



Preliminary Landscape & Visual Overview  
**Heath Crescent, Norwich**  
13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

12790/R01b/KL/RP







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# 1 Introduction and Site Context

## Background

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to inform initial advice for the purpose of site promotion for residential development through the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) for a site located at Heath Crescent, Norwich, Norfolk. This document considers the landscape and visual context within which the site is situated.
- 1.2 Reference is made to the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, the Broadland District Council Development Management DPD, the Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan, and the findings of fieldwork and Tyler Grange's site specific appraisal to identify the landscape, townscape, visual context and key features.
- 1.3 These opportunities have been used to identify strategic landscape principles for the site to ensure the development respects and enhances the landscape context, providing opportunities for mitigation and enhancements where appropriate.
- 1.4 This report does not constitute a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) or a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) or a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA).

## Site Context

- 1.5 The site is located in the parish of Hellesdon and suburb of Norwich, Norfolk. The site consists of a single land parcel including a sports pitch, two tennis courts, a bowling green and a changing facility.
- 1.6 The site location and the site boundary can be seen in **Plan 1**, along with aerial photography and the surrounding context.
- 1.7 The site is located in an urban context and surrounded on all boundaries by built form and existing development. The northern boundary of the site is adjacent to residential properties along Heath Crescent, currently comprising of garden fencing and some shrub planting from the residential back gardens. The eastern boundary comprises mature hedgerow planting that sits adjacent to an industrial park. The southern boundary consists of hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting and sits adjacent to residential properties off Prince Andrew's Close. The western boundary is adjacent to residential properties off Prince Andrew's Road and consists of garden fencing from the residential back gardens. The site has existing vehicular access point off Heath Crescent with another proposed off Prince Andrew's Road. The site is flat, only slightly sloping up towards the south.

Plan 1: Site Location and Site Context (12790/P01)



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### National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)

- 2.1 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan making the presumption requires plans to positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of an area and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change.
- 2.2 Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Furthermore, it confirms that where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.
- 2.3 The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve, as stated at paragraph 124.
- 2.4 Paragraph 127 seeks to ensure that developments:  
*“Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, just not for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;  
Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;  
Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);  
Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;  
Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and  
Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*
- 2.5 Paragraph 170 requires planning policies and decisions to

contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by fulfilling criteria including amongst others:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.*

### National Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.6 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and it was last updated in February 2019. The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which was published online on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014 with the guidance on Design: Process and Tools (October 2019), National Design Guide (October 2019), Green Infrastructure (July 2019) and Landscape (July 2019). Those categories within the NPPG that are of particular relevance to landscape and visual matters in relation to this site are set out below.
- 2.7 The Greater Norwich District Council will need to in line with the policies listed within the NPPF and NPPG.
- Design: Process and Tools
- 2.8 The NPPG states that well-deigned places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process. The guidance sets out processes and tools that can be used through the planning system. The guidance is to be read alongside the National Design Guide.
- 2.9 As set out in paragraph 130 of the NPPF, permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Good design is set out in the National Design Guide under 10 characteristics which include context, identity, nature and public spaces (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 26-001-20191001).

### National Design Guide (NDG) (2019)

- 2.10 The NDG sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. Planning policies can set out the design outcomes that development should pursue as well as the tools and processes that are expected to be used to embed good design by local authorities when creating Local Plans. The Greater Norwich Local Plan should consider this guidance in the preparation of the local plan.
- 2.11 The importance of landscape in design is identified from the introduction and throughout the NDG with the beauty of a place ranging from a long view down to the details of a building or a landscape.
- 2.12 Hard and soft landscape are identified as key components of good design. In considering context, it is necessary for development to understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context which includes landscape character.
- 2.13 In terms of identity, paragraph 49 confirms that the identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is therefore necessary for new development to be influenced by an appreciation and understanding of land amongst other criteria.

### Green Infrastructure

- 2.14 The NPPG highlights the multifaceted benefits provided through the provision of Green Infrastructure, including but not limited to: “enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk” (Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 8-005-20190721).
- 2.15 Moreover, the NPPG recognises how green infrastructure exists within a wider landscape context and can thus be used to reinforce and enhance local landscape character and contribute to a sense of place. Careful consideration should be made to the scale and size of the site in relation to potential opportunities to incorporate Green Infrastructure if and where possible.

