



LAND OFF SCALFORD ROAD, MELTON MOWBRAY Proposed Residential Development

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

June 2014

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TS Ref.: RE-SR-DAS-01

Office Address: Townscape Solutions
13 Crosbie Road
Birmingham
West Midlands
B17 9BG

Telephone: 0121 429 6111

Email: kbrown@townscapesolutions.co.uk

Revision: D

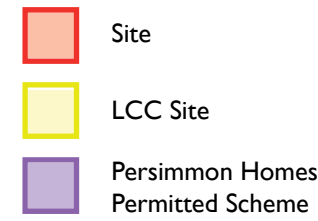
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Section I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Townscape Solutions on behalf of Richborough Estates. It supports an outline planning application for residential development of up to 225 dwelling units, with all matters reserved except for access, on land off Scaford Road to the north of Melton Mowbray. The site location highlighted in red can be seen in figures 1 and 2 at varying scales.
- 1.2 The same consultancy team coordinated by GVA, has also prepared an outline planning application on behalf of Leicestershire County Council to be submitted simultaneously for the neighbouring land at Sysonby Farm marked in yellow in figures 1 and 2. This neighbouring application relates to residential development of up to 325 dwelling units, with all matters reserved except for access. A Masterplan and Development Framework coordinates the approach to the two sites and is explained in Sections 4 and 5 of this document. Each site has been assessed as a standalone exercise, as well as cumulatively, in terms of any potential impact. The issues examined include planning, highways, landscape, ecology, and archaeology/heritage. A full range of reports including these and other topics accompany both applications.
- 1.3 Figure 1 also identifies the Persimmon Homes site marked in purple which has permission for 91 dwellings. Taken together all three sites would form a logical consolidation of development to the north of the town helping to meet the need for housing in the area.
- 1.4 This document is divided into a number of sections. This section introduces the project and the development site. Subsequent sections are set out as follows:
 - Assessment of the local context and its character;
 - Consultation and involvement process;
 - Evaluation of the opportunities and constraints
 - Design and Access rationale



SITE LOCATION

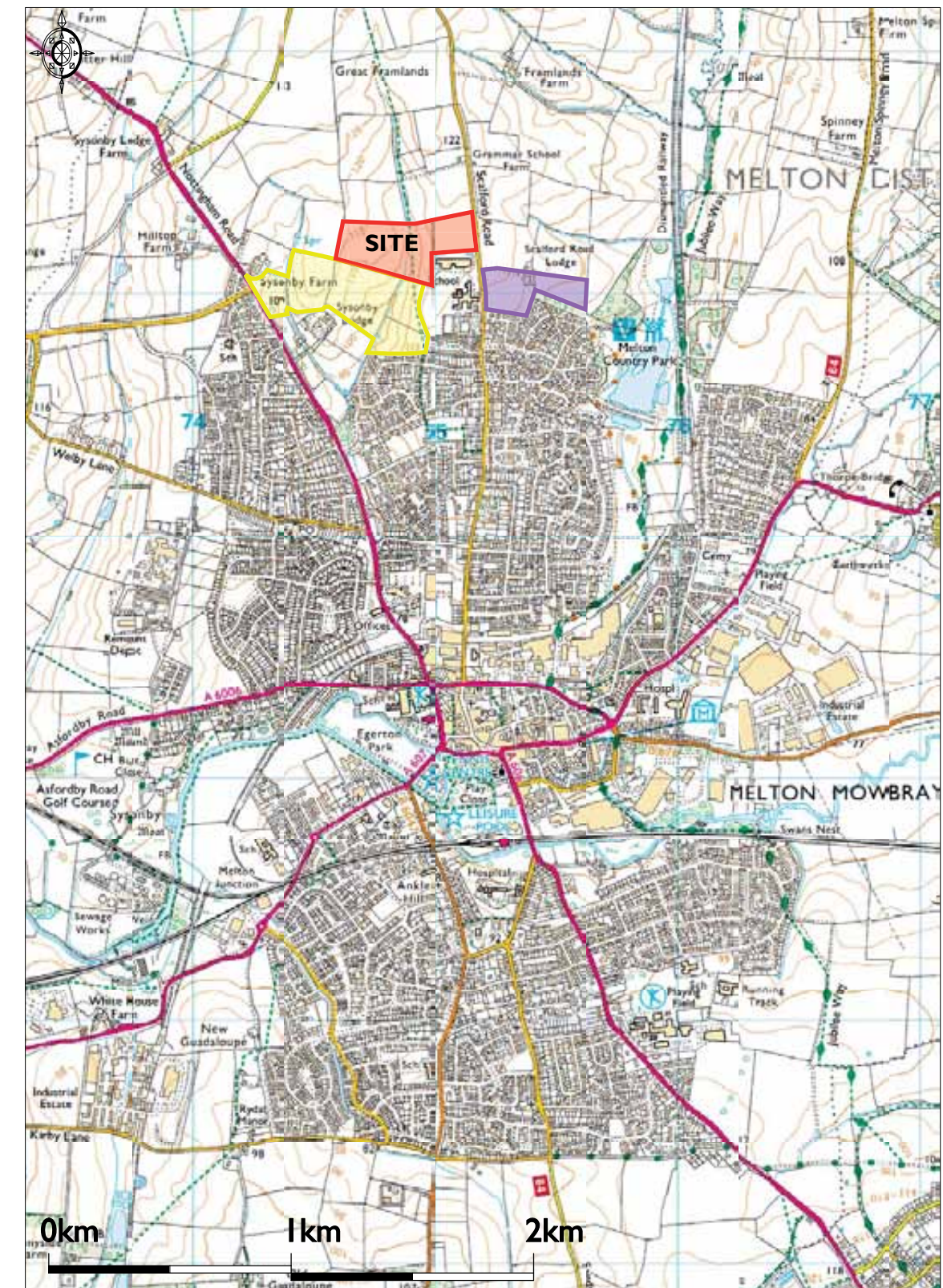


Figure 1: Site Location, Scale- 1:25,000 at A3, (OS Copyright)

SITE BOUNDARY

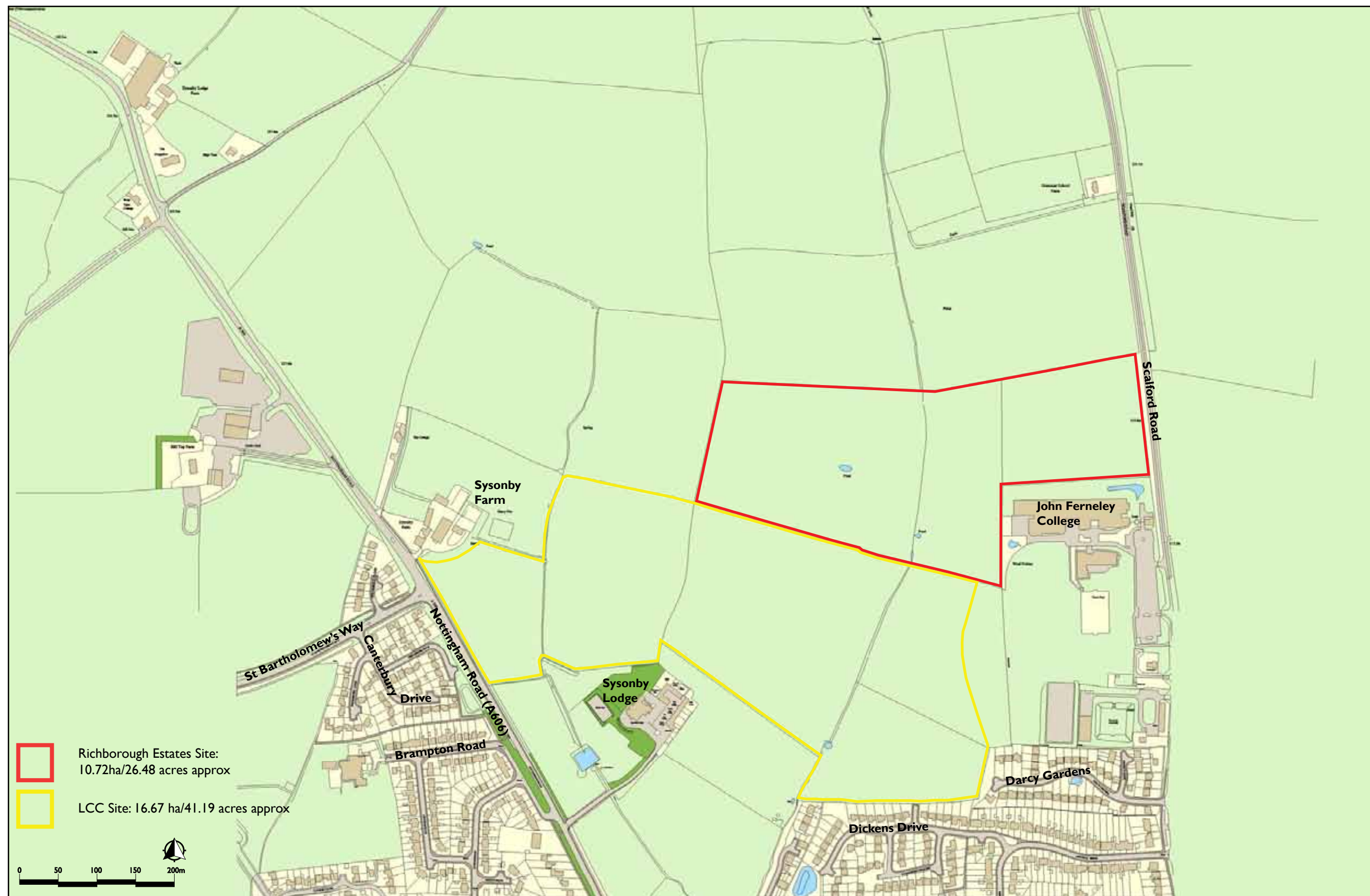


Figure 2: Site Boundary, Scale-1:5000 at A3, (OS Copyright)

Section 2

ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This section describes and assesses the *physical, planning and socio-economic* context of the development site, as a basis for understanding and evaluating the key issues to be taken into consideration.
- 2.2 Richborough Estates has cooperated with Leicestershire County Council to bring forward at the same time complementary proposals for the neighbouring sites of Scalford Road and Sysonby Farm. Figure 2 (p.5) illustrates the Scalford Road site boundary which is outlined in red and measures 10.72 hectares (26.48 acres). The neighbouring Sysonby Farm site proposed by LCC is highlighted in yellow.
- 2.3 The red line boundary has been determined in part by avoiding the better quality agricultural land on the northern part of the ownership and it also follows natural field and ownership boundaries.

PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

- 2.4 A physical assessment of the site has been carried out, which examines the movement network, site characteristics, history, landscape, built form and various technical issues such as flood risk and utilities. The site analysis drawings and photos that follow illustrate the key features of the site and its context with the main issues summarised below.

Movement Network and Access

- 2.5 Melton is the largest town and the administrative centre of Melton Mowbray Borough.
- 2.6 The land proposed for development is located within the Parish of Melton Mowbray, in the administrative district of Melton Borough Council, approximately 21km northeast of central Leicester and 28km southeast of Nottingham. The site is located around 2.4km north of Melton Mowbray town centre to the west of Scalford Road (see figure 1, page 4).
- 2.7 Melton is served by a railway station and is on the line from Birmingham to Stansted Airport, also connecting Leicester, Peterborough and Cambridge. There are also bus services from Melton to Leicester, Oakham and to Nottingham.

2.8 Figure 4 (p.8) illustrates the site in relation to its potential access to facilities. As the diagram illustrates, the site benefits from good connectivity to existing pedestrian and public transport routes, as well as local facilities including schools and recreation space.

2.9 In terms of the technical requirements of vehicular access, it is proposed that the Scalford Road site would be accessed from a new 'T' junction on Scalford Road just north of the college. From Nottingham Road, a new roundabout access is proposed to serve the LCC development site. Between the two sites a link road is proposed to provide a connection between Nottingham Road and Scalford Road.

2.10 Taking both sites together, the access proposals would include improved cycle link provision with a new footway/cycleway proposed on the western side of Nottingham Road between St Bartholomew's Road and Brampton Road, which would connect to routes recommended by Leicestershire County Council that head towards St Mary's Primary School and the town centre. To form a continuous cycle route, the intention is to extend the cycle network from Nottingham Road through the development sites to Scalford Road with the provision of a new footway/cycleway link to John Ferneley College and the cycle network beyond.

2.11 To seek to minimise traffic impact, the provision of a new bus service is being explored to connect both development sites to the town centre via Nottingham Road, Scalford Road and John Ferneley College on a circular bus route. In addition, a Travel Plan would be implemented to encourage non-car use and this may include measures such as providing new residents with bus taster tickets or assistance with a bike purchase, for example.

2.12 More information on transport, and access can be found in the accompanying Transport Assessment prepared by Milestone Transport Planning.

Site Characteristics

2.13 The extent and main features of the land are illustrated in Figure 5 (p.9) as well as in photos 1-10 (p. 15-18). The site is comprised of 3 main fields which are enclosed by fencing and hedgerows, some with trees.

2. ASSESSMENT

2.14 The site is bounded to the east by Scalford Road, to the north and west by farmland, to the south east by John Ferneley College and to the south west by Sysonby Farm.

History

2.15 Figures 7-10 (pages 20-21), illustrate the historical evolution of Melton Mowbray from 1905 to the present day. The proposed new development will continue the evolution of the town with the site forming a natural consolidation of development between Nottingham Road and Scalford Road.

Built Form

2.16 There are no buildings within the red line boundary, although John Ferneley College is adjacent to the south of the north east corner of the site. This is a sizable building with around 12 metres to the ridge which is equivalent to a 3-4 storey apartment building and a footprint of around 73m x 23 m.

2.17 Sysonby Lodge is located to the south of the Sysonby Farm site. This is a complex of an early 19th century Grade II listed former hunting lodge and associated outbuildings and grounds. The buildings have been converted to housing. The boundary of the Sysonby Farm site is around 40 metres from the nearest point of the listed building and over 260 metres from the Scalford Road site with the proposed development at Sysonby Farm which would intervene. Even without any development on Sysonby Farm, the distance separation and intervening landscaping and level changes would ensure that there is no negative impact on the listed building or its setting.

2.18 In terms of the wider surrounding townscape, the built form is comprised of largely detached and semi-detached two storey houses and bungalows built from the 1930s onwards.

2.19 The closest housing will be the new 91 home Persimmon development being constructed to the south east on the eastern side of Scalford Road. The closest existing housing extends around the south eastern corner of the Sysonby Farm site south of the college, in the form of two storey brick built mainly detached houses dating from the 1990s

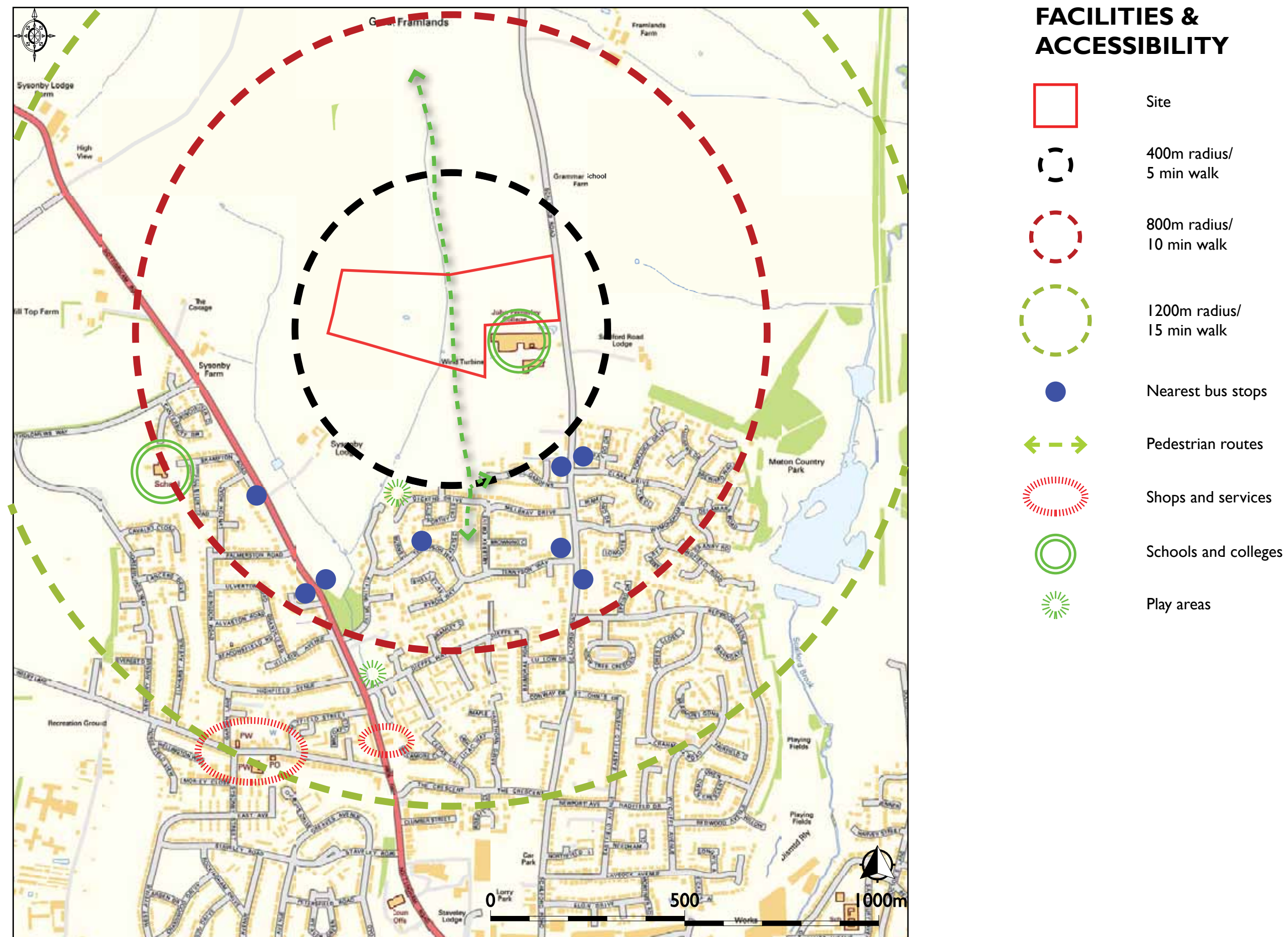


Figure 4: Existing Access & Movement, Scale-1:10 000 at A3 (OS copyright)

SITE ANALYSIS



Figure 5: Site analysis summary. Scale 1:3000 (OS Copyright)

focused around Darcy Gardens and Dickens Drive. Further south lie streets of mainly 1960s and 70s housing along with some older 1930s properties. Again this is mostly two storeys although there are also more semi-detached houses rather than just detached.

- 2.20 In general the 1930s houses are the most distinctive in terms of local character. Later post war houses are pleasant if unremarkable in terms of distinctiveness. There are also a few scattered examples of older buildings which were built before the housing estates existed. A selection of local housing examples can be seen on page 19. A mix of design approaches could justifiably be applied to the site. The more distinctive design of the 1930s streets and buildings would arguably provide the richest source of local design inspiration, although farm houses and other rural housing types could also be justifiably used as an influence.
- 2.21 With regard to building heights, apart from John Ferneley College, most nearby buildings are 1.5-2 storeys supplemented with bungalows and some 3 storey development.
- 2.22 Overall, built form and character is not likely to be a constraint subject to a suitable design response in terms of layout and appearance.

Landscape and Trees

- 2.23 The site is currently in open countryside as applied by Local Plan Policy OS2 so it is therefore a matter of planning balance in terms of its suitability for development. This is discussed in detail in the accompanying Planning Statement and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The applicants believe that sufficient benefits arise from the development of the site to allow a departure from Policy OS2.
- 2.24 The Melton Landscape Character Assessment 2006 and Update (2011), commissioned by Melton Borough Council, identified the sites as being as part of Landscape Character Area "LCA 20- Melton Farmland Fringe" which displays a distinctly urban fringe character. The land is also however

within Zone A which has a high landscape sensitivity. It is therefore important that any proposals are designed to minimise any impact on the landscape. Section 5 of this document and the LVIA explain the measures used to mitigate any impact.

