

Area reference: SP043

Figure A.52: Map of the area with designations / constraints

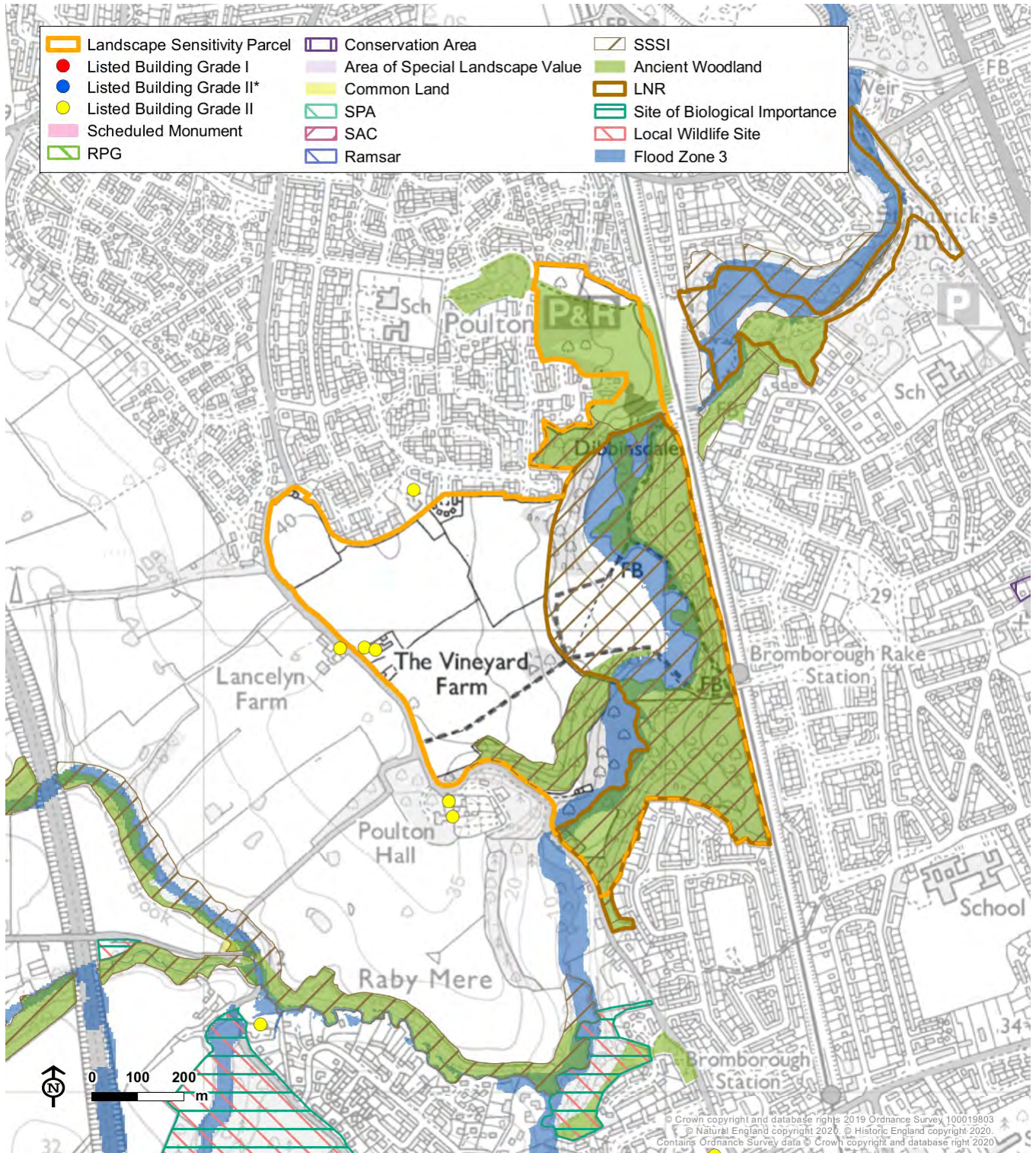


Figure A.53: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.54: Representative photos



Semi-enclosed field boundaries and the visible Poulton-Spital settlement edge along the horizon line



Public right of way through the enclosed Marfords Wood

Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the south-east of the borough. It lies to the south of Poulton, west of Bromborough, and north of Cunningham Drive, Brookhurst. The urban edge of Poulton-Spital forms the northern boundary and the Wirral Line railway line forms the eastern boundary. The urban edge of Cunningham Drive, Brookhurst and Poulton Road form the southern and south-western boundaries respectively. Poulton Road also forms the western boundary.

The area is situated in Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, which forms part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. The eastern section of the area has an undulating landform, characterised by woodland, and open grassland. The western section of the area has a flat to gently sloping landform and comprises arable farmland.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). However, part of Brotherton Park and Dibbinsdale within the eastern section of the area is a key feature that is valued for its wildlife and is designated as a Local Nature Reserve. Footpath Wood, Marfords Wood, and Railway Wood are Ancient Woodland.

The Brotherton Park and Dibbinsdale LNR in the eastern section of the area is accessible via a strong network of public rights of way, routed throughout the woodland and provides a recreational resource for local residents. The western section of the area is used as working farmland for crops and therefore has limited recreational value except for a public right of way which connects Poulton Road to the woodland in the eastern section of the area.

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 eastern section of the area has an undulating and distinct landform (from 10m AOD to 35m AOD), predominantly characterised by mature woodland, small enclosures of grassland, ponds and narrow watercourses. The topography and network of small-scale landscape features indicate a high sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The western section of the area has a flat to gently sloping landform (from 40m AOD to 30m AOD), falling from north to south. Medium sized fields are formed by hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, and there are</p>

	scattered wooded copses and mature trees within the fields, providing a modest density of small-scale landscape features also resulting in a high level of sensitivity to residential development.
Natural Character	<p>The eastern section of the area is characterised by semi-natural broad-leaved woodland located along Dibbinsdale Brook, designated as part of the Brotherton Park and Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve and Dibbinsdale SSSI indicating a higher sensitivity to residential development. This includes extensive broadleaved woodland, including Ash-wych elm woodland and alder woodland along the valley floor, fen pasture and neutral grassland, and reed swamps. Priority Habitats include Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Wet Woodland, Lowland Wood-pasture and Parkland.</p> <p>The western section of the area is farmed through arable practices (although softened by woodland copses, mature hedgerows and scattered trees), with extensive areas of Priority Habitat Lowland Fens.</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>Marfords Wood, the area of woodland within the eastern section of the area, is Ancient Woodland. The woodland in the north eastern corner of the area, is also categorised as Post Medieval Woodland which indicates a high sensitivity to residential development. The woodland surrounding the open grassland in the centre of the area is categorised as 20th Century Woodland, indicating a lower sensitivity.</p> <p>The fields in the western section of the area are medium-scale 20th Century Fieldscapes, categorised as 20th Century Agricultural Improvement which indicates a lower sensitivity.</p> <p>A cluster of listed buildings at Vineyard Farm on Poulton Road are important to landscape character. There are also Grade II listed buildings adjacent to the northern and south-western boundaries of the area respectively and an area of archaeological importance that falls partly within the area boundary in the west, which indicates a higher sensitivity surrounding these locations.</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 existing development surrounding the area is generally well integrated into the landscape by hedgerows and woodlands, resulting in a high sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>A fairly limited section of the residential edge along the northern boundary is open and exposed in places, forming a 'hard edge' to the adjoining landscape and development could provide opportunities to improve and integrate the settlement edge, indicating lower levels of sensitivity. However, in general, the area provides a rural setting to this settlement edge with uninterrupted views afforded from some areas towards Marfords Wood, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity.</p>
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>The area is visually enclosed by woodland along the eastern and southern boundaries, with a low degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes, indicating a lower sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The elevated ground along its northern edge is open in some areas and therefore has some inter-visibility with the surrounding landscape. This results in a higher sensitivity.</p> <p>Field boundaries within the eastern portion of the area are typically formed by low hedgerows resulting in a sense of openness and inter-visibility with the surrounding landscape, including to St Barnabas Church spire in Bromborough, above the wooded horizon, which increases sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>This is a largely undeveloped landscape with a strong rural character, with little influence from surrounding development. The wooded areas within the eastern section of the area have a sense of remoteness and tranquillity, which indicates a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The busy M53 to the west provides aural intrusion, perceptible throughout the area, which in addition to the railway line along the eastern boundary, lowers sensitivity.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Within the eastern section of the area, the presence of Ancient Woodland, Dibbinsdale SSSI and Brotherton Park and Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve; localised natural habitats including Priority Habitat Lowland Fens; and the containment, sense of remoteness and tranquillity provided by the woodland increases sensitivity to residential development. However, the aural intrusion from the M53 and proximity to the railway line lowers sensitivity. Overall, the

eastern section of the area is considered to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

Within the north-western section of the area, the localised natural habitats and valued natural features (hedgerows, mature trees and wooded copses), and the role the area plays in providing a rural setting to the existing residential development increase sensitivity. However, the flat to gently sloping landform, farmed character, little time depth, surrounding human influences and the visual openness provided along some boundaries lowers sensitivity. Overall, the north-western section of the area is considered to have a **moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

Guidance²⁴

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.
- Retain and manage mature trees within the area. Pursue opportunities to extend the coverage of trees 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.
- Ensure that the intimate character of the woodland is retained.
- Protect and enhance public right of way connections to promote further opportunities to increase access and enjoyment of the landscape in association with any new development.
- Conserve, enhance and manage the other valued habitats within the area. Manage the area in accordance with the Dibbinsdale, Raby Mere and Eastham Country Park Nature Improvement Area ecological and habitat management priorities, which 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 threats to woodland and wetland habitats; and, manage areas of existing wetland to maintain the extent of scrub growth.

