

Warrington Local Plan Examination

Hearing Session Note Action 33

Matter 7e – Site Allocation Winwick
EIA Screening Opinion Request relating to the
proposed site allocation.

6th October 2022

Development Control
Warrington Borough Council
New Town House
Buttermarket Street
Warrington
WA1 2NH



Our ref: 35733

31 August 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

**Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017
Regulation 6: Request for a Screening Opinion**

On behalf of Bellway Homes Limited (Manchester), we hereby formally request a Screening Opinion pursuant to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('the Regulations') to confirm whether the land to the north of Winwick should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA').

Land to the north of Winwick

The entire site subject to this screening request is located between Golborne Road and Waterworks Lane, and is outlined in red on the Site Location Plan (**Appendix 1**). It comprises 6 hectares ('ha') of agricultural land, at the north of the settlement of Winwick.

Bellway controls the site, which is proposed to be allocated by the Warrington Updated Proposed Submission Version Local Plan ('UPSVP') 2021-2038, by draft Policy OS6 for a minimum of 130 homes. Nexus has submitted representations and Hearing Statements to the UPSVP Examination, confirming support for the plan overall, and support for the draft allocation. A Statement of Common Ground has also been signed between Bellway and the Council, which sets out areas of agreement between the parties as to the future delivery of housing on the site.

The allocation and subsequent development of the site will provide much needed new homes of a mix of tenures and sizes to meet local needs, and will deliver a range of social, economic and environmental benefits. Bellway is committed to applying for full planning permission at the earliest opportunity (pending adoption of the plan), with the intention of starting on site in September 2023 and fully completing the development by Summer 2028.

The proposed description of development for the full application is not yet fixed, but we envisage it will comprise:

“Residential development for 163 dwellings, including public open space and access from Golborne Road, together with associated works and infrastructure”

The application will be supported by a full suite of technical information to assess the environmental impacts of the development and will set out the measures to be incorporated into the proposals to mitigate against any potential adverse impacts.

Submission Information

Where a screening request is made in relation to Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development, the Regulations (Part 3, Regulation 9) require the Local Planning Authority ('LPA') to take environmental information into consideration in order to assess whether there will be significant effects of the development on the environment.

In accordance with Regulation 6(2), this request is accompanied by:

1. A plan sufficient to identify the land – **Appendix 1**;
2. A description of the development, including its physical characteristics and with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected – **above and below**;
3. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development – **below**;
4. To the extent the information is available, a description of any likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment resulting from the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, and the use of natural resources – **below**; and
5. Such other information as the person making the request may wish to provide or make, including any features of the proposed development or any measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment – **below**.

The Site and Surroundings

Land to the north of Winwick

The site to which the proposed full application will relate to is known as land to the north of Winwick. It comprises a 6 ha of land in a uniform rectangular shape. The site is currently in use as agricultural land, and is an open grassed field. An electricity pylon is located in the western section of the site, with associated overhead lines running east to west through the centre of the site. The site's former use also includes a sand pit in the north eastern corner of the site, and a drain located in the south-eastern quadrant of the site. Its development would form a logical extension of the settlement of Winwick to the north.

The surrounding area can be described as follows:

- To the north of the site is agricultural land;
- To the east of the site is Waterworks Lane, and beyond that is agricultural land;
- To the south of the site are residential properties on Spires Gardens and the Winwick Water Treatment Works and Service Reservoir; and
- To the west of the site is Golborne Road (the A573), and beyond that are some residential dwellings on Green Lane Close and further agricultural land.

Winwick is a settlement with a small historic core, around a mile to the north of Warrington, and close to the M6 (Junction 22) and M62 (Junction 9) motorways. Winwick itself benefits from a range of local services and facilities including St Oswald's Church, Winwick Church of England Primary School, The Swan public house and Premier Inn, a leisure centre, a nursery, care home, convenience store and hairdressers. The settlement is well connected to Warrington by bus and private car, and there are bus stops located 350m and 400m away from the site. Newton-le-Willows railway station is located approximately 2.8km to the north on Mill Lane (the A49).

