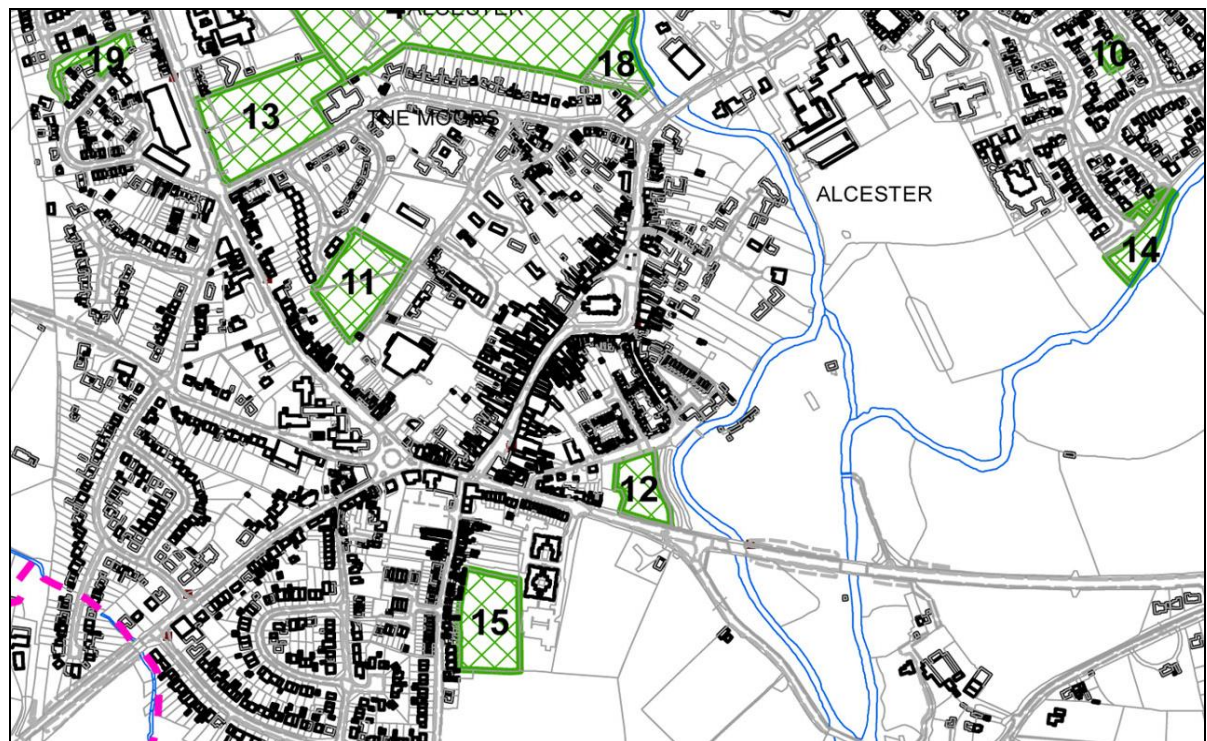


**Alcester Neighbourhood Development Plan
Local Green Space Site Assessment - August 2018**

Site Address	Site Area	Site Ref
Allotment, East of Bleachfield Street (north end), Alcester	Approx. 0.85ha	LGS 15

Plan



Site Description and Current Land Use

This large, well-maintained and well-used allotment is located at the north end of Bleachfield Street. Its popularity is evidenced by the Allotment Association noticeboard located at the entrance of the site. It is surrounded by residential properties and grounds on three sides; north, east and west. An open field sits to the south of the site. There are scenic views through the southeast corner of the site over the local countryside looking towards Oversley Wood.

Within the site are numerous mature apple trees, well-tended horticultural beds, water butts, outside tap, sheds, compost bins and poly tunnels. Post and wire fencing lines the site together with assorted shrubs including buddleia.

Relevant Planning History

Application no: 94/00219/OUT (Land Off Bleachfield Street Alcester Warwickshire)

- Proposed: Retail development
- Decision: Withdrawn

ADJACENT PLOTS

Application no: 75/00901/FUL (Off Plot 1 13 Bleachfield Street Alcester Warwickshire)

- Proposed: Off Plot 1 13 Bleachfield Street Alcester - Proposed Erection of Detached Houses with Garages
- Decision: Permitted
- Decision Date: 16/12/1975

Application No: 74/01608/FUL (Land Off Bleachfield Street Alcester Warwickshire)

- Proposed: Proposed Erection of 75 Dwellings and Layout of Roads and Footpaths
- Decision: Permitted
- Decision Date: 11/09/1975

Site Ownership

Ragley Estate, 8th Lord Hertford A&M Will Trust. Title Ref: WK447125. This site is managed under a long lease by Alcester Town Council.

Site Constraints

The site sits outside the Built-up Area Boundary but borders it on all but its south 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).

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:

“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 about 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

Public Access

The site is open and accessible to the public but only for use by allotment holders.

Access is gained from Bleachfield Street from a passage way between residential dwellings on the east side of the street.

Site Photo



Ecological Significance

The allotment gardens contain a variety of food and ornamental planting. Within the site and along its boundaries are mixed species hedgerows, shrubs and trees, including mature apple trees. All of which are 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. In particular, old orchard trees provide an ideal habitat for the Nobel Chafer which is a protected species.

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

Allotments are particularly popular among the residents Alcester. SDC Core Strategy Policy AS.2 B5 provided for additional allotments given a shortfall. Since then Alcester Town Council has established the School Road allotments and currently supply is equalling demand. The well-tended allotments provide recreational value for residents with the opportunity to exercise and socialise while gardening. The produce grown also contributes to sustainability.

The site is locally significant because it is well used and valued by the local community as an allotment garden. The special qualities of the site include its strong contribution to local character and distinctiveness due to its natural beauty.

It is also highly appreciated and prized by the local community as an undeveloped tranquil area of open land serving the southern section of the town with views across the open countryside toward Oversley Wood which contributes to its green setting.

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.