- 2.25 The site is comprised of a patchwork of urban edge fields, bounded by hedgerows and scattered trees. Existing trees, hedgerows and undulating topography currently serve to limit visibility. There is also a clear association with the adjoining residential development at the northern edge of Melton Mowbray, with the adjacent large scale John Ferneley College building, wind turbine and associated sports pitches providing a significant built form and distinct urban fringe characteristic at the existing settlement edge. The LCA Update (2011) also suggests that there are few receptors and accessible viewpoints from the north and that other views from the south and from Scalford Road are also limited due to rising foreground (page 18).
- 2.26 The LVIA has been undertaken to assess the character and visual impact and effects of the proposed development upon the local landscape. The key issues identified include:
- Public Rights of Way - Public footpath E17 runs through the site and will be sensitively incorporated into the scheme proposals with opportunities to link it to new areas of public open space and pedestrian routes.
 - Watercourse - A linear watercourse traverses the site. Additional tree planting and a development offset will be sought for this. A public open space can be provided with potential attenuation ponds in the lower lying areas of the site to provide habitat linkages to the adjacent watercourse.
 - Adjacent residential amenity and wider visual impact - Adjacent scaling, materials, land uses, boundary treatments and colouration will be referenced within the proposed scheme to ensure a high quality design that will be appropriate to the character of the locality. The new development will include new trees

and buffer / boundary tree planting to help to reduce the visual density of the development. Development parameters can also be designed to restrict built development from more sensitive rising slopes.

- Existing landscape framework – Existing field patterns will remain through the retention of existing vegetation that will tie in with new open spaces, including the retention of and enhancement of hedgerow trees to maintain the linear green links that currently cross the site.
 - Agricultural land - Government advice states that the best and most versatile agricultural land is land in grades 1, 2 and 3a. Both sites are classified as Grade 3B agricultural land of the Agricultural Land Classification, defined as "moderate quality agricultural land", therefore the sites do not use high grade land.
- 2.27 In terms of existing trees and hedgerows these are concentrated along field boundaries which they define. A tree survey is included within the application which has assessed all the trees on the site in relation to the proposed development in order to determine their quality and value and to categorise them according to their contribution. Although hedgerows are prominent, the site does not contain many large trees and of those recorded on the site, none were the highest category, Grade A. The survey concludes that no trees of moderate or high quality will be removed as part of the proposed development.
- 2.28 There is also the opportunity to strengthen and improve the existing vegetation with new planting, as well as provide new landscaping within the developed areas. Areas of open space and additional hedgerow and tree planting can be used to further filter views and break up the overall form. It is also important to remember that well designed built form can add character to the landscape.

- 2.29 The topography is undulating in form with a valley running north-south with a drainage ditch/brook at the bottom and slopes leading to high points above the valley identified in figure 5. Development will be located to take account of the slopes as the Development Framework and Masterplan make clear in Sections 4 and 5.
- 2.30 Other features summarised in figure 5 include overhead power lines which run along the northern boundary of the site. It is intended that these will be buried and/or diverted to reduce their impact and constraints on the housing.
- 2.31 In terms of landscape design within the housing areas, the surrounding area displays a mix of hard and soft landscaping including hard features such as boundary walls softened with hedges marking the boundaries of properties, as well as grass verges alongside the roads. The modern estate housing also incorporates existing trees and hedgerows which could be retained in a similar fashion on the site.

Flood Risk & Water

- 2.32 The site is crossed by a watercourse running north to south (see figure 5). The watercourse runs in the valley roughly in the centre of the site. The fields fall towards the watercourse at maximum gradients of between 1 in 9 and 1 in 12.
- 2.33 A flood risk assessment has been prepared and is submitted with the application. The site lies within Flood Risk Zone 1 (low risk category) and is considered suitable for the proposed development (see flood risk map in figure 3 adjacent). The design of the new development will adopt measures to reduce the surface water discharge through the use of sustainable drainage techniques in the form of 2 attenuation basins with a further 4 on the neighbouring Sysonby Farm site. As a result the proposed development will provide betterment with regards to flood risk within the site and elsewhere.
- 2.34 Further details on surface and foul water strategies are set out in the accompanying flood risk and drainage report.

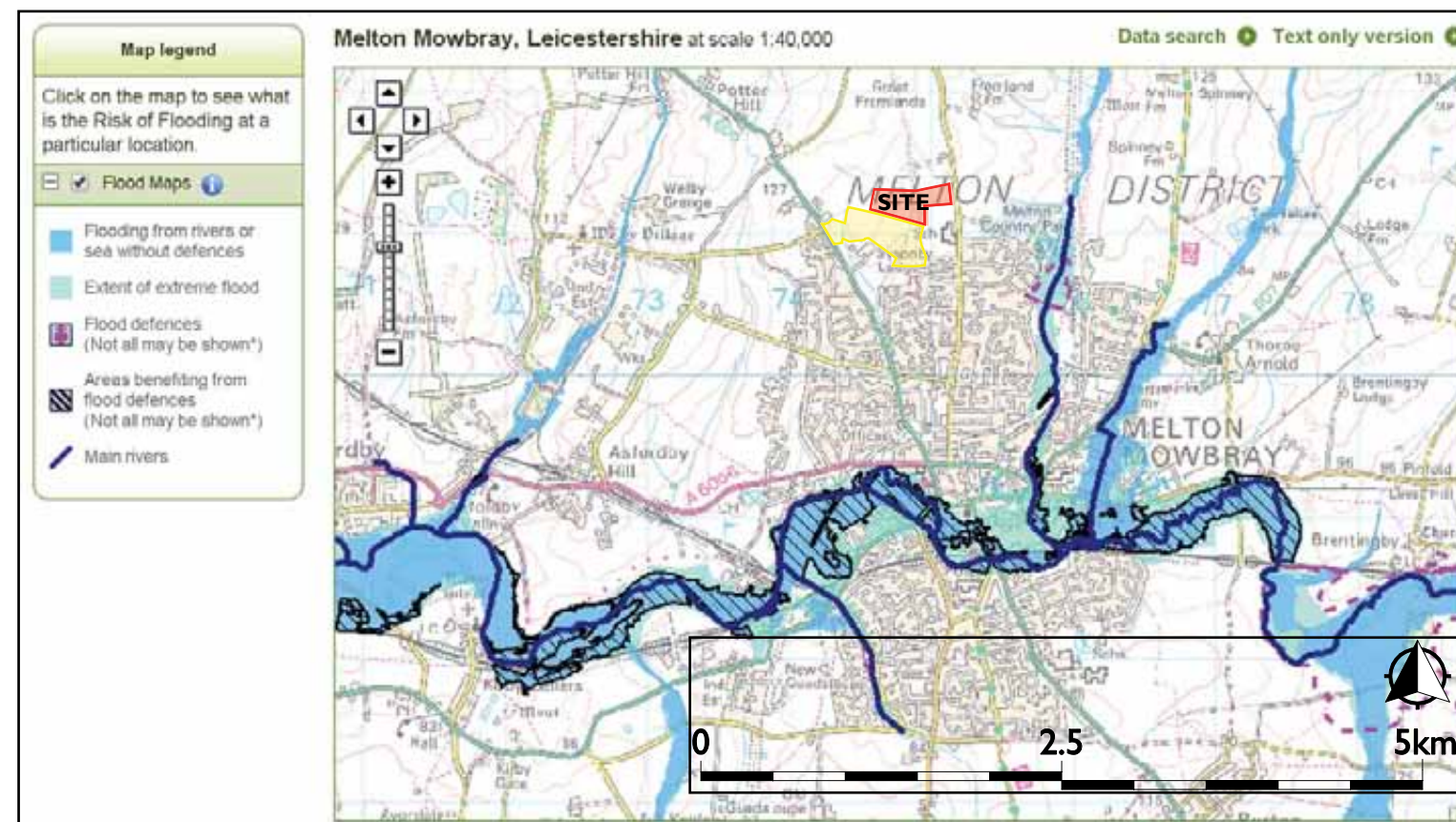


Figure 3: Flood Risk map (Source: The Environment Agency, Scale-1:50,000 at A3 (OS Copyright))

Ecology

- 2.35 Habitat surveys have been carried out to identify existing habitats within the site, and to determine the potential for protected species being present. Some protected species are present but the habitat can be protected and mitigated against any impact from the development.
- 2.36 To minimise the loss of biodiversity, wherever possible, broadleaved woodland, boundary hedgerows, species rich hedgerows and intact hedgerows with mature trees are proposed to be retained. They will also be managed to enhance their ecological value including the provision of suitable habitat for the wide range of bird species present. Furthermore a wildlife corridor will be created and will be planted with a range of native species, to allow the

site to remain connected to the wider landscape. Further enhancements will include wildlife ponds and bat and bird boxes to further increase the available habitat. Overall with the retention of most of the trees and hedgerows as well as the provision of new wildlife habitat including trees, ponds and open space, the aims of the Local Plan Countryside and Natural Environment policies will be met.

Archaeology and Heritage

- 2.37 An Archaeology and Heritage Assessment has been drawn up to determine the archaeological and heritage potential of the neighbouring Sysonby Farm site. Given their close proximity the County Archaeologist did not require this exercise for Scaford Road. Trial trenching will however be carried out.

- 2.38 As mentioned previously, there is a Scheduled Monument at Sysonby Grange and a Grade II Listed Building at Sysonby Lodge but neither of these will be adversely affected by the development. The distance separation, topography and degree of screening ensures that there is no adverse heritage impact.
- 2.39 Overall, the site may have some archaeological potential for the Anglo-Saxon period but the site has been assessed as having low archaeological potential of local significance for the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods. Nevertheless geo-physical surveys have been undertaken and trial-trenching will also be carried out to ensure that any significant archaeological remains are recorded.

Utility Services

- 2.40 A services search has been undertaken to establish the approximate location of existing recorded services. The site and its surrounds are well served by high and low voltage electricity, gas, water, telecoms and public sewer infrastructure. It is considered that the provision of strategic services to the site should not be problematic.
- 2.41 There are overhead electricity cables which run along the northern boundary as identified in figure 5. As mentioned it is intended to bury and/or divert these cables. This will reduce the constraints on the housing as well as enhancing the landscape.
- 2.42 From the work carried out so far it is clear that there are no major constraints with regard to existing utility easements and the availability of utilities will not overly constrain development.

