

Leeds Forward Planning Report - Wills Gill, Guiseley (3029)

Location of the site

Wills Gill is an unlit, unadopted track at the junction of Carlton Lane and Town Street, Guiseley. It has 7 properties spread out along it, the most recent of which were built in the late 1950's. It is surrounded by green belt land which stretches from Queensway all the way up Guiseley Moor and on to Otley Chevin Forest Park.

Shaw Lane Gardens is a quiet sloping road of approximately 50 houses, the majority of which were built in the late 1950's on a plot of allotments and market gardens and this can be seen in their long narrow gardens.

Queensway is a busy road which was newly built in the late 1950's. It runs between Guiseley and Yeadon.

In the green belt, site 3029 sits between these two quiet communities, with Wills Gill to the North and Shaw Lane Gardens and Queensway to the South. Its eastern boundary is green belt fields. The western boundary comprises the medieval Crofts and Tofts at the boundary of Guiseley Conservation Area (see Photo 1).



Photo 1: An aerial view of site 3029 and its surroundings

Landscape

At the edge of Guiseley, Wills Gill is surrounded by pastoral plateau farmland. Ancient footpaths marked on maps from the late 19th century cross the fields in this area and there are the remains

of a roman road on nearby Guiseley Moor. Following the footpath from Queensway, crossing Wills Gill and continuing up towards Carlton Lane, ancient field boundaries are obvious even though some of the hedgerows have gone. After crossing Carlton Lane the footpaths continue to the top of Otley Chevin, passing very few houses. This landscape is “Guiseley Plateau” (see Leeds Landscape Assessment 1994), a gently rolling landscape with long views. Site 3029 with its distinctive line of poplar trees is prominent from footpaths and from Carlton Lane (see Photo 2).

The sloping site is currently used for grazing sheep and cows; historically it was used as grazing for the Albion Dyeworks’ mill horses. Within living memory the land has been ploughed.



Photo 2: Site 3029 with its tall poplars is prominent from Carlton Lane

Historical Features

Bordering the site is Guiseley Conservation Area. This is the heart of historic Guiseley, with ancient field systems, Guiseley wells, the Church of St Oswald, which dates from approximately 1150, and 6 Grade II, listed buildings along Town Street. There are numerous other listings around the Church of St Oswald including the Grade II* listed Rectory Hall, Guiseley Cross and various graves and lampposts.

Medieval Crofts and Tofts, groups of regular long thin plots of land within which lay a rural domestic dwelling, lie adjacent to the western boundary of the site (see Photo 3). Research into these indicates that they are rare and of significant value and high sensitivity.

The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Guiseley shows that the site intersects with the Guiseley Conservation Area retaining 'village' character and provides a key long distance view from Guiseley (see Photo 4).



Photo 3: Site 3029 from Queensway, looking across the medieval Crofts & Tofts

A Local Asset for Exercise and Views

"We all need places for relaxation and escape, for exercise and recreation, and our parks and green space provide this. They also help to build a sense of community. This is why they always score at the top of what people regard as important, whether they live in Leeds or are just visiting." - from "A Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds".

The site offers a refreshing view of open green space and the historic Crofts and Tofts from Queensway. It is the last green field along Queensway and the only remaining land which prevents Guiseley and Yeadon being completed merged along Queensway. This amenity green space is prominent from Queensway, from the footpath between Queensway and Wills Gill, from Town Street and the roads running off it, from Wills Gill and from Carlton Lane, where you can see a long distance view of it next to the Church of St Oswald. It is a vital resource for recreation and exercise, with well-used ancient footpaths which can be followed all the way to the Chevin Forest Park.

Ecology

The fields in this area are wet, with becks, natural springs and wells. There are 3 known wells along Wills Gill and several along Town Street. The site contains a spring and 2 becks, one of which has historic value as a mill beck used by Albion Dyeworks. Some residents of Wills Gill, Shaw Lane Gardens and Town Street have had issues with overflowing wells, water ingress into garages or flooding of cellars. The Wills Gill track is known to flood at the corner abutting the site.

Species such as weeping willow and mayflower (*Cardamine pratensis*) growing on the site indicate that it is damp meadow. Other species growing on the site include ash, beech, oak, sycamore, horse chestnut and poplar. Bluebells and celandines grow at the edges where it is not grazed.

A wide range of bird species visits this site. Little owls and tawny owls nest and roost in trees around this site. Red kites, buzzards and kestrels regularly quarter these fields for small mammals and other prey. Woodpeckers, curlews, greenfinches, jays, goldfinches and starlings are regularly seen or heard. There is a large colony of house sparrows. Bats hunt around the site in the evenings.

