



Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone

Landscape & Visual Appraisal

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Ref: 10032-R01

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Summary

- S1. This report has been prepared by Annabelle Langhorn CMLI in order to provide an updated assessment of the landscape and visual baseline circumstances at land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone. It provides details of the current landscape conditions of the site, the visual context within which the site is visible from nearby publicly available locations, and details of the mitigation and enhancements that were recommended to inform the design layout. The report then goes on to provide an assessment of the potential impacts and effects of the proposed residential development on the landscape and visual receptors identified.
- S2. This report has been based on previous landscape and visual assessment work undertaken in association with previous applications for the site. As per the previous applications which were for employment development within the site, for this application, the key areas of focus for this LVA are impacts on landscape character and impacts on the users of the public rights of way that cross the site.
- S3. The only traits typical of the character type within the site are the field boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees. There are no other key character features present within the site. Changing the land on-site from farming use to residential use would indeed have a localised effect on the character of the landscape as would any change of use of a greenfield parcel of land, but the development response has been designed so that it would relate to the nearby housing at Mellor and Mellor Brook (to the south-east and south-west). Extensive soft landscaping has been incorporated into the site frontage so as to soften the sight of the buildings within the site.
- S4. Visually, the site sits alongside the A59, within a tract of the landscape that is less visible and less characteristic than the more rural, rising landform further south-east. From elevated locations to the south-east of the site views extend across the landscape encompassing Samlesbury, Osbaldeston, Balderstone, and Mellor Brook; these views are not picturesque as such, as they contain several urbanising and detracting elements such as highways (A59) and extensive industrial developments (Samlesbury). The land to the north-west of the site is flatter and the intact field boundaries mean that visibility towards the site is limited due to the layering of intervening field boundary vegetation. From all public locations other than the public footpaths crossing the site itself, the site does not form a distinctive part or feature within views, nor is it viewed as part of any key areas of landscape visually. It appears as an ordinary part of the landscape, and it tends to only be partially visible due to being flat topographically and due to the screening effects of the surrounding vegetation.
- S5. The landscape masterplan has been updated in conjunction with this new application for residential development application. The scheme would not cause any unduly adverse landscape or visual impacts on the Lower Ribble LCA, or on the visual amenity of nearby users of the landscape as a result of the development of the site for residential use.
- S6. Overall, it is considered that, together with the mitigation proposed, the residential use proposed within the site could be accommodated within the receiving landscape and that the development would not be an uncharacteristic change given the context of nearby housing uses and other types of development within the locality and along the A59. Adverse impacts on the users of the footpaths crossing the site are inevitable due to the proximity of the proposed built form, and these impacts have been reported as such, but the development response has sought to ensure the impacts are minimised as much as possible through additional screen planting and enhancements within the public open spaces within the site.



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Section 1: Introduction

Background

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Annabelle Langhorn, a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute, and experienced Landscape Planner, on behalf of Specialist Diesels Ltd. It has been prepared to advise on the landscape and visual matters associated with the proposed development of land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone (hereafter referred to as the 'site') for residential use.
- 1.2 This report has been prepared utilising the findings ascertained through the Landscape & Visual Appraisal (LVA) that was prepared in January 2023 (Ref: 10007_R01a) for the original application (Planning Ref: 3/2023/0148) which was refused planning permission and the LVA that was prepared to accompany the resubmission (Ref: 10027-R01a).
- 1.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the plan and appendices contained at the rear of this report.

Site Description

- 1.4 The site consists of two fields used for grazing, on the south-eastern side of the A59 Longsight Road. The site boundaries are defined by hedgerows and lines of trees.
- 1.5 The site boundary is shown in red on the plan below:



Figure 1: Site Location



- 1.6 The site is traversed by six Public Footpaths which lead from Longsight Road southwards and eastwards and connect up to Public Footpaths that cross the rising pastoral land to the south and east of the site. The location and references of these routes, and other routes within the vicinity of the site are shown on **Plan 1: Landscape Context**.

Plan 1: Landscape Context

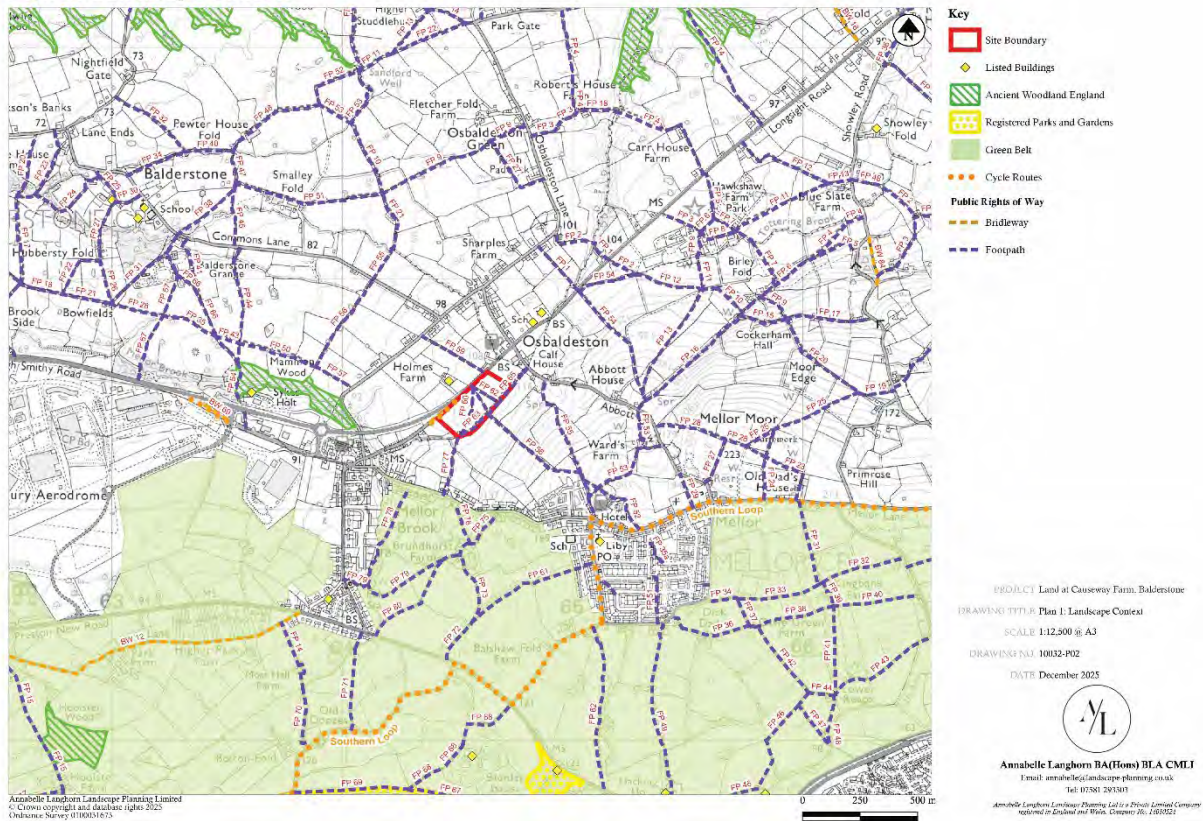


Figure 2: Landscape Context

- 1.7 The land within the site rises from the boundaries towards a central plateau from heights of between 105.8 and 109.0m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at the edges of the site, rising up to approximately 110.5m AOD centrally. A watercourse runs along the north east, south east and south west boundaries of the site and there are two ponds located within the central and south-western part of the site.
- 1.8 The site's immediate environs consist of the following:
- To the east, the site boundary is formed by a hedgerow with mature hedgerow trees, beyond which lies rising pastoral and arable land.
 - To the south, the site boundary is formed again by a hedgerow which is scrubby in places and frequent hedgerow trees. Beyond the site to the south, there is a small adjoining pastoral field, a copse of woodland, and an area of newly planted woodland.
 - To the west, the site boundary is formed by a timber post and wire fence, a low trimmed hedgerow, along the A59 Longsight Road.
 - To the north, the site is defined by a hedgerow, beyond which is an adjoining pastoral field with the Bowker Ribble Valley car dealer located beyond this to the north.
- 1.9 The landscape surrounding the site broadly consists of pastoral land on all sides, beyond which lies Mellor Brook to the south-west and west, the village of Mellor to the south-east and the village of Osbaldeston to



the north. The landscape rises steeply to the east of the site, and narrow roads, lanes and public rights of way cross this rising pastoral landscape leading towards Mellor. The landscape to the west of the site is broadly flatter as it leads towards the River Ribble. The A59 is a busy road traversing the landscape with scattered development along its route, including the Samlesbury Aerodrome to the west of the site, and the ESSO Pennine petrol station, Bowker Ribble Valley car dealership, and the Bay Horse Inn to the north of the site.

- 1.10 There are several Listed Buildings within the vicinity of the site, as shown on **Plan 1**, including Causeway Farm located to the north-west of the site, on the opposite side of the A59 Longsight Road, which is Grade II Listed.

Proposed Development

- 1.11 The proposals are described in detail within the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application and are illustrated on the 'Illustrative Masterplan' (Ref: 1588-MP-01) produced by Gallagher Technical & Design Ltd, an extract of which is shown below:



Figure 3: Proposed Illustrative Masterplan

- 1.12 The masterplan has been developed by the project team in response to the iterative design inputs of various technical consultants who have provided up-to-date information on the constraints present relating to the site. This LVA has been prepared to ensure that the application for the site responds to the current character of the site, the surrounding landscape, and to the visual amenity of nearby users of the landscape.
- 1.13 85 new houses are shown on the Illustrative Masterplan, within a framework of the retained boundary and internal hedgerow vegetation and trees within the site. The Illustrative Masterplan shows just one illustrative example of how development of the nature proposed could be set out within the site.



Methodology

- 1.14 The purpose of this report is to set out for the reader the process that has been undertaken to advise upon the landscape and visual constraints and opportunities relating to the development of the site for residential use. The report constitutes a baseline assessment which covers the analysis of the existing landscape and visual circumstances of the site followed by the provision of recommendations to guide the development of the site. The report then goes on to provide an assessment which determines the likely impacts upon the landscape as a resource, and upon the visual amenity of user groups, as a result of the proposed development.
- 1.15 Where mitigation may be necessary to best assimilate the development into the landscape, this has been identified within this report and has fed into the development of the masterplan for the site. In addition, opportunities to enhance the landscape in line with the site-specific circumstances and guidance set out within published character documentation have also been set out within this report and have fed into the development response.
- 1.16 This LVA report has been undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance as set out at **Appendix 1**.



Section 2: Baseline Landscape Context

Landscape Character of the Site

- 2.1 A site visit was undertaken in summer 2024 which confirmed that the site consists of two pastoral fields, currently grazed, with hedgerows at the boundaries and separating the two fields internally. The hedgerow boundaries contain numerous hedgerow trees, which create a copse of woodland along the south-eastern and south-western boundaries. There is a small copse of trees adjacent to the south-eastern boundary and there are two ponds internally within the southern section of the two fields on site. There is also a small watercourse running along the north-east, south-east and south-west boundaries of the site. The site slopes up gently from south-west to north-east, with a central raised area.
- 2.2 The site is mainly perceived from the A59 which passes along the north-western boundary of the site, and from the Public Footpaths that cross it. From the A59 it is perceived as two fields within a series of fields that align the A59 in between clusters of employment and housing development, and it forms the foreground to backdrop views of steeply rising agricultural land further east.
- 2.3 From the Public Footpaths that cross the site, the field appears as an ordinary field, used for grazing, contained by trees and hedgerows but with a sense of the openness of the landscape to the east beyond the site through visibility of the steeply rising agricultural land. Views west from within the site are influenced by the layering of field boundary vegetation that occurs on the broadly flat agricultural land to the west of the A59, such that views are not expansive and generally limited to views of the A59 and the existing development along it.



Image 1: View of the pastoral land within the site, facing west.

Published Landscape Character Context

- 2.4 The published character context of the site remains unchanged from when the original assessment was undertaken. At a national level, it is identified within the 'Lancashire Valleys' National Character Area (NCA) and within the Undulating Lowland Farmland Landscape Character Type and the Lower Ribble Landscape Character Area within the Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment. The updated fieldwork undertaken has confirmed that the only features within the site that are characteristic of these character areas and types are the field boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- 2.5 The site represents a very small proportion of ordinary, commonplace landscape features, not in particularly favourable condition, within a much broader character area overall. The more unique, and notable characteristics of both the NCA and the LCA/LCT relate to landscape features much further afield, such as the settlement centres, vegetated valleys and industrial heritage, and do not relate to the distinctive character of the site as a series of two ordinary pastoral fields within the transport corridor



associated with the A59. It should also be noted that the A59 forms a detracting and urbanising element within the immediate context of the site, and that the existing employment and residential development along the A59 reduces the sense of an open countryside character in this part of the landscape. Through the presence of urbanising elements, a distinct lack of any notable character features, and through direct visibility between the fields and urban areas adjoining the A59, the overriding character is that of a transitional, semi-urban, road corridor, not of rural, untouched, open agricultural countryside.

Identification and Classification of Landscape Receptors

- 2.6 The threshold and terminology referred to in this section is set out in the methodology within the original LVA which is contained at **Appendix 1**. The classification of sensitivity of the landscape as a resource is related to its susceptibility to the type of change proposed, and the value placed on the landscape.

Susceptibility

- 2.7 This means the ability of the landscape type, in this locale, to accommodate the development proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. With regards to the site, the proposed development whilst creating direct change to two undeveloped fields, will also have a degree of consistency with other residential uses within Mellor Brook and Mellor which are near to the site.
- 2.8 The site is located directly alongside the A59, next to the settlement area of Mellor Brook which already features residential development as well as industrial, commercial and employment uses at its peripheries. The existing hedgerow and tree planting along the site boundaries provides a degree of visual containment from the wider agricultural and rural landscape to the north-west and east. The A59 as a transport corridor has a notable influence over the site giving it a semi-rural character as opposed to rural.
- 2.9 Mitigation can be incorporated into the development layout in the form of: development offsets from the site boundaries to ensure the existing field boundary hedgerows and trees can be retained, gapped up, and strengthened; restrictions on the maximum building heights to follow the nearby urban grain and avoid the buildings being overly dominant in the landscape; new screen planting to soften, screen and diminish the visual prominence of the new buildings in the landscape; and the creation of green corridors within the site incorporating the routes of the existing public footpaths crossing the site. Soft landscaping throughout the development also serves to ensure the development can be assimilated into its surroundings.
- 2.10 The landscape of the site is therefore of a **medium susceptibility to the change proposed**, as the development would have a degree of consistency with the character of the A59 corridor and the settlement edge of Mellor Brook. The character of the remaining rural landscape can be safeguarded through the implementation of appropriate mitigation.

