

Outline Landscape Statement

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STATION ROAD DRIGG

Prepared on behalf of Sunshine Properties West Coast Ltd



January 2022

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I INTRODUCTION

- I.1 Westwood Landscape Ltd, a Landscape Institute registered landscape design consultancy based in Carlisle, was commissioned by Sunshine Properties West Coast Ltd in January 2022 to prepare an outline Landscape Statement for a proposed residential development on land at Station Road, Drigg.
- I.2 The site had been included in the new Copeland Borough Council Local Plan but was removed after consultation based on: *'impacts on the character of the village, unacceptable encroachment into the countryside and uncertainty surrounding the availability of the land.'*
- I.3 This report investigates these issues with an outline appraisal of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development on landscape as a resource and on views available to people and their visual amenity.

The site and proposed development

- I.4 The site for the proposed development is for 9 houses on improved grassland to the north of Station Road at the north edge of the settlement of Drigg. A single access road is proposed off Station Road. The Site Location Plan (**Appendix I Photographic Landscape Appraisal**) indicates the location of the site in relation to the existing residential areas and the surrounding agricultural land.
- I.5 A full description of the proposed development is included in the Design and Access Statement and plans by Ashwood Design Ltd. And Planning Statement by SRE Associates.

2 SCOPE OF THE APPRAISAL

- 2.1 The scope of the appraisal is based on a desk study and site visit to assess the nature of the site and the proposed development and its possible effects. This is a broad outline assessment which is considered to be adequate for the moderate scale of the development and suitable to develop a Landscape Strategy to support the application. No detailed LVIA assessment and visualisations of selected viewpoints is included. However the preparation of the landscape statement is based on the processes outlined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (GLVIA3) and An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2014).

Key landscape and visual issues

- 2.2 The proposed development is likely to give rise to landscape and visual effects as a consequence of the character of the site changing from improved agricultural land to residential development. Landscape effects are concerned with changes to the physical landscape, including effects on its character as a whole and on the individual elements contributing to this character.
- 2.3 It is predicted that the landscape receptors likely to be affected during the construction and operation of the proposed development would include:
- Low Farmland landscape character type within which the site lies due to change from improved grassland to an urban form; and
 - Physical features on the site: 0.71 Ha of improved grassland will require removal to accommodate the proposed development. The intermittent boundary hedgerows of mainly Hawthorn and Gorse will be retained. (Refer to photos 1-3)
- 2.4 The proposed development is likely to give rise to visual effects within the study area as a consequence of the character of the site changing from an area of improved grassland to an urban form. Visual effects are the effects of the proposed development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. The Photographic analysis (Appendix 1) illustrates the indicative extent of the surrounding area from which views of the proposed development may be available which is restricted by landscape features including trees, hedges and buildings. There will be some longer distance views from the elevated ground within the LDNP to the east but the long view distances will ensure that any visual effects will be negligible.

3 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Designated landscapes

- 3.1 Designated landscapes can be an indicator of the recognised value of a landscape. The site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations. The Lake District National Park, designated for high landscape and scenic value, is just 650m to the south-east at its closest point.
- 3.2 There are various protected nature conservation areas of high ecological and landscape value close to the site. Drigg Coast SSSI, SAC and SPA is situated 630m to the south at the closest point. Hallsenna Moor National Nature Reserve and SSSI is situated 1.1 Km to the north. Drigg Holme National Nature Reserve and SSSI is situated 0.8 Km to the east.