### Landscape

- 2.16 The NPPG makes reference to the NPPF, stating: *“it is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the*

## 2 Policy Context

*conservation and enhancement of landscapes*" (Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721).

- 2.17 It is therefore emphasised that the cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully, whereby proposals should *"avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary"* (Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721).

### Local Planning Policy

- 2.18 The site falls into the administrative area of Broadland District Council and within Norfolk County Council. The current adopted local plans relevant to the site are The Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (adopted January 2014), The Broadland District Council Development Management DPD (adopted August 2015), Site Allocations DPD (adopted 2016) and The Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan (adopted December 2017).

- 2.19 Hellesdon Conservation area sits approximately 2.3km to the south west of the site.

- 2.20 The key policies that are of primary importance in the consideration of development potential and landscape context outlined in the adopted local plan are set out below:

*The Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (Adopted January 2014)*

- 2.21 Policy 1: Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets – Proposals should:

- *"Be designed to mitigate and be adapted to the urban heat island effect in Norwich";*
- *"Improve the resilience of ecosystems to environmental change";* and
- *"Contribute to providing a multifunctional green infrastructure network, including provision of areas of open space, wildlife resources and links between them, both off site and as an integral part of the development."*

- 2.22 Policy 2: Promoting good design – Proposals should respect local distinctiveness by respecting:

- *"The landscape setting of settlements including the urban/rural transition;*

- *The landscape character and historic environment;*
- *Townscape, including the city and the varied character of our market towns and villages;*
- *Provision of landscaping and public art;*
- *The need to ensure cycling and walking friendly neighbourhoods;*
- *Designing out crime; and*
- *The use of sustainable and traditional materials."*

- 2.23 Policy 12: The remainder of the Norwich urban area, including the fringe parishes – Proposals will be supported when opportunities are sought *"to improve townscape and retain the best of local character"*. Green Infrastructure and Green Infrastructure links will be maintained, enhanced and protected by:

- *"The protection of the landscape setting of the urban area;*
- *The establishment of a comprehensive cycle and walking network; and*
- *Tree planting to enhance amenity and habitat, and to ameliorate the impact of the 'urban heat island' effect."*

*The Broadland District Council Development Management DPD (Adopted August 2015)*

- 2.24 Policy GC4: Design – Proposals should take into consideration:

- *"The environment, character and appearance of an area;*
- *Reinforcing local distinctiveness through careful consideration of the treatment of space... the appearance... the scale of new development and landscaping;*
- *Meeting the reasonable amenity needs of all potential future occupiers;*
- *Considering the impact upon the amenity of existing properties;*
- *Making efficient use of land and resources;*
- *Being accessible to all via sustainable means; and*
- *Creating safe environments.*

- 2.25 Policy EN2: Landscape – Seek to enhance and protect:

- *"Gaps between settlements;*
- *Visually sensitive skylines, hillsides and valley sides and important views including the setting of the Broads Area;*
- *Nocturnal character;*
- *Conservation Areas;*
- *Scheduled Ancient Monuments;*
- *Historic Parks and Gardens; and*
- *Green spaces including natural and semi-natural features as well as geographical/geomorphological features which make a significant contribution towards defining the character of an area."*

- 2.26 Policy EN3: Green Infrastructure – *"All development will be expected to maximise opportunities for the creation of a well-managed network of wildlife habitats."* Proposals will be expected to make *"arrangements for the management and maintenance of green infrastructure"*.

- 2.27 Policy RL1: Provision of formal recreational space – *"Residential development consisting of five dwellings or more will be expected to make adequate provision and subsequent management arrangements for recreation."*

*Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan (2017)*

- 2.28 The objectives below aim to address specific issues identified by the local community:

- *"Objective 1: To protect and enhance existing and create new local green infrastructure;*
- *Objective 2: To preserve and enhance the suburban character of Hellesdon, both in terms of its buildings and layout;*
- *Objective 3: To improve conditions and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists moving through or around the Parish; and*
- *Objective 4: To protect and enhance local amenities including shops, services, community facilities, play areas and open spaces.*

