



LIZARD
Landscape Design and Ecology

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

**MERSEYSIDE DOGS TRUST REHOMING CENTRE
WHISTON LANE, HUYTON, LIVERPOOL, MERSEYSIDE**

Montagu Evans

Draft Issue

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

i Introduction and Background

Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Montagu Evans on behalf of the Dogs Trust Merseyside to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, (LVA) for land at the Dogs Trust Merseyside (Liverpool), Whiston Lane, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L36 6HP.

ii The Site

The Site comprises 1.8 hectares, (some 4.3 acres) of land in use as the Merseyside Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre, comprising canine enclosures, service and reception buildings. A large car park is located to the south western end of the Site, accessed off Whiston Lane, (see Photographs A - F). There is a gentle fall across the Site from a high of some 40m aOD to the north east and a low of some 33m aOD along Whiston Lane.

The north western boundary of the Site is defined by a post and rail fence, offset beyond a 2.2m high green mesh fence, upon the lower edge of the City Wigan Line Railway embankment, which is well tree'd and rises some 10m above the Site level. Beyond the railway embankment extends the Huyton and Prescot Golf Club, which is recognised as a Local Wildlife Site.

The south eastern boundary of the Site is defined with 1.8m close boarded fence, beyond which there is dense scrub and woodland which extends for some 100m north west off the north eastern part of the Stadt Moers Country Park.

The north eastern boundary is defined by scrub and trees which form part the buffer to the M57 Motorway, which is offset some 50m beyond a fenced area in use as a canine recreation space.

iii The Scheme

The Scheme comprises an improvement to the condition and quality of the canine enclosures to the eastern half of the Site, through the replacement of the existing six round single storey structures, with three rectangular, single storey structures, with more open space between these.

The existing reception building would be retained and re-purposed for veterinary use. A new re-homing reception building would be located east of the visitors car parking area to the south west of the Site, with an accessible ramp to the south west of this and a retaining wall to 1m extending about from this.

Existing mounds and tree groups would be retained across the central area, whilst an operational vehicular access would be provided along the north western edge of this to connect with the existing access track to the eastern end of the north western edge, where an operational parking area is proposed.

The existing parking area to the south west would be restructured, with planting areas and space for trees, whilst rain gardens and biodiversity areas with swales would form part of the open space provision to the new layout to the north east.

iv Summary Appraisal

The existing trees within the Site would be substantially maintained, with impacts offset through new tree planting and approaches to habitat managed for biodiversity in line with KLP P CS8: Green Infrastructure and P CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development.

There would be no substantive effect on spatial or visual aspects of openness. Regarding the visual aspect the limited contribution of the upper tree canopies within the Site, where glimpsed from the adjacent extent of Whiston Lane and from elevated ground offset to the south west along the upper western end of Lynton Road would be both maintained and enhanced, with additional tree planting.

There would be no impact on the open visual aspect and character of the grassed area offset south east of the Site, (beyond a 40m tree belt) within the Stadt Moers Country Park.

The spatial density of built form within the north eastern part of the Site, would be more evenly distributed across the Site, through a rationalisation of built form with more open space to the north east and a shift of built form to the lower lying landform to the south west from the proposed new re-homing reception building would be located east of the visitors car parking area.

This would be in line with KLP P CS5: Green Belt, with no harm to openness, visual or recreational amenities. There would be no harm to the purposes of the Green Belt, including separation of towns and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Visual Amenity

For primarily vehicular users, and a fewer number of pedestrians along Whiston Lane (represented from south to north by **Viewpoints No. 01, 02, 03 and 04**) there would be no change to visual amenity, other than where offset immediately adjacent to the entrance gate to the Merseyside Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre, (illustrated by **Viewpoint No. 02**) where a barely perceptible change to the character of the obtuse view would be introduced from the proposed new re-homing reception building. The roofline of the new building would be glimpsed just above the intervening railing, enclosed within surrounding vegetation from both within the Site and rising up the adjacent tree'd railway embankment. Despite the minor additional area of built form within the view, the overall visual character and balance between greenery and built form would remain consistent. There would be a **Negligible effect** on visual amenity.

Conclusion

There would be overall **Negligible effects** on the visual amenity and appearance of the surrounding area and landscape character within. The limited contribution of the Site area to the openness and function of the Green Belt would substantially remain as at present, albeit with some redistribution of built form within.

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 9

2.0 PLANNING POLICY, DESIGNATIONS AND CHARACTER..... 10

3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS - FIELD SURVEY AND REVIEW 16

4.0 LANDSCAPE OPPORTUNITIES 20

5.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL 21

APPENDIX A - HISTORIC MAPPING AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY A1

APPENDIX B - VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHS B1

APPENDIX C - NO VISIBILITY SCHEDULE C1

APPENDIX D - LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL - METHODOLOGY..... D1