Landscape character

Cumbria Landscape Character Toolkit 2011

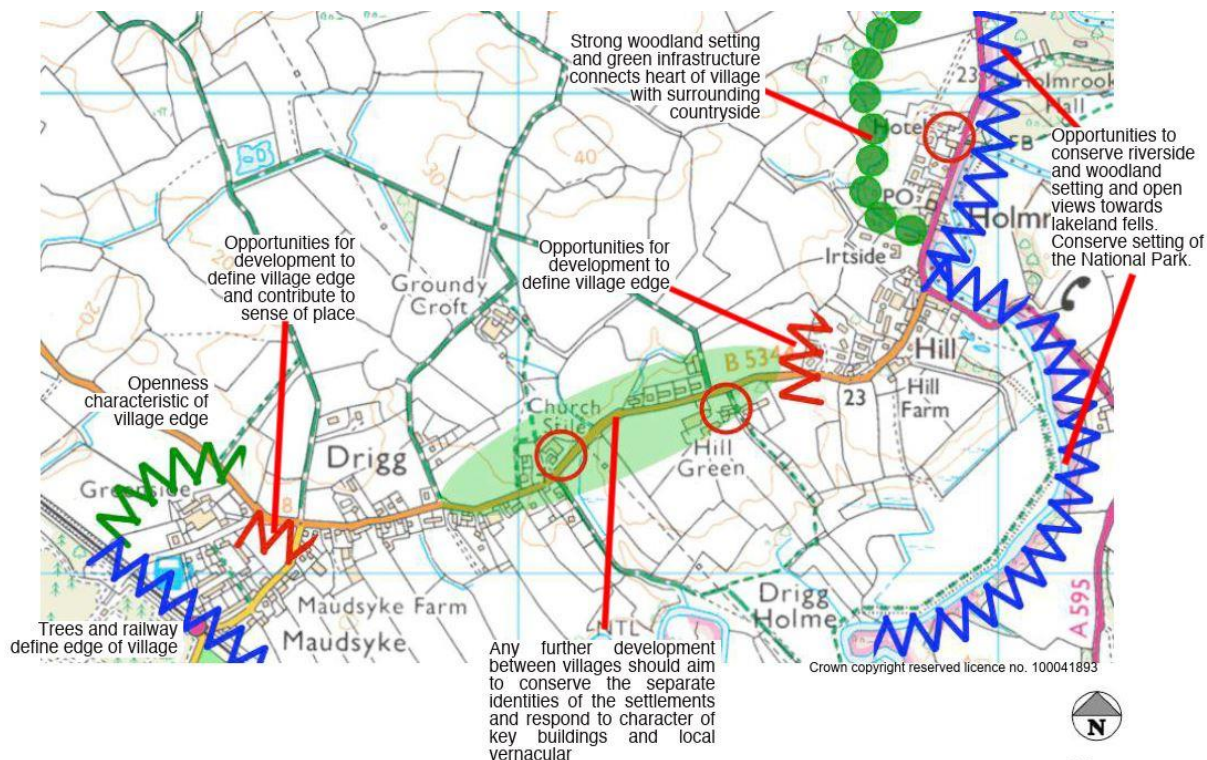
- 3.3 This describes the character of different landscape types across the county and provides guidance to help maintain their distinctiveness. It supports the local development frameworks and influences where future development takes place and what it might look like. It addresses the aims of the European Landscape Convention by identifying and assessing landscape types and by providing a strategic framework that includes visions and objectives for future landscapes and guidelines to help protect, manage and plan changes to maintain and enhance landscape distinctiveness. Refer to Appendix 2.
- 3.4 The landscape character assessment describes and maps the elements and features that make up distinctively different types of landscape throughout the county. The vision, landscape changes and guidelines provide a framework to help protect, manage, enhance and restore landscapes in the future and keep their distinctiveness.
- 3.5 The site lies within the Landscape Type 5b: *Low Farmland*. This describes a landscape of undulating and rolling topography with a distinct historic field pattern defined by fences and kest hedgerows with occasional small copse and shelterbelt woodland. It is an intensively farmed landscape with pasture dominating. To the south of Drigg the River Irt meanders across open floodplain which allows open distant views eastwards to the LDNP fells.
- 3.6 The south-western edge of Drigg is defined by the coastal railway line beyond which the industrial character of the nuclear waste depository detracts from the landscape amenity. However this storage depot supports mature woodland which serves to curtail local views from

the coast.

