

### START HERE

## Introduction

This presentation has been convened by the owners of the land to the south of Woodhall Spa, who wish to consult with local residents and members of the wider community about its potential to accommodate new development as part of a long-term strategic plan for the village.

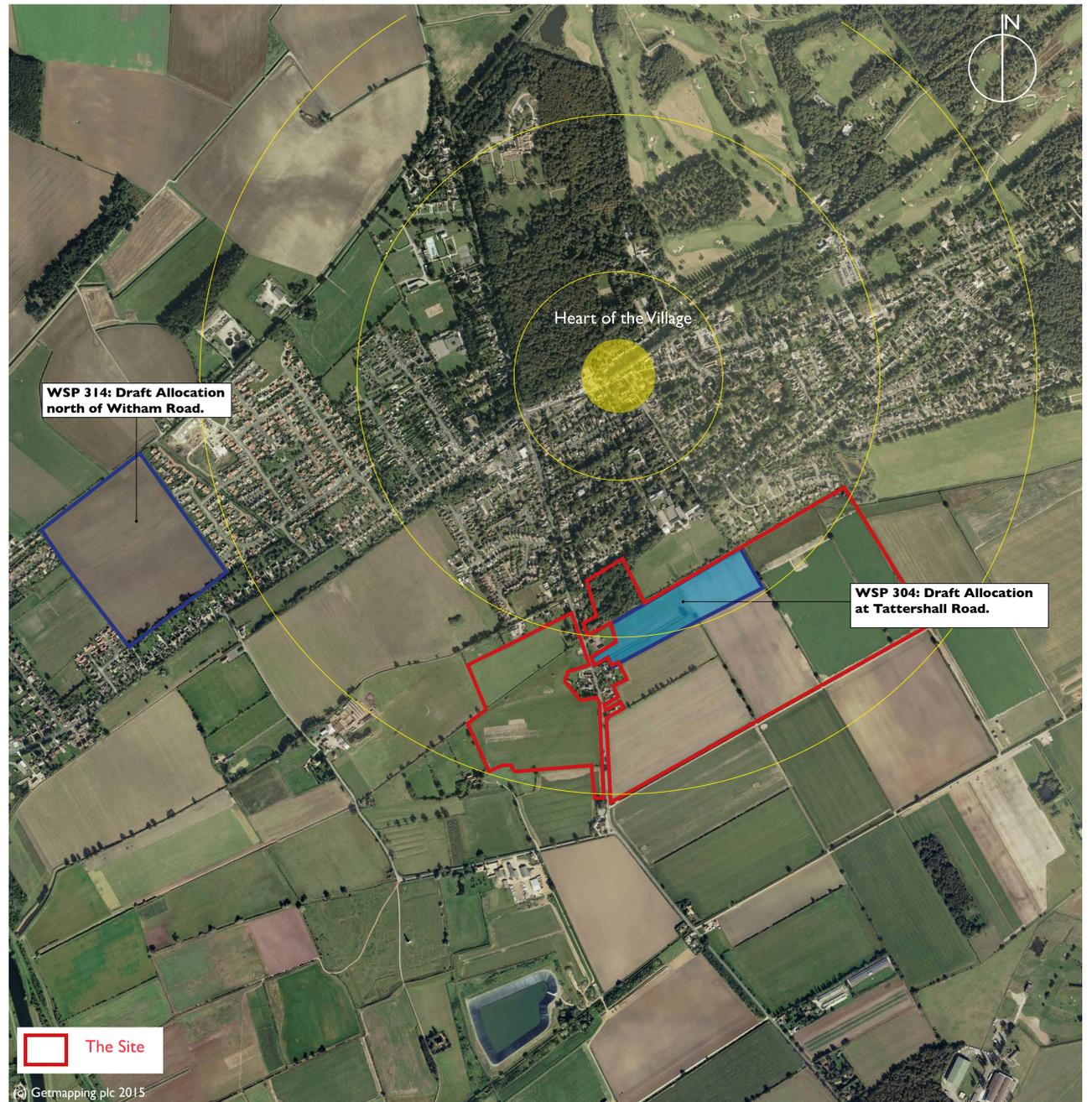
The extent of the site is identified on the accompanying aerial view. The land is in two ownerships, the majority of which is currently in agricultural use, with a small parcel laid out as playing fields (not shown), for the exclusive use of St Hugh's School.