FIGURES

FIGURE 1.1. DEVELOPMENT SITE LOCATION..... 4

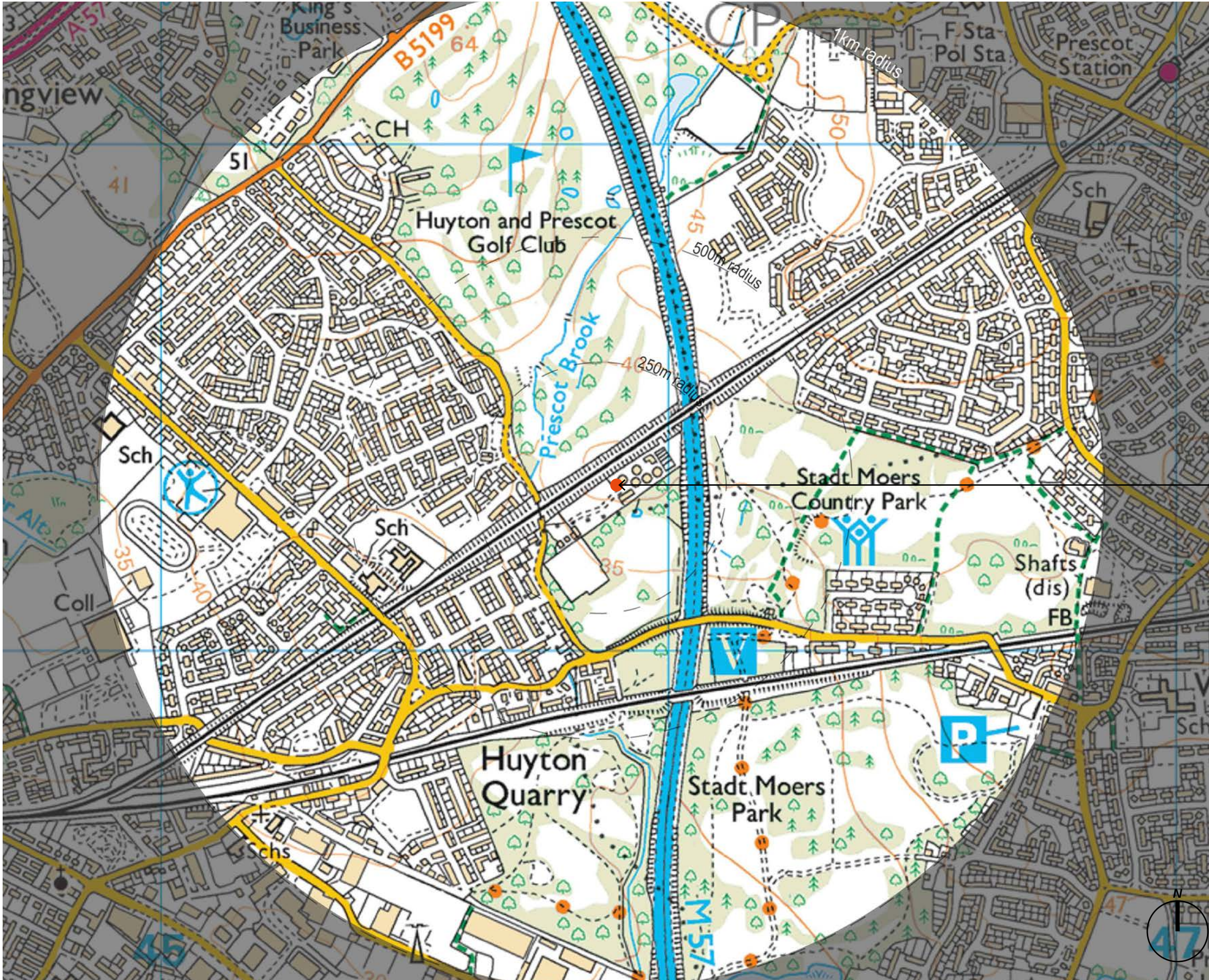
FIGURE 1.2. SITE AND SURROUNDS..... 7

FIGURE 2.1. PLANNING DESIGNATIONS 11

FIGURE 3.1. KNOWSLEY HISTORIC CHARACTER SUB TYPES (2011) 13

FIGURE 4.1. LANDFORM 15

FIGURE 4.3. VIEWPOINTS AND ZONES OF VISUAL INFLUENCE 18



Development Site Location.

Figure 1.1. Development Site Location



Photograph A. Existing car parking area with surrounding buildings.



Photograph B. South western end of the dog walking area, with training barn.



Photograph C. Access track to the northern edge of the Site, where vehicular access along the northern edge of the Site is gained.



Photograph D. Reception area with dog enclosures beyond.



Photograph E. Northern edge of dog enclosures, with chainlink fencing to northern boundary



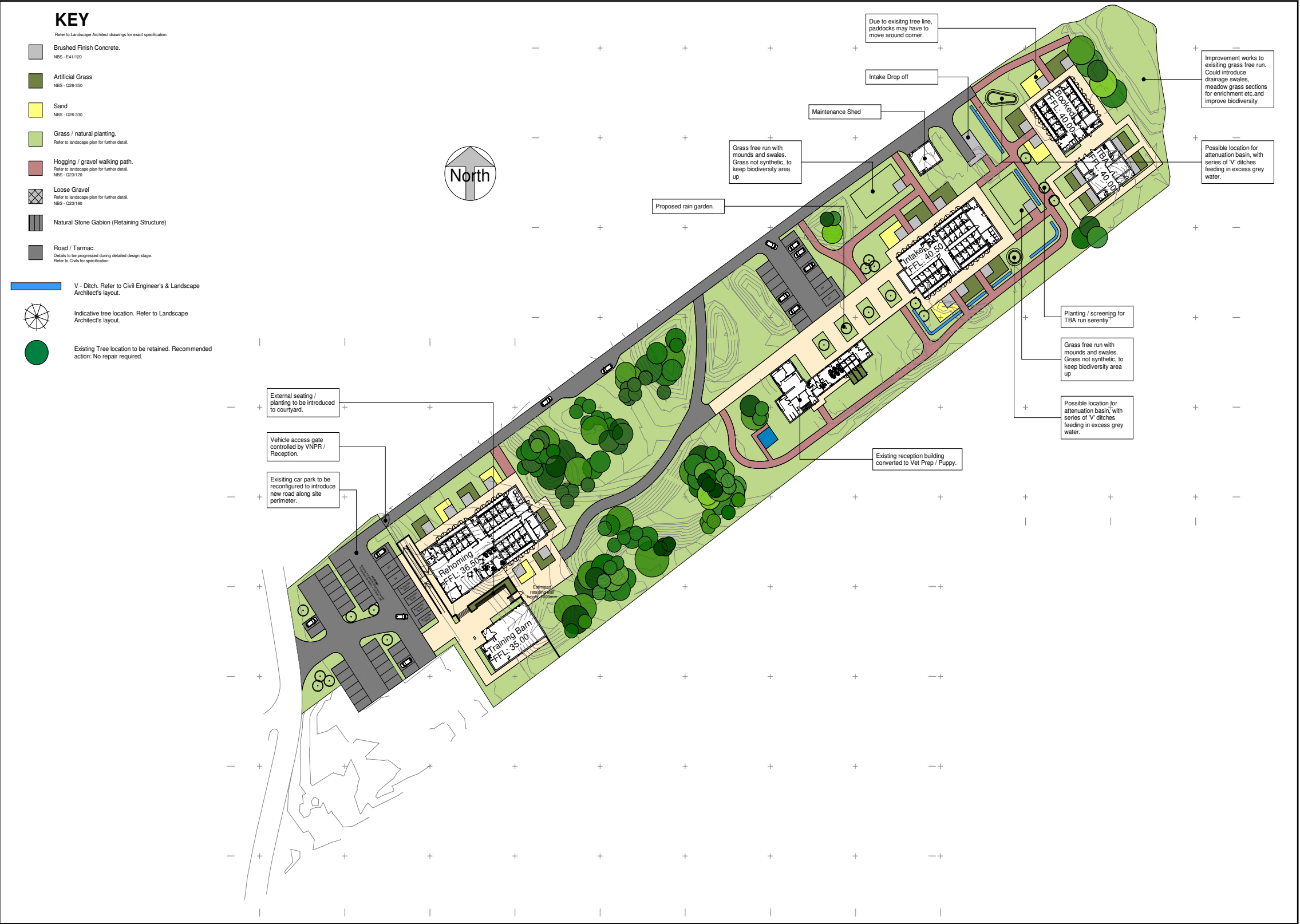
Photograph F. Dog recreation area with mounding to north eastern end of the Site.