Ground Investigation

- 2.43 A preliminary ground investigation has been carried out by ASL. The report found no significant constraints regarding contamination or unsuitable ground conditions. The report also recommended that an intrusive ground investigation should be carried out before any development would commence.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 2.44 The accompanying Planning Statement explains the planning issues in detail. A number of planning policies have been discussed already including countryside and wildlife policies. This section summarises the planning issues raised by the proposals particularly in relation to design.
- 2.45 The proposals are being developed in line with Melton's Planning Policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Melton's current Plan contains many policies which are now out of date. While a new up to date plan was being prepared (the "Core Strategy") it was formally withdrawn last year after the Inspector appointed to examine it found it was unsound. The reasons for this related to the Council underestimating the amount of new housing needed in the future and the infrastructure required to support it. There were also issues regarding the allocation of land and the proportion of new development for urban and rural areas.
- 2.46 Melton has an undersupply of housing and currently does not meet its obligation to have a 5 year supply of housing land. In these circumstances, the relevant planning policy to determine planning proposals is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This document states that proposals for sustainable development will be judged favourably.

The Scalford Road Opportunity

- 2.47 The site proposed at Scalford Road comprises just over 10.7 hectares of agricultural land immediately north of the settlement of Melton Mowbray with the potential for around 225 new homes. The adjacent site at Sysonby Farm promoted by LCC offers a further 16.67 hectares of land with the potential for around 325 new homes. Taken together the two sites could potentially provide around 550 new dwellings to meet local housing need. Saved Policy OS2 of the development plan (Melton Local Plan, adopted 1999) creates a general presumption against development in the countryside outside of settlement envelopes. However, the planning balance and housing

need also has to be taken into account. Importantly, the land proposed for development does not include any higher grade agricultural land.

- 2.48 In light of the above, the land at Scalford Road (and Sysonby Farm) could make a significant contribution towards meeting the needs for housing in Melton, particularly in light of the urgent need to release land to address the shortfall in the supply of deliverable housing sites.
- 2.49 Apart from the right of way that runs down the centre of the site, public access to the land is currently restricted since it is in private ownership. A sensitively designed housing development would deliver not only much needed housing but also potentially new open space benefitting the existing community, as well as new residents. Development would be confined to those areas with the least landscape impact and would be entirely appropriate in character terms given that the site already adjoins built development at the moment. Furthermore 34% of the site will remain undeveloped on Scalford Road and around 38% cumulatively with land off Sysonby Farm.
- 2.50 It is also important to examine the local policy considerations that apply with regard to design. The main policy to address is BE1 within the Local Plan:

BE1: PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR NEW BUILDINGS UNLESS:-

A) THE BUILDINGS ARE DESIGNED TO HARMONISE WITH SURROUNDINGS IN TERMS OF HEIGHT, FORM, MASS, SITING, CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAILING;

B) THE BUILDINGS WOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT OCCUPANTS OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES BY REASON OF LOSS OF PRIVACY OR SUNLIGHT / DAYLIGHT;

C) ADEQUATE SPACE AROUND AND BETWEEN DWELLINGS IS PROVIDED;

D) ADEQUATE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPING IS PROVIDED WHERE APPROPRIATE;

E) THE BUILDINGS AND THEIR ENVIRONS ARE DESIGNED TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF CRIME;

F) WHEREVER POSSIBLE, BUILDINGS ARE DESIGNED AND SITED TO MAXIMISE SOLAR GAIN AND UTILISE ENERGY SAVING FEATURES;

G) ADEQUATE VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PARKING IS PROVIDED.

2.51 Matters of design are reserved, however the intention is to create a development that is in accordance with BE1. The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates that it is possible to address the issues within the site. For example generous areas of public open space are shown. Also there is a significant buffer between existing properties and the proposed housing ensuring that there will be no adverse impact on existing occupants.

2.52 Policy H9 relating to density and Policies H10 and H11 relating to amenity open space and play space are also important to consider in terms of the amount of housing and open space that can be accommodated on the site. Section 5 explains how the proposals are in accordance with these policies.

2.53 Overall the opportunity exists to achieve a sensitive development for housing and open space on land that is adjacent to the built up area. The Council is currently undertaking a further review of available development land and submissions were put forward to the Council before the 04/11/13 deadline confirming the developable and available status of the site for housing. Sections 4 and 5 explain the proposals for the site in more detail.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

2.54 In terms of socio-economic issues, the proposals will deliver a number of benefits. These are explained in detail within the accompanying Economic Statement. In summary these will include:

- A choice of open market homes and affordable homes to enhance the housing offer locally in Melton Mowbray, and across the wider Melton Borough;
- Direct construction employment including a high potential for local jobs;
- Indirect and Induced Construction Employment Generation;
- The combined effect of 550 new homes on the two sites provides an opportunity to attract and retain family households whom will help to sustain essential services within the wider locality;
- Retention and attraction of a skilled labour force;
- Potential income uplift and expenditure capture;
- Additional Council Tax revenue for delivering public services as well as investing in maintaining and enhancing infrastructure within the locality;
- New open space and play areas benefitting both new and existing residents in the area.

2.55 The applicants will also agree to enter into a legal agreement with Melton Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council to provide contributions towards education provision, new leisure facilities and improvements to transport.



Figure 6: Aerial photo and site photo locations, Scale-1:5000 at A3



Photo 1: View looking south west along Scaford Road to the eastern site boundary, with John Ferneley College in the background



Photo 2: View looking north west along Scaford Road to the eastern site boundary



Photo 3: View from the western boundary of the site looking east to John Ferneley College on the skyline



Photo 4: View looking north east from the LCC land at Sysonby Farm towards John Ferneley College on the skyline



Photo 5: Panoramic view from the high point on the eastern field looking west across the north-south hedgerow



Photo 6: Panoramic view from the high point on the eastern field looking north east to the northern hedgerow boundary



Photo 7: Panoramic view looking north west across the larger field. The site boundary ends at the hedgerows



Photo 8: Panoramic view looking south west across the largest field towards the Sysonby Farm site beyond the hedgerow



Photo 9: Panoramic view from the south east corner of the site looking north west



Photo 10: Panoramic view looking south from the northern boundary along the central drainage ditch

LOCAL STREETS AND BUILDINGS



Photo 11- View of the rear of Sysonby Lodge and recent converted outbuildings as seen from the Sysonby Farm site. Sysonby Lodge was one of the few buildings close to the site on the older historic maps.



Photo 12- Converted red brick Edwardian hospital building with new build housing in the former grounds east of the site across Scaford Road (Faldo Drive). Again an older building which predated the main expansion of Melton Mowbray to the north



Photo 13:- New build development on Faldo Drive set in shared surface courtyards



Photo 14- 1930s semi-detached housing on Melbray Drive to the south east of the site built as the town expanded north along the other main arterial route of Scaford Road. These are set closer to the road than the previous example. The buildings still however feature bay and bow windows, hipped roofs, arched doorways and use of brick and render. In addition timber framing and 'cat slide' roofs are also employed.



Photo 15- More recent 1990s housing estate development (Darcy Gardens) to the south east of the site which incorporated an existing pond and trees into the layout



Photo 16- 1930s bay fronted houses facing Scaford Road built as the town expanded northwards. These are accessed from the main road by way of a small slip road. A similar principle could be employed on the site.

1905 MAP

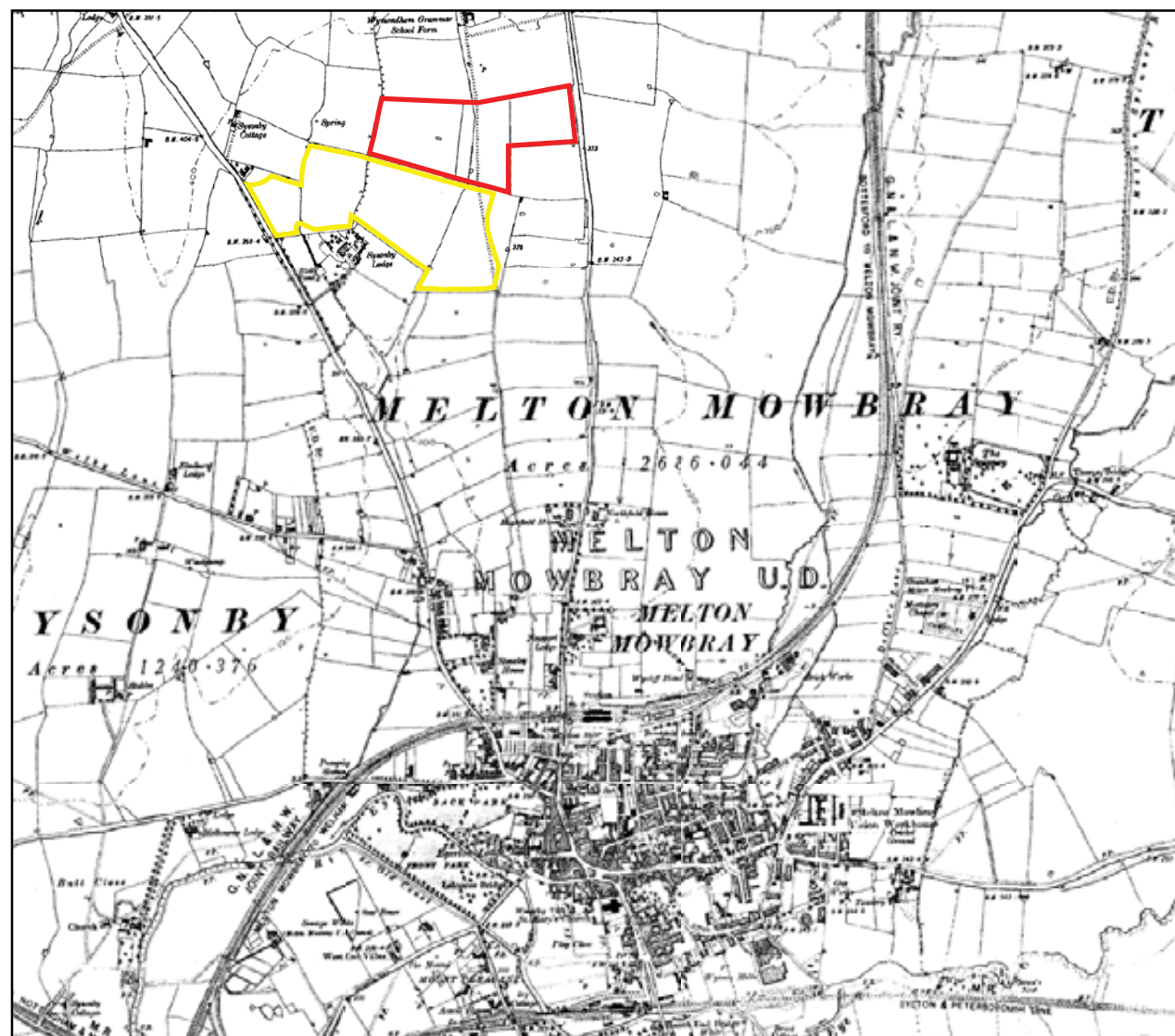


Figure 7: 1905 map showing the site isolated to the north from the main town of Melton Mowbray before significant development took place. Very little development is present close to the site at this time. (Scale-1:20,000 at A3, OS Copyright)

