



BLACKMORE, ESSEX

LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

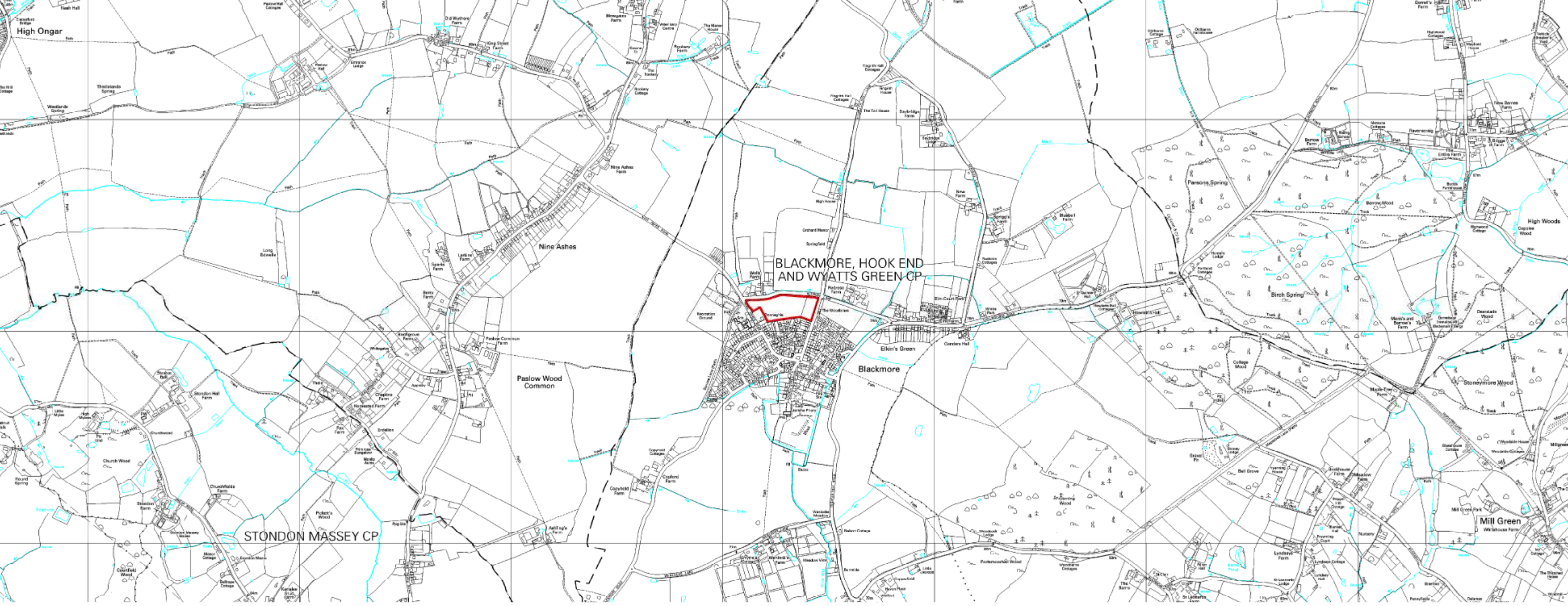


Urban Design studio

ANDERSON
GROUP

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Document and The Proposal Site

This Landscape and Visual Appraisal with Urban Design Framework has been produced on behalf of Anderson Group to inform a proposed residential development on land to the south of Redrose Lane and between Nine Ashes Road and Fingrith Hall Lane on the northern edge of Blackmore in Essex.

The main part of the document is a Landscape and Visual Appraisal which identifies the issues relating to the landscape character and visual amenity of the area and identifies ways in which they should inform any future masterplan design. This has been brought together with research from Ecologists and Engineers to identify the opportunities and constraints to development and then with local design guidance to produce an Urban Design Framework for future development on the site.

The Proposal Site

The proposal site comprises two pastoral fields separated by an overgrown hedgerow. The site is bordered to the south by residential properties on Woollard Way, by Redrose Lane along the northern boundary, by Nine Ashes Road along the western boundary and by Fingrith Hall Lane along the eastern boundary. The northern, eastern and western boundaries are marked by hedgerows which have been poorly maintained and are therefore gappy and with some small trees. The southern boundary is marked by a mix of hedgerow in poor condition and a range of fencing.

The areas to the south, south-east and south-west comprise residential development. There is a school and the village hall to the west and a farm to the north. The site is therefore located on the rural/urban fringe of the village and is mainly seen in the context of surrounding development.



Figure 1. Aerial photograph showing location of site



Figure 2. Loss of hedgerow on southern boundary



Figure 3. Loss of hedgerow along southern boundary

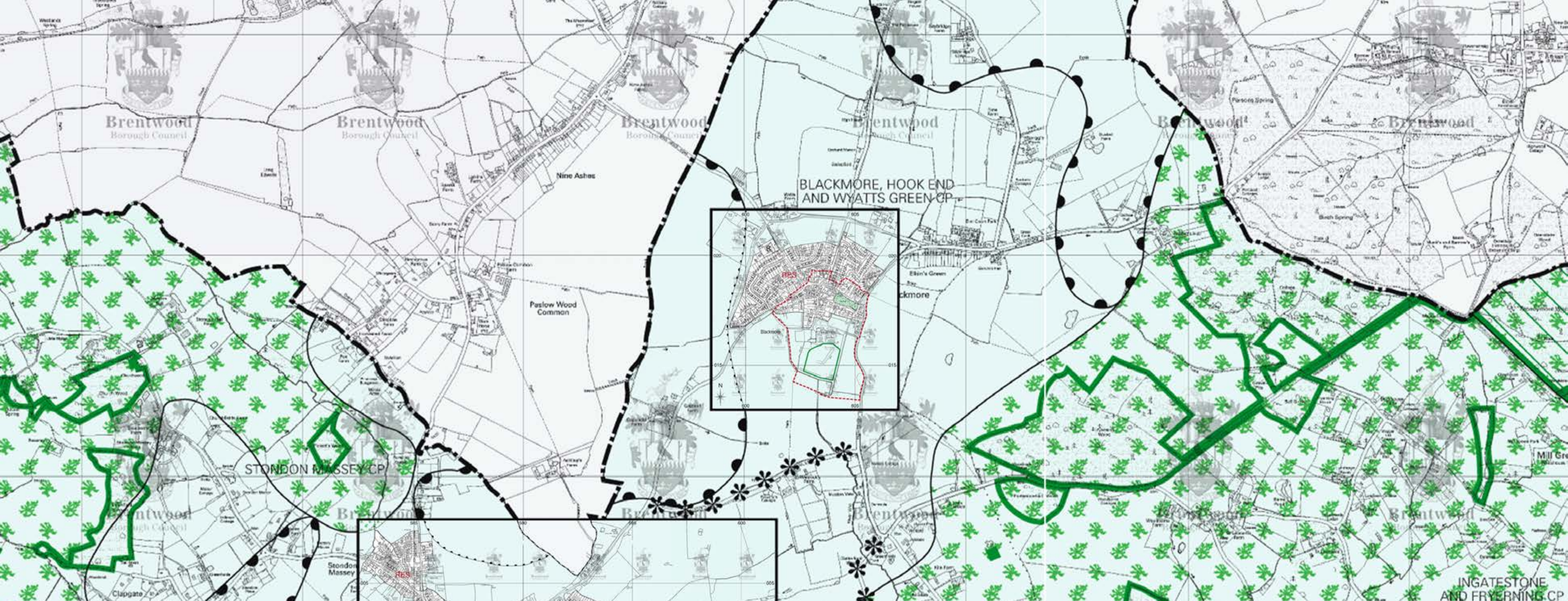


Figure 4. Looking west along Redrose Lane with northern boundary on left



Figure 5. Hedgerow along western boundary in poor condition

2. Policy Background



2.1 Landscape Planning Policy

Introduction

The proposal site is subject to two levels of Development Plan policy:

- National – National Planning Policy Framework (2012);
- Local Planning Policy- ‘Brentwood Local Plan (2005) Saved Policies’.

National Policy – The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

National Planning Guidance is represented by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is concerned with planning issues at the broader national scale and which is used to inform and guide the formation of local planning policies

Local Planning Policy - ‘Brentwood Replacement Local Plan (2005) Saved Policies’

Brentwood Borough Council is part way through its new local plan process. Certain policies have been retained from the 2005 Replacement Local Plan and these will gradually be replaced by those within the emerging local plan. The emerging Local Plan is currently at the Strategic Options consultation stage. This document does not propose a specific direction of growth for the Borough but invites views on which possible growth options may be the most favourable. It acknowledges that the brownfield capacity of the Borough is some 3,000 units short of the full objectively assessed need. Within this context it seeks respondents views on how the plan should be devised in order to meet this need, including the release of Green Belt land. Blackmore is defined as being within the “North of the Borough” where it suggests that “sites on the edge of villages could be released”.

Issues Arising from Landscape Planning Policy

Key issues arising from the planning policy baseline are as follows:

- Protection of the landscape character through protection of landscape features;
- Creation of high quality and well-designed residential development to reinforce local townscape character;
- Issues relating to Green Belt;
- Creation and protection of biodiversity habitats;
- Protection of existing and creation of new access to the countryside;
- Protection of Listed Buildings;
- Security of new developments.



Figure 6. Brentwood Borough Replacement Local Plan Proposals Map

3. Background Studies



3.1 Landscape Appraisal

Introduction

This chapter describes the context in which the proposal site is located. The information has been gathered from a combination of desktop and site surveys, utilising both on-site and standard published research. These documents are explored in greater detail in the following pages. The document makes a reference to ‘landscape’ but this may also refer to ‘townscape’, otherwise known as the ‘urban landscape’.

