

Rosconn Strategic Land

**Broom Court Farm, Bidford-on-Avon** 

**SUPPORTING LANDSCAPE STATEMENT - DRAFT** 

October 2020



# **FPCR Environment and Design Ltd**

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# **CONTENTS**

1.0	INTRODUCTION	. 4
2.0	LANDSCAPE CHARACTER	. 4
3.0	VISUAL AMENITY	. 9
4.0	GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND MITIGATION	. 9
5.0	CONCLUSION	10

# **FIGURES**

Figure 1: Landscape Character

Figure 2: Visual Appraisal

Figures 3.1-3.4: Photo Viewpoints

# **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: 9702-L-03 B Development Framework



#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR) have been appointed by Rosconn Strategic Land to assist in the promotion of Land at Broom Court Farm, Bidford-on-Avon within the Stratford-on-Avon district.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to support, in landscape and visual terms, the promotional work for the site to be included within Stratford-on-Avon District Council's (SDC) Site Allocations Plan.

#### 2.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

#### **National Character**

2.1 The site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 106: 'Severn and Avon Vales' as shown at Figure 1. This NCA is briefly described below:-

"The lower valleys of the rivers Severn and Avon dominate this low-lying open agricultural vale landscape made up of distinct and contrasting vales...a small proportion is urban and includes towns such as...Stratford-upon-Avon...".

- 2.2 Key characteristics, most relevant to the site and its context, for NCA 106 include:-
  - "A diverse range of flat and gently undulating landscapes strongly influenced and united by the Severn and Avon rivers...
  - Woodland is sparsely distributed across this landscape but a well wooded impression is provided by frequent hedgerow trees...and surviving traditional orchards...;
  - Small pasture fields and commons are prevalent in the west with a regular pattern of parliamentary enclosure in the east. Fields on the floodplains are divided by ditches...fringed by willow pollards and alders;
  - Pasture and stock rearing predominate on the floodplain and on steeper slopes, with a mixture
    of livestock rearing, arable, market gardening and hop growing elsewhere;
  - ...the Warwickshire River Avon meanders over a wide flood plain between Stratford, Evesham and Tewkesbury...;
  - Highly varied use of building materials, with black and white timber frame intermixed with deep red brick buildings, grey Lias and Cotswold stone;
  - Many ancient market towns and large villages are located along the rivers, their cathedrals and churches standing as prominent features in the relatively flat landscape."
- 2.3 The NCA includes four 'Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO)'. Those of relevance are set out below:
- 2.4 **SEO 1:** "Protect and manage the landscape, heritage and biodiversity associated with ... the river valleys and other hydrological features, planning for a landscape scale expansion of wetlands, inter-tidal habitats and unimproved grasslands along river floodplains through, restoration, expansion and re-linkage of existing remnant areas of semi-natural habitat.

For example, by:-

• "Maintaining restoring and creating areas of wetland habitat...



- Promoting and expanding, multi-functional quality green spaces ... integrated with wetland habitats for recreation, health and educational benefits."
- 2.5 **SEO 2:** "Seek to safeguard and enhance this area's distinctive patterns of field boundaries...settlements, orchards...small woodlands...and floodplain management with their strong links to past land use and settlement history, and for the benefits this will bring to...biodiversity."
- 2.6 **SEO 3:** "Reinforce the existing landscape structure as part of any identified growth of urban areas, hard infrastructure and other settlements ensuring quality green infrastructure is incorporated enhancing health, access, recreation, landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity.

For example, by:-

- Providing access to quality greenspace through well designed green infrastructure which will benefit health and wellbeing and provide habitat increasing the permeability of the urban landscape to biodiversity;
- Ensuring that new development provides biodiversity enhancement rather than just mitigation;
- Encouraging the creation of sustainable urban drainage systems...that can create new wetland features close to urban areas and new development, tying in as part of a green infrastructure network."
- 2.7 Additional Opportunity: "Enhance and manage the relationship between access to the natural environment and conservation of the landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and historic qualities of this popular area.