Outline planning permission (N/S/215/01656/14) has recently been granted on part of the site, permitting the construction of 49 residential dwellings. Following the publication of the East Lindsey Draft Core Strategy and Settlement Proposals DPD (Feb 2016), which formally allocates this part of the site for development (Ref: WSP304), the intention is to pursue a joined up, comprehensive approach that provisionally considers all of the land south of Woodhall Spa within the redline.

The decision to apply for outline planning permission on a larger site is based on the view that, compared to the other significant draft allocation north of Witham Road (Ref: WSP314), the land to the south has far greater potential to deliver a suitable and sustainable, long-term vision for the future growth of Woodhall Spa. Moreover, by ensuring future development proposals are informed by a careful appraisal of the special architectural and historic features of the village, and by taking a comprehensive and strategic approach to its planning and design, the site offers a real opportunity to make a significant contribution to sustaining and enhancing the established character of one of Lincolnshire's most attractive villages.

This presentation provides an overview of the site, the appraisal work that has been undertaken to date, and some initial ideas about how this can be used to inform future development proposals capable of building upon the legacy of Woodhall Spa's unique heritage.

## Site Location



## Site Description

The site adjoins the southern edge of Woodhall Spa's historic urban core, and is accessed from Tattershall Road which forms its eastern boundary. There is a small area of woodland to the north that adjoins St Hugh's School. The school also uses part of the redline site as a playing field. The western and southern boundaries are defined by hedgerows. There are several residential properties and a small business park located adjacent to the western boundary.

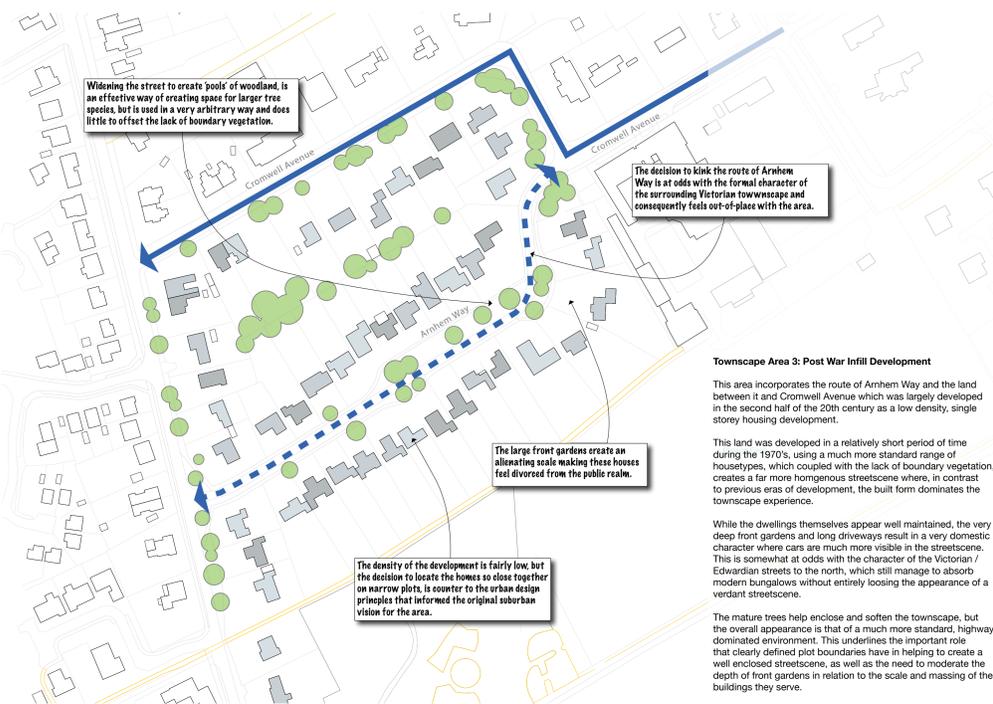
The land is currently in agricultural use and falls gently from south to north, draining towards a watercourse which runs along its northern boundary. There are few natural features on the site other than several hedgerows and some substantial mature trees dotted along the field boundaries.

