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From: [REDACTED] [k](#)

Sent: Mon, 25 Jan 2021 14:24:47

To:

Subject: Wemyss & March Estates - Representation to Proposed Plan - January 2021

Sensitivity: High

Attachments:

[a](#)

CAUTION: External Email

Good afternoon,

On behalf of the Wemyss & March Estate, please find attached our response to the LDP2 Proposed Plan.

I look forward to receiving acknowledgement of receipt and would be delighted to discuss the content further in due course.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

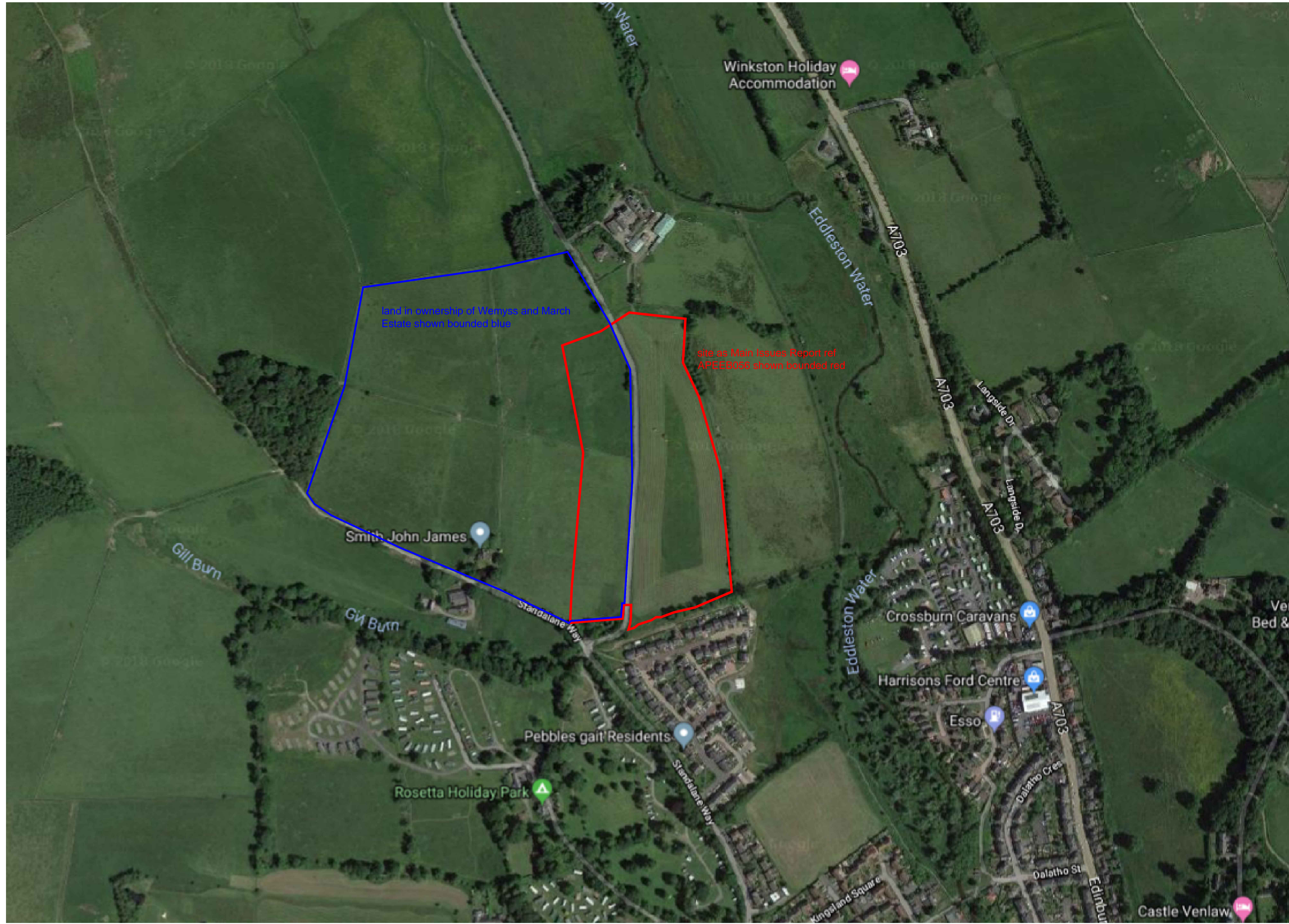
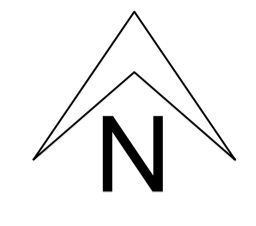
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Capacity study

Peebles North

Client: Wemyss and March Estate
Document No: 191353_Peebles North Capacity Study
Revision: A
Date: August 2020



open

optimised environments

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

This document describes the opportunity that the site south of Chapelhill Farm, Peebles presents for well-located and deliverable residential-led development to the north of the town.

This document has been prepared by Optimised Environments Limited, 'OPEN' on behalf of Wemyss & March Estate (WME). This Capacity Study document has been prepared to support the justification and rationale for the allocation of land to the south of Chapelhill Farm, Peebles. The document provides a landscape and visual appraisal of the WME site area, identifies a potential development area and concludes with a Development Framework plan which illustrates the opportunity the site presents.

OPEN has been appointed, to explore the potential for locating development in this location to inform a representation to Scottish Borders Council (SBC) and help identify suitable development sites to be considered for inclusion in the next SBC LDP2.

The WME site, see figure 2, covers some 14.7 hectares (36.32 acres) to the north of Peebles. Part of the WME site (approximately 2.3 hectares) has been identified as part of the preferred site APEEB056 in the Scottish Borders LDP2 Main issues Report (MIR). The preferred site APEEB056, measuring some 7.0 hectares, and is proposed for residential development to the north of Peebles with a suggested capacity of 150 residential homes.

OPEN believes that the WME site has the capacity for additional development beyond the boundaries of the preferred site. This document has been prepared to demonstrate the rationale for locating additional development land to the north of Peebles and outlines a proposed structure of development in this location.

1.2 The site

The site area, subject of this capacity study, is located to the north of Peebles is identified on figure 1 opposite. The site area is owned by Wemyss & March Estate. The land is retained for agriculture and due to the topography utilised for grazing.

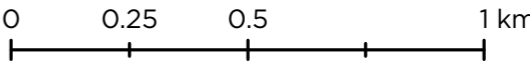
The site comprise four roughly rectangular fields to the west of the minor road which connects Peebles to the Edinburgh Road, A703, to the north. The land slopes up from the minor road, rising from east to west.

The western boundary of the site is defined by field boundary to the road. The northern boundary of the site is defined by a stone wall field boundary which runs west from Chapelhill Farm. The western boundary of the site is defined by a stone wall field boundary and to the south west enclosed by woodland. The southern boundary of the site follows the Standalane Way, which provides farm access and is also part of the Core Path (CP 162) network.



Legend

- Land South of Chapelhill Farm
- Land in Ownership of Wemyss and March Estate



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fig. 1: Site area.

2. The site and context

2.1 Landscape context

The site and the landscape surrounding the site, and the northern edge of Peebles, has a strong rural character. The valley of the Eddleston Water to the east of the site is framed by the steep slopes of Hamilton Hill to the west and Mallingsland Hill and Venlaw to the east. The A703 is found on the lower eastern slopes of this valley. The Peebles settlement is nestled within the valleys of the River Tweed and Eddleston Water with its centre focussed around the confluence of these two rivers, see figure 3.

The site area is located on the slopes of Hamilton Hill on steeply sloping land that lies between the Standalane access track (also the Cross Borders Drove Road footpath) and the minor road that passes Chapelhall Farm. The site area is split roughly into a quadrant of roughly equal sized field compartments separated by drystone walling. A small woodland sits on high ground to the west of the site area boundary which due to its elevated position on the shoulder of Hamilton Hill is a recognisable landscape feature from surrounding views across Peebles. The small woodland is also the site of the no longer used Standalane Quarry. Boundary trees to Standalane visually connect to the wider strips of tree belts and small woods that frame the settled area of north Peebles including the Rosetta Holiday Park (camping and caravanning).

