



**Mill Lane, Rainhill
Additional Information**

January 2017

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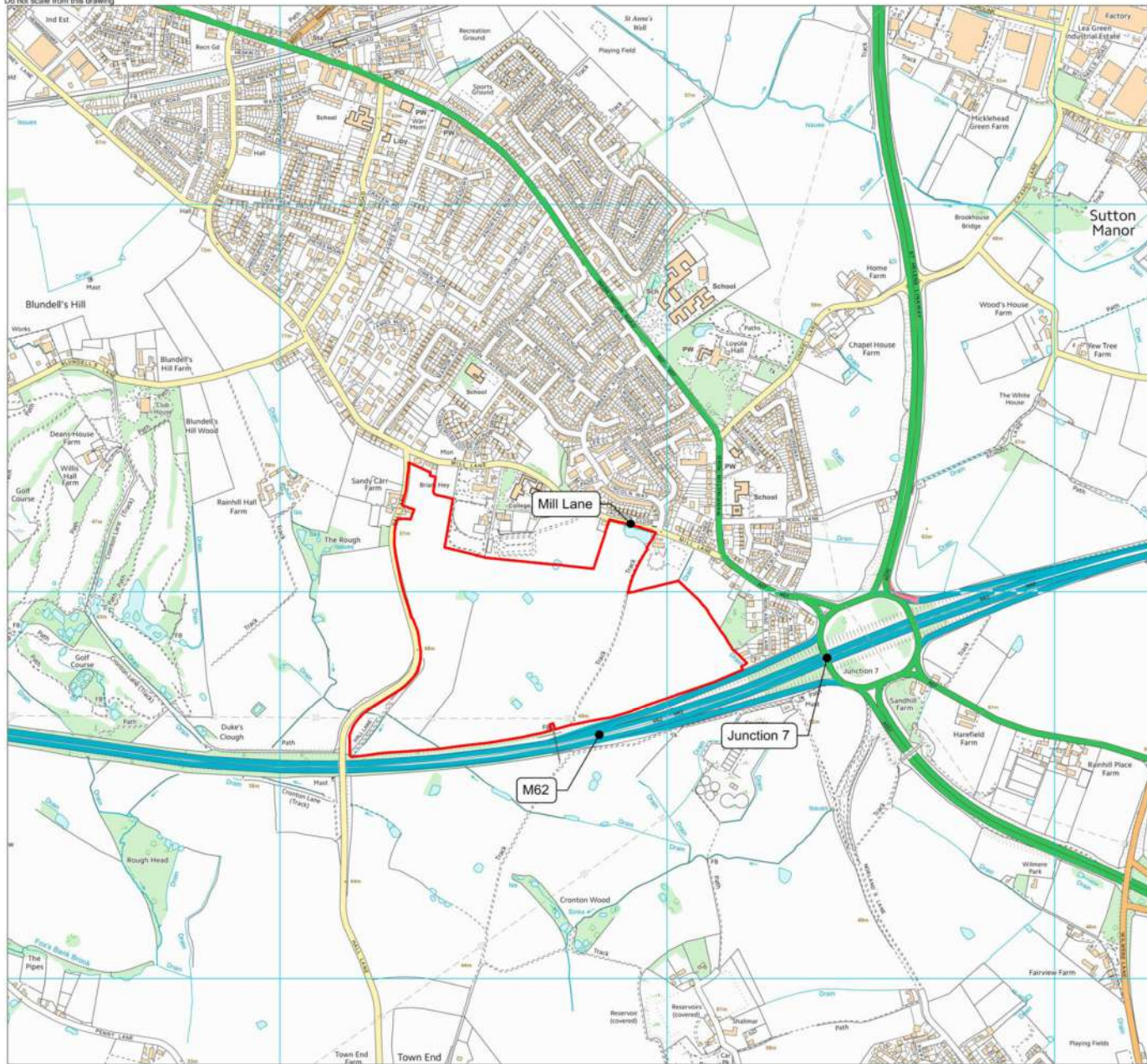
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Mill Lane, Rainhill



Drawing No. 16002-STEX-P002-A
Site Location (wider scale)

 Site Boundary (37.9 ha)

Rev A (26.01.17) Drawn: SB - Checked: RM
Note: Site boundary amended

Rev - (04.02.16) Drawn: SD - Checked: KT

Status: For Information

scale 1:10,000 @ A3



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1. Introduction

Site at Mill Lane, Rainhill

Wallace Land Investments (Wallace) strongly support the Council’s proposals to safeguard the site for long-term development.