²⁴ 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: SP044

Figure A.55: Map of the area with designations / constraints

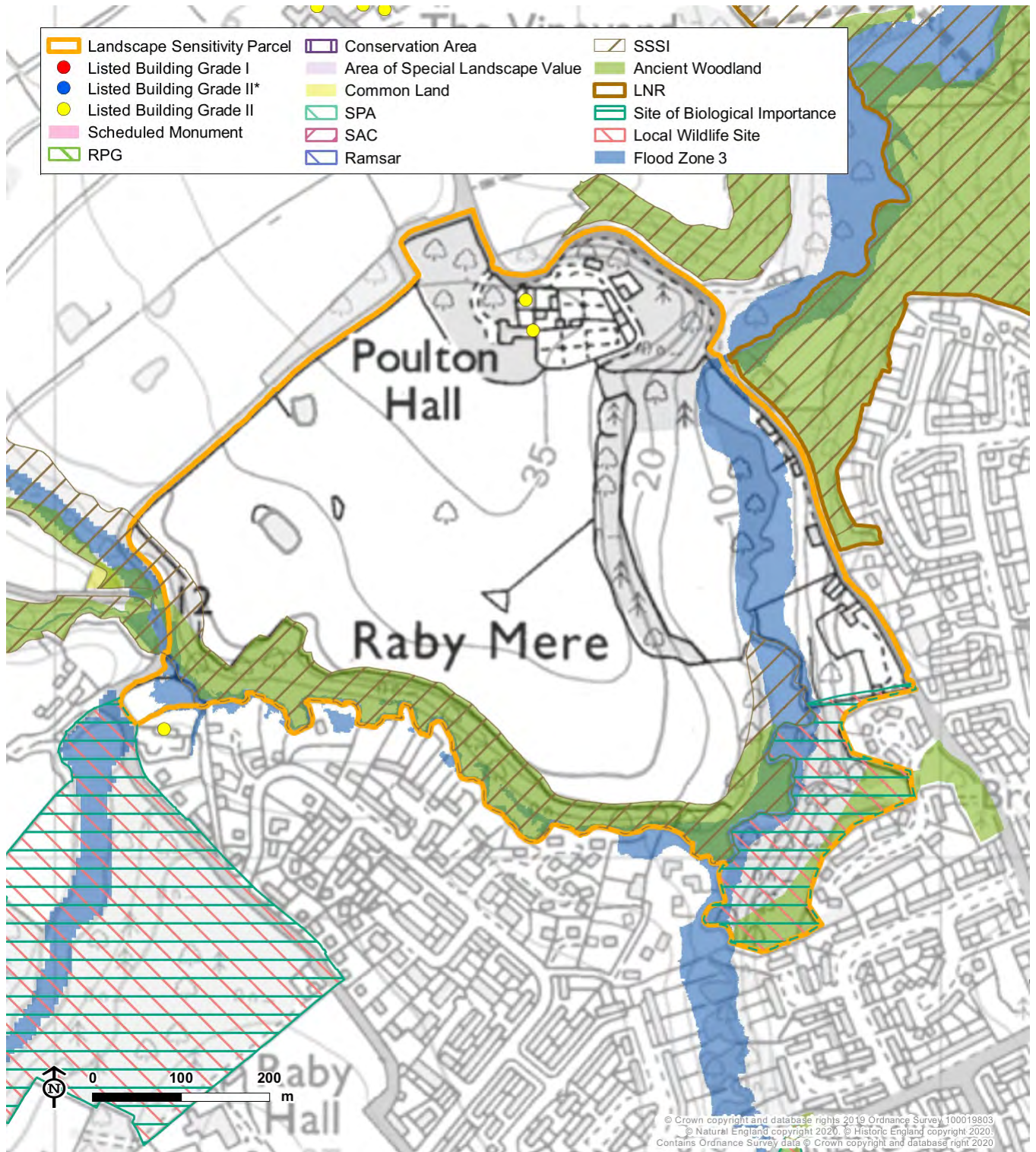


Figure A.56: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.57: Representative photos



Wooded boundary to Poulton Hall, along Dibbinsdale Road



Pastoral farmland with wooded edges and scattered trees

Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the south-east of the borough. It lies to the east of the settlements at Marfords Avenue, and to the north of Raby Drive. Dibbinsdale Road forms the eastern boundary, Poulton Road the northern boundary and Poulton Hall Road the north-western and western boundaries. Poulton Hall is located within the area and its associated estate abuts these boundaries. The wooded settlement edge forms part of the eastern and southern boundary, and the course of Dibbinsdale Brook forms the south-western boundary.

The area is situated in Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, which forms part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. The majority of the area comprises medium-large scale pastoral fields which are gently sloping, with the wooded course of Dibbinsdale Brook and Clatter Brook meandering along the periphery of the area.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). However, the wooded course of the brooks that cross the area are a key landscape feature valued for their nature conservation value and designated as part of the Dibbinsdale SSSI.

There is no public access into the area resulting in there being no 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 area has a gently sloping landform that falls from the elevated ground at Poulton Hall on the north edge to the southern and western corners of the area (from 35m AOD to 10m AOD) indicating lower levels of sensitivity to residential development. However, the narrow wooded valley formed along the course of Dibbinsdale and Clatter Brook cuts through the landscape, increasing sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The area is overlain by a landscape pattern comprising irregular fields that are medium to large in size, and mostly enclosed by wooded boundaries and hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, providing 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 an area managed as pasture farmland, which indicates lower sensitivity to residential development, but this is softened by mature parkland trees and strong woodland edges. There is some limited development present at Poulton Hall and scattered dwellings along Dibbinsdale Road.</p> <p>The strong natural qualities of the wooded course of the brooks increase the sensitivity of the area due to their nature conservation interest, including designation as part of the Dibbinsdale SSSI and as Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and Wet Woodland. The Marfords, Brookhurst in the south east is designated as a Site of Biological Importance/Local Wildlife Site and there is extensive Ancient Woodland at Thornton Wood/Intake Wood along the southern boundary. Other valued natural features include 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 varied time depth with some historic features important to landscape character which increases sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The pasture farmland which covers much of the area is an area of 20th Century Enclosed Parkland, consisting of medium-large scale regular fields, reducing sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Poulton Hall and the Old Brewhouse to the north east are both Grade II listed buildings and the north-eastern area of the area is an area of archaeological importance. The estate immediately surrounding the hall is categorised as Post Medieval Ornamental Parkland which increases sensitivity to residential development. 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>The linear woodland in the centre of the area is categorised as a Post Medieval Plantation and Ancient Woodland extends along the brook valley.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The area provides a rural setting to Poulton Hall, and the other clustered dwellings along Dibbinsdale Road, which residential development would adversely affect.</p> <p>The area also provides a wooded setting to the settlement edges at Raby Drive and Marfords Avenue Bromborough. The area forms an important part in the perception of a gap between these settlements, indicating a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>The area is visually enclosed by the wooded edge on its boundaries to the north, east, and south while mature hedgerow boundaries with hedgerow trees, enclose the western boundary and as a result, there is a low degree of visibility with surrounding landscapes which lowers the sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The parkland character of the area is adjoined by narrow rural roads, with little influence from surrounding development, indicates a higher sensitivity to residential development. Aural intrusion from the M53, to the west of the area, disturbs tranquillity and lowers 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 strong natural and rural qualities of the area, including the wooded course of the meandering brooks, much of which is ancient and the valued natural features (mature parkland trees, hedgerows and field ponds), the role the area plays in providing a rural setting to Poulton Hall and a perceived gap between surrounding settlements increase sensitivity. However, the generally flat landform, and the visual enclosure provided by the existing woodland lowers sensitivity. Overall, the area is considered to have **moderate-high** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

Guidance²⁵

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.
- Preserve the natural meandering character of the Dibbinsdale Brook, avoiding development that will change their course or introduce artificial banks.
- 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 threats to woodland and wetland habitats; and, manage areas of existing wetland to maintain the extent of scrub growth.