Guiseley in recent years

“Historically Guiseley was home to a number of manufacturers, but over the past few years it has undergone significant change as employment sites have been redeveloped for housing as a result of businesses restructuring, existing facilities being outdated and a general move towards the service sector. Consequently, Guiseley has lost a lot of employment land to housing developments which could not have been foreseen. This has had a significant impact on the character of Guiseley as a town in terms of employment activity, the rise in population, and physically as industrial buildings which were not considered fit for conversion were demolished to make way for new housing.

The loss of employment land to residential has had a significant impact on the number of people now living in Guiseley and the number of cars on the local road network, though it must be acknowledged that regardless of this, car ownership has dramatically increased across the board throughout the whole of Leeds.

...
Guiseley is protected by a tight Green Belt boundary and it is important that it remains so, as it prevents Guiseley from becoming an extension of suburban Leeds or merging with Bradford.”

This is a quote from a Leeds City Council document called ‘Consultation Report Guiseley’ which was written in 2007 (<http://www.leeds.gov.uk/council/Pages/Guiseley-consultation.aspx>)

Greenbelt Review of Site 3029 - Wills Gill, Guiseley (proposed 133 Houses)

Purpose	Criteria	Assessment			
		LCC	LCC Comments	Resident	Residents Comments
1. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	i. Would development of the site lead to/ constitute ribbon development	No		No	
	ii. Would development result in an isolated development site not connected to existing boundaries	No		No	
	iii. Is the site well connected to the built up area? – Does it have 2 or more boundaries with the existing built up area	Yes		No	The site is only connected to an existing built up area on one boundary, Shaw Lane Gardens. Green fields lie to the east and west, and the northern boundary consists only of seven scattered properties along an unlit, unadopted track.
	iv. Would development of the site effectively 'round off' the settlement pattern	Partial		Partial	Only a small corner of the site could be considered as 'rounding off'. The establishment of the few properties along Wills Gill has occurred separately to the outward growth of Guiseley and Yeadon. Development on this site would be encroachment into green belt.
	v. Do natural and physical features (Major road, river etc) provide a good existing barrier between the existing urban area and	No		No	

	undeveloped land, which if breached may set a precedent for unrestricted sprawl ?				
	OVERALL SPRAWL CONCLUSION		Low potential to lead to unrestricted sprawl		High potential to lead to unrestricted sprawl
2. Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	i. Do natural features and infrastructure provide a good physical barrier or boundary to the site that would ensure that development was contained?	No		No	
	ii. Would development of the site lead to physical connection of 2 or more settlements?	No		Yes	The site, along with the adjacent Crofts and Tofts, is the last rural land remaining which separates the settlements of Guiseley and Yeadon along Queensway.
3. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	OVERALL COALESCENCE CONCLUSION		No merging but there is no defensible boundary		Development of the site would lead to coalescence/merging of settlements.
	i. Is there a strong, defensible boundary between the existing urban area and the site – wall, river, main road , etc. (as opposed to garden boundaries)	No		No	There is no defensible boundary to prevent encroachment further into the countryside
	ii. Does the site provide access to the countryside – footpaths, bridleways across the land, or is it a	Yes		Yes	The site includes a well-used footpath which connects to others leading to Chevin Forest Park.

	designated park/greenspace?			
	iii. Does the site include national or local nature conservation designated areas (SSSIs etc)	No	No	
	iv. Does the site include areas of woodland, trees or hedgerows that are protected (protected ancient woodland) or significant unprotected tree/hedge cover	No	Yes	The site includes approximately 70 mature trees, a good number of which correlate with those on old maps and may be over 100 years old. Species include oak, ash, beech, copper beech, whitebeam, horse chestnut, willow and poplar. It is not known if these trees are protected.
	v. Does the site include any best and most versatile; grade 1, 2 or 3a (where known) agricultural land?	No	No	
	vi. Does the site contain buildings? If yes, are these in agricultural use?	No	Yes	There are two small sheds/barns in agricultural use on the site.
	No	Yes		
	OVERALL COUNTRYSIDE ENCROACHMENT CONCLUSION		Site performs an important role in safeguarding from encroachment	Site performs an important role in safeguarding from encroachment
4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	i. Is the site adjacent to a conservation area, listed building or other	No	Yes	Guiseley Conservation Area is immediately adjacent to the west of the site. There are 6 Grade II listed buildings

	historical features?				on adjacent Town Street. Medieval Crofts and Tofts lie adjacent to the site.
	ii. If 'yes' could development preserve this character?			No	The transition from town, to the medieval Crofts and Tofts, to open fields is key to the importance of the landscape of the site. Development of any sort would destroy this character.
	OVERALL CHARACTER PRESERVATION CONCLUSION		No effect on the setting and special character of historic features		Development of the site would have a significant effect on the setting and special character of historic features. The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Guiseley shows that the site intersects with the Guiseley Conservation Area retaining 'village' character and provides a key long distance view from Guiseley (photo 4).
5. Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land			Not to be included within GB assessment because the Core Strategy policies encourage regeneration in the urban area		
OVERALL SUMMARY	GREENBELT ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION		Green Belt site. The site is well connected to the urban area but does perform a role in safeguarding the countryside from further sprawl.		Green Belt site. The site is only partially connected to the urban area and performs a strong role in safeguarding the countryside from further sprawl. The site is adjacent to valuable historic assets and is an amenity green space with a well-used footpath giving access to countryside. Development of the site would lead to merging of settlements.

