

Land at Norwich Road,
Cromer, Norfolk

Position Statement





Prepared by: Jasmine Mountford and Kelsey Fordham
Checked by: Fraser Hall (Partner) and Emma Griffiths MRTPI

For and on behalf of Innova, and the land owner consortium.

Brown & Co is a leading provider of agency, professional and consultancy services across the whole range of rural, commercial, residential, and agricultural markets.

Corylus is a multi-disciplinary planning and environmental consultancy.

RICS, RIBA and MRTPI Chartered Practice.

Date: December 2023

Reference: 23_052338_Position Statement_Cromer

PART I:
INTRODUCTION

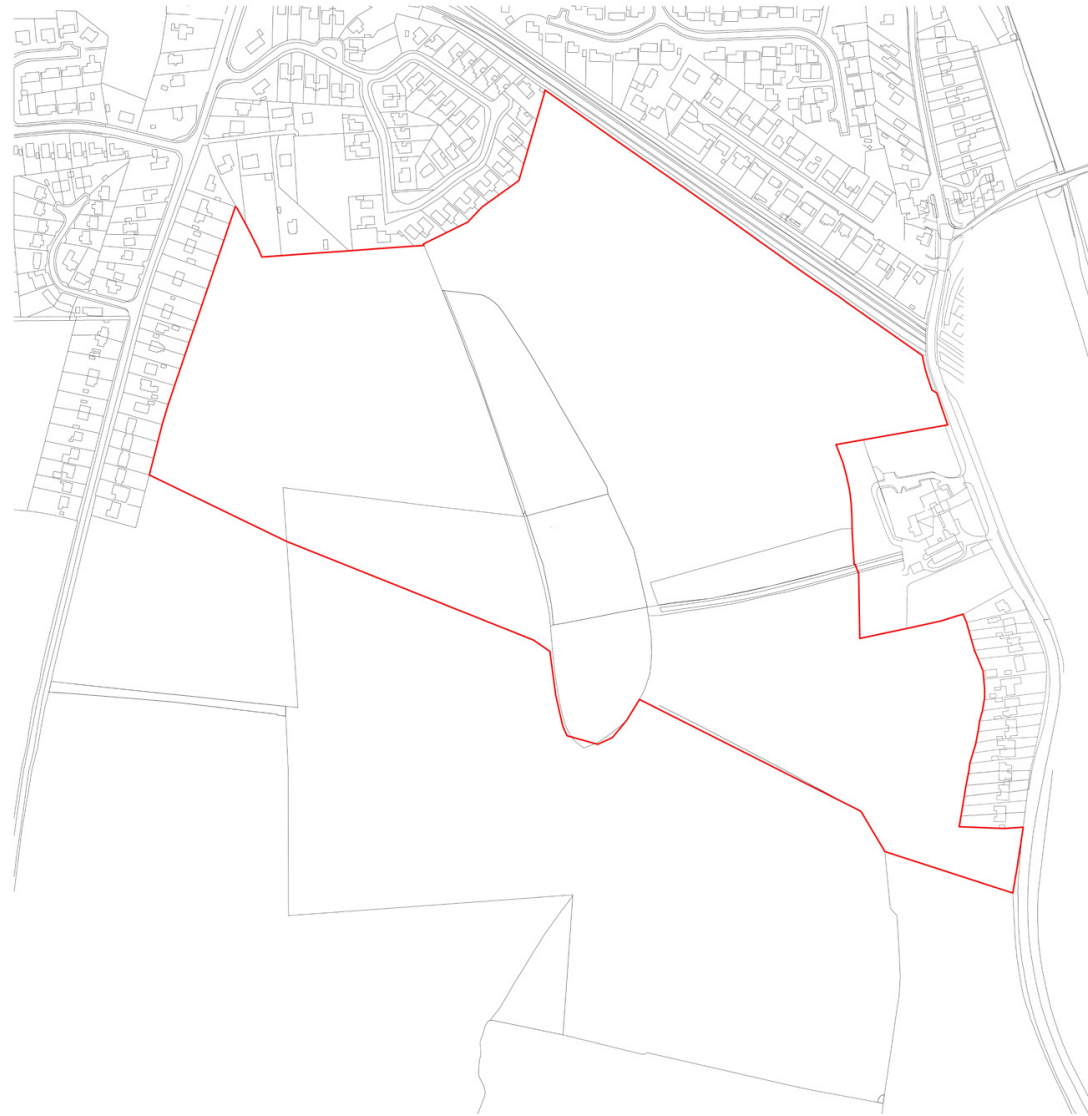
1.1 Project Overview and Location

This document has been prepared by Brown&Co and Corylus on behalf of Innova (Promoter) and the landowner consortium. This document seeks to supplement the draft allocation, providing additional information for the Planning Inspector when examining the emerging local plan.

The statement sets out how the site context, previous applications, and continued engagement with North Norfolk District Council (hereinafter 'NNDC') have informed the preparation of the indicative masterplan. It also provides details of the design process undertaken, including commentary on landscaping, access, layout and scale.

Cromer is a busy seaside town on the North Norfolk Coast. It sits around 22 miles north of the city of Norwich, and roughly equidistant between the towns of Holt and North Walsham, located circa. 10 miles north-east of the former, and north-west of the latter. Cromer provides a range of retail and leisure facilities, including independent shops, cafés and restaurants, alongside larger retailers and supermarkets.

The allocation site is located to the south of the town, beyond the railway line, and falls partially within the adjacent parish of Northrepps. Measuring 25.7 hectares, the allocation site immediately abuts the main built form of Cromer, and extends between Norwich Road to the east, which forms the main gateway into the town, and Roughton Road to the west. The site is characterised by a plantation woodland area to the centre, known as Beckett's Plantation.



