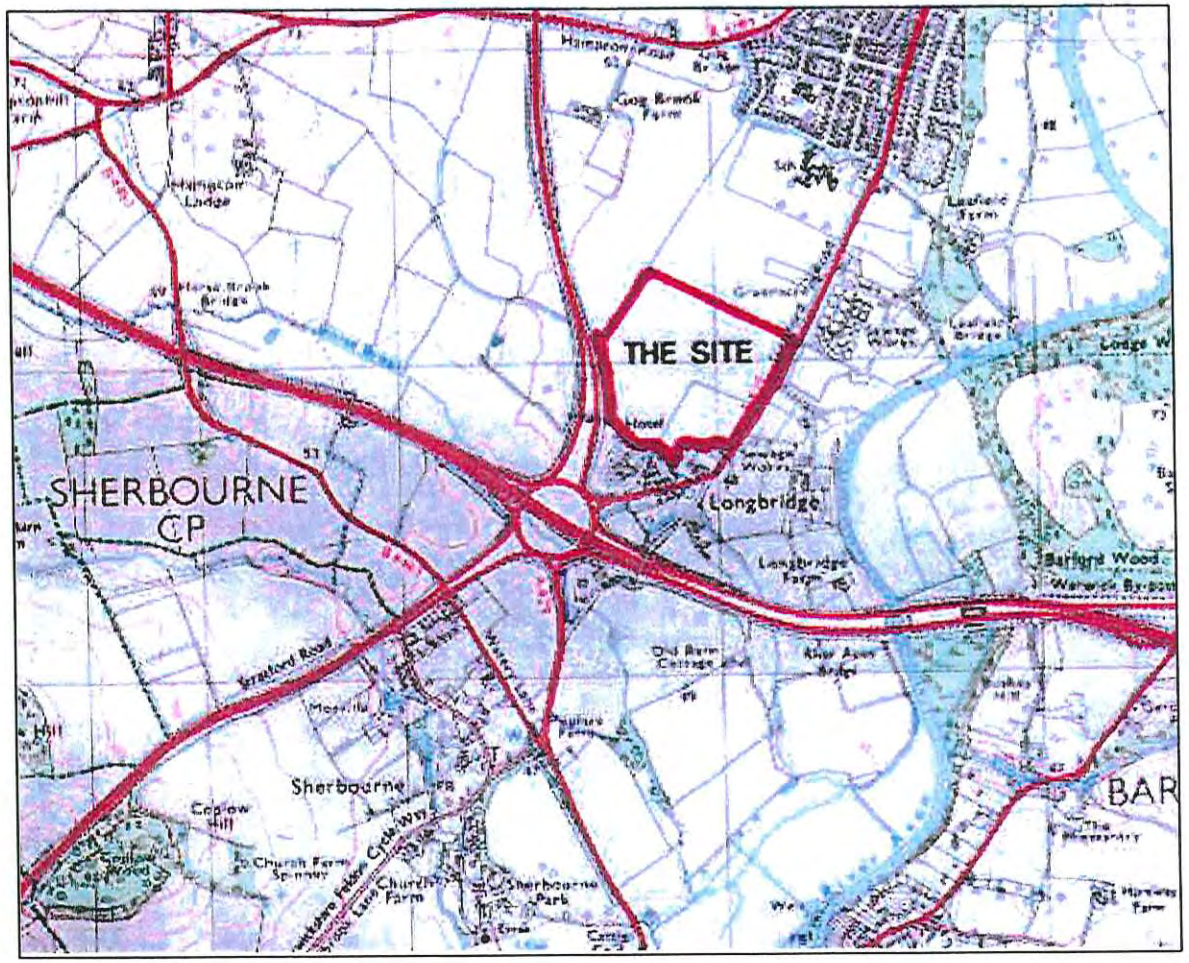

TOURNAMENT FIELDS, WARWICK

EMPLOYMENT LAND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Prepared by Severn Trent Property

March 2003

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INTRODUCTION

The Adopted Warwick District Local Plan (April 1995) allocates 20 hectares of land 'South of Warwick – west of A429' as a major employment land allocation. (Policy (LW) EMP1. The Policy states:-

"Development will be expected to provide a high quality environment and all appropriate infrastructure necessary for the proper development of the sites and their assimilation into the urban framework. (Land at Heathcote was also allocated for employment development pursuant to this policy). Development requirements will be incorporated within development briefs for each site."

On the 21st November 2000 the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions granted outline planning permission for the phased erection of B1, B2 and B8 floorspace, service roads, car parking, landscaping, associated infrastructure and ancillary developments on part of the allocated employment site at south west Warwick. The developers for this part of the allocation are Severn Trent Property Limited. The development has been named Tournament Fields.

Condition 1 of the outline planning permission states:-

"An application for the approval of a Master Plan identifying the principles and for the phasing of the development shall be submitted before the expiry of three years from the date of this permission. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the principles and phases established in the Master Plan as approved by the Planning Authority or as may subsequently be varied with the approval of the Planning Authority."

The purpose of this document is to discharge the requirements of Condition 1. Subsequently submission will be made for the approval of "details" pursuant to the principles established in this Master Plan.

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LOCATION

The Tournament Fields development is located immediately to the east of J15 M40, with the A46 immediately to the west and the A429 immediately to the south east. Access to the development will be by way of a new island onto the Stratford Road. Warwick town centre is approximately 1.5 miles to the north. Tournament Fields forms part of the commercial element of the South West Warwick Housing and Employment allocation.

THE SITE

Tournament Fields totals approximately 21.1ha (52 acres), and is currently unfarmed agricultural land.

The development is bounded to the southwest by the Hilton Hotel and a modern residential development known as "The Peacocks". To the very south of the development is a listed house and grounds known as "The Old House". To the north is the remainder of the South West Warwick planning area where some 1100 houses are proposed some of which are under construction by Bryant and others.

EASEMENTS / RIGHTS OF WAY

There are no existing easements or rights of way within the curtilage of the site. However as part of the comprehensive development of South West Warwick, Tournament Fields will provide road access, surface and foul water drainage and electricity supply to neighbouring land owners. These easements / rights of way will pass through Tournament Fields development from Stratford Road to its northern boundary thus linking services to the residential development adjacent. It is proposed that these services and this part of the road network will be formally adopted.

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3.01 PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN GUIDE

The Design Guide is intended to control the future development of Tournament Fields to maximise the potential and benefit for the local community, owners, occupiers and investors.

The Brief will set out guidelines for achieving a high standard of design both of the Masterplan and of individual buildings. This will cover the plot layout, scale and height of development and integration with a landscape design of equally high standard for a business park in this key location.

The key criteria for the design of the Framework Plan/Masterplan are:-

- A well designed infrastructure allowing direct and easy access into the heart of the site and also with the flexibility to adjust to changing market conditions.
- A high standard of building design with harmonious aesthetics yet capable of expressing individual occupier identities.
- The selection of materials suited to the location and constraints.
- A quality landscape scheme enhancing the setting of the buildings and providing buffer screen planting to sensitive boundaries.
- An integrated design for pedestrian and cycle movement around the park.
- Consideration of public transport provision.

