



LOES FARM

Land off Coventry Road, Warwick

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This brochure has been prepared to support the ongoing engagement of Nurton Developments with the preparation of the new Local Plan for Warwick District, with particular regard to the potential development of land at Loes Farm, Warwick. The site is identified in this brochure as 'Loes Farm'.

The new Local Plan has been subject to examination at a strategic level and it has been identified that significant further housing allocations need to be made in order to achieve a sound Local Plan. Loes Farm provides an opportunity for the development of 260 homes along with significant public open space. This brochure describes how the site's constraints, characteristics and context have been explored and evaluated in order to arrive at a vision for how the

site could be developed. As such it demonstrates that the development of the site would be deliverable, particularly in terms of landscape and heritage considerations, and of minimal harm to the purposes of the Green Belt.

Deliverable, particularly in terms of landscape and heritage considerations. **02**

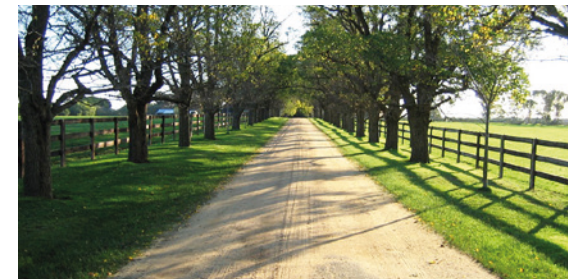


Image top left:

New high quality housing around shared spaces

Image top right:

Opportunities to include signage within the Country Park explaining its historic significance.

Image Bottom left:

Opportunity to use the existing farm access as an attractive approach to both the development and Country Park.

Image bottom right:

New housing set within landscape mark a transition into the Country Park.

01 *Loes Farm... opportunity for the development of 260 high quality homes along with significant public open space.*

03 Site Location and Facilities

Site Location: The site is located on the north-eastern edge of Warwick and is contained by the A46 Warwick Bypass, the A429 Coventry Road and Woodloes Lane. It is to the north of the Woodloes Park housing estate. The site area totals 27.3ha, consisting of two parcels. The main parcel is 26.2ha and covers the majority of the area described above. There is a separate parcel of 1.1ha in the south eastern corner of the area described above, separated from the main site area by Hintons Nursery.

Access & Facilities: The site is accessed from Coventry Road, which is a single carriageway road with a 40mph speed limit. There is a pedestrian footway alongside the site on Coventry Road for its entire length. For part of its length it is also a cycle route. Woodloes Lane is a public footpath (recreational route) and part of the National Cycle Network. It is a narrow, single track lane with a bound surface, serving two dwellings and providing a rear access to the Hintons Nursery.

Bus services in the vicinity of the site include the X16, providing an hourly service from Warwick to Stratford, Kenilworth and Warwick University and Coventry, and the G1, running every 8-10 minutes along Primrose Hill, through the Woodloes Park housing estate, and connecting to Warwick and Leamington town centres.

Generally, the site is in a sustainable location for development, being located on the edge of a compact town with excellent local facilities and good rail connections. There are convenience shops, a pharmacy and post office at the Woodloes Park estate approximately 1.6km from the site and there is an M&S Simply Food approximately 800m from the site on Coventry Road.

- Site Boundary 
- Schools 
- Health Centre 
- Dentist 
- Outdoor Recreation 
- Restaurant/Bars 
- Church 
- Food Stores 
- Post Office / Newsagent 
- Train Station 