1.2 Emerging Local Plan- Draft Site Allocation

Policy C22/2

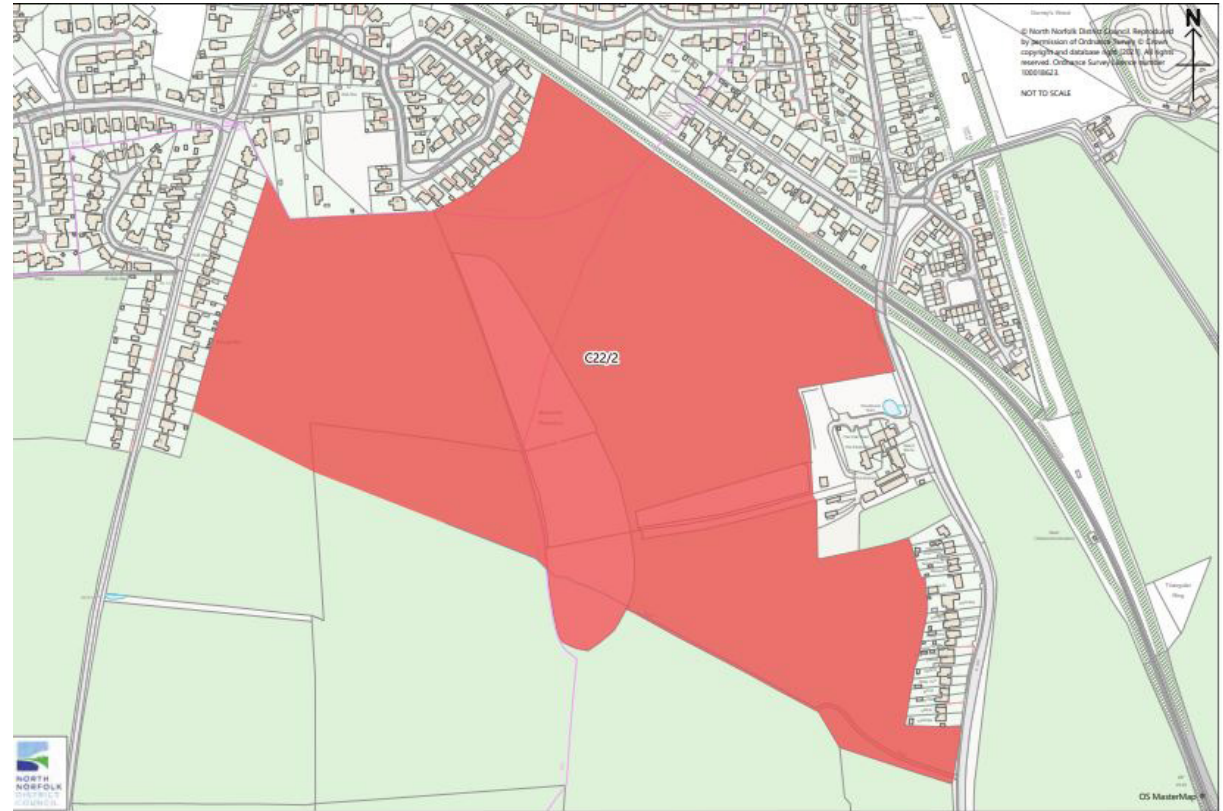
Land West of Pine Tree Farm, Norwich Road

Land amounting to 25.7 hectares, as defined on the Policies Map, is allocated for development of approximately 400 dwellings, specialist elderly persons accommodation, sport and recreational facilities and associated on and off-site infrastructure.

Planning permission will be granted subject to compliance with the policies of this Plan, and the following site specific requirements:

1. Provision of a new segregated cycle/pedestrian footway along the Norwich Road including a dedicated footbridge (or suitable alternative) crossing over the railway;
2. Provision of two vehicle access points onto the A149 including the provision of a roundabout at the southern access;
3. The submission, approval and implementation of a Transport Impact Assessment to include analysis of the impact the development would have upon the road network, identify areas where mitigation may be required and provide solutions;
4. Careful attention to site layout, building heights and materials in order to minimise the visual impact of the development on the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
5. On site delivery of not less than 4.9 hectares of multi-functional open space together with measures for its on-going maintenance;
6. The delivery of not less than 5 hectares of land suitable for sports pitch provision and agreed contributions towards delivery;
7. Provision of additional green infrastructure on the site which maximises connectivity between the residential development and the open space. Biodiversity improvements and access should be provided to Beckett's Plantation;
8. Retention and enhancement of hedgerows and trees around and within the site, including the protection of existing woodland within site and the provision of a landscaped buffer along the southern boundaries;
9. The existing public footpath through the site should be retained and upgraded to a surfaced route within in a green corridor and a new route should be provided from the site to connect with Roughton Road;
10. The submission, approval and implementation of a Surface Water Management Plan ensuring that there is no adverse effects on European sites and greenfield run off rates are not increased;
11. The submission, approval and implementation of a Foul Drainage Strategy, details of any enhancements and setting out how additional foul flows will be accommodated within the four sewerage network;
12. Enhancement to sewerage infrastructure should be undertaken prior to the first occupation of any dwelling to prevent detriment to the environment and comply with Water Framework Directive obligations;
13. Appropriate contributions towards mitigation measures identified in the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS);
14. Delivery of comprehensive development in accordance with agreed phasing which ensures delivery of all aspects of the allocated uses including not less than 100 units of specialist elderly persons accommodation; and,
15. Development should preserve and enhance the setting of the grade II listed Pine Tree Farmhouse through careful layout, design and landscaping.

The site is underlain by a defined Mineral Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel. Any future development on this site will need to address the requirements of Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Policy CS16 - 'safeguarding' (or any successor policy) in relation to mineral resources, to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority.