²⁵ 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: SP045

Figure A.58: Map of the area with designations / constraints

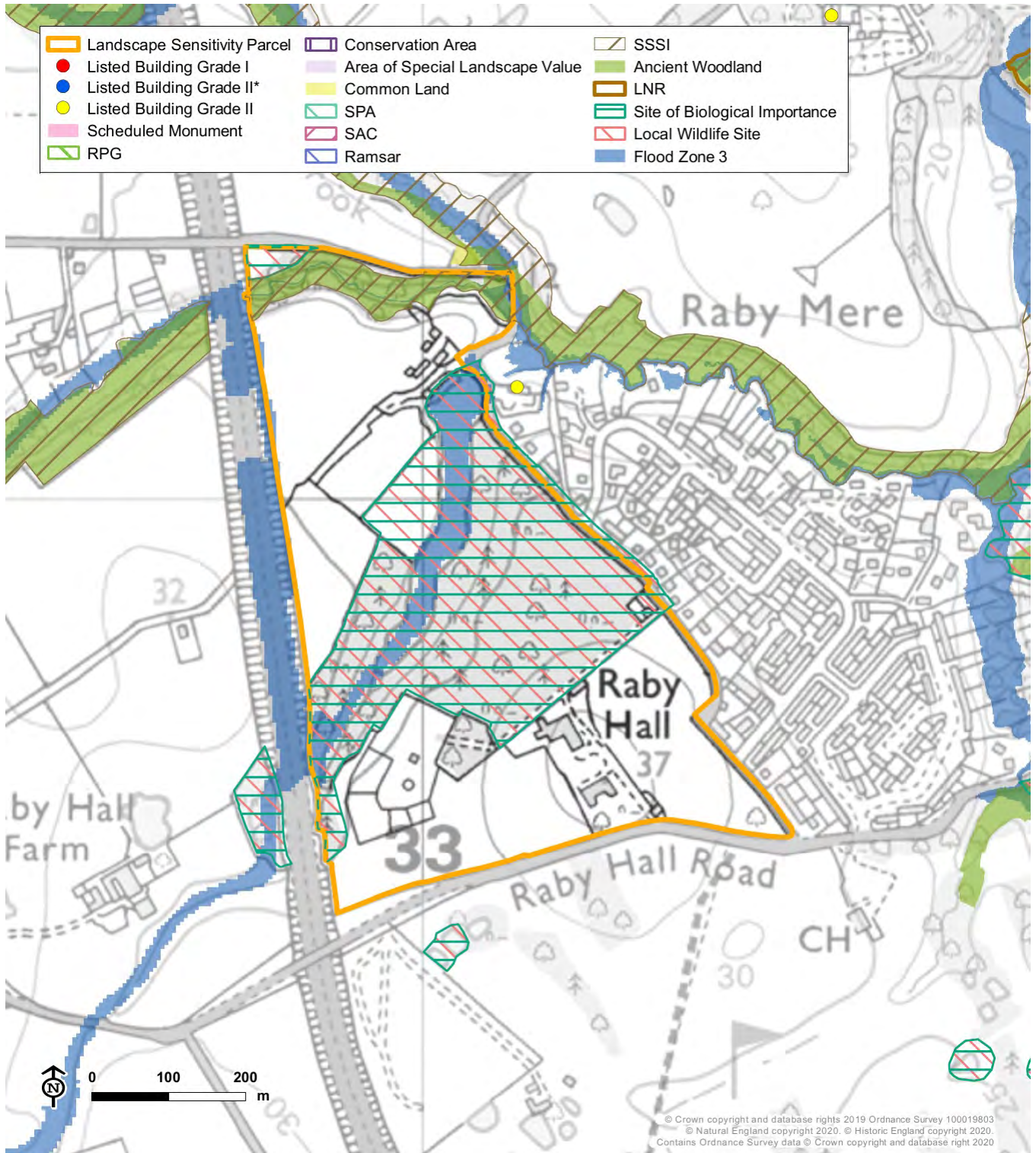


Figure A.59: Aerial photograph of the area

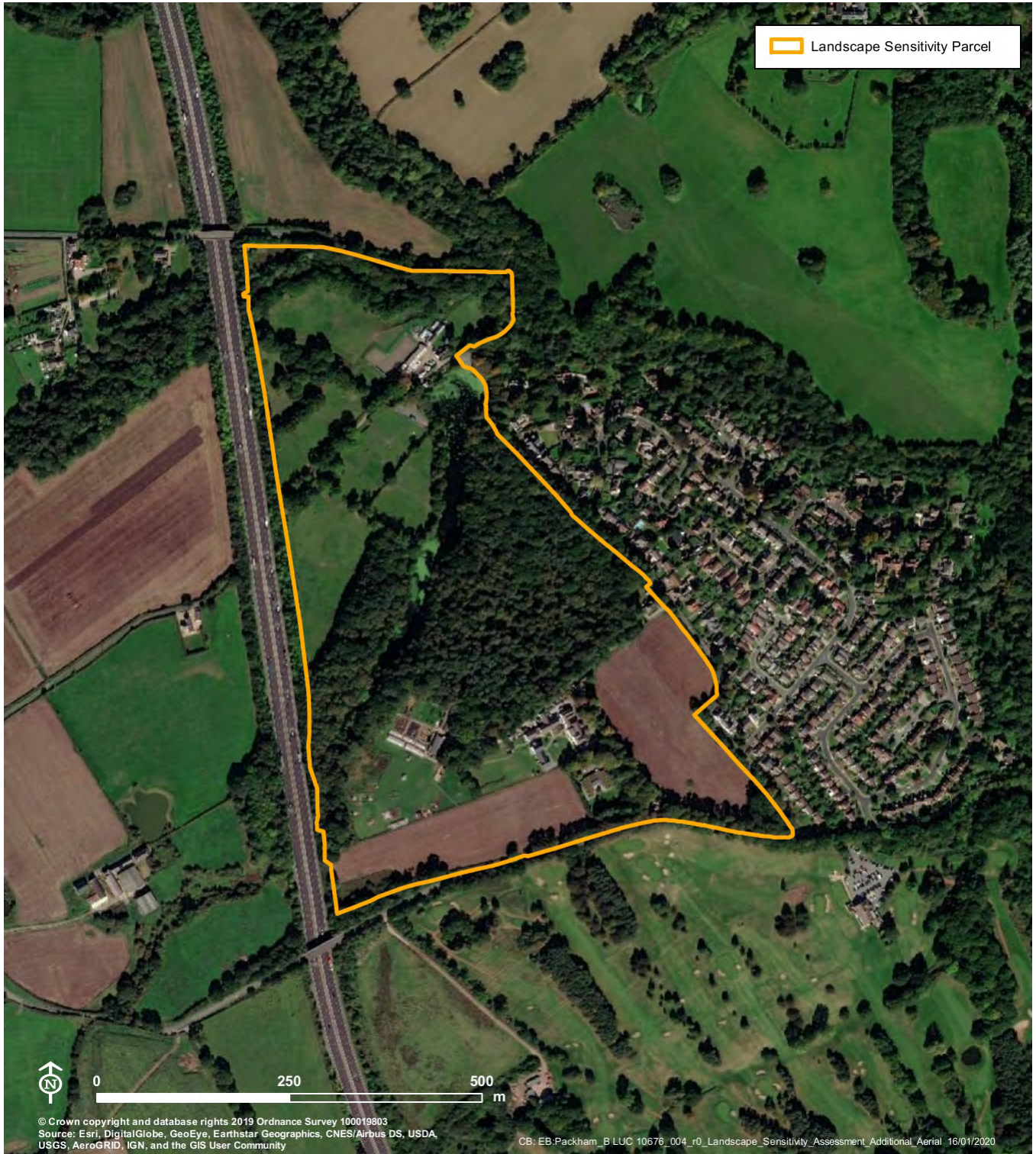


Figure A.60: Representative photos



Gently sloping pasture, with the settlement edge at Raby Mere visible through the wooded boundary



The wooded edge along Blakeley Road, opposite the fishing lake

Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the south-east of the borough. It lies to the west of the settlements at Raby Drive. Thornton Common Road forms the northern boundary, and Blakeley Road the eastern boundary, with the settlements at Raby Drive abutting this edge. Raby Hall Road and the M53 form the southern and western boundaries respectively.

The area lies within the Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, which forms part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. The area contains a mix of woodland and both pastoral and arable small-medium sized fields. The area is gently undulating, with a narrow wooded valley along the northern boundary of the area, and a localised high point at Raby Hall along the southern boundary. The area also contains Raby Mere, which is managed for fishing, and a small number of residential dwellings.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). However, Raby Mere woodland, within the centre of the area, is valued for biodiversity, being a designated Site of Biological Importance /Local Wildlife Site. Foxes Wood, a linear woodland along the northern boundary, is Ancient Woodland.

Public access into the area is restricted, however Raby Mere is a popular fishing area, resulting in there being limited 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 area has a gently undulating landform (from 37m AOD to 15m AOD); falling from elevated ground at Raby Hall in the south of the area, indicating lower levels of sensitivity to residential development. However, the incised wooded valley along the tributary of Clatter Brook along the northern boundary of the area and along the settlements at Raby Drive contributes positively to landscape character; indicating higher levels of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The area is overlain by a mix of geometric, rectangular and irregular fields to the north and south of the area, that are small to medium in size and mostly bound by hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, providing a</p>

	modest density of small-scale landscape features, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.
Natural Character	<p>The northern and southern sections of the area comprise areas that are farmed or managed, although softened by wooded boundaries and hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. There is some existing development present (a farm and buildings associated with the fishing lake to the north, and Raby Hall and its ancillary buildings to the south of the area), although this is rural in character.</p> <p>The Raby Mere lake and the large area of woodland in the centre is designated as Raby Mere Woodland Site of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site. The wooded valley along the northern boundary of the area is part of the Dibbinsdale SSSI and includes Foxes Wood Ancient Woodland. These are the largest of several areas of valued semi-natural habitats within the area, which include Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Lowland Wood Pasture and Parkland and Wet Woodland, which indicates a higher sensitivity to residential development. Other valued natural features include clumps of woodland along the area boundaries, narrow watercourses which feed into Raby Mere lake, field ponds surrounded by trees /shrubs, and hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees.</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>The wooded valley along the northern boundary comprises Ancient Woodland. Raby Mere lake is a natural water body, and the woodland which surrounds it is categorised as Post Medieval Plantation. The area immediately around Raby Hall is categorised as Post Medieval Ornamental Parkland. The small-medium scale fields both north and south of the area are categorised as Late Post Medieval Agricultural Improvement. These features contribute towards a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>There are no known heritage assets within the area. The area may be of archaeological importance.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	The area provides a rural setting to the settlement edge at Raby Drive, Raby Hall and the other residential dwellings within the area, which further residential development would adversely affect. The settlement edge is well integrated into the surrounding landscape with a mix of wooded boundaries and low hedgerows with mature trees, which indicates a higher sensitivity to residential development.
Views and visual character including skylines	The area is visually enclosed by woodland and hedgerows which indicates a lower sensitivity to residential development.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The pastoral and arable land uses and sense of remoteness through the enclosure provided by woodlands, woodland copses and hedgerow field boundaries, results in a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Sensitivity is lowered where modern development is present. The M53 along the western boundary, which runs through a cutting, introduces significant aural intrusion to the area.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The wooded watercourse, extensive natural habitats, much of which is designated as a SSSI and LWS, and the rural wooded setting provided to the settlements at Raby Mere increases sensitivity. However, the influence of existing development and visual enclosure lowers sensitivity. Overall, the area is considered to have a **moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development. The Raby Mere lake and its associated woodland and the wooded brook valley have a higher sensitivity to residential development.

Guidance²⁶

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.
- Retain and manage mature trees within the area. Pursue opportunities to extend the coverage of trees 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.
- Preserve the natural meandering character of the existing watercourses, avoiding development that will change their course or introduce artificial banks.
- Conserve, enhance and manage any other valued habitats that have formed within the area, including clumps of woodlands along the area boundaries, narrow watercourses which feed into Raby Mere lake, field ponds surrounded by trees /shrubs, and hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees.
- 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 threats to woodland and wetland habitats; and, manage areas of existing wetland to maintain the extent of scrub growth.

²⁶ 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: SP046

Figure A.61: Map of the area with designations / constraints

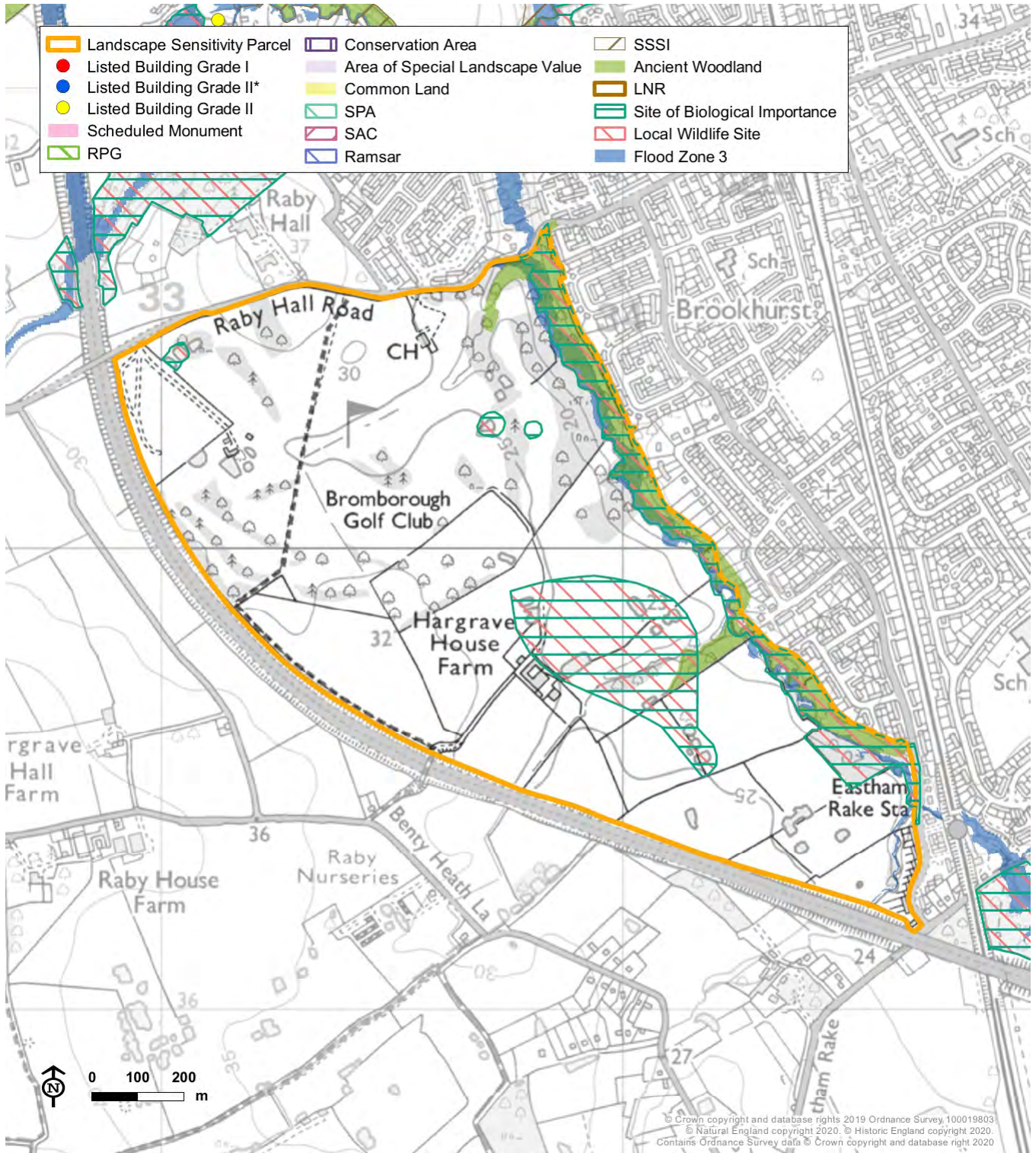


Figure A.62: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.63: Representative photos



Amenity grass, clumps of trees and sand bunkers at Bromborough Golf Course



Gently undulating pasture with a woodland edge

Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the south east of the borough. It lies to the west of Brookhurst, and to the south of the settlements at Raby Drive. Raby Hall Road forms the northern boundary, and the settlement edge of Brookhurst forms the eastern boundary. Brookhurst Avenue and the M53 form the south-eastern and western boundaries respectively.

