

DECEMBER 2015



DEVELOPMENT @

moor lane



SETTING +
LANDSCAPE



COMMUNITY



PROTECTION +
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POSITIVE CHANGE & OPPORTUNITIES



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barwood

Delivering *Real* Property Potential



INTRODUCTION

This Delivery Statement has been prepared on behalf of Barwood to illustrate how its land to the south of Moor Lane, Woodthorpe represents a suitable and deliverable site for residential development. This draws together an unprecedented level of technical assessment and survey work undertaken over the last two years, the scale of which far exceeds what is normally required to support a Local Plan allocation or a planning application.

The northern part of the site has been identified in the latest published draft City of York Local Plan for future residential development.

This document explains how the whole site could be brought forward in a way that would:

- respect, protect and enhance its setting;
- maximise the unique and important opportunities for protection and enhancement of the Askham Bog SSSI; and
- help to meet the city's urgent housing needs alongside providing a range of other community benefits.

Copies of the detailed technical work referred to in this document can be made available on request and will also be submitted to the City Council and to the future stages of the Local Plan, including the Examination as necessary.

BACKGROUND

Barwood is a specialist strategic land promoter and niche homebuilder based in the Midlands. It is committed to excellence in design and masterplanning to deliver homes that people aspire to live in. Each detail is carefully thought through to ensure all of Barwood's sites and homes respect and enhance the places in which they are located.

Barwood has appointed a multi-disciplinary professional team including:

1. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, one of the world's leading science and conservation institutions that works with communities, businesses and governments to help people live sustainably alongside wetlands;
2. Peter Brett Associates, a specialist providing multi-disciplinary engineering solutions;
3. Barton Willmore, specialising in innovative and considered design and masterplanning approaches;
4. The Environmental Dimension Partnership, a specialist environmental consultancy;
5. Dave Bentley Ecology Services, an aquatic invertebrate species specialist;
6. Headland Archaeology, a leading UK archaeological practice.

This work confirms the site is a suitable and deliverable opportunity. Moreover, it provides a comprehensive understanding of the site's opportunities and constraints to inform a responsible masterplanning approach.

Over the past two years Barwood and its technical team have engaged with a number of key stakeholders including Officers at City of York Council, Natural England, York's Internal Drainage Board, the Environment Agency and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

This has informed an extensive and unprecedented level of technical work that provides a robust and complete understanding of the site constraints and opportunities. That work includes:

1. Extensive hydrological investigations, modelling and monitoring over a 15 month period;
2. Assessment of highway, access and sustainability considerations;
3. Phase I Ecological habitat surveys;
4. Phase II protected species surveys;
5. Aquatic Invertebrate survey;
6. Arboricultural survey;
7. Landscape and Visual Impact study;
8. Agricultural Land Classification, Farming Circumstances and Soils Baseline Assessment; and
9. Archaeological investigations, including geophysical surveys and trial trenching.

THE SITE

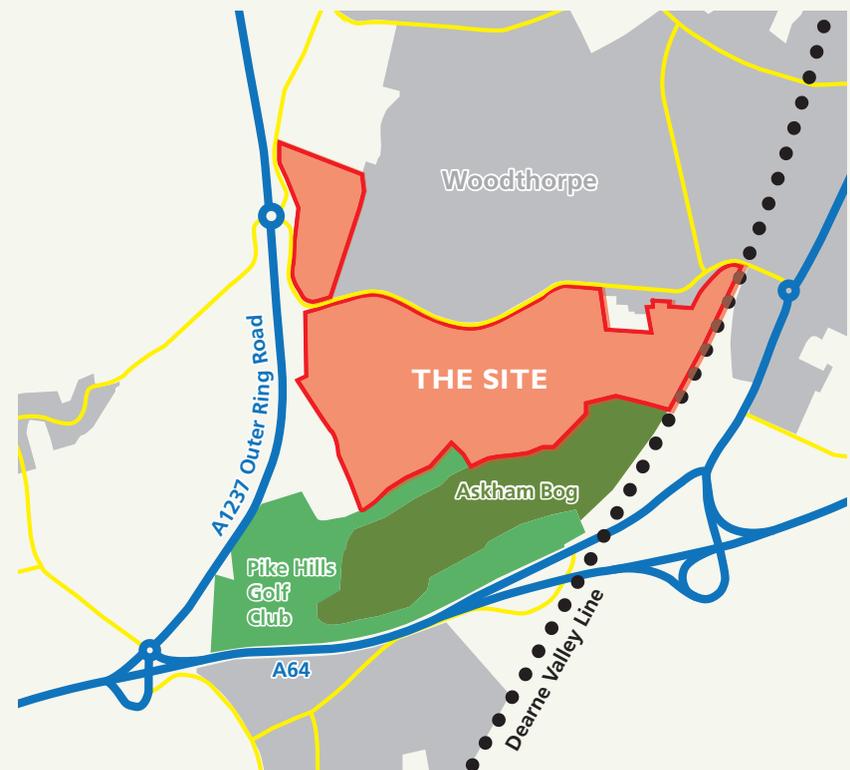
The site lies on the southern edge of the city, at Woodthorpe approximately 3.5 miles from the city centre. It comprises circa 98 hectares (242 acres) as shown on the Plan below.