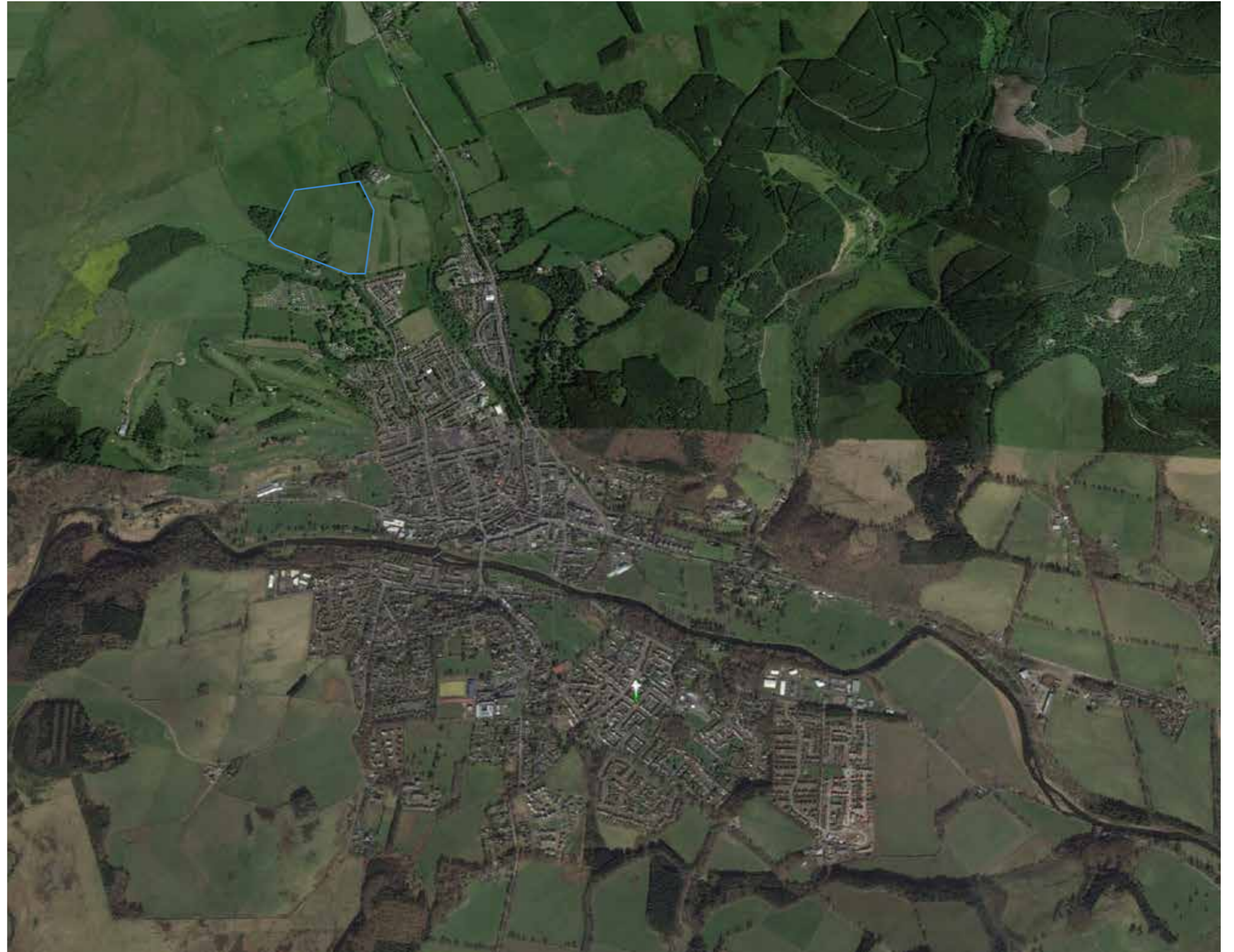
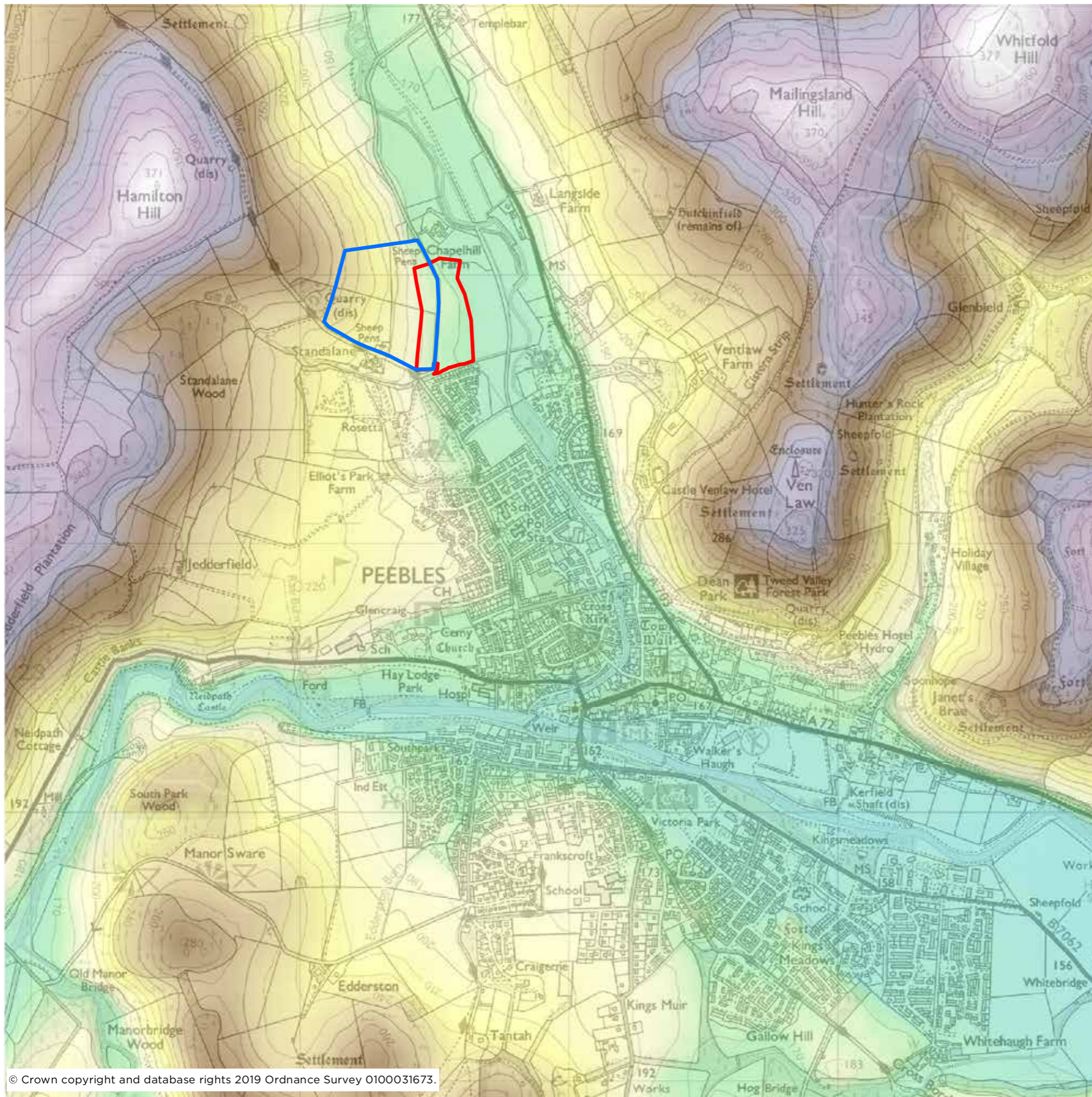


fig. 2: Study area in town context.

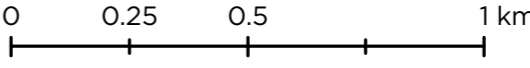


Legend

- Land South of Chapelhill Farm
- Land in Ownership of Wemyss and March Estate

OS Terrain 5 DTM

Elevation (m)
 High : 379.5
 Low : 152.1



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fig. 3: Topography.

2.2 Landscape Character

In early 2019, SNH published an update to the characterisation of Scotland's landscape as a digital resource. The information builds on the characterisation studies published in the 1990's. SNH describe the recent publication as superseding the 1990s landscape character descriptions and mapping. The Key Characteristics of

The site area lies within the area identified as Upland Valley with Woodland (LCT 116) within the 2019 dataset, key characteristics are described as follows:

- 'Meandering river valley, strongly enclosed by uplands.
- Flat valley floor, broad and open in places, narrow and more intimate in others.
- Prominent terraces (haughlands) caused by fluvial and glacial action.
- Strong influence of woodland, with extensive coniferous forest prominent on valley sides, and mature hedgerow tree lines, broadleaf, and mixed policy woodlands on valley floor.
- Traditional dwellings, farmsteads and hamlets clustered at the foot of valley side slopes.
- Mill towns prominent on valley floor and sides.
- Tower houses and mansions common along river banks.
- Prehistoric hillforts common on gently rounded hill tops.
- Designed policies and parklands significantly contribute to woodland cover and character.'

Additional description in relation to settlement is also provided as follows:

'The medieval burgh of Peebles and the mill towns of Innerleithen and Walkerburn are the main settlements in this Landscape Character Type. These towns are built mainly of stone and are centred around grey whinstone mill buildings in the valley floor. The light coloured buildings of mid and late 20th Century expansion along the valley floor and higher on the valley sides are often conspicuous against the darker coloured fields and trees. Along the valley edges and in many of the tributary valleys are farmsteads and hamlets of simple traditional design. Tower houses e.g. Neidpath and Newark Castles, and mansions, such as Traquair House, are common along the riverbanks. These are often set amongst mature mixed policy woodlands, with distinctive tall ornamental conifers rising above the surrounding broadleaf canopy. A quarry at Stobo supplied slates used widely in vernacular buildings throughout the Borders.'

2.3 Landscape Designations

The Peebles Conservation Area encompasses a large area of Peebles fanning out from the Tweed River and the core of the settlement found along the A72. Views from the conservation area to the site area are limited by the urban build up and surrounding vegetation of Peebles which intervenes.

