

# LANDSCAPE REPORT

Former MSD Facility, Breakspear Road South,  
Ickenham, London Borough of Hillingdon

Client: Keltbray Developments Ltd  
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# PART 1: Introduction



Figure 1: Aerial View of existing site

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of Document

This Landscape Report has been prepared to support the Detailed Planning Application for a site at Breakspear Road South, Ickenham. The application is for the retention and demolition of existing buildings, construction of new buildings and hardstanding, widening of vehicular access off Breakspear Road South, associated car and cycle parking, enhanced landscaping and ancillary works. This document includes all details relating to open space and landscape within the development site.

The extent of this application is identified on the adjacent page, comprising of 4.87 hectares of previously developed land. The proposals for this site include a series of new storage yards and buildings, associated access infrastructure, car parking, SuDS features, structural landscaping, tree planting, amenity landscape, grassland and seating areas.

This Landscape Report has been prepared to provide information relating to the landscaped areas within the application area and should be read in conjunction with the landscape planning drawings that have also been prepared to support this detailed application.

In addition, reference should be made to the Design and Access Statement (DAS) and accompanying suite of documents from other consultants which form part of the planning application.

## 1.2 Methodology

Due to the nature and location of this development it has been important to work closely with the architects and engineers to ensure the proposals reflect the various considerations for this site. Landscape has been a key consideration in the proposals, incorporating input from ecologists and the arboriculturalist to develop biodiversity across the site.

Having previously been developed, the impact of the proposed development will not be as significant as it would have been if it was agricultural land within the Green Belt. However, the visual impact on the surrounding landscape context has been a key consideration, particularly within the context of the HS2 site to the south.

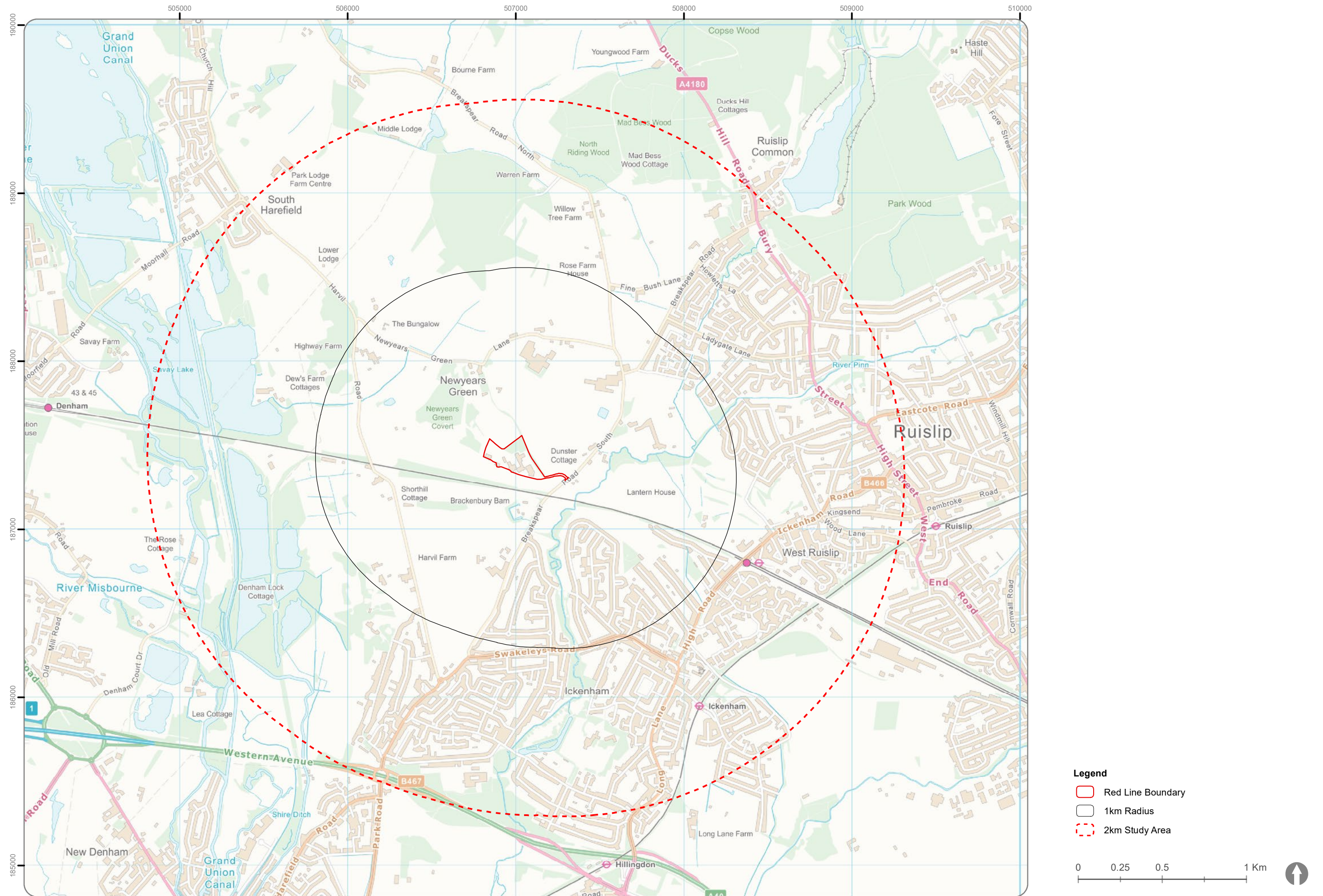
The landscape design has been an iterative process that has been developed through close coordination with the other consultants in the design team.

