



Site B - Land East of Dale View Close  
North of Gills Lane, Pensby  
**Design and Access Statement**

May 2022



**LEVERHULME**



Site Aerial photo

Site B - Land East of Dale View Close, North of Gills Lane, Pensby  
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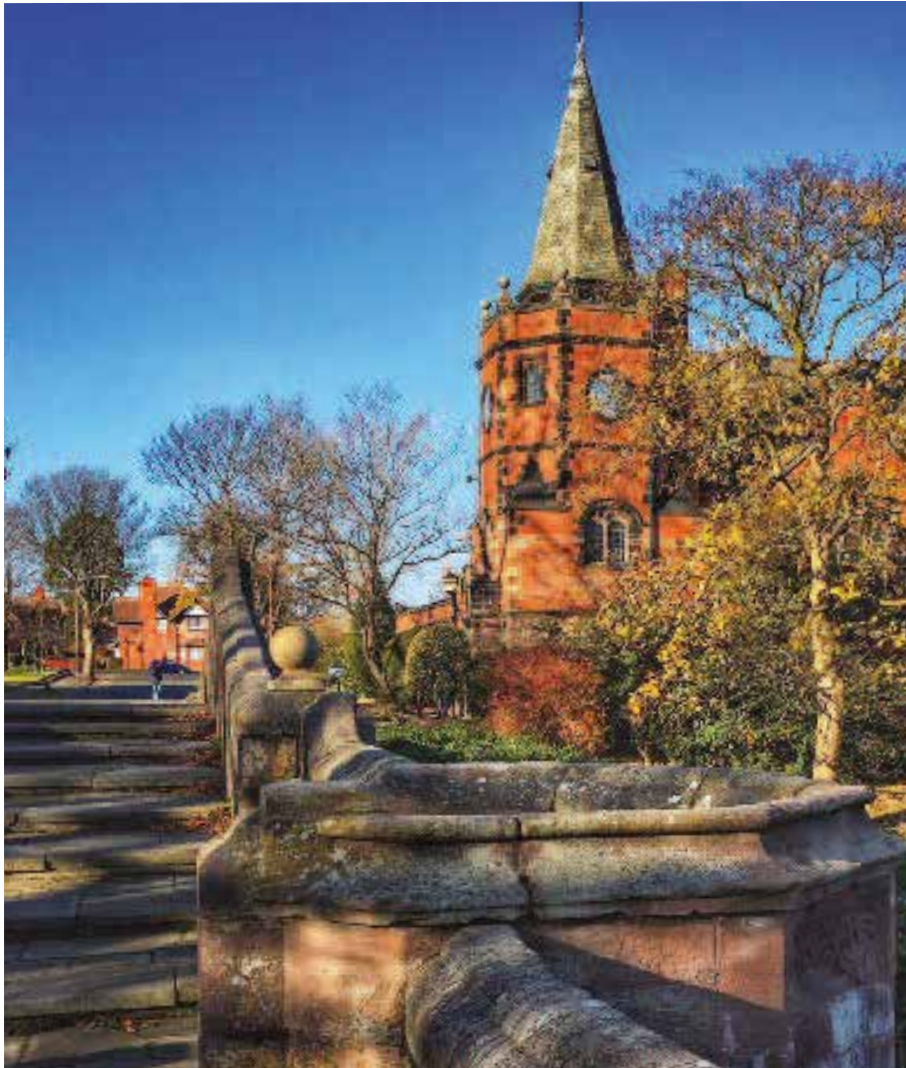
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Appendix A: Design Charter assessment

Appendix B: Building for a Healthy Life assessment

# 1.0 Introduction



Port Sunlight

Site B - Land East of Dale View Close, North of Gills Lane, Pensby  
Design and Access Statement / May 2022

## 1.1 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Leverhulme Estates Limited in support of the outline planning application for Site B Land East of Dale View Close, North of Gills Lane, Barnston (the Site).

The application forms part of Leverhulme's strategic and estate-wide approach to deliver much-needed homes and unlock strategic transport, landscape and biodiversity and economic opportunities for Wirral, as set out in The Leverhulme Vision, April 2020.

The Site, currently in agricultural use, covers 3.92 hectares and is in a sustainable location within 5 minutes walk of Pensby local centre.

The proposals for the Site include up to 92 new high quality market and affordable homes; the creation of green infrastructure including a new public open space and play area, wildlife habitats and green corridors.

Making use of its significant wider landholding, Leverhulme proposes to deliver compensatory enhancements to improve the environmental quality and accessibility of the retained Green Belt including tree and hedgerow planting, habitat creation, and new public footpaths.

Leverhulme will take a long-term approach to the delivery and stewardship of the development and will ensure high standards of design quality are met, in line with the Design Charter which supports this planning application.

The latter will inform a Design Code that will be approved under the conditions of the planning application.

## 1.2 Leverhulme

Leverhulme has been part of the fabric of Wirral life for over 130 years, originating and delivering two of the most iconic parts of Wirral at Port Sunlight and Thornton Hough.

Today, Leverhulme is responsible for the long term, sustainable management of over 2,000 hectares of land at the heart of Wirral, stretching from Heswall and Irby in the west to Bebington in the east.

The landholding includes agricultural land farmed by tenant farmers, footpaths and bridleways, sports and rural leisure facilities and thriving rural enterprises including Brimstage Hall & Courtyard. Leverhulme is the custodian of 69 listed buildings.

Leverhulme provides over 150 rental homes meeting the needs of individuals and families today, alongside care and respect for the estate's historic character.

Leverhulme is in the unique position of being able to offer land to support Wirral's housing growth targets, while still retaining the vast majority of its rural landholding. The remaining Green Belt will be enhanced through environmental and accessibility improvements as compensatory improvements in line with Government guidance, to the major, lasting benefit of Wirral.

The Site is one of eight Sites at the edges of the existing urban area, for which planning applications have been prepared. These Sites represent phase 1 of Leverhulme's strategic approach, and will deliver homes within the first five years of the Local Plan to assist the Council in meeting its five-year housing land supply target.

Phase 2 Sites are being promoted through the Local Plan process and would be delivered during years 6-15.

Longer term, it is likely that there will be a need to provide additional housing growth as part of future Local Plans. Phase 3 opportunities

are being identified in other parts of the estate that could be brought forward in years 16 onwards.

Each phase of development will be matched by environmental, accessibility and transport enhancements across the estate to bring benefits for the whole of Wirral.



Figure 1: The location of Leverhulme landholding within Wirral Borough

### 1.3 Leverhulme Vision

It is Leverhulme's aim to ensure that any development of its land will make Wirral a better place for people, both for today and for generations to come. This will be achieved through a strategic, estate-wide approach, which looks outside the red-line boundary of individual Sites to provide sustainable growth alongside significant enhancements to green infrastructure and accessibility.

This estate-wide approach is described in The Leverhulme Vision, April 2020 and summarised below. Figure 2, provides a conceptual, spatial representation of the Vision.

#### Beautiful homes for Wirral residents

Land at the edge of the rural estate has the potential to offer a highly attractive living environment which complements the urban area; leafy streets with generous gardens and easy access to the rural footpath and cycling network. Leverhulme's commitment to the delivery of beautiful places is described in the Design Charter which accompanies this planning application which recognises the importance placed on good design in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 126-136 and through the establishment of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission.

#### Communities not just homes

Leverhulme seeks to create exemplary neighbourhoods which have vitality, wellbeing and a sense of belonging at their heart and which are recognised as wonderful places to live.

#### A modern, biodiverse agricultural estate

The vast majority of the landholding will remain agricultural. Farming is having to adapt in response to changing agricultural policy, and the climate and biodiversity needs. Leverhulme has developed an estate-wide green infrastructure plan, including plans to assist the evolution of farming practices and to deliver improved access and net gains in biodiversity which go beyond current Government requirements.

#### Health and wellbeing

Leverhulme has the ability to increase public access to the rural landscape, including improvements to existing footpaths, new off-road cycleways and footpaths, and the creation of new publicly accessible conservation areas. This includes the creation of Cycle Supergreenways connecting rural and urban Wirral.

Interaction with nature and active leisure are increasingly recognised as being essential to both the mental and physical health of adults and children. This is a real area of opportunity to enhance the quality of life that is on offer for all residents of Wirral.

#### Connected infrastructure

Leverhulme land can be used to facilitate improved east-west connectivity and relieve localised congestion hotspots. Comprehensively planned development can support improvements to public transport.

#### Thriving rural economy

The centre of Wirral is home to a number of village communities including Thornton Hough, Raby, Brimstage and Storeton. The future economy and vitality of these villages can, through effective planning, be supported by enhanced connectivity, farm diversification and support for rural and community enterprises.

#### Leisure and tourism

Leverhulme's vision involves new walking and cycling leisure trails as part of the green infrastructure plan to widen Wirral's appeal to visitors, reveal its heritage and places of interest and support the local economy. As the farming economy evolves there are opportunities for further diversification projects to ensure historic farm buildings have a viable long-term use.

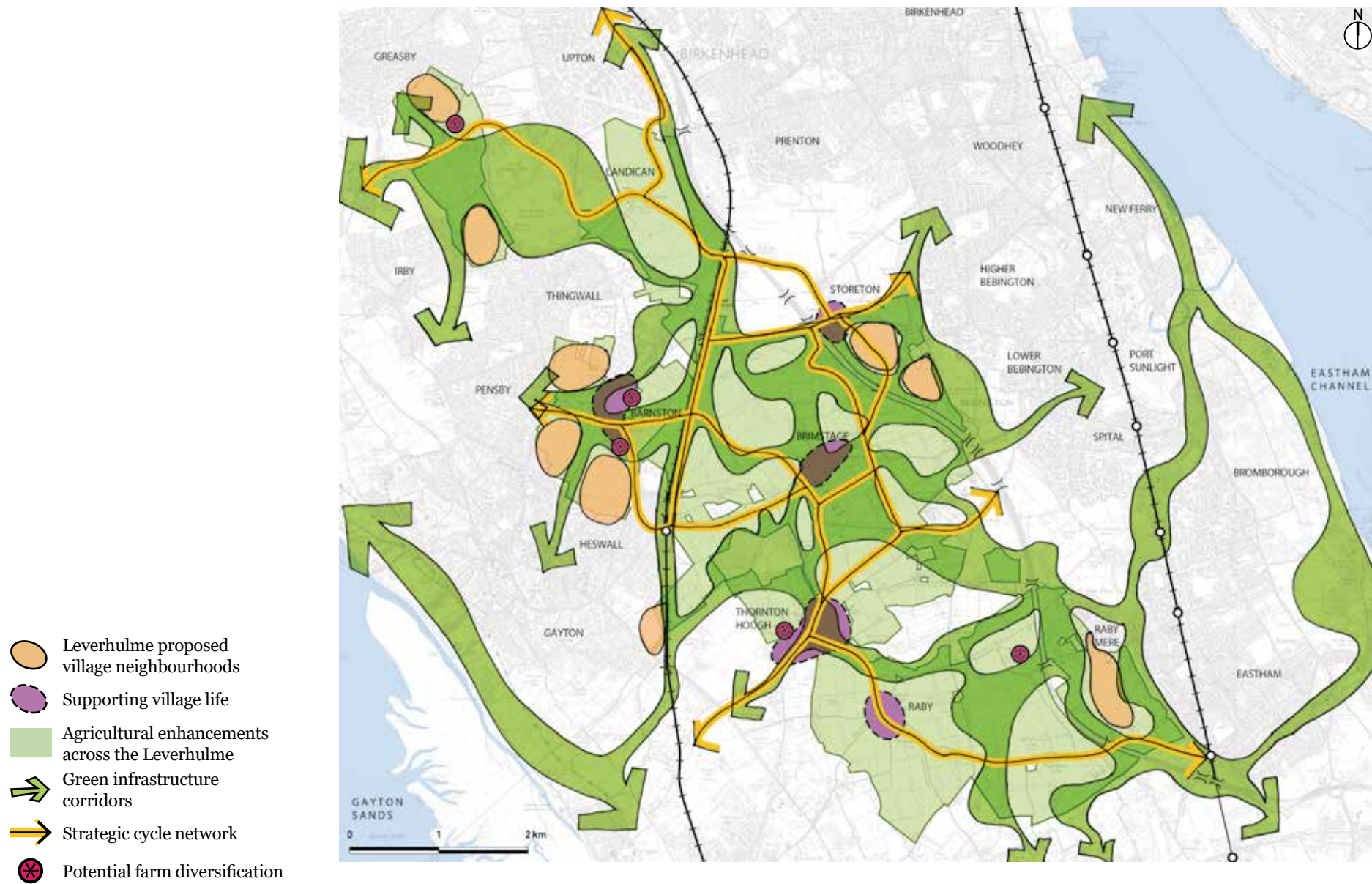


Figure 2: Estate-wide approach

### 1.4 Site location

The main development Site covers 3.92 hectares of agricultural land and lies between residential properties on Thorncroft Drive to the east, Gills Lane to the south, houses on Dale View Close to the west, and houses and fields to the north.

The Site has been identified through Leverhulme’s strategic, longer term approach, as a lower performing Green Belt location, which has the potential to deliver much needed high-quality homes within the next 5 years in a sustainable location supported by compensatory enhancements to the wider retained Green Belt.

In addition to the main Site, a 0.023ha Site on Storeton Lane, Barnston is identified for highways improvements.

- ▭ Site boundary
- ▭ Main development Site 3.92 Ha
- ▭ Storeton Lane Site 0.023 Ha
- ▭ Other land owned by Leverhulme

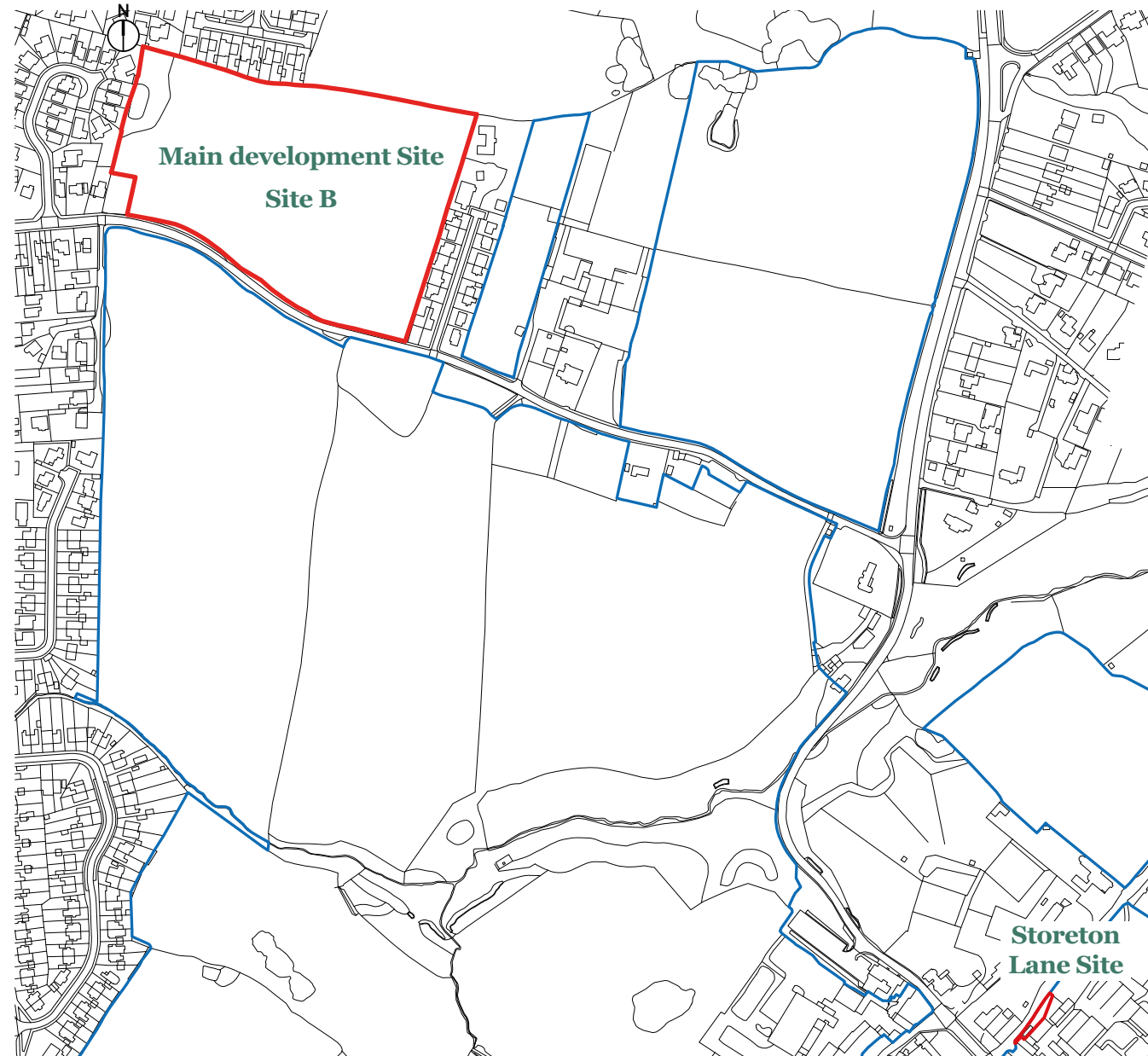


Figure 3: Location plan

## 1.5 Scope of the Design and Access Statement

This Design and Access Statement summarises how the existing character and constraints of the Site and its surroundings have been analysed and have informed the proposed design of the development and the supporting enabling infrastructure.