Site Location and Facilities Fig.1

04 Environmental Considerations

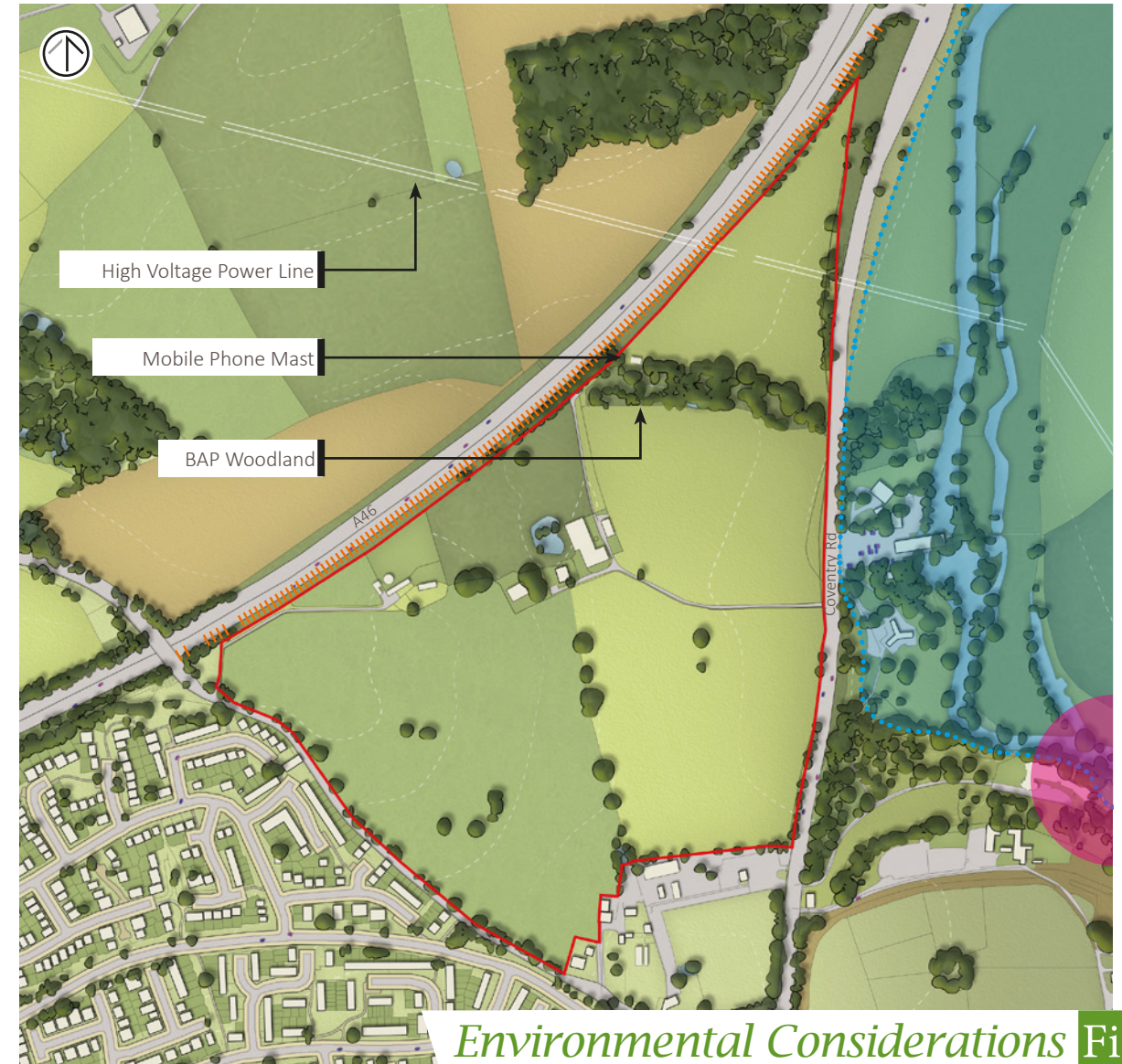
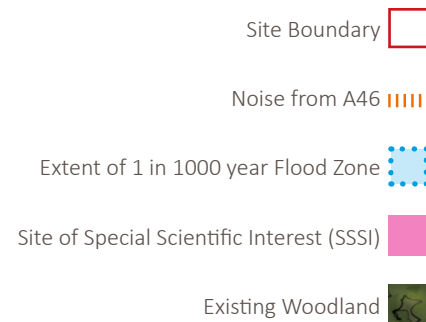
Ecology: The land is largely devoid of hedgerows, except for its perimeter, but it contains a number of trees. There is a thick woodland belt running east-west across the site and isolating its northern corner. This woodland belt is a Deciduous Woodland Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat. There are no other ecological designations on the site. There is a pond located within the site and the woodland belt also contains a watercourse.

Geology: The Guy's Cliffe Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), designated for its geological interest, is 250 metres away from the site.

Utilities: The triangle of land isolated by the woodland belt has a high voltage power line crossing it, with a pylon within the site. There is also a 20 metre high mobile phone mast within this area, adjacent to the woodland.

Flooding & Drainage: The site is in Flood Zone 1 and therefore is not at significant risk of flooding.

Noise Environment: The site is affected by noise from adjacent roads, but the A46 being in cutting adjacent to the site means that noise is reduced. Noise buffers may need to be built in to the development of the site.



