

Copyright Pegasus Planning Group Ltd. Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Copyright Licence number 100042093. Promap. Licence number 100020449. EmagSite Licence number 0100031673. Standard OS licence rights conditions apply. Pegasus accepts no liability for any use of this document other than for its original purpose, or by the original client, or following Pegasus' express agreement to such use. T 01285 941717 www.pegasusgroup.co.uk



KEY

SITELLOCATION (1.63HA)

LAND AT LEIGH SINTON - SWDP CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL LAND TO THE EAST OF LEIGH SINTON ROAD

ON BEHALF OF PATRICK MALEY AND CHRISTINE HARFOOT

Pegasus Group

Pegasus House | Querns Business Centre | Whitworth Road | Cirencester | Gloucestershire | GL7 1RT

T 01285 641717 | **F** 01285 642348 | **W** www.pegasuspg.co.uk

Birmingham | Bracknell | Bristol | Cambridge | Cirencester | East Midlands | Leeds | Liverpool | London | Manchester

PLANNING | **DESIGN** | **ENVIRONMENT** | **ECONOMICS**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Pegasus have been instructed by the client to undertake a landscape and visual appraisal (LVIA) with respect to a site located on land east of Leigh Sinton Road, Leigh Sinton ('the site'), shown at **Figure 1: Site Location Plan**. This report has been based on a site visit which was undertaken on 6th December 2019 together with an analysis of desk-top research to prepare this report.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to comment upon the suitability of the site to accommodate residential development from a landscape and visual perspective.

Development Context

1.3 The site is located on the south east of Leigh Sinton, north of Malvern. The site is within Malvern Hills District administrative boundary. The site is approximately 1.62ha and comprises two fields, split north-south by a hedgerow.

1.4 The site's western boundary is formed by Leigh Sinton Road (B4503) which runs broadly south from Leigh Sinton to the edge of Malvern. A mature hedgerow marks the boundary of the site along this edge (**Context View 4**). The southern edge is formed by Lower Howsell Road and has a managed hedgerow along this edge (**Context View 5**). The eastern boundary sits adjacent to surrounding fields, bound by hedgerow (**Context Views 2 and 3**). The northern edge is narrow and wraps around the settlement edge (**Context View 1**).

Designations

1.5 The site is within the 'Significant Gap' (Malvern Hills District Council Development Plan) which wraps around the settlement edge and extends south to the edge of Malvern (**Figure 2: Environmental Designations Plan**).

1.6 Malvern Hills AONB is located approximately 2.3km to the southwest. Views from the AONB towards the site would be a material consideration. The Malvern Hills form a strong visual backdrop in views to the southwest (**Context View 1 and 11**).

1.7 There are no registered parks and gardens within the vicinity of the site. The closest being Madresfield Court (Grade II* listed) approximately 3.4km to the southeast and would not be a material issue in the context of the site.

Topography

- 1.8 The landform of the wider area is formed by a dramatic topographical change to the southwest. The Malvern Hills reach in excess of 200m AOD, providing a prominent backdrop to the surrounding flat landscape (**Figure 3: Topography**). To the northeast the changes in landform are more subtle and generally flat, falling towards the River Teme to the north and Severn to the east.
- 1.9 The site falls from 56m AOD in the north, falling to 50m AOD around the central hedgerow and rising slightly along the southern edge to 52m AOD. From the site the topography of Leigh Sinton rises north and most notably to the west. There is a rise in topography to 58m AOD to the northeast of Stocks Lane. To the south the topography rises to 58m AOD around Buckman's Farms.
- 1.10 A tributary of Carey's Brook runs broadly northeast, south of Leigh Sinton and the site, and through Brook Farm, east of the Site. The surrounding landform falls gently towards the brook.
- 1.11 The existing residential development of Leigh Sinton is located immediately to the north and west of the site; rising to the northwest. The development of the site would reflect topographic continuity with the existing residential edge, sloping broadly southeast.

Vegetation

- 1.12 The site comprises two pastoral fields split by a hedgerow running east to west (**Context View 2 and 3**). The boundaries of the site are demarcated by a high mature hedgerow along Leigh Sinton Road (**Context View 4**). The southern boundary hedge along Lower Howsell Road is mature but maintained at a low height (**Context View 5**). The eastern hedgerow boundary also appears to be mature but maintained at a low height (**Context Views 1-3 and 8**).
- 1.13 Woodland blocks are spread throughout the surrounding area. Mature hedgerows with hedgerow trees, and vegetation along brooks and streams provide important screening.
- 1.14 The western, southern and eastern edges of the site are bounded by managed hedgerows; however, to the south and east they are managed at a low height providing open views into the site. These edges would need to retain (where practical) existing hedgerow and manage to a good height and be enhanced

where needed with tree planting to provide an adequate level of physical and visual screening.

Access

- 1.15 The site benefits from having road frontage associated with Leigh Sinton Road along its western boundary. This could provide a potential vehicular access point into the site, subject to highway consultant advice.
- 1.16 There are no Public right of way (PRoW) within or adjacent to the site. There are several PRoW footpaths to the east and southeast, namely 706, 548, 709, 571, 569, 572 and 573. Footpath 582 and 613 run north from the A4103 to the north.
- 1.17 A pedestrian footpath runs along the western edge of Leigh Sinton Road. Lower Howsell Road is a relatively narrow lane with no footpath however PRoW 709, 569 and 563 can be accessed from the road.