Landscape Character Baseline

The area is covered by three levels of landscape character assessment:

- National Landscape Character Areas (2012) - Natural England;
- Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003) – Chris Blandford Associates; and
- Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments (2006)- Chris Blandford Associates.

National Character Areas are broad-

brush in nature and cover large areas of the country. As such, they can often lose local and detailed variations in character. However, they can form a useful baseline against which to assess the more detailed areas. The study area also falls within Epping Forest district but it is not felt that the landscape character assessment adds further information that would be required to complete this appraisal. For the purposes of the appraisal, only character areas closest to the application site have been explored in order to identify key issues for future development.

In addition, a local landscape character appraisal was undertaken to compare the published research with the situation at a site level. This ensures that local issues are not missed.

National Landscape Character Areas (NCAs) - Natural England

The study area is covered by National Character Areas (NCA) 111: Northern Thames Basin and 86: South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands. As greater detail is included within the County and District-wide assessments, only the key points relating to the NCAs are included here.

The Northern Thames Basin character area covers a wide range of landscapes, including estuaries, rural landscapes, historic towns and villages and the suburbs of London. The proximity to the Capital has meant that the area is, and has been historically, under pressure for development. More rural areas still exist, particularly in Essex and Hertfordshire as well as a diverse range of natural and semi-natural habitats. The soil quality is poor on the London clays and the area supports a range of agriculture and forestry with many of the woodland having been managed through coppicing and pollarding for many generations. Where agriculture occurs, increased farming size and intensification has brought its own pressures on the landscape.

There are four Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) with the following two being of relevance to the Application Site:

- SEO 3: Protect and manage the historic environment for its contribution to local character, ensuring high design standards which respect the open and built character of the Thames Basin. Enhance and increase access between rural and

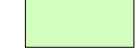
Key

 Proposed Development Site

Essex Landscape Character Assessment

 Brentwood Hills

 Central Essex Farmlands

 Roding Valley

Braintree etc Landscape Character Assessment

 Blackmore Wooded Farmland

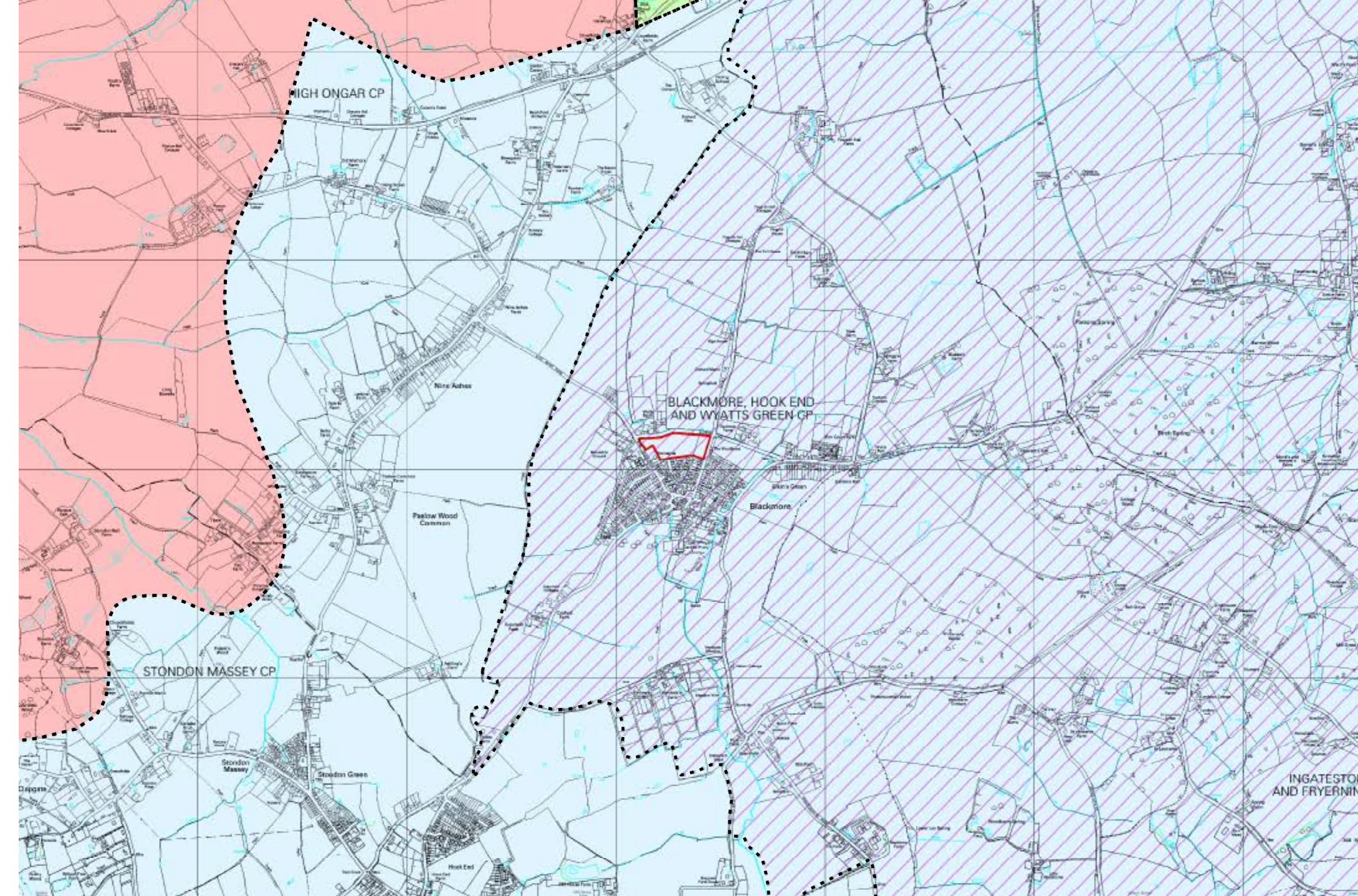


Figure 7. Landscape Character Areas

urban areas through good green infrastructure links;

- SEO 4: Manage and expand the areas of broadleaf woodland and wood pasture, and increase tree cover within urban areas.

The South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands character area is described in the NCA assessment as an ‘ancient landscape of wooded arable countryside’. It is also a gently undulating plateau dissected by river valleys with a network of hedgerows, woods and parklands. The soil is fertile and the area has a long history of inhabitation and contains many Mediaeval towns and villages as well as frequent farmsteads. However, the southern part is greatly contrasting, containing larger settlements and major transport routes.

There are four Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) for this NCA, of which all are of relevance to the Application Site:

- SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the character of the rural landscape by maintaining agricultural productivity and encouraging management practices that protect and enhance

the landscape and the sense of place;

- SEO 2: Protect and enhance the area’s ancient woodland cover, parkland trees, river valley plantations and ancient hedgerows;
- SEO 3: Enhance the rivers and their flood plains for their ecological, historical and recreational importance; and
- SEO 4: Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and improve opportunities for people to enjoy and understand the landscapes outside the AONB whilst maintaining the tranquillity of the area and the special qualities of protected landscapes.

The character areas differ, primarily in relation to their proximity to London and the associated development pressures. The proposal site is located close to the boundary of the two areas in a primarily rural landscape with frequent villages but within 4km of the A12 and its associated larger settlements.

Essex Landscape Character Assessment (2003) - Chris Blandford Associates

The project site is located within the character area D: Wooded Hills and Ridge Landscape in sub character area D2: Brentwood Hills. Character areas B1: Central Essex Farmlands and C4: Roding Valley fall within the study area but are not considered relevant to the appraisal.

Wooded Hills and Ridge Landscape - D2: Brentwood Hills

The Wooded Hills and Ridge Landscape is described as a wooded hill area contrasting with the surrounding open farmland and river valleys. It contains areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland with a strong hedgerow network and historic parkland in the form of small estates. Settlement is described as being sparse but has been impinged upon in some locations by suburban development on the edge of large towns. The Brentwood Hills sub-character area is described as an area of undulating hills and ridges that flattens out towards the centre, with a semi-enclosed character created by the areas of woodland and frequent hedgerow trees. The topography is reflected in the field

pattern with small and irregular fields on the edges with larger and more regular fields in the centre of the area where it is flatter and higher. The result is that views are generally foreshortened by vegetation and landform but that longer distance views are possible from areas of higher ground. Isolated farms and churches characterise the area with larger development along the A12 and railway line.



Figure 8. Showing land rising up to north-east



Figure 9. View showing the proposal site set back against modern development edge

Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments (2006) - Chris Blandford Associates

The study area covers character area F: Wooded Farmland Landscapes and sub character area F7: Blackmore Wooded Farmland. Other character areas fall within the study area but they are not considered relevant to the appraisal or its findings.

The character assessment describes an area of elevated and undulating hills and ridges with views towards wooded horizons. The landscape is a mix of arable and pasture farmland with areas of common land and pasture. It is a well-wooded landscape with a mix of woodland types. These, together with mature field boundaries, create framed views and an enclosed character.

The Blackmore Wooded Farmland reflects the characteristics of the wider character area with medium to large-scale woodland areas. The area contains a network of narrow lanes connecting small hamlets and farmsteads in an area which is described as tranquil. Views are described as being longer distance

towards the wooded horizons.

Key pressures relate to the erosion of the tranquillity of the area through increased traffic and transport infrastructure. Loss of mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees through lack of management is also highlighted as an issue.