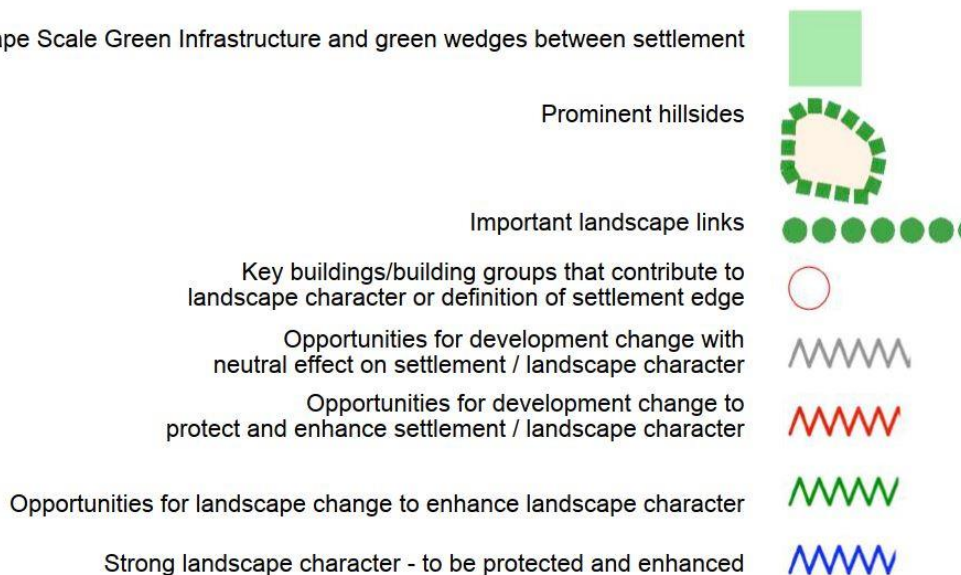
- 3.7 The settlement pattern of Drigg is a linear development of 19th and 20th century housing along the B5344 road and fragmented in nature. Properties around Hill Green to the east are separated from the riverside village of Holmrook by just 100m of pasture land and properties at Stubble Green to the north-west are separated from the main village by 550m of pasture land.
- 3.8 To the west of the village there is a small area of Landscape Character Type 2a *Dunes and Beaches* and Type 1a *Intertidal flats* through which runs the England Coast Path. The alignment of this PROW was revised on 22.08.28 by Natural England (Refer to Appendix 2). Whilst the path is not continuous to the south it is to the north as far as Whitehaven and is an important leisure route to consider.
- 3.9 The village character is enriched with some historic buildings including the listed Drigg Hall (Viewpoint 4) and Rose Cottage and St Peters Church. The landscape and visual impact on the setting of these historic building will be negligible as a result of the development.

Landscape Sensitivity to development

- 3.10 The open characteristics of the Low Farmland are sensitive to development particularly those which will interrupt the skyline. The traditional settled agricultural character is sensitive to unsympathetic settlement expansion. This sensitivity was considered to be medium – high in the Drigg Landscape Settlement Study July 2020 by David Wilson Partnership for Copeland Borough Council (refer to Appendix 2). This study concludes that: *there is scope for further development in Drigg to reinforce the sense of identity in the heart of the village and help to define the village character.*



Landscape Scale Green Infrastructure and green wedges between settlement



3.11 The diagram above is an extract from the 2020 study which indicates that there is an opportunity to define the northern edge of the village which could be achieved at the northern edge of the proposed development site rather than the B5344 as indicated.

3.12 The landscape setting of the development is considered to be of low to moderate quality.

Visual sensitivity to development

3.13 The key visual receptors identified are local residents, motorists and users of the network of

PROW's including the long distance England Coast Path and walkers within the LDNP.

- 3.14 The proposed development site is partially visually enclosed by the mature woodland to the east associated with Partfield House. This curtails views from the east as illustrated by viewpoints 10 and 11 in the Photographic Analysis (Appendix 1). Views from the south and west are curtailed by the mature woodland within the nuclear depository site as illustrated by viewpoints 12 and 13 from the Coastal Path.
- 3.15 From the north-west the proposed development will be visible from the group of houses at the western edge of Drigg at Stubble Green. The proposed houses will have a backcloth of mature trees and a context of other houses in the village (Viewpoint 15). Viewpoint 14 illustrates typical views closer to the site which will be experienced by users of the B5344 road and PROW. The woodland backcloth will significantly reduce the potential landscape and visual impact.
- 3.16 Views from properties and roads within the village are represented by viewpoints 5, 7, 8 and 18 from where the development site is visible and the landscape character will become more urban as a result of the development. From the western edge of the village at the Victoria Hotel and Drigg Station the proposed houses will be screened by intervening buildings and trees (Viewpoint 9). Travellers on the Old Shore Road will get views of the development from the elevated section as it crosses the railway.
- 3.17 The landscape and visual impact of the proposed development on walkers within the LDNP will be negligible as illustrated by Viewpoint 16.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Mitigation of landscape and visual effects

- 4.1 Mitigation of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development have been incorporated into the design process. The key principles were to:
- Retain and protect the existing hedges and trees on the site and reinforce these to strengthen the landscape infrastructure to define the northern village boundary.
 - Establish trees and shrubs to the streetscape and gardens to define the 'village green' open space and integrate the development to its landscape setting.
 - Include native species to enhance the local biodiversity and compensate for the loss of grassland.
 - Arrange the proposed houses in clusters to reduce the potential landscape and visual impact and facilitate landscape screening.