For example by:-

 Providing more green infrastructure and route connectivity in areas close to where people live to improve access for all...and improve health and understanding of the natural environment."

## **Local Character**

# The Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines (1993)

- 2.8 This Assessment<sup>2</sup> divides the county into seven broad character areas, placing the site within the 'Avon Valley' area which is further sub-divided into four landscape types. The majority of the site falls within the 'Terrace Farmlands' landscape type, as illustrated at Figure 1, which is briefly described as "A flat, open, intensively farmed landscape, with market gardening, on fertile river terrace soils".
- 2.9 Key characteristics relevant to the site and its context are:-
  - "Broad, flat gravel terraces.
  - A large geometric field pattern.
  - Small arable plots growing a wide variety of vegetable crops.
  - Well wooded stream lines...
  - Small nucleated villages with many brick and timber buildings."



2.10 The Management Strategy and Guidelines for 'Terrace Farmlands' provide an overall framework for the conservation and enhancement of landscape character and are set out below:-

# Management Strategy

"Enhance the structure and unity of the landscape by strengthening primary linear features".

#### Landscape Guidelines

- "Conserve and restore all primary hedgerow, and manage them more positively as landscape features.
- Strengthen primary hedgelines by encouraging natural regeneration of hedgerow oaks, especially along roadsides and parish boundaries.
- Conserve and enhance the wooded character of streamlines.
- Soften hard built edges through increased tree planting within and around new development.
- Encourage development of wide field margins along streamlines and woodland edges."
- 2.11 The south eastern portion of the site falls within the 'River Meadowlands' landscape type, as illustrated at Figure 1, which is briefly described as "A narrow, meandering river corridors landscape, with flood meadows and steep, wooded river bluffs".
- 2.12 Key characteristics relevant to the site and its context are:-
  - "Narrow river corridor defined by flat alluvial flood plains.
  - · Prominent, steeply sloping, often wooded river bluffs.
  - · Grazing meadows, often with patches of wet grassland.
  - Diverse river channels with meanders, islands, steep banks and much marginal vegetation.
  - Fringing alders and scrub.
  - Curvilinear hedgerows and ditches along the boundary of the flood plain"
- 2.13 The Management Strategy and Guidelines for 'River Meadowlands' provide an overall framework for the conservation and enhancement of landscape character and are set out below:-

# Management Strategy

"Conserve and enhance the special character and continuity of river landscapes".

# Landscape Guidelines

- "Retain grassland along alluvial floodplains and where possible consider a return to traditional grassland management.
- Conserve the diversity of unimproved flood meadows through regular grazing or hay-making.
- Identify opportunities for re-creating riverside wetland habitats.
- Retain and enhance river channel diversity and marginal vegetation.
- Conserve and enhance the curvilinear hedgerows defining river floodplains.
- Enhance the continuity of the river channel through appropriate tree and shrub planting.



• Conserve the continuity of the river corridor by avoiding development along the alluvial floodplain."

# Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide (2001)