There are currently no public rights of way across the site, and the majority of the land is outside the floodrisk zone. Other than the need to respect the privacy and amenity of the residential properties along Tattershall Road, there are no significant development constraints associated with the land.





### Townscape Appraisal (Part 2)



#### Townscape Area 3: Post War Infill Development

This area incorporates the route of Arnhem Way and the land between it and Cromwell Avenue which was largely developed in the second half of the 20th century as a low density, single storey housing development.

This land was developed in a relatively short period of time during the 1970's, using a much more standard range of house types, which coupled with the lack of boundary vegetation, creates a far more homogenous streetscene where, in contrast to previous eras of development, the built form dominates the townscape experience.

While the dwellings themselves appear well maintained, the very deep front gardens and long driveways result in a very domestic character where cars are much more visible in the streetscene. This is somewhat at odds with the character of the Victorian / Edwardian streets to the north, which still manage to absorb modern bungalows without entirely losing the appearance of a verdant streetscene.

The mature trees help enclose and soften the townscape, but the overall appearance is that of a much more standard, highway dominated environment. This underlines the important role that clearly defined plot boundaries have in helping to create a well enclosed streetscene, as well as the need to moderate the depth of front gardens in relation to the scale and massing of the buildings they serve.

#### Key Features

The low-density infilling that has taken place throughout the village is a natural process that has created some pleasant neighbourhoods, as seen along Arnhem Way where the new houses have been loosely arranged to incorporate existing trees where possible.

To a certain degree, the basic principles of the garden village have been retained, with relatively narrow plots and good sized front gardens providing plenty of space for landscaping along the frontages. However, the use of a large number of single storey homes and an open aspect without well defined plot boundaries, has resulted in a streetscene that lacks the levels of greenery and enclosure associated with the earlier streetscenes to the north.

As a consequence, this results in cars and driveways being much more visible within the public realm, which could be a problem for new development which needs to accommodate a range of dwelling types and sizes at more efficient densities. It also results in a streetscene that lacks the continuity and structure of previous eras, where individual gardens tend to compete with one another and the attractiveness of the public realm hinges on the aesthetic choices of individual residents.

This very loose, open aspect streetscene is therefore unlikely to offer a good template for future development on the basis that the public realm is essentially unstructured and lacks a clear definition between the public and private realm. This is an important distinction as new homes and neighbourhoods are now expected to meet modern standards for security and crime prevention. One of the key tools of achieving this is through the creation of defensible space, which relies on a very clear definition between the private space surrounding the home, and the public realm of the street, so that there is no ambiguity about the extent of either.

While the mature trees make a significant contribution to greening the public realm, they are unable to compensate for the expansive driveways and open front gardens, and appear isolated and monumentalised rather than an integral part of the public realm.

This underlines the need for new development to have a clear strategy for the design of the public realm where boundary enclosures, landscaping, open space and tree planting are considered together to create a coordinated and cohesive streetscene that echoes the established qualities of the village and makes a positive contribution to the character of Woodhall Spa.