Work undertaken on housing numbers and the Plan’s proposals leads us to conclude that there is a deficiency in the supply of housing. Wallace are willing to commit to bringing forward the site at Mill Lane in the early part of the Plan, with a planning application in the near future to assist the Council in this regard.

The site will deliver 700 homes, of which 30% (210 homes) will be affordable housing. It will enhance the economy of the Borough by utilising a site with excellent connections to the strategic road network, attracting approximately £81 million inward investment.

Additional Information

Further information is submitted in relation to the following:

- Original submission for reference– Appendix 1
- Agricultural Land Classification – Appendix 2
- Ecological Assessment – Appendix 3
- Landscape Visual Appraisal – Appendix 4
- Heritage Assessment – Appendix 5
- Access Feasibility Study – Appendix 6
- Revised Sustainability Appraisal
- Developability
- Indicative Proposal and Masterplan

Next Steps

Wallace consider that the site at Mill Lane represents a better site for allocation than other sites proposed by the Council, for the reasons set out in their Comments Form.

Wallace Land Investments have an excellent track record of delivering houses on the ground.

Wallace wishes to work positively with the Council to ensure smooth progress of the Local Plan through its further statutory stages.

We welcome further engagement with the Council, and to this end request a meeting to discuss the Mill Lane site.



Representations on the Local Plan

Wallace's representations on the Preferred Options Local Plan, including comments on the Green Belt Study and other sites proposed in the Local Plan, are summarised below. They can be found in full in Wallace's *Comments Form* on the Local Plan.

The housing requirement

Wallace consider the housing requirement to be too low, and support Alternative Option 2 for a housing target of 712 dwellings for the following reasons:

- To meet national planning policy's requirements to take account of market signals and economic growth;
- To face up to long term housing undersupply and the chronic housing crisis facing the next generation;
- To reduce commuting into the borough;
- To ensure the Borough is attractive to inward investment in competition with major sites in Knowsley and Warrington;
- To support the borough's economy, including strengthening the vitality of its town centres.

Distribution of development

Policy LPA02 should list all the key settlements in part 1 of the policy, including Rainhill.

Removal of land from the Green Belt

Wallace support the release of sufficient land from the Green Belt to meet the needs of St. Helens for two plan periods, in accordance with national planning policy.

Wallace support the removal of the Mill Lane site from the Green Belt. It has a lesser role in separating neighbouring towns, relative to other sites. Adequate separation will remain with Widnes in Halton Borough and Huyton in Knowsley Borough.



The site's position in the Green Belt

Eccleston Park

Wallace have concerns about some of the sites identified in the Plan. In particular, the Eccleston Park Golf Course site HA8 contributes strongly to the role of the Green Belt as a 'green lung' for recreation and separation of urban areas, and should be dropped as a proposed allocation.

Green Belt Boundary

The M62 motorway forms a strong, defensible boundary for the re-drawing of the Green Belt boundary. The proposed boundary of site HS23 should be redrawn to reflect this.

Over-reliance on too few sites

Policy LPA05's focus of 73% of allocations on 6 strategic sites is an over-reliance on a small number of sites that puts the Plan at risk.

If the Council is serious about avoiding under-delivery during the plan period, it is imperative that it takes market signals more seriously and identifies more sites that have strong market demand for all tenures of housing.

Allocation for development

Site HS23 at Mill Lane is able to come forward quickly, with potential to deliver housing completions by 2019. It would make a suitable allocation for inclusion under policy LPA05.

Representations contin.

There is considerable evidence to support a higher housing target, some of which is detailed in our representation on the Draft Local Plan. In summary, the Borough Council has had a significant under-delivery of housing, with a cumulative shortfall of 1,064 dwellings to date.