Land West of Pine Tree Farm (C22/2)



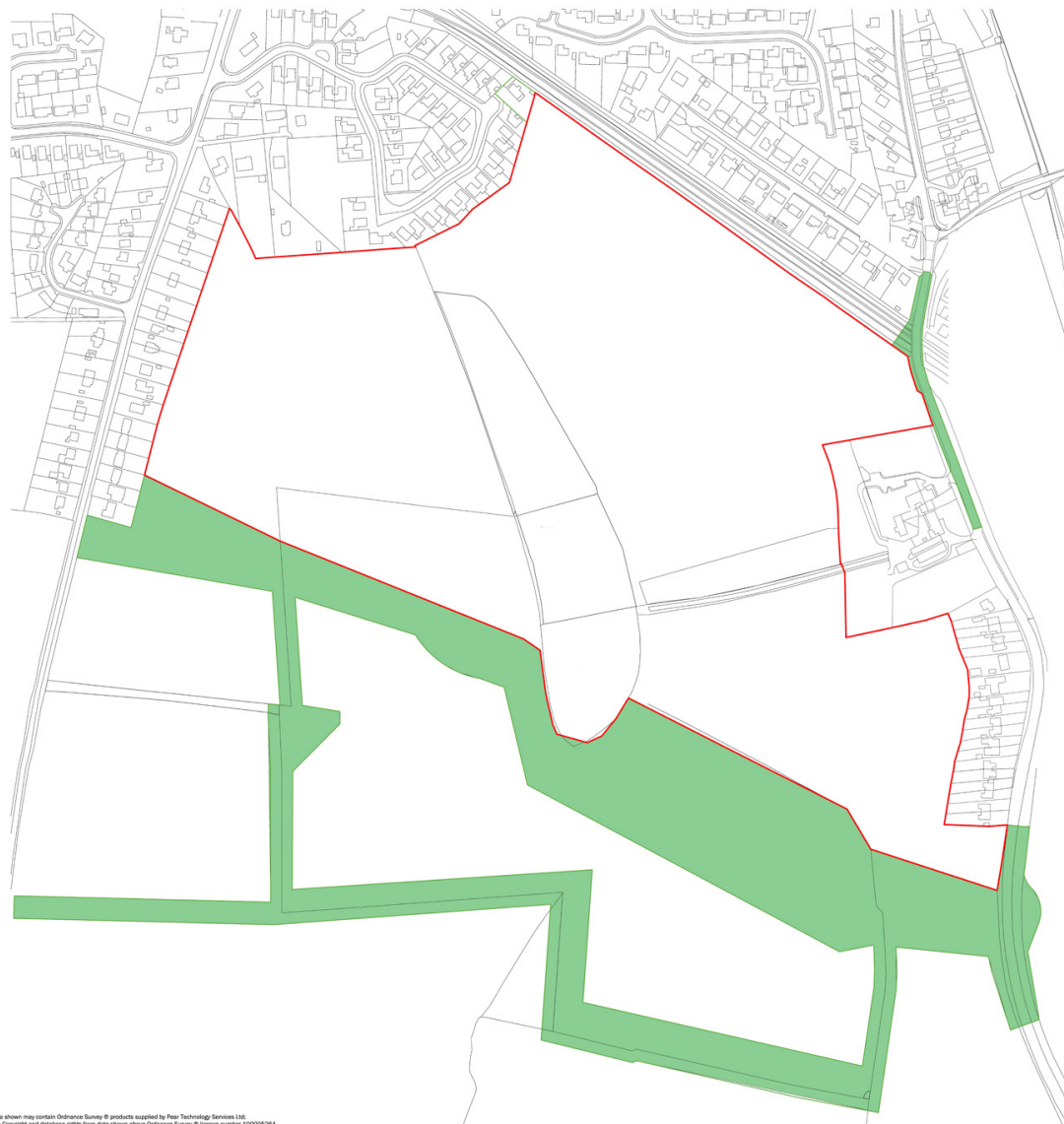
1.3 Vision Statement

The intent is to deliver a landscape-led scheme which respects the sensitive landscape setting, through extensive multi-functional green and blue infrastructure and high-quality development.

The green infrastructure network would extend across the site, incorporating sports pitches, play space, allotments, landscaping, and walking and cycling routes. It would provide the framework for the delivery of circa. 400 dwellings, including accessible and affordable housing, care facilities and assisted living bungalows.



1.3.1 Expected Delivery Boundary



In order to deliver the scale of scheme allocated, alongside the football pitches, and requisite infrastructure it is necessary to develop outside of the draft allocation boundary. The anticipated development site would extend to 36.74Ha and includes the space required to provide the required highways infrastructure, SUDs, and landscaping.

Careful consideration has been given to the sensitive landscape setting, and role of the site as a transition between the main form of Cromer and the open countryside beyond. As set out below, extensive technical work, and engagement with Officers at NNDC has been undertaken in order to ensure that the additional land required is kept to a minimum, and that development in this area would be limited to essential features.

1.4 Site photos



01 Looking east to the rear of the existing houses along Norwich Road



02 View of Beckett's plantation and existing tree belt



03 View looking east along existing tree belt



04 View looking west through gap in Beckett's plantation



05 View from railway bridge looking west towards Beckett's plantation.



06 View looking towards the bungalows north of the site.



o7 View looking towards the north-east corner of the site.



o8 View of western parcel looking south along Beckett's Plantation.



Aerial view of site with photo location markers.

PART II:
CONTEXT

2.1 Historical Context

2.1.1 Historical Maps

Examination of the historical maps available shows that the site has remained largely unaltered for a significant period of time; comprising of agricultural fields divided by the distinct curvilinear form of Beckett's Plantation to the centre. The maps illustrate that the tree belt which runs east to west through the centre of the eastern half of the site is relatively young; not appearing on the aerial images from either 1988 or 1946.