Site Level Assessment

The landscape in and around the proposal site broadly reflects that described within the published landscape character assessments. The area contains a strong network of hedgerows and woodland which foreshorten views and create an intimate and wooded character. The edge of the village reflects post war expansion which has not contributed to landscape or townscape character and which provides an insensitive and harsh edge to the village.

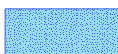
Landscape Setting

Topography

The general topography of the site and study area is shown on the adjacent plan.

The village of Blackmore is located on an area of very gently undulating land rising up to higher ground to the west. The comparatively level quality of the landscape means that there are limited views towards the village and the proposal site. Where there is higher ground, the distance from the site is considered too great to offer overlooking views. If the site were visible, it would be seen in the context of the neighbouring residential development.

Key

	Proposed Development Site
	40-50m
	50-60m
	60-70m
	70-80m
	80-90m
	90-100m
	100-110m
	Body of Water

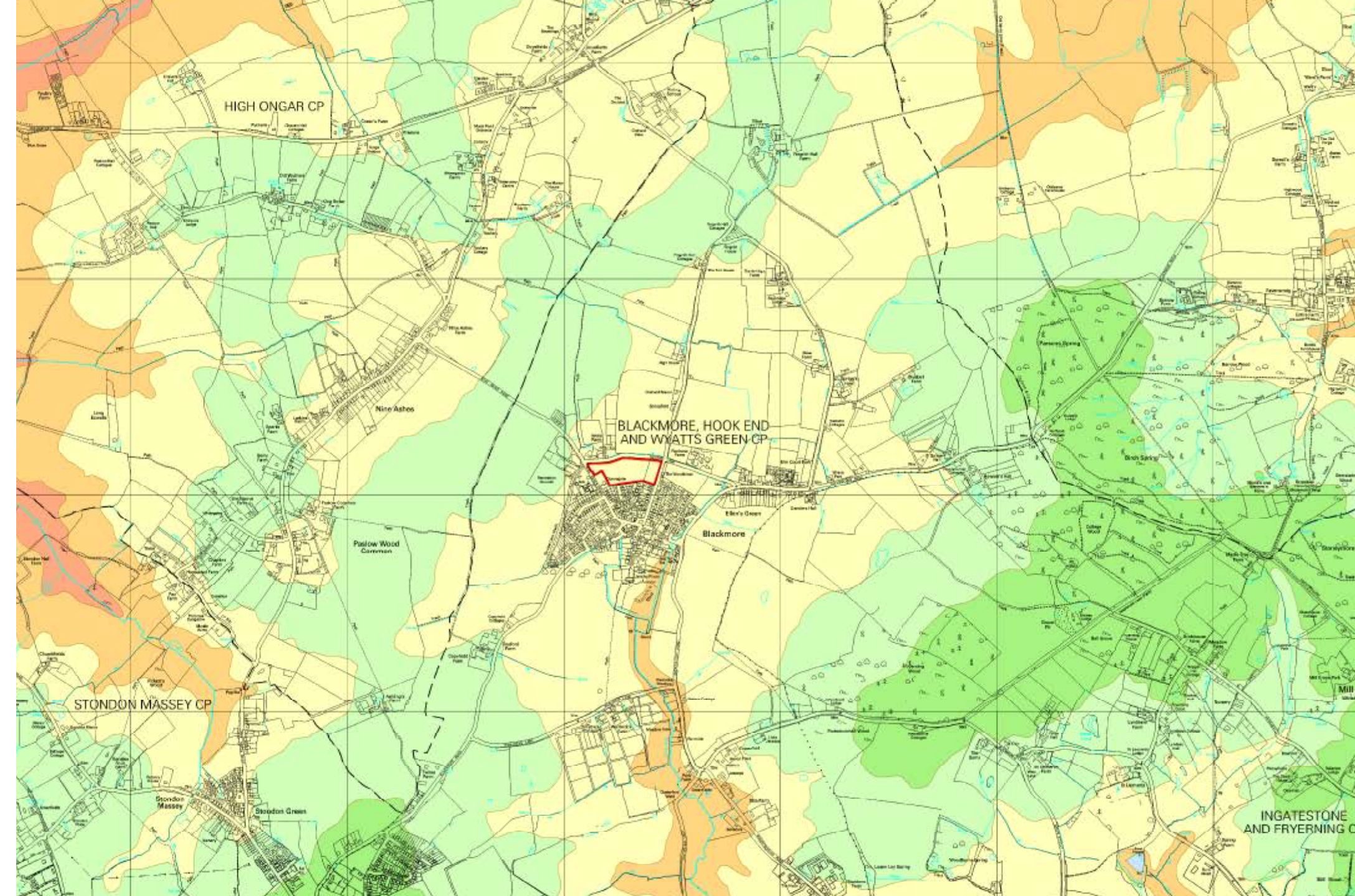


Figure 10. Topography

Protected / designated Areas

The relevant protected and designated landscape areas within the study area are shown on the figure opposite. This information has been taken from MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) and illustrates that there are few designated areas in close proximity to the proposal site.

Landscape Designations

There are no national landscape designations within the character area. The Special Landscape Area is located to the west and south of Blackmore. It comes within approximately 1km of the proposal site. Views from within the SLA were as part of the appraisal but development on the proposal site will not impact upon the SLA itself.

Green Belt

The proposal site and the majority of the study area are included within the Green Belt. Green Belt is not a landscape designation but relates to land use. Green Belt Review is an entire area of study in itself and the result of a wider assessment process. The site does not make a notable contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and therefore

development on the proposal site would have a minimal effect on the remaining Green Belt.

More detail regarding the Green Belt Review is included in the appendices.

Ecological and Geological Designations

The closest Site of Special Scientific Interest is located approximately 3km to the south-west of Blackmore at The Coppice, Kelveden Hatch. Development on the proposal site would not impact upon this or other designations.









Historic Designations

The closest Scheduled Ancient Monument is approximately 1.5km to the north of the proposal site on the moat at Fingrith Hall. The next SAM is located over 3km to the east on an old Roman Villa, located north-east of Mill Green. Development on the proposal site would not impact upon these.

There are a number of Listed Buildings in the study area, including many in Blackmore. There are two adjacent to the proposal site: the Grade II Listed Wells Farmhouse to the north of Redrose Lane and the Grade II Listed building

at the Woodbines to the east of the proposal site. The setting of both of these buildings needs to be taken into account in any future proposals.

Key

-  Proposed Development Site
-  Grade I Listed Building
-  Grade II* Listed Building
-  Grade II Listed Building
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Green Belt
-  Scheduled Ancient Monument
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest

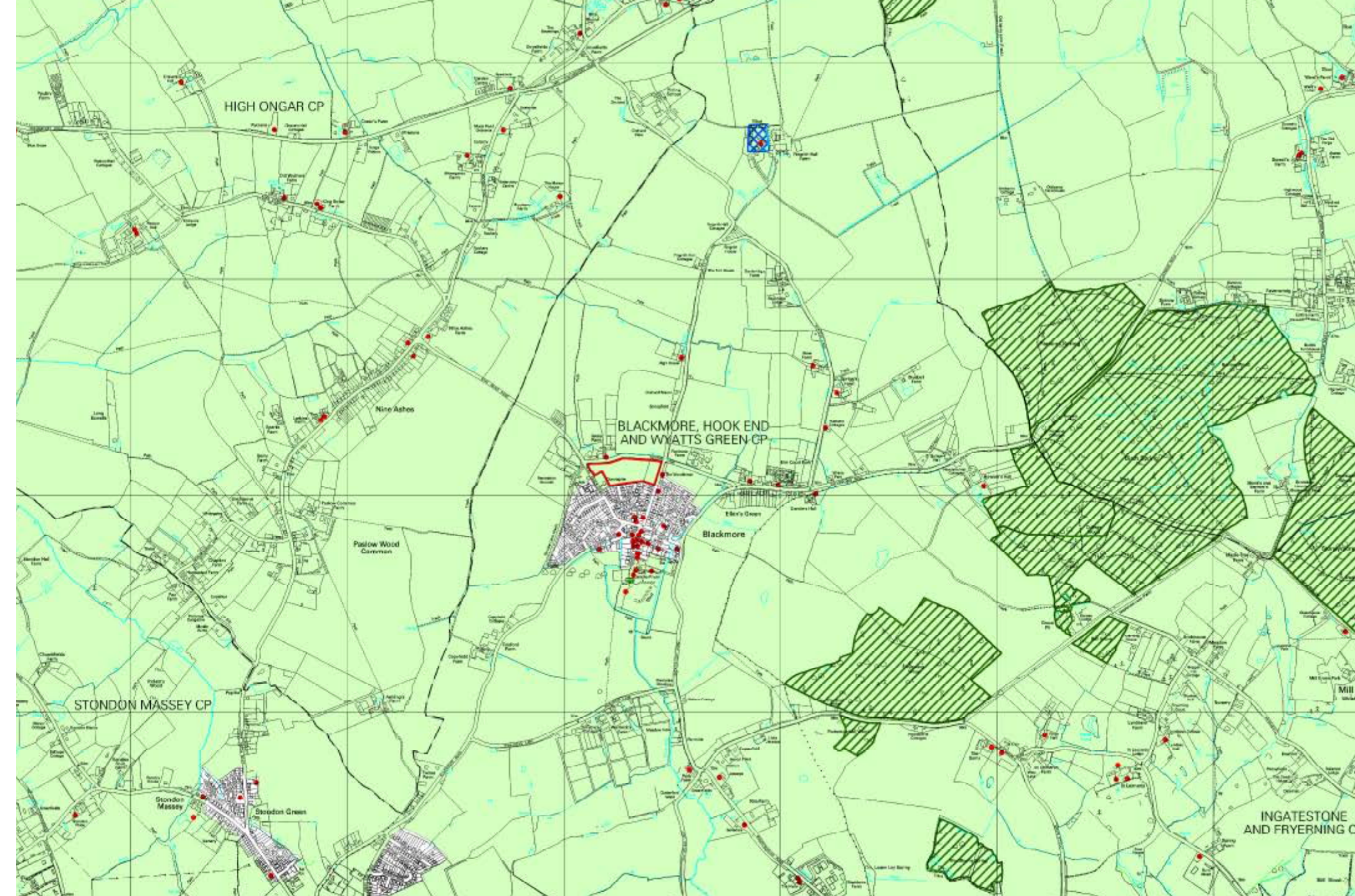


Figure 11. Designations



Figure 12. Grade II Listed Wells Farmhouse



Figure 13. Grade II Listed Woodbines

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

There is an extremely dense network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the local area. These footpaths are too numerous to list but the most significant of these is the St Peters Way National Trail, which runs approximately east to west through the centre of Blackmore. Views from St Peter's Way were considered within the visual appraisal. There are no PRoW within the proposal site. However, there are two which run up to the edge of the proposal site. These are:

- Footpath 271_7 which runs south from a network of footpaths south of the A414 to the north-west corner of the proposal site;
- Bridleway 271_32 which runs north along the western edge of Blackmore from St Peter's Way.

Views from both of these routes, as well as others, were considered in the visual appraisal.

Vegetation

The area is strongly vegetated with a dense network of mature tall hedgerows with trees running along the boundaries of a small field network. Large areas of woodland are located on the higher ground, especially approximately 1km to the east of Blackmore on the higher ground. The small field pattern and frequent trees and tall hedgerows means that there is a dense layering of vegetation and foreshortening of views, creating an intimate character to the landscape.

The hedgerows around the proposal site appear to have been poorly managed and are losing their integrity. Many plants have grown to their full height through lack of pruning and the hedges are gappy. The southern hedgerow has been damaged and replaced with fencing in areas.



Figure 14. Hedgerow running through eastern part of the site in poor condition



Figure 15. Hedgerow along the northern boundary requiring maintenance



Figure 16. Hedgerow loss along southern boundary

Issues Arising from the Landscape Baseline.

The landscape character assessments describe a gently undulating rural landscape with a small and irregular field pattern surrounded by frequent hedgerows and interspersed with areas of woodland, resulting in an intimate scale and wooded horizons. Although the area is rural in character, its close proximity to London and the settlements along the A12, mean that the area is under pressure from development, traffic and transport infrastructure.

Key issues raised within the landscape character assessments were:

- Loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees through poor management;
- Erosion of townscape character through insensitive development;
- Loss of tranquil character through increased traffic and transport infrastructure; and

- Post-war village edge doesn't reflect local character and provides an insensitive and harsh edge to the settlement.

Certain issues need to be taken into consideration that have arisen as a result of the landscape setting:

- Setting of Listed Buildings close to the application site;
- Restoration and improvement of the hedgerows within and around the proposal site;
- Redefinition of the village edge.

3.2 Townscape Appraisal

Townscape Character Baseline

There are two levels of published information relating to townscape character. These are:

- The Essex Design Guide (1997 revised 2005) – Essex County Council; and
- Blackmore Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) – Brentwood Borough Council and Essex County Council.

The Essex Design Guide

The Essex Design Guide was first published in 1973 as ‘a response to concerns about the poor appearance of new housing areas at the time. It set out underlying visual principles of past and present built environments and objective visual criteria against which proposals could be assessed.’

The design guide not only makes reference to materials but outlines ways in which streets and spaces can be designed to create a better experience for the people using those spaces and so that they contribute more positively to local townscape character.

The guide summarises its requirements and those of relevance to the proposal site are:

- Sustainability issues must be addressed for development sites;
- The layout structure on development sites must be both permeable and legible;
- Continuity of built frontages to give enclosure to spaces in densities over 20dph;
- Schemes must be designed with thought to crime prevention;
- Access for the disabled must be allowed in certain situations;
- Roads over 100m in length should be designed to reduce car speeds to 20mph.

Blackmore Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

The proposal site is not located within the Conservation Area, which covers the oldest parts of the village, including the Green and the moated site of the



Figure 17. Horsefayre Green



Figure 18. The Church of St Laurence - Grade I Listed

Priory. However, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) highlights the elements and features which make the centre of Blackmore unique and it is these features which give Blackmore much of its character. Such features can be reflected in proposed development in order to preserve and reinforce local townscape character.

The document describes Blackmore as ‘a small rural village with a historic monastic core.’ The village was originally located to the north of a Priory, which has since been demolished, leaving only the church. The village is nucleated and contains a number of dwellings dating from the 17th Century and earlier, set out along a medieval street pattern of roads and tight alleys. There is a central green faced by surrounding dwellings. A secondary green area is faced by a number of public houses and the village shop.

The document outlines the prevailing building materials which feature in the Conservation Area. These can provide inspiration for future development in the rest of the village so that it may reinforce and respect local townscape character.



Figure 19. Church Street looking north



Figure 20. Brentwood 1803-1838



Figure 21. 1885



Figure 22. 1888

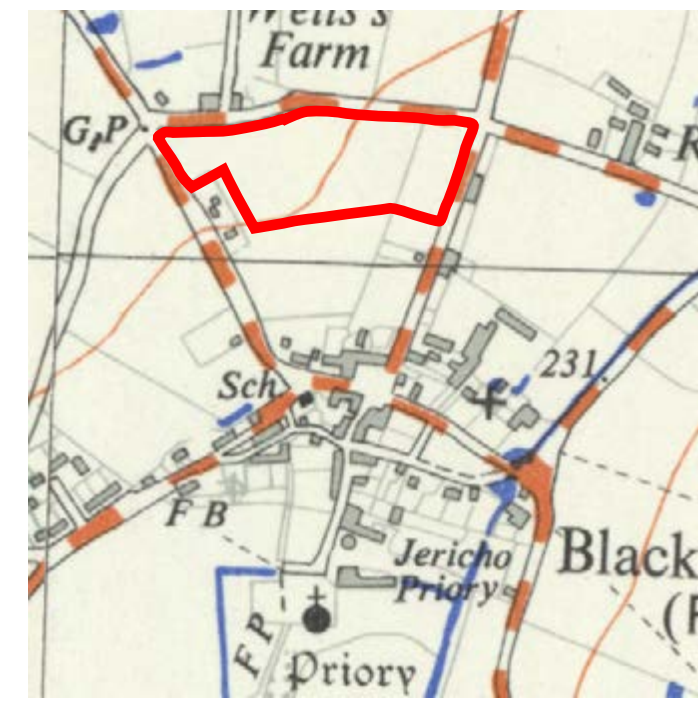


Figure 23. 1937



Figure 24. 1955



Walls

Brick in the village is generally red and laid out in a traditional bond, i.e. full bricks and half bricks alternating. Gault bricks do occur and are found on the Manor House near the church. The document states that modern houses have been constructed using stretcher bond which it describes as 'monotonous'. The walls in the Conservation Area are primarily constructed using brick and it is a characteristic material of the area around the Church.

Weatherboarding occurs, primarily on utility buildings but is seen on some houses.

Painted render features strongly in the townscape and some buildings contain examples of pargetting and relief murals.

Roofing

Older roofs tend to be covered with red plain tiles with welsh slate on later buildings. The document states that 'less attractive modern materials, using concrete profiled tiles' feature on modern buildings.

Trees and hedgerows

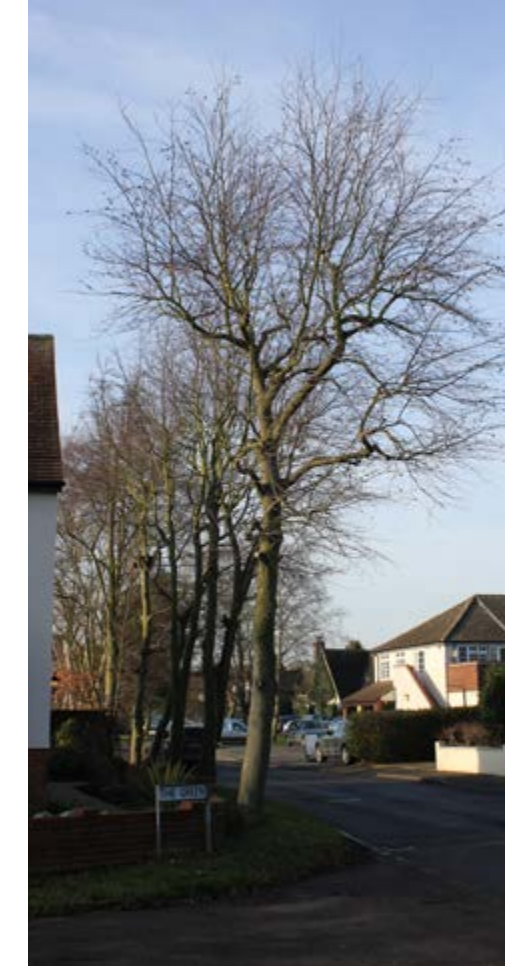
With the exception of the brick walls around the Church and its environs, hedgerows are the most common boundary treatment in the remainder of the Conservation Area. These create a softer and rural character to the village, with frequent large trees breaking up the roof line.