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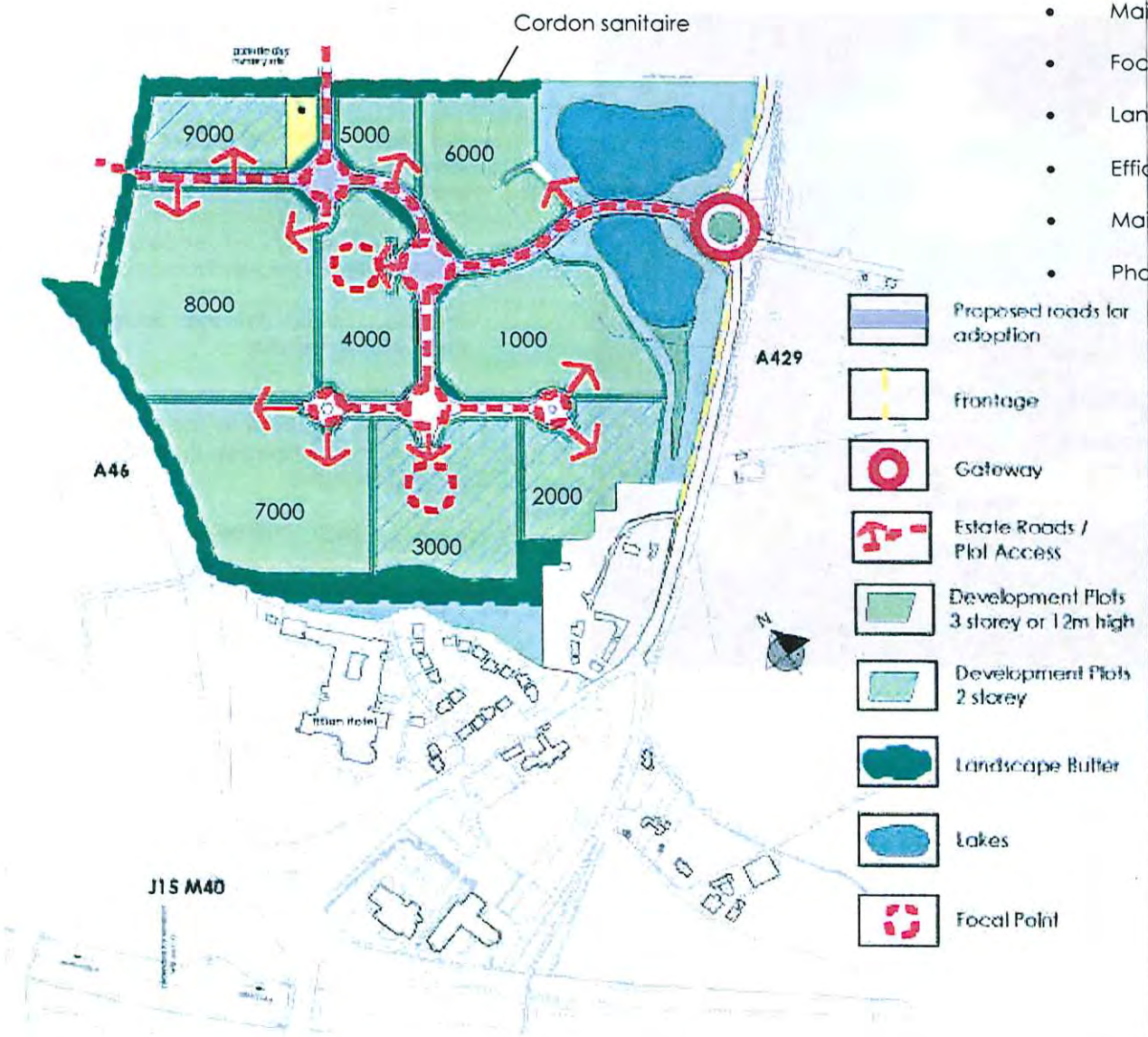
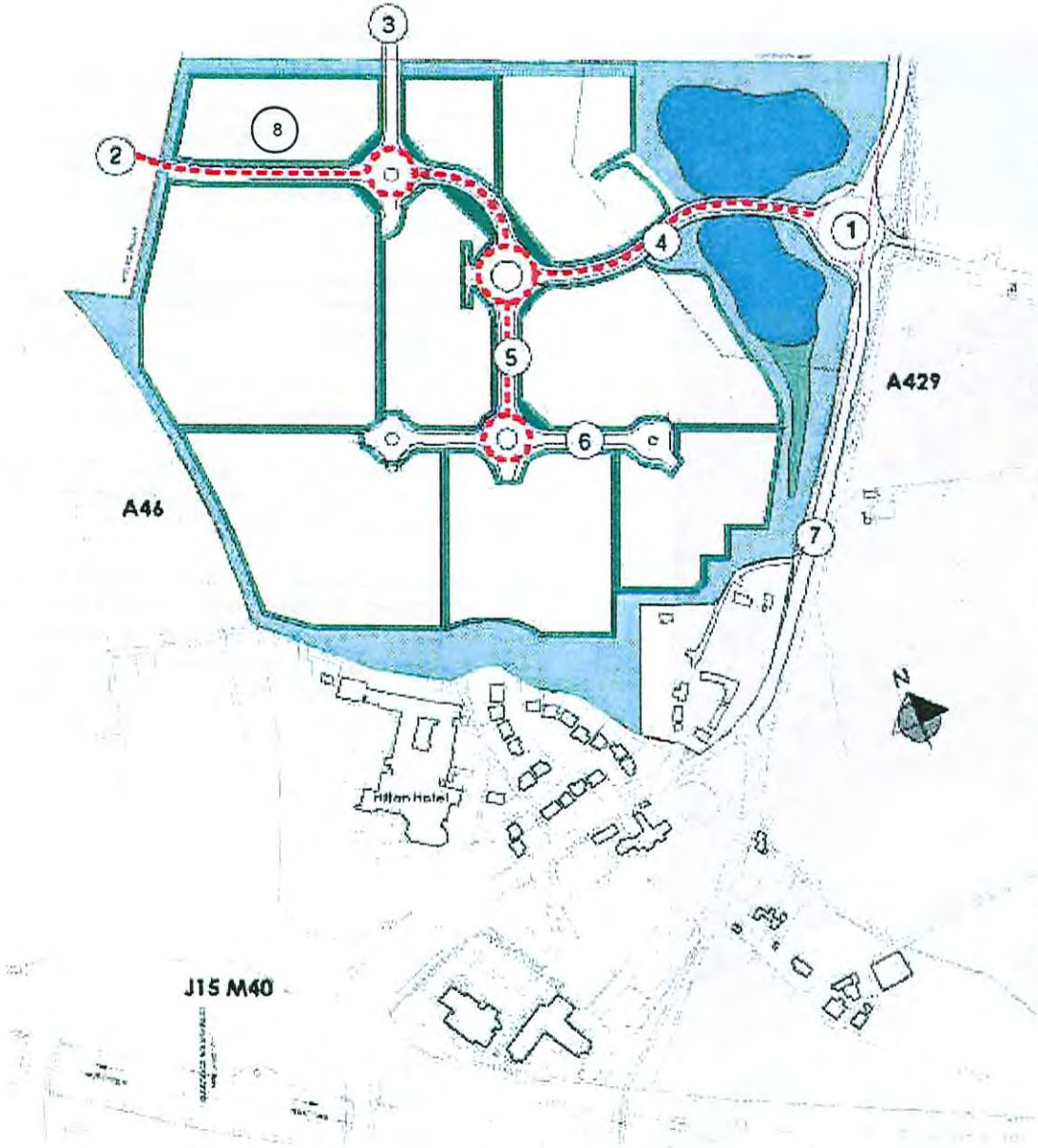


3.02 MASTERPLAN - DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

- Main Site Frontage – A429.
- Focal points – building sited to terminate view.
- Landscape buffers to key boundaries.
- Efficient internal estate roads.
- Main 'spine' boulevard.
- Phasing as plot numbers



3.03 ACCESS

1. Main roundabout on A429.
2. Access through to residential.
3. Future access to 'CapCo' Land.
4. Main access road.
5. Bus route proposed down spine road.
6. 7.3m wide Estate Roads.
7. Direct links to M40 J15.
8. Combined footpath cycleway provided on one side of road between (1) and (2).