Determining whether EIA is required

The proposals would not fall within any of the categories listed under Schedule 1 of the Regulations. However, the proposals for 163 dwellings on a 6 ha site would fall above the screening thresholds (150 dwellings or 5 ha) for 'urban development' projects as defined in Schedule 2 Paragraph 10(b) of the Regulations.

We therefore consider below whether the site is in a sensitive location, and if the project would have significant environmental effects by virtue of nature, size or location.

Characteristics of the Development

A full planning application is proposed to be submitted for 163 new homes. An indicative coloured layout plan (**Appendix 2**) confirms the indicative density and layout of the site. This demonstrates that the potential capacity of the site is achievable, acknowledging the practical constraints of the site.

The key aspects of the proposed development can be summarised as follows:

- Provision of 163 dwellings (in a mix of tenures, types and sizes) and associated infrastructure;
- Vehicular access off Golborne Road and new roads, driveways and footpaths within the site;
- Green infrastructure spine through the centre of the site, incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems ('SuDS') in the form of attenuation ponds;
- Local equipped area for play; and
- Ecological and landscaping works.

Residential uses typically do not generate significant emissions or waste, and do not involve processes that would introduce new pollutants, significant noise or any hazardous materials to the area. In relation to the effects from the construction phase of the development, it is not considered that these will give rise to likely significant effects. This is due to the scale of development proposed, mitigation measures imposed, the temporary nature of such effects and the location of the proposal and its relationship to sensitive receptors.

Given the scale of development, it is considered that the proposals would not result in a significant environmental impact, either on an individual or cumulative basis. It is therefore our view that the characteristics of the development will not give rise to any likely significant effects on the environment.

Location of the Development

In order to help assess potential impact, consideration must be given to whether the site is in or near a 'sensitive area', defined by the Regulations as including Sites of Special Interest, National Parks, World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Designated European Sites.

The site itself is not within a sensitive area as defined by the Regulations. However, the site lies to the east of the Registered Battlefield known as the Battle of Winwick or the Battle of Red Bank. Further consideration of the impact of developing the site on the Registered Battlefield is considered in the 'Characteristics of any Potential Impact' section below.

Cumulative Development

The 2017 Regulations require other existing development and/or approved development to be considered in combination with the proposed development. This omits the requirement of the previous regulations to assess

schemes that are reasonably foreseeable, which would include allocations. Therefore, there is no need to consider other allocations in the emerging Warrington Local Plan or the adopted St Helens Local Plan.

In its response to the technical consultation on EIA thresholds in 2015, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities), stated that urban development projects below the revised EIA screening thresholds “will not be likely to have significant effects either alone or in combination with other projects because of their nature, location or impact”.

Therefore, the consideration of cumulative effects is limited to those projects above the thresholds of:

- 1 ha for development which is not dwellinghouse development;
- More than 150 dwellings; or if
- The overall area of the development exceeds 5 ha.

Table 1 considers consented development within 1 km of the site’s boundary, which meet the screening criteria above. This includes cumulative development in both Warrington and St Helens (the boundary of which is located less than a kilometre away from the site).

Table 1: Cumulative Schemes

Address	Planning Application Reference	Description of development	Status
Land site of former Parkside Colliery, Winwick Road, Newton le Willows, St Helens	P/2018/0048/OUP (St Helens Council)	Outline application (all matters reserved except for access) for the construction of up to 92,900 m2 of employment floorspace (Use Class B8 with ancillary B1(a)) and associated servicing and infrastructure including car parking; vehicle and pedestrian circulation space; alteration of existing access road including works to existing A49 junction; noise mitigation; earthworks to create development platforms and bunds; landscaping including buffers; works to existing spoil heap; creation of drainage features; substations and ecological works	Approved 11.11.21
Land between A49 Winwick Road to A573 Parkside Road, including a portion of the former Parkside Colliery Site and then land from A573 Parkside Road to A579 Winwick Lane connecting to M6 Junction 22	P/2018/0249/FUL (St Helens Council)	Formation of a new link road between A49 (Winwick Road) and M6 Junction 22 including the realignment of Parkside Road and other associated works	Approved 11.11.21