Strong, permanent existing physical features contain the site on all sides:

- Moor Lane and the residential area of Woodthorpe to the north;
- The Dearne Valley Railway Line, the Askham Bar Park & Ride and a mix of uses including a Tesco superstore and college to the east;
- The Askham Bog and Pike Hills Golf Course to the south, which screens the site with a strong landscaped boundary from the A64 and wider countryside; and

- The A1237 outer ring road to the west

It is well connected to the city centre with excellent public transport links including the new Park & Ride facility at Askham Bar which is within walking distance of this site. A range of local facilities are within an easy walking distance including schools, York College and local shops. New facilities will also be provided within a community hub within the Moor Lane site.



VISION AND OBJECTIVES



The land at Moor Lane will deliver a high-quality extension of York that will help meet identified housing needs and retain and enhance the physical and environmental assets of the site and its surroundings. This vision is underpinned by the following three guiding principles:

OBJECTIVE



I. SETTING + LANDSCAPE

A scheme that is truly respectful of, and responsive to its setting on the southern edge of York.

A development of exceptional quality that respects and is in keeping with the unique character of the city and the local vernacular.



OBJECTIVE



2. COMMUNITY

A form of development that will provide a clearly defined and robust edge to the city, which will create a long-term and defensible new southern boundary to the urban area.

Integration with the existing community of Woodthorpe and provision of new facilities and benefits for the existing and new residents including schools, play areas, open space, enhanced green infrastructure network, sports pitches and employment uses.

Helping to meet the significant and urgent needs of York through the delivery of a balance of housing sizes, types and tenures including family housing and affordable and starter homes.



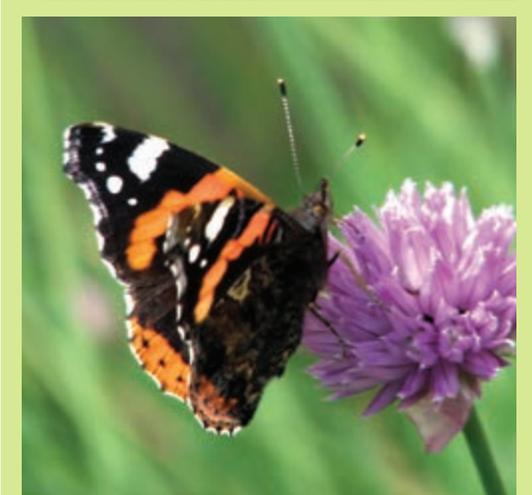
OBJECTIVE



3. PROTECTION + ENHANCEMENT

A scheme which facilitates and delivers enhanced understanding, management and quality of environmental, social and economic assets, including ensuring the long-term protection and enhancement of Askham Bog's fenland environment.

Creation of a very strong green network of linear spaces and routes, which ties into and enhances York's existing network of green corridors and green fingers through the city.



A DELIVERABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Transportation

Peter Brett Associates has undertaken a technical appraisal of access, highways and sustainable transport to ensure the site can be accessed safely while encouraging and enhancing sustainable transport options. In conclusion:

- There are excellent public transport links serving the site, with bus services along Moor Lane that provide direct connections to the city centre, local services and facilities at Foxwood and Monks Cross.
- Askham Bar Park & Ride is located immediately east of the site. This has benefitted from recent significant investment and expansion and provides convenient public transport links every 10-15 minutes between the site and the city centre, thereby reinforcing the site's sustainability credentials.
- A range of local facilities are within an easy walking distance of the site including schools, York College and local shops. These will be supported and enhanced by new facilities to be provided within a community hub on site.
- Safe pedestrian and cycle routes are the priority and will maximise opportunities for non-car travel. A Travel Plan will be implemented to encourage the new population at Moor Lane to use the Park & Ride other non-car modes of transport.
- Opportunities to provide a new pedestrian link from the site over the railway line to improve accessibility to the Park & Ride from Woodthorpe are being investigated to encourage greater use and support its long term success and viability.