Legend

- Development Site Boundary
- Country Park
- Local Wildlife Site
- Deciduous Woodland UK Priority Habitat
- Metropolitan Green Belt
- Site Photographs

Figure 1.2. Site and Surrounds



Extract A. Powell Dobson Architects - Proposed Site Plan.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- General**
- 1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, (*Lizard*) has been commissioned by Montagu Evans on behalf of the Dogs Trust Merseyside to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, (*LVA*) for land at the Dogs Trust Merseyside (Liverpool), Whiston Lane, Huyton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L36 6HP, (*NGR SJ 45867 91286*) (see **Figure 1.1**).

1.2 The LVA has been undertaken by Josh Peacock, Technical Lead of Landscape Planning at Lizard and a Chartered Landscape Architect with over 20 years professional experience in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (*LVIA*).

Report Structure

1.3 Following this introduction, relevant landscape planning policy, landscape planning designations and landscape characterisation is outlined within **Section 2.0**. Existing conditions are described in **Section 3.0**, which presents primary evidence with a descriptive identification of the landscape and visual baseline. Landscape and visual receptors are defined and a value allocated to inform subsequent consideration of sensitivity to change.

1.4 The landscape and visual appraisal of effect is undertaken within **Section 4.0**, supported by a tabulated assessment of landscape and visual amenity within **Tables 4.1 and 4.2**, which provides an overview of the allocation of value, magnitude of change and sensitivity leading to the identified effect.

The Site

- 1.5 The proposed development site, (*the Site*) is 1.8 hectares, (*some 4.3 acres*) of land in use as the Merseyside Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre, comprising canine enclosures, service and reception buildings. A large car park is located to the south western end of the Site, accessed off Whiston Lane, (see **Photographs A - F**). There is a gentle fall across the Site from a high of some 40m aOD to the north east and a low of some 33m aOD along Whiston Lane.

1.6 The north western boundary of the Site is defined by a post and rail fence, offset beyond a 2.2m high green mesh fence, upon the lower edge of the City Wigan Line Railway embankment, which is well tree'd and rises some 10m above the Site level. Beyond the railway embankment extends the Huyton and Prescott Golf Club, which is recognised as a Local Wildlife Site.

1.7 The south eastern boundary of the Site is defined with 1.8m close boarded fence, beyond which there is dense scrub and woodland which extends for some 100m north west off the north eastern part of the Stadt Moers Country Park.

1.8 The north eastern boundary is defined by scrub and trees which form part the buffer to the M57 Motorway, which is offset some 50m beyond a fenced area in use as a canine recreation space.

The Scheme

- 1.9 Through reference to the Powell Dobson Architects produced Site Plan, (see **Extract A**) the Scheme comprises an improvement to the condition and quality of the canine enclosures to the eastern half of the Site, through the replacement of the existing six round single storey structures, with three rectangular, single storey structures, with more open space between these.

1.10 The existing reception building would be retained and re-purposed for veterinary use. A new re-homing reception building would be located east of the visitors car parking area to the south west of the Site, with an accessible ramp to the south west of this and a retaining wall to 1m extending about from this.

1.11 Existing mounds and tree groups would be retained across the central area, whilst an operational vehicular access would be provided along the north western edge of this to connect with the existing access track to the eastern end of the north western edge, where an operational parking area is proposed.

1.12 The existing parking area to the south west would be restructured, with planting areas and space for trees, whilst rain gardens and biodiversity areas with swales would form part of the open space provision to the new layout to the north east.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY, DESIGNATIONS AND CHARACTER

Planning Policy

2.1 The following relevant policy has been taken into account by the appraisal:

- *National Planning Policy Framework, (July 2021);*
- *Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (January 2016).*

2.2 The Statutory development plan for Knowsley District consists of the Knowsley District Local Plan Core Strategy (2016) and the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (June 2006). There are no relevant policies identified within the 2006 Development Plan considered to be relevant for this project.

2.3 The key planning policies considered relevant to the Scheme's landscape and visual considerations are summarised below:

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

2.4 The Government's current planning policies on land use planning in England are set out within the National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF, 2021).

2.5 Paragraph 130 identifies that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

2.6 Regarding protecting green belt land, Paragraph 137 within Chapter 13 identifies that: *'the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'*

2.7 Paragraph 138 identifies that: *'Green Belt serves five purposes:*

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

2.8 Regarding the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, Paragraph 174 within Chapter 15 identifies that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (January 2016)

2.9 Strategic Objective 8: Green Infrastructure and Rural Areas, is:

'To support and strengthen the role of Knowsley's Green Infrastructure (in rural and urban areas), promote biodiversity, and maintain the character of rural settlements including Cronton, Tarbock and Knowsley Village.'

2.10 Policy CS5: Green Belt, identifies that:

'New Development in the Green Belt

1) Inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Green Belt except in very special circumstances in which it has been demonstrated that the harm to the Green Belt (including any harm to its openness, purposes or to its visual and recreational amenities) would be clearly outweighed by other considerations. Major Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt.'

