

2 Site Characteristics and Appraisal

Site Location and Development Context

- 2.1 The site allocated for development forms part of, and an extension to, an established and substantial nucleus of development in the North of Salisbury at Old Sarum which includes residential, employment and recreational uses comprising about 160 dwellings, one of the major employment areas for the City extending to approximately 13 ha, the City Football Stadium and the Beehive park and ride.
- 2.2 The site lies to the north of the Portway opposite the existing employment area and adjoining housing on the northern edge of the Old Sarum Airfield. The allocated site wraps around the Partridge Way housing estate, football stadium and playing fields. The Development Brief also considers the potential to integrate the adjoining M.O.D land in order to provide enhanced recreation and open space facilities for the existing and new consolidated community. The site includes the Sarum Centre which is allocated for redevelopment and the Development Brief reaffirms the importance of including previously developed land at the Sarum Centre within the project. To the west of the allocation at the junction of the A345 and the Portway, the City's first park and ride is now fully operational.

Community

- 2.3 The existing community at Old Sarum lives within three quite distinct areas; the two storey predominantly terraced and semi detached housing alongside the Portway and Green Lane, the redeveloped housing estate off Partridge Way and the conversion of the former officers mess to residential apartments. The local community has good potential access to local jobs at the Airfield employment area and to the City facilities via the park and ride. All of the urban uses are located off the Portway, however, much of the development is set back from the road and there is little cohesion so that Old Sarum in general displays a poor sense of place.
- 2.4 The area currently has a paucity of facilities. There is no community or religious building or primary school at Old Sarum, however a small local shop has now been provided. The bus services are infrequent (if the Park and Ride is not taken into account). The proposals for development can and must help resolve these deficiencies by the provision of new facilities. In order to co-ordinate the provision of such facilities a comprehensive outline planning application will be required accompanied by an appropriate legal agreement with Salisbury District Council and the other relevant authorities. This will ensure that the relevant facilities are provided when and where required during the implementation of the development.

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Access

- 2.5 Access to the site can be obtained from the Portway. Vehicular access to and from the City Centre will be via the Portway and the A345. Bus priority and cycle lane provisions have been implemented along this route to the City Centre as part of the City's Beehive Park and Ride scheme. A transport study has shown that journeys into the City by bus along Castle Road are quicker than by car during the peak period. This is therefore a major incentive in favour of public transport as a major mode of travel from the new development. Figure 2.1 shows the existing cycle and pedestrian priority routes.
- 2.6 *To enhance the level of public transport provision at Old Sarum to and from the City Centre via Castle Hill a new service will be provided. A new bus route will loop through the development from the Portway and return along the Portway.*
- 2.7 Green Lane is to be retained for its existing uses but also improved for cyclists and pedestrians between the Portway and Ford and extending to Bishopdown Farm.