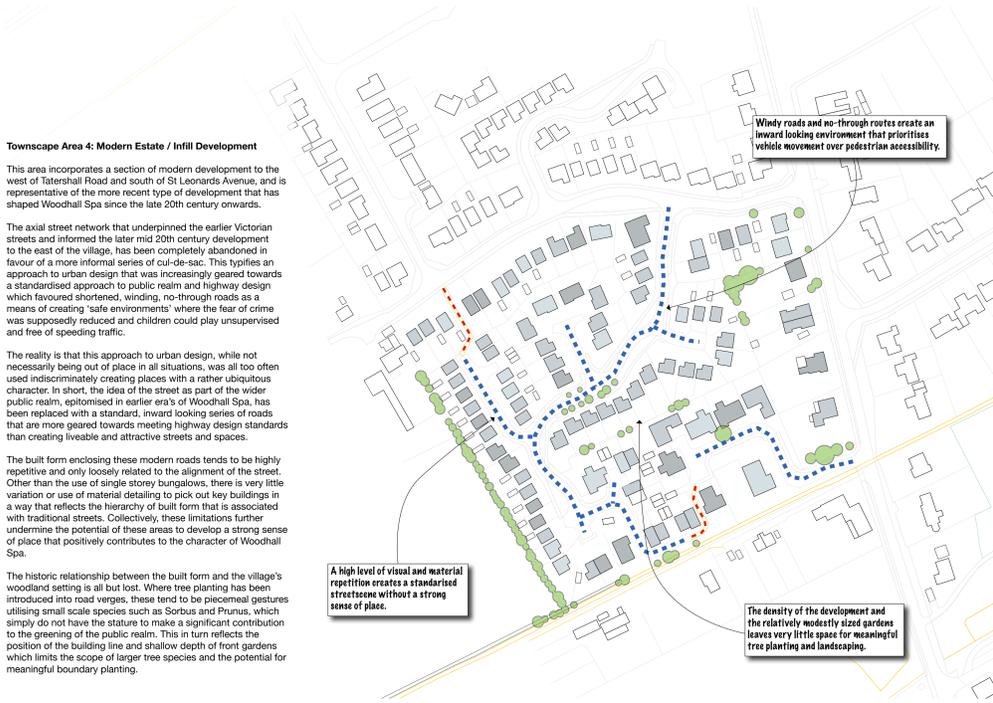
View looking east along Arnhem Way showing low-density houses and bungalows either side of mature trees.



Individual bungalows tend to occupy larger plots but provide less visual impact and enclosure within the streetscene, unlike previous eras of development that create a more distinctive sense of place.



The absence of green boundaries and garden vegetation creates a stark contrast between the public and private realm, exposes car parking and driveways, and creates a rather fragmented appearance.



#### Townscape Area 4: Modern Estate / Infill Development

This area incorporates a section of modern development to the west of Tattershall Road and south of St Leonards Avenue, and is representative of the more recent type of development that has shaped Woodhall Spa since the late 20th century onwards.

The axial street network that underpinned the earlier Victorian streets and informed the later mid 20th century development to the east of the village, has been completely abandoned in favour of a more informal series of cul-de-sacs. This typifies an approach to urban design that was increasingly geared towards a standardised approach to public realm and highway design which favoured shortened, winding, no-through roads as a means of creating 'safe environments' where the fear of crime was supposedly reduced and children could play unsupervised and free of speeding traffic.

The reality is that this approach to urban design, while not necessarily being out of place in all situations, was all too often used indiscriminately creating places with a rather ubiquitous character. In short, the idea of the street as part of the wider public realm, epitomised in earlier eras of Woodhall Spa, has been replaced with a standard, inward looking series of roads that are more geared towards meeting highway design standards than creating liveable and attractive streets and spaces.

The built form enclosing these modern roads tends to be highly repetitive and only loosely related to the alignment of the street. Other than the use of single storey bungalows, there is very little variation or use of material detailing to pick out key buildings in a way that reflects the hierarchy of built form that is associated with traditional streets. Collectively, these limitations further undermine the potential of these areas to develop a strong sense of place that positively contributes to the character of Woodhall Spa.

