

**SHAW LAITHE FARM, LAND AT LOWER EDGE ROAD
AND SHAW LANE, ELLAND**

PROPOSED MIXED RESIDENTIAL AND EDUCATIONAL LAND APPLICATION

**LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL
IN SUPPORT OF CALDERDALE LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION LP0978**



ON BEHALF OF P & J BOYLE AND SON

FEBRUARY 2016

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On behalf of:

P & J Boyle and Son

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Cover photograph: View looking south across project site towards Lowfields Business Park

1 INTRODUCTION

Barton Howe Associates Ltd have been instructed by Walker Morris LLP, on behalf of the Old Earth Primary School and P & J Boyle and Son, to undertake a Landscape Appraisal of land at Lower Edge Road, Elland, Calderdale with a view to allocation of the site for potential expansion to the existing Old Earth Primary School and new residential development.

This report is structured to provide a logical path from description of the existing landscape character/context through an appraisal of the existing site and immediate environs followed by an examination of pertinent landscape planning data leading to a proposed landscape strategy. Conclusions are drawn at the end of the report based upon this process. The field inspections, landscape appraisal and reporting has been undertaken by a suitably experienced Chartered Landscape Architect.

2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The proposed site extends to some 8 hectares, bounded by Lower Edge Road and the Old Earth Primary School to the south and Shaw Lane to the east. Immediately north the trans Pennine railway forms the site boundary with playing fields and existing residential development at Grasmere Drive and Old Earth to the western and south-western boundaries; see Figure 1, approximate site centre Ordnance Survey grid reference SE 12092 21509 (Postcode HX5 9PL). Photographic locations referenced in the following text are indicated at Figure 2.

Existing land use within the site is predominantly grazing, close cropped grass is evident throughout, with open boundaries within. A single, former field boundary is delineated by a remnant stone wall with occasional small hedgerow tree to the north; see Photograph A1 at Photo Sheet A. The perimeter boundaries consist of narrow tree belts to the west and north, featuring mature deciduous species, whilst to the east and south hedgerows enclose the site. The line of mature poplar trees to the west is supplemented by an immature hedgerow at ground level, see Photograph A2 at Photo Sheet A, whilst the northern boundary includes a prominent steel palisade security fence to define the extent of railway property.

Topography within the site falls from north to south with a shallow valley to the north eastern corner that creates a distinct, rolling landform from east to west. Elevation ranges from a high point of approximately 94 metres AOD at the southern boundary to Lower Edge Road and 70 metres AOD to the north-eastern corner of the site. There is a noticeable depression close to the eastern boundary, see Photograph A3 at Photo Sheet A, that features ground vegetation of ruderals and bracken with a group of small trees and single mature tree. This area, from examination of historic mapping, appears to be the site of the former Shaw Laithe Farm building complex.

The site is crossed by two, overhead electricity transmission/distribution lines; a single 400kV transmission line from south-east to north-west mounted on steel lattice towers and single 11kV distribution line mounted on wooden poles from east to west. See Photograph A4, Photo sheet A.

The site boundary to Shaw Lane is defined by an existing hedgerow, recently flailed at the time of the site inspection, through which occasional gaps offer views into the site. A public footpath that bisects the site (east/west) connects the eastern edge of Elland to Shaw Lane and offers a clear vantage point. The footpath, although not marked across the site, constitutes a well established route having existed since at least the middle of the 19th century (reference 1854 OS 'Yorkshire Series' Edition) connecting the former

Shaw Laithe Farm and Shaw Lane to Old Earth in the west. To the north-eastern corner a small area of scrubland with ruderal/bracken ground storey is present; this area is located outwith the site boundary.

To the east of Shaw Lane the rising topography of restored former mineral workings now features immature woodland; both the landform and land use offer a contrast to the open, gently sloping fields within the site boundary. Both the restored areas and naturally regenerating extraction site link to the adjacent Sangstry Wood. The eastern boundary of Shaw Lane is well defined by mature trees and a stone wall with the younger woodland of restored quarry slopes visible beyond. A small number of dwellings are situated to the northern boundary of Lower Edge Road and abut the junction with Shaw Lane. A 400kV overhead electricity transmission line traverses Lower Edge Road and part of the former mineral extraction site before heading north-west across Shaw Lane into the site. This transmission line crosses the railway to the north of the site terminating at a substation located within the Lowfields Business Park; the latter once forming the location of the Elland Power Station of which the numerous overhead electricity lines within the wider Calder Valley constitute a legacy. Shaw Lane itself once formed an access to the former clay works and mineral extraction site; see Photograph B1, Photo Sheet B. The extensive clay works building complex has now been demolished and the mineral extraction activities have also ceased. The site has been secured with perimeter steel palisade fencing, see Photograph B1, and the slopes of the former quarry are evidently re-generating with pioneer tree species and scrubland.

The immediate northern boundary is defined by the existing trans-Pennine railway line with wooded, the railway line is predominantly in cutting adjacent to the site, that create a partial visual screen. Trains are frequent along this line that serves a number of settlements and urban areas along the Calder Valley. The railway line is also a historic feature within the local landscape having operated since opening in 1840 by the Manchester and Leeds Railway. This section of railway was incorporated within the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway in 1847 then amalgamated into the London and North Western Railway in 1922 prior to forming part of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway before the post-war nationalisation in 1948. The railway station at Elland closed to passengers in June 1962.

Beyond the railway line the larger distribution warehouses situate at Lowfields Way are clearly visible. Views, particularly in winter months, through the narrow woodland alongside the railway are available to the Business Park beyond. A caravan storage area to the fringe of the Business Park is clearly visible through the trees; see Photograph B2, Photo Sheet B. Lowfields Business Park, once the site of the Elland Power Station (demolished in 1996), is located within a bend of the River Calder although the latter feature is not visible from the site. In the distance the northern flank of the Calder Valley rises steeply towards a high point, approximately 1.5 kms distant, just south of Southowram at some 230 metres AOD. The flank of the valley closest to, and visible from, the site is formed of dense woodland at Elland Park Wood; see Photograph B3, Photo Sheet B. Two small wind turbines are visible on the distant horizon together with a further overhead electricity transmission line silhouetted against the skyline. Occasional buildings situated along the A6025 (Elland Road), in particular the clay pipe works of W. T. Knowles, are visible amongst the trees. Intermittent views, at limited locations, are available from the A6025 back towards the southern flank of the valley however the project site forms part of an overall vista dominated by the Lowfields Business Park and the upland fields of the landscape beyond.

To the west a line of mature poplar trees and low hedgerow forms the site boundary separating the agricultural land from the more formally presented sports pitches immediately adjacent. A recent residential development at Old Earth (c2000) is clearly visible through the trees where the immature garden boundaries offer insignificant screening; see Photograph A2. Further residential areas at Grasmere Drive and Thirlmere Avenue are situated to the south-west of the site. The housing stock here is somewhat older,

constructed sometime during the early to middle 1970's. The existing dwellings, largely of brick construction with concrete tile roofs, feature mature garden boundaries. Garden boundaries are typically timber fences beyond which numerous outbuildings, conservatories and house extensions are visible. Informal extensions of gardens have taken place, occupying part of the project site; see Photograph B4, Photo Sheet B. The interface to the existing agricultural field is hence less distinct at this particular boundary. More extensive residential development lies to the south of Lower Edge Road with some properties at Lodge Drive, facing the project site, dating from the inter-war period. Development here has continued steadily with further dwellings added in successive building periods during the 1950's, 1970's and more recent years to create a more expansive, eastern suburb to Elland. The built form is more varied featuring a collection of detached, semi-detached, 3 storey town house and terraced dwellings with red brick, buff/brown brick, and combination natural stone/render elevations. Pitched roofs dominate, principally featuring darker coloured concrete tiles. Further east, towards Elland, a small development of bungalows face Lower Edge Road with much older red brick terraced houses beyond.

