

Area reference: SP015A

Figure A.22: Map of the area with designations / constraints

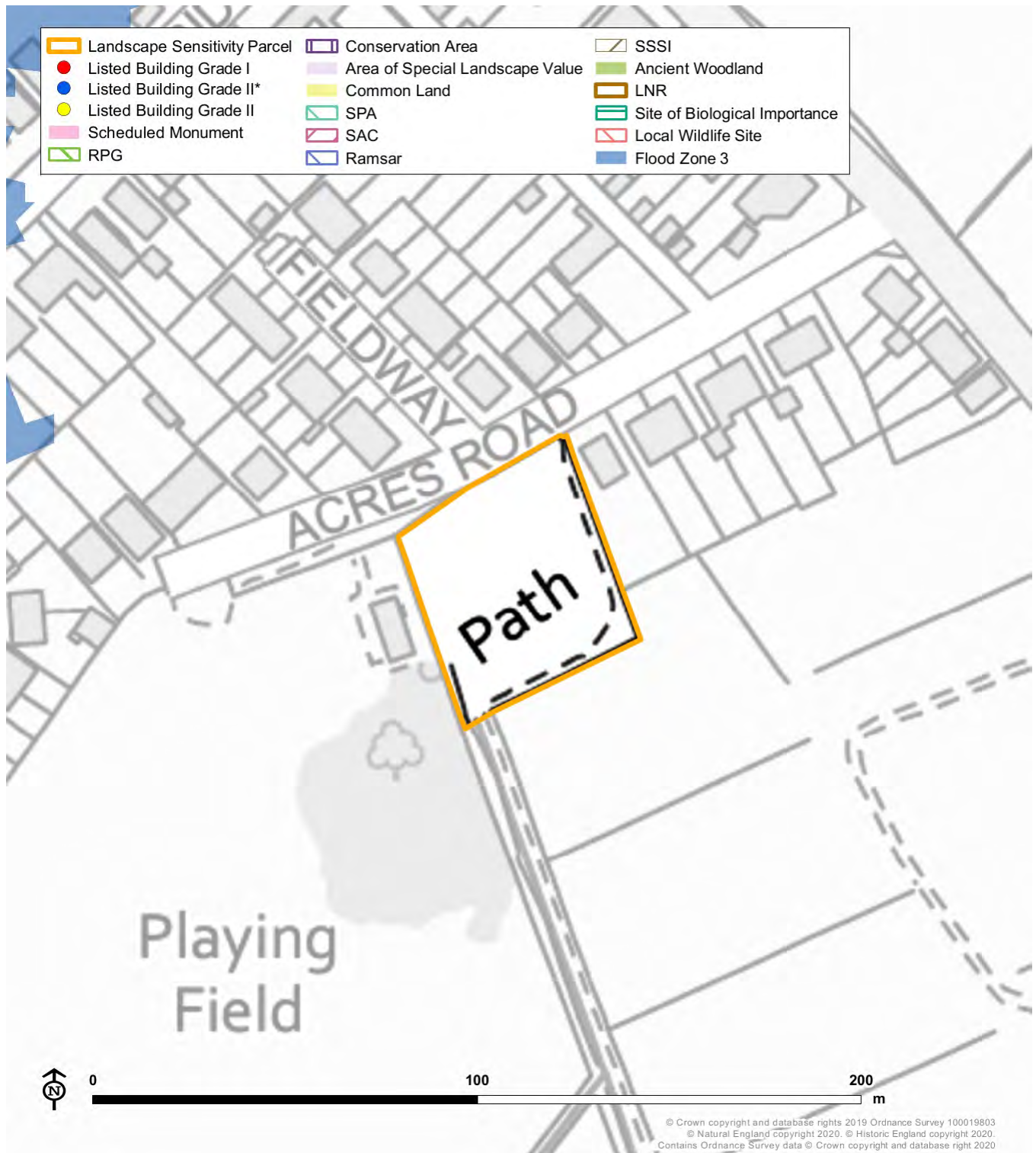


Figure A.23: Aerial photograph of the area

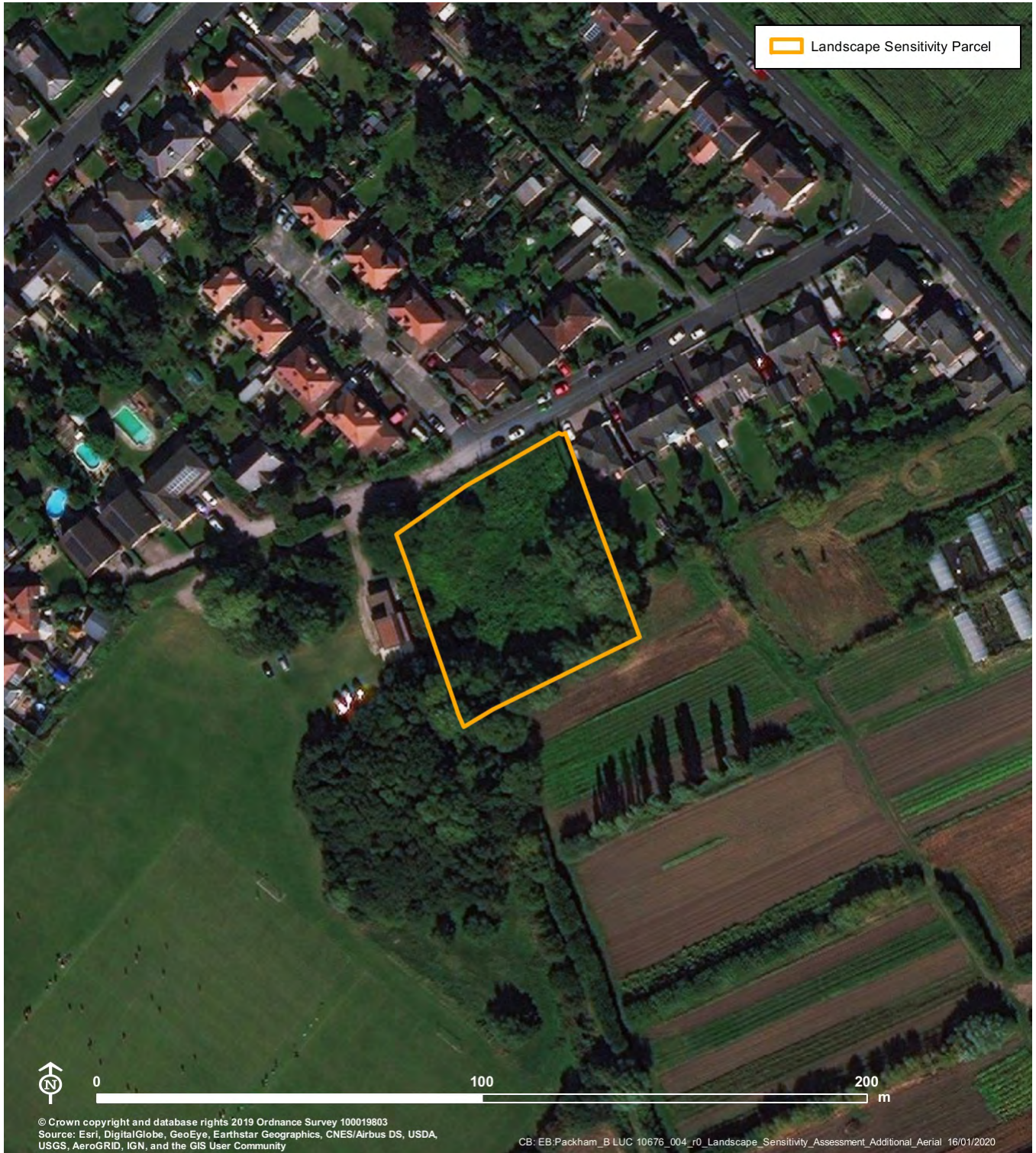


Figure A.24: Representative photos



Public right of way along the eastern boundary, enclosed by fencing



Area colonised with overgrown scrub vegetation

#### Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the north-west of the borough and lies to the south of Meols and along the southern edge of Acres Road. Properties line the road with one abutting the eastern edge of the area. Playing fields are located to the west of the area and arable farmland to the south.

The area lies within The Birket LCA, forming part of the River Floodplain LCT. It is a former pond which has been infilled and left to colonise resulting in overgrown scrub vegetation covering the area.

#### Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). Scrub vegetation covering the area has resulted in the formation of natural habitats.

Public rights of way run along the eastern and southern boundaries providing recreational value.

The table below incorporates these indicators of value into the assessment of sensitivity.

Assessment Criterion	Landscape Sensitivity Description
Physical Character (including topography and scale)	The flat and featureless landform indicates low levels of sensitivity to residential development. A number of trees border the area which provides a limited density of small-scale landscape features and increases sensitivity to residential development.
Natural Character	The overgrown nature of the area has resulted in the formation of natural habitats, predominantly from the scrub vegetation that covers the area and trees along its boundaries, resulting in some sensitivity to residential development.
Historic landscape character	The area does not contain an identifiable field pattern given its small size and overgrown state. There is no sense of time depth and the Cheshire HLC categorises it as 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Settlement, indicating low levels of sensitivity to residential development.  There are also no heritage assets within the area.

Character and setting of existing settlement	The area does not contribute positively to the setting of the settlement given its neglected appearance, and does not play a separation role between settlements. Future development in the area would have a good relationship with the existing settlement form and pattern, and would improve the existing settlement edge of Meols, therefore indicating low levels of sensitivity to residential development.
Views and visual character including skylines	The area is visually enclosed by surrounding built development, tall overgrown vegetation and fencing, resulting in a low degree of visibility from the surrounding landscape and indicating a lower sensitivity to residential development.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The area is already influenced by surrounding development, disturbing its scenic value and limiting dark night skies through existing light sources, and therefore decreasing the sensitivity to residential development. New development would not be out of character and would be an improvement from its neglected state, resulting in low levels of sensitivity to residential development.

### Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The flat landform, neglected character, surrounding human influences, absence of historic features and visual containment lower the sensitivity across the area. The natural habitats that have formed from the scrub vegetation that covers the area (including boundary trees) slightly increase the sensitivity. However, overall the area is considered to have a **low** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

### Guidance<sup>12</sup>

*Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following general guidance applies to any development on this area:*

- Conserve and manage boundary trees as important wildlife habitats and landscape features.
- Conserve, enhance and manage any other valued habitats that have formed within the area.
- Protect and enhance the public right of way connecting Meols to Saughall Massie Road and promote further opportunities to increase access and enjoyment of the landscape in association with any new development.

<sup>12</sup> The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that residential development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

Area reference: SP016

Figure A.25: Map of the area with designations / constraints

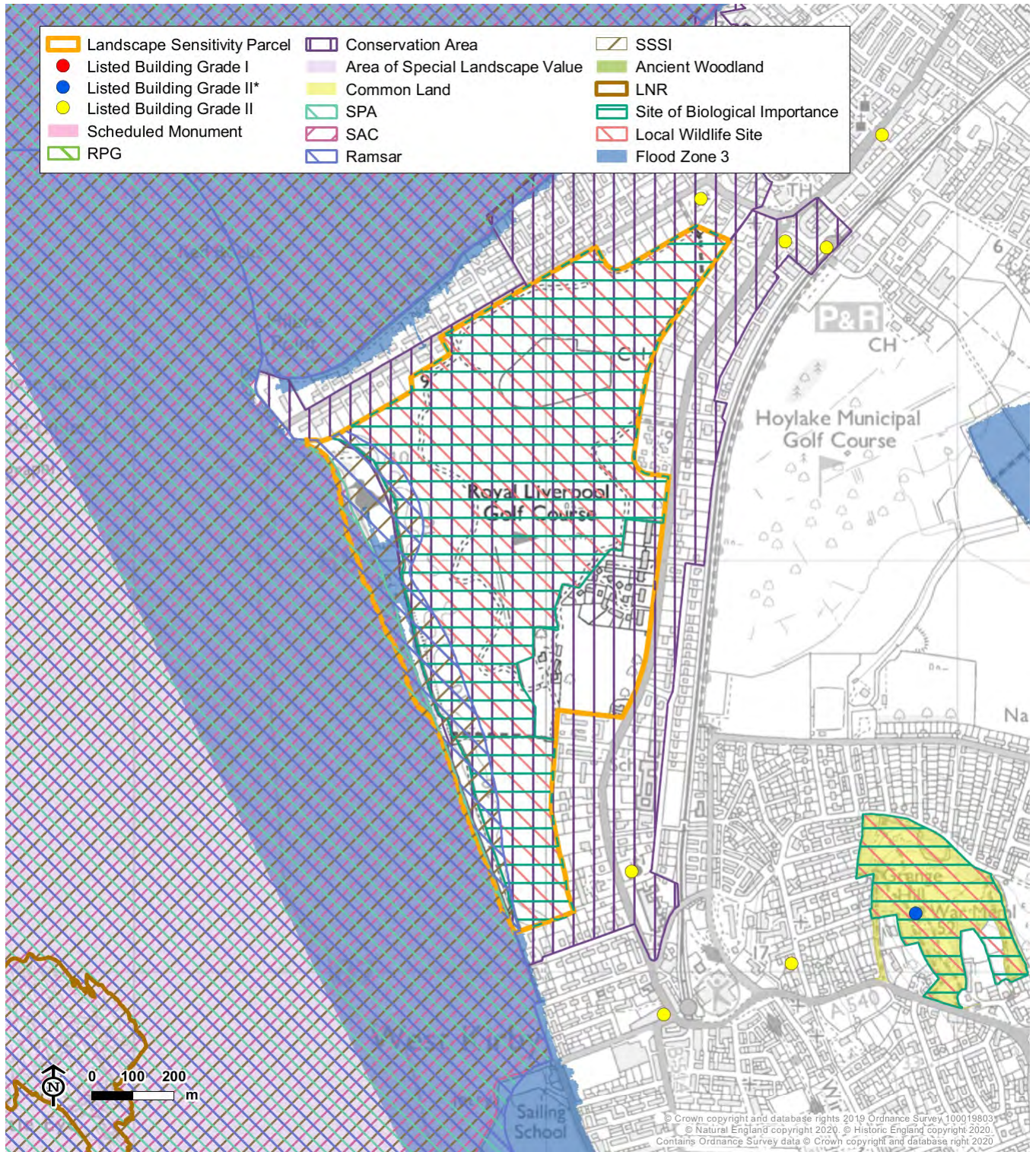


Figure A.26: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.27: Representative photos



Royal Liverpool Golf Course



Red Rocks Site of Special Scientific Interest with views across the Dee Estuary towards Hilbre Island and North Wales

#### Location and landscape character context

The area is situated on the north-western corner of the borough, bounded by the coastline of the Dee Estuary. It extends between the towns of Hoylake to the north-east and West Kirby to the south-east with property boundaries adjoining its northern, eastern and southern edges.