1959 MAP

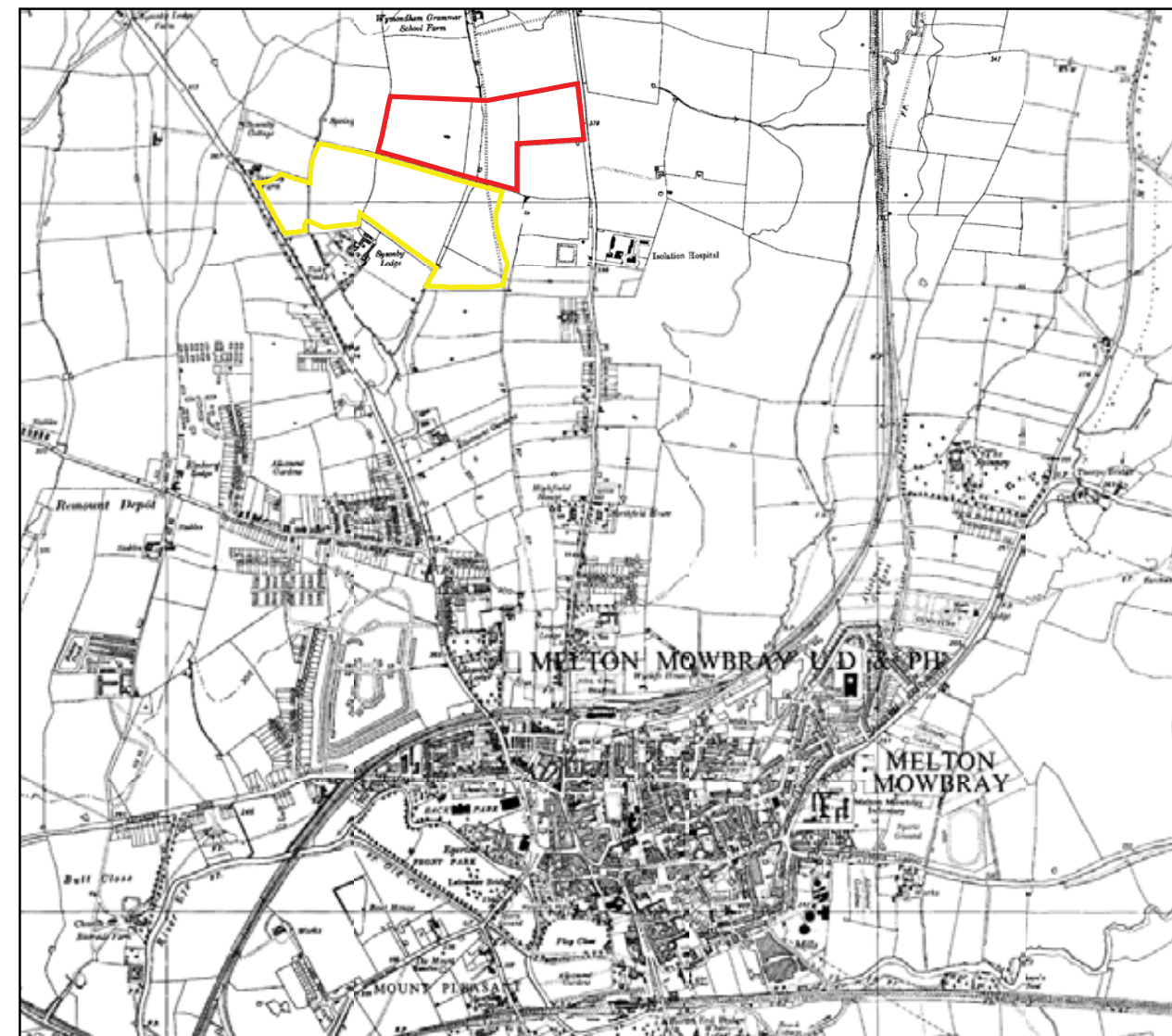


Figure 8: 1959 map showing the growth of the town northwards along the main arterial routes of Nottingham Road and Salford Road. The amount of development is still not significant however. (Scale-1:20,000 at A3, OS Copyright)

1971 MAP

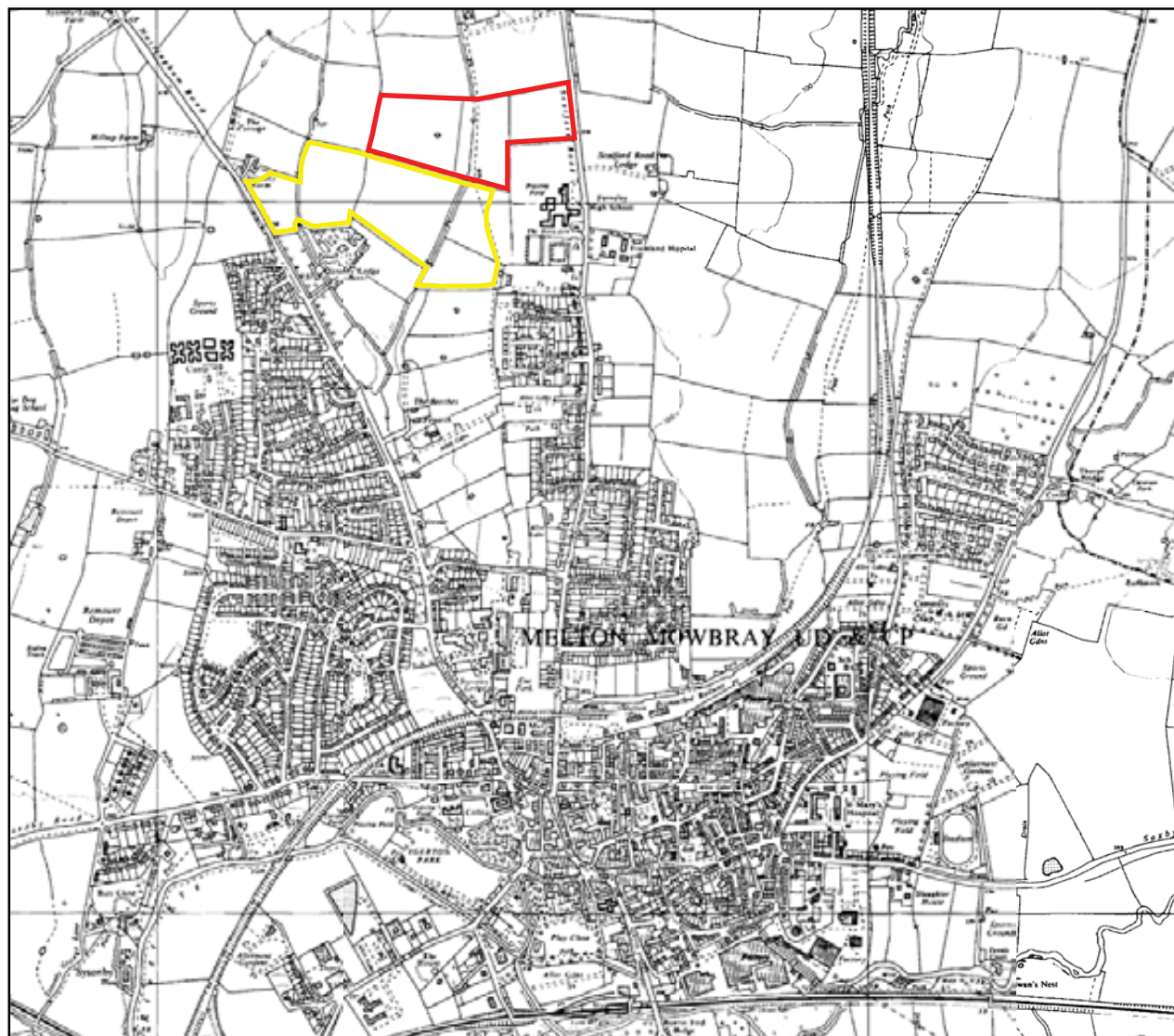


Figure 9: By 1971 the amount of development spreading northwards from the town centre is now considerable and is close to the boundaries of the site. (Scale-1:20,000 at A3, OS Copyright)