Landscape and Visual

The Environmental Dimension Partnership has undertaken detailed landscape and visual assessment and digital modelling of the site, which demonstrates how the scheme would respect its setting including the landscape context, the site's existing main landscape features and key views.

Moor Lane is the only potential strategic housing site identified by the City of York Council which is well contained and has strong, existing physical features on all sides. This confers significant benefits over other alternative sites:

1. The site can be planned as a whole to be delivered as a single entity without fear of setting future precedent.
2. A new long term defensible boundary can be drawn that will protect the surrounding countryside and York's character and setting.
3. The site can come forward as planned without fear of breaching any existing natural boundaries or setting a precedent for urban sprawl and will provide a robust, defensible and long-term edge to the city.

The importance of views from the outer ring road has been extensively tested, including by digital modelling. This has informed the evolution of the design for Moor Lane in order to ensure that the visual impact is minimised and the sense of York's containment within the ring road is protected. This can be achieved by:

- A minimum setback from the ring road of 300m to create an area of open space that will be retained in agricultural use;
- A scheme that is designed within the existing framework of field boundaries, which will be strengthened and enhanced through new planting to reinstate their quality;
- New woodland planting to reflect the surrounding Rolling Diverse Arable Farmlands' landscape character.

A fleeting view of York Minster on the distant skyline from the intersection of the A63 and A1237 is the only key view of relevance that has been identified by the City Council. Digital modelling proves that the view will be retained, even in winter, and will be unaffected by the scheme proposals. This does not appear to be the case for other proposed allocations which include new settlements sitting out in prominent open countryside locations.

Heritage and Archaeology

The Environmental Dimension Partnership and Headland Archaeology have undertaken an extensive programme of archaeological investigations. This comprised a desk-based study followed by detailed field investigations (including geophysical survey, geo-environmental evaluation and trial trenching).

Geo-environmental evaluation and trial trenching investigating the potential for buried archaeological remains identified only two localised and isolated areas of late prehistoric settlement in the far west and north west of the site. In addition restricted and localised areas of buried peat and wind blown sand were found on the very southern edge of the site; however further field investigations and off-site analysis found no evidence of a wider human presence and the City Council's specialist archaeological advisor was able to confirm that:

“There are no archaeological features and deposits identified by the evaluation exercise that will preclude development of the site from an archaeological perspective.”

Ecology

The site has been the subject of detailed ecological studies over a two year period, far exceeding the detail typically required to support an allocation and are more akin to an outline planning application stage. The surveys were undertaken on both the site and within Askham Bog in consultation with key stakeholders including Natural England, the City Council and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and include:

- A hedgerow survey
- An arboricultural assessment
- Breeding bird survey
- Bat activity survey and bat roosting assessments of trees and buildings
- Badger survey
- Great Crested Newt surveys
- A reptile survey
- An aquatic invertebrate survey, undertaken by an aquatic invertebrate species specialist, Dave Bentley Ecology Services

These surveys conclude there are no in principle constraints to development. They found that other than some of the hedgerows and trees, the site is currently of little ecological note due to the arable agricultural activities.

The surveys found that there is little interrelationship between the habitats within the Moor Lane site and those within Askham Bog due to their different physical attributes: The site being a working arable farm landscape designed to be intensively managed and to shed water from the land, whereas Askham Bog is a peat bog based habitat.

The invertebrate survey concludes that there were no species rich invertebrate surveys within either the site or the Bog. It also highlights that those species existing within the Bog are threatened by evidence of pollution and the presence of alien invasive plants, which the survey concludes is a serious problem.

Significant opportunities for much improved biodiversity and habitats have been identified. Development of the Moor Lane site will support and make a significant contribution to the biodiversity and green infrastructure resources of the city. The intensively farmed agricultural land of low ecological value will be replaced by a significant and purposefully designed ecological park that will complement and enhance the ecological interest of Askham Bog. This will make a major contribution to the ecological resources of the city.

Hydrology and Flood Risk

A 15 month programme of hydrological monitoring and testing has been undertaken, including to understand what, if any, relationship between the site and Askham Bog exists in hydrological terms.

Following discussions with City Council Officers, Natural England, the Internal Drainage Board, Environment Agency and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, an extensive suite of water level and water quality data and hydraulic modelling has been undertaken.

14 rounds of data collection took place between July 2014 and September 2015 to ensure an entire seasonal cycle is accounted for. The assessment work has been submitted to Natural England for further consultation and a specialist organisation in wetland habitats (the Wetland and Wildlife Trust) has reviewed the work confirming the conclusions reached.