Adjoining the prospective development site, to the south-west corner, lays the existing Old Earth Primary School; the school building itself dates back to 1971. The school building is a low, single storey complex of dark brick elevation with a flat roof. The building is set down slope from Lower Edge Road and is hence largely screened from the highway by a perimeter hedgerow; see Photograph C1, Photo Sheet C. A small playing field extends to the rear of the school which, together with a boundary hedgerow, abuts the site. Temporary access is available from the school car park, to the east of the school building, into the adjacent field, within the site, for overspill car parking. The school caretaker house is situated to the south-east corner adjacent to Lower Edge Road.

The southern extent of the project site is comprised of a relatively short boundary to Lower Edge Road. The boundary here is an existing hedgerow that screens views into the site; during winter months intermittent views are available through this feature. Immediately opposite the southern boundary are dwellings and a collection of large outbuildings that line Lower Edge Road, perceptibly forming the edge of the urban area leading into Elland; see Photograph C2, Photo Sheet C. These dwellings are situated on higher ground overlooking the site, but also create a legible boundary to the eastern, built form, extent of Elland.

Beyond the immediate southern boundary, landform rises towards a distinct ridge at Elland Upper Edge approximately 1 km distant from the site. Along the skyline a variety of buildings are visible, see Photograph C3 at Photo Sheet C, consisting primarily of older buildings (stone built cottages and terraced housing) along the B6114 Dewsbury Road. Such properties offer panoramic views across the Calder Valley. The intervening slopes accommodate small to medium sized fields defined by stone walls and occasional trees, which are used for grazing; see Photograph C3. At the lower slopes the interface with existing residential areas off Lower Edge Road is less well defined, with informal storage of vehicles and building materials taking place to blur the land use boundary; also see Photograph C3.

From within the site, the relatively elevated landform to the southern section offers partial views both east and west along the valley. Views west towards the centre of Elland are available, see Photograph C4 at Photo Sheet C, with the restored mill building (now in residential use) at Valley Mill a particularly prominent landmark. Rising land along the flanks of the Calder Valley to the west creates a backdrop to such views. Views east along the valley are also available from within the project site, however the valley is more constrained with steeper, wooded flanks that tend to limit the extent of view.

3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Landscape character has been appraised at three levels, national, regional and local level to provide further context to the site setting.

Based upon national level Landscape Character Appraisal, the site falls within Character Area 37 'Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe'; as referenced within the 'National Character Areas (England)' undertaken by Natural England. At a regional level no Landscape Character Assessment has yet been undertaken for Calderdale hence reference has been made, as recommended by Calderdale Council, to the 'South Pennines Wind Energy Landscape Study' (Julie Martin Associates/LUC: October 2014). A local level appraisal has been undertaken specifically for this project through a combination of desk top study and field inspection in general accordance with the principles established in 'Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland' (2002) produced by The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage.

A check has also been made of available historic landscape assessment, namely the English Heritage led 'Historic Landscape Characterisation' (HLC) project, however no assessment data appears to be available for the Calderdale area. Therefore, in order to provide some historic context, Ordnance Survey mapping dating back to the 1850's has been examined to determine the evolution of key landscape features and establish changing land use in the intervening period to modern day.

National Level Landscape Character Appraisal

The site and immediate environs is located within Character Area 37 'Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe' (Natural England). This character appraisal describes the 'Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe' as a *"transitional area, lying between the pastures of the upland Pennine block to the west and the lower-lying arable land to the east"*. The appraisal further notes that, *"there is also a transition of land use across the area, from more rural, upland and sparse landscape in the west to the more heavily developed industrial areas in the east"*. Geo-morphological effects of the major rivers are clearly recognised with the resultant, deeply incised river valleys. The contribution that such features make as ecological links between the lowlands and Pennine uplands is also noted. Key characteristics are described as:

- A transitional landscape dissected by steep-sided valleys, dropping from the high gritstone hills in the west to lower land in the east, and thus creating an important backdrop to the many industrial towns and villages within and beyond the National Character Area (NCA).
- Sandstones and gritstone beds of Millstone Grit (Namurian) age underlying smooth hills and plateaux in the west. These are overlain in the east by beds of sandstone, siltstone and mudstone of Coal Measures age.
- Rivers creating a deeply dissected landscape, with high plateaux cut by steep-sided valleys, and fanning out in 'fingers' across valleys of the NCA.
- Treeless hill tops with tracts of rough grazing and extensive areas of enclosed pasture to the west, but with broadleaved woodland on steeper valley sides, giving the impression of a well-wooded landscape, especially to the north and west of Sheffield.
- Predominantly pastoral farming, especially in western areas, with a shift to more arable land in the drier eastern areas.
- Boundary features that change from distinctive patterns of drystone walls on the upland hills, to hedgerows becoming the predominant field boundary in the east.

- Close conjunction between rural landscapes and the rich industrial heritage of the urban areas, including settlements associated with the textile industry, with large mills and tall chimneys, and large factories and forges associated with the iron, steel and manufacturing industries.
- Urban development constrained within valley floors and up side slopes, with location and layout strongly influenced by the landform.
- Industrial wealth revealed in magnificent civil architecture in town centres, notably Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield and Sheffield, and several stately homes with designed parklands.
- Evidence of bronze-age and Roman habitation still present on uplands, and old pack-horse routes that once joined settlements across the Pennines still in place, or now forming modern major road routes.
- Extensive and dramatic views from higher land out over lower-lying land to the east, even from within urban areas.
- Several reservoirs contained within narrow valleys contributing a distinct character as well as providing popular places to visit.
- Small patches of fragmented priority habitats providing important refuges locally for wildlife. Grassland mosaics are particularly important in supporting waders and the twite that breeds on adjacent moorland areas; lowland woodland is also an important feature.
- In places a dense network of roads and urban development, with many road, rail and canal routes crossing the NCA, and a high density of footpaths throughout.

Remarking upon the 'Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe' today the appraisal observes that "*The settled valleys contrast strongly with the treeless rough grazing and remnant moorlands on higher land and the extensive areas of pastures enclosed by drystone walls on the Pennine foothills*". In respect of historical influence upon the modern day landscape, "*The area contains a wealth of industrial archaeology which contributes significantly to the strong sense of historical character and identity, although this is breaking down in some of the more extensive urban areas*".

Regional Landscape Character Appraisal

No Landscape Character Assessment or Appraisal is currently available for the Calderdale area however Calderdale Council reference the results of an appraisal undertaken to study the potential landscape capacity for windfarms within the southern Pennine region. This study, 'South Pennines Wind Energy Landscape Study' (Julie Martin Associates/LUC: October 2014), considered both the assessment of landscape character and landscape sensitivity (with particular reference to wind energy projects and the resultant capacity for commercial wind farms).

The assessment undertaken focussed primarily upon the consideration of landscape sensitivity in the context of landscape and visual issues only, including cumulative effects, however the background landscape character studies do appear to address historic, cultural and perceptual issues.

The prospective development site would appear to be located within Landscape Character Type M1: Calder Valley Floor. The character type is described with the following key characteristics:

'The Calder Valley Floor runs between Elland and Huddersfield eastwards to Horbury and beyond the study area boundary. This area comprises the flat to gently undulating valley floor of the River Calder which sits within a well-defined valley that broadens and widens in places where there are confluences with tributary rivers and valleys. This landscape has been significantly developed containing extensive areas of industrial 'sheds' which block views across the valley and create a strong horizontal pattern broken in places by occasional chimneys. In some areas where there are views of the valley sides above they form a wooded

backdrop and provide a setting to the development and areas of housing. Within the valley floor there are various numerous railway lines and road corridors. From elevated areas there are views across this development. The river itself is not visually dominant in this landscape.'

Strategic landscape issues within this study are limited to the potential for, and likely effects of, wind energy development and hence did not consider residential or other types of development.

Local Level Landscape Assessment

A local level landscape assessment has been undertaken in general accordance with the principles of 'Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland' (2002) produced by The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage. Namely a four stage process; scope; desk study; field survey, and; classification. The scope of this local level assessment is within the context of likely allocation of a proposed development site hence the boundaries of the appraisal are relatively closely drawn and relate to both the site itself and immediate environs. Desk study has been undertaken including an analysis of existing, pertinent landscape character/assessment data available together with mapping data (including historic mapping information). Field inspection, both in and around the site, took place in early February 2016 with relevant data collected in respect of land use, landscape features and perceptual aspects. Drawing together both desk top and field study, local character areas have been identified and described.