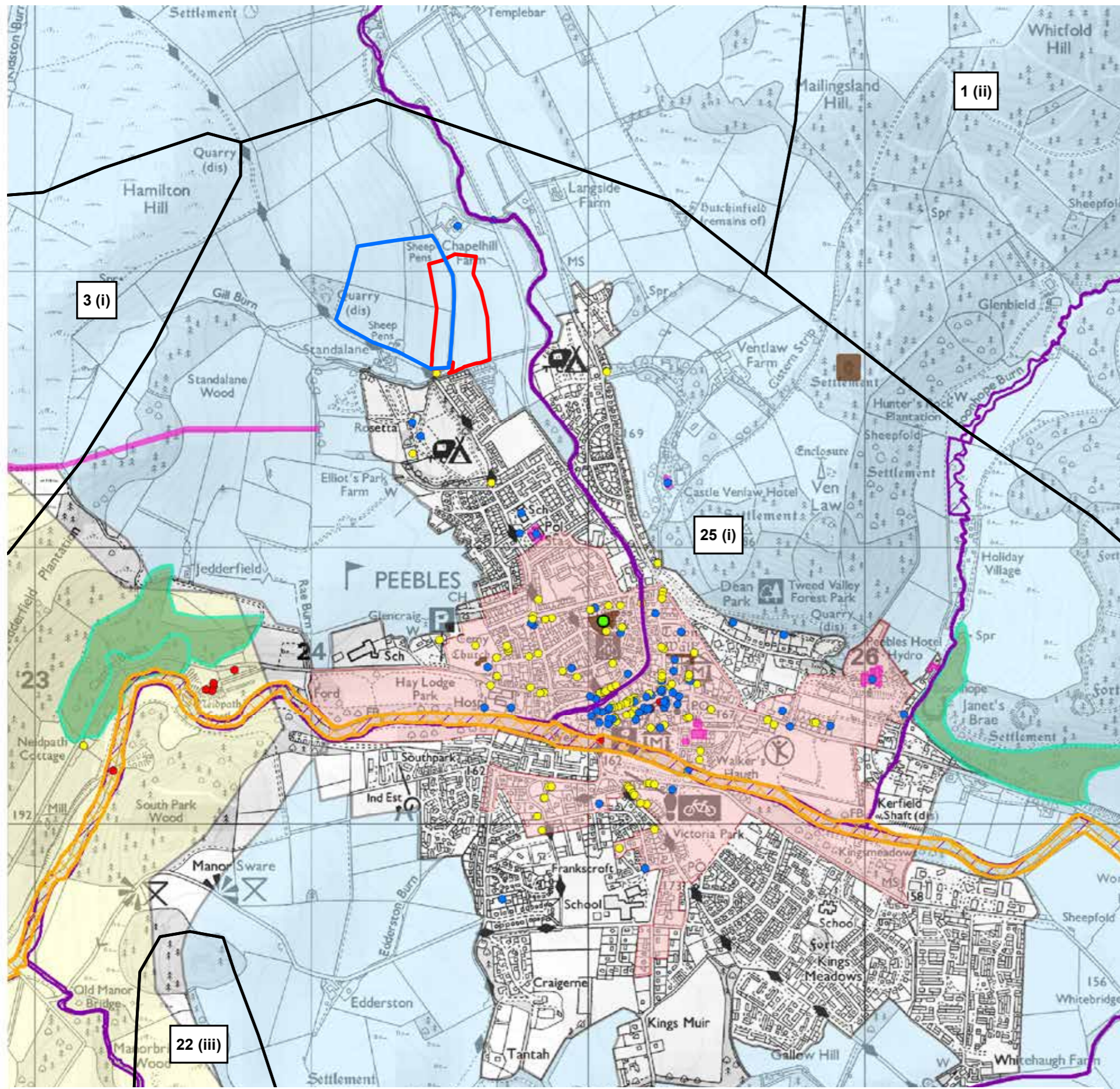
The site and surrounding landscape lies within the Tweed Valley Special Landscape Area (SLA). Albeit that the Peebles settlement is excluded from the designation. The SLA statement of importance includes the following:

'The broad Tweed Valley is typical of the Borders and is the most familiar of the Borders valleys. Accordingly, it has a strong sense of place, with certain views being instantly recognisable. The varied mix of landscape elements is highly representative, with forestry, woodland, open hillsides and pastoral farmland all juxtaposed. Added to this mix is a range of settlement types, with the valley providing the setting to several settlements. The landscape unfolds as the viewer follows the river through the valley, presenting new vistas alternately dominated by forestry, as around Walkerburn, or by the steep rocky slopes above Innerleithen. The contrast between the well settled valley and the bare heather and grass moors and landmark hills is striking. Well designed forestry actively contributes to this visual experience in places.'

The forces for change particular to the site that are listed in the SLA statement of importance include 'development pressures at settlement edges, for housing and commercial developments' and 'potential for visual impact of development on hills outside the proposed SLA'.

The following management recommendations are also highlighted and include:

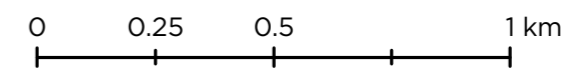
- 'Careful management of land use at settlement edges.
- Consider landscape and visual impacts of proposed developments in and around settlements, particularly the treatment of their edges.
- Seek opportunities to better integrate existing development into the landscape.
- Promote the restructuring of forests, and the use of forest design plans for new areas of afforestation.
- Consider the effects of development on hilltops, such as masts or wind farms, which may be visible within the valley.'



Legend

- Land South of Chapelhill Farm
- Land in Ownership of Wemyss and March Estate
- Property in Care
- Listed Building Category A
- Listed Building Category B
- Listed Building Category C
- Ancient Woodland
- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Canmore Site
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- National Scenic Area
- Special Landscape Area
- Scottish Borders Landscape Character Assessment

- 1 (ii). Dissected Plateau Moorland - Moorfoot Plateau
- 3 (i). Plateau Outliers - Eddleston / Lyne Interfluve
- 22 (iii). Upland Valley with Pastoral Floor - Manor Water
- 23 (ii). Pastoral Upland Valley - Eddleston Water
- 25 (i). Upland Valley with Woodland - Middle Tweed



Data Sources:
 Scottish Natural Heritage 2019
 Historic Environment Scotland 2019
 Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan 2016

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fig. 4: Landscape Character and Designations.

2.4 The site

Due to the existing agricultural use specific features within the site are limited. The key aspects within and around the site area which have informed the siting and form of development have been the topography, site boundaries and surrounding woodland areas.

There are very few trees within the site area however none of these will act as a constraints to development within the area.

There are a number of overhead lines and other utilities which cross the site however none of these will act as a constraints to development within the area.

No flood risk is identified within the site area on SEPA's flood maps. As the site falls to the east, the flood risk from Eddleston Water becomes more of a determining factor in the developable area to the east side of the road

Slopes and aspect

The topography of the site is perhaps the key factor which has influenced the location and form of development in this area. A key characteristic of the site is its steeply sloping south east facing aspect which provides views overlooking the river valley.

The plan opposite, figure 5, highlights the topography and gradients of the slopes in and around the site area. It shows the areas of the site which are steeper to the north and the steeper band through the middle of the site. The slopes are shallower and more favourable to development to the east and south of the site, the gradients would not preclude development in these areas but would require a sensitive approach to the site layout and built form.

Boundaries

With the open agricultural character of the site the plot boundaries formed by stone walls are an important feature which should be retained and protected within the site layout. A key characteristic across the wider landscape these boundaries should inform the site layout.

Surrounding woodland

Groups and belts of mixed woodland are a key characteristic of Peebles, located on the lower land in the valley in contrast to the open agricultural areas of higher ground that surround the town. The woodland surrounding the site, located on areas of steeper land, surrounding properties, following roads and rivers must therefore be retained and enhanced to not only contain the site but integrate it with the character of the town to the south as opposed to the open landscape areas to the north.

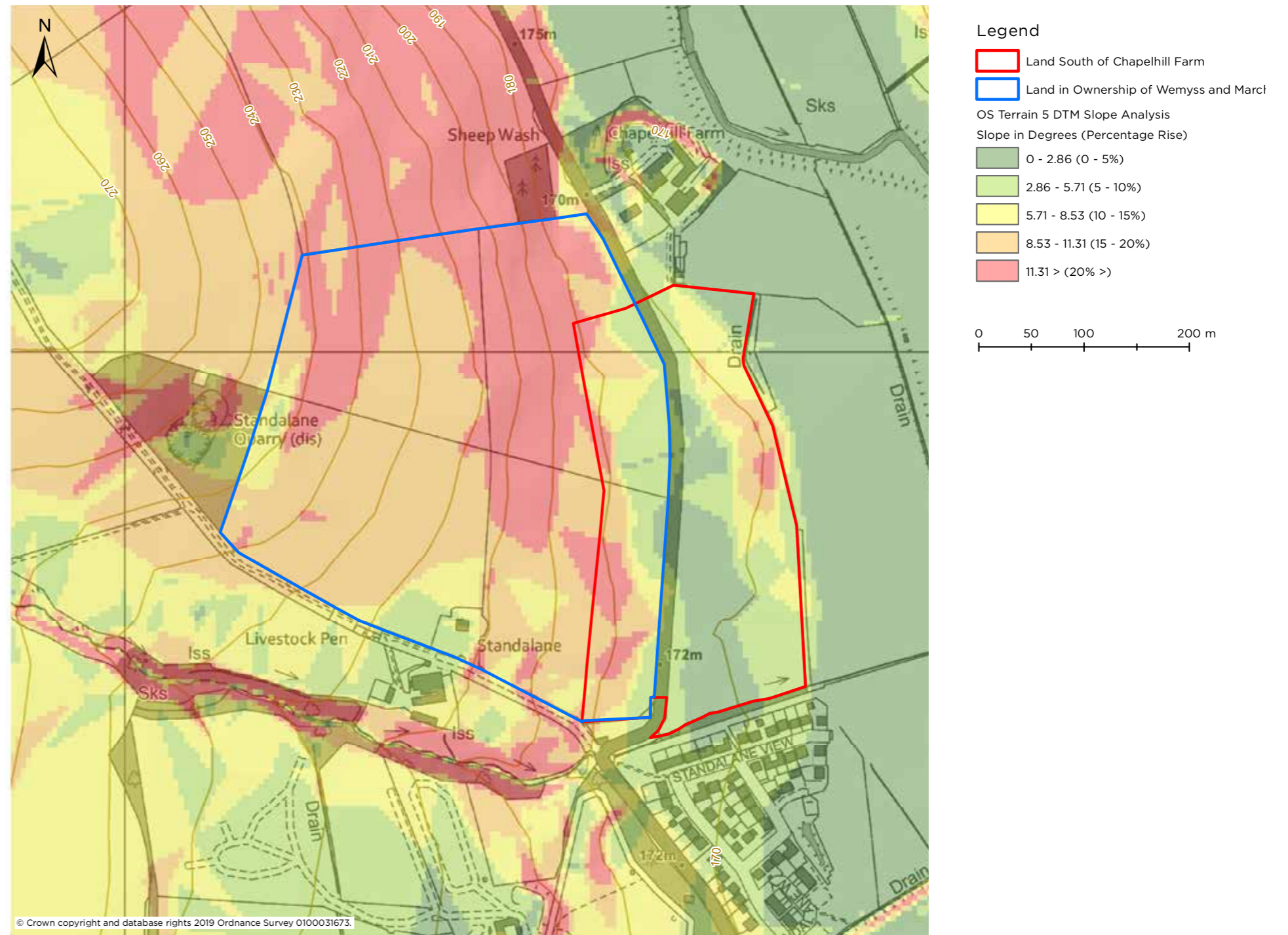


fig. 5: Site topography.