Value

- 2.11 As set out within the original LVA, the site is not located within a landscape considered to be inherently 'valued' under the definition set out within the NPPF. 'Having value' and being a 'valued landscape' are not inter-changeable terms. A landscape may have a degree of local value but that does not equate to possessing value sufficient to reach and surpass the necessary threshold to be 'valued' by a particular community at either a local or national scale.
- 2.12 Having considered the key elements related to value for the site specifically, it has been determined that there is nothing associated with the site that makes it as a whole more than ordinary and valued no higher than of local importance (see **Appendix 1**). The fact the site is currently undeveloped and 'open' in that sense, does provide a degree of locally valued visual amenity benefits for users of the public footpaths that cross it, and for users of the A59 that runs alongside the north-western edge of the site. Views across the site are partially contained by the site boundary hedgerows and trees at the outer boundaries and internally within the site.



Landscape Sensitivity

2.13 Combining the susceptibility and value of the landscape of the site, the landscape on-site is considered to be of a **medium sensitivity to change**, and the wider LCA landscape is considered to be of a **medium sensitivity to change**. To reiterate the key findings of the 2023 LVA, the boundary features present are commonplace locally, in a variable condition due to being very gappy, and these could be readily replicated. It was deemed that mitigation would be appropriate to enhance assimilation of the development into the surrounding landscape in order to respect the prevailing character of the area and this finding remains the case. The proposed development is somewhat consistent with the existing character and land use already present within Mellor Brook which adjoins the site.

Recommended Landscape Mitigation and Enhancements

2.14 The above site-specific and published character context provides an indication of the key issues relating to landscape change within the site and the wider landscape. The published character studies provide guidance as to what sort of mitigation and enhancement measures would be both necessary and desirable in order to assimilate new development into the landscape.

2.15 In the context of the proposal to develop the site for residential use, the following measures are recommended to ensure the development assimilates into the landscape context appropriately and without causing undue adverse impacts on the LCA, or resulting in change beyond that which can be accommodated within the wider landscape surrounding the A59, Mellor and Mellor Brook:

- Strengthen and enhance the existing boundary vegetation with new native planting to continue to contribute towards the green infrastructure of the area, and to provide visual filtering and softening for the proposed development.
- Retain and enhance as much of the on-site landscape features as possible, incorporating into the development scheme within areas of public open space, green corridors along footpath routes, and/or boundary structure planting to visual screen and soften the sight of the proposals.
- Where hedgerows can be retained on-site, improve their condition by replanting gaps, planting new hedgerow saplings, and introducing locally appropriate and diverse species.
- Retain existing roadside grass verges and grass hedgerow margins, and increase species diversity through the introduction of overseeding, plug planting and long term management where possible.
- Ensure the maximum height of the development is such that the backdrop of the agricultural ridgeline remains visible as a visual backdrop to the east of the site when viewed from the A59 and public footpath locations further west.
- Incorporate new tree planting within the site, in the form of new hedgerow trees, and new standalone trees and tree copses within public open spaces and green corridors. Link up to the existing tree planting and hedgerow trees within and surrounding the site where possible.
- Use species typical of the local area such as oak and alder.
- Opportunities could be taken to provide recreational connections around the site connecting up to the existing public footpaths crossing it.
- Ensure any footpath diversions required do not result in the site being less permeable or accessible to the public.

2.16 These recommendations have been incorporated into the Landscape Strategy set out on **Plan 7: Landscape Strategy**.



Plan 7: Landscape Strategy



Figure 4: Landscape Strategy plan



Section 3: Baseline Visual Context

Summary of Visual Context

- 3.1 In order to determine the extent of the area from which the development can be seen, OS terrain and LiDAR data was used to produce a Topography Plan and Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) for the proposed maximum height of the development (assumed maximum ridge height of 9m above ground level for a maximum of a 3 storey house – although the majority of the development will comprise 2 storey dwellings). – see **Plans 3, 4, 5 and 6**.

Plan 3: Topography

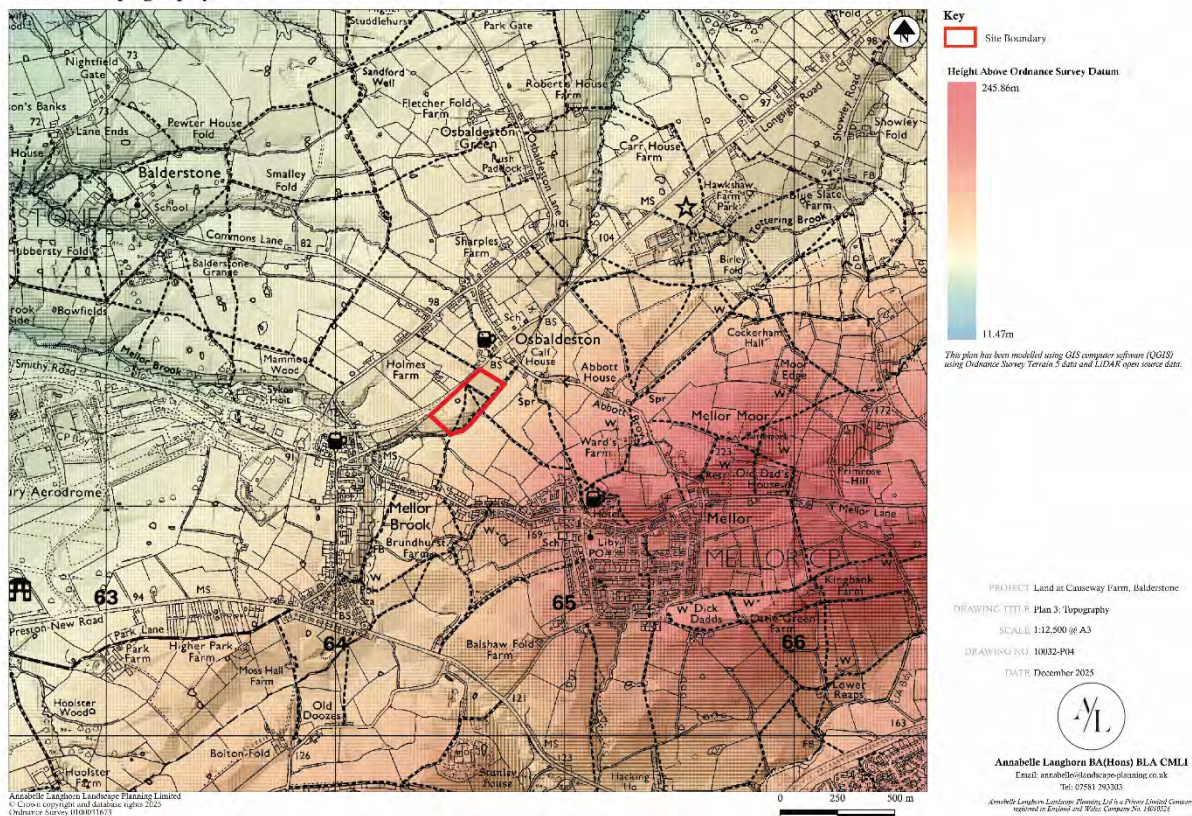


Figure 5: Topography plan

- 3.2 The ZTV is theoretical and does not take into consideration site-specific visual circumstances such as the screening effect of built form, trees, and vegetation, and how these may influence the actual visibility of the site and development upon on it. Therefore, a more accurate representation of the extent to which the site and proposed development would be viewed is undertaken in the field, with the ZTV used as a starting point for the fieldwork in terms of determining the existent of visibility and the likely visual receptors.



Plan 5: GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility

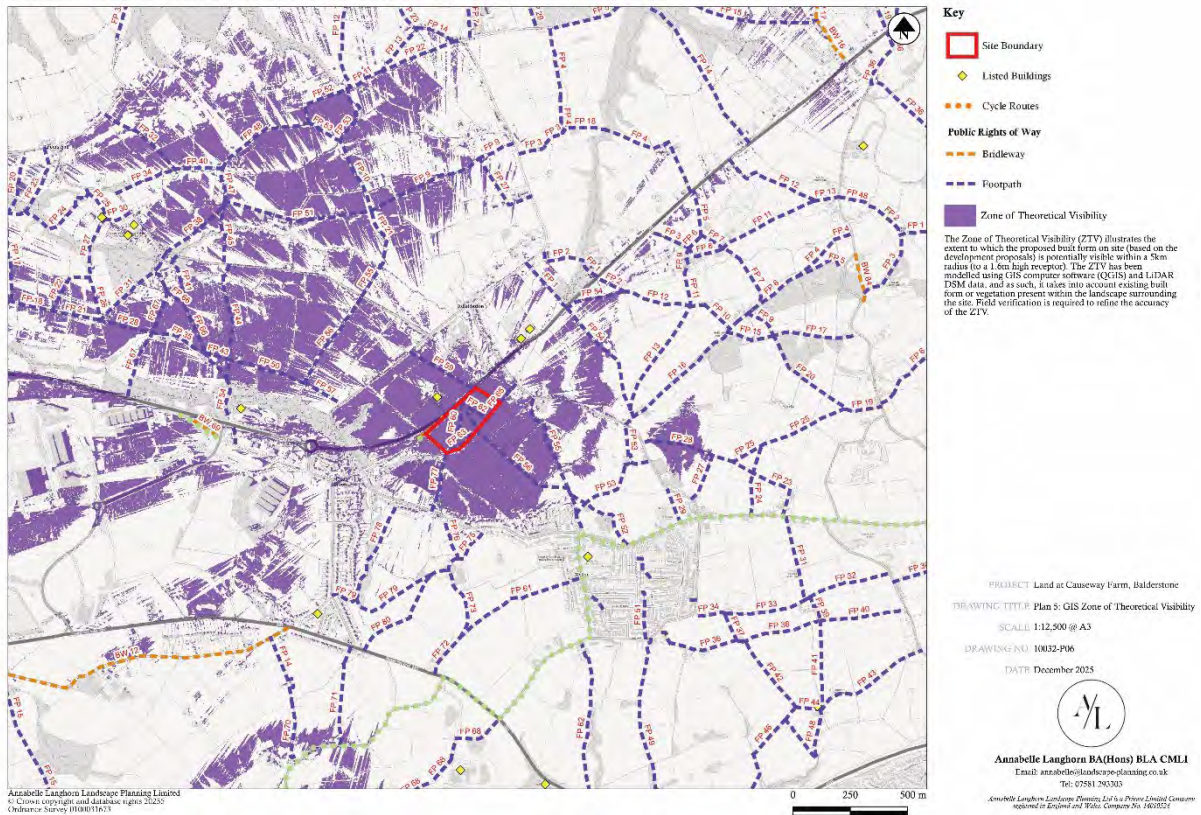


Figure 6: ZTV

- 3.3 In the case of this site, the ZTV shows that the undulations of the surrounding landscape around to the east of the site results in a visual envelope that is focused on a limited geographical area, with more expansive visibility potentially available towards the north-west. In the field, it is evident that the site visually forms part of the agricultural fields that align the A59 in this area, with the rising agricultural land to the south-east providing elevated views across the landscape encompassing Samlesbury, Osbaldeston, Balderstone, and Mellor Brook, but beyond which visibility of the site is restricted. The land to the north-west of the site is flatter; the field boundaries are formed of intact hedgerows with hedgerow trees being numerous and mature. This presents a situation in which distant visibility towards the site is limited due to the layering of intervening field boundary vegetation, and as such the visual envelope for the proposed development is much more limited than the GIS ZTV would at first suggest.
- 3.4 The visual study has been focused on the representative viewpoints set out on the ZTV plan (**Plan 6**), which aims to cover the public rights of way, settlement edges, and roads where the proposed development is most likely to have the potential to be visible.



Plan 6: Photoviewpoint Locations



Figure 7: GIS ZTV & Representative Photoviewpoint Locations

Viewpoints

- 3.5 Representative views of the site from a variety of receptors in the local area have been determined on the basis of the first sieve ZTV mapping and subsequent fieldwork. The identification of views was carried out from external spaces within the public domain, and not from buildings or private spaces. The viewpoints chosen are intended to be representative of the key locations from which publicly available views are or could be possible.
- 3.6 The photographs included within this appraisal were taken using an SLR digital camera, using a 50mm focal length as per best practice guidance. They are intended to provide an indication of the composition of the view and extent of visibility, but it is recognised that such views are best experienced in person, in the field. Summer photographs when deciduous vegetation was in leaf were taken during summer 2024. For worst-case scenarios, the photography included within the 2023 LVA can be referred to which was captured during winter months.
- 3.7 Having conducted the site visit, the following viewpoints have been identified as being representative of the extent of visibility and key receptor locations to assist with the consideration of the visual impacts of the proposed development on the site:
- 3.8 Having conducted the site visit, the following viewpoints have been included within this updated LVA, and these are representative of the extent of visibility and key receptor locations to assist with the consideration of the visual impacts of the proposed development on the site:



Viewpoint Reference	Viewpoint Location/Description	Visual Receptor view is Representative of
a	View north-east from the route of Public Bridleway BW70 at the end of Whalley Road	Recreational users of Public Bridleway BW70
b	View east from route of Public Bridleway BW70 alongside the A59 Longsight Road	Recreational users of Public Bridleway BW70 Transient users of A59 Longsight Road
c	View south-east from A59 Longsight Road	Transient users of A59 Longsight Road
d	View south-east from A59 Longsight Road	Transient users of A59 Longsight Road
e	View south-east from A59 Longsight Road	Transient users of A59 Longsight Road
f	View south-west from A59 Longsight Road	Transient users of A59 Longsight Road
g	View south-west from A59 Longsight Road	Transient users of A59 Longsight Road
h	View south-west from Abbott Brow	Transient users and private residents at Abbott Brow
i	View south-west from Public Footpath FP55	Recreational users of Public Footpath FP55
j	View west from Public Footpath FP55	Recreational users of Public Footpath FP55
k	View north-west from Public Footpath FP55	Recreational users of Public Footpath FP55
l	View north-west from Permissive Path off Public Footpath FP56	Recreational users of the Permissive Footpath off Public Footpath FP56
m	View north-west from Public Footpath FP56	Recreational users of Public Footpath FP56
n	View north-west from Public Footpath FP55	Recreational users of Public Footpath FP55
o	View south-east from Higher Commons Lane	Transient users of Higher Commons Lane
p	View south-east from Public Footpath FP59	Recreational users of Public Footpath FP59

3.9 The photosheets contained at the rear of this report illustrate the composition of the existing views described above. For ease of review, extracts of these images are also contained below along with narrative explaining the visual circumstances for each viewpoint.