The area lies within Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, which forms part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. Bromborough Golf Course comprises the northern part of the area. Hargrave House Farm and an area of gently undulating arable and pastoral farmland comprise the southern part of the area. A linear woodland following the course of the meandering Dibbinsdale Brook runs along the eastern boundary of the area at Plymyard Dale and a small ribbon of residential development is located in the south east corner adjacent to the settlement edge at Brookhurst.

Landscape value

This area is not subject to any landscape designations (national or local). However, the area has several locations valued for contribution to biodiversity which are designated as Sites of Biological Importance /Local Wildlife Sites. This includes Ancient Woodland within Plymyard Dale along the eastern boundary, Hargrave House Farm Ponds within the centre of the area, and small ponds within Bromborough Golf Course.

The area's primary uses as both a golf course and farmland limit its recreational value, although a public right of way crosses the area between Raby Hall Road and a footbridge crossing the M53.

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 west to the east (from 32m AOD to 10m AOD), including the artificial undulating topography within the Bromborough Golf Course which, indicates lower sensitivity to development. The slight undulation surrounding the narrow watercourses along the eastern boundary contributes positively to landscape character and indicates a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Tree clump planting and frequent ponds in the north contribute towards a density of small-scale landscape features within the golf course. The southern section of the area comprises a mixture of regular and irregular fields which are formed by mature hedgerows, with frequent field ponds surrounded by trees /shrubs and</p>

	woodland copses. This modest density of small-scale landscape features results in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.
Natural Character	<p>The man-made landscape at Bromborough Golf Course occupies the north, which results in a lower sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The southern section 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 limited existing development (Hargrave House Farm, and a small ribbon of residential development in the south-east) that results in a lower sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>There are areas of valued semi-natural habitats, including scattered woodland throughout the area, much of which is Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and includes the linear Ancient Woodland that extends the Brookhurst settlement edge and is designated as Plymyard Dale Site of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site. Wetlands and ponds also provide valued features and are designated within the Hargrave House Farm Pond Site of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site and Bromborough Golf Course Ponds Site of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site.</p> <p>The majority of the area is also included within Dibbinsdale, Raby Mere and Eastham Country Park Nature Improvement Area which prioritises woodland habitat creation and management. Other valued natural features include small pockets of trees/ shrubs surrounding field ponds, hedgerows, meandering water courses, and wooded copses.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>The golf course in the north does not contain an identifiable field pattern. The consequent lack of time depth therefore indicates low levels of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>Within the southern section of the area, there is a diverse time depth which increases sensitivity to residential development. This includes an area of small-medium scale Ancient Fieldscapes in the centre of the area, categorised as Ancient Field Systems Irregular. Field ponds (marl pits) are scattered across this area of Ancient Fieldscapes and were historically used to extract marl deposits to be used as mineral fertilisers. The woodland along the eastern boundary is Ancient Woodland.</p> <p>The fields along the western boundary of the area is categorised as 20th Century Agricultural Improvement, which reduces the sensitivity.</p> <p>There are no heritage assets within the area. The area may also be of archaeological importance.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	The settlement edge is well defined by linear woodlands which provide a rural setting, indicating a higher sensitivity.
Views and visual character including skylines	Woodland boundaries enclose much of the area and therefore there is a low degree of inter-visibility with surrounding landscapes which lowers the sensitivity to residential development.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The man-made landscape in the north results in a lower sensitivity to residential development. Within the southern section of the area, the largely rural, agricultural landscape with a working farm, results in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development. Aural intrusion from the M53 to the west of the area lowers the sense of tranquillity across the area.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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In the northern section of the area, the linear belt of woodland, and the localised natural habitats and features (woodlands, mature trees, hedgerows and field ponds) contribute towards a higher sensitivity. However, the man-made landscape associated with Bromborough Golf Course, the proximity of the M53, and the visual enclosure of the area lower sensitivity.

In the southern section of the area, the well-defined wooded settlement edge, the time-depth of the small-medium scale field pattern and small-scale landscape features indicate a higher sensitivity. However, the generally flat landform, visual containment and the proximity and audible intrusion from the M53 lower the sensitivity across the area.

Overall, the area is considered to have **low- moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

Guidance²⁷

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.
- Preserve the natural meandering character of the existing watercourses, avoiding development that will change their course or introduce artificial banks.
- Conserve, enhance and manage any valued habitats within the area, including small pockets of trees/ shrubs surrounding field ponds, hedgerows, meandering water courses, and wooded copses.
- 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 the relevant areas of the area in accordance with the Dibbinsdale, Raby Mere and Eastham Country Park Nature Improvement Area ecological and habitat management priorities. This includes: the creation of new woodland to buffer ancient woodland; woodland management to improve structure and quality of ancient woodland, wet woodland, and river; and, management of Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam, which pose significant threats to woodland and wetland habitats.
- Conserve the rural character and small scale intact historic field pattern.

²⁷ 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: SP047 and SP048

Figure A.64: Map of the area with designations / constraints

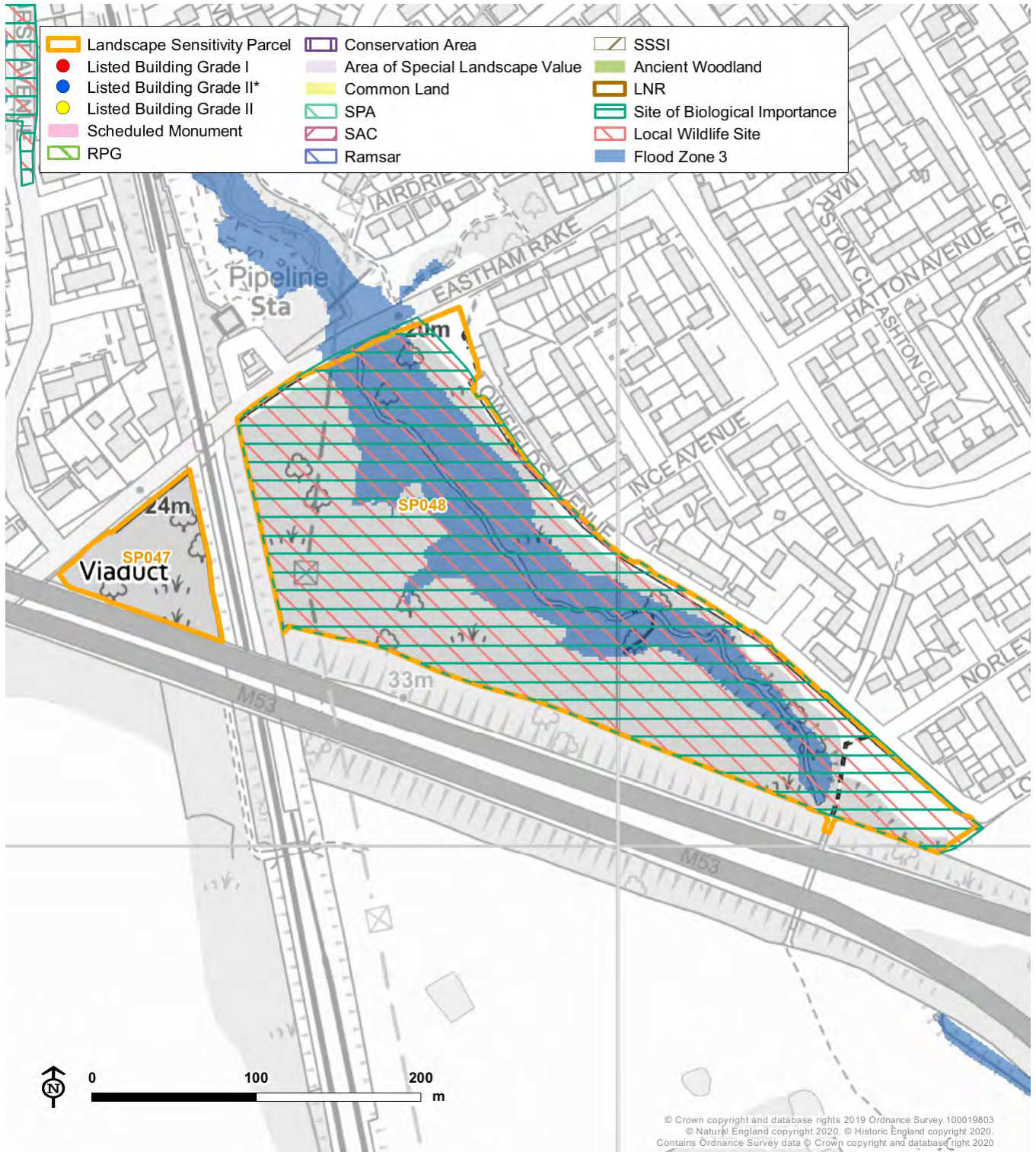


Figure A.65: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.66: Representative photos



Amenity grassland in the east, surrounded by woodland



Public right of way routed through the area, enclosed by woodland

Location and landscape character context

The area (incorporating SP047 and SP048) is situated in the south east of the borough. Eastham Rake and Lowfields Avenue form the northern and eastern boundaries, with the M53 forming the southern boundary. It lies to the south of Brookhurst and west of Mill Park, with the settlement edge abutting both the north and eastern edges of the area.

The area lies within Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, which forms part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. It has a flat to gently sloping landform and is covered by woodland, with a small area of amenity grassland. A railway line and overhead power line run through the centre of the area.

Landscape value

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

A public right of way runs through the area providing recreational value and a connection between Lowfields Avenue and an underpass beneath the M53.

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 almost flat landform falls gently from the south western corner (30m AOD) to the eastern boundary at Lowfields Avenue (20m AOD) which indicates a lower sensitivity to residential development. There is no identifiable field pattern as the area largely comprises woodland, with a small area of amenity grassland in the eastern corner adjacent to Lowfields Avenue. The extensive coverage of mature woodland results in a high density of landscape features, resulting in a higher sensitivity to residential development.
Natural Character	Lowfields Woodland runs along the course of a narrow watercourse is valued as a semi-natural habitat, cited as Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. The whole of SP048 is designated as a Site of Biological Importance/Local Wildlife Site and also designated as part of Dibbinsdale, Raby Mere and Eastham Country Park Nature Improvement Area which prioritises the management and creation of woodland, resulting in higher sensitivity to residential development.

	The maintained amenity grassland in the eastern corner of the area, off Lowfields Avenue, has a less 'natural' quality lowering sensitivity to residential development.
Historic landscape character	The Cheshire HLC categorises the woodland within the area as Post Medieval Plantation (post-dating 1600AD), which increases sensitivity to residential development. The small area of amenity grassland is categorised as 20 th Century Settlement, which reduces the sensitivity. There are no known heritage assets within the area.
Character and setting of existing settlement	The area provides an attractive wooded backdrop to the surrounding settlement edges, separating them from the nearby M53, indicating a high sensitivity to residential development.
Views and visual character including skylines	Due to its woodland cover, the area is visually enclosed and has a low degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes indicating a lower sensitivity to residential development.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The woodland has a scenic value indicating a higher sensitivity to residential development. However, the overhead power line that runs through the area, as well as aural intrusion from the railway and the adjacent M53 viaduct lowers sensitivity.

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 and visual containment indicates a low sensitivity across the woodland-covered areas within the area. However, the coverage of valued semi-natural habitats and wooded backdrop that the area provides to the adjacent settlement edge, along with its important role in providing a buffer between the settlement edge and the M53, means SP047 and the majority of SP048 are considered to have a **moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

It is considered that the level of sensitivity decreases within the small area of amenity grassland in the east of SP048 as development in this area would not result in the loss of valued habitats.