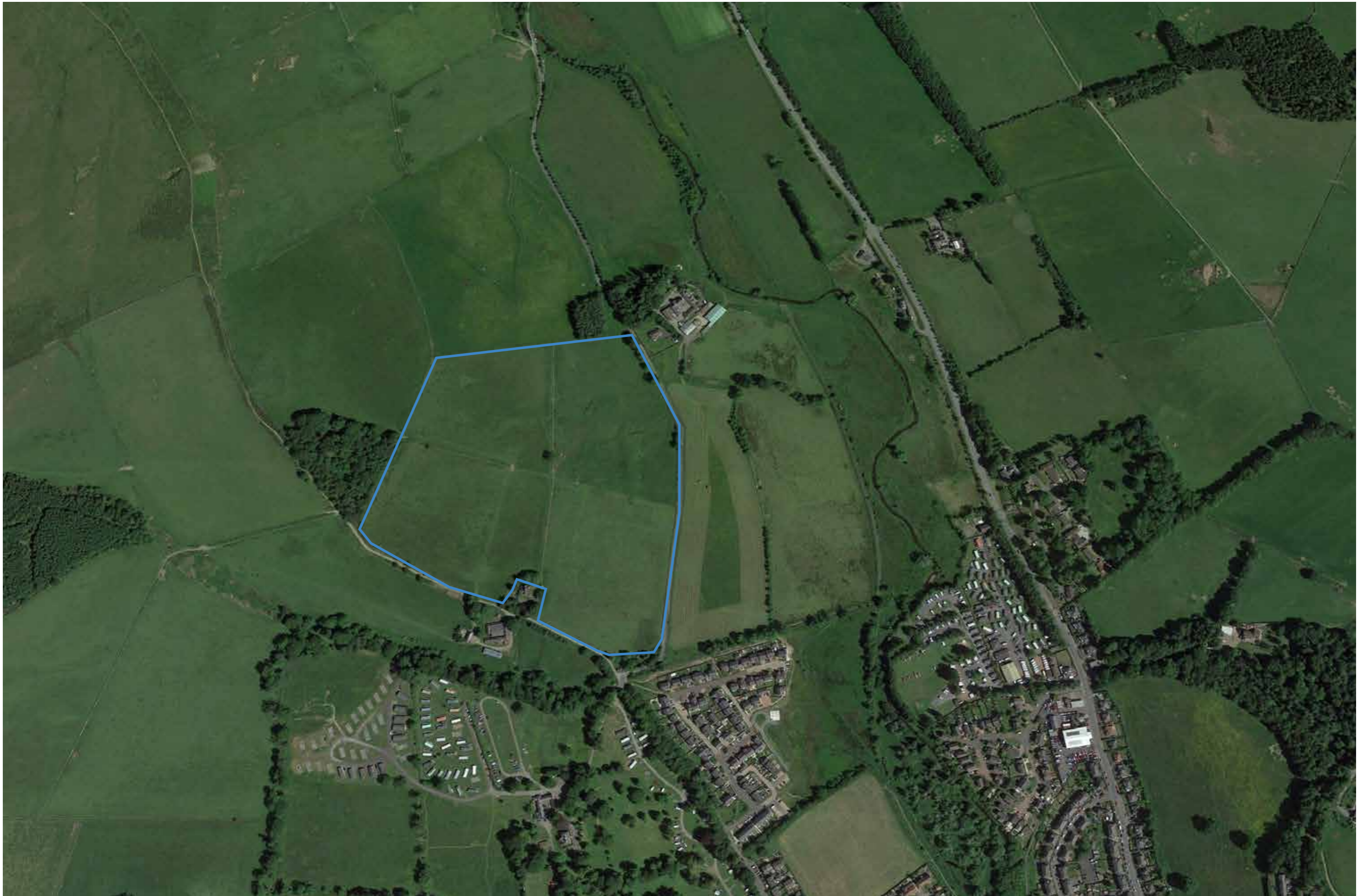


fig. 6: Site analysis.

2.5 Landscape and Visual Appraisal

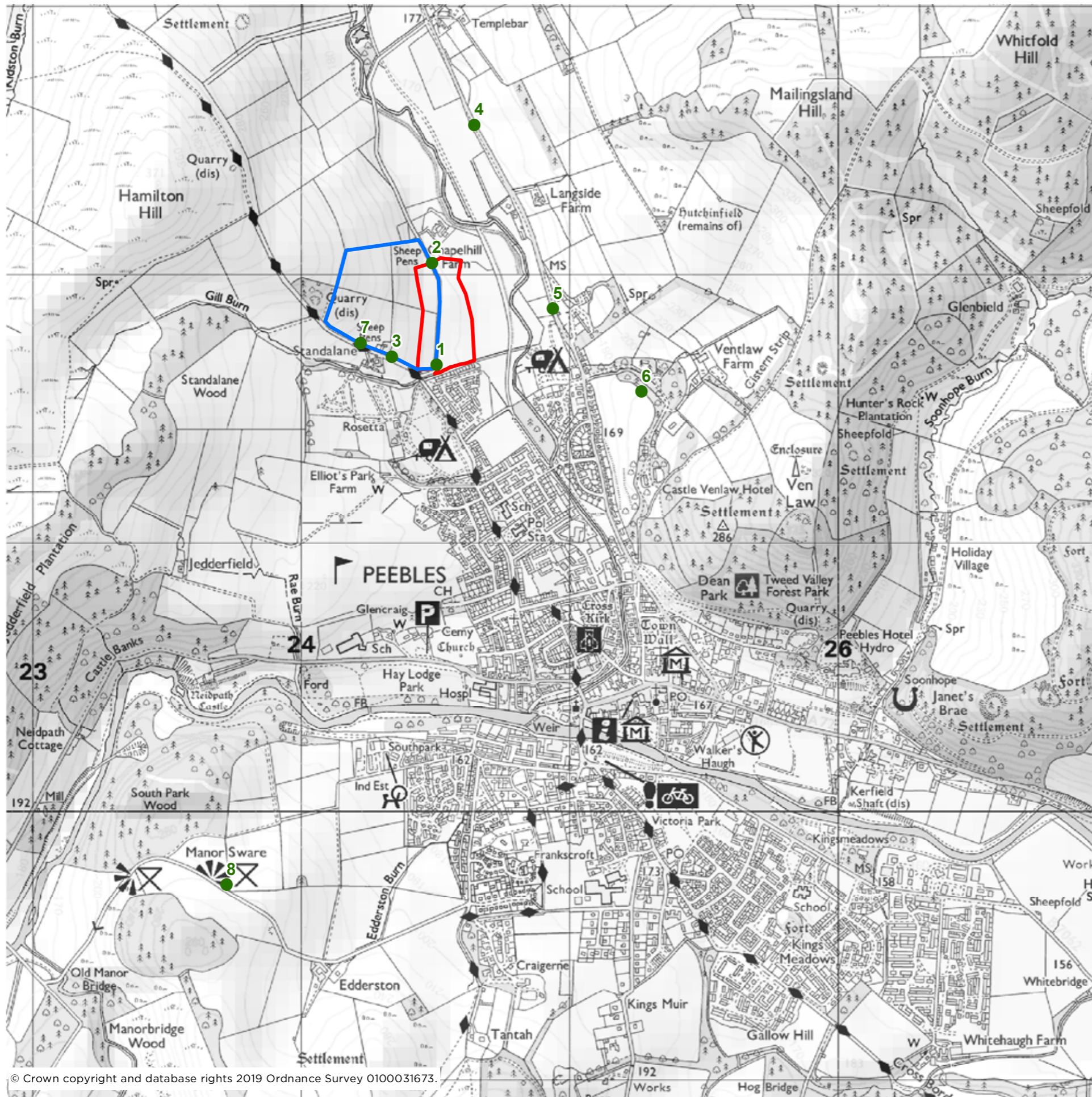
Figures 8 to 15 of this report are representative of views into and from the potential site from the surrounding landscape. The landscape and visual analysis presented in this section of the report, whilst representing a cross section of receptor types and sensitivities in the area, is intended as a preliminary appraisal and does not constitute an LVIA.

2.5.1 Visual Context

Due to the east facing aspect of the site area, the majority of views towards the site area are found to the east. The site sits across a broad shoulder of Hamilton Hill and whilst broadly east facing the hill has a north-east and south-east aspect. As a result, the northern field compartments are not visible in views from the south and the southern field compartments are not visible from the north. The sloping nature of the site landform can be appreciated from nearby locations along the minor road that passes Chapelhill Farm. The steepest parts of the site are rougher in texture and landcover than the more gently sloping areas which are closer to the minor road east of the site or above the dyke that stretches out from Standalane Farm.