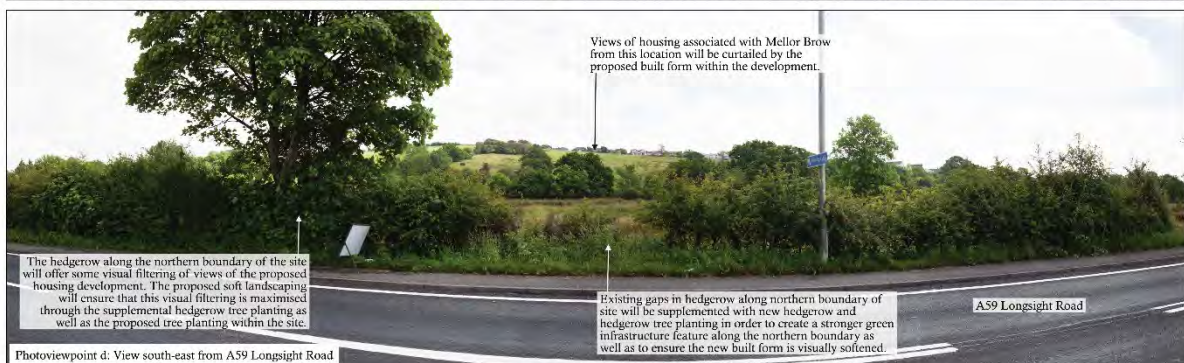
Descriptive Viewpoint Analysis

Viewpoints a and b



3.10 Viewpoints a and b illustrate the visual context for users of the Public Bridleway that runs immediately adjacent to the northern edge of the site. In close proximity to the site, it is evident from the above that users are mainly lead down a visually enclosed route, with some visibility available eastwards where the rising land can be seen, but for the most part users are experiencing a route that travels from a housing area and then alongside a busy main road, with overgrown vegetation on both sides.

Viewpoints c to g

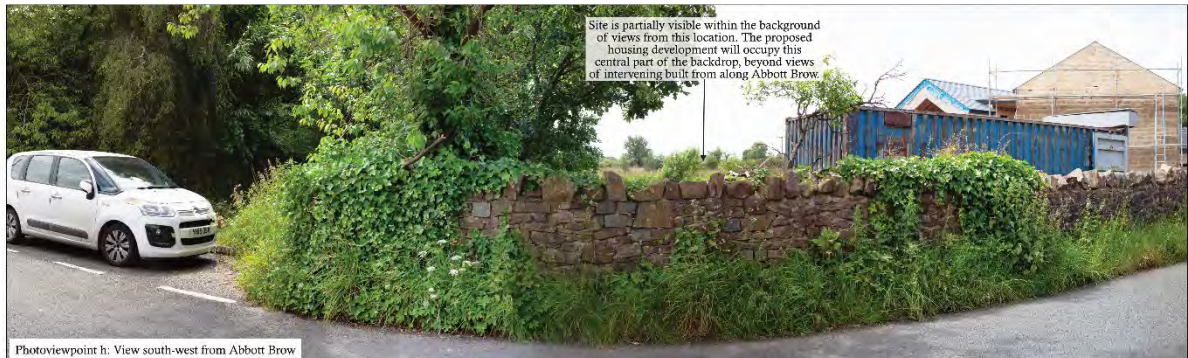




3.11 Viewpoints c through to g focus on views towards the site from the A59 Longsight Road. Here the viewpoint photography illustrates ordinary character of the field within the site, the limited views of the internal features within the site, the screening provided by the roadside vegetation and the character of the A59 which is already influenced by existing built form and development.

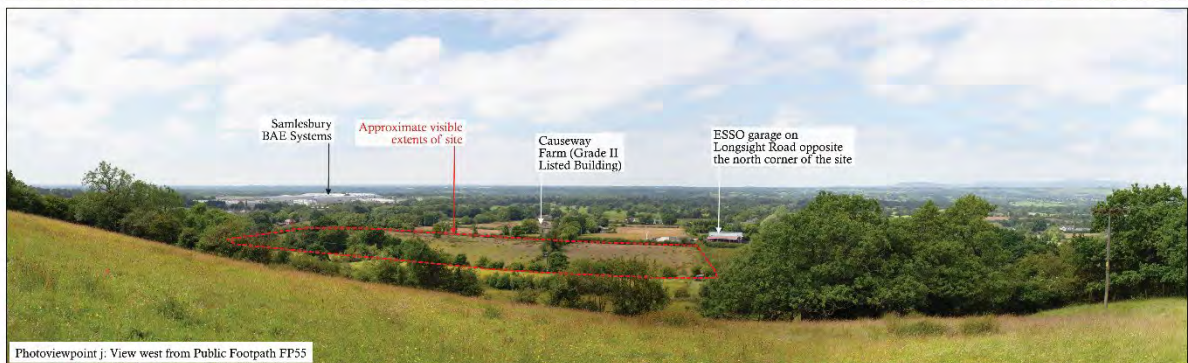


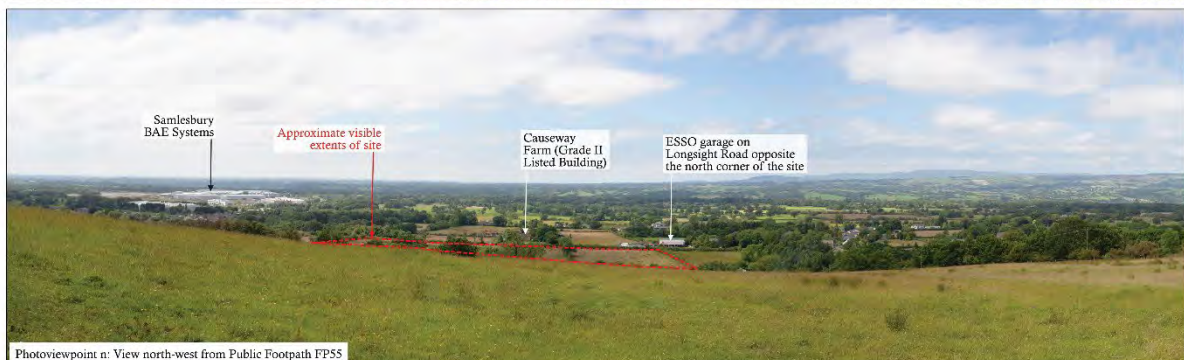
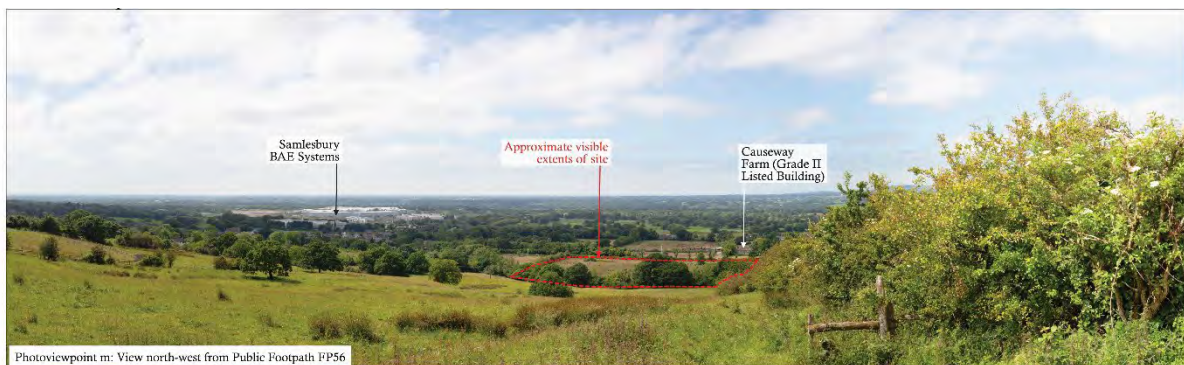
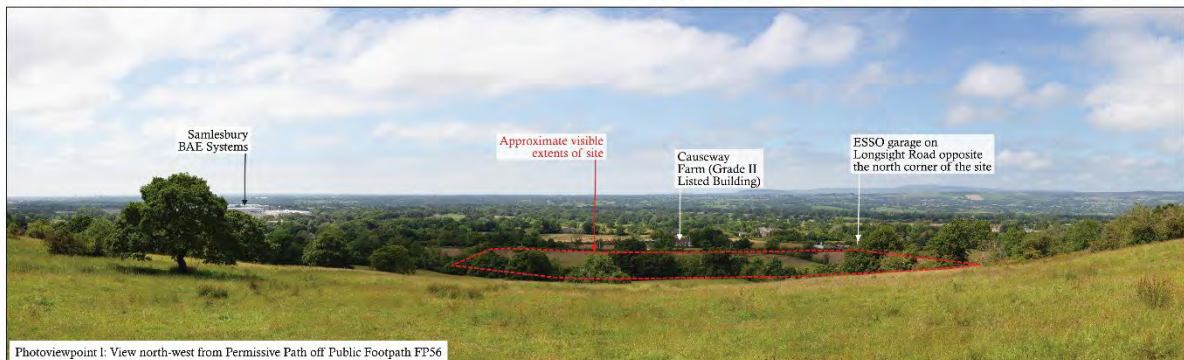
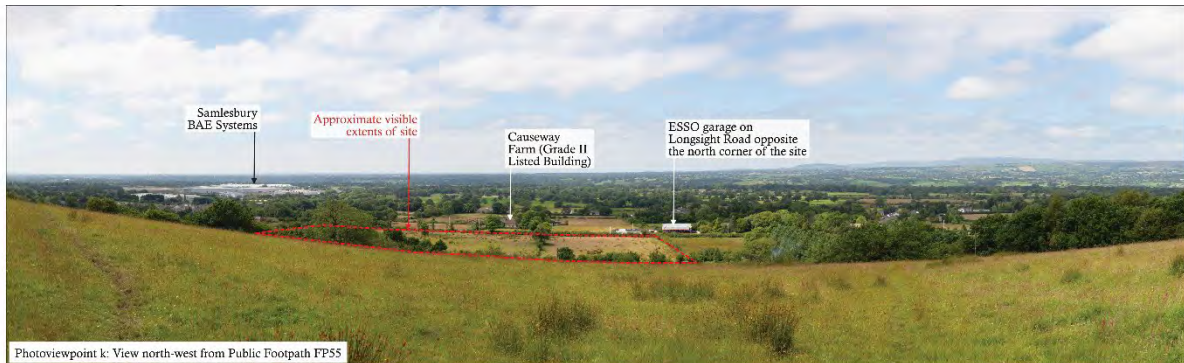
Viewpoint h



- 3.12 Viewpoint h is useful in providing an insight into the existing character of the local landscape surrounding the site, which cannot be described as unspoilt or undeveloped, and contains a variety of uses associated with new residences, farmsteads, businesses, and commercial developments. In the case of viewpoint h above the intervening built form restricts an appreciation of the currently open agricultural land beyond.

Viewpoints i to n





3.13 Viewpoints i to n have been included within the updated photosheets to provide a more detailed analysis of the views available from the public and permissive rights of way that traverse the rising land to the immediate east of the site. As shown on the views above, the site is partially visible and sits within a well-vegetated context of frequent field trees. The wider view is punctuated with the large development at Samlesbury and other existing built elements that already exist along the A59 corridor.



Viewpoints o and p



- 3.14 Viewpoints o and p represent views from the public rights of way and roads to the north-west of the site. From the north-west views are generally restricted by the dense roadside vegetation and field boundaries which contain frequent tree. Although the site itself cannot be readily depicted within views from these locations, it is likely the proposed development will be visible within these views, set against the rising backdrop. And viewed adjacent to the existing residential development seen in viewpoint p.
- 3.15 Overall, the site is primarily viewed from the A59 that runs along the north-western boundary of the site, from the Public Footpaths that cross it (Public Footpaths FP60, FP61, FP62, FP63, FP64 and FP65), and from the Public Footpaths that traverse the rising and elevated agricultural land to the east of the site (Public Footpaths FP55 and FP56). Private residential views towards the site are possible from the Grade II Listed farmhouse at Causeway Farm to the north-west of the site, from Brook Lea and Rose Cottage to the north of the site, Mellor Brow and Elswick Gardens to the south-east of the site. From further afield the site is less noticeable if visible at all. This represents a very limited visual envelope geographically.
- 3.16 Where the site is visible, it is viewed through the filtering effect of the site boundary vegetation. The site is well contained by its own boundary vegetation, but parts of the boundaries are less intact which affords greater intervisibility with the surrounding landscape to the north and north-west. There are no views within which the site is seen as an important component of the landscape in its current usage, and even for the more sensitive of visual receptors, the development of the site would still not result in the loss of any important scenic qualities or valued visual features.

Identification and Classification of Visual Receptors

3.17 The visual receptors identified within the 2023 LVA remain as previously assessed as follows:

- Recreational users of Public Footpaths FP60, FP61, FP62, FP63, FP64 and FP65 that traverse the site;
- Recreational users of Public Footpaths FP55 and FP56 to the south-east of the site;
- Recreational users of Public Footpath FP77 to the south of the site;



- Recreational users of Public Footpaths FP76 to the south of the site;
- Recreational users of Public Bridleway BW70 to the north-west of the site;
- Recreational users of the cycleway to the north-west of the site;
- Recreational users of Public Footpath FP59 to the north of the site;
- Recreational users of Public Footpaths FP55 and FP56 to the north-west of the site;
- Private residents associated with A59 Longsight Road to the north of the site (Higher Common, Brook Lea and Rose Cottage);
- Private residents associated with Osbaldeston Lane to the north of the site;
- Private residents associated with Abbott Brow to the north-east of the site;
- Private residents associated with Elswick Gardens to the south-east of the site;
- Private residents associated with Mellor Brow to the south-east of the site;
- Private residents associated with Further Lane to the south-west of the site;
- Private residents associated with 17 to 25 Whalley Road to the south-west of the site;
- Private residents associated with the Grade II Listed Causeway Farm to the north-west of the site;
- Private residents associated with Higher Commons Lane to the north-west of the site;
- Business users and patrons of the Bay Horse Inn Public House on Longsight Road to the north of the site;
- Business users and customers associated with the ESSO Pennine Service Station to the north of the site;
- Business users and customers associated with Bowker Ribble Valley car dealership to the north-east of the site;
- Employees, visitors, and users of St Mary's RC Primary School to the north-east of the site;
- Users of St Mary's Catholic Church to the north-east of the site;
- Transient users of A59 Longsight Road to the north-west of the site;
- Transient users of Higher Commons Lane to the north-west of the site;
- Transient users of Commons Lane to the north-west of the site;
- Transient users of Osbaldeston Lane to the north of the site;
- Transient users of Mellor Brow to the south of the site;
- Transient users of Abbott Brow to the north-east of the site; and
- Agricultural users associated with Causeway Farm to the north-west of the site.

3.18 People using the recreational footpaths crossing the site and within the local landscape surrounding it will experience views will be engaged in outdoor activities whereby their attention and interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and the sequential visual experience. As a result, the sensitivity of these user groups to visual change will be **high**. Cyclists on the nearby cycle routes will also be **high** sensitivity.

3.19 Private residents associated with Causeway Farm to the north-west of the site will have direct visibility of the site and will experience views of the development on a daily basis. The sensitivity of these users to visual change will therefore be **high**.

3.20 Private residents associated with Mellor Brow and Elswick Gardens to the south-east of the site have partial and elevated visibility of the site from rear and side windows. They will have partial views of the site, seen in the distance, and as such their sensitivity will be **medium**.