The extent of the local landscape assessment is illustrated at Figure 3 with approximate boundaries to the north at Lowfields Business Park, to the east at the former mineral extraction site/Strangstry Wood, to the south at the ridgeline of Elland Lower Edge and to the west within the existing urban area of Elland. Six basic, local character types have been identified, a number include 'transitional' landscapes between boundaries. The six character areas are described below:

Urban/Suburban

An extensively, and intensively, developed area comprising primarily of residential land use that forms the eastern extent of Elland. This landscape character type (LCT) includes associated infrastructure such as small scale commercial premises, schools, highways and transport corridors located primarily within the valley bottom or to the lower slopes of the valley. Views within this area are largely contained by the density of built form but where available tend to be towards elevated features such as the valley tops and local ridgelines. There is considerable variety in building materials within the limited geographical extent of this LCT. Older properties tend to be constructed of local stone with more recent intervention of brick however stone now features to the latest developments. Built form follows a traditional pattern of rectilinear shape with a pitched roof and the majority are of small scale. There are few open spaces with the overall perception of enclosure within the built form. Development within this area reflects a steady expansion of the urban core of Elland from the mid 19th century. This LCT forms the perceived eastern boundary to the urban area of Elland adjacent to the site. The dominant nature of this character area influences the adjacent landscape. Key characteristics are:

- Smaller scale elements/features/spaces (at this local level) and small to intimate scale.
- Overall rough texture with muted colours and occasional colour highlight.
- Form is vertical due to dominance/proximity of built form with rectilinear shapes.
- A degree of balance resulting from overall similarity of land use type and scale.
- Calm but with busy features e.g. local highways and railway.
- Relatively enclosed with little diversity of texture characterised by building materials and built form.

- Organised character and busy, offers some contrast to adjacent areas.

Rural Fringe Farmland

That area to the south of Lower Edge Road, along the southern flank of the valley, rising up to Elland Lower Edge. This LCT is notably constrained by urban/suburban development and/or settlements to the north-west, west, south and east (partial). Woodland along the valley flank intersects with the agricultural land use creating a visual and physical link to woodland within the valley bottom. Field size is small to medium, rectilinear in shape with a degree of uniformity and predominance of stone wall boundaries. There are occasional small trees and sections of hedgerow. The field pattern appears largely unchanged since the mid 19th century with boundaries that follow or are at 90 degrees to the prevailing slope, however some field boundaries have been partially removed to create larger field sizes. The black coated stone bears witness to a long period of industrialisation and historic air pollution. The size and shape of fields, within which the closely grazed grass creates an even texture, lends a rhythmic pattern to the landscape and tangible link to the industrial heritage of the area. The introduction of more recent, incongruous features such as the overhead electricity transmission line contrasts with the timeless quality of the field pattern.

Generally this character area displays an overall homogeneity in defining characteristics, key characteristics are:

- Medium scale.
- Open nature with defined, low level boundaries e.g. stone walls.
- Even texture with predominantly horizontal features.
- Muted colours with overall balance but minor discordant features e.g. transmission lines.
- Calm with low level of activity.
- Irregular pattern that responds to landform but reflects organisation e.g. field pattern.

Urban - Industrial

The northern part of the area assessed comprises the extensive Lowfields Business Park within the valley bottom bounded to the east, north and west by the River Calder and Calder/Hebble Navigation canal. The boundary to this area is clearly defined by both watercourses and the railway line to the south. Built form displays a degree of homogeneity in style and materials but of differing scale. The pattern of development is simple, regular in layout with principal access roads creating the dominant spaces. The relatively recent nature of this development lends further regularity with consistency in materials and colours. Large, industrial warehouses predominate, constructed of metal panels covering steel portal frames; some variation is provided by smaller scale office development of brick construction within the overall business park.

Pale colours are evident throughout the development; generally grey with contrasting colour highlights. Large open spaces within the business park accommodate access routes, car parking or storage areas fringed by ornamental planting; the latter beginning to mature and achieve its own scale. Open views area available within the industrial area, despite the size of buildings there is a lack of enclosure with the valley flanks providing a backdrop; the exception being the main, tree lined access route at Lowfields Way. There is regular activity through transportation of materials by heavy goods vehicles, loading/unloading of goods and staff/visitor vehicular traffic. Key characteristics are:

- Large scale, both built form and spatial qualities.
- Overall lack of enclosure with open views.
- Even texture, due to homogeneity of built form, with muted colours.

- Balance in form between verticality of buildings and horizontal nature of open spaces due to built elements.
- Dominance of angular features.
- Busy features and near constant activity with noticeable noise; including the frequent trains to the adjacent railway line.
- Regularity of form with elements of semi-formality e.g. layout and pattern of access roads, car parking.

Rural Fringe – Disturbed Land

The valley bottom in particular displays evidence of human activity stretching over a period of more than a century. Features dating back to the mid 19th Century tend to be of smaller scale and more responsive to the natural landform e.g. the railway line and canal which are sinuous features. Over time the extent of human activity has increased and less sympathetic features appeared that have created their own pattern e.g. mineral extraction and associated clay works. Mineral extraction to the boundary of Strangstry Wood is a long standing activity however the scale of works enlarged through the 20th Century with consequential disturbance of the natural topography. Similarly, disposal of waste materials within the 'loop' of the River Calder, adjacent to the former Power Station, is evident from at least the 1950's. Both activities have resulted in large scale disturbance and despite recent restoration, more significant at the former mineral extraction site, there are extensive areas of 'disturbed' land that differ both physically and visually from adjacent natural areas. This character type effectively creates a transitional zone between the urban areas to the valley bottom and flanks and the rural areas beyond. There are differences between the restored waste disposal area in the valley bottom and the former mineral extraction site, however there are common perceptual qualities that bind both together e.g. the contrived landform, scale of activity, sense of disturbance. Key characteristics are:

- Large scale, variety of exposure and enclosure.
- Simple, even texture resulting from homogenous features with muted colours.
- Form is horizontal, mixture of organic and straight.
- Balanced, simple with limited number of features.
- Calm, lack of, or low level activity.

Urban Fringe - Greenspace

A pocket of land stretches along the lower valley flank from within the *Urban/Suburban* character area to the boundary of the *Rural Fringe – Disturbed Land* character area. With the distinct boundary of the railway line to the north this area encompasses the open, grass playing fields and agricultural land within the project site. The close cropped grass provides a visual and physical link that radiates around the sloping topography of the valley flank. Boundaries are defined to the west and south by built form whilst to the east Shaw Lane and woodland beyond create a legible boundary. The railway line and wooded periphery offer a continuous and linking feature with a shared visual experience of views beyond to the adjacent business park. This railway line also creates a source of noise, with frequent trains, backgrounded by the colours and activities of the business park. At particular times of the day, the Old Earth Primary School also contributes a hub of noise. There are noticeable features of human intervention including the paraphernalia associated with football pitches e.g. changing room building, goal posts, and the overhead electricity transmission/distribution lines. Overall this area is open with views constrained at eye level by boundary features, however the elevated nature of the landform offers distant views to both the valley flanks and along the Calder Valley itself. The presence of the larger urban area at Elland is experienced through views

to larger buildings, the fringe industrial area and background noise. Generally this character area displays an overall homogeneity in defining characteristics, key characteristics are:

- Medium scale.
- Open nature with defined boundaries that create visual horizons.
- Outward looking views to distant features are a notable quality.
- Even texture with predominantly horizontal features.
- Balanced, simple form, muted colours with minor discordant features e.g. transmission line.
- Calm with predominantly low level of activity but busy periods.
- Regular pattern that generally responds to landform but reflects organisation e.g. playing fields and agricultural land.