2.11 Policy CS8: Green Infrastructure identifies that:

'Maintenance and Enhancement of Knowsley's Existing Green Infrastructure: 1) Knowsley's existing Green Infrastructure and its beneficial functions will be protected, managed and/or enhanced, primarily to: a) Ensure more attractive and cleaner residential neighbourhoods; b) Sustain and promote biodiversity (including designated sites, priority habitats and protected and endangered species) in accordance with importance and contribution to ecological networks; c) Preserve the character and function of historic environments and valued landscapes; d) Mitigate the effects of climate change and flood risk; e) Mitigate air, water and noise pollution; f) Provide local opportunities for sport, recreation and allotments; and g) Provide sustainable transport linkages between residential neighbourhoods and easy access to employment and services[...].'

2.12 Policy CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development, identifies that:

'1) To enhance the local distinctiveness, identity and accessibility of places, new development within Knowsley will be expected to: a) Respond to and integrate positive characteristics of immediate surroundings, including local materials, scale, mass, form, layout, alignment and density of the existing built environment; b) Complement and enhance (where possible), existing landscape, topography, Green Infrastructure; and features of local importance and historic interest; c) Consider provision of landmark buildings and additional detailing at and adjacent to main gateways, movement corridors, town centres and strategic regeneration opportunities; [...].'



- Legend**
- Development Site Boundary
 - Listed Buildings
 - Country Park
 - Local Wildlife Site
 - Deciduous Woodland UK Priority Habitat
 - Metropolitan Green Belt

Figure 2.1. Planning Designations

Landscape Planning Designations

2.13 Landscape planning designations within the Study Area are described below and their location shown on **Figure 2.1**.

Green Belt

2.14 Green Belts are protected to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence, as reinforced within the NPPF, Paragraph 137 and 138. Planning Practice Guidance regarding the Green Belt from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, (*published 22 July 2019*), advises that:

'Assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, where it is relevant to do so, requires a judgment based on the circumstances of the case. By way of example, the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to: openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume; the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.'

2.15 The concept of openness is understood to be 'open-textured', (*Turner [2016] EWCA Civ 466*) and that in addressing this, evidence can and should consider a number of factors which may be relevant to the assessment, as a matter of planning judgement, (*Samuel Smith Old Brewery [2020] UKSC 3*). The Study Area is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

2.16 Through reference to the Knowsley and Sefton Green Belt Study - Final Knowsley Report (November 2012) an overall commentary on the unit (K040) within which the Site is located is provided as follows: *'Parcel is within essential gap between Huyton and Prescott. Development within this parcel would significantly reduce this gap and potentially create a precedent for similar development on either side of the M57 between the Huyton and Prescott.'*

Listed Buildings

2.17 Listed Buildings have statutory protection under the Planning (*Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*) Act 1990. The Hurst Hall, Huyton And Prescott Golf Club Grade II Listed Building, is located some 850 m to the north west of the Site. The National Heritage List for England, (*NHLE*) provides the following details: *'House, now golf club house. 1830s with extensions of 1870s. Stucco on stone with hipped slate roof, brick extensions. 2 storeys, 5 bays. [...].'*

Country Parks

2.18 Country Parks are statutorily declared and managed by local authorities in England and Wales under the Countryside Act 1968. They are primarily intended for recreation and leisure opportunities close to population centres and do not necessarily have any nature conservation importance. Country Parks are defined by Natural England as *'public green spaces often at the edge of urban areas which provide places to enjoy the outdoors and experience nature in an informal semi-rural park setting'*.

2.19 The north western part of the Stadt Moers Country Park is located to the south of the Site. Through reference to the Parks and Green Spaces webpage for Knowlsey Council, the main entrance to Stadt Moers Park is from Pottery Lane, with one of a number of more minor entrances located some 100m south of the Site on Whiston Lane.

2.20 A number of further secondary access points from other local entrances are provided from Cross Lane, West View, Huyton Lane and Paradise Lane. Visitor facilities and attractions include: Environment centre, (open when Green Space Rangers are on site); Car parking; Playgrounds; Cycleway; Cross country course; Walking and cycling clubs; Wildflower, wetland and woodland habitats; Fishing pond; Friends of Stadt Moers Park; 'Work Out' Green Gym; Whilst the main footpath and cycle routes are accessible.

2.21 Through reference to the Mersey Forest website, the Country Park is described as follows: *'Stadt Moers Park covers more than 220 acres of land between Whiston and Huyton and includes meadow, woodland and pond habitats, set amongst a network of footpaths.'*

The development of the Park has been an ambitious project in the heart of Knowsley to transform formerly derelict land into the largest area of public open space in the Borough.