3.21 Private residents associated with Longsight Road, Whalley Road, Osbaldeston Lane and Higher Commons Lane to the north-west of the site will have oblique and/or heavily filtered views of the site and as such their sensitivity will be **medium**. Private residents associated with Abbott Brow and Further Lane are influenced by distance from the site and heavy filtering from intervening woodland and hedgerow vegetation, such that their sensitivity will also be **medium**.

3.22 Users of local business premises, St Mary's RC Primary School and St Mary's Catholic Church will be engaged in activities related to work and/or which take place indoors predominantly, and where any views of the landscape while outside are part of, but not the sole focus of their activities. Their sensitivity to visual change will be **low**.



- 3.23 Transient users of local roads as drivers will have a different focus to their activities and will be travelling at speed. The sensitivity of transient users of the A59, Higher Commons Lane, Commons Lane, Osbaldeston Lane and Mellow Brow will therefore be **low**.
- 3.24 Users associated with Causeway Farm will have their attention focused upon their activities and not upon the wider views. Therefore, their sensitivity to visual change will be **low**.

Recommended Visual Mitigation and Enhancements

- 3.25 The visual envelope and composition of views provides an indication of the key issues relating to visual change within the site and the wider landscape. In the context of the proposal to develop the site for residential use, the following measures are recommended to ensure the development assimilates into the visual context and appears consistent with the prevailing composition of existing views:
- Strengthen and enhance the existing boundary vegetation with new native planting to soften the development, and to filter views of the new built form within the site from public footpaths and the wider landscape to the north-west and north-east in particular.
 - The development frontage onto the A59 will require careful consideration to ensure the character of the A59 is referenced, and the development appears in keeping with the existing development that appears along the road. A development offset from the north-western boundary should be considered so that the existing boundary vegetation can be retained, new tree planting can be incorporated, and so that some of the development can be set-back from the road to reduce its visual dominance over road users and pedestrians.
 - Off-site roadside tree planting along the A59 affords visual screening for development to be accommodated within the western part of the site.
 - The maximum height of the development needs to ensure the background skyline of the ridgeline to the east of the site can be retained within views from locations to the west of the site as much as possible, so that the development sits beneath it visually. This will prevent it from appearing prominent within the existing visual context.
 - Development offsets from the existing and rerouted public footpaths crossing the site will need to be incorporated into the development, with new planting proposed so that the users of these routes can experience a visual context in which the routes are mostly aligned by open space and soft landscaping, with the housing units set beyond and heavily filtered from view as much as possible.
- 3.26 These recommendations have been incorporated into the Landscape Strategy set out on **Plan 7: Landscape Strategy**.



Section 4: Landscape Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy & Guidance

- 4.1 In terms of national planning policy, the key point to note is that the site does not fall within a designated areas such as Green Belt land, Local Green Space or a National Landscape.

Local Policy

- 4.2 The site falls within the administrative borough of Ribble Valley Borough Council and the relevant development plan for the purposes of this application is the Core Strategy 2008-2028. Under these policies the site is not designated and falls within the Open Countryside.
- 4.3 The following policies are directly referenced within the Reason for Refusal and relevant to landscape and visual matters concerning the development of the site:
- DMG1: General Considerations
 - DME1: Protecting Trees and Woodlands
 - DME2: Landscape and Townscape Protection
 - DMB5: Footpaths and Bridleways
- 4.4 The key landscape objectives of the above policies in landscape and visual terms are to ensure development is sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses, to consider the relationship of a development to the surroundings including impact on landscape character, to enhance the environment, to avoid impacting on trees and woodland, to protect important landscape features, to enhance biodiversity and to retain, maintain and improve the public rights of way network.



Section 5: Proposals

Description of Proposed Development

- 5.1 The application proposes to create up to 85 new residential dwellings with all matters reserved except for access.
- 5.2 Full details of the proposals are contained within the Design and Access Statement. The illustrative proposals show that development would be able to retain as much of the internal and outer field boundary features as possible, including the existing hedgerows, ponds, the existing drainage ditch and associated riparian vegetation along the south-eastern boundary, and the existing trees. All landscape features should be largely retained and enhanced with the exception of a short section of hedgerow loss on the internal field boundary to facilitate vehicular access through the site across the two field parcels. All remaining existing hedgerows could be gapped up, supplemented with new hedgerow trees, which would link up to new areas of species diverse grassland and meadows within the site.
- 5.3 In addition, the Landscape Strategy (see **Appendix 2**) illustrates the mitigation and enhancement measures that are proposed for the site, which in summary, include:
- New landscape buffers along the north-eastern, south-eastern, and south-western boundaries, as well as along the internal field boundary which will enable the retention of the existing vegetation, and its enhancement with new grassland margins and additional tree and shrub planting.
 - Development has been set back from the north-western boundary to allow for the provision of a landscape buffer at the site's frontage which will consist of grassland and areas of public open space. This also allows for the retention and enhancement of the existing site boundary hedgerows and trees so that they can be protected and supplemented with new stock and trees. The new soft landscaping within these buffers will also serve to soften views of the new development from the A59, private residents to the north and public rights of way crossing the landscape to the north-west.
 - Development has been set back from the south-eastern boundary so as to allow for a landscape buffer to be provided between the development and the adjacent agricultural landscape. This allows for the retention and enhancement of the existing boundary hedgerow, trees, and riparian vegetation so that it can be supplemented with new stock to strengthen the visual softening properties it has for users of the wider surrounding countryside landscape and nearby private residents.
 - The retention and reinforcement of the hedgerows and trees at the site boundaries which will strengthen the landscape structure where it is currently gappy, overgrown and scrubby in places. This will also soften the new residential units and provide some permanence to the filtering of views provided by the existing boundary vegetation.
 - The inclusion of new tree and shrub planting within areas of green space within the development, which will enhance biodiversity and ecological mitigation, as well as ensuring an aesthetically pleasing appearance to the development that is appropriate especially for a development adjacent to the open countryside.
 - New tree planting will be incorporated into the development, and in particular to enhance the north-western, northern, and internal field boundaries where the hedgerows are currently gappy and could benefit from supplementation with new hedgerow trees.
 - The incorporation of an area of green infrastructure to the south-eastern edge of the site, which will enable the enhancement the existing trees, grassland, and riparian vegetation along the drainage ditch.



Section 6: Impact Assessment

Introduction to Impact Appraisal

- 6.1 The sensitivity of the various receptors is set out in Sections 2 and 3 of this report. This section now considers the magnitude of change, based on the scheme proposed. Reference should be made to **Appendix 1** for the terms used in this section.
- 6.2 As recommended by professional guidance (GLVIA 3) this report avoids the use of matrices and tables and sets out the assessment in a narrative format with tables only used for summaries of the assessment findings. The assessment undertaken has aimed to be proportionate in detail considering the nature and scale of the proposals applied for.
- 6.3 During the construction phase of the development programme there will be continuous change to the landscape of the site and the views experienced by residents and those moving around the area. It is generally recognised that this is the most disruptive phase of the development. In general terms whilst there will be direct changes to the site itself, such changes will be experienced in the context of the existing A59 road corridor to the north-west. The assessment of effects as set out below seeks to place these changes into the local context rather than focusing on the specifics of the site area.
- 6.4 The changes will be permanent although the maturation of the landscape mitigation measures will assist with the assimilation of the development over time and reinforce the integration of the development with the existing uses that occur along the A59. For the purposes of the assessment, it is considered that the vegetation will be effective in terms of its landscape and visual contribution within 15 years of planting.

Landscape Character Impacts and Effects

Magnitude of Change (Impacts)

- 6.5 The site is influenced by the adjoining A59 road corridor which runs along the north-western edge of the site, the existing built form along the A59 near to the site, and by the visual containment provided by the site boundary vegetation, the roadside trees along the A59, and the ridgeline within the agricultural land to the east.
- 6.6 Residential development is not uncharacteristic within this part of the LCT. The existing agricultural grassland on site will be replaced with built housing development. A short section of hedgerow along the northern boundary of the site will be lost, as well a short section of the internal field boundary hedgerow, to facilitate vehicular access into and through the site. These features that are to be lost as a result of development are characteristic of the LCT but are not rare.
- 6.7 The development proposed will sit adjacent to the settled edge of Mellor Brook to the west, replacing a portion of agricultural land which is commonplace within the landscape. No residential views from Mellor Brook will be interrupted or curtailed. A small number of more distant residential views will experience a change in the composition of their overall view, whereby the development proposed will alter a small part of the middle-ground or background of their view, but the change would be consistent with other components already seen within their wider views.
- 6.8 Public views from the Public Footpaths crossing the site will experience the greatest degree of change in visual context, compared to their existing views, as views across the currently undeveloped field are curtailed and interrupted, and replaced with views of new areas of public open space, tree and shrub planting, with the new housing seen beyond. The location of the proposed built form set back from the routes of the public rights of way will allow for the continued visual amenity of these users to be considered and for the filtering of the proposed development from view.
- 6.9 Longer distance views from the public rights of way to the east and north-west will not be greatly affected by the impacts of the proposed development. This is due to the filtering afforded by the layering up of



intervening field boundary and roadside hedgerows and trees. Where the development will be seen from elevated locations on the public footpath routes to the east of the site (FP55 and FP56), it will sit within a wider view which already contains other elements of built development, such as the Samlesbury BAE Systems site. The woodland vegetation that forms part of the green infrastructure within this part of the Lower Ribble LCA also provides a strong structure of vegetation which the development can sit and be contained within visually.

- 6.10 Whilst there will be a direct loss of a portion of agricultural land to development, the existing hedgerows and trees on the boundaries will all be retained, except for a short section of the hedgerow along the A59 and a short section of the internal field boundary hedgerow which will require removal to facilitate vehicular access into and through the site. The character of the site is currently influenced by the A59 immediately adjoining it and the existing developments that are located nearby. The introduction of new residential development to adjoin the existing settlement edge at Mellor Brook, together with the incorporation of green corridors and open space within the development, will be in keeping with the character of the A59 and the rural periphery of Mellor Brook. The proposed development will be visually well contained by the surrounding intact vegetation structure and further softened by the enhancements proposed to the existing hedgerows and trees.
- 6.11 The provision of a high quality, appropriately scaled housing development that references local uses along the A59 and implements well-designed landscape mitigation and congruent boundary treatments is not considered to be a wholly uncharacteristic addition in this location. The magnitude of change as it relates to the site itself will be **high** due to the permanent loss of the open qualities of the land, and the permanent change to residential use as proposed. However, the magnitude of change when considering the site within its context, within the wider Lower Ribble LCA, is **medium** as the development occupies a relatively small portion of land, will complement the existing uses along the A59 road corridor, and will only result in a localised loss of an area of land exhibiting typical, but not notable, characteristics. The development will not be totally uncharacteristic within the wider landscape given its association with the A59, the proximity of similar uses within Mellor Brook and Mellor, and the strong vegetation structure within which it will be contained. The contribution that the development could make to the characteristics of the landscape would assist in balancing out some of the changes to the landscape brought about by the introduction of new housing within the site.
- 6.12 Overall, the perception or distinctiveness of the wider LCA and LCT would not be compromised. The development would result in localised permanent loss to three commonplace landscape features (small area of agricultural grassland, two ponds and two short sections of hedgerow), and would introduce new residential development that would be noticeable but would not visually dominate the landscape, and that would not be substantially uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape, especially in light of the surrounding built development to the west, the existing employment uses to the north and the scope for mitigation to ensure the development respects the open countryside that surrounds it.

Construction Phase Effects

- 6.13 The site itself will experience **Temporary Major Adverse** effects, as the appearance of construction machinery on site will be inevitably disruptive and will occupy a large proportion of the land on site.
- 6.14 When considered in its wider surroundings however, in terms of the character of the site and its immediate context, the Lower Ribble LCA will experience only a localised change, whereby the introduction of elements and features associated with the construction process are uncharacteristic. The baseline context of the site is one in which construction development is not a typical occurrence at the moment, with no other construction sites within the visual or perceived vicinity of the site. Disruption associated with the construction of the development will last for a temporary period and in the lifetime of the residential development the effects will be short-term, localised and result in **Temporary Moderate Adverse** effects on the Lower Ribble LCA.

Operational Phase Effects

- 6.15 The proposed development will result in a complete change to the site itself, however that change will have a degree of consistency with the existing settlement edge of Mellor Brook to the west, and with the



established character and uses associated with the A59 in this area. The development will also assimilate well with the agricultural landscape that surrounds the site and the A59 through the retention of the existing boundary hedgerows and trees, and through the incorporation of landscape buffers at the outer boundaries to provide visual softening and screening of the new housing, opportunities for landscape enhancements in the form of new native tree and shrub planting, and to provide visual containment.

- 6.16 Given the condition of the boundary vegetation associated with the site, it is considered that this development presents an opportunity to improve and diversify the structural hedgerow and tree stock both in terms of species, and visually.
- 6.17 The impacts on the site itself are considered to result in **Moderate Adverse** effects as the site is changed from a pastoral field to a residential development which considerably alters its landscape character, albeit the new development will be in keeping with the character of the settlement edge of Mellor Brook and the character of the A59 with which it is intended to be associated in line with policy requirements (Policy EC1).
- 6.18 The impacts on the landscape character of the site within the context of the Lower Ribble LCA are considered to result in **Moderate-Minor Adverse** effects however as only a small proportion of the landscape character area will be changed, no fundamentally defining features will be lost (a small area of privately owned agricultural land and short sections of boundary hedgerows only), and those features that will change will be compensated for (with new soft landscaping intended to protect the remaining pastoral and arable landscape beyond the site boundaries, to diversify the open space retained and created within the site and new recreational links provided to connect with the wider PRow network). The new development will not be wholly uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape (given the influence the adjoining A59 has over the site, its edge of town location, and the presence of existing development elsewhere along the same stretch of road), will affect a only limited geographical area in relation to the wider LCA (as it is confined to the site boundaries and is not readily visible from a wide area as demonstrated within Section 3 of this report), and will not be readily visible from the majority of the public footpath network that traverses the LCA (again as demonstrated within Section 3 of this report).
- 6.19 The soft landscape mitigation and enhancement proposals will ensure that the development is well contained within a strong landscape structure and is perceived as visually softened. In this sense, although a small number of features of the LCA will change, within two fields, overall, the change will not be a notable one within the context of the distinct character of the Lower Ribble LCA. Effects will be noticed immediately upon completion, but over time with the establishment of the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, the new housing development will appear appropriate at the periphery of Mellor Brook, and along the A59, maintaining the existing landscape character and quality of the LCA both immediately surrounding the site and in the wider vicinity.
- 6.20 The following table summarises the findings described above:



Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change (Impacts)			Construction Phase Effects	Operational Phase Effects
		Scale	Geographical Extent	Duration of Change and Reversibility		
Site (landscape features within the site and the overall character of the site itself)	Medium	Low –changes to the landscape character within the site with very limited change to the area surrounding the site.	High – Intensive change over a localised area	High - Long term; permanent	Temporary major adverse	Moderate adverse on completion
		The site is influenced by the adjoining A59 road corridor which runs along the north-western edge of the site, the existing built form along the A59 near to the site, and by the visual containment provided by the site boundary vegetation, the roadside trees along the A59, and the ridgeline within the agricultural land to the east. The magnitude of change as it relates to the site itself will be high overall due to the permanent loss of the open qualities of the land, and the permanent change to residential use as proposed. But in terms of landscape features within the site, there will be a net minor beneficial change as the landscape features retained will be improved in terms of their condition, diversity, function, and quantity. Overall, the character of the site will still be adversely affected at Year 15 due to the inevitable loss of an open area of land, despite the localised improvements to the retained landscape features within it as they become established over time.				
Lower Ribble LCA	Medium	Low - Minor loss or alteration to the grassland and trees within the site which do not form a fundamental component of the existing wider LCA. Minor loss of field boundary hedgerows within the site.	Low - Minor changes in a localised area	High – Long term; permanent	Temporary moderate Adverse	Moderate to minor adverse on completion
		The magnitude of change when considering the site within its landscape context, within the Lower Ribble LCA is medium as the development occupies a relatively small portion of land,				



		will complement the A59 corridor and the existing uses along it, and will only result in a localised loss of an area of land exhibiting typical, but not notable, characteristics. The operational development will not be totally uncharacteristic within the wider landscape given its association with the A59, the proximity of similar uses along the A59, and the strong vegetation structure within which it will be contained. Overall, the perception or distinctiveness of the wider LCA would not be compromised. The development would result in localised permanent loss to three commonplace landscape features (small area of agricultural grassland, two ponds and two short sections of hedgerow), and would introduce residential development that would be noticeable but would not visually dominate the landscape, and that would not be substantially uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape. Over time, the establishment of the proposed soft landscaping within the site will further assist the development to appear in keeping with the A59 corridor, and to contain the development physically and visually from the wider agricultural landscape to the east and west.		
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Visual Impacts and Effects

6.23 See **Plan 8: Receptor Locations** for references of where the receptor groups listed below are in relation to the site.