It explains how the development of the Site forms part of phase 1 of a longer term, estate-wide strategy for sustainable growth which will deliver wider environmental, economic and community benefits to Wirral.

It explains the distinctive, place-specific character which is proposed for the Site, and how the design has responded to the comments received through the public consultation.

**Chapter 2** summarises the regeneration and planning context for the Site's development.

**Chapter 3** reviews the characteristics of the Site's geographic context.

**Chapter 4** reviews the findings of Site surveys and technical assessment work and its implications for the masterplan.

**Chapter 5** explains the proposals for the Site including the place-specific vision, design principles, masterplan and proposed character. It describes how the proposals have evolved in response to community feedback and technical testing.

**Appendix A** summarises how the proposals meet the commitments of the Leverhulme Design Charter.

**Appendix B** summarises how the proposals reflect Homes England's Building for a Healthy Life, 2022 guidance.

## 2.0 Planning

### 2.1 Planning History

A Planning Statement has been prepared by Strutt & Parker which accompanies the application.

Section 2.0 of the Planning Statement relates to the Site context and planning history.

In this instance, there is no relevant planning history based on a search of Wirral Borough Council's Public Access search facility.

### 2.2 Relevant planning policy

Section 5.0 of the Planning Statement provides an overview of the relevant local and national planning policies relevant to the application as well as highlighting the existing Development Plan policies which are most important for determining the application. Appendix 1 of the Planning Statement then provides an analysis of the consistency of each Unitary Development Plan policy against the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF").

In short, the statutory Development Plan for the Wirral comprises:

- The Unitary Development Plan for Wirral (adopted February 2000) ("the UDP"); and
- The Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton (July 2013) ("the Joint Waste Local Plan")

The NPPF and the Council's Supplementary Planning Documents ("SPDs") are also material considerations in the determination of this application.

Reference should be made to the Planning Statement for further details.

### 2.3 Public and stakeholder engagement

Leverhulme undertook pre-application public and stakeholder consultation which centred around a virtual exhibition (as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic), held from Wednesday 23rd February 2022 until Sunday 13th March 2022. Local residents and stakeholders were informed about the consultation via a letter mailing and through local press releases. Online feedback forms were available as part of the virtual exhibition for attendees to record their views. Those that were unable to get online were able to request for hard copies of the exhibition to be posted out to them.

Feedback received from consultation has informed the finalisation of the planning application. This is explained in section 5.4.4 'Amendments in response to public consultation, February 2022' of this report.

Further details of the pre-application public and stakeholder consultation are provided in the Statement of Community Involvement which accompanies this planning application.

### 2.4 Very special circumstances

The Site is within the adopted Green Belt.

Fundamental to this planning application is that it is being presented not as an isolated proposal justified solely on the basis of housing land supply shortfalls and Local Plan delays, but as part of something much more considered.

It is part of a wide ranging suite of complementary proposals which stem from the unique position of Leverhulme as a major landowner with a long-term perspective and wish to see Wirral prosper whilst maintaining its special character and enhancing public access and landscape quality within the heart of its Green Belt.

The Site at Land East of Dale View Close will deliver much needed market and affordable housing to address the delivery problems in the shorter term, but the provision will sit within a wider strategic context.

The Sites are presented within a framework package of environmental improvements including biodiversity net gain, improved access to recreational resources in the countryside and landscape enhancements. The overwhelming majority of the Leverhulme Green Belt will be retained as such, with appropriate enhancements where desirable.

Moreover Leverhulme is committed to ensuring that schemes that are delivered on its land will be well designed, attractive and healthy places befitting the Leverhulme name and will be part of its continuing legacy on Wirral. A fuller description of the suite of benefits arising from this application and the wider proposals is presented in the accompanying Analysis of Very Special Circumstances (Strutt and Parker, May 2022). The way in which this package of measures discharges the planning balance in favour of this application is presented in the Planning Statement submitted as part of this application.

## 3.0 Appraising the context

### 3.1 Relationship to the surrounding area

The application Site 'Land East of Dale View Close and North of Gills Lane' is a single field in agricultural use which sits between existing built development on three sides with Pensby to the west, Thingwall to the north and Barnston to the east. Nearby schools and shops are found close by in Pensby to the west and Thingwall to the north.

Land abutting the Site to the north includes residential properties on Gwendoline Close which back onto the Site and a field. To the north-east, are grass-covered, above-ground reservoirs which have an artificial appearance due to their unnatural, raised landform. There is also a prominent telecommunication mast located within this land to the north of the Site.



Reservoir and telecomms mast to the north of the Site

The eastern Site boundary is delineated by the rear boundaries of houses located on Thorncroft Drive.

There is a hedge running along the northern side of Gills Lane. To the south of Gills Lane there is further agricultural land.

The western Site boundary is adjacent to the rear gardens of properties on Dale View Close. Houses in the immediate surroundings of the Site include detached and semi-detached, two storey properties that were predominantly constructed during the latter half of the 20th Century.



Houses on Thorncroft Drive backing onto the Site

### 3.2 Historical development of the area

Despite some evidence for transient activity in the vicinity of a waterway to the east of the Site, prehistoric and Roman activity appears to be focused on the high ground of the peninsula to the west of the Site. The occupation foci of medieval activity appears to be off-site also.

Historic mapping suggests that the Site B field once comprised two fields of similar size with a central dividing hedgerow. The central field boundary was likely removed to increase the field size at some point in the second half of the 20th Century.

The 1847 map shows a group of houses between Barnston Road and Barnston Dale.

The 1913 OS map shows early suburban growth along Pensby Road to the west of the Site.

By 1946, considerable development had occurred around Pensby and Barnston to the west and east of the Site, and on Gills Lane at Gills Lane Farm and Thorncroft Drive. Crosshill Reservoir to the north is also evident on the 1946 map. This period of suburban development continued into the post war period with the construction of new residential streets consolidating the urban areas of Pensby and Thingwall.

### 3.3 Local character

#### 3.3.1 Townscape and public realm

The residential areas of Thingwall and Pensby lie to the north west of the Site. Most of the housing is set on curving streets and cul-de-sacs, comprising detached and semi-detached properties many of which were constructed during the second half of the 20th Century.

Properties are generally typical of their age rather than being of a local vernacular, and of red brick, white render or pebble dash.



Cheshire Tithe Map of 1847



OS Map from 1913



OS Map from 1946

Residential buildings are generally two storey in height with occasional single storey and some one and a half storey buildings with rooms in dormers or attic space. However, there are several streets in the surroundings where detached bungalows are the predominant typology.

Hipped and pitched roofs, porches and bay windows are common features in the local streetscape. Homes have front gardens often incorporating parking.

There is little evidence of the use of local materials such as handmade brick and red sandstone in the immediate local area, although the Cottage to the east of the Site on Gills Lane is a good example.

The local centre at Pensby Road has a fragmented townscape character and ranges in scale and appearance from the 1960s three storey retail/residential parade with parking and access road to the front, to single storey retail units in converted bungalows, to car garages. St Michael and All Angels Church occupies a prominent position at the corner of Pensby Road and Gills Lane, and comprises a modern extension to a single storey red brick chapel with bell tower, set behind a large open lawn.

### Leverhulme vernacular

The character of the proposed scheme has also drawn inspiration from the character of earlier Leverhulme developments including the planned village at Port Sunlight, and Thornton Hough. The characteristics of the ‘Leverhulme vernacular’ which give these places a special quality is described in the Design Charter, Appendix B Leverhulme Characterisation Study, which accompanies this planning application.



Red brick properties with large front gardens incorporating parking, Gills Lane



White render and pebble dash properties on Gills Lane



Bungalows on Dale View Close



Dale View Close cul-de-sac



Three storey retail parade with residential above at Pensby Road



St Michael and All Angels Church, Pensby Road



The Cottage fronting Gills Lane to the east of the Site

### 3.3.2 Landscape setting

The setting of the Site comprises gently undulating farmland and parts of the combined settlements of Heswall, Pensby and Thingwall which wrap around the southern, western and northern extents of the farmland. The agricultural landscape includes scattered farmhouses and the small village of Barnston. The agricultural landscape is predominantly arable with some pasture, mainly around the settlement edges. To the east, the Bidston-Wrexham railway line runs through the landscape, roughly on a north-south alignment. It is largely screened by vegetation and provides a physical edge to the eastern part of Wirral.

A narrow enclosed wooded valley at Barnston Dale between Barnston and Thingwall provides physical and visual separation between the areas surrounding Barnston and the landscape to the north and this is experienced particularly when travelling north or south on Barnston Road.

Woodland occurs along the urban fringes and includes ornamental species and some evergreen trees. This woodland provides partial screening of the settlement edges, reducing their urbanising influence. There are also linear belts of trees growing alongside the railway and some large, geometric blocks of mixed deciduous woodland within the landscape to the east of the railway. Overall, this woodland, together with that growing within the valley of Barnston Dale, gives the impression of good levels of woodland cover.

Numerous field ponds are present throughout the surrounding area, possibly formed as a result of locally dug marl pits used for field improvement. Many of the ponds are surrounded by groups of trees and shrubs, whilst others appear as small depressions within fields.

The engineered grassed mounding of the above ground reservoirs at Thingwall gives the landscape an artificial, contrived appearance. The ground levels are elevated over the reservoirs to an extent and



A number of fields in the surrounding area are used as horse paddocks

in a manner that is clearly engineered and this provides physical and visual separation between the Site and the residential areas to the north. There are overhead power lines running parallel with the railway line which are prominent, detracting features within the wider landscape.

### 3.3.3 Landscape character

The Site and surrounding area falls within National Character Area (NCA) 59 'Wirral' and within Local Character Type (LCT) 4 'Lowland Farmland and Estates' under the classification provided by the Wirral Landscape Character Assessment, 2019. At the finer grain the site lies within the Landscape Character Area (LCA) 4a Landican and Thingwall Lowland Farmland.

The landscape is urban fringe, with the site adjoining residential development to the north, east and west. The site does not contain any notable, rare or unique features but does contain a pond and some trees which are of local value.

The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment aspect (Chapter 9) of Wirral's Draft Environmental Sensitivity Assessment, 2021 attributes the following sensitivities to the rural parts of the study area:

- Areas to the north of Gills Lane and to the west of Barnston Road (including the main application Site and encompassing the reservoirs): Low – Moderate
- Areas to the south of Gills Lane and to the west of Barnston Road: Moderate – High
- Barnston Village, fields to the east of Barnston Road, to the south of Storeton Lane and to the west of the railway (including the Storeton Lane Site): Moderate – High
- Barnston Dale/Prenton Brook: Moderate – High
- Housing areas to the east of Barnston Road and to the north of Barnston Dale/Prenton Brook: Moderate
- Storeton Lane to the north-west of Barnston Village: Moderate

Further detail of landscape character and setting are provided in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which accompanies this planning application.

The NCA profile includes Statements of Environmental Opportunity. Those relevant to the study area have informed plans for the site and the wider landscape of the estate as part of the Leverhulme Vision. This includes enhancing *'people's understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment, providing interpretation and educational facilities and opportunities for experiencing wildlife, with a strong network of green infrastructure, which will bring health and wellbeing benefits for both residents and visitors.'*

The Wirral Landscape Character Assessment includes Landscape Guidelines for each of the Landscape Character Areas and these have informed the proposals. Landscape Guidelines for LCA 4a Landican

and Thingwall Lowland Farmland include: *'Retain and enhance the integration of urban fringes both within and outside the character areas through native wooded boundaries and trees to reduce their prominence'; Enhance and augment any fragmenting field boundaries through planting new native hedgerows and encourage replanting where appropriate' and 'Avoid visually intrusive development, particularly on prominent slopes or ridgelines both within and outside the character area.'*

### 3.3.4 Environmental designations in the surrounding area

The Site is within close proximity to three Local Wildlife Sites (LWS); Barnston dale LWS (500 m), Murrayfield Hospital, Thingwall LWS (800 m) and Lower Heath Wood, Thingwall LWS (670 m).

There are three internationally designated Sites within 5 km of the Site; The Dee Estuary Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) , and Ramsar 3.40 km south west of the Site.

Natural England recognises deciduous woodland within Barnston Dale and adjacent to Pensby Road as Priority Habitat. The woodland is also protected by group TPOs.

The application Site and the surrounding area are not located within existing Areas of Special Landscape Value or within the proposed Local Landscape Designation.

A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening has been undertaken and has identified potential for an increase in recreational pressure on the coastal protected Sites as a result of the proposed development in combination with other identified developments in the surrounding area. An HRA Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is being undertaken which will address proposed mitigation measures including provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

### 3.4 Heritage assets

There are no designated heritage assets within the main body of the Site. However, the detached part of the Site within Barnston is located within a Conservation Area.