## 2 Policy Context

- 2.29 Policy 1: The Hellesdon Green Grid – Proposals should contribute to the creation of the green grid (referenced within the neighbourhood plan) by including:
- *“Native avenue tree planting;*
  - *Hedgerows and species rich vegetated verges; and*
  - *Pockets of managed wild-space and woodland.*
- 2.30 Policy 2: The Hellesdon Community Grid – Developments will be encouraged with *“the creation of walking and cycling friendly neighbourhoods”*.
- 2.31 Policy 3: High Quality Residential Neighbourhoods – Proposals are encouraged to:
- *“Respect the scale and character of existing local neighbourhoods with generous plot sizes, houses set back from the street, grass verges and native species avenue tree planting;*
  - *Ensure walking and cycling are prioritised;*
  - *Promote measures that design out crime and anti-social behaviour, for example by ensuring that public spaces are visible and over-looked by housing; and*
  - *Promote measures that design out parking on verges and footpaths and provide adequate spaces for visitors.”*
- 2.32 Project 1: Enhanced Parks and Open Spaces – “The Parish Council will seek to improve the quality and diversity of existing parks and open spaces throughout Hellesdon”, including:
- *“Securing the use of Jarrold’s Sport Ground / Heath Crescent for the local community;*
  - *Improving signage and entrances to raise awareness and use;*
  - *Reviewing the function of existing parks to ensure they meet with residents needs and aspirations;*
  - *Making better use of smaller pieces of incidental greenspace, for example through the provision of play equipment and seating for individual neighbourhoods;*
  - *Supporting community groups to come forward to create and manage their own pocket parks; and*

- *Exploring opportunities for ‘edible parks’ growing fruit and produce to increase awareness and promote healthy lifestyles.”*

### Planning Policy Conclusion

#### Principles informing site allocation:

The following principles should be considered to ensure that the development of the site accords with the Development Management Plan (DMP), Hellesdon Development Plan and the NPPF.

- Proposals should enhance, maintain and create Green Infrastructure and GI links (Policy EN3 within the Development Management Plan, Policy 1 within the Neighbourhood Plan);
- Proposals should protect, conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness by respecting the local character and landscape setting (Policy EN2 and GC4 within Development Management Plan);
- The provision of native hedgerow and avenue tree planting (Policy 1 within the Neighbourhood Plan);
- Proposals should promote walking and cycling with the creation of more routes and links to existing footpath and cycle routes (Policy 2 and 3 within the Neighbourhood Plan);
- Proposals should have high quality design by ensuring the development is visually attractive, respect the scale and character of the local area, design out crime and provision of landscaping (Policy 3 within the Neighbourhood Plan); and
- Provision of formal recreational space and open spaces such as pocket parks (Policy RL1 within Development Management Plan and Project 1 within the Neighbourhood Plan).



### 3 Landscape Character

#### National Character

- 3.1 The site falls within the Central North Norfolk National Character Area (NCA 78). Although sharing characteristics of the National Character Area, the NCA covers a much larger area and the County and local landscape characteristics are more relevant to the site.

#### District Character

*Broadland District Council Landscape Character Assessment SPD (September 2013)*

- 3.2 The site is identified as being 'Urban' within the Broadland District Landscape Character Assessment and as such there is no published landscape character assessment to make reference to.

#### Site-Specific Character

- 3.3 In order to gain an understanding of how the site fits within the local townscape, Tyler Grange has undertaken a site specific assessment which considers features, landscape structures, land use, enclosure, condition and characteristics of the site.
- 3.4 The site is located off Heath Crescent, Hellesdon in the suburb of the city of Norwich. The site is surrounded by built form, with residential properties to the north, south and west, and an industrial park adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. The site is located approximately 500m south of Norwich International Airport.
- 3.5 The site comprises an area of approximately 2.2ha and was previously used as a sports and social club for Jarrold's employees. Due to dwindling membership and the facility running at a loss, the site closed in August 2016. The land is relatively flat with the site slightly sloping up from approximately 29m (AOD) to 31m (AOD) towards the south.
- 3.6 The site consists of a building previously used as a changing facility, two tennis courts, a bowling green and a grassed playing field. The tennis courts, bowling green and the building are located to the northern part of the site, with the playing field towards to south. The playing field itself has no significant landscape features, however three scattered trees (seen in **Image 1**) are located to the north of the bowling green. The bowling green is surrounded by evergreen hedgerow planting that has a few gaps to access the green. The tennis courts are surrounded by shrub planting. The site is relatively enclosed due

to the flat landform and built form surrounding the site.