## 1.3 Content

The importance of the landscape on this site is evident. It serves as a means to mitigate the impact of the proposed buildings on the surrounding Green Belt context, to enhance biodiversity, for habitat creation, and to provide amenity for the users of the site to enjoy. The design of this landscape has been developed in response to existing site characteristics and the proposed development.

The Landscape Report has been structured to provide background baseline analysis, design development, and detailed design proposals. The detailed proposals aim to outline the design intent and material palette.





**Figure 3: Location Plan**  
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# Part 2: Site Context



**Figure 4: Site context**  
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# 2. Site Context

## 2.1 Overview

The site sits to the north west of Ickenham town centre just off Breakspear Road South.

It lies within the Greater London Borough of Hillingdon, roughly 13 miles north of Heathrow Airport. Junction 1 of the M40 motorway is located approximately 2 miles to the south west and RAF Northolt 2 miles to the south east. The site itself is bounded by Breakspear Road South on the eastern edge and the Chiltern Main rail line to the south.

The landscape to the south and east is generally urban in character with the residential centres of Uxbridge, Ickenham, and Ruislip however, the site itself sits within the Green Belt and Colne Valley Regional Park. There are existing blocks of woodland to the west that include an area of designated Ancient Woodland. A bridleway runs directly adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site connecting Breakspear Road South to Newyears Green Lane. Various footpath connections exist within the surrounding landscape that connect to both Ruislip and Ickenham.

An HS2 construction site is currently being developed between the southern boundary of the site and the Chiltern Main Rail Line. Final proposals for this immediate context are investigated further later in this document but it is understood that the proposals include extensive areas of woodland planting.

## 2.2 Existing Site Description

The site comprises 4.87 hectares (Ha) of land lying on a gradient from a high point in the west to a low point at the existing access from Breakspear Road South in the east. Ground elevation ranges from 58 m AOD to 40.5 m AOD which represents a fall of approximately 17.5 m over a distance of 500m. Existing landform is depicted graphically later in this document. The site is generally well drained with some existing drainage features running through the centre of the site.