The images show the historic expansion of Cromer, with residential development present along Norwich Road and Roughton Road in the 1946 imagery. However significant expansion of the town, primarily along Roughton Road, is illustrated in the 1988 imagery.



Tithe Map 1836-1850's



OS First Edition 1876-1886



1946 Aerial map



1988 Aerial map

2.1.2 Cromer Town Growth



1840 and older



1840 to 1912



1912 to 1960



1960-1990



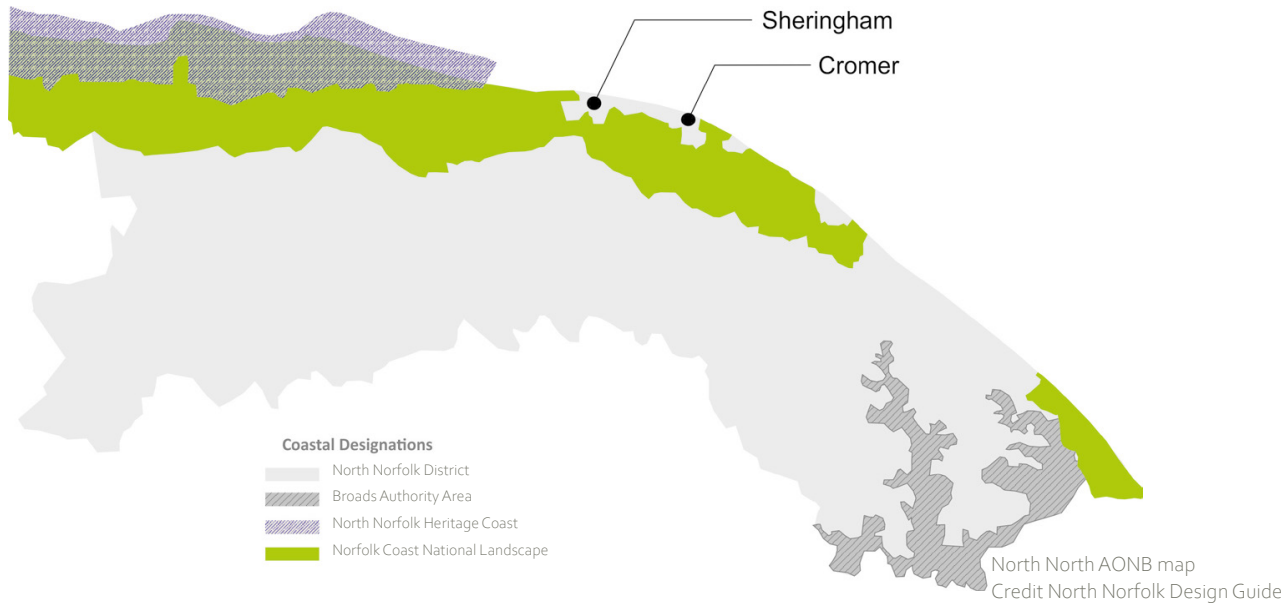
1990-2010



2010-Present

2.2 Site Analysis

2.2.1 Landscaping Features and the Norfolk Coast National Landscape



The site is relatively flat and comprises predominantly of Grade 2 agricultural land. Beckett’s Plantation forms a distinct feature which runs north-south centrally through the site, with a small tree belt extending eastwards towards the southern end. Otherwise, landscaping within the site is focused to the site boundaries, and comprises hedging, trees, ditching, and a small pond.

The site is located within the Norfolk Coast National Landscape (formerly the Norfolk Coast AONB), which is noted for seven key qualities, including the strong links between land and sea, a sense of remoteness, and diversity of landscape and settlement character.

The proposed development would inevitably alter the character and appearance of the site, and its contribution to the National Landscape. However, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in a significant detrimental impact as a result of a sensitive, landscape-led masterplan. Mitigation has been embedded within the proposed layout, high-quality design would create an attractive scheme, whilst extensive planting across the site and beyond would help to screen the development and create an attractive rural edge.

The proposed development provides an opportunity to reinforce the distinctive character of the surrounding landscape, enhance habitat connectivity and biodiversity, increase recreational opportunities, and contribute generally to the Management Plan objectives for the National Landscape.



View West from Cromer lighthouse over Cromer and its Grade 1 listed parish church tower, which is the highest in Norfolk.
Credit North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment 2021



New housing on the southern edge of Cromer, contained to the south by woodland.
Credit North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment 2021