Over recent years the ratio of LQ house prices to incomes has risen from 4.47 in 2011 and 4.86 in 2016. This worsening of affordability requires a strong response to increase supply. The Secretary of State described the problem as a “moral duty” on Councils to help future generations.

The Green Belt and limited housing allocations are key mechanism that constrain housing supply. To improve affordability in St. Helens borough council, it is necessary to release the breaks on supply by significantly increasing the amount of land identified as suitable for development.

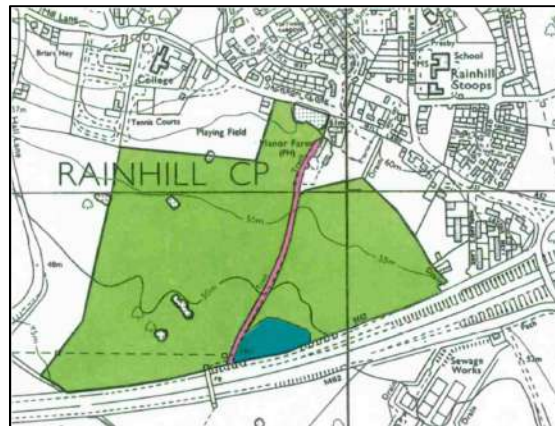


2. Agricultural Land Classification

The site was surveyed at the request of St. Helens’s Borough Council in January 1995, in connection with the Unitary Development Plan being prepared at that time.

26 augers were bored and 2 soil pits investigated. The results are reproduced below and available in Appendix 2.

The above ground investigations found that 93% of the site was grade 3b (shown in green below), 3% of the site grade 3a (shown in blue below), 2% was open water and 2% was non-agricultural (namely the right of way track, shown in pink on the map below).



3. Ecological Assessment

An ecological assessment was carried out by TEP and is available in Appendix 3. Recommendations include enhancing ponds and hedges where feasible.

Overall, the habitats on site are considered to be of low ecological value due to being predominantly arable land. The relative lack of connectivity as a result of the M62 to the south and residential development to the north means opportunities for commuting by various species are limited.

There are some limited habitats of higher value such as ponds, hedges and mature broad-leaved trees. These have value in particular to transient species such as birds and bats and potentially to amphibians.

Landscaping and the creation of public open space around proposed development creates opportunities to enhance habitats and improve biodiversity.



4. Landscape & Visual Appraisal

A detailed Landscape & Visual Appraisal (LVA) is attached at Appendix 4.

The Landscape Setting

The site is characterised by the following:

- Traffic noise levels from the M62;
- Urban built form in close proximity, with two large electricity pylons on the southern part of the Site;
- A public footpath that traverses through the Site from north to south;
- ‘Water pits’ and associated small blocks of woodland;
- Waste tipping and litter along the western Site boundary with Hall Lane.

A combination of the above aspects creates a ‘peri-urban’ space rather than a demonstrable agricultural landscape.

Landscape Character

There is a distinct difference in character defined by Hall Lane. The site is typical of the post WW1 and post WW2 eras, whereas land west of Hall Lane is characterised as pre 1900.

The Mersey Forest Plan 2014 has a policy aim of achieving 20% woodland cover in this location, compared to 7% at present. It seeks to, *“enhance shelterbelts and hedgerows”, “plant woodland to soften the urban edge along the Rainhill ridge”, and “plant wet woodland pockets to enhance distinctive water pits.”*

The Indicative Masterplan

Development offers opportunities to enhance and improve the landscape, with additional tree planting, new hedgerows and water features. Mitigation measures are shown on the indicative masterplan.

Visual context and characteristics

In relation to the visual context the site:

- is not visually dominant from the urban edge, looking towards Rainhill;
- is not particularly visible from the wider urban area, looking towards the countryside;
- is different from the landscape to the west, being flatter, less wooded and altogether less sensitive;
- has a clearly defined, direct and hard boundary defined by the M62 motorway to its south.

Overall the site is different in its characteristics from the broader Rainhill Slopes landscape character area. It can be considered a subset of that characterisation, the details of which are described in the LVA in Appendix 4.



5. Heritage Assessment

A Heritage Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at Appendix 5.