The historic relationship between the built form and the village's woodland setting is all but lost. Where tree planting has been introduced into road verges, these tend to be piecemeal gestures utilising small scale species such as Sorbus and Prunus, which simply do not have the stature to make a significant contribution to the greening of the public realm. This in turn reflects the position of the building line and shallow depth of front gardens which limits the scope of larger tree species and the potential for meaningful boundary planting.

Windy roads and no-through routes create an inward looking environment that prioritises vehicle movement over pedestrian accessibility.

A high level of visual and material repetition creates a standardised streetscene without a strong sense of place.

The density of the development and the relatively modestly sized gardens leaves very little space for meaningful tree planting and landscaping.

#### Key Features

The modern estate development that has taken place in Woodhall Spa is typical of a general approach to urban design that has come under increasing scrutiny for its ability to deliver high quality neighbourhoods capable of making a positive contribution to the character of the place. There has been a general move, both in policy and practical terms, towards a more contextual response that avoids the highly standardised designs of the cul-de-sac style of development, in favour of something more akin to the traditional design qualities that underpin the earlier stages of Woodhall Spa's development.

This can be seen in the more recent development that has taken place to the north of Witham Road. Here, the new streets of Turnberry Drive and Wentworth Way have been laid out on a more regular, grid-like pattern, with pedestrian links and a central open space with informal planting. There is also some tree planting along these key routes, albeit on cursory inspection, the species selection does not look likely to provide substantial canopies. This is likely to be as a result of highway design and servicing constraints which need to be considered from the outset alongside the public realm strategy.

While these new streets have gone some way to avoiding the inward looking cul-de-sac designs, the public realm still lacks the simplicity and elegance of the Victorian streets that characterise the village centre. It is encouraging that garden boundaries have been reinstated and hedges have been used extensively to help define the plot frontages. However, the decision to use extensive areas of Beech hedging limits the potential for variety and visual interest that a patchwork of hedge species could have provided.

The streets themselves feel heavily engineered, and introduce standard material finishes like concrete block paving which further compound their ubiquitous character.

More fundamentally, the streetscenes do not have any planned sense of individual character and do not appear to conform to a logical street hierarchy. While it is accepted that the use of standard house types are necessary for large scale development, these streets lack a coordinated approach to material selection and design detailing, which could help create more distinctive streets and squares and contribute to the creation of a legible public realm.

Reflecting on these issues, future development proposals for Woodhall Spa would benefit from a more refined approach to material selection and design which explicitly focus on the creation of locally distinctive streets, rather than adopting an area wide approach where all the streets basically look the same. One of the ways this could be implemented is through the use of character area design, where the appearance of individual zones and their corresponding design criteria are identified at the outset.



View looking north along Turnberry Drive where front gardens and hedges have been reintroduced to help soften the appearance of the streetscene.



The recurring use of standard design and materials provides limited visual interest, which along with use of concrete block paving in turning heads, contribute to a ubiquitous streetscene.



Recent development has reintroduced street trees and grass verges, albeit the width of the verges is unlikely to permit the selection of substantial species that will make a real contribution to the street.

## Summary of Appraisal.

This brief appraisal has identified a number of important features that collectively define the character of Woodhall Spa. The historic core of the village, largely defined by the conservation area boundary, provides the setting that is most positively associated with Woodhall Spa. These include generously proportioned streets, wide pavements, tree-lined avenues and a variety of building types and forms. Away from the village centre itself, the original Victorian / Edwardian streets display subtle variation as part of a hierarchy of routes, and there is a very definite sense of the garden village where views of trees and woodland are an essential part of the streetscene.

It was noted that later periods of development have tended to lose touch with these original design principles, with the absence of garden boundaries, and deep driveways leading to a rather suburban appearance. More recently, modern developments have tended to create very standard streetscenes that lack the variety of built form and have relegated the landscape and tree planting to residual spaces that are unlikely to ever make a significant contribution to the character of the village.

