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# Green Belt Site Assessment Proformas - Sites no longer considered suitable for release **Elmbridge Local Plan**

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**2022 (Updated 2023)**



**Elmbridge**  
Borough Council  
*... bridging the communities ...*

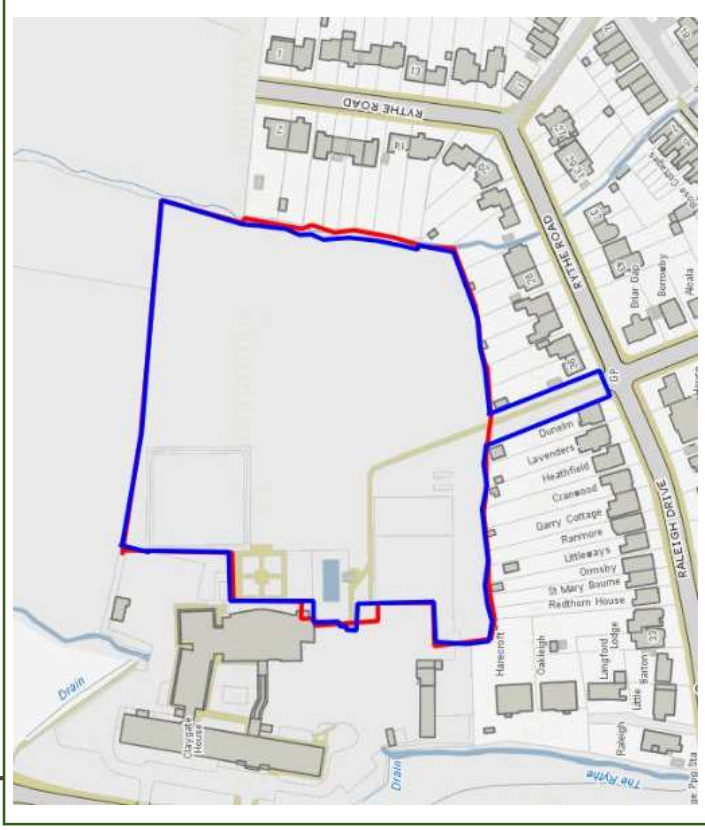


## SA-59 Land east of Claygate House

**Settlement/ward:** Claygate (Esher) /  
Claygate      **Land parcel area:** 2.38ha

**Address:** Land east of Claygate House, Littleworth Road, Esher, KT10 9PN

**Map:**



**Satellite image:**



**Land parcel description:** The land is situated to the northwest of Claygate village bound by Rythe Road to the southeast and east, properties in Raleigh Drive along the south boundary with the site of Claygate House to the west. To the north and northeast, the plot

abuts greenfield land with the lines of trees on its north, east and south boundaries. The parcel is predominantly a greenfield land with some previously developed land to the west of the land parcel.

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<b>Greenfield:</b> Yes	<b>Brownfield:</b> Yes	<b>Within built area:</b> Yes	<b>Adjoining built area:</b> Yes
<b>Existing land use:</b> Greenfield & part PDL (hardstanding)			
<b>Agricultural land classification:</b> Urban			
<b>Green belt:</b> Yes	<b>Identified GB Local Area &amp; performance:</b> Yes (LA-45) Strong	<b>Identified GB Sub-Area &amp; performance:</b> Yes (SA-59) Meets purposes weakly and makes less important contribution to the wider strategic GB	
<b>Landowners:</b>	<b>Private:</b> Yes	<b>Public:</b> No	<b>Unknown:</b> N/A

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**Relevant planning history / Status:**

Planning Permission (ref. 2019/2134) was granted in June 2020 for Development comprising 51 residential units (11 houses and 40 flats) with associated parking, bin storage and landscaping following demolition of existing buildings. An amended scheme comprising 62 flats with associated parking and landscaping following demolition of existing buildings (ref. 2020/2095) was subsequently granted Planning Permission in May 2021.

A further outline planning application (ref. 2023/0962) for up to 60 dwellings, associated landscaping and open space with access from Raleigh Drive was submitted to the Council in March 2023. This application has yet to be determined by the Council.

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<b>Reason for consideration:</b>	<b>Promoted by landowner:</b> Yes	<b>Identified in GB review for further consideration:</b> Yes
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**Absolute/national constraints**

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<b>Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area:</b> No	<b>Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace Site:</b> No	<b>Site of Special Scientific Interest:</b> No
<b>Flood Zone 3b (Functional Floodplain):</b> Yes (0.35ha = 15%)	<b>Park or Garden of Special Historic Interest:</b> No	<b>Registered Town and Village Greens and Commons:</b> No

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**Ancient Woodland:** No      **Ancient Veteran Trees:** No      **Lowland Fens (Priority Habitat Inventory):** No      **RAMSAR Site:** No

**Other policy designations / constraints:**

- Flood Zones 2 and 3a (approx. 0.54ha)
- River Rythe catchment (whole land parcel)
- Risk of Surface Water Flooding – low – high
- Ordinary Watercourse Buffer 8m
- TPO (scattered along all boundaries) – EL:19/38, EL:20/17, EL:11/22

**Promoted use of land parcel**

**Promoted site reference:** GB35

**Proposed use:** residential

**Proposed site area:** 2.05ha

**Proposed yield:** 60 at 30dph

**Suitability considerations**

<b>Suitability</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
Sustainable location	The overall score in terms of the Accessibility Assessment (2020) is good, with an average distance to local services of 0.89 km. The closest services are less than a km away, with the nearest bus stop, healthcare centre/GP and retail centre 0.35 km, 0.5 km and 0.7 km away. However, the distance to the nearest major service / employment centre is significant at 7.5 km.
PDL	The land parcel is a mix of greenfield land and previously developed land.
GB performance and integrity	The land parcel sits within and contributes to a strategically important arc of Green Belt that can be traced from Heathrow Airport through to Epsom, providing a narrow break between Outer London and several Surrey towns (including Esher, Hersham, Claygate and Walton-on-Thames within Elmbridge), and preventing further coalescence between the Greater London built-up area and settlements in the Borough and the wider Surrey area. This strategic area of Green Belt is identified in the Council's Green Belt Boundary Review, 2016 (GBBR) as 'Strategic Green Belt Area A'. The GBBR states that this area of

<b>Suitability</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
	<p>Green Belt performs very strongly against purpose 1 and 2 of the Green Belt – checking unrestricted urban sprawl of large built-up areas and preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another.</p> <p>At the Borough level, the sub area (SA-59) sits within Local Area 45 (LA-45), which also performs strongly against purpose assessment criteria. The local area is connected to the large built-up area of Greater London along its eastern edge and prevents its sprawl into open land. LA-45 forms much of the essential gap between the non-Green Belt settlements of Hinchley Wood (Greater London), Claygate and Esher, preventing development that would significantly reduce the actual distance between the settlements. The gap is particularly narrow here and any development is likely to result in coalescence. In addition, despite a relatively urban context, only 3% of the LA-45 is covered by built development and the land parcel remains largely open, consisting of open fields and pony paddocks. And a golf course to the south. Development is restricted to a small number of farm buildings and facilities for the rugby club.</p> <p>Whilst the sub-area (SA-59) itself is not free from development and its level of openness has been reduced, only 19% (approximately) of the sub-area is covered by built form (e.g. open car park). Development of the