Plan 8: Receptor Locations

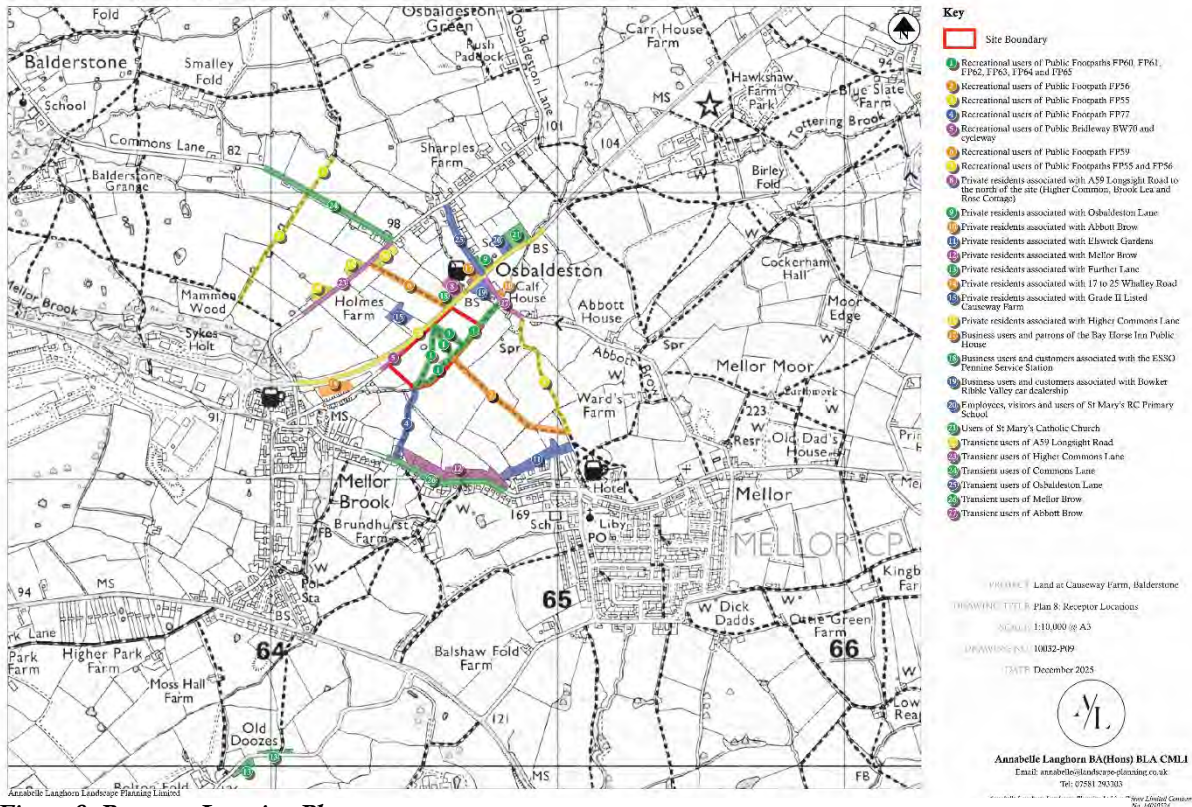


Figure 8: Receptor Location Plan

6.24 The following table sets out the visual impacts judged to be experienced by the visual receptors identified:

Visual Receptor and Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change (Impacts)	Construction Phase Effects	Operation Phase Effects on completion	Operation Phase Effects at Year 15
RECREATIONAL				
Users of Public Footpaths FP60, FP61, FP62, FP63, FP64 and FP65 crossing the site High sensitivity	High	Temporary major adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate to minor adverse
Users of Public Footpaths FP55 and FP56 to the south-east of the site High sensitivity	High to Medium	Temporary moderate adverse	Moderate to Minor adverse	Minor adverse



Visual Receptor and Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change (Impacts)	Construction Phase Effects	Operation Phase Effects on completion	Operation Phase Effects at Year 15
Users of Public Footpath FP77 to the south of the site High sensitivity	Medium to Low	Temporary minor adverse	Moderate to Minor adverse	Minor adverse
Recreational users of Public Bridleway BW70 to the north-west of the site High sensitivity	Medium	Temporary moderate adverse	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
Recreational users of the cycleway to the north-west of the site High sensitivity	Medium	Temporary moderate adverse	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
Recreational users of Public Footpath FP59 to the north of the site High sensitivity	Medium	Temporary moderate adverse	Moderate to minor adverse	Minor adverse
Recreational users of Public Footpaths FP55 and FP56 to the north-west of the site High sensitivity	Low	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse	Minor adverse to neutral
PRIVATE RESIDENTS				
Private residents associated with A59 Longsight Road to the north of the site (Higher Common, Brook Lea and Rose Cottage) Medium sensitivity	Medium	Temporary moderate to minor adverse	Moderate to minor adverse	Minor adverse
Private residents associated with Osbaldeston Lane to the north of the site Medium sensitivity	Low to Negligible	Temporary Minor adverse	Neutral	Neutral



Visual Receptor and Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change (Impacts)	Construction Phase Effects	Operation Phase Effects on completion	Operation Phase Effects at Year 15
Private residents associated with Abbott Brow to the north-east of the site Medium sensitivity	Low	Temporary Minor adverse	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
Private residents associated with Elswick Gardens to the south-east of the site Medium sensitivity	Low to negligible	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse to neutral	Neutral
Private residents associated with Mellor Brow to the south-east of the site Medium sensitivity	Low to negligible	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse to neutral	Neutral
Private residents associated with Further Lane to the south-west of the site Medium sensitivity	Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Private residents associated with 17 to 25 Whalley Road to the south-west of the site Medium sensitivity	Low	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse to neutral	Neutral
Private residents associated with the Grade II Listed Causeway Farm to the north-west of the site High sensitivity	High to medium	Temporary moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate to Minor adverse



Visual Receptor and Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change (Impacts)	Construction Phase Effects	Operation Phase Effects on completion	Operation Phase Effects at Year 15
Private residents associated with Higher Commons Lane to the north-west of the site Medium sensitivity	Medium to low	Temporary moderate to minor adverse	Moderate to minor adverse	Minor adverse
USERS OF LOCAL BUSINESSES AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS				
Users and patrons of the Bay Horse Inn Public House on Longsight Road to the north of the site Low sensitivity	Medium	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse to neutral	Minor adverse to neutral
Users and customers associated with the ESSO Pennine Service Station to the north of the site Low sensitivity	High to Medium	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse	Minor adverse to Neutral
Users and customers associated with Bowker Ribble Valley car dealership to the north-east of the site Low sensitivity	High to Medium	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse	Minor adverse to Neutral
Employees, visitors, and users of St Mary's RC Primary School to the north-east of the site Low sensitivity	Low to Negligible	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse to neutral	Neutral
Users of St Mary's Catholic Church to the north-east of the site Low sensitivity	Low to Negligible	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse to neutral	Neutral
USERS OF LOCAL ROADS				
Transient users of A59 Longsight Road to the north-west of the site	High to medium	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse to neutral	Neutral



Visual Receptor and Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change (Impacts)	Construction Phase Effects	Operation Phase Effects on completion	Operation Phase Effects at Year 15
Transient users of Higher Commons Lane to the north-west of the site Low sensitivity	Low	Temporary minor adverse to neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Transient users of Commons Lane to the north-west of the site Low sensitivity	Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Transient users of Osbaldeston Lane to the north of the site Low sensitivity	Low to negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Transient users of Mellor Brow to the south of the site Low sensitivity	Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Transient users of Abbott Brow to the north-east of the site Low sensitivity	Low	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
AGRICULTURAL USERS				
Agricultural users associated with Causeway Farm to the north-west of the site. Low sensitivity	Medium	Temporary minor adverse	Minor adverse to neutral	Neutral



Section 7: Conclusion

- 7.1 When considering the landscape and visual effects of development it is important to recognise that any change to a greenfield site will result in adverse landscape and visual effects. The extent of the effects and degree of conformance with the local context need to be taken into consideration. In addition, the effects need to be put in the planning balance with all other economic, social, and environmental effects of the development.
- 7.2 Within published character documentation, the site is identified with Lower Ribble LCA within the Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment. The fieldwork undertaken has confirmed that the only landscape features present within the site that are characteristic of the Lower Ribble LCA are the field boundary hedgerows. These are currently gappy and overgrown in places, and they would benefit from management and enhancement in order to improve their condition and the contribution they make the wider landscape character of the LCA. The site is influenced by the adjoining A59 road corridor which runs along the north-western edge of the site, the existing built form along the A59 near to the site, and by the visual containment provided by the site boundary vegetation, the roadside trees along the A59, and the ridgeline within the agricultural land to the east.
- 7.3 The perception or distinctiveness of the wider LCA and LCT would not be compromised as a result of the residential development proposed. The development would result in localised permanent loss to two commonplace landscape features (small area of agricultural grassland and two short sections of hedgerow), and would introduce housing development that would be noticeable but would not visually dominate the landscape, and that would not be substantially uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape, especially in light of the surrounding built development to the west, the existing development along the A59 to the north and the scope for mitigation to ensure the development respects the open countryside that surrounds it.
- 7.4 The impacts on the landscape character of the site within the context of the Lower Ribble LCA are considered to result in **minor adverse effects** as only a very small proportion of the landscape character area will be changed, no fundamentally defining features will be lost, and those features that will change will be compensated for. This also reflects the localised improvements that the development proposed will make to the landscape features retained within the site, which include improvements to the condition of the existing hedgerows, the introduction of new hedgerow trees, and the introduction of site wide soft landscaping which will be characteristic of the agricultural fringe location of the site.
- 7.5 The development will be visible within a limited visual envelope geographically and for a relatively small number of potential visual receptors. Importantly, the visual context is such that when the site is visible, it is viewed through the filtering effect of the site boundary vegetation. The site is well contained by its own boundary vegetation but parts of the boundaries are less intact which affords greater intervisibility with the surrounding landscape to the north and north-west. There are no views within which the site is seen as an important component of the landscape in its current usage, and even for the more sensitive of visual receptors, the development of the site would still not result in the loss of any important scenic qualities or valued visual features. No residential views from Mellor Brook will be interrupted or curtailed. A small number of more distant residential views will experience a change in the composition of their overall view, whereby the development proposed will alter a small part of the middle-ground or background of their view, but the change would be consistent with other components already seen within their wider views.
- 7.6 The most significant visual effects will be experienced by the recreational users of the public footpaths which cross the site where there will be **moderate adverse effects** experienced, as a result of the direct, close proximity views of the new dwellings once the development is completed. These effects will reduce to **moderate to minor adverse** after 15 years once the proposed soft landscaping has matured, as there will then be intervening vegetation to filter and screen views of the built development, and new areas of public open space will form the focus of foreground views.



- 7.7 Largely **minor adverse or neutral effects** will be experienced by other identified receptors.
- 7.8 Both the landscape and visual effects are limited in geographic extent, and all effects are therefore localised to the site and its immediate context, affecting only a small number of private residents, users of a small number of nearby Public Footpaths, and the users of the A59 to the immediate north-west of the site. Whilst the site occupies open agricultural land, a sensitive design response, with legible Green Infrastructure connections and a commitment to the retention and enhancement of existing landscape features will create a new development that relates well to the A59 and to Mellow Brook and Mellor, and is visually and physically contained to separate it from the wider agricultural landscape. Some localised adverse effects will arise; however, the proposed development approach demonstrates how the development can address policy objectives without harming the wider character area.



Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone
Landscape & Visual Appraisal
December 2025
Ref: 10032-R01

Appendix 1: Methodology for Landscape & Visual Appraisal



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment/Appraisal Methodology

Introduction

This report has been undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance and following the Landscape Institute and IEMA guidelines, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013 (GLVIA3).

The appraisal/assessment of landscape and visual impacts and effects are not based on hard and fast rules. A judgement process, using narrative to fully explain the reasoning behind the judgements made is a key part of the process, which is set out in full within this report. Within this methodology however, a series of tables are included which provide the reader with more detail and definitions relating to the assessment of sensitivity, magnitude of change, and significance of effect.

The conclusions reached about the sensitivity of receptors, the magnitude of change (impacts) and the significance of the resulting effects are always based on professional judgement.

The key terms used within assessments are:

- Susceptibility and Value – Which contribute to Sensitivity;
- Scale, Geographical Extent, Duration and Reversibility – which contribute to the Magnitude of change; and
- Significance of Effect – a judgement of the level of significance of effect when Sensitivity and Magnitude are combined.

Sensitivity

Overall sensitivity lies along a continuum of low to high. The Value and Susceptibility of a receptor are both considered in order to ascertain its overall sensitivity. In the case of landscape receptors, reference is normally made to the most recent relevant published Landscape Character Assessments.