The limitations of a suburban form of development that utilises a restricted palette of standard materials and detailing, is increasingly being recognised as a negative influence on the character of historic towns and villages. Cumulatively, neighbourhoods planned on this basis tend to erode the vibrancy and attractiveness of the public realm, and fail to make a positive contribution to maintaining and enhancing the special interest of a place.

In order to arrest a gradual process of creeping mediocrity, it is suggested that the planning and design of future development requires a more proactive approach that is squarely rooted in a long-term vision for the type of place to be created, based on an understanding of how that place will complement and eventually strengthen the character of its surroundings.

Building on the recent outline planning permission for land at Tattershall Road, and taking a more strategic view of the site's development potential, it is suggested that there is now an opportunity to develop just such a long-term vision for how this land can positively contribute to the future of Woodhall Spa.

Indeed, this land has a number of important advantages over the other sites within the village, which may be summarised as follows:

- Tattershall Road is an important route into Woodhall Spa and development here could make a significant contribution to enhancing the character of this route by creating a southern gateway into the village.
- There are multiple points of access from Tattershall Road, and there are no landownership constraints to affect future highway design works.
- The site is within easy walking distance of the village centre, and there are opportunities to create new footpath and cycle links that will provide direct access to the established street network to the north.
- The site does not flood and can be easily drained to a watercourse.
- There is sufficient space to create substantial areas of green infrastructure and public open space to serve the existing and new community.
- There is an opportunity to open up pedestrian access to the south of Woodhall Spa and beyond to the former airfield site now a nature reserve.
- There are a minimal number of neighbouring properties which can be easily accommodated within the future proposals.
- The site is large enough to deliver a range of land uses to help create a balanced and inclusive community.