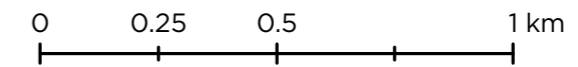
The A703 has good views into the site from directly opposite Chapelhill Farm but these views quickly diminish to the north with the site area obscured by around Templebar due to intervening landform and tree vegetation. There are elevated parts of Peebles in the Kings Muir area, from where properties with unobstructed views north are able to view the general context of the landscape around the site. The view at Manor Sware shares a similar view (albeit as a more elevated example) and it is clear that only the south western field compartment of the site is visible. The view from Manor Sware provides a key overview of the Peebles settlement and the pattern of development stretching out along the rivers of the Tweed and Eddleston Water. If potential development on the proposal site is restricted in the areas uphill of Standalane Farm (to the west) the same undeveloped character of the skyline to the north would be maintained both from the Manor Sware viewpoint and from those elevated properties within southern Peebles that have views north.

It is considered therefore that potential visual effects are limited in extent and would only be experienced by visual receptors with close proximity views of the site area, largely found to the east. The visual effect that these neighbouring visual receptors might experience can be minimised through the careful design and layout of any future development and proposed planting at the edges and internally as structure planting.



Legend

- Land South of Chapelhill Farm
- Land in Ownership of Wemyss and March Estate
- Photo Locations
- 1, Minor Rd (East of Site)
- 2, Chapelhill Farm (North East of Site)
- 3, Standalane Farm (South of Site)
- 4, A703 Peebles Approach
- 5, A703 edge of Peebles
- 6, Castle Venlaw access track
- 7, Standalane Farm (South West of Site)
- 8, Manor Sware Viewpoint Car Park



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fig. 7: Photo location plan.



fig. 8: Viewpoint 1, Minor Road (East of site)



fig. 9: Viewpoint 2, Chapelhill Farm (North East of Site).



fig. 10: Viewpoint 3, Standalane Farm (South of Site).



fig. 11: Viewpoint 4, A703 Peebles Approach.

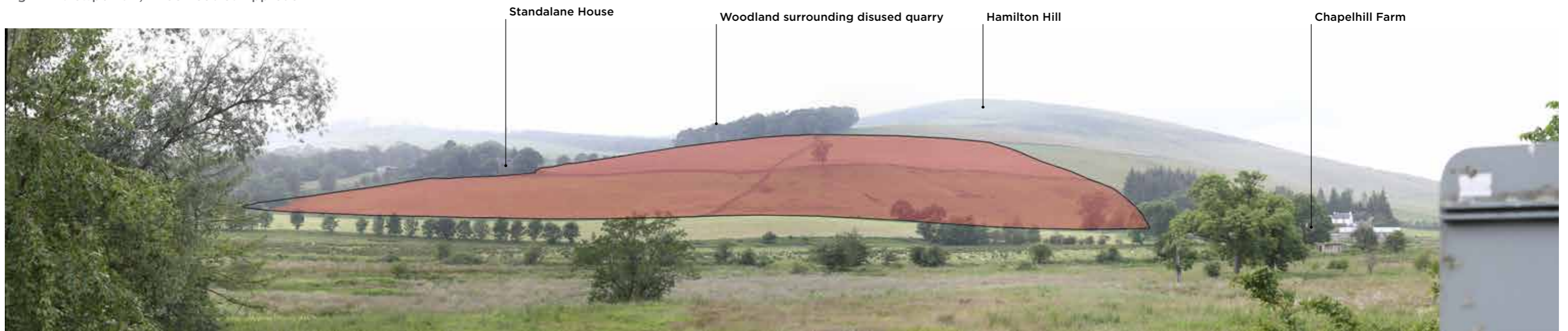


fig. 12: Viewpoint 5, A703 edge of Peebles.



fig. 13: Viewpoint 6, Castle Venlaw, access track.



Standalane Track (Core Path 162)

Woodland surrounding disused quarry

fig. 14: Viewpoint 7, Standalane Farm (South West of Site).



Woodland surrounding disused quarry

Northern part of site area

Peebles Golf Course

fig. 15: Viewpoint 8, Manor Sware, Viewpoint Car Park.

Chapelhill Farm



Standalane House

Standalane Track (CP 162)

Peebles town centre



3. Landscape capacity

3.1 Conclusion of LVA

The proposal site would add an area of development to the north of the existing settlement edge increasing the influence that settlement has on the rural character of the Upland Valley with Woodland LCT from where it would be most visible. From the wider landscape the proposal site represents a relatively discreet position in views, this can be seen in the annotated photo panoramas from the Manor Sware viewpoint and A703 south of Templebar. These changes would however be localised in extent and the immediate area has existing landscape features that when considered in relation to future development, along with potential additional landscape planting, offers further mitigating factors in support of settlement expansion in this area:

- The existing tree planting around Chapelhill Farm and along the Eddleston Water river valley provides some containment to future settlement expansion providing a well-established natural settlement edge;
- The Framework Plan seeks to continue the current pattern of built development found on the lower slopes of Hamilton Hill;
- The Framework Plan seeks to minimise visual effects to neighbouring visual receptors through careful design and layout along with proposed planting at the edges and internally as structure planting; and
- Views towards the ridgeline created by the eastern shoulder of Hamilton Hill from the south would not be interrupted providing the suggested pattern of development in the Framework Plan is followed.

On the basis of these considerations, the proposals represented by the Framework Plan included in this report are regarded as providing an opportunity for potentially integrating future housing development to the north of the settlement edge of Peebles. New development within proposal site would have very localised visual influence and would mirror the existing pattern of built development that is currently emerging in north Peebles by following the lower western slopes of Hamilton Hill and set back from the banks of Eddleston Water.

3.1.1 Proposed developable area

Following the landscape and visual assessment of the site an updated developable area has been identified that reflects the findings of the study, shown on figure 16 opposite. This area is considered to have capacity to accommodate built development without negatively impacting the landscape character or setting of Peebles. The new developable area extends to some 7.1 Hectares (12.1 Hectares including land to the east of the road).

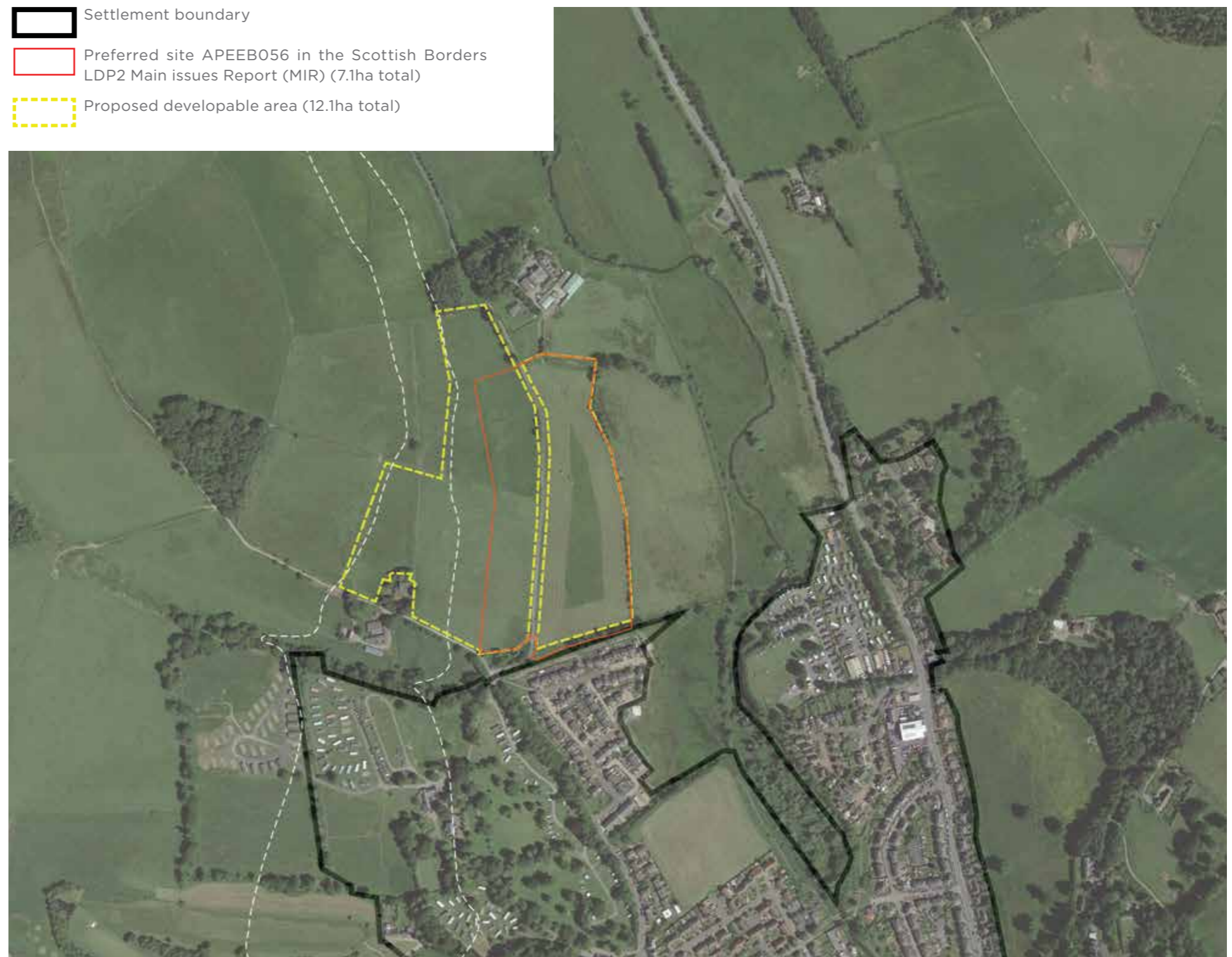


fig. 16: Proposed site capacity.