The area lies in the North Wirral LCA, forming part of the Coastal/Estuarine Edge LCT. It comprises the Royal Liverpool Golf Course and a small area of residential development and forms part of the low-lying flat coastline with views extending across the Dee Estuary towards the Welsh coastline.

#### Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local), although lies adjacent to an Area of Special Landscape Value that covers part of the Dee Estuary to the west which is valued for its contribution towards biodiversity and is designated as a Special Protection Area, Special Area of Conservation, Site of Special Scientific Interest and Ramsar site. These nationally important designations extend across the seaward edge of the area.

The area itself is also of biodiversity value being a Site of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site for its coastal dune grassland. The partially accessible coastal sand dunes along the western boundary at Red Rocks are a key feature distinctive for their brackish dune slacks and reedbed, and valued for their contribution towards biodiversity. The sand dunes are also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The area is located within the Meols Drive Conservation Area which contributes towards the overall value. The Kings Gap Conservation Area also lies directly adjacent to the north eastern edge of the area with intervisibility between it and the area.

The area's use as a golf course provides recreational value for those playing or spectating and is crossed by a public right of way in the north-east and the south; the latter being a key access route to the coast from West Kirby.

The table below incorporates these indicators of value into the assessment of sensitivity.

Assessment Criterion	Landscape Sensitivity Description
Physical Character (including topography and scale)	<p>The area forms part of a flat coastline with distinctive rolling sand dunes on its seaward side which increases sensitivity to residential development. The northern part of the area, once used as a racecourse, has a flatter landform.</p> <p>The open character of the landscape, due to the low density of overlying landscape features (limited to a few small shelterbelts / clumps of trees), indicates lower sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Natural Character	<p>Although used as a golf course, the entirety of the area is overlain by Priority Habitats, with the majority consisting of Coastal Sand Dunes and a narrow strip comprising Coastal Saltmarsh and Reedbeds along the western boundary. This has led to the majority of the area being designated a Site of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site and the western edge being a Site of Special Scientific Interest, indicating higher sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>There is some existing development along the eastern edge of the area resulting in lower sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>The Royal Liverpool Golf Course was established in 1869 and is the second oldest in England. Its association as a historic 'links' golf course indicates some sense of time depth and increases sensitivity to residential development. Lower levels of sensitivity to residential development exist in the east of the area which the Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation categorises as 20<sup>th</sup> Century Settlement.</p> <p>Meols Drive Conservation Area covers the majority of the area, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The area was screened as high for archaeological issues by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. The area would therefore require further archaeological investigation as part of any proposed development.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The area plays some role in the separation of Hoylake from West Kirby resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development. The gap is best perceived when travelling along the public right of way running through the southern part of the area and providing a connection between West Kirby and the coast. It is however acknowledged that some coalescence between the two settlements has already occurred along Meols Drive (A540) which runs along the eastern boundary of the area.</p> <p>The golf course is important in providing a backdrop to the surrounding housing as recognised in the Meols Drive Conservation Area Appraisal<sup>13</sup> which states, '<i>The golf course and the surrounding housing on Meols Drive, Stanley Road and Lingdale Roads provide the setting for each other and are mutually dependent</i>'. The study also recognises the importance of the golf course for the wider borough stating '<i>The Golf Course, dunes, and sands across to Hilbre Island provide a landscape and seascape of defining significance to Wirral and are important within the context of the North West's Irish Sea coastline</i>'. Development would have a poor relationship with the existing settlement pattern and could adversely affect the distinctive settlement edge with its variety of architectural styles including Arts and Crafts villas. The area also allows for uninterrupted expansive views across to the Hilbre Islands and North Wales from surrounding settlement edges, indicating high levels of sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>The area is visually enclosed by existing residential development to the north, east and south which lowers sensitivity. However, due to its location on the north west corner of the Wirral Peninsula and the open character of the coastal landscape, the area is visually prominent from the Dee Estuary, the Hilbre Islands and areas along the North Wales coastline to the west, indicating a high sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The setting of the golf course results in highly scenic perceptual qualities and a sense of tranquillity, indicating high levels of sensitivity to residential development. Sensitivity decreases slightly as the area is influenced by surrounding development, limiting dark night skies through existing light sources.</p>

<sup>13</sup> Donald Insall Associates Ltd (2004) Meols Drive Conservation Area Appraisal



### Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The open character of the landscape due to the low density of overlying landscape features, and the visual enclosure by surrounding settlement lowers sensitivity. However, the rolling landform formed by sand dunes, large areas of landscape that are designated for their nature conservation interest (Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Site of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site), the historic associations of the area as a Conservation Area, the role the area plays in contributing towards a perceived gap between settlements, the setting that the area provides to surrounding settlements (with uninterrupted expansive views to the west resulting in a high scenic value) and its visual prominence when viewed from the Dee Estuary, the Hilbre Islands, and North Wales, increases sensitivity.

Future development would lead to significant change to a landscape that is highly valued for its natural character, historic associations, setting, visual character and perceptual qualities. Therefore, the area is considered to have a **high** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

#### Guidance<sup>14</sup>

*Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following general guidance applies to any development on this area:*

- Work with natural coastal processes to conserve and enhance the coastal landscape, including the distinctive pattern of intertidal mudflat, coastal saltmarshes and coastal sand dunes, enhancing the sense of place and conserving important coastal and estuarine habitats.
- Conserve the pattern of natural sand dunes across the area and carefully manage scrub regeneration to maintain the open grassed sand dunes and transitional shoreline vegetation.
- Conserve the open and largely undeveloped character of the landscape, ensuring any limited development or landscape change is unobtrusive and sensitively integrated and retains a well-defined distinction between the open coastline and urban areas.
- Ensure the function of the area as a perceived gap is maintained by providing a clear physical and visual separation between adjacent settlements.
- Avoid visually intrusive development in order to conserve the exposed character of the area and views towards the coast.
- Protect and enhance the public right of ways, particularly the footpath that provides access to the coast and coastal paths along the sand dunes.

<sup>14</sup> The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that residential development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

Area reference: SP019B

Figure A.28: Map of the area with designations / constraints

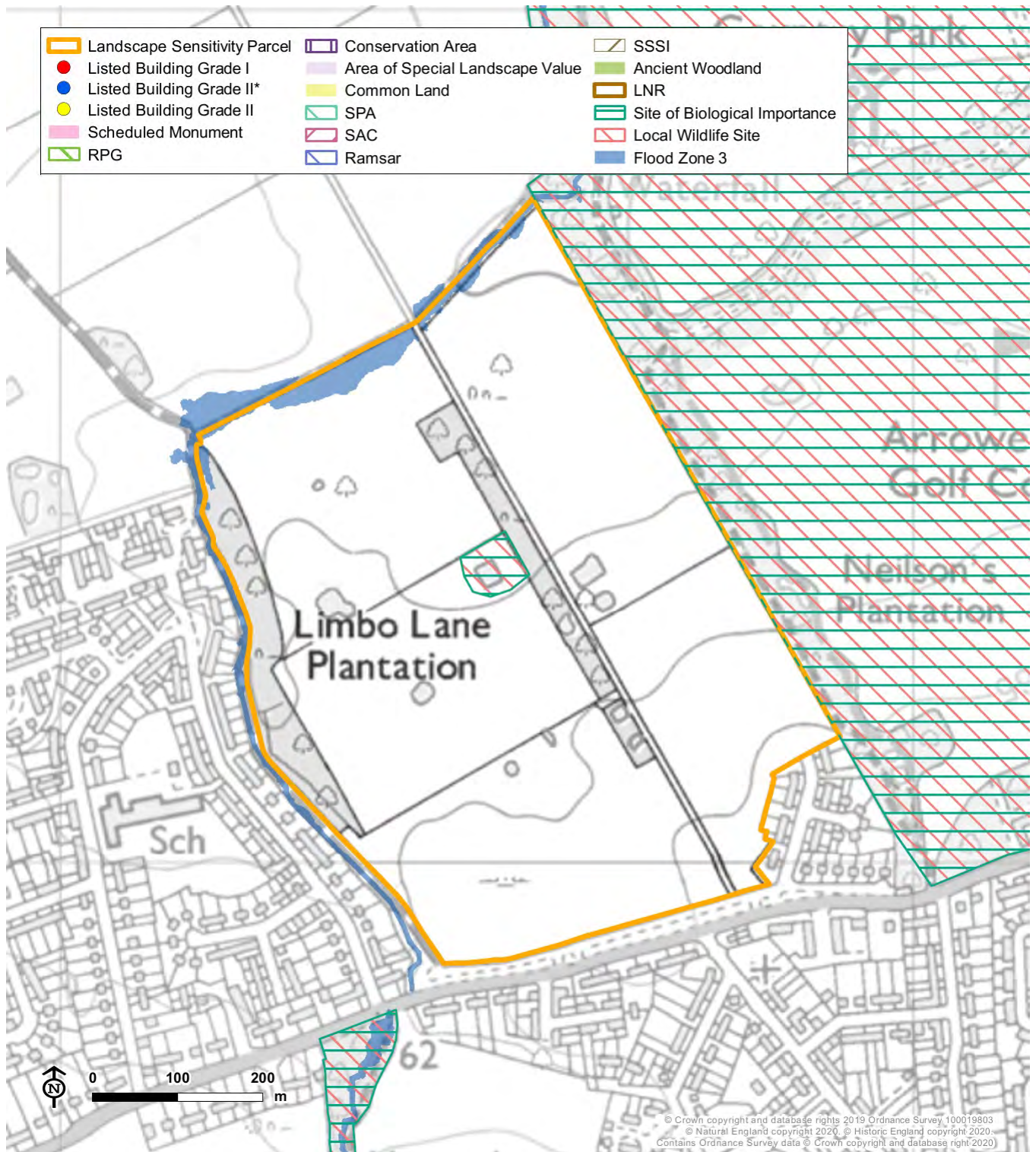


Figure A.29: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.30: Representative photos



Linear belts of woodland forming skyline features



Rural setting to properties on the edge of Thingwall

### Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the west of the borough and lies to the north of Thingwall and east of Irby. Arrowe Country Park and Arrowe Park Golf Course forms its eastern boundary and a hedgerow along Arrowe Brook runs along the northern boundary.

The area lies within the Thurstaston and Greasby LCA, forming part of the Sandstone Hills LCT. It comprises small-medium scale arable fields (although low hedgerows running east-west result in fields appear larger), and characterised by linear woodland belts that run north-south within and around the edges of the area.

### Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). However, the Limbo Lane Pond is a key feature that is distinctive as an open field pond, valued for its contribution to biodiversity, and designated as a Site of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site.

The area's use as working farmland for crops restricts public access. However, public rights of way follow the eastern and western boundaries of the area, and permissive paths run along a wide hedge lined farm track across the middle of the area between Thingwall Road and Arrowe Brooke Lane and east west across the area between Arrowe Park and Limbo Lane. Intervisibility with the area along these routes is restricted by intervening vegetation.

The table below incorporates these indicators of value into the assessment of sensitivity.

Assessment Criterion	Landscape Sensitivity Description
Physical Character (including topography and scale)	The gently sloping landform falls south to north (from 65m to 50m AOD) from higher ground on the settlement edge of Thingwall indicating lower levels of sensitivity to residential development.  The area is overlain by a pattern of regular fields that are small to medium in size and formed by hedgerows and linear belts of woodland, providing a modest density of small-scale landscape features, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.
Natural Character	Much of the area comprises areas that are intensively farmed through arable practices, and limited coverage of semi-natural habitats resulting in lower sensitivity to residential development.