Sustainability Appraisal of Site 3029, Wills Gill, Guiseley

Sustainability Assessment Site 3029		LCC Score	LCC Comments	Residents Score	Residents Comments
SA01	Employment	0		-1	Site is used for agriculture. Current use is for grazing sheep and cows and historically it was used as grazing for the Albion Dyeworks' mill horses. Within living memory the land has been ploughed.
SA02	Economic Growth	0		-1	Site is used for agriculture. Current use is not high economic value but future trends in agriculture and food security may create more opportunities for agricultural employment on this land and for higher gross value added (GVA).
SA03	Accessibility to Education	0		0	St Oswalds C of E Junior School and Guiseley Infant and Nursery are both being expanded to capacity but this will only meet current demand, not future demand.
SA04	Accessibility to Health	0		0	No new health facilities have been built in Guiseley in the last 10 years. In the period 2000-2013 approximately 1300 houses have been built in Guiseley.
SA05	Crime	0	Outside of the scope of the Site Allocations document to determine the implications for crime arising from a site's development.	0	Domestic burglary in Leeds rose 7% in 2014/15, and the offence rate was 16th highest out of the 324 Community Safety Partnership (CSP) areas in England and Wales. The offence rate for burglary in a building other than a dwelling was the 19th highest of the 324 CSP areas in 2014/15. Any housing development within Leeds should be required to adopt the highest levels of Secure by Design principles.
SA06	Proximity to Leisure/Culture	0		0	Aireborough Leisure Centre is extremely run down. in 2013, Councillor Pat Latty said, "The state of the facilities at Aireborough Leisure Centre is incredibly run-down, and I have had complaints from residents about everything from the condition of the floors and toilets to the dilapidated changing rooms. In some cases it seems like there must be health and safety implications for the centre's users, yet time and time again Aireborough misses out on investment."
SA07	Housing	1		1	
SA08	Community Participation	-1		-1	
SA09	Community	0		-1	Site is out of scale with existing communities. Wills Gill is an unlit, unadopted track with only 7 properties spaced along it and Shaw Lane Gardens has approximately 28 houses bordering the site while the proposal is for 133 new houses between these two communities.

SA10	Greenspace Access	0	0	"We all need places for relaxation and escape, for exercise and recreation, and our parks and green space provide this. They also help to build a sense of community. This is why they always score at the top of what people regard as important, whether they live in Leeds or are just visiting." - quoted from "A Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds". This site is an amenity green space, providing a beautiful refreshing view of countryside and the medieval Crofts and Tofts of Guiseley from the busy road Queensway which abuts it. This greenbelt land is the last green field along Queensway and it is the only remaining land which separates Guiseley and Yeadon along Queensway. It is also a vital resource for recreation and exercise with well-used and ancient footpaths leading all the way to the Chevin Forest Park.
SA11	Greenfield or BrownField	-2	-2	Designated Greenbelt, which should only be built upon in exceptional circumstances. "Guiseley is protected by a tight Green Belt boundary and it is important that it remains so, as it prevents Guiseley from becoming an extension of suburban Leeds or merging with Bradford." (from Consultation Report Guiseley written in 2007 - http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/FPI_GC_002%20Consultation%20Report%20Guiseley1.pdf) In the Leeds SHLAA 2014 Update (Full Report) 3029 is designated as "mixed brownfield and greenfield". This is incorrect; it is green field.
SA12	Biodiversity	0	-2	This site improves biodiversity. A wide range of bird species visits it. Little owls and tawny owls nest and roost in trees around this site. Red kites, buzzards and kestrels regularly quarter these fields for small mammals and other prey. Woodpeckers, curlews, greenfinches, jays, goldfinches and starlings are regularly seen or heard. There is a large colony of house sparrows. Bats hunt around the site in the evenings. Mayflowers, bluebells, celandines and stitchwort grow around the site where it is not grazed. Becks run along both the eastern and western boundaries and there is a natural spring to the north of the site. Many large native trees including ash, oak and beech grow on and around the site. Site 1256 adjacent to this is scored as -2 and it is the same type of land, wet grassland with becks with the same species.
SA13	Greenhouse Emissions	0	-1	Emissions from buses are an issue in Guiseley. See map 8 on page 33 of "LEEDS LOW EMISSION ZONE TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY STUDY (Summary Report)" (http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s124750/BACKGROUND%20DOCUMENT%20Low%20Emission%20Zone%20Report%20081214.pdf)