Having previously been developed, the site currently comprises of a number of existing buildings and extensive areas of hardstanding. Between these areas of hardstanding are some areas of amenity grass and some specimen tree planting of various species and maturity. A historic field boundary runs through the centre of the site that includes a drainage feature and a series of mature oak trees. The eastern site boundary consists of a number of mature trees along an existing bridleway that extends into an area of semi-mature woodland in the north of the site consisting of predominantly planted lines of common ash and Norway maple. This area of woodland appears to have been planted when the site was previously developed. As a result of this, views into the site from the north and east are limited with the existing development screened from view. The site is much more open to the south where it sits adjacent to an HS2 construction site. The final proposals for this HS2 site will have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape context. A Phase 1 Habitat Survey has been carried out by Brindle and Green. The habitats on site were evaluated as being of low ecological value, consisting predominantly of area of hardstanding and amenity grassland. An area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland to the west of site is considered to be of higher botanical value and will be retained as part of current proposals for the site.

A security fence currently encloses the site meaning that there is only one point of access, from the road connection to Breakspear Road South.

## 2.3 Site History

The site has been previously developed and was operated by Merck Sharpe Dohme (MSD) Animal Health as an animal research facility. The site includes 16 separate buildings that includes offices, laboratories, storage space, and other ancillary uses. An access road and footpath infrastructure links these buildings together.



**Figure 5: Bridleway on eastern boundary**  
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## 2.4 HS2 Proposals

Immediately to the south of the site, and formerly owned by MSD, is a HS2 compound; used as a staging area for plant and construction materials associated with the construction of HS2. The site is accessed from Breakspear Road South, to the east, via a new road constructed to allow access into the HS2 compound.

The plans on the adjacent page illustrate the proposals for the HS2 site and along the HS2 corridor to the east and west.

Extensive woodland planting is proposed to the south and east that will help to contain the proposed development and screen it from long distance views. This will also help to screen views from the Chiltern Main Rail Line to the south which is elevated for much of it's length. The proposed topography between the Copthall Tunnel and the Chiltern Main Rail Line has been increased in height which will further screen the Breakspear Road South development from view. These proposals can be seen on the opposite page.





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# PART 3: Planning Context

## 3. Policy compliance summary

### 3.1 Introduction

A separate Planning Statement has been prepared by Gerald Eve to support this detailed planning submission. The following section identifies some of the key landscape and environment policies which have shaped the proposals for the site.

The key reference documents are National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF), The London Plan 2021, and The Hillingdon Local Plan (Parts 1 and 2). Additional reference is made to the Sustainable Drainage Design and Evaluation document.

### 3.2 Relevant Policies

#### National Planning Policy Framework 2021

The key aspects of the NPPF 2021 that relate to the proposed site are chapter 13 'Protecting Green Belt Land' and chapter 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment'.

Green Belt serves five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Development is generally not permitted in the Green Belt unless it meets one of a number of criteria and does not detract from or harm the Green Belt.

This site has been previously developed and has a number of abandoned buildings and areas of hardstanding. It can therefore be characterised as previously developed land and is suitable for redevelopment as long as it does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

*"...complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development."*

Habitats and Biodiversity - To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

#### Response

The openness of the Green Belt has been considered carefully in the landscape proposals. The site is largely contained on the east and north boundaries due to existing tree planting that is retained as part of these proposals. Additional tree planting is proposed on the western boundary to ensure the site does not visually impact on the existing Green Belt. The existing topography of the site has also naturally guided the location of the building and additional landscaping features. The neighbouring HS2 proposals have also been carefully assessed to ensure that the proposals for the application site sit comfortably adjacent.

Habitats that are considered of good ecological value such as the existing areas of broadleaved woodland are retained within the proposals and these are supplemented with large areas of wildflower meadow, native shrub planting and a significant number of additional standard and woodland trees. SuDS basins and an additional wildlife pond will provide additional habitat and biodiversity. A biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment is being carried out to demonstrate that there is an increase in biodiversity across the site.