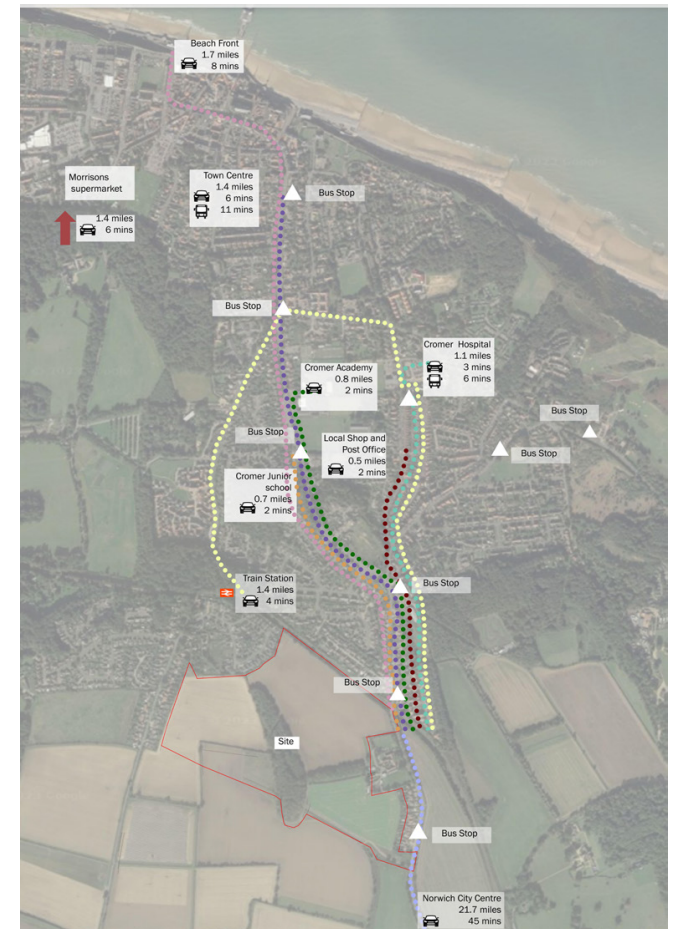
2.2.2 Connectivity

The site is a short distance south of the town centre (circa 1.4 miles) and therefore in walking distance of the wide range of services and facilities available within Cromer. The Junior School, Cromer Academy, a convenience store, and Roughton Road Train Station are all within a 15 minute walk.

Cromer is well served by public transport, with a significant number of regular bus services providing connections throughout the District and beyond, including Sheringham, North Walsham, Holt, Aylsham, and Norwich. The site is well related to a number of bus stops along Norwich Road and Roughton Road. Roughton Road Train Station is located within a five minute walk of the site, and provides regular rail services between Sheringham and Norwich.



Burnt Hills Pedestrian Access Connections






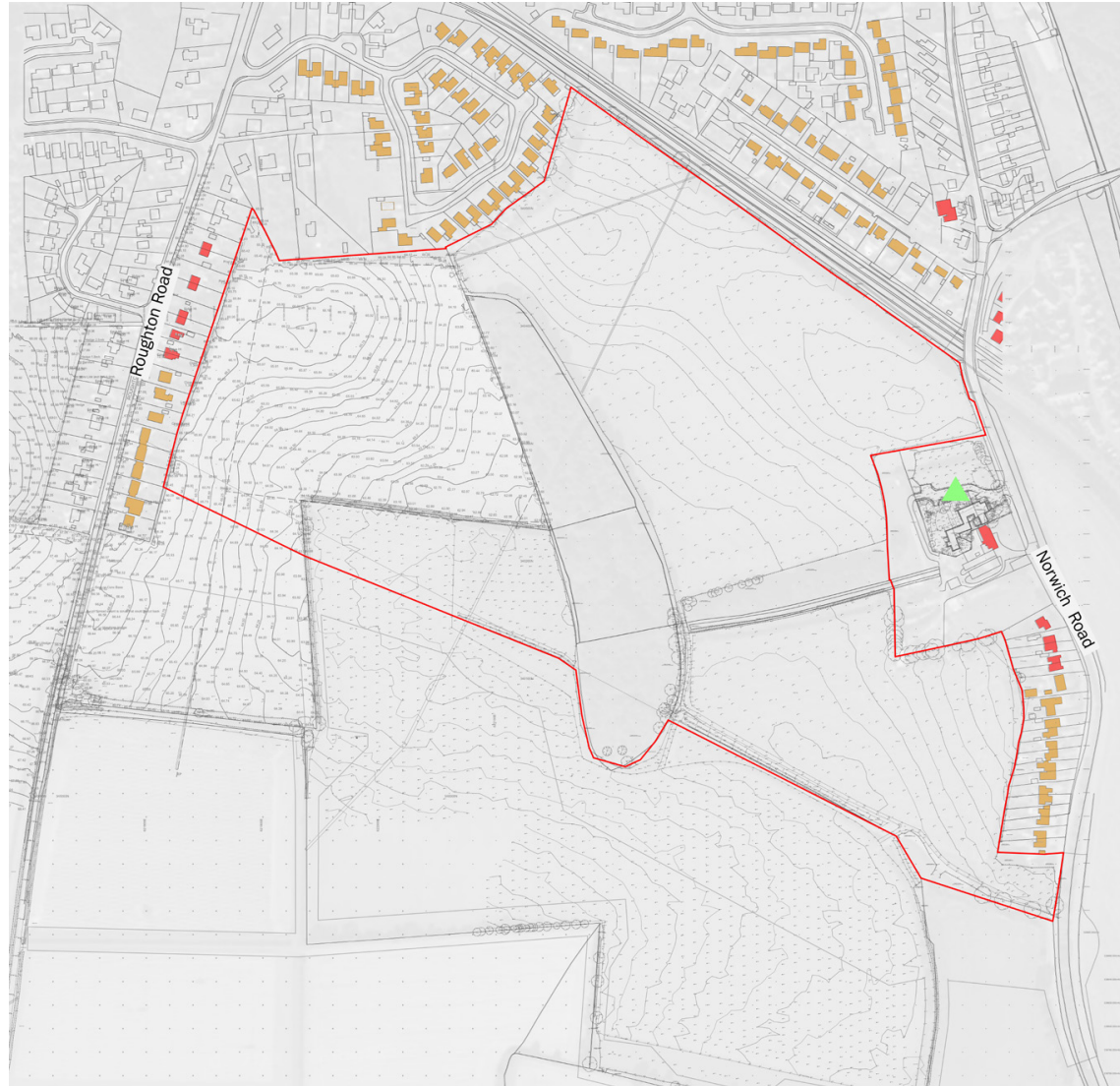
Norwich Road Vehicular Access Connections