3.2 Potential development plan

The proposed development plan opposite, figure 17, has been included to illustrate the key principles that should be applied to the identified development area to ensure it fits within the established landscape structure and pattern of built development to the north of Peebles. For context the plan highlights allocated development areas and structural landscape features as identified in the 2016 LDP, see inset figure 18.

The plan identifies two development areas to the west of the minor road within the proposed developable area. Structural woodland planting should surround these development areas, following the established field boundaries and connecting existing areas of woodland to the north around Chapelhill to the woodland along Standalane track to the south. Opportunities for advance planting of the structural woodland should be considered as this would further help establish a structure with robust landscape boundaries.

The northern development area (1.8 Ha) has been kept on the lower, less steep, slopes of Hamilton Hill as informed by the slope analysis. The developable area extends north to the existing woodland around Chapelhill which acts to contain the development and provide a point from which new woodland planting should connect.

The southern development area (4.1 Ha) follows the existing urban pattern, extending west just beyond Standalane Farm where it would be contained by woodland planting, keeping off the upper slopes which are typically free from development. Woodland planting along the existing field boundary to the north, follows the shoulder of Hamilton Hill and would contain development to the south.

Together the development areas (to the west of the minor road) measure 5.9 Hectares and would have the capacity for around 100 to 120 units.

In addition to the areas identified with the potential to accommodate residential development the plan also identifies the Standalane steading as a mixed use opportunity. The existing steading would require some refurbishment but presents an exciting and complimentary mixed use development opportunity in line with the proposals to the north and close to the Rosetta mixed use development to the south.

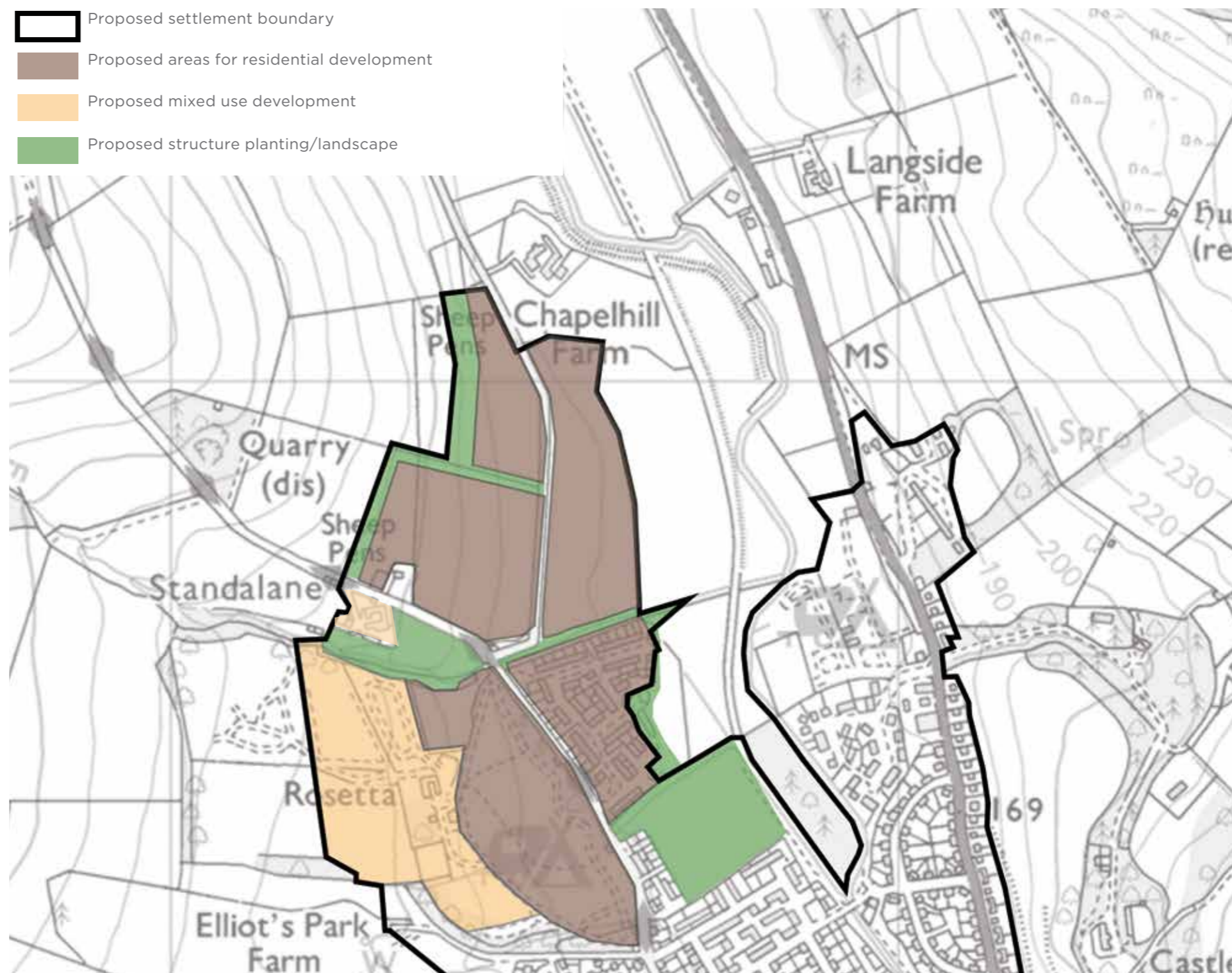


fig. 17: Proposed development plan.

3.3 Development Framework plan

The approach to development within the identified developable area must be based upon creating a layout that fits with the wider landscape structure, recognises the pattern of development and retains and utilises existing site features to best effect. The character of the site is defined by its topography and open panoramic views. These features coupled with opportunities identified in the previous section lead to a simple and logical concept for the site layout

The key elements for the design approach to the site are:

- A strong landscape boundary to the west of the site. Structural woodland planting should connect existing areas of woodland to the south around Standalane Farm to the existing woodland at Chapelhill. This will reduce the visual impact of development and help integrate the development with the existing landscape setting. Consideration should be given to advance planting of this woodland to help establish robust landscape boundaries.
- New woodland planting within the site between the southern and northern areas, following existing field boundaries to reinforce the landscape pattern, further contain development and reflect the existing character within Peebles to the south.
- Woodland planting and areas of open space to protect the setting of Standalane House and promote good connections to Standalane Track/ Core Path.
- Areas of open space and woodland on the steeper slopes to help minimise the need for earth works, break up the development and allow public spaces for people to enjoy views from the site.
- A street structure that integrates the existing minor road into the development and follows the topography as much as possible to minimise earth works and allows the development to benefit from the southerly aspect and views across the river valley.
- Development blocks that respond to the topography and ensure the views from the site are maximised from the open spaces and as many properties as possible.
- The street structure could provide suitable vehicle access to the Standalane steading site. The Core Path would provide pedestrian access.

These elements will ensure the development connects with the wider surroundings creating a legible site structure and a distinct sense of place. The key aspects of the concept are illustrated on the diagram opposite, identifying the main principles that underly the initial development framework.

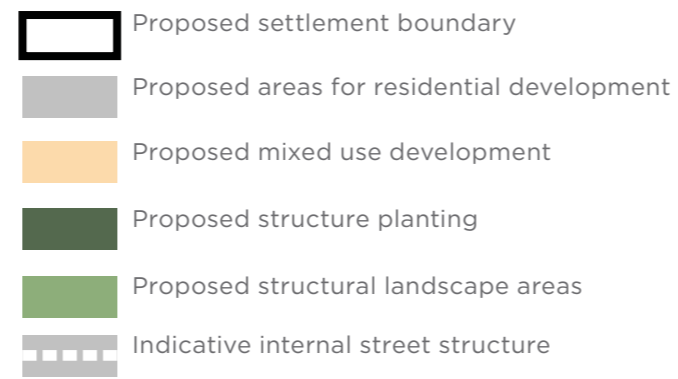


fig. 18: Proposed development framework.

3.4 Summary

The response to the LDP2 set out in this document underpins OPEN's view that additional land, to that identified in the Proposed Plan, should be allocated for development within the area to the north of Peebles.

The preferred site APEEB056, measuring some 7.0 hectares, and is proposed for residential development to the north of Peebles with a suggested capacity of 150 residential homes. Through following the landscape led masterplanning approach to development set out in this document, OPEN believe that the site could be increased to 12.1 Hectares, by extending the allocation to the north and west. This could provide a total of around 250 new homes to the north of Peebles. The Standalane steading site should also be considered as a mixed use development opportunity site alongside the residential development opportunity to the north.

OPEN believes that the site to the west of the existing road (within Wemyss & March Estate land) has the capacity to accommodate 100-120 new of the new homes which will allow flexibility for the creation of an attractive and distinct urban area set within a robust landscape structure in keeping with the traditional settlement form to the south.

In summary OPEN believes that the Wemyss & March Estate land has the capacity for additional development beyond the boundaries of the preferred site (APEEB056) as shown on figure 16. The plan opposite illustrates the proposed extended development site to demonstrate how the scale and structure of the site would be in keeping with the town context.