The assessment reveals that the character areas display a degree of variety within a relatively small geographical area. There is a variety of scale and key characteristics, but consistency of colours and transitional boundaries that link a number of areas. A high degree of intervisibility exists and accentuates the contrasting nature of areas such as the *Urban – Industrial* character area and *Rural Fringe – Farmland*. There is a clear sense of history both as a result of ongoing, traditional land use and remnant features. Elements that have both a historic link, e.g. the predominance of overhead electricity transmission lines within the Calder Valley that emanated from the former Elland Power Station, and current use influence a number of character areas.

The site is located within the *Urban Fringe – Greenspace* character area with visual influence arising from the adjacent Urban/Suburban character area to the west, the *Urban - Industrial* to the north and *Rural Fringe – Disturbed* to the east.

4 LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

Visual Context

A field inspection to define the visual context of the project site was undertaken in early February 2016. Weather conditions were changeable with periods of clear sunny weather interspersed with showers. Deciduous tree and shrub species were not in leaf hence their screening value was at its least effective.

The site is visually contained to the east by a combination of the existing hedgerow boundary at Shaw Lane, mature trees along the road and rising landform; the latter clothed with woodland. The former mineral extraction site to the east of Shaw Lane is private land with no designated or identifiable footpaths to this boundary. Woodland to the restored west facing slopes is dense and forms an effective, close visual horizon. A small number of dwellings situated east of Shaw Lane face on to Lower Edge Road, the rear garden of the closest property is elevated with views into the project site; although ameliorated by adjacent trees. The 400kV overhead electricity transmission line that traverses the project site also crosses the south-western corner of the mineral extraction site, oversailing the existing trees with a prominently located tower adjacent to the dwellings; the transmission line then continues south-east up the valley flanks towards Elland Lower Edge. Views into the site are available from Shaw Lane, which also forms a Public Right of Way (PROW), although filtered by the existing hedgerow; during summer months this hedgerow is likely to provide a more substantial visual barrier. There are few breaks in this hedgerow hence a near continuous visual screen is created, however a gap is present to accommodate the route of the PROW that heads across the middle of the prospective development site. Towards the north-eastern corner of the site the hedgerow

boundary is supplemented by a copse of trees which further strengthens the visual barrier. The site of the former clay works to the east is now a clear, level area. Views into this latter site are available from the PROW through the steel palisade security fence and the upper slopes of the project site offer a viewpoint into this area; hence it is assumed that reverse views are possible.

To the northern boundary of the site, mature trees along the railway line form an intermediate visual screen. At the time of the site inspection, views through the trees were available to the Lowfields Business Park in the near distance and the wooded valley flank beyond. The fringe of the business park consists of an elevated bund upon which caravans are stored. The white or light coloured caravans contrast against the immediate backdrop of the taller, grey, warehouse buildings. Eye level views at the northern boundary of the site, through the steel palisade railway boundary fence, are directly towards this combination of caravans and buildings which form an intermediate visual horizon. Up slope, towards the middle of the project site, rising ground affords a view over the industrial buildings to the densely wooded slopes of the valley side. A limited number of larger buildings are visible amongst the trees including the clay works at Elland Road and partial views of some terraced dwellings; also at Elland Road. Small sections of Elland Road itself are visible from the site; the movement of vehicles amongst the trees is noticeable adjacent to Cromwell Bottom. To the reverse view the project site is discernible but set within the eastern urban area of Elland. The swathe of light coloured, industrial buildings at Lowfields Business Park are particularly prominent creating a dominant, horizontal line along the valley floor over which the densely packed residential areas along Lower Edge Road are visible. The numerous overhead electricity transmission lines that traverse the valley are visible against the woodland and to the skyline. High land along the valley flank is also visible to the north-east from within the project site. Towards the north-west the backdrop of higher land falls away as the valley floor winds away north towards Halifax; views are partially intercepted by the mature poplars that border the site.

The western boundary is well defined by a line of mature poplars that delineate the edge of the site, a hedgerow has been planted beneath this line of trees. Views are possible, at eye level, beneath the canopies of the mature trees given that the hedgerow is immature and of insufficient height to create a substantive screen. It is likely that in summer months this hedgerow will filter more distant views from the site looking west. There is a degree of visual continuity between the project site and the playing fields beyond, with features in each area visible from the other. The overhead electricity transmission line tower within the project site is a prominent feature in views from the playing fields and adjacent housing at Old Earth. The rising landform of the former mineral extraction site and wooded slopes is a backdrop to such views. Similarly, from within the project site, views through the tree boundary to the playing field building and dwellings at Old Earth are also possible.

Dwellings at Grasmere Drive create a visual horizon to views south-west. The rear elevation of dwellings forms the visual backdrop beneath which the assorted collection of garden boundaries and outbuildings offers a less ordered boundary. Informal garden extensions, with a variety of fenced boundary and outbuildings, create incursions that further disrupt the boundary line. The PROW is routed through a gap in the dwellings, the entry point defined by a heavy duty, steel palisade gate. At the site boundary views are limited by the adjacent dwellings to an immediate visual horizon, however from within the project site views over the residential buildings to the elevated valley flank are available.

The grounds of Old Earth Primary School, in particular the boundary hedgerow, offer visual continuity to the southern boundary of the project site. The boundary hedgerow offers a substantive visual barrier, views into the school site are not readily available and only glimpses of features within the site are e.g. brightly

coloured vehicles within the car park to the eastern portion of the site, are possible. Views over the school site to the ridgeline beyond are also possible from within the project site.

To the south, views into and from the project site at Lower Edge Road are interrupted by the boundary hedgerow. The hedgerow, which is evidently managed based upon recent flailing, screens views. During summer months this feature will offer a more substantial screen. To the southern boundary of Lower Edge Road, dwellings are elevated relative to the site hence views over the hedgerow from a small number are possible. The dwelling closest to the boundary appears to be a stone built farmhouse (orientated east/west) with external storage yard and numerous outbuildings of mixed construction, including concrete blockwork, red brick and timber facing directly on to the highway. These buildings also create a visual horizon to near views. The PROW along Shaw Lane passes along a short section of Lower Edge Road and is then routed to the east of this farm, the buildings effectively screen views back towards the project site.

Moving east along Lower Edge Road, views to the south open up across the rising landform. This rising landform features numerous grazing fields and occasional trees. To the distant ridgeline, at Elland Lower Edge, the skyline is punctuated by buildings and woodland. The overhead electricity transmission line forms an intrusive feature as it crosses the valley flank. Those properties to the east of Shaw Lane, situated to the northern boundary of Lower Edge Road, also create an immediate visual horizon.

The site boundaries are well defined and unlikely to be altered by prospective development; an extension to the existing school and residential development within the remainder areas. There are few, if any features within the site that contribute to or affect viewpoints. Beyond the site boundary, near horizons are constrained to the west and south by existing residential areas and the school itself. To the east the rising landform of the former mineral extraction site creates a both a dramatic backdrop and visual horizon. The northern boundary is visually more porous, however the views outwards are dominated by the nearby industrial park of which the light coloured buildings create a visual dominance. The nature of the surrounding landform and landscape is such that elevated, but distant views are available towards the project site, however the context for such views is one of a site situated within the urban edge of Elland.

Landscape Context

The existing land use within the project site boundary is grazing. The project site slopes south to north with a distinct 'roll' in the landform towards the north-east corner. Landscape features within the project site are limited, consisting primarily of occasional trees towards the eastern boundary, hedgerows around the site boundary and a short section of remnant stone wall towards the northern boundary. The project site is also traversed by an overhead electricity transmission line with steel lattice towers and a lower voltage electricity distribution line mounted on single wooden poles; these elements abound within the Calder Valley at Elland. Without the site boundary there a number of local features that influence local landscape by virtue of scale, colour and landform. To the north, the Lowfields Business Park is a significant feature that intrudes upon a number of views and creates a setting dominated by the scale, number and colour of built form.