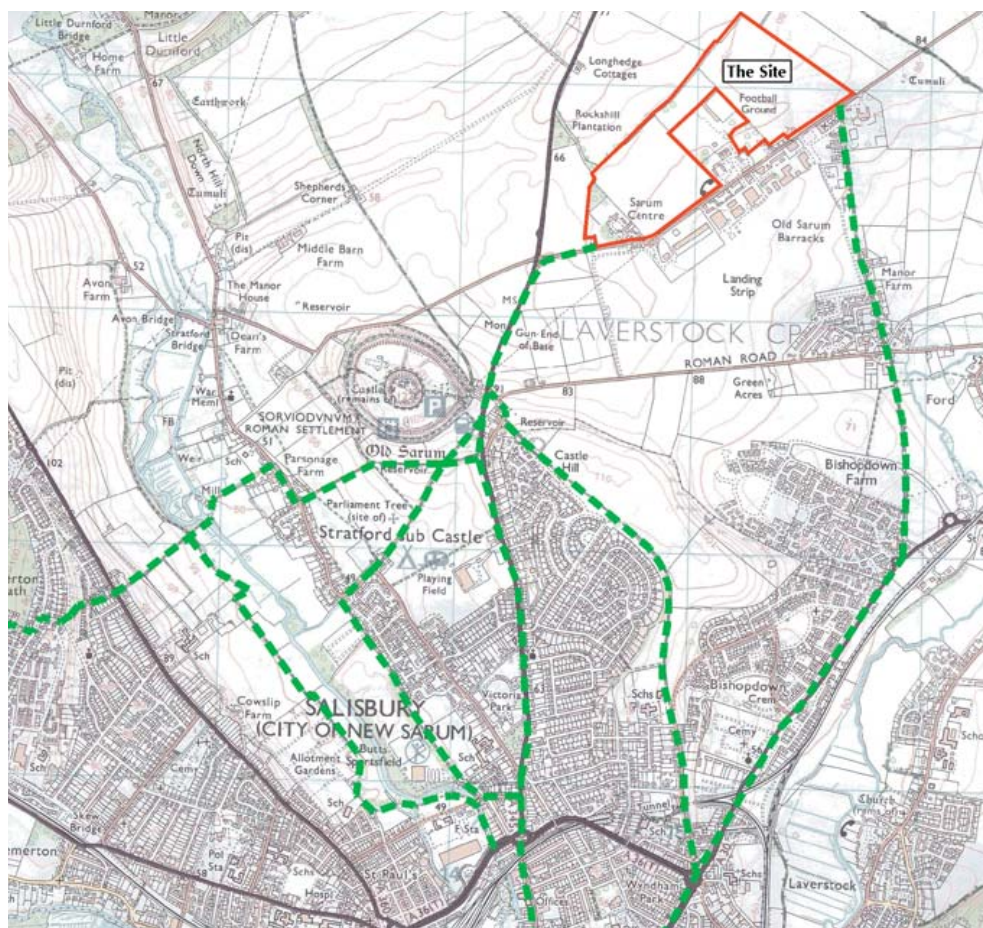


FIG 2.1 URBAN AREA CYCLE & PEDESTRIAN LINKS

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- 2.8 The combination of the improved bus service and improved linkages for cyclists and pedestrians will provide further options for sustainable transport related to the new development and access to employment and facilities in the wider area. At the same time the improvements to Green Lane will not encourage inappropriate motor vehicle usage. Joint use of Green Lane by cyclists and pedestrians between the Portway and Ford extending to Bishopdown Farm will provide further opportunity for sustainable transport related to the new development and access to employment in the wider area.
- 2.9 Matters relating to public transport, pedestrian and cycling facilities will be covered in the legal agreement accompanying the comprehensive outline planning application.

Landform & Topography

- 2.10 The site lies between 60 to 80m Above Ordnance Datum at the head of a broad, gently sloping dry tributary of the Avon Valley. Two gentle ridgelines enclose the site to the north east and south east. The landform is illustrated in fig 2.2.