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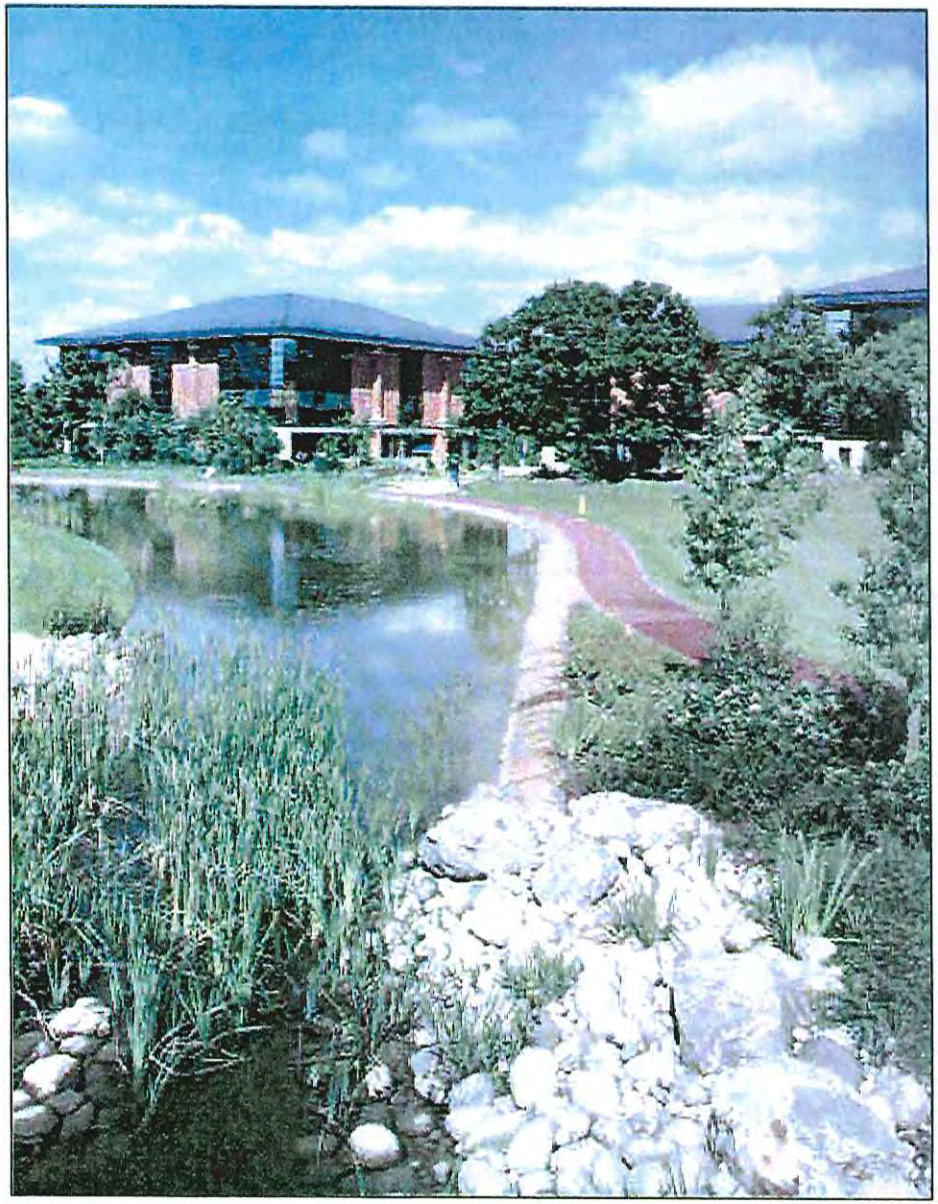

4.01 INTRODUCTION

This section comprises an assessment of the landscape and visual characteristics of the site, with proposals for their retention or modification where appropriate; and a description of the landscape strategy to be adopted as part of the development for the purpose of mitigating its impact and enhancing its quality.

An initial assessment of the site's visibility was undertaken in December 1994, followed by further landscape and visual appraisals in April 1996. These studies, which were reviewed and updated in July 2002, include field inspections of the site and its environs, a photographic survey, and a desk-top study of Ordnance Survey data.

The effects of the proposed development on the present landscape and its character, and on views to and across the site, are discussed.

Finally, a concept of the landscape infrastructure for the proposed development is presented, based on the findings of the studies; together with recommendations for the type of landscape to be incorporated in the design of the site boundaries, access roads and development plots.

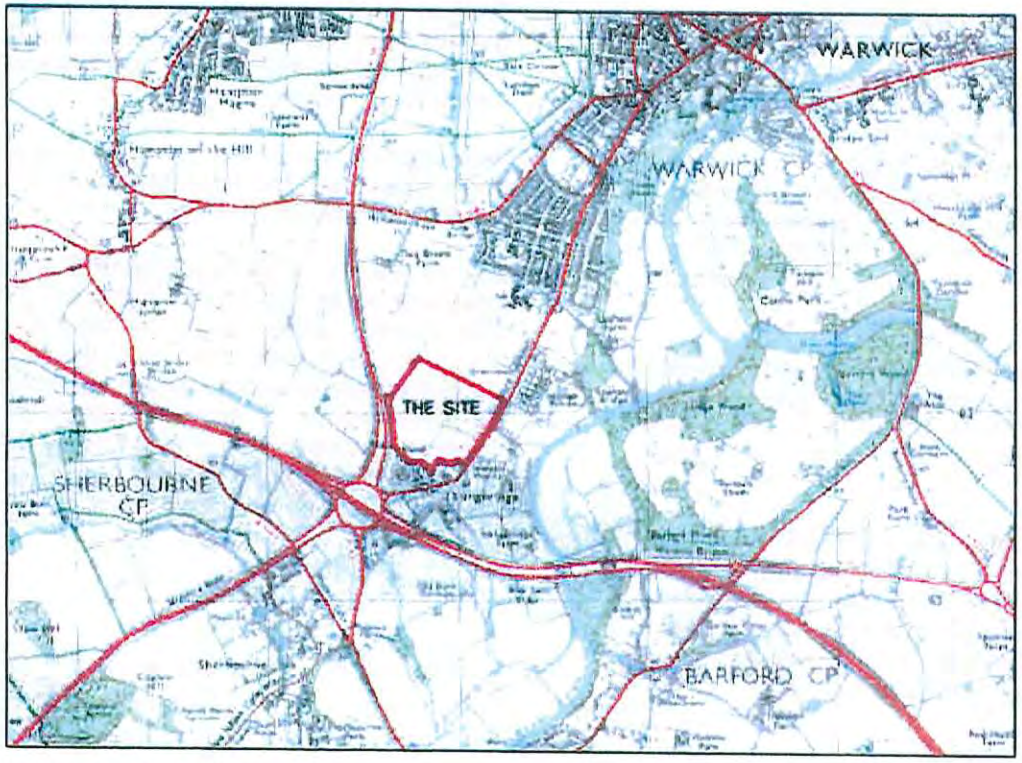

Figure 1: Site Context

Photograph No. 1 View from the B4463 Bridge over the M40, Note St Mary's Church Tower

4.02 LOCAL LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The site lies on the A429 Stratford Road in south-west Warwick, just north-east of the Longbridge Roundabout at Junction 15 of the M40 Motorway. Refer to Figure 1 entitled 'Site Context'.