	Areas of valued semi-natural habitats, including Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (in the form of linear belts of woodland running centrally and along the western edge) and small areas of Reedbeds associated with field ponds, indicate areas of higher sensitivity to residential development. Valued natural features include hedgerows and small pockets of trees/ shrubs surrounding the frequent field ponds.
Historic landscape character	The Cheshire HLC indicates that the area contains Post Medieval Fieldscapes, categorised as Late Post Medieval Agricultural Improvement with Post Medieval Plantations. The resulting regular field pattern indicates lower levels of sensitivity to residential development.  There are no designated heritage assets within the area, however it was screened as medium for archaeological issues by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. The area would therefore require further archaeological investigation as part of any proposed development.
Character and setting of existing settlement	The area plays a role in the sense of separation between the larger part of Irby to the west and the remaining parts of Irby and Thingwall to the south and east, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development. The gap is best perceived when travelling along Thingwall Road as intervisibility between these parts of the urban area is limited by the wooded character of the landscape which also contributes towards the perceived separation. The area also provides a rural setting which residential development would adversely affect, as uninterrupted views from properties along Thingwall Road look across the area towards attractive wooded skylines (with distant turbines associated with the Burbo Bank Offshore Wind Farm also visible) which increases the sensitivity to residential development.  The existing development surrounding the area is relatively well integrated into the landscape by woodland, trees and hedgerows, and with intervisibility between the area and Irby restricted by a dense belt of woodland along the western edge of the area. Development could have good relationship with the existing settlement form/ pattern resulting in a lower sensitivity to residential development.
Views and visual character including skylines	Although field boundaries are generally formed by low and relatively fragmented hedgerows, the area is visually enclosed, by surrounding built development to the south, woodland to the east and west and the mature tree lined hedgerow along the northern boundary, indicating a lower visual sensitivity to residential development. However, the linear belts of woodland located centrally and along the western edge of the area, contribute towards a undeveloped wooded skyline when viewed from more open areas in the north, indicating a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	Although largely a rural agricultural landscape, the area is influenced by surrounding development, disturbing its scenic value and limiting dark night skies through existing light sources, and therefore decreasing the sensitivity to residential development. However the mature woodland provides a sense of separation from adjacent modern development which indicates higher sensitivity to residential development.

### Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The linear belts of woodland (as semi-natural habitats and skyline features), the localised natural habitats and features (hedgerows and field ponds), the role the area plays in providing a rural setting to Irby and Thingwall (with uninterrupted wooded skyline views towards Liverpool Bay) and its contribution towards a perceived gap between parts of the urban area, increase sensitivity. However, the gently sloping landform, intensively farmed character, limited time depth, surrounding human influences and the visual enclosure provided by existing woodland lower the sensitivity. Overall, the area is considered to have a **moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

It is considered that the level of sensitivity increases in areas located away from the existing settlement edges, where the containment from woodland provides a sense of separation from the settlement edge.

### **Guidance<sup>15</sup>**

*Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following general guidance applies to any development on this area:*

- Conserve and reinforce the network of native hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate development by increasing the presence of hedgerow trees and providing additional native woodland planting.
- Restore hedgerow boundaries where these are fragmented.
- Retain and manage areas of deciduous woodland within the area. Pursue opportunities to extend native woodland across undeveloped parts of the area as part of an integrated green infrastructure network connected to the surrounding landscape, to protect visual amenity and to help integrate potential development into the landscape.
- Revert areas to grassland in order to increase species diversity and to support surrounding heathland outside of the area (consistent with the priorities of the West Wirral Heathlands and Arrowe Park Nature Improvement Area).
- Conserve the mixture of wooded and open field ponds which are characteristic features of the area.
- Preserve rural views out from the Thingwall settlement edge ensuring that wooded skylines are conserved and enhanced through additional planting.
- Ensure the function of the area as a perceived gap is maintained by providing a clear physical and visual separation between adjacent parts of the urban area.

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<sup>15</sup> The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that residential development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

Area reference: SP025B

Figure A.31: Map of the area with designations / constraints

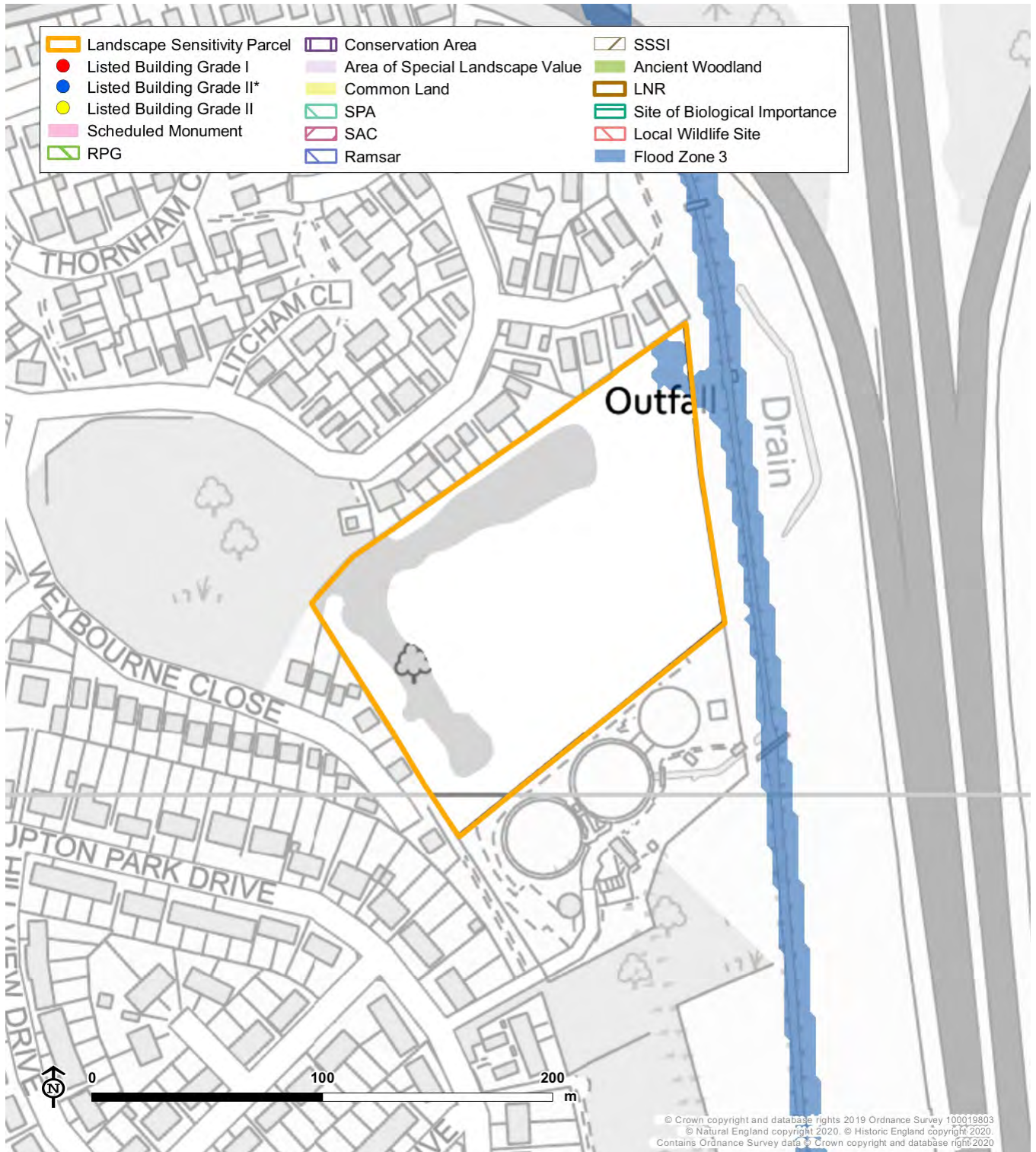


Figure A.32: Aerial photograph of the area

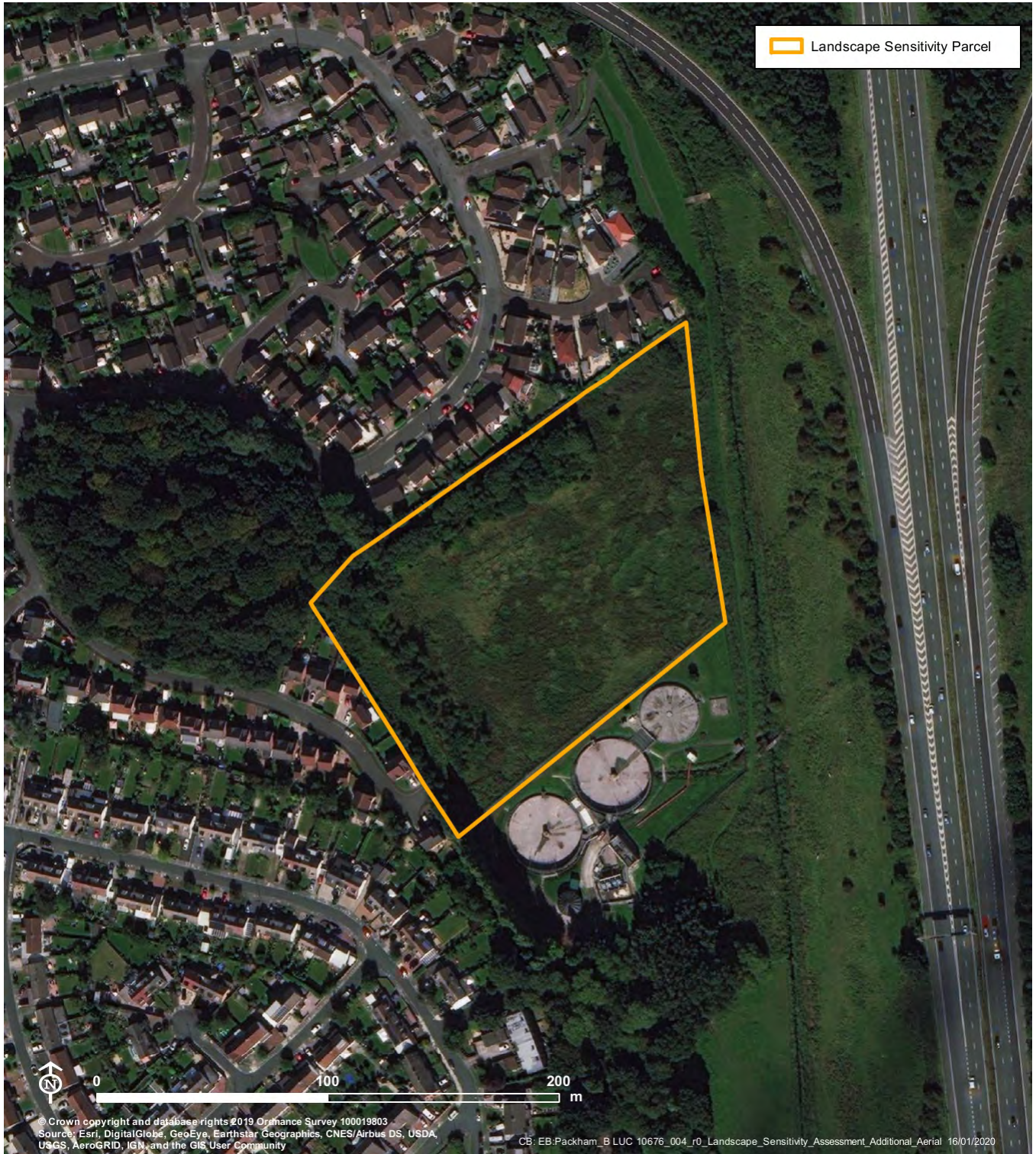




Figure A.33: Representative photos



View of the unmanaged area from a public right of way bordering the western boundary



Sewage works adjacent to the southern boundary

#### Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the north of the borough and lies between Upton and the M53. Properties line the northern and south-western boundaries, and there is a small area of woodland directly adjacent to the west. A sewage works is located adjacent to the southern edge of the area and a grass verge along the edge of the M53 forms the eastern boundary, which the River Fender cuts through as it flows from the south towards the River Birket in the north.

The area lies within The Fender LCA, forming part of the River Floodplains LCT. The area is unmanaged and fenced off, with areas consisting of overgrown scrub, wetland habitats and large trees along the northern and western boundaries

#### Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). The area has been unmanaged for some time resulting in the colonisation of scrub and wetland vegetation, forming natural habitats.

A public right of way runs along the eastern boundary, and although separated from the area by a chain link fence, it provides recreational value as views into the area form part of the user's experience.

The table below incorporates these indicators of value into the assessment of sensitivity.

Assessment Criterion	Landscape Sensitivity Description
Physical Character (including topography and scale)	The flat and featureless landform indicates low levels of sensitivity to residential development. A number of trees have established on artificial banks along the northern and western boundaries of the area which provides a limited density of small-scale landscape features and increases sensitivity to residential development.
Natural Character	The unmanaged area has resulted in the formation of natural habitats, predominantly from the scrub and wetland vegetation that cover parts of it and trees along its northern and western boundaries, resulting in higher levels of sensitivity to residential development.
Historic landscape character	The area does not contain an identifiable field pattern given its small size and overgrown state. There is no sense of time depth and the Cheshire HLC categorises it as 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Settlement, indicating low levels of sensitivity to residential development.

	There are also no heritage assets within the area.
Character and setting of existing settlement	The area does not contribute positively to the setting of the settlement edge given its unmanaged appearance. Future development in the area would have a good relationship with the existing settlement form and pattern, and would improve the existing settlement edges of Upton, therefore indicating low levels of sensitivity to residential development.
Views and visual character including skylines	The area is visually enclosed to the north and west by surrounding built development and mature vegetation, to the south by the sewage works and woodland and to the east by mature vegetation lining the M53, resulting in a low degree of visibility from the surrounding landscape and indicating a lower sensitivity to residential development.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The adjacent sewage works to the south and the M53 to the east provide both visual and aural detractors. Surrounding development to the north and west disturbs the area's scenic value and limits dark night skies through existing light sources, and therefore decreases the sensitivity to residential development. New development would not be out of character.

### Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The flat landform, unmanaged character, surrounding human influences and detractors, absence of historic features, and visual containment lower the sensitivity across the area. The natural habitats that have formed from the scrub and wetland vegetation, as well as boundary trees, slightly increase the sensitivity. However, overall the area is considered to have a **low** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

### Guidance<sup>16</sup>

*Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following general guidance applies to any development on this area:*

- Conserve and manage boundary trees as important wildlife habitats and landscape features.
- Conserve, enhance and manage any other valued habitats that have formed within the area.

<sup>16</sup> The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that residential development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

Area reference: SP030 / SP031

Figure A.34: Map of the area with designations / constraints

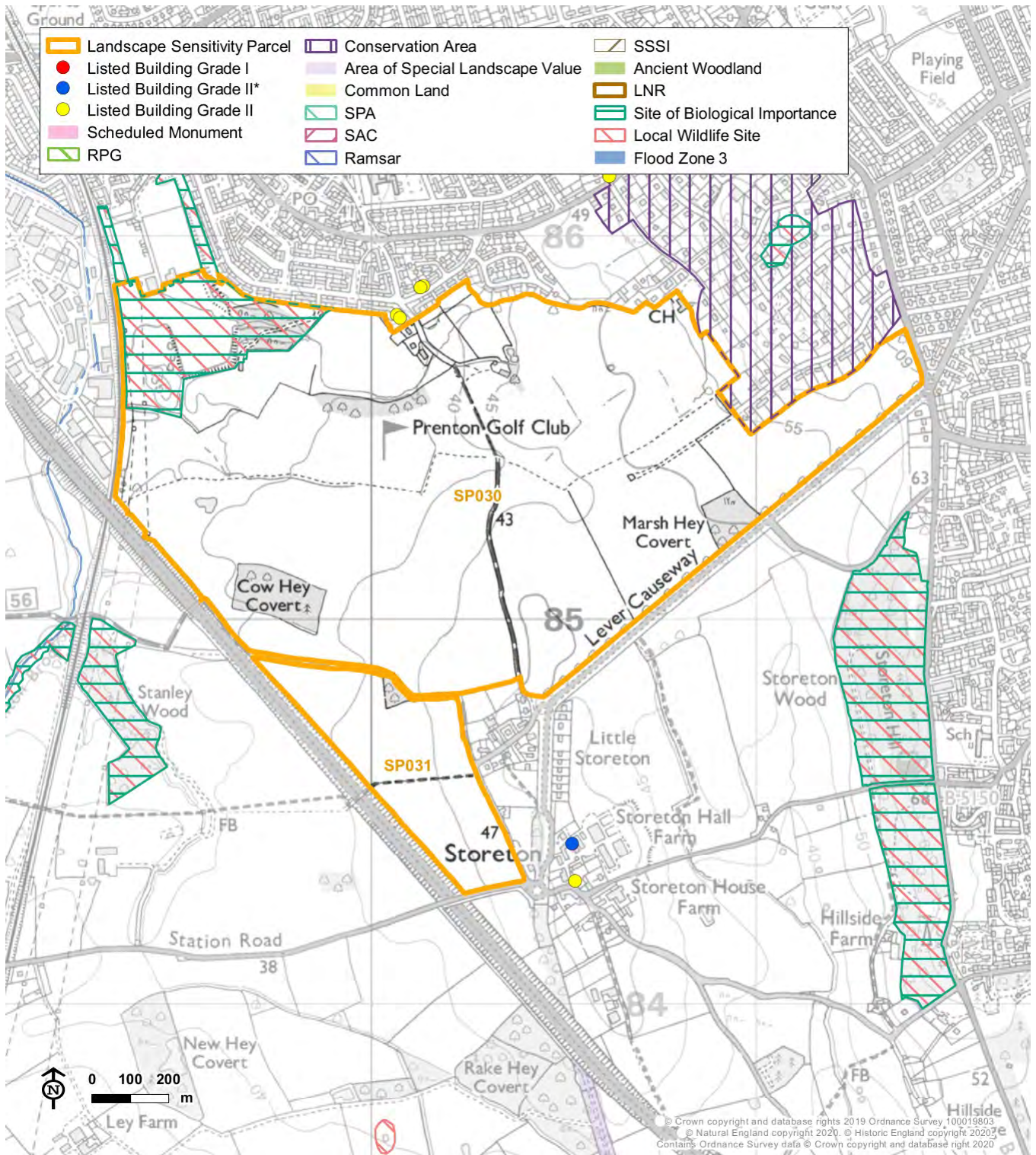


Figure A.35: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.36: Representative photos



Gently sloping landform, surrounded by hedgerows, trees and small woodland copses



A hedgerow lined road, with open views across the M53 to rising topography in the west, featuring the distant Welsh Hills and pylons on the horizon

#### Location and landscape character context

The area (incorporating SP030 and SP031) is situated in the centre of the borough. It lies to the south of Prenton and to the west of Mountwood and Higher Bebington. The M53 forms the south-western boundary and a small section of the Borderlands railway line forms the western boundary. The tree-lined Lever Causeway and Station Road form the south-eastern and southern boundaries respectively with the village of Little Storeton abutting these edges. The urban edge to Prenton, Mountwood and Bebington forms the northern and eastern boundaries.

SP030 lies within the Landican and Thingwall LCA and SP031 lies within Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley Lowland LCA; both of which form part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. The area is characterised by gently sloping landform, falling from the eastern corner to the west. It comprises arable farmland in the form of medium-large sized fields, with scattered woodland copses, and pockets of trees surrounding field ponds and depressions. The northern section of the area contains Prenton Golf Course, playing fields, a small number of dwellings, and the Prenton Dell and Claypit Site of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site.

#### Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). Prenton Dell and Claypit is valued for its contribution to biodiversity, and is designated as a Site of Biological Importance /Local Wildlife Site.

Mountwood Conservation Area is located directly adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the area although there is limited inter-visibility between it and the area due to mature hedgerow boundaries, and scattered woodland throughout the centre of the Conservation Area. Lever Causeway, which forms the south-eastern boundary, is another valued feature. It comprises a straight avenue of mature trees and was originally designed to join Lord Leverhulme's Manor in Thornton Hough to Mount Road in Higher Bebington.

The area's primary use as arable farmland limits its recreational value, although there are two public rights of way crossing the area. These provide a north-south connection between Prenton and Lever Causeway, and between a footbridge crossing the M53 and Little Storeton. National Cycle Route 56 is also routed through the area, along Landican Lane and Station Road.

The table below incorporates these indicators of value into the assessment of sensitivity.

Assessment Criterion	Landscape Sensitivity Description
Physical Character (including topography and scale)	<p>The gently sloping landform falls from elevated ground on the Prenton / Higher Bebington settlement edge in the east to the north-western corner of the area (from 60m to 25m AOD) indicating lower levels of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The area has a mixed field pattern of geometric, rectangular and irregular fields that are medium to large in size and mostly formed by hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, alongside frequent woodland copses and tree clumps within the golf course, providing a modest density of small-scale landscape features, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Prenton Dell and Claypit is located in the north-western corner of the area and has a more distinctive undulating topography compared to the rest of the area due to previous quarrying activity, with wooded boundaries and scattered trees throughout and the urban area of Prenton, to the north, is on higher ground. This results in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Natural Character	<p>Much of the area comprises areas that are intensively farmed (although softened by the frequent woodland copses and mature hedgerow trees) or managed for recreational use at Prenton Golf Club. There is evidence of former industrial land use adjacent to Prenton and adjacent to the borough's principal electricity substation and some development extending into the area along Roman Road and adjacent to Prenton Golf Course. These factors contribute towards a lower sensitivity.</p> <p>Pockets of higher sensitivity to residential development exist where there are areas of valued semi-natural habitats, including priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland; the largest area is concentrated in the north western corner of the area. Part of this area is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site/Site of Biological Importance. Other valued natural features include the mature avenue of trees along Lever Causeway, woodland copses along the settlement edge of both Prenton and Mountwood, and at Marsh Hey Covert and Cow Hey Covert, clumps of woodland within the Golf Club, hedgerows enhanced occasionally with hedgerow trees and small pockets of trees/ shrubs surrounding field ponds.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>The Cheshire HLC indicates that the area contains a limited time depth which decreases sensitivity to residential development although there are some historic features important to the character of the area.</p> <p>The eastern part of the area consists of Post Medieval Fieldscapes, with fields categorised as Late Post Medieval Agricultural Improvement and consists of medium-scale fields, indicating a lower sensitivity to residential development. Post Medieval Plantations are also scattered across the area, all semi-regular in shape with straight edges. Frequent field ponds (marl pits) are scattered across the area and were historically used to extract marl deposits to be used as mineral fertilisers, indicating a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>There is an early 20<sup>th</sup> century golf course located across the northern section of the area. Along the western boundary of the area is an area of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Field Systems, consisting of medium scale regular fields, and on the northern boundary are areas of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Settlement, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Industry and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Recreation, all reducing the sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>There is a footpath between Prenton and Little Storeton which is of archaeological importance, and SP030 was screened as high for archaeological issues by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. The area would therefore require further archaeological investigation as part of any proposed development.</p> <p>The area wraps around the southern edges of Mountwood Conservation Area, in the north-eastern corner of the area. There are also several Grade II listed buildings on the northern boundary of the area, along Roman Road at Prenton.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The area plays a role in the separation of Prenton in the north from Little Storeton in the south, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development. The gap is best perceived when travelling along the public right of way between the two settlements.</p> <p>The area provides a rural setting to the village of Little Storeton which residential development would adversely affect. Conversely, existing mature vegetation surrounding and built form within Mountwood Conservation Area limits inter-visibility with the area towards the north and east, resulting in a lower sensitivity. This is recognised in the Mountwood Conservation Area Appraisal<sup>17</sup>, which states, "<i>Views to the west are across mostly open / flat countryside. However, views to the west are limited from the public domain, being obscured by houses and mature planting.</i>"</p>
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>The area is visually enclosed by the wooded edge of surrounding built development to the north and east, indicating a lower sensitivity to residential development. Mature hedgerow boundaries, featuring hedgerow trees, enclose much of the area and therefore, in combination with the frequent woodland copses, lowers the sensitivity</p>

<sup>17</sup> Donald Insall Associates Ltd (2005) Mountwood Conservation Area Appraisal.

	<p>to residential development. The mature avenue of trees along the Lever Causeway also provide strong visual separation between the land to the north and remaining open countryside to the south.</p> <p>There are open views to the west and south, this includes from the public right of way along Roman Road and across to the M53 and rising topography in the west, with the distant Welsh Hills and pylon towers along the horizon line. This inter-visibility with the surrounding landscape will have a higher sensitivity. Oxtton's church tower is also visible on the wooded skyline to the north.</p> <p>The elevated land in the eastern corner of the area is visually prominent from surrounding areas, therefore resulting in a higher sensitivity.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Although largely a rural agricultural landscape, within the north-western corner, the area is influenced by urban fringe elements including Prenton Golf Course, playing fields, an area of former industry and residential uses along Roman Road, reducing sensitivity. Prenton Dell and Claypit Local Wildlife Site/Site of Biological Importance is also located here, however, which indicates a higher sensitivity.</p> <p>The existing development surrounding the area decreases the sensitivity to residential development. The busy M53 along the eastern boundary provides aural intrusion, although is not visible as it is located within a cutting and surrounded by woodland.</p>

### Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The presence of field ponds and woodland plantations, localised natural habitats, the role the area plays in contributing towards a perceived gap between settlements, and rural setting to Mountwood Conservation Area and Little Storeton increase sensitivity. However, the gently sloping landform, limited time depth, intensively farmed character, the presence of human influences along the urban fringes, including Prenton Golf Course and the M53, lower sensitivity. Overall, the area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

There is a higher sensitivity around the north eastern edge of Prenton where the area provides a rural setting to the Conservation Area, as well as areas close to Little Storeton where development could affect the rural character of the village and there is high inter-visibility with the surrounding landscape.

### Guidance<sup>18</sup>

*Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following general guidance applies to any development on this area:*

- Conserve and reinforce the network of native hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate development by increasing the presence of hedgerow trees and providing additional native woodland planting.
- Retain and manage areas of deciduous woodland within the area. Pursue opportunities to extend native woodland across undeveloped parts of the area as part of an integrated green infrastructure network connected to the surrounding landscape, to protect visual amenity and to help integrate potential development into the landscape.
- Retain and manage the existing mature trees along Lever Causeway.
- Conserve the rural character in proximity to the Conservation Area at Mountwood and Little Storeton where the area contributes towards their setting.
- Conserve the mixture of wooded and open field ponds (marl pits) which are characteristic features of the area.
- Preserve rural views out from and to Mountwood Conservation Area.

<sup>18</sup> The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that residential development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Avoid visually intrusive development on elevated areas along the eastern edge of the area, ensuring that wooded skylines are conserved and enhanced through additional planting.
- Ensure the function of the area as a perceived gap is maintained by providing a clear physical and visual separation between adjacent settlements.
- Protect and enhance the existing public rights of way and promote further opportunities to increase access and enjoyment of the landscape in association with any new development.