- Incorporate local stone wall detailing to help to integrate the development with the village character.

5 LANDSCAPE CONCEPT

5.1 The landscape strategy summarised in the Landscape Concept Plan in Appendix 3 aims to:

- Strengthen the northern edge of the settlement with a comprehensive landscape infrastructure and enclose a central open space to create a 'village green' character to enhance the village.
- Enhance the natural screening between the proposed houses and the existing properties to control potential inter-visibility issues and minimise the magnitude of landscape and visual impact whilst capitalising upon views out from the development site and existing housing. This will involve planting native hedgerows and filling the gaps on the north and west boundaries including hedgerow trees combined with tree and shrub planting within the proposed gardens and public open space.
- The Landscape Design objectives can be summarised as:
- Create an attractive landscape setting and environment for residents and visitors and strengthen the village identity.
- Retain and protect the hedges and trees on and adjacent to the site and reinforce these with additional planting of native species to enhance the ecological diversity and wildlife value of the area including wildflower grass seeding and plug planting to the hedgerow margins and to the village green.
- Establish tree and shrub areas which define and enhance private gardens and streetscapes, reinforce boundaries, provide shelter and create year-round colour displays. This will include trees and specimen shrubs along the access roads with low shrubs, hedging, specimen shrubs and flowering groundcover.
- Create a distinct identity for the area with high quality entrance and focal features through the use of local materials and bold planting. The aim will be to achieve a sense

of semi-privacy in the cul-de-sacs through changes to surfacing and planting style themes and layout. Local stone wall details will be replicated.

- To accommodate pedestrian circulation through the development with strong links to the adjacent road and PROW network.
- Accommodate the requirements of the service statutory authorities and SUDS design keeping access and easements clear (power line to the north-east corner).
- Ensure that the maintenance requirements for the landscape areas are minimised through design and specification of high quality, robust materials from sustainable, energy efficient sources and appropriate plant species.
- To develop a landscape management strategy to ensure that the design objectives are realised and sustained in the long term.

6 CONCLUSION

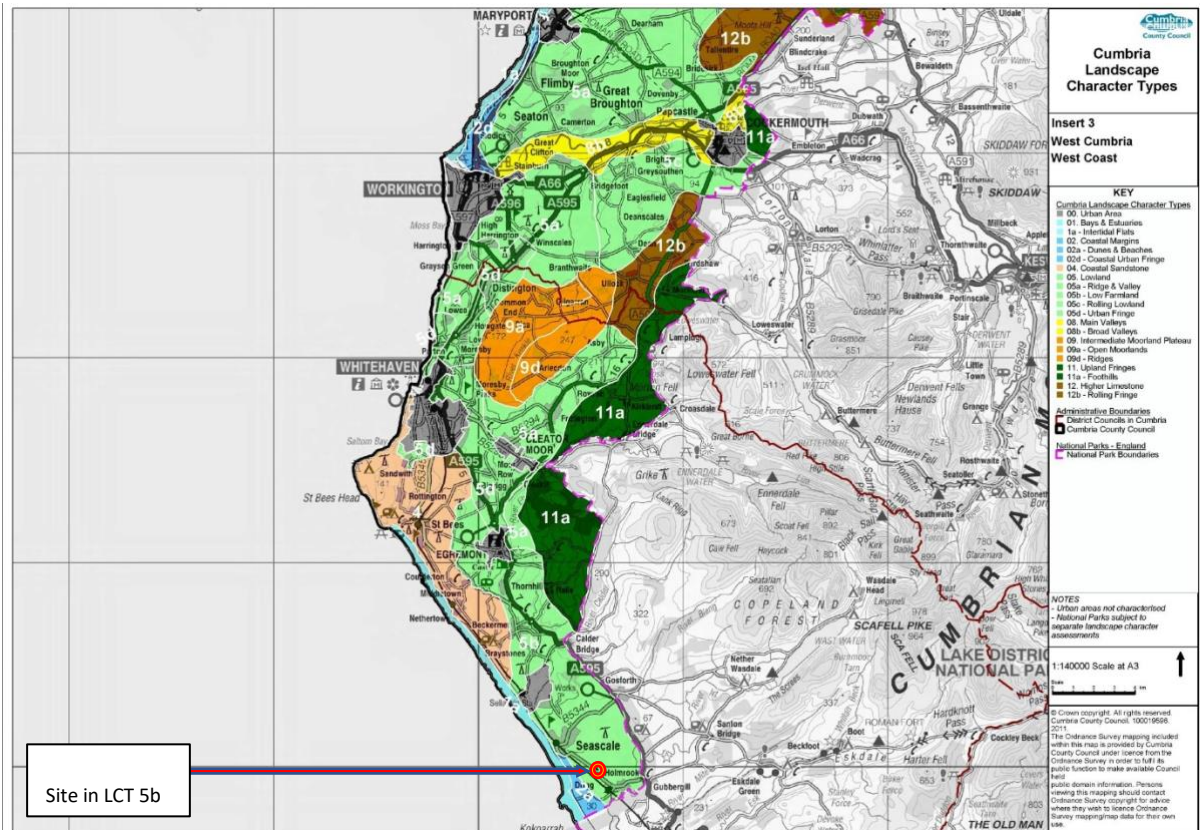
- 6.1 Having assessed the landscape character of the receiving environment we consider that the site has the capacity to accommodate the proposed development. The potential landscape and visual impact on the character of the village can be mitigated by sensitive siting and design and there are opportunities to enhance the village and reinforce its identity with high quality development.
- 6.2 Whilst the development encroaches into the countryside it reduces the fragmentation of the settlement and provides an opportunity to enclose a central open space area with a village green character which will enhance the village and streetscape. The village green could also be incorporated in to the proposed housing layout on the allocated site to the south.
- 6.3 The landscape and visual impact of the proposed development on the adjacent designated landscapes including the LDNP will be negligible due to the view distance involved and the screening effect of the mature woodland adjacent to the site.
- 6.4 Visual receptors affected by the development will include local residents and users of roads and footpaths. The proposed houses will be visible in short-range views from the west and south-west with a backcloth of mature woodland which reduces the potential landscape and visual impact. This can be reduced further by enhancing the landscape infrastructure to the site to define the urban boundary.