#### The London Plan 2021

- Policy G5 Urban Greening: Major development proposals should contribute to the greening of London by including urban greening as a fundamental element of site and building design, and by incorporating measures such as high-quality landscaping (including trees), green roofs, green



walls and nature-based sustainable drainage. Boroughs should develop an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) to identify the appropriate amount of urban greening required in new developments. A target score of 0.3 for predominately commercial development (excluding B2 and B8 uses).

Response

The proposals fall into commercial use class B8 and therefore do not technically need to be assessed however, we have carried out this assessment to demonstrate the significant positive contribution the proposals make to green space and biodiversity. The results of this assessment are set out in the following table:

PROPOSED SITE			
SURFACE COVER TYPE	FACTOR	AREA (m2)	FACTOR X AREA
Semi-natural vegetation (trees, woodland) maintained	1	9212	9212
Semi-natural vegetation (species-rich grassland) established on site	1	5645	5645
Wetland or open water (semi-natural; not chlorinated) established on site	1	741	741
Flower-rich perennial planting – see RHS perennial plants for guidance.	0.7	5616	3931.2
Rain gardens and other vegetated sustainable drainage elements	0.7	877	613.9
Hedges (line of mature shrubs one or two shrubs wide)	0.6	69	41.4
Standard trees planted in pits with soil volumes less than two thirds of the projected canopy area of the mature tree	0.6	3656	2193.6
Amenity grassland (species-poor, regularly mown lawn)	0.4	2738	1095.2
Permeable paving	0.1	841	84.1
TOTAL		29,395	23,557
Total Site Area (m2)			48,758
Proposed Site UGF Calculation			0.48
London Plan Suggested Target for Commercial Sites			0.3

Hillingdon Local Plan (Parts 1 and 2)

The main policies within Hillingdon Local Development Plan that will influence the emerging landscape proposals for this site are:

- SO8: Protect and enhance biodiversity to support the necessary changes to adapt to climate change. Where possible, encourage the development of wildlife corridors;
- Policy DMEI 1: Living Walls and Roofs and on-site Vegetation: The Council will seek living walls and roofs in urban areas with limited green space and where developers are proposing minimal landscaping.
- Policy DMEI 7: Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement: The design and layout of new development should retain and enhance any existing features of biodiversity or geological value within the site. Where loss of a significant existing feature of biodiversity is unavoidable, replacement features of equivalent biodiversity value should be provided on-site.

Response

Existing landscape features of value are retained where possible. Existing trees and woodland are incorporated into the landscape proposals and where the removal of trees has been unavoidable additional trees are proposed to mitigate this loss. Existing drainage features are incorporated into the drainage proposals and supplemented with additional features where opportunities exist to enhance biodiversity and habitat creation. Bird and bat boxes will also increase opportunities for wildlife.

Green roofs and living walls have been considered. Policy DMEI 1 relates specifically to sites within urban built up areas. This site is located within the Green Belt and does not have the same constraints on landscaping. The proposals include significant areas of green space with landscaping that enhances biodiversity and provides amenity for users. Green roofs and living walls are therefore not required in this location.

3.3 Design Guide:

Sustainable Drainage Design and Evaluation

Design guidance for SuDS has been developed by Robert Bray Associates which sets out best practice for integration of SuDS within proposed development in order to maximise their value.

The guidance has the support of 16 Local Authorities across England which includes the London Borough of Hillingdon.

- This design guidance will be carefully considered in the approach to SuDS design for this site and the positive contribution it can have, including:
- Delivering biodiversity and allowing breakdown of pollutants;
- Managing rainfall pollution close to source which is beneficial for workers, visitors and wildlife;
- Managing risks to avoid the need to fence of SuDS and therefore maximise their amenity benefit;
- Enable people to connect with the SuDS features, planting, and wildlife.

Response

The guide offers insight into the detailed design of SuDS features, and this includes amenity, accessibility, visual quality, biodiversity, and planting design. Slopes of proposed drainage features have been carefully considered to maximise the opportunities for amenity benefit. Climate resilience, biodiversity and habitat creation has also been reviewed to ensure maximum contribution throughout the site.