2014 MAP

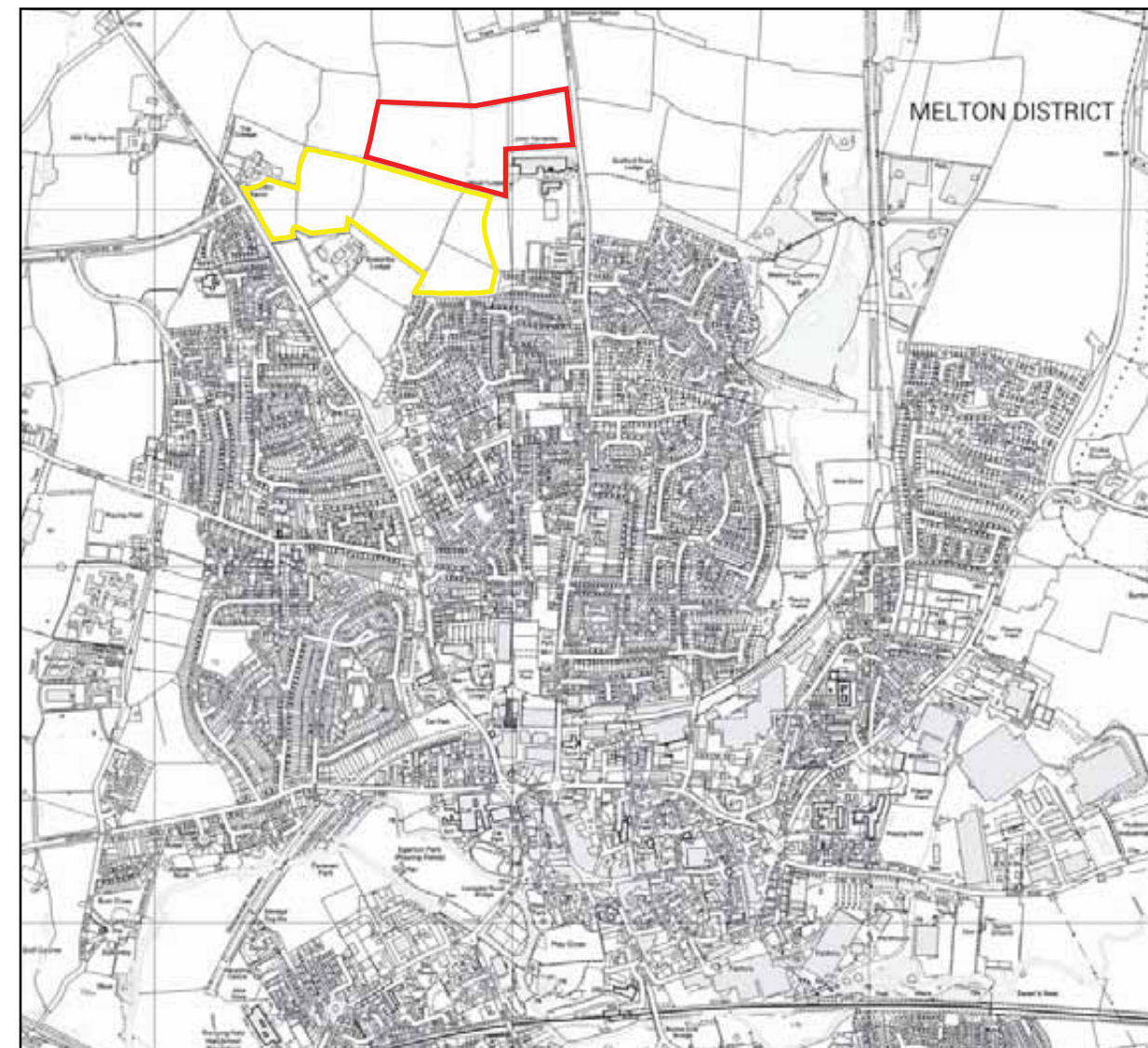


Figure 10: Present day map showing further growth. Development now extends along the western and south eastern boundaries of the site. Development of the site and land off Scalford Road will consolidate development at the northern edge between Nottingham Road and Scalford Road (Scale-1:20,000 at A3, OS Copyright)

Section 3

INVOLVEMENT

3. INVOLVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 A separate Consultation Statement has been produced to accompany the application. This section however summarises the consultation process that has taken place.
- 3.2 A series of meetings have taken place with Council Officers as well as ongoing correspondence. Feedback from these meetings has been incorporated into the proposals.
- 3.3 In addition a public consultation event was held on 30th April 2014 at Melton Country Park where an exhibition of the draft proposals was on display. A website was also set up to display the exhibition. Feedback from the consultation is detailed in the Consultation Statement.
- 3.4 With regard to issues raised in connection with the Illustrative Masterplan, these are summarised here. These included proximity to the housing on Darcy Gardens and Dickens Drive, loss of green space and views and also that play areas should not be too close to their homes or the right of way due to concerns over anti social behaviour. Many of the responses were also complimentary.
- 3.5 In response to the matters raised the following amendments were made to the Illustrative Masterplan:
 - Additional landscaping was introduced and the amount of proposed houses has been reduced.
 - Development on the Sysonby Farm site was pulled further away from the housing on Darcy Gardens and Dickens Drive.
 - The play areas are not close to any existing homes and the play space on the Scaford Road site was shown to be moved away from the right of way.
 - The main recreation space on the Sysonby Farm site was enlarged.
 - The building line on the Scaford Road frontage was set back further in line with John Ferneley College with additional landscaping introduced in front.

3.6 Also influencing the layout is the work of the various consultants, which is summarised as follows:

- Access points confirmed by Transport Consultants as the most suitable. Consultation has also taken place with Council Highways Officers which has resulted in the current access arrangements.
- Trees to be protected are indicated in the accompanying tree report. Generally all the better quality trees and hedgerows are to be retained throughout.
- In terms of ecology, there is no reason to suggest that any ecology, habitats of nature conservation interest or any protected species will be adversely affected by the proposals;
- Landscape considerations have influenced the final form of the indicative layout with its strong landscape structure;

- A sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) is to be incorporated. Indicative locations and sizes for the water detention basin can be seen on the Illustrative Masterplan;
 - The planning justification for the proposed development is set out in the accompanying Planning Report.
- 3.7 As the application has been submitted in outline, the Masterplan is indicative only. It seeks to demonstrate that a housing development of the density proposed can be achieved on the site.



Photo 17: Public consultation event held on 30th April at Melton Country Park

Section 4

EVALUATION

4. EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 This section summarises the opportunities and constraints presented by the site.

OPPORTUNITIES

- 4.2 There are a number of advantages that make the site ideal for residential development:
1. Provision of a site to supply a significant amount of housing to meet local needs;
 2. Good access to the local highway network and public transport;
 3. Adjacent to the existing settlement;
 4. Established local residential character;
 5. Existing mature trees and hedgerows to enhance the development and sympathetically assimilate the built form into the landscape;
 6. Does not affect higher grade agricultural land;

CONSTRAINTS

- 4.3 There are a few constraints however that are fully addressed in the illustrative proposal:
1. Policy issues in relation to open countryside;
 2. Hedgerows and tree retention whilst an opportunity, does constrain the form to a certain extent;
 3. Presence of protected species and their habitat will require care in the placement of development;
 4. Landscape sensitivity and the greenfield nature of the site will require careful design with regard to an appropriate built form and character;
 5. Overhead power cables run across the northern edge of the Salford Road site, although it is intended to divert and/or bury these underground;
 6. The topography is challenging in some areas.

ADDRESSING THE CONSTRAINTS

- 4.4 The Illustrative Development Framework and Masterplan has tried to balance the findings of the analysis in terms of character, policy and consultation requirements. In summary the following principles apply:
- **Use** should be compatible with the area which is mainly made up of housing as well as supporting facilities such as schools and recreation/open space;
 - **Density** to balance efficient use of land and relationship to local character and market conditions;
 - **Layout** to respond to the best examples found in the area. Street types in studied examples vary from wider main routes with pavements on one or both sides, narrow shared surface streets and access drives/courtyards;
 - Layout to create a series of interesting spaces and viewpoints to enhance legibility and create a distinctive character;
 - **Scale** principally 2 storeys in line with the local context but also occasional 2.5-3 storeys to define key corners and terminate views as well as define open space may be acceptable subject to further discussion at the detailed design stage. Traditional rural typologies found locally range from cottages to larger farmhouses/villas. Good quality suburban housing can also be found locally mainly dating from the 1930s but also some good modern examples.
 - **Landscaping** to integrate the development sensitively into the landscape making use of the majority of existing trees and hedgerows as well as new planting.
 - Boundary treatment to include hedges/verges as well as walls, and occasional railings;
 - **Appearance** to relate to the best examples found locally but there is the opportunity to create a distinctive place in its own right.

- 4.5 The Illustrative Development Framework plan overleaf (figure 11) illustrates the basic principles behind the proposals for the site. The next section demonstrates how these general principles could be applied in practice taking on board the opportunities and constraints and consultation input.