Visual Amenity

- 1.18 The existing residential development at Leigh Sinton to the northeast and west of the site limits the opportunity to observe development of the site in terms of views from the northeast and west and are predominantly limited to houses along the edge of Leigh Sinton Road facing or backing onto the site (**Context View 4**). This residential edge sits at a higher elevation to the site; therefore, development proposals would sit lower than the existing edge.
- 1.19 There are views east from Leigh Sinton Road moving north (**Context View 4**) and south (**Context View 1**) for a short stretch of the road. Potential development would sit beyond existing hedgerow which where feasible should be retained and in places enhanced.
- 1.20 In terms of views from the north, there are glimpsed views of the northern edge of the site moving south along Leigh Sinton Road from the A4103 (**Context View 1**). The north of the site is the narrowest part of the site and is contained by the telephone exchange building and houses along the A4103.
- 1.21 The site is contained along the southern edge by hedgerow along Lower Howsell Road (**Context View 5**). Any views of potential development would be close range and would therefore benefit from the retention and enhancement of the hedgerow to maintain visual enclosure. Directly south of the road there is a substantial tree belt restricting longer range views.

- 1.22 Views from the east and southeast are more open towards the settlement edge and the site from the network of PRow which cross the surrounding countryside. PRow footpath 709 towards Brook Farm runs from Lower Howsell Road, broadly northeast. Views towards the site are relatively open towards its eastern edge (**Context View 7** and **8**), however the footpath runs along lower topography than the site land which itself is not visible. The footpath meets the access track to Brook Farm and runs broadly northwest to Stocks Lane. Views from the track are constrained by subtle undulations in the landform and intervening hedgerow and field trees (**Context View 9**). The site is not clearly visible; development of within the site would sit against the backdrop of housing along Leigh Sinton Road.
- 1.23 PRow footpath 548 runs through Brook Farm northeast to Stocks Lane. Views from the footpath are relatively open towards Brook Farm (**Context View 10**). The site is not clearly visible. Further northeast PRow footpath 546 crosses a local high point. Views from the footpath are obscured in the mid ground by a mature hedgerow. From this elevation the Malvern hills are clearly visible in the distance (**Context View 11**). The site is not clearly visible.
- 1.24 Whilst there would be some local views from Leigh Sinton Road, Lower Howsell Road and PRow footpaths to the southeast to northeast, such views would be seen in the context of the existing development edge and therefore the change to the visual character of the views would not be material or so great that there would be an unacceptable degree of visual effect.
- 1.25 Due to the elevation of the Malvern Hills, in contrast to the surrounding flat landscape, they form a backdrop within views to the southwest (**Context Views 1** and **11**). There potential for the site to be visible from the AONB, however due to the small size of the site in comparison to Leigh Sinton and the vast extent of views from the Hills, the extension of built form would be perceived as negligible.

Policy

South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016) (SWDP)

- 1.26 The SWDP was adopted in February 2016 and covers the plan period 2006 - 2030. The spatial strategy of the plan is set out in Policy SWDP2- 'Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy' which sets out the following five principles of the plan;

... **Safeguard and (wherever possible) enhance the open countryside.**

1.27 Policy SWDP2 also contains guidance on the 'Significant Gap' stating at Criteria D that;

"Development proposals should ensure the retention of the open character of the Significant Gaps."

1.28 Paragraph 8 on p. 50 states with regard to significant gaps that;

"The purpose of maintaining these gaps, which either serve as a buffer or visual break between rural settlements and adjacent urban areas or protect the character and setting of settlements, is to provide additional protection to open land that may be subject to development pressures.

The designation helps to maintain a clear separation between smaller settlements and urban areas in order to retain their individual identity. Acceptable development proposals in such areas may include the reuse of rural buildings, agricultural and forestry-related development, playing fields, other open land uses and minor extensions to existing dwellings."

1.29 The site is within the significant gap (**Figure 2: Environmental Designations Plan**) which wraps around the settlement edge and extends south to the northern edge of Malvern. The site extends only slightly further south than the existing settlement edge along the western side of Leigh Sinton Road. Proposed draft allocation CFS0009 sits to the north of the village outside of the significant gap.

1.30 The evidence base for the SWDPR includes a Malvern Hills AONB Study (May 2019). The landscape sensitivity and capacity findings indicate the preferred direction for growth for land cover parcels (LCP) and are summarised in a table the end of Section 3 of the report. The site falls within LCP M13 and was assessed as having a medium visual sensitivity and capacity for 1ha-5ha of housing, the site being 1.62ha. Proposed draft allocation CFS0009 (8.64ha) sits within M11. For 5ha-10ha the study assessed this area as being high/medium sensitivity with no capacity for housing.

1.31 The study concludes that there are opportunities for development at *"Leigh Sinton- ... the southern part of M11 (up to 5Ha) and the western part of M13 (1Ha)."* The site falls at the western edge of the parcel and is therefore conducive with the findings of the report. Proposed draft allocation CFS0009 is larger than the recommended growth capacity and would be much more visible from the AONB (as illustrated at Photo View A within the report) and would be viewed as sprawl beyond the village limits. In contrast the site would be viewed against the backdrop of Leigh Sinton.