- 3.7 The northern boundary is adjacent to the residential properties along Heath Crescent and comprises the existing site entrance to the site from Heath Crescent. The northern boundary is adjacent to the back gardens of the residential properties and is largely fenced with a mixture of timbered and cross wire fencing, with some shrub planting growing through it.
- 3.8 The eastern boundary is adjacent to an industrial park with warehouse buildings providing a strong feature and edge to the site. These warehouse buildings create further urbanising characteristics for the site and although hedgerow planting defines this boundary, the presence of the adjacent built form is a strong feature within the landscape as seen on **Image 2**.
- 3.9 The southern boundary is adjacent to the rear gardens of the properties along Prince Andrew's Close. The southern boundary largely comprises a low wall with high cross wire fencing (as seen in **Image 3**). Additionally, a large number of trees and gappy hedgerow planting make up the southern boundary.
- 3.10 The western boundary is adjacent to the rear gardens of properties along Prince Andrew's Road. The majority of the western boundary is made up of timbered fencing with a scattering of tree planting (as seen in **Image 4**).
- 3.11 Due to the large quantities of built form surrounding the site, the setting of the site is urban and enclosed. The built form largely influences the character of the site.
- 3.12 The site does not have any defining landscape features and does not contribute to the wider landscape setting, with urbanising features present at all boundaries. As identified the site sits within the "urban" character type and does not contribute towards Policy EN2 of the Broadland Development Management DPD with the presence of built form, surrounding urban development and features defining the character of the site. Policy EN2 is therefore not relevant with regard to the development of the site.



**Image 1: Scattered tree planting located to the north of the bowling green.**



**Image 2: Native hedgerow planting along eastern boundary.**



**Image 3: Cross wire fencing and tree planting along southern boundary.**



**Image 4: Timber fencing of rear gardens along western boundary.**



## 4 Visual Study

- 4.1 The presence of the existing built form enclosing the site, as well as the relatively flat topography of the surrounding context limits wider views of the site. The mature vegetation along the eastern and southern boundaries also helps filter views of the site.

### From the North West:

- 4.2 Views from the north west are seen from Heath Crescent with direct partial views through the existing access off Heath Crescent (**Photoviewpoint 1**). These views are seen in the context of existing bungalows and urban characteristics off Heath Crescent.

### From the East:

- 4.3 Views from the east are limited from the industrial park, with the site sitting behind a established native hedgerow. This view is seen in the context of the existing industrial development and associated areas of hardstanding and car parking (**Photoviewpoint 4**).

### From the South:

- 4.4 Views from the south are limited from Prince Andrew's Close, due to the mature vegetation along the southern boundary of the site. Residential properties limit views of the site and any additional development would be seen within the context of existing built form and residential development (**Photoviewpoint 3**).