Appendix I

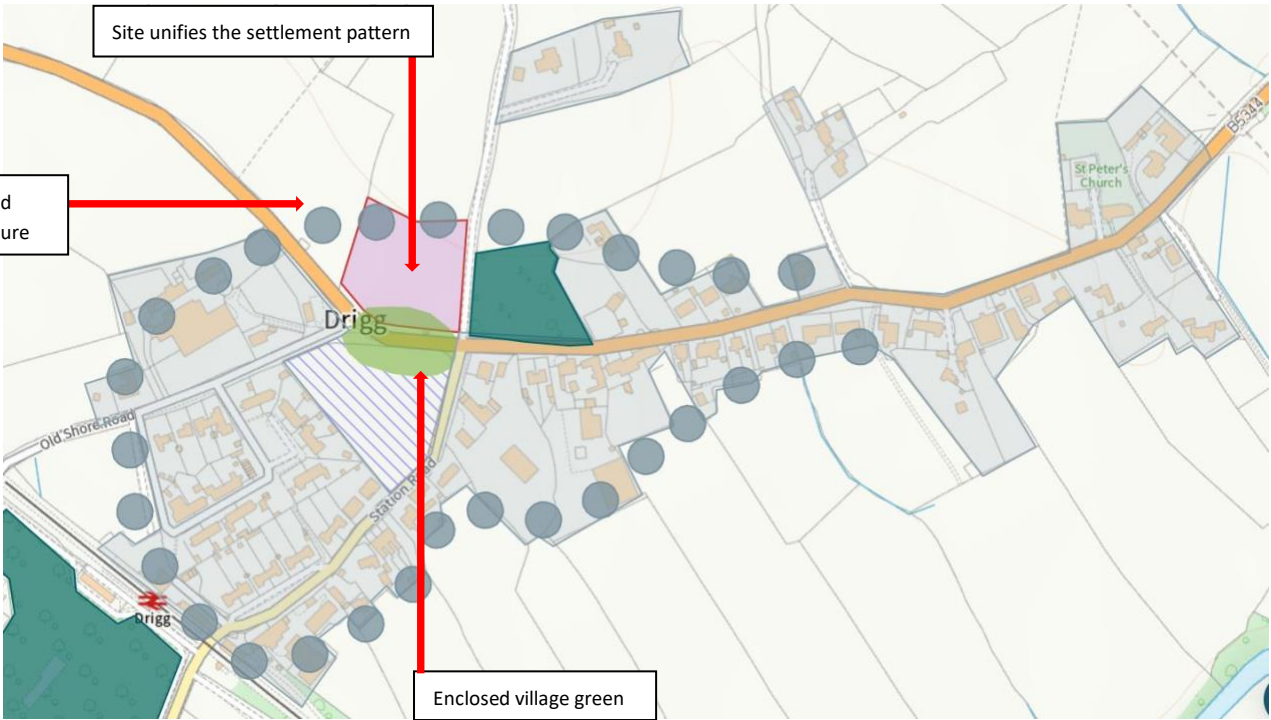
Photographic Landscape Appraisal

Appendix 2

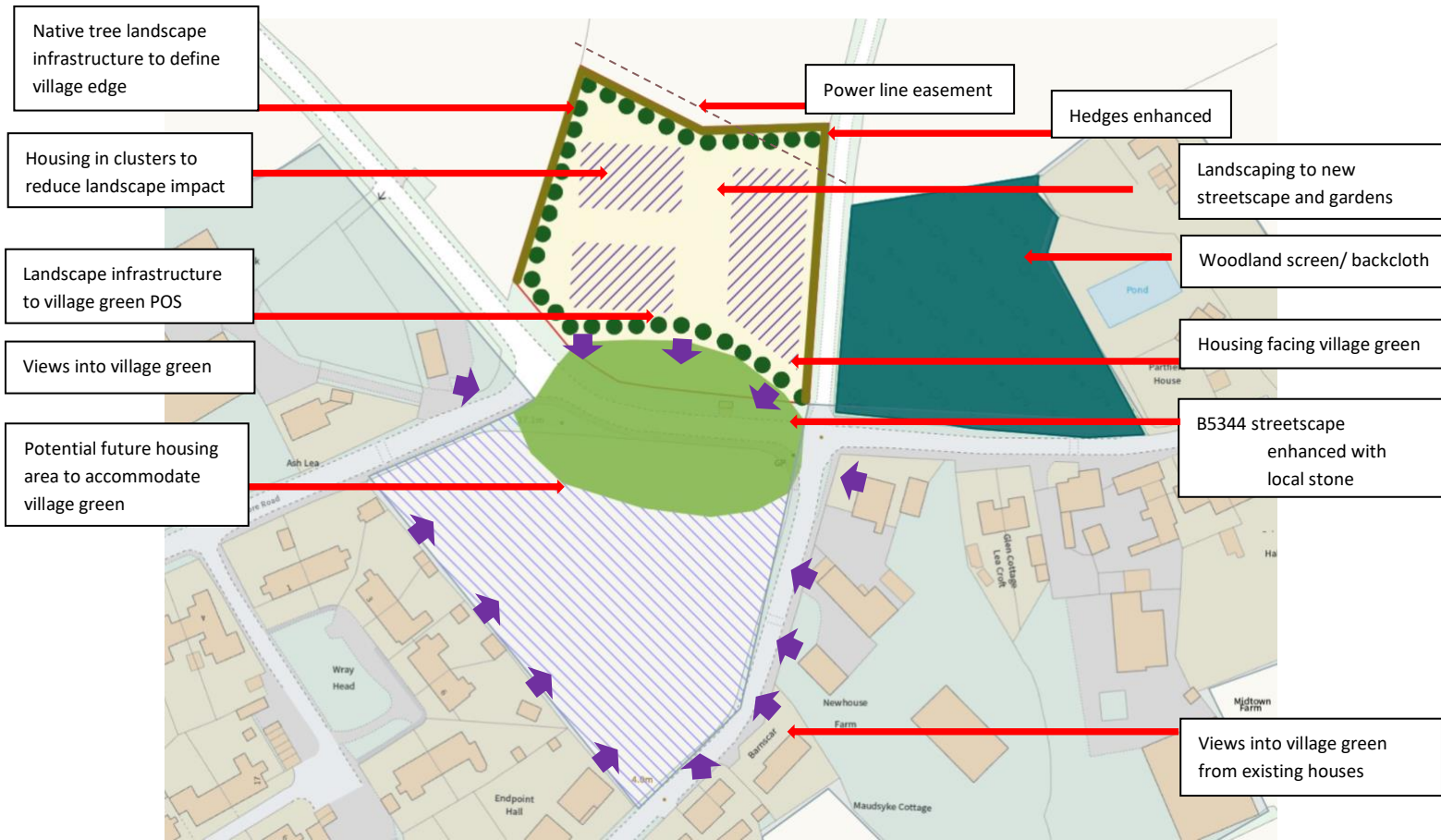
Landscape Character Appraisal



Settlement Concept Plan



Landscape Concept Plan



Appendix 4

Landscape Design Plan