2.2.3 Local Built Form & Context

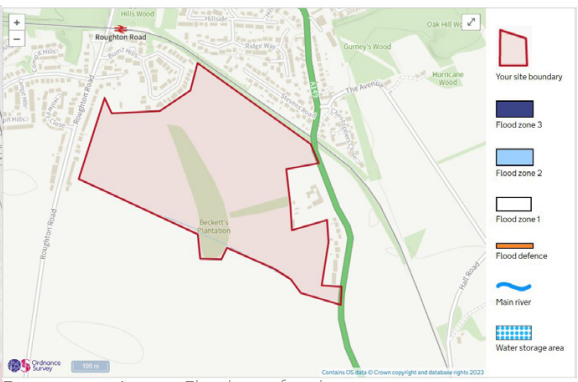
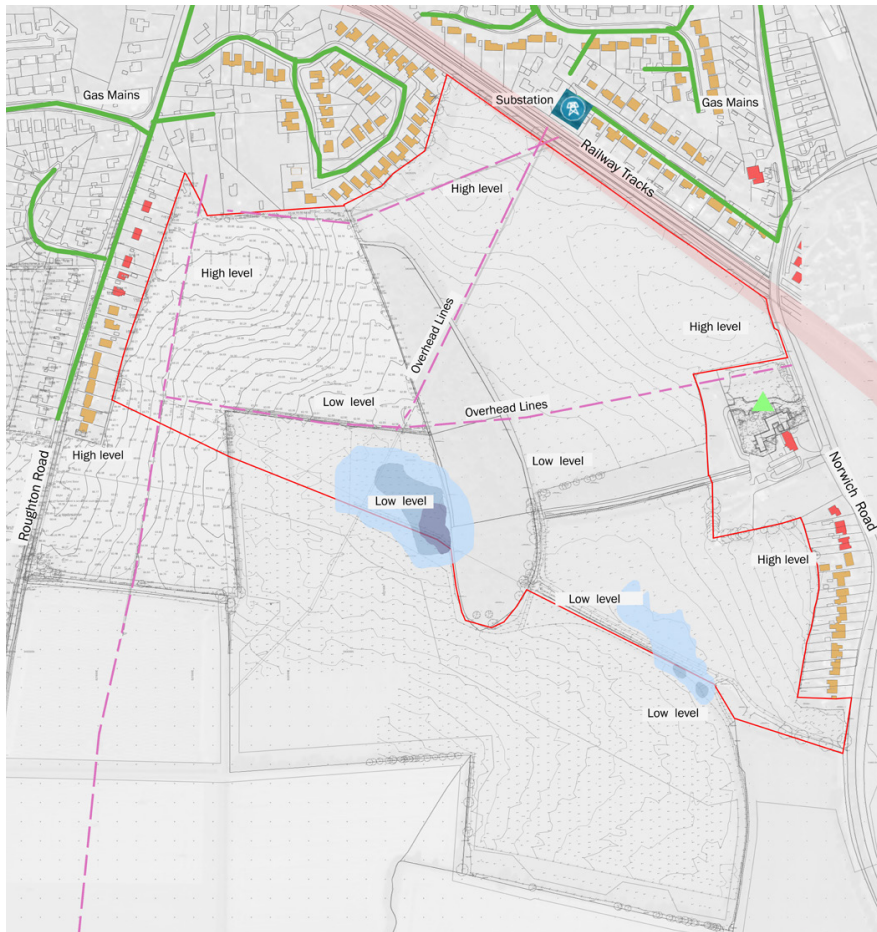
The site is well related to the main built form of Cromer, with residential dwellings to the north, east, and west. Dwellings in the area are predominantly single storey, though there are a small number of two storey dwellings along Roughton Road to the west, and Norwich Road to the east. Constructed between 1960 and 1990, the dwellings are constructed of red brick, with render detailing, under pantiled roofs.

To the east of the site, adjacent the secondary tree belt, lays Pine Tree Farm and Pine Tree Barns; the farmhouse is Grade II listed, and the barns likely curtilage listed. The farmhouse, constructed in the 17th and 18th centuries, is constructed of painted flint and brick, under a Belgian tile roof. The barns, which are single storey, have been converted to residential dwellings.

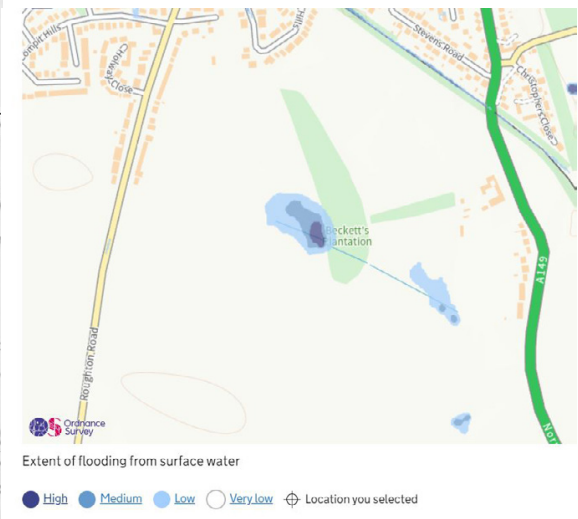
- Key**
-  Single Storey Bungalow
 -  2 Storey House
 -  Grade 2 Listed Farmhouse



2.2.4 Site Levels and Utilities



Environment Agency Flood map for planning



Extent of flooding from surface water map

The site is generally flat with slightly higher levels at the boundaries, falling gradually towards Beckett's Plantation and the ditch to the southern boundary. Beyond the site, land levels generally rise to the north, and fall to the south.

A number of high voltage overhead cables cross the site, predominantly to the northern half. There are water, telecommunications, and gas services available within the local road network.

The Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps show the site to be within Flood Zone 1, and therefore at very low risk of fluvial and coastal flooding. The maps also show that the majority of the site is at very low risk of surface water, however an area immediately adjacent to Beckett's Plantation is identified as being at very high risk, and another area to the south east of the site is shown to be at low risk.