#### 3.4.1 Listed buildings

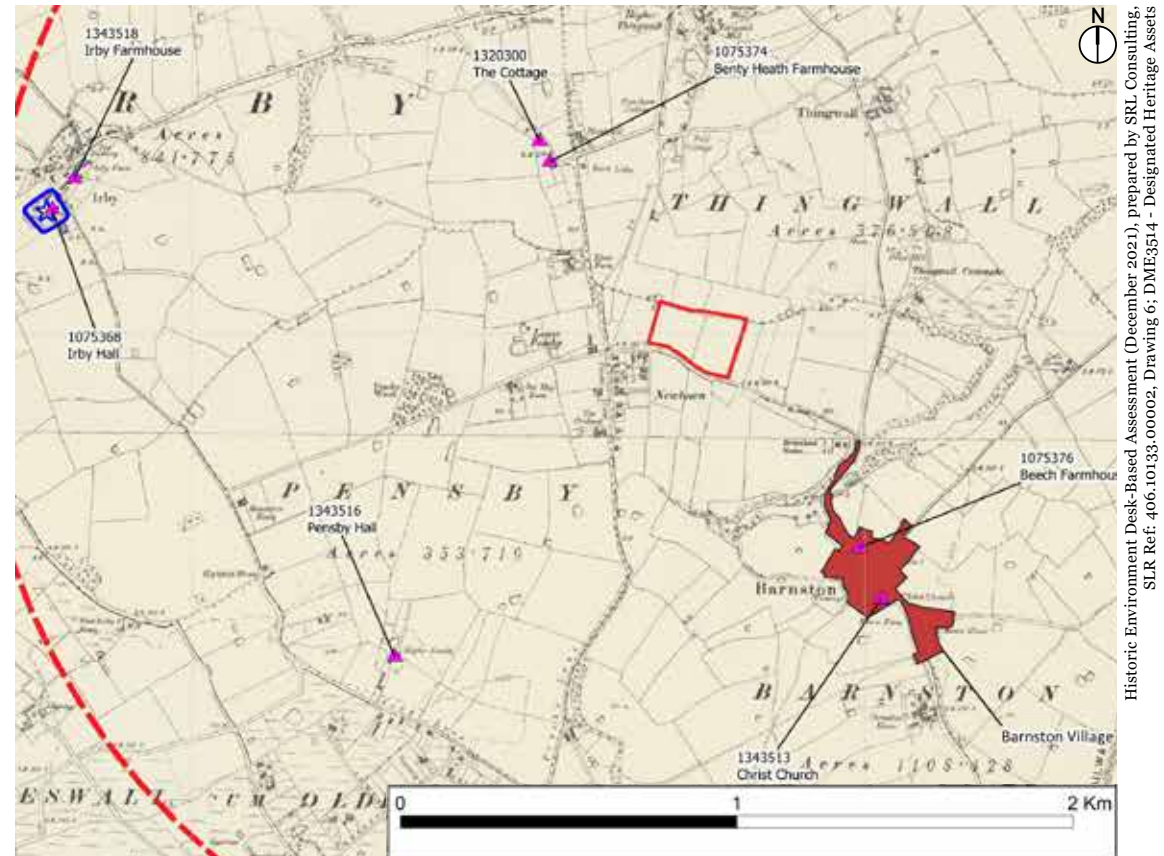
There are eight listed buildings within the 2km study area, all of which are Grade II listed. The closest listed buildings to the Site are Benty Heath Farmhouse, located 530m to the north west and the Cottage, c.600m to the north west.

#### 3.4.2 Scheduled monuments

A single Scheduled Monument is located within 2km of the Site, comprising the remains of Irby Hall moated Site, Sited c.1.8km to the west.

#### 3.4.3 Conservation Areas

There is one Conservation Area located c.430m south-west of the main body of the Site. This comprises Barnston. The detached part of the Site, on Storeton Lane, is located within this Conservation Area.



Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (December 2021), prepared by SRL Consulting, SLR Ref: 406.10133.00002, Drawing 6; DME3514 - Designated Heritage Assets

Figure 4: Designated Heritage Assets

- Site boundary
- ▲ Listed Building Grade II
- ☆ Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area

### 3.5 Local facilities

The Site is positioned in a sustainable location, with easy access to a range of existing retail and community facilities, many within walking distance. The nearest convenience shops are the Co-op and Tesco Express located within Pensby local centre, Pensby Road within 5 minutes walk to the west. Pensby local centre provides a mix of local retail, community facilities, services and food and drink outlets. The nearest petrol station is Texaco Petrol Station, which is approximately 350m away.

There are three primary schools in the immediate vicinity, Pensby, 1.2km away, Thingwall, 1.3km away and Ladymont, 1.6km away. The nearest secondary school is Pensby High School which is 1.6km away. For further education, there are two sixth-form options, Neston High School, 7.2km away and Hilbre High School 7.5km away. The nearest special needs school is Stanley School, 1.2km away. The nearest library is Pensby Branch Library, which is 500m away.

The nearest public hospital is Arrowe Park Hospital which is 3.5km away. The nearest doctor's surgery is Greasby Group Practice, which is 500m away. The nearest community centre is Pensby Community Centre, which is 800m away.



Retail parade on Pensby Road



Pensby Recreational Centre & Bowling Green on Pensby Road

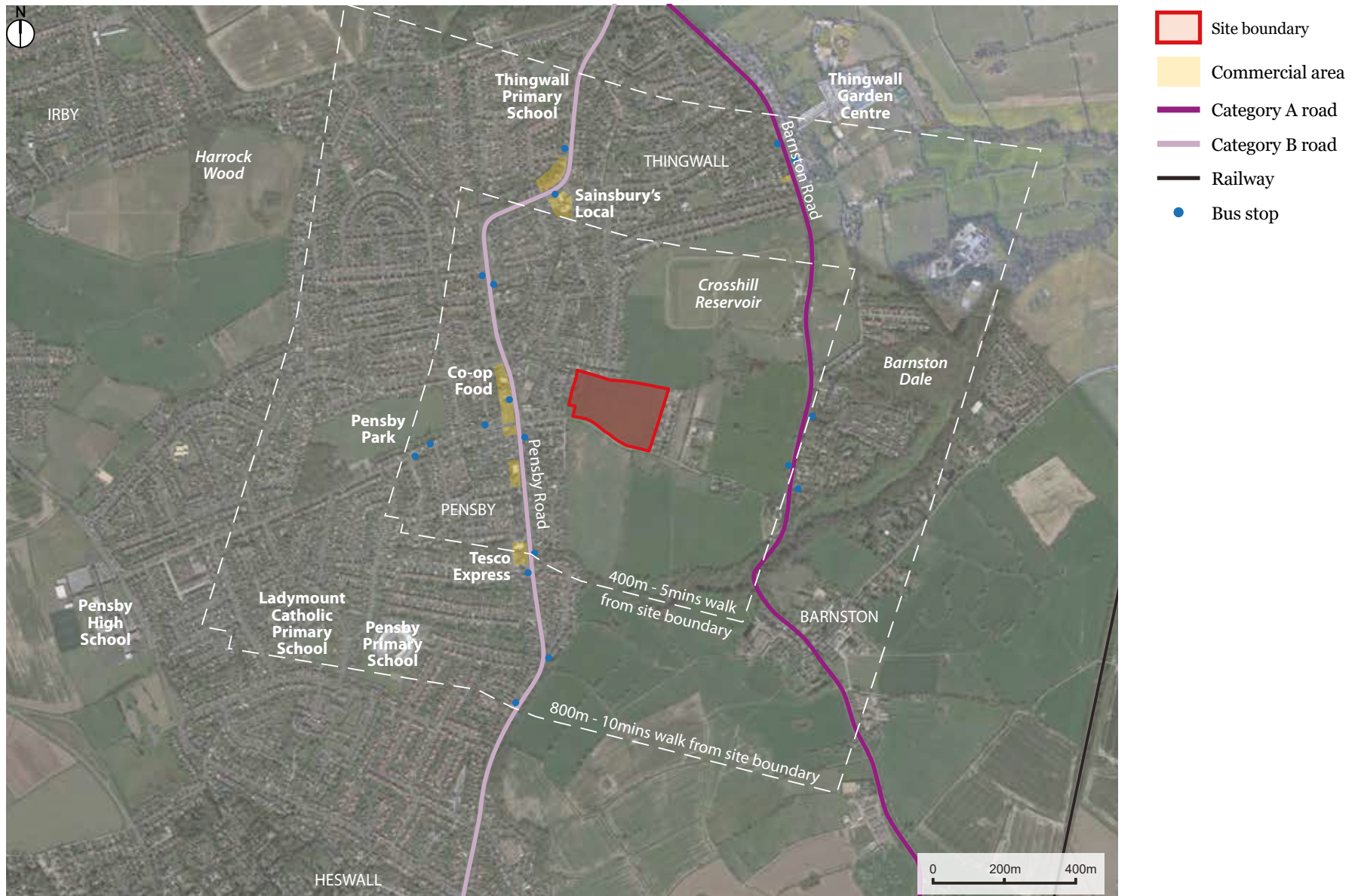


Figure 5: Context

### 3.6 Movement context

#### 3.6.1 Pedestrian routes and Public Rights of Way

There is no public access to the Site and no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the immediate vicinity, however there appears to be an informal pedestrian route across the Site from Gills Lane towards the eastern end of Gwendoline Close through a break in the northern boundary hedge.

#### 3.6.2 Cycling

There are a number of roads recommended or signed for cycling on the carriageway, for example Gills Lane, Pensby Road and Barnston Road. There are also several off-road tracks and bridleways in the vicinity of the Site, providing useful connections north towards Irby and south towards Neston.

#### 3.6.3 Public transport

The nearest railway station is Heswall, which is 2.7km away. There is an hourly service between Bidston and Wrexham Central from Monday to Saturday and two-hourly in the evening and on public holidays. There is a service every 90 minutes each way on Sundays.

There are two regular bus routes that serve the area. The 181 runs from Arroe Park to Heswall every hour and the nearest formal bus stop is on Fishers Lane, 200m away. The 181 operates a hail and ride service on Gills Lane adjacent to the Site. The 472 runs from Liverpool to Heswall every 20 minutes and the nearest bus stop is on Pensby Road 200m away.

More details on public transport are provided in the Transport Assessment.

#### 3.6.4 Road network

The Site sits between Dale View Close to the west, Gills Lane to the south, Gwendoline Close to the north and Thorncroft Drive to the east. All roads mentioned, with the exception of Gills Lane, are cul-de-sacs and have no current vehicular access to the Site.

Gills Lane is a 30mph, single lane, two-way road, linking the Site to Barnston in the east and Pensby in the west. The footway on the northern side of Gills Lane in the vicinity of the Site is narrow and overgrown. There is no footway on the southern side of Gills Lane.

Gills Lane connects with the B5138 Pensby Road to the west of the Site and with the A551 Barnston Road to the east, providing vehicular access to the wider surrounding area.



Narrow pavement running on the northern side of Gills Lane



Informal route linking the eastern end of Gwendoline Close with Gills Lane

## 4.0 Site analysis

### 4.1 Topography

The south west of the Site lies on a topographic peak of approximately 72.8m AOD with the Site sloping down to the east towards the northern extent of Thorncroft Drive, to an elevation of approximately 66.4m AOD.

### 4.2 Ground conditions

#### 4.2.1 Geology

The British Geological Survey GeoIndex indicates the vast majority of the Site in the east and in the north-western corner is underlain by Glacial Till (Devensian) comprising clays, sands, gravels and cobbles. The rest of the Site is mapped as exposed bedrock with no overlying superficial deposits.

The solid geology underlying the majority of the Site is reported to be the Wilmslow Sandstone Formation, although a small area towards the southwestern Site boundary is reported to be underlain by the Helsby Sandstone Formation.

#### 4.2.2 Contamination

The Preliminary Land Quality Risk Assessment by SLR identified no significant sources of potential contamination on Site. Potential sources of historical contamination were present within 100m of the Site including electricity substations, nurseries, and a former Smithy. An active petrol filling station is located 210m southwest of the Site. However, these sources of potential contamination are unlikely to present an unacceptable risk to the proposed development, primarily due to the age, and/or distance from the Site and low likelihood of potential contaminants of concern associated with these facilities.

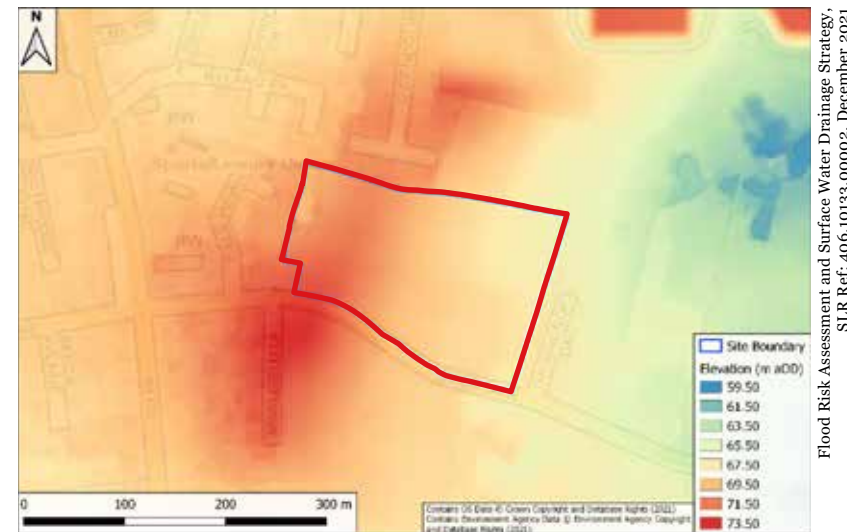


Figure 6: Site topography

## 4.3 Flood risk and drainage

### 4.3.1 Flood risk

The Flood Risk Assessment undertaken by SLR, finds that based upon the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning, the entire Site lies within Flood Zone 1 (lowest probability of fluvial or tidal flooding) which presents no constraint to residential development.

Surface water modelling by the EA indicates that the north western extent of the Site is shown to be at 'Low' (0.1% AEP) and 'Medium' (1% AEP) risk of surface water ponding in two small, isolated areas due to a slight depression in the topography relative to the surrounding area. This will be mitigated through Sustainable Drainage features which are to be included in the Site design, and building up land within local depressions to inhibit pooling. The flood risk posed by surface water and overland flow is therefore considered low.

Flood risk from groundwater, sewers and mains water systems, reservoirs, canals and other artificial sources or infrastructure failure on Site are all low or negligible.

### 4.3.2 Existing drainage

The Site is currently undeveloped and not formally drained. There are no known sewers or mains water pipes beneath the Site. A combined public sewer is shown to serve Thorncroft Drive to the east of the Site, which then drains eastwards along Gills Lane.

Incidental rainfall is considered to drain via a combination of evaporation, limited infiltration into the underlying strata, and following topographic gradients to off-site areas to the north east and south east on Gills Lane. A 10m long drainage ditch is located at the south eastern boundary, backing onto the houses at the south of Thorncroft Drive.



Figure 7: Environment Agency, Flood Map for Planning

Groundwater vulnerability at the Site is designated as medium-low, and the Site is not located within a Source Protection Zone (SPZ).

The Site is within the High Priority category for Countryside Stewardship Water Quality.

#### 4.4 Edge conditions

The northern boundary is formed partially by a trimmed hawthorn hedgerow and partially by the rear boundaries of houses located on Gwendoline Close.

The eastern Site boundary is delineated by the timber, rear garden fences of houses located on Thorncroft Drive.

Where the boundary borders Gills Lane it is delineated by some short sections of timber post and wire fence and a trimmed hawthorn hedgerow.

The western boundary between the Site and the properties on Dale View Close is very well vegetated with a hedgerow to the south.

#### 4.5 Site access

The Site currently lacks a formal vehicular access, however there is an informal farm gate entrance on the southern perimeter of the Site, which provides access for the existing agricultural uses.



Northern boundary



Eastern boundary



Southern boundary and access gate



Western boundary with Thorncroft Drive

## 4.6 Landscape and ecology

### 4.6.1 Environmental designations

The landscape is not protected by national or local statutory landscape designations. However, the Site is within close proximity to three Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and there are three internationally designated Sites within 5 km of the Site. See Section 3.3.4 for details of designations in the surrounding area.

### 4.6.2 Landscape features

The Site comprises a broadly rectangular shaped grassland field on the north side of Gills Lane.

There are some well-established hedgerows along the northern and southern boundaries and some mature trees along the western boundary.

Hedgerows along Gills Lane are gappy adjacent to the Site, but more intact to the east and existing mature trees have a visual quality but are generally of a low to moderate quality.

There is a field pond present in the north west corner of the Site which is shrouded by trees and shrubs.