Susceptibility

Susceptibility is assessed both for landscape receptors (including landscape designations and character areas) and for visual receptors (people). It indicates the ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the proposed development “*without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.*” (GLVIA, 3rd version, para 5.40). An example of how Susceptibility can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the following tables below for both landscape and visual receptors.

Value

Landscape Value is “*the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society*” (GLVIA, 3rd version, page 157). Box 5.1 (GLVIA 3rd version, page 84) sets out factors to be considered in the identification of valued landscapes and this has been supported by the guidance set out within the Landscape Institutes Technical Guidance Note 02/21 ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’. The factors influencing landscape value can be broadly described as: Landscapes recognised and valued for their quality and and/or cultural associations; key characteristics and features as recognised in published landscape character assessments; Landscape constrictions and the degree to which the landscape is intact and legible.

In visual terms, Value relates to that attached to views experienced by receptors (people) – this is typically influenced by scenic qualities of the view, a view being identified as forming part of a specific viewing spot, or one which has been locally noted to form a key role as part of a settlement, route, or experience. Certain views are highly valued for either their cultural or historical associations, which can increase the sensitivity of the



viewer. However, whilst a valued view may serve to increase the overall visual receptor sensitivity, a low value will not necessarily reduce sensitivity.

GLVIA3 advises that it is helpful to consider (but not be restricted to) the following:

- Nature of the view (full, partial or glimpsed);
- Proportion of the proposed development visible (full, most, part or none);
- Distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development and whether it would be the focus of the view or only a small element;
- Whether the view is stationary, transient or sequential; and
- The nature of the changes to the view.

Additionally, the seasonal effects of vegetation are considered, in particular the varying degree of screening and filtering of views.

Magnitude of Change

Overall magnitude of change lies along a continuum of low to high. Together the scale, geographical extent, and duration and reversibility of effect are all considered in understanding the overall Magnitude of change.

- Scale of effect is assessed for both landscape and visual receptors and identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development.
- Geographical Extent of effect is assessed for both landscape and visual receptors and indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt.
- Duration and Reversibility of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development.

Effects

Landscape effects can be defined as the changes in the character and quality of the landscape as a result of a development, through:

- The impact on the landscape fabric (changes the development may cause to specific features and elements that make up the landscape);
- The impact on the overall patterns of elements and on the perceptual and aesthetic aspects that give rise to landscape character and regional and local distinctiveness; and
- The impact on valued landscapes such as public open space, designated landscapes or otherwise valued landscapes including wild land.

Visual effects relate to changes in available views of the landscape and the effect of those changes on people, including:

- the immediate impact of the Proposed Development on the content and character of views (e.g. through intrusion or obstruction and / or the change or loss of existing elements in a specific view); and
- the broader impact considering the overall change in visual amenity enjoyed by receptors in the area.

Best practice guidelines stipulate that the level of any landscape or visual effect should be evaluated, both during the construction works and following completion of the development. The level of any landscape and visual effect is a function of the sensitivity of the affected landscape resources and visual receptors against the magnitude of change that they would experience. As such, the assessment of potential and residual effects can be described as: negligible, minor, moderate, or major.

The following terms are used to define residual landscape/townscape effects:

- Adverse: the proposed development may result in direct loss of physical landscape/townscape resources, weaken key characteristics or negatively affect the integrity of a landscape/townscape designation; and
- Beneficial: the proposed development may replace poor quality elements of the existing landscape/townscape or strengthen existing landscape/townscape characteristics.



The following terms are used to define residual visual effects:

- Adverse: the proposed development reduces visual amenity; and
- Beneficial: the visual amenity is improved by the proposed development.

Appraisal/Assessment Criteria Tables

Landscape Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the landscape receptors has been arrived at by considering the landscape receptor value and the susceptibility of the landscape receptor to the change proposed.

Susceptibility and value can be combined in different ways although it is generally accepted that a combination of high susceptibility and high value is likely to result in the highest sensitivity, whereas a low susceptibility and low value is likely to result in the lowest level of sensitivity. As noted in GLVIA3 there can be complex relationships between the value attributed to a landscape and its susceptibility to change, which can be particularly important when considering change in or close to designated landscapes.

Landscapes considered highly susceptible to the proposed change are normally considered to be of high sensitivity unless there are particularly strong reasons associated with the landscape value that lead to a reduction in sensitivity. Similarly, receptors considered to be of low or medium susceptibility are usually in the same category of sensitivity, unless there are reasons associated with the landscape value that lead to an increase in sensitivity.

The overall sensitivity generally follows the definitions set out in the table below. It should be noted that the levels are indicative, and the levels shown are arbitrary divisions of a continuum. Professional judgement is always used to determine the overall level.

LEVEL OF SENSITIVITY	TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS
HIGH	Areas of landscape character that are highly valued for their scenic quality (including most statutorily designated landscapes); Elements/features that could be described as distinctive, unique or are nationally scarce; Distinct landscape structure with strong pattern and intact features; Mature vegetation with provenance such as ancient woodland or mature parkland trees; Mature landscape features which are dominant within the landscape and fundamental to defining the distinct landscape character of an area. Features which are characteristic of and contribute to a sense of place and illustrate time-depth in a landscape and if replaceable, could not be replaced other than in the long term; Important characteristics and features recognised as forming an intrinsic part of a nationally or regionally designated landscape; and/or Few detractors or uncharacteristic features or elements present. The landscape is such that changes in terms of the proposed development would be entirely at odds with its character, related to matters of pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.
MEDIUM	Areas that have a positive landscape character but include some areas of alteration/degradation/or erosion of features; Locally important and notable features that contribute to the overall character of an area; Perceptual/aesthetic aspects has some vulnerability to unsympathetic development; and/or features/elements that are locally commonplace; unusual locally but in moderate/poor condition; or mature vegetation that is in moderate/poor condition or readily replicated.



	Some scope for substitution or positive enhancement – the proposed development is somewhat consistent with the existing scale, pattern, grain, and/or land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.
LOW	Damaged or substantially modified landscapes with few characteristic features of value; Features or elements that are uncharacteristic and detract from the landscape character of an area such as obtrusive man-made artefacts (e.g. power lines, large scale developments, etc); Degraded landscape structure with fragmented pattern and poor legibility of character Capable of absorbing major change – the proposed development is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass, and/or there is scope for substitution or positive enhancement.
NEGLIGIBLE	Areas that are relatively bland or neutral in character with few/no notable features; A landscape that includes areas of alteration/degradation or erosion of features; and/or Landscape elements/features that are common place or make little contribution to local distinctiveness. Opportunities for the restoration of landscape through mitigation measures associated with the proposal.

Visual Sensitivity

The sensitivity of a visual receptor reflects their susceptibility to change and any values which may be associated with the specific view. It varies depending on a number of factors such as the activity of the viewer, their reasons for being there and their expectations and the duration of view.

As with landscape, susceptibility and value can be combined in different ways to form a judgement about the sensitivity of a given receptor. It is generally accepted that a combination of high susceptibility and high value is likely to result in the highest sensitivity, whereas a low susceptibility and low value is likely to result in the lowest level of sensitivity.

However, whilst a valued view may serve to increase the overall sensitivity of the visual receptor, a low value will not necessarily reduce sensitivity. Visual receptors considered highly susceptible to the proposed change are normally considered to be of high sensitivity unless there are particularly strong reasons associated with the value of the view that lead to a reduction in sensitivity.

Similarly, receptors considered of low or medium susceptibility are usually in the same category of sensitivity, unless there are reasons associated with the value of the view that lead to an increase in sensitivity.

The overall sensitivity generally follows the definitions set out in the table below. It should be noted that the levels are indicative, and the levels shown are arbitrary divisions of a continuum.

LEVEL OF SENSITIVITY	TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS
HIGH	A view or overall visual amenity which is an important reason for receptors being there (and therefore most views or overall visual amenity for highly susceptible receptors). A well balanced view containing attractive features and notable for its scenic quality. A view which is experienced by a large number of people and/ or recognised for its scenic qualities. (e.g. residents at home, users of public rights of way, users of footpaths where the attractive nature of the countryside is a significant factor in the enjoyment of the route, cyclists on national and local cycle routes designed to provide an attractive experience, road users on recognised tourist/scenic routes, visitors to landscape and heritage resources and attractions where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to their appreciation, experience or enjoyment). The visual composition following the development as proposed will include discordant and incongruent elements.



MEDIUM

A view or overall visual amenity which plays a relatively small part in the reason why a receptor would be there (and therefore most views or overall visual amenity for receptors of medium susceptibility).

An otherwise attractive view that includes noticeable discordant features or overall visual amenity where there are noticeable visual detractors.

(e.g. general road users, passengers on rail lines where the trains run at low or moderate speeds, users of public open space and footpaths where the nature of the surroundings is not a significant factor in the enjoyment of the space/activity, visitors to landscape and heritage resources and attractions where views of the surroundings are a minor contributor to their appreciation, experience and/or enjoyment).

The visual composition following the development as proposed will be consistent with the baseline situation although some aspects may be at odds with the visual composition.

LOW

A view or overall visual amenity which is unlikely to be part of the receptor's experience or reasons for being there (and therefore most views or overall visual amenity for receptors of low susceptibility).

An unattractive view or overall visual amenity where there are many visual detractors.

(e.g. people at their place of work or shopping, users of high speed roads and passengers on railway lines running at high speed, people engaged in recreational activities where the view of the surroundings is secondary to the enjoyment of the activity such as outdoor sports, user of public open space and footpaths where the nature of the surroundings is irrelevant to the enjoyment of the activity)

The visual composition following the development as proposed will be in harmony with the existing composition.

NEGLECTIBLE

A view or overall visual amenity which is irrelevant to the receptor's experience or reasons for being there.

(e.g. users of indoor facilities where the view is irrelevant to their activity)

The visual composition following the development as proposed will make no difference to the users existing visual context or experience.

Magnitude of Change (Impacts)

The magnitude of change described within this report generally follows the definitions set out in the table below. It should be noted that the levels are indicative, and the levels shown are arbitrary divisions of a continuum.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE JUSTIFICATION

HIGH

Total loss or major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline (existing) landscape or view, and/or the introduction of totally uncharacteristic elements with the receiving landscape.

MEDIUM

Partial loss of or alteration to one of more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that may be prominent but not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.

LOW

Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.

NEGLECTIBLE

Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the existing landscape or view and/or the introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape – approximating the 'no change' situation.



Level of Effect

The level of effect will vary depending on the circumstances, the type and scale of development proposed, the baseline context and other factors. Professional judgement is used to combine sensitivity and magnitude to gauge the level of effect and determine whether it is significant or not.

The gradations of magnitude of change and level of effect used in the assessment represent a continuum on a four-point scale: major; moderate; minor; and negligible. Where appropriate, this assessment uses intermediate descriptors, such as minor to negligible, minor to moderate or moderate to major, where the assessor considers that the effect falls between the levels set out below.

Effects can be either beneficial or adverse and, in some cases, neutral.

The level of effect described within this report generally follows the definitions set out in the table below. It should be noted that the levels are indicative, and the levels shown are arbitrary divisions of a continuum.

LEVEL OF EFFECT	JUSTIFICATION
MAJOR	Total permanent loss or major alteration to key elements and features of the landscape, to include the introduction of elements totally uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape. Development would be visually intrusive and would disrupt fine and valued views both into and across the area (adverse). Fitting well with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, and enhance the existing landscape character. The development would create a highly improved change in views (beneficial).
MODERATE	Effects that are at variance with some of the landscape characteristics, adversely affecting the character (adverse), or fitting well with the landscape characteristics but changing their emphasis for improvement (beneficial).
MINOR	Not quite fitting the characteristics of the landscape (but not considered uncharacteristic) or have local/limited scale adverse impact (adverse), or locally improving or adding to the quality of the landscape (beneficial).
NEUTRAL	Complementing the landscape characteristics and maintaining the existing landscape character and quality.



Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone
Landscape & Visual Appraisal
December 2025
Ref: 10032-R01

Appendix 2: Landscape Masterplan

Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone

LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN



This plan sets out the indicative approach to the soft landscaping treatments proposed at Causeway Farm. The landscaping principles shown relate to the intended overarching themes and functions of the proposed soft landscaping. The specific locations, planting species, densities and sizes would all be subject to detailed design and would be detailed as such to ensure no conflicts between existing or proposed utilities, building foundations or other technical constraints. The purpose of this plan is to indicate broad planting principles, to illustrate the intended approach to landscape mitigation and enhancements across the site, and to enable agreement of the general landscaping approach with the local planning authority.

Please Note: This Landscape Masterplan is based on an Illustrative Layout only - the specific site layout is subject to change but it is anticipated that the proposed landscape themes and functions could function successfully on an alternative development layout for the site.

Key to Landscape Proposals

- 1 Open areas of species rich grassland, meadow seeding and scattered native trees with existing ponds retained and enhanced
- 2 Native scrub and mixed shrub planting
- 3 Retained and enhanced ponds
- 4 Native hedgerow planting, including new hedgerow trees to retained hedgerows
- 5 Flower rich hedgerow margins
- 6 Play area

Indicative Planting Palette

Native Amenity Tree Planting



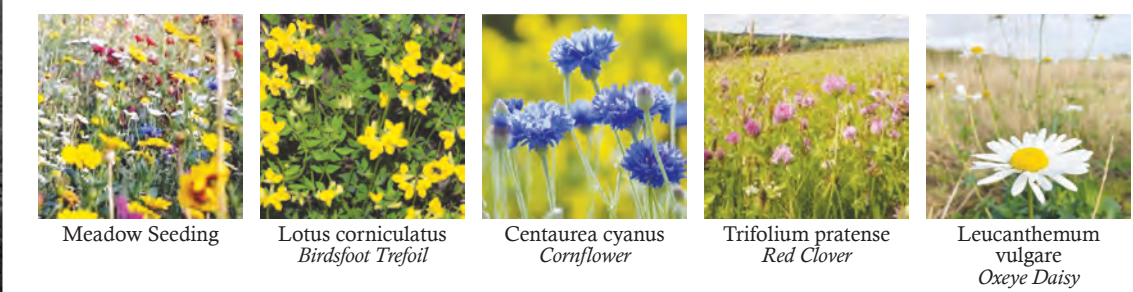
Native Hedgerow Planting



Mixed Scrub



Wildflower areas within Grassland



Proposed Landscape Treatments

Outer Edges of Development
The soft landscaping approach is to retain the existing vegetation as far as possible, improve its condition by gapping up and replanting to increase species and age diversity, and strengthen its visual screening properties through additional scrub, shrub and tree planting.

Public Open Spaces and Footpath Routes
The retained and rerouted public footpaths within the site will be set within open spaces that will consist of a varied arrangement of meadow and grassland, native scrub and shrub planting, tree copses and specimen tree planting.

