

Landscape Report

Prepared by PGLA Landscape Architects



Project Title: Land off Wombwell Lane, Stairfoot, Barnsley- Proposed landscape treatment on former canal site. Landscape and Visual Effects.

Date: 23rd March 2016

Purpose: This document has three roles:

- To set out the former characteristics of the site and its surroundings;
 - To suggest an acceptable landscape layout to mitigate the adverse harm that the works may have caused; and
 - To set out the likely effects the mitigation proposals may have on the landscape and visual amenity of the site and surroundings.
-

1.0. Introduction

1.1. This report has been prepared in response to an Enforcement Notice issued by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to reinstate land that has been subjected to unauthorised works. This report also considers the effects that the proposed landscape treatments that has been submitted as a Full Planning Application will have on the landscape and surrounding visual amenity and whether the treatments offer satisfactory mitigation measures to offset any harm caused by the unauthorised works. A Landscape Proposal Plan: BAR1602_P002 B has been submitted as part of the Planning Application (ref 2016/0148) and this illustrates the potential to restore a large portion of the former condition of the site without re-instating the exact profile of the former, but redundant canal. In preparing this report, a desk-top study has been undertaken by chartered landscape architects, to assess the landscape character, identify key visual receptors, and identify significant designations, such as the Green Belt in addition to site visits and photographic survey to record the visual character of the site and surrounding area.

1.2. The report considers the landscape related comments provided in the Enforcement Notice dated 23rd February 2016. The Notice also makes direct comment on the harm caused in terms of a historic and heritage perspective and those issues are addressed by RSP in their Heritage Statement. Reference is also made to the legislation relating to the Green Belt and this is addressed in detail by Knights Solicitors. In particular, this report considers the reference in section 4 relating to the effect on the visual amenity of the surrounding area and the claimed

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damage caused by the unauthorised works and this is described in the following extract from the Notice:

“4. Reason for issuing this notice

“The Local Planning Authority is concerned that the Unauthorised Works along the former canal basin represents harm to visual amenity and creates conditions for encroachment upon the green belt.

The previous contour and profile of the land provided a historical marker for the route of the canal basin and the canal embankment represented a physical boundary feature of the land that coincided with the green belt boundary.

The Unauthorised Works create an area of land adjoining the existing trade/retail park which removes the evidence of the historical route and profile of the canal altogether.”

“The Unauthorised Works, due to their excessive scale are visible from surrounding land and property thereby creating conditions which are detrimental to visual amenity through the loss of a landscape feature, planting and greenery. The extent of the excavations and alteration to the landscape leaves a scarred appearance along an area of land which forms the green belt boundary. The local planning authority considers the development contrary to the aims and objectives of adopted CSP 29 ‘Design’.”

- 1.3. The following sections firstly considers the former condition of the site based on available information followed by the current condition based on a photographic study recording of a site visit conducted on 22nd March 2016. Section 3 considers the appropriateness of the proposed design in terms of impacts on the landscape and considers the scale, profile and planting used in context to the quality of the existing landscape and visual amenity. It also provides comment on whether the detailed landscape scheme should be considered sufficient in terms of mitigation to offset the perceived harm to the former condition and if the proposals are a suitable alternative solution which involves remodelling to reflect the former profile and landform of the site. The objectives of CSP 29 Design are referenced to enable a judgement to be made.

2.0. Site and Landscape Character

- 2.1. The site is located to the south eastern edge of Barnsley on the southern edge of a Trading Estate off Wombwell Lane, Stairfoot. The site, as contained within the site boundary on the Land Registry Plan (Appendix A) is mostly visually screened from the north by the tall buildings

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within the trading estate as well as the Tesco store off Wombwell Lane. Views from the south are also limited due to landform which rolls towards the top of the bank and also by planting within the landscape. Views into site can be achieved from a few locations on Caulk Lane on the east of the site but this is mostly screened by the dense hedgerow. There are a number of detached properties and farmsteads off Caulk Lane but these don't have a direct visual connection with the site. It may be possible for some views of the top of the bank to be experienced from the upper rooms of the residential development at Swaithe Hall Farm, however, the main section of the development sits below the top of the bank so generally the edge of the arable field is only likely to be visible. Views from the west will be limited from the residential areas due to the landform, existing trees and hedges and there are no key visual receptors from footpaths or other rights of way.

- 2.2. Pedestrian access is currently unavailable through the site and there are no public footpaths that cross through. It appears that some people walk across the fields and along the top of the bank to possibly cut through to Wombwell Lane but this is not a formalised track. The site is defined by the arable crop fields to the south and west, Caulk Lane to the east and the Barnsley Trade Park to the north. Currently, the site has undergone major excavation and re-profiling works as shown in on site views 1- 9 in Appendix B. This is in contrast to the former condition prior to the works which generally displayed the appearance of a typical scrub and poor grassland landscape. Apart from any historic contribution the landscape does not offer much value in landscape and visual terms as it is fairly featureless and bereft of high quality landscape elements such as hedgerows, mature trees, or striking landform. However, it is noted that the boundary to the trading estate comprised of reasonably mature native planting which has since been removed. A pictorial study of the former condition is contained within Appendix C from the Pennine Waterways website, (www.penninewaterways.co.uk).
- 2.3. We have consulted the Barnsley Borough Landscape Character Assessment, (Edit December 2002) and identified the site as falling into the landscape character D3: West Dearne Settled Arable Slopes. The key characteristics of this landscape are as follows:

- *Rolling landform consisting of broad rounded ridge that gently slopes towards the Rivers Dove and Dearne.*

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- *Land use mainly agriculture and residential but with some commercial, industrial, communication and landscape renewal.*
- *Tracts of arable farmland with some short term ley and horse grazing. Degraded hedgerow field boundaries and some post and wire fencing. Scattered stone farmsteads, some with modern outbuildings.*
- *Untidy areas adjacent to farmsteads with scrap machinery, farm waste and horse grazing.*
- *Traditional mining settlements within to the character area – Ardsley, Darfield.*
- *Intact farmland up to urban edge in many locations.*
- *Stone walls and infrequently managed hedgerows form boundaries between roads and farmland.*
- *Small infrequent blocks of deciduous trees on valley slopes, but few mature trees on the more exposed higher ground.*
- *Views beyond character area boundaries to settlements, reclaimed tips, working warehouse units and upland part of the Borough.*

2.4. It is clear that the landscape that is described is not considered to be that of a particularly high value, such as to be found in the Pennines or National Parks and the former characteristics of the site broadly conform to the general descriptions above. See Landscape Character Plan in Appendix D.

2.5. It is noted that the site is within and forms the boundary of the Green Belt and although this is a spatial planning policy rather than a landscape designation policy we do offer comment in the next sections as to whether the proposals are likely to cause harm to the openness of the Green Belt. See Designations Plan also in Appendix D

3.0. Proposals and Landscape Layout

3.1. The proposal for the site is for the profiling of the embankment that formed the southern side of the disused canal with the introduction of a new public footpath linking Caulk Lane to Wombwell Lane. The embankment will also be planted with appropriate native species as listed in Section 5(iii) of the Enforcement Notice. A post and rail fence will be installed on the

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lower terrace in alignment with the northern boundary to the trading estate. The proposals are clearly illustrated on the submitted Landscape Layout Drawing No BAR1602_P002_Rev B submitted in support of the Planning Application and in Appendix E of this Report.

- 3.2. The overall landscape strategy is to introduce a profiled landform with planting that is appropriate to the local landscape character and most importantly to re-instate the landscape to a similar status and character to reflect the former condition. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to introduce wildflower and grassland species to enhance the quality and biodiversity of the landscape to a status that could be considered as an improvement over the former condition. The public footpath will also provide access to the landscape and recreational opportunities that are not present in the current and former condition.
- 3.3. Generally, the proposals accord with the objectives set out in Policy CSP 29 Design as described in the following:

Development should:

- *contribute to place making and be of a high quality, that contributes to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment.*
- *help to transform the character of physical environments that have become run down and are lacking in distinctiveness.*
- *enable all people to gain access safely and conveniently, providing, in particular, for the needs of families and children, and of disabled people and older people.*
- *contribute towards creating attractive, sustainable and successful neighbourhoods.*

4.0. Likely Effects on the Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

- 4.1. This section considers in more detail the following statement in section 4 of the Enforcement Notice, *"The Unauthorised Works, due to their excessive scale are visible from surrounding land and property thereby creating conditions which are detrimental to visual amenity through the loss of a landscape feature, planting and greenery. The extent of the excavations and*

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alteration to the landscape leaves a scarred appearance along an area of land which forms the green belt boundary...”

- 4.2. To understand whether this is the case we have visited the site and travelled a number of the key visual receptors within the vicinity. The recreational routes, including public footpaths and the Trans Pennine Trail have been plotted on drawing Recreational Routes and Viewpoint Locations in Appendix F. We have selected viewpoints to represent receptors that could potentially be affected by the current works and potential landscape proposals as set out in the landscape drawing in Appendix E.
- 4.3. We have also assessed the impact on the former condition as visually set out in Appendix C caused by the unauthorised works followed by a judgement on the likely effects after the Landscape Proposals are implemented to the quality illustrated in the drawing in Appendix E.
- 4.4. In terms of the effects that the works have had on the landscape it is clear that the unauthorised works have caused a major change to the former canal site which can be deemed as significant and adverse. However, the harm is not considered to be permanent and can be repaired with correct landscape intervention. The key characteristics as stated in the D3: West Dearne Settled Arable Slopes currently remain largely unaffected by the harm due to its localised nature and there is an opportunity to not only re-instate the landscape character within the site to a similar condition as before but also to provide improvements in the form of appropriate planting, as listed in section 5(iii) of the Enforcement Notice and also provide public access via a new public footpath linking Caulk Lane to Wombwell lane. Should the planning application be approved then the landscape measures that are implemented in accordance to drawing BAR1602_P002_RevB would lead to the major and adverse effects being reduced to minor with permanent neutral significance of effects. Therefore, the proposals when implemented will counteract the concern raised “..*creating conditions which are detrimental to visual amenity through the loss of a landscape feature, planting and greenery.*” Furthermore, the scarred appearance on the Green Belt boundary will be replaced with a green planted profiled bank with a public footpath running along its length. Wildflower meadows can be introduced at the foot of the bank providing walkers with further enjoyment of the mitigated landscape.

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- 4.5. With respect to how visible the unauthorised works are to nearby residents and land we found that the site was hardly visible from nearby properties. This is certainly true of the properties off Caulk lane to the east of the site but it may be possible to view the top of the bank and current earth storage from rear and upper windows of Swaithe Hall Farm. We travelled up Caulk Lane to this property and Viewpoints 1 and 2 in Appendix G illustrate the extent of the visibility from adjacent to the site and further south, however, Swaithe Hall Farm is private and we did not take photos from within the grounds of the property, but onsite Viewpoint 4 is a view towards these properties from the site and it is clear that some visibility will be experienced as described above.
- 4.6. Viewpoint 3 is located within the edge of Barnsley Trade Park and adjacent to the site. This view provides the context of the localised character of the area due to the nature of the development site being adjacent to the urban edge of Barnsley and a Commercial Zone. The viewpoint also illustrates that the effects of the unauthorised works have caused a major change to the former condition which can be considered as adverse. However, the landscape proposals with a newly profiled embankment and appropriate planting will be visible from here providing an attractive transitional edge to the trading estate and the Green Belt. Therefore the likely effects can be considered to be minor and permanent neutral.
- 4.7. With regards to impacts on the visual amenity beyond the immediate vicinity part of the current site and the proposed landscape will be visible from the footpaths to the north including the Trans-Pennine Trail. Viewpoints 4, 5 and 6 represent these recreational receptors and although most of the footpaths and trail are heavily vegetated there are occasional gaps where the trading estate and site is visible. In terms of the effects on the general visual amenity caused by the unauthorised works it could be considered that they are moderate/minor adverse as the site is barely noticeable from these locations. Furthermore, if the landscape proposals are implemented the effects are likely to be negligible.
- 4.8. Generally, we consider that the statement that describes the unauthorised works as being detrimental to the visual amenity accurately describes the current condition within the site, however, it is clear that the degree of harm can be considered as temporary and that the adverse effects will be fully mitigated with the implementation of the Landscape Proposals as put forward in the drawing BAR1602_P002_Rev B in Appendix E.

5.0. Conclusions

- 5.1. The site of the former disused canal has undergone considerable change due to the nature of the unauthorised works that have been carried out. In terms of the effects on the landscape character as described in the Landscape Character Assessment for Barnsley we consider the harm has little effect on the key characteristics of the wider area as the works have been

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localised to within the site which is a comparatively small proportion. Furthermore, the landscape Proposals that form part of the current Planning Application (2016/0148) and illustrated in drawing BAR1602_P002_Rev B demonstrate that the adverse effects can be viewed as temporary and ultimately neutral in terms of significance of effects.

- 5.2. The proposals, if implemented, can be considered to conform to the broad objectives of Policy CSP 29 Design and also be complementary to advice on planting contained in Section 5(iii) of the Enforcement Notice. In particular, the proposals will provide a high quality place-making opportunity, which can be deemed attractive and an improvement on the current, and to some extent the former condition.
- 5.3. In terms of the likely effects on the residential and visual amenity it is clear that the site will be visible from certain, but limited, locations in the immediate locality and the effects caused by the unauthorised works are viewed as major and temporary adverse. These will be reduced to minor and permanent neutral as a result of the implemented landscape proposals. Likewise there is little significant effect on the residential amenity within the area.
- 5.4. The medium to long range recreational receptors will experience some visibility of the current condition and improved proposals but generally the significance of effects are likely to be minor or negligible.
- 5.5. Overall, in the light of the above I consider that the landscape proposals for the site will result in an attractive landscape feature with appropriate planting that reflects the surrounding landscape character and meets the objectives on Policy CSP 29. The long term and residual effects of the proposed scheme will become neutral when the landscape planting has matured.

Paul Gray CMLI (Director): 24th March 2016



APPENDICES LANDSCAPE REPORT

Landscape Report
Barnsley Canal Site.

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Appendices

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MARCH 2016



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LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL FIGURES

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Appendix F	Recreational Routes Plan and View Point Locations
Appendix G	Viewpoints



APPENDIX A

LAND REGISTRY PLAN

Landscape Report

Barnsley Canal Side.

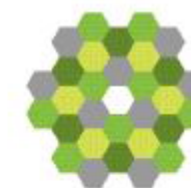
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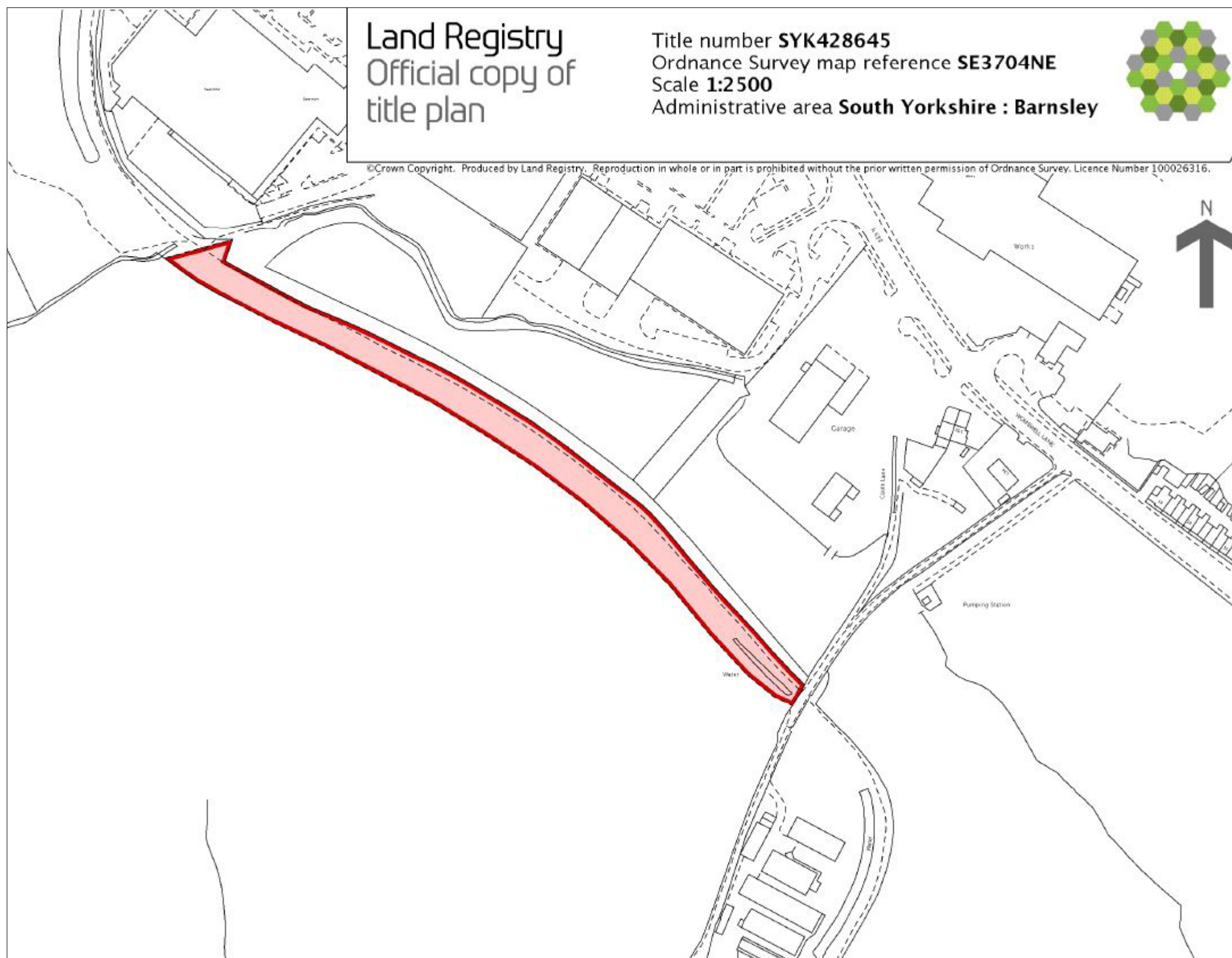
MARCH 2016

Land Registry
Official copy of
title plan

Title number **SYK428645**
Ordnance Survey map reference **SE3704NE**
Scale **1:2500**
Administrative area **South Yorkshire : Barnsley**



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APPENDIX B ONSITE VIEWS

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Barnsley Canal Side.

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Onsite Viewpoint 1: Looking in a westerly direction across the site.



Onsite Viewpoint 2: View from top of embankment looking west.



Onsite Viewpoint 3: View from top of bank in south looking north.



Onsite Viewpoint 4: View towards Swaithe Hall Farm.



Onsite Viewpoint 5: Looking in a northerly direction.



Onsite Viewpoint 6: View looking east to Caulk Lane.



Onsite Viewpoint 7: View from west of site looking east.



Onsite Viewpoint 8: View looking north.



Onsite Viewpoint 9: View from east of site opposite Tesco.



APPENDIX C

PENNINE WATERWAY PHOTOGRAPHS

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Barnsley Canal Side.

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Looking West from Caulk Lane towards Stairfoot. The canal channel is intact but dry.



Continuing westwards.



There is a small amount of water in the canal bed.



The dry canal passes around the back of the Tesco store towards the one-way system at Stairfoot.



Looking east at the rear of Tesco.



Approaching the one way traffic system at Stairfoot. Beyond Bleachcroft Way, the canal has disappeared under the new alignment of Doncaster Road



APPENDIX D

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER PLAN DESIGNATION PLAN

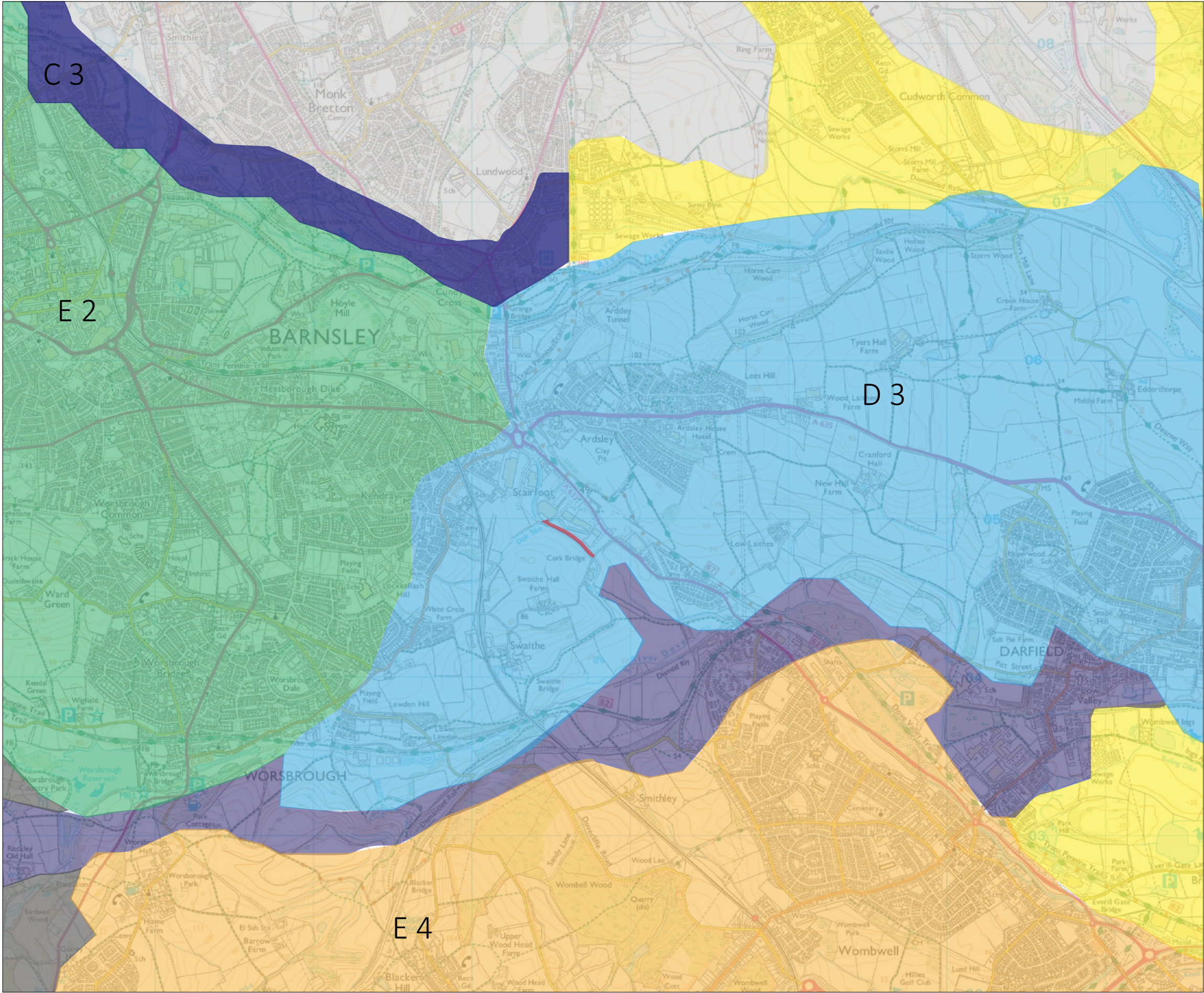
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- KEY**
- Site Boundary
- Landscape Character Areas**
- C 2 Lower Dearne Lowland River Floor
 - C 3 Upper Dearne Lowland River Floor
 - C 4 Dove Lowland River Floor
 - D 1 North East Barnsley Settled Arable Slopes
 - D 2 East Dearne Settled Arable Slopes
 - D 3 West Dearne Settled Arable Slopes
 - E 1 West Barnsley Settled Wooded Farmland
 - E 2 Barnsley Settled Wooded Farmland
 - E 3 Grimethorpe Settled Wooded Farmland
 - E 4 Hoyland Settled Wooded Farmland



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

0161 238 9138
info@pgla.co.uk
pgla.co.uk

229 Ducie House
Ducie Street
Manchester
M12JW

Project Title
Barnsley Canal Side

Job Ref.
BAR1602

Client
Sentiville Limited

Drawing Number
BAR1602_APPD

Revision
-

Drawing Title
Landscape Character

Scale
1:25 000@A3

Date
March 2016



APPENDIX E

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

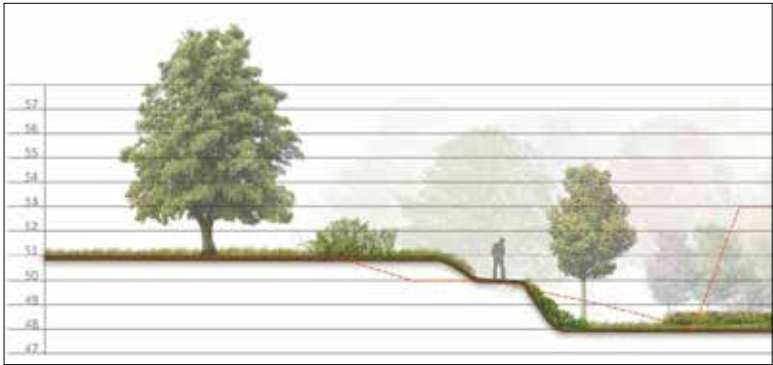
Landscape Report

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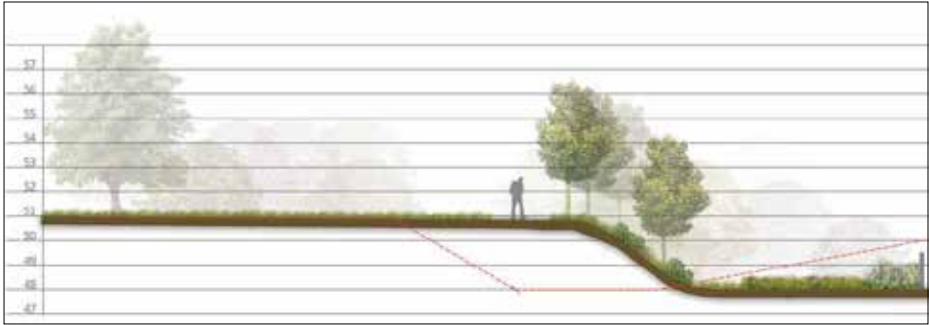
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Section E - EE [Scale 1:250]



Section A - AA [Scale 1:250]

KEY

- Proposed Trees
- Native Whip Mix
- Grass [sown with agricultural grass/ wildflower seed]
- Footpath
- Existing levels
- Boundary Line
- Post and Rail Fence

pgla
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

t 0161 238 9138
e info@pgla.co.uk
w pgla.co.uk

229 Ducie House
Ducie Street
Manchester
M1 2JU

Project Title
Barnsley Canal Side

Job Ref.
BAR1602

Client
Sentiville Limited

Drawing Number
BAR1602_P002

Revision
B

Drawing Title
Landscape Proposal For Approval

Scale
1:200@A1

Date
February 2016



APPENDIX F RECREATIONAL ROUTES & VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS MAP

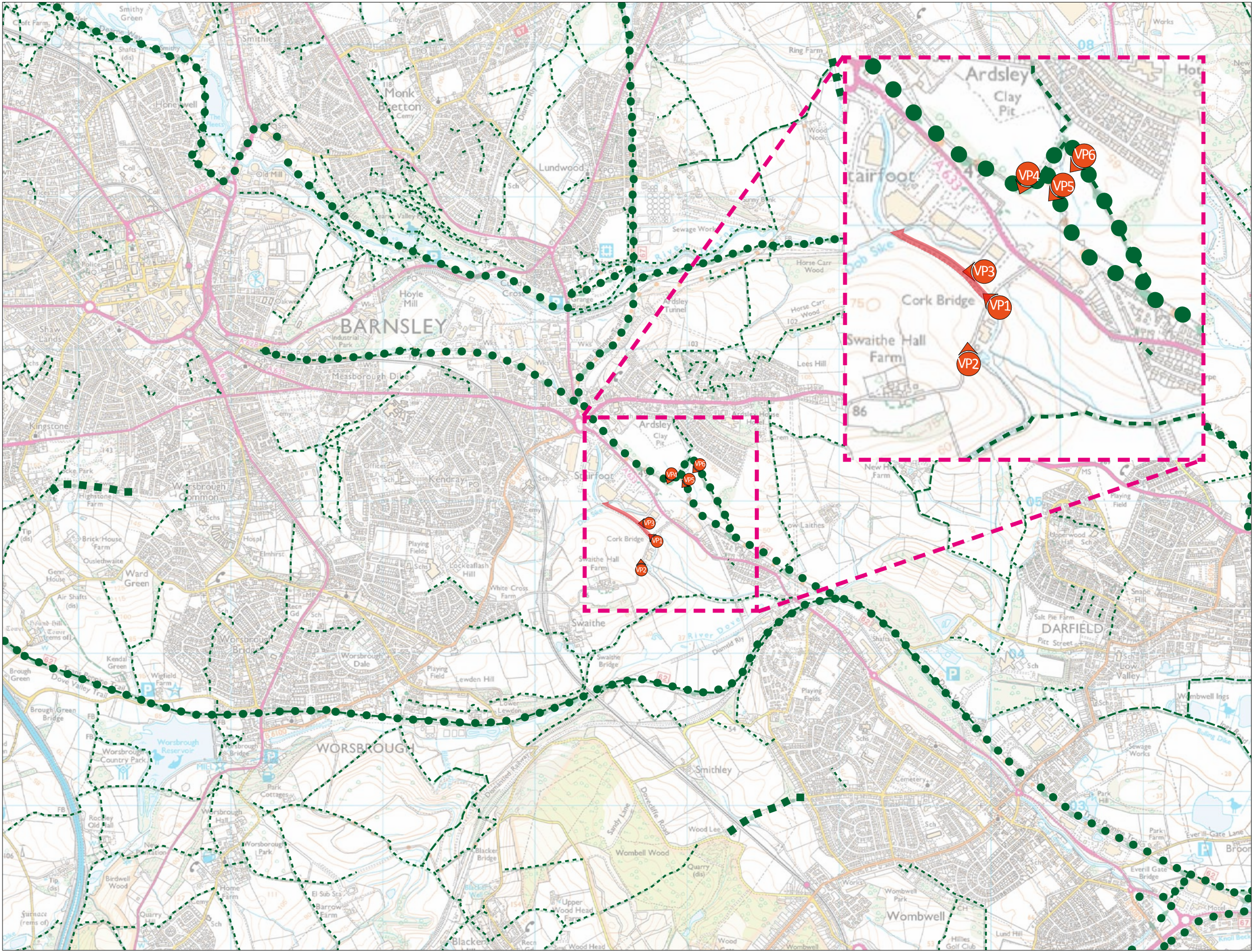
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KEY

Site Boundary

Public Rights of Way

Public Footpath

National Trail

Bridleway

Other routes with public access


LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

 0161 238 9138

 info@pgla.co.uk

 pgla.co.uk

229 Ducie House
Ducie Street
Manchester
M1 2JU

Project Title
Barnsley Canal Side

Job Ref.
BAR1602

Client
Sentiville Limited

Drawing Number
BAR1602_APPD

Revision
-

Drawing Title
Recreational Routes Map

Scale
1:25 000@A3

Date
March 2016



APPENDIX G VIEWPOINTS

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Barnsley Canal Side.

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MARCH 2016



Viewpoint One: From Caulk Lane.



Viewpoint Two: From Caulk Lane.



Viewpoint Three: From Trade Park.



Viewpoint Four: From Trans-Pennine Trail.



Viewpoint Five: From Trans-Pennine Trail.



Viewpoint Six: From public footpath looking South.

Produced by:



229

Ducie House
Ducie Street
Manchester
M1 2JW



0161 238 9138



Info@pgla.co.uk



www.pgla.co.uk