Group of trees and pond at the north west corner of the Site

### 4.6.3 Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the Site has been undertaken by Environment Bank. The Site comprised a roughly rectangular field, dominated by a temporary grass and clover ley, with a pond surrounded by a mixed scrub margin in the north-west and a strip of other neutral grassland in the east. Three hedgerows were also identified on the Site.

The Site was found to support habitat opportunities for common amphibians and terrestrial mammals with limited opportunities for roosting and foraging bats and breeding birds. No invasive non-native species were recorded on the Site at the time of survey. Subsequent species surveys found that there is a low risk of Great Crested Newts being present on Site (although the presence/likely absence on Site was not confirmed during surveys), and non-significant effects on birds in the local area.

Site hedgerows, ponds and woodland provide nesting habitat for local bird species (in particular house sparrow, stock dove, song thrush and mallard) and these will be retained and protected during construction works, with a bird box/nest brick scheme (within new buildings and on retained trees) enhancing the wider Site for nesting birds.

Bat activity surveys identified low levels of bat activity across the Site and no trees with bat potential are proposed for removal. A sensitive lighting scheme will be developed for the proposed development which will ensure no increase in lighting on sensitive boundary features with additional planting, habitat creation and provision of bat boxes providing enhancement for these species.



Figure 8: UKHab Survey



Ecological Impact Assessment, The Environmental Bank, 6 December 2021, Report Ref: EB03242-B, Figure 2 – UKHAB Survey

No evidence of badger activity was recorded at the time of the survey.

The PEA makes a number of recommendations for retention and buffering of existing habitats and opportunities to incorporate features to support biodiversity. These have been reflected in the masterplan layout as set out in Section 5.0.

#### 4.6.4 Trees and hedgerows

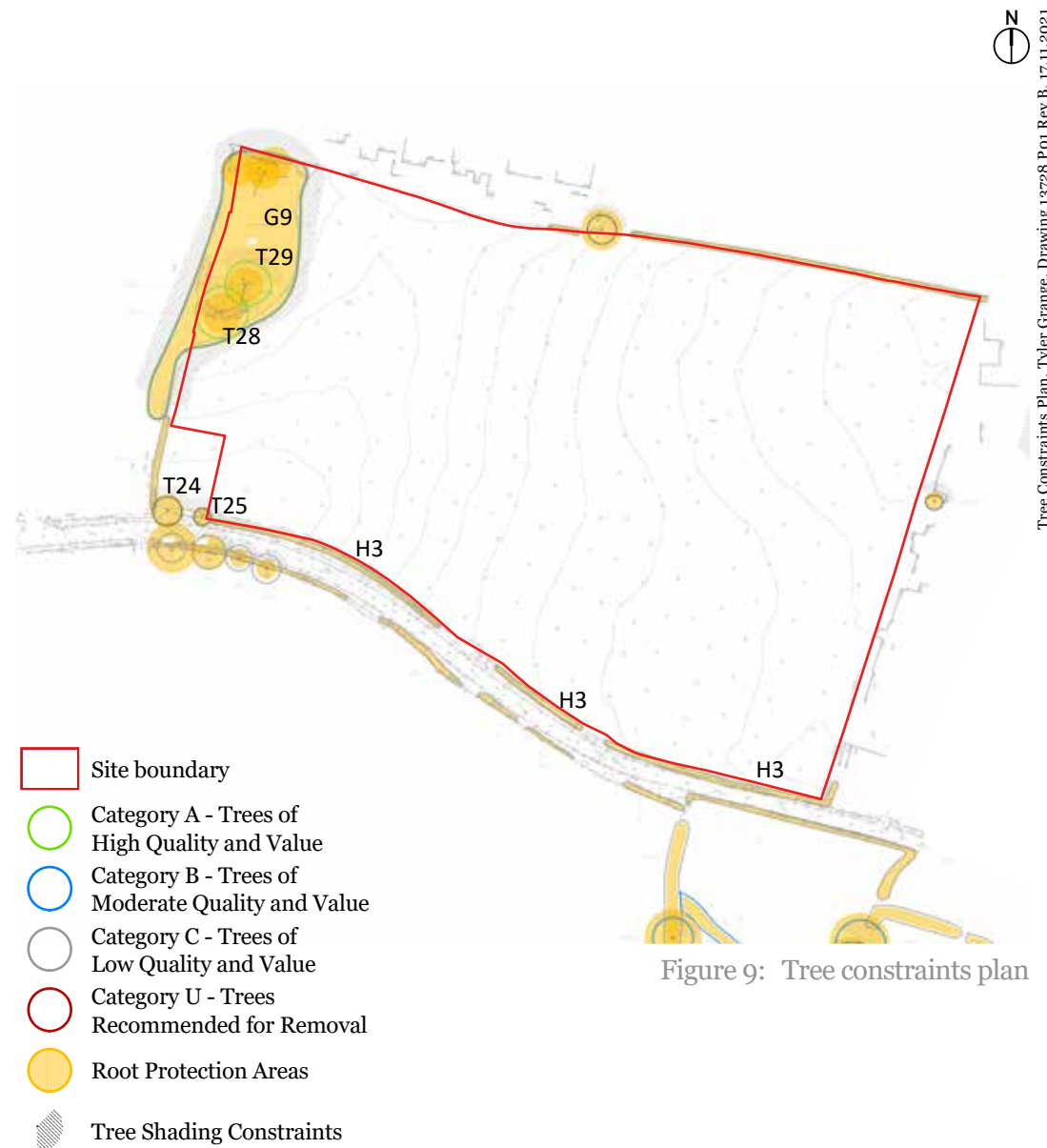
An Arboricultural Survey has been undertaken by Tyler Grange in May 2021 to assess the quality of existing trees and hedgerows within the Site and surrounding area.

Trees and hedgerows are confined to the Site boundaries. The hedgerow along the northern boundary is intact and well managed and generally does not include trees.

The hedgerow along the southern boundary (H3) is more intact at its eastern end and similarly does not include trees.

There are a couple of individual trees near to the southwestern corner of the field (T24 and T25), which lie outside the Site boundary.

There is a group of broadleaf mature trees that surround a pond within the north-western corner of the Site (G9), which includes sycamore, hawthorn, holly, oak and goat willow. The tree survey categorises this group as being of moderate quality (Category B), but highlights two individual pedunculate oak trees (T28 and T29), which are of a high quality (Category A).



#### 4.7 Heritage and archaeology

No designated heritage assets are present within the main body of the Site. The detached part of the Site on Storeton Lane is located in Barnston Conservation Area.

A Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by SLR Consulting Limited (SLR) in April 2022. It identifies known and anticipated heritage assets within the Site, and discusses their significance, in accordance with the NPPF (2021) paragraph 194.

The report also discusses the possible effect of the proposals upon the significance of heritage assets, both as a result of physical truncation and as a result of change to setting.

Reference should be made to the Heritage Impact Assessment for further information. The Planning Statement accompanying this application also considers any heritage impacts in the context of national planning policies and the overall planning balance.

#### 4.8 Utilities

A survey of existing underground utility services on and around the Site was undertaken by MEC Geomatics in spring 2021. A simplified summary of the utilities that have been identified is shown in Figure 12.

There are a number of services running under the footway and carriageway of Gills Lane outside the Site boundary including electric cable, telecommunication services, water, gas and combined drainage pipes.

#### 4.9 Noise and air pollution

A Site noise survey was carried out by SLR Consulting in March 2021 with an acoustics report produced as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment in May 2022.

To determine the noise environment across the Site a noise model of the area has been developed. The noise survey results collected at the location has been used to calibrate the noise model. The results of day-time and night time external noise environment are shown in the figures below. Day-time noise levels that have been identified are shown in Figure 10:

- In the dark green areas external ambient noise levels are below 50dB(A). The BS8233:2014 lower limit of 50dB(A) and the Risk Assessment has identified a Negligible Risk.
- In the light green areas external ambient noise levels are between 50 and 55dB(A). The BS8233:2014 upper limit of 55dB(A) and the Risk Assessment has identified a Low Risk.
- In the yellow areas external ambient noise levels are between 55 and 60dB(A). The BS8233:2014 upper limit is exceeded, and the Risk Assessment has identified a Medium Risk.
- In the orange areas external ambient noise levels are over 60dB(A). The BS8233:2014 upper limit is exceeded, and the Risk Assessment has identified a High Risk.

In summary, during the daytime most of the Site falls within the category of 'Negligible' to 'Low' noise risk, and the layout of the proposed development should also mitigate the noise impact within the higher risk areas closer to the road.

Night-time noise levels that have been identified are shown in Figure 11:

- In the dark green areas external ambient noise levels are below 45dB(A). The Risk Assessment has identified a Negligible Risk. As the results in Section 4 indicate that L<sub>max</sub> noise levels at night

are not regularly over 60.0 dB the Negligible Risk is still valid.

- In the light green areas external ambient noise levels are between 45 and 50dB(A). The Risk Assessment has identified a Low Risk.
- In the yellow areas external ambient noise levels are between 50 and 55dB(A). The Risk Assessment has identified a Medium Risk.
- In the orange areas external ambient noise levels are over 55dB(A). The Risk Assessment has identified a High Risk.

In summary, at night, most of the Site falls within the category of 'Negligible' to 'Low' noise risk.

In response to the baseline noise model, the design of the site has incorporated good Acoustic Design measures to reduce noise impacts. These are described in section 5.13.

### 4.9.1 Air quality

The Site is located outside of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The closest AQMA is the Liverpool City-wide AQMA, located approximately 8.1km north east of the Site.

Pollutant concentrations reported within proximity of the Site are considered to be well-below the corresponding air quality objectives. As such, the area surrounding the Site is not considered to be sensitive with respect to air quality.

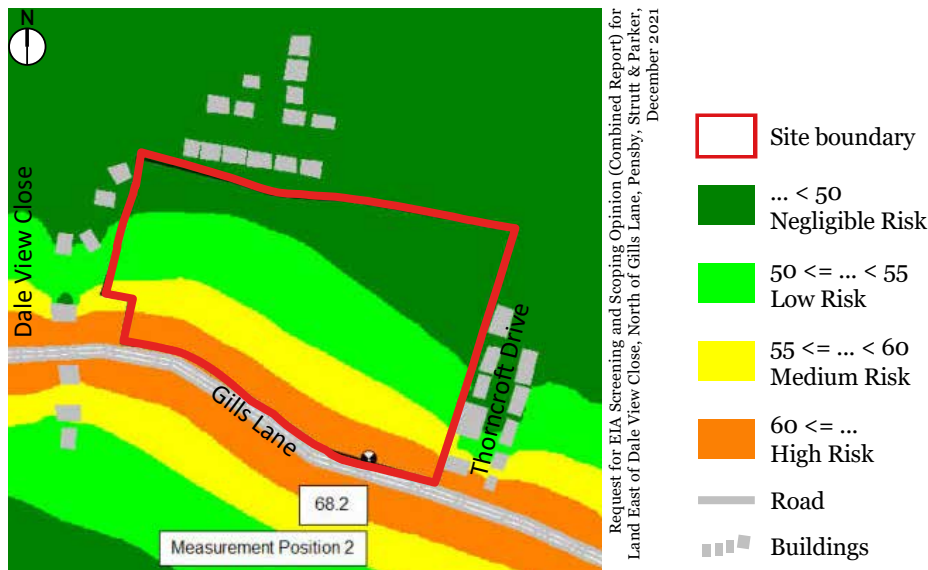


Figure 10: External day-time Noise Level and Risk Assessment

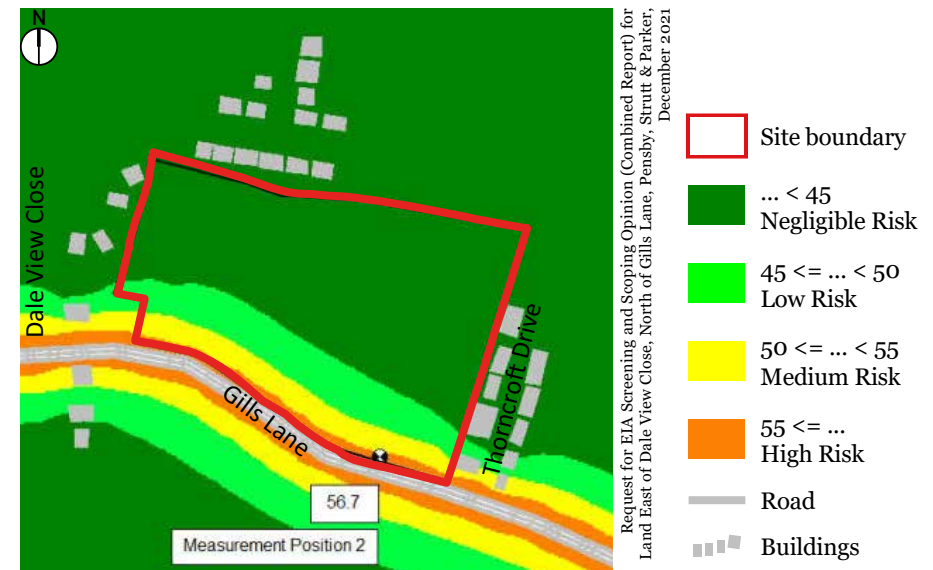


Figure 11: External night-time Noise Level and Risk Assessment

#### 4.10 Summary of constraints and opportunities

The Site is currently in agricultural use, surrounded on three sides by residential development and does not have any significant physical constraints that would prevent development.

It does, however, have a clear landscape structure of boundary hedgerows and tree groups. There is an opportunity to create a landscape-led development which retains this structure of trees and hedgerows to form the setting for an attractive, leafy neighbourhood with links to the surrounding landscape.

The design of the proposed scheme has carefully considered these features and other aspects of the Site's existing character and that of the surrounding area. These include:

- 1 The layout of the Site creates direct walking routes to the Pensby local centre
- 2 Houses surrounding the Site are mostly 2 storey in height. New houses will be 2 storeys in height, potentially with some dormer windows to add character
- 3 Woodland and pond habitats in the north western corner of the Site will be retained and expanded
- 4 A drainage basin and wetland habitat will be located in the north east corner with a drainage swale linking to pipes in Gills Lane
- 5 New homes will back onto existing properties to the north and east. Gardens will be larger and have a planted rear boundary to limit overlooking. Properties on Dale View Close will back onto the retained woodland area and a planted Site boundary.
- 6 The boundary hedgerow will be enhanced with additional tree and shrub planting to form an attractive edge to the fields.
- 7 Improvements will be made to Gills Lane to provide a wider pavement on its northern side.
- 8 Hedgerows running along the boundary with Gills Lane will be retained where possible, or replanted within the Site if lost due to the proposed pavement widening.
- 9 In response to the baseline noise model, the design of the site has incorporated good Acoustic Design measures to reduce noise impacts. These are described in section 5.13



Figure 12: Combined constraints plan

## **5.0** **Vision and masterplan**

### **5.1 Site vision**

*Land to the east of Dale View Close, north of Gills Lane will become a leafy neighbourhood, between the residential streets of Thorncroft Drive and Dale View Close.*

*Homes in a range of sizes and tenures will be beautifully designed, reflecting the design ethos of Leverhulme.*

*Properties will overlook green corridors, hedgerows and a new play area.*

*A wider pavement on Gills Lane and new footpath links will make it easier to walk and cycle to the nearby local centre on Pensby Road.*



Artist's impression of the green space at the Site entrance, looking north east

## 5.2 Leverhulme Design Charter

The planning application is supported by a Design Charter developed by Leverhulme to set out its commitment to delivering beautiful and long-lasting living environments in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Charter's ten commitments to sustainable, high quality design respond to the ten themes of the Government's National Design Guide and reflect the heritage and ethos of Leverhulme.