Address	Planning Application Reference	Description of development	Status
Land between A49 Winwick Road to A573 Parkside Road, including a proportion of the former Parkside Colliery with land, from A573 Parkside Road to A579 Winwick Lane connecting to M6 Junction 22, WA2 8ST	2018/32514 (Warrington Borough Council)	Proposed single carriageway link road between A49 Winwick Road (WA12 8EF) and A573 Parkside Road; at each location a signalised junction will be formed. The road then utilises the existing A573 Parkside Road to cross the M6 (via existing overbridge) before realigning Parkside Road to a new roundabout before heading east to A579 Winwick Lane to a newly formed roundabout. The section of carriageway from the new Winwick Lane roundabout and the M6 Junction 22 will be a dual carriageway. The A573 and A579 will be realigned to the new roundabouts.	Approved 11.11.21

We note that these applications were considered ‘EIA development’ and were subject to an Environmental Statement.

Characteristics of any Potential Impact

Technical work in relation to the site has been undertaken to support the proposals, and a full suite of technical reports will be submitted alongside the planning application. The following section is a summary of the key elements of the assessment work, which demonstrates that development of the site would not give rise to any potential significant environmental impact that would necessitate an EIA.

Heritage and Archaeology

A preliminary feasibility study has been prepared by Heritage Archaeology which considers the heritage assets within 500m of the site.

The Battle of Winwick Registered Battlefield is located to the west, directly opposite the site but separated by the A573 Golborne Road, which is believed to have been used as part of the battle and forms the battlefields’ eastern extent. The battlefield extends westwards from Golborne Road, beyond the A49 Newton Road and to the north of Hermitage Green Lane and Newton Brook. The site only forms a small part of the battlefield’s setting, which makes a positive albeit limited contribution to the asset’s value. Overall, the site makes a moderate contribution to the Registered Battlefield, given the electricity pylons, modified field pattern and the lack of evidence to indicate any Civil War action within.

Development of the site would retain the contribution made by the A573 as a boundary to the battlefield describing the eastern flanking manoeuvre of the parliamentarian army, and the asset would still be experienced as a large area of agricultural land. There would only be a negligible degree of harm to the heritage value of the battlefield. It will affect the rural experience of the area and the rural setting of the battlefield, and would therefore result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Battlefield.

Whilst, there would be some loss of rural setting, for a c.150 ha area designation with a c.6 km boundary, the site at c.6 ha is a very small part of a much wider setting. The moderating factors outlined above are such that the site does not make any particularly strong contribution to any of the main heritage values of the designation. Overall, through the siting of sensitive landscaping and design, the proposal development will not bring substantial harm to the significance of the identified heritage asset. This is confirmed by Historic England’s representations on the emerging UPSVLP (dated 22 October 2021), which conclude that that the site (draft Policy OS6) can be developed without harm to the historic environment, through implementation of recommended mitigation and design measures.

We also consider the impact on other heritage assets in the area. The Grade I Listed St Oswald's Church in Winwick is approximately 400m to the south of the site. The site has no intervisibility to the asset. There are a number of other listed buildings and features located within Winwick which include a Milestone on Newton Road (Grade II Listed); a Milestone on Golborne Road (Grade II Listed); The Manor House (Grade II Listed); and Church House Farmhouse (Grade II Listed). The site is not within the setting of any of these assets.

From an archaeological perspective, aerial photography does not indicate any buried archaeology on the site, yet there is a bowl barrow of probable Bronze Age date 600m to the east of the site, so there is moderate potential for the site to contain archaeology from the later prehistoric period. The proximity to the Registered Battlefield indicates a moderate to high potential for the survival of early post-medieval archaeology associated with the Civil War on the site. Further investigation through detailed desk-based assessment and field evaluation would support the application.