Water

The River Wid runs through the village and forms the basis of the moat of the now demolished Priory. A pond forms an important focal point to the Green near the entrance to the village from the west. The CAAMP describes water as an important part of the landscape of the village.

Arrangement of buildings

The Conservation Area is described as being characterised by a contrast between enclosed and built up spaces and the more open areas of the Green. The area around Church Lane is tightly developed with buildings directly fronting a shared surface street. The area known as Horsefayre Green is strongly enclosed by the pubs and the village shops,



together with other buildings. The Green is also surrounded by buildings but these are set back.

Site Level Townscape Appraisal

The village comprises a historic core located primarily in the southern part of the settlement, close to the church and the site of the demolished Priory. This historic core is encompassed by the Conservation Area. Development to the north, north-east and north-west of this is modern, mainly post-war and is typical of that period of development in that it reflects little of local vernacular. Any development within the site will need to resolve its location on the rural/urban fringe and the way in which it defines the new edge of the settlement. Consideration will also need to be given to the setting of the two adjacent Listed Buildings and the character of the adjacent lanes.

Issues Arising from the Townscape Appraisal

There are a number of issues arising from the townscape appraisal. These are:

- Use of materials which respect and reflect the local vernacular, but not necessarily copy;
- Use of housing types and scales which reflect the local vernacular, but not create a pastiche;
- Consideration of the relationship with the adjacent buildings and the streets to create areas of strong enclosure contrasting with more open areas;
- Consideration of the location of the site on the edge of the settlement;
- Consideration of the resulting character of the surrounding roads;
- Consideration of the setting of the Listed Buildings.



Figure 25. The Green looking west



Figure 26. Modern development in the north of the village

3.3 Visual Appraisal

Introduction

The local area was visited to identify key views into the proposal site which may be impacted upon by any proposed development. The location of key views is identified on the figure to the right and the corresponding images are included on the following pages.

Zone of Visual Influence

The countryside is gently undulating providing some areas of higher ground. However, the strong network of trees and hedgerows mean that views are generally foreshortened and that there are few longer distance views. The village of Blackmore and the proposal site are generally screened from longer distance views by the intervening vegetation. The areas of higher ground are not high or close enough to provide views of the site. In locations where the site may be visible, it would be located in the context of the surrounding development. As a result, the visual envelope of the proposal site is small and views are primarily contained to areas and properties adjacent and to the approaches to the village from the north.



Figure 27. Location of appraisal photographs

Representative Viewpoint Locations

The local area was travelled to identify representative locations from where the proposal site was visible. Viewpoints from where the proposal site was not visible were scoped out. The remaining viewpoint locations include;

- Viewpoint 1 – View from north-eastern end of Woollard Way into the south of the proposal site;
- Viewpoint 2 – View from north-western end of Woollard Way into the south of the proposal site;



Figure 28. View 1 - from eastern end of Woollard Way



Figure 29. View 2 - from western end of Woollard Way



Figure 30. View 3 - from Nine Ashes Road



Figure 31. View 4 - from Redrose Lane into north-western part of site

- Viewpoint 3 – View from Nine Ashes Road into the western end of the proposal site;
- Viewpoint 4 – View from Redrose Lane into the north-western part of the proposal site;

- Viewpoint 5 – Views from Redrose Lane into the north-eastern part of the proposal site; and
- Viewpoint 6 – View from Fingrith Hall Lane into the eastern part of the proposal site.



Figure 32. View 5 - From Redrose Lane into north-eastern part of site



Figure 33. View 6 - From Fingrith Hall Lane

The visual appraisal demonstrated that views towards the proposal site were limited to locations immediately adjacent. No longer distance views were identified due to the dense nature of the surrounding vegetation and the gently changes in elevation.

It is possible that viewpoints towards the site have not been identified, despite best efforts. In these cases, should they exist, the site would be viewed in the context of the existing development of the village.

Issues Arising from the Visual Appraisal

Key issues arising from the visual appraisal which will require consideration in any future masterplan are:

- Views from adjacent properties;
- Views from and along Nine Ashes Road;
- Views from and along Fingrith Hall Lane;
- Views from Redrose Lane;
- Views into the village on approaches from the north and north-east;
- Creation of a softer and more sensitive edge to the village.



Figure 34. View west along Redrose Lane



Figure 35. View south along Nine Ashes Road

3.4 Ecology

Introduction

An Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey was carried out on 29th April 2014 by DF Clark. A report was produced, a summary of which is included in these pages.

The objectives of the survey and report were to:

- Accurately assess and record the existing habitats on site;
- Highlight any potential protected species presence and make recommendations for further surveys where appropriate;
- Identify any statutory or non-statutory designated sites likely to be impacted by future proposals at the site; and
- Summarise the overall ecological value of the site.

Summary of Findings

The proposed development site has potential to support roosting bats, nesting birds and reptiles.











There are no European statutory designated sites within 5km of the site and no UK statutory designated sites within 2km of the survey site. There are nine Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) of county importance within 2km, all of which are situated at least 1km from the proposed development site. It is unlikely the proposals will impact on the features of conservation importance for which the sites have been designated.

The hedgerows bordering the site are of ecological value and should be retained where possible. They may be classified as “important” under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, as well as being an Essex Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat type “Hedgerows” and a Habitat of Principal Importance listed in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

An ash tree on site provided low potential bat roosting habitat and requires a further survey to be carried out should removal be required. The trees, hedgerows and scrub on site also provide suitable bird nesting habitat therefore recommendations have been made regarding clearance of these features during the bird nesting season.

It is recommended that the grassland be kept short throughout the reptile active period (March/April to October) by grazing or mowing, to deter reptiles from colonising the site. If this is not carried out it may be necessary to carry out detailed reptile surveys prior to site clearance to determine if they are present. Although not proposed at present, if large scale removal of hedgerows is required it is recommended that reptile surveys be carried out. Surveys should be carried out from April to September, with the peak survey months being April, May and September.

Key

	Native species hedge with trees
	Scattered trees
	Semi-improved grassland
	Ruderal
	Dense scrub
	Standing water
	Building
	Ditch
	Survey boundary
	Target note

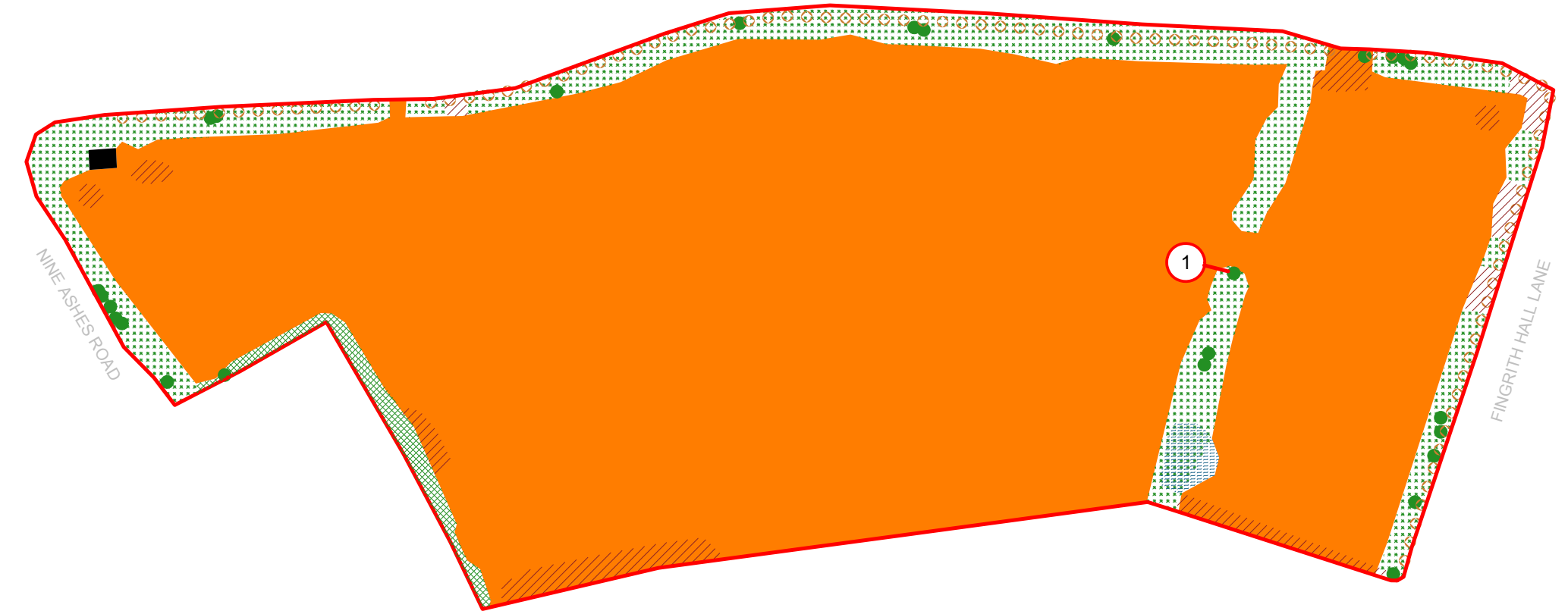


Figure 36. Phase 1 habitat survey

3.5 Transport and Infrastructure

Introduction

Stomor Civil Engineering Consultants were commissioned in July 2014 to identify the utilities, drainage and transport constraints of the site to inform the indicative masterplan.