Guidance²⁸

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

- 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.
- Protect and enhance public rights of way and promote further opportunities to increase access and enjoyment of the landscape in association with any new development.
- Preserve the natural meandering character of the existing watercourse, avoiding development that will change its course or introduce artificial banks.
- Conserve, enhance and manage any other valued habitats within the area, including the narrow watercourse.
- Manage the relevant areas of 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

²⁸ 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.

improve structure and quality; and, management to eradicate Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam which pose significant threats to woodland.

Area reference: SP049

Figure A.67: Map of the area with designations / constraints

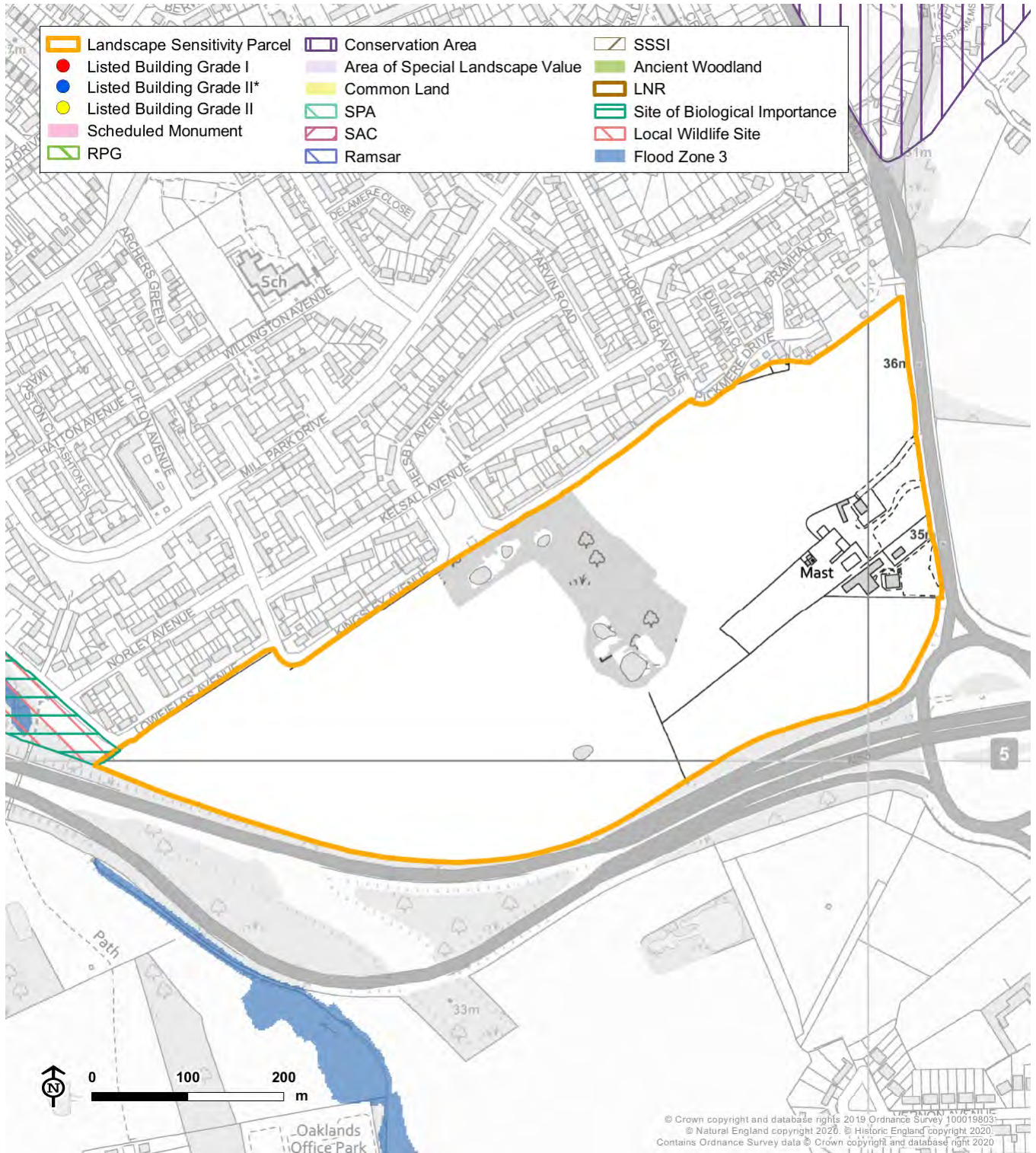


Figure A.68: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.69: Representative photos



Gently sloping pasture with the Eastham settlement edge along the horizon line



Arable farmland enclosed by woodland copses and hedgerows, with glimpses of the M53 along the boundary

Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the south east of the borough. It lies to the south of Mill Park in Eastham. The settlement edge of Eastham forms the northern boundary and the A41 New Chester Road forms the eastern boundary. The M53 forms the southern boundary, with Junction 5 abutting the south-eastern corner.

The area lies within Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, which forms part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. It consists of arable and pastoral farmland with scattered woodland copses with a gently sloping landform. A hotel, coffee shop, garden centre and outdoor storage facility are also located within the area, along the eastern boundary.

Landscape value

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

The area's primary use as farmland limits its recreational value, and there are no public rights of way across it.

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 is gently sloping, with a fall from east to west (from 35m AOD to 25m AOD), overlain by medium-large scale fields indicating a low sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The area comprises woodland copses and a mix of mature, intact and low, fragmented hedgerows. This modest density of small-scale landscape features results in a higher level of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The existing development within the area, comprising a hotel, coffee shop, garden centre and outdoor storage facility, lowers levels of sensitivity and will influence the scale of residential development that can be accommodated within the landscape.</p>
Natural Character	<p>Much of the area comprises areas that are farmed or managed (through both pastoral and arable practices), with some existing development present along the eastern edge of the area which indicates 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. This includes the medium scale woodland copse in the centre of the area, which is categorised as Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland which contains a number of field ponds with wetland</p>

	habitats including Priority Habitat Reedbeds. Other valued natural features include hedgerows with hedgerow trees, mature in-field trees and trees along the motorway.
Historic landscape character	The Cheshire HLC indicates that the area contains little sense of time depth with medium-large scale fields of Post Medieval Fields, categorised as Late Post Medieval Agricultural Improvement, indicating a lower sensitivity to residential development. The woodland copse is a Post Medieval Plantation. Field ponds (marl pits) are also scattered across the areas and were historically used to extract marl deposits to be used as mineral fertilisers. These features combine to indicate a higher sensitivity. There is an area of archaeological importance near the hotel.
Character and setting of existing settlement	Eastham's existing settlement edge, along the northern boundary of the area is semi-enclosed, with fragmented and low hedgerows, which indicates a lower sensitivity. New development could have a good relationship with the existing settlement form/ pattern, and could provide the opportunity to improve the existing settlement edge.
Views and visual character including skylines	The area is partially enclosed by hedgerow boundaries and woodland copses, although some of the hedgerows are low and fragmented. This results in some localised open areas and a degree of inter-visibility from the surrounding landscape, indicating a higher sensitivity to residential development.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The area is influenced by the proximity of modern development including the M53, development within the area on the eastern boundary, the settlement boundary to the north and views to the Eastham Oil Refinery. This results in a lower 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 to gently undulating landform, surrounding human influences, and semi-enclosed settlement edge along the northern boundary lower the sensitivity across the area. Valued semi-natural habitats including a woodland copse and mature in-field and boundary trees increase sensitivity. Overall the area is considered to have a **low-moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

Guidance²⁹

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 post and wire 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.
- Conserve the mixture of wooded and open field ponds (marl pits) which are characteristic features of the area.
- Conserve, enhance and manage any other valued habitats within the area including hedgerows with hedgerow trees, mature in-field trees and trees along the motorway.

²⁹ 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: SP050

Figure A.70: Map of the area with designations / constraints

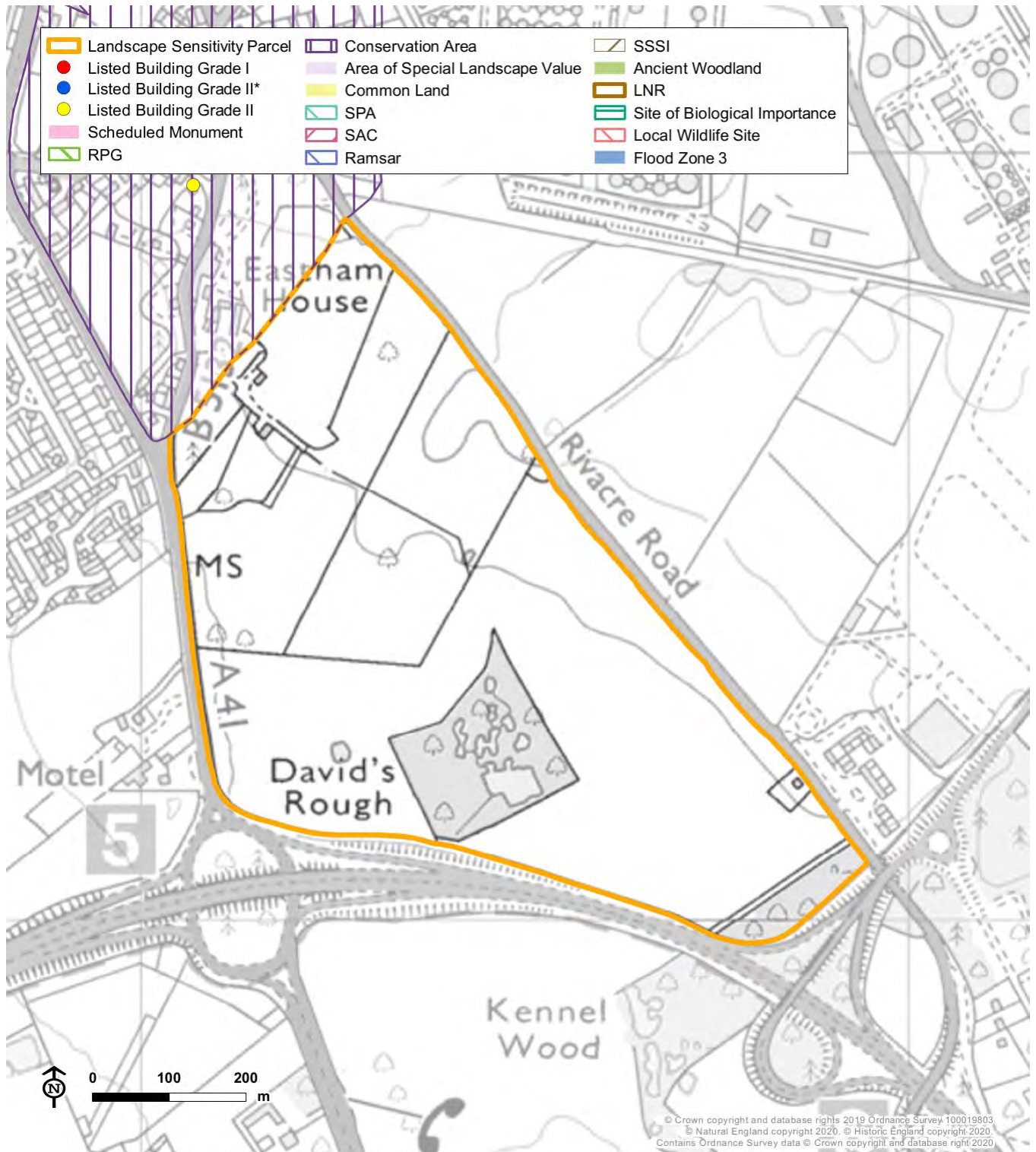


Figure A.71: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.72: Representative photos



Flat to gently sloping arable fields, with woodland copses and scattered individual mature trees, creating a 'parkland' landscape character



The M53 and its associated infrastructure visible along the horizon line, beyond an open area of arable farmland

Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the south east of the borough. It lies to the south-west of Eastham Oil Refinery and to the south east of Eastham. The north western boundary is formed by Eastham Village Conservation Area boundary, although there are no physical features defining this boundary. The eastern boundary is formed by the B5132 Rivacre Road. The M53 and New Chester 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. It consists of arable farmland with scattered woodland copses, a large geometric woodland block and mature individual trees with a flat to gently undulating landform. Some scattered farm buildings, a residential dwelling, and an equine centre are located within the area.

