



**Representations to Warrington Local Plan:
Preferred Development Option – September 2017
On behalf of Beck Homes Ltd**

I write on behalf of Beck Homes Ltd to make formal comments to the Warrington Local Plan as part of the public consultation.

The proposals include very significant changes to the Green Belt, including land for 1,190 new homes in the outlying settlements, of which 500 are proposed on the periphery of Lymm.

We propose that alongside considerations to dramatically change the Green Belt around Lymm, the nearby settlement of Broomedge offers an opportunity to be reconsidered as a village to be inset from the Green Belt, therefore allowing a proportion of additional housing within a newly defined settlement boundary that takes account of existing houses and potential small scale development sites that will have little impact on the landscape, but could help to reduce the amount of fresh open Green Belt land needed to be removed from the Green Belt directly adjacent to Lymm. There may also be other villages currently within the Green Belt that could be considered in this way.

Broomedge is located very close to Lymm on a main road route, and contains a local conveniences store, post office and public house at the main crossroads, providing a level of local services that can accommodate housing growth in a sustainable manner. As the Council

are considering many thousand new homes in the Green Belt, it would be appropriate to consider all potential sources of supply, particularly in an area so close to the settlement being considered for significant expansion.

We have attached a Village Character and Heritage Assessment that considers the existing built parts of the village and would suggest this forms a guide to reconsider a settlement boundary inset from the Green Belt.



BROOMEDGE

VILLAGE CHARACTER
AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

BROOMEDGE SETTLEMENT CHARACTER AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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FIGURE 1: LOCAL CHARACTER AREAS

INTRODUCTION

Broomedge is a small settlement that lies within farmland approximately 1km to the east of Lymm, in Cheshire. It has developed around crossroads formed by the junction of Burford Lane/ High Legh Road (B5159) with the busy A56 road (known locally as Higher Lane) which links the towns of Lymm and Altrincham. Lymm is an ancient settlement that is recorded in the Domesday Book.

This report provides an assessment of the character and heritage of Broomedge, identifying the features that contribute to its particular character and appearance including underlying geology, topography land use and drainage, its layout and built form, and the landscape features that make up the fabric of the settlement including boundaries, open spaces, private gardens, trees and tree belts. This has led to the identification of six local character areas which are illustrated on Figure 1 and described below.



Left: Edwardian cottages on Burford Lane



Right: Aerial view of Broomedge

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Broomedge sits on a low ridge approximately 55-60 m AOD that runs roughly south-east- north-west. The underlying geology of the ridge is red Keuper Sandstone, which is overlain by fluvio-glacial deposits, including gravels, marl and boulder clay laid down by retreating ice sheets. The north facing slope of the ridge is gently undulating and forms the southern side of the river Bollin valley; land falls northward towards the river which is approximately 2.2 km to the north while the Bridgewater Canal is approximately 1.3km distant, constructed to run along the 25m contour.

Soils around Broomedge are generally fertile and have traditionally supported mixed arable farming and stock grazing in regular fields that are typically enclosed by hedgerows. Orchards, market gardens and plant nurseries have also been a feature of local land use, including at Broomedge where the Broomedge Nurseries and Willowpool Garden Centre (formerly a nursery) are located.



A large wood is established to the west of Burford Lane Farm which was present when the Tithe maps were recorded in 1837. It adjoins the Spud Wood community woodland. Generally, tree cover is largely limited to trees in roadside field hedgerows and in private gardens and grounds, notably those on the west side of Burford Lane including within the grounds of Rosewood House. Groups of mature trees are also characteristically established around the margins of ponds formed in former marl pits that are present in large numbers within the Cheshire countryside, including around the pond that lies within the Willowpool Garden Centre site.

Left: Burford Lane runs down the north-facing ridge slope
Above: Burford Lane: Approach to Broomedge from the north

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BROOMEDGE

The origins of Broomedge lie in its location at the crossroads formed by Higher Lane (A56) with the minor Burford Lane/ High Legh Road (B5159). The A56 is thought to have been established, at least in part, as a Roman Road that led eastward from the Roman fort at Chester (Deva Victrix) towards York, also one of the three main Roman army camps.