Environmental Considerations Fig.2

06 Green Belt

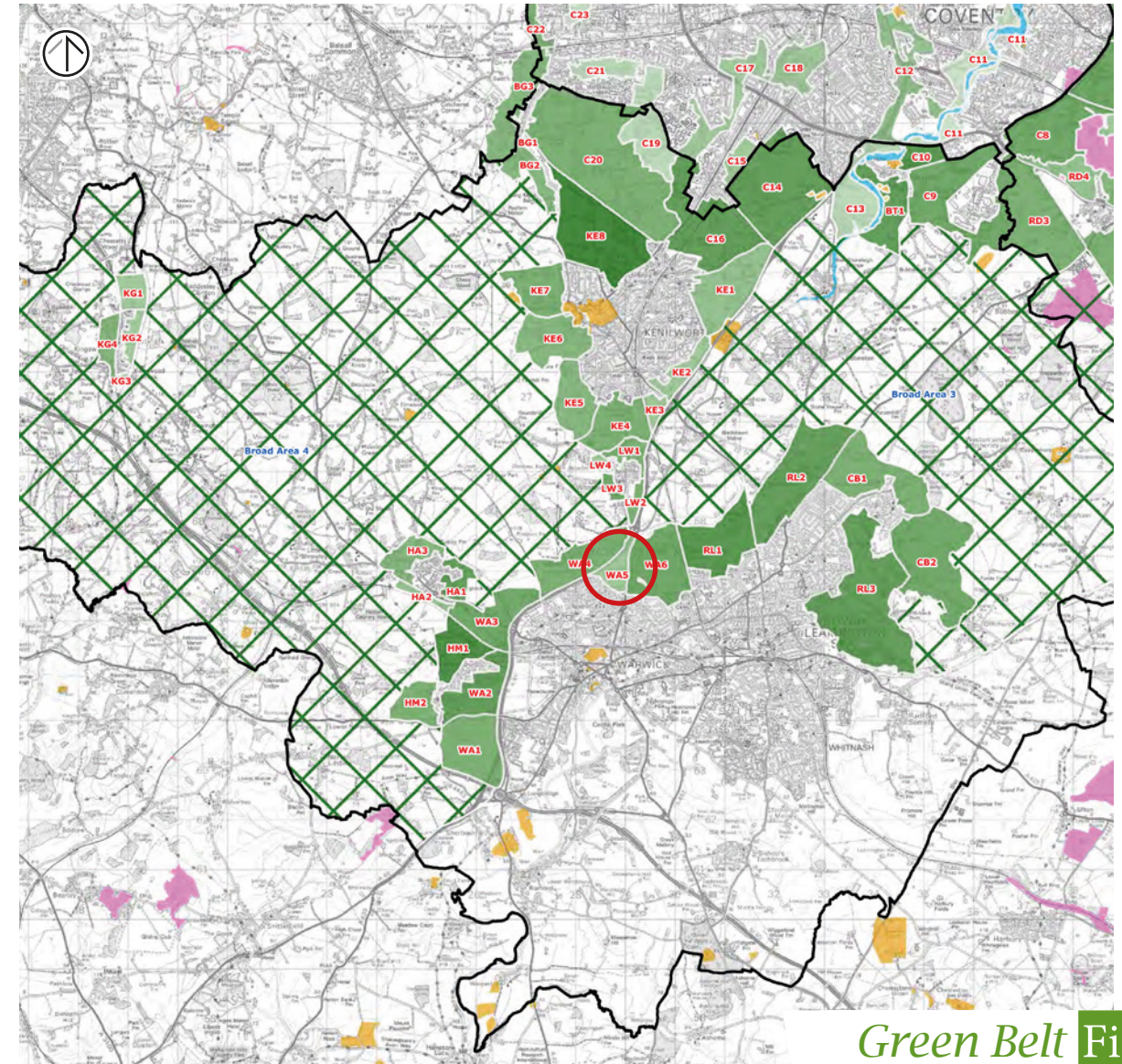
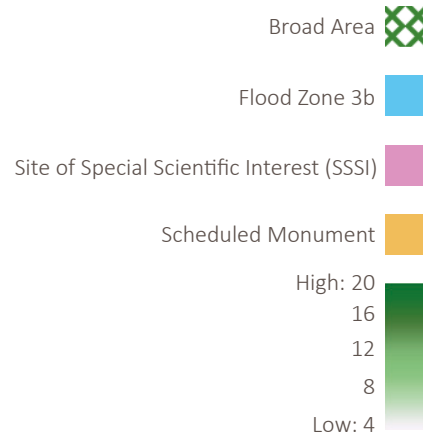
The West Midlands Joint Green Belt Study 2015 (WMJGS) considered the Green Belt across West Midlands Local Authority areas in terms of its contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. The purposes of the Green Belt are described in paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework as:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The site was assessed as Parcel WA5 in the WMJGS. The study examined individual parcels of land in terms of their contribution to the purposes of maintaining the Green Belt. Parcel WA5 received one of the lowest scores in the study area, meaning that it makes a low value contribution to the objectives for preserving the openness of the Green Belt.

Parcel WA5 received one of the lowest scores in the study area meaning that it makes a low value contribution to the objectives for preserving the openness of the Green Belt

Plan Source: Joint Green Belt Study published by LUC



Green Belt Fig.3

The principal reasons for the low score are summarised below, with comments on the conclusions reached in the study.

Issue 1a - Ribbon development – Score 1

‘The parcel helps to prevent ribbon development along Coventry Road towards Leek Wootton and Coventry to the North’.

Comment: The heritage designation of the Guy’s Cliffe Historic Park and Garden would serve to prevent ribbon development along Coventry Road, if the site was removed from the Green Belt. The site is tightly defined by significant roads and therefore creeping ribbon development further north could be firmly resisted.

Issue 1b – Openness – Score 1

‘The land parcel contains limited development: Four detached dwellings are scattered in the southern two thirds of the parcel. The parcel is relatively open. The south eastern corner of the site is a plant nursery and the centre of the site contains a farmhouse and associated agricultural buildings’.

Comment: Although relatively open, the parcel is seen in the context of the existing urban edge and the surrounding road infrastructure detrimentally affects the open, rural character.