A Heritage Impact Assessment and Archaeological Desk-based Assessment will accompany the planning application but it is not envisaged that they will give rise to any potential significant environmental impact that would necessitate an EIA.

Traffic and Transport

The site will be accessed via Golborne Road (the A573) to the west of the site. For 163 dwellings, the site will only need to be served by a sole vehicular access. This can be designed to ensure a safe and suitable access to the site and the Transport Assessment ('TA'), being prepared by Eddisons, will demonstrate that the site access junction can accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the proposals as well as accommodating the background traffic on Golborne Road.

The TA will also demonstrate that the site is sufficiently sustainable by non-car travel modes. There are a number of local day to day amenities within a short walk of the site within Winwick, including Winwick Primary School. In addition, regular and frequent buses operate within the village that provide direct services to Warrington, Wigan and Ashton-in-Makerfield, as well as Newton-le-Willows rail station which is less than 2 miles from the site providing direct regular and frequent rail services to Liverpool, Leeds and Manchester, for example.

The TA that will accompany the planning application will cover all pertinent highways and transport matters and ensure that the proposals are acceptable. For instance, it will provide an assessment of the impact of the 163 dwellings on the local road network and will demonstrate that the proposals will not have a 'severe' impact in accordance with current national planning policy.

As such, it is not envisaged that the proposals will give rise to any potential significant environmental impact that would necessitate an EIA.

Noise

An environmental noise survey was carried out by Red Acoustics to determine the existing noise climate from local traffic on Golborne Road, Waterworks Lane and operational noise from the water treatment facility. A 3D noise propagation model has been created which predicts noise levels across the site. The site is suitable for residential development with the use of standard glazing sizes and a mix of standard vents and acoustic vents. Acoustic vents are recommended for some of the homes facing onto Golborne Road and Waterworks Lane. Therefore, the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment.

A Noise Impact Assessment will accompany the planning application but it is not envisaged that it will give rise to any potential significant environmental impact that would necessitate an EIA.

Air Quality

The wording of draft Policy OS6 refers to mitigating air quality impacts on the Manchester Mosses Special Area of Conservation. Redmore Environmental has undertaken an Air Quality Assessment to understand the construction and operational phase impacts on air quality, based on 167 homes (a slightly reduced quantum of 163 homes is now proposed). Sensitive receptors were identified around the site, which include no ecological receptors within 50m of the site, yet due to the presence of residential properties around the site, the sensitivity of the surrounding environment is high. A detailed assessment using dispersion modelling will support the forthcoming planning application. Overall, there will be no significant impact on the environment as a result of the proposed development, to necessitate an environmental impact assessment.

An Air Quality Assessment will accompany the planning application but it is not envisaged that it will give rise to any potential significant environmental impact that would necessitate an EIA.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, which is the lowest classification of flood risk. Discharge rates will be restricted to greenfield run-off rates, with an appropriate allowance for climate change. Attenuation will be provided in the form of on-site SuDS attenuation ponds set within areas of public open space.

A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy will accompany the planning application but it is not envisaged that it will give rise to any potential significant environmental impact that would necessitate an EIA.

Ground Conditions

Phase I and II Geo-Environmental reports have been prepared by IGE Consulting, following an intrusive investigation undertaken on the site in June 2019. The site is predominantly greenfield, although there was a sand pit in use in the north-east of the site prior to 1849 until the 1960s. A land drain which was recorded in the south-eastern quadrant of the site appears to have been infilled or culverted by the 1980s. The potential contaminative sources on the site include on-site made ground (infilled sand pit) and the agricultural use. There are limited potentially contaminative off-site sources recorded within 500m of the site. The site does not lie within a development high risk area where a detailed mining assessment is required, as there are no mine entries, coal outcrops or potentially shallow coal seams present.

The findings of the intrusive ground investigation were that no remedial action will be required for ground gas or controlled waters. Although a remedial strategy will be prepared to support the planning application, the risks to human health and controlled waters are very low, except within the envelope of the former infilled sand pit which may require remedial works subject to the proposed layout and levels. In summary, no ground conditions were found that would have likely significant effects on the environment.