To the east, the dramatic wooded slopes of the former mineral extraction site create both a significant feature and visual backdrop to the project site. The north facing slopes are often shaded and dark with the 'benched' landform associated with the extraction process particularly noticeable. The human influence within this area is further reinforced by the extensive cleared site of the former clay works.

Less dramatic, but nonetheless influential, are the railway line that passes along the northern boundary and the large residential area situated along and around Lower Edge Road creating a swathe of urban/suburban development that wraps around the project site from west to south. The former contributes frequent movement and noise from trains and the latter creates both visual and physical containment.

To all four points of the compass the intervention upon the natural landscape is both evident and influential.

The immediate landscape includes an abundance of features that reinforce the perception of an urban fringe site with a distinct transition point at Shaw Lane. To the east and south-east the landscape changes, land use differs and the landform becomes more dramatic. These factors culminate at a point where the residential areas to Lower Edge Road create a distinct boundary between the urban edge of Elland and rural landscape, this boundary coincides with the junction of Shaw Lane and Lower Edge Road immediately east of the project site.

5 PLANNING CONTEXT

This section of the Landscape Appraisal does not purport to be an exhaustive examination of planning policy. Rather, it is a discussion, with reference to landscape considerations, of the policy context considered to be most influential upon allocation of the project site for extension to the existing school and residential use.

A more comprehensive description and analysis of planning policy has been undertaken by Walker Morris LLP on behalf of The Old Earth Primary School and P & J Boyle and Son; see Planning Statement authored by Stephen Sadler of Walker Morris.

Green Belt Policy

The site is situated within the current, adopted Calderdale Council Green Belt; Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (Adopted August 2006 and as amended August 2009), confirmed by the subsequent Green Belt Review (Issues and Options November 2008). A Local Plan for Calderdale is currently in preparation hence the saved policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan constitute current policy guidance.

At a national level, the current National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) cites 5 purposes to Green Belt:

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

Historically Green Belt location boundaries have been supported in the Calderdale area through the previous Regional Spatial Strategy of May 2008, and the previous version of December 2004, the initial Calderdale Unitary Development Plan of 1997, the Calderdale Green Belt Subject Local Plan (March 1989) and the initial preparation of a Green Belt by West Riding County Council and Halifax County Borough Council in the 1950's. Review and alteration of the Green Belt has taken place as a result of various plan preparations since the original consideration of areas suitable for this designation during the 1950's.

In respect of the Green Belt as detailed within the Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan (RCUDP) the prospective development site is located within the currently designated area that eastwards from the boundary of the playing fields off Old Earth, residential area at Grasmere Drive and perimeter of Old Earth Primary School; see Figure 4. The boundary is constrained to the north by the existing railway, which lies outside the Green Belt, and the Lowfields Business Park; note that the cleared former clay works to the east of the project site also lie outwith the Green Belt. To the east and south the Green Belt extends over some distance. The key policy within the RCUDP is Policy GNE 1:

“CONTAINMENT OF THE URBAN AREA

A GREEN BELT WILL BE MAINTAINED AROUND THE MAIN BUILT-UP AREAS. THE PLAN WILL SEEK TO RESTRAIN DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE THE URBAN AREAS THROUGH THE GENERAL EXTENT OF THE GREEN BELT.”

The RCUDP recognises the pressures upon larger sites to the edge of larger towns, such as Elland, for development. Acknowledgment is also made to the effect that, *“...some limited development may take place on the basis that it is neither detrimental to visual amenity nor achievement of the purposes of the Green Belt”*. The most recent review of the Green Belt boundary within Calderdale is detailed within the review document of November 2008. The five purposes of Green Belts, as confirmed by PPG2 at the time of the review and restated within the current NPPF, are listed and the note is made that boundaries, *“...should be altered only exceptionally”*. Green Belt boundaries should be, *“clearly defined, using readily recognisable features such as roads, streams, and belts of trees or woodland edges where possible”*. In respect of boundaries the review document goes on to state, *“...weak boundaries can be vulnerable to urban encroachment”* and, *“It is essential that existing and new boundaries are durable for the next 30 years”*. Examples of ‘Strong’ boundaries are given and these include, *“railway line (in use), prominent physical features, protected woodlands/hedges and residential or other development with strong established boundaries”*. Examples of ‘Weak’ boundaries include, *“private/unmade roads, field boundaries, non protected woodlands/trees/hedges and residential of other development with weak or intermediate boundaries”*. The relevance of boundaries is that those considered to be strong are anticipated to remain in place over the long period, being resistant to removal by physical means or planning decisions. Boundaries that are weak would be considered vulnerable and more easily removed. Importantly the review document goes on to state, *“In this context a boundary is defined as a recognisable linear feature or boundary between two separate areas of land. When identifying the site area boundaries strong boundaries will be used wherever possible”*.

Green Belt Policy Discussion

Turning to the five purposes of a Green Belt, this landscape appraisal has described a visual and landscape context whereby the project site may be perceived to lie within the urban edge of Elland. Indeed the configuration of existing development to the north, west, south-west and south is such that it ‘wraps’ around the site in terms of physical geography. Visually, in particular the publicly accessible but distant views from the valley flanks, the project site appears to sit within the urban edge. The visual continuity between those fields within the project site and the adjacent playing fields reinforces this perception i.e. it may be considered that the project site already falls within the existing ‘urban sprawl’.

The location of the project site is such that coalescence to neighbouring towns is considered to be, in landscape terms, a less sensitive factor. The closest areas of settlement to the east at Rastrick, given that the urban boundary of Elland effectively encloses the site on three sides, are both distant and separated by a considerable difference in physical elevation. The presence of the former mineral workings to the east of Shaw Lane is such that any further extension of the urban area would be a task of considerable logistical challenge.

This appraisal has identified a number of local character areas; in the absence of an adopted Landscape Character Assessment for the Calderdale area. The boundaries of those areas that display recognisable features or characteristics of rural and urban character have been assessed and are described at section 3 above. It is contended that this landscape character assessment has identified a distinction between the two with the project site falling within an area that constitutes ‘urban edge’. Those areas of rural characteristics

i.e. 'countryside' lie beyond the site and already possess recognisable boundaries. In this context it is contended that encroachment has already taken place with the prospective boundary to encroachment effectively located at Shaw Lane.

The Green Belt purpose of preserving the setting and special character of historic towns is not considered relevant to this project site.

This appraisal contends that the project site may already be perceived to lie within the urban boundary of Elland. On this basis the project site could make a positive contribution to urban regeneration and establish a legible boundary to the eastern extent of Elland.

In terms of the Calderdale Green Belt review, in particular the justification and reasoning behind Green Belt boundaries, it is suggested that the present boundary between the existing playing fields and the project site is both 'weak' and vulnerable. To some degree it may also be argued that the existing boundary to the residential area at Grasmere Drive and the Old Earth Primary School is similarly 'weak, consisting of 'residential development with weak or intermediate boundaries' and 'unprotected hedges'. The former is evidenced by the informal garden extensions into the project site i.e. a lack of physical constraint to such activity. It is contended that Shaw Lane, with the adjacent substantive woodland constitutes a 'strong' offering 'prominent physical features' i.e. dramatic difference in elevation together with extensive woodland.

Landscape Policies of Calderdale Council

The RCUDP details a number of policies that are relevant both to the existing landscape and potential new landscape infrastructure.

At a more strategic level i.e. in consideration of the wider environment, Policy GNE 2 'Protection of the Environment' asserts Calderdale policy with reference to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the character, quality and diversity of the natural, historic and cultural landscape by development. Policy GBE 1 'The Contribution of Design to the Quality of the Built Environment' requires all new development to achieve high standards of design and make a positive contribution to the quality of the local environment. Over-arching design considerations are captured by Policy BE 1 'General Design Criteria' which highlights key aspects of design required from new development including contextual aspects of a development site, the retention, enhancement or creation of natural features, the need for a development to be visually attractive and retain a sense of local identity, to not intrude upon key vistas, incorporate landscape treatment and where appropriate to include locally native plants. Policy BE 3 'Landscaping' specifically relates to landscape proposals that will accompany any new development.