This has provided a detailed evidence base and clear understanding of the hydrology of the area, concluding:

There is no hydrological connectivity between the site and Askham Bog; the Bog is fed, supported and maintained by rainfall and not from the groundwater or surface water from the Moor Lane site.

The Holgate Beck flows along the northern edge of the Askham Bog and further downstream into York itself, with the flows controlled by a foul pumping station at Moor Lane. This pumped system means that the area around the Bog and close to Moor Lane can be prone to localised flooding and risk of pollution.

The Moor Lane development will address existing constraints and issues in the system and will result in improved habitats and biodiversity potential, including within Askham Bog.

There will also be improved water quality as arable farming practices, including the use of pesticides, is replaced by a managed drainage system.

The development proposals will mean that surface water runoff from the site is managed before it enters the Holgate Beck system. Holgate Beck is separate from the Askham Bog, and flow rates and water quality will be controlled through the implementation of a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) designed to the standards required of the Environment Agency, the Internal Drainage Board and City of York Council. The drainage strategy will be underpinned by the following core principles:

- Ensuring that the flow in the existing watercourses and current greenfield rates of surface water runoff from the site are maintained through the use of attenuation features;
- Improving the quality of water runoff into the surrounding watercourses through the use of SuDS and other water treatment measures;
- Providing additional storage areas to help manage local flooding from the Holgate Beck, providing a net benefit;
- Designing features to deliver the drainage function for extreme events whilst providing areas of opportunity for amenity and biodiversity to benefit the wider local area.

Drainage Strategy

The diagram below shows the key elements of the drainage strategy which includes:

- Attenuation basins in the north western and along the northern areas of the overall development site;
- Drainage channels running through the main development area feeding an attenuation feature within the southern buffer;
- Outfalls in to the Holgate Beck controlled by new pumping station;
- Upgrades to the existing pumping station.

The attenuation features are designed to incorporate permanently wet areas linked by a series of channels with the potential to accommodate runoff from the development site in the 1 in 100 year storm event with an allowance for climate change, within landscaped basins. These basins will both store the runoff and provide secondary treatment to water quality, through settlement and filtration from use of strategic planting.

Water entering the Holgate Beck system will not exceed the current greenfield rates. Through a managed system and with the storage potential of the attenuation features on site, the impacts of localised flooding will be reduced particularly during the more frequent events, to the benefit of local communities.



MASTERPLANNING & DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The illustrative masterplan has been informed by the findings of the technical work summarised in this document and is underpinned by a surface water drainage strategy that will protect and support the long-term future of Askham Bog.



A1237 OUTER RING ROAD

Respecting the visual and physical setting of Eastfield Farm which will create an attractive setting and retain the farmstead within an open agricultural setting

New woodland planting to reinstate/ respect the Rolling Diverse Arable Farmlands Landscape Area that is characteristic of this area

A physical setback from the development edge of at least 300m along the A1237 – to be retained in agricultural use

300m

Retention of the single key view across the city, from the the ring-road - proven through digital modelling in both summer and winter

A 2.2ha primary school site – 2 form entry

EASTFIELD FARM

PIKE HILLS GOLF CLUB

A 15 ha buffer that will be retained in agricultural use to protect the rural edge of the city



WOODTHORPE

1,250 homes on the 35ha site (around 35dph of the net developable area and 15 dph across the whole site)

Tree lined streets and urban green spaces which connect with the existing community and the wider green infrastructure network – a sense of place that respects its location on the edge of York

Provide a balanced mix of housing sizes, types and tenures – this includes affordable, family and starter homes

Strengthening of green infrastructure links, linking into the wider city and strategy

3.44ha employment

Over 50% of the site dedicated to Public Open Space, agricultural buffer (west) and ecology buffer (south)

ASKHAM BOG

Retention of the most valuable habitat and use of the existing field structure as the design framework. All notable trees will be retained

A 12.5ha, 175 m width buffer between Askham Bog and the built form edge

DEARNE VALLEY LINE

A1036



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THE SOUTHERN BUFFER

Askham Bog was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its bog/fen and associated habitats and species. Although a national level designation, the Bog is an artificially maintained and modified fragment of its original state, which reflects centuries of human use and its current management and promoted accessibility (and weak boundaries).

Askham Bog has a single, formal point of public access, taken from the A64 to the south. There is no formal access allowed from the northern boundary, although this is not currently physically controlled and there is evidence of unauthorised access including dens and evidence of fires and littering within this part of the site.