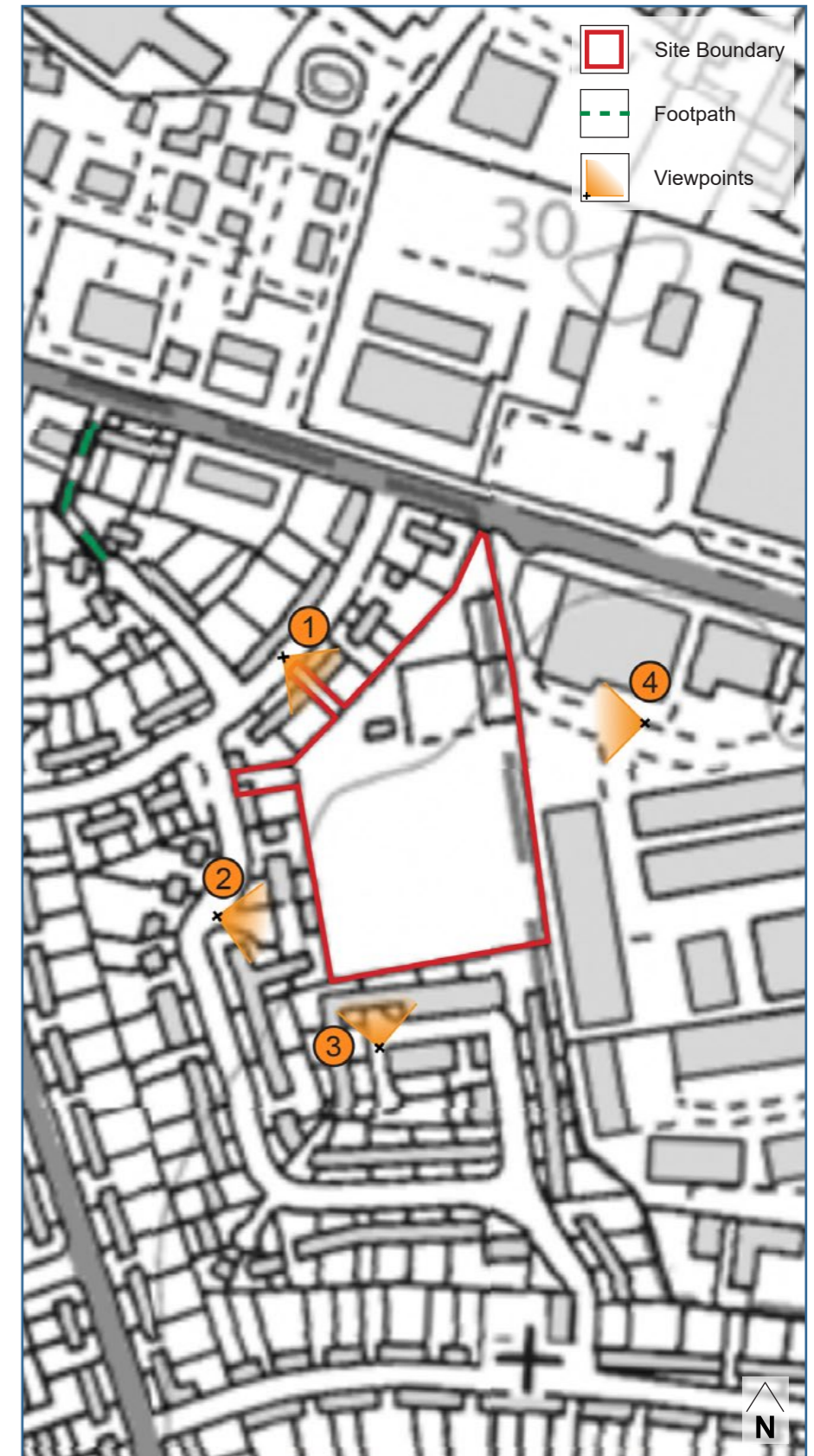
### From the West:

- 4.5 Existing bungalows along Prince Andrew's Road in the foreground limit views of the site (**Photoviewpoint 2**). Glimpsed views may be possible at gaps between existing bungalows, but development will not be uncharacteristic with the local context.

### Receptors

- 4.6 Receptors that will experience views of the site are likely to include:
- Residents of properties along Heath Crescent experiencing direct views (**Photoviewpoint 1**);
  - Residents of properties along Prince Andrew's Road experiencing direct views (**Photoviewpoint 2**);
  - Residents of properties along Prince Andrew's Close experiencing direct views (**Photoviewpoint 3**);
  - Transient users of Heath Crescent (**Photoviewpoint 1**);
  - Transient users of Prince Andrew's Road (**Photoviewpoint 2**);
  - Transient users of Prince Andrew's Close (**Photoviewpoint 3**); and
  - Workers of the industrial park will experience glimpse views (**Photoviewpoint 4**).
- 4.7 Views are local and limited and are seen in the context of existing built form. There are no long distance views due to the flat nature of the landform of the site and its surroundings.
- 4.8 Development of the site would not be uncharacteristic or be detrimental to the visual amenity of receptors, with existing urban development, residential properties and industrial units surrounding the site.
- 4.9 The presence of larger industrial units along the eastern boundary of the site are a strong feature within the landscape and opportunities exist to provide higher development adjacent to the southern part of this boundary. The height parameters of proposed development should be reviewed in more detail at a later date.