In respect of existing landscape features, Policy NE 21 'Trees and Development Sites' notes requirements for a tree survey, retention of trees/hedgerows, replacement of trees/hedgerows as required, consideration of potential shading and stand off distances between trees and new buildings to ensure the continued health of trees. Policy NE 22 'Protection of Hedgerows' states that measures will be required to protect, conserve and enhance hedgerows including consideration of future management. Replacement of hedgerows will only be permitted in certain circumstances.

6 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Any development proposal for the project site must not only take account of existing landscape features and context but also contribute to the creation of green infrastructure that enhances the local landscape. These objectives would operate in tandem with both the aspirations of Calderdale Council, as stated within current policies described at Section 5 above, together with the design driven requirements for a particular development. In respect of prospective development at the project site there are both internally focussed objectives to deliver a landscape that enhances the educational experience of a school campus, acts as a setting to a residential area together with the wider contribution of enhancement to local landscape quality and character.

The consideration of the effects upon both local and distant views to and from the site, with emphasis upon visual amenity, is also required. Such consideration, based upon field inspection and in preparation of this appraisal, suggests that reinforcement of the northern boundary will contribute to visual separation of existing and prospective residential areas to the adjacent business park. The detailed design of this boundary should contrive to retain views up towards the south facing valley flank. Similarly, additional planting to the hedgerow boundary to Shaw Lane would further reinforce the legibility of this boundary and potentially amended Green Belt boundary.

The opportunity could be taken to introduce green infrastructure along the line of the existing PROW. Such a strategy would not only retain the pedestrian link across the site but could also create a significant landscape feature which would break up the massing of potential residential units to views from a distance; in particular Elland Road. Trees could, in time, offer screening to buildings at the higher levels on site and also the existing residential area beyond. A green 'corridor' would also link visually to the extensive, immature woodland east of the project site at the former mineral extraction site. A landscape feature of such significance could also benefit open space within any residential development, offer a focal point for smaller open space e.g. local areas of play and infrastructure planting within gardens or access roads. The boundary between an extended school campus and residential area could also offer opportunity to introduce a further landscape feature across an east/west axis of the project site.

Potential plant species within any prospective landscape scheme should also consider inclusion of native species, of local provenance where available, to increase sustainability, establish a local 'sense of place' and offer ecological benefits.

7 CONCLUSIONS

A landscape appraisal has been undertaken of the project site and immediate environs. The appraisal has considered the key components that constitute the local landscape, including an assessment of local landscape character, together with an analysis of the visual context of the prospective development site.

It is contended that the character of the project site can be assessed to fall within an identified area to the urban edge of Elland. The key characteristics of the project site are shared with a larger area of open space that is situated within a wider context of developed land to the eastern boundary of Elland. There is a discernible change in key landscape characteristics to those areas east of the project site, characteristics and features that give rise to a more rural character. Prospective development at the project site would be compatible with that

which lies immediately adjacent and could be viewed, in landscape terms, as an extension accommodated within the identified existing urban edge of Elland.

The project site displays a degree of visual containment but also offers a range of open views which seek to create links to areas of existing development around the site; particularly to the west and north. More distant views to the valley flanks north and south are also afforded but given the geo-morphology of the Calder Valley such views are typical from within the bottom of the valley and lower elevations.

In respect of the Green Belt designation, this appraisal has undertaken analysis of the five key purposes of Green Belt with the conclusion that the project site may be viewed as falling within the existing 'urban sprawl' of Elland. Furthermore it is considered that development at the project site would not increase, on the basis of adjacent landform, landscape characteristic and visual horizons, the risk of coalescence to neighbouring towns. The project site may be perceived to lie within the existing urban boundary of Elland hence development could assist urban regeneration and establish a legible boundary to the urban edge. Finally, the Green Belt purpose of preserving the setting and special character of historic towns is not considered relevant to the appraisal of this particular site.

The local Green Belt Review undertaken by Calderdale Council presents a reference point for boundaries that are of relevance to the project site; both in the existing situation and future integrity. It is contended that the western boundary of the current Green Belt is, by definition within the review document, 'weak' and already vulnerable to physical encroachment. An amended boundary, located at Shaw Lane, may be reconciled with the definition of a 'strong' boundary in the Review Document.

It is not considered that, in reference to the existing landscape policies of the RCUDP, development at the project site would be in conflict with such policies and that a scheme could be designed to satisfy the various aspirations stated within said policies.

8 REFERENCES

Calderdale Council: Replacement Unitary Development Plan (September 2006)

Calderdale Council: Green Belt Review Methodology Consultation, Evidence Base (November 2008)

Calderdale Council: Schedule of Policies Contained in the Calderdale Unitary Development Plan – Adopted August 2006 (August 2009)

The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage: 'Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland' (2002)

Department Communities and Local Government: National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

Julie Martin Associates/Land Use Consultants: South Pennines Wind Energy Landscape Study (October 2014)

Natural England: Natural Character Area Profile: 37 Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe (2013)