The topography of the area owes its characteristics to both the underlying sandstone and to the River Avon, which flows in a north-east to south-west direction from beyond Leamington Spa (adjoining Warwick to the east) to Stratford-upon-Avon, some 8 kilometres to the south-west of the site. The level of the Avon at Warwick is approx. 45m A.O.D., whilst the County town is built upon a knoll of rock rising to 70m A.O.D. centred around St Mary's Church. The area in which the site lies, west of the river between Warwick and Longbridge, remains almost flat, rising little more than 5 metres over 1.5km. Further west, the land rises gently to 85m A.O.D. at Hampton-on-the-Hill, whilst beyond the Avon to the east, the land only reaches 70m A.O.D. at Heathcote.

St Mary's Church Tower is an attractive local landmark for views towards Warwick from the surrounding roads (refer to Photograph No. 1). In some views from the south, Warwick Castle is also a striking feature. All developments in the vicinity of Warwick in recent years have been required to respect these views.

Except for hedgerow trees and occasional tree clumps, there is no woodland in the area of south-west Warwick. However, alongside the Avon River, and within the grounds of Warwick Castle, which is situated on the river immediately south of the town centre, there are several tracts of mixed woodland, each stretching for more than a kilometre in length. To the west, beyond Hampton Magna and Hampton-on-the-Hill, and beyond the motorway to the south, there is a scattering of woods and spinneys, essentially deciduous, ranging in size up to 100 hectares. Other vegetation cover includes hedgerows of blackthorn and hawthorn with some elder and sallow.

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4.03 THE SITE AND ITS CHARACTER

The site is an area of uncultivated farmland presently supporting rough grassland and weeds, including the pernicious weed ragwort. It has the character of being semi-rural, but also appears derelict, having been unfarmed for many years. The boundary to the south is a brook, a small tributary of the Avon, beyond which lies the Hilton Hotel and a small adjacent group of houses known as 'The Peacocks'. The site is bounded to the east by the A429 Stratford Road, to the north by open fields surrounding Aylesford School, and by housing under construction by Bryants at Gog Brook Farm; and to the west by the A46(T) Warwick By-pass and its embankments. Adjacent to the south-east corner of the site is a Grade 2 listed building, surrounded with trees and associated farm buildings in various stages of disrepair.

There is no hedge between the site and the Stratford Road, but along the other (east) side of Stratford Road is a 5-10m high screen of hedgerow trees including ash, oak and hawthorn, The screen effectively affords visual enclosure to the site's eastern flank. Further east, between the Stratford Road and the River Avon, is the Longbridge sewage works, but it is not visible from the site.

The site is virtually flat, rising little more than a metre from the Stratford Road in the east to the A46(T) Warwick By-pass in the west. The embankments of the by-pass rise from the north-west corner of the site to approx 4.0m height at the south-west corner, where the by-pass approaches the motorway junction roundabout (see Figure 2: Section E-E). Although the road is not visible from the site, there is some noise from it, particularly near to the western boundary of the site.

The only significant vegetation appertaining to the site are the trees planted within the curtilage of the listed building, and the clumps of shrubs and trees growing on the banks of the brook.

These clumps do not form a fully continuous screen, so that part of the Hilton Hotel and some of the adjacent housing is visible from the site.

Just off the site, there is a maturing woodland mix of trees and shrubs (up to 15m in height) planted on the embankments of the A46(T). The site is otherwise devoid of woody plants, and, because of this and the absence of intermediate boundary fences, except for occasional low fence posts, it has the character of a wide, uninterrupted open field, enclosed on its east, south and west sides, but open to the north.

Figure 2: Section E-E

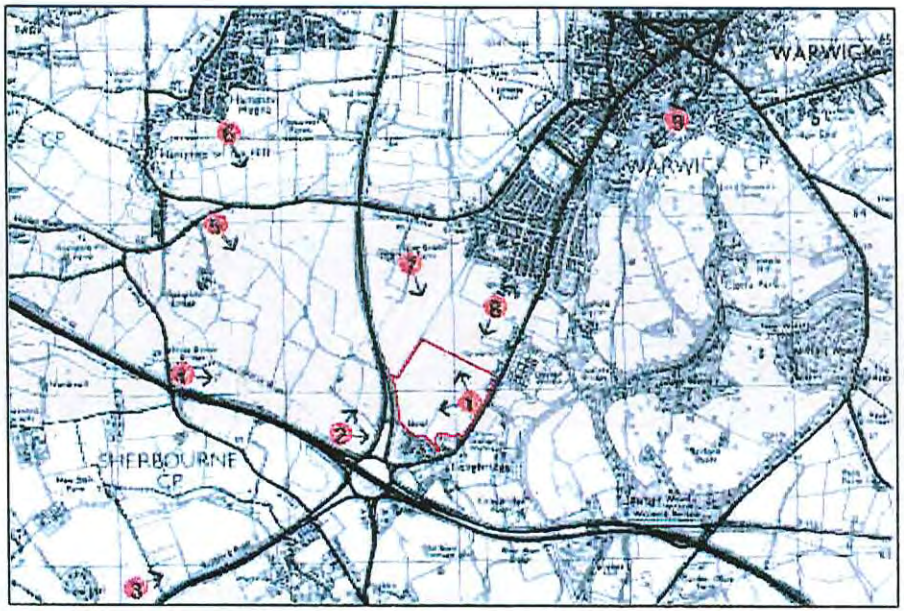


Figure 3: Photograph Key

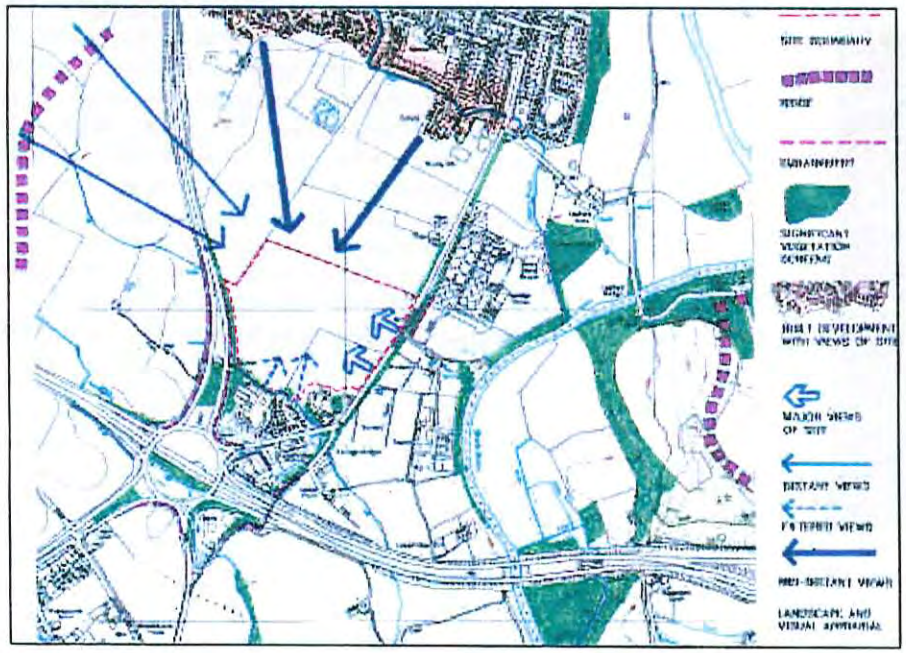


Figure 4: Landscape and Visual Appraisal

4.04 VISUAL APPRAISAL

An assessment of the extent to which the site could be viewed from surrounding vantage points was made following a study of topographical and vegetation mapping, and by field study visits. These visits were made in the summer of 2002, when a number of photographs from the vantage points in the direction of the site were taken. Those photographs which best illustrate the extent to which the site is visible from the publicly-accessible parts of surrounding area are keyed in Figure 3.