The Charter contains, and has been informed by, a townscape characterisation study of Leverhulme places.

The ten commitments are reflected in the masterplan and design approach for Site B and provide the framework for a Site Design Code which will be prepared as a condition of the planning application.

Further details of how the design approach meets the commitments are contained in Appendix A.

### Ten Commitments to Sustainable Placemaking

**Context:** to create beautiful places which enhance their surroundings by responding directly to the special character, culture and heritage of Wirral, and the setting, constraints and assets of each Site.

**Movement:** to develop places where residents' health and wellbeing is supported by creating connected, walkable neighbourhoods. To create integrated places by linking new neighbourhoods with the surrounding street network. To support Wirral Council's aim for fossil fuel free local travel by 2030.

**Nature:** to make green spaces, trees, hedgerows and gardens core characteristics of every Leverhulme neighbourhood for the benefit of the environment, climate and community wellbeing. To bring significant environmental gains to Wirral through enhancement of habitats across the rural Leverhulme.

**Built form:** to create new neighbourhoods with a coherent and harmonious layout, moderate densities and human scale which fit comfortably with their surroundings and their location at the urban/rural edge.

**Identity:** to establish neighbourhoods which are distinctively Wirral, with a beautiful and bespoke character reflecting the Leverhulme vernacular and the surrounding area.

**Public spaces:** to create public spaces and streets which are welcoming and safe, and which support community interaction and cohesion.

**Uses:** to create a broad mix of homes and flexible spaces for non-residential uses across the estate. This will bring vitality, support health and wellbeing, rural enterprise, community organizations and community cohesion.

**Homes and buildings:** to create properties which can adapt to residents' changing needs over time, and which provide a safe and comfortable environment to call home.

**Resources:** to support Wirral Council's Environment and Climate Emergency commitments by considering environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability at all stages of the planning and design process.

**Lifespan:** to deliver long-lasting, beautiful places to live. To maintain a role in their ongoing management and community stewardship.

### 5.3 Spatial Design Principles

The proposed Site layout is structured by key spatial design principles. These respond to the commitments of the Design Charter and the Site's character, context and opportunities.



- Retain and incorporate the pond and small woodland in a green corridor in the western part of the Site



- Provide a green buffer and improved ditch next to the short rear gardens of Thorncroft Drive



- Widen the footway on Gills Lane to create a safe walking route to Pensby local centre.



- Create a connected internal street layout to make it easy to walk and cycle



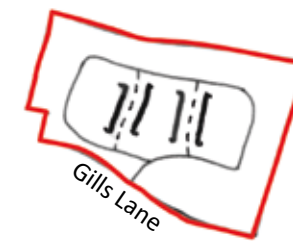
- Create a play area linked by footpaths to Gills Lane for use by the wider community



- Create a wetland habitat in the north eastern corner of the Site which functions as a sustainable drainage attenuation feature



- Create a central access point to the Site framed by new homes



- Create a variety of housing types and sizes to meet local needs including quiet lanes fronted by terrace properties

## 5.4 Design evolution

### 5.4.1 Initial concept plan, March 2021

Based on emerging constraints analysis, Alan Baxter prepared an initial concept plan for the Site.

The concept plan assumed that the access point would be provided from Gills Lane in the centre of the Site.

An indicative, potential zone for green and blue infrastructure was identified in the south east corner.

The layout retained the existing pond and incorporated it together with a new play area within green corridor in the western side of the Site.

### 5.4.2 Masterplan evolution, July 2021

Baseline technical assessments covering ecology and arboriculture, access, drainage and noise risk were undertaken. The findings informed an illustrative masterplan which was produced in July.

Feedback on landscape highlighted the importance of retaining the existing hedgerow along the northern boundary and enhancing it with a tree buffer to provide a better interface with the open land to the north.

The layout incorporated a 10m green corridor buffer to the existing pond and its woodland reflecting advice from ecologists.

In response to the Site drainage strategy, the location of the attenuation pond was moved to the north east corner with a swale running along the eastern edge of the development. This also enabled the creation of a green corridor buffer to Thorncroft Drive.



Figure 13: Initial concept plan, March 2021



Figure 14: Masterplan, July 2021

The informal pedestrian link from the end of Gwendoline Close to Gills Lane was incorporated into the layout.

The Site boundary was altered to remove a small area of land in the south western corner which is outside Leverhulme's ownership.

The housing mix was revised to incorporate a broader range of house types and sizes and this was reflected in the layout.

### 5.4.3 Illustrative masterplan, November 2021

Following further assessment of required open space provision on Site, additional publicly accessible open space was incorporated into the layout in the north east corner.

The location of the play area was adjusted to widen the habitat buffer to the pond.

The transport assessment identified the opportunity for footway widening along the northern side of Gills Lane. The widened footway and associated repositioning of sections of hedgerow were reflected in the layout.

### 5.4.4 Amendments in response to public consultation, February 2022

Feedback from the pre-application consultation in early 2022 is specifically reflected in the Site proposals as follows:

- Consultees noted that 3-4 bed properties, market sale and social housing properties are most needed. This is reflected in the indicative housing mix (see section 5.10) including a commitment to 30% affordable housing, exceeding the target the Council is looking to incorporate in its Local Plan. Bungalows were requested by some respondents and these are not included on this Site but

are included in proposals for nearby Site A, Land east of Glenwood Drive and Site E, Land at Milner Road and Barnston Road, Heswall.

- Community food growing, upgrades to local public transport and contribution to local community space were the most requested community benefits. Reflecting these preferences, the Site contains new public green space, fruit trees in gardens and a play area open to the wider community. Space for additional bus stops on the 472 bus route is provided on Gills Lane at the front of the Site. Leverhulme will enter Section 106 Agreements with Wirral Council to secure financial contributions to any necessary additional community facilities and land has been identified to the south of the Site for potential future education and healthcare provision (see Analysis of Very Special Circumstances, May 2022).
- Green space, play areas and access to local facilities were the most popular important sustainability features. Reflecting these preferences, the Site is located within 5 mins walk of local services on Pensby Road, and contains new green space and play areas to serve the local community. Leverhulme will enter into Section 106 Agreements with Wirral Council to secure financial contributions to any necessary additional community facilities.
- In response to a request for more information in relation to ecology and landscape, section 5.9 of the DAS now includes further detail on these topics and an Illustrative Landscape Framework Plan has been prepared.
- Concerns relating to traffic impact are addressed in the Transport Assessment which accompanies the planning application, which has been prepared in collaboration with Wirral Borough Council.

## 5.5 Illustrative masterplan

The illustrative masterplan for land east of Dale View Close, north of Gills Lane is the culmination of the design and consultation process outlined in previous sections.

It illustrates how the Site would be developed within the parameters of the planning application (see section 5.18) to deliver up to 92 homes in a manner which responds to the constraints and opportunities of the Site, and urban design best practice.

The masterplan layout is strongly landscape-led; structured around the retention of landscape features at the Site boundaries and the creation of a network internal residential streets which enable easy walking and cycling connections with the surrounding residential area, local facilities and public transport.

The masterplan incorporates the following key features:

- 1 Tree-lined streets fronted by a mix of 2-4 bedroom homes with front and rear gardens
- 2 Shared surface lanes fronted by groups of smaller terraced houses in the centre of the Site
- 3 A new footpath connecting the surrounding neighbourhoods to the new play area
- 4 Public green space with wildflower grassland and a new play area at the western end of the Site
- 5 Existing pond and woodland habitats are retained and expanded within the green space
- 6 The pavement on the northern side of Gills Lane is widened to improve pedestrian access
- 7 Existing hedgerows along Gills Lane are retained where possible or replanted at the Site boundary to enable the pavement widening
- 8 Additional tree and hedge planting at the Site boundaries provides an attractive edge to the neighbouring streets and fields to the north
- 9 A second green space in the east of the Site contains a sustainable drainage basin which captures surface water and creates a new wetland habitat
- 10 A planted corridor between new homes and existing properties on Thorncroft Drive incorporates a drainage swale
- 11 An informal footpath link to the north towards Gwendoline Close has been retained.



Figure 15: Illustrative Masterplan

## 5.6 Relationship to Leverhulme Vision

The proposed development forms part of an important first phase of Leverhulme's strategic, estate-wide vision. This has been long in the making – the final Vision document which gave form to the ideas was prepared in April 2020.

The Vision seeks to meet local housing need while providing significant community and environmental benefits making use of Leverhulme's wider landholding. By planning strategically in this manner, the right infrastructure (movement, green and blue and community) can be provided in a coordinated and timely manner.

This application is submitted alongside several others and in the context of a range of strategic benefits. Together there are very positive in-combination effects which will help bring the Leverhulme vision to life. Notwithstanding, each individual application itself targets and delivers both on-site and off-site benefits which (guaranteed by formal planning obligations made by Leverhulme) will be binding on the areas concerned.

Compensatory enhancements to the remaining Green Belt are proposed, to be delivered across all phases. These have been strategically planned in relation to the proposed first phase of development and later potential phases of growth, to cumulatively deliver the vision for a connected network of new cycleways and footpaths, habitat corridors, woodland planting, leisure and heritage trails and other environmental enhancements identified in the Leverhulme Vision.

Proposed enhancements on and off-site which form part of the longer-term vision include:

- the creation of biodiverse habitat including grassland and woodland planting to the south of Gills Lane adjacent to Barnston Dale Site of Biological Importance

- new footpath routes near Barnston Dale, connecting Gills Lane towards Pensby across the rural estate and proposed SANG area (see below).
- bus infrastructure enhancements on Gills Lane. Should the adjacent Site 'Land West of Barnston Road, Pensby' also come forward, the proposed development Site could contribute towards the increased frequency of the 181 service.

The Analysis of Very Special Circumstances report (Strutt and Parker, May 2022) which accompanies this planning application, contains further details of Leverhulme's strategic approach.

## 5.7 Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

The conclusion of the Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 1 Screening assessment identified potential for likely significant effect on the qualifying features of the Dee Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from increased recreational pressure in-combination with other plans and projects.

A suitable mitigation strategy is being developed to offset adverse impacts from increased recreational pressures on the designated Sites, as a result of development of the eight phase 1 Sites. It will include provision of a Suitable Area of Natural Greenspace (SANG) on land owned by Leverhulme to the west of Barnston. The SANG will include a small car park and a circular walking trail, within a managed rural landscape. A planning application for the SANG is currently under preparation.

Conditions on this Site B application will ensure that the SANG is implemented prior to first occupation of the proposed dwellings.

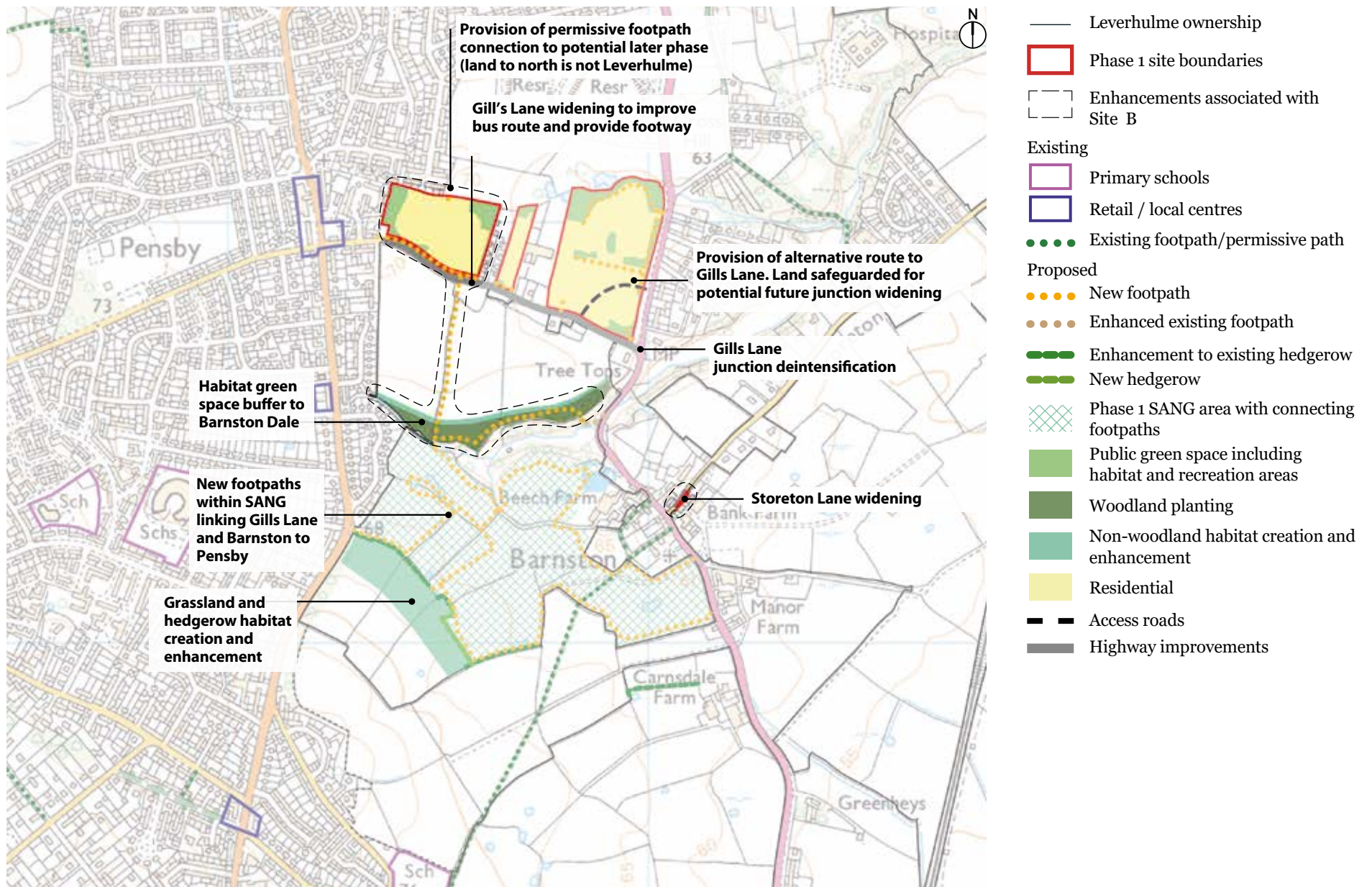


Figure 16: Embedded and offsite enhancements

## 5.8 Land use mix

The distribution of land uses is summarised in Figure 17.

Around 2.96 Ha of the Site is proposed for residential use, located in the centre of the Site and providing frontage onto green spaces and Gills Lane.

Around 0.96 Ha (24%) of the Site is proposed for green and blue infrastructure (GBI) including play area and informal walking routes. GBI is located as a wide corridor along the western boundary providing separation between the existing and proposed housing.

GBI is also incorporated into the north-eastern corner providing a drainage attenuation basin, linked to Gills Lane via a swale that would run along the Site's eastern boundary.

A further corridor of GBI is placed along the southern boundary incorporating hedgerow planting.



Figure 17: Land use

## 5.9 Landscape

The masterplan layout is strongly landscape led and described on the following pages. Of particular note is how the layout has responded to the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecology Appraisal and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) baseline to enhance landscape character and biodiversity, whilst also moderating the visual prominence of the development, by assimilating it into its landscape setting.