PROJECT Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone
DRAWING TITLE Landscape Masterplan
SCALE NOT TO SCALE
DRAWING NO. 10032-P01
DATE December 2025



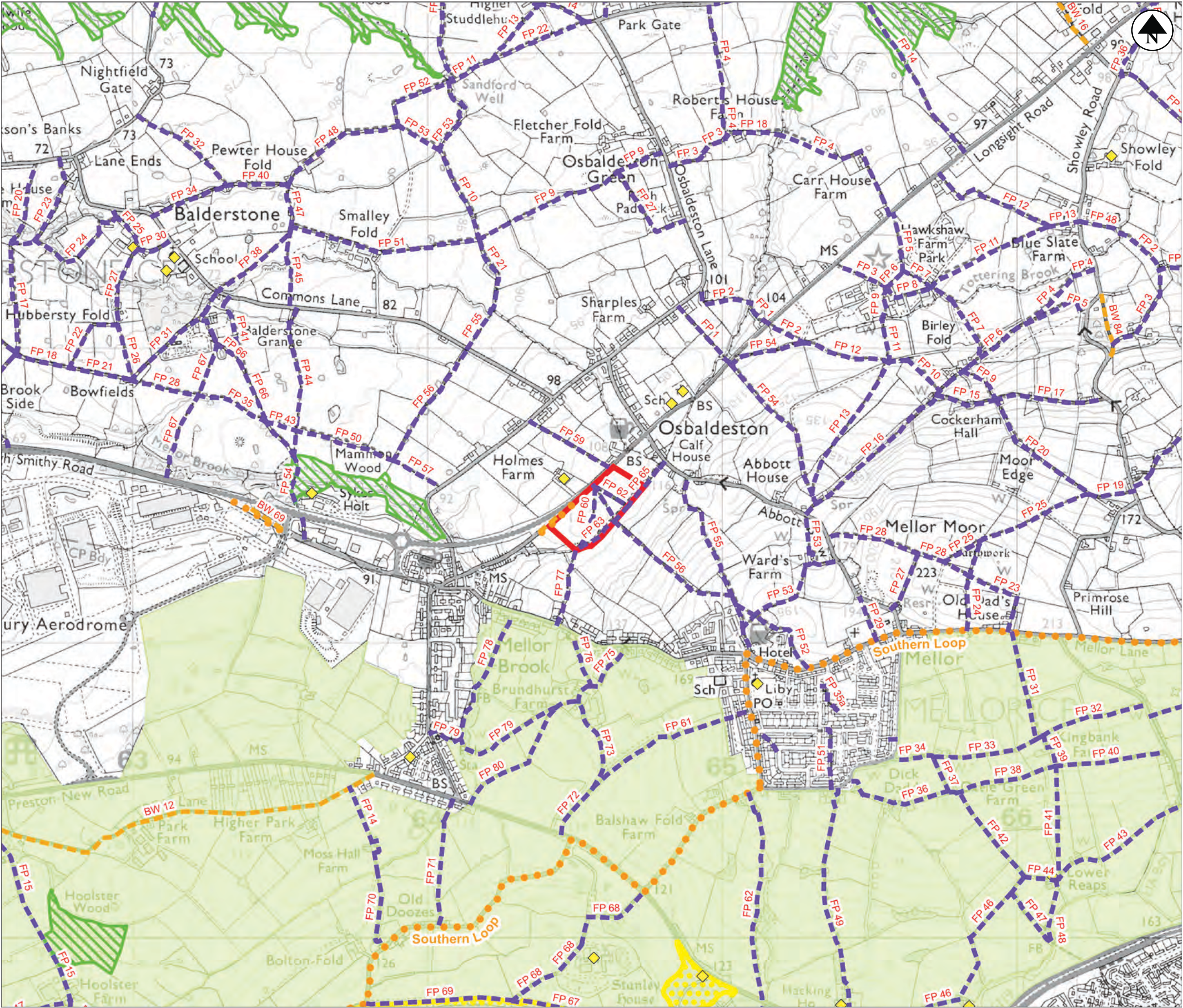
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Plans

Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone
Landscape & Visual Appraisal
December 2025
Ref: 10032-R01

Plan 1: Landscape Context



Key

- Site Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Ancient Woodland England
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Green Belt
- Cycle Routes
- Public Rights of Way**
- Bridleway
- Footpath

PROJECT Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone

DRAWING TITLE Plan 1: Landscape Context

SCALE 1:12,500 @ A3

DRAWING NO. 10032-P02

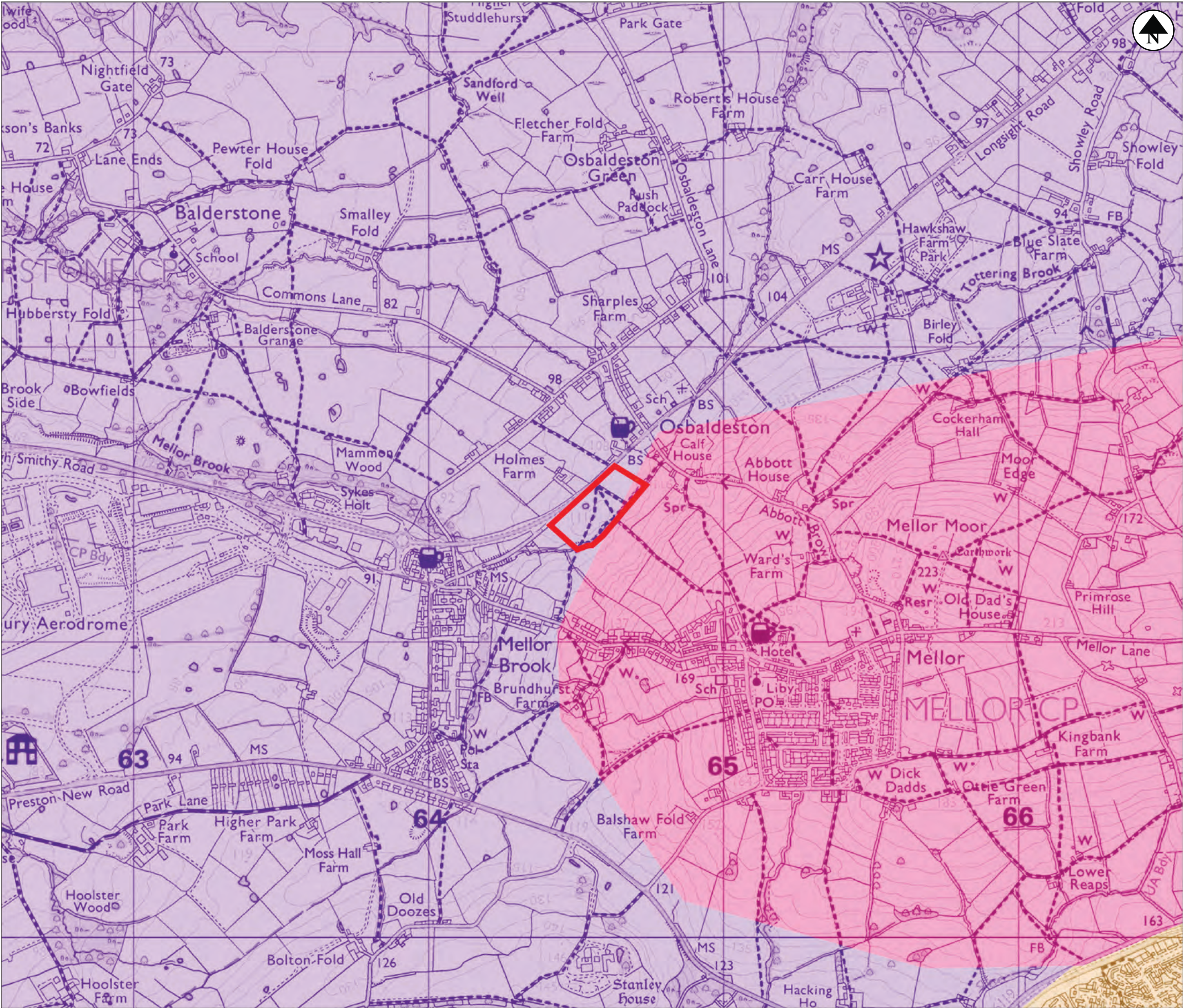
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Plan 2: Landscape Character



Key

Site Boundary

Landscape Character Types

Farmed Ridges

Suburban

Undulating Lowland Farmland

PROJECT Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone

DRAWING TITLE Plan 2: Landscape Character

SCALE 1:12,500 @ A3

DRAWING NO. 10032-P03

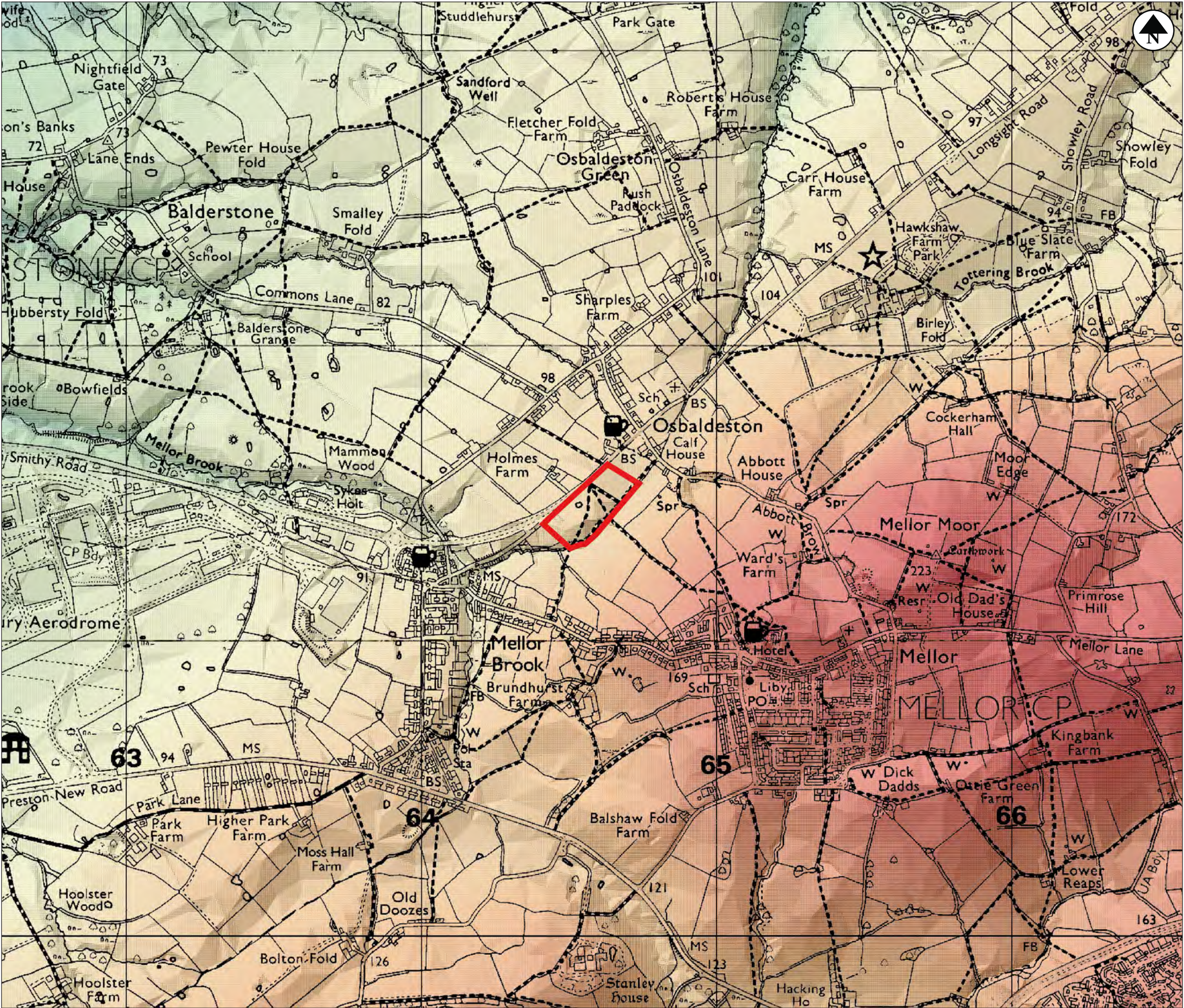
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Plan 3: Topography



Key

Site Boundary

Height Above Ordnance Survey Datum

245.86m

11.47m

This plan has been modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) using Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data and LiDAR open source data.

PROJECT Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone

DRAWING TITLE Plan 3: Topography

SCALE 1:12,500 @ A3

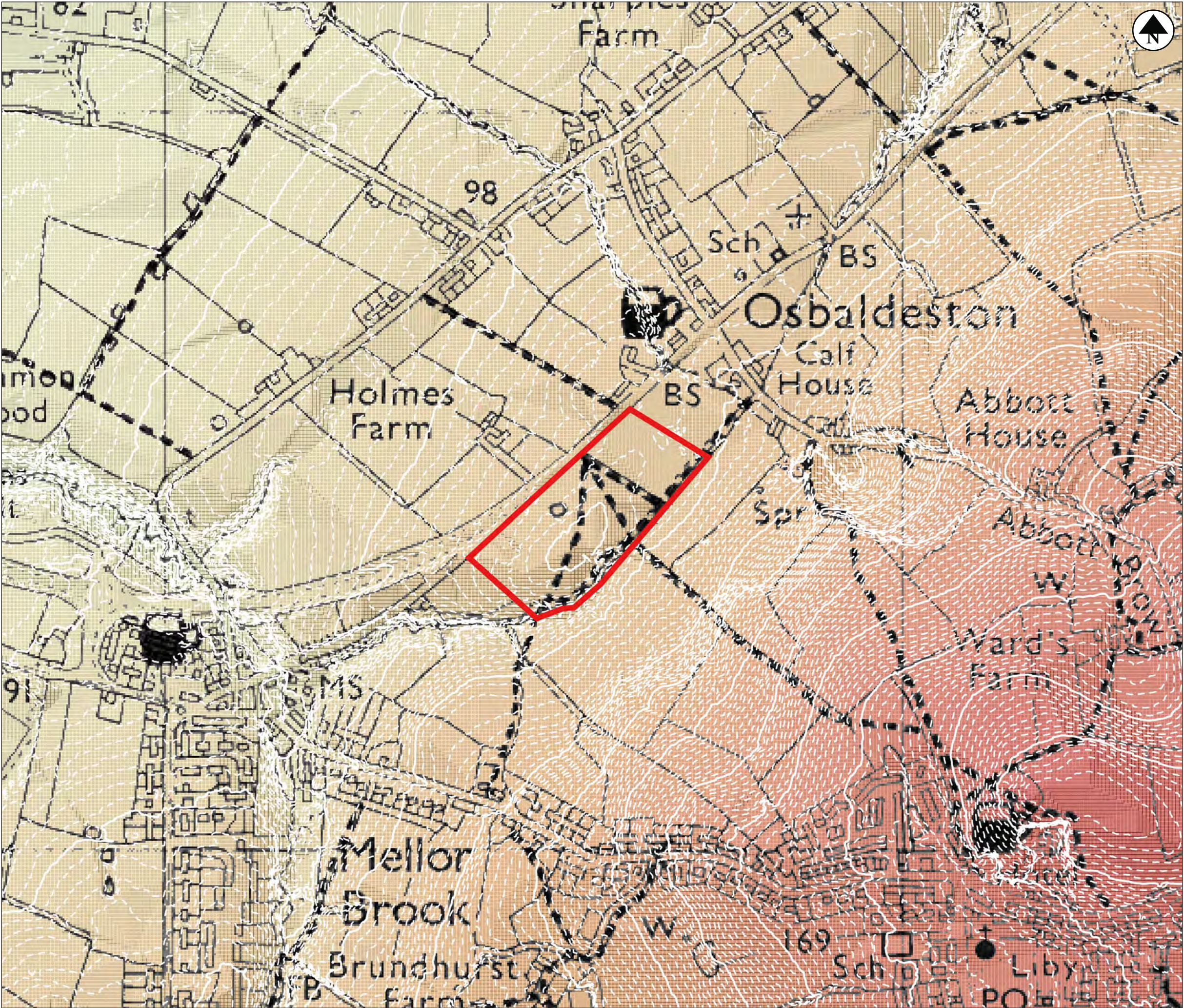
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Plan 4: Site Topography



Key

Site Boundary

Height Above Ordnance Survey Datum

245.86m

11.47m

Height Contours

10m contour intervals

10m contour intervals

This plan has been modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) using Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data and LiDAR open source data.