The technical work undertaken has shaped the approach to provide mitigation and protection for the Bog and enhancement, both physically and to the biodiversity and ecological potential the Bog could offer. Three interrelated strategies are proposed, which form the basis for the design framework for any development proposed:

People and Access Strategy – to provide new opportunities for recreation within the development whilst preventing access from its northern boundary, the latter in consideration of the wishes of Natural England and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

Surface Water Drainage Strategy – to maintain current greenfield flow rates and improve the quality of surface water draining from the site. It will make a positive contribution to water quality feeding the Bog and reduce the risk of flooding in the local area.

Ecological Strategy – to create extensive new habitats which complement and increase the resilience of the designated habitats and species within the Bog.

Protecting against Recreational impacts

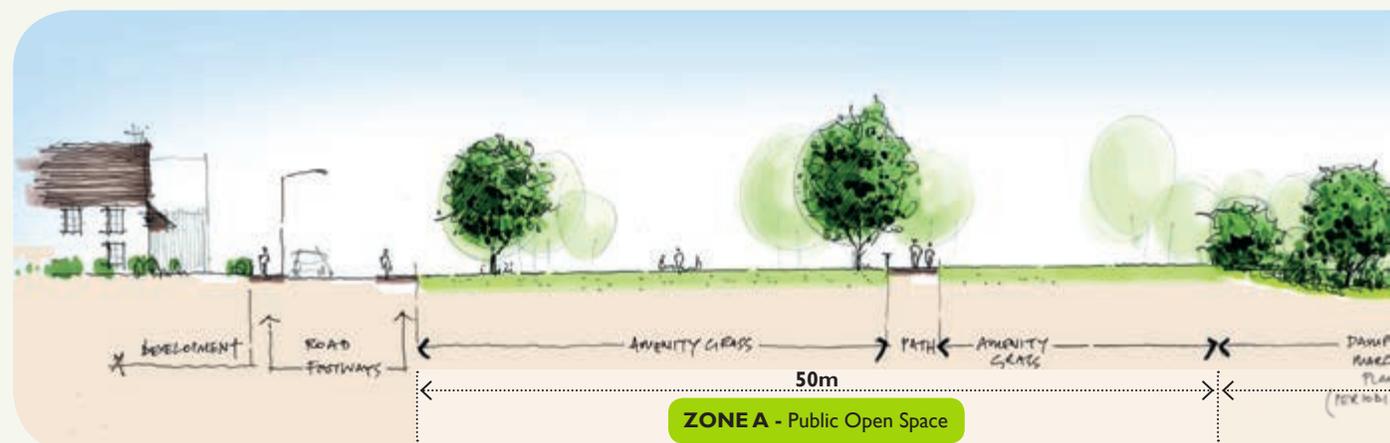
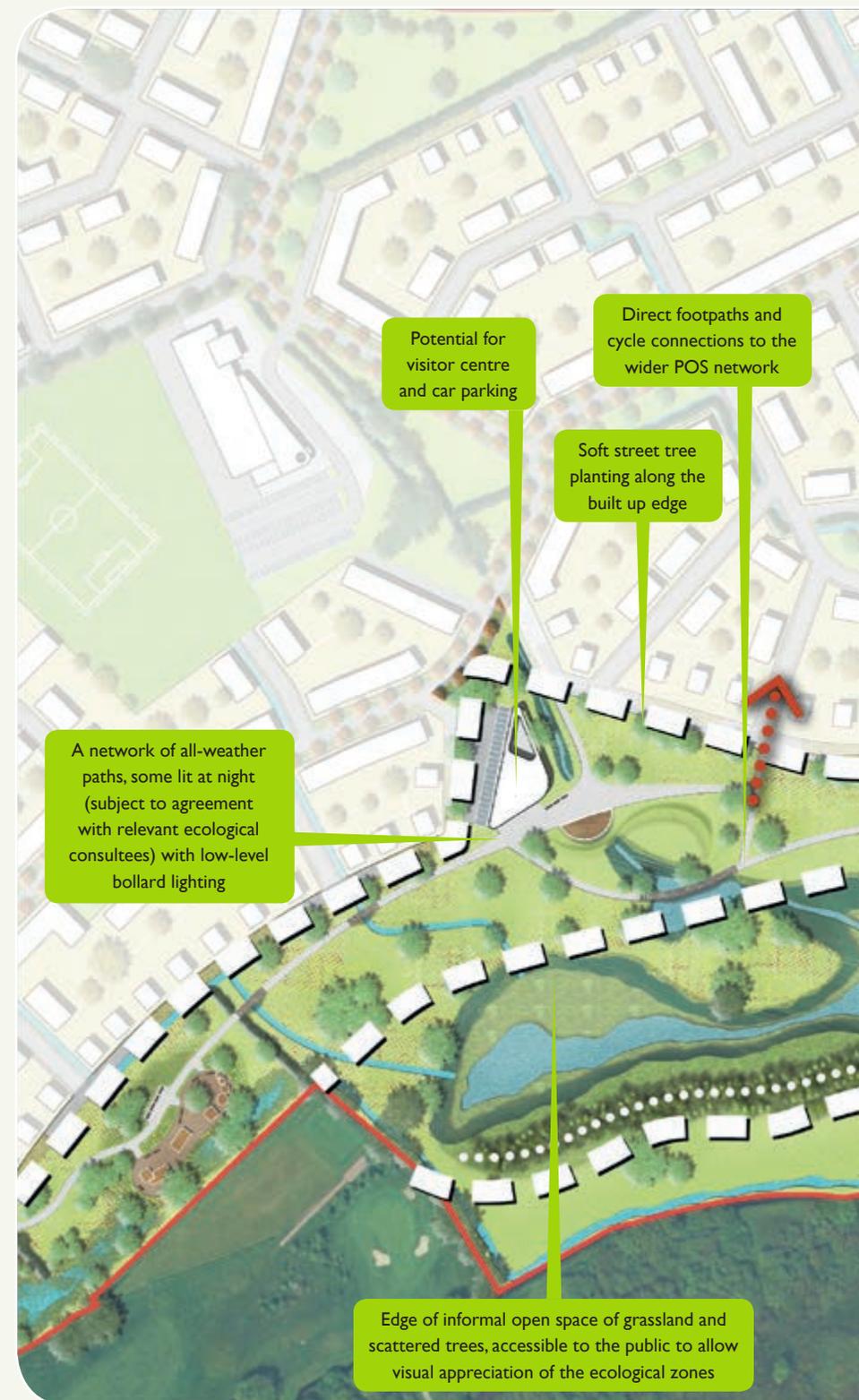
A buffer of at least 175m in width is proposed within the Moor Lane site, separating the Bog from the development, which is the same distance as considered acceptable when proposed for allocation. This extensive multi-purpose open space offers the opportunity to deliver the required avoidance and mitigation strategies whilst providing a range of additional benefits.