In line with the recommendations of the Preliminary Ecology Appraisal the Site design has:

- Retained and provided a 10m buffer from built development to the existing woodland, pond, scrub and grassland complex in the north-west of the Site.
- Retained hedgerows where possible, and incorporated a buffer zone from built development covering, as a minimum, the root protection area and up to 5m where possible.
- Incorporated opportunities for nesting birds and invertebrates within the development.
- Designed landscaping to include plant species of native origin, with high value for pollinating insects, and incorporated areas for semi-natural biodiversity habitats, including wildflower grassland, drainage attenuation/wetland habitats, shrubs and enhanced hedgerow and tree planting.
- Detailed design will incorporate measures to ensure minimal impacts on nocturnal animals (e.g. badgers and foraging bats) that may be commuting in areas within 50 m of the Site, or (in the case of bats) directly above/within the Site. These include minimising lighting and noise, particularly at night, directional lighting (downward and away from the commuting features), and/

or cowed lighting, and in line with current guidance (BCT and ILP, 2018); BCT, 2014; Stone, E.L. (2013).

- Where unavoidable losses of these habitats (including the loss of hedgerow due to the widening of Gills Lane pavement), or habitat opportunities for notable species, occur, compensatory habitat replacement will be provided to ensure there is a net gain of biodiversity overall.

In line with the findings of the LVIA baseline the Site design has:

- Retained and enhanced existing trees and hedgerows in the western part of the Site and at the eastern boundary.
- Incorporated green space at the north-eastern corner, including drainage attenuation basin, and larger gardens and additional hedgerow tree planting along the northern boundary. This will provide a landscape buffer setting for fields to the north.
- Incorporated new replacement boundary hedgerow to compensate for hedgerow lost due to the road widening of Gills Lane.
- Retained the informal connection towards Gwendoline Close.

### 5.9.1 Landscape strategy

Figure 18 illustrates the proposed landscape and ecology strategy for the Site and the distribution of green infrastructure. Around 24% of the Site area is to become public open space incorporating green and blue infrastructure and delivering benefits for wildlife and people and responding to the challenges of climate change.

The green and blue infrastructure will provide green corridors running along the western boundary, the western parts of the southern boundary and the north-eastern corner of the Site. The green areas will incorporate the existing pond and wetland habitats,



Figure 18: Landscape



trees and hedgerows and provide new publicly accessible open space, a play area and drainage features.

The woodland and pond setting of the Site will be preserved, with green space buffers. A play area will form a social focus for the new community.

The proposed landscape strategy for the Site includes:

- A green space in the western part of the southern boundary with a play area for children (Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) of approximately 600 sqm)
- An attractive green space at the north east corner of the Site containing trees and grassland and incorporating sustainable drainage attenuation feature to capture surface water run-off. This will be designed as wetland habitat
- Footpaths through public open space
- A habitat buffer of 10m to the pond and woodland in the north west
- Hedgerows at the northern, western and eastern boundaries of the Site will be enhanced with tree and shrub planting
- Hedgerows along Gills Lane will be retained wherever possible or replanted early in the development if lost due to highway improvements
- Streets will be planted with street trees or trees in front gardens to provide urban cooling and an attractive leafy character. Tree selection will include smaller ornamental species appropriate for minor streets.
- Houses will have planted front and rear gardens, including the provision of a fruit tree for each property.

- The development will seek to double the existing tree canopy cover of the Site, to help meet the commitments of Wirral's Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy.
- Public spaces and play area will be designed to be DDA compliant, inclusive and welcoming to all ages and abilities.
- Off-site, Leverhulme will invest in the expansion of woodland and grassland habitats, and new footpath links in its rural estate to the south around Barnston Dale.

### 5.9.2 Public open space and play space provision

The provision of open space goes beyond the minimum requirements of Policy CS32 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan for Wirral and meets the greater quantum recommended in Wirral's Draft Open Space Standards Paper (2020).

The latter proposes that the equivalent of 89 square metres of open space should be provided per dwelling, of which 6 square metres should be play provision. With the proposed development parameters allowing for up to 92 new homes, this equates to a requirement for 0.82 hectares of green space, of which 0.06 hectares to be formal play space provision. The Paper recommends that play provision should be provided if there is more than 0.04 hectares required in total.

The landscape plan (Figure 18) and parameter plan (Figure 26) proposes publicly accessible open space provision totalling 0.96 hectares including a play area of 600 sqm.

### 5.9.3 Indicative landscape proposals

The indicative landscape proposals for the Site are described graphically in Figure 19 and include the following proposed elements:

- Native Species Hedgerows
- Native Species Woodland
- Native Species Trees
- Parkland Trees
- Street Trees
- Garden Trees
- Amenity Grass
- Wildflower Meadow
- Wetland Meadow.

The Site is located on the eastern, urban edge of Pensby and is contained to the west and north-west by its connection with adjacent residential areas. In addition, the houses on Thorncroft Drive also surround the Site along its eastern border. As a result, the Site abuts the adjacent rural landscape to the north-east and to the south. The Site's proposed development will create new edges to the settlement in this location. The landscape proposals respond to this scenario in that the northern-eastern and southern edges to the development are to be defined by sections of native species hedgerow with trees therein and copses of native species woodland located to the north-eastern and south-western corners of the Site. Some sections of the existing hedgerow along Gills Lane may be retained and improved, however new sections will also be required.

These proposals will therefore form an appropriate transition between the existing urban edge, the new development and the rural landscape to the north-east and south, in that the proposed native species trees and hedgerows will be consistent with those located within the adjacent countryside, will create an appropriate visual and physical edge to the development by assimilating the new houses into the landscape and the views experienced from it, whilst also providing additional new habitat. The native species hedgerows and trees will also connect with an existing block of woodland located within the north-western corner of the Site and existing boundary hedgerows, thus creating habitat links for the dispersal of species and will also promote natural regeneration by colonisation.

Trees are highly valued within residential environments and add substantially to the quality and character of street scenes and gardens. Trees bring a sense of scale and structure that cannot be created by other plants. They are rarely planted by home owners and must be planned in at the outset as the backbone to the structural landscape for the development.

All native species trees will where practicable, be locally sourced from locations in the north-west of England and north Wales. Native species trees have been selected with reference to existing trees that are present and successful within the area, and with reference to online information provided by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

The parkland trees comprise a number of native species trees and non-native species ornamental trees. Native trees within peripheral open spaces and streets will provide a consistency with the native species used along the transitional edges of the development and they will provide new habitat and enhanced biodiversity in all locations.

The non-native ornamental species parkland and street trees have been selected to provide scale, colour, texture and variety to open spaces and street scenes, whilst also providing the opportunity to

-  Existing trees to be retained
-  Existing hedge
-  Existing scrub
-  Proposed native species hedge
-  Proposed parkland hedge
-  Proposed native trees
-  Proposed parkland trees
-  Proposed street trees
-  Proposed garden trees
-  Proposed native woodland planting
-  Amenity parkland grass
-  Wildflower meadow
-  SuDS feature



Illustrative Landscape Framework, prepared by Barnes Walker, Dwg no. M2738-PA-02-V3, February 2022

Figure 19: Illustrative landscape framework plan

create different character areas within the development by utilising a particular palette of trees in a specific zone.

The garden trees selected provide a selection of smaller trees with an appropriate mature scale and spread and a variety of colours, forms and textures. Trees located within garden areas will contribute to enhancing the street scene by complementing nearby street trees and those in adjacent open spaces.

Within the Wirral Tree Strategy 2020, WBC have committed to planting 210,000 trees between 2020 and 2030. The quantities of proposed trees indicated within the Illustrative Landscape Framework plan will make a significant contribution towards WBC's Tree Strategy objectives.

Areas of open space to the south-west and west will incorporate wildflower meadows. These grasslands only require low levels of maintenance and will attract and support a range of species and they also create a variety of colours, shapes and smells providing an interesting display throughout spring, summer and autumn. The presence of wildflowers with nectar-rich plants helps support dwindling populations of native pollinators including butterflies, moths and bees, helping to sustain insects that pollinate our food crops.

Two proposed SUDs waterbodies are also located adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the Site and will be seeded with two different wildflower seed mixes for wetlands and pond edges. Surrounded by areas of native species woodland and individual native species trees, these areas of wetland grass will provide additional levels of enhanced biodiversity.

An indicative species mix is provided right and overleaf.

### Wildflower meadows



Wildflower Seed Mix - Emorsgate  
EM2F



Liquidambar styraciflua  
'Worpleston'

**Native trees**



Acer campestre



Alnus glutinosa



Betula pendula



Corylus avellana



Fagus sylvatica



Malus sylvestris



Pinus sylvestris



Populus tremula



Prunus avium



Prunus padus



Quercus petraea



Quercus robur

**Hedging**



Mixed Native Hedge



Betula albo sinensis  
'Fascination'



Parkland Hedge  
(Fagus sylvatica)



Parkland Hedge (Fagus  
sylvatica) - autumn



Tilia cordata



Ulmus glabra

**Parkland trees**



*Acer freemanii*  
'Autumn Blaze'



*Betula albo sinensis*  
'Fascination'



*Platanus hispanica*



*Quercus palustris*



*Sorbus aria*



*Sorbus aucuparia*

**Street trees**



*Gleditsia triacanthos*  
'Sunburst'



*Liquidambar styraciflua*  
'Worplesdon'



*Prunus* 'Sunset  
Boulevard'



*Pyrus calleryana*  
'Chanticleer'

**Garden trees**



*Acer platanoides*  
'Crimson Sentry'



*Crataegus prunifolia*  
'Splendens'



*Prunus umineko*



*Sorbus vilmorinii*

**Swale and Balancing Pond /  
Pond and Stream Margin Planting**



Swale and Balancing Pond Mix -  
Emorsgate EM8



Pond and Stream Margin Mix -  
Emorsgate EP1

### 5.9.4 Biodiversity net gain

A baseline Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been undertaken by Environment Bank, which has been used to inform development proposals. The Wirral's current UDP requires a 'no net loss' to biodiversity for developments. However, it is anticipated that the emerging Wirral Local Plan will require a minimum 10% uplift in biodiversity for all developments in line with the Environment Act 2021.

The Biodiversity Accounting Assessment of the current masterplan concludes that on balance of impacts and habitat creation/enhancement, the proposed development and offsite mitigation will result in an overall net gain of 0.98 habitat Biodiversity Units (BU) and a net gain of 3.94 hedgerow BU, equivalent to a net gain of 10.41% and 235.9%, respectively. In addition, on balance of impacts and habitat creation/enhancement, the report also concludes that the Leverhulme Vision will result in an additional net gain of 6.99 habitat BU, equivalent to a net gain of 118.54%.

This has been achieved by retaining and enhancing the more distinctive habitats on Site including the hedgerows, scrub, grassland and ponds, with the main area of the development located within the low distinctiveness arable habitat. Although based on an Illustrative Masterplan, the assessment will be updated as plans are finalised with a minimum 10 % net gain achieved either on-site or off-site within the wider estate vision.

### 5.9.5 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken by Barnes Walker and has informed the evolution of the masterplan layout through an iterative process as noted above.

The LVIA concludes that upon maturity of the landscape there would be no significant residual landscape or visual effects. Residual effects upon the landscape character would be Minor Adverse at worst. The incorporation of areas of open space, green corridors, footpaths, wetland, tree, hedgerow and grassland planting, would enhance biodiversity and the recreational value of the site resulting in beneficial residual effects upon the landscape features.

Upon maturity of the landscape it is anticipated that views along Gills Lane, to the east of the Site would not be affected to any extent, however road users passing the Site on Gills Lane are expected to experience changes to their views that result in a residual visual effect of between Minor Adverse and Minor-Moderate Adverse.

The proposed development would not be visible from any PROWs.

Upon maturity of the landscape road users within the immediate vicinity of the Site would experience a range of visual effects, however these visual effects would not be significant.

### 5.10 Housing mix

The illustrative masterplan supports the delivery of a mix of detached, semi-detached and short runs of terrace properties ranging from 2 to 4 bedrooms, and a small number of 2 bedroom apartments.

30% affordable housing will be provided, in excess of both existing and emerging Wirral Council policies.

Figure 20 provides an indicative housing mix as follows, which reflects local housing need together with the character and scale of the local area:

<i>House Type</i>	<i>Total number of units</i>	<i>Number of affordable units</i>	<i>Number of market units</i>
2-bedroom apartments	6	2	4
2-bedroom houses	24	7	17
3-bedroom houses	38	12	26
4-bedroom houses	24	7	17
Sub-total		28	64
Total	92		

Indicative housing mix



Figure 20: Indicative housing mix

## 5.11 Townscape and urban design

In line with the accompanying Leverhulme Design Charter, the design seeks to embed the new neighbourhood comfortably within its surroundings while establishing a beautiful and distinctive character reflecting the Leverhulme vernacular and the best of Wirral.

### 5.11.1 Layout and block structure

Each development block is designed as a loose perimeter block. Homes front outwards addressing the street and green corridors with rear gardens contained within the centre of the block.

The detailed design of blocks will follow local standards in relation to overlooking and private amenity space. Rear gardens will be designed to allow 21m between habitable rooms and 14m from habitable room window to blank gable.

Bespoke corner buildings will be used to provide frontage to streets on both sides and avoid blank facades, for example at the entrance to the Site. Buildings will be carefully arranged to terminate street vistas and create a harmonious overall street composition.

### 5.11.2 Scale and massing

The design features a variety of building typologies which are arranged to reinforce the character of individual streets.

The entrance to the Site is marked by a larger corner villa of 2-2.5 storeys containing apartments, which provides a sense of enclosure to the adjacent open space.

The primary street is to be fronted predominantly by semi-detached properties of 2 storeys. Parking is kept to the side to minimise the impact of parked cars on the streetscape and to enable well proportioned streets with small front gardens, and a good level of enclosure.



Overlooked green space, Upton, Northampton



A short run of terraced houses, Port Sunlight



Figure 21: Urban design

Properties on the central lanes are to be small terrace groups, predominantly 2 storey with the potential for some single storey properties with dormers. The change in typology, scale and shared surface treatment of the carriageway will give these streets a distinctive character.

### 5.11.3 Edges and gateways

The development will be outward facing with development frontage to green at the edges of the Site and towards Gills Lane. This will support the creation of safe, well-used public spaces through passive surveillance from active residential frontages.

At the northern and eastern boundaries of the Site, proposed private back gardens back onto the existing back gardens of properties on Gwendoline Close and Thorncroft Drive to create secure rear boundaries.

The frontage to Gills Lane in the western part of the Site comprises a hedgerow and green corridor with larger properties set behind the primary street. In the western part of the Site, a shared surface lane provides access to properties which front onto Gills Lane from behind the hedgerow.

### 5.11.4 Architecture

Bespoke architectural design is to be agreed at reserved matters stage and will reflect traditional local building typologies of the surrounding early twentieth century and the Leverhulme vernacular combined with 21st century requirements for high levels of energy efficiency, accessibility and internal space standards (in line with the Government's Nationally Described Space Standards).

It is expected that a range of long-lasting materials will be used including red brick, render, timber details and occasional use of red sandstone. Buildings will have pitched roofs, with the ridgeline generally running parallel to the street.

A variety of gable designs addressing the street, steep roof pitches and the inclusion of first and second floor pitched dormers, and porches will create a varied roofscape and attractive articulation of the front elevations.

### 5.11.5 Public realm

Small planted or grassed front gardens are proposed to the front of properties. Generally, these will be bounded by a hedge or a low, red brick, or stone wall to clearly define the public/private boundary.

Street trees will be planted on all streets within the footway or grassed verges. Species will be selected using the 'right tree, right place' approach and with consideration of utilities corridors and other street elements.

### 5.12 Sustainable drainage

Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) features are proposed to attenuate surface water runoff so that peak outflows are equal to or less than the peak greenfield runoff rates for the equivalent Site area.

Surface water runoff from the roofs of the residential properties and associated driveways, footpaths and access road will drain via overland flow, to source control features and drainage gullies.

Conveyance of flow will be via reticulated sewer, following the local topography to an attenuation pond positioned in the north east of the Site with an effective storage volume of 1839.2 cubic metres. The basin will form an integral part of the landscape design of the Site, providing a biodiverse, planted wetland feature.