Plan 2: Viewpoint Location Plan (12790/P02a)



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4 Visual Study



Photoviewpoint 1: Taken from Heath Crescent.

Orientation: South-East Distance from site: 5m



Photoviewpoint 2: Taken from Prince Andrew's Road.

Orientation: East Distance from site: 60m



4 Visual Study



Photoviewpoint 3: Taken from Prince Andrew's Close.

Orientation: North Distance from site: 45m



Photoviewpoint 4: Taken from the industrial park to the east of the site.

Orientation: West Distance from site: 58m



## 5 Recommendations

### Landscape Recommendations

- 5.1 Having reviewed local policy requirements, Supplementary Planning Guidance and the completion of a site specific appraisal of the landscape and visual context of the site, the following landscape and visual opportunities and constraints to development have been identified. These are illustrated on **Plan 3**:
1. The existing hedgerow along the eastern boundary should be retained.
  2. A proposed native hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting to the northern boundary of the site will assist in filtering views and creating a softer edge to the development.
  3. There are opportunities for properties within the developable area to front the multi functional green infrastructure.
  4. The enhancements of existing boundary vegetation and the proposed hedgerow to the northern boundary will enhance green infrastructure links, consistent with Policy EN3 of the The Broadland District Council Development Management DPD.
  5. Opportunities for higher development adjacent to the south eastern part of the site may be possible and would not be uncharacteristic with the existing industrial units to the east of the site.

Plan 3: Opportunities and Constraints Plan (12790/P03b)



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## 6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This preliminary landscape and visual report for the promotion of the site at Heath Crescent has found that development of the site can be achieved without undue and unnecessary harm to the landscape character and visual amenity of the area.
- 6.2 Visually the site is well related to the existing built form within the local context. Residential properties currently sit adjacent to the northern, southern and western site boundaries, with an industrial park adjacent to the eastern site boundary. The presence of the industrial units adjacent to the south eastern boundary create urbanising effects, with the large industrial units forming much of the eastern boundary of the site. Proposed higher development along this boundary would not be an uncharacteristic feature, and internal street scene landscaping would assist in softening the existing industrial units and proposed built form.
- 6.3 Direct views of the site are possible from the site entrance at Heath Crescent, as well as direct views for residents living in properties adjacent to the site boundaries. The flat landform of the site and its surroundings limits long distance views, with the built form enclosing the site.
- 6.4 The creation of links to existing walking and cycling routes will be promoted (Policy 2 within Core Strategy, Policy 2 and 3 within the Neighbourhood Plan). Footpath links will promote a healthier lifestyle and encourage exercise. The introduction of footpath links in the northern part of the site will be beneficial for the wider community, creating a loop walk between Heath Crescent and Fifers Lane.
- 6.5 The policy context of the site states that proposals should enhance, maintain and create Green Infrastructure and GI links (Policies 1 and 12 within Core Strategy, Policy EN3 within the Development Management Plan, Policy 1 within the Neighbourhood Plan). The retention and enhancement of existing planting with public open space in the northern area of the site required for surface water attenuation could be designed to have multifunctional use to enhance green infrastructure on site.
- 6.6 The mature hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting along the eastern boundary should be retained.
- 6.7 There are opportunities to propose a native hedgerow along the north western boundary to filter potential views of the site from Heath Crescent. The provision of additional tree and native hedgerow planting will be supported within the development.
- 6.8 The Local Policy EN2 - Landscape of the Broadland Development Management DPD identifies that *'proposals should have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment SPD and in particular..... Green spaces including natural and semi-natural features as well as geological/geomorphological features which make a significant contribution towards defining the character of an area'*
- 6.9 The proposals sit within an area surrounded by built form, and the Broadland District Council Landscape Character Assessment identifies that the site is within the "urban" character type.
- 6.10 As identified the site displays urban characteristics and does not make a significant contribution towards defining the character of the area or landscape, and therefore Policy EN2 is not relevant with regard to the site.
- 6.11 The development of the site would not cause undue harm to the visual amenity of the area as the development of the site would be logical due to built form enclosing the site.
- 6.12 Development of the site will comply with policies as a whole and will be in keeping with local and existing settlement character due to its "urban" designation in the Landscape Character Assessment. The development will not be uncharacteristic of this area.