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FIGURES

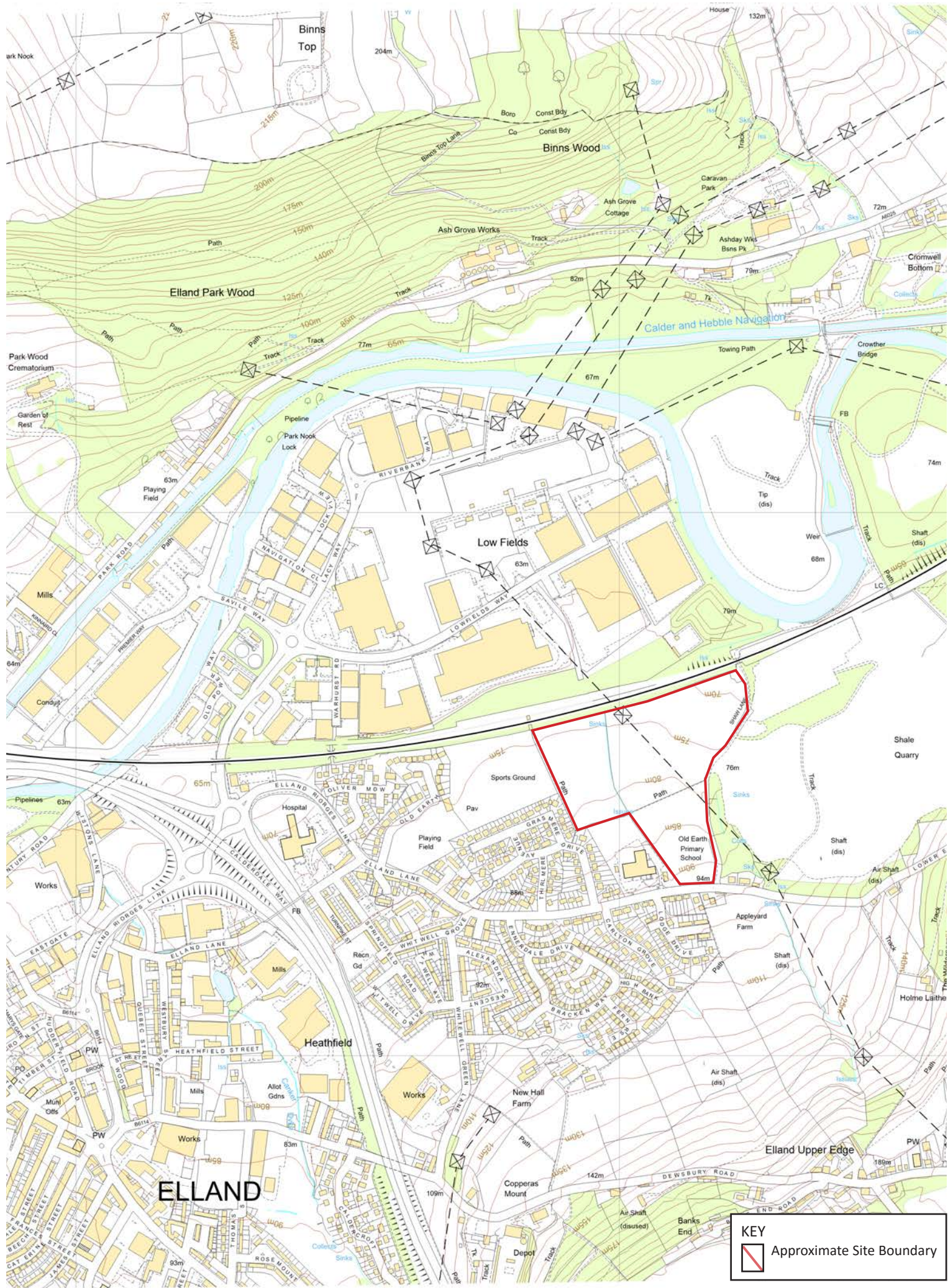
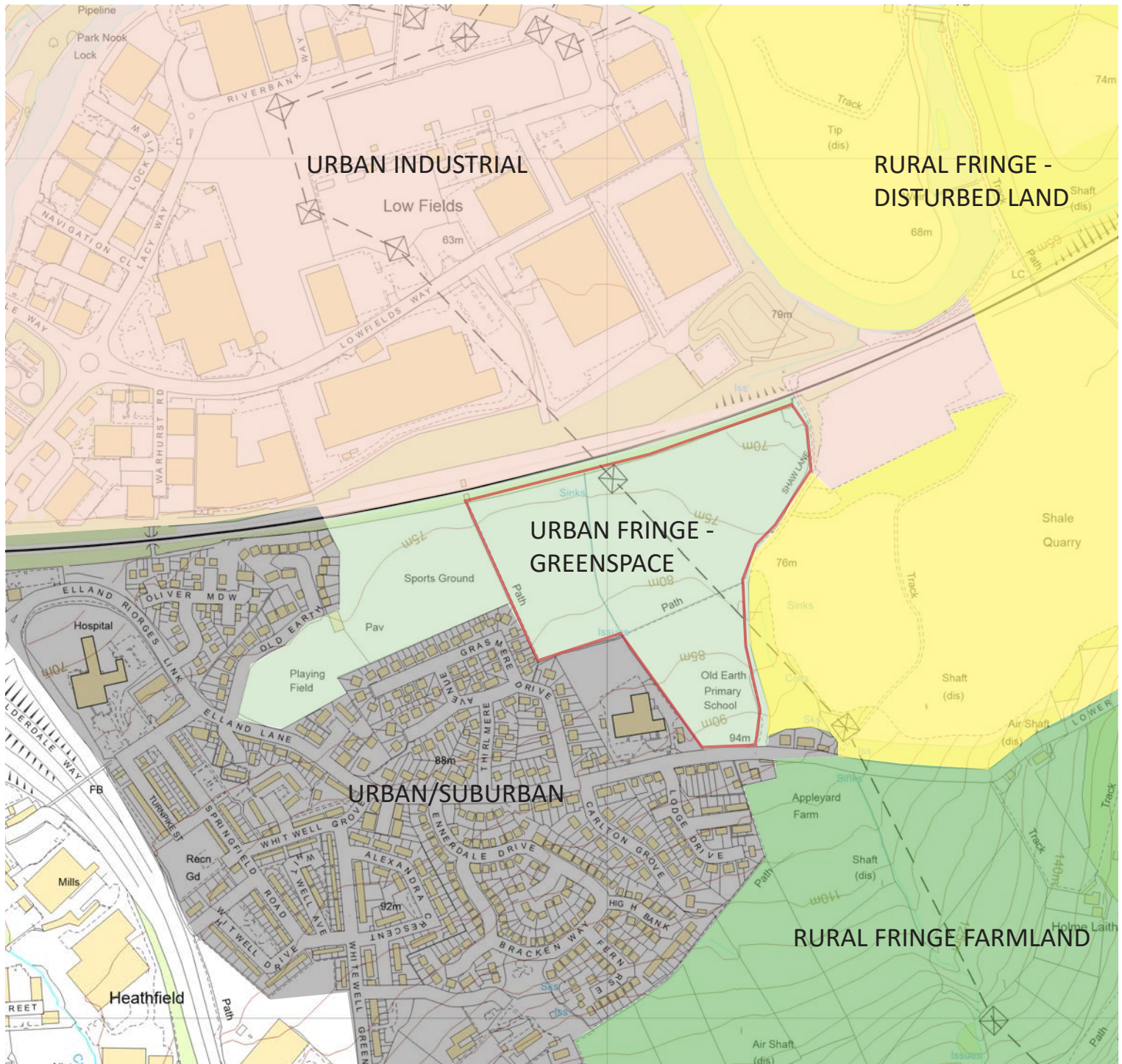


Figure 1: Site Location



URBAN/SUBURBAN

- Smaller scale elements/features/spaces (at this local level) and small to intimate scale.
- Overall rough texture with muted colours and occasional colour highlight.
- Form is vertical due to dominance/proximity of built form with rectilinear shapes.
- A degree of balance resulting from overall similarity of land use type and scale.
- Calm but with busy features e.g. local highways and railway.
- Relatively enclosed with little diversity of texture characterised by building materials and built form.
- Organised character and busy, offers some contrast to adjacent areas.

RURAL FRINGE FARMLAND

- Medium scale.
- Open nature with defined, low level boundaries e.g. stone walls.
- Even texture with predominantly horizontal features.
- Muted colours with overall balance but minor discordant features e.g. transmission lines.
- Calm with low level of activity.
- Irregular pattern that responds to landform but reflects organisation e.g. field pattern.

URBAN - INDUSTRIAL

- Large scale, both built form and spatial qualities.
- Overall lack of enclosure with open views.
- Even texture, due to homogeneity of built form, with muted colours.
- Balance in form between verticality of buildings and horizontal nature of open spaces due to built elements.
- Dominance of angular features.
- Busy features and near constant activity with noticeable noise; including the frequent trains to the adjacent railway line.
- Regularity of form with elements of semi-formality e.g. layout and pattern of access roads, car parking.

RURAL FRINGE - DISTURBED LAND

- Large scale, variety of exposure and enclosure.
- Simple, even texture resulting from homogenous features with muted colours.
- Form is horizontal, mixture of organic and straight.
- Balanced, simple with limited number of features.
- Calm, lack of, or low level activity.

URBAN FRINGE - GREENSPACE

- Medium scale.
- Open nature with defined boundaries that create visual horizons.
- Outward looking views to distant features are a notable quality.
- Even texture with predominantly horizontal features.
- Balanced, simple form, muted colours with minor discordant features e.g. transmission line.
- Calm with predominantly low level of activity but busy periods.
- Regular pattern that generally responds to landform but reflects organisation e.g. playing fields and agricultural land.