Issue 2a - Location of parcel and distance between neighbouring settlements – Score 2

‘Measured along Coventry Road which connects with the A46 to the north of the parcel, Warwick lies roughly 1.8km to the south of Leek Wooton’.

Comment: The distance from Leek Wootton is substantial and the defensible boundaries to the site would firmly prevent coalescence with the neighbouring settlement.

Issue 3a - Significance of existing urbanising influences – Score 2

‘Land within the parcel has the characteristics of countryside. The land parcel contains four detached dwellings which are scattered in the southern two thirds of the parcel. The site is relatively open. The south eastern corner of the site is a plant nursery and the centre of the site contains a farmhouse and associated agricultural buildings. None of the development in the parcel is considered urbanising development in the countryside’.

Comment: The parcel is seen in context of the existing urban edge of the Woodloes Park modern housing estate. This is considered a significant urbanising influence. The surrounding road infrastructure, particularly the A46 is considered a significant urbanising influence.

The site has many benefits in terms of its strong containment... and lack of impact on the historic core of Warwick. **09**

Issue 3b - Significance of boundaries / features to contain development and prevent encroachment – Score 0

‘The A46 Warwick Bypass runs along the northern boundary of the site. The River Avon flows less than 200m from the eastern boundary of the site’.

Comment: The A46 Warwick Bypass, Woodloes Lane and the Coventry Road provide very strong defensible boundaries for the release of land from the Green Belt.

Purpose 4 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – Score 0

‘The parcel does not overlap with a Conservation Area within an historic town. In addition, there is no intervisibility between the historic core of a historic town and the parcel’.

Comment: The site scores favourably in this respect, compared to other sites around Coventry, Warwick, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa, which have moderate to high value in this respect.

Overall, it is considered that the site has many benefits in terms of its strong containment, remoteness from other settlements, urbanising influences and lack of impact on the historic core of Warwick. As such it only makes a low contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and it should be prioritised for consideration for release from the Green Belt.

10 Heritage Appraisal

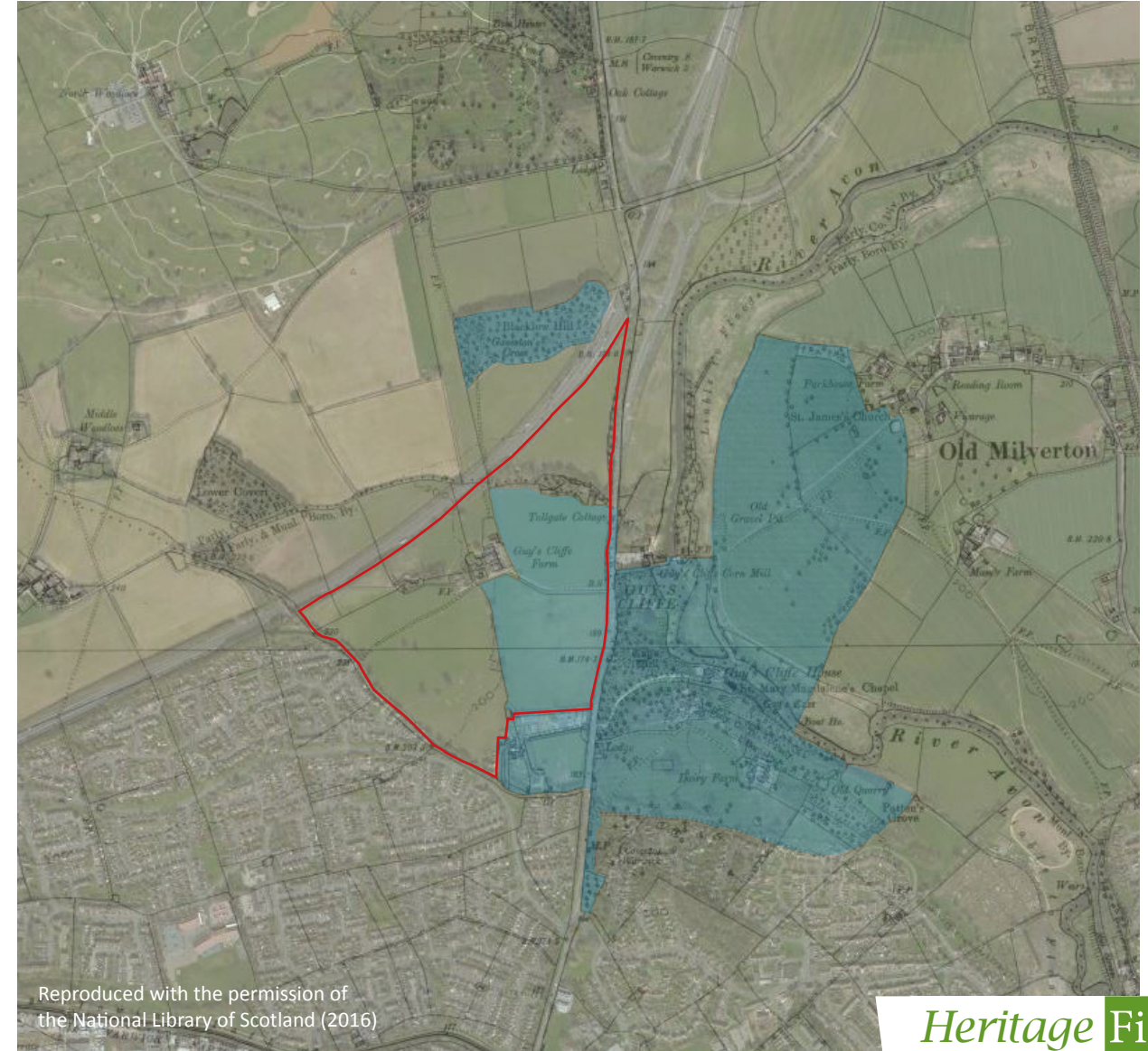
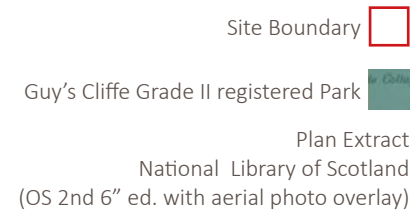
A heritage assessment has been undertaken which draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage significance and archaeological potential of the site. This has established that the study site is considered to have moderate potential for Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon remains. Should such remains be present, they are considered likely to be of local significance.