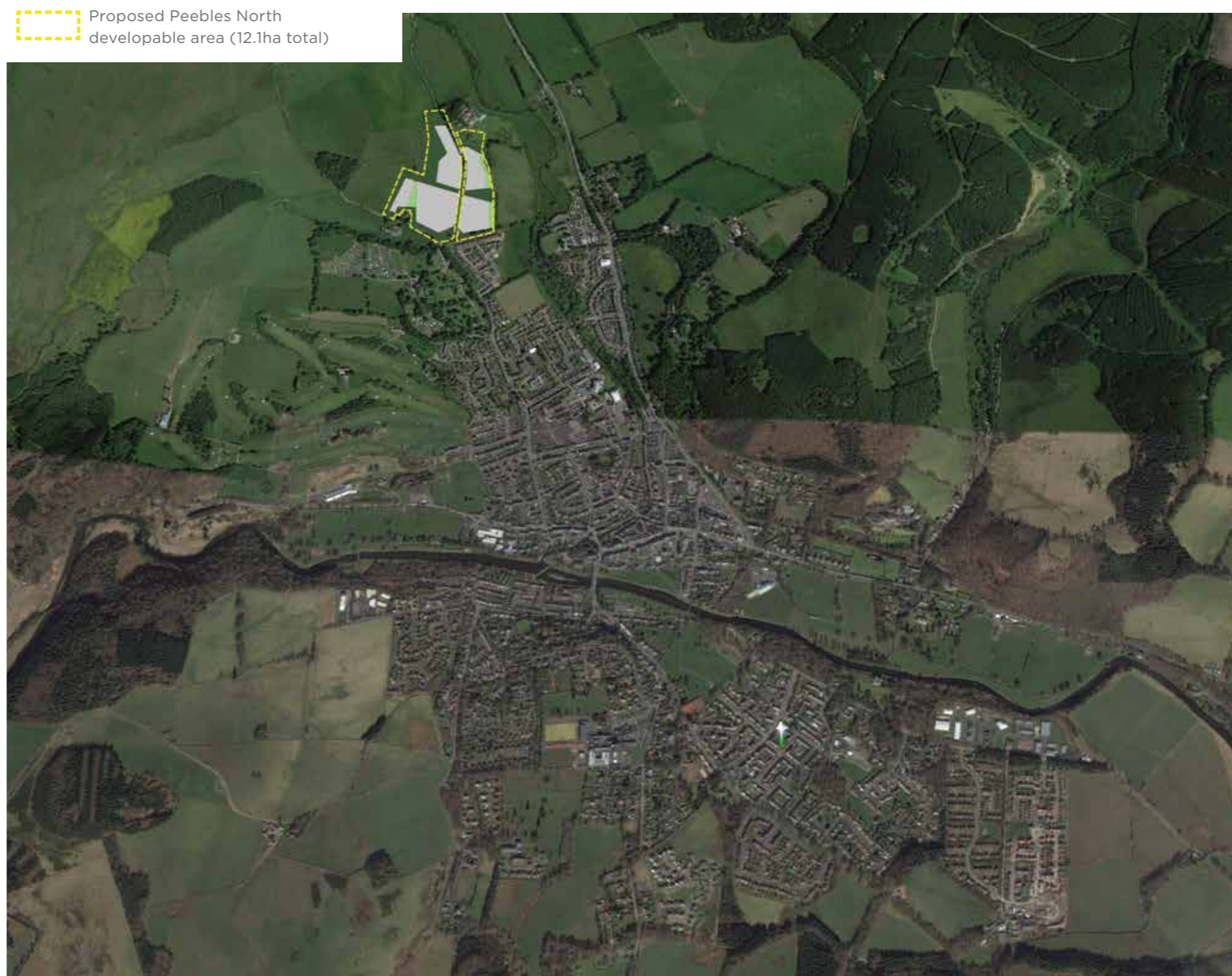


fig. 19: Proposed development framework in town context.

optimised environments Ltd.

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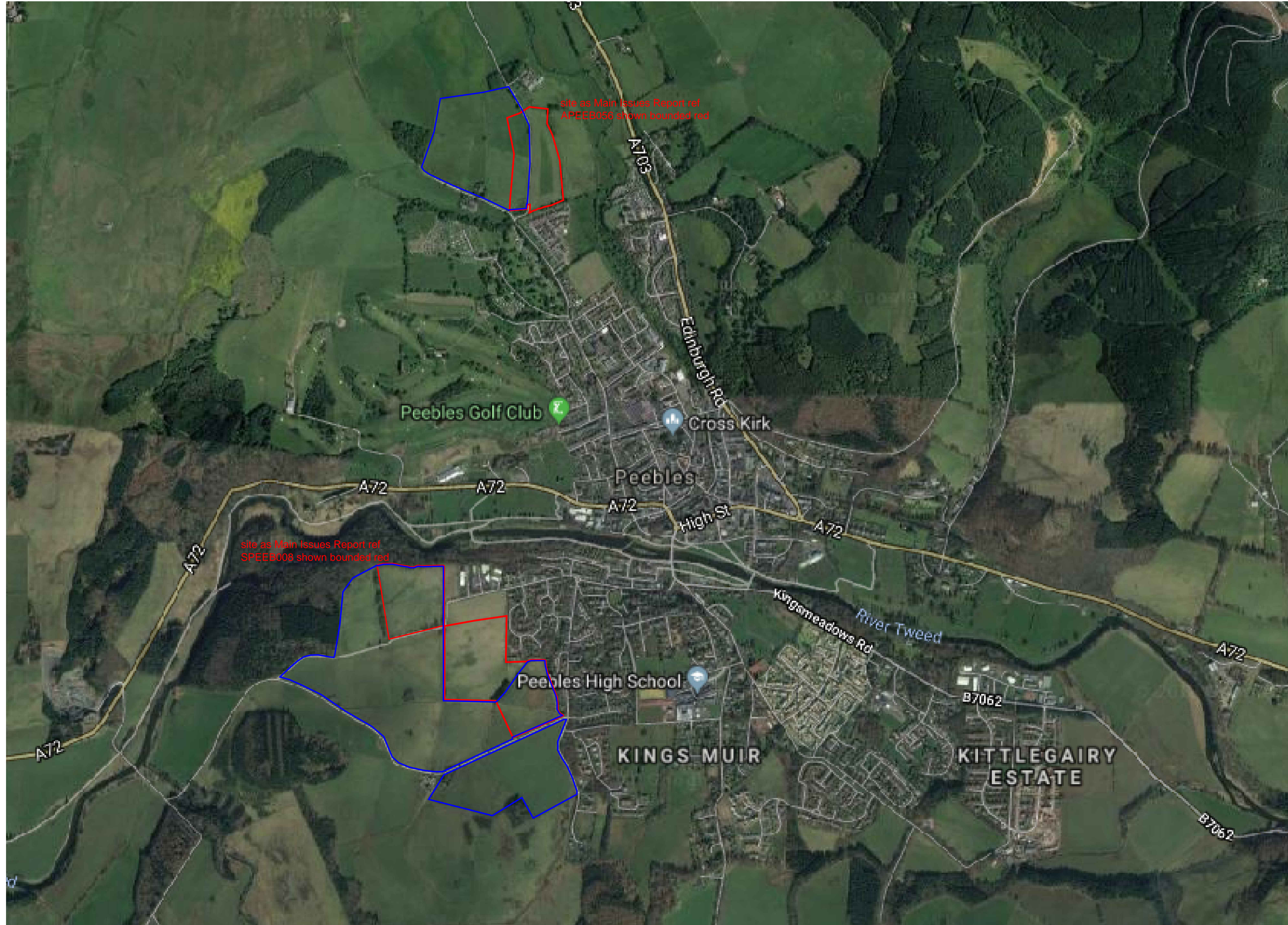
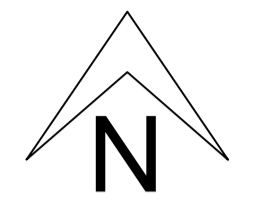
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t 0207 984 4022

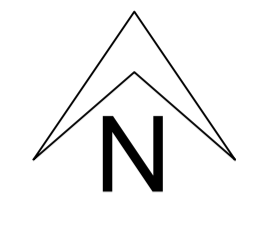
Manchester

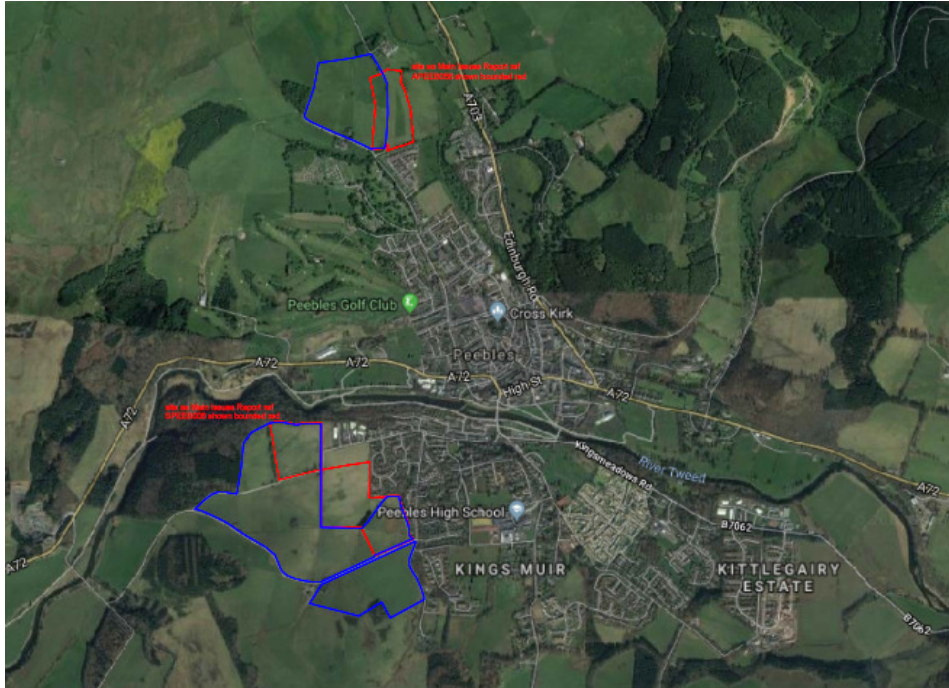
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Registered address: Quartermile Two | 2 Lister Square | Edinburgh | EH5 9JH

land in ownership of Wemyss and March
Estate shown bounded blue







SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2 Response to Proposed Plan

On behalf of

The Wemyss & March Estate

January 2021

apt planning &
development

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East Lothian
EH40 3AB

www.apt-plandevlop.co.uk



**Scottish Borders LDP2
Response to Proposed Plan
The Wemyss & March Estate**

INTRODUCTION

1. On behalf of the Wemyss & March Estate (WME), **apt planning & development** is pleased to lodge this response to the publication of the **Proposed Scottish Borders Local Development Plan**.
2. As a landowner and employer in the Scottish Borders, as well as supporting businesses in the provision of leasehold property and supply chain activities, and providing affordable rural housing for rent, WME would be delighted to further engage in the preparation of LDP2 and in the context of the comments made below.
3. This document is intended to build on our earlier submission in January 2019 responding to the **Main Issues Report** and is accompanied by a **Landscape Capacity Study** prepared by **OPEN**.
4. WME is delighted to respond with site **APEEB056** having been retained in the Proposed LDP and we therefore make this submission **in support of that allocation**. In addition, we continue to promote the potential for the site at Standalane/Chapelhill to stretch further to the west and the Landscape Capacity Assessment helps qualify the promotion of this additional land.