The plan identified the following key constraints to development:

- There is a sewer crossing the north-western corner of the site with a 3m easement;
- Drainage ditches run along the northern and eastern boundaries. The ditch running along the northern edge of the proposal site may require opening up to provide for surface water run off;
- There are two low areas of the site which would be suitable for onsite SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems);
- Vehicular access is to be gained from Woollard Way. Since the plan was produced, it has been highlighted that access may only be gained from the western arm of Woollard Way;
- No vehicular access may be gained onto Fingrith Hall Lane, Redrose Lane of Nine Ashes Road;
- Proposed foul water drainage is to be through the eastern boundary of the site. The location will require an easement;
- A pedestrian access to and from Nine Ashes Road is proposed with an accompanying crossing point to allow access to the school and village hall.



Figure 37. View west along Redrose Lane

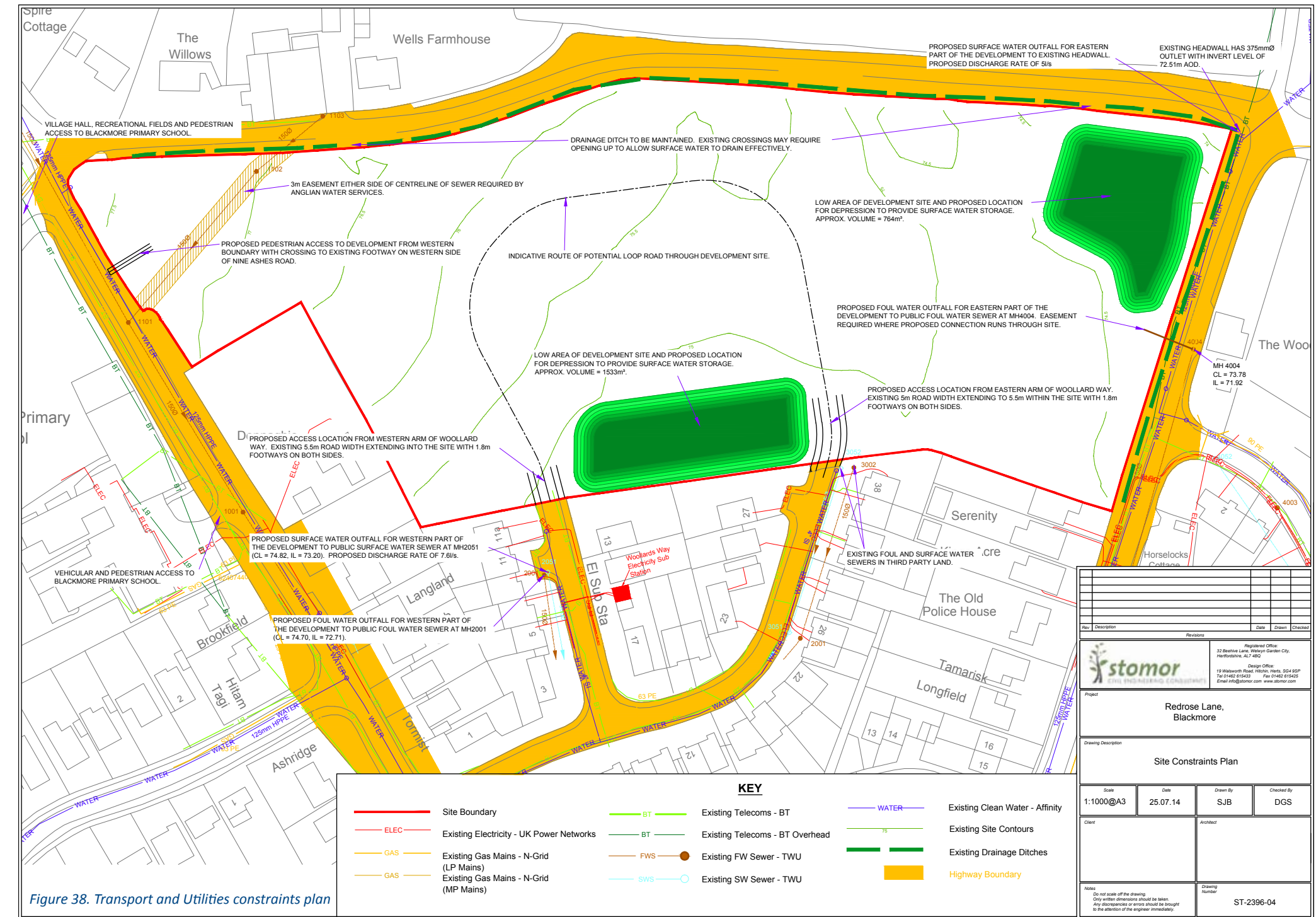


Figure 38. Transport and Utilities constraints plan

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked

		Registered Office: 22 Beehive Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL7 4BQ	
Design Office: 19 Watnour Road, Histon, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE9 1JG		Design Office: 19 Watnour Road, Histon, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE9 1JG	
Project: Redrose Lane, Blackmore			
Drawing Description: Site Constraints Plan			
Scale	Date	Drawn By	Checked By
1:1000@A3	25.07.14	SJB	DGS
Client	Architect	Drawing Number	
		ST-2396-04	

3.6 Opportunities and Constraints

The site was appraised from a number of different professional viewpoints in order to inform any future masterplan development. In summary, these were:

- Landscape;
- Townscape;
- Visual;
- Ecology;
- Transport; and
- Utilities.

These reports identified key issues which needed to be considered and put forward a number of recommendations that should be accounted for in the masterplan design. The following key design solutions should be considered within any design proposal:

- The careful consideration of housing typologies, layouts and materials, in particular along the northern boundary. The urban edge of Blackmore is characterised by typical post-war suburban development which does not reflect the character

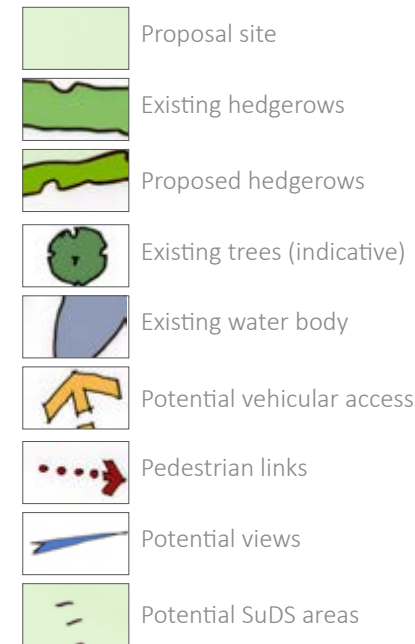
of the village and which creates an insensitive and harsh edge to the north of the village. The use of appropriate materials, heights and densities will ensure that local character is reinforced and that the trend of character erosion is halted. This is not to say that any development should be pastiche in design, but rather that it should respond to heights, massing and tones of colour of historic development in the area;

- Restoration of hedgerow boundaries. Hedgerow loss is a key issue in the local area as highlighted by the landscape character assessments and as witnessed within the proposal site. Boundaries should be redefined using native hedgerow species with specimen trees. This will ensure that the landscape structure is restored and enhanced in the region of the proposal site. It will also go some way to soften the impact of the proposed development in both short and long distance views;
- Use of native tree and hedgerow planting within the proposed development. Trees and hedgerow planting breaks up areas of

residential development, softening its impact upon views and ensuring that it makes a positive contribution to local landscape character. This is not to say that development should be screened by planting, but softened by it;

- Improvement of public access into and through the site, particularly from Woollard Way and through to the PRowWs to the north-west;
- Light spill should be minimised both for the benefit of bats foraging in the area but also to reduce nighttime visual impact;
- Provision for surface water run on in the form of SuDS;
- Allowance for easements relating to utilities.

Key



1. Potential vehicular from Woollard Way
2. Pedestrian access from Woollard Way
3. The Woodbines
4. Wells Farmhouse
5. Hedgerow to be replaced along southern boundary
6. Indicative pedestrian access to Nine Ashes Road
7. Indicative pedestrian access to Fingrith Hall Lane
8. Sewer Easement



Figure 39. Opportunities and Constraints



4. Urban Design Framework

4.1 Design Principles

Introduction

The proposed design has evolved from a design process based on the information provided by the consultant team and included within the previous chapters. It has been used to design a new development which will contribute positively to Blackmore and which will increase landscape and vegetation within the settlement.

The Vision

The vision for the site is to provide a scheme which responds to the local context and has a unique and distinctive character, is well designed and provides functional, attractive and sustainable homes. It should have usable, stimulating areas of public realm and above all, it should reflect the needs of the local community. The new neighbourhood will display the following characteristics:

- A well-connected and integrated scheme, with strong visual and physical links to the surrounding neighbourhood. It will provide pedestrian, cycle and vehicle routes to assist the scheme's integration;

- A strong landscape structure to minimise the impact of development upon neighbouring areas;
- Attractive areas of open space that will provide play facilities;
- Attractive and successful streets and outdoor areas will provide space where children can play, people can sit, talk, walk and exercise, promoting both recreation and ecological diversity;
- A strong urban grain with a legible sequence of blocks and spaces to ensure the scheme is easily navigable;
- Sustainable development, which incorporates the use of sustainable drainage systems and resource efficient technologies; and
- It will incorporate an appropriate range of housing types and tenures at suitable densities to provide for the needs of the local community.

Urban Design Framework

The Urban Design Framework (UDF) is a stage towards the creation of the Concept Masterplan. It is built on the opportunities and constraints plan which, in turn, stems from the research of the consultant team. The UDF shows where key features of the site are and how different elements of proposed development might sit in relation to each other. It shows opportunities to create spaces and character within the development and how access to dwellings may be achieved.