To Village Centre

Possible Site Access

To Coningsby



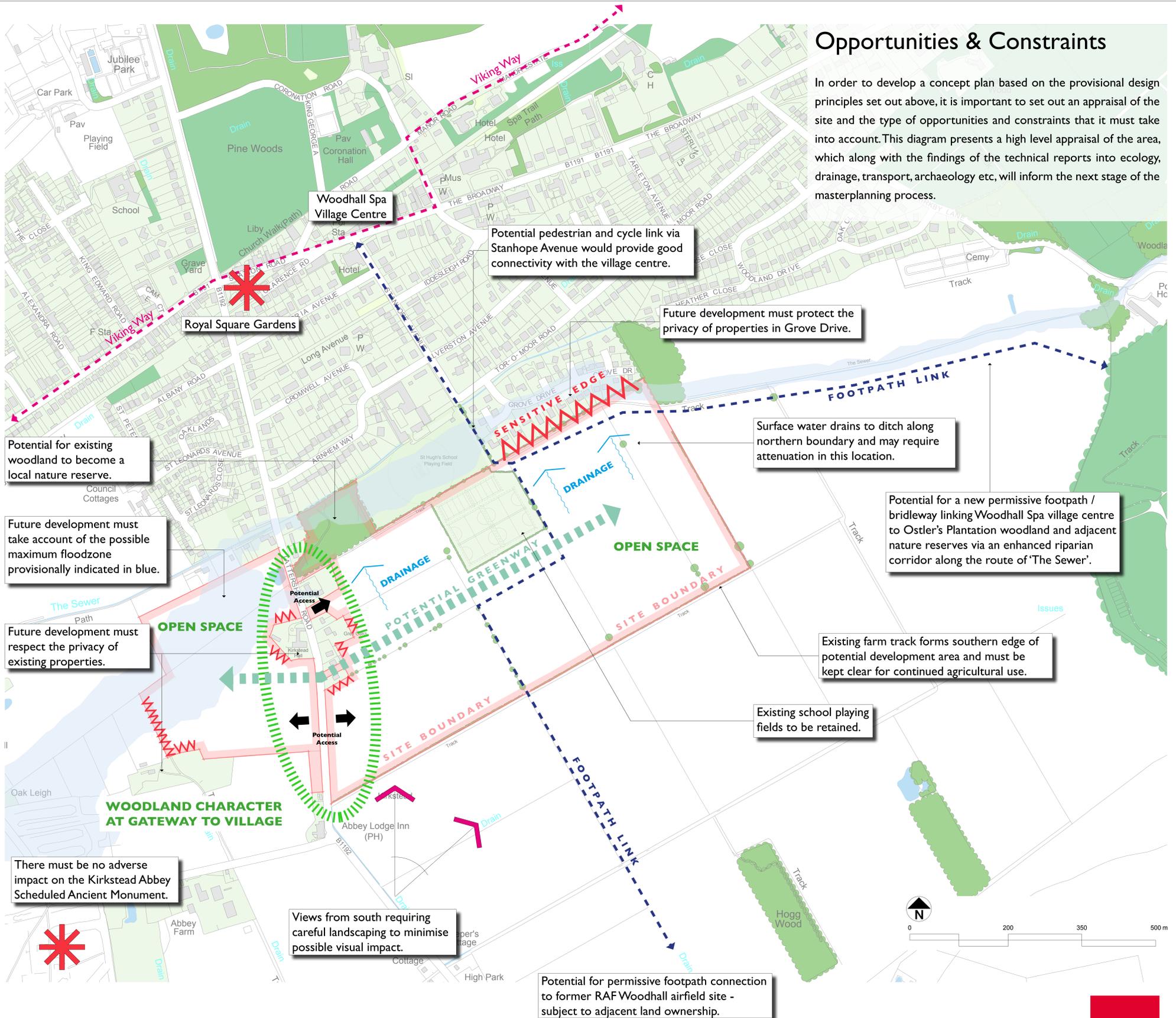
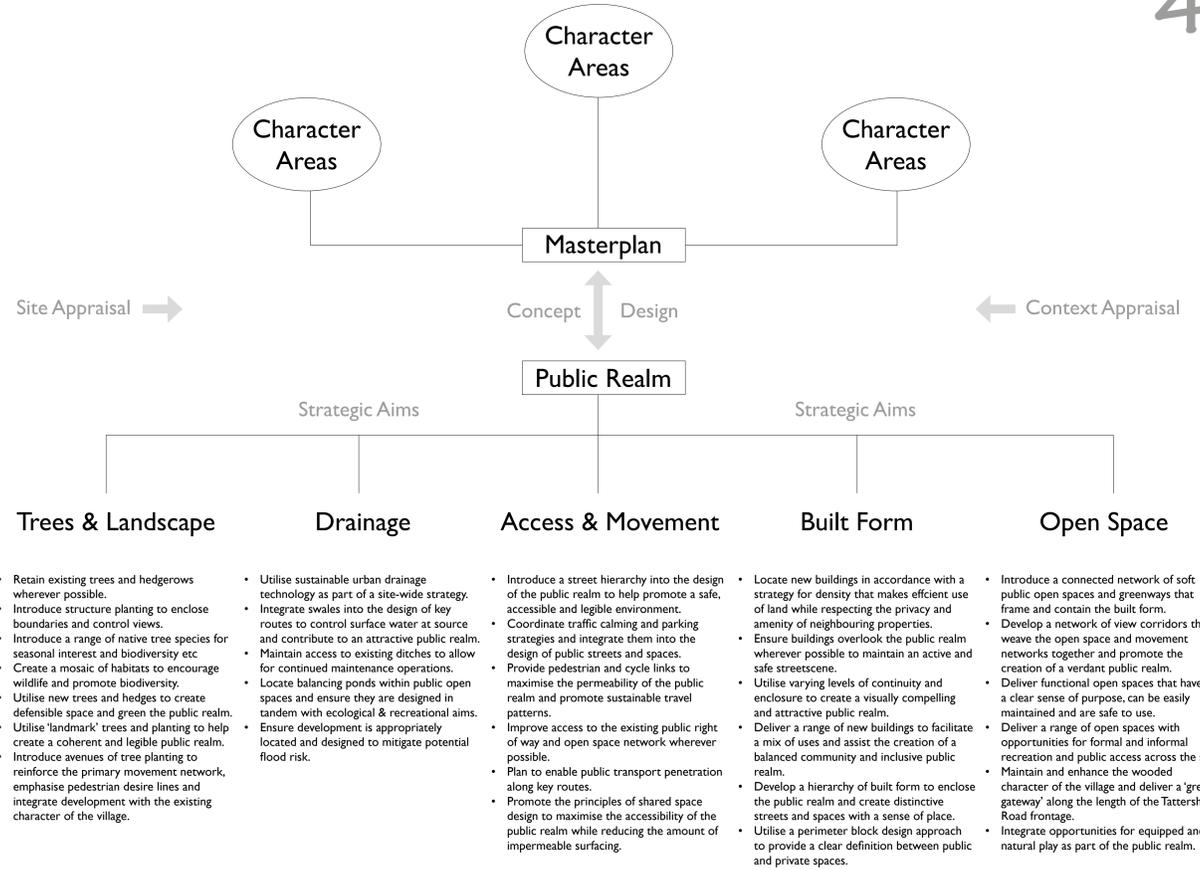
### Planning for Change (The Development Process)