- 2.14 This document<sup>3</sup>, which provides design guidance for new development, divides the district into five landscape character areas (LCAs) each of which are sub-divided into smaller areas. The site is located within the 'Avon Valley' LCA and the north western portion of the site lies within the sub-area of 'Avon and Arrow Terraces'; key characteristics relevant to the site and its context are:-
  - "Broad flat gravel terraces at the meeting of the rivers Arrow and Avon;
  - A large scale geometric field pattern; some small arable plots growing a wide variety of vegetable crops; well wooded streamlines;
  - Small compact villages, generally on or next to a river; scattered greenhouses and other horticultural buildings;
  - Main building materials are timber frame, Blue Lias Limestone and brick."
- 2.15 The south eastern portion of the site lies within the sub-area of 'Avon Vale'; key characteristics relevant to the site and its context are:-
  - "Flatter side of the lower Avon basin; narrow river corridors defined by flat floodplains with steeply sloping, often wooded bluffs extending out to broad flat valley with occasional low rounded hills;
  - Grazing meadows often with meanders, islands, steep banks and much marginal vegetation; fringing alders and scrub; winding hedgerows and ditches along the boundary of the floodplain; a medium to large scale geometric field pattern on the valley land with many small often abandoned orchards:
  - Straight roads with wide roadside verges typically bounded by a tall hedge and ditch; a strongly nucleated settlement pattern of medium sized villages, often fringed by greenhouses or other horticultural buildings;
  - Main building materials are timber frame, Blue Lias Limestone, 'Cotswold Limestone' (Oolitic Limestone) and brick;"
- 2.16 Section 4 of the guide recognises the importance of landscape character in defining a context for new development and promotes landscape, open space and planting as being integral to any future development proposals. It states that:-
- 2.17 "New development should maintain and extend the landscape and open space network of an existing settlement by taking best advantage of existing features and creating new features appropriate to the location including:-
  - routeways of different kinds;
  - edges or boundaries between distinct areas;
  - landmarks;
  - gateways;
  - crossings;
  - central spaces; and
  - views. (paragraph 4.5.3)



- 2.18 The boundaries, size and sequence of open space, including...footpaths...created by new development should extend and enhance the character of the landscape and open space network of an existing settlement. (paragraph 4.5.4)
- 2.19 Hard and soft landscape features must be conceived of as an integral part of designs for new development AND as an integral part of the wider landscape and open space network. (paragraph 4.5.10)
- 2.20 Landscape features should be designed as multi-purpose elements within the broader network, serving where possible as:-
  - Public open space;
  - a visual amenity;
  - a buffer against temperature extremes;
  - a wildlife habitat;
  - a land drainage feature". (paragraph 4.5.15)
- 2.21 In terms of edge treatment to developments, the design guide states that, "in cases where the treatment is soft, the principal constituent of the edge is most often hedges with hedgerow trees and/ or less formal screen planting. To be effective, the space for this edge screen planting should be a minimum of 5 metres wide". (paragraphs 4.5.19, 20)

# Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of Main Settlements including Areas of Restraint Assessment (July 2011)

- 2.22 White Consultants produced an assessment of landscape sensitivity to residential and commercial development for land surrounding the main settlements within Stratford District. The site itself is not included within this assessment though land adjoining the site to the north and east lies within Zones 'B15' and 'B14' respectively within the assessment. Zones 'B15' and 'B14' are identified as having medium sensitivity to housing development with land to the north since being developed for residential use.
- 2.23 The Bidford-on-Avon Area of Restraint does not cover the site, lying to the east beyond the River Avon.

#### **Site Context and Character**

- 2.24 The site is situated on the western end of the village of Bidford-on-Avon and comprises arable land located between Salford Road and the River Avon. To the north the site is bounded by an established hedgerow beyond which is located modern residential development along Avon Way. Small Brook, a well vegetated watercourse, runs adjacent to the site's western boundary and the site's eastern boundary is partially enclosed by an existing tree line. Adjacent to the site's south western corner lies a parcel of land containing tree planting. These features help to visually enclose the site, though the site is more open to the south and south east, adjoining adjacent agricultural land.
- 2.25 The landscape to the south of the site is characterised by open agricultural land leading to the River Avon. To the west the landscape consists medium-large scale fields situated between the A46 and Bidford-on-Avon. To the north and north east lies the existing settlement, while to the east there is a mixture of agricultural fields, allotments and, beyond the River Avon, 'Big Meadow' Recreation Ground.



- 2.26 The adjacent settlement to the north influences the character of the site with views available of modern residential properties at the development along Avon Way.
- 2.27 No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross or border the site, the nearest PRoWs are Shakespeare's Avon Way (Footpath AL199) which runs along the eastern banks of the River Avon and footpath AL18a which provides a route from Salford Road over Marriage Hill to the north west of the site.
- 2.28 The site occupies flat agricultural land to the north west of the River Avon and lies at around 30m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The village of Bidford-on-Avon is also relatively flat with the majority of the settlement lying around 30-50m AOD. Within the immediate context of the site to the south, east and south west the landscape remains relatively flat, though further from the site the landform varies and includes a number of hills. To the west and north west the land rises towards Marriage Hill which forms a local high point.