Peter Burdett's county map of Cheshire in 1777 provides an early illustration of the local road network, including the crossroads of Higher Lane (A56) with Burford Lane/ High Legh Road, although the map provides no indication of a settlement there.

One of the first records of a settlement at Broomedge is provided by Christopher Greenwood's 1819 map of Cheshire (top right) which identifies 'Brownedge' at the crossroads of the A56 with Burford Lane/ High Legh Road (highlighted by a red circle). A number of individual properties are also indicated, including the Jolly Thresher public house on the west side of the crossroads which is likely to have been a coaching inn for travelers on the A56.

Bryant's 1831 county map of Cheshire (right) provides more detailed evidence of a settlement at 'Broom Edge'. The Jolly Thresher pub is identified on the map, as is Burford Lane Farm and the Lodge to Oughtrington Hall on Burford Lane.



Top right: Christopher Greenwood's map of Cheshire 1819
Lower right: Bryant's map of Cheshire 1831

The track to Broomedge Farm is also indicated on Bryant's map, together with several individual properties west of the crossroads and adjacent to the A56, including a Roman Catholic chapel.

Historical tithe maps for the local area and dated 1837 illustrate the post-medieval enclosure of previously open land into large often rectilinear fields. They also show further development around the crossroads where a smithy was established that may have further cemented the role of The Jolly Thresher as a coaching stop-over point.

The map extract (*right*) is from the 1837 tithe map for the local area, colour-coded to indicate the contemporary pattern of land use. Its coverage includes the crossroads and extends northward to include Burford Lane Farm. The analysis provides limited information regarding buildings within Broomedge. However the presence of gardens/orchards (shown in orange) points to the location of many further properties and to an evolving pattern of settlement that includes:

- a cluster of development at the crossroads, principally on the north side;
- a ribbon of development extending northward from the crossroads along the east side of Burford Lane;
- a separate cluster of development further to the north along Burford Lane at Burford Lane Farm
- several scattered individual properties along the A56, principally on the north side.

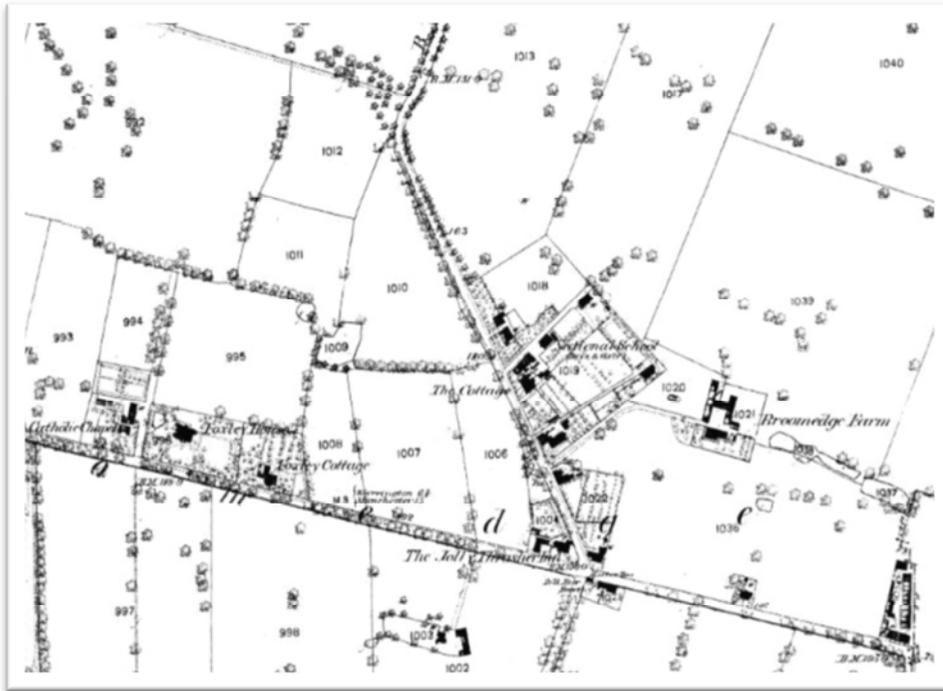
The location of the Lodge to Oughtrington Hall is also indicated by the presence of gardens/orchards on the west side of Burford Lane.