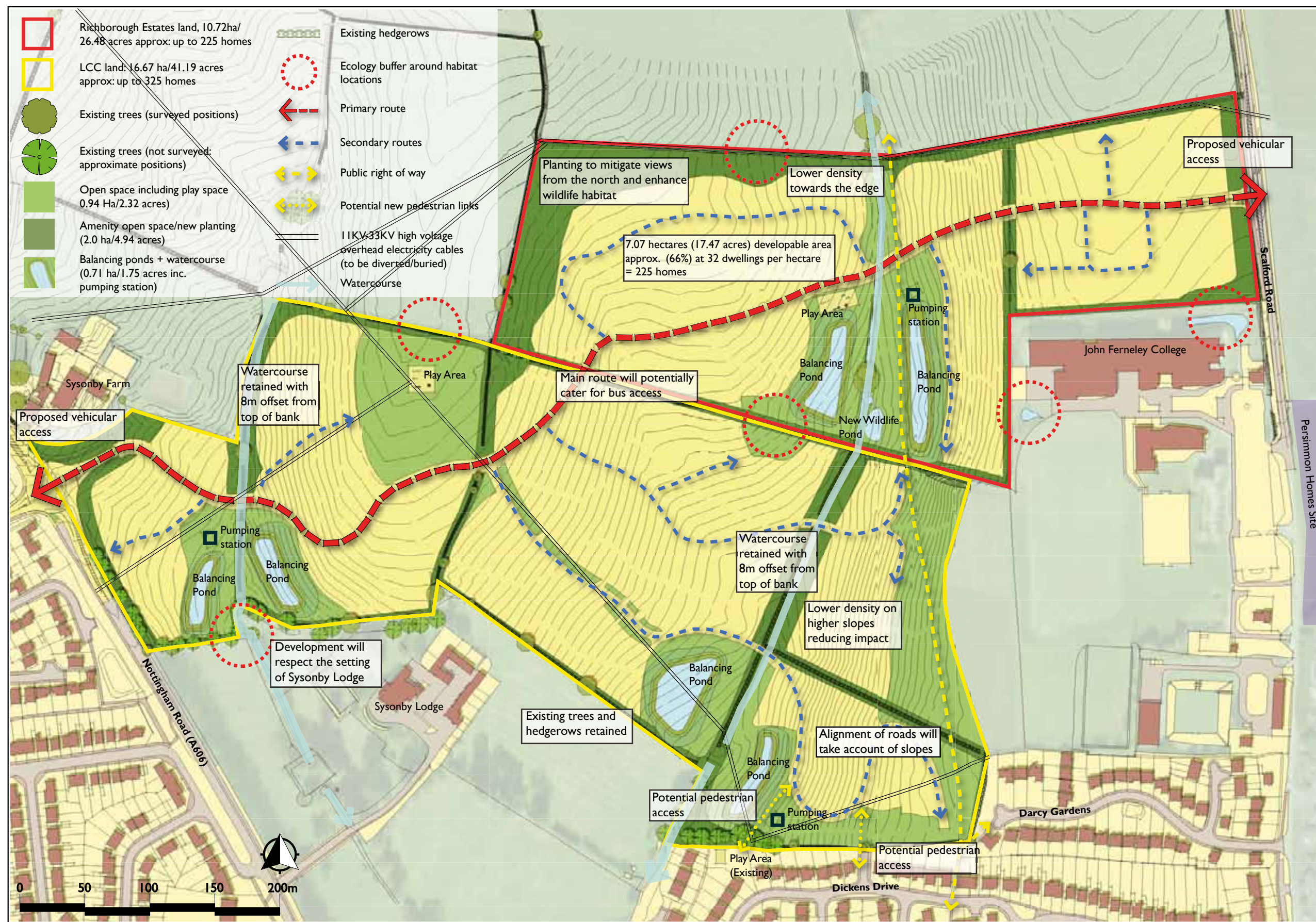


Figure 11: Illustrative Development Framework plan summarising the key principles, Scale-1:3000 at A3

Section 5

DESIGN & ACCESS

5. DESIGN & ACCESS

THE OVERALL VISION

- 5.1 This section considers how a proposed development scheme can respond to the issues which have been referred to in the preceding sections and illustrates and explains a potential solution. The overall vision is one of a distinctive yet sensitive development which complements the site and surroundings in terms of built form and landscaping. Much of the site will still remain undeveloped (around 33%) leaving significant areas of open land both formal and informal in character.

APPROPRIATE USES

- 5.2 The main uses proposed are housing and open space. Housing is compatible with the residential context and will cater for a range of local housing needs including affordable housing.
- 5.3 Any housing proposals will incorporate a mix of house types and tenures. Local Plan Policy H7, which relates to Affordable Housing, is also of relevance; it states that the Council will “...have regard to evidence of need for affordable housing in the locality when considering planning applications for residential development on land not allocated in the local plan....” Affordable housing will be provided on site to address local needs in line with the relevant policies.
- 5.4 The open space in the form of new play spaces and informal open space will provide a facility not just for the site but also for the wider community fulfilling a local need and make public land that is currently private.

AMOUNT

- 5.5 The site area measures around 10.72 ha (26.48 acres) with approximately 7.07 hectares (17.47 acres) suitable for development after the constraints have been addressed. Local Plan Policy H9 outlines the density requirements for new residential developments. The required average net site density is stated to be 30-40 dwellings per hectare (dpha). Within this range, the resulting amount of houses would be somewhere between 213 and 284 units. It is likely that it would be at the lower end of that scale given

the edge of settlement context and nearby suburban character. Character and landscape impact has of course to be balanced with the need to optimise the potential of the site as set out in paragraph 58 of the NPPF. The application figure and Illustrative Masterplan are suggesting a figure up to 225 units which aims to achieve an appropriate balance of 32 dpha net.

- 5.6 As discussed in Section 2, Local Plan Policy H10 requires that appropriate levels of amenity space are provided within new developments. Appendix 5 of the Plan contains the relevant standards and states that public amenity open space for passive recreation required in residential development of 10 dwellings or more with provision to be made at 5% of the gross development site area. The Illustrative Framework and Masterplan incorporates a generous area of around 25% of the site as public amenity space which includes balancing ponds, space along and around existing trees and hedgerows to ensure they are given a suitable buffer space and also areas of buffer planting as mitigation for the landscape impact of the development.
- 5.7 Local Plan Policy H11 outlines specific requirements for playing space provision in new residential developments:
- On developments of 35 dwellings or more, a minimum of 40 sq.m of outdoor playing space for sport should be provided per dwelling with a minimum 1400 sqm play space which is large enough for a ‘kick about’ area. This would equate to a requirement of 0.9 ha for 225 dwellings. There is 0.94 ha proposed.
 - On developments of 15 dwellings or more, every dwelling should be within a 1 minute walk (60m straight line distance) of a Local Area for Play (LAP) to be made up of: 1) an Activity Zone (at least 100sq.m); and 2) a Buffer Zone (5m minimum) sufficient to minimise audible and visual intrusion to adjacent residents.
 - On developments of 50 dwellings or more, every dwelling should be within a 5 minute walk (240m straight line distance) of a Local Equipped Area for

Play (LEAP) to be made up of: 1) an Activity Zone (at least 400sq.m); and 2) a Buffer Zone (20m minimum) sufficient to minimise audible and visual intrusion to adjacent residents.

- 5.8 The Illustrative Development Framework and Masterplan demonstrates that there would be generous areas of open space provided, which would not only meet the policy standards but would be in excess of the guidance. These will be designed as an integral feature of the whole development with good footpath links and within easy walking distance of the housing they serve. Soft landscaping will be used to add interest and form to the open space. Around 9% of the site is proposed as open space suitable for playing space.
- 5.9 Overall just over 33% or around 3.65 hectares (9 acres) of the site is proposed to remain undeveloped as formal or informal open space.
- 5.10 Taking the two sites together there would be almost 38% or around 10.36 hectares (25.6 acres) of undeveloped land with an even distribution of play space allowing convenient access throughout. Furthermore the additional areas of open space proposed would also provide recreational and amenity opportunities accessible to existing and future residents.

ACCESS & PARKING

- 5.11 The main access proposed has been determined in part by the transport assessment to allow for the suggested amount of dwellings proposed, as well as offering a suitable and convenient location.
- 5.12 The site has also been designed in tandem with the neighbouring site at Scalford Road. A link road capable of allowing a bus and cycle route is shown on the Illustrative Framework and Masterplan running through both sites from Nottingham Road to Scalford Road. This provides advantages in terms of sustainable transport as well as relieving any potential traffic pressure on existing streets by allowing an additional east-west route between the two main roads.

5.13 As well as the link road which can allow bus penetration, the site is currently well situated for access to public transport and local facilities. Bus stops and local facilities are within 5 -10 min walk of the site with the town centre and railway station only around 1.5 to 2 miles south of the site.

5.14 Although there are some relatively steep slopes on the site, it is intended that there will be few barriers to movement in terms of difficult level changes. This would be achieved by locating the housing and recreational space on the flatter parts of the site and where there are steeper slopes that are developed, the access roads would curve around or run along the contours reducing the impact of the gradient.

5.15 Car parking will be conveniently located for access to the units and in line with local authority requirements.

These are:

(a) 4 or more bedrooms = 3 spaces min.

(b) With 3 or less bedrooms = 2 spaces min

(c) Flats with 2 bedrooms or less = communal parking 1.5 spaces per flat

SCALE

5.16 The national requirement for detailed scale parameters has now been removed following amendments to paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Article 4 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 ('the DMPO'). The length, height and depth of each building will be subject to detailed design at the reserved matters stage, where it can be more appropriately addressed.

5.17 In terms of general scale there are relatively few examples of development above two storeys in the area. Given the potential landscape sensitivities and the edge of settlement location most buildings are likely to be two storeys in the main with a number of single storey bungalows in addition. Any buildings greater than two storeys will be few if any and confined to particular key locations marking focal points and views. Over time the largely two storey development

combined with existing and proposed landscaping will ensure a sensitive integration of the development into the landscape.

5.18 Figures 14-16 on pages 34-36 show illustrative aerial perspectives demonstrating how the approach to scale and massing could be implemented across the site. Over time the layout, open space and existing and proposed landscaping will ensure a sensitive integration of the development into the landscape.

LAYOUT

5.19 The indicative layout in the form of the Illustrative Masterplan (figure 12, p.32) is indicative at this stage but it does suggest a structure which has evolved from taking account of site characteristics in particular, and also local character. As well as addressing the issue of impact on the landscape, the aim is to provide a well connected and easily understood layout in line with good practice including 'NPPG Design' and 'Manual for Streets' as well the requirements within local policy.

5.20 In general the street pattern follows the topography and proposes housing that runs along the contours for the most part to minimise any difficult level changes.

5.21 Different character areas and densities are proposed to create a distinctive development with a varied townscape. This is influenced in part by local 1930s developments with curvi-linear streets and generous areas of landscaping. Higher density development is shown close to the main Scalford Road and the large scale John Ferneley College, as well as along the main route through the site. Lower densities are located towards the northern edge to the countryside as well as facing the park space. Figure 14 (p.34) highlights the different character areas which are also defined by the existing field pattern. At the reserved matters stage detailed design and landscaping would be used to further reinforce the character areas.

5.22 Across the site, streets generally link up ensuring a permeable walkable layout with easy links to the play areas and to the existing pedestrian right of way running down the centre of the site.

5.23 The amenity of the proposed houses next to the large college building is protected by existing and proposed landscaping as well as a generous distance separation.

5.24 An important feature of the layout is that it has been designed in tandem with the neighbouring site at Sysonby Farm. Together they link up and ensure that the relationship between housing and landscaping on both sites is complementary.

DESIGNING OUT CRIME

5.25 As the NPPG (Design) states in paragraph 010, designing out crime and designing in community safety should be central to the planning and delivery of new development. The Guide also states however that crime should not be seen as a stand alone issue, to be addressed separately from other design considerations. In other words well designed places should inherently reduce the risk of crime.

