

Landscape Assessment

Rabbit Ings Regeneration Scheme near Royston,
Barnsley

On behalf of the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District
Council and Yorkshire Forward

By The Farningham McCreadie Partnership /
WYG Planning and Design

October 2008

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	Page No. 2
2.0	Planning Policy Context	Page No. 6
3.0	Landscape Classification	Page No. 6
4.0	Site Description & Landscape Character	Page No. 8
5.0	Assessment of Landscape Impacts	Page No. 10
6.0	Mitigation of Landscape & Visual Impacts	Page No. 16
7.0	Overview	Page No. 17

Table 1: Visual Impact Assessment

Figures

Figure1	Site Location Plan
Figure 2	Planning Policy Context Plan
Figure 3	Topographical Analysis Plan
Figure 4	Landscape Context Plan
Figure 5	Photographic Viewpoint Location Plan
Figure 6	Photographic Viewpoints 1 – 3
Figure 7	Photographic Viewpoints 4 - 6
Figure 8	Photographic Viewpoints 7 - 9
Figure 9	Photographic Viewpoints 10 - 12
Figure 10	Photographic Viewpoints 13 - 15

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape Assessment describes the existing environment and provides an assessment of the predicted impact of the proposed reclamation and regeneration of the lands at Rabbit Ings, Royston, in terms of its effect on both views (i.e. visual impact) and the landscape.

Approach and Methodology

- 1.2 The approach to this assessment has been to consider the impacts on the physical structure and aesthetic character of the landscape and, the impacts on the visual amenity of those experiencing views of the site.
- 1.3 A baseline study was established by an initial desktop study of Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and planning documents followed by site surveys in **February and March 2008**.
- 1.4 The area of study corresponds broadly to the wider **Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI)** of the proposed development. Landscape and visual amenity outside this zone will remain unaffected by the proposals. **Figure 4, Landscape Context Plan** illustrates the local landscape character of the site and its relationship with other adjoining uses.
- 1.5 The assessment has been undertaken in line with the guidance contained in the **Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** published by the **Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment** in association with **The Landscape Institute**.
- 1.6 The key objectives of the assessment were to:
- classify the area according to different types of landscape character;
 - identify landscape features that may be affected by the development;
 - identify key viewpoints and viewers likely to be affected by the development;
 - identify significant impacts on the landscape and visual amenity; and,
 - identify measures to mitigate these impacts.

Assessment of Impacts on Landscape Character

- 1.7 The approach taken within this appraisal reflects the need to identify and understand the following:

- the character of the landscape and its ability to accommodate change; and,
- the visual relationship between the study area and its setting during construction and following completion.

1.8 Landscape and visual impacts may potentially result from the following:

- visibility of elements associated with the development during the regeneration operations;
- loss of existing landscape features or the introduction of new features; and,
- the presence of permanent structures on completion of the development.

1.9 The impacts are described according to their level of significance, whether adverse or beneficial. The significance of impacts is determined by the magnitude of change to the landscape (which depends on the nature and scale of the development and its visibility); the extent to which the existing landscape character will be changed; and, the sensitivity of the landscape to change. Sensitivity of the landscape depends both on its intrinsic quality and explicit value (according to landscape designation) and, on its ability to accommodate the changes imposed by a development proposal. The criteria for this are summarised as follows:

- **High:** An area of highly valued landscape with strong structure and positive character, which is considered vulnerable to small degrees of change;
- **Moderate:** An area with a well defined landscape character with positive qualities which may however, have suffered some degradation or erosion. Sensitivity will be diminished and change more likely to be accommodated; and,
- **Low:** An area of generally poor landscape character with few positive and valued features. Change will make a positive contribution to the landscape.

Assessment of Impacts on Visual Amenity

1.10 As with landscape impacts, the impact on visual amenity is a function of the *magnitude* of change and the *sensitivity* to change. *Sensitivity* refers to viewer sensitivity and depends upon the following:

- the length of viewing time e.g. a local resident with prolonged viewing opportunities will be more sensitive than a passer-by;

- context of the view e.g. a viewer with an existing view of industrial structures will be less sensitive than a viewer with rural views; and,
- distance from source.

111 The *magnitude* of impact depends on the following:

- obstruction, or the extent to which existing views are blocked;
- intrusion, or the extent to which existing views are impinged upon;
- qualitative change to the landscape; and,
- number of people/viewers who are affected.

1.12 Grading of the scale of the impact is based on the detailed information available regarding the nature of the proposed development, the scale, duration and permanence of the change and the size of the resource/area affected. The following criteria (adapted from the **Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact 2002**) are used:

Nature:

- **Adverse:** Detrimental or negative effect on an environmental resource or receptor;
- **Negligible:** No significant effect on an environmental resource or receptor; and,
- **Beneficial:** Advantageous or positive effect on an environmental resource or receptor.

Magnitude:

1.13 Assessment based on the scale of change. Specifically in terms of the actual degree of change within the view, the level of contrast or integration of the new element and the size of area affected. The criteria for these are summarised below.

- **Minor:** Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline resource / landscape / view, and/or the introduction of elements that may not be characteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape;
- **Moderate:** Partial loss of, or alteration to, one or more key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline resource / landscape / view and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be

substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape; and,

- **Substantial:** Total loss of, or major alteration to, key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline resource / landscape / view and/or introduction of elements considered to be totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.

Duration of Impact

- 1.14 For the purposes of this appraisal, the 'Duration of Impact' referred to in **Table 1: Visual Impact Assessment** describes both the 'short term / regeneration operations' effect, including site clearance, construction and early establishment of structure planting etc, and the 'Long Term' effect (approximately +15 years from completion of the regeneration works), including established development with structure planting maturing and having the effect it was designed for.

Overall Significance of Visual Impact

- 1.15 The significance of the impacts is described according to the level of sensitivity in relation to the magnitude of change. The criteria for these are summarised as follows:

Substantial. A high impact on visual amenity would generally arise where an impact of high magnitude affects viewers of predicted high sensitivity.

Moderate. Where the change is moderate and the viewer is also moderately sensitive, the impact is therefore determined to be moderate.

Minor. A low impact will occur where the change is small and the viewer's sensitivity is also considered to be slight.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (Adopted December 2000)

- 2.1 The site is predominantly located within the **Green Belt**, which is identified within **Policy RO5** of the **Barnsley Unitary Development Plan** and the **Royston Community Area Proposals Map**. The purpose of the Green Belt is to maintain *“the physical separation of Royston, Staincross and Athersley; safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and assisting in encouraging the regeneration of central and eastern Royston by restricting urban sprawl to the west.”* (Volume 6, page 12, para 4.5)
- 2.2 The now disused sports pitch area, within the south western sector of the site, is designated as an area of Urban Greenspace within **Policy RO9** of the **Barnsley Unitary Development Plan**. These areas have been identified within the Plan as they are *“the most significant urban greenspaces in the Community Area due to their scale, location, recreational function and/or visual, environmental or ecological value.”* (Volume 6, page 13, para 4.7).
- 2.3 In addition, within the Plan, the area directly north of the Pallet Works (within the site boundary) is designated as an **Employment Policy Area** (see **Figure 2**), whilst the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT), which crosses the south eastern sector of the subject lands, is designated a **Multi-user Recreational Routeway**.
- 2.4 The planning policy context is illustrated in **Figure 2, Planning Policy Context Plan**.

3.0 LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION

- 3.1 Landscape classification is a means of sub-dividing the landscape into different areas with distinctive landscape character. Landscape types differ in their range of landscape features and the patterns these create and consequently their ability to accommodate different types of development. Some areas may be particularly sensitive, others more resilient.
- 3.2 To assist in the understanding and interpretation of the site and its wider setting the assessment draws on the findings of the **Countryside Character Volume 3: Yorkshire & Humber**, published by the **Countryside Commission**, and the **Barnsley Borough Landscape Character Assessment**, published by **ECUS** and **LUC**, in 2002.

- 3.3 Within the **Countryside Character Volume 3: Yorkshire & Humber**, the site is located within **Landscape Character Area No. 38 – Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire coalfield**, which describes the key characteristics of this landscape as having *inter alia*:
- ***“Widespread evidence of industrial activity including mine buildings, former spoil tips and iron and steel plants.***
 - ***Complex mix of built-up areas, industrial land, dereliction and farmed open country.***
 - ***Many areas affected by urban fringe pressures creating fragmented and downgraded landscapes.”***
- 3.4 The document goes on to note that ***“the landscape is underpinned by generally low and undramatic but variable hills, escarpments and broad valleys. It is dominated everywhere by extensive urban influences and industry. There has been constant change and development since the era of the industrial revolution, when there was rapid expansion of housing, transport networks and industry of many types. The result is a complex intermingling of rural and urban areas and of modern commerce and industrial dereliction, the whole creating a mosaic of disparate land uses and land cover.”*** (Landscape Character Area No. 38).
- 3.5 The inherent potential of these degraded landscapes is also highlighted in the text, where it is noted that ***“reclamation of derelict sites will continue and provides significant opportunities for enhancing or creating both landscape and wildlife habitats.”*** In addition, there is ***“the enormous potential for enhancing this landscape by, for example, significant woodland planting”*** (Landscape Character Area No. 38 - Shaping the Future) is recognised.
- 3.6 The **Barnsley Borough Landscape Character Assessment** also recognises that ***“Disused industrial quarries, tips and spoil heaps provide strong visual cues to industrial heritage and present day regeneration initiatives.”*** (page 75, D1: North East Barnsley Settled Arable Slopes - Key Characteristics) In this context, the Assessment acknowledges that ***“Reclamation of spoil heaps is evidence of positive measures to improve the recreational, visual and ecological quality of the landscape.”*** (page 77, D1: North East Barnsley Settled Arable Slopes – Forces for Change)

4.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 4.1 The application site is located on the eastern edge of Royston, a former mining town, which lies approximately 4.5 km to the north of Barnsley town centre. Several similar sized former mining towns are located to the south and east of Royston, including Cudworth, Shafton, Brierley and Ryhill. Whilst the M1 motorway extends in a north-south direction approximately 5.5 km to the west of Royston. At a more local level a coking works, currently operated by the Monckton Coke and Chemical Company, remains operational to the west of Lund Hill Lane, whilst a pallet works is currently operating between the western site boundary and Lund Hill Lane (directly opposite the coking works).
- 4.2 The site itself has been significantly disturbed by previous mining and tipping activities, and therefore, is sparsely vegetated. However, patches of predominantly self seeded birch woodland have established on parts of the southern slopes and along parts of the northern site boundary. neutral grassland has also established to cover most of the tip and most of the remaining site area. This is interspersed with occasional areas of regenerating scrub and trees.

Topography

- 4.3 The landform within the site is predominantly dominated by the large colliery tip which rises approximately 40m above the surrounding landscape. The sides of the tip generally fall at a gradient of 1:3 (approx.) however, parts of the southern flank are much steeper, with gradients reaching approximately 1:1. The remainder of the site is generally characterised by gently undulating ground

Site Boundaries and Land cover

- 4.4 The site boundaries are generally well defined by a combination of manmade and 'natural' features, including road corridors and watercourses. The northern site boundary is predominantly defined by a simple post and wire fence, however a significant proportion (circa 300m) of the northern boundary remains physically undefined.
- 4.5 The eastern boundary is also defined by a recently erected steel palisade security fence, which continues along the edge of Sandybridge Lane. The fence, which extends approximately 50m to the north of the north eastern corner of the site, was designed to restrict unlawful access by 4x4 vehicles, quad bikes and motorbikes. The

southern boundary of the site is predominantly defined by the Sandybridge Dike, a narrow watercourse, which is characterised by sporadic tree and shrub planting.

- 4.6 The western boundary is again predominantly defined by a steel palisade security fence, which was also erected to restrict unlawful access to the site by 4x4 vehicles, quad bikes and motorbikes. This fence line extends along the edge of Lund Hill Lane *before returning eastwards to define the southern eastern and northern boundaries of the pallet works.* The primary vehicular access point into the site during site operations is located on this boundary, off Lund Hill Lane approximately 55m to the north of the pallet works. The entrance is protected by a locked heavy duty vehicular gate.
- 4.7 The land cover within the site is dominated by the large colliery tip, which formed part of Monckton Main Colliery, and which was created by "aerial ropeway tipping". The colliery (later operating as New Monckton Colliery) was closed in the 1960's when the Royston Drift Mine was opened, (within the north western sector of the site). It is assumed that the drift mine also utilised the Rabbit Ings tip, until its closure in 1990.
- 4.8 A former recreation ground, which is framed by a line of mature Black Poplar trees on its northern and eastern edge, is located within the lower lying south western sector of the site. The ground in this area has been recently ripped in an effort to prevent unauthorised use by 4x4 vehicles, quad bikes and motorbikes. The north western sector of the site is occupied by areas of rubble and a large area of concrete hardstanding which formed part of the former Royston Drift Mine.
- 4.9 Whilst the slopes of the colliery tip are generally quite uniform, the southern face of the tip features steeper slopes which have been subject to slippage in the past and these are seen as a potential safety hazard. As part of the regeneration works, these steeper southern slopes will be re-profiled to create a safer and more stable gradient upon which the new habitats and recreational facilities can be established.
- 4.10 Sandybridge Dike flows along the southern boundary of the site, with a number of further small un-named watercourses and water bodies evident in the northern and western sectors. A pond formerly associated with the colliery / tip activity is located in the south western corner and a number of reed beds are present between the toe of the tip and Sandybridge Dike and adjacent to the former recreation ground. A second pond is located in the north eastern corner of the site.

- 4.11 Whilst there are several worn footpaths and access tracks within the subject lands, only 2 No. Public Rights of Way cross the site. These are located firstly, towards the northern edge of the site, and secondly, within the south western sector of the site. **(Figure 4, Landscape Context Plan)**
- 4.12 The south western footpath extends from the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) in a northerly direction, crossing Sandybridge Dike and an area of exposed colliery spoil before turning in a north westerly direction towards the edge of the site at Lund Hill Lane. The small footbridge which allowed access across Sandybridge Dike is no longer passable due to damage, and there is no defined route across the large area of exposed colliery spoil to the north of the dike.
- 4.13 The northerly footpath extends from Sandybridge Lane into the north eastern corner of the site, before continuing west along the site boundary and onwards to exit the site onto Lund Hill Lane, to the north of the pallet works.
- 4.14 The proposals allow for the retention of both of these Rights of Way, and whilst the northern route will be retained unchanged, it is proposed that the south western route is temporarily closed during site operations, then permanently diverted, subject to the appropriate permissions from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, along the north and east edge of the new sports pitch area. The proposed diversion will be designed to tie in with the proposed landform whilst also providing access to the new sports pitches and the wider network of multi-use access tracks.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

- 5.1 The impact of the proposed development on the landscape is described below and in terms of its: Impact on Landscape Resources; Impact on Landscape Character; and, Visual Impact. The assessment of impacts discussed within the following paragraphs is based on drawing A039273 L(92)0016 Rev F.
- 5.2 The impacts are described according to their level of significance. The significance of impacts is determined by the magnitude of change to the landscape (which depends on the nature and scale of the development and its visibility); the extent to which the existing landscape character will be changed; and, the sensitivity of the landscape to change. Sensitivity of the landscape depends both on its intrinsic quality and explicit value (according to landscape designation) and, on its ability to accommodate the changes imposed by a development proposal.

Impact on Landscape Resources

- 5.3 As a result of the regeneration proposals, some of the existing landscape resources on site will be lost, including reed beds, woodland planting, areas of neutral grassland, semi-improved and improved grassland. In addition most of the trees within the line of Black Poplars, which extends around the northern and eastern side of the sports pitch area will be removed to accommodate the new multi-use access track and the re-aligned electricity cable.
- 5.4 Whilst the impact on these resources will be kept to a minimum, the site in its current condition is seen as a significantly degraded landscape of low quality in visual and amenity terms, and the regeneration proposals will be seen to offset the loss of these resources through, firstly, the retention of key areas of existing habitat within the south eastern corner of the site and along the northern boundary, and secondly, the introduction of areas of new habitats including significant areas of new 'native' species based woodland and understorey planting, areas of open neutral and species rich grassland, and wetland habitats.
- 5.5 Whilst it is the intention to retain as many trees as possible, the lines of Black Poplar trees which extend around the northern and eastern edges of the sports pitch area will be removed as a result of the development proposals. In order to alleviate the poor drainage within the south western sector of the site, and to allow the implementation of new properly drained sports pitches, it is necessary to raise the ground level within the existing sports pitch area by approximately 1m (to allow pipe drainage systems to be constructed). The trees are even aged and over mature and many have been selected for early removal due to their poor condition (refer to Arboricultural Survey by JCA Arboriculturalists 2008). In this context, the trees would only have a limited life span as part of the regenerated site. A replacement planting strategy, which includes the planting of approx 40 No. Common Alder trees has been proposed, and once established, these trees will be seen to provide a similar level of enclosure and formality to the proposed uses within this sector of the site.
- 5.6 The reed beds, which are located along the southern slopes of the colliery tip, are fed by the drainage runoff from the upper tip slopes. These features have been identified as valuable ecological assets and whilst some of the reed beds on the upper slopes will be lost due to the necessary landform modifications (to achieve a safe and stable gradient), the regeneration proposals allow for the introduction of new reed beds at the foot of the re-profiled slopes, which will be partially formed by transplanting reeds

from the beds on the upper slopes. This new reed bed system will extend along much of the southern sector of the site, and will be seen to be more extensive than the existing habitat.

- 5.7 Areas of 'native' species based shelterbelt planting have established along the eastern edge of the tip's southern slopes, and whilst it is the intention to retain as many trees on site as possible, a large part of this group will be lost due to the necessary landform modifications, which are required to achieve a safe and stable gradient. This tree loss will be offset by the introduction of significant areas of new tree planting, which will include various 'native' species based mixes of understorey, woodland edge, and wet woodland planting. This new planting will extend over approximately 20% of the total site area, and together with the other habitat types introduced, will be seen as a valuable addition to the wider woodland resource of South Yorkshire.
- 5.8 The areas of neutral grassland, which have established on the upper slopes of the tip, will again be retained where possible, but it is envisaged that due to the necessary landform modifications, much of this will be lost. However, within the regeneration proposals, following the removal of the existing benching and unsightly runoff channels, and the formation of the new multi-use access track network, grassland will be re-established on the upper slopes of the tip. This will retain the open character of the upper slopes, where views will be available over the surrounding landscape from the new viewpoint. This will also provide a valuable ecological habitat to birds such as Skylark as well as mammals such as Hare.
- 5.9 The regeneration proposals also include the introduction of several new recreational and amenity resources including the multi-use access track and mountain bike track as well as interpretive facilities with new sign posts and information boards. New football pitches, catering for both adult and junior levels, will also be introduced along with a new changing room and meeting room facility which will be accessed via a new, gated vehicular entrance and car park.

Impact on Landscape Character

- 5.10 Following the regeneration proposals, there will be a beneficial impact on the landscape character of the site and its immediate context, with the site changing from a degraded, post industrial landscape featuring prominent landform modifications, unsightly drainage runoff channels and poorly established grassland areas, to a new

high amenity and ecological resource which will be seen as a positive feature in the wider landscape setting.

- 5.11 The existing tip, which is prominent in views over the local landscape, is seen as an unnatural landform in the prevailing landscape of gently undulating topography. The northern, eastern and western slopes of the tip are sparsely vegetated, with only small areas of regenerating woodland and shelterbelt planting breaking up the open grassland which covers the majority of the tip. The regeneration proposals will include the introduction of significant areas of new 'native' species based woodland planting along the lower slopes, which, when viewed from out with the site, will be seen to 'break up' the exposed flanks of the remodeled tip and in turn, helping to integrate it into the wider landscape structure.
- 5.12 In its current condition, the site is under-utilised and whilst there are 2 No. existing rights of way and several informal footpaths crossing the site, the condition of these routes remains poor, particularly during periods of inclement weather. The regeneration proposals, which include the introduction of a new multi-use access footpath and cycle network, a mountain bike track as well as interpretative facilities such as directional sign posts, information boards, distance markers (for recreational / running) and safety notices, will be seen to significantly increase the amenity value of the site which will encourage access and use of the site from both the local community and the wider area.

Impact on Visual Amenity

- 5.13 An appraisal of the visual amenity of the site was undertaken to establish the potential impact of future development on the site and to assist in determining the capacity of this landscape to accommodate change. Full consideration has been given to the viewpoints illustrated in **Figures 6 - 10 , Viewpoints 1-15**, their location and distance from the site, the quality of each view and the impact the development of the site will have on the wider setting. The location of these viewpoints is presented in **Figure 5, Photographic Viewpoint Location Plan**. A review of the key issues is presented in **Table 1, Visual Impact Assessment**.

Visual Impact from the north

- 5.14 Views towards the site from the north are predominantly restricted or filtered by a combination of factors including existing vegetation cover, which lines the road corridors and many of the field boundaries, as well as the undulating landform.

Transient, filtered views towards the upper slopes of the colliery tip are available through gaps in the roadside planting from Lund Hill Lane. The colliery tip is again visible to transient views from Church Lane, where the prominent mound is seen as an abrupt and unnatural landform in an otherwise gently rolling landscape. Whilst the sparse vegetation located on the northern slopes of the tip is visible, the vegetation cover is too limited to effectively 'break up' or soften views towards the prominent slopes.

- 5.15 Views towards the site from the existing footpath (Right of Way), which extends along the northern boundary of the site are generally filtered by the existing woodland planting which has established near the boundary. However, where direct views open up, the receptor experiences direct views towards rising barren slopes of the colliery tip. (**Viewpoint 3, Figure 6**). Whilst grasses and sporadic vegetation have established on these slopes, the steep gradients, landform modifications including benching and shelving, and patches of erosion caused by runoff, are seen as significant detractors on an otherwise gently rolling predominantly agricultural outlook (to the north). In this context, the proposed regeneration strategy will be seen to have a significant beneficial impact on the existing view from this location.
- 5.16 The visual impact experienced by visual receptors to the north of the site is described in detail in **Table 1 - Visual Impact Assessment**.

Visual Impact from the East

- 5.17 Views towards the site from the east are available from Sandybridge Lane from the network of rural footpaths which extend across the predominantly agricultural landscape and from the small settlement of South Hiendley, and from South Hiendley itself.
- 5.18 Direct views towards the northern and eastern slopes of the colliery tip are available to vehicles approaching the site from the north (along Sandybridge Lane). From this location, the tip is seen as a prominent, unnatural feature in the landscape, with the steep flanks and patchy, open grassland seen to offer a negative contrast with the more gently rolling landscape context. This is illustrated within **Viewpoints 5 & 6, Figure 7**.
- 5.19 Distant views towards the site from South Hiendley and from the western edge of Brierly are more elevated, and whilst the site is seen within the context of the wider landscape of gently rolling agricultural lands and small settlements, the colliery tip is

again seen as an unnatural and abrupt landform, which is distinct from the prevailing landscape pattern. This is illustrated within **Viewpoints 7 & 8, Figure 8.**

- 5.20 The visual impact experienced by visual receptors to the east of the site is described in detail in **Table 1 - Visual Impact Assessment.**

Visual Impact from the South

- 5.21 Distant views towards the site from the south are generally restricted by the undulating hill forms which characterise the landscape to the west of Shafton, and Upper Cudworth. However, more localised views are available from the north western edge of the settlement of Shafton and in close proximity, from the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT), which extends along the southern edge of the site.
- 5.22 Views towards the southern flanks of the colliery tip, the reed beds and the Sandybridge Dike are available from the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) as the route extends between the woodland at Pools Ings and Sandybridge Lane. The steep southern flank of the colliery tip, which is scarred with drainage runoff channels, benches and rough access tracks, is prominent in the view from this location, and whilst some regenerating woodland has established at the eastern end of the southern flank and along Sandybridge Dike, this degraded, post industrial landscape and colliery tip is seen as a significant visual intrusion in views from this strategic footpath & bridleway. This is illustrated in **Viewpoint 11, Figure 9.**
- 5.23 More distant views towards the site are available from the small settlement of North Field, and whilst views are partially obscured by the high ground at Gander Hill (to the west of Shafton), the upper slopes of the colliery tip and the coking works (to the west of the site and Lund Hill Lane) are prominent on the skyline. This is illustrated in **Viewpoint 10, Figure 9.**
- 5.24 Views towards the upper slopes of the colliery tip are available from the dwellings at Queens Drive, on the western edge of Shafton. Whilst the planting, which has established on the eastern end of the tip's southern flank, helps to soften views towards the upper slopes of the tip from this location, the patchy grassland, benching and eroded runoff channels remain visible. These obvious post industrial features are seen to contrast with the gently rolling agricultural landscape in the foreground of the view. This is illustrated in **Viewpoint 9, Figure 8.**

- 5.25 The visual impact experienced by visual receptors to the south of the site is described in detail in **Table 1 - Visual Impact Assessment**.

Visual Impact from the West

- 5.26 Views towards the site from the settlement of Royston are predominantly obscured by the existing building forms and intervening vegetation which has established along the railway line. However views towards the upper slopes of the colliery tip are available from the eastern edge of the town. This is illustrated in **Viewpoint 13, Figure 10**.
- 5.27 Views towards the site from Lund Hill Lane, which extends along the western edge of the site, are filtered through the intervening vegetation and the various boundary treatments including steel palisade security fencing and a brick wall. Views towards the upper slopes of the colliery tip are available and the patchy grassland, benching and eroded runoff channels are again visible.
- 5.28 The visual impact experienced by visual receptors to the west of the site is described in detail in **Table 1 - Visual Impact Assessment**.
- 5.29 Due to the degraded nature of the existing site, the *Nature of Change* as a result of the regeneration proposals will predominantly be **beneficial** however, there will be a degree of adverse impact during the earthmoving and construction stages of the project, where moving machinery and the removal of resources such as the neutral grassland and areas of shelterbelt planting will be carried out. In this context, **whilst there will be a minor adverse impact during the regeneration works, the long term impact will be substantial beneficial**, as the existing degraded landscape will be changed to a new, well designed amenity landscape offering a range of habitats and recreational uses which will benefit both the local community and the wider area.

6.0 MITIGATION OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

- 6.1 Mitigation of the impacts generated by the proposed regeneration works will be achieved through a combination of factors, including: the retention and enhancement of the existing vegetation structure where possible; and, minimum changes to the existing landform, except where due to the severity of the gradient, earthworks are required to achieve a stable and safe slope.
- 6.2 The long term impacts, which will occur as a result of the regeneration proposals, will

be beneficial and whilst it is acknowledged that there will be a short term adverse impact during the regeneration works, this will be a minor impact and the long term benefits are seen to outweigh the short term impacts.

- 6.3 Extensive areas of new 'native' species based planting will be designed to 'wrap' around the lower slopes of the colliery tip. This will soften the existing views towards the remodelled slopes, whilst also being seen to 'anchor' the prominent landform into a more structured woodland framework.
- 6.4 Following the completion of the earthworks and construction programme, the prominent and unsightly access tracks and drainage runoff channels, which cross the upper slopes of the tip, will be replaced with a new multi-use access track network introduced alongside a new drainage system of open swales, ditches and rock channels. This will allow for a more uniform grass cover to establish, which will be seen as a much less visually prominent backdrop to the new woodland planting belts on the lower slopes.
- 6.5 The proposals have been designed to encourage the creation of a range of habitat types, including: areas of neutral grassland; species rich grassland; and, native species based woodland planting. These latter features will include areas of wet woodland, and woodland edge planting and will be seen to significantly enhance the range of landscape resource types on site. Whilst some of the reed beds, which have established on the lower slopes on the southern edge of the colliery tip, will be lost as a result of the earthworks required to form a safe and stable gradient, the regeneration proposals aim to retain as much of this important habitat as possible. In addition, new areas of wetland will be created along the southern edge of the site and Sandybridge Dyke, with new reed beds allowed to establish.
- 6.6 In addition, to ensure that the existing habitats and new planting areas are given the best possible chance to establish, a **detailed five-year aftercare and management plan** has been undertaken which will reflect the specific needs and objectives of the site. The management plan will then be reviewed against current best practice and as the needs of the site evolve, to ensure that longer term management practices are appropriate to the site at that time.

7.0 OVERVIEW

- 7.1 In assessing the potential landscape and visual impacts generated by the proposals, full consideration has been given to the overall landscape character of the site at

Rabbit Ings and its relationship to the extended landscape context. In summary, whilst there will be a period of establishment and change, the long term benefits to this degraded landscape are significant.

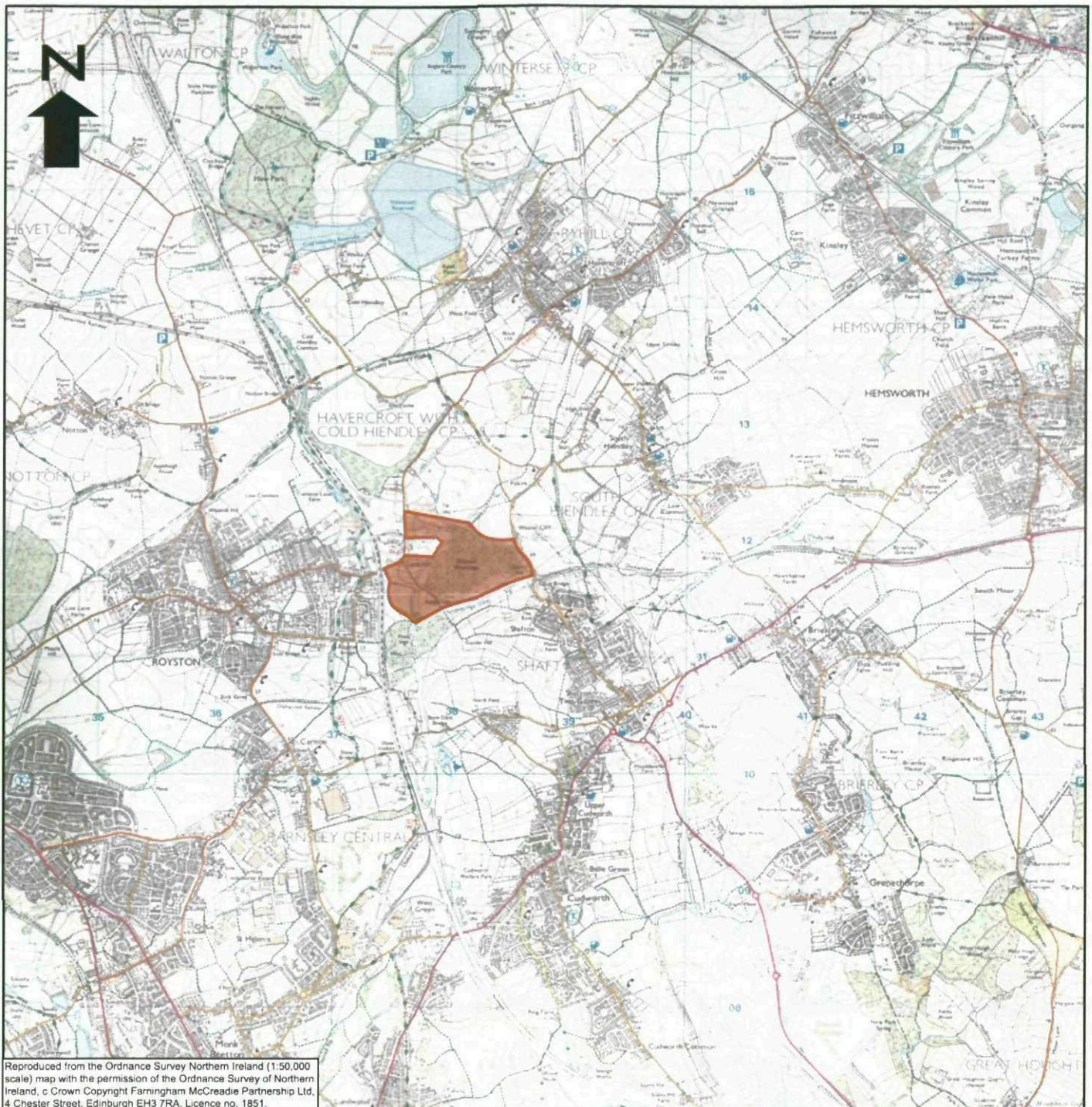
- 7.2 The introduction of extensive areas of new planting, recreational facilities, including the new sports pitches and associated changing rooms, as well as a significant increase in accessibility through the introduction of a new network of multi-use access tracks, will be seen as a significant benefit to the local community. In addition, whilst there will be significant areas of new 'native' species based planting introduced, the existing ecology within the site will be protected where possible to ensure the sensitive integration of existing habitats.

TABLE 1: VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Selected Photo View No.	Location	Approx. Distance from Site	Description of Existing View and Landscape Character	Sensitivity of View	Potential Impact of Development & Mitigation / Change in View	Nature of Change	Magnitude of Change	Duration of Impact	Overall Significance of Visual Impact
4.	View from the B6428 Lund Hill Lane looking south towards the site.	400m	View from road corridor overlooking agricultural land (pastoral) and a minor electricity sub station. Sporadic tree planting framing the fields and the south eastern edge of the road corridor, whilst a denser tree belt frames the north western edge of the road corridor.	Low	The upper slopes of the colliery tip are visible through gaps in the sporadic tree planting which frames the paddocks. The tip is seen as an unnatural engineered landform. The new 'native' species based planting belts, which will 'wrap' around the base of the tip, will soften views towards the slopes. During the construction stage the earthworks and engineering works being carried out on the upper tip slopes will be visible from the road as the viewer approaches the site from the north. This, however, will be a short term impact and it is considered that the long term beneficial impact significantly outweighs any short term adverse impact.	Adverse (Short Term / Construction) Beneficial (Long Term)	Minor Minor-Moderate	Short Term Permanent	Minor adverse to Moderate Beneficial
7.	View from Church Lane looking south west towards the site	600m	View from road corridor framed by post and wire fences and occasional tree and shrub planting overlooking a large field of rough grassland. The colliery tip is visible on the skyline to the left of the view, whilst other industrial features such as pylons and the coking works plant are visible in the distance. The colliery tip is seen as an unnatural landform in the context of the otherwise gently rolling landscape.	Low	The new 'native' species based planting belts, which are proposed within the northern and eastern sectors of the site, will, once established, soften the view towards the tip. The new planting will also be seen to significantly enhance the existing woodland resource visible within the view During the construction stage the earthworks and engineering works being carried out on the upper tip slopes will be visible from the road. This, however, will be a short term impact and it is considered that the long term beneficial impact significantly outweighs any short term adverse impact.	Adverse (Short Term / Construction) Beneficial (Long Term)	Minor Minor/Moderate	Short Term Permanent	Minor adverse to Minor/Moderate Beneficial
9.	View from the footpath (right of way) adjacent to the dwellings at Queens Drive, on the western edge of Shafton.	200m	View from a minor footpath which extends along the edge of a large agricultural field. A mid 20 th Century housing development, comprising semi-detached, two storey dwellings, is located to the right of the view. The colliery tip is prominent on the skyline and whilst the planting, which has established on the eastern end of the tip's southern flank, helps to soften views towards the subject lands, the patchy grassland, benching and eroded runoff channels are visible. These obvious post industrial features are seen to contrast with the agricultural landscape in the foreground of the view.	Moderate	The areas of existing woodland which have established on the lower slopes of the colliery tip will be lost as a result of the slope re-profiling and earthworks operations required to achieve a safe and stable slope. However significant areas of new planting belts will be introduced throughout the site, particularly around the lower slopes of the tip. These new planting areas, once established, will be seen to firstly, soften views towards the prominent landform of the colliery tip, and secondly, significantly enhance the existing woodland resource in the area. In addition, the patchy grassland, unsightly runoff channels and benches etc will be removed through landform re-profiling and a new cover of grassland will be established. As highlighted above, there will be a short term adverse impact during the construction stage, where earthmoving works are carried out and the new grassland is established. Whilst there will be a period of establishment and change, the long term beneficial impact will outweigh any short term adverse impact	Adverse (Short Term / Construction) Beneficial (Long Term)	Minor Moderate	Short Term Permanent	Minor adverse to Moderate Beneficial

TABLE 1: VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Selected Photo View No.	Location	Approx. Distance from Site	Description of Existing View and Landscape Character	Sensitivity of View	Potential Impact of Development & Mitigation / Change in View	Nature of Change	Magnitude of Change	Duration of Impact	Overall Significance of Visual Impact
11.	View from the footpath (Right of Way) which extends between Sandybridge Dike and the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT)	100m	View from footpath / track overlooking an area of rough grassland which is interspersed by small trees and scrubby vegetation. The southern flank of the colliery tip, is prominent in the view, and is set in the context of a degraded landscape with overhead cables and pylons framing the setting to the east and industrial structures established at Royston framing the setting to the west.	Low	The patchy grassland, runoff channels, access tracks and benches etc, which are all visible on the southern slopes of the tip, will be removed and replaced with a more uniform, gently sloping landform. Whilst much of the existing tree and scrub planting, which has established on the lower slopes, will be lost due to the necessary re-profiling works (to achieve a stable 1:3 slope), significant areas of new 'native' species based structure planting will be introduced along the lower slopes of the tip. These new planting areas will, once established, soften views towards the lower slopes whilst also significantly enhancing the existing woodland resource within the site and the local context. During the construction stage the earthworks and engineering works being carried out on the tip slopes will be visible from the footpath and the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) however, this adverse impact will be short term and the longer term impact will be substantial beneficial.	Adverse (Short Term / Construction) Beneficial (Long Term)	Minor Substantial	Short Term Permanent	Minor adverse to Substantial Beneficial



LEGEND



PROPOSED SITE LOCATION

City of Wakefield MDC
Yorkshire Forward



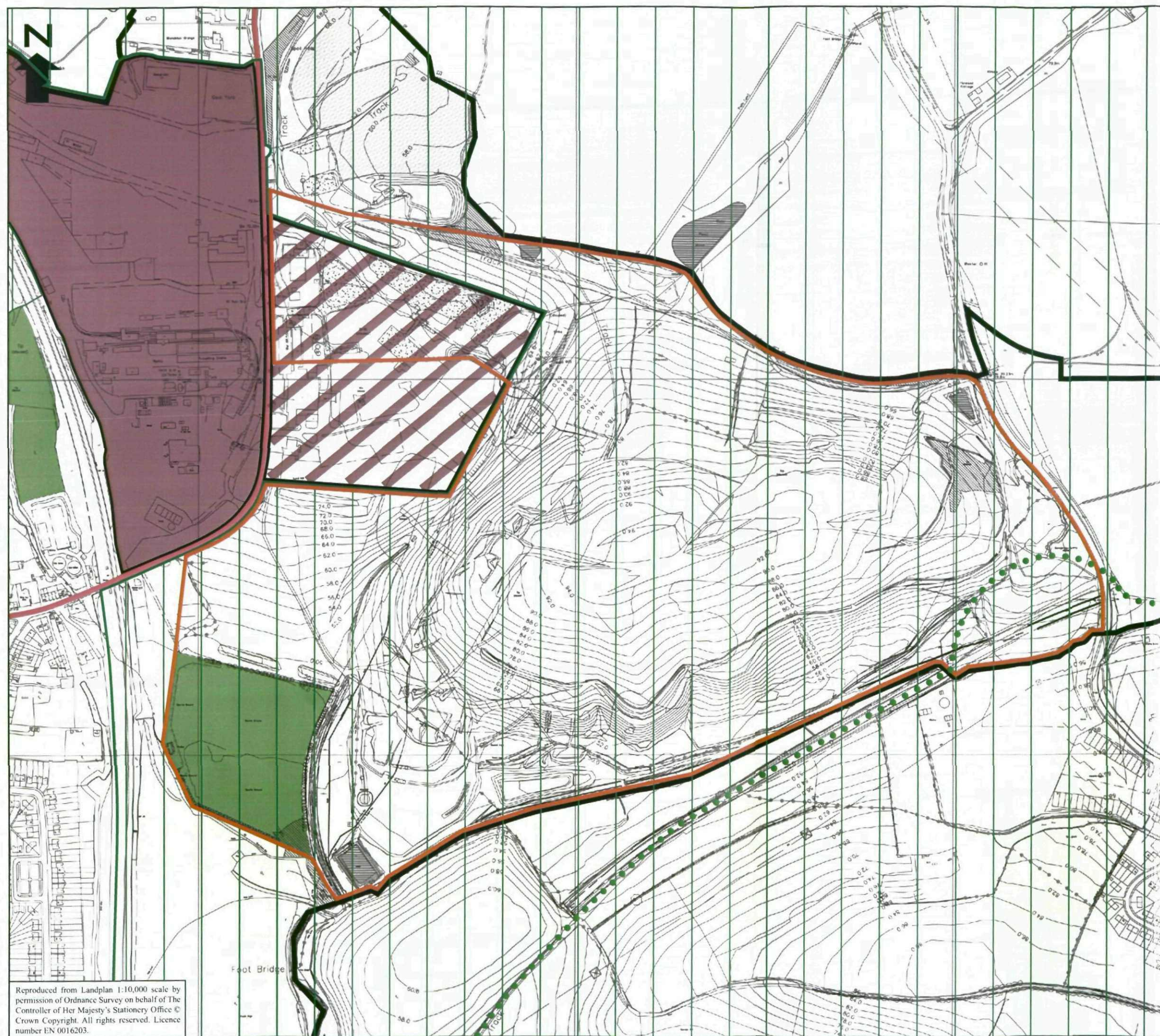
LAND AT RABBIT INGS,
ROYSTON,

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 1

SITE LOCATION PLAN

Job No: A039273
Scale: 1:50,000 Date: October 2008

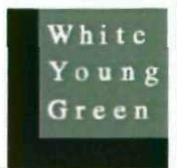


LEGEND

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  COMMUNITY AREA BOUNDARY
-  EMPLOYMENT PROPOSAL
-  EMPLOYMENT POLICY AREA
-  GREEN BELT
-  MULTI-USER RECREATIONAL ROUTEWAY
-  URBAN GREENSPACE
-  STRATEGIC HIGHWAY NETWORK

*Information abstracted from the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan Proposals Maps for the 'Barnsley Urban', 'North East Towns' and 'Royston' Community Areas

City of Wakefield MDC
Yorkshire Forward



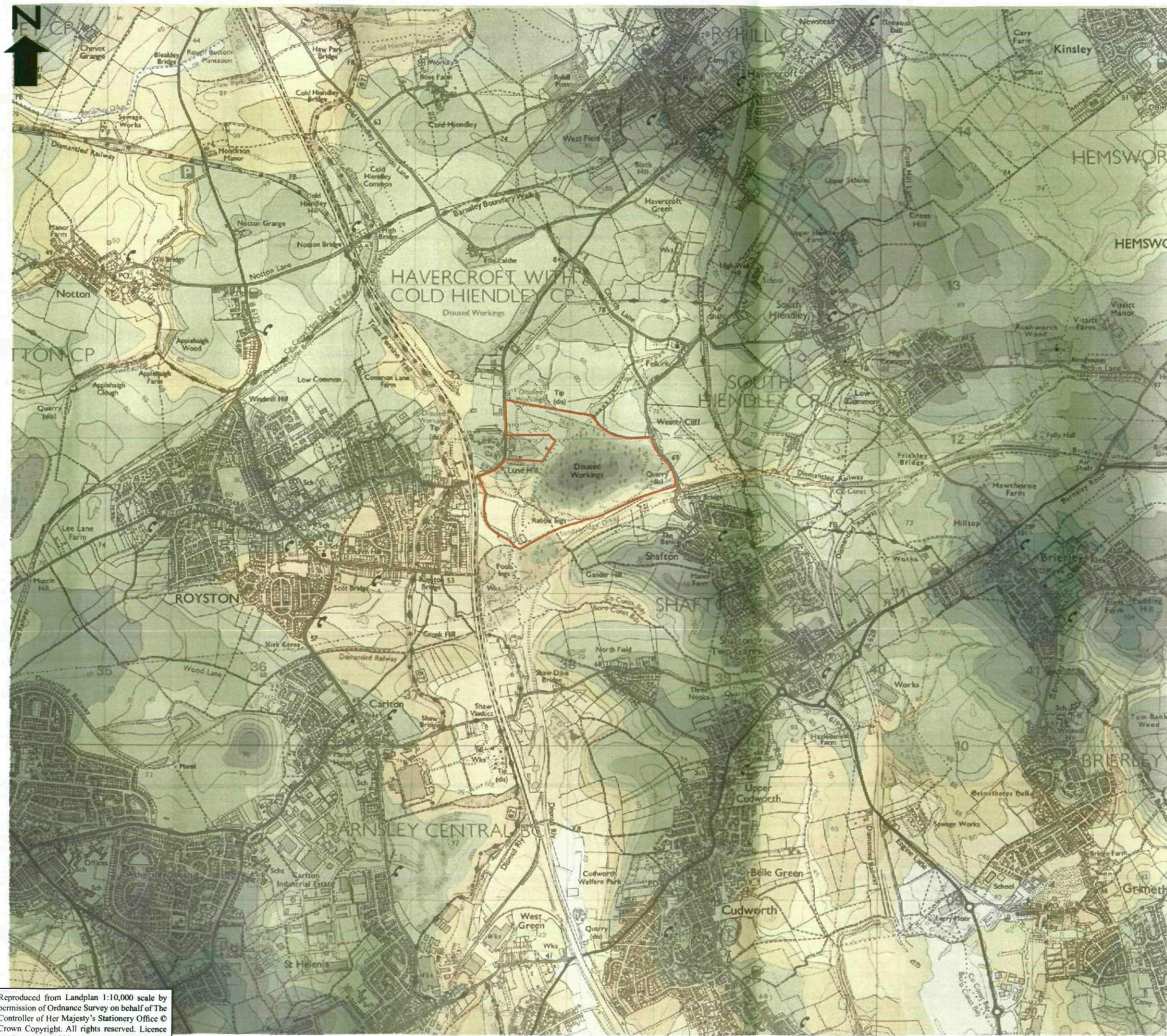
RABBIT INGS,
ROYSTON

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

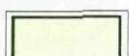
FIGURE 2
PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT PLAN

Job No: A039273
Scale: 1:5,000 Date: October 2008

Reproduced from Landplan 1:10,000 scale by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number EN 0016203.



LEGEND

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  100-110m
-  90-100m
-  80-90m
-  70-80m
-  60-70m
-  50-60m
-  40-50m
-  30-40m

City of Wakefield MDC
Yorkshire Forward



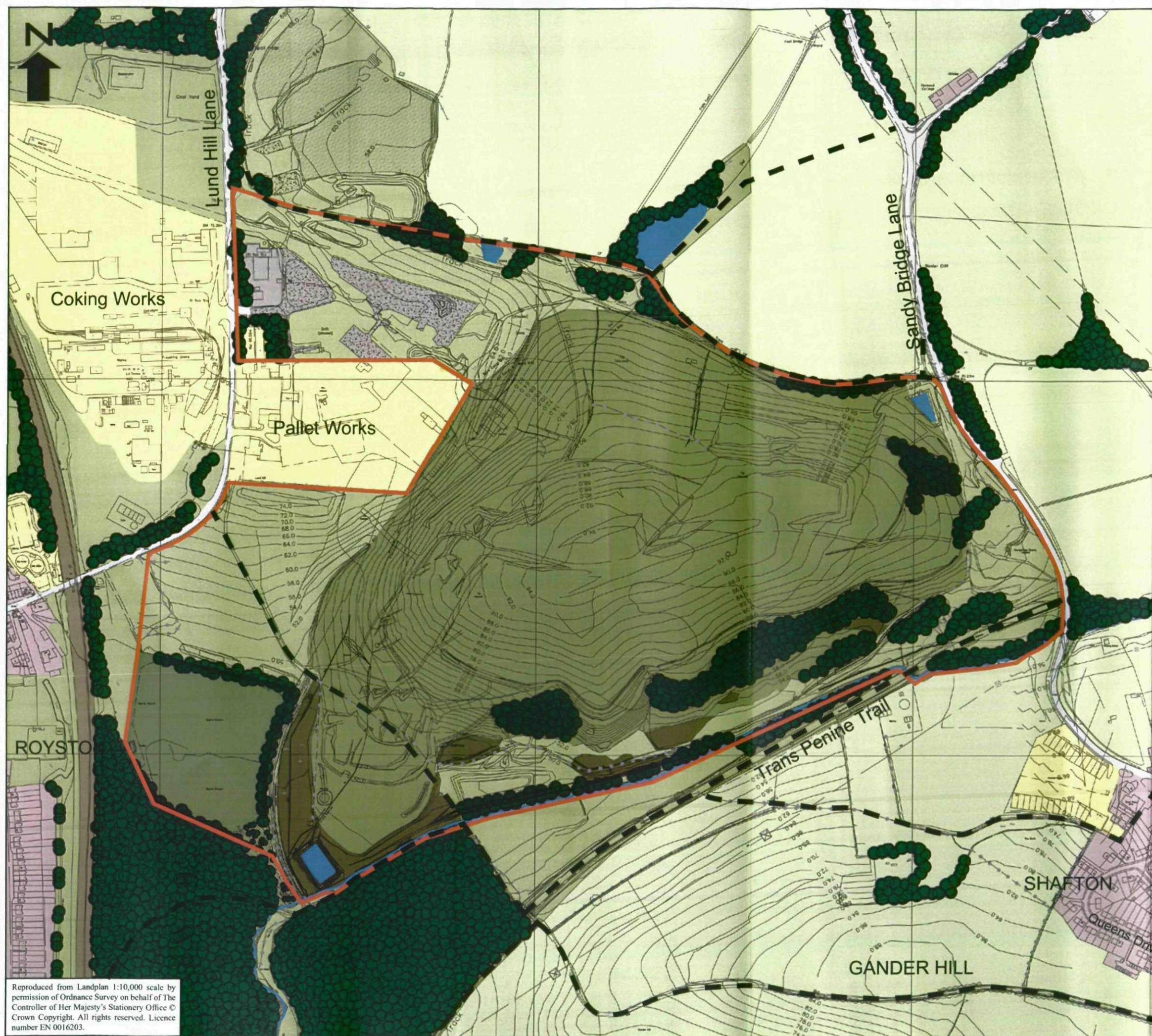
White
Young
Green

RABBIT INGS,
ROYSTON

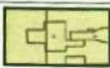
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 3
TOPOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS PLAN

Job No: A039273
Scale: 1:25,000 Date: October 2008



LEGEND

-  SITE BOUNDARY
-  RESIDENTIAL
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  EXISTING TREES
-  ROUGH GRASSLAND
-  AGRICULTURAL LAND
-  AREA OF FORMAL SPORTS PITCHES (DISUSED)
-  REED BEDS
-  COLLIERY SPOIL WITH PATCHY GRASSLAND REGENERATION
-  EXISTING ROADS
-  DISUSED RAILWAY LINE
-  RIGHT OF WAY
-  WATERCOURSE / WATERBODY
-  HARD STANDING

City of Wakefield MDC
Yorkshire Forward



White
Young
Green

RABBIT INGS,
ROYSTON

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 4
LANDSCAPE CONTEXT PLAN

Job No: A039273
Scale: 1:5,000 Date: October 2008

Reproduced from Landplan 1:10,000 scale by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number EN 0016203.



LEGEND



SITE BOUNDARY



PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWPOINT

City of Wakefield MDC
Yorkshire Forward

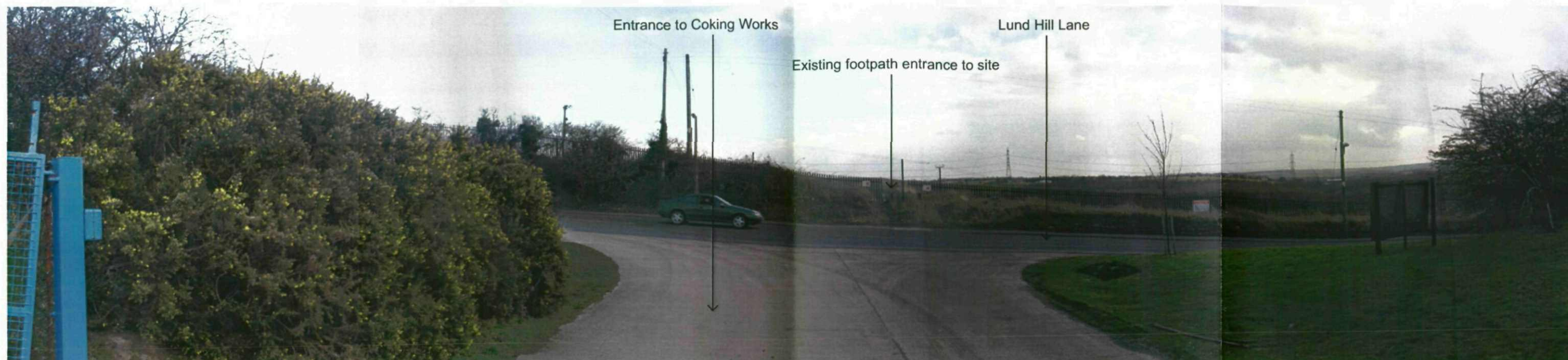


RABBIT INGS,
ROYSTON

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 5
PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWPOINT LOCATION PLAN

Job No: A039273
Scale: 1:25,000 Date: October 2008



Viewpoint 1: View looking south east towards the site from the coking works located to the west of Lund Hill Lane. The metal palisade security fencing, which extends around much of the western site boundary, is visible on the far side of the road.



Viewpoint 2: View looking east towards the site from Lund Hill Lane from the northern entrance into the coking works (which is visible to the right of the view). The metal palisade security fencing, which extends around much of the western site boundary, is visible on the far side of the road.



Viewpoint 3: Internal view looking south west from the northern edge of the site. The sparsely vegetated northern slopes of the colliery tip are prominent to the left of the view, whilst the patchy woodland planting, which has established along the northern boundary, is visible to the right of the view.

City of Wakefield MDC
Yorkshire Forward



White
Young
Green

RABBIT INGS,
ROYSTON

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

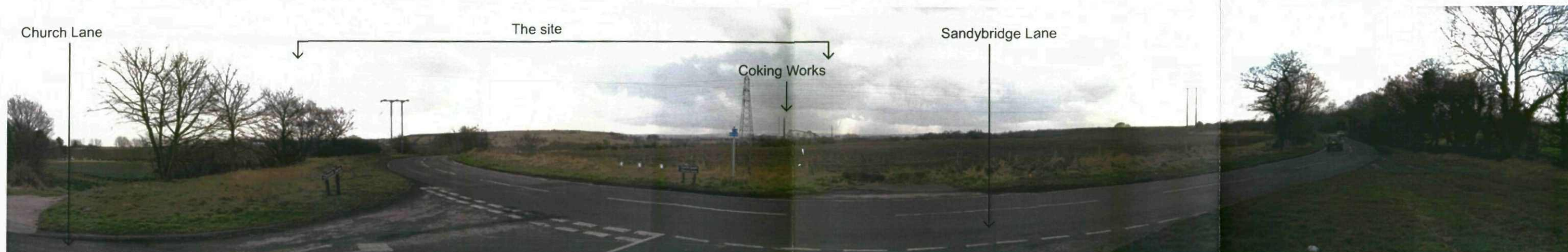
FIGURE 6

PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWPOINTS 1-3

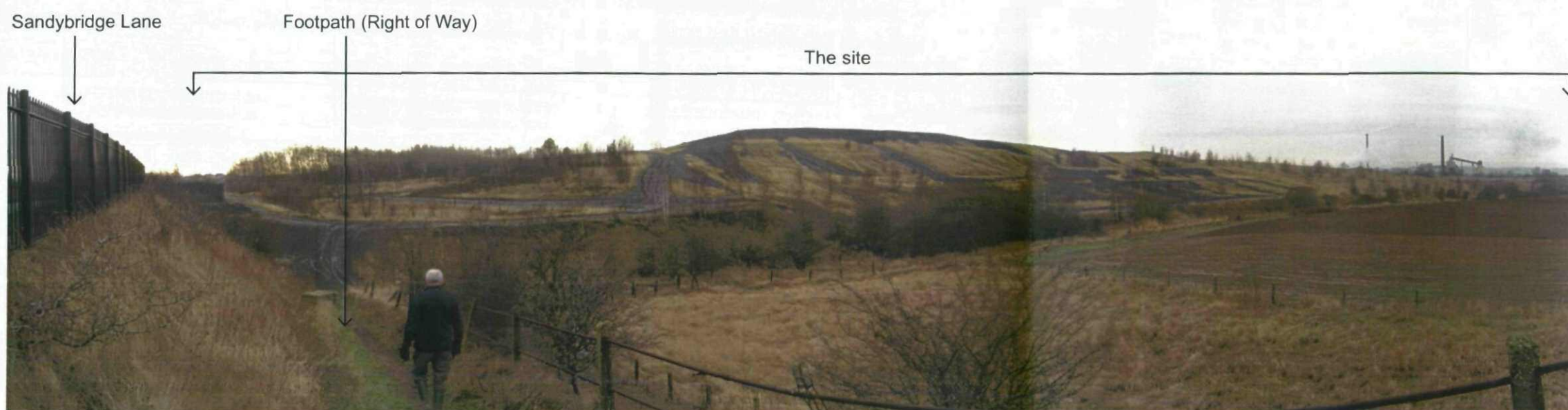
Job No: A039273 Date: October 2008



Viewpoint 4: View looking south east towards the site from Lund Hill Lane. The upper slopes of the colliery tip are visible on the skyline beyond the tree line in the centre of the view.



Viewpoint 5: View looking south west towards the site from the junction of Church Lane and Sandybridge Lane. The sparsely vegetated northern slopes of the tip are prominent on the skyline to the left of the view.



Viewpoint 6: View looking south west towards the site from the edge of Sandybridge Lane. The footpath (Right of Way), which extends into the site from Sandybridge Lane, is visible in the foreground, whilst the sparsely vegetated northern slopes of the tip are prominent on the skyline.

City of Wakefield MDC
Yorkshire Forward



**RABBIT INGS,
ROYSTON**

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 7

PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWPOINTS 4-6

White
Young
Green

Job No: A039273 Date: October 2008



Viewpoint 7: View looking west towards the site from the Low Common, at the south western edge of South Hiendley. The edge of the settlement is visible to the right of the view, whilst the upper slopes of the colliery tip at Rabbit Ings is visible on the skyline.



Viewpoint 8: View looking west towards the site from the western edge of Brierley. The colliery tip is visible in the mid ground of the view, immediately to the north west of Shafton.



Viewpoint 9: View looking north west towards the site from the north western edge of Shafton. The houses at Queen's Drive are visible to the right of the view, whilst the upper slopes of the colliery tip is visible on the skyline.

City of Wakefield MDC
Yorkshire Forward

**FARNINGHAM
MCCREADIE
PARTNERSHIP**

**White
Young
Green**

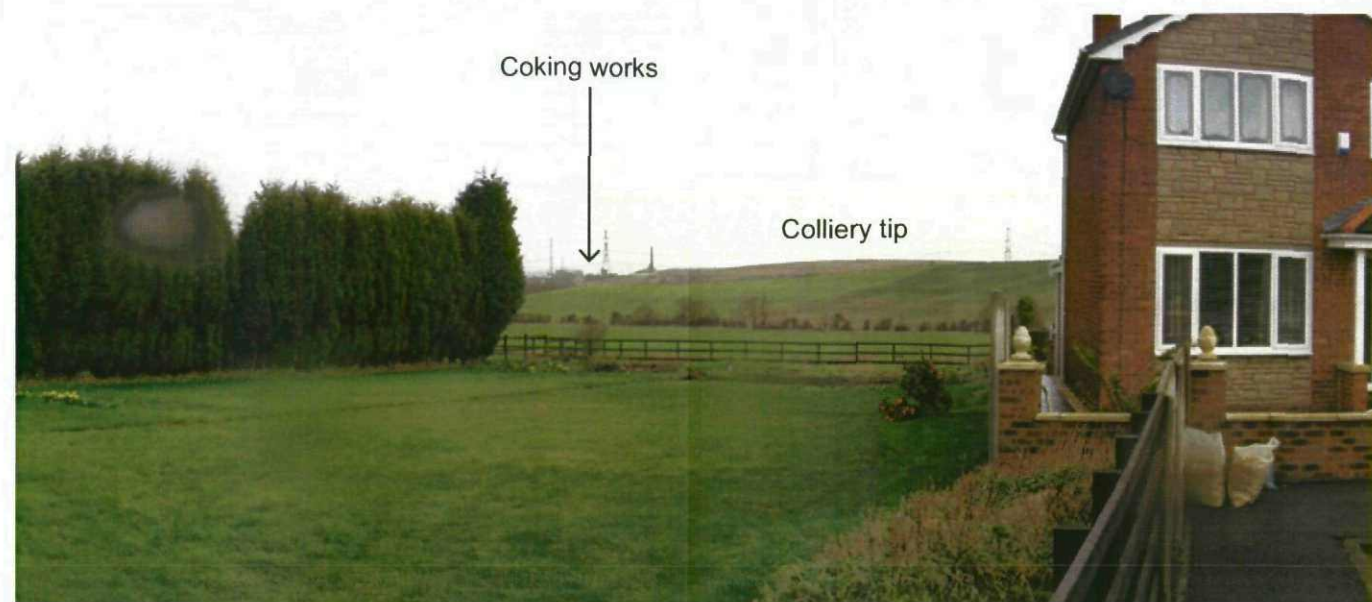
**RABBIT INGS,
ROYSTON**

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 8

PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWPOINTS 7-9

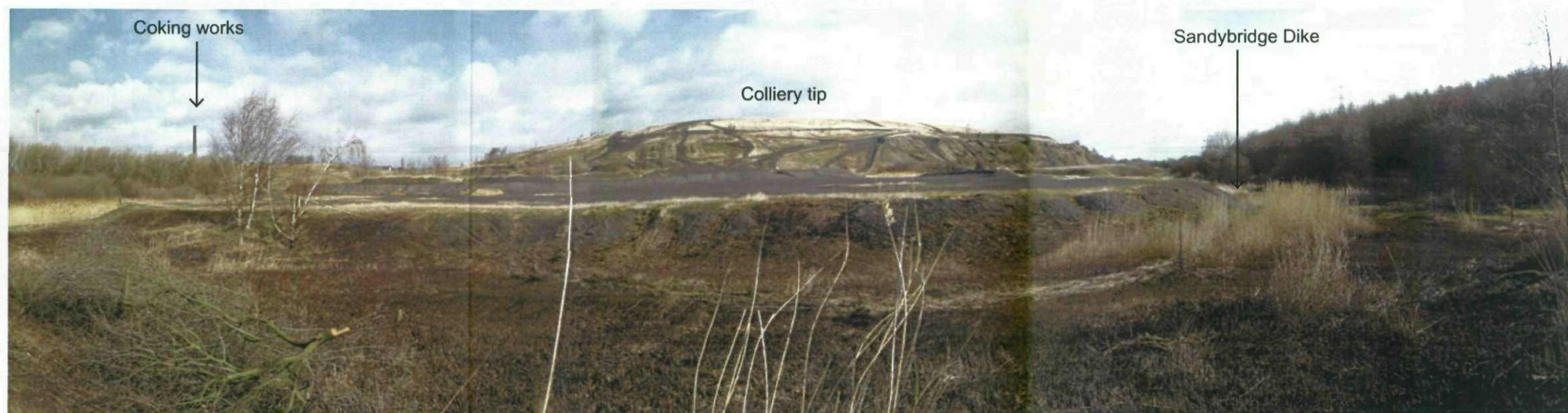
Job No: A039273 Date: October 2008



Viewpoint 10: View looking north towards the site from the northern edge of North Field. One of the dwellings on Bateman Close is visible to the right of the view, whilst the colliery tip is visible on the skyline beyond the rolling agricultural lands at Gander Hill.

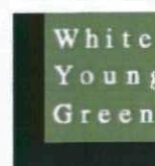


Viewpoint 11: View looking north from the footpath (Right of Way) which extends between Sandybridge Dyke and the Trans Peninne Trail. The steep southern slopes of the colliery tip are prominent in the centre of the view.



Viewpoint 12: View looking north from the southern edge of the site towards the south western flank of the colliery tip. The reed beds which have established along the lower slopes of the southern tip slope are visible in the foreground, whilst the unsightly access tracks and drainage runoff channels which cross the sides of the tip are prominent against the lighter coloured grasslands which have established on the upper slopes.

City of Wakefield MDC
Yorkshire Forward



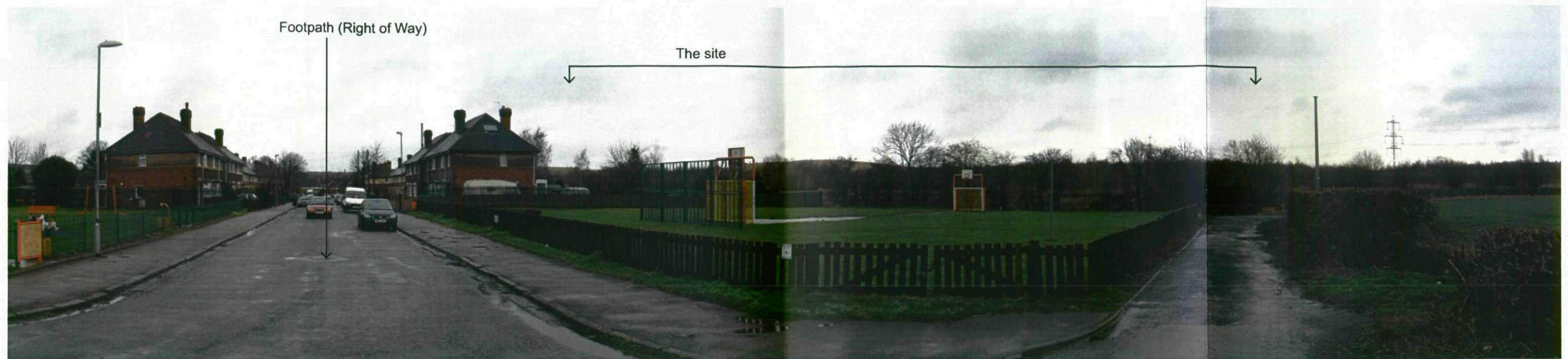
RABBIT INGS,
ROYSTON

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

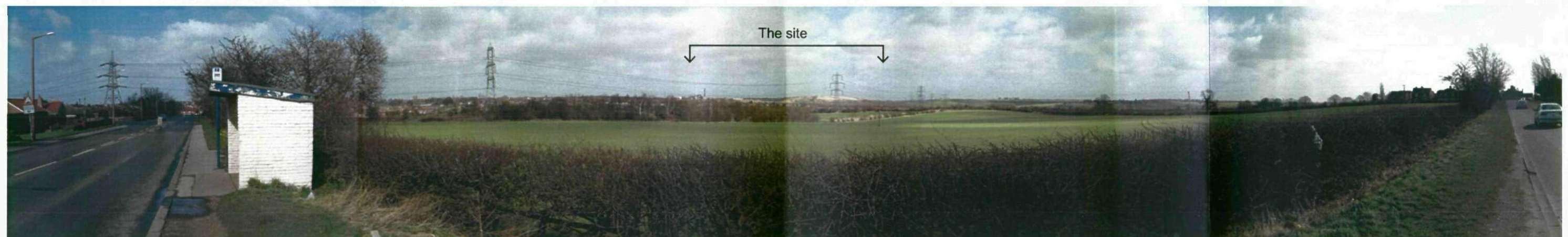
FIGURE 9

PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWPOINTS 10-12

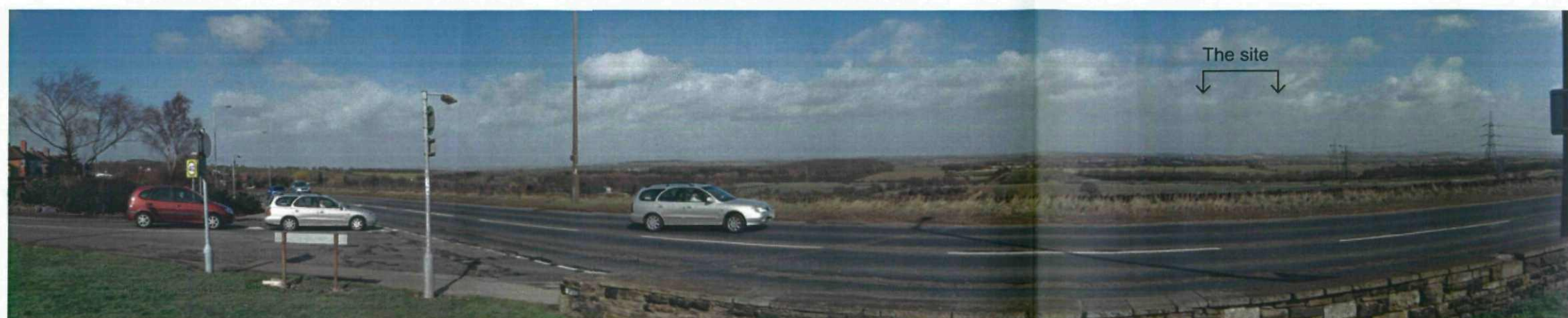
Job No: A039273 Date: October 2008



Viewpoint 13: View looking north east towards the site from the south eastern edge of Royston. Whilst the site is predominantly obscured by intervening vegetation, the upper slopes of the colliery tip are visible over the tree line in the centre of the view.

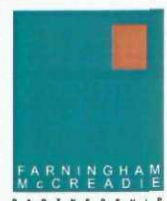


Viewpoint 14: View looking north east towards the site from Royston Lane on the edge of Carlton. The lighter coloured colliery tip is prominent on the skyline near the centre of the view, and is seen to contrast with the otherwise gently rolling agricultural lands which extends between the dispersed pattern of towns and villages.



Viewpoint 15: Distant view looking east towards the site from the edge of Staincross. Whilst the landscape beyond the A61 road corridor, which extends across the foreground of the view, is characterised by varying land uses and features such as small settlements, woodland belts and pylons, the lighter coloured colliery tip is prominent in the distance to the right of the view.

City of Wakefield MDC
Yorkshire Forward



White
Young
Green

RABBIT INGS,
ROYSTON

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

FIGURE 10

PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWPOINTS 13-15

Job No: A039273 Date: October 2008