2.3 Site Opportunities and Constraints















Constraints

- Location within North Norfolk Coast National Landscape
- Overhead power lines
- Beckett's Plantation
- Areas of surface water flooding
- Proximity to Grade II listed building
- Railway line

Opportunities

- Beckett's Plantation
- Potential for multiple pedestrian access points
- Create soft transitional buffer to open countryside beyond
- Biodiversity enhancements
- Create gateway to Cromer
- Creation of home for Cromer Town Football clubs
- Provision of care facilities
- Provision of affordable housing
- Extension to Public Right of Way
- Creation of circular pedestrian and cycle routes

Key

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
|  | 2 Storey House |  | Main Roads |
|  | Single Storey Bungalow |  | Overhead power lines |
|  | Grade 2 Listed Farmhouse |  | Existing trees/hedges |
|  | Bus Stops |  | Existing Ditch |
|  | Roughton Road Train Station |  | Potential Vehicular Access |
|  | Railway Tracks |  | Potential Pedestrian Access |
|  | Public Right of Way (PROW) |  | Potential new roundabout |



PART III:
Norfolk Coast National
Landscape Considerations

3.1 Special Qualities

The Norfolk Coast National Landscape is a unique landscape covering 453 squared kilometres of rolling chalkland and glacial moraine. The National Landscapes Association notes that it is:

[...] a setting for nature conservation, farming, recreation, tourism, and industry, but is also a vulnerable coastline, impacted by recreational disturbance, infrastructure developments, and climate change.

The landscape stretches from The Wash in the west, to Winterton-on-Sea in the east, and incorporates a number of National Nature Reserves, National Trails, and statutorily designated nature conservation sites. The coastal frontage is backed by farmland, heathland, wetlands, and woodlands, with settlements and buildings interspersed throughout which reflect the long history and human management and settlement in the area; which it itself contributes to the importance of the landscape.

The Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape Management Plan Strategy 2019-2024 (amended 2022) identifies seven key qualities of the National Landscape:

1. Dynamic character and geomorphology of the coast
2. Strong and distinctive links between land and sea
3. Diversity and integrity of landscape, seascape and settlement character
4. Exceptionally important, varied and distinctive biodiversity, based on locally distinctive habitats
5. Nationally and internationally important geology
6. Sense of remoteness, tranquillity and wildness
7. Richness of archaeological, heritage and historic environment, particularly that relating to the coast and its character



Cromer Coastline



National trails of North Norfolk



Norfolk Nature Reserves

3.2 Impact of the proposed development

The proposed development would inevitably have an impact because it would introduce built form to a greenfield site. However, this is not a pristine, scenic landscape – the characteristic openness of this part of the Tributary Farmland landscape results from degradation over many years of intensive farming and hedgerow loss. Whilst the linear pattern of existing houses along the Norwich Road (and Roughton Road) also contributes to a relatively nondescript and, in places, poor quality gateway to Cromer from the south.

It is, therefore, equally relevant to consider the development of the Norwich Road site as an opportunity to create a positive, more enclosed farmland landscape, an enhanced transition between the rural farmland landscape and the settlement edge and a safer, more welcoming A149 gateway to Cromer.

The indicative masterplan for the site has been landscaped and developed in an iterative way; predicted adverse landscape and visual effects have been identified and minimised as an integral part of the design process - through the careful planning, siting and design of development and through proposals for extensive off-site hedgerow planting to the south-west and south of the site. These measures are considered to mitigate all significant impacts; they also ensure that the scheme complies with the Management Plan objectives and indeed offers opportunities to enhance some of the special qualities of the AONB.



Degradation of landscape on site



Degradation of Site in front of Burnt Hills

PART IV:
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Previous Proposals



Figure 2. PO/18/1551



Figure 1. PO/18/2169

The application site has been the subject of two previous, separate, planning applications.

It was proposed to erect circa. 300 dwellings, alongside new facilities for Cromer Town Football Club on the land to the east of, and including Beckett's Plantation. The proposals broadly aligned with the previous draft allocation of that land within the emerging North Norfolk Local Plan. The application is still pending consideration (LPA reference PO/18/2169).

The land to the west of Beckett's Plantation, alongside additional land to the west of Roughton Road, was subject of an application for the erection of circa. 185 dwellings, Extra Care Home, supported living facility, and sports and leisure park. The application was withdrawn due to technical constraints around highways access (LPA reference PO/18/1551).

Figure 1- Proposed Site Plan submitted in support of application PO/18/2169

Figure 2 – Proposed Site Plan submitted in support of application PO/18/1551

4.2 Technical profile and engagement with NNDC

The emerging development proposals have been informed by a wide range of technical assessment, some of which was undertaken in support in each of the aforementioned applications, and others following the landowner collaboration, including:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Transport Assessment & Travel Plan
- Drainage Strategy & Flood Risk Assessment
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Geophysical Survey
- Archaeology Report
- Air Quality Assessment
- Lighting Impact Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Ecology Assessment
- Utilities investigation
- Quantity Surveyor;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Viability Report.

As part of the forthcoming planning application a full suite of up-to-date survey work would be undertaken and submitted for consideration.

Engagement with the Council regarding development in this location has been ongoing for several years, with pre-application engagement undertaken in relation to both of the previous applications. In August 2021 representatives of the landowners were contacted to understand whether they would be willing to collaborate in order to deliver a larger allocation. Since that time, the core design team have undertaken significant engagement with the Council, including fortnightly meetings with the Planning Policy Manager to ensure that the proposed development would meet local needs, provide appropriate community facilities, enhance connectivity, and protect and conserve the landscape setting.



4.3 Progression of Design



Sept 2021

- Combining land east and west of Beckett's Plantation.
- Main access roundabout to the north of Pine Tree Farm
- Sports facilities to the south of the site.
- Care facilities north of the woodland tree belt.