Land Use Colour Key	
■ Cultivated Land	■ Waste Ground
■ Grassland	■ Woodland
■ Heathland	■ Industrial
■ Fresh Water	■ Building
■ Garden / Orchard	■ Unrecorded
■ Thoroughfare	■ No Data

Above: Tithe Map of 1837
Land use analysis

Historical Ordnance Survey maps show that much of the new development took place along the east side of Burford Lane, to the north of the crossroads. Lateral growth of the settlement also took place on the east side of Burford Lane where a new roadway that extended north-eastward from Burford Lane (and later became The Drive) is also evident.



Above: Extract from Ordnance Survey map 1876, 1:2500

Agricultural prosperity increased throughout C19. To the west of the crossroads, on the A56, Foxley House had been constructed in the early part of C19 in extensive grounds next to a Catholic Chapel, with Foxley Cottage adjacent.

In 1866 the old buildings at Burford Lane Farm were replaced by a large new farmhouse and by a range of farm buildings including a barn, granary and shippon and a stable and cartshed building, all designed by the prominent local architect John Douglas.

By 1876 Ordnance Survey maps show that Broomedge had expanded further with the addition of what is now Chapel Walks on the east side of Burford Lane, while the west side of Burford Lane was free of development following the removal of the Lodge to Oughtrington Hall.



Right: C19 cottages on Chapel Walks

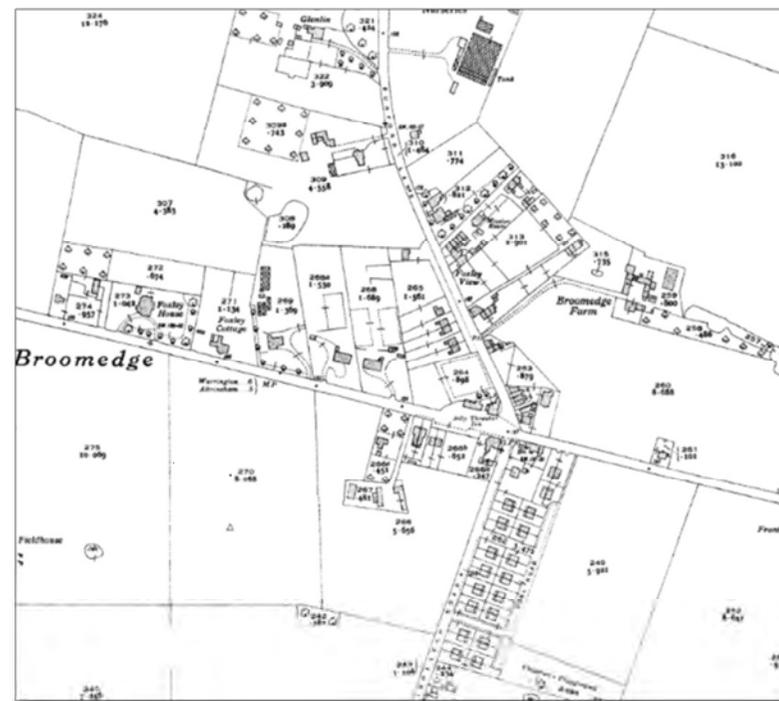
This pattern of settlement remained largely unchanged until the early C20 when, between 1900 and 1910, the cluster of development at the crossroads was expanded by new buildings within the open south-west quadrant. Development already established at Burford Lane Farm was extended southward along Burford Lane by a line of 5 properties, including Fox How, the most southerly property.