The buffer, covering around half of the total site area, has been designed to create a permanent and impenetrable barrier between the Bog and the site – highlighted as a priority by the Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

The proposed mosaic of different habitats will provide very significant enhancement opportunities for breeding, foraging and refuge for a range of wildlife species including birds, bats, invertebrates, reptiles and including new aquatic habitats for invertebrates and GCNs present within the site and/or the Bog.

Long term management

Beyond the technical work, a Management Plan will be secured as part of a Section 106 agreement to ensure the long-term protection and enhancement of Askham Bog.

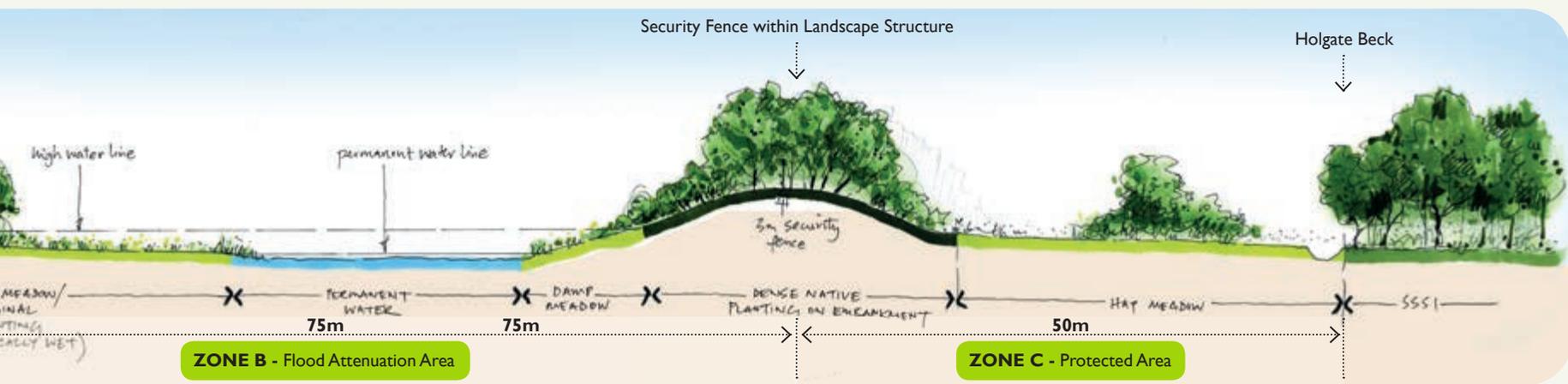




ZONE A: this is the publicly accessible open space closest to the new built development. It provides a readily accessible and attractive area for informal recreation and outdoor exercise linked to the wider open space network within and around the development.