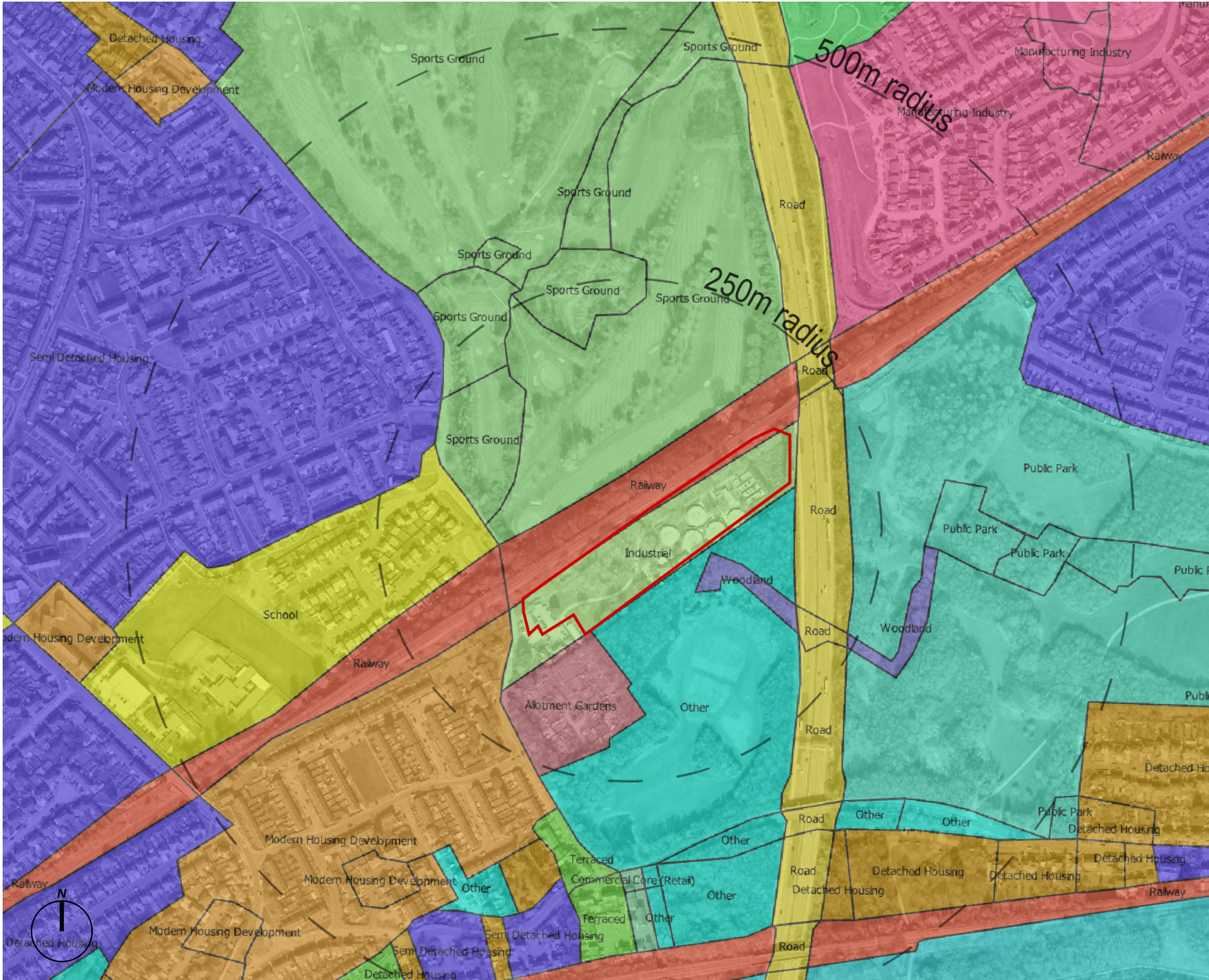
The area has a long history of coal mining, before Tushingham's Brickworks was built in the 1890s. By 1976 the works were derelict and much of today's park was used as a landfill site for domestic refuse. In 1983, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, as part of the Operation Groundwork experiment, undertook a major reclamation scheme to transform these landfill sites into an attractive country park. Since then thousands of trees have been planted as part of a new landscape.

Stadt Moers Park gradually emerged, named after Knowsley's twin town of Moers in Germany. The Park is divided into four 'areas' by the Liverpool/Manchester Railway and M57 Motorway. Each of these areas is different in character and has something different to offer visitors. From the formal parkland and playgrounds of West-View, to the rugged nature areas of Tushingham, Stadt Moers Park provides the perfect setting to experience 'countryside close to home'. The Stadt Moers Park Visitor Centre, off Pottery Lane, will help you get more from your visit, it is run by The Sustainability and Environmental Development Division and provides information, exhibitions and toilet facilities. The Site Rangers also deliver a programme of education sessions and public events throughout the year.'

Local Wildlife Sites and UK Priority Habitat

2.22 Local Wildlife Sites (*LWS*) are non-statutory designations given to areas of high, local conservation value. The Huyton and Prescott Golf Club LWS is located beyond the City Line Wigan Railway Embankment to the north of the Site. Habitats of Principal Importance are included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

2.23 There are a number of patches of woodland within the immediately surrounding landscape, including outside of the southern boundary of the Site, which are identified within Natural England's Priority Habitats Inventory v2.1 as UK Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland.



Legend

Development Site Boundary

Figure 3.1. Knowsley Historic Character Sub Types (2011)

Published Landscape Character Studies

- 2.24 A review of published Landscape Character Assessment information within the Study Area has been undertaken to provide an understanding of the landscape character context for the Study Area. This includes the following relevant documents:
- *National Character Areas (September 2013);*
 - *Landscape Character Assessment of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough (2007);*
 - *Merseyside Historic Characterisation Project: Knowsley (December 2011),*

National Character Areas (September 2013)

- 2.25 The Study Area falls within the eastern part of the Merseyside Conurbation National Character Area, (NCA 58) which is described as:

'A predominantly urban and suburban landscape, based around the settlements of Liverpool, Birkenhead, Bootle, Kirkby, Maghull, Huyton, Bebington and Wallasey. The NCA sits on a low-lying but gently rolling platform punctuated by low sandstone ridges and bisected by the lower estuary of the River Mersey. [...] There is a large proportion of industrial land use, with docks, warehouses and associated commercial land, interlinked by an extensive transport infrastructure'

- 2.26 The following Statements of Environmental Opportunity are identified for NCA39: *'SEO 3: Plan to connect habitats across the urban fabric, creating corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, to enhance the landscape, create local routes for walking and cycling, and provide accessible natural green spaces for people close to where they live and work.'* (Ibid, p4)

Landscape Character Assessment of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough (2007)

- 2.27 The Knowsley Landscape Character Assessment identifies and describes the character and distinctiveness of the Boroughs landscape whilst establishing links with the Merseyside Historic Characterisation Project. Six landscape character types are identified. However, the Study Area falls outside of these areas, within an area classified as urban.

Merseyside Historic Characterisation Project: Knowsley (December 2011)

- 2.28 The Merseyside Historic Characterisation Project: Knowsley comprises a GIS data set together with a set of supporting reports, undertaken by the Merseyside Archaeological Advisory Service. The data provides a broad-brush characterisation of the landscape of Merseyside which can be interrogated to encourage the management and understanding of the historic dimension of the present day. Historic Landscape Character Types (HLCT) identified across the Study Area are shown within **Figure 3.1**.
- 2.29 The 2011 Study historically characterises the landscape within which the Site is located as Industrial, with Allotment Gardens to the south and an area classified as other. Whilst a belt of woodland is shown offset to the south east extending towards the Road of the M57.