# **Designations**

2.29 The site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations and nor do any lie within the vicinity of the site. A number of listed buildings occur within Bidford-on-Avon village, predominately within its conservation area located c.400m to the east of the site as identified at Figure 2.

#### 3.0 VISUAL AMENITY

- 3.1 Photographic viewpoints of the site from selected vantage points have been carried out, their locations are shown at Figure 2 while the photographs are included at Figures 3.1 3.4. These depict the nature of the landscape character and visual containment provided by existing settlement and established vegetation which result in limited visibility of the site.
- 3.2 The closest potential visual receptors of any future development of the site are residents at properties off Avon Way located beyond a boundary hedgerow to the north of the site. Existing development and vegetation generally limit potential views available from Salford Road. There are two PRoWs from which there is potential to gain views of any development on the site; from Shakespeare's Avon Way (Footpath AL199) to the east of the site views are restricted by riverside vegetation, however occasional gaps allow views of the site; despite PRoW AL18a's elevated position on Marriage Hill to the northwest of the site, views towards it are largely screened by vegetation though there is potential for views of a development between/above the vegetation.
- There is a lack of inter-visibility between the site and the majority of the village including the village centre and its conservation area owing to intervening development and vegetation.

## 4.0 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND MITIGATION

- 4.1 A development framework has been produced as part of the promotion of the site (drawing 9702-L-03 B included at Appendix A). This shows one way in which development of the site could be brought forward in a way which respects the local context.
- 4.2 It is important that any development on the site is set within a robust Green Infrastructure (GI) framework. The development framework shows a substantial portion of the site being dedicated to GI with new public open space wrapping around the potential developable area. Existing hedgerows and trees along the site's northern, eastern and western boundaries are retained and



complemented by new planting and proposed open space. Considerable new planting within the open space particularly to the south will provide a wide green edge to the development and there is potential to continue planting into the floodplain subject to approval from the local flood authority. Built development will not extend to the floodplain and there is an opportunity for this area to be used for habitat and wetland creation. In addition, proposed sustainable drainage features incorporated into the development's layout will also provide valuable habitats within the site.

- 4.3 The development framework shows the potential developable area within the northern portion of the site, closest to the existing settlement with the southern and eastern areas reserved for GI and mitigation. The western boundary is also set back to reflect the extent of the adjacent development. A potential pedestrian route is shown as a loop through the site's GI for recreational use and providing connectivity to the development situated along Avon Way.
- 4.4 Any future development of the site has potential to assist in the delivery of NCA 106 Statements of Environmental Opportunity 1, 2 and 3 and the Management Strategy and Guidelines for the county landscape sub areas 'Terrace Farmlands' and 'River Meadows'.
- 4.5 New tree and hedgerow species associated with the GI for any future development will be selected in accordance with the 'Avon Valley' district landscape character area as set out in Appendix D of the Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide (2001).