The site is considered to have low potential for domestic Medieval and Post-Medieval remains but contains the earthwork remains of ridge and furrow. The proposed development will impact upon part of the area of surviving ridge and furrow earthworks. The area of the ridge and furrow earthworks within the portion of the study site that is within the Guy's Cliffe registered park will be preserved within a country park.

It is anticipated that Warwickshire County Council will require archaeological evaluation across the site comprising geophysical survey and/or trenching. Should the evaluation works reveal archaeological remains in areas where development impacts are unavoidable, further mitigation excavation and recording and/or watching brief may be required as a condition of planning permission.

The site contains part of Guy's Cliffe grade II registered park. The proposed development is considered to have a minor effect on the contribution that the setting makes to the park which is considered to equate to less than substantial harm to its significance. Consequently, as per para 134 of the NPPF, as there is less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets within and adjacent to the site, the economic and public benefits of the proposals will need to be weighed against the limited harm to designated heritage assets. The proposed development will not impact upon other designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the study site.

The proposed development is considered to have a minor effect on the contribution that the setting makes to Guy's Cliffe Registered Park, which is considered to equate to less than substantial harm to its significance.



Heritage Fig.4

Topography and Visibility

The triangular site is located between the A46 Warwick Bypass and the A429 Coventry Road, rising from its lowest point at the Loes Farm Access off the Coventry Road at 50m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) up to the highest point at the western corner of the site of 75m AOD. More broadly, the site is part of the broad, open River Avon valley catchment, with agricultural pasture running north-south and rising gently westwards away from the river towards the Bypass.

There are a series of interlocking, shallow hillsides within a 5km radius, as the landform follows the River Avon alignment. These create a series of short distance views, where vantage points afford glimpsed views across to Old Milverton village to the East, Warwick to the south and Leamington Spa to the south east. Due to the nature of the undulating lowland topography, the views are dominated by the middle distance scenery, punctuated by landmarks such as St. Mary's Church Tower and Warwick Castle for example. Views further afield, towards the Cotswolds for example, are not within the site's visual envelope.

Urban Grain

The Woodloes Park residential area lies due south of the site and has a reasonably low density layout of approximately 20 dwellings per hectare (DPH). Housing comprises mostly modern two-storey accommodation, of red/beige brick and clay tiled pitched roof construction. Most properties have moderately-sized rear gardens which are often surrounded by tanalised larch vertical-slatted fencing.

Open green spaces are characterised by intermittent tree and shrub planting and there are a number of tarmac paths, distinct from the road network, facilitating access to the countryside north along Woodloes Lane and across over the Bypass.