Time Depth - Historic Mapping Review

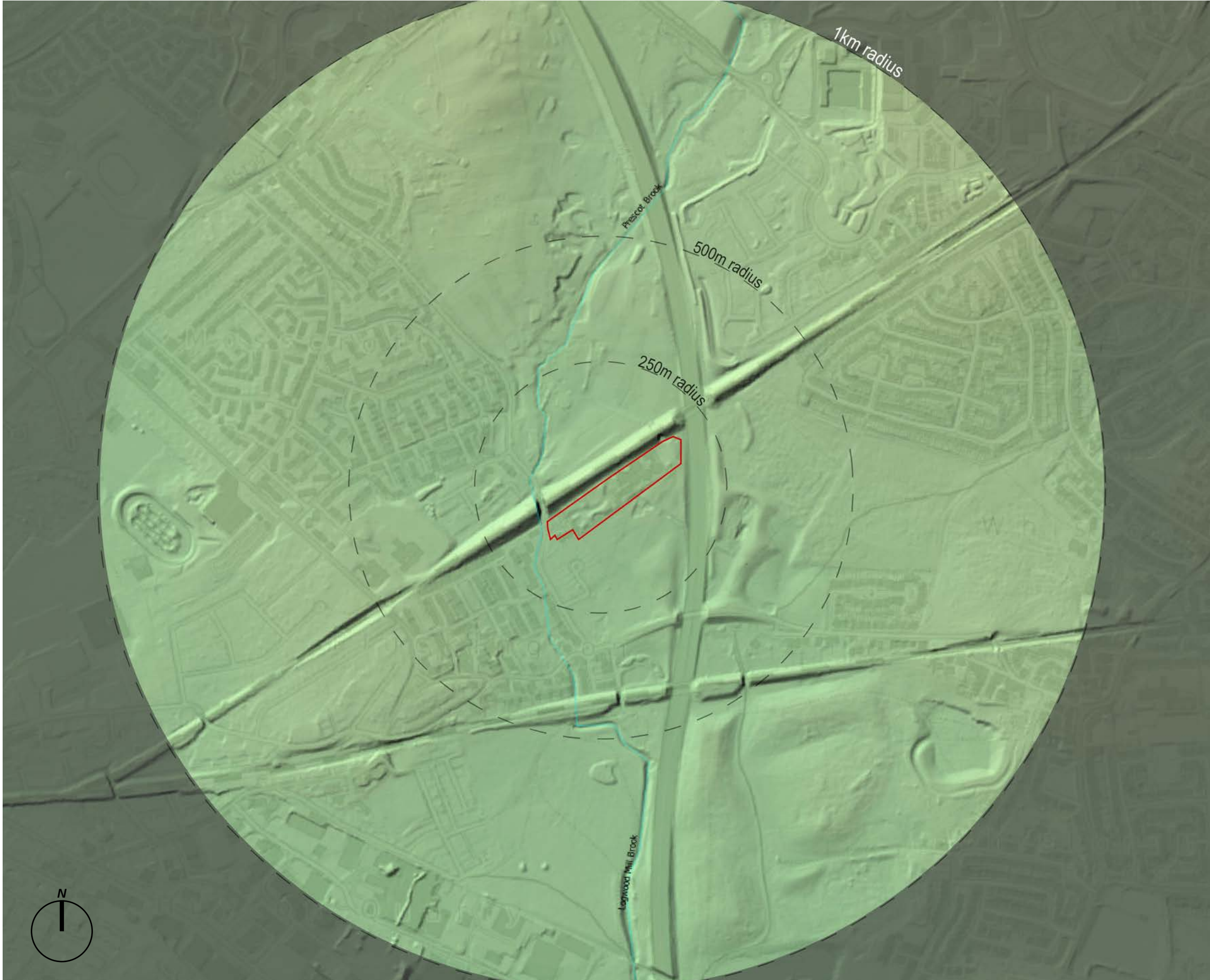
- 2.30 A historic map regression is undertaken to inform a review of the historic evolution of the area surrounding the Site, regarding patterns of settlement, field boundaries, vegetation and use, through reference to historic maps provided within **Appendix A**.
- 1894 - 1966 - 1991 - Ordnance Survey Maps
- 2.31 Through reference to the 1894 Ordnance Survey (OS) (6 inch) Map, the Railway can be seen extending in diagonally across the landscape, bisecting the earlier field systems, Lord's Lane and the Prescott Brook. A tunnel is provided through the embankment for Lord's Lane, and for a green lane. Field boundaries are shown inset from the northern boundary of the Site and mid way through the Site. A smaller enclosure off Lord's Lane is shown to the western end of the Site, with a pond upon the alignment of this. That which extends mid way continues south east to a broader belt of trees within which a pond is located. Kennel Cottage is located offset, beyond field systems to the east of this.

- 2.32 Through reference to the 1966 OS Map, a trackway can be seen extending through the middle of the Site, between the now named Whiston Lane and Kennel Cottages offset to the south east. The area of the Site is labelled Nursery, within which a glasshouse is shown, with two buildings offset south of this just outside of the Site. Field boundaries are no longer shown extending about, whilst the woodland belt offset to the south east is no longer represented, albeit a patch of trees are shown surrounding the previously noted pond. Various planned estates are shown offset to the north east and south east.

- 2.33 Through reference to the 1991 OS Maps, the M57 motorway and cutting is shown extending longitudinally, further bisecting the landscape. The former Kennel Cottages and former trackway east of the M57 are no longer shown present, albeit that within the Site remains. The planned estates west of Whiston Lane are shown.

2000 - 2022 Aerial Photograph

- 2.34 Through reference to the aerial photograph from 2000, the present layout and use within the Site by the Merseyside Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre, with car park to the south west and canine enclosures, service and reception buildings to the north east.
- 2.35 Maturing vegetation can be seen providing a new structure to the uses of the former farmed landscape to the north of the railway line by the Huyton and Prescott Golf Club and the north eastern part of the Stadt Moers Country Park to the south. Through reference to the aerial photograph from 2020, the vegetation structure can be seen to have matured, whilst further planned estates extend offset to the north east and south west.



Legend

Development Site Boundary

Watercourse, (Source: OS Open Rivers)

Light Detection and Ranging (*LiDAR*) is an airborne mapping technique, which uses a laser to measure the distance between the aircraft and the ground. Up to 100,000 measurements per second are made of the ground, allowing highly detailed terrain models to be generated.