APEEB056 – Standalane/Chapelhill

5. As above, WME continues to support proposed development site at **APEEB056, Standalane**.
6. To build on this allocation (and as outlined in our MIR submission), WME owns further land to the west of **APEEB056** suitable to be considered to deliver a larger site for residential development. In assembling this wider site, WME can provide additional, deliverable sites for the provision of new homes to the north of Peebles.
7. WME part-owns the land included in the proposed allocation (to the west of the road dissecting the site) as well as the continuation of the land to the west (roughly rectangular in shape and consisting of four fields – see below) which although sloping up from east to west, could help deliver new homes to the north of Peebles either as part of the existing APEEB0056 or as a new allocation ensuring a single ownership and potentially giving more certainty over the future delivery of the site.
8. WME is happy to work alongside the owner of the remainder of the site to the east or work with SBC to deliver new homes to the west on land solely owned by WME. The site benefits from good access onto Edinburgh Road (A703) enabling quick access into Peebles from the north, or easy access away from the town (without the potential for adding to congestion in the town centre).

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9. The land slopes up from east to west creating the opportunity for attractive south-facing development as you move up the slope towards the west of the site. This would enable additional development, outwith the extent shown in the Proposed Plan but within a natural limit of development as defined through further dialogue and survey, design and layout work.
10. The Landscape Capacity Study prepared by OPEN looks at this in more detail, clearly identifying additional land to that in the Proposed Plan that would ensure a coordinated approach to development to the north of the town and potentially relieving pressure elsewhere in Peebles.
11. The Capacity Study identifies the potential for development to fit within the rising landform, which together with additional boundary planting will help minimise what is identified as being localised visual impacts. Added to the opportunity afforded by Standalane Steading to provide a mixed use redevelopment/refurbishment opportunity and a coordinated approach looking at a larger site area to the north of Peebles becomes a credible solution in helping SBC meet housing supply demand targets for the forthcoming LDP2 (and beyond).
12. The expanded area extends to just over 7 hectares to the west of the access road and over 12 hectares in total including the area to the east of the road and under separate ownership.
13. As the site falls to the east, the flood risk from Eddleston Water becomes more of a determining factor in the developable area on this side of the road (and a Flood Risk Assessment is identified as a critical part of any future proposals for the site).
14. Land to the west of the road, presents an appropriate northerly expansion of development in Peebles whilst future proofing the potential development from any encroachment of the area at risk from flooding.

SPEEB008 – South West Peebles

15. WME was naturally disappointed that **SPEEB008**, initially proposed in the MIR for longer-term mixed use development of business/industry and residential development to the south west of Peebles has not been retained in the Proposed Plan. We again promote this site in this document for a mixed use development in the creation of an attractive south-west expansion of Peebles.



16. WME can help SBC create a long-term defensible boundary to this part of the Peebles, whilst enabling and delivering short, medium and longer term development, both business and industry as well as additional residential land simultaneously relieving pressure on other areas of Peebles.
17. The area of land to the west of Edderston Road and Edderston Ridge is only gently undulating until it rises further to the west, is accessible via Craigerne Lane and Caledonian Road whilst WME has the ability, through further planting and the pattern of development to shape this edge to Peebles, providing a significant area of land for future phased development alongside a long-term defensible boundary to the town.
18. We acknowledge that certainty is required with regards to the requirement for and delivery of a new crossing over the River Tweed and are willing to work with the SBC in better understanding this requirement and helping with its delivery if at all possible. We also acknowledge that this is why the land can only be treated as part of the longer-term development options for Peebles.
19. The MIR preferred allocation was for 19.5 hectares of land, with approximately 6.5 hectares being promoted for the future expansion of South Park Industrial Estate. Of the remaining 13 hectares of land for residential development, the site immediately to the south of South Park Industrial Estate and comprising of just over 2 hectares is currently under construction for residential development following the granting of planning permission 18/01026/FUL.



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20. By contrast (and including those areas included as preferred future allocations), WME controls over 50 hectares in the immediate area, giving them a unique ability to help shape this southwest edge to Peebles with an appropriate mix of landscaping, boundary treatments and (mainly residential) development.

Policy HD2 – Development in the Countryside

21. WME supports the Borders Council in seeking to protect the countryside from inappropriate, poorly designed and poorly located development (Policy HD2). However there is a need for good development across a range of locations across the Borders including those in the Countryside. WME continues to promote a variation to the preferred policy that allows development in the countryside on the proviso that it can be justified by good design and acceptable impact on the surrounding area (visual/infrastructure etc.).
22. There are numerous redundant or semi-redundant former cottages and farm buildings in the countryside that could be brought back into beneficial use (not exclusively but more often than not, residential). However the cost of refurbishment/redevelopment coupled with limited financial returns means land and property owners cannot justify the outlay. Appropriate new-build in addition to the existing property would help bridge this funding gap (and we acknowledge that there is some support for this in the Proposed LDP – Section E of HD2).
23. However, many of these buildings are constrained by access difficulties or lack of modern services. In such cases relocating a house to a more accessible site could offer the council a realistic opportunity to deliver much needed rural housing whilst in principle simply replacing an existing building with a better located and more sustainably constructed alternative. There is continued pressure to deliver a wide range of house types and tenures and this proposed approach would help provide a wider variety of types and tenure options (market-rent, mid-market rent, key worker, rural affordable etc.).
24. More flexibility is needed for development in the countryside to assist with diversification opportunities for rural businesses and to promote sustainable development. Limited small scale development profits, rental revenues or receipts from land and plot sales are invariably ploughed back into the Borders economy through further investment (especially through long term stakeholders such as WME), spending on local goods and services and employment...or simply providing much-needed income for a local business enabling it to remain viable.
25. Modern living promotes less travel, working flexibly and from home whilst landowners (large and small) are needing to diversify (even without the as yet still unknown impacts of Brexit and the Coronavirus pandemic) to ensure a viable existence in the Countryside. The impacts of Coronavirus can already been seen with increasing demand for flexible accommodation in more rural areas, enabling working from home and the establishment of new or relocated businesses.



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26. There is clearly potential for well-designed innovative development in the countryside (of a variety of uses, not just residential) and future investment in appropriate development should be encouraged in promoting good practice and also in supporting the rural and wide Scottish Borders economy.

Summary

27. The Wemyss & March Estate welcomes this opportunity to engage in the LDP process as the Scottish Borders Council seeks to finalise LDP2 and move towards the preparation of LDP2. WME is an existing land and property owner and employer in the Scottish Borders with the ability to work with the Council to help deliver many of the aims of the LDP, including the provision of land for commercial and residential development.
28. WME supports many of the Council's key aims and objectives around the provision of business and housing land and the presumption in favour of sustainability and sustainable development.
29. WME was pleased to see the inclusion of their land included as a preferred site in the Proposed Plan at APEEB056. As explained above and illustrated in the plans and Landscape Capacity Study accompanying this written response, WME has the ability to explore the potential of APEEB056 as they control adjacent land to the west.
30. This site should be considered for additional development and the site-specific characteristics will help create a longer-term, defensible boundary to the north-west of Peebles.
31. WME was disappointed that site SPEEB008, to the southwest of Peebles has been removed as a longer-term development option for commercial and residential development. WME continues to promote the site on the basis that it is deliverable and attractive and that WME controls sufficient land in that part of Peebles to create a long-term defensible boundary to the settlement.
32. On the specific issue of development in the countryside, we are strong advocates for the protection of the countryside from inappropriate development, but also supporters of innovative high quality development where development can be incorporated into the locality and landscape with positive or minimal impacts.
33. As the rural economy evolves and faces up to the challenges it faces, landowners and the Council must work together to ensure a vibrant thriving rural sector and this may require a robust but flexible approach to development in the countryside.



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34. An innovative yet practical approach to the reuse of the existing stock of under-utilised property in desperate need of refurbishment and redevelopment coupled with pockets of complementary and enabling new development can go some way to providing new and affordable housing (both for sale and rent) whilst making the most of the resources already available. This could also involve the permitting of new development at better locations where current conditions preclude the redevelopment of isolated or poorly served existing properties.
35. We would respectfully request that the Scottish Borders Council considers the commentary above and the opportunity to review the allocations to the northwest and southwest of Peebles.
36. WME continues to play an important and positive stakeholder role in the Scottish Borders, constantly seeking opportunities to invest in the area, increasing employment and providing much needed new homes (across of broad spectrum of house types, sizes and tenures) and promoting economic development.
37. WME looks forward to continuing this level of investment and stewardship into the future and would welcome the opportunity to work with SBC to ensure these opportunities are identified and delivered in each LDP cycle.