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION

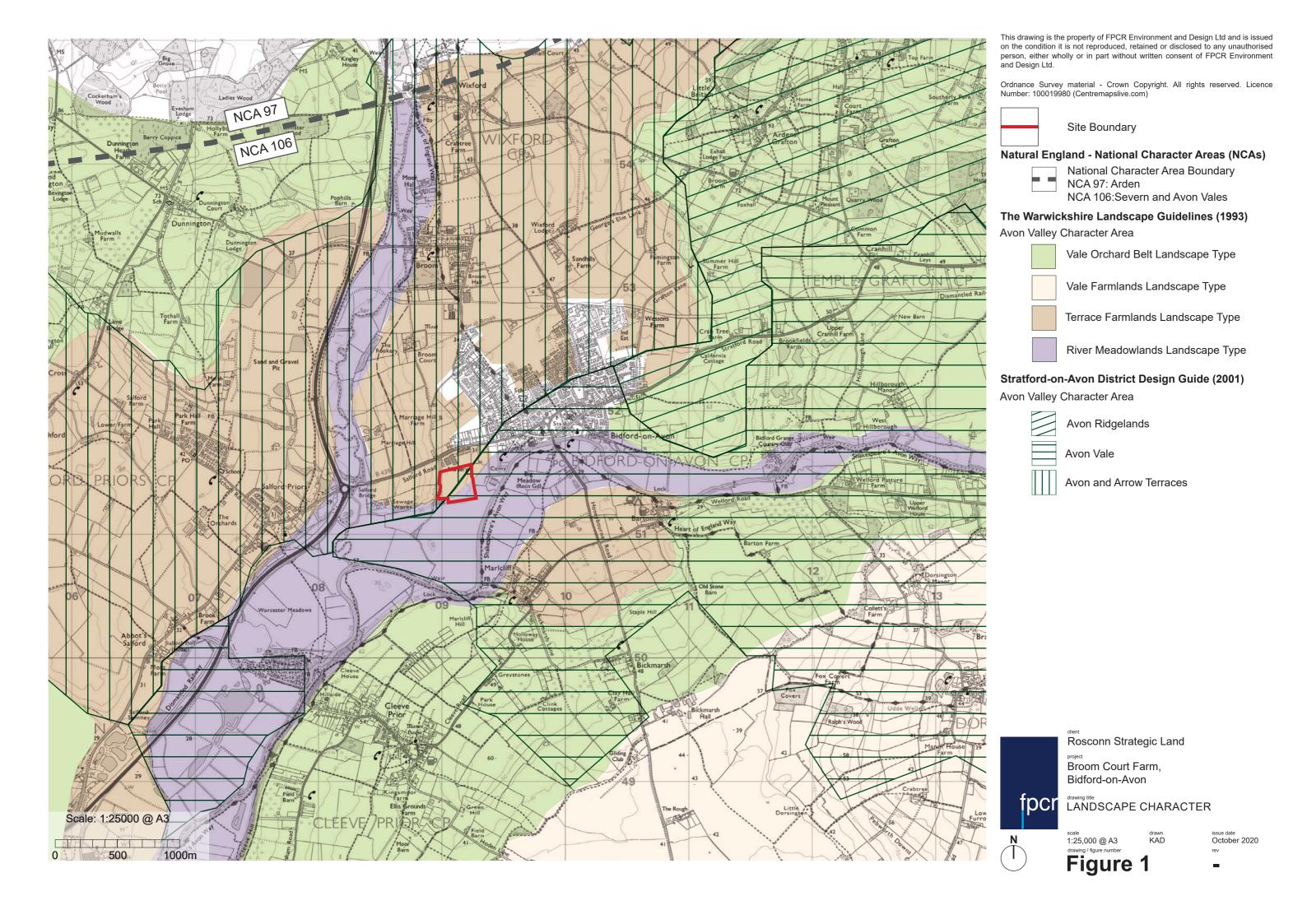
5.1 From this appraisal it is considered that the site has potential to accommodate residential development of an appropriate scale and design. No landscape designations cover the site or lie within close proximity and visually the site is relatively well contained by existing vegetation and adjacent development. There is a lack of inter-visibility from the majority of the village including the village centre and conservation area. Furthermore, the site presents an opportunity for habitat creation through its GI which will also help to mitigate landscape and visual effects of a development. As such it is considered that the site is capable of accommodating an appropriate residential development such as that presented by the Development Framework.