1.32 Policy SWDPR25 gives guidance on 'Design' in relation to landscape and visual considerations. Points of relevance are as follows:

"i. Siting and Layout: The siting and layout of a development should reflect the given characteristics of the site in terms of its appearance and function..."

ii. Relationship to Surroundings and to Other Development: Development proposals must complement the character of the area. In particular, development should respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the visual and heritage interest of the townscape, frontages, streets and landscape quality of the local area...

iii. The Settings of the City, Towns and Villages: Design proposals should ensure that the prominent views, vistas and skylines of Worcester city, the towns, and other settlements are maintained and safeguarded, particularly where they relate to heritage assets, existing landmark buildings, and 'gateway' sites. Development at the urban edges should respect the rural setting. The distinct identity and character of rural settlements should be safeguarded."

1.33 The location of the site is contiguous with the settlement edge of Leigh Sinton. The key landscape components of the site are its established hedgerows which provide a framework for potential development.

Sustainability Appraisal (August 2019)

1.34 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the SWDPR, identifies the site (CFS1084) and 'Land off A4103' (CFS0009) site as falling within LCT 'Principal Timbered Farmlands' (**Figure 5: landscape Character Plan**). The report notes a key characteristic of the LCT is *"notable pattern of hedgerow trees, predominantly oak and hedgerow boundaries to fields"*. It suggests that these sites could be discordant with the guidelines and key characteristics of the LCT in particular, resulting in the loss of hedgerow bordered fields and arable land.

1.35 Within the Principal Timbered Farmlands is the *"The basic concern for the retention of the character of this landscape is the loss of scale and structure that is already evident"*.

1.36 It is considered that the site provides an opportunity for development which fits within the existing small-scale village setting while the development of the larger proposed draft allocation CFS0009 would provide a large-scale development which would be at odds with the more organic evolution of the village settlement.

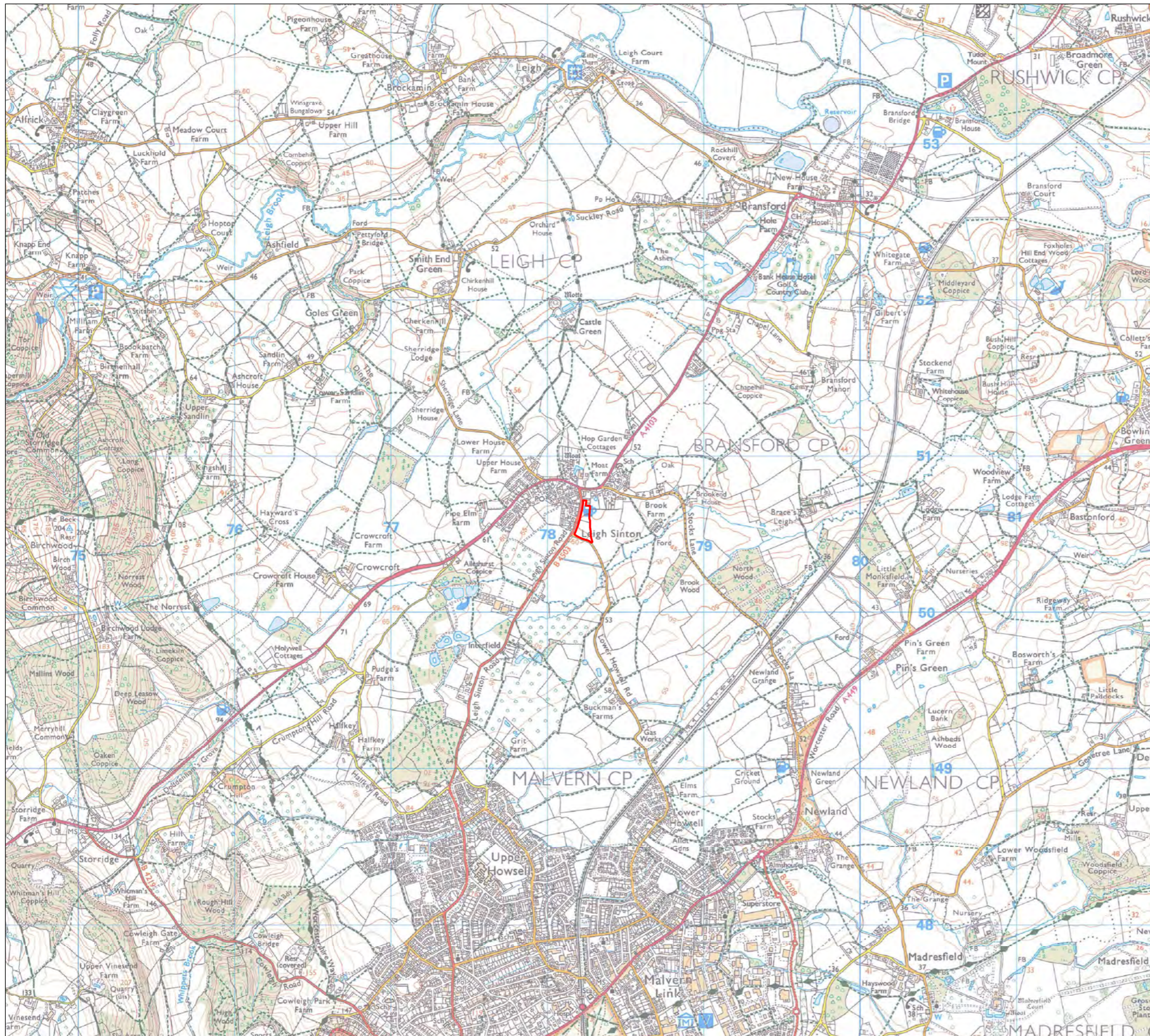
- 1.37 In terms of views from PRow Network, the SA states that *“Several PRowS are located in close proximity... with footpaths coinciding with Sites CFS0009 and CFS1084 could potentially alter the views experienced by users of these footpaths. As a result, a minor negative impact on the local landscape would be expected.”*
- 1.38 The allocated site CFS0009 has a PRow passing directly through the site (footpath 582), from which there are open views to the surrounding countryside and settlement edge. In contrast our client’s site (CFS1084) has no PRow in close proximity. Views from PRow to the southeast in relation to the site are explored within the Visual Amenity section of this LVIA.
- 1.39 In relation to views for local residents the SA in relation to development proposed at Sites CFS0009 and CFS1084 states that it *“could potentially alter the views experienced by local residents”*. Inevitably there will be views experienced by local residents however the short extent of the site (CFS1084) is limited and benefits from mature hedgerow planting along its western boundary with the settlement edge.
- 1.40 The site comprises two small linear fields which sit close to the settlement edge. The site itself is relatively enclosed by existing boundary vegetation. The fields to the east are more open in character. The two fields comprising site CFS0009 are large and flat, its boundary hedgerow low and very open along its roadside boundary and with clear views across CFS0009 (**Context View 12**). Views are also available within CFS0009 from PRow footpath 582. Development of CFS0009 would be viewed from the A4103 as a vast extension of Leigh Sinton experienced upon arrival and when departing the village.

Potential Development Opportunities

- 1.41 In terms of its development context, the site lies immediately adjacent and contiguous with residential areas of Leigh Sinton. Located at the settlement edge there are a range of local community facilities.
- 1.42 The primary constraint in terms of designations, is the significant ‘gap’ associated with the area south of the settlement edge and includes the site. There are no PRow running through the site.

-
- 1.43 The topography is gently sloping broadly to the south with a slight raise to the south west corner, consistent with adjacent residential areas and in this regard, presents no constraint to residential development opportunities.
- 1.44 The site benefits from good physical and visual containment to the north and west due to the existing residential area at Leigh Sinton. Leigh Sinton Road and Lower Howsell Road provide strong physical boundaries to the west and south respectively. The boundary hedgerows along the edges of Leigh Sinton Road and Lower Howsell Road would benefit from enhancement to bolster screening of built form when viewed from the settlement edge Leigh Sinton.
- 1.45 The western side of the site is open due to limited hedgerow vegetation and there is clear intervisibility between the site and the wider countryside to the west and southwest. To address this, it would be necessary to have a strong landscape framework wrapping around the south, western and eastern sides of the site to provide substantial physical and visual containment in the medium and longer term. Enhanced boundary planting and landscaping would have the effect of rounding off the Leigh Sinton development to the west.
- 1.46 The pattern of the developable areas should sit within the existing two field structure where feasible, utilising the existing field boundary to break up the development area. The division of northern and southern parcel which is demarcated by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees, should be a material consideration in the development of the site, retaining where possible and avoiding important trees (subject to a tree survey) if removing to link the two fields.
- 1.47 The outline of green infrastructure is already in place around the site. The suggested enhancements would help to provide a strong and continuous landscape framework for the site, linking to the countryside edge. The sloping site would also benefit from street tree planting, breaking up views of development along the slopes when viewed from the west and southwest.
- 1.48 In terms of access opportunities, the site is adjacent to the Leigh Sinton Road and as such, subject to highway consultant advice, it is considered the site can be suitably serviced in vehicular and pedestrian terms.
- 1.49 Overall, in landscape and visual terms, the site is considered suitable for residential development.

FIGURE 1
SITE LOCATION PLAN



KEY

 Site Boundary

Revisions:
First Issue- 02/12/2019 JS

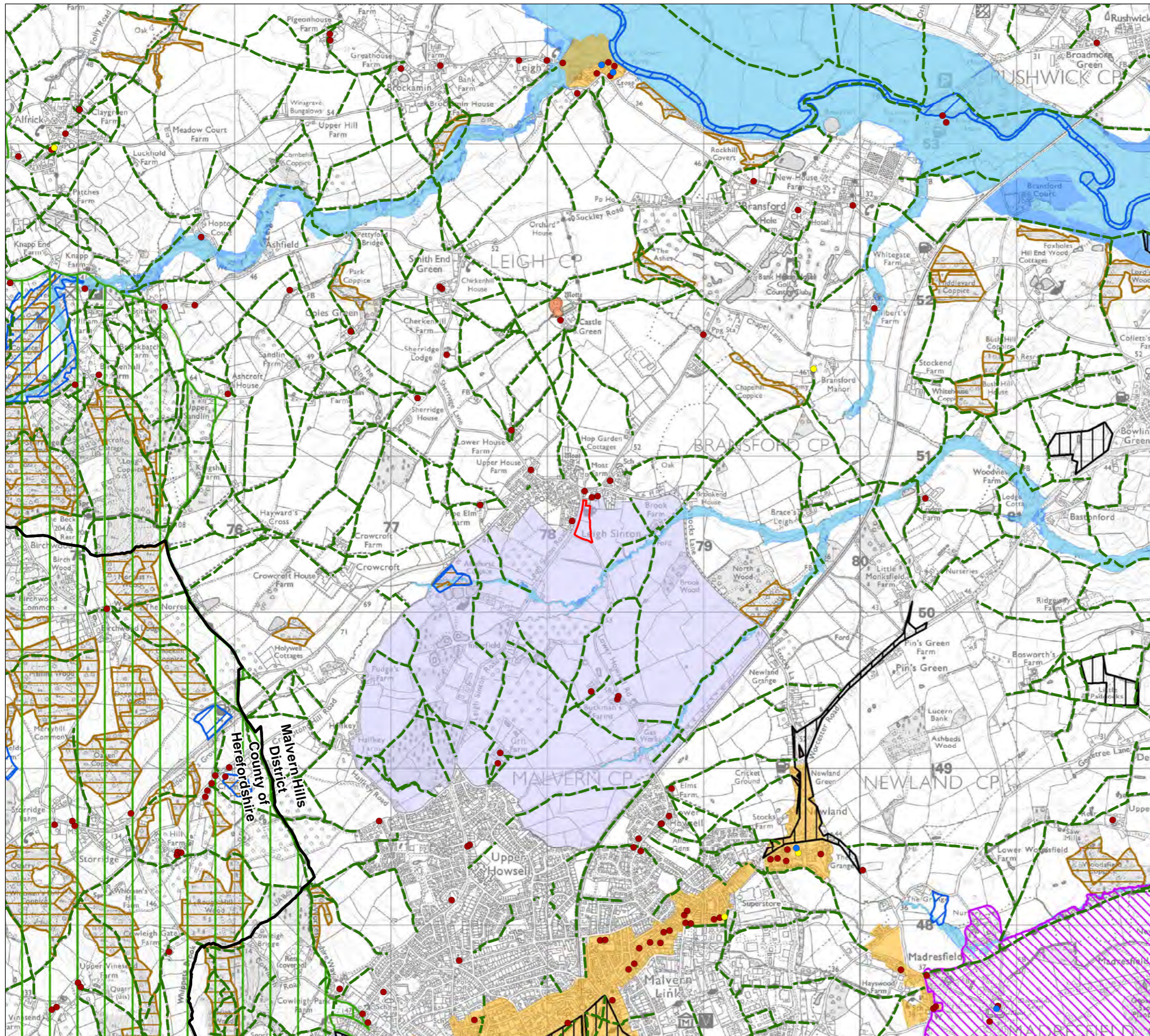
Site Location Plan

Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire

Client: Patrick Malley
 DRWG No: **P19-0570_08** Sheet No: - REV: -
 Drawn by: JS Approved by: KEB
 Date: 02/12/2019
 Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3



FIGURE 2
ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNATIONS PLAN



- KEY**
- Site Boundary
 - Local Authority Boundary
 - Public Right of Way
 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
 - Open Access Land / Registered Common Land
 - Grade I Listed Building
 - Grade II* Listed Building
 - Grade II Listed Building
 - Registered Park / Garden
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Conservation Area
 - EA Flood Zone 3
 - EA Flood Zone 2
 - Significant Gap (SWDP 2)

Revisions:
First Issue- 03/12/2019 JS

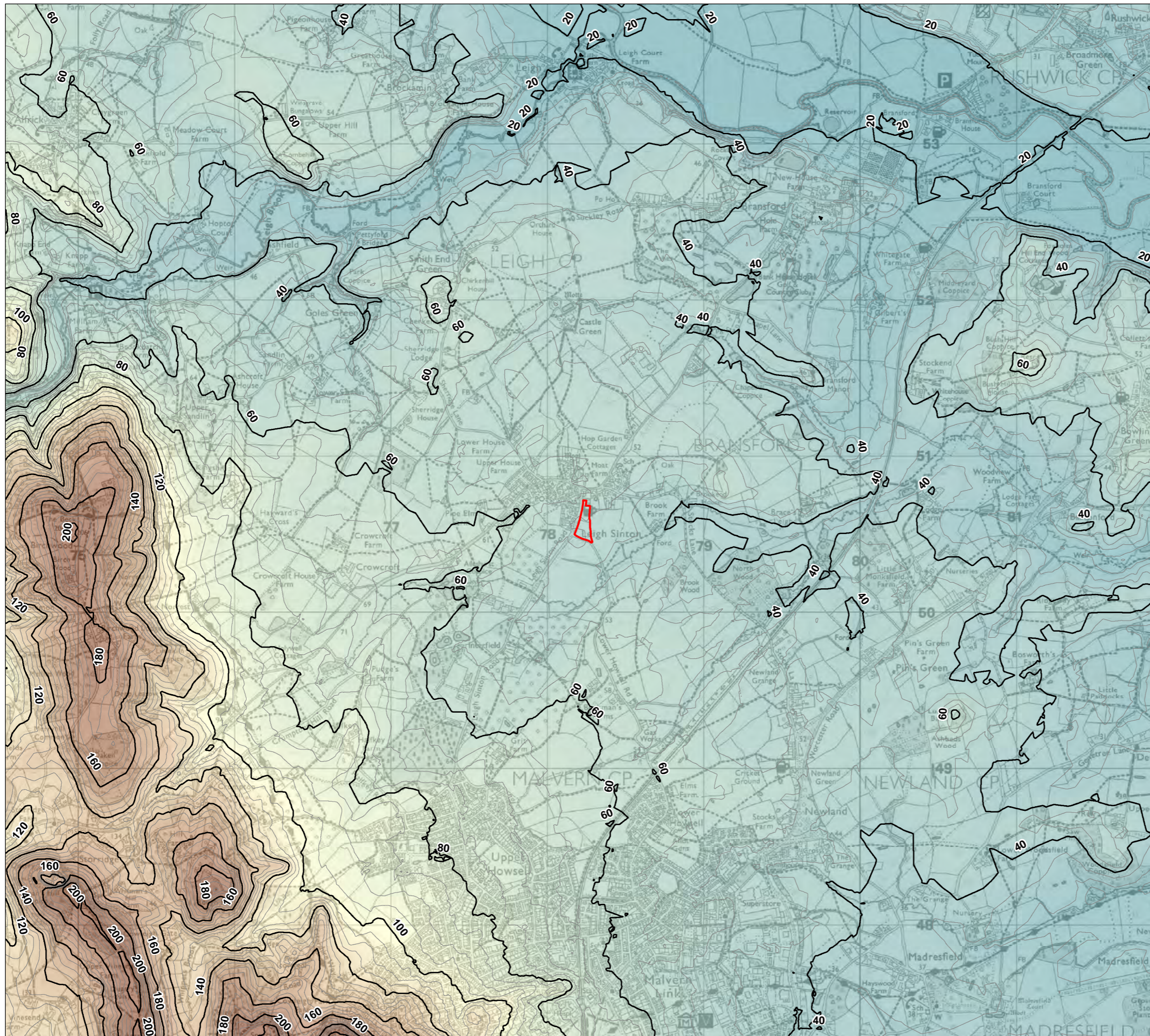
Environmental Designations Plan

Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire

Client: Patrick Malley
 DRWG No: **P19-0570_11** Sheet No: - REV: -
 Drawn by: JS Approved by: KEB
 Date: 03/12/2019
 Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3




FIGURE 3
TOPOGRAPHY PLAN




KEY

 Site Boundary

 Contour

DTM (metres above ordnance datum)

 High : 209.985

Low : 10.5224

Revisions:
First Issue- 02/12/2019 JS

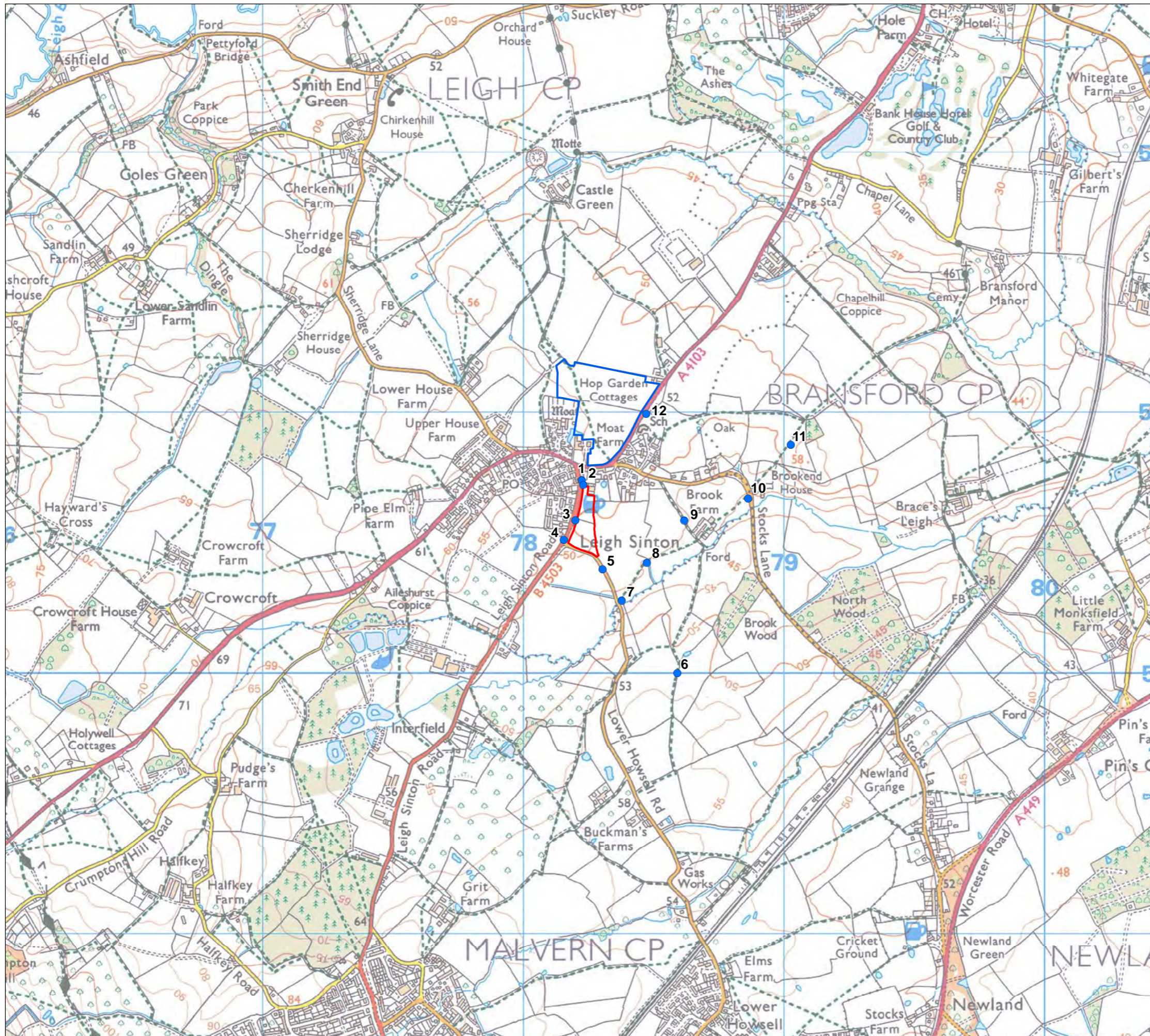
Topography Plan

Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire

Client: Patrick Malley
 DRWG No: **P19-0570_09** Sheet No: - REV: -
 Drawn by: JS Approved by: KEB
 Date: 02/12/2019
 Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3



FIGURE 4
CONTEXT VIEW LOCATION PLAN



KEY

- Site Boundary
- Allocation CFS0009 boundary
- Viewpoint Location

Revisions:
 First Issue- 10/12/2019 AJH

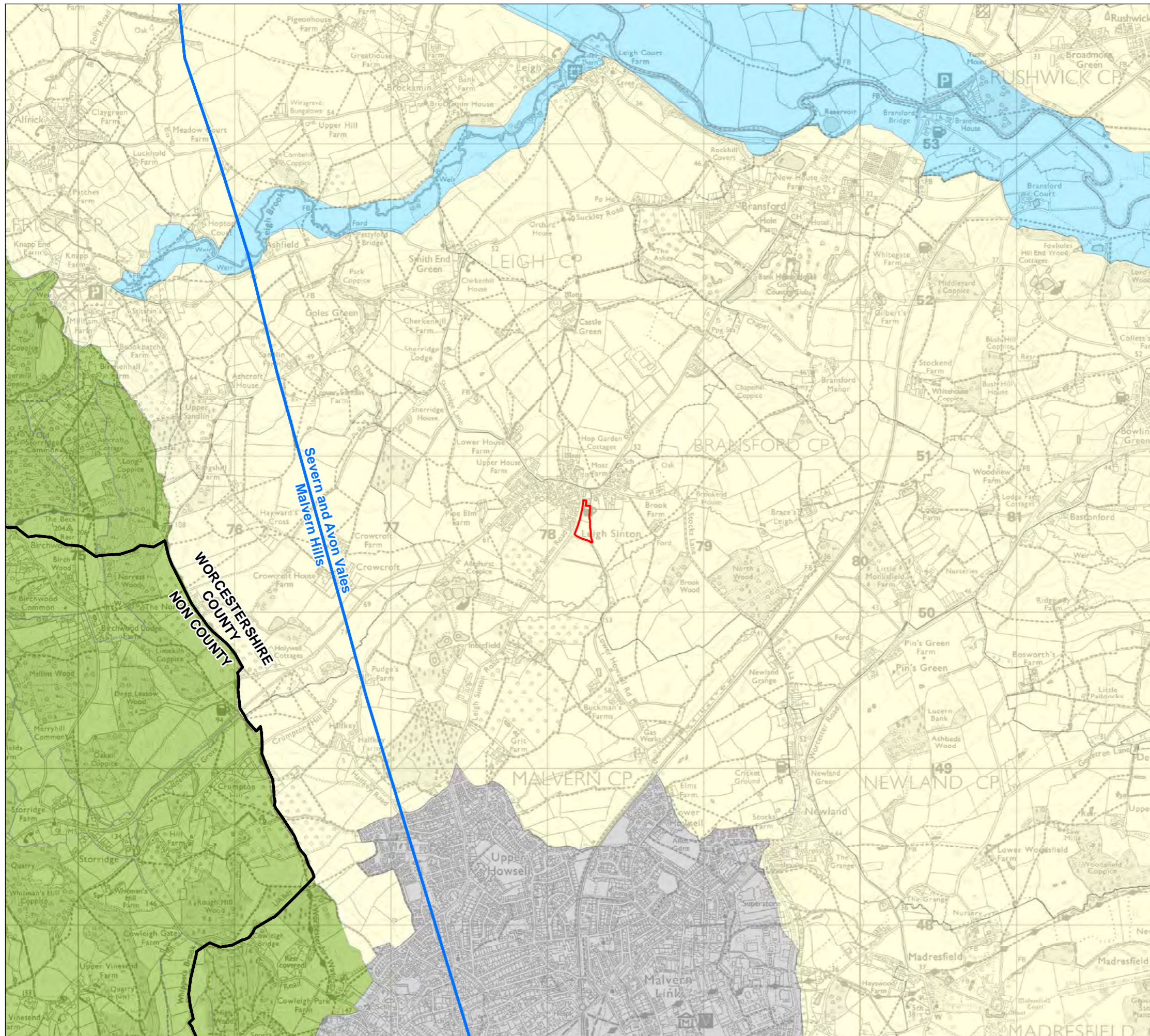
Context Viewpoint Location Plan

Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire

Client: Patrick Malley
 DRWG No: **P19-0570_13** Sheet No: - REV: -
 Drawn by: AJH Approved by: KEB
 Date: 10/12/2019
 Scale: 1:15,000 @ A3



FIGURE 5
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER PLAN



KEY

- Site Boundary
- National Landscape Character Areas
- County Boundary

Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment (2012)

Landscape Character Types

- Principal Timbered Farmlands
- Principal Wooded Hills
- Riverside Meadows
- Urban

Revisions:
 First Issue- 02/12/2019 JS

Landscape Character Plan

Leigh Sinton, Worcestershire

Client: Patrick Malley
 DRWG No: **P19-0570_10** Sheet No: - REV: -
 Drawn by: JS Approved by: KEB
 Date: 02/12/2019
 Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3



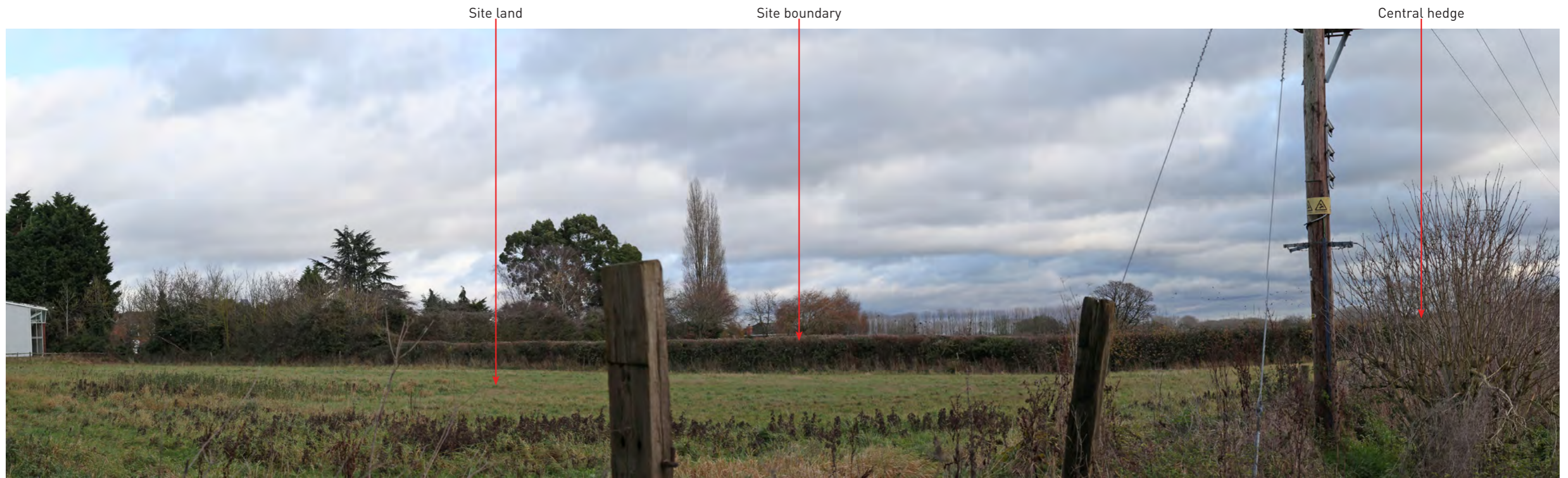
CONTEXT VIEWS 1-12



CONTEXT VIEW 1: From Leigh Sinton Road, looking south



CONTEXT VIEW 2: Off Leigh Sinton Road, looking south into the site



CONTEXT VIEW 3A: From Leigh Sinton Road, looking east into the site



CONTEXT VIEW 3B: From Leigh Sinton Road, looking east into the site



CONTEXT VIEW 4A: From Leigh Sinton Road, looking northeast



CONTEXT VIEW 4B: From Leigh Sinton Road, looking northeast



CONTEXT VIEW 5: From Lower Howsell Road, looking northwest



CONTEXT VIEW 6: From PRow footpath 572, looking northwest



CONTEXT VIEW 7: From PRow footpath 709, looking north



CONTEXT VIEW 8: From PRow footpath 709, looking northwest

Malvern Hills AONB

Approximate Site Extent



CONTEXT VIEW 9: From PRow footpath 706 and access track to Brook Farm, looking west

Malvern Hills AONB

Brook Farm

Housing along Stocks Lane

Approximate Site Extent



CONTEXT VIEW 10: From PRow footpath 548, looking west



CONTEXT VIEW 11A: From PRow footpath 546, looking southwest



CONTEXT VIEW 11B: From PRow footpath 546, looking southwest

Approximate extent of Allocation CFS0009



CONTEXT VIEW 12A: From A4103, looking southwest towards allocated site CFS0009

Approximate extent of Allocation CFS0009



CONTEXT VIEW 12B: From A4103, looking southwest towards allocated site CFS0009