

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Residential Development
Land adjacent to Mappenor's Lane,
Leominster

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1. INTRODUCTION

Proposal overview and project brief

This document has been prepared by Owen Hicks Architecture in support of an outline planning application for a proposed residential development of up to 21 dwellings on land to the north of Mappenor's Lane, an established residential area in the North-Herefordshire market town of Leominster.

Document objectives

This design & access statement will assess the site, its local context, infrastructure and facilities. It will outline the proposal's key features in delivering a high quality, scheme as an appropriate and sympathetic response to its place and wider local context.

In drafting this statement, reference has been made to the adopted Herefordshire Core Strategy 2011-2031, and the National Planning Policy Framework; the government's planning policy direction to local planning authorities in determining planning applications.

Figure 1: Site location - aerial view



Figure 2, 3, 4: Site contextual photographs

2. SITE ANALYSIS AND CONTEXT

Site description and location

The proposal site is a 0.86 ha greenfield site on the northern fringe of the market town of Leominster, Herefordshire. Leominster is identified as a centre for proportionate residential growth in the recently adopted Herefordshire Core Strategy 2011-2031 given its identification in the settlement hierarchy as a second tier 'other urban area' centre after Hereford.

The site is well related to the existing built-up extent of Leominster, being bordered on three of its established boundaries by existing residential development to the east, south and west. The site is accessed by an existing 5m wide adopted residential estate road known as Mappenor's Lane, which leads to a field gate in the centre of the southern boundary.

To the north is a watercourse known as Kenwater, and the site falls on a moderate slope from the Mappenor's Lane access point in the southern boundary towards the watercourse beyond the northern boundary.

Existing uses

The site's current use is agricultural grazing land, and the site is considered to be "greenfield", i.e. having no previous development evident within the red line as identified by the site plans opposite.

The site's surroundings are however developed, with existing residential uses surrounding the site to the east, south and west, characterised by 1970s and 1980s developer - built housing.

Building heights to the south and west are predominantly two storey, while building heights to the east are predominately single storey.