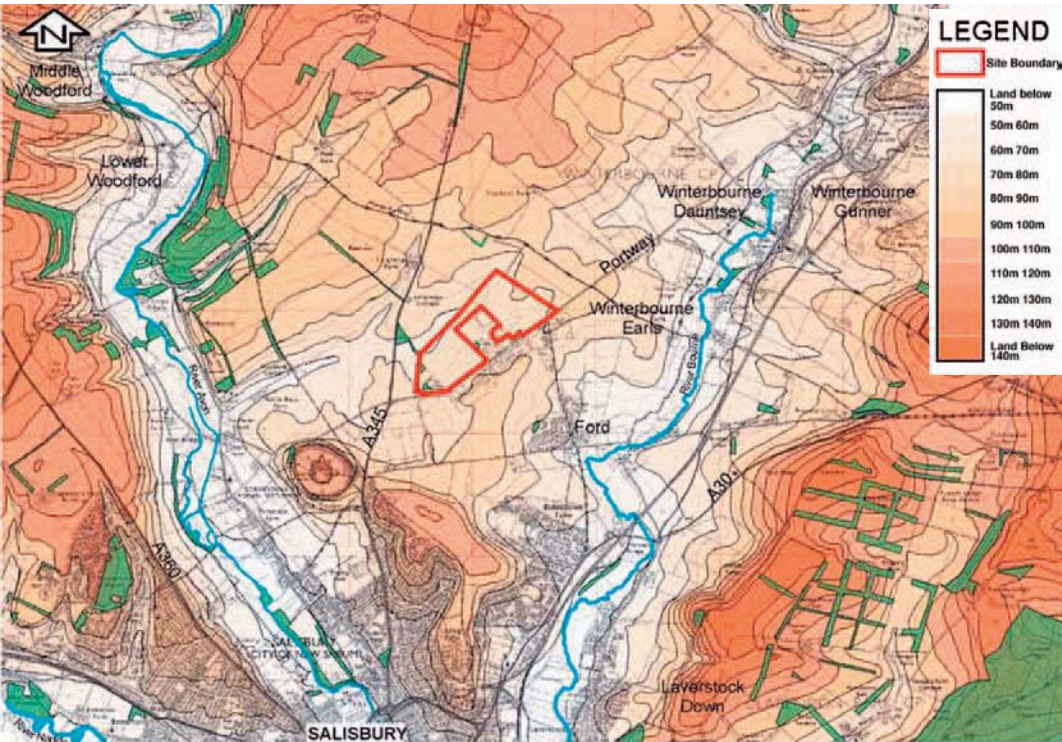


FIG 2.2 LAND FORM

Surrounding Landscape Character

- 2.11 The site lies within the Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs Character Area defined by the Countryside Agency in their Landscape Character Assessment of South East England. The following main features of the landscape character area are all recognisable within the surrounding landscape:

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- Extensive open, rolling chalk plateaux;
- Large arable fields;
- Woodland confined to copses and shelterbelts;
- Widespread earthworks (archaeological remains) in prominent open landscapes;
- Roman roads

2.12 The site lies within but is excluded from 'The Landscape Setting of Salisbury and Wilton', as defined in the SDLP. The main landscape characteristics which contribute to this designation are described as follows;

- A bowl shaped landform containing the city;
- Chalk downland;
- Views over Salisbury from the downland, including skyline views of the Cathedral spire;
- Framed views towards the city and cathedral from the river valleys and flood meadows; and
- The visual and physical relationship between Old Sarum Scheduled Monument and the city.

Landscape Character of the Site

2.13 The site allocated for development comprises five distinct parcels of land. These are shown as A to E in figure 2.3.



FIG 2.3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

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- 2.14 Area A comprises a large scale and open, relatively featureless arable landscape, sloping gently north westwards. Hedgerow trees in some boundaries enrich the otherwise bland landscape. Area A also benefits from views over adjoining chalk downland to the north and views of Old Sarum Scheduled Monument. However, views of existing industrial buildings adjoining the Portway, residential development, and the football ground, detract from the quality of this area, lending it an urban fringe character.
- 2.15 Area B is smaller in scale than Area A, and comprises a narrow strip of essentially flat ground laid to grass. A spoil heap is located to the north east of the area, and a number of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) protected trees to the south west. Views to the north are more restricted than those from Area A, due to the low lying elevation.
- 2.16 Area C comprises a large scale and open, gently undulating arable landscape with a general fall towards the bottom of the dry valley along the north west boundary. This area is similar in character to Area A, however, boundary hedgerows are generally poor with frequent gaps,
- 2.17 Area D comprises a small plot of neglected ground between residential development and the football ground. It is relatively flat and comprises rough grass with some mature trees and invading scrub and has an enclosed character.
- 2.18 Area E comprises the Sarum Centre, a teaching and therapy establishment with residential care accommodation and incorporating a horticultural plant centre. All this is set within a framework of mature trees which provide an attractive landscape character. The Sarum Centre is the obvious area of previously developed land within the site (leaving aside therefore the converted officers accommodation south of the Portway).

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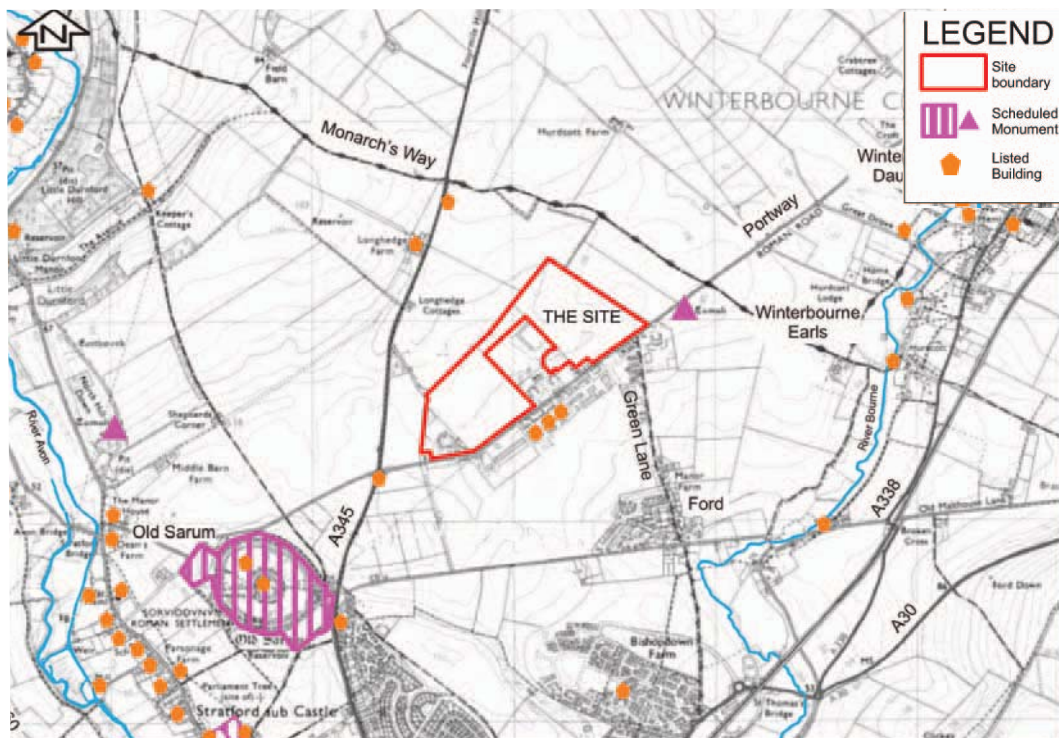