As can be seen by reference to Figure 4 'Landscape & Visual Appraisal', the site is visually open to the A429 Stratford Road, so that uninterrupted views across the entire site are possible from here (refer to Photograph No.2). Hedgeline vegetation restricts views from this road beyond the north-east corner of the site, and beyond the Stratford Road, within the site of the Longbridge Sewage Works and on the floodplain of the Avon, views of the site are also curtailed by hedgerows. Further **east**, potential views of the site from the rising ground are screened by woodland established on the hillside slopes.

Photograph No. 2 View across the site from the A429 Stratford Road

Photograph No. 3 View towards the site from the A46(T) at Coplow Hill

From the **south**, views across the site are possible from the rear of a few of the properties in "The Peacocks" and from some bedrooms of the Hilton Hotel. Some of these views are filtered by the branches of the trees and shrubs growing alongside the brook which marks the southern boundary of the site. Beyond the hotel and housing there are no views from the south, with the exception of glimpses over the roofs of the hotel/housing from the footbridge which crosses the M40 Motorway just east of Junction 15 (Longbridge). Views of the site were, until recently, possible from the A46 towards Stratford at Coplow Hill, but these are now screened by roadside vegetation (see Photograph No. 3)

Photograph No. 4 View towards site from the M40 J15 southbound off slip road

Photograph No. 5 View to SW Warwick From the A4189 at Hampton on the Hill

Photograph No. 6 View towards site from public footpath between Hampton on the Hill and Warwick

Vegetation planted on the embankments of the A46(T) Warwick Bypass is now sufficiently mature to curtail views of the site from the Bypass and from the Longbridge Roundabout (refer to Photograph No. 4); whilst further **west**, beyond the A46(T), land-levels remain low-lying and potential views of the site are blocked by the Bypass embankments. However, approx 1.5km further north-west, the land rises to Hampton on the Hill village, so that long-distant filtered views of the site are just possible from the A4189 north of Hampton Lodge (see Photograph No. 5). Distant glimpses of the site are also possible from higher ground at the western end of the Public Footpath between Warwick and Hampton on the Hill (see Photograph No. 6). In both of these situations the dominant landscape feature is the background of woodland planting on the skyline in the distance (Castle Park)

Photograph No. 7 View to the site from Aylesford Secondary School

Photograph No. 8 View across site from new housing at Gog Brook Farm, off Hampton Road

Photograph No. 9 View towards SW Warwick from the ramparts of Warwick Castle

Because of the open nature of the fields immediately to the **north** of the site, uninterrupted views of the site are possible from the grounds of Aylesford School (Photograph No. 7), and from the new housing site at the western edge of Warwick on the Hampton Road (once Gog Brook Farm), (Photograph No.8). Views of the site from the rest of Warwick are not possible, with the exception of St Mary's Church Tower (occasionally open to the public) and the ramparts of the castle (refer to Photograph No. 9). Views from these two historic buildings are probably the most sensitive in Warwick, but because of the amount of planting in the foreground and the distance (approx. 2km from the site), the site is only just visible.

4.05 IMPACT ANALYSIS

The proposed development: A framework for the development of the site is illustrated on page 6 (Development Concept), and consists of a number of plots dedicated to offices, and 2-3 larger plots intended for development as light assembly facility/warehousing. A varied roofscape will be achieved between 2 storey and 3 storey buildings. Building will be restricted to 12m in height with 2 storey buildings in the order of 8.5m in height. The plots will be served by a framework of private estate roads branching from a new junction roundabout proposed opposite the entrance to the Sewage Works on the A429. The proposed access road from this roundabout will enter the site across a causeway between two small lakes.

Landscape Impact: The proposals will alter the character of the site, in that the semi-rural open-ness of the site will be lost, and the existing field of rough grass and weeds will be given over to buildings, roads and car parks. The existing trees and shrubs, however, growing beside the brook and on the A46(T) embankments, will be retained, and a vast number of additional tees and shrubs will be planted throughout the development. Existing levels, which presently hardly vary across the site, will be modified where necessary to accommodate the development, and to allow for the installation of the proposed lakes and for ground-modelling around the periphery of the site.

Visual Impact: It has been demonstrated above that the main views of the site are from the A429 Stratford Road as it passes alongside the site on its eastern side, with more distant views from the school and new housing (Bryants Development) to the north. There are also a few intermittent, filtered views from the Hilton Hotel and The Peacocks housing to the south, and long distant views from the A4189 and a public footpath in the vicinity of Hampton on the Hll to the west. These views will be impacted by the development to some degree, but because of the distances, and because of the setting within other more dominant landscape features the impact generally should not be adverse and only very slight.

The view of the site from the Stratford Road will change from one of an unkempt semi-derelict field of grass and weeds to a managed but sub-native landscape of trees, shrubs, lakes and grass, beyond which offices will be seen in a parkland setting.

The future developments proposed on the intervening fields between Aylesford School and the site will screen or effect the views in such a way as to render the impact of the development on the school insignificant in the longer term.

The light assembly distribution buildings and office buildings proposed on the south side of the site would be visible from a few windows at the rear of the hotel to the south, and from some of the adjacent houses and their respective gardens, except that 2.0m high bunding, fully planted with indigenous trees and shrubs, is proposed alongside the brook. Such ground-modelling and planting will serve to curtail views of the development as well as prevent overlooking of the gardens from the upper-storey office windows. See Figure 5 'Sections'.

The distant views of the development from around Hampton on the Hill to the north-west, and from the Castle ramparts and St Mary's Church Tower to the north-east, will be seen in the context of both the existing housing areas and those developments proposed between the site and south-west Warwick. In this context, and taking into account the distances involved and the proposed site landscape, the site's development will hardly be noticeable, and will appear insignificant in the longer term.