The water retained by the pond will then drain via a swale on the eastern boundary to the surface water sewer within Gills Lane to the south of the Site, mimicking greenfield runoff rates.

Further SuDS measures will be considered as part of the detailed design stage, for example filter drains and pervious paving.

### 5.13 Noise mitigation

Throughout the project, the SLR Acoustic's Team was consulted to advise on good Acoustic Design at the Site. The site has been designed to maximise the distance between the road network and the most exposed plots with rear gardens located on facades facing away from the road network.

Properties will be fitted with appropriate glazing and ventilation to mitigate any noise impacts on the internal environment, as set out in Appendix 3 of the Acoustics chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment which accompanies this planning application.

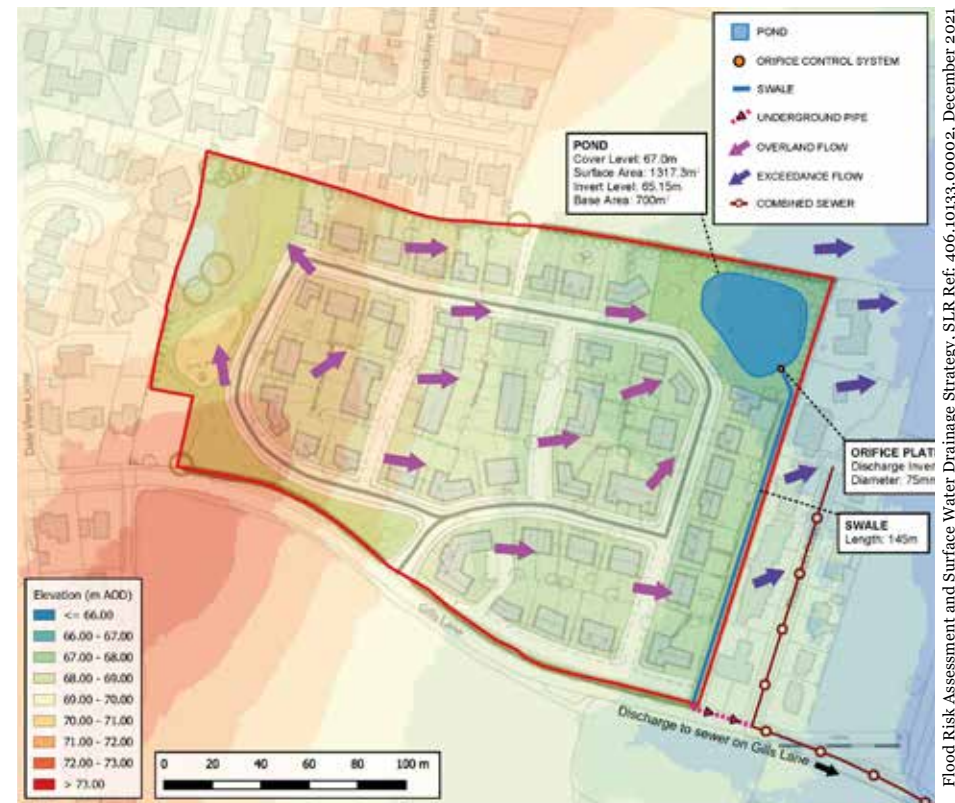


Figure 22: Drainage

## 5.14 Access and movement

Curtins has been appointed to produce a Transport Assessment that considers all traffic and transportation matters associated with the development proposals. An Interim Travel Plan has also been prepared to encourage travel by sustainable modes.

In preparing both documents, Curtins has liaised with representatives from WBC and National Highways to discuss the application Site in detail.

The highway impacts of the traffic predicted to be generated by the proposed development have been assessed at key junctions on the road network using the most recent junction modelling software. This process concluded that the proposed development would be acceptable from a highways perspective. Notwithstanding, Leverhulme is in an excellent position to assist the region with the development of transport infrastructure improvements, and mitigation is currently being considered.

### 5.14.1 Vehicle access points

Vehicular access to the Site is to be provided directly from Gills Lane in the form of a priority junction arrangement (refer to Curtins drawing 078240-CUR-00-XX-DR-TP-75002-P02: Access Arrangement for details).

Street and junction design will be in accordance with Wirral local design standards and Manual for Streets.



Residential street, Loftus Garden Village, Newport



Shared surface lane, Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge



Figure 23: Movement and access

### 5.14.2 Street hierarchy

The proposed street layout within the Site consists of a primary residential street of 5.5m carriageway with a 2m wide footway on both sides which connects with the existing footway provision along the northern side of Gills Lane. The residential street encircles the Site providing direct access to the majority of properties.

There are three shared surface lanes of 9m width proposed, two in the centre of the Site, and a further lane running adjacent to Gills Lane at the front of the Site, which provide access to a small number of properties.

All streets will be designed to control speed naturally through the geometry of the buildings and street layout. The primary residential street will have a design speed of 20-25mph and the shared surfaces lanes 5-10mph.

All streets will be designed to be DDA compliant, inclusive and welcoming to all ages and abilities.

### 5.14.3 Walking and cycling

The layout of the proposed neighbourhood will create a network of streets and footpaths which make it easy to walk and cycle around the Site and which connect with Gills Lane to provide access towards the nearby shops and services on Pensby Road to the west and towards Barnston village to the east.

In addition to pedestrian footways as part of the Site access junction, two further pedestrian access points will be created at the eastern and western ends of the Site to improve connectivity with Gills Lane.

The existing footway on the northern side of Gills Lane will be widened to 2m along the Site frontage to improve pedestrian connectivity towards Pensby's local centre.

The illustrative masterplan indicates the opportunity for a pedestrian connection at the Site's northern boundary into the field to north. This is to maintain the route of the current informal access that appears to take place between Gwendoline Close and Gills Lane via the Site.

To increase public access to Leverhulme's rural estate, new footpaths across fields to the south of the Site, along Barnston Dale, and between Barnston and Pensby will be created.

### 5.14.4 Public transport

The Site is considered to be accessible by sustainable modes of travel in line with national and local transport planning policy.

The street layout provides direct connection with Gills Lane where a hail and ride bus service operates. The enhanced footway to Gills Lane provide improved connections from the Site towards the bus stops on Pensby Road.

The potential for the provision of formal bus stops adjacent to the Site could be explored at detailed design stage.

### 5.14.5 Parking provision

Car parking is to be provided in accordance with the maximum standards set out by WBC, in their Supplementary Planning Document for house types similar in nature and location.

Parking is generally provided on plot, to the side of properties to minimise the visual impact of parked cars on the street frontage, or to the front where necessary for terrace properties. A small parking court is proposed to serve the residential apartment building at the entrance to the Site. Visitor parking will be provided on street.

Parking for bicycles will be provided in line with Borough standards in accessible locations on plot, and serving public green spaces.

Electric vehicle charging points will be delivered as part of the development in line with local and national standards.

Although there is currently limited access to car sharing services/car clubs across Wirral there are opportunities to increase car clubs by introducing car sharing bays at train stations, town and local centres, key employment areas and leisure centres, ideally within 400m of residential areas. As part of the wider car club services across the peninsula, there is opportunity to provide on street parking spaces for club cars within the development Site.



Parking provided to the side of properties

### 5.14.6 Off-site improvements

The Transport Assessment undertaken to support the planning application identifies the need for improvements to the Storeton Lane junction in Barnston Village.

Barnston Road/Storeton Lane is a known pinch point that would benefit from enhancement. Storeton Lane narrows to a single direction approximately 30m from the give-way line. Whilst the proposed development cannot be considered to have a severe impact on the Barnston Road/Storeton Lane junction, there is an opportunity for the development to improve the junction operation, journey delay and safety.

The design includes widening of Storeton Lane using land under the ownership of Leverhulme to ensure two-way traffic movement is maintained along Storeton Lane itself.

Refer to Curtins Drawing 078243-CUR-00-XX-DR-TP-75006-PO1: Storeton Lane Widening for details.



Figure 24: Storeton Lane widening location plan

- Site boundary
- Leverhulme ownership boundary

### 5.15 Character areas

Three character areas are proposed to create a sense of hierarchy between different parts of the development and to respond to the context of the Site.

The boundaries of the character areas are fluid and intend to create subtle changes of tone throughout the development adding legibility and identity to the new neighbourhood.

The character areas are:

- Leafy streets
- Central lanes
- Green corridors

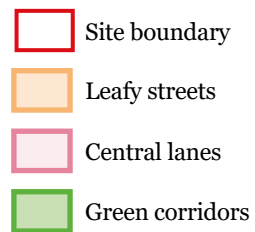


Figure 25: Movement and access

### 5.15.1 Leafy street

This character area provides homes fronting onto tree-lined streets and green spaces. The predominant building typology will be semi-detached family homes with occasional detached and terraced properties, of 2 to 4 bedrooms and generally 2 storeys in height.

A small apartment building, designed to resemble a larger villa will front Gills Lane and define the entrance to the Site. To the east, semi-detached properties will front towards Gills Lane set back behind a hedge and accessed via a shared surface lane.

Properties will overlook and provide passive surveillance to walking routes and green corridors.

Parking will be on plot to the side of properties.

The main characteristics of this area are:

- Semi-detached, detached, apartment or terraced properties
- Predominantly 2 storey buildings with occasional dormers
- Bespoke corner buildings providing frontage to all public streets
- Variety in the building line and set back, to create an organic, informal character
- Small, ornamental species of street trees with larger trees at the edges of green space
- Street carriageway widths of 5.5m
- Planted front gardens of 3-4m with wall or hedgerow boundaries
- Parking provided to the side of the house or to the rear of apartments.



Leafy Streets location plan



Recent development in an Arts and Crafts style at Letchworth Garden City

### 5.15.2 Central Lanes

Situated in the middle of the Site this character area will provide north-south connectivity via quiet, shared surface lanes fronted by short runs of terraced properties.

Parking is generally on plot, to the side or front of properties.

The main characteristics of this area are:

- Short groups of terraced properties
- Predominantly 2 storey buildings with potential for some single storey with dormers
- Shared surface lanes with a width of 9m incorporating delineated pedestrian footways
- Planted front gardens of 1-6m with wall or hedgerow boundaries
- Parking provided to the side of the house or to the front of properties, with planting to soften visual impact.



Central Lanes location plan



Parking in front of the properties, Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge

### 5.15.3 Green corridors

This character area comprises the main public open spaces of the Site including green corridors at the edges, play area, drainage attenuation features, wetland habitat areas and existing trees and hedgerows. The area will be kept free from development.

Details relating to green infrastructure within this character area are provided in Section 5.7.



Green corridors location plan



### 5.16 Secured by Design

The illustrative masterplan layout has been informed by Secured by Design 2019 guidance principles. The design follows the guidance with respect to:

- Streets and new public open spaces are overlooked by the frontage of properties, to encourage natural surveillance.
- Pavements run as part of the street to the front or side of dwellings. Routes will be appropriately lit.
- Dwellings front outwards onto the street with a clearly defined public/ private boundary.
- The layout allows for a mix of property sizes and types to encourage a mixed community and activity throughout the day.
- Private gardens are generally located to the rear of properties, abutting other rear gardens and private boundaries to create a secure rear boundary with appropriate fencing.
- Generally parking is provided on plot accessed from the front of the property. Rear parking for the apartment building will be designed as a parking court directly related to the apartment building. It will be well landscaped with a combination of trees, hedgerows and climbing plants and will allow convenient access to rear gardens for bin and cycle storage.
- The layout of the masterplan has legible, direct routes to public open spaces, play facilities and towards Pensby local centre to encourage intuitive wayfinding.
- Windowless elevations and blank walls facing the public realm will be avoided.
- Secured by Design matters will be considered further through reserved matters including in relation to public open space design, planting, lighting, boundaries and parking design.



Overlooked public open space, Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge



Rear parking court, Abode at Great Kneighton, Cambridge

### 5.17 Sustainability

Leverhulme fully supports Wirral Council's Environment and Climate Emergency commitments to:

- Cut climate damaging pollution locally in line with global targets, whilst developing resilience to more extreme weather patterns and rising sea levels that impact Wirral
- Protect and enhance biodiversity.

The masterplan design responds to this commitment in the following ways:

At the neighbourhood level:

- The development is sustainably located, being within 5 minutes walk of Pensby local centre facilities, local shops, and within 10 minutes of primary schools.
- The permeable neighbourhood layout, moderate densities, footpath and cycleway links have been designed to encourage walking and cycling to local facilities instead of vehicle use.
- Frequent bus services serve Pensby Road providing access to destinations across Wirral.
- Deciduous street trees will be planted in streets, gardens and in local green spaces to provide shelter from strong winds, capture carbon and to moderate extremes of temperature through evaporative cooling, while allowing sunlight in winter.
- Additional trees and hedgerows will be planted off-site to capture carbon, moderate temperatures and protect soil.
- The retention of trees and hedgerows, creation of green corridors, nature areas, together with tree planting, planted private gardens

and additional off-site habitat creation will contribute to an overall residual biodiversity net gain of +10.41 % for habitat and +235.9 % for hedgerows with additional biodiversity net gain related to Leverhulme Vision proposals.

- Surface water run-off will be attenuated on Site using sustainable drainage features.
- The layout maximises the zero-carbon potential from a passive design perspective balancing this with the constraints of the Site and the importance of creating an attractive and connected layout. This includes:
  - Using terrace and grouped properties within the scheme. These are inherently more energy efficient than detached homes and create attractively framed streets.
  - Orientating streets broadly east-west where possible, to maximise the number of homes with a north-south orientation and roofs suitable for PV panels.

At the plot level:

- Detailed design will seek to provide homes which are 'zero carbon ready' with low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency, including those delivered in advance of the 2025 deadline proposed by the Government's emerging Future Homes Standards. This will enable homes to become fully zero carbon as the national grid is decarbonized without the need for future retrofitting.
  - A fabric first approach will be adopted with high levels of insulation and increased air tightness, high efficacy lighting and passive or heat recovery ventilation systems. The details of the design will be determined at reserved matters stage.
  - New homes will be planned to have dual aspect to maximise

daylighting and natural ventilation potential and will have high ceilings to manage the heat within the buildings and good sized glazed areas to reduce the need for artificial lighting.

- Given the location and density of the proposed development, it is anticipated that each dwelling will have an individual heating system rather than obtain energy from a centralised energy system. The system used will depend on the building typology but it is anticipated that this will include the use of air source heat pumps and photovoltaic panels.
- Locally sourced materials, recycled and reused materials should be used wherever possible.
- All timber used should be from PEFC or FSC certified sources.
- Every home will have access to at least one electric vehicle charging point.
- All homes will have secure, accessible cycle parking.

### 5.18 Proposed development parameters

Outline planning approval is sought for the development parameters shown on Figure 26. These reflect the design principles of the illustrative masterplan, while allowing for design refinement of the layout through the reserved matters process. The proposed development parameters comprise:

- Up to 92 residential dwellings
- Provision of publicly accessible green space in the west, south west and east of the Site including retained pond, woodland and hedgerows, habitat buffers, grassland habitats, play space and footpath
- Provision of a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) accessible to the wider community
- Retention of good quality trees and hedgerows and additional planting at the Site boundaries
- A drainage basin and wetland habitat in the north east part of the Site and a linking swale on the eastern boundary to capture surface water run-off
- Widening to Gills Lane to enable provision of a 2m footway on its northern side. Replanting of affected sections of existing hedgerow.
- Provision of a primary junction onto Gills Lane providing access to the Site.
- Pedestrian/cycle connections onto Gills Lane at the eastern and western ends of the Site.