ZONE B: An impenetrable barrier of permanently open water, wetland habitats and earth mounding to prevent public access to the Bog. The drainage features here control the rate and quality of the surface water discharging into local water courses compared to the current intensive arable uses. The permanently open water and wetland habitats are bounded to the south by a dense, thorny scrub planting (incorporating a security fence as an extra precaution) to prevent public access into Askham Bog.

ZONE C: is a zone of minimum management intervention and no public access located adjacent to the SSSI but a minimum of 125m from the proposed development edge. The objective here is to encourage and sustain the development of a rich mosaic of habitats complementary to the interests and long-term management of the SSSI.



THE WESTERN EDGE

York's existing western development edge is set back from the A1237 by between 200m and 800m - a relationship which the proposed development will respect.

The detailed landscape and visual assessment work has modelled the proposed development area and shown that a defensible boundary at a minimum distance of 300m will be able to protect the character and nature of the A1237 landscape corridor.

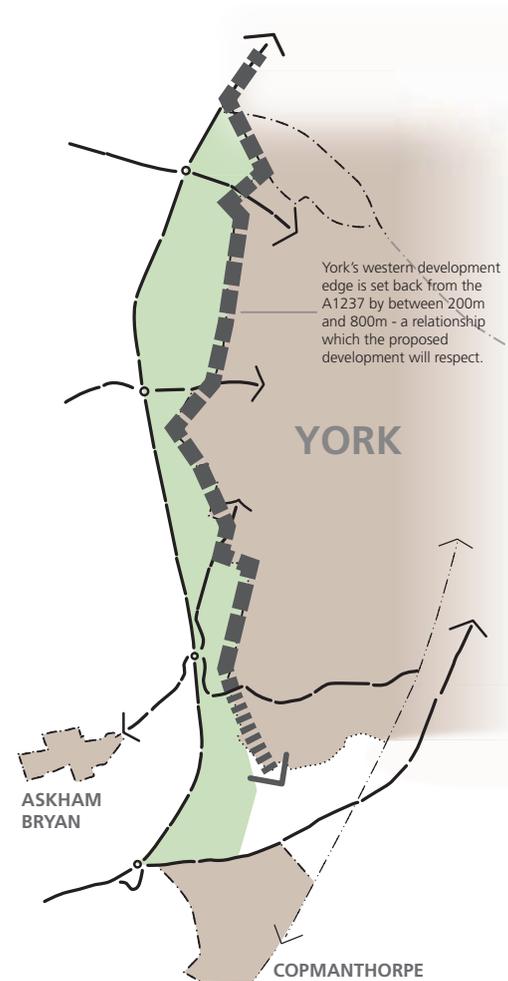
The photomontage sketch opposite is an example of this technique and demonstrates the application of the objectives described within this document.