Area reference: SP032

Figure A.37: Map of the area with designations / constraints

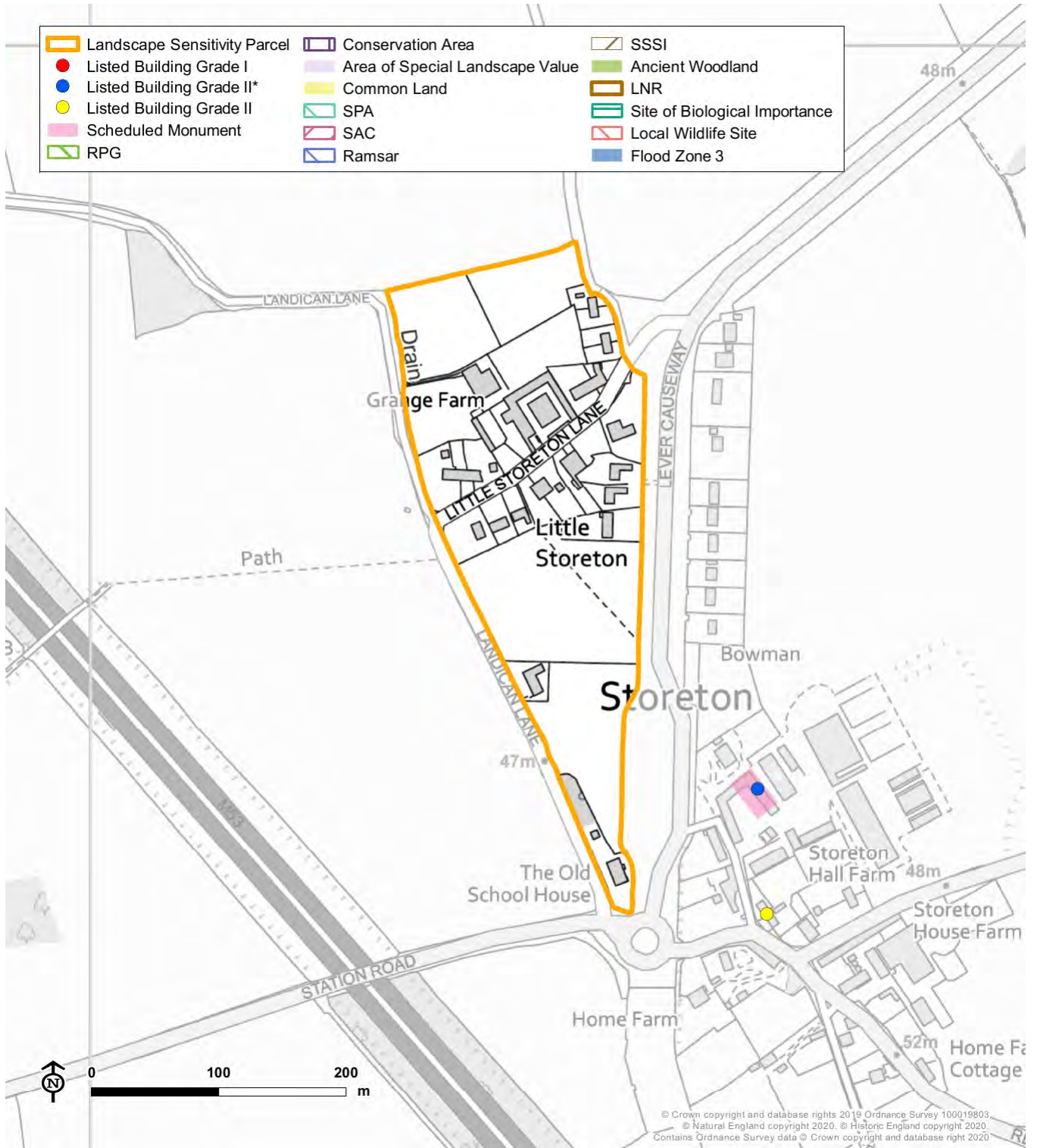


Figure A.38: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.39: Representative photos



View from a public right of way on the southern edge of Little Storeton, towards the western boundary of the area



Pastoral fields, enclosed by hedgerows, within the northern section of the area

### Location and landscape character context

The area lies in the centre of the borough. It comprises the land around the village of Little Storeton, to the north-west of Storeton village and the west of Higher Bebington. Lever Causeway and Landican Lane form the eastern and western boundaries respectively. A hedgerow forms the northern boundary.

Little Storeton Lane runs through the centre of the area. The Landican and Thingwall LCA lies to the north of this road, while to the south of, and including Little Storeton Lane, is the Thornton Hough LCA. Both form part of the Lowland Farmland and Estates LCT. A gentle slope, falling east to west, characterises the area, which comprises the small, nucleated settlement of Little Storeton, with small scale horse paddocks to the north and enclosed pasture fields to the south. The area also accommodates a couple of scattered dwellings in the southern section of the area.

### Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

Public rights of way run along parts of the eastern and western boundaries of the area and provide connections to the west across a footbridge over the M53. Another path crosses the area connecting Little Storeton Lane and Lever Causeway. National Cycle Route 56 runs along the western boundary of the area. All of these routes provide recreational value.

The table below incorporates these indicators of value into the assessment of sensitivity.

Assessment Criterion	Landscape Sensitivity Description
Physical Character (including topography and scale)	<p>The landform gently falls from the north eastern corner of the area at Little Storeton (50m AOD) to Landican Lane in the south-western corner (47m AOD). This indicates lower levels of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The area has a mixed field pattern of regular and irregular fields that are small to medium in size and are formed by both mature hedgerows and wooden post fencing. Together with occasional hedgerow trees and woodland copses along the boundaries, these provide a modest density of small-scale landscape features, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.</p>

Natural Character	<p>Much of the area comprises areas that are managed through pastoral practices, with existing development also present (both dwellings and a farm associated with Little Storeton village, and a couple of scattered residential dwellings along Landican Lane), and limited coverage of semi-natural habitats resulting in lower sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Valued natural features consist of the hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees that bound some of the area boundaries, small woodland copses, the woodland in the south west corner of the area, which contains priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland, and Lever Causeway along the eastern boundary of the area, which is lined by mature trees. All of these increase the sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>The Cheshire HLC indicates that the historic core of Little Storeton and The Old School House, located in the southern corner of the area, have a sense of time depth as both are categorised as Post Medieval Settlement. This increases their sensitivity to residential development. The surrounding settlement dates from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.</p> <p>The surrounding fields are a mixture of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Field Systems and Agricultural Improvement, which reduces the sensitivity.</p> <p>The area lies adjacent to the footpath between Prenton and Little Storeton which is of archaeological importance. The area was also screened as medium for archaeological issues by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. The area would therefore require further archaeological investigation as part of any proposed development. Lever Causeway comprises a straight avenue of mature trees and was originally designed to join Lord Leverhulme's Manor in Thornton Hough to Mount Road in Higher Bebington.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The area plays a role in the separation of Little Storeton and Storeton, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development. The gap is best perceived when travelling along Lever Causeway, and from the public right of way which connects Little Storeton Lane with Lever Causeway.</p> <p>The area also provides a rural setting to both Little Storeton and Storeton, which residential development would adversely affect.</p> <p>Much of the existing residential dwellings within Little Storeton and elsewhere within the area are visible from the area. There are limited opportunities for infill development, and in combination with the issue of coalescence with Storeton, results in higher sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>The area is semi-enclosed due to the open boundaries of some of the fields, in particular to the south of the area along Lever Causeway. There is also some inter-visibility with surrounding landscapes, particularly those to the west towards the M53 due to the falling topography, although the high hedgerow along Landican Lane provides some enclosure. This indicates a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The field to the north of the village is enclosed by hedgerows, indicating lower sensitivity. The surrounding built development associated with Storeton, along the eastern and southern boundaries of the area, also provides some visual containment therefore indicates a lower sensitivity.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>This is a largely rural, agricultural landscape with a working farm and orchard set within a rural village, with a strong sandstone vernacular. This results in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development. Modern residential development to the east of the village and aural intrusion from the M53 to the west of the area, lower the sensitivity.</p>

### Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The gently sloping landform and some aspects of visual containment lower the sensitivity across the area. However, the rural character of the area, its small-medium scale field pattern, and the important role that it plays in providing separation between Little Storeton and Storeton, means the area is considered to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

It is also considered that there are limited opportunities for infill development within the area.

### **Guidance<sup>19</sup>**

*Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following general guidance applies to any development on this area:*

- Conserve and reinforce the network of native hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate development by increasing the presence of hedgerow trees and providing additional native woodland planting.
- Restore hedgerow boundaries where these are fragmented and replace wooden fencing with native hedgerow species.
- Retain and manage areas of deciduous woodland within the area. Pursue opportunities to extend native woodland across undeveloped parts of the area as part of an integrated green infrastructure network connected to the surrounding landscape, to protect visual amenity and to help integrate potential development into the landscape.
- Retain and manage the existing mature trees along Lever Causeway.
- Ensure the function of the area as a perceived gap is maintained by providing a clear physical and visual separation between adjacent settlements.
- Protect and enhance the public rights of way and promote further opportunities to increase access and enjoyment of the landscape in association with any new development.

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<sup>19</sup> The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that residential development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

**Area reference: SP033, SP034, SP035, SP036, SP037, and SP041**

Figure A.40: Map of the area with designations / constraints

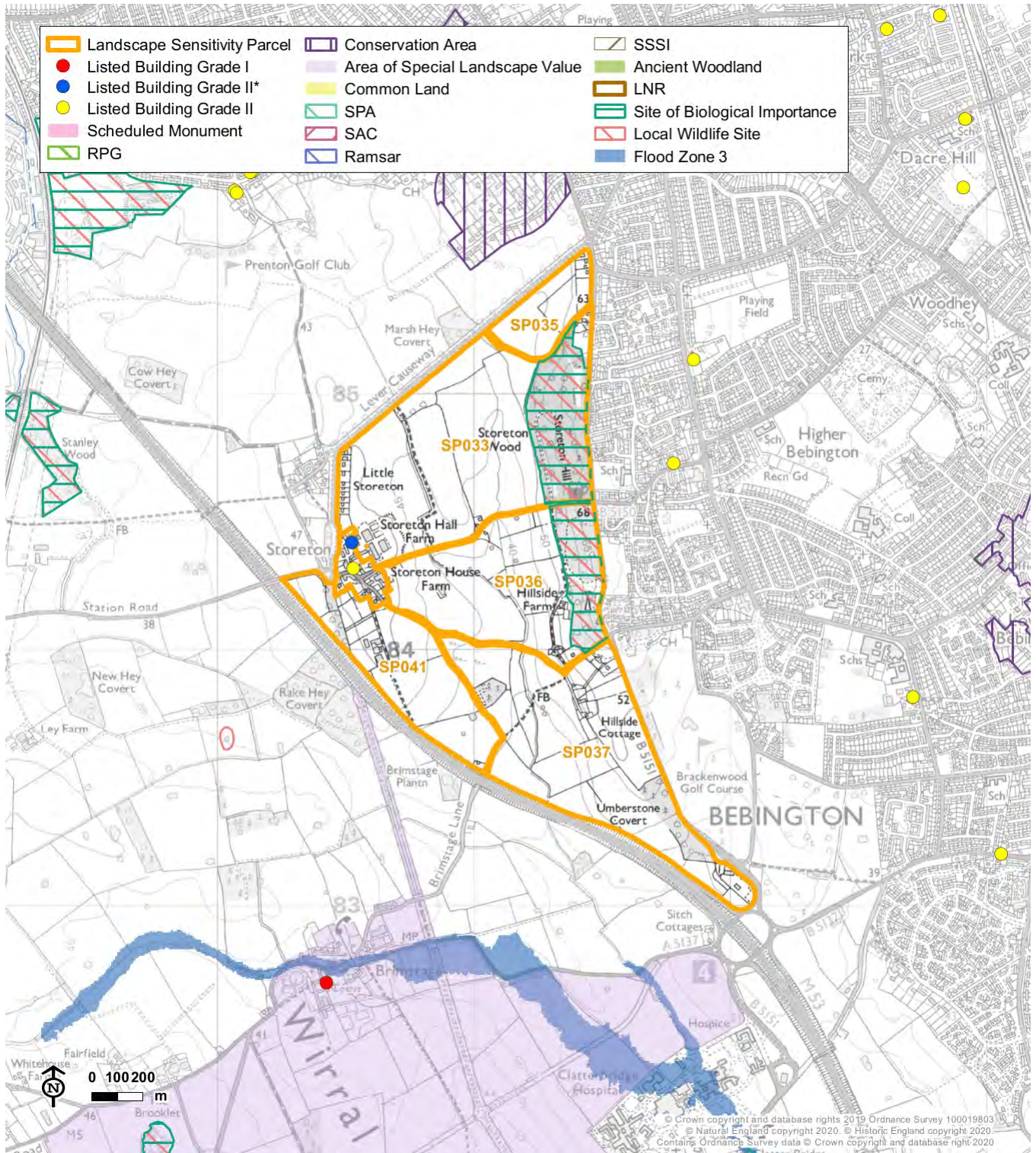


Figure A.41: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.42: Representative photos



Undulating landform with medium to large scale fields, and existing development integrated into the landscape with mature hedgerow boundaries, featuring hedgerow trees



View east towards Storeton Wood with the radio mast located above the horizon line

### Location and landscape character context

The area (incorporating SP033, SP034, SP035, SP036, SP037 and SP041) is situated in the centre of the borough. It lies to the south of Prenton and to the west of Bebington. The M53 forms the south-western boundary with Junction 4 abutting the southern edge of the area. Lever Causeway forms the north western and western boundary and the B5151 Mount Road forms the eastern boundary.