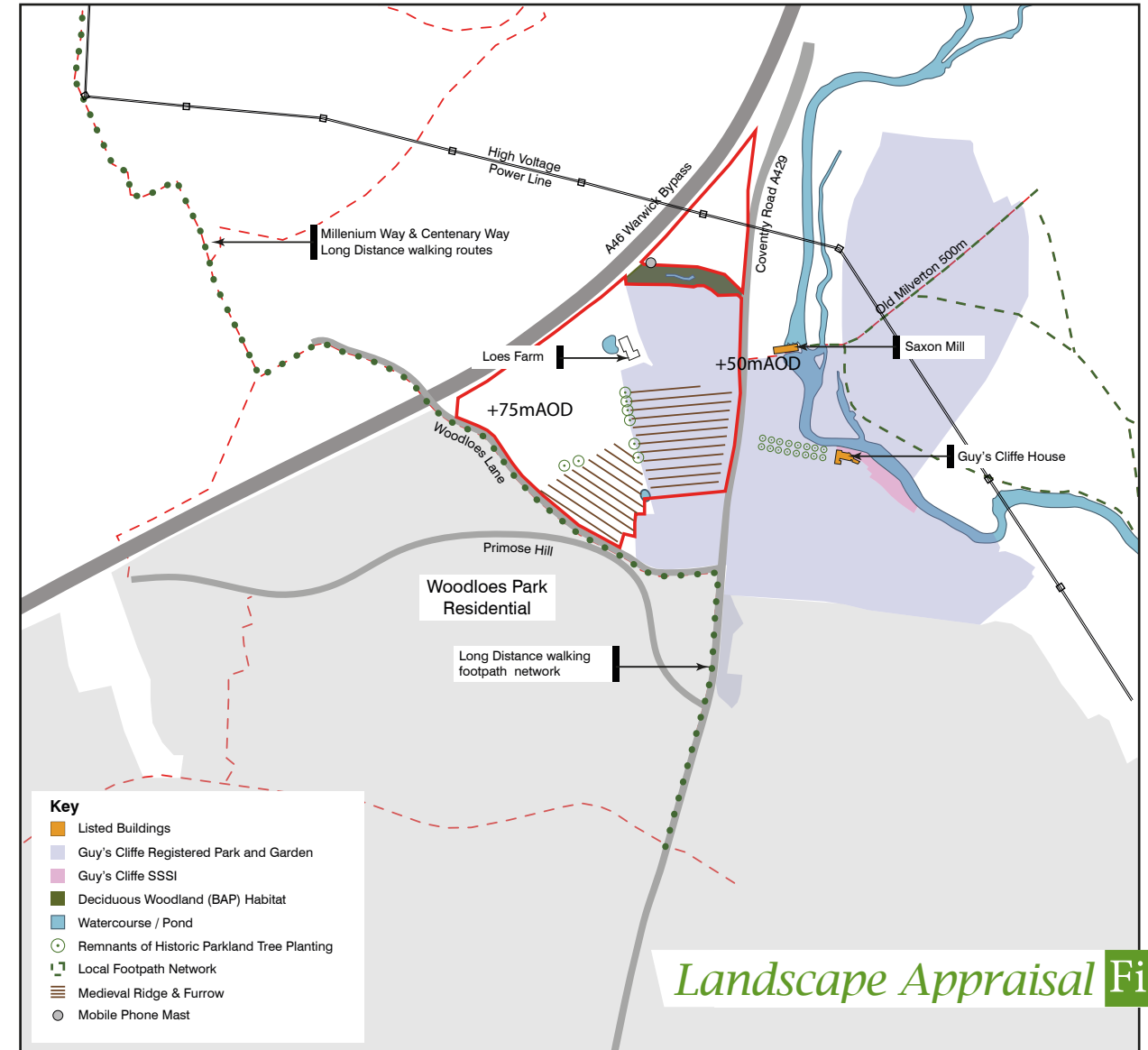
Landscape Character - Historic Influence

The site's landscape character is broadly in line with the NCA 97: Arden character type identified by Natural England, with rolling, undulating countryside, further characterised by oak woodland, high hedges, hedgerow trees and remnants of the historic designed landscape.

There is evidence of Medieval ridge and furrow agriculture in the field due west of the Coventry Road, with the broader designed landscape of Guy's Cliffe Registered Park and Garden overlying this. Much of the built components of this landscape are in good condition, whilst some of the landscape components such as the Como Pit, Guy's Cliffe House Avenue view and parkland planting have been either degraded or lost entirely. Similarly, degraded field boundaries, fragmented hedgerows, loss of hedgerow trees and depletion of arboreal coverage over the last 100 years all present opportunities for conservation or restoration.

Circulation

The site is well-connected with public rights of way, with short distance paths linking from the Guy's Cliffe estate and the village of Old Milverton, with some additional long distance routes passing close-by via Woodloes Lane and thus offering opportunities for recreational connections.



Landscape Appraisal Fig.5

14 Landscape & Visual Analysis

Visual Appraisal

The site is naturally well-screened from much of Coventry Road by high, dense hedgerows (albeit with gaps) which even in winter preclude sightlines far into the development area.

Residential development to the south of Woodloes Lane is visible from the Coventry Road, thus alerting visitors of the change in landscape character and the transition to the urban environment. The precedent of extending the urban realm over the ridge line and into the next 'fold' of undulating countryside has already been set by Woodloes Park. However, this existing development remains reasonably discrete when viewed from the Coventry Road. New residential development along the ridge and plateau in the south west corner will increase the visibility of the urban edge initially, but will become well integrated once the woodland planting becomes established.

In terms of the historic environment, the masterplan currently has only minor implications for the designed landscape, with the majority of this cultural landscape retained and preserved. Woodland planting will serve to partially screen the residential development whilst providing only a modest intrusion into the registered parkland. The masterplan presents clear opportunities to improve this cultural landscape through the restoration of the significant view from Guy's Cliffe House whilst improving public access and awareness of the site's rich cultural heritage.

It is accepted that the visual resource would be changed by the development, with the urban edge further encroaching into the agricultural landscape.