Above: Extract from Ordnance Survey map 1910, 1:10560

Ordnance Survey plans dating from 1936-37 show that Broomedge expanded significantly in the 1920's and early 1930's with infilling of gaps and extension of existing development at the crossroads and westward along the A56, and also to the north of Burford Lane Farm. However the most obvious changes were through expansion into previously open areas, including:

- to the south-east of the crossroads where 18 pairs of semi-detached houses – the Park Road estate - were constructed in a double row along High Legh Road, considerably extending the settlement in a southerly direction; and;
- to the west side of Burford Lane, where pairs of semi-detached houses and several larger properties were constructed.



Above: Extract from Ordnance Survey map 1936, 1:2500

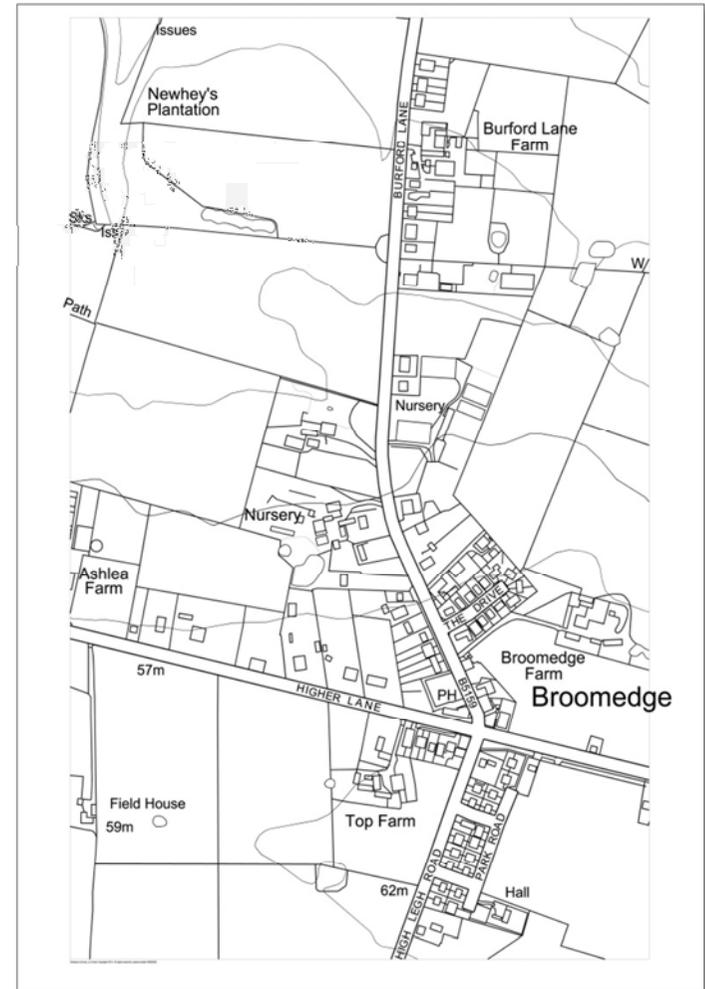
The Broomedge Nurseries were also established by 1936-37 on the east side of Burford Lane, between the northern part of Broomedge that is centered on Burford Lane Farm and the main part of the settlement to the south. Ordnance Survey plans illustrate the presence of large glasshouses and other buildings on the nursery site, together with two detached properties (Nos. 54 and 56 Burford Lane) constructed adjacent to Burford Lane within the nursery site.

During the 1960s Broomedge expanded further with the construction of a small estate of bungalows and dormer bungalows along The Drive, on the east side of Burford Lane.



On the west side of Burford Lane, the extensive grounds surrounding a large private residence (Shaw Villa) were converted into the Willow Pool Nurseries which subsequently became a retail garden centre & architectural salvage yard, now disused. More recent development within Broomedge has included several individual properties

on infill plots sited along the A56 and on Burford Lane. The current extent of development in Broomedge is illustrated on the contemporary Ordnance Survey plan below.