Rainhill Hall & Moat

Rainhill Hall and its moat lie to the west of the site, but the importance of the wider setting to the significance of these assets is limited.

The proposed structure planting along the east side of Hall Lane will reduce any potential reciprocal views. Overall there would be negligible impact or harm to the character, setting or significance of these heritage assets.

The Cross

The Cross is situated on the north side of Mill Lane. It is some distance from the proposed development boundaries and has no views into the proposed site. There will be little or no impact on its setting or significance.



Briars Hey

Briars Hey on the south side of Mill Lane is valued as an example of a bold Gothic building. Its grounds are of limited heritage value in their own right. The originally intended setting was altered by the construction of Tower College.

The house's ceremonial western main entrance and will not be affected by the development. Structure planting along the south and west boundaries of the grounds of Briar's Hey will limit the visual impact of the proposed development. Its elevated position means the house will still have distant views over the countryside to the south.

Manor House

The former Manor House farmhouse on the south side of Mill Lane is a fairly well-preserved example of a building of the mid-17th century. Its setting has been considerably altered and diluted in heritage value in the recent past in order to meet its present needs as a public house and restaurant.

The proposed structural planting to the south of the grounds will help to lessen any impact that the development could have.

The Smithy Cottage

The Smithy Cottage is small and structurally complex building of coursed sandstone rubble at the junction of the main A57 and Mill Lane.

The petrol filling station and shop dominate the Smithy on the east, and to the south is a car-washing plant. To the west is an electricity sub-station. Consequently the building is hemmed in by modern structures which are completely out of sympathy with its architectural or historical character and which considerably damage its heritage values and setting.

Conclusions

The Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that the proposals would have little or no impact on the character, setting or significance of any adjacent heritage assets.



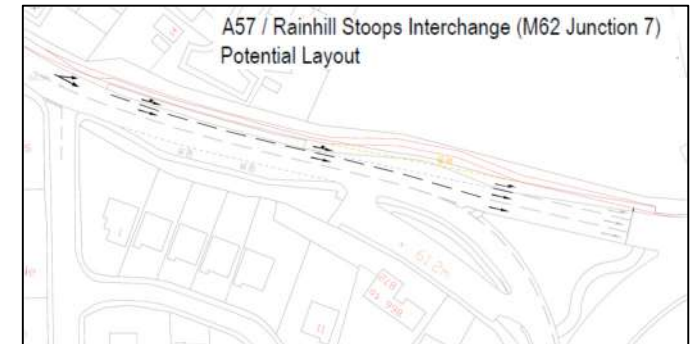
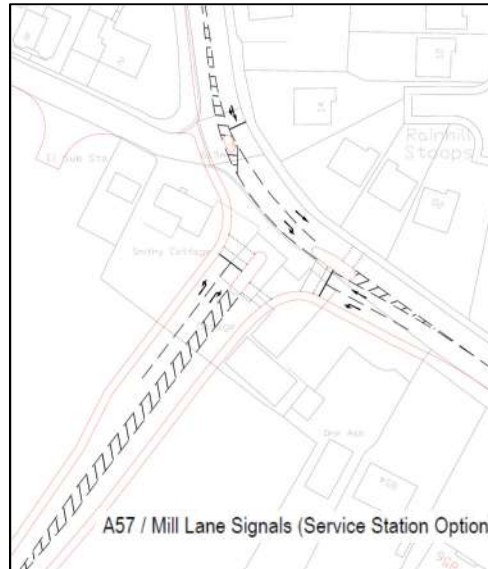
6. Access Feasibility Study

Wallace have undertaken an access feasibility study with their consultants to assess different access options. Two alternatives are shown on the indicative masterplan, for further discussion with the Council.

A traffic count and queue length surveys were undertaken 17th - 21st October 2016. Please note that the survey was unaffected by the schools half term holiday the following week 24th- 28th October and the survey dates were agreed with the Council's Highways officers. The results informed the access proposals.

Options for access to the site are being considered. One option would be a traffic-light controlled & upgraded Mill Lane / Warrington Road junction with access to site taken from Mill Lane.