FIG 2.4 LISTED BUILDINGS/SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

Built Heritage, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments

- 2.19 The locations of Listed Buildings within approximately 1km of the site are shown in figure 2.4. There are no listed buildings on the site. Three former World War 1 hangers at Old Sarum Airfield are listed Grade II* and Longhedge House on the A345, and a milestone a short distance to the north are listed Grade II. The setting of the aircraft hangers is formed by the airfield to the south east which is separated from the site by more recent industrial development. Longhedge House is also separated from the site.
- 2.20 The Scheduled Monuments within approximately 1km of the site are shown in figure 2.4. These include the Ende Burgh Long Barrow approximately 200m east of the site, and the prominent Old Sarum Iron Age hillfort approximately 750m south west of the site.

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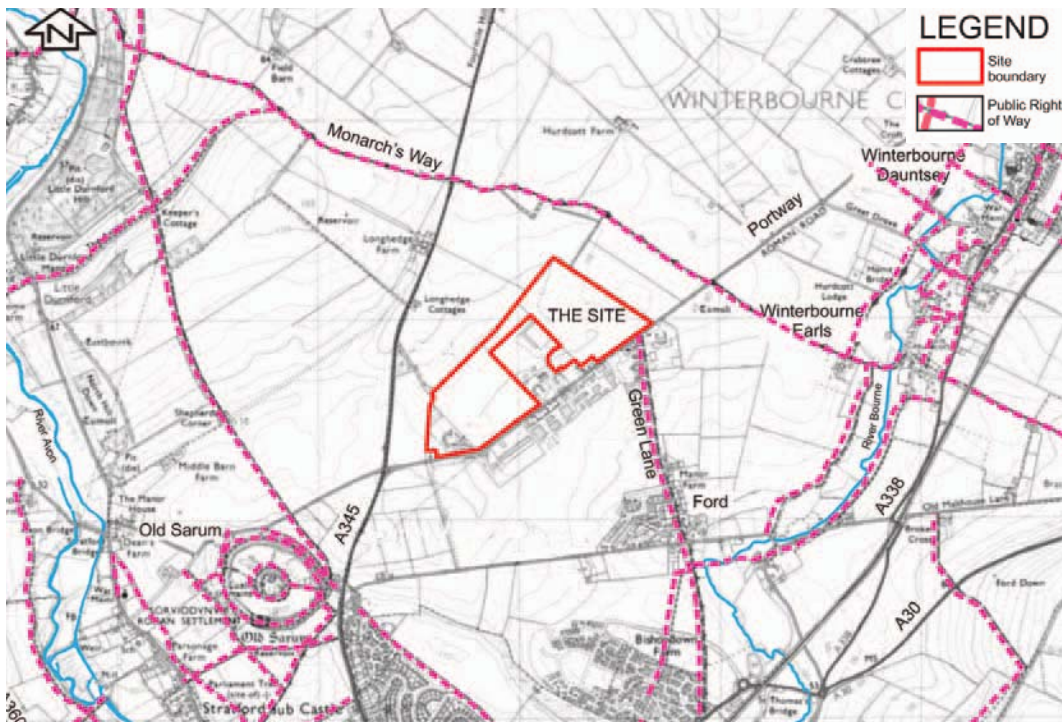


FIG 2.5 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Public Rights of Way

- 2.21 There are no public rights of way on the site. Alongside the Portway a pedestrian footway passes the site. Green Lane (a byway) leads from the Portway to Ford and beyond to the A30 and north east Salisbury. The long distance footpath, Monarch's Way passes the site a short distance to the north east. These rights of way, and others are shown in figure 2.5. The development should provide improved pedestrian linkages.