Left: 1960's dormer bungalows, The Drive
Above: Ordnance Survey map , contemporary

GENERAL CHARACTER OF BROOMEDGE

The Warrington Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) classifies the local landscape within 'Area Type 3 – Red Sandstone Escarpment'. It describes the local settlement pattern and identifies roads running north-south, including the B5159 (Burford Lane), that intersect with the A56 *'and these form the centres of the villages'*. It further notes that *'Some of the villages have clearly expanded outwards from a village centre by ribbon development along the main roads, while later expansion has been by infilling and small housing estates.'*

Broomedge is typical of this general pattern, having formed initially around the crossroads of the A56 and Burford Lane /High Legh Road and then expanded via ribbon development, in particular along Burford Lane. Broomedge also provides examples of *'infilling'* – with more recent properties developed on individual plots – and of *'small housing estates'* including The Drive (14 properties) that was developed in the 1960's.



Left: 1930's semi-detached and half-rendered houses on Burford Lane, with a recent property to the right on an infill plot.

Above left: C19 house on Burford Lane dated 1857

Above right: C19 house on Chapel Walks, built in brick, now part rendered

Right: Modern three storey houses on Higher Lane

In common with many settlements the buildings of Broomedge exhibit considerable variety in age and style; this represents part of its appeal. The most developed part of the village is located at the southern end of Burford Lane, where the majority of properties are detached or semi-detached two storey houses built in brick under slate roofs; gables are common features. Most properties, including recent ones, are built in brick although there are also occasional rendered properties including the Old Post Office and properties that are half-rendered in combination with brick. In contrast, the properties along The Drive are single storey or one and a half storey bungalows in brick with tiled roofs.

At Burford Lane Farm the principal buildings are of nationally importance as Grade II Listed Buildings of special architectural and historic interest. Built in 1866 to designs by the prominent local architect John Douglas, the buildings, which include the farmhouse and barn. were constructed in red-brown brick and half-timbered with oak-framed gables and grey slate roofs.

They are examples of the '*black and white revival*' of the Tudor architectural style and characterised by white painted panels set within black painted timber frames that became fashionable again from the mid C19. Other vernacular elements present include the tall chimney stacks of the farmhouse with their decorative brickwork and the square steepled dovecote and weathervane that crown the barn.



Nikolaus Pevsner described the black and white revival movement as a '*Cheshire speciality*', and echoes of the style are to be found in many of the later buildings within Broomedge, including Fox How, also on Burford Lane, as well as in some relatively recent buildings that include half-timbering.



Left: Aerial view of the Listed Buildings at Burford Lane Farm
Above: Fox How on Burford Lane, built between 1900 and 1910

Hedgerows, trees and garden vegetation make an important contribution to the character of Broomedge. Dense hedges, established over dwarf walls or on their own are the most common form of boundary treatment. In places they are fronted by grass verges which, in the absence of a village green or other public space, provide linear open green space that are of particular value.



There are also many mature roadside and garden trees and tree belts that provide privacy and a degree of screening to village properties as well as a natural greenness and softness that contrasts with built form.



Left: Hedges and verges enhance the character of properties on Burford Lane
Above: Broad verge at the crossroads of A56 and Burford Lane/High Legh Road
Below: Mature trees contribute to character and limit wider views within Broomedge

As well as residential properties, Broomedge village includes a range of existing and former commercial uses. The crossroads in the centre of the village provides the focus for existing commercial activity including The Jolly Thresher pub, the Broomedge Post Office/general store and the office accommodation housed within the former Smithy on the corner of Burford Lane/A56.



Further north along Burford Lane, the property Rosewood House accommodates the P.E.T.S. Animal Hotel, providing 'upmarket' animal boarding kennels and ancillary facilities, while Burford Lane Farm operates a commercial livery yard with 18 indoor stables and an all-weather floodlit outdoor arena.