A second option would be a new signalised junction through the existing petrol filling station that would replace the existing Mill Lane / Warrington Road junction as shown. The full drawings are attached as Appendix 6.



Under these proposals, Mill Lane would become a cul-de-sac and all through traffic would divert through the development site. The secondary site access with Mill Lane would be designed to accommodate this volume of traffic.

The proposals would also be accompanied by widening on the Warrington Road southbound approach to the Rainhill Stoops Interchange, to increase queuing capacity by 27 vehicles and ensure that either of the signalised junction options with Warrington Road could operate effectively.

7. Revised Sustainability Appraisal & Response to local concerns

As a result of the additional information provided, the Sustainability Appraisal scores are significantly improved as shown below. In summary, there are no overriding constraints to development, and the site has good accessibility to employment, services and facilities.

SA Criteria	Comment	Current SA score	Revised score
SA1 Protect & enhance biodiversity	No adverse impact on any TPOs. The ecological assessment identifies potential for overall improvement in biodiversity (see Appendix 3).	Red	Yellow
SA2 Protect & improve land quality	The SA is incorrect; the Site is largely Grade 3b agricultural land (see Appendix 2)	Red	Yellow
SA3 Improve Air Quality	Extensive tree planting along the M62 will improve air quality.	Grey	Grey
SA4 Sustainably manage water resources	The site is not within a groundwater source protection zone 1 or 2	Grey	Grey
SA5 Mitigate against climate change	Extensive planting and new habitats will be provided as part of the development, creating new green infrastructure.	Grey	Green
SA6 Minimise flood risk	The site is not affected by flood risk.	Grey	Grey
SA7 Landscape sensitivity & distance to prominent ridgeline	A landscape visual appraisal finds medium sensitivity (see Appendix 4). Only a very small part of the north-west corner of the site is affected by a ridgeline.	Red	Yellow
SA8. Protect & enhance cultural heritage	The heritage assessment (see Appendix 5) shows no harm to heritage assets	Red	Yellow
SA Access to open space & green space	The development will enhance the existing public right of way across the site and crossing the M62 motorway to the open countryside to the south.	Green	Green
SA12a Access to health & leisure	Centre of the site is within 2km of Rainhill village surgery, while bus stops close to the site on Mill Lane & Warrington Rd provide access to leisure facilities in St. Helens.	Green	Green
SA13 Access to schools	Centre of the site is only 1,200 metres from Rainhill High School, 1,000 metres from Oakdene Primary School and 800 metres from St. Bartholomew's RC Primary School.	Green	Green
SA14 Access to employment opportunities	The site offers ready access to the trunk road network and local employers such as the Lea Green Industrial Estate.	Grey	Grey
SA15 Support local economy	As the site is within 1km of a motorway junction, providing ready access to jobs and boosting the workforce, it should score positively on this measure.	Grey	Green
SA16 Access to housing	This site is highly deliverable (see Appendix 8).	Grey	Green
SA17 Reduce poverty & social exclusion	This site will contribute to the local economy and thereby help reduce poverty.	Grey	Grey
SA19 Reduce need to travel	The site is served by bus services 289 & 290 on Mill Lane and bus services 61 & 61A on Warrington Road.	Green	Green
SA20 Access to Services	Development would be accompanied by enhanced community facilities.	Yellow	Green

Local residents' concerns

Local residents have expressed concerns about the pressure from new development on schools, medical facilities, roads and the countryside. However the Mill Lane site would provide a net improvement in all these facilities.

Contribution to additional school places

The Council's School Organisation & Forward Planning team were approached in September 2016. They provided a calculation for a s106 contribution to ensure that development would be matched by an increase in local school places.

For primary pupil school places the formula is:
 $£12,439 \times \text{family dwellings} / 1000 \times 37$

Therefore, 700 family dwellings would be matched by a contribution of **£322,170** for additional primary school places.

For secondary school places the formula is:
 $£16,171 \times \text{family dwellings} / 1000 \times 16$

Therefore, 700 family dwellings would be matched by a contribution of **£181,115** for additional secondary school places.

The development would therefore match new houses with new school places.