Figure 5: Site location - OS Map

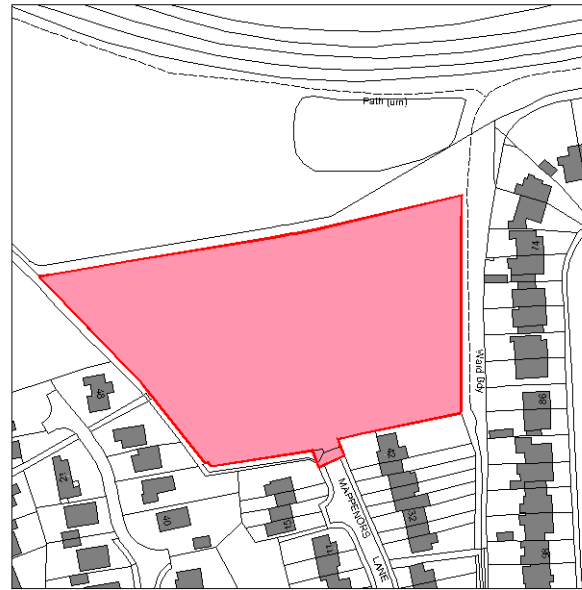


Figure 6: Site location - Figure / Ground Plan

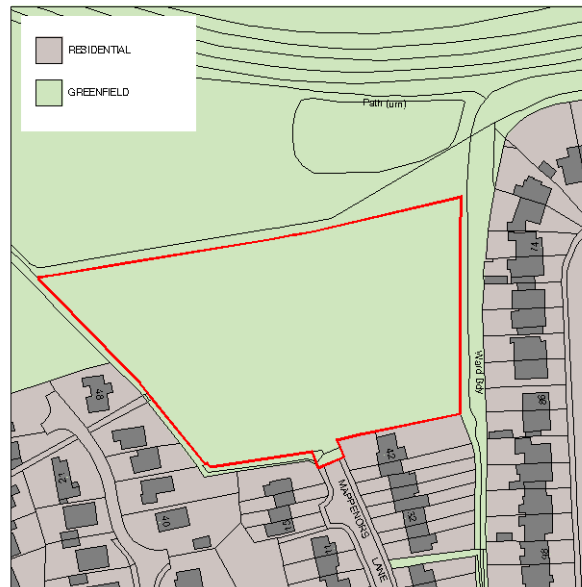
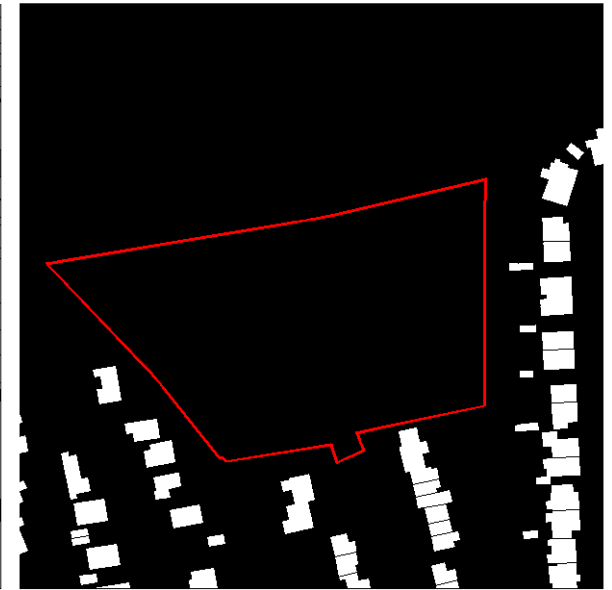


Figure 7: Site location - Existing Uses

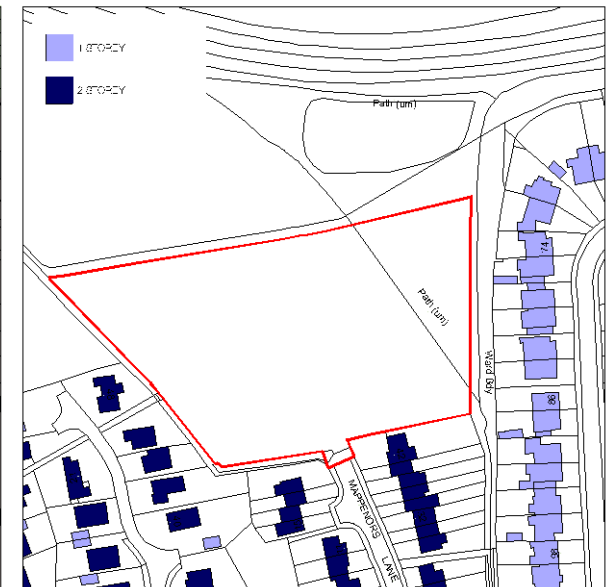


Figure 8: Site location - Existing Building Heights

Existing Density and Massing

The site is previously undeveloped land, however the neighbouring residential developments to the east, south and west are fairly tightly-grained and urban in character, as illustrated by the figure ground plan (figure 6).

The development pattern is more linear to the east with single storey houses aligned tightly to the existing residential road. The slightly later development to the south and west is still of a linear form, with building frontages addressing the residential access roads, however the graining becomes slightly looser to the west where the dwellings are larger in plan form and two storey in height.

It is considered that development on the site should be broadly reflective of the manner in which massing and density are handled in the surrounding developments, so as to read as a logical infilling of the existing development pattern evident.

Existing Access

The site is currently accessed by a 5m wide residential road known as Mappenor's Lane which is surfaced in tarmac and incorporates pedestrian footways to either side of the carriageway.

Mappenor's lane currently leads to an existing metal field gate in the centre of the southern boundary as indicated by the blue arrow in Figure 9.