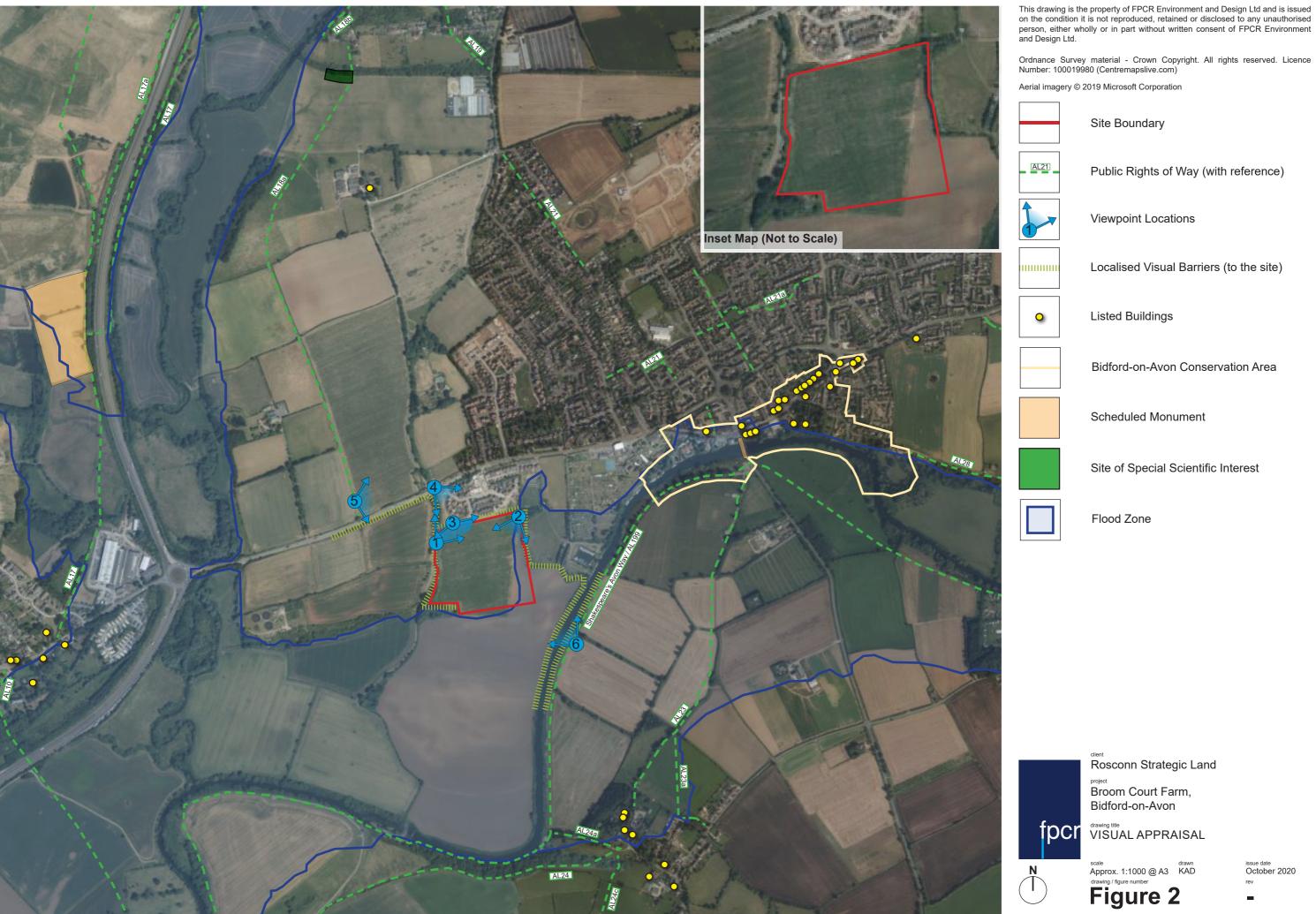
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Natural England (2014) National Character Area Profile 106: Severn and Avon Vales Natural England

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Warwickshire County Council and Countryside Commission **The Warwickshire Landscapes Project** (1993)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Stratford-on-Avon District Council **Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide** (2001)





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Localised Visual Barriers (to the site)