However, there are no significant long-range views to protect from the main viewpoints considered, with the views dominated by the natural containment presented by the undulating landform and mature vegetation. From an historic perspective, the specific channelled view of the site from Guy's Cliffe House is the only one worthy of protection, though the general sense of openness of this land is also an important aspect of the visual resource as part of the overall setting of the mansion house to which it relates.

When the development is considered as a whole, the magnitude of change in the visual environment is considered to be medium adverse following initial planting. This reduces incrementally by year 15 as planting matures and buildings weather to a low minor adverse change.

The people that would be the most affected by the development would be the residents along the northern edge of Woodloes Park, and users of Woodloes Lane (public footpath / track). New boundary planting between the development and residents along Woodloes Lane lessen the impact of development over time.

People travelling along Coventry Road and visiting the Saxon Mill (opposite the site) will also have sight of the development. These views will however take in a large area of open space in the foreground with new housing set back from the carriageway and softened by both existing and proposed planting. This open space (comprising the area of the registered park of Guy's Cliffe) will be enhanced with parkland trees and footways. Furthermore there is an opportunity to open-up the view from Guy's Cliffe House across the ridge and furrow pasture towards new parkland tree planting.

New residential development within the site will increase the visibility of the urban edge initially, but will become well integrated once the woodland planting becomes established

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View west from Coventry Road along the existing access track to Loes Farm.



View north from Woodloes Lane.

Key Views Fig.6

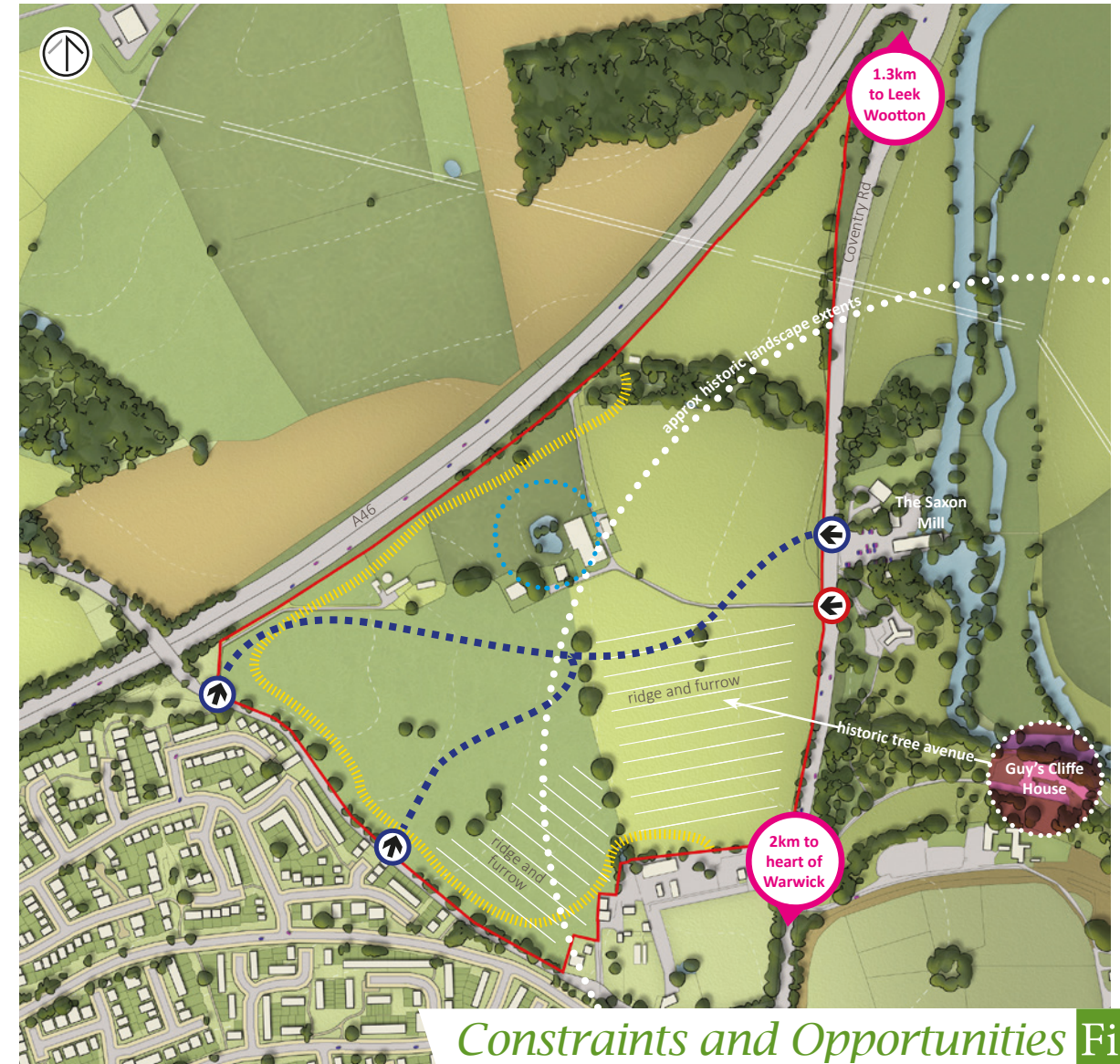
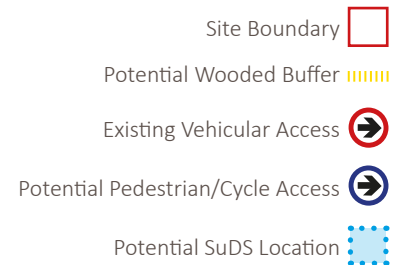
16 Site Constraints and Opportunities

