

SHLAA ASSESSMENT FORM – GREEN BELT SITES

STAGE 1

SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Unique Site Reference	SHLAA-GB-SM-86
Site address (or brief description of broad location)	Smallford Works, Smallford Lane, Smallford



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Ownership details - including whether freehold or lease and length of lease (if applicable)	Stackbourne Ltd
Contact details - if different from above (e.g. agent, planning consultant etc)	Mike Moulton Moulton Walker
Area of site or broad location (hectares)	3.34 hectares
Category of site (e.g. agricultural etc)	Employment
Current use(s)	Employment uses including open storage.
Character of surrounding area (including adjoining land uses; site outlook etc)	Previously developed site – situated adjacent to the north western corner of the Green Belt Settlement of Sleafshyde (residential properties). Otherwise, site is completely surrounded by open Green Belt countryside. Smallford Lane runs alongside the site's eastern boundary.
Method of site identification (e.g. proposed by landowner etc)	Proposed by the landowner via agent
Planning History (including Local Plan Inquiries, LDF etc)	<p>Local Plan Inquiry 1982 – Green Belt status of the site was questioned. Inspector recommended no change, other wording relating to unallocated employment sites in the Green Belt.</p> <p>5/88/0175, 5/88/0852 & 5/88/1880 - Development of business park (B1). All refused.</p> <p>5/94/1656 & 5/94/1564 – Certificate of Lawfulness (Existing) – B2, B8 and use of plant hire and builder's yard. Refused.</p> <p>5/2002/2112 – New access road. Cond Perm.</p>

SITE SUITABILITY

Physical Constraints			
Area of flood risk	Yes*	SSSI	No
Ancient Woodland	No	Local Nature Reserve	No
County Wildlife Site	No*	Poor access	No
Site of Geological Importance	No	Steep slopes/uneven terrain	No
Scheduled Ancient Monument	No	Ground contamination	None identified
Site for Local Preservation (archaeological)	No	Proximity of Locally Listed Building(s)	No
Proximity of Listed Building(s)	No	Historic Park or Garden	No

Air Quality Management Area	No	Conservation Area	No
Tree and hedgerows	Yes**	Other habitat/green space	No
Proximity to Hazardous Installations (as per Policy 84b)	No	Public Right of Way	No
		Utilities – e.g. electricity substations, pylons, telecom masts, underground pipelines, sewers etc	None identified
Minerals and waste site (i.e. development would result in the sterilisation of mineral reserves)	No	Site is adversely affected by noise, air or other forms of pollution (e.g. major roads etc)	Possibly
Development would cause demonstrable harm to the character and amenity of surrounding areas/land uses	Yes***	Development would involve land that could otherwise help to meet the objectives of Watling Chase Community Forest	Yes
Development would result in unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.	No	Scale and nature of development would be large enough to significantly change size and character of the settlement.	Yes
Development would result in neighbouring towns merging into one another.	PDL	Development would result in encroachment into open countryside.	PDL
Development of the site would affect land that is presently rural rather than urban in nature	Yes	Development would be visually intrusive from the surrounding countryside	Yes
Development would assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.	Yes	Existing Green Belt boundary is well defined	N/A
Removal of the site from the Green Belt would create additional development pressure on adjoining land	Yes	Release of the site from the Green Belt would create a more clearly defined, robust long term boundary	N/A
Development would affect the setting and special character of St Albans (i.e. the Ver Valley to the south & west of the City); Harpenden (i.e. the southern approach across the Common); or the historic centres of Redbourn or Wheathampstead			No
Comments/observations (including details of other physical constraints or site designations) <p>* Almost the entire site is within Flood Zone 3b (Functional Flood Plain).</p> <p>* Site lies immediately adjacent to Smallford Pit – a County Wildlife Site and Protected Species Site.</p> <p>** Trees/vegetation along the site boundaries.</p> <p>*** However, the Council has, for some time, been trying to secure the removal of the badly sited industrial uses at Smallford Works. It has been recognised in the past that the uses are unlikely to be removed unless some 'enabling development' of a type not normally accepted in the Green Belt is permitted on part of the site.</p>			

Policy Constraints			
Loss of high quality agricultural land (Grades 1,2 or 3a)	No	Green spaces identified for protection in the Green Spaces Strategy	No
Landscape Character Area - i.e. those areas where emphasis is on conservation (NB: Local Plan still refers to Landscape Conservation Areas)	Yes HCC Area 30	Site with social or community value (provide details)	No
Tree Preservation Orders	No	Greenfield site	
Comments/observations (including details of any other national, regional or local policy constraints):			

Can any of the physical or policy constraints identified above, be overcome or could mitigation measures be introduced to reduce any potential impacts identified?	
Officers Conclusions - Stage 1 (i.e. should this site be given further consideration for housing development? If no, provide reasons)	No. The site is previously developed land and the Council has long had aspirations to remove the poorly located industrial uses on the site, in order to secure some major environmental enhancement of the area as part of Watling Chase Community Forest. It is recognised that this is unlikely to happen without some 'enabling development'. However, almost the entire site is within Flood Zone 3b Functional Flood Plain. PPS25 says that more vulnerable uses (including residential dwellings) should not be permitted in Flood Zone 3b.