Medical facilities

Land for community facilities such as medical facilities will be made available on the site. NHS England funding follows population, so an increase in households should be followed by an increase in medical facilities.

Impact on traffic & pollution

The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment found that almost all purchasers of new housing in St. Helens Borough already live in the local area. This means development will not necessarily increase the volume of traffic, as occupiers are already living in the area.

The Mill Lane site is close to the strategic road network and therefore will have less impact on congestion in Rainhill village than the other local sites at Eccleston Park golf club and Hanging Bridge Farm.



The site at Mill Lane will create least pollution, as traffic will be able to keep moving. Extensive landscaping along the southern edge of the site, adjoining the M62, will 'green' the local area and increase tree cover.

Wildlife

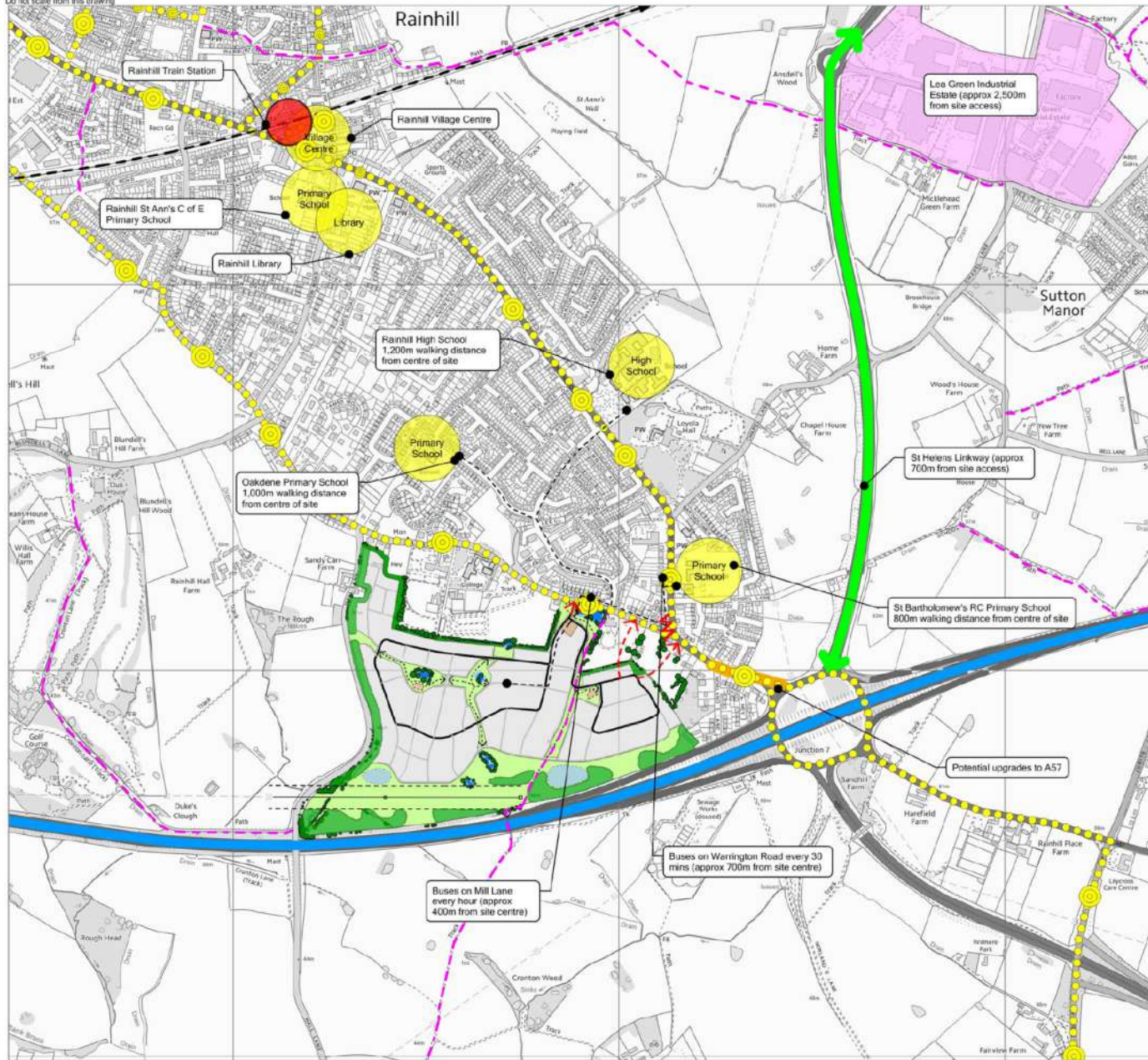
At present much of the Mill Lane site is used for haylage. This mono-crop has limited biodiversity and offers little for wildlife. It will be replaced by a mix of private gardens and landscaped public open space, which have much greater biodiversity potential and will result in a net gain in wildlife.