The analysis of site characteristics has identified the following opportunities and constraints to the development of the site:

- **Sustainable Location:** The site is in a sustainable location, located within walking/cycling distance to a range of local facilities and services and public transport.
- **Well Contained:** The site is a very well-contained parcel of land, which if released from the Green Belt would cause limited harm to Green Belt purposes.
- **Access:** Vehicular access can be taken from Coventry Road, with opportunities for pedestrian links to the neighbouring Woodloes Park housing estate.
- **Existing Vegetation:** Hedgerows, trees, woodland and the pond within the site should be retained as part of the development.
- **Land to the North:** The isolated triangle of land in the northern end of the site is affected by pylons and divorced from the rest of the site by a woodland and the 'Como Pit'. It is therefore unsuitable for development, but could be used as open space.
- **Flooding and Drainage:** The development should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to manage surface water runoff.
- **Green Infrastructure:** The development should be designed with buffers/separation such that the new housing is not affected by noise from surrounding roads.
- **Heritage:** The new residential scheme will provide an exciting investment opportunity for conservation of the historic environment

(designed landscape). Part of this opportunity will be: significant restocking of the designed landscape's parkland trees; conservation of medieval ridge and furrow field system; and finally the restoration of a key avenue view from Cliffe House.












- **Landscape:** The development will provide a community context for improved public access improvements between Woodloes Park residential area, the historic designed landscape of Guy's Cliffe House, and the Saxon Mill with associated public footpath routes. Part of this establishment of new routes will be planting a tree lined avenue along the site entrance way, creating a meandering landscaped entry to the new scheme. The new scheme itself is an opportunity to create a natural extension of the urban grain of Woodloes Park that will appropriately address the historic designed landscape. A constraint within the integration of an historic landscape with a residential community is the visual containment required for the historic landscape itself. This can be achieved through improving the wooded character of the landscape in line with Natural England guidance; adding to the character rather than detracting.



Constraints and Opportunities Fig.7

Fig.9 Illustrative Masterplan



-  Site Boundary
-  Proposed Vehicular Access
-  Proposed Pedestrian/Cycle Access
-  Proposed Residential Properties
-  Proposed Roads
-  Proposed Lanes
-  Proposed Tree Planting
-  Proposed Meadow Planting
-  Proposed Tree/Hedge Lined Entrance Road
-  Retained Existing Farm House
-  Retained Existing Pond
-  Retained Existing Woodland

The masterplan has sought to respect, conserve and where possible restore the historic designed landscape whilst delivering a well-connected residential extension to Warwick. 19

The concept masterplan sets out a vision for the proposed development, showing how the development of the site would respond to the site constraints, opportunities and context. The development would deliver up to 260 new dwellings, of mixed density with a maximum of 35 dwellings per hectare. The development would integrate with the existing urban area in this sustainable location and provide a well-contained urban extension.

The development is designed around a green infrastructure framework, comprising a number of pocket parks, equipped children's play spaces and a new country park based around the historic setting of the Guy's Cliffe designed landscape. The development delivers structural/screen planting along the northern boundary against the backdrop of the A46 Warwick Bypass; gapping-up and replacing fragmented and degraded sections of hedging along Woodloes Lane and Coventry Road; with structural internal tree planting to restore lost views from Guy's Cliffe House as well help screen the development from Coventry Road.

Vehicular access to the development is from the existing access to Loes Farm off Coventry Road, with new Public Rights of Way created to improve site-wide circulation and connect to existing footpaths which currently terminate at the 'Saxon Mill'. A new tree lined avenue will be planted along the site entrance way creating a meandering landscaped entry to the new development.

The masterplan has sought to respect, conserve and where possible restore the historic designed landscape whilst delivering a well-connected residential extension which responds to the existing grain of urban development within the adjacent Woodloes Park.



Fig.10 Illustrative Masterplan



Artist Impression of the proposed development wrapping around Loes Farm



Artist Impression of the proposed development set back from the edge of the proposed Country Park

The images above seek to illustrate how the Registered Park of Guy's Cliffe (west of A429) may not only be retained and respected by new development, but how this could be enhanced for public enjoyment. With the planting of a modest number of new parkland trees and the sympathetic routing of a few pathways with interpretative signage this open space may contribute positively to one's arrival at Warwick from the north whilst preserving the park in perpetuity.



prepared April 2016 by:

