

Heritage Appraisal

Warrington Local Plan

South West Urban Extension (SWUE)

November 2021

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	The Appraisal Site	2
3.	The Heritage Assets	4
4.	Assessment of Significance	7
5.	Overview of Legislation and Key National Planning Policy Considerations	19
6.	Key Heritage Considerations	21

Appendix 1: Heritage Asset Plan

Appendix 2: Masterplan

Client

Peel L&P Holdings (UK) Limited



November 2021

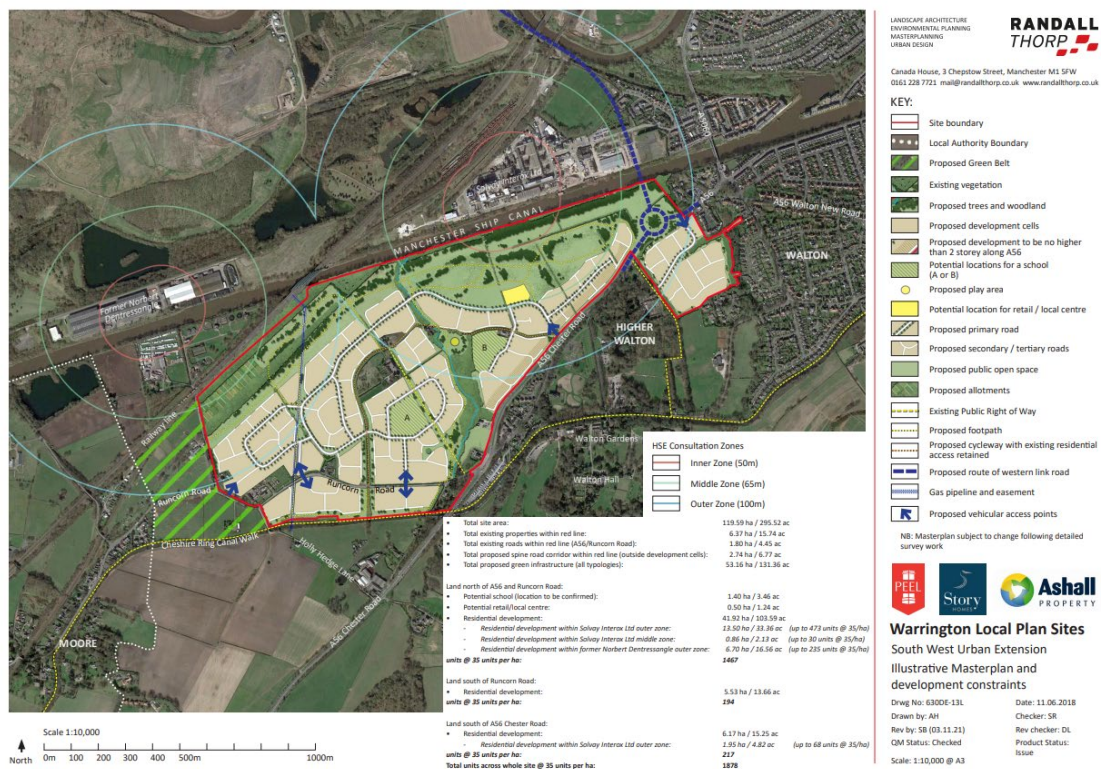
1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Appraisal has been prepared on behalf of Peel L&P Holdings (UK) Limited in connection with the South West Urban Extension (SWUE) (the 'Appraisal Site'). It identifies heritage assets with potential to be affected by development of the Appraisal Site and broadly describes their significance and setting for the South West Urban Extension (SWUE).
- 1.2 The Appraisal identifies whether there are heritage constraints to development and how these constraints could be resolved or mitigated. It has informed the development of an illustrative Masterplan submitted as part of the Development Perspective (November 2021).
- 1.3 This forms one of a suite of reports commissioned to inform the development of a masterplan for the Site and to assess its deliverability. Together, these reports form part of the evidence base which underpins the proposed allocation of the Site through the emerging Local Plan.

2. The Appraisal Site

2.1 The Site lies to the immediate south west of the settlement boundary of Warrington. It is bound by the Manchester Ship Canal to the north and the West Coast Railway to the north west. To the south east the A56 Runcorn Road forms the boundary, with a plot of land to the south of the A56, immediately adjoining the Warrington settlement boundary, included. The Bridgewater Canal encloses the Site at its southern boundary. At the eastern extent, the boundary follows Bellhouse Lane and Runcorn Road.

Figure 2.1: Site boundary plan (red line indicates appraisal site boundary)



2.2 The Site currently comprises a mix of agricultural land and associated buildings and property. Mill Lane runs through the Site, providing access to a number of private properties and farm buildings. An area of industrial uses lies on the northern side of the Ship Canal, known as Warrington Waterfront. The route of the proposed Western Link Road lies at the eastern end of the Site.

2.4 The topography is generally flat with individual mature trees and groups of trees spread across the Appraisal Site including a more substantial band of trees along a disused railway in the north west of the Appraisal Site. The rural character of the

Appraisal Site is experienced alongside the A56 and industrial chemical processing sites north of the Manchester Ship Canal.

- 2.5 Historic cartographic evidence suggests the Appraisal Site has changed little since the mid- 19th century. Porch-house Farm, Canal Farm and Grange Green Manor Farms, three historic farmsteads within the Appraisal Site, and Grange Flour Mill and mill pond are discernible on the 1841 Tithe Map. The Map also shows that historically the field pattern around the farms was comprised of noticeably smaller fields than at present; particularly to the east of Grange Green Farm (now Grange Green Manor). The Bridgwater Canal (opened 1761) and the Chester to Manchester Railway Line are also present on the 1841 Tithe Map.
- 2.6 The Manchester Ship Canal was constructed between 1887 and 1894, and is present on the 1896 Ordnance Survey Map. Cockfight Cottages were built in 1892-3 and are also present on the 1896 Map. At the eastern edge of the Appraisal Site, a school and a vicarage are identified on the 1896 Map (constructed between c1877 and c1896). The field pattern as seen today had largely been adopted by the end of the 19th century. The plot of land south of the A56 saw further field boundaries removed in the mid to late 20th century.
- 2.7 There was very little change during the first half of the 20th century. Mill Lane cottages to the north of Mill Lane had been constructed by the 1911 Ordnance Survey Map. By the 1937 Ordnance Survey Map the 'old railway' identified on the 1896 Map had been dismantled and Grange Mill is identified as being disused. The greatest change to the Appraisal Site and the wider area was the construction of the Chester New Road (A56) in the late 1950s/early 1960s which bounds the Appraisal Site and separates it from the village of Higher Walton. By the late 1960s Grange Mill had been rebuilt/converted to a house. The Christmas Tree farm is not present on Ordnance Survey Maps from the late 1980s and early 1990s and is therefore presumed to be more recent.

3. The Heritage Assets

3.1 The NPPF (2021) defines a heritage asset as:

“A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest”¹.

3.2 A site visit was completed on 22 May 2018 to assess the potential for designated and non-designated heritage assets to be affected by future development of the Appraisal Site for residential use. Due to the intervening distance, topography, landscape and/or development it is concluded that the significance of the following listed buildings would not be affected and they are not considered further within this Appraisal:

- Walton Hall (grade II listed) (7 on the accompanying Heritage Asset Plan, Appendix 1)
- Retaining wall, balustrades and steps between lawns east of Walton Hall (grade II listed) (8 on the Heritage Asset Plan)

3.3 In addition, there are a number of listed buildings within Walton Village Conservation Area. Having considered the significance of these assets and the contribution made by their setting, it is concluded that the significance of these assets are unlikely to be affected by the development of the Site due to their orientation and the intervening distance, landscape and development. These assets are considered proportionately as part of the Heritage Appraisal but are considered as part of the Walton Village Conservation Area.

3.4 In relation to Moore Conservation Area, intervisibility between the asset and the Appraisal Site is greatly limited due to:

- The distance between the asset and the Appraisal Site.
- The curvature of Runcorn Road and the Bridgewater Canal between the conservation area and the Appraisal Site.
- The intervening development along Runcorn Road.
- The proposed retention of an area of green belt between Moore Village and the Appraisal Site.
- The extent and maturity of tree belts and vegetation between the conservation area and the Appraisal Site.

3.5 There is no known associative relationship between the Appraisal Site and the conservation area. Therefore it is concluded, based on the available information, that the significance of the Moore Conservation Area is unlikely to be affected by the

¹ DCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

development of the Appraisal Site for residential use and it is not considered further within this Heritage Appraisal.

3.6 The following locally listed building (non-designated heritage assets) are proximate to the Site, however the significance of these assets is unlikely to be affected by the development of the Appraisal Site, as summarised below, and accordingly these assets have not been considered further within this Heritage Appraisal:

- 34 & 35 Chester Road and The Ship PH (2 locally listed buildings): These assets are situated proximate to the north of the Site. Both are altered and experienced within a changed setting that is principally defined by the A56 and the urban context of Lower Walton including the modern residential development along Springbrook to the rear of the assets.
- 1-3 Walton Lea Cottage (3 locally listed buildings): The setting of the late 19th century cottages is characterised by the enclosure provided by the surrounding woodland. The woodland to the north and east of the cottages adjacent to the Site is not as extensive as the woodland to the north, south and west. However the orientation of the cottages means they overlook the approach from the north and the walled gardens to the south (and not the Site). There are no known functional associations between the assets and the Site.

3.7 The following heritage assets were identified as having the potential to be affected by the development of the Appraisal Site and accordingly, their significance (including the contribution made by setting and the Appraisal Site) and the potential effects of development are considered in this Appraisal. The locations of the heritage assets are shown on the accompanying Heritage Asset Plan.

Ref.	Asset Name	Grade (if applicable)	Location, relative to Site
1	Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road (old line)	Grade II listed	On the southern boundary of the Site, over Underbridge Lane.
2	Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal	Grade II listed	On the southern boundary of the Site under Mill Lane.
3	Acton Grange Bridge (Over Bridgewater Canal)	Grade II listed	On the southern boundary of the Site at Holly Hedge Lane.
4	Walnut Tree Farmhouse	Grade II listed	Approximately 35m from the north eastern extent of the Site.
5	Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium)	Grade II listed	Approximately 30m from the Site at its nearest point at the A56.

6	Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium)	Grade II listed	Approximately 30m from the Site at its nearest point at the A56.
	Walton Village Conservation Area	N/a	Approximately 20m from the west boundary of the Site at its nearest point at the A56.
A	2 Cockfight Cottages	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Runcorn Road.
B	4 Cockfight Cottages	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Runcorn Road.
C	Porch House Farm	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Runcorn Road.
D	Canal Farmhouse	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Runcorn Road.
E	Grange Green Manor	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Mill Lane.
F	Grange Mill House	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, on Mill Lane.
G	The Vicarage	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, off Chester Road
H	School converted to House	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, off Chester Road
I	Underbridge Cottages	Locally listed	Within the Appraisal Site, off Underbridge Lane
J	Stoneoaks Cottage	Locally listed	Approximately 185m from the southern boundary of the Site at its nearest point.
K	99 Chester Road	Locally listed	Approximately 15m from the plot of land south of the A56.

4. Assessment of Significance

Introduction

- 4.1 The NPPF defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

Listed Buildings

- 4.2 Listed buildings are defined as designated heritage assets that hold special architectural or historic interest. The Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (2010) are published by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and are supported by Historic England’s Listing Selection Guides for each building type.

Conservation Areas

- 4.3 Conservation areas are *“areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”*²
- 4.4 Historic England has published Good Practice Advice (GPA) on *‘Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment’*³ to assist in assessing the significance of heritage assets. This guidance has informed the following assessments of significance.

Setting

- 4.5 The setting of a heritage asset is defined by the NPPF (2021) as:

*“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”*⁴

- 4.6 Historic England has published updated guidance in respect of the setting of heritage assets⁵, providing detail on understanding setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes. The guidance confirms that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, rather its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the relevant heritage asset itself.
- 4.7 Further guidance on the definition of setting and how it should be taken into account is set out in national Planning Practice Guidance. In assessing the contribution of setting

² s69(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1900

³ Historic England (2015) Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2

⁴ DCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Annex 2: Glossary

⁵ Historic England (2017) The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3

to the significance of the following identified assets, the role of the Application Site has been considered.

Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road, Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal and Acton Grange Bridge (all grade II listed)

Special Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.8 These assets form a group of three listed bridges on the Bridgewater canal between the A56 and Holly Hedge Lane on the southern boundary of the Appraisal Site. All three bridges were built c1770 and were designed by James Brindley, the engineer of the Bridgewater Canal, for the Duke of Bridgewater. The two road bridges are very similar in appearance; both are constructed of brown brick with sandstone dressings and retaining walls. The aqueduct has stone dressed brickwork and a 20th century parapet to the towpath on the north bank of the canal.
- 4.9 The three bridges are principally listed due to their late 18th century date, high degree of intactness and their functional association with the Bridgewater Canal; often referred to as the first truly man-made canal.

Contribution made by Setting to Significance

Physical Surroundings

- 4.10 The bridges are situated consecutively (circa 250m to 350m apart) on the Bridgewater Canal which defines the southern boundary of the Appraisal Site. The assets do not have a designed setting. As a group they have a functional relationship which is also shared with other assets associated with the Bridgewater Canal.
- 4.11 The topography of the land surrounding the assets is relatively flat, although there is a slight embankment up to the canal from the surrounding fields (see Figures 1 and 2). Continuing along the towpath in a north easterly direction approximately 350m beyond the aqueduct is Walton Bridge (grade II listed), another c1770 bridge designed by James Brindley, and the Walton Village Conservation Area. The Moore Conservation Area is situated approximately 600m along the towpath to the south west.
- 4.12 The two road bridges are orientated roughly north-south across the canal which runs east to west. The aqueduct follows the orientation of the canal. The immediate surrounding landscape is comprised of arable fields to the north and south of the canal. The roads above and below the bridges are surfaced with modern tarmac and the towpaths have a natural surface. To the east of Acton Grange Bridge pipework bridges cross the canal in an arch (see Figure 1). There are single trees and groups of trees growing intermittently along the towpaths which, together with vegetation along the canal banks and the adjoining fields, provide a semi-rural setting experienced alongside the industrial development north of the Manchester Ship Canal and, to the west of the assets, the principal route of the A56 Chester Road.
- 4.13 Due to the slightly raised position of the canal, towpath and the road bridges there is a degree of openness; although to the east of Acton Grange Bridge the towpath feels more enclosed due to a banking of trees along the north bank of the canal (see Figure 2). Beyond the immediate setting of this part of the canal, there have been large scale changes within the wider setting of the bridges since their construction in c1770 (i.e.

the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, the Chester to Manchester Railway Line and the A56).

Figure 4.1: View looking west along the north towpath of the Bridgewater Canal towards Thomasons Bridge from near the aqueduct (left) and view looking west towards Acton Grange on the same towpath.



Experience of the Asset

- 4.14 The road bridges have a degree of dominance along the towpath due to their height and their built form. There is intervisibility between the aqueduct and Thomasons Bridge and Thomasons Bridge and the Acton Bridge due to their close proximity. This intervisibility arises from the functional requirement for the bridges to be constructed at communication points and is not a designed aspect of their setting. There is no intervisibility between the listed bridges and the Walton Bridge, Walton Village Conservation Area or Moore Conservation Area but these assets are experienced sequentially along the canal. Wider views encompassing the surrounding area are experienced from the bridges and the tow paths close to the bridges.
- 4.15 The immediate setting of the listed bridges has a picturesque quality, but the assets are not experienced in 'splendid isolation'. The noise from the A56 diminishes the sense of remoteness, as does the intermittent noise of the nearby train line. The industrial landscape to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal is also present in views from the assets and along the tow path on the northern bank of the canal. During the winter months when trees are not in leaf, there would be greater visibility of the wider setting of the bridges from the tow paths; in particular to the east of Acton Grange Bridge looking north where there is a bank of deciduous trees along the canal bank. The bridges are publically accessible with the canal and tow path used regularly for leisure purposes.
- 4.16 The significance of the bridges lies primarily in their age, former function, group value and association with the Bridgewater Canal. Whilst the immediate setting is picturesque, it is not essential to their special interest.

Figure 4.2: Most enclosed setting along the Canal to the east of Acton Grange Bridge (left) and view north from the canal towpath proximate to the aqueduct (right).



Contribution made by the Appraisal Site

- 4.17 The southern part of the Appraisal Site forms part of the bridges immediate setting to the north and south of the towpath. The Appraisal Site does not contribute to an understanding of the age, former function, group value and association with the Bridgewater Canal but provides a rural backdrop to the assets.

Walnut Tree Farmhouse (grade II listed)

Special Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.18 Walnut Farmhouse is of special interest as a (mainly) early 19th century farmhouse, which is likely to incorporate earlier structures. Although altered, its vernacular architecture is of interest and contributes to an understanding of traditional farm buildings in this part of the country. Its central square brick chimney with sloped projecting courses suggests a former steeped roof which was possibly thatched.

Contribution made by Setting to Significance

Physical Surroundings

- 4.19 The farmhouse is situated on the western edge of the suburban area associated with Stockton Heath and Walton which, close to Walnut Farm, is characterised by a mixture of modern low density housing, brick terraces, former agricultural buildings and cottages of various ages. Adjacent to the farmhouse, separated by a narrow track, is a car showroom. To the west are the undeveloped fields of the Appraisal Site; at a distance of approximately 35m from its north eastern extent. The asset does not have a designed setting.
- 4.20 Walnut Farmhouse is adjacent to and orientated towards the A56. On the opposite side of the A56 is the plot of land south of the A56 which forms part of the Site and comprises open fields. The farmhouse has two large, later outshuts to the rear. The topography surrounding the farmhouse is flat. There is dense coniferous and deciduous trees and planting in the farmhouse garden along its boundary with the Appraisal Site and the A56. As a result it has a high degree of enclosure and is not easily seen from within the surrounding area.

- 4.21 The 1844 Tithe Map and apportionment details for Lower Walton indicate that Walnut Farm was owned by Ann Grime; along with the properties immediately to the north and the field to the west of the Farmhouse, which forms part of the Appraisal Site. The farmhouse and adjacent field were both occupied by James Swinton. This suggests there was historically a functional relationship between the farmhouse and at least the first field to the west.
- 4.22 Since the early 19th century, development has encroached on the farmhouse from the east and this part of its setting has become more urban in character. The greatest change to the farmhouse's setting was the construction of the A56 in the late 1950s/early 1960s. It is probable that the extensive planting of trees along the garden boundaries was a reaction to the resulting close presence of heavy vehicular traffic travelling along the road.

Experience of the Asset

- 4.23 Due to the enclosure of the garden surrounding the farmhouse there are no views of the farmhouse from the street or surrounding area. The farmhouse is a private residential dwelling and there is no public access to the house or its surrounding garden. The very close proximity of the A56 means there is a high degree of noise and any historic rural tranquillity in which the farmhouse may historically have been experienced has been diminished. Due to the density and inclusion of coniferous species in the planting around the farmhouse, it is unlikely that anything more than glimpsed views to and from the farmhouse would be possible even during the winter months. The visual separation from the field to the west diminishes the legibility of any former historic association between the asset and that part of the Appraisal Site. For these reasons it is concluded that setting makes a very limited contribution to the significance of Walnut Tree Farmhouse.

Contribution made by the Appraisal Site

- 4.24 As previously identified, the northern extent of the Appraisal Site is adjacent to Walnut Tree Farm and the 1841 Tithe Map indicates there was a historic functional relationship between the asset and this small part of the Appraisal Site. However, today there are dense coniferous and deciduous trees and planting along its boundary with the Appraisal Site and the legibility of any historic functional relationship is greatly diminished. Part of the Appraisal Site also sits to the east of Walnut Tree Farm, separated by the A56. Although it provides a degree of rural context, the presence of the A56 and the enclosure of the farmhouse greatly limit any contribution the Site makes to the significance of the listed building. Therefore it is concluded that the Appraisal Site makes a very limited contribution to the significance of Walnut Tree Farmhouse.

Walton Hall Lodge and Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (now lodge to the crematorium, both grade II listed)

Special Architectural and Historic Interest

- 4.25 The lodge was originally the lodge to Walton Hall and was built in 1838. It is listed for its early 19th century date, group value in its association with Walton Hall, and for the architectural interest of its Jacobean architecture. The gates, gatepiers and screens are of the same date and are listed for completeness, their architectural quality and group

value with the lodge. The lodge is constructed of brown brick with dressed sandstone and a Westmorland green slate roof. It is a single-storey cottage with a T-shaped plan. It has a stone-mullioned oriel window to the drive and a gabled porch with a stone Jacobean-arched doorway. The gatepiers and screens are sandstone with wrought iron railings and gates.

Figure 4.3: Lodge from the avenue of trees to the south (left) and looking north from the lodge across the Appraisal Site (right).



Contribution made by Setting to Significance

Physical Surroundings

- 4.26 The lodge, gates and gatepiers are situated on the A56 immediately opposite the Appraisal Site. Historically the lodge and gates formed part of the Walton Hall estate and the Hall's wider designed parkland setting. However, the lodge and gates now form part of the crematorium site. The avenue of trees along the driveway towards the Hall largely remains intact, although there is car parking for both the crematorium and Walton Hall to the east of the drive. To the west of the driveway is the crematorium burial ground.
- 4.27 The A56 and the lodge sit at a higher position than the Appraisal Site (north of the A56) at this point (see Figure 3 above). Beyond the Appraisal Site is industrial development to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal. The topography gradually rises from the lodge towards Walton Hall in the south. The grade II listed Walton Hall and its associated garden terraces (also grade II listed) are situated at some distance (approximately 600m) from the lodge. Where the driveway crosses the Bridgewater Canal, en-route to the Hall, there is a listed bridge and house (Walton Lea Bridge and Bridge House, both grade II listed). The lodge has a historic, functional relationship with these assets. The Church of St John the Evangelist (grade II* listed) is situated across the burial ground, approximately 300m to the south west and formed part of the Walton Hall estate village. The Walton Village Conservation Area has been extended to the west of the driveway to include the burial ground.
- 4.28 At this point, the A56 follows the route of an earlier road. The gate piers, gates and screens were clearly designed to address that earlier road and mark the entrance to Walton Hall and the lodge is orientated to address both the road and the driveway. In addition to the avenue of trees south of the lodge, there are belts of mature trees and vegetation along the south east side of the A56 on approach to the lodge from both

directions. The tree belt to the east of the lodge extends southwards creating an area of woodland that encloses the lodge to the east and south east. Further to the east is the plot of land south of the A56 which forms part of the site; separated from the lodge by the woodland.

Experience of the Asset

- 4.29 The lodge is experienced as part of an altered parkland setting, where key elements of the designed landscape, such as the avenue of trees, remain legible but the aesthetic effect has been somewhat diminished. The Appraisal Site formed part of the wider rural setting within which the country estate was historically situated. However, due to the topography and lower position of the Appraisal Site (north of the A56), the present agricultural character of the Site is not immediately apparent in the view from the lodge to the north. Instead, the view is dominated by the industrial development to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal. The presence of industrial development within this view, combined with the close proximity of the A56 and the associated visual and noise impact of its heavy traffic, greatly diminish the historic rural character of this part of the asset's setting. Accordingly, the view north from the lodge does not contribute to the significance of the lodge.
- 4.30 The view from the lodge looking south along the driveway to Walton Hall does provide an understanding of the lodge's historic associative relationship with the Hall and the former designed parkland setting of the lodge and Hall. Views from the lodge and along the driveway to the Church provide picturesque views and intervisibility with an important building within the Walton Hall Estate village. It is likely that these views were designed for their picturesque qualities to create architectural and landscape interest on arrival at the estate. These two views contribute to the significance of the lodge and associated gates and gatepiers.
- 4.31 Due to the density of the tree belts and woodland to the east and south east of the lodge, it is unlikely that seasonal changes would materially alter the setting of the listed building in terms of its visibility, views from the lodge or its sense of enclosure. The crematorium, Walton Hall and the Church are all publically accessible and the lodge remains prominent on arrival at the crematorium.

Contribution made by the Appraisal Site

- 4.32 The Appraisal Site (north of the A56) is separated from the lodge by the A56 and, as described above, is at a lower level relative to the lodge and gates. The plot of land to the south of the A56 is separated from the assets by an area of woodland. The Site forms part of the wider historic rural context for the assets but as identified above, due to the nearby industrial development north of the Manchester Ship Canal and the A56, this context is not readily appreciable in views north from and in close proximity to the lodge. For these reasons, the Appraisal Site does not contribute to the significance of the lodge and gates.

Walton Village Conservation Area

- 4.33 Walton Village conservation area is focused on the village of Walton, historically known as Walton Superior or Higher Walton. It is bounded by the A56 in the west and the Bridgewater Canal in the south. The conservation area extends to include the Church of

St John the Evangelist in the north east and Walton Bridge on the Bridgewater Canal to the south west. It is comprised of a small number of residential properties with a church and public house. The village is described in Pevsner as “*The most accomplished estate village was built in the late 19th century by a family of successful brewers, Greenhalls, at Walton (Warrington)*”.

- 4.34 Until the 1960s, the village was small and consisted solely of Victorian and Edwardian buildings. These buildings are unified in their Jacobethan architectural style and common palette of materials comprising brown brick, half timbering, red Runcorn sandstone, white painted render, red brick and stone dressings. The historic buildings are freely arranged and set back from the Old Chester Road, which runs through and is the primary street in the conservation area, with small gardens to the front enclosed by railings. There are a high number of mature trees within the conservation area and, together with the aforementioned gardens and trees belts along the boundaries of the conservation at the A56 and Bridgewater Canal, they provide a green and attractive character. Post 1960, a cul-de-sac development of c13 dwellings was added at the north end of the village opposite the Church (Lychgate).
- 4.35 The special character and appearance of the conservation area lies in its rural, attractive village character and the quality and consistency of the Victorian and Edwardian architecture.

Contribution made by Setting to Significance

Physical Surroundings

- 4.36 Walton Village Conservation Area is situated approximately 20m from the eastern boundary of the Appraisal Site on the opposite side of the A56. The topography within and surrounding the conservation area is relatively flat, although it rises to an escarpment to Walton Hall (grade II listed) to the east of the conservation area. To the south of the conservation area is a caravan park and golf course. The surrounding landscape to the east of the A56 can be characterised as an altered parkland estate and gardens associated with Walton Hall. To the west of the A56 the landscape is more rural in character. Both are comprised of green open spaces, areas of woodland, tree belts and sparsely spaced buildings or groups of buildings. At a greater distance to the west is industrial development to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal
- 4.37 The Victorian and Edwardian buildings within the conservation area are principally orientated inwards towards Old Chester Road and are largely separated from the conservation area’s eastern boundary with the A56 by later development and a belt of trees along the south section of the boundary to the A56. Along Old Chester Road the character of the conservation area feels very enclosed. Beyond this to the north, the aspect to the A56 is more open however this is where the modern housing within the conservation area is situated. To the north eastern boundary, the mature parkland of the Walton Hall estate encloses the conservation area (see Figure 4 below). There is a historic associative relationship between the conservation area, in particular the Church and Walton Hall.

Figure 4.4: Looking west to Lynchgate with the Appraisal Site beyond from Chester Old Road (left) and looking north from St John's Church towards the Appraisal Site (right).



Experience of the Asset

- 4.38 The conservation area's setting to the east is characterised by the altered parkland of the Walton Hall Estate and to the west, it is characterised by the A56, the arable fields of the Appraisal Site and industrial development to the north of the Manchester Ship Canal beyond.
- 4.39 Due to the enclosure along Chester Old Road, the A56 and to the north of the conservation area, there are limited views into or out of the conservation area. Those views which contribute to the character of the conservation area are:
- views along Chester Old Road where the historic rural character of the conservation area and the architecture of its historic buildings can be appreciated, and
 - views of the parkland which forms part of the conservation area and extends beyond it to the north east.
 - As previously stated, it is likely that the view from Walton Hall lodge to the church was designed and this view contributes to the architectural and historic interest of the conservation area.
- 4.40 Views to the Appraisal Site to the west are views from upper floors of (principally modern) buildings along the western edge of the conservation area and from gardens. These views are not experienced within those parts of the conservation area that are of high architectural or historic interest and as such as considered to make a very limited contribution to its significance.
- 4.41 Views from the Appraisal Site to the conservation area are limited due to the intervening hedgerows. Where there are views to the east, the spire of St John's Church is visible above the mature tree cover associated with the conservation area, however the character and appearance of the conservation area is not readily discernible due to its enclosed character. These views therefore contribute to the significance of the Church, but make a limited contribution to the significance of the conservation area.

- 4.42 These views will encounter seasonal changes and, in particular due to the limited depth of the tree belt along the A56, there will be greater visibility to and from the western edge of the conservation area during the winter months.
- 4.43 Despite background noise from the nearby A56, the enclosed character previously described means the most significant parts of the conservation area (Chester Old Road and the grounds of the Church of St John) have a sense of tranquillity and seclusion.
- 4.44 The setting of the conservation area contributes to an understanding of its historic context and development, but due to the conservation area's enclosure there is a limited visual relationship between the asset and its wider setting. For these reasons, setting is considered to make a moderate contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Contribution made by the Appraisal Site

- 4.45 As previously stated, the arable fields of the Appraisal Site form part of the setting of the conservation area to the west of the asset. However, it is separated from the conservation area by the A56 and, as set out above, intervisibility between the Appraisal Site and the asset is limited. For these reasons, the Appraisal Site is concluded to make a minor contribution to the significance of the Walton Village Conservation Area.

Locally Listed Buildings (Non-Designated Heritage Assets) – Various

- 4.46 As set out above, there are a number of locally listed buildings within the Appraisal Site. These are set out within Appendix 4 of the Warrington Borough Council Core Strategy which was adopted in 2014.
- 4.47 A broad overview of their significance and setting is provided below, culminating in an assessment of the contribution made by the Site to their significance. For clarity, there is no clear guidance or existing assessment by Warrington Borough Council as to why these buildings or structures are formally locally listed.
- **2 Cockfight Cottages and 4 Cockfight Cottages** (2no. locally listed buildings): two semi-detached, two storey cottages dating from 1892 and 1893 built in brown stone with red brick quoins and banding, brick and sandstone window mullions, lintels and cills and gabled slate roof with a central Tudor-style chimney. Each cottage is symmetrical with two bays to the front with a gabled porch on each of the return elevations. The cottages are situated on Runcorn Road and are set within their own gardens to the north and south but have relatively open aspects over the surrounding arable fields.
 - **Porch House Farm:** a vernacular farmhouse complex of an unknown date (present on the 1841 Tithe Map). The farmhouse is a symmetrical four-bayed two-storey property with two projecting gabled wings. It is constructed from red brick above two courses of Runcorn red sandstone. The ground floor windows and first floor windows on the wings have brick hood moulds. The farmhouse provides a frontage to a complex of former agricultural buildings and modern farm buildings, principally to the west and formal gardens to the south. Its wider setting is comprised of a garden nursery and open arable fields.

- **Canal Farmhouse:** a vernacular farmhouse complex with a square plan form. On the 1841 Tithe Map it has a linear form and has therefore either been extensively extended or rebuilt. It is a two storey, red brick farmhouse with attached outbuilding to the east and a large detached barn. It is situated within fields, proximate to and facing towards the Bridgewater Canal.
- **Grange Green Manor:** Grange Green Manor (formerly Grange Green Farm) is a substantial late 19th century three-storey farmhouse red brick farmhouse set on an H-plan. Former agricultural buildings, set around a formal courtyard immediately to the north of the farmhouse have been converted to residential use. The farmhouse overlooks an open arable fields to the south across which there is a footpath linking to the Runcorn Road, which would provide views of its principal southern elevation.
- **Grange Mill House:** Grange Mill is a former flour mill present on the 1841 Tithe Map but became disused by the 1930s after which it was converted or rebuilt as Grange Mill House. It is situated on a bend on Mill Lane at a stream. The former mill pond to the south has been drained, reducing the legibility of the building's former use. There is woodland along the stream and the house overlooks an open arable field to the west.
- **The Vicarage:** The Vicarage was constructed between c1877 and c1896 and is the former vicarage associated with St John's Church in Higher Walton. It is a large detached, three-storey brick-built house with a multi-gabled roof and tall brick chimneys. The house sits within grounds that are enclosed from by a high boundary wall, gates and planting which limit visibility of the building from Chester Road. The Christmas Tree Farm wraps around the grounds of the house from Chester Road in the north east to the former school and public footpath in the south west which provide further enclosure. Beyond this is a tree belt separating the Christmas Tree Farm from agricultural land to the west. There is no visual connection between St John's Church and the Vicarage due to the intervening village (Higher Walton). The former relationship between the buildings has been further eroded by the construction of the A56 and the loss of its historic function as a vicarage.
- **School converted to House:** The former school was built between c1877 and c1896. It has a picturesque architectural character with a low form, large gables and what may have been a small belfry or ventilation tower topped by a weather vane. The school hall is lit by a large gothic window which faces Runcorn Road. The former school has an open aspect to the street and a public footpath running along its north eastern boundary. Whilst there is some planting to the north and west, there are views across the fields to the north west.
- **Underbridge Cottages:** A small row of altered cottages, dating from around the early 19th century. They are surrounded by gardens and a mature tree belt along the A56 to the rear and overlook fields to the east and north; separated by Underbridge Lane and Runcorn Road.

4.48 The following locally listed buildings are located outside, but proximate to the Appraisal Site:

- **Stoneoaks Cottage:** A cottage dating from around the early 19th century and forming part of a cluster of buildings of varied age on Thomasons Bridge Lane. The property overlooks fields to the east, south of the Bridgewater Canal, which the 1845 Tithe Map and apportionment indicate were in the same occupation as the cottage. Although the cottage and parts of the Site were both in the ownership of Sir Richard Brooke at this time, they were in separate occupation and formed a small part of Sir Richard's substantial land holdings in the area.
- **99 Chester Road:** A late 19th century former lodge associated with Walton Lea, a mansion house (now demolished) which was located to the south. It is situated on the A56 with gardens to the rear, woodland to the south and a band of trees to the north. The Site sits to the east, separated by an access road and deciduous and evergreen planting including.

Contribution made by the Appraisal Site

- 4.49 As described earlier, the Appraisal Site comprises open fields largely used for arable crops with a series of farms, small holdings and cottages. To varying degrees the Appraisal Site forms part of their rural context. In the case of the farms the Appraisal Site forms part of their historic functional setting which, along with their vernacular architecture, provides an understanding of their former use.

5. Overview of Legislation and Key National Planning Policy Considerations

Statutory Duty (1990 Act)

- 5.1 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

- 5.2 The concept of ‘preserve’ has been interpreted through case law to mean ‘to cause no harm’.

The National Planning Policy Framework, revised 2021

- 5.3 Conservation areas are 'designated heritage assets' within the meaning of the NPPF. Paragraph 190 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

- 5.4 Paragraph 195 sets out the principles guiding the determination of applications affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets, and states that:

'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal . . . They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.'

- 5.5 Paragraph 197 elaborates that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation, as well as the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 5.6 Paragraph 199 requires when considering the impact of a Proposed Development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be. Paragraph 200 confirms that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and any harm or loss requires clear and convincing justification.
- 5.7 In the event that harm is perceived to arise from proposals, the NPPF provides a policy framework at paragraphs 201 and 202 within which such harm can then be weighed against public benefits (202) or substantial public benefits (201) bearing in mind the considerable importance and weight that should be attached to the statutory duty of the Act.
- 5.8 Paragraph 203 requires that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 5.9 Paragraph 206 requires local planning authorities look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to better reveal their significance. With respect to setting, the policy notes that proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.
- 5.10 The setting of a conservation area is not enshrined in legislation and does not attract the weight of statutory protection.⁶ It is however a consideration as set out in the NPPF and has therefore been addressed in this Appraisal.

⁶ APP/H1705/A/14/2219070 & APP/U3935/V/14/2216792

6. Key Heritage Considerations

- 6.1 The development of the Appraisal Site would result in the partial loss of arable fields to the north and south of The Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal, Thomasons Bridge and Acton Grange Bridge (all grade II listed). However this aspect of setting is not essential to their special interest, which primarily lies in their age, former function, group value and association with the Bridgewater Canal.
- 6.2 Due to the enclosure and visual separation of Walnut Tree Farm (grade II listed) from the Appraisal Site, which has also diminished the legibility of any former historic association between the asset and the north east part of the Appraisal Site, the sensitivity of the asset to the development of the Appraisal Site is limited.
- 6.3 The Appraisal Site forms part of the wider rural context for Walton Hall Lodge (grade II listed), the Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (grade II listed), and 99 Chester Road (locally listed). Due to the lower position of the Appraisal Site (excluding the plot of land to the south of the A56), relative to the assets, the visual impact of the development of this part of the Appraisal Site will be minimised. Due to the intervening distance and woodland between the lodge, gates, gatepiers and screens and the plot of land to the south of the A56 no visual impact is anticipated in relation to this part of the Appraisal Site and these assets. 99 Chester Road is closer to this part of the Appraisal Site (c15m) however the proposed landscape buffer will minimise the visual impact on this asset. There is no known historic or functional relationship between these assets and the Appraisal Site.
- 6.4 As previously identified, there are limited views into and out from the Walton Village Conservation Area to the Appraisal Site. Where there is intervisibility, this is from the upper floors of mainly modern houses in the west of the Conservation Area. Whilst the development of the Appraisal Site will result in the reduction of the village's wider rural setting, the extent to which this will affect the character and appearance of the conservation area is greatly limited; depending on the location and treatment of access roads and the height of development.
- 6.5 The development of the Appraisal Site will result in the loss or partial loss of the historic rural setting of the identified locally listed buildings which are situated within the Appraisal Site and Stoneoaks Cottage. In particular this will affect the setting of Porch House Farm, Canal Farmhouse and Grange Green Manor which, as agricultural buildings, have a functional association with their surrounding landscape which contributes to the legibility of their former use. In preparing the Masterplan (Appendix 2), consideration has been given to retaining some open land around these assets to maintain a degree of legibility of their former rural setting and agricultural use. In relation to the Vicarage, the effect would be minor due to the high degree of enclosure previously described which limits intervisibility between the asset and the Appraisal Site.
- 6.6 There is an opportunity to enhance the appreciation of Grange Mill House (locally listed) through interpretation of the former mill pond and its surroundings and of

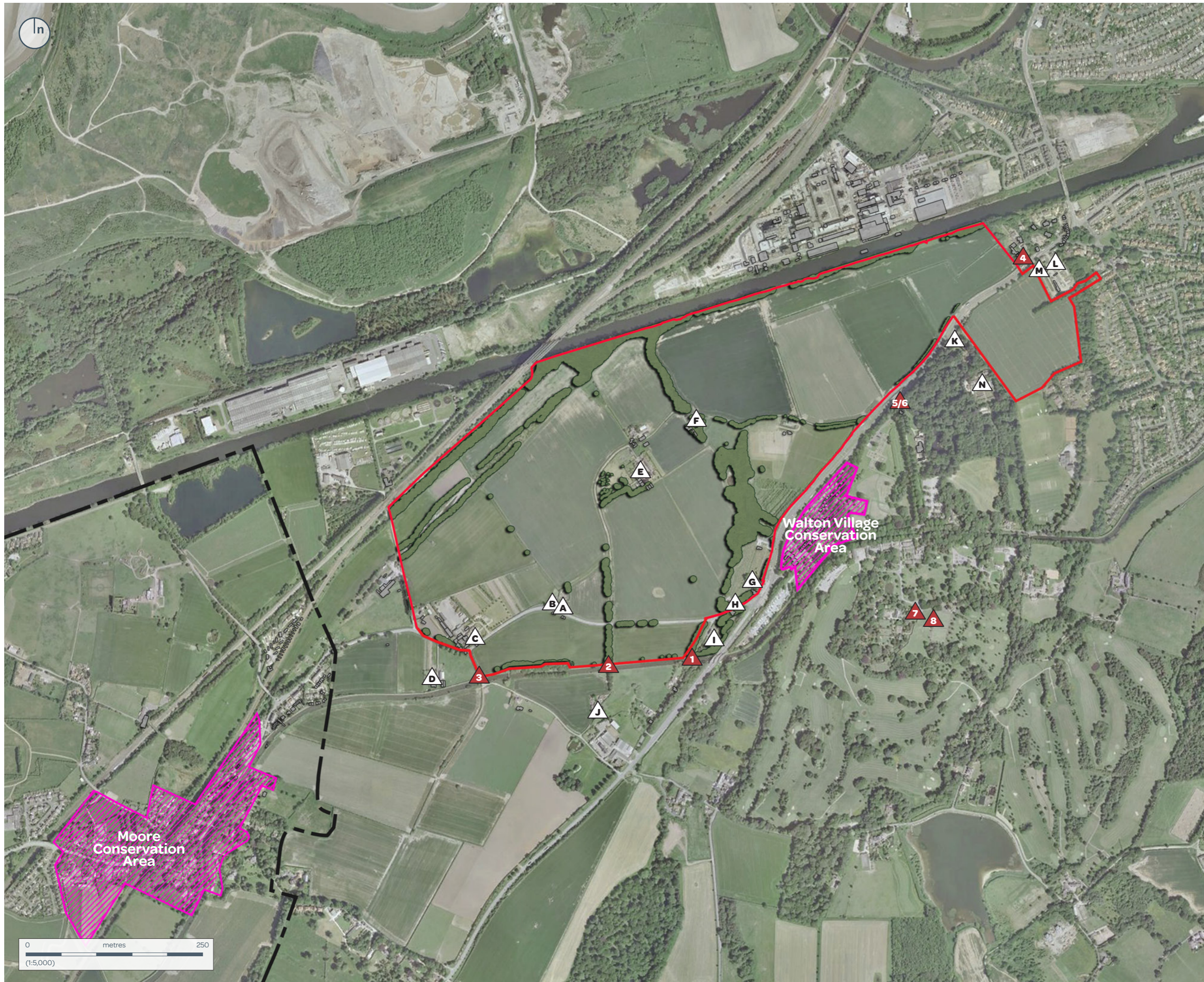
Grange Green Manor by utilising the historic footpath that connected the farm with Runcorn Road.

- 6.7 In accordance with Historic England guidance, we would recommend that the following measures are considered:
- Where possible, retain hedgerows across the Appraisal Site to maintain a sense of its former rural character. Retain and bolster the hedgerow along the A56, proximate to the Walton Village Conservation Area and Walton Hall Lodge and associated gates.
 - It is recommended that opposite Walton Lodge the height of development is restricted to a maximum of two storeys to avoid visual intrusion in views north from and proximate to the Lodge.
 - Look to retain locally listed buildings within the Appraisal Site.
 - Where possible development to the south of Grange Green Manor should be sited to maintain views of it from the south/south east.
 - There is an opportunity to enhance legibility of the former mill and mill pond within the retained open space around Grange Mill House.
- 6.8 If the following measures are implemented, as shown on the Masterplan (Appendix 2), it is considered that the urban extension will sustain the significance of the following designated heritage assets, in accordance with NPPF Paragraphs 192 and 193:
- Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road (old line)(grade II listed)
 - Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal (grade II listed)
 - Acton Grange Bridge (Over Bridgewater Canal) (grade II listed)
 - Walnut Tree Farmhouse (grade II listed)
 - Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium) (grade II listed)
 - Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium) (grade II listed)
 - Walton Village Conservation Area (grade II listed).
- 6.9 In determining future planning applications for the site, it is concluded that the requirement of s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act can be satisfied, subject to a considered design approach.
- 6.10 As previously identified, the development of the Appraisal Site will result in the partial loss of the rural setting of the following locally listed buildings (non-designated heritage assets):

- 2 Cockfight Cottages.
- 4 Cockfight Cottages.
- Porch House Farm.
- Canal Farmhouse.
- Grange Green Manor.
- Grange Mill House.
- The Vicarage.
- School converted to Home.
- Underbridge Cottages.
- Stoneoaks Cottage.
- 99 Chester Road.

6.11 In accordance with NPPF Paragraph 203, in weighing future applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Appendix 1: Heritage Asset Plan



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- Site boundary
- Warrington Borough boundary
- Conservation areas
- Locally listed buildings
- Statutory listed buildings

Listed Buildings (all grade II listed):

- 1 Aqueduct carrying the Bridgewater Canal over Chester Road (old line)
- 2 Thomasons Bridge over Bridgewater Canal
- 3 Acton Grange Bridge (Over Bridgewater Canal)
- 4 Walnut Tree Farmhouse
- 5 Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium)
- 6 Gates, gatepiers and screens at Walton Hall Lodge (now Lodge to Crematorium)
- 7 Walton Hall
- 8 Retaining wall, balustrades and steps between lawns east of Walton Hall

Locally Listed Buildings (non-designated Heritage Assets):

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| A 2 Cockfight Cottages | I Underbridge Cottage |
| B 4 Cockfight Cottages | J Stoneoaks Cottage |
| C Porch House Farm | K 99 Chester Road |
| D Canal Farmhouse | L 34 & 35 Chester Road |
| E Grange Green Manor | M The Ship PH |
| F Grange Mill House | N 1-3 Walton Cottages |
| G The Vicarage | |
| H School converted to House | |

CLIENT:

PEEL

PROJECT:

Warrington Local Plan – South West Urban Extension

DRAWING:

Heritage Assets

PROJECT NUMBER:

PEEM3056

DRAWING NUMBER:

20_

CHECKED BY:

KM

REVISION:

00

STATUS:

Final

DATE:

November 2018

SCALE:

1:5,000 @ A3




Appendix 2: Masterplan

KEY:

-  Site boundary
-  Local Authority Boundary
-  Proposed Green Belt
-  Existing vegetation
-  Proposed trees and woodland
-  Proposed development cells
-  Proposed development to be no higher than 2 storey along A56
-  Potential locations for a school (A or B)
-  Proposed play area
-  Potential location for retail / local centre
-  Proposed primary road
-  Proposed secondary / tertiary roads
-  Proposed public open space
-  Proposed allotments
-  Existing Public Right of Way
-  Proposed footpath
-  Proposed cycleway with existing residential access retained
-  Proposed route of western link road
-  Gas pipeline and easement
-  Proposed vehicular access points



HSE Consultation Zones

-  Inner Zone (50m)
-  Middle Zone (65m)
-  Outer Zone (100m)

- Total site area: 119.59 ha / 295.52 ac
- Total existing properties within red line: 6.37 ha / 15.74 ac
- Total existing roads within red line (A56/Runcorn Road): 1.80 ha / 4.45 ac
- Total proposed spine road corridor within red line (outside development cells): 2.74 ha / 6.77 ac
- Total proposed green infrastructure (all typologies): 55.82 ha / 137.93 ac

Land north of A56 and Runcorn Road:

- Potential school (location to be confirmed): 1.40 ha / 3.46 ac
- Potential retail/local centre: 0.50 ha / 1.24 ac
- Residential development: 41.15 ha / 101.68 ac
 - Residential development within Solvay Interlox Ltd outer zone: 13.50 ha / 33.36 ac (up to 473 units @ 35/ha)
 - Residential development within Solvay Interlox Ltd middle zone: 0.86 ha / 2.13 ac (up to 30 units @ 35/ha)
 - Residential development within former Norbert Dentressangle outer zone: 6.70 ha / 16.56 ac (up to 235 units @ 35/ha)

units @ 35 units per ha: 1440

Land south of Runcorn Road:

- Residential development: 5.53 ha / 13.66 ac

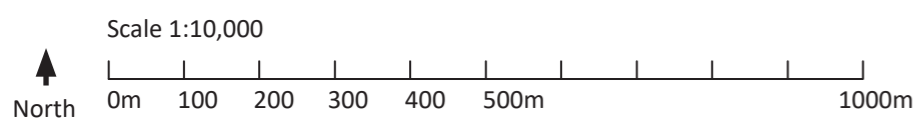
units @ 35 units per ha: 194

Land south of A56 Chester Road:

- Residential development: 4.28 ha / 10.57 ac
 - Residential development within Solvay Interlox Ltd outer zone: 0.47 ha / 1.16 ac (up to 16 units @ 35/ha)

units @ 35 units per ha: 149

Total units across whole site @ 35 units per ha: 1783



NB: Masterplan subject to change following detailed survey work



Warrington Local Plan Sites
South West Urban Extension
Illustrative Masterplan and
development constraints

Drwg No: 630DE-13M Date: 11.06.2018
 Drawn by: AH Checker: SR
 Rev by: SB (10.11.21) Rev checker: DL
 QM Status: Checked Product Status: Issue
 Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3