SA14	Flood risk	1	1	The Wills Gill track floods at the corner abutting the site. Significant flooding occurred here in November 2006. Photographs from the 1960's show significant flooding on Queensway from the same beck, which is along the western boundary of the site. There is also a beck on the eastern boundary as well as a spring on the site. The water table is high across the whole site. During heavy rain surface water flooding is a problem for properties on Wills Gill and Shaw Lane Gardens. There are 3 known wells at houses on Wills Gill and more at properties along Town Street. Local searches in March 2014 for the purchase of a house adjacent to the site show that there is the possibility of surface water flooding across this site.
SA15	Transport Network / Access	0	-1	Queensway and Oxford Road are very busy and the A65 is extremely congested. Traffic is increasingly using smaller roads such as Ruskin Crescent and Nunroyd Avenue and Town Street/Moor Lane and Carlton Lane to avoid larger roads such as the A65/A658. Turning into Queensway from Town Street at peak hours is extremely difficult. Across Leeds as a whole, in the medium term, the number of casualties in road accidents has been falling. Between 2009 and 2014, the number of all-age casualties fell by 17% and the number of child casualties fell 17%. This district-wide picture is in contrast to what has been happening in Aireborough (Housing Market Characteristic Area), where over the same medium-term period the number of all-age casualties has increased by 9% and the number of child casualties has risen by 171% (from 7 children in 2009 to 19 children in 2014). "The loss of employment land to residential has had a significant impact on the number of people now living in Guiseley and the number of cars on the local road network, though it must be acknowledged that regardless of this, car ownership has dramatically increased across the board throughout the whole of Leeds." (from Consultation Report Guiseley written in 2007 - http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/FPI_GC_002%20Consultation%20Report%20Guiseley1.pdf)
SA16	Local needs	0	0	
SA17	Waste	0	0	
SA18a	Land Contamination	0	0	
SA18b	Air Quality	0	0	There are no local air quality monitoring stations to refer to, however modelled data from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory show higher than average levels of Nitrogen Dioxide in Guiseley and Yeadon area. This will mainly be attributable to vehicle emissions. The cumulative effect of continued development in the area is likely to make this worse.

SA18c	Hazard Zone	0		0	
SA19	Landscape / Woodland	0		-1	This site includes approximately 70 native trees, many mature, including ash, beech, copper beech, oak, sycamore, whitebeam, horse chestnut and poplar. There is a natural spring with a large willow tree next to it and a beck at each of the eastern and western boundaries.
SA20	Distinctiveness	-1		-1	These fields offer a refreshing view of open green space and the medieval Crofts and Tofts from Queensway. In fact the site is the last piece of green belt which prevents Guiseley and Yeadon being completely merged along Queensway. The site is prominent from Queensway, from the footpath between Queensway and Wills Gill, from Town Street, from Wills Gill and from Carlton Lane, where you can see a long distance view of it next to the Church of St Oswald. The footpath from Carlton Lane down to Wills Gill offers delightful views of it, with its distinctive line of poplar trees.
SA21	Historic Environment	0		-1	Bordering site 3029 is Guiseley Conservation Area. This is the heart of historic Guiseley, with ancient field systems, Guiseley wells, the Church of St Oswald which dates from approximately 1150, and 6 Grade II listed buildings along Town Street. There are numerous other listings around the Church of St Oswald including the Grade II* listed Rectory Hall, Guiseley Cross and various graves and lampposts. Medieval Crofts and Tofts, groups of regular long thin plots of land within which lay a rural domestic dwelling, lie adjacent to the western boundary of the site. Research into these indicates that they are rare and of significant value and high sensitivity. The beck which runs alongside these also has historic value as a mill beck used by Albion Dyeworks. The views of the Crofts and Tofts are a precious asset to Guiseley. The footpaths in this area are marked on maps from the late 19th century. The houses adjacent to the site were built on brownfield sites (farms or businesses) or prior to the 1960's. Shaw Lane Gardens was built in the late 1950's on land which was allotments and market gardens.
SA22a	Agricultural Land	-1		-1	Currently used for grazing sheep and cows.
SA22b	Area of search for wind energy	0		0	
SA22c	Water Resources	0		0	
SA22d	Mineral Resources	0		0	
	Sum for Reference	-3		-12	

Summary

The Wills Gill 3029 site is only partially connected to the urban area and performs a strong role in safeguarding the countryside from further sprawl. Adjacent to Guiseley Conservation Area, the site is an amenity green space with a well-used footpath giving access to countryside. Development of the site would lead to the merging of Guiseley and Yeadon along Queensway.

The site is wet grassland with becks and a spring and a high diversity of species depends upon it. It is currently used for agriculture.



Photo 4: A key long distance view across site 3029 from Guiseley Conservation Area