The Phase I and II Geo-Environmental reports will accompany the planning application but it is not envisaged that they will give rise to any potential significant environmental impact that would necessitate an EIA.

Ecology and Trees

An Ecological Assessment was prepared in June 2019 by TEP to inform proposals for the site. A new Phase 1 survey (and protected species surveys where required) would be prepared to support the forthcoming full application, but

the findings of the 2019 survey and recommendations are likely still relevant, and can provide reassurance that the proposals would not have a significant impact on the environment.

The site does not accommodate any notable habitats. There may be some protected species on the site, including bats, and protected birds within 1 km of the site. A breeding bird survey therefore may be required. Scattered trees and dense scrub towards the perimeter of the site should, where feasible, be retained in order to maintain the foraging and commuting opportunities they provide for a range of wildlife. It may be necessary to undertake bat activity surveys to understand the importance of the hedgerows on site. Biodiversity enhancement measures should be included in the design, including bird boxes, bat boxes, hedgehog gates and areas of wildflower seeding.

The site does fall within the Impact Risk Zone for the Highfield Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI'). The SSSI is located approximately 2.2 km north of the site. However, residential development is not one of the development types identified as having the potential to impact on the SSSI. A Local Wildlife Site is located approximately 1 km to the north-east of the site (Gallows Croft), which is too far so as to directly or indirectly affect the development proposals.

A tree survey was undertaken by Ascerta in June 2019. A full update to the survey would be undertaken to support a planning application, but usefully this provides information on the number and condition of trees on the site. Due to the site's use as a pasture field, the majority of the trees on site are clustered at its boundaries, particularly the southern boundary where they form a natural barrier to neighbouring development. Due to their location, it is expected that the majority of these trees can be retained and incorporated into the development.

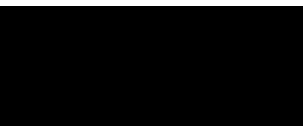
Updated ecological and arboricultural reports will accompany the planning application but it is not envisaged that they will give rise to any potential significant environmental impact that would necessitate an EIA.

Conclusions

The proposed development falls within Schedule 2 of the Regulations, albeit by 10 homes above the 150 dwelling threshold.

Having considered the characteristics of the proposed development (163 dwellings) in combination with the site's location and surrounding context, it is not likely that either individually or cumulatively, there will be significant environmental effects and therefore, the proposed development does not represent 'EIA development' in accordance with the 2017 EIA Regulations, and warrants a negative screening opinion.