Photo Viewpoint 1: View Northeast from within Site



Photo Viewpoint 2: View Southwest from Northeastern Corner of the Site



**Photo Viewpoint 1** Date & time of photo: 14 Sept 2020,12:37 Camera make & model, & sensor format: Canon EOS 1300D Horizontal Field of View: 75°

Direction of View: 45°, bearing from North

Direction of View: 225°, bearing from North

Photo Viewpoint 2

Date & time of photo: 14 Feb 2020,12:44 Camera make & model, & sensor format: Canon EOS 1300D Horizontal Field of View: 75°

Printing note: To give the correct viewing distance the sheet should be printed at a scale of 1:1 on A1. To be viewed at comfortable arms length.

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Projection: Cylindrical Enlargement factor: 100%

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Rosconn Strategic Land Broom Court Farm, Bidford-on-Avon PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 1 + 2

October 2020 Figure 3.1



Photo Viewpoint 3: View South from Residential Development off Avon Way



Photo Viewpoint 3 (continued): View South from Residential Development off Avon Way

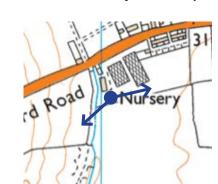


Photo Viewpoint 3
Date & time of photo: 14 Sept 2020,13:21
Camera make & model, & sensor format:
Canon EOS 1300D
Horizontal Field of View: 150°
Direction of View: 150°, bearing from North

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Projection: Cylindrical Enlargement factor: 100%

Printing note: To give the correct viewing distance the sheet should be printed at a scale of 1:1 on A1. To be viewed at comfortable arms length.

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PHOTO VIEWPOINT 3

October 2020 Figure 3.2



Photo Viewpoint 4: View South from Salford Road



Photo Viewpoint 5: View South East from Public Footpath AL18

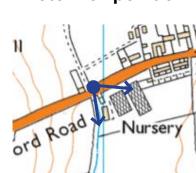


Photo Viewpoint 4
Date & time of photo: 14 Sept 2020,13:19
Camera make & model, & sensor format:
Canon EOS 1300D
Horizontal Field of View: 75°
Direction of View: 135°, bearing from North

Photo Viewpoint 5
Date & time of photo: 02 Sept 2020,13:13
Camera make & model, & sensor format: Canon EOS 1300D
Horizontal Field of View: 75°
Direction of View: 120°, bearing from North

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Projection: Cylindrical Enlargement factor: 100%

Printing note: To give the correct viewing distance the sheet should be printed at a scale of 1:1 on A1. To be viewed at comfortable arms length.

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Rosconn Strategic Land Broom Court Farm, Bidford-on-Avon PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 4 + 5

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Figure 3.3



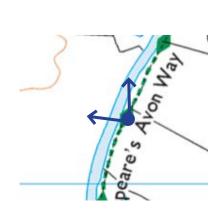


Photo Viewpoint 6
Date & time of photo: 02 Sept 2020,13:44
Camera make & model, & sensor format: Canon EOS 1300D

Horizontal Field of View: 75°

Direction of View: 315°, bearing from North Printing note: To give the correct viewing distance the sheet should be printed at a scale of 1:1 on A1. To be viewed at Ltd and is issued on the condition it is not reproduced, retained comfortable arms length.

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Projection: Cylindrical Enlargement factor: 100%

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project
Broom Court Farm, Bidford-on-Avon
drawing title
PHOTO VIEWPOINT 6

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KAD drawing / figure number Figure 3.4





**DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN** 

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Aerial imagery © 2020 Microsoft Corporation



Site Boundary (7.14ha)



Proposed Residential Area (2.50ha)



Proposed Indicative Access Route



Existing Public Right of Way



Proposed Indicative Pedestrian Links



**Existing Vegetation** 



Proposed Tree/Shrub Planting



Proposed Public Open Space



Potential Location for SuDS Basin



Environment Agency (EA) Floodplain; Floodplain within Site to be used for Habitat Creation/ Wetlands (planting proposals within floodplain subject to approval from flood authority)



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