Landscape value

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

The area's primary use as an area of arable farmland limits its recreational value, and there are no public rights of way across the area.

Eastham Village Conservation Area is located directly adjacent to the north-western boundary of the area and contributes to overall value although there is limited inter-visibility between it and the area.

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 is generally flat with a fall from west to east (from 35m AOD to 25m AOD) indicating a low sensitivity to mixed and/or residential development.</p> <p>The area is overlain by a mixture of medium to large scale fields that are geometric, regular and irregular in shape, and mostly formed by hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees and woodland copses. There are also frequent, mature in-field trees creating a 'parkland' character to the area. This modest density of small-scale landscape features results in a higher level of sensitivity to mixed and/or residential development.</p>

<p>Natural Character</p>	<p>Much of the area comprises areas that are farmed or managed (through arable practices), with some existing development present along the northern and southern edges of the area. This includes some scattered farm buildings, and associated farm paraphernalia, a 2-storey residential development and an equine centre, indicating a lower sensitivity to mixed and/or residential development.</p> <p>Areas of higher sensitivity to employment development exist where there are valued semi-natural habitats, including Priority Habitats Lowland Mixed Broad-leaf Woodland; the largest area concentrated at David's Rough, a medium-scale woodland copse, central to the area. Other valued natural features include hedgerows with hedgerow trees, scattered mature in-field trees, and small pockets of trees/ shrubs surrounding field ponds.</p>
<p>Historic landscape character</p>	<p>The Cheshire HLC identifies the geometric fields in the north of the area are Post Medieval Ornamental Parkland, associated with the Eastham House estate, indicating time-depth and increasing sensitivity.</p> <p>Lower levels of sensitivity to mixed and/or residential development exist in the south of the area, where the medium-large scale field is identified as a Post Medieval Fieldscape, categorised as Late Post Medieval Agricultural Improvement.</p> <p>The medium-scale woodland copse central to the area is a Post Medieval Plantation, and also features a network of small field ponds. Field ponds (marl pits) are also scattered across the area and were historically used to extract marl deposits to be used as mineral fertilisers. All of these features combine to indicate a higher sensitivity.</p> <p>Eastham Village Conservation Area is located adjacent to the north-western boundary. There are no designated heritage assets within the area, however it 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>Character and setting of existing settlement</p>	<p>The area, which lies adjacent to the Eastham Village Conservation Area, provides part of the rural setting to the village. There is no physical boundary between the edge of the Conservation Area and the area, with the boundary routed through the arable farmland and the boundary planting adjacent to Eastham Village settlement edge, which restricts inter-visibility between the area and the village. Views within Eastham Village are mostly inward facing which is recognised in the Eastham Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan³⁰, which states, <i>"Although there are a number of groups of buildings forming attractive visual compositions, most views and vistas within the conservation area focus on the church, with the spire highly visible above the roofs of the much lower buildings surrounding it."</i></p> <p>It is also recognised within the Eastham Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan that there is a sense of separation between Eastham Village and the surrounding area, which states, <i>"Unlike many places on the Wirral, Eastham Village has successfully maintained a degree of separation from neighbouring built up areas. The Green Belt surrounding the village has helped in maintaining this separation. Playing fields provide a break to the north and west and the grounds of Eastham House and Eastham Hall to the south and east. There are agricultural areas beyond to the south and east."</i> Any development proposed in the north of the area could overlook the Conservation Area, adversely affecting its setting, which indicates higher levels of sensitivity to mixed and/or residential development in this area.</p>
<p>Views and visual character including skylines</p>	<p>The area is partially enclosed by hedgerow boundaries and woodland copses although some of the hedgerows are low and fragmented which results in some localised open areas and a degree of inter-visibility with the surrounding landscape, indicating a higher sensitivity to mixed and/or residential development.</p> <p>Views to the north of Eastham Village church spire, an important landmark feature within Eastham Village Conservation Area, is visible above the intervening woodland and built development, indicating a higher sensitivity to mixed and/or residential development.</p> <p>Views of the Eastham Oil Refinery towers to the north and the M53 motorway infrastructure to the south form detracting features indicating a lower sensitivity.</p>
<p>Perceptual and experiential qualities</p>	<p>The woodland copses and scattered mature trees in the north of the area, which result in a parkland character reflective of its historic relationship with Eastham House and the role of the area in the setting of the Eastham Village Conservation Area, indicate higher sensitivity to mixed and/or residential development.</p> <p>However, the busy road network surrounding the area, including the A41 and M53, exiting development within the area, reduces the sense of remoteness and introduces human influences which results in a lower sensitivity to mixed and/or residential development.</p>

³⁰ Donald Insall Associates Ltd (2007) Eastham Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from mixed and/or residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The generally flat landform, the influence of human activity, particularly the surrounding road network and some visual containment lower sensitivity to mixed and/or residential development within the area. However, the valued natural habitats, particularly the woodland copses, and the parkland character to the north of the area which is reflective of its historic relationship with Eastham House and the role the area plays in providing a rural setting to Eastham Village Conservation Area increases sensitivity. Overall the area is considered to have a **moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from mixed and/or residential development. This sensitivity increases with proximity to the Conservation Area.

Guidance³¹

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 post and wire 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.
- Conserve the mixture of wooded and open field ponds (marl pits) which are characteristic features of the area.
- Preserve rural views out from and surrounding Eastham Village Conservation Area.
- Conserve the rural character and ornamental parkland character of the landscape in proximity to Eastham Village where the area contributes towards the setting of the Conservation Area.

³¹ The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

Area reference: SP051

Figure A.73: Map of the area with designations / constraints

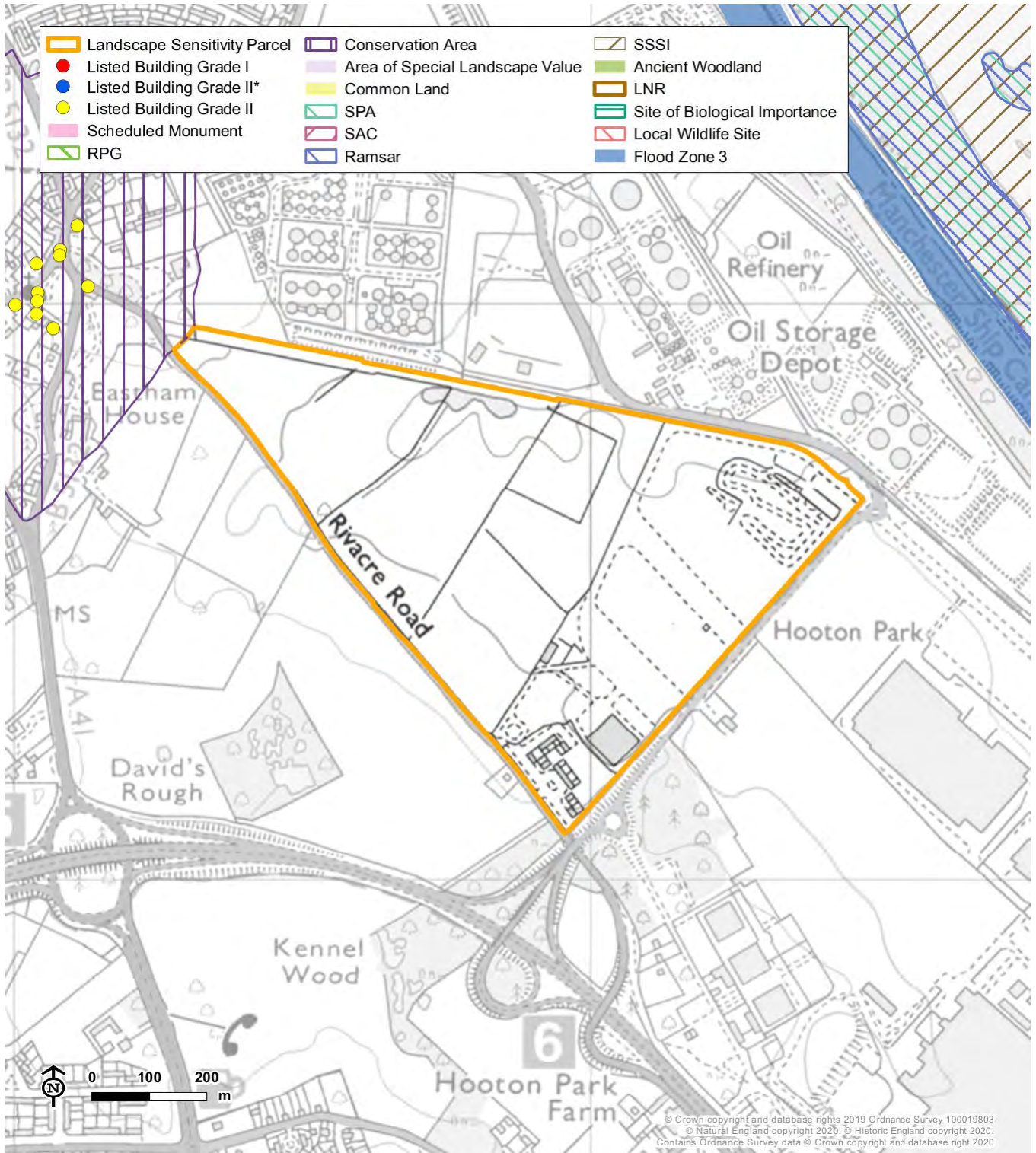


Figure A.74: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.75: Representative photos



Gently sloping arable fields, with Eastham Oil Refinery and large scale development located along the horizon line



Mature trees and woodland copses along the boundary of the area, with views of the industrial area lining the River Mersey in the distance

Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the south east of the borough. It lies to the south of Eastham Oil Refinery and to the south east of Eastham. Eastham Oil Refinery, Bankfields Drive, and North Road all form the northern boundary; West Road and Rivacre Road form the eastern and western boundaries respectively. The north western corner of the area is formed by Eastham Village Conservation Area boundary - there is no physical feature defining this boundary.

The area lies within Clatterbrook and Dibbin Valley LCA, which forms part of the Lowland and Farmland Estates LCT. It has a generally flat landform falling west to east, overlain by arable fields enclosed by hedgerows and small woodland copses. A small area of residential development, an outdoor storage facility, a distribution centre and lorry park and a go-karting track are located in the south east.