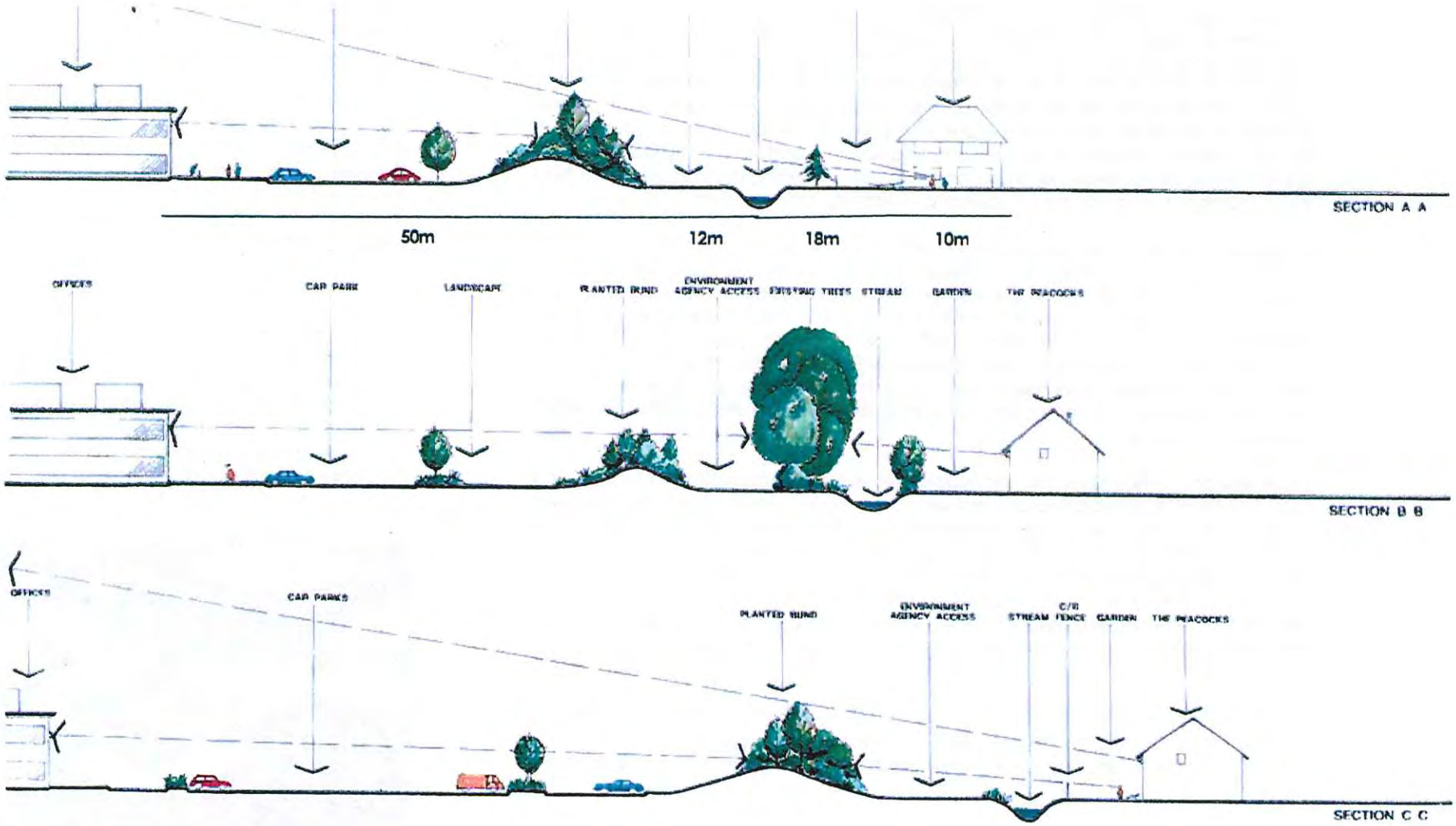
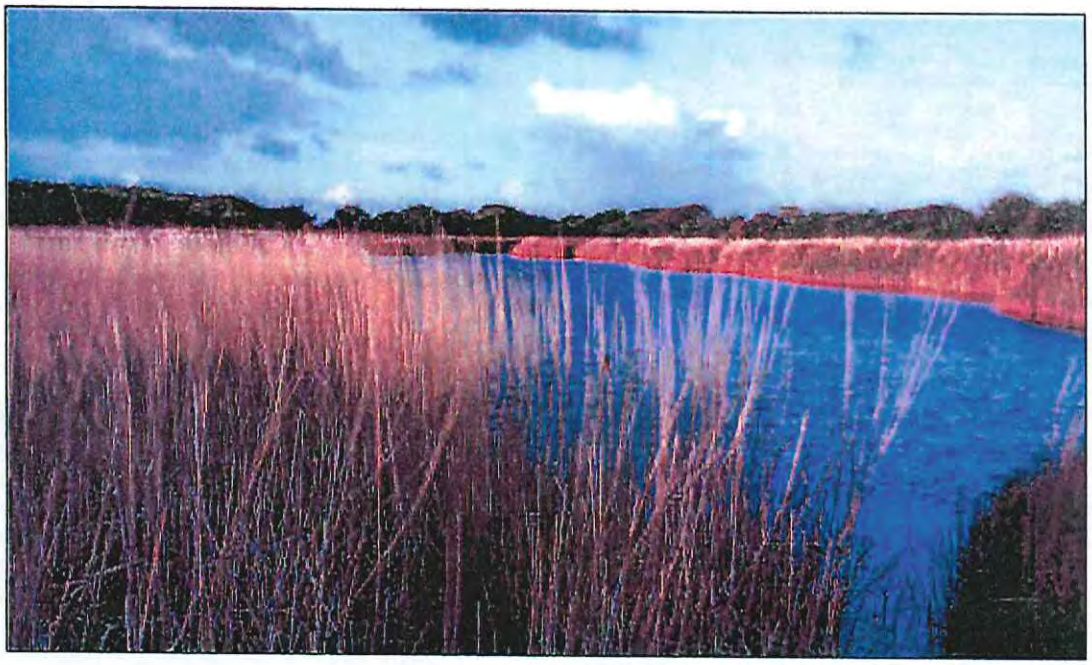


Figure 5: Sections A-A, B-B and C-C (refer to Figure 7 on page 19)



Benefits of Development: In landscape and visual terms, there are a number of benefits of the site being developed in the form proposed:

- A site left semi-derelict for many years will become managed. The pernicious weed 'Ragwort' will be eradicated from the site.
- The proposed trees and shrubs will introduce vegetation to the site, thus providing a variety of new habitats and an increase to the rather sparse tree/woodland cover to the landscape of south-west Warwick.
- The proposed lakes will be a potential habitat for fish, waders, and other birds and mammals associated with inland fresh-water bodies.
- Tournament Fields will form the gateway to Warwick from the M40 J15 and visitors will benefit from the visual amenity provided by the proposed lakes and well managed landscaping.

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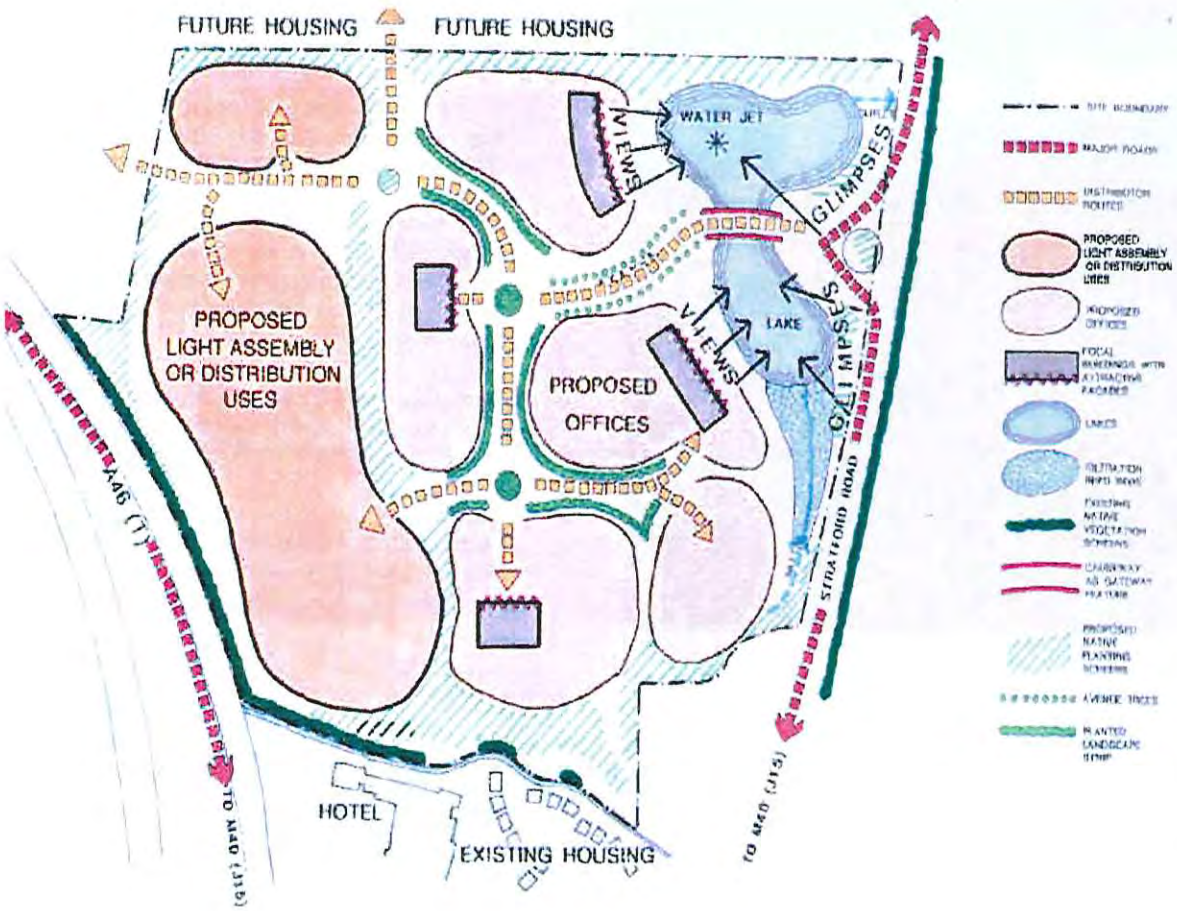