Open spaces

At present the majority of the site is in agricultural use and public access is limited to the right of way that crosses the site.

After development, approximately a third of the site would become publically accessible open space. This would be landscaped with trees, shrubs and ponds, and made accessible with pedestrian & cycle paths. This would greatly increase the amount of open space that can be enjoyed by local residents.

Do not scale from this drawing



Mill Lane, Rainhill



Drawing No. 16002-MPDF-P002-A
Sustainability of Location (with Proposal)

- Railway
- Rail station
- Bus route
- Bus stop
- Local amenities
- Lea Green Industrial Estate
- Right of Way
- Walking distance from centre of site
- St Helens Linkway
- M62
- Proposed road upgrades
- Blocked off road
- Access
- Potential secondary access
- Potential developable area
- Area for community facilities
- Greenspace
- Indicative SuDS measure
- Landscape buffer
- National Grid power line buffer zone

Rev A (26.01.17) Drawn: SB - Checked: SM:K
 Note: Notes amended
 Rev - (25.01.17) Drawn: SB - Checked: RM

Status: For Information

Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3
 0 100m 200m 500m



8. Developability

Wallace seek to work cooperatively with local councils, helping to ensure that homes are delivered on suitable sites.

Wallace is a dedicated strategic land company with the sole objective of promoting both residential and mixed use sites. Since 2009 Wallace have had continued successes and many of their sites are now delivering the homes and infrastructure that the country needs.

Wallace support the Council's proposals for long-term development in the borough. The site is also able to come forward more quickly.



Case Studies

We are currently promoting over 30 sites in the UK with over 2,000 acres under the control of Wallace. Below are three case studies:

Shifnal – land to the north-east of Shifnal, Shropshire was successfully promoted by Wallace for 200 homes in 2012/13. It gained planning consent in 2015 and was subsequently sold to David Wilson Homes, who are currently developing out the site.

Edinburgh – land at West Edge Farm was successfully promoted by Wallace for c.220 homes, via a planning application and appeal.

The site has been marketed to a number of home builders and is now progressing towards a sale by early 2017.

Edinburgh – land promoted by Wallace to the east of Lasswade Road in Edinburgh was been released from the from the Greenbelt and included within the settlement envelope after the examination of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan in 2015/16. Wallace has submitted a planning application comprising c.310 units with approval expected mid-2017.

Process

Following publication and adoption of the Local Plan, Wallace would obtain outline planning permission and then sell the site to local and national housebuilders.

Market interest

The site is located in a good market area and Wallace would be able to commit to enabling first completions by 2019, helping to deliver the housing requirement in the early stages of the Plan.

Affordable Housing Viability

The site can deliver 30% affordable housing.



10. Indicative Proposals

Sustainable location

This site is well located in relation to two primary schools and Rainhill High School. Development will contribute to the provision of more school places in these popular local schools, providing a net benefit to all.

Development will provide enhanced community facilities, at indicative locations shown on the Masterplan.

A number of bus routes are accessible from the site, which is also well located on the strategic road network.

The site is sustainably located with good access to a range of job opportunities, whilst also providing a pleasant local environment for residents. The Lincoln Way public footpath provides pedestrian routes across the M62 into the wider countryside beyond.



New infrastructure

There is potential to accommodate access onto Mill Lane and directly onto the A57 Warrington Road.

Improvements to the Rainhill Stoops junction will improve capacity at peak times, reducing congestion on the A57 and maintaining traffic flows.