The content of this LiDAR plan is sourced from the Environment Agency as digital elevation data supplied as a Digital Terrain Model to 1m, (2022) through QGIS.

Figure 4.1. Landform

3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS - FIELD SURVEY AND REVIEW

Landscape Character

Landform, Settlement Pattern, Soils, Hydrology, Land Use and Vegetation

3.1 Landform across the Study Area is gently undulating, with highs of some 50m aOD offset to the north east and north west, falling to a low of some 35m aOD about the area of Whiston Lane south east across the Stadt Moers Country Park. There is a gentle fall across the Site from a high of some 40m aOD to the north east and a low of some 33m aOD along Whiston Lane.

3.2 Soil type across the central part of the Study Area is understood through reference to the Soils Map (produced by Cranfield University, with support from Defra) to comprise: 'Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage'. A general indication of the plant communities and habitats with which this soil type is associated with include: 'Wide range of pasture and woodland types'.

Landscape Receptors

Value of Landscape Receptors

3.3 Existing character assessments are reviewed and interpreted for the Site. This review informs identification of key characteristics associated with the associated character area that are most relevant to an appraisal of the proposal, as recommended within GLVIA3, (p79, Para 5.15).

3.4 The application Site is not considered to be a valued landscape in relation to Paragraph 174(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework as informed by LI Technical Guidance Note 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations.

3.5 The description of components of landscape enables an understanding of their value, including what the contribution of the Site is to that. This enables consideration of susceptibility against the type and magnitude of change proposed within the appraisal. The following components, which may include elements, features and areas where appropriate are defined to provide an understanding of the landscape both within the site and placed within a wider context where relevant.

3.6 The components are provided with a value, through consideration of the criteria provided within the methodology:

Landscape Areas, Features and Aspects within the Site

- *Area - Wooded area along the south eastern edge of the Site, identified as comprising Deciduous Woodland UK Priority Habitat - **Low Value**;*
- *Area - Contribution of the trees within the Site, dominated by birch to a tree'd character which extends to the south across a 40m tree belt within the north western edge of the Stadt Moers Country Park - **Low Value**;*
- *Feature - Treed embankment along the north western edge of the Site - **Low Value**;*

Landscape Character and Wider Context of the Site

- *Open visual aspect and character of the grassed area offset south east of the Site, (beyond a 40m tree belt) within the Stadt Moers Country Park, forming part of the Green Belt - **Medium Value**;*
- *Contribution of the upper canopy of the trees within the Site, dominated by Birch to the tree'd aspect, glimpsed from elevated ground offset to the south west from along the Upper western end of Lynton Road - **Low Value**;*

Visual Amenity

3.7 Viewpoint locations referred to below are shown through reference to **Figure 4.3**. Viewpoint Photographs are provided within **Appendix B**. Receptors are identified (with some weighting, relative to the value criteria provided within the methodology).

3.8 The people whose visual amenity is defined are referred to as visual amenity receptors. Visual receptors are commonly grouped based on either the nature of the visibility which they are afforded towards the Site, which may be further subdivided based upon distance and orientation.

3.9 To enable a description of the nature of the visual amenity afforded to people, the nature of use and any values associated with the visual amenity are identified. This includes the identification of any landscape features within the view, which may emphasise the value associated with the features contribution to the views compositional balance.

Nature of Visual Receptors

3.10 Primarily vehicular users, and a fewer number of pedestrians along Whiston Lane are represented from south to north by **Viewpoints No. 01, 02, 03 and 04**.

3.11 Local residents along the upper western end of Lynton Road on the road or pavement are illustrated by **Viewpoint No. 05**. Smaller numbers of primarily dog walkers upon an Informal pathway within the woodland to the south east of the Site, forming part of the Stadt Moers Country Park are illustrated where most adjacent by **Viewpoint No. 06**.

3.12 These users are likely to anticipate views of a **Low - Medium value**, contributed positively by aspects of natural character, such as the tree canopies across the Site, but reduced relative to the suburban character of housing and roads.

Zone of Visual Influence

3.13 The Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) for the Site, (see **Figure 4.3**) was derived from the Zone of Theoretical Visibility determined as part of the field appraisal and desktop analysis of Ordnance Survey mapping, through reference to the Viewpoint photographs.

3.14 The ZVI is indicative of the area from which aspects of the Site are visible from the public realm, taking into account landform, built form, vegetation and distance. The ZVI is defined as three separate zones on **Figure 4.3**.

3.15 Visibility towards the Site is substantially contained to the adjacent extent of Whiston Lane due to the density of surrounding tree belts. Those within surrounding areas, including upon the M57 Motorway to the east and the City Wigan Line Railway are travelling at speed, with dense woodland belts between these arterial routes and the Site.



Legend

Development Site Boundary

V01

Short Distance Viewpoint Location and Direction.

Areas of publicly accessible land from which visibility into the south western part of the Site is possible.

Areas of publicly accessible land from which filtered visibility into part of the south eastern edge of the Site is possible.

Areas of publicly accessible land from which visibility of part of the vegetation bordering the Site or canopy of trees above the Site is possible.

Figure 4.3. Viewpoints and Zones of Visual Influence

4.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

General

- 4.1 This section appraises the landscape and visual impacts which would result from the Scheme described in **Section 1.0**.
- 4.2 The appraisal considers the likely effects using the criteria provided within **Appendix D**, taking into account the value of the receptor and susceptibility to the magnitude of impact anticipated.
- 4.3 The appraisal is undertaken descriptively to maintain the narrative and present the logic as clearly as possible, supported by a tabulated assessment of effect for landscape character within **Table 4.1** and visual amenity within **Table 4.2**.

Landscape Opportunities / Design Strategy

- 4.4 The following opportunities present the contextual and distinctive approach taken proposed as part of the Scheme.
- 4.5 Landscape opportunities are defined to respond to the identified values associated with the Site, through what is referred to as the mitigation hierarchy, whereby the first consideration is avoidance of impact, followed by reduction, and then otherwise compensation. Enhancement measures are otherwise defined as either stand-alone improvements or in compensation for an impact that cannot be avoided or sufficiently reduced.