PROJECT Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone

DRAWING TITLE Plan 4: Site Topography

SCALE 1:5,000 @ A3

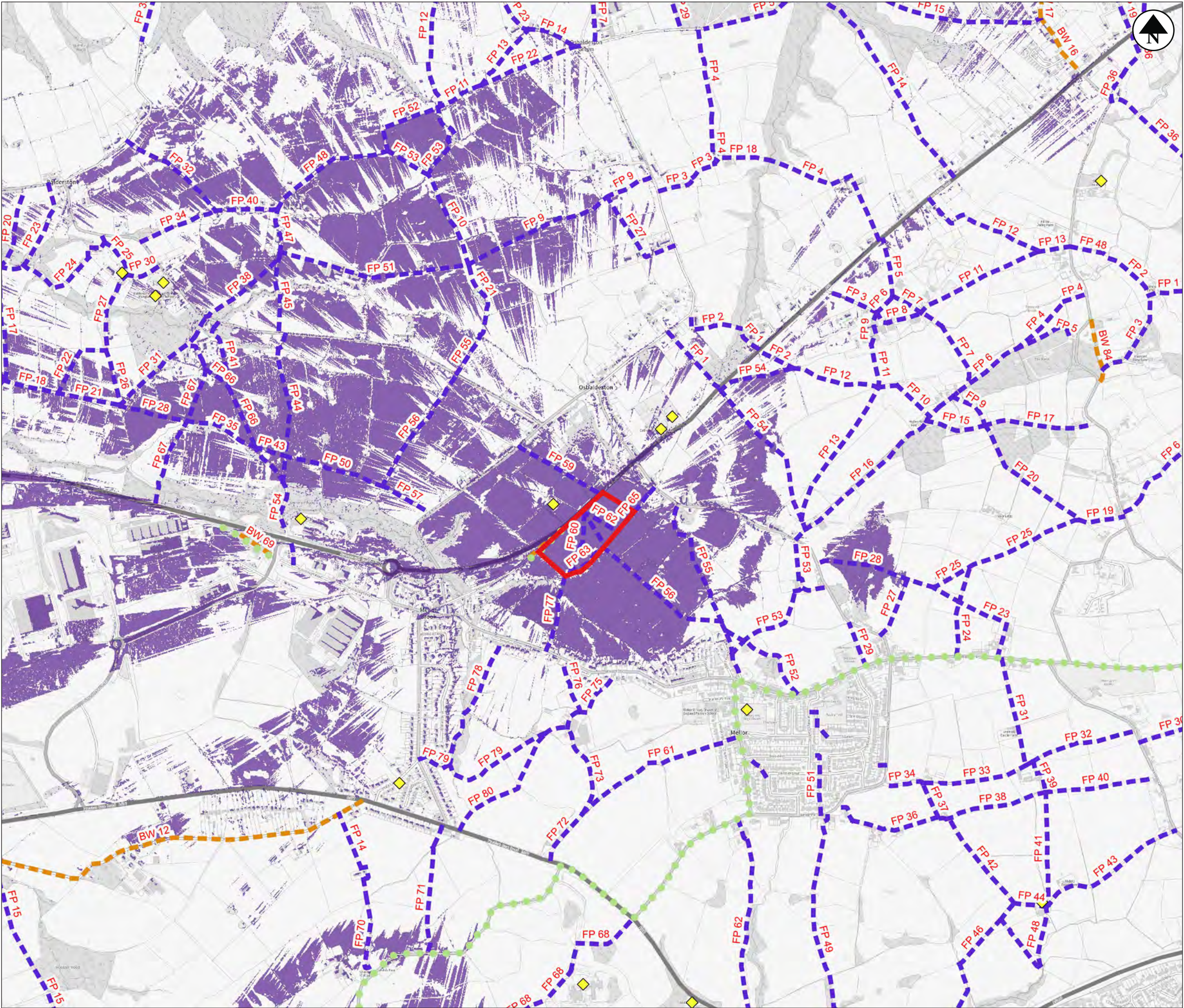
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Plan 5: GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility



Key

- Site Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Cycle Routes
- Public Rights of Way**
- Bridleway
- Footpath
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates the extent to which the proposed built form on site (based on the development proposals) is potentially visible within a 5km radius (to a 1.6m high receptor). The ZTV has been modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) and LiDAR DSM data, and as such, it takes into account existing built form or vegetation present within the landscape surrounding the site. Field verification is required to refine the accuracy of the ZTV.

PROJECT Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone

DRAWING TITLE Plan 5: GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility

SCALE 1:12,500 @ A3

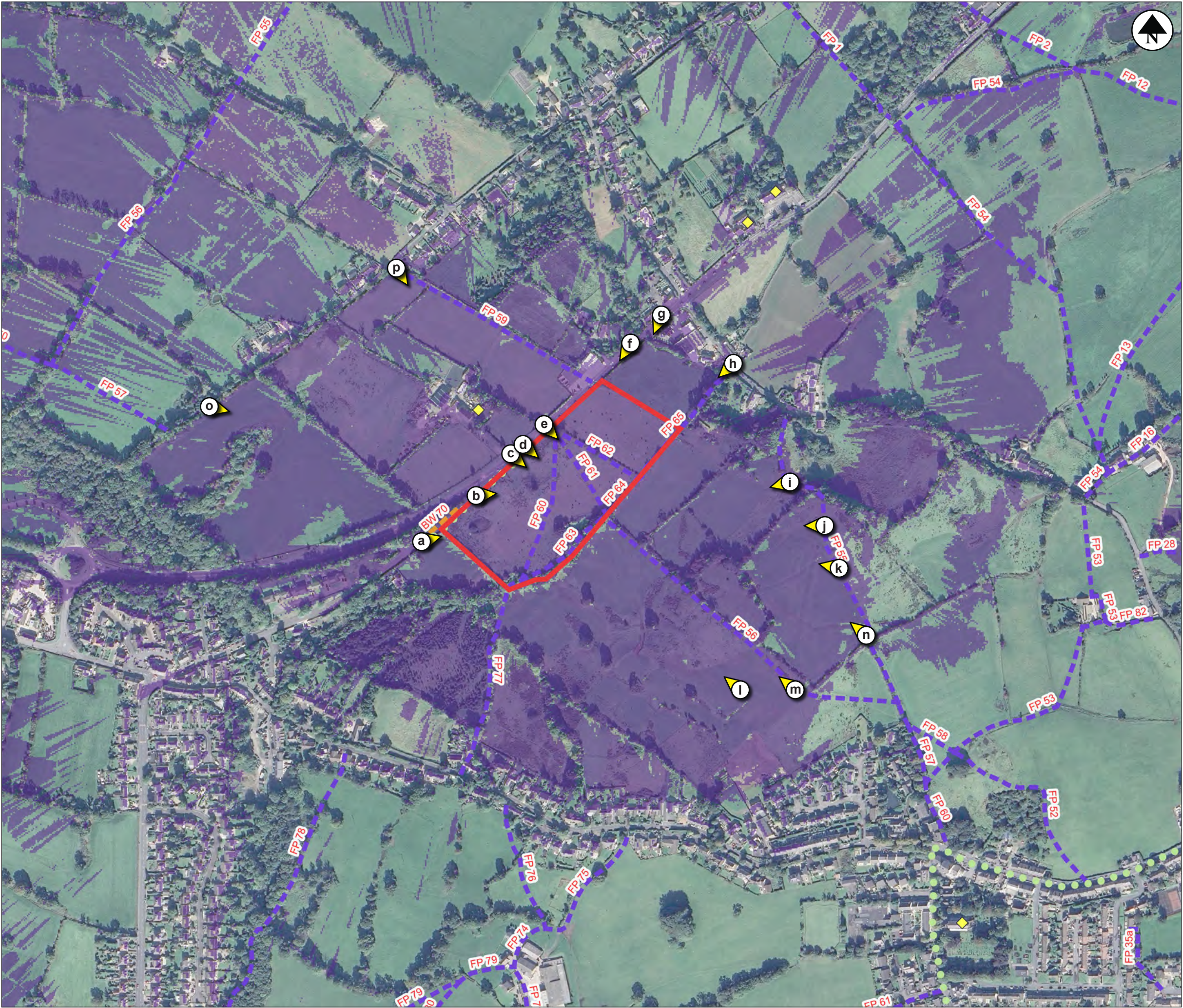
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Plan 6: Photoviewpoint Locations



Key

- Site Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Cycle Routes
- Public Rights of Way**
 - Bridleway
 - Footpath
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility
- a** Photoviewpoint Locations

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates the extent to which the proposed built form on site (based on the development proposals) is potentially visible within a 5km radius (to a 1.6m high receptor). The ZTV has been modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) and LiDAR DSM data, and as such, it takes into account existing built form or vegetation present within the landscape surrounding the site. Field verification is required to refine the accuracy of the ZTV.

PROJECT Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone

DRAWING TITLE Plan 6: Photoviewpoint Locations

SCALE 1:5,000 @ A3

DRAWING NO. 10032-P07

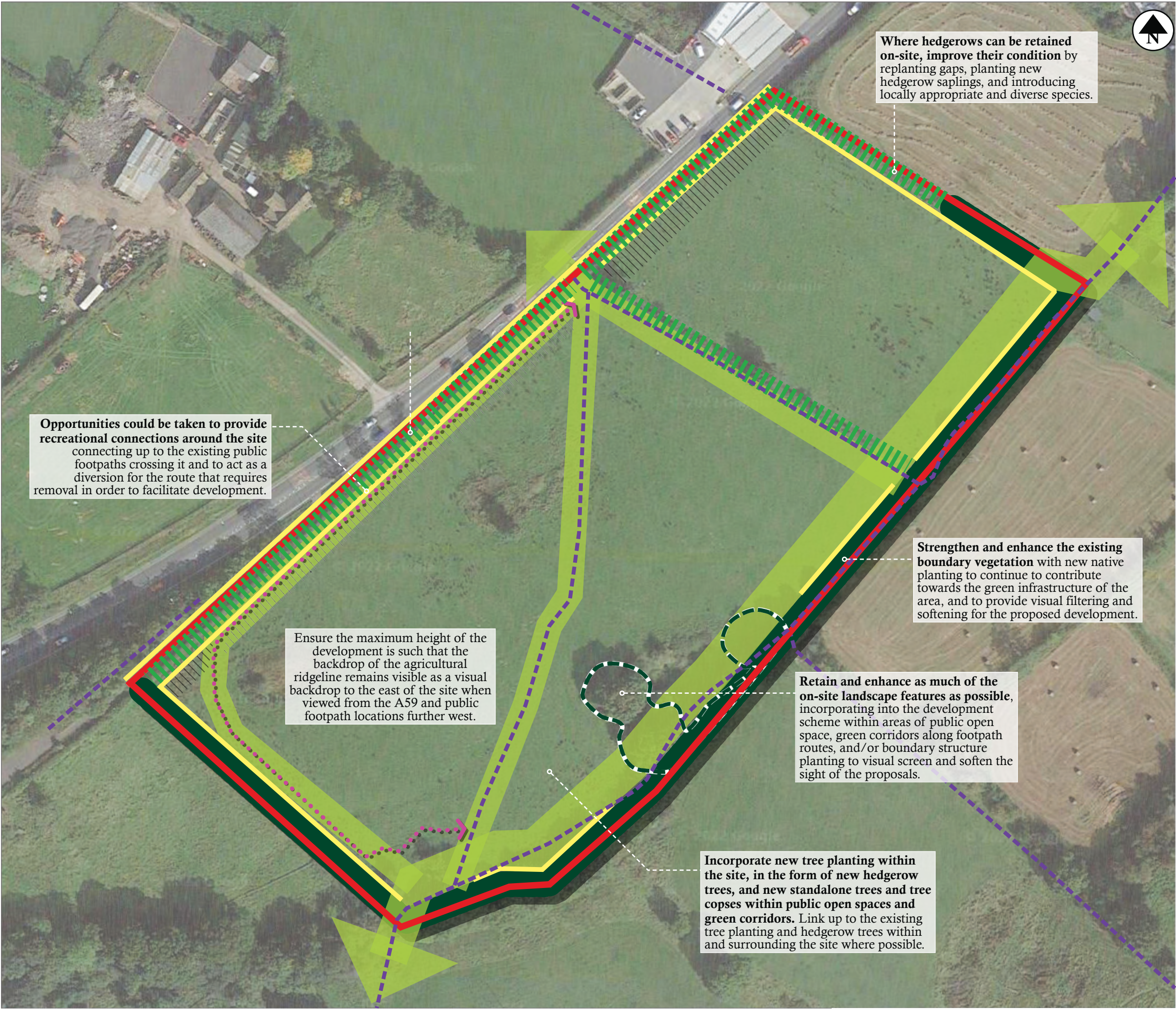
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Plan 7: Landscape Strategy



- Key**
- Site Boundary
 - Retention and enhancement of existing boundary/internal hedgerow vegetation where possible
 - Retention and enhancement of existing tree and riparian boundary vegetation
 - Retention and enhancement of existing tree copse
 - Landscape buffer / development offset from Longsight Road
 - Retention and enhancement of existing grass verges and hedgerow margins
 - Key green infrastructure corridors within the site incorporating existing public footpath routes (retained in-situ or diverted)
 - Creation of new pedestrian recreational routes within the site
 - Existing retained public rights of way

PROJECT Land at Causeway Farm, Balderstone

DRAWING TITLE Plan 7: Landscape Strategy

SCALE 1:1,250 @ A3

DRAWING NO. 10032-P08

DATE December 2025



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