Above Left: P.E.T.S. Animal Hotel on Burford Lane

Above Right: The Jolly Thresher pub

Right, top: The former 'Green Centre' on Burford Lane

Right below: Redundant glasshouses and caravan storage at the former Broomedge Nurseries

LOCAL CHARACTER AREAS

Six local character areas have been identified in Broomedge that exhibit a reasonable consistency of character in terms of physical context, historical development, building period and style etc. These are indicated on Figure 1 below and described on the pages that follow.



LEGEND

1. Crossroads
2. High Legh Road
3. Higher Lane
4. Burford Lane: South
5. Burford Lane: North
6. Burford Lane: Central



FIGURE 1

Crossroads

The crossroads at Broomedge were the first part of the village to be settled, with The Jolly Thresher established as a coaching inn for travelers on the A56 by early C19. It is the main location in the village for commercial properties.

Key characteristics:

- Character is heavily influenced by the physical form of the roads, by road traffic and infrastructure and by the proliferation of commercial signage;
- Generally the buildings at the crossroads are set back from the roadside, behind broad parking areas, paved forecourts, verges and gardens and the bus stop lane, all of which provide a sense of openness;
- Buildings include both commercial and residential uses and are of various styles and ages. They include The Jolly Thresher pub and former Smithy (now offices), both early C19, and various Edwardian buildings including Broomedge Post Office/general store which was constructed by 1910. Inter-war semi-detached houses are also present, together with several modern properties.



Left: The Jolly Thresher with the former Smithy behind
Top: Broomedge Post Office/general store, an Edwardian building
Above left: Semi-detached houses from the 1930's – 1940's
Above right: Recent detached property

High Legh Road

High Legh Road provides the approach to Broomedge from the south. This part of the settlement extends southward from the Broomedge crossroads to Holly Cottage, a traditional C19 property. It was the last part of the village to be developed.

Key characteristics:

- Distinctive double-row of 1930's semi-detached houses – the Park Road estate. Constructed in brick under slate roofs the houses have a regularity and uniformity that is not found elsewhere in Broomedge;
- Properties are arranged along the eastern side only of High Legh Road and set back from the roadside behind front gardens that are variously hedged or fenced;
- Views westward across High Legh Road to open farmland



Left and above: Semi-detached houses on the Park Road estate

Higher Lane

Higher Lane (A56) provides the approach to Broomedge from Lymm and the west. A number of properties are located along the road, principally on the north side where they form a ribbon of development that is generally screened from view. Properties include Foxley House and Foxley Cottage, both dating from the early part of C19.

Key characteristics:

- Large individual residences set back from the roadside within substantial private grounds that generally abut farmland to the north;
- High walls, gates and fencing and dense vegetation including hedges and trees provide a generally green roadside screen on the north side of the road that obstructs views into and from these properties.
- Views southward from Higher Lane over hedges with trees to open farmland.



*Left: High hedges and mature trees screen Foxley House and neighbouring properties from view
Above The approach to Broomedge from the west*

Burford Lane: South

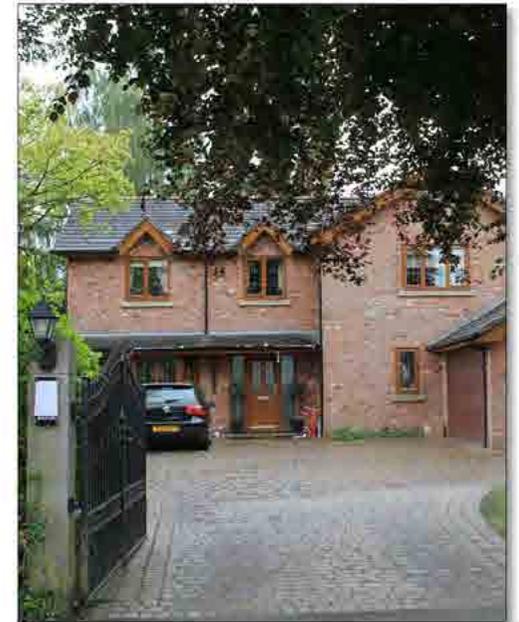
Burford Lane extends northward from the crossroads, running gently downhill. The southern end of Burford Lane – Burford Lane South - is the most densely developed part of Broomedge village. Comprising residential properties only it has a relatively suburban character.