KEY

Approximate Site Boundary

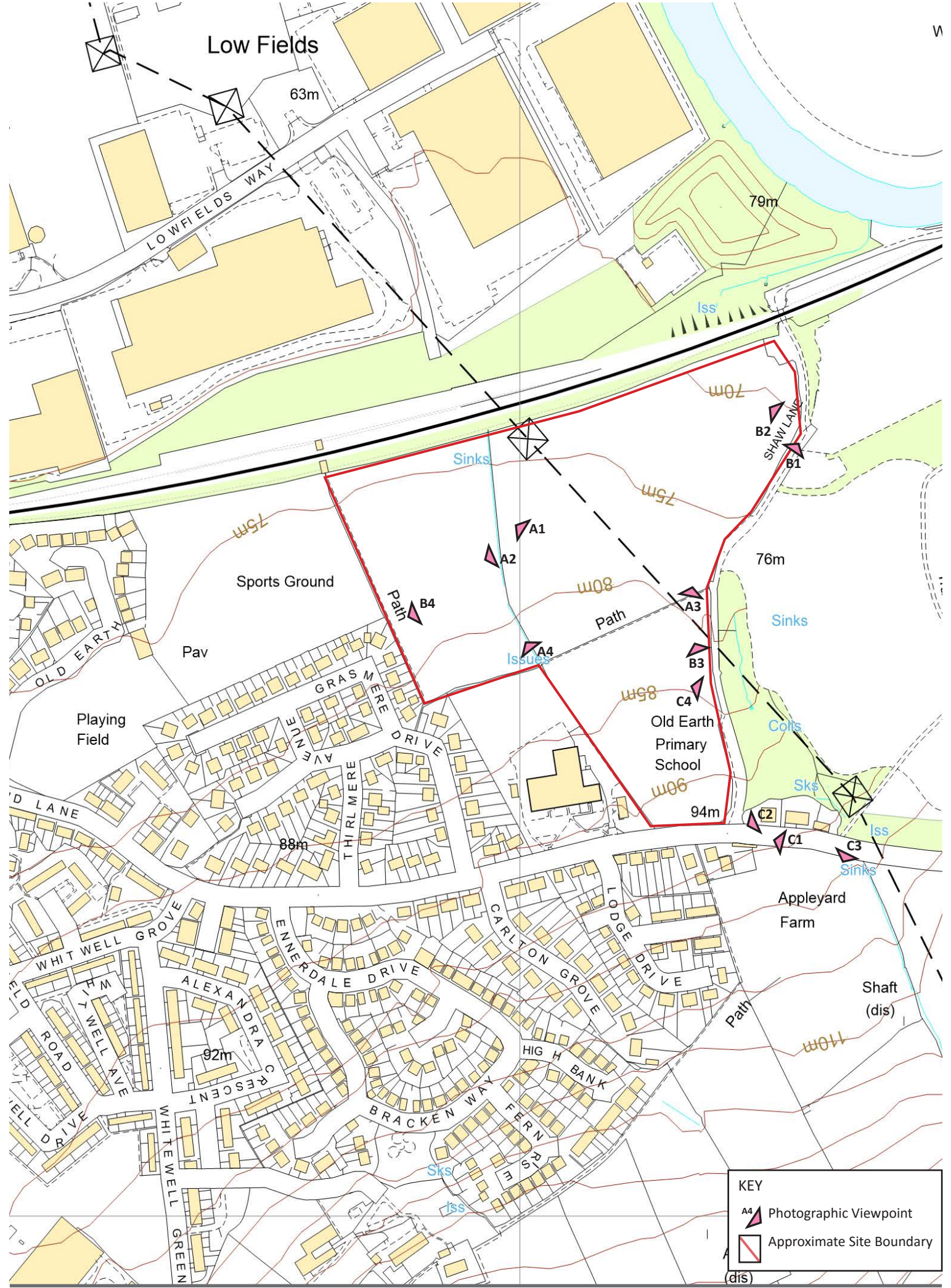
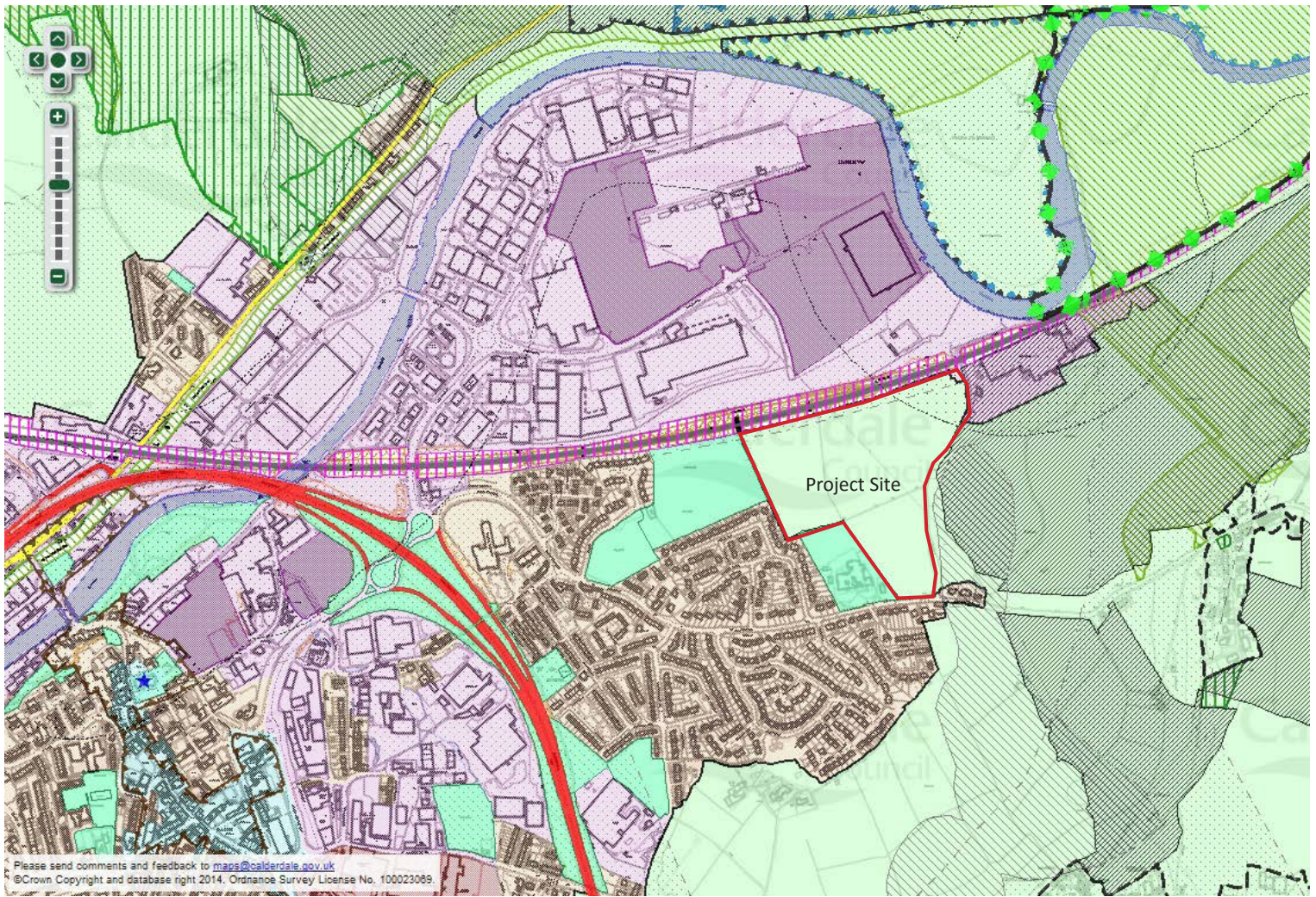


Figure 3: Photographic Locations



Replacement Calderdale Unitary Development Plan: Legend

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Archaeological site class 1 ★ Archaeological site class 2 Area around Todmorden Category 1 road M62 Category 2 roads Category 3 roads Common land Community facilities Conservation areas UDP Cycle corridor Dangerous substances establishments Disused rail formation Existing passenger railway Greenbelt Halifax day and night zone Halifax office amenity zone Halifax residential amenity zone Halifax residential priority regeneration area Hameldon Hill consultation zone Historic parks and gardens Region Region Leeds Bradford Airport consult zone Leeds Bradford safeguarding zone Local nature reserves Mineral area of search Mineral working sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed use New employment site New housing site Openspace rural Openspace urban Other retail area Pipelines Primary employment area Primary housing area Primary shopping frontage Protected land Regeneration action area as a whole Regeneration action area specific sites Regeneration priority areas River courses Secondary shopping frontage Sites of ecological or geological interest Sites of special scientific interest Sowerby Bridge canal wharf Special landscape area Special protection area and special area of conservation Tertiary shopping frontage Todmorden curve Town centre UDP Cycleways Unstable land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village envelope Washland Waste disposal Wildlife corridors Borough boundaries Borough boundaries
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Figure 4: Extract from RCUDP

PHOTO PLATES



Photo A1
Photo A3



Photo A2
Photo A4





Photo B1
Photo B3



Photo B2
Photo B4





Photo C1
Photo C3



Photo C2
Photo C4