The site is well located in relation to the strategic road network, with ready access to St. Helens town centre, the Lee Green Industrial Estate and other employment opportunities.

Socio-Economic Benefits

The Local Plan anticipates that 700 new homes could be provided on this site. The socio-economic benefits of new housing include:

- £81million investment
- £6.3million New Homes Bonus
- £19.3million additional annual household expenditure by residents
- £1million Council tax per annum
- 910 construction job years
- £17.6million increased GVA per annum
- Up to 210 affordable homes

Environmental Benefits

The site is currently in agricultural use. The only public access is the route of a right of way across of the site. Development will greatly increase the area for public enjoyment of open space, with around 35% of the site becoming publically accessible greenspace.

Environmental improvements include:

- Public open space parkland
- Structure planting with hedges & trees
- New ponds for SUDS and biodiversity
- Enhanced and new pedestrian routes
- Acoustic bund to reduce noise from the M62
- Landscaped mounds that reduce the dominance of the motorway & pylons



Ponds integrated into the proposed green network.

11. Conclusion and Way Forward

The Mill Lane site represents an ideal site for allocation for 700 homes for the following reasons:

- Close to the strategic road network;
- Quick access to St. Helen's town centre and Lea Green Industrial Estate via the Linkway A570;
- Minimises congestion in Rainhill;
- Provides an upgraded junction to replace the existing Mill Lane/ Warrington Road junction;
- Will be accompanied by improvements to the Rainhill Stoops motorway junction;
- Will be accompanied by environmental enhancements;
- Located close to Rainhill High School, Oakdene and St. Bartholomew's Primary Schools;
- Will contribute to the provision of additional school places;
- Will provide enhanced community facilities on site and public open space.

There are no technical constraints to the site that cannot be overcome through careful design, as evidenced by the accompanying reports.

The site is strategically well located to enable St. Helens Borough Council to maximise its economic potential and utilise the best locations on its strategic road network.

Wallace seek to work closely with the Council as the Plan progresses to ensure that the final proposals are acceptable.

We respectfully submit this site for allocation in Policy LPA05.1 Strategic Housing Sites, as a highly deliverable site that can provide completed dwellings by 2019.

Location Plan showing strategic road network

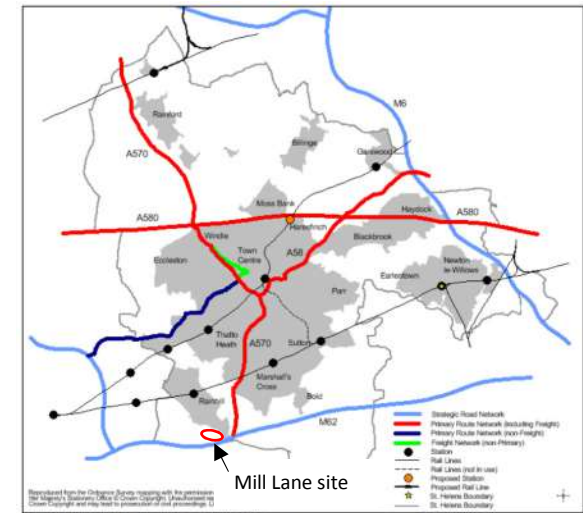


Figure 4.2: Key Transport Designations



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Mill Lane, Rainhill



Drawing No. 16002-MPDF-P001-D Indicative Development Framework

- Potential developable area (21.2 ha)
700 homes based on average density of 33 d.p.h
- Area for community facilities (0.5 ha)
- Indicative frontage
- Proposed new road
- Street
- Lanes
- Paths
- Access
- Potential secondary access
- Blocked off road
- Greenspace
- Indicative SuDS measure
- Indicative play area location
- Indicative location of acoustic bund / landscaped mound
- Existing trees
- Existing ponds
- Landscape buffer
- Structure planting
- Proposed road upgrades
- National Grid power line buffer zone

Rev D - (25.01.17) Drawn: SB - Checked: KT
 Note: Layout amended
 Rev - (16.02.16) Drawn: SD - Checked: KT

Status: For Information

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 0 50m 100m 250m