Yours sincerely



Matt Dugdale

Associate Director



cc. Jon Penrose, Bellway Homes

enc. Appendix 1: Site Location Plan
 Appendix 2: Coloured Sketch Layout

London

Birmingham

Bristol

Manchester

Reading

Appendix 1

Site Location Plan

London

Birmingham

Bristol

Manchester

Reading

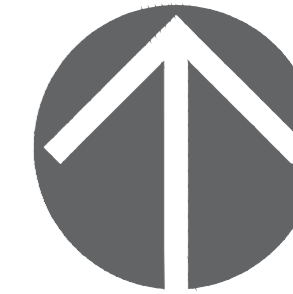
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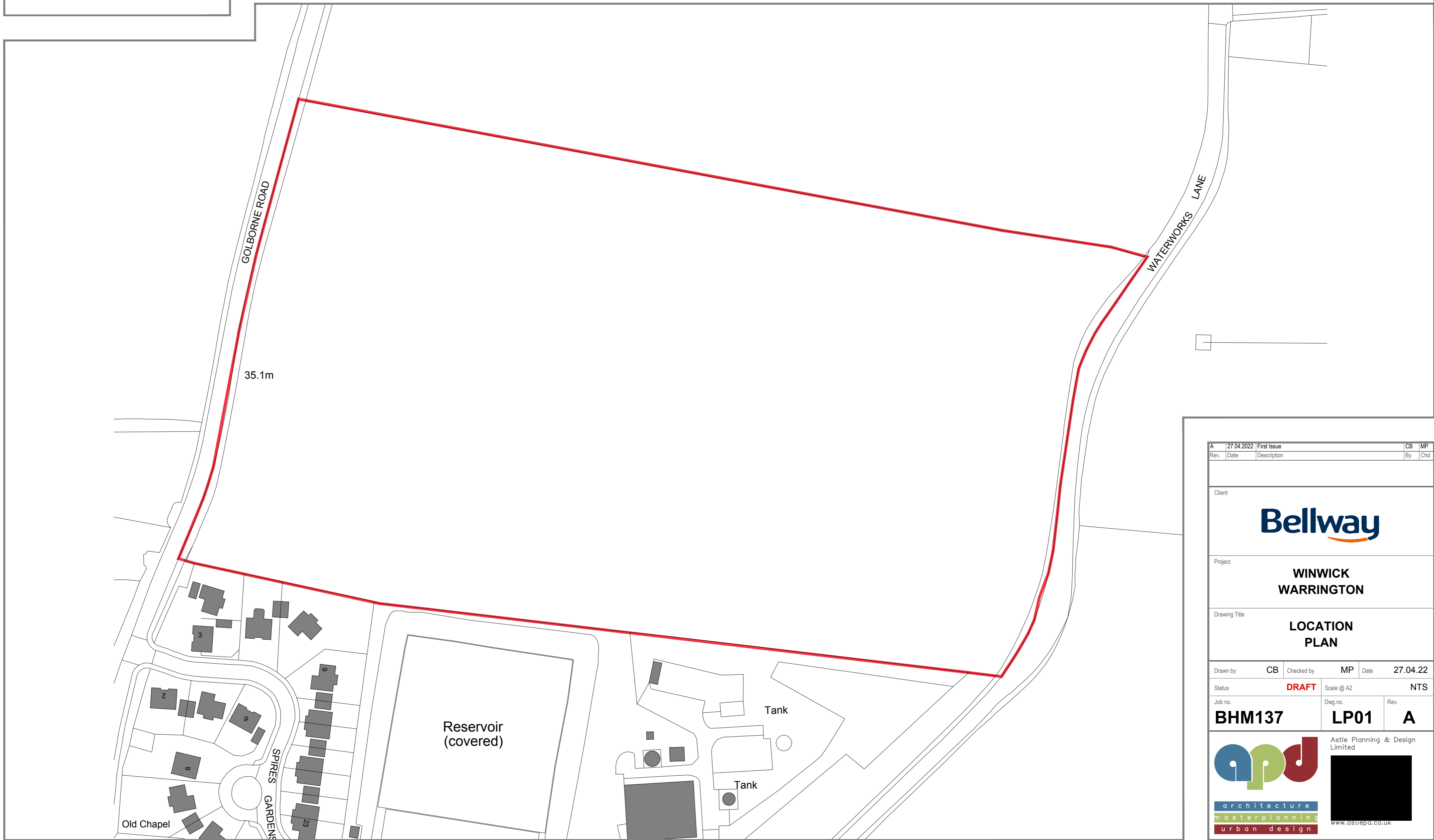
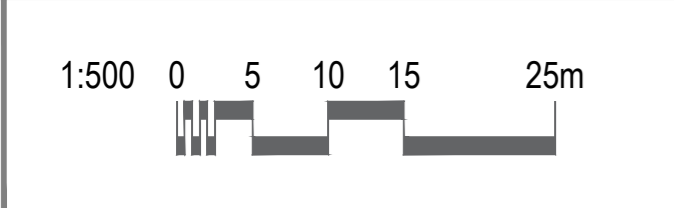
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WINWICK, WARRINGTON

LOCATION PLAN



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Project				
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LOCATION PLAN				
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Appendix 2

Coloured Sketch Layout

Land off Goldborne Road, Winwick, Warrington



Illustrative Sketch Layout

Detailed Planning Application

Drawing Number APD/BHM139/SK03
Revision P3
Date 28.09.22
Scale/Sheet Size 1:500/A1

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Bellway