Visual Appraisal

- 2.22 A comprehensive visual appraisal has been undertaken to determine the effect the proposed development would have upon the surrounding landscape and townscape, from which an appropriate landscaping strategy has been prepared. The findings of the appraisal show that:
- i) The site is relatively inconspicuous from publicly accessible view points within the wider landscape;
 - ii) There are only partial views of the site available from any given viewpoint with land form or tree belts screening the remainder of the site;
 - iii) Many local views of the site are already affected by views of existing

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employment buildings and residential development along the Portway or by the football club;

- iv) Much of the site is screened from the Old Sarum Scheduled Monument by mature tree planting associated within the Sarum Centre, together with more recent planting at the Park and Ride, with the remainder seen in the context of existing development, however, where views can be obtained of the Scheduled Monument from the site these are important.
- v) It is important to retain as many of the mature trees on the site as is practical.
- vi) The site is not a prominent component within views of the landscape setting of Salisbury.

Noise

- 2.23 Potential noise sources adjoining the site are identified as being;
 - i) road traffic on the Portway.
 - ii) aircraft noise from Old Sarum airfield.
 - iii) industrial noise from the Old Sarum employment site.
 - iv) spectators and traffic associated with the use of Salisbury City football ground.
- 2.24 Planning Policy Guidance 24 (PPG24) : Planning & Noise (September 1994) gives Government Guidance to Local Planning Authorities in England on the use of their planning powers to minimise the adverse impact of noise. The guidance also introduces the concept of noise exposure categories for residential development. Road traffic noise surveys undertaken indicate that a large proportion of the site, i.e. those areas which are more distant from The Portway road, falls within Noise Exposure Category (NEC) A. At NEC A, PPG24 states that noise need not be considered as a determining factor in granting planning permission. At NEC B, and C, PPG24 states that noise generated from surrounding activities must be taken into account when determining planning applications for residential development. Conditions are likely to be imposed on planning permission to ensure an adequate and commensurate level of protection against noise.
- 2.25 As an approximate guide in free-field conditions, i.e., in the absence of any development, existing or proposed, a narrow strip of land adjoining the Portway may be regarded as falling within NEC C (up to around 15m from The Portway nearside carriageway), whilst NEC B is reached beyond 15 m from this point, and NEC A at a further distance from the road.

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2.26 It should, however, be noted that screening of road traffic noise will be provided by existing and appropriately designed proposed residences and proposed non-residential properties and other structures alongside The Portway. These will reduce received noise levels at proposed residential facades in the 'acoustic shadow' of this screening. Consequently it is expected that there will be a reduction in the width of the strip of land categorised as NEC C, and that beyond this the categorisation will quickly fall from NEC B to NEC A based on the screening provided by both existing and proposed dwellings and other structures.

2.27 Any noise from the Old Sarum airfield and Salisbury City Football Club will require further assessment. However, as most of the site falls within the noise level ranges of NEC B or NEC A based on road traffic noise alone, any additional noise from airborne aircraft is not anticipated to raise noise levels into the high NEC category. In addition, noise from the take-off, taxi and landing of aircraft on the airstrip is well screened at the site by large intervening buildings including aircraft hangers.

2.28 Activity at the football ground is expected to be typically restricted to around three hours only on match days. These can reasonably be expected to take place on mid-week early evenings and Saturday afternoons, between early August and late April. This relatively infrequent and short-term duration of activity is anticipated to result in acceptably low noise levels at proposed residential facades.

Archaeology

2.29 Much of Salisbury District, including the development site, lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance. These areas are valued for either their ancient landscape or their settlement form, together with the resultant cluster of associated features. The impact of development on these landscapes and features must be assessed as part of any planning application.

2.30 An archaeological study of the site and extending 0.5km from its boundary shows that there are no Scheduled Monuments within the site, although Ende Burgh Barrows lie within the study area immediately to the east (see figure 2.4). Outside the study area the hill fort of Old Sarum lies c 750m to the south west, and part of the Roman road to Venta Belagrum (Winchester) runs to the south east.