4.06 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The strategy employed in the landscape development of the site is illustrated in the Figure 6 'Landscape Design Concept'. The following is a summary of the key elements of the concept:

- Undertake phased provision of structural landscaping, with early provision of structural landscaping along the southern boundary.
- Locate the distribution facility buildings, rather than offices, close to the western boundary. Here, noise from the A46(T) will be less distracting than to offices, and be attenuated for the rest of the site by the bulk of the warehousing. Also, the large distribution buildings will not be close to the adjacent housing south of the brook.
- Locate key office buildings with attractive facades at the focal points of each of the distributor spur roads, to provide 'sense of place' and orientation within the development.
- Create spaces by the juxtaposition of the buildings and associated tree planting.
- Provide an attractive frontage to the development on to the A429 Stratford Road, with lakes and a semi-rural parkland landscape, to provide a suitable setting for the offices facing towards the road, and to soften and visually enhance views of the development from the road.
- Utilise the lakes/frontage landscape as a 'Gateway' feature into the development.
- Screen the development from the hotel & housing to the south by means of ground-modelling and tree and shrub planting. (Refer to Figure 5 and Figure 7).
- Plant linear tree belts for screening between the distribution facilities and the offices.
- Ensure sufficient space is allowed for in the development for a good depth of estate road verge landscape.

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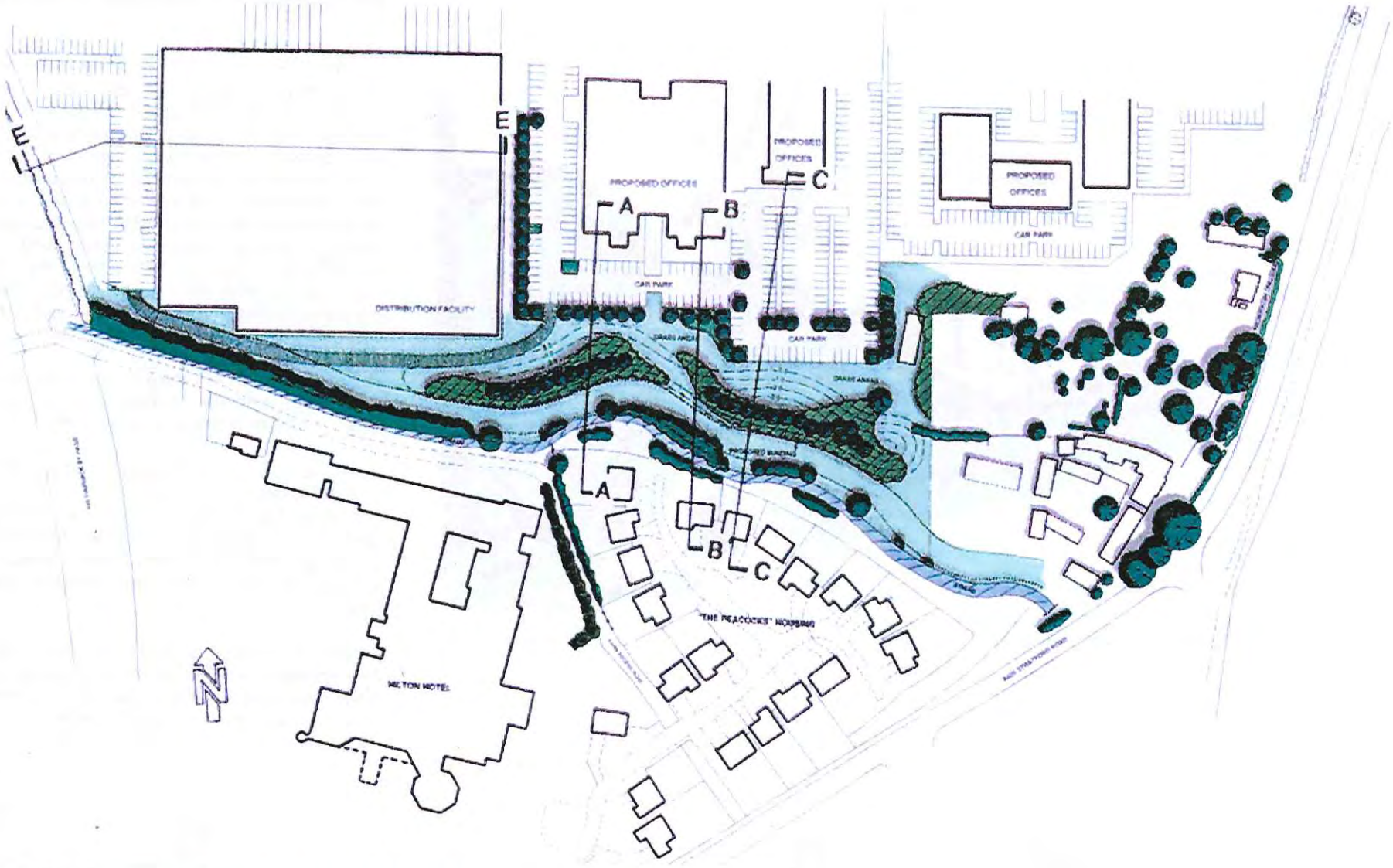

Figure 7: Landscape Proposals to Southern Boundary

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Figure 8: Gateway Proposal

4.07 GATEWAY AND STRUCTURAL LANDSCAPE

The Gateway

As mentioned above, one of the main elements of the development's design concept are the lakes proposed adjacent to the A429 Stratford Road on the east side of the site. The two lakes are proposed to sit astride of the site's access spine road, so that the road will cross over a causeway as it enters the development after leaving the roundabout. It is intended that the causeway will be as narrow as possible to give the appearance of being a bridge across a single large water body. Immediately following the causeway, an avenue of semi-mature trees will direct the visitor into the heart of the development. Together, the causeway and avenue will serve as a 'Gateway' into the site.

The lakes will be designed to have gentle sides for both safety and amenity, clothed in a varied landscape of grass, shrubs and marginal plants (refer to Figure 8).

The species employed will be essentially native/indigenous, in respect of the site's semi-rural nature on the outskirts of Warwick. The landscape will also be of a parkland character, to reflect the nearby outer grounds of Castle Park. These will appear contiguous when seen from distant views on higher land.