The area lies within Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, with SP041 extending into Thornton Hough LCA, which both form part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. The area has an valley landform, falling from a high point on Storeton Hill in the east to the valley bottom in the centre and up to Storeton in the west. It comprises pastoral fields, woodlands, pockets of trees surrounding field ponds and watercourses. The area includes Storeton village and some scattered development. The fields are typically medium to large scale in the centre of the area, with smaller fields on the edges of the area. The rising land towards Storeton Hill is highly visible across a wide area, from the M53, to the south and beyond.

### Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). However, Storeton Wood is valued for its contribution to biodiversity, designated as a Local Wildlife Site/Site of Biological Importance.

The area's primary use as pastoral farmland limits its recreational value, however four public rights of way cross the area, allowing public enjoyment of the countryside. These provide connections between Storeton and Brimstage Lane along the western boundary, Red Hill Road and Brimstage Lane through the centre of the area, Red Hill Road and Rest Hill Road in the north-eastern corner, and from Rest Hill Road to Lever Causeway in the north-western corner. National Cycle Route 56 runs along Brimstage Lane and Red Hill Road.

The table below incorporates these indicators of value into the assessment of sensitivity.



Assessment Criterion	Landscape Sensitivity Description
Physical Character (including topography and scale)	<p>The gently undulating landform falls from elevated sandstone ridge at Storeton Hill along the eastern boundary to the (70m to 35m AOD) the stream valley that runs north-south through the area east of Storeton. These landform features contribute positively to landscape character; indicating higher levels of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The area has a mixed file pattern comprising geometric, rectangular and irregular fields that are medium to large in size in the centre of the area, and small to medium scale around the periphery. The fields are mostly formed by hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, alongside linear woodlands and woodland copses. These provide a modest density of small-scale landscape features, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Natural Character	<p>Much of the area comprises areas that are farmed or managed (although softened by the linear woodlands and frequent woodland copses and mature hedgerow trees). There is some existing development present (dwellings on Mount Road in the north-eastern corner, and a recycling centre in the southern corner), and in combination with a radio mast, results in a lower sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Areas of valued semi-natural habitats, including priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland which could be vulnerable to loss from development indicate higher sensitivity; the largest area is concentrated at Storeton Wood and is designated as a Local Wildlife Site/Site of Biological Importance. The valley side in the east is designated as part of the East Wirral Heathlands Nature Improvement Area which prioritises the creation and management of lowland heathland, acid grassland and woodland habitats. Other valued natural features include hedgerows enhanced with hedgerow trees and small pockets of trees/ shrubs surrounding field ponds and narrow watercourses and along the M53.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>The Cheshire HLC indicates that the area contains a diverse time depth which increases sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>There are several ancient fieldscapes (pre-1600) within the area, namely the medium-scale irregular field pattern to the south-east of Storeton. There are also several Post Medieval Field Systems (post-1600) and Late Post Medieval Agricultural Improvement within the centre of the area. Frequent field ponds (marl pits) are scattered across the area, historically used to extract marl deposits to be used as mineral fertilisers, and a Post Medieval Plantation is located along Mount Road (Umberstone Covert). All of these features contribute towards a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Along the western boundary of the area is a mix of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Field Systems, consisting of medium scale fields, and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Settlement, all reducing the sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Storeton, categorised as a Post Medieval Settlement, is a rural village with a strong sandstone vernacular that contains several Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings (including Storeton Hall), which contribute to landscape character and result in a higher sensitivity. There are also areas of archaeological importance across parts of the area, which were also screened as medium and high for archaeological issues by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. The area would therefore require further archaeological investigation as part of any proposed development.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The area provides an attractive rural backdrop to Storeton and scattered development throughout the area which is integrated into the landscape by trees and hedgerows. Development in the area is therefore likely to be at odds with the existing settlement pattern, resulting in higher sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The Bebington settlement edge, along the eastern boundary of the area, is well screened by woodland cover at Storeton Wood except for a small extent in the north east corner to the west of Marsh Lane, which indicates higher sensitivity.</p>
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>Mature hedgerow boundaries, featuring hedgerow trees, and frequent woodland copses enclose lower elevations within the area. However, the sloping topography of the valley side to the east and west results in high intervisibility across the valley. The distinctive wooded ridgeline of Storeton Hill along the eastern boundary creates a visually distinctive skyline when viewed from more open areas to the west, which results in higher sensitivity.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The traditional pastoral land uses and sense of remoteness through the enclosure provided by the ridgeline woodlands, woodland copses and high hedgerow boundaries along winding rural lanes, result in a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Sensitivity is lowered where fragmented urban fringe elements intrude into the area, including small areas of equestrian use, the radio mast on Storeton Hill, a recycling centre, and kennels. The area is influenced by light pollution from surrounding development limiting dark night skies through existing light sources, therefore decreasing sensitivity. The M53 along the western boundary, which runs on an embankment south of Storeton village, introduces significant aural and visual intrusion detracting from the sense of tranquillity.</p>

### Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The distinctive landform, linear belts of woodland (semi-natural habitats and skyline features), the localised natural habitats and features (hedgerows, woodland copses, stream and field ponds), the role the area plays in providing a rural setting to Storeton and other dispersed residential dwellings, the varied time depth, and the mixture of small-scale and larger scale field patterns with a moderate density of small-scale landscape features and prominence in long range views up the valley from the south and west, contribute towards a higher sensitivity. However, the intrusion of urbanising elements including the radio mast and the M53 lower sensitivity. Overall, the area is considered to have **moderate-high** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

#### Guidance<sup>20</sup>

*Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following general guidance applies to any development on this area:*

- Conserve and reinforce the network of native hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate development by increasing the presence of hedgerow trees and providing additional native woodland planting.
- Retain and manage areas of deciduous woodland within the area. Pursue opportunities to extend native woodland across undeveloped parts of the area as part of an integrated green infrastructure network connected to the surrounding landscape, to protect visual amenity and to help integrate potential development into the landscape.
- Conserve the mixture of wooded and open field ponds (marl pits) which are characteristic features of the area.
- Avoid visually intrusive development on elevated areas along the eastern edge of the area, ensuring that wooded skylines are conserved and enhanced through additional planting and long range views are maintained.
- Protect and enhance the existing public rights of way and promote further opportunities to increase access and enjoyment of the landscape in association with any new development.
- Manage and create habitat in relation to the East Wirral Heathlands Nature Improvement Area. This includes restoring, maintaining and enhancing the heathland habitats, and enhancing the existing woodland to support the heathland.

<sup>20</sup> The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that residential development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

**Area reference: SP038 and SP039**

Figure A.43: Map of the area with designations / constraints

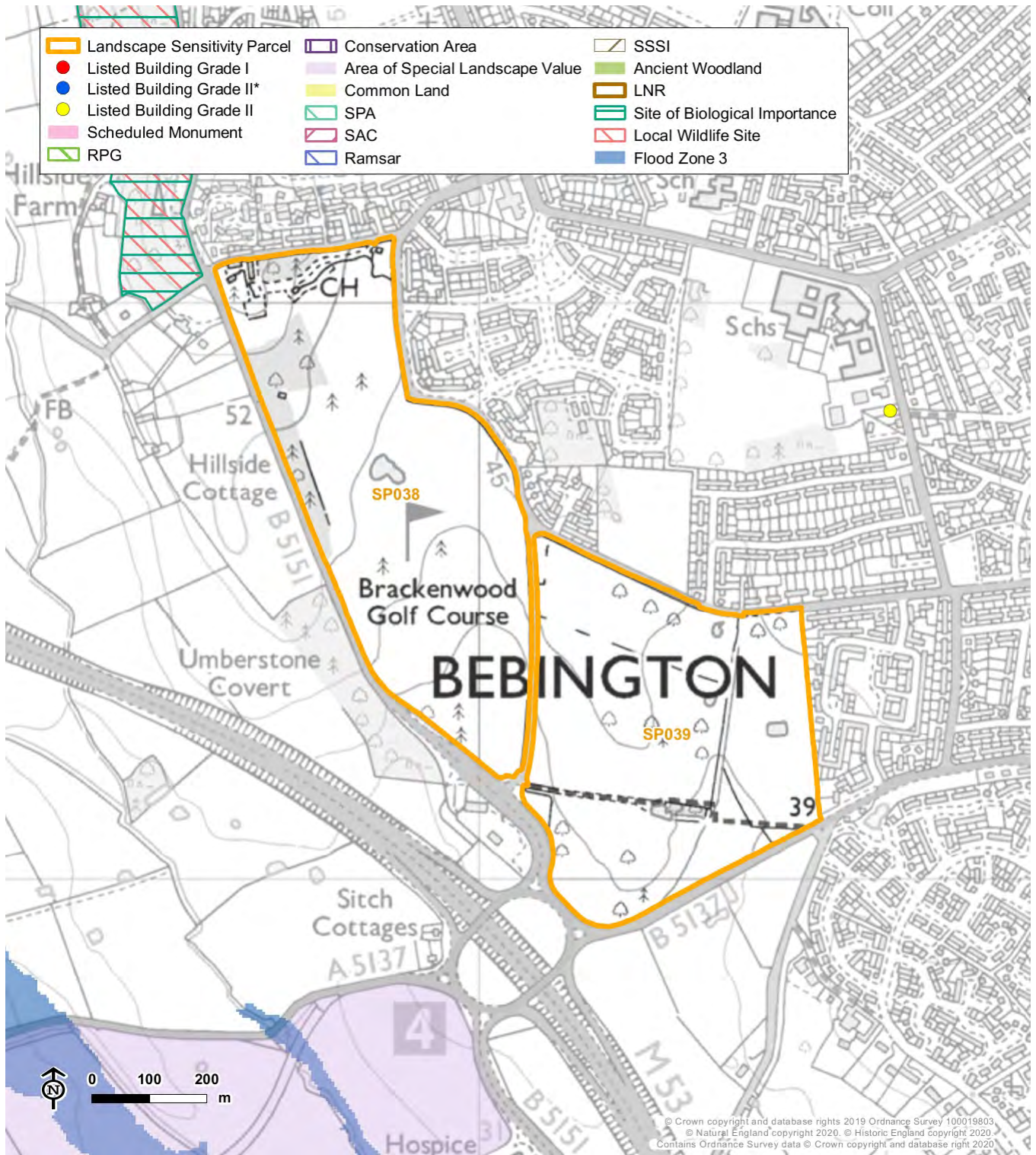


Figure A.44: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.45: Representative photos



A pond and scattered mature trees within the playing field



The golf course with scattered mature tree belts

#### Location and landscape character context

The area (incorporating SP038 and SP039) is situated in the centre of the borough. It lies to the west of Bebington, and to the south of Higher Bebington. Bracken Lane forms the northern boundary, and both Bracken Lane and Peter Prices Lane form the north-eastern boundary. The eastern edge is formed by a hedgerow, and abutted by residential properties. The B1537 Brimstage Road and B5151 Mount Road form the southern and western boundaries respectively.

The area lies within Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, which forms part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. Brackenwood Municipal Golf Course comprises the majority of the area and there is an open area of amenity grassland in the east at Poulton Recreation Ground. The gently sloping landform falls from north to south and a linear woodland belt is located along the western boundary. Brackenwood Road runs through the centre of the area.

#### Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

The area has a golf course with partially accessible woodland, a medium-scale public recreation area and several public rights of way cross the area. These provide connections along the length of the western and southern boundaries, and between Brackenwood Road and Brimstage Road, all contributing towards recreational value.

The table below incorporates these indicators of value into the assessment of sensitivity.

Assessment Criterion	Landscape Sensitivity Description
Physical Character (including topography and scale)	<p>The gently sloping landform falls from the north to the south within the area (from 60m AOD to 30m AOD) from elevated ground on the Higher Bebington settlement edge. In addition to the medium to large scale fields, this indicates lower levels of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>A large section of the area comprises Brackenwood Municipal Golf Course. This features an artificial and undulating topography, established according to the configuration of golf holes, indicating a lower level of sensitivity to residential development. However the introduction of tree clump planting associated with the golf course greens contribute towards the density of small-scale landscape features and increases the sensitivity.</p>

Natural Character	<p>Much of the area comprises the man-made landscape at Brackenwood Municipal Golf Course and Poulton Recreation Ground, which results in a lower sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Areas of valued semi-natural habitats, including scattered woodland throughout the area, much of which is cited as priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland. The linear woodland along the western boundary of the area on Mount Road extends along the ridgeline from Storeton Hill. Other valued natural features include small pockets of trees/ shrubs surrounding field ponds, including the large pond located within the recreation ground in the eastern section of the area.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>The area does not contain an identifiable field pattern given its usage as a golf course and recreation ground. The consequent lack of time depth indicates low levels of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>There are no heritage assets within the area, however it was screened as medium for archaeological issues by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. The area would therefore require further archaeological investigation as part of any proposed development.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The area is well integrated within the surrounding area, with the boundary formed by mature hedgerows and frequent trees, along with occasional woodland copses, indicating a higher sensitivity.</p> <p>The southern section of the area has a more open edge and is defined by wooden fencing and mature trees or hedgerows. Further development in the southern section could be in accordance with the pattern and form of the existing development, while providing opportunities to improve and further integrate the settlement edge.</p>
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>The area is visually enclosed by surrounding built development to the north and east, indicating a lower sensitivity to residential development. Mature hedgerow boundaries, featuring hedgerow trees, enclose much of the area and therefore, in combination with the frequent woodland copses, there is a low degree of inter-visibility with surrounding landscapes which also lowers the sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The recreation ground in the southern section of the area has semi-enclosed boundaries and has some inter-visibility with the surrounding landscape, indicating a higher sensitivity</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>New development would not be out of character and there is a lower sensitivity to residential development. The busy M53 to the west of the area also provides aural intrusion and supports this low sensitivity.</p>

### Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The linear belt of woodland, and the localised natural habitats and features (mature trees, hedgerows and field ponds) contribute towards a higher sensitivity. However, the lack of rural character, primarily in the form of Brackenwood Municipal Golf Course, the proximity of busy surrounding road junctions and the visual enclosure of the area, lower sensitivity. Overall, the area is considered to have **low** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

### Guidance<sup>21</sup>

*Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following general guidance applies to any development on this area:*

- Conserve and reinforce the network of native hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate development by increasing the presence of hedgerow trees and providing additional native woodland planting.