Figure 26: Development parameters

## 6.0 Conclusion

This Design and Access Statement describes and illustrates how the design of the proposed development of up to 92 new homes has evolved in response to an analysis of Site B's constraints and opportunities, in particular its landscape setting and relationship to adjacent residential areas. The design has taken on board the feedback received from public consultation and the findings of technical assessments including ecology, landscape, highways, drainage and noise assessments.

The proposed development is in accordance with the Leverhulme Vision, and Leverhulme Design Charter and seeks to deliver a high-quality and locally distinctive place at the edge of Pensby.

The illustrative masterplan is strongly landscape-led and shows the proposed traditional arrangement of perimeter blocks with homes fronting onto tree lined streets and open spaces. This will provide natural surveillance of the public open space, as well as offer an attractive setting for residents.

This document demonstrates how development can deliver much needed, high-quality homes, while strengthening walking and cycling links to the local facilities of Pensby and supporting active, healthy lifestyles.

Our design has sensitively incorporated the following:

- Creation of landscape buffers to existing pond and woodland habitats
- Planting of trees and hedgerow strengthening at the Site boundaries to provide an attractive edge to the neighbouring streets and fields to the north
- A new play area open to the wider community
- Off-site widening of Gills Lane footway, enhancing access for pedestrians and cyclists towards Pensby local centre
- A range of property sizes and tenures to meet local needs, including 30% affordable homes, set on leafy streets with a traditional character
- Sustainable drainage measures including an attenuation basin and swale to capture water run-off and create new wetland habitats

## Appendix A: Design Charter assessment

The following table summarises how the proposed development is in line with the commitments of the Leverhulme Design Charter.

In summary, the proposed scheme design and approach meets all the relevant Design Charter commitments for an outline application and provides an appropriate framework for the delivery of Design Charter commitments at the Reserved Matters and implementation stages.

Design Charter Commitment			Detailed commitments of relevance to outline planning applications	Assessment
1	Context	To create beautiful places which enhance their surroundings by responding directly to the special character, culture and heritage of Wirral, and the setting, constraints and assets of each Site.	Contextual and Site analysis	Detailed context and Site analysis is presented in Section 3.0 and Section 4.0 of this document
			Analysis informs design	The Site has been designed following contextual and Site analysis, design rationale is presented in Section 5.0
			Character study informs design	The design of the Site is influenced by Leverhulme Characterisation Study (Appendix B, Leverhulme Design Charter) for example architectural design will reflect traditional local building typologies of the surroundings and of historic Leverhulme places.
			Wider strategic role considered	The Site has been designed as part of the long-term estate-wide plan for growth, environmental and accessibility enhancements (see Leverhulme Vision, An Enhanced Green Belt section). For example, bus infrastructure enhancements on Gills Lane
			Consultation informs design	Feedback from the public consultation was reviewed and incorporated into the design where possible. Summary of the Consultation Report is presented in Section 5.4.4

Design Charter Commitment			Detailed commitments of relevance to outline planning applications	Assessment
2	Movement	To develop places where residents' health and wellbeing is supported by creating connected, walkable neighbourhoods. To create integrated places by linking new neighbourhoods with the surrounding street network. To support Wirral Council's aim for fossil fuel free local travel by 2030.	Walkable neighbourhood layout	The scheme proposes a layout that creates a network of footpaths that provides easy access on foot around the Site and connect with the surrounding area
			Pedestrians prioritised	The existing footway on the northern side of Gills Lane will be widened to 2m along the Site frontage to improve pedestrian connectivity towards Pensby's local centre
			Overlooking of public routes	All properties will be fronting onto public spaces, walking routes and green corridors to encourage natural surveillance
			Delivers cycle supergreenway (where relevant)	Not relevant for this Site
			Cycle parking	The basis for cycle parking is provided in this document, see Section 5.14.5
			Electric vehicle charging point	The basis for electric vehicle charging infrastructure will be in accordance with national and local adopted standards
			Spaces for car clubs	The basis for car clubs are presented in Section 5.14.5
			Parking appropriate to street character	Character sensitive parking types are presented in Section 5.15
		Transport assessment undertaken	Transport Assessment has been produced by Curtins, summary of the report is presented in this document in Section 3.6 and Section 5.14	

Design Charter Commitment			Detailed commitments of relevance to outline planning applications	Assessment
3	Nature	To make green spaces, trees, hedgerows and gardens core characteristics of every Leverhulme neighbourhood for the benefit of the environment, climate and community wellbeing. To bring significant environmental gains to Wirral through enhancement of habitats across the rural Leverhulme.	Biodiversity net gain of at least 20%	Biodiversity net gain of at least 20 % is achieved across the phase 1 sites and associated phase 1 Leverhulme Vision proposals.
			Footpaths, cycleways connections to green spaces	The proposed layout will create a network of footpaths and cycleways incorporated in and connecting to green spaces within the Site and its surroundings, see Figure 25 and Section 5.14.3 for more details
			Wirral Draft open space standards	The proposed provision of open space within the scheme is in line with Wirral Draft open space standards, see Section 5.9.2 for more details
			Multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network	Provision of multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network within the Site is presented in Landscape Strategy, Section 5.9.1
			Sustainable drainage system (SuDS)	Site's SuDS strategy is presented in Section 5.12
			Outdoor garden space	The basis for front/back garden space is provided in Section 5.11 and Section 5.15
			Retention of trees, woodland and hedgerows or compensatory planting	Woodland, trees and hedgerows will be retained. Where unavoidable losses of hedgerow due to the widening of Gills Lane pavement occur, compensatory hedgerows replacement will be provided to ensure there is a net gain of biodiversity overall. For more details see Section 5.9
			Double tree canopy cover on Site	Streets will be planted with street trees, houses will have planted front and rear gardens, including fruit trees. The development will seek to double the existing tree canopy cover of the Site.
			Right tree, right place planting	Street tree species will be selected using the 'right tree, right place' approach. Indicative planting is shown on Figure 19 with planting plan to be agreed at Reserved Matters
		Hedgerow planting	Landscape strategy proposes additional hedgerow tree planting along the northern boundary	

Design Charter Commitment			Detailed commitments of relevance to outline planning applications	Assessment
4	Built form	To create new neighbourhoods with a coherent and harmonious layout, moderate densities and human scale which fit comfortably with their surroundings and their location at the urban/rural edge.	Harmonious overall street composition	The design of harmonious overall street composition is presented in detail in Section 5.11 and Section 5.15
			Use of linked buildings	The layout proposes short groups of terraced properties on the central lanes
			Use of perimeter blocks	The layout shows the proposed traditional arrangement of perimeter blocks with homes front outwards addressing the street and green spaces
			Townscape aids legibility	The layout of the masterplan has legible, direct routes to public open spaces, play facilities and towards Pensby local centre to encourage intuitive wayfinding
			1-3 storey buildings	Homes will be generally two storey with a larger corner villa of 2-2.5 storeys at the entrance to the Site
			Use of street trees	Deciduous street trees will be planted streets, where appropriate

Design Charter Commitment			Detailed commitments of relevance to outline planning applications	Assessment
5	Identity	To establish neighbourhoods which are distinctively Wirral, with a beautiful and bespoke character reflecting the Leverhulme vernacular and the surrounding area.	Reflects Leverhulme places	The design seeks to embed the new neighbourhood comfortably within its surroundings while establishing a beautiful and bespoke character reflecting the Leverhulme vernacular and the best of Wirral, see Section 5.0 for more details
			Variety and interest in non-residential elements	The masterplan proposes non-residential uses within the Site including a green space in the western part with a play area, a green space at the north east corner and a habitat buffer of 10m to the pond and woodland
			Use of new Leverhulme vernacular	Bespoke architectural design in line with the new Leverhulme vernacular is to be agreed at reserved matters stage and will reflect local building typologies of the surrounding early twentieth century and of Port Sunlight combined with 21st century requirements, for more details see Section 5.11

Design Charter Commitment			Detailed commitments of relevance to outline planning applications	Assessment
6	Public spaces	To create public spaces and streets which are welcoming and safe, and which support community interaction and cohesion.	Secured by Design principles	The design of the scheme has been informed by Secured by Design 2019 guidance principles, see Section 5.16 for more details
			Incorporates new public spaces	The scheme incorporates new public spaces including a green space with a play area and a wetland habitat at the north east corner of the Site containing trees and grassland and incorporating sustainable drainage attenuation feature. For details see Section 5.9.1
			DDA compliant public spaces	The scheme proposes public spaces, streets and play areas will be designed to be DDA compliant, details to be agreed at Reserved Matters stage
			Street hierarchy reflects movement and place functions	Street hierarchy for the Site is shown on Figure 25 and described in detailed in Section 5.14.2
			Enclosure to streets	Enclosure to the streets will be provided by building frontages, boundary treatments and trees. See Section 5.11 and Section 5.15

Design Charter Commitment			Detailed commitments of relevance to outline planning applications	Assessment
7	Uses	To create a broad mix of homes and flexible spaces for non-residential uses across the estate. This will bring vitality, support health and wellbeing, rural enterprise, community organizations and community cohesion.	New uses for redundant buildings	Not relevant for this Site
			Provision of new community facilities	The masterplan proposes a community focus in the form of green space with play area for children
			Inclusion of parks and play areas	The landscape strategy proposes a green space with a play area and public open spaces providing routes for walking. For more details see Section 5.9.1
			Strategic planning of facilities	The scheme proposes a new play area that has a footpath connection to the surrounding neighbourhood. S106 financial contributions will provide appropriate community facility enhancements in the wider area.
			Flexibility for building adaptation/land use change	Indicative building footprints are based on the Nationally Described Space Standards, to allow for flexibility of use internally as needs change.
			Variety of house sizes and tenures	The scheme proposes the delivery of detached, semi-detached and short runs of terraced properties and a small apartment building with home sizes varying between 2 to 4 bedrooms. See Section 5.10 for more details.
			Provision of bungalows on larger schemes	Bungalows are not included on this scheme, but are included in nearby Site A and Site E
			Affordable house provision and tenure blind design	30% affordable housing will be provided
			Opportunity for self-build/custom-build on larger Sites	Self-build/custom-build are not included on this scheme, but are included in nearby Site A and Site E.

Design Charter Commitment			Detailed commitments of relevance to outline planning applications	Assessment
8	Homes and buildings	To create properties which can adapt to residents' changing needs over time, and which provide a safe and comfortable environment to call home.	Use of Nationally Described Space Standards, 2015	The indicative building footprint is in line with the Nationally Described Space Standards, 2015
			Inclusion of Lifetime Homes where possible	The layout incorporates the plots and buildings in line with Building Regulations, Part M(2), Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings, HM Government, 2015
			Inclusion of private/communal garden space	All houses will have a private garden reflecting the size of property and the Site constraints. Apartment buildings will have private garden or communal gardens
			Garden sizes, generally no less than 10m in length	The masterplan proposes back gardens of a minimum of 10m long
			Limit overlooking between properties	Rear gardens will be designed to allow 21m between habitable rooms
			Rear gardens in centre of the block	Each development block is designed as a perimeter block as a result homes are designed to front outwards addressing the street and green corridors with rear gardens contained within the centre of the block
			Majority of private parking on plot	Parking is generally provided on plot, to the side of house. Where the terraced housing is proposed parking will be to the side or front of properties. A small parking court is proposed to serve the residential apartment building at the entrance to the Site.

Design Charter Commitment			Detailed commitments of relevance to outline planning applications	Assessment
9	Resources	To support Wirral Council's Environment and Climate Emergency commitments by considering environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability at all stages of the planning and design process.	Woodland planting across the Estate	Leverhulme is proposing enhancements to existing and creation of new woodlands, see Leverhulme Vision, 'An Enhanced Green Belt' section and VSC proposals.
			Environmental and farming enhancements	Vision for environmental and farming enhancements is presented in Leverhulme Vision document, see section 'An Enhanced Green Belt'
			Long distance cycleways and footpaths	A wider strategy of long distance cycleways and footpaths is presented in Leverhulme Vision document, see section 'Enhancing access' and VSC plans.
			Walkable neighbourhoods	The scheme proposes a permeable neighbourhood layout that creates a network of footpaths and provides easy access on foot around the Site connecting it with the surrounding area. This will encourage walking and cycling to local facilities instead of vehicle use
			Mix of property sizes and tenures	The masterplan provides a mix of different property sizes and tenures (varying between 2 to 4 bedrooms in size) to encourage a mixed community. See Section 5.10 for more details
			Use of sustainable drainage systems	SuDS strategy for the Site is presented in Section 5.12
			Garden and street tree planting	The masterplan proposes planting street and garden trees on every street and in local green spaces
			Use of terrace and grouped properties	Layout of the Site includes terraced and grouped properties, see Section 5.11 and Section 5.15
10	Lifespan	To deliver long-lasting, beautiful places to live. To maintain a role in their ongoing management and community stewardship.	Leverhulme directly prepares outline planning application	This Design and Access Statement is part of the outline planning application submission package prepared by the team working directly with Leverhulme

## Appendix B: Building for a Healthy Life assessment

The following table summarises how the proposed development is in line with the commitments of Building for a Healthy Life, 2020, Homes England.

Building for a Healthy Life		Assessment
Integrated Neighbourhoods		
1	Natural connections	The Site design meets all the green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example retained hedgerows are kept within the public realm, connected internal street layout respond to pedestrian and cyclist desire lines
2	Walking, cycling and public transport	The Site design meets all the appropriate and relevant green criteria for an outline planning application, for example widening of Gills Lane pavement will enable easy walking and cycling connections with the surrounding residential area, local facilities and public transport
3	Facilities and services	The Site design meets all the appropriate green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example a new play area is linked by footpaths to Gills Lane for use by the wider community
4	Homes for everyone	The Site design meets all the green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example a range of housing typologies are provided that support local housing needs and policies to help create a broad-based community; apartments are designed with private/communal gardens
Distinctive Places		
5	Making the most of what's there	The Site design meets all the green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example existing pond and woodland are retained and expanded within the green space; proposed private back gardens back onto the existing back gardens of properties on Gwendoline Close and Thorncroft Drive to create secure rear boundaries
6	A memorable character	The Site design meets all the green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example a small apartment building will front Gills Lane and define the entrance to the Site
7	Well defined streets and spaces	The Site design meets all the green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example bespoke corner buildings that will provide frontage to streets on both sides; each development block is designed as a loose perimeter block
8	Easy to find your way around	The Site design meets all the green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example primary residential street is made different to shared surface/lanes through the use of different spatial characteristics, building typologies, building to street relationships, landscape strategies and boundary treatments; buildings will be carefully arranged to terminate street vistas and create a harmonious overall street composition

Building for a Healthy Life		Assessment
Streets for all		
9	Healthy streets	The Site design meets all the green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example streets are planted with trees and have landscape layers that add sensory richness to a place; streets are also responding to pedestrian and cycle 'desire lines'
10	Cycle and car parking	The Site design meets all the green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example small parking courtyards are provided where parking space directly relates to the property and is overlooked by first floor habitable rooms
11	Green and blue infrastructure	The Site design meets all the green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example streets and new public open spaces are overlooked by the frontage of properties to encourage natural surveillance; plans are provided that identify the character of new spaces, such as 'woodland', 'wildflower meadow', 'wetland', 'play area', 'habitat buffer' rather than 'P.O.S.'
12	Back of pavement, front of home	The Site design meets all the green criteria relevant for an outline planning application, for example planted or grassed front gardens will be bounded by a hedge or a low, red brick, or stone wall to clearly define the public/private boundary; there is no left over spaces with no clear public or private function

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*‘Leverhulme’s estate-wide approach can deliver  
much-needed homes and unlock strategic  
transport, landscape, biodiversity and economic  
opportunities for the benefit of all of Wirral’*



**LEVERHULME**