2.31 The study identified 59 archaeological and historical sites and find spots within the study area, of which 17 lie wholly or partly within the site. Many of the features are ring ditches representing the ploughed-out remains of Bronze

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Age round barrows, the majority of them clustered within distinct barrow cemeteries. Associated spatially with these cemeteries are a range of linear features, some of which may represent late prehistoric field boundaries, while a number of the longer linear features may be territorial boundaries.

- 2.32 Wiltshire County Council is aware of the results of the study and require that the round barrow cemetery straddling the eastern boundary of the site should be preserved in situ. The existence of known features elsewhere in the site including ring/penannular ditches and a double linear ditch in the south west of the site require archaeological field evaluation to be carried out in accordance with the specification of the County Council. Such archaeological evaluation will therefore be a requirement of any planning application and permission.

Ecology

- 2.33 No statutory or non statutory nature conservation designations apply to the site or the adjoining area. Geological maps show that the site is formed of chalk. There are no watercourses flowing through the site and no water bodies. An ecological study of the site shows it to comprise mainly arable fields, bordered by fragmented occasionally species - rich hedgerows. Overall this habitat is of limited intrinsic value for nature conservation.



FIG 2.6 ECOLOGICAL INTEREST

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2.34 The large mature trees in the grounds of the Sarum Centre and within the hedgerows are, however, of intrinsic nature conservation value. The hedgerows are likely to support nesting birds. A main and outlying badger sett are present in the south western portion of the site, and the woodland, and amenity grassland in this area are valuable foraging habitats for badgers. Two UK Biodiversity Action Plan Species (BAPS) have been noted on or close to the site. These are brown hare and sky larks. The areas of ecological interest are identified in figure 2.6).

2.35 Appropriate mitigation measures must therefore form an integral part of any planning application for the site and may be incorporated as conditions on any relevant permission.

Agricultural Land Quality

2.36 An agricultural study of the site shows that of the 40.4 ha study area some 34 ha are in agricultural use. The greater majority (68%) of the agricultural land comprises grade 3b. There is, however, a single isolated area of grade 3a. The study reveals that the loss of this agricultural land is unlikely to have any significant effects on agricultural businesses.

2.37 In this case the greater majority of the agricultural part of the site comprises grade 3b land and it is considered that the development would not result in the loss of a significant area of BMV land and that the proposed development is in accordance with the advice given in PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.

Key Findings of the Site Characteristics Appraisal

2.38 The following constraints and opportunities within and around the site have been identified which need to be addressed in the development of the site.

- i) There is a lack of local facilities for the existing community there being no primary school, community or religious building, or permanent doctors surgery. The new proposals can and must help resolve these deficiencies by the provision of new facilities.
- ii) There is a limited access to public transport (if the first rate facilities geared for travelling public at the Beehive Park & Ride are not taken into account). The development can and must help resolve this deficiency by the provision of new services.
- iii) The existing residential community does not comprise a full complete mix of housing. The new development should achieve this so that taking the

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new and existing community as a whole, a balanced mix of housing will be provided.

- iv) The Old Sarum Airfield Employment Estate is an important economic focus providing opportunities for local employment.
- v) The site is relatively inconspicuous from publicly accessible view points in the wider landscape and is not a prominent component within views of the landscape setting of Salisbury. It therefore represents a good opportunity to accommodate necessary development.
- vi) The football stadium is potentially intrusive and amelioration should be considered in the design of the scheme.
- vii) An area of archaeological importance in the eastern corner of the site should be protected from development and incorporated as open space.
- viii) The Sarum Centre is the obvious area of previously developed land within the site and it is important to integrate redevelopment of the Centre in the overall project. The mature hedgerows and trees along the eastern field boundary adjoining the Sarum Centre, and around the Centre, together with other field boundaries which typically mark the edges of the site are important local features in landscape and ecological terms and should be retained wherever possible.
- ix) Views from and to Old Sarum Scheduled Ancient Monument will be addressed in the landscape strategy and design guide.
- x) There is potential to improve the amenity of the road corridor along the Portway and develop a sense of place at Old Sarum.
- xi) There is potential to provide landscaping along the northern edge of the site to help filter views.
- xii) The lack of formal access to, or alongside the Ministry of Defence (M.O.D) playing fields is a weakness which restricts permeability. Opportunities to achieve better linkages between the areas of new development and the potential to provide enhanced recreation and open space facilities for the existing and new consolidated community must be assessed and pursued.

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