February 2022

- Development area reduced to reflect draft allocation boundary.
- Sketch options exploring possibilities to access western parcel from the north, and centrally through Beckett's Plantation in order to create a loop



March 2022

- Roundabout moved to the south of the site, to allow for better visibility.
- Vehicular access to western parcel from the north and south of Beckett's Plantation.
- Potential SUDs features incorporated, in line with drainage testing undertaken.





July 2022

- Allotments located adjacent to Burnt Hill's bungalows to reduce impact of development on neighbouring properties.
- Care facilities moved to western parcel.
- Low density plots along southern boundary to form entrance along main access road.



November 2022

- Housing moved further away from adjacent bungalows with an open space buffer and football pitches moved north to reduce light impact on the National Landscape.
- Offsite landscaping to buffer and screening introduced along existing field boundaries to the south.



January 2023

- Care facilities moved to the Eastern parcel.
- Pedestrian cycle link to connect via Burnt Hills Estate.
- Proposed boundary amended to include the pedestrian access to Roughton Road, and SuDs features along the southern boundary.



4.4 Parameter plans

4.4.1 Landscape Strategy



The masterplan has been landscape led, focusing on respecting the National Landscape setting, and retaining and enhancing existing landscaping features within the site such as Beckett's Plantation and the adjacent tree belt.

The proposals would incorporate significant landscaping throughout, creating an extensive green and blue infrastructure framework within which development would be set. Significant new planting would be introduced to the southern boundary in order to create a soft transitional edge between the built form of Cromer and the open countryside beyond, and provide screening to the proposed development.

It is proposed to deliver a swathe of off-site planting, enhancing the historic field boundaries across the land immediately south of the site. Such planting would enhance the landscape setting, and the special qualities of the Norfolk Coast National Landscape, it would further help the proposals to assimilate with their surroundings and create a gateway entrance to Cromer.



4.4.2 Public Open Space (POS) and Play areas



A key element of the proposals is the provision of football pitches, in accordance with the requirements of NNDC's Playing Pitch Strategy, so as to provide appropriate facilities for the relocation of all Cromer Town Football Club adult and youth teams. The pitches, one 3G and one grass, would be designed in accordance with FA specifications.

The proposals have been designed so as to ensure that all dwellings would be well-related to areas of open space and play areas, connected by way of tree-line footway/ cycleways.

The design, scale, and nature of the opens spaces would reflect policy requirements, with the surrounding development designed so as to provide appropriate overlooking.

Key

- Public Open Space
- Play space
- Allotments
- Sports facilities



4.4.3 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)



A blue infrastructure network, comprising of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), would be delivered across the site. The proposed masterplan illustrates the approximate size and location based on topography and the preliminary testing undertaken.

These features would capture water from across the site, ensuring that the development would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. They would be designed, and appropriately planted, so as to create attractive landscape features throughout the site, in addition to creating wetland habitats which would enhance the biodiversity value of the site.







4.4.4 Vehicular Movement and Access



The masterplan is predicated on two vehicular access points from Norwich Road, a roundabout to the south and a priority T-junction to the north, which would provide safe access to the site, and help to provide traffic-calming measures on the approach in to Cromer.

A six metre wide road, with a three metre wide footway/ cycleway and two metre wide footway would form the primary route through the site, connecting the eastern and western parcels by way of a loop around Beckett's Plantation. Secondary routes are designed to ensure permeability, creating links throughout, whilst small areas of private drives would create quieter mews style development.

Key

-  Primary Route
-  Secondary Route
-  Tertiary Route (Shared Surface)
-  Private Drives






4.4.5 Pedestrian Movement and Access



A network of footways and cycleways would ensure safe pedestrian and cycle access throughout the development, including pedestrian friendly living streets. The network would connect with both Norwich Road and Roughton Road in a number of locations throughout the site, so as to ensure that residents could easily access the services and facilities available within Cromer.

A public right of way is present within the site, entering from Pine Tree Farm to the east and terminating at the southern end of Beckett's Plantaiton. The masterplan has been designed so as to retain this feature and enhance it through the provision of a connection to Roughton Road.

Key

-  Footpath link
-  Pedestrian/ Cycle link
-  Pedestrian/ Cycle Site Access.



4.4.6 Massing and Scale



The masterplan has been designed to provide 400 dwellings, in order to address housing need in the area. The development would incorporate a variety of housing types, including low density detached homes, medium density terraced homes and high density apartments and care provision.

Low density development would be focused adjacent to the proposed allotments, and along the southern edge of the site; providing a softer edge. Medium density development would be positioned within the centre of the site, creating living streets with a sense of community.

High density care apartments and assisted living facilities would be located adjacent to the northern vehicular access, so as to create an attractive feature within the streetscene. High density housing development would be located to the centre of the eastern parcel of land, interspersed by high quality public open space.

Key

- Sports Facilities
- Care Facilities
- High Density Housing
- Medium Density Housing
- Low Density Housing



4.4.7 Phasing Strategy



It is anticipated that the proposed development would be delivered in three phases, ensuring for the appropriate and timely delivery of the requisite highways infrastructure and sports pitches.

Phase 1 would deliver the dwellings to the southern half of the eastern parcel of land, and include the roundabout from Norwich Road, which would form the primary vehicular access point for the entire development. The highway would extend northwards through the site to the football pitches, allowing for works to commence in their delivery. Pedestrian and emergency only access to Burnt Hills would also be delivered.

Phase 2 would incorporate the delivery of the secondary vehicular access from Norwich Road, alongside housing to the northern half of the eastern parcel, the care facilities and allotments.

Phase 3 would centre around delivery to the west of Beckett's Plantation, including completion of the internal loop road around the tree belt and the formation of pedestrian access on to Roughton Road.

Key

- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Phase 3



PART V:
Proposed Masterplan

5.1 Proposed Masterplan