<sup>21</sup> The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that residential development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

- Retain and manage areas of deciduous woodland within the area. Pursue opportunities to extend native woodland across undeveloped parts of the area as part of an integrated green infrastructure network connected to the surrounding landscape, to protect visual amenity and to help integrate potential development into the landscape.
- Conserve the mixture of wooded and open field ponds (marl pits) which are characteristic features of the area.
- Protect and enhance the existing public rights of way and promote further opportunities to increase access and enjoyment of the landscape in association with any new development.

Area reference: SP040

Figure A.46: Map of the area with designations / constraints

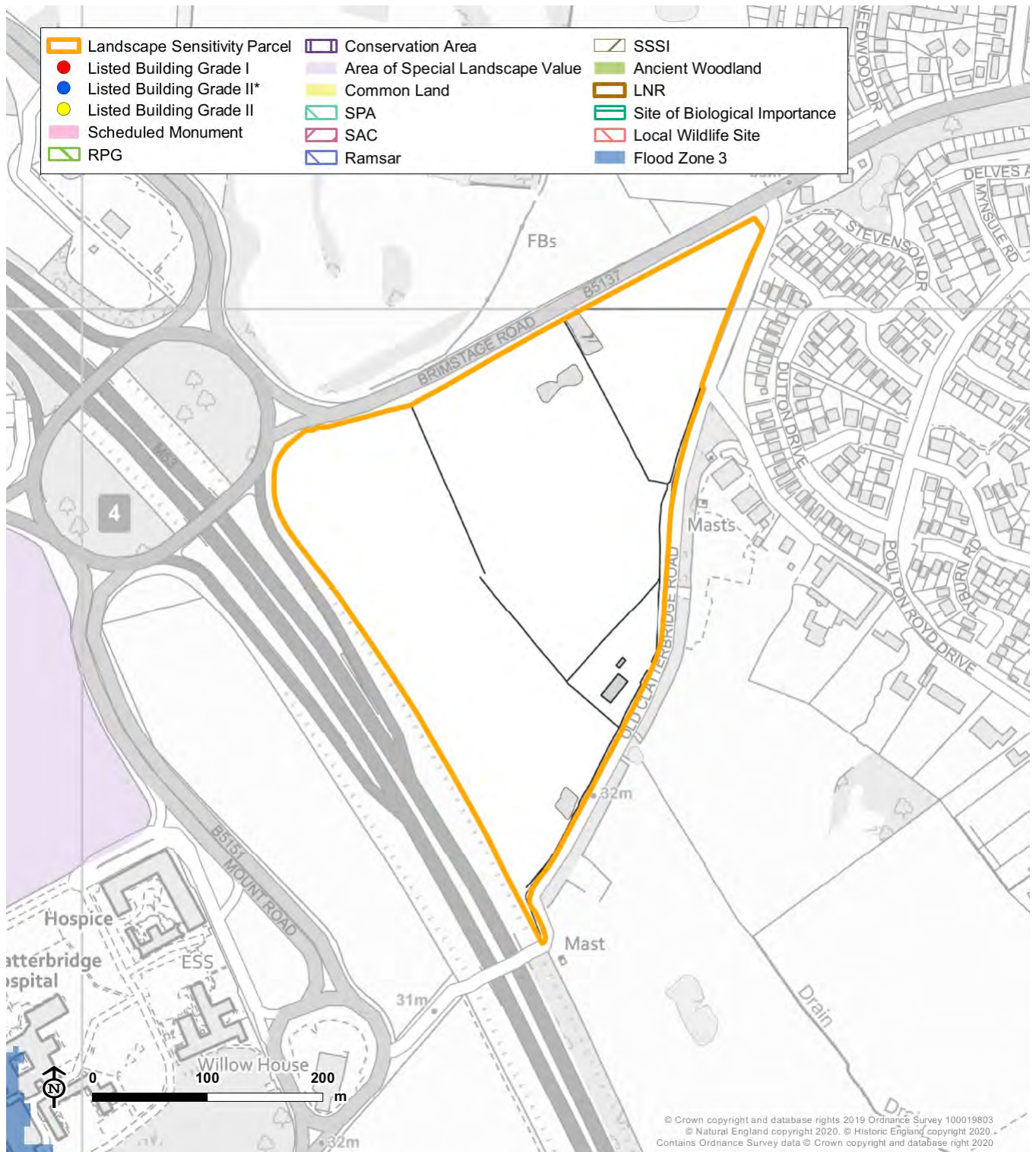




Figure A.47: Aerial photograph of the area

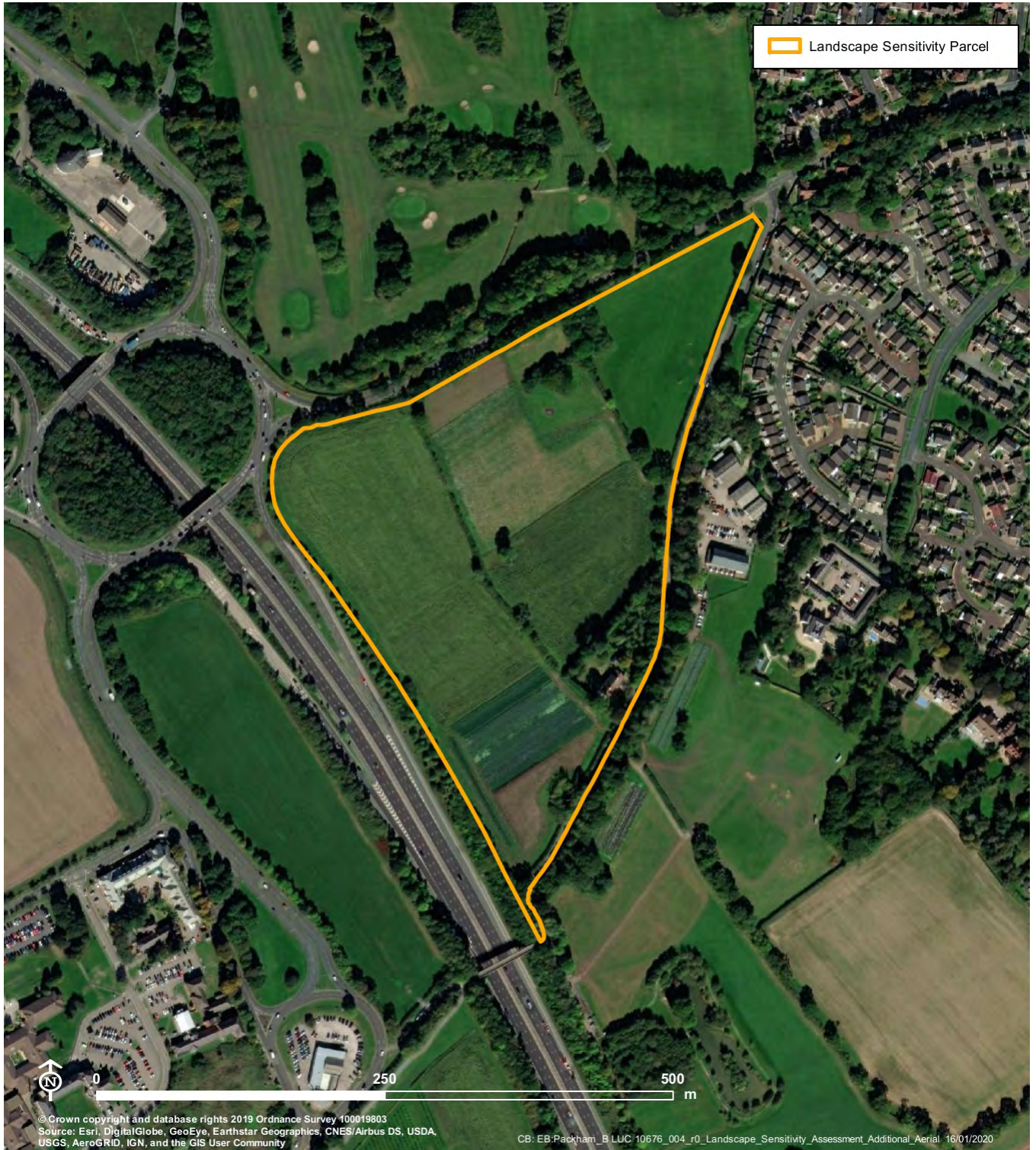


Figure A.48: Representative photos



Open boundary at Old Clatterbridge Road and Brimstage Road with a view south west across pastoral fields,



Mature hedgerow boundary along Old Clatterbridge Road

#### Location and landscape character context

The area is situated towards the centre of the borough, to the west of Poulton-Spital, and to the south west of Lower Bebington. The B5137 Brimstage Road and Old Clatterbridge Road form the northern and eastern boundaries respectively. The M53 forms the western boundary.

The area lies within Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, which forms part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. The area is characterised by a flat to gently sloping landform. It comprises both arable and pastoral farmland in the form of small-medium sized fields, with hedgerow boundaries and scattered woodland copses, and pockets of trees surrounding field ponds. The settlement edge of Poulton-Spital abuts the north east corner of the area.

#### Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local).

There is no public access into the area which precludes recreational value.

The table below incorporates these indicators of value into the assessment of sensitivity.

Assessment Criterion	Landscape Sensitivity Description
Physical Character (including topography and scale)	The flat to gently sloping landform falls from east to west (from 39m AOD to 30m AOD) from the Poulton-Spital settlement edge toward the M53 in the south-western corner, indicating lower levels of sensitivity to residential development. However, the area contains a mixture of geometric and irregular small-medium sized fields, bound by hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, alongside woodland copses, which provides a modest density of small-scale landscape features, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.
Natural Character	A large proportion of the area comprises areas that are farmed or managed, with limited coverage of semi-natural habitats resulting in a lower sensitivity to residential development.  Valued natural features consist of the hedgerows (some fragmented) with mature hedgerow trees that bound the area boundaries, small woodland copses surrounding field ponds and woodland along the M53 which increase the sensitivity to residential development.

Historic landscape character	The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation indicates that the area contains time depth which increases sensitivity to residential development. The field pattern within the area is categorised as a Post Medieval Field System (post-1600) and consists of small-medium scale fields. Field ponds (marl pits) are scattered across the area and were historically areas used to extract marl deposits to be used as mineral fertilisers, also indicating a higher sensitivity to residential development and the area may also have archaeological importance.
Character and setting of existing settlement	The settlement edge is well integrated by mature hedgerows and frequent hedgerow trees, along with occasional woodland copses, indicating a higher sensitivity.
Views and visual character including skylines	The area is predominantly enclosed by hedgerows and woodland copses which indicate a lower sensitivity to residential development.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	Although largely an undeveloped and rural agricultural landscape, there is some influence from surrounding development, including audible intrusion from the busy B5137 Brimstage Road and the M53 limiting its sense of remoteness and tranquillity.

### Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The flat to gently sloping landform, limited natural character, visual enclosure and surrounding human influences, lower the sensitivity across the area. However, the small-medium scale fields, valued natural features (including field ponds, mature hedgerows and woodland copses) increase the sensitivity. Overall, the area is considered to have **low-moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

### Guidance<sup>22</sup>

*Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following general guidance applies to any development on this area:*

- Conserve and reinforce the network of native hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate development by increasing the presence of hedgerow trees and providing additional native woodland planting.
- Restore hedgerow boundaries where these are fragmented.
- Retain and manage areas of deciduous woodland within the area. Pursue opportunities to extend native woodland across undeveloped parts of the area as part of an integrated green infrastructure network connected to the surrounding landscape, to protect visual amenity and to help integrate potential development into the landscape.
- Conserve the mixture of wooded and open field ponds (marl pits) which are characteristic features of the area.
- Avoid visually intrusive development on elevated areas along the north eastern corner of the area.