In addition to the existing highway which provides

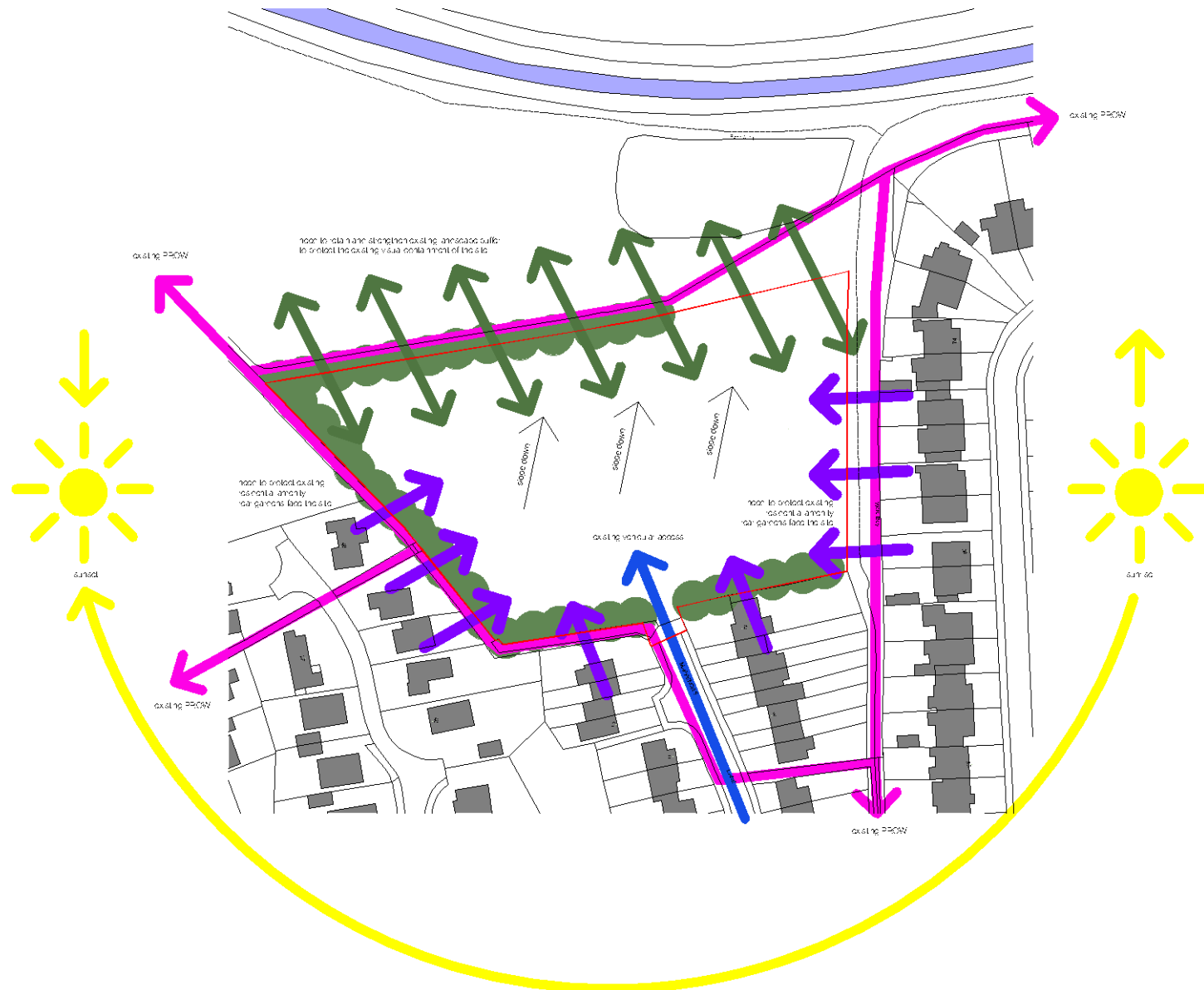


Figure 9: Site Analysis: opportunities and constraints

an opportunity for access onto the site by both vehicles and pedestrians, there are a number of existing public rights of way which envelop the site perimeter, connecting with the pavements on Mappenor's Lane, as identified by the pink arrows on Figure 9 (information taken from Herefordshire Council definitive rights of way map).

There is an opportunity for development of the site to utilise and link with existing and established access routes, and to provide improved definition and enhancement to the existing public rights of way around the site.

Topography and Landscape

The application site is set on a moderate, but uniform incline rising from north to south, the site entrance being at the high point of the site.

The slope would not preclude a sensitively designed development though, indeed the adjacent existing development comfortably accommodates the same topography and level change.

The site lies entirely in the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk of flooding) and as the site is less than 1 ha in area, no flood risk assessment is required to be submitted with a planning application.