Before entering the lakes, surface water from the development will be directed through a set of reed beds, positioned south of the lakes, to clean the water; whilst a vertical jet of water positioned in one of the lakes will provide both aeration and visual interest.

SECTION D-D

Structural Landscape
The structural landscape of the development will perform the following functions:

- Screening of the development for any views that exist from the Hilton Hotel and The Peacocks Housing to the south of the site.
- Softening and screening the outline of the distribution warehouses for long-distance views form the north-west.
- Providing a landscape separation between the distribution buildings and the office buildings.
- Providing structural landscaping as a setting for the proposed buildings for views from the Stratford Road and for any possible long-distance views from the castle and St Mary's Church Tower.
- Enhancing the character of the estate roads.
- Providing an attractive setting for those working at, or visiting, the site's facilities.

The pedestrian/cycle routeways will be restricted to one side of the estate roads wherever possible to allow for a greater width of soft verge. In addition, where possible, footpaths will not always be set immediately adjacent to road kerbs, but will meander a short distance away from the road to allow for a landscape dividing strip between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

Species employed in the structural planting mixes will essentially be native/indigenous, with some cultivated varieties introduced where appropriate, for example nearer to the buildings.

4.08 DEVELOPMENT PLOT LANDSCAPE

The majority of the land around the proposed buildings upon each development plot will be given over to car parking, or in the case of the distribution facilities, HGV parking and/or unloading bays, in order to satisfy the required level of provision for each facility.

Car parks will be arranged in such a way that every block will be divided by a planting strip of trees and shrubs, to visually soften / hide the cars, to create spaces and to reduce the perceived volume of hard-standing.

Car parking ratios for B1use to be 1:28m^2 (gross internal).

Landscape within lorry parking areas is highly susceptible to accidental damage, so proposed planting in association with these areas will be restricted to the periphery of the parking lot, arranged to provide as much of a screen of the HGV's as possible when viewed form the surrounding roads.

Plant species used within the plots will be drawn from a palette of hardy plants known to give the all-year ground cover and spatial containment intended by the design. Landscaping schemes will include provision for semi-mature specimens where appropriate.

Near to the office entrances and windows, including those offices linked to the distribution facilities, beds of hardy flowering shrubs will be introduced to give additional interest for those arriving for work or looking from the office windows. Pavings associated with the offices will be of high quality.

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SUSTAINABILITY

An important principle in the master planning of Tournament Fields, and in the detailed design of buildings will be to promote the principles of sustainable development.

The Master Plan will encourage walking, and cycling and the use of public transport for access to the Tournament Fields particularly from the adjacent residential area at South West Warwick. In the granting of planning permission, financial contributions were made towards the provision of public transport, cycle paths and towards traffic management schemes in Warwick Town Centre. Occupiers of Tournament Fields will be encouraged to access the facilities proposed at the local centre by walking and cycling. The outline planning permission requires the provision of cycle storage and showers within buildings to encourage cycling for the journeys to and from work.

In respect of the detailed design of buildings, consideration will be given to the use of environment friendly materials where appropriate. The outline planning permission requires a significant usage of recycled materials in the provision of the infrastructure of the site, and the re-use in situ of the underlying sand and gravels. In the absence of this on-site resource, new material would have to be imported on site from mineral reserves elsewhere.

The outline permission further requires a specified quantity of mineral to be extracted from the underlying resources. The areas of extraction will be restored to form two lakes as a gateway feature to Tournament Fields. The restoration to form lakes will avoid the need for the importation of filling by road haulage. In order to minimise the amount of extracted mineral that has to be transported off site the use of the extracted mineral within the development will be encouraged.

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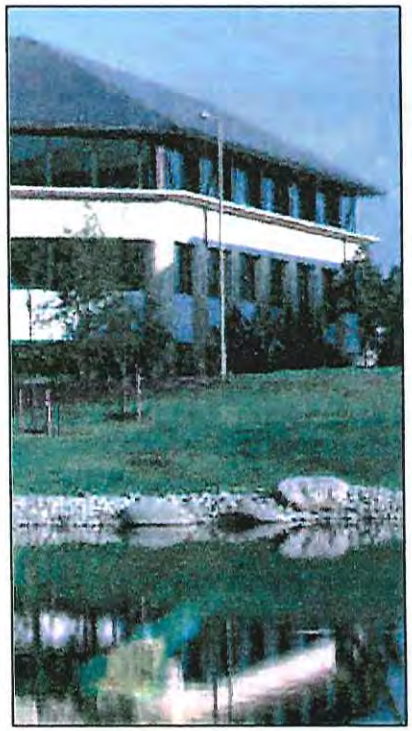
The orientation, external and internal design of buildings, and the use of landscaping should seek to take advantage of natural light and heat; contribute to local bio-diversity and minimise the use of non-renewable sources. Sustainable surface water drainage techniques will be restricted by the hydrological conditions of the site; such as the high water table and shallow gradient to the final point of discharge into the River Avon. Sustainable drainage techniques will be limited and incorporated into the site infrastructure where appropriate.

A high quality design will be sought throughout the development. A good standard of thermal and noise insulation should be achieved within all buildings. It is envisaged that within the development process new initiatives may be identified as having potential opportunities to reduce the consumption of natural resources and encourage energy conservation. It is recognised that such initiatives must constitute sound techniques, which do not frustrate the successful implementation of Tournament Fields, by either discouraging investment, or deterring potential occupiers.



The site is a gateway location with a prime frontage on the approach into Warwick. The guidance in this document is intended to achieve a visual appearance for the park, which is of a high quality, prestigious and co-ordinated effect appropriate to a site of this prime importance.

The consistency of design can be determined by a relatively restricted palette, colour range of materials and by a common approach to the scale of elevational treatment. A predominance of three-storey buildings on the main frontage will contribute to the prestige of the site whilst two storey buildings are located so as to relate to the domestic scale of existing residential areas to the south west and new residential to the north east.

The nature of parkland settings is that the buildings are 'set in' the landscape and allow for distinctive individual buildings, however, the opportunity exists to create squares and spaces between the buildings as well as keynote buildings placed to terminate views. Encouragement will be given to observe these urban design principles.

A parkland setting is not considered to be suitable for bright colours or garish materials. The palette suggested is therefore restricted to white, grey, buff and terracotta. This encourages the use of natural materials – stone, timber and brick and neutral colours for other types of cladding. The use of green, grey, neutral glazing tints will also help to unify the appearance.

Ancillary structures
Where possible refuse and sub-station enclosures will be located and screened within the plots and preferably be integrated into the building design. Where they are separate, they should be no higher than 3.5m and be screened with a green stained timber enclosure (Hixson or similar).

Signage
A co-ordinated park signage scheme will be designed to further reinforce the park image as a high quality, managed development.

7.00 ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Tournament Fields will provide occupiers with considerable flexibility in terms of tenure, style and nature of their buildings. It is therefore essential that the quality of environment is maintained to the highest standards. In order to achieve this, a separate Management Company will be established to create the legal framework necessary for the protection and maintenance of the environment.

With the exception of the spine road through to the residential land, which will be an adopted highway, the Management Company will be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of all the common areas. To ensure the continuity and a high standard at the entrance of the development the maintenance will extend to the areas adjoining the adopted boulevard.

All remaining estate roads, paths and common areas including landscaped areas will be privately owned and ownership will be transferred to the Management Company on completion of the development. All electricity sub-stations, gas governor stations and pumping stations, where privately used, will also be transferred to the Management Company.

The Management Company will be owned by each of the freehold purchasers and control transferred to them when the last plot is developed out. All owners will be required to comply with the park's standards, which will be designed to ensure that all occupiers enjoy the working environment.

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