Primary Mitigation and Enhancement Measures:

- **Enhance** - The replacement of the existing six round single storey canine enclosure structures, with three rectangular, single storey structures, with more open space between these, would maintain a single storey at a comparable elevation at a reduced density to that existing;
- **Reduce** - The new re-homing reception building would be located east of the car parking area upon lying land to the south west of the Site, beyond existing 2m tall fences and viewed enclosed within the surrounding tree belts, which extend up the adjacent embankment;

- **Reduce** - The operational vehicular access proposed along the north western edge of the Site and operational car parking area would substantially maintain the existing trees which enclose the existing wide track along this boundary, further to the recommendations and guidance of an Arboriculturalist;
- **Enhance** - The existing parking area to the south west would be restructured, with planting areas and space for trees, whilst rain gardens and biodiversity areas with swales would form part of the open space provision to the new layout to the north east, with some contribution to the wider green infrastructure within Knowsley.

Impact Appraisal

Landscape Character

- 4.6 The existing trees within the Site would be substantially maintained, with impacts offset through new tree planting and approaches to habitat managed for biodiversity in line with KLP P CS8: Green Infrastructure and P CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development.
- 4.7 There would be no substantive effect on spatial or visual aspects of openness. Regarding the visual aspect the limited contribution of the upper tree canopies within the Site, where glimpsed from the adjacent extent of Whiston Lane and from elevated ground offset to the south west along the upper western end of Lynton Road would be both maintained and enhanced, with additional tree planting.
- 4.8 There would be no impact on the open visual aspect and character of the grassed area offset south east of the Site, (beyond a 40m tree belt) within the Stadt Moers Country Park.
- 4.9 The spatial density of built form within the north eastern part of the Site, would be more evenly distributed across the Site, through a rationalisation of built form with more open space to the north east and a shift of built form to the lower lying landform to the south west from the proposed new re-homing reception building would be located east of the visitors car parking area.

- 4.10 This would be in line with KLP P CS5: Green Belt, with no harm to openness, visual or recreational amenities. There would be no harm to the purposes of the Green Belt, including separation of towns and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

Visual Amenity

- 4.11 For primarily vehicular users, and a fewer number of pedestrians along Whiston Lane (represented from south to north by **Viewpoints No. 01, 02, 03 and 04**) there would be no change to visual amenity, other than where offset immediately adjacent to the entrance gate to the Merseyside Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre, (illustrated by **Viewpoint No. 02**) where a barely perceptible change to the character of the obtuse view would be introduced from the proposed new re-homing reception building. The roofline of the new building would be glimpsed just above the intervening railing, enclosed within surrounding vegetation from both within the Site and rising up the adjacent tree'd railway embankment. Despite the minor additional area of built form within the view, the overall visual character and balance between greenery and built form would remain consistent. There would be a **Negligible effect** on visual amenity.
- 4.12 For local residents along the upper western end of Lynton Road on the road or pavement, (illustrated by **Viewpoint No. 05**) the contribution of the upper canopy of trees within the Site to a wider canopy of trees would be retained, with no substantive impact on this, with a **Negligible effect** on visual amenity here.
- 4.13 For smaller numbers of primarily dog walkers upon an Informal pathway within the woodland to the south east of the Site, forming part of the Stadt Moers Country Park, (illustrated where most adjacent by **Viewpoint No. 06**) there would be no change as the existing building which can be glimpsed through the vegetation would remain as existing, with a **Negligible effect**.
- Conclusion**
- 4.14 There would be overall **Negligible effects** on the visual amenity and appearance of the surrounding area and landscape character within. The limited contribution of the Site area to the openness and function of the Green Belt would substantially remain as at present, albeit with some redistribution of built form within.

TABLE 4.1 - ASSESSMENT SUMMARY TABLE - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER COMPONENTS

RECEPTOR	ASSESSMENT			
	VALUE	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE	POTENTIAL EFFECTS (POST CONSTRUCTION)
Landscape Areas, Features and Aspects within the Site				
<i>Area - Wooded area along the south eastern edge of the Site, identified as comprising Deciduous Woodland UK Priority Habitat;</i>	LOW	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
<i>Area - Contribution of the trees within the Site, dominated by birch to a tree'd character which extends to the south across a 40m tree belt within the north western edge of the Stadt Moers Country Park;</i>	LOW	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
<i>Feature - Treed embankment along the north western edge of the Site;</i>	LOW	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
Landscape Character and Wider Context of the Site				
<i>Open visual aspect and character of the grassed area offset south east of the Site, (beyond a 40m tree belt) within the Stadt Moers Country Park, forming part of the Green Belt;</i>	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
<i>Contribution of the upper canopy of the trees within the Site, dominated by Birch to the tree'd aspect, glimpsed from elevated ground offset to the south west from along the Upper western end of Lynton Road;</i>	LOW	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE

TABLE 4.2 - ASSESSMENT SUMMARY TABLE - VISUAL AMENITY

RECEPTOR	ASSESSMENT			
	VALUE	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE	POTENTIAL EFFECTS (POST CONSTRUCTION)
North bound primarily vehicular users, and a fewer number of pedestrians along Whiston Lane offset south of the access to the Merseyside Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre, represented by Viewpoint No. 01 ;	LOW - MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
Primarily north bound vehicular users, and a fewer number of pedestrians along Whiston Lane adjacent to the access to the Merseyside Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre, illustrated by Viewpoint No. 02 ;	LOW - MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
South bound primarily vehicular users, and a fewer number of pedestrians along Whiston Lane north of the access to the Merseyside Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre, illustrated by Viewpoint No. 03 ;	LOW - MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
South bound pedestrians along Whiston Lane pavement arriving out from the railway bridge offset north of the access to the Merseyside Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre, illustrated by Viewpoint No. 04 ;	LOW - MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
Local residents along the upper western end of Lynton Road on the road or pavement, illustrated by Viewpoint No. 05 ;	LOW - MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
Smaller numbers of primarily dog walkers upon an Informal pathway within the woodland to the south east of the Site, forming part of the Stadt Moers Country Park, illustrated where most adjacent by Viewpoint No. 06 .	LOW - MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE