

4 Site Observations

The following images illustrate the existing character and defining features of the landscape in and around Lowood. The site is rich in natural assets, with opportunities for landscape enhancement presenting themselves. Fieldwork was undertaken in July 2019.



Veteran trees and mature tree belts are central to Lowood's character and quality. These should be retained unless there is exceptional justification such as long term health of the trees.



Estate largely hidden from public roads- any development can be contained by existing woodland. The river corridor should be protected from development.



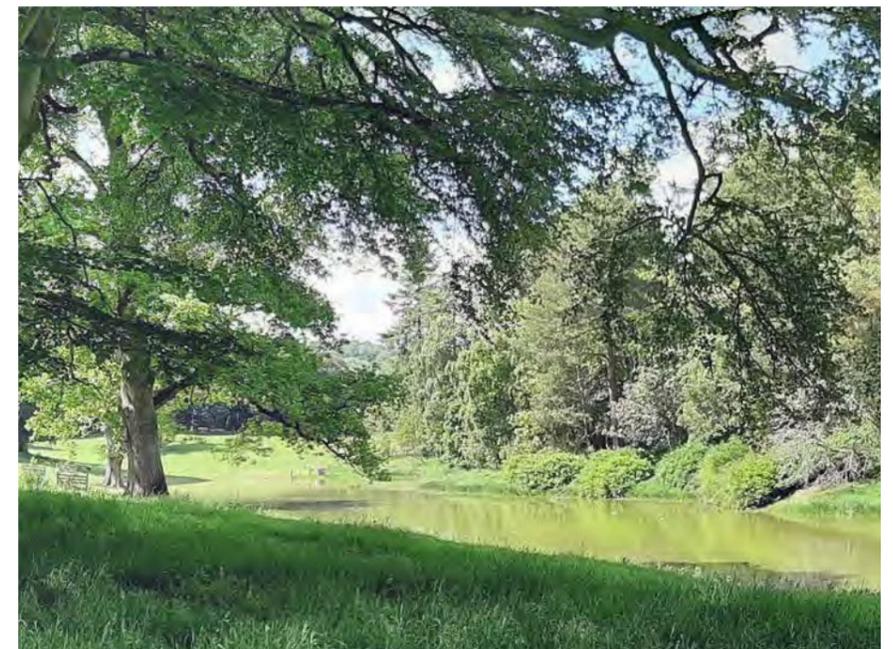
The rural character of this section of the Borders Abbays Way must continue to be safeguarded.



Views of the estate parkland from the riverside path must be safeguarded and retained.



Estate entry opens up to create a wide area of parkland largely contained and concealed from views. The character of this access contributes to the unique site characteristics.



Key natural assets such as the Lowood Pond create a distinctive sense of place.



This natural gap in the tree belt where levels are most favourable is an appropriate new vehicle access point.



Large open pasture- screened from the riverside path and north river bank could accommodate sensitively designed development by means of retaining mature trees and a developing a strategy of new tree planting.



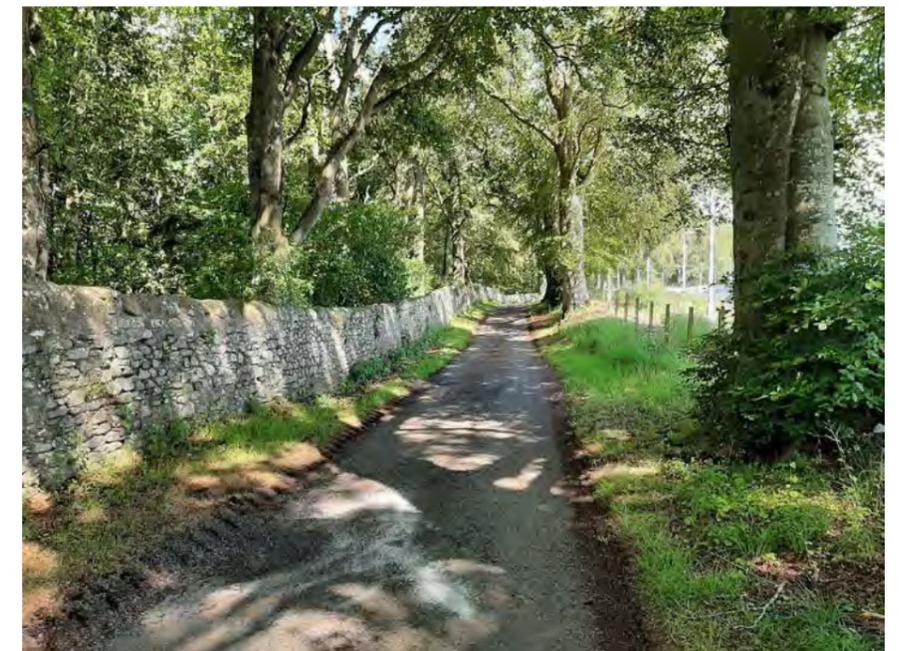
The mature treebelt along the ridgeline creates identity and a natural enclosure to development. This should be retained and protected.



Areas of newly established and cleared woodland are suitable for redevelopment.



Areas of plantation forest are at the end of their lifespan and should be cleared for forestry management reasons. This provides future development opportunities.



The perimeter access road with its historic wall and mature avenues should be retained and protected. This can form a new active travel corridor for pedestrian and cycle use.

5 Site Opportunities and Constraints

The following section sets out the key opportunities and constraints to be considered by a future developer(s):

Opportunities

- The site offers the opportunity to create an exemplar of high quality sustainable development, that is sympathetic to the unique character of the site, whilst having its own sense of place.
- The Lowood Estate provides opportunities to develop approximately 300-400 homes and to help meet the Scottish Borders affordable housing needs, there is a requirement for 25% of residential properties to be affordable housing.
- The development of the site provides opportunities to adopt a low carbon approach to development. The site offers the opportunity to be a low carbon development with options including passive and active solar, air or ground source heat pumps and implementation of a biomass fuelled heat network. The passive design of buildings could also contribute significantly to reducing energy use.
- The proximity of the site to the existing Central Borders Innovation Park provides opportunities for the development of land in the east of the site for business and employment use. Business and employment land on this site would benefit from the existing transport links, including the numerous bus services and Tweedbank railway station which are all within close proximity to the site.
- The high quality environmental setting of the site provides an excellent location for a 'Care Village' with dementia hub, the need for which has been identified by the Council, where residents and patients could receive therapeutic care.
- The proposed development brings opportunities to increase connectivity between the site and Tweedbank, encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes and outdoor space for recreational purposes.
- The development offers potential to support access along the riverbank, encouraging recreational use of the area, connecting to popular tourist attractions nearby, including Abbotsford House, Melrose Abbey and Scott's View.
- The site provides opportunities for biodiversity net gain, through habitat protection, enhancement and creation in the undeveloped areas of the site. This valuable green infrastructure can bring significant benefits to local biodiversity, enabling increased connectivity throughout the ecological network.
- The site offers potential to enhance recreational greenspace, encouraging the use of outdoor areas, within the site, and along the waterfront.



High quality environmental setting of Lowood Estate Parkland provides opportunities for mixed use development.



Development of the site promotes connectivity between neighbouring settlements, supported by an existing network of recreational and active travel routes.

Constraints

- Careful consideration with regards to vehicular access will be required. Currently there is one single track road which serves Lowood House and the cluster of buildings to the west and south. Widening this access would have impacts, particularly along the southern side of the estate where the road runs between the estate wall and mature trees. A new vehicular access point in the western part of the site will be required. Consideration of the impact on the existing road network will be required.
- The site is located within a broad meander along the River Tweed which is designated as a SSSI and SAC. Consideration of any potential effects on the river corridor and these designations resulting from the development is essential. Likewise, consideration of effects on biodiversity in undesignated areas of the site (e.g. areas of woodland) will be required; as such areas could provide valuable habitats for mammals and bats etc.
- Part of the site in the north and north-west is located within the high risk flood zone. There is no development opportunity within these areas although they could support wet woodland compensatory planting.
- Development must protect the potential future extension of the railway line. Any future extension could impact upon proposed access links into the Lowood Estate.
- The site is located approximately 130m west of the western most boundary of the Eildon and Leaderfoot National Scenic Area (NSA). Any impact upon the NSA must be given due consideration when assessing development proposals. In addition, careful consideration should be given to potential impacts on the Special Landscape Area located approximately 420m to the south of the site.
- Services to the development site face limitations. In particular, the Galashiels Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) is nearing capacity. Currently all flows from Tweedbank have to pass under the river to access the WWTW. Consideration must be given to water and sewerage provision, ensuring that the infrastructure is appropriate for the number of units developed, in consultation with SEPA and Scottish Water.
- Development will need to consider and include surface water management as an integrated approach and comply with best practice.



A new vehicle access point will be required as the existing road infrastructure has limited capacity.



Development will need to consider the ecological designations and flood risk constraints of the River Tweed.

6 Vision and Aspirations

Development Vision

The site provides a unique opportunity to support the sustainable expansion of Tweedbank with a range of historical, cultural, economic and environmental assets to create a distinct and exemplar development with a strong sense of place. These important assets will be safeguarded and enhanced, encouraging their recreational use and enjoyment by the local community and visitors. The integrated and expanded settlement of Tweedbank will be an inclusive, well-connected and cohesive community which people will aspire to live in and visit.

The strategic objectives for the development are to:

- to deliver new development sustainably and sensitively within this attractive landscape setting;
- to create and complete a coherent, inclusive, well-connected settlement which is fully integrated into Tweedbank and which is readily and conveniently accessible from the surrounding area;
- to lead by example implementing the Scottish Government's and the Council's commitments to the achievement of net zero carbon emissions and to facilitate the establishment of a responsible, resilient, forward-looking community which responds decisively to the challenges of climate change, employing state-of-art technologies and producing its own renewable energy;
- to realise a place which embodies the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods; that is well-laid out, designed with clear, logical linkages that appeal to residents, visitors, and business users alike; and which encourages active travel, utilises and develops the site's green infrastructure and supports healthy lifestyles;
- to deliver a development with a strong sense of place which is an integral part of Tweedbank and sympathetic to its site and setting;
- to respect the core landscape, built heritage, natural and historical environmental assets and topography of the site and its surroundings;
- to ensure that future generations will continue to benefit from the site's qualities and that this character underpins delivery of a unique sense of place;
- to support the needs and wellbeing of all members of the community within a coherent, resilient and inclusive place and;
- to deliver a development which makes nature an integral component part and which encourages and promotes biodiversity within and around the site.



Existing tracks provide excellent opportunity for foot and cycle connections to the railway station



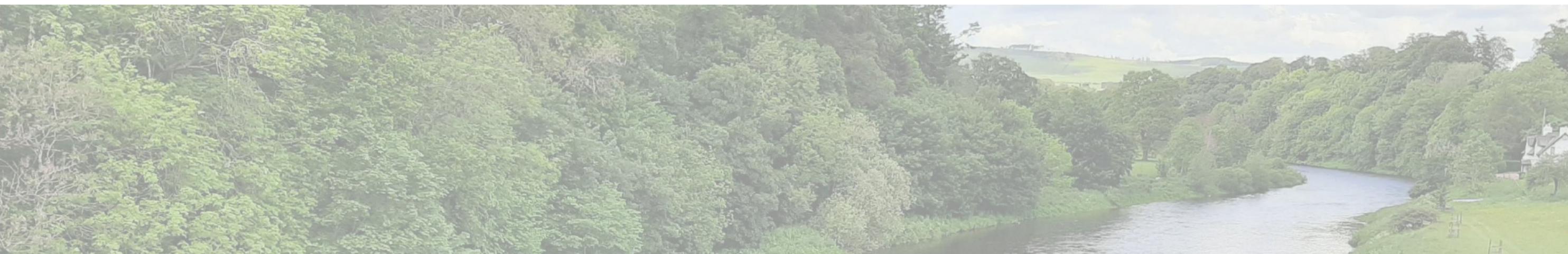
The character of the parkland should be retained with opportunities to support enhancements to biodiversity and access



New development should be sensitively contained by retained mature trees

Part 2 :

Development Analysis and Zoning Opportunities



7 Development Zoning Opportunities

The Site's Natural Assets: Building on and supporting the site's character and value

The following summarises the key areas of landscape consideration to be taken forward with any new development



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Establishing the Developable Areas



- Residential Zone 1 - 28,655m²
- Residential Zone 2 - 12,422m²
- Residential Zone 2a - 6923m²
- Residential Zone 3 - 10,847m²
- Residential Zone 4 - 17,240m²
- Zone 5 - Residential or Employment mix - 12,434m²
- Business Zone 1 - Employment Land (Class 4) - 12,614m²
- Business Zone 2- Employment Land (Class 4) - 5859m²

There is the opportunity for a future dementia facility to be accommodated within the residential zones, most likely to the east of the site.

It should be noted that these plans are indicative only and may be subject to change as the development progresses and further information becomes available through full site investigations/surveys.

Development Access



Aerial: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/ Airbus DS, AeroGRID, IGN and the GIS User Community

Two vehicular access points are required to serve the development.

Access 1: A new road bridge would provide a critical connection with Tweedbank allowing vehicular access to the western part of the site.

Access 2: Access from the Innovation Park into the eastern part of the site provides a commercial link.

Phasing of infrastructure is critical to development opportunity. Both accesses and internal connectivity are essential for a neighbourhood expansion.