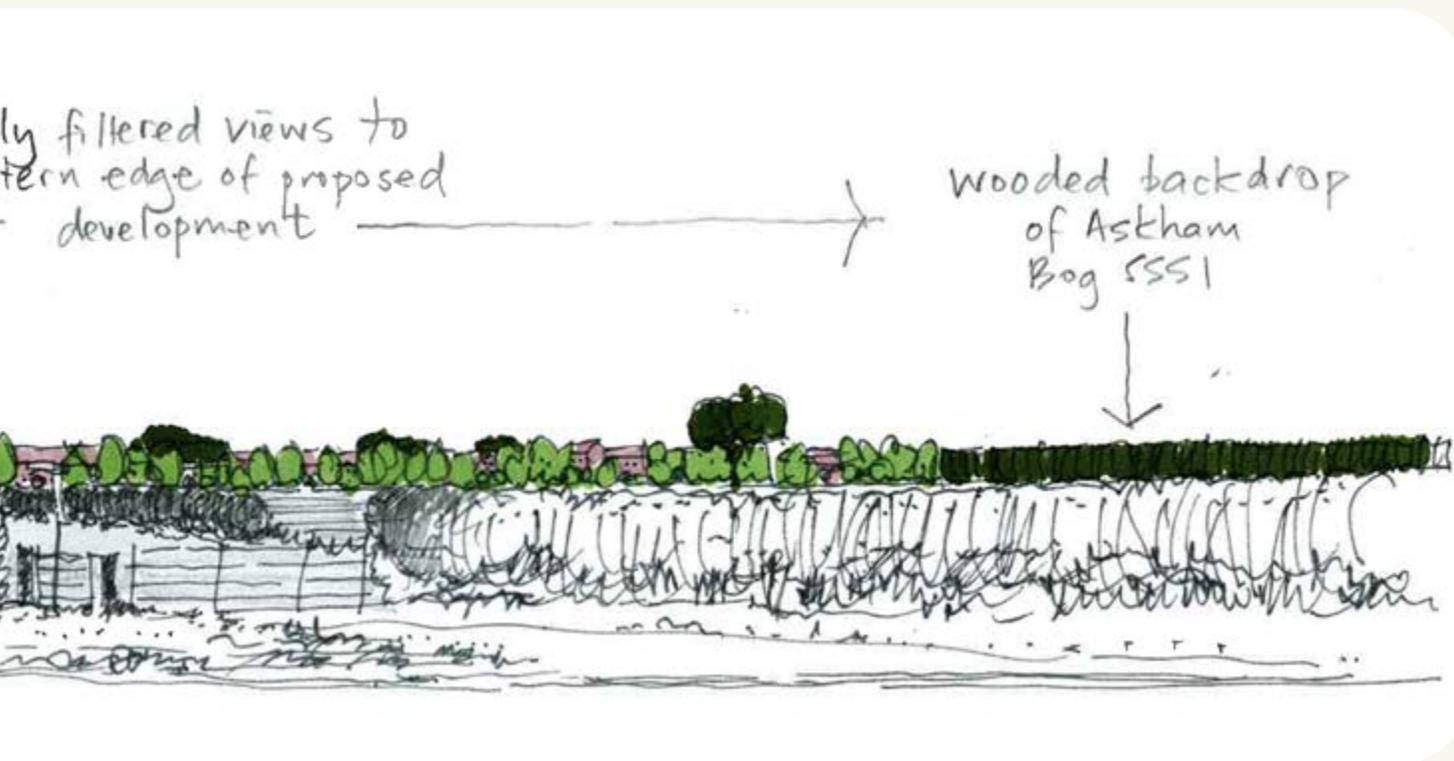


EXISTING VIEW FROM A1237 LOOKING EAST



VIEW FROM A1237 WITH THE ADDITION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT





Extent and line of proposed development to the west of Woodthorpe limited by topography. Higher ground around roundabout to be kept free of built development and retained for Public Open Space and new structure planting

Protect visual and physical setting of Eastfield Farm



SETTING STRATEGY

New woodland shelterbelt to screen views to the development edge

Fields adjacent to the A1237 retained in agricultural use with minimum 300m setback from road to any new development

CONCLUSION

This document demonstrates that the land south of Moor Lane York should be allocated as a residential-led, sustainable urban extension in the emerging York Local Plan.

Barwood and its professional team has carried out detailed technical assessments and crafted a high quality, carefully considered indicative masterplan for the site, showing a possible form of development. An unprecedented level of technical work has been undertaken, which addresses all the matters previously raised by City Council officers and other stakeholders to a level of detail far in excess of that normally considered appropriate at the local plan allocation stage.

It demonstrates beyond doubt that this is a deliverable, achievable and viable site; one which represents an appropriate area to contribute to the City's future development needs. The Green Belt function will not be materially affected and its existing firm physical features will provide continued Green Belt protection to surrounding open land in the foreseeable future.

Moor Lane will deliver a development of exceptional quality, with around 1,250 homes and a wide mix of community facilities that will help to meet the urgent and significant housing and community needs of the city. With over 50% of the site committed to landscape, open spaces and agricultural uses, it will also truly respect its setting.

The evolution of this scheme has highlighted ways in which the development can deliver significant planning and environmental benefits both to the local community and wider area, including managing flood risk and enhancing ground water quality.

Barwood looks forward to continuing a constructive dialogue with the City of York Council and other stakeholders in order to bring forward this unique opportunity and maximise the benefits Moor Lane can deliver.

No other site can offer this unique and important opportunity to facilitate an improved understanding, long-term management, protection and enhancement of Askham Bog as a fenland environment, with potential for significant net biodiversity gains.



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The logo features the word "barwood" in a bold, green, lowercase serif font. Below it, the tagline "Delivering *Real* Property Potential" is written in a smaller, grey, sans-serif font, with the word "Real" in italics. The text is centered on a white circular background. The overall background is a light yellow-green color with abstract, white, wavy lines and shapes that suggest a map or a landscape.

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