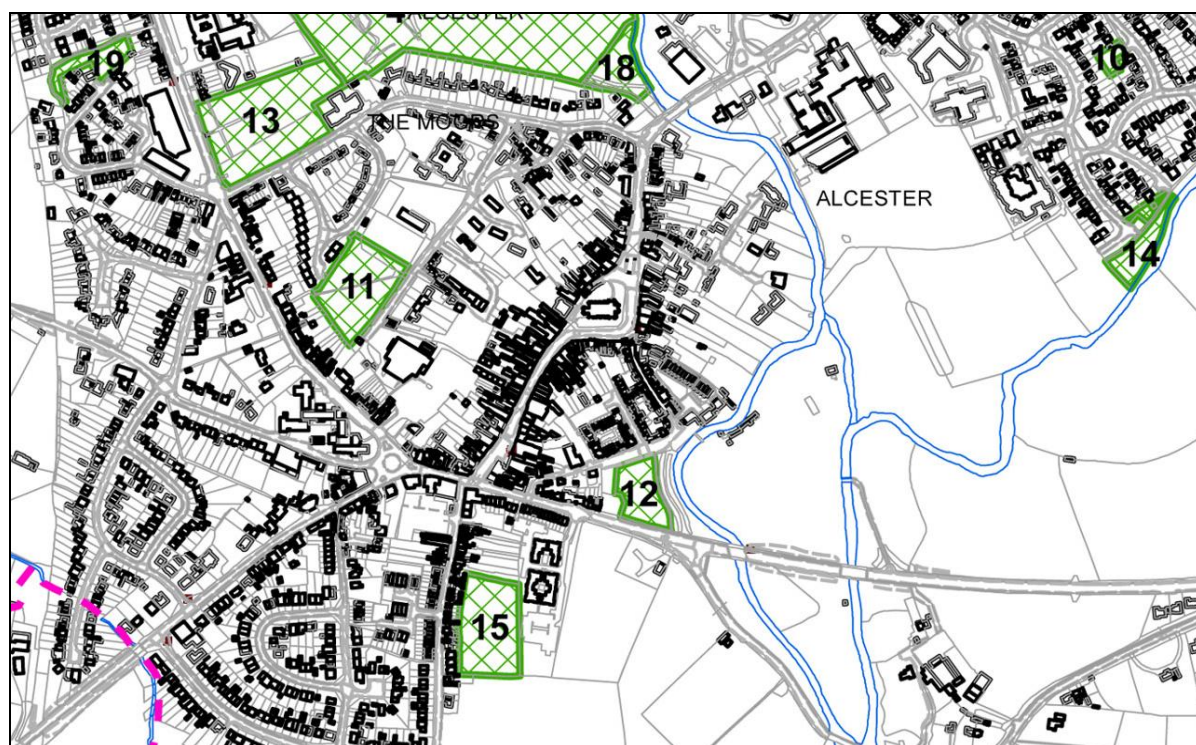


Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan Local Green Space Site Assessment - August 2018

Site Address	Site Area	Site Ref
Gas House Lane Recreation Ground, South of Gas House Lane, Alcester	Approx. 0.32ha	LGS 12

Plan




Site Description and Current Land Use

The site is a picturesque, open green space with a rolling landscape that is situated on the outskirts of Alcester, south of Gas House Lane. It runs alongside the River Arrow and is a key feature in the approach to the town from Stratford A46 direction. It forms part of a Scheduled Monument covering a large area of Alcester Roman Town and is a designated Field in Trust.

A tarmacked path running through it links Stratford Road with Gas House Lane and the Heart of England Way. An avenue of trees and benches line the path, including crab apple, lime and birch. Views to open countryside to the south across Stratford Road can be seen as can views to the River Arrow through the dense thicket of trees and shrubs that line the east boundary. Young and mature trees are scattered across the site, including Horse Chestnut and Ash. Dwarf post and rail fencing lines the perimeter of the site.

Residential dwellings line the site to the north. An open gravelled area lines the site to the west with residential dwellings beyond. Grade II listed, 41 Malt Mill Lane list to the northeast corner of the site. Car parking is situated along the north boundary.

Relevant Planning History
No relevant planning history found.
Site Ownership
Owned and managed by Alcester Town Council. Title Ref: WK407774
Site Constraints
<p>The site sits outside the Built-up Area Boundary but borders it its west boundary. It sits within conservation area, designated Green Belt (SDC Core Strategy Policy PR.2) and Special Landscape Area (SDC Core Strategy Policy EF.2). It also forms part of the Schedule Ancient Monument area (SDC Core Strategy Policy EF.11) that covers a large portion of Alcester Roman Town. Grade II listed, 41 Malt Mill Lane list to the northeast of the site.</p> <p>The site is situated in Zone A08 of the B2 Alcester Landscape Sensitivity Study (2011) and is identified as having high sensitivity to both residential and commercial development. The northern section of the zone is identified as a Green Area Belt and Schedule Monument area. The reports states that:</p> <p><i>“This gently sloping zone is on the edge of the valley floor, partly in floodplain and accommodates well used allotments, permanent pasture and the grounds of new flats. Strong outgrown hedges and trees abut the area to the north along Stratford Road and east. These contribute, with the easterly pasture, to a pleasant rural valley floor approach into the town core from the east. The zone is open to views from the south and the flats appear prominent from the PROW here. The area is entirely within the Alcester Roman settlement SAM and the allotments and flats lie within the Conservation Area. Its location partly on floodplain, on the fringes of the settlement core and key road approach, prominence from the valley floor, part community use and designations means that further housing development is inappropriate.” p.22</i></p>
Public Access
The site is open and accessible to the public along Stratford Road and Gas House Lane.
Site Photo




Ecological Significance

Though the body of the site is mainly an open grass area and has low ecological value, it adjoins the River Arrow and has a dense thicket of mature/ semi-mature trees and shrubs lining its perimeter. As such, it supports a variety of wildlife including insects, amphibians, invertebrates, mammals and birds.

The banks of the River Arrow are edged with willow, alder, oak and hawthorn, which provide ideal perches for kingfishers. This mix of habitats is important for a number of birds and mammals as they provide food, shelter and nesting sites. They increase the diversity of insect species (including butterflies and bees which are currently in decline), which are a food source for bird and mammal species and can also play an important role in the pollination of plants and crops in the surrounding area. The diversity and population numbers of insects directly impacts the food chain for other fauna in the area and has a wider impact on the cultivation of crops. These are all vital for the wider food web and species diversity within the town's ecosystem.

In the town, there have been sightings of larger fauna species such as bats, birds of prey (e.g. buzzards and owls), rabbits and hedgehogs. The site plays an important contributory role in the wider ecological significance of the town.

Special Qualities and Local Significance

The site is locally significant because of its historical heritage as part of a Schedule Monument site that covers a large area of Alcester Roman Town and is a designated Field in Trust. Being easily accessible from the town centre, it is well used and highly valued by the local community for local residents, visitors, dog walkers and walkers, providing a welcome resting place along the Heart of England Way. It offers a good location for riverside picnics and is used for town social events such as Alcester Duck Race.

The special qualities of the site include its strong contribution to local character and green infrastructure. It is also distinctive due to its natural beauty and open aspect as well as its views of the River Arrow.

Summary and Suitability for Designation as Local Green Space

This site is well related to and appreciated and valued by the local community and makes a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of the village.

The LGS as outlined on the above plan is considered to be suitable for Local Green Space designation in accordance with paragraphs 99-101 of the National Planning Policy Framework in that it is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance because of its recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity and richness of its habitats and wildlife potential; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.