Landscape value

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

The area's primary use as an area of arable farmland limits its recreational value, and there are no public rights of way across the area.

Eastham Village Conservation Area is located directly adjacent to the north west, and contributes to overall value although there is limited inter-visibility between it and the area.

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 is generally flat, falling from west to east (from 30m AOD to 20m AOD) indicating a lower sensitivity to employment or residential development.</p> <p>The north west of the area is overlain by a mixture of small to medium sized fields that are geometric and irregular in shape, and mostly formed by fragmented hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees and woodland copses. This modest density of small-scale landscape features, resulting in a higher level of sensitivity to employment or residential development. Large scale development to the south east lowers sensitivity.</p>

Natural Character	<p>Much of the area is intensively farmed or managed through arable practices, while the south east contains existing development including residential areas, an outdoor storage facility, a distribution centre and lorry park, and a go-karting track. The limited coverage of semi-natural habitats results in a lower sensitivity to employment or residential development.</p> <p>Semi-natural habitats are limited to small woodland copses along boundaries, including one along Rivacre Road on the western boundary, categorised as Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Broad-leaf Woodland. Other valued natural features include hedgerows with hedgerow trees and a single field pond.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>The Cheshire HLC indicates that the area contains some limited time depth. The fields which comprise a large proportion of the area are Post Medieval Fieldscapes are categorised as Late Post Medieval Agricultural Improvement, indicating a lower sensitivity to employment or residential development. The small woodland copse along the southern boundary is categorised as Post Medieval Plantation. This indicates a higher sensitivity to employment or residential development.</p> <p>The developed area in the south eastern section of the area is not included within the Cheshire HLC and lowers sensitivity.</p> <p>Eastham Village Conservation Area is located adjacent to the north-western boundary and the area may be of some archaeological importance.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The area plays some limited role in providing a rural setting to the residential development on the perimeter of Eastham and the Eastham Village Conservation Village, as well as to the residential dwellings in the south-eastern corner. This results in a higher sensitivity to employment or residential development in this area. However, there is a degree of separation between the Conservation Area and the area, with a small woodland copse providing enclosure. There is little inter-visibility between the area and the Conservation Area, as many of the views within Eastham Village are inward facing. This is recognised in the Eastham Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan³², which states, <i>"Although there are a number of groups of buildings forming attractive visual compositions, most views and vistas within the conservation area focus on the church, with the spire highly visible above the roofs of the much lower buildings surrounding it."</i></p> <p>However, new development would not be out of character in the south eastern section of the area where there is a concentration of existing large scale development. Future development here could have a good relationship with the existing built- form and pattern, and would improve the existing developed edge, therefore indicating low levels of sensitivity to employment or residential development.</p>
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>The area is partially enclosed by the hedgerow boundaries and woodland copses within it, although some of the hedgerows are low and fragmented. This results in some localised open areas and a degree of visibility from the surrounding landscape, indicating a higher sensitivity to employment or residential development.</p> <p>Views of Eastham Village church spire are visible to the west above the intervening woodland, an important landmark feature within Eastham Village Conservation Area, indicating a higher sensitivity to development.</p> <p>Views of the adjacent Eastham Oil Refinery towers form a detracting skyline to east, indicating a lower sensitivity</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The arable character of the north western section of the area retains a rural character. However, the perceptual qualities of the area are significantly influenced by existing development within the area including housing, a karting track and other commercial development and the adjacent Eastham Oil Refinery, and the surrounding road network resulting in a lower sensitivity to employment or residential development.</p> <p>Aural intrusion from Junction 6 of the M53 to the south west disturbs the tranquillity of the area</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from employment or residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The generally flat landform, limited natural habitats, visual containment and influence of existing development both within and surrounding the area lower the sensitivity across the area. Despite the proximity to the Eastham Village Conservation Area, there is limited inter-visibility between it and the area. Overall the area is considered to have a **low-moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from new development. Sensitivity increases with proximity to the Eastham Village Conservation Area.

³² Donald Insall Associates Ltd (2007) Eastham Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Guidance³³

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 post and wire 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.
- Conserve the vegetated boundaries in proximity to Eastham Village Conservation Area.

³³ The guidance provided should not be interpreted to the effect that employment development of the scale assessed would be considered acceptable in principle in landscape terms.

Area reference: SP052

Figure A.76: Map of the area with designations / constraints

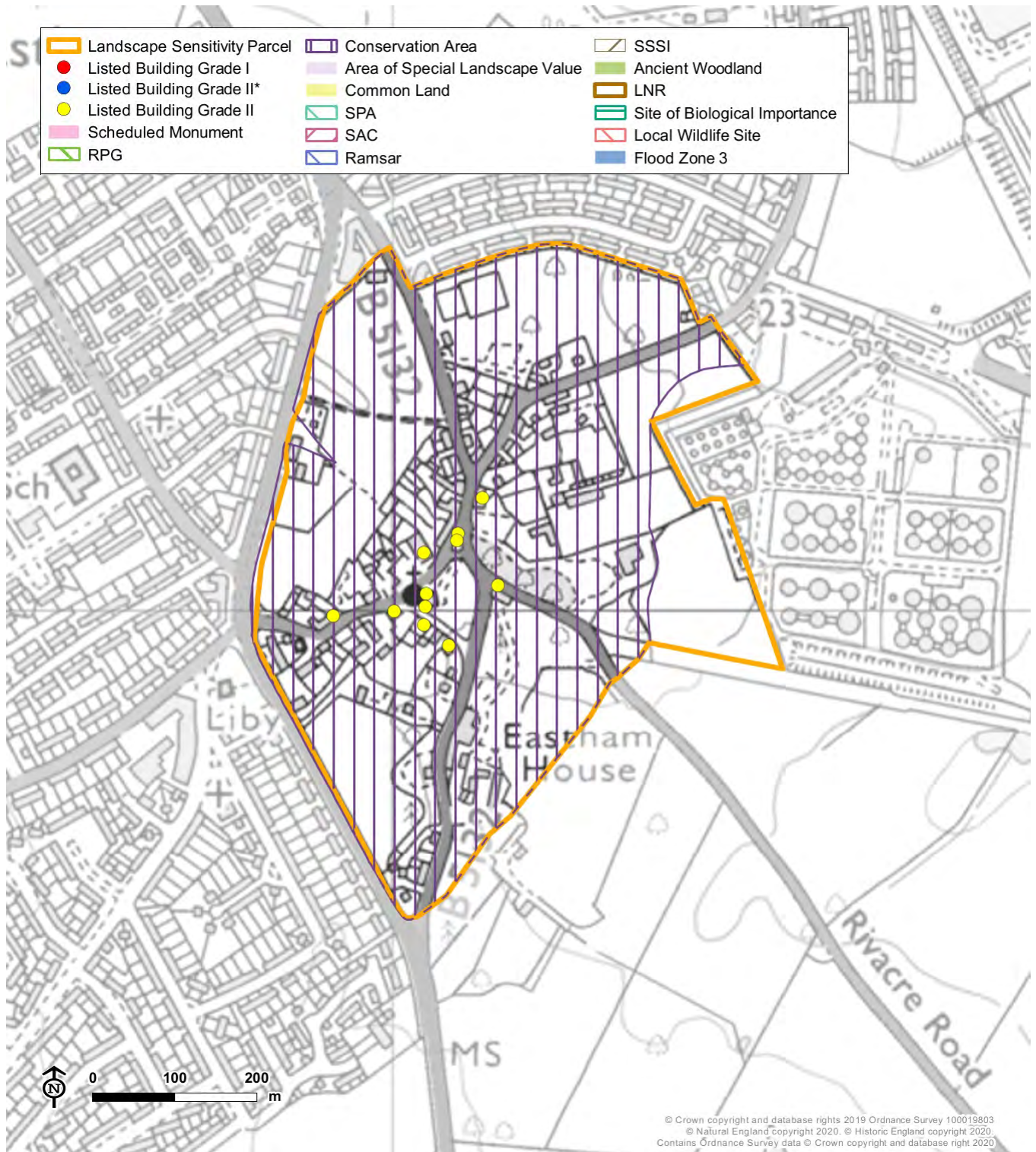


Figure A.77: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.78: Representative photos



A playing field on the boundary of Eastham Village settlement edge, surrounded by mature hedgerows and woodland copses



The church central to Eastham Village, viewed along a characteristic narrow and irregularly winding road

Location and landscape character context

The area is situated in the south east of the borough, to the east and south of Eastham and to the west of Eastham Oil Refinery. The settlement edge of urban Eastham forms the northern boundary, and Eastham Oil Refinery forms the eastern boundary. There are no physical features which form the south-eastern boundary, as it transects arable fields, roads and hedgerows. New Chester Road 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 largely flat and comprises Eastham Village Conservation Area with the village at its core. The area also accommodates playing fields, and areas of both arable and pastoral farmland around its edges.

Landscape value

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

The area comprises the whole of Eastham Village Conservation Area, with some of its surrounding fields and woodland.

Primarily, residential development limits recreational value, but there are playing fields in the north-west and south-west of the area and a public park to the north. A public right of way connects New Chester Road with Eastham Village Road through the north-western playing field.

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 is largely flat, with a gently slope from west to east (from 35m AOD to 30m AOD) indicating a low sensitivity to residential development. There are a few slightly raised areas of landform, giving buildings such as the church additional prominence which indicates higher sensitivity to residential development within the localised area.</p> <p>The centre of the area largely comprises the historic village of Eastham and there is no identifiable landscape pattern other than for the small-scale fields and recreational land located around the edges of the village. These fields are mostly bound by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees, along with small woodland copses, providing</p>

	<p>a modest density of small-scale landscape features which indicates a higher sensitivity to residential development.</p>
Natural Character	<p>Existing development associated with Eastham Village forms the central area of the area, and the resulting lack of semi-natural features lowers the sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The small scale fields which enclose the village comprise areas of woodland, including Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. Other valued natural features include hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. This indicates a higher sensitivity within these areas.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>The area encompasses the Eastham Village Conservation Area including 11 Grade II listed buildings, with a strong vernacular of Red Cheshire Sandstone and red brick linked by narrow winding roads with sandstone boundary walls. This time depth indicates a high sensitivity to development.</p> <p>The fields to the south east of the area are identified in the Cheshire HLC as Post Medieval Ornamental Parkland, associated with the Eastham House estate which also results in higher sensitivity.</p> <p>Sensitivity to residential development decreases slightly where 20th century development has occurred around the periphery of the village core, or where fields are used for recreation. The fields surrounding the edge of the settlement are categorised primarily as 20th Century Settlement, 20th Century Recreation, with a small field in the east of the area categorised as Late Post Medieval Agricultural Improvement, which indicates a lower sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The area may also have some archaeological importance.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The village of Eastham is a distinctive settlement of historic origin, reflected in its designation as a Conservation Area. As most of the area comprises existing dwellings there is little opportunity for the area to accommodate additional development, which would be limited to infill development within the village or in the surrounding fields.</p> <p>The small scale fields surrounding Eastham Village comprise both arable and pastoral farmland, recreational land and landscaped grounds which provide an attractive backdrop to the settlement, and play an important role in separating Eastham Village from the surrounding industrial development and wider built-up areas resulting in higher sensitivity to residential development. This is recognised within the Eastham Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, which states, <i>"Unlike many places on the Wirral, Eastham Village has successfully maintained a degree of separation from neighbouring built up areas. The Green Belt surrounding the village has helped in maintaining this separation. Playing fields provide a break to the north and west and the grounds of Eastham House and Eastham Hall to the south and east. There are agricultural areas beyond to the south and east."</i></p>
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>The area is generally visually enclosed by surrounding built development, tall hedgerow boundaries and woodland copses, and this lack of inter-visibility with the surround areas indicates a lower sensitivity to residential development. This is recognised in the Eastham Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, which states, <i>"Although there are a number of groups of buildings forming attractive visual compositions, most views and vistas within the conservation area focus on the church, with the spire highly visible above the roofs of the much lower buildings surrounding it."</i></p> <p>However, further development in the area is likely to be at odds with the nucleated settlement pattern resulting in higher sensitivity.</p>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The area has a rural character and a sense of remoteness and tranquillity as a result of Eastham Village's high quality architecture and its separation from the surrounding area provided by the surrounding fields and winding rural roads which indicates a higher sensitivity to residential development. Glimpsed views of adjacent industrial development, towards the River Mersey including Eastham Oil Refinery nevertheless detract from its scenic qualities.</p>

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to future change from residential development

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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The designation of the majority of the area as a Conservation Area indicates that it is unable to accommodate additional residential development without significant change or adverse effects. The natural character of the small scale fields which enclose the settlement provide an attractive backdrop to the settlement, and play a role in separating the area from the surrounding industrial development and wider built-up areas of Eastham, all indicating a higher sensitivity to residential development.