Vegetation

The UDF proposes the retention of the key existing vegetation on site and its maintenance and improvement. Planting within developments breaks up the mass of the built form and the roof line. Trees within developments join visually with trees in nearby sites when viewed from longer distances, reducing the impact of new development on views and helping it to integrate into the landscape. Trees and hedgerows are a feature of the historic centre of Blackmore.

Open Space

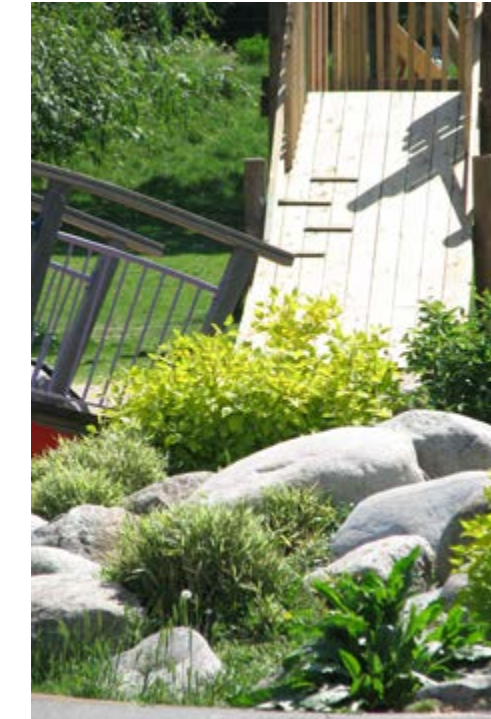
Open space has been located so as to protect the natural assets of the site, i.e. the hedgerows dividing the site.

Access

Access is to be taken from the western branch of Woollard Way with a pedestrian link to the eastern branch. Pedestrian connections through to the existing footpaths will also be encouraged and the layout will be designed so that the footpath benefits from passive surveillance from the new dwellings.

Built Form

Dwellings will be designed so as to be in keeping with the character of the village. That is not to say that they should be a pastiche of traditional housing styles. Buildings should generally not exceed two storeys in height, although limited instances of two and a half storeys may be proposed, and will provide variety and interest in the roof line. This will reduce the impression of the mass of the built form when viewed from outside the village.



Figures 40 and 41. Examples of natural play areas



Figure 42. Modern interpretation of weatherboarding



Figure 43. Hanging tiles

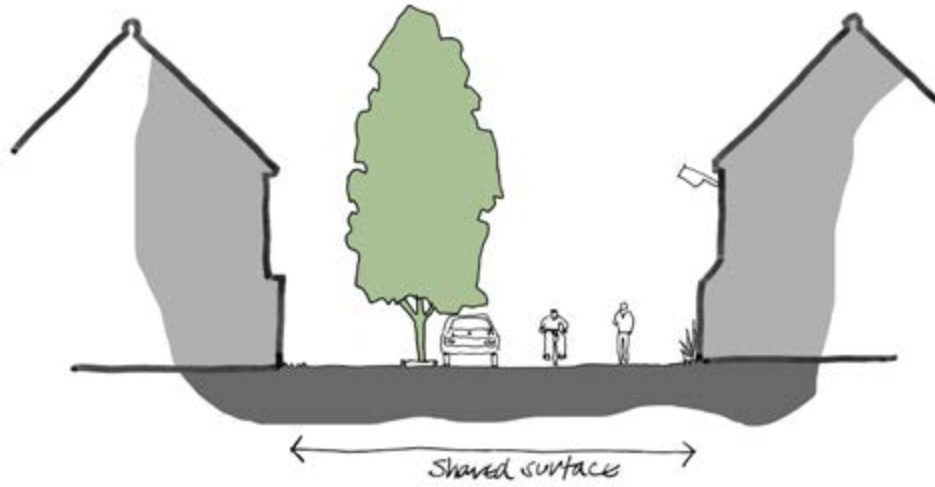


Figure 44. Example street typology

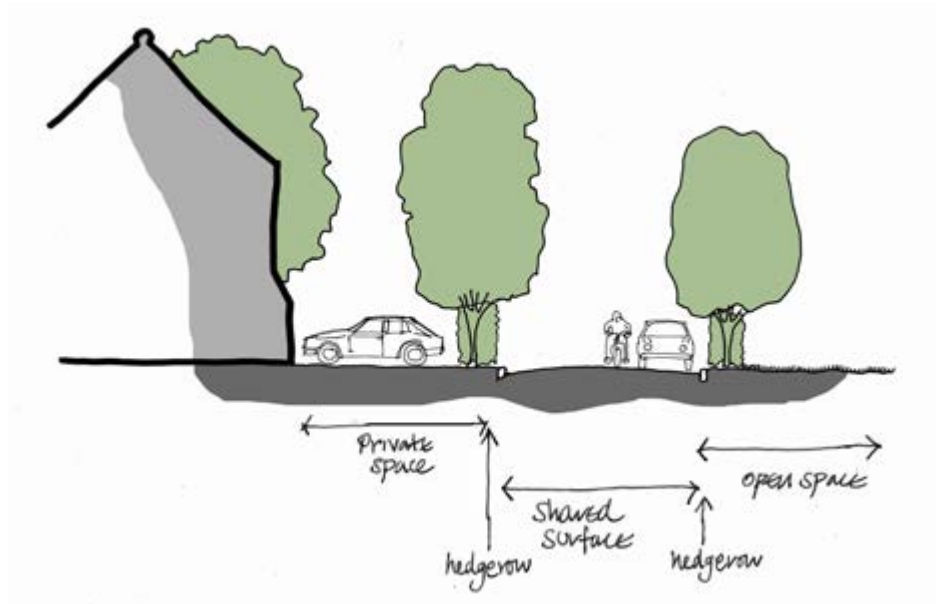
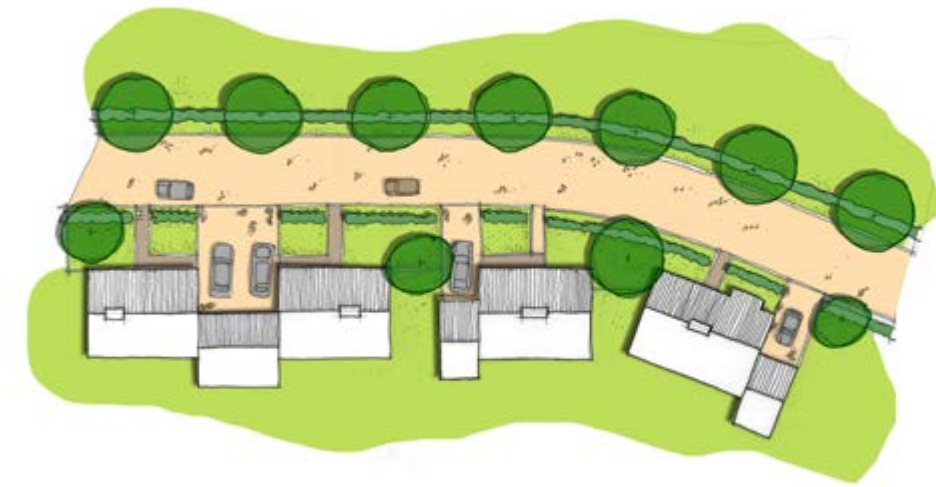


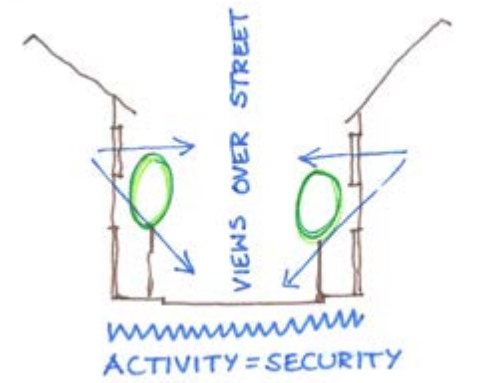
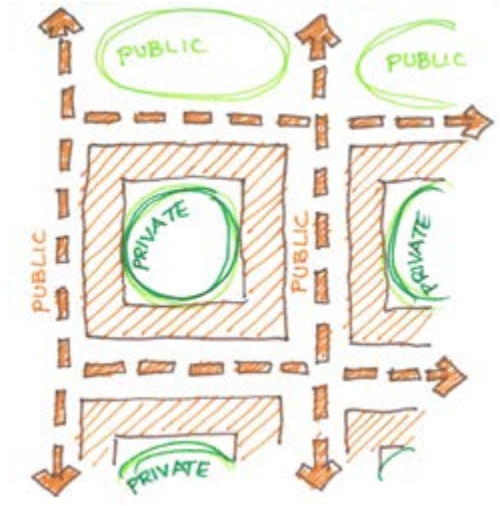
Figure 45. Example street typology

Materials

Development within Blackmore reflects a range of periods and styles. However, inspiration can be taken from the existing village in terms of materials, and tones.

Street Pattern

Properties will be located so that rear gardens face each other and so that there is no ambiguous space. Adjacent dwellings will overlook public areas such as open spaces and streets. Front doors will face the street to create activity.



Figures 46 and 47. Passive surveillance

4.2 Proposed Framework Plan

The Urban Design Framework builds on the information contained within the opportunities and constraints plan and combines it with information gained from the landscape and townscape assessment. It is not a masterplan in that it does not offer a final design solution but demonstrates indicative ideas that may be taken forward into a concept masterplan design.

The UDF concept proposes an area of residential development that fits around the existing landscape and ecological features on the site. These features are to be retained and enhanced and new elements added where appropriate, such as the hedgerow along the southern boundary.

One of the features of the centre of the village is the contrast between the higher density lanes and alleys as compared to the more open space of the Green. The masterplan demonstrates a way in which this might be achieved through the creation of higher density mews type streets to contrast with lower density housing fronting onto the areas of open space.