Key characteristics:

- Gently sloping topography, land falls northwards towards the river Bollin;
- Frequent mature garden trees and hedges and open grass verges that make an important contribution to village character and interrupt local views;
- Houses line both the east and west sides of Burford Lane, with occasional extension developments eastward including The Drive and Chapel Walks;
- Eclectic range of building styles and ages. The earliest properties are on the eastern side of Burford Lane, including the Old Post Office, Foxley View (Gothic revival) and properties along Chapel Walks. Several pairs of 1930's semi-detached houses and more recent properties on infill plots line the west side of Burford Lane, with 1960's dormer bungalows along The Drive.



Above: Pairs of half-rendered semi-detached houses built between 1910 and 1936 with hedged front gardens and grass verges



Above left: Foxley View, dating from the mid C19 (Gothic revival style)

Above right: The Old Post Office, early-mid C19

Below left: The Drive, a cul-de sac of bungalows built in the 1960s

Below right: Recent detached property on Burford Lane

Burford Lane: North

Burford Lane North is characterised by a ribbon of properties that forms the northern part of Broomedge village. This area is centred on Burford Lane Farm where there is a large equestrian complex and farm-based tourism.

Key characteristics:

- Gently sloping topography, with land falling northwards towards the R. Bollin;
- Properties line the east side only of Burford Lane within an essentially rural setting surrounded by farmland;
- Houses are set back from the roadside behind front gardens and parking areas, typically bounded by dwarf walls with hedges above. Most were built between 1900 and mid-1930's. They have a general consistency of style and materials: typically semi-detached, built in brick and occasionally half-rendered. There are also two modern detached bungalows built on infill plots to the north of Foxley House, a substantial residence built between 1900-1910.
- Burford Lane Farm, where there are several Grade II Listed Buildings, sits centrally within the ribbon of development at Burford Lane: North. It is largely hidden from view behind trees and a tall and dense roadside hedge;



Left: A pair of half-rendered semi-detached houses built between 1910 and 1936

Above: Edwardian semi-detached houses built before 1910

Below: A recent dormer bungalow property on Burford Lane

Burford Lane: Central Section

Between Burford Lane North and Burford Lane South, Broomedge village has a leafy but mixed character arising from a combination of individual residential properties along Burford Lane and extensive former commercial uses, now defunct. These commercial uses include the former Broomedge Nurseries (plants and flowers) on the east side of Burford Lane, and on the west side the former Willow Pool garden centre/ tea room/ architectural salvage yard and the former 'Green Centre' (plants). An 'upmarket' dog kennels / cattery facility currently operates from Rosewood House. Caravan storage and several light industrial activities use open land and redundant buildings and glasshouses at the former Broomedge Nurseries

Key characteristics:

- Gently sloping topography, with land falling northwards towards the River Bollin;
- High evergreen hedges and considerable mature tree cover, particularly to the west of Burford Lane, including woodland at Rosewood House;
- Detached houses on individual plots line the east side of Burford Lane between Chapel Walks and the Broomedge Nurseries, beyond which are two further detached houses (Nos. 54 & 56 Burford Lane). Typically set back from the road behind front gardens and bounded by hedges, the houses are of various ages, materials and style;
- Disused glasshouses and buildings at the former Broomedge Nurseries and a disused polytunnel at the former 'Green Centre' are clearly visible from Burford Lane and have a neglected semi-derelict appearance;
- A range of disused buildings and extensive hardstandings at the former Willow Pool garden centre that are screened in views from Burford Lane.



Above left: No. 54 Burford Lane, a half-rendered house built by 1938
Above right: No. 44 Burford Lane, detached house dating from the 1960's
Below: Redundant glasshouses at Broomedge Nurseries