Overall, the area is considered to have a **high** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

Guidance³⁴

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 special character and qualities of Eastham Village and the wider Conservation Area by retaining its existing settlement pattern, strong vernacular and wooded character.
- Conserve the rural character and surrounding small scale field pattern which contributes towards the setting of Eastham Village.
- Ensure the function of the area as a perceived gap is maintained by providing a clear physical and visual separation between Eastham Village and surrounding settlement and industrial development.

³⁴ 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: SP054 and SP055

Figure A.79: Map of the area with designations / constraints

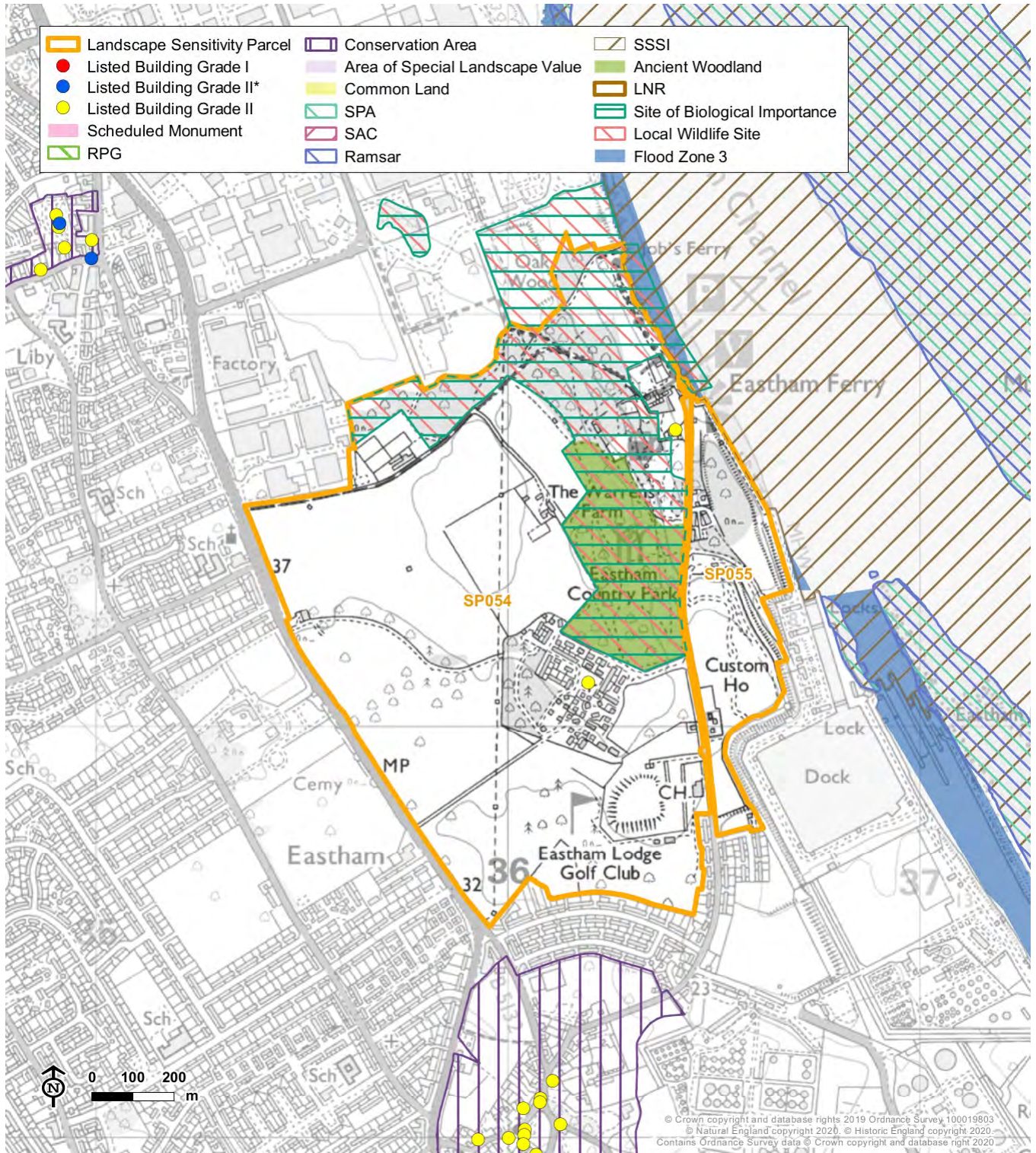


Figure A.80: Aerial photograph of the area



Figure A.81: Representative photos



Enclosed mature woodland at Eastham Country Park



Amenity grassland adjacent to the residential development at Torr Drive

Location and landscape character context

The area (incorporating SP054 and SP055) is situated in the south east of the borough. It lies to the south of Bromborough, between urban Eastham to the west and the River Mersey to the east. The northern boundary is formed by both Green Lane and an area of woodland associated with Eastham Country Park. The eastern boundary is formed by the banks of the River Mersey and by its associated docks and industrial development. The settlement edge at urban Eastham and ribbon development at St David Road form the southern and western boundaries and predominantly features residential housing but also includes a recreation ground, allotments, and a cemetery.

The area lies within Eastham LCA, which forms part of the Coastal/Estuarine Edge LCT. Eastham Lodge Golf Club, and a small allotment area, comprise the southern part of the area. A small area of residential development is located centrally at Torr Drive, with Leverhulme Sports Field and Eastham Country Park forming the majority of the northern part of the area. The eastern edge of the area, adjacent to the River Mersey, comprises a public recreation area, wooded slopes overlooking the Estuary and Mayfield Remembrance Park, a woodland burial ground.

Landscape value

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

Eastham Country Park has open access and is valued as a visitor resource. The area is well connected to the wider landscape by a network of public rights of way including the promoted route of the Wirral Circular Way. The park along with the Leverhulme playing fields and Eastham Lodge Golf Course add to the recreational value of the area.

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 west to east (from 30m AOD to 7m AOD), indicating a lower sensitivity to residential development. There is a localised high point within Leverhulme Sports Field (40m AOD), and a more undulating area within Eastham Country Park in the north east, indicating a higher sensitivity.</p> <p>Eastham Lodge Golf Course lies in the south. This features an artificial and undulating topography, indicating a lower level of sensitivity to residential development.</p>

	The wide coverage of landscape features, including woodland and tree clump planting associated with the golf course and along access roads contribute towards a high density of small-scale landscape features and increases sensitivity.
Natural Character	<p>Eastham Country Park comprises broadleaved woodland, much of which is ancient, which is valued as a semi-natural habitat, cited as Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and smaller areas of Lowland Wood-pasture and Parkland. This indicates a higher sensitivity to residential development. Eastham Woods are also designated as a Site of Biological Importance /Local Wildlife Site. The whole area, other than the playing fields and residential development, is also designated as part of Dibbinsdale, Raby Mere and Eastham Country Park Nature Improvement Area which prioritises the restoration, maintenance and enhancement of the woodland habitats.</p> <p>The managed landscape at Eastham Lodge Golf Club and expansive areas of amenity grassland at Leverhulme Sports Fields, have more limited naturalistic qualities, resulting in lower sensitivity. However, the frequent occurrence of mature woodland copses and trees within the golf course and across the sports fields are valued natural features and the whole area is cited as Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland or Priority Habitat Lowland Wood-pasture and Parkland (except for small areas at Warrens Farm and south of the residential area in the centre of the area) raising sensitivity to residential development. Other valued features include mature hedgerows and woodland copses along the area boundaries.</p>
Historic landscape character	<p>Eastham Country Park is categorised by the Cheshire HLC as an area of Post Medieval Ornamental Parkland, which increases sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The Eastham Lodge Golf Course to the south, the playing fields to the north and the woodland burial area to the east, do not contain an identifiable field pattern and lack time depth indicating low levels of sensitivity to residential development.</p> <p>The Grade II listed chapel at Carlett Park area is the only heritage asset within the area. The area may also be of some archaeological importance.</p>
Character and setting of existing settlement	<p>The settlement edges around the area are well integrated with the boundaries characterised by linear woodlands, mature hedgerows and frequent trees, along with occasional woodland copses, indicating a higher sensitivity.</p> <p>The wooded character of the area also contributes positively towards the setting of the residential development located centrally within the area at Torr Drive, which additional residential development would adversely affect.</p>
Views and visual character including skylines	The area is visually enclosed by surrounding built development and other urban fringe uses to the south, west and north of the area and woodland associated with both Eastham Country Park and Mayfield Remembrance Park encloses much of the eastern boundary which indicates lower sensitivity. However, promoted viewpoints along the banks of the Mersey with panoramic views up and down the estuary results in a higher sensitivity.
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>The playing fields, burial ground and golf course, and existing residential development in the north west and south lack a perceived naturalness which reduces sensitivity to residential development. Intrusion from the busy A41 along the western boundary disturbs tranquillity.</p> <p>The woodland at Eastham Country Park and its visual relationship with the Mersey Estuary creates a tranquil and scenic character in the north-east, indicating a higher 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 north-western and southern sections of the area, which consists of playing fields, a golf course, burial ground and residential development, has a lower sensitivity to residential development due to the landform, limited time-depth, visual enclosure and lack of rural character. However, the coverage of valued natural habitats and features (woodlands, mature trees, and hedgerows) contribute towards a higher sensitivity. Overall, this area is considered to have **moderate** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

Eastham Country Park is valued as a visitor resource, with panoramic views over the Mersey and extensive semi-natural habitats, which is recognised through its designation as a Country Park and Site of Biological Importance /Local Wildlife Site, where the tranquil wooded character contributes towards a higher sensitivity. Overall, this area is considered to have **high** sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development.

Guidance³⁵

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, including ancient woodland within the area. Pursue opportunities to extend native woodland across undeveloped parts of the area, providing a buffer to these important areas, 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 mature parkland trees, clumps and rides as key features within 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.
- Manage the relevant areas of the area in accordance with the Dibbinsdale, Raby Mere and Eastham Country Park Nature Improvement Area ecological and habitat management priorities. This includes restoring, maintaining and enhancing the woodland habitats.

³⁵ 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.