5.26 In terms of safety and security, the illustrative proposals are based on the following principles as features of a well designed place rather than 'add on's':

- Generally a perimeter block form with public fronts and private backs;
- Active frontages throughout with buildings facing on to public areas;
- Areas of blank wall have also been minimised where it is suggested that corners are turned by way of special corner turning units which are splayed or at least ensure that corner units are double fronted with windows to both returns.
- Parking is to be visible and/or within secure curtilages.
- Use of defensible planting and defensible space in front of properties;
- Where there are pedestrian only links these will be well overlooked;
- All public open space is well surveilled from the proposed properties.

LANDSCAPING AND GREEN SPACE

- 5.27 The proposals seek to minimise any landscape impact by generally locating development away from the highest and most exposed points of the site (apart from where it is next to the existing college building), as well as retaining as much of the existing trees and hedgerows as possible. Furthermore areas of new planting will also enhance landscape quality. The concept has also been designed with regard for the adopted Melton Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment (2006) which identifies the key characteristics of the prevailing landscape in this part of Melton Mowbray.
- 5.28 The LVIA addresses landscape issues in detail however the report concludes that *“The majority of the relevant landscape policy objectives and SPD criteria can be satisfied through an appropriate development response that responds to the site specific criteria and established landscape strategy.”*
- 5.29 Landscaping is to be reserved, however the Illustrative Masterplan and Development Framework show indicative landscaped areas illustrating broad principles.
- 5.30 The proposal for the site will include landscape enhancements. This will include planting within the confines of the proposed gardens of residential properties, the wider street scene and the public open space. Building on the analysis in Section 2, the landscape strategy will create a continuation of the local landscape character.

This will include:

- Strengthening of field boundaries using native hedgerow planting;
- New areas of public open space and tree planting will break up and screen the outline and form of the development reducing any landscape impact;
- Tree and shrub planting will be carried out with a suitable species in liaison with the Council;
- Well overlooked play space on flatter useable areas providing convenient access to all residents including the wider existing community;

- Low walls, railings and hedges will define front boundaries. Hedges are particularly appropriate to the site and existing hedges will be incorporated where possible;
- Use of verges and hedge planting alongside the carriageway also echoes the nearby rural character;
- Surface materials will include the use of asphalt, block paving and concrete paving slabs with details reserved;

DESIGN & APPEARANCE

- 5.31 As with landscaping, the design and appearance of the scheme is to be reserved, however some basic principles can be outlined at this stage. As suggested in Section 4, the intention is to take some reference from the best examples of housing found locally. Design precedents found locally that could inform the design are set out on page 19 particularly the 1930s and older examples. Precedents illustrating some of the main principles can also be seen on page 33 where examples are applied site specifically.
- 5.32 Local traditional architecture can be used as a reference with a traditional or modern interpretation acceptable as long as it is of sufficient quality with a close attention to detail. Quality design is the key, although the detailed appearance will be worked up later in consultation with the planning authority.
- 5.33 Features found locally that references could be made to, include:
- Prevalent use of detached and semi-detached units in a landscaped setting;
 - Some use of bay windows and gables;
 - Use of brick and render facing materials;
 - Hipped and gable roofs with tile or slate covering.
- 5.34 Figures 14 to 16 (pages 34-36) show illustrative aerial perspectives demonstrating how a development could be sensitively integrated into the landscape.

SUSTAINABILITY

- 5.35 Positive sustainability benefits will be provided including:
- Accessible location close to existing amenities and a permeable layout allowing easy pedestrian and cycle movement as an alternative to car use;
 - Efficient use of land that balances density with character;
 - A sustainable urban drainage strategy;
 - An orientation and layout that will allow for a significant area of south facing facades and roof slopes;
 - Any north-south streets can still have a roof design with a south facing slope;
 - A landscaping scheme which will retain existing trees and hedgerows and complement them with native planting to support biodiversity.
- 5.36 In terms of sustainable building design a number of measures can also be employed. The site will be developed by house builders who will build energy efficient homes through a number of initiatives and techniques which typically will include:
- Natural ventilation – all homes to maximise natural daylight through appropriate window openings, providing natural ventilation and reducing energy consumption.
 - Insulation – good insulation and airtight seals in all buildings, improving their ability to retain heat energy and lowering the amount of fuel required for heating.
 - Lighting – energy-efficient lighting in all homes with daylight maximised to reduce the need for artificial lighting.
 - White goods – where provided, the aim will be to provide white goods with energy efficiency ratings of A or B.

- Water saving – water-saving features in all homes, including low-flow taps and showers, and dual-flush cisterns.
- Landscaping - A planting scheme which will offer native planting species.

PHASING

- 5.37 Figure 17 (p.37) illustrates indicative phasing for both sites. It is likely that each site would start from the main road frontages of Nottingham Road and Scalford Road and work in until the two sites meet and the link road is joined up.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

- 5.38 This document, together with the Illustrative Masterplan and Development Framework Plan offers a sensitive and considered approach to the development of land at Scalford Road for new housing and open space.
- 5.39 It demonstrates how this site together with the neighbouring LCC Sysonby Farm site could make a valuable contribution towards meeting the need for housing in the area focused around a compact and sensitively designed urban form within a high quality landscaped setting.
- 5.40 The development will also secure a generous amount of open space including equipped children's play space and public open space benefitting existing as well as new residents. In addition most of the existing trees and hedgerows will be retained and taken together both sites will leave almost 38% or around 10.36 hectares (25.6 acres) of land undeveloped as landscaped recreation/play space or amenity land.
- 5.41 The document has examined planning policy issues and also demonstrated that there are no technical constraints preventing a development of 225 houses being developed.



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Figure 12: Illustrative Masterplan, Scale- 1:3000 at A3

DESIGN EXAMPLES



Photo 18- Buildings within generous landscaping



Photo 19- Use of sustainable urban drainage



Photo 20- Frontage set back behind landscaping



Photo 22- Houses set back behind existing hedgerows



Figure 13: Design examples (not to scale)



Photo 21- Landscaped courtyards



Figure 14: Illustrative aerial perspective in context looking west, showing the potential development of the Scalford Road site in conjunction with Sysonby Farm in the background. The site is broken down into different character areas defined by differing densities as well as the existing field pattern and landscaping.



Figure 15: Illustrative aerial perspective looking north showing the potential development of the site and the creation of new public open space



Figure 16: Illustrative aerial perspective looking north east, showing the park space as the focus of the Scalford Road site

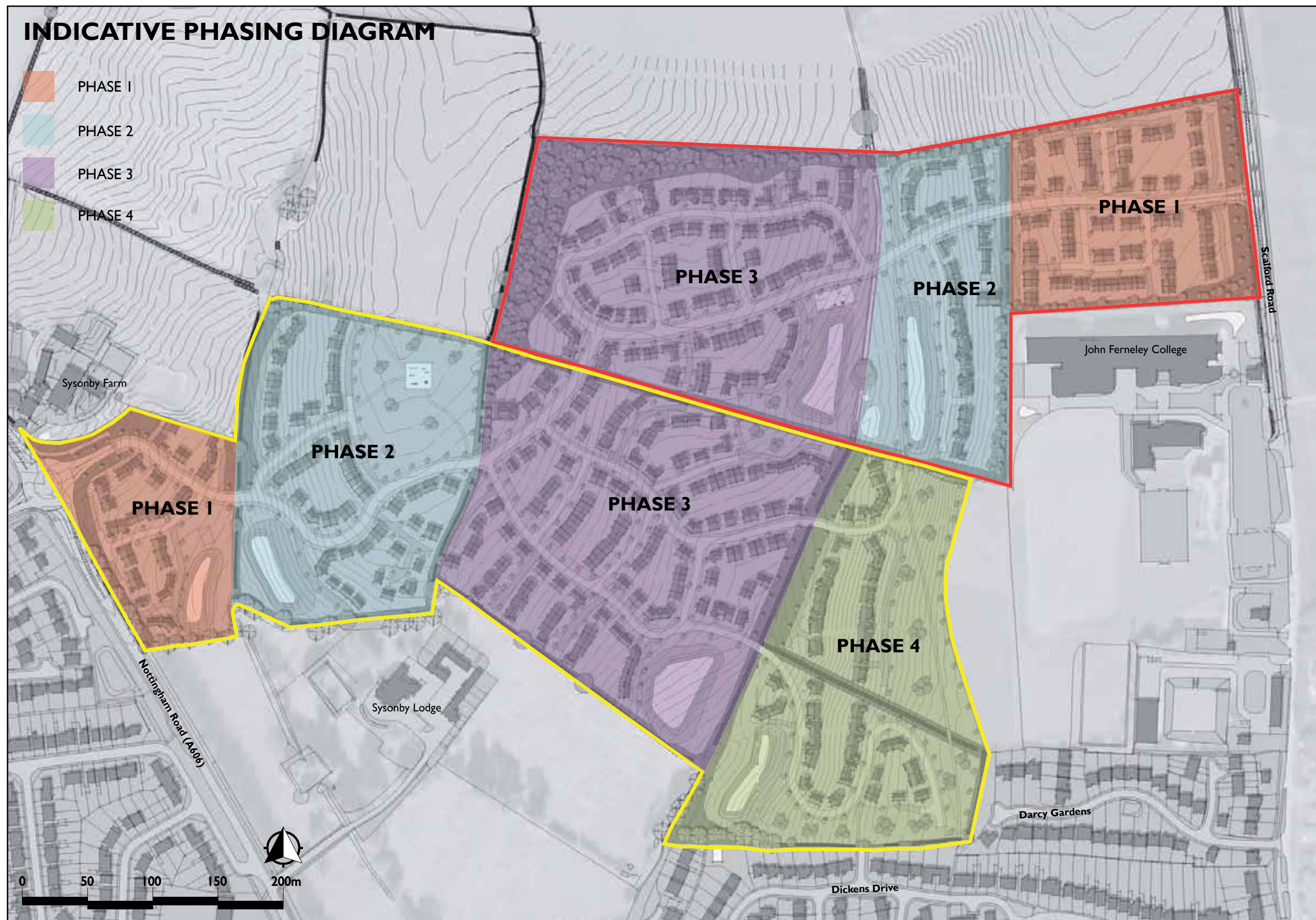


Figure 17: Indicative Phasing Diagram, Scale- 1:3000 at A3