<sup>22</sup> The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that residential development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

Area reference: SP0042

Figure A.49: Map of the area with designations / constraints

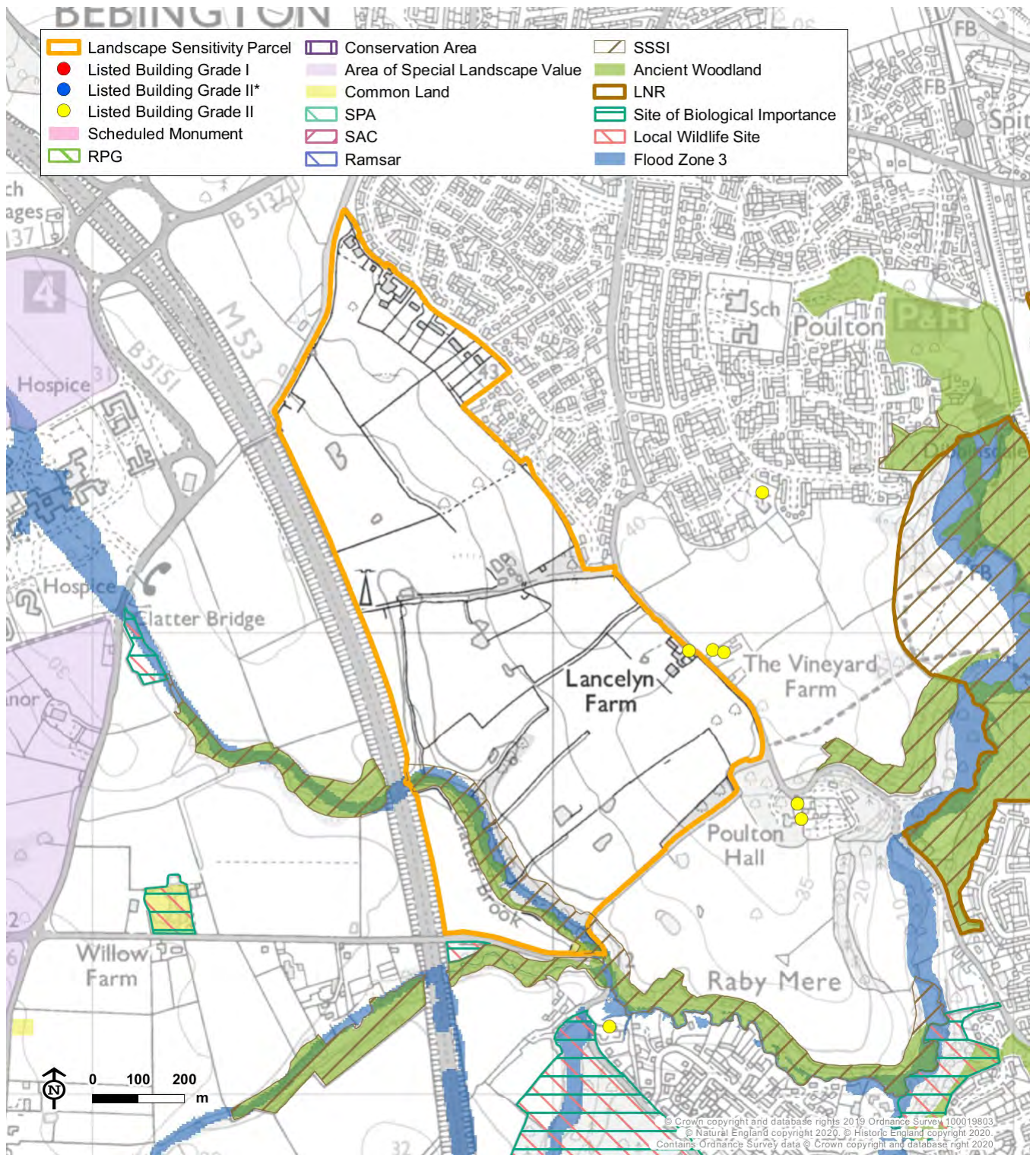


Figure A.50: Aerial photograph of the area

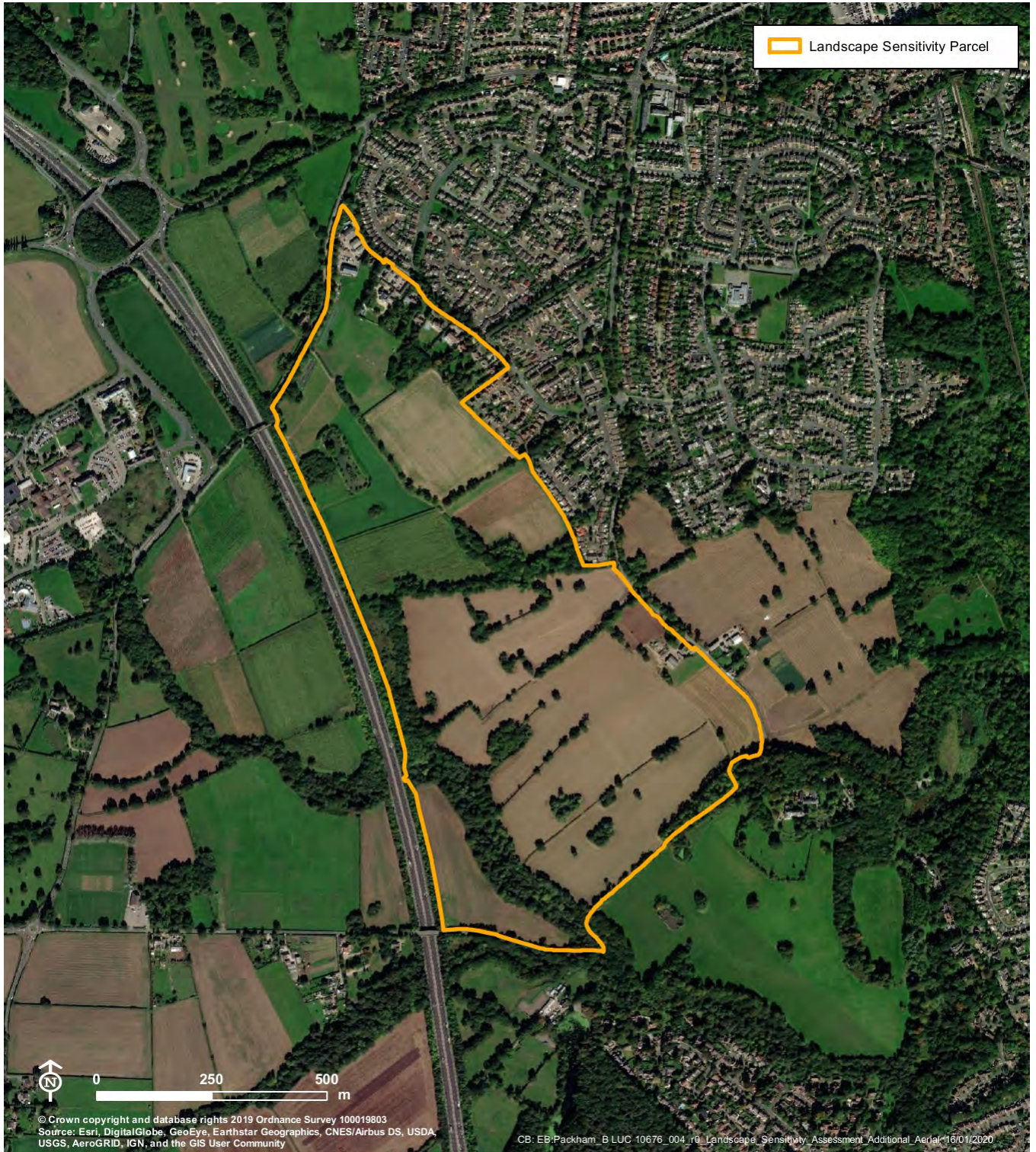


Figure A.51: Representative photos



Gently sloping landform. Thornton Wood encloses the northern boundary of this medium scale field



Fragmented hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees form the boundaries of the fields in the centre of the area

### Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the south east of the borough and lies to the south west of Poulton-Spital. Old Clatterbridge Road forms the northern boundary, and both the settlement edge of Poulton-Spital and Poulton Road form the eastern boundary. Poulton Hall Road/Thornton Common Road and the M53 form the southern and western boundaries respectively.

The area lies within Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, which forms part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. The area is characterised by a gently sloping landform, falling from the northern eastern edge to the south, with an incised valley along the wooded course of Clatter Brook in the south west. It comprises arable farmland in the form of medium-large scale fields, with some pastoral farmland along the northern boundary with a network of permissive footpaths.

### Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). However, the wooded valley along the Clatter Brook is designated as part of the Dibbinsdale SSSI for its ancient woodland.

There are fishing lakes in the north, however public access is limited, which limits recreational value.

The table below incorporates these indicators of value into the assessment of sensitivity.

Assessment Criterion	Landscape Sensitivity Description
Physical Character (including topography and scale)	<p>The gently sloping landform falls from east to west (from 43m AOD to 25m AOD) from high ground on the settlement edge near Poulton Royd Drive indicating lower levels of sensitivity to residential development. However, the narrow wooded valley along Clatter Brook cuts deeply through the landscape, increasing sensitivity to residential development locally.</p> <p>The area is overlain by a pattern comprising a mixture of geometric, rectangular and irregular fields that are medium to large in size and formed by hedgerows (occasionally fragmented) with hedgerow trees and some linear woodland copses. This indicates a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Natural Character	<p>Much of the area comprises areas that are intensively farmed or managed, although this is softened by the frequent woodland copses and hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. There is some limited existing</p>

	<p>development (dwellings and farms along Poulton Royd Drive, clusters of buildings along Old Clatterbridge Road, a farm along Poulton Road, a fishing lake, and a couple of masts) that results in a lower sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Pockets of higher sensitivity to residential development exist where there are areas of valued semi-natural habitats, including Priority Habitats Lowland Mixed Broad-leaf Woodland, Wet Woodland and Reedbeds. The extensive ancient woodland in the Clatter Brook valley is designated as an SSSI. Other valued natural features include hedgerows enhanced with mature hedgerow trees (mostly oak) and small pockets of trees/ shrubs surrounding the numerous field ponds which characterise the area.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>The Cheshire HLC indicates that the area contains a relatively diverse time depth which increases sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>There is a high concentration of Ancient Landscapes (pre-1600) within the area; namely the medium-scale irregular field pattern in the centre of the area, adjacent to Clatter Brook, which is categorised as Medieval Town Fields. Further north, there is also an area of semi-regular Post Medieval Landscapes, categorised as Post Medieval Planned Enclosures and in the south-western corner, categorised as Parliamentary Enclosures. This time depth and scale increases sensitivity to residential development in these areas. Frequent field ponds (marl pits) are scattered across the ancient landscapes and were historically used to extract marl deposits to be used as mineral fertilisers, also resulting in a higher sensitivity.</p> <p>Along the eastern boundary of the area is an area of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Landscapes, categorised as 20<sup>th</sup> Century Agricultural Improvement consisting of a large scale field, and in the northern corner is an area of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Settlement, all reducing the sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>There are limited heritage assets important to landscape character except for a Grade II listed farmhouse along the eastern boundary on Poulton Road (Lancelyn Farmhouse). There is also an area of archaeological importance that falls partly within the area boundary in the south east.</p> <p>The area was also screened as high for archaeological issues by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. The area would therefore require further archaeological investigation as part of any proposed development.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The area is well integrated within the surrounding area, with the boundaries formed by mature hedgerows (occasionally fragmented) and frequent mature trees, along with occasional woodland copses, indicating a higher sensitivity.</p> <p>The area provides a rural setting to Poulton-Spital. This results in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>The area is generally enclosed, particularly along the M53, due to hedgerows and trees and linear woodlands, indicating a lower sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>From more elevated areas there are views to the distant Welsh hills and pylon towers along the wooded horizon line. This inter-visibility with the surrounding landscape indicates a higher sensitivity.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Although largely a rural agricultural landscape, the area is influenced by urban fringe elements including farm buildings, residential dwellings and radio masts reducing sensitivity. The area is influenced by the proximity of surrounding development, including the audible intrusion of the M53, disturbing tranquillity and therefore decreasing the sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>However, there is a sense of remoteness away from the urban edge within the area particularly along the wooded valley of Clatter Brook and its tributaries. This creates enclosure and a perceived naturalness, resulting in a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p>

### Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The presence of historic field patterns, a wooded valley, localised natural habitats, and the experiential sense of remoteness in parts of the area, increases the sensitivity to residential development. However, the gently sloping landform, intensively farmed character, the presence of human influences, including surrounding development and the M53, lower sensitivity. Overall, the area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

### Guidance<sup>23</sup>

*Given the overall assessment of landscape sensitivity outlined above, the following general guidance applies to any development on this area:*

- Conserve and reinforce the network of native hedgerows and seek to create a stronger landscape structure to integrate development by increasing the presence of hedgerow trees and providing additional native woodland planting.
- Restore hedgerow boundaries where these are fragmented and retain mature hedgerow trees.
- Retain and manage mature trees and areas of deciduous woodland within the area. Pursue opportunities to extend the coverage of trees and native woodland across undeveloped parts of the area as part of an integrated green infrastructure network connected to the surrounding landscape, to protect visual amenity and to help integrate potential development into the landscape.
- Conserve the mixture of wooded and open field ponds (marl pits) which are characteristic features of the area.
- Avoid visually intrusive development on elevated areas along the eastern edge of the area.
- Manage the area in accordance with the Dibbinsdale, Raby Mere and Eastham Country Park Nature Improvement Area ecological and habitat management priorities. This includes: woodland management to improve structure and quality of ancient woodland, wet woodland and rivers; management to eradicate Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam which pose significant threat to woodland and wetland habitats; and, manage areas of existing wetland to maintain the extent of scrub growth.

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<sup>23</sup> The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that residential development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.