Lower density housing is proposed along the northern boundary where the new edge of the settlement would be located. This should provide space for trees, hedgerows and shrub planting and have an irregular roofline to provide a softer edge to the village that sits more sensitively in the wider landscape and is appropriate to the rural setting.

Key



1. Indicative spaces with higher density housing
2. Lower density housing along Redrose Lane with varied roofline and frequent tree planting to create soft edge to development
3. Houses overlooking Public Open Space
4. LEAP
5. SuDS areas to provide additional potential for play when not in use. Potential for permanent wet area
6. Potential narrow shared surface lanes to reflect those in centre of village
7. Buildings set back to provide a buffer to Listed Building
8. Allowance for sewer easement



Figure 48. Urban Design Framework



Appendix 1. Landscape and Visual Appraisal Methodology

A brief description of the existing land use of the area is provided including reference to existing settlements, transport routes and vegetation cover, as well as local landscape designations, elements of cultural and heritage value, local landmarks or tourist destinations, planning policy, published landscape character assessments and available views. These are assessed to identify issues which need to be accounted for in the design development of any future masterplan for the proposal site.

Definition of the Study Area

The appraisal has been determined through a study of desktop mapping and is influenced by factors such as landform and vegetation. It has been confined to an area approximately 3km from the proposal site. This is considered a sufficient area to establish the landscape and visual baseline. Landscape character often affects larger areas and is usually assessed for the majority of the study area. The visual baseline is often limited to a smaller study area as it is based upon the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) of the proposal site.

Photographic Data and Visual

Appraisal

An inspection of the site was undertaken to determine the ZVI, which involved walking Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and visiting significant public viewpoints to determine the likely visibility of the development. Photographs from selected viewpoints were taken using a Canon EOS 550D SLR camera. The viewpoints chosen are not intended to be exhaustive but rather to build up a picture of the areas from which the proposed development is potentially visible.

Photographs were taken at a focal length of equivalent to 50mm on a conventional 35mm camera, to create the view which is generally accepted as being closest to that seen by the human eye. However, the photographs used are intended only to give an indication of the view discussed and are not a substitute for visiting the site in person.

Panoramic views consisted of photographs taken by the criteria outlined above merged together with Adobe PhotoShop® software. No other photographic manipulation was undertaken. Due to the infinite number of possible viewpoints to choose from, those

chosen were done so on the basis of their location in relation to the site and local landscape features, such as woodlands and landform. The locations were chosen to aid the identification of the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposed development from a range of directions. Beyond the area chosen, the development is likely to be screened by local features, such as landform, buildings and vegetation or become a recessive element within the landscape due to reduced contrast at longer distances.

Appendix 2. Landscape Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 1 – Sustainable Design

The NPPF states that ‘the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development’ (NPPF paragraph 6). It then goes on to say that the planning system needs to perform a number of roles including ‘an economic role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment...’ (Paragraph 7).

Chapter 7 – Good Design

Chapter 7 of the NPPF relates to good quality design. Paragraph 60 states that ‘planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles of particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness’.

‘Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore,

planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.’ (Paragraphs 60 and 61).

Chapter 9 – Green Belt

Chapter 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is dedicated to issues of Green Belt and it states: ‘the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attributes of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence,’ (Paragraph 79). It then goes on to list the five purposes of Green Belts:

- To check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging in to 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.

When assessing the contribution of a site to Green Belt, this latter criterion is often disregarded as it applies equally to all sites. Development edges should be constrained by ‘defensible boundaries’ i.e. those which are permanent and which development is unlikely to cross.

Chapter 11 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The NPPF seeks to protect the natural environment including ‘protecting and enhancing valued landscapes,’ (paragraph 109).

Brentwood Borough Local Plan (2005) Saved Policies (Saved 2008)

Core Policy CP1 relates to the protection of local character and visual amenity. It states that new development must ‘not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on visual amenity, or the character and appearance of the surrounding area.’ It goes on to state that the development should be ‘of a high standard of design and layout and should be compatible with its location and surrounding development’ and ‘the proposal will be expected to take full account of the need to conserve or enhance the character,

appearance, biodiversity and historical and archaeological heritage of the site and the surrounding area.’

Policy H14 relates to density and states that housing densities should not fall below 30 dwellings per hectare (dph). However, this policy is based on Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3) which stated the same. The NPPF, which replaced the PPGs and PPSs replaced this with a softer approach, stating that densities should be appropriate to context.

Policies GB1 and GB2 relate to development in the Green Belt. However, the Council is considering a number of sites to release from the Green Belt, including the proposal site and these are, therefore, not considered relevant to this appraisal. However, policy GB2 makes reference to the protection of landscape features and rights of way and these are considered relevant to the site.

GB27 relates to Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and minor rural roads, both in terms of access and amenity. There are no PRoW crossing the site but there are PRoW in close proximity and the site is surrounded by rural lanes. GB27 also relates to the improvement of access

to the countryside in urban-rural fringe areas.

Policy C5 states that natural features within a site should be retained and enhanced as part of any new development.

Policy C12 relates to landscape improvement measures and habitat creation, stating that it will be encouraged.

Policy C16 relates to development within the setting of a Listed Building. There is a Listed Building adjacent to the proposal site and this has been addressed by the heritage statement.

Policy C19 states that all new development should be in accordance with the principles of Secured by Design.

The appendices of the Local Plan include the open space requirements for new development. Sites greater than 1ha (the site is 3.3ha in size) will normally be required to provide a LEAP at a minimum of 400 sq m and at least one LAP with a minimum of 100 sq m.

Appendix 3. Green Belt Review

Introduction

The proposal site and the majority of the study area are included within the Green Belt. Green Belt is not a landscape designation but relates to land use. Green Belt Review is an entire area of study in itself and the result of a wider assessment process. However, a brief assessment of the contribution of the site to the Green Belt is included here.

Methodology

The Green Belt assessment has been undertaken using a methodology based upon analysis of existing good practice. It is based upon the five purposes the Green Belt as set out within the NPPF. The last of these is not used in Green Belt Review as it applies to all sites equally:

- To check 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 following criteria were used to assess the contribution of the chosen areas to the purposes of the Green Belt:

Significant - Significant contribution towards purpose of Green Belt

Some - Some contribution towards purposes of Green Belt

Limited - Limited contribution towards purposes of Green Belt

Assessment against the Characteristics of the Green Belt

The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are 'their openness and their permanence,' (paragraph 79). In defining new boundaries to the Green Belt, it must be ensured that these characteristics are not diminished for the areas remaining within the Green Belt designation as a direct result of development on the proposal site.

In addition, the proposal site has been assessed in terms of its relationship to existing elements, such as roads, railways and water features, as well as visual barriers such as ridgelines and areas of vegetation, such as hedgerows, tree belt and areas of woodland. This is to help assess the effects of the development upon the openness of the remaining Green Belt and to help identify boundaries that may be considered to be 'permanent'.

Definitions

When considering the ability of the option site to meet each of the purposes of the Green Belt, the following definitions should be considered.

Openness

Openness is taken to be the degree to which the area is unaffected by built structures. It is considered that, in order to be a robust assessment, this should be considered from first principles, i.e. acknowledging existing structures that occur within the area, rather than seeing them as being 'washed over' by the existing Green Belt designation.

Sprawl

Disorganised and unattractive extension to developed area (perhaps lacking defensible boundary).

Defensible boundaries

The NPPF states that, when choosing boundaries, 'local authorities should define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent,' (paragraph 85).

Appendix 4. Indicative Housing Numbers

The following table gives an indication of the possible housing numbers possible for the proposal site. The information is based on the POS requirements outlined in the Brentwood Borough Replacement Local Plan which is 20% for sites over 50 dwellings. The other figures are indicative and are based on previous experience. A more accurate assessment may be made through the use of digital mapping.

Site Area (Hectares)	POS Requirements - 20% (from Local Plan)	Remaining Developable Area	Road	SuDS	Green Infrastructure	Remaining Developable Area	Required Density	Number of Dwellings
3.3	0.66	2.65	0.5	0.23	0.5	1.41	30	42
							35	49
							40	56

Purpose of the Green Belt (NPPF)	Discussion	Contribution to Green Belt Purposes
Prevent nearby towns from merging into one another	Developing the site will not cause the settlement of Blackmore to merge with other settlements to the north.	Limited
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The site is constrained to the north by Redrose Lane and to the east and west by Fingrith Hall Road and Nine Ashes Road respectively. These are defensible boundaries to development. The current development edge is not defensible as it comprises garden fences and no natural features. There is development to the north of the western part of Redrose Lane and to the west and east of the site. Developing this site will not cause physical encroachment to the countryside.	Limited
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The site does not impact upon the setting of the village centre when viewed from the Green Belt as it will be viewed in the context of the neighbouring residential development.	Limited
To check the unrestricted sprawl of settlements	Redrose Lane, Fingrith Hall Road and Nine Ashes Road form defensible boundaries to development. At present there is no defensible boundary to the north of the development area. Building as far as Redrose Lane will not increase sprawl or cause adjacent sites to be put under pressure for development which may constitute sprawl.	Limited
To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	The Local Plan consultation document accepts that there is insufficient brownfield land to meet objectively assessed housing need. The release of Green Belt land to meet housing need is required and would therefore have little or no impact on the principle of urban regeneration, particularly in the rural area.	Limited

The site does not make a notable contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and therefore development on the proposal site would have a minimal effect on the remaining Green Belt.

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