The outline planning application is accompanied by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and Landscape Strategy by John Challoner Associates,



Figure 10, 11, 12, 13, 14: Site Analysis: Photographs of existing site and surroundings

The consultant report identifies the key landscape features of the site and its surroundings as:

- The proposal site has a landscape character which differs from the wider landscape character reflecting the residential nature of surrounding uses.
- The site is small, compact and detached from the adjoining land by the existing hedgerow features and topographic features.
- The site is characterised by a strong human influence, being enclosed on three sides by suburban residential developments.
- The proposal site is of a lower quality and landscape sensitivity than the higher macro status of the surrounding area assessed by the Council.
- Housing development is feasible on the site and a programme of landscape improvements can be implemented to both protect and enhance the landscape quality of the urban fringe surrounding the site.
- The more important landscape quality and sensitivity of the wider part of the site will not be affected by the proposed development of the site.

Ecology and Biodiversity

An extended phase 1 ecological survey of the site has been undertaken by Star Ecology and their ecological report accompanies the outline planning application.

The ecological report finds the interior of proposal site to be of low ecological value, it being currently used for cattle grazing. The mature hedgerows surrounding the site provide a potentially important wildlife habitat, and any scheme for residential development within the site interior should aim to preserve and enhance these habitat features.

Paragraph 117 of the NPPF states that “planning policies should...promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations...”.

Paragraph 118 of the NPPF states: “opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged”.

In line with the NPPF's emphasis on biodiversity enhancement, the ecologist's report makes a number of recommendations, which offer the potential for incorporation with a proposed scheme and can be controlled by planning condition and / or approved through the Reserved Matters phase of application decision-making.



Figure 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22: Site Analysis: Photographs of existing site and surroundings

3. LINKS AND FACILITIES

Leominster is identified in the Herefordshire Core Strategy as the main centre for the north of the county which should continue to fulfil a diverse range of important roles as a centre for residential, employment, cultural, retail, tourism and recreational uses. The Core Strategy seeks to promote continued development of the town taking into account its needs, opportunities and constraints.

Policy LO1 requires Leominster to accommodate a *minimum* of 2,300 new homes within the plan period 2011-2031. It is understood that Herefordshire Council cannot currently demonstrate 5 years worth of deliverable housing land as required by the NPPF, and as such Core Strategy plan policies relating to quantitative housing delivery cannot be currently regarded as up to date. Further information relevant to local planning policy together with commentary related to housing land supply in Herefordshire is set out in the Planning Statement.

Local Facilities

The proposal site adjoins existing built up residential areas which are well - connected to local facilities and services within the town. Leominster currently includes the following local facilities:

- Primary, secondary and nursery schools
- Banking
- Supermarkets and retail outlets

- Filling Stations
- Banks
- Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool
- Library
- Sports Clubs
- Public Houses, restaurants, coffee shops.
- Employment opportunities including offices, factories, shops.

Services

The site is located adjacent to existing residential development on three boundaries of the site, Mains water, electricity, gas, sewerage and telephone infrastructure are all understood to be available in the vicinity of the site and there are no known issues in providing services onto the site to enable the proposed development.

Pedestrian and Cycle Routes

The site is well connected to existing pedestrian and cycle routes via Mappenor's Lane and the surrounding PROW network. The development proposal would not require the diversion or extinguishment of any existing public rights of way, and there would be no adverse impact on existing routes.

Public Transport Connections

Leominster is served by the northern county's main bus station and railway station providing connections to Hereford, the outlying hinterlands and further afield via the national rail network.

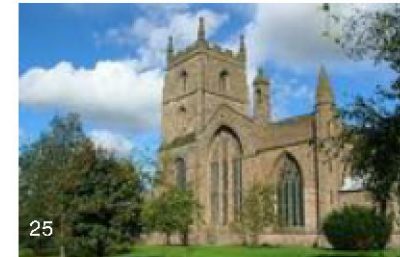


Figure 23 & 24 - Leominster Rail station, Figure 25 - Leominster Priory Church, Figure 26 - Leominster Bus Station. Figure 27 - Drapers Lane shops, Figure 28 - Earl Mortimer College, Figure 29 - Leominster Swimming Pool, Figure 30 - Broad Street Shops