The summary appraisal underlines the need to think about development as a long-term process of change that is guided by a clear vision for the type of place being created. In the case of Woodhall Spa, this vision should respect the character and heritage of the village, and be driven by the opportunity to strengthen and contribute to its unique sense of place for the benefit of existing residents and future generations.

It is also important to ensure the development process is a creative one, planning for change in a way that positively reflects and reinterprets the established qualities of a place, such that the long-term vision is greater than the sum of its parts. In the context of an historic townscape, there is only very rarely a case for slavish preservation, and instead, the general emphasis for new development should focus on how it will add to the legacy of its surroundings.

As can be seen in the Edwardian blueprint for Woodhall Spa with its wide, tree lined avenues and green corridors, an enduring vision revolves around defining the public realm from the outset. While the technical and regulatory process has become more complex, successfully planning for long-term change should still begin by developing a vision for the public realm.

The accompanying diagram sets out an approach for coordinating and managing change directed towards the creation of a high quality, sustainable public realm capable of maintaining and enhancing the character of Woodhall Spa for future generations.



### Concept Plan



**Retirement Living.**  
There is an opportunity to create a bespoke development exclusively designed to meet the needs of the over 55's community, with the potential for a mix of private homes, sheltered housing and an element of extra care / assisted living accommodation.



**Leisure & Recreation.**  
There are opportunities to improve access to existing leisure and recreation facilities as part of a long term vision that links the large area of open access woodland and nature reserve to the east with the village centre via an informal public right of way.



**Open Spaces**  
There is an opportunity to create a significant network of public / protected open spaces utilising the existing trees, hedgerows and watercourses to create a series of green corridors that intersect the new public right of way network. Given the size of the site, there is scope for a range of open spaces from semi-formal lakeside walks and open grassland to informally managed meadows and woodland copse designed to create a mosaic of habitats and provide an environmentally and socially sustainable setting for new development.



**Southern Gateway into Woodhall Spa.**  
An opportunity to consolidate and extend the verdant character of Tattershall Road to create a green gateway either side on approaching the village from the south. This could involve the creation of wide grass verges with space for large, woodland scale trees and rural fencing and signage to compliment the existing character of the village.



**Sustainable Urban Drainage.**  
There is an opportunity to incorporate a site-wide strategy for dealing with surface water with the use of sustainable drainage technologies such as swales designed into the principal streets and public open spaces from the outset.



**Public Rights of Way.**  
There is an opportunity to substantially improve the connectivity of the public right-of-way network as part of a long-term vision for the land south of the village. This could involve the creation of both short and long distance routes connecting with Oslders Plantation to the east and the disused airfield / wildlife reserve to the south, as well as improved access along Tattershall Road and a new link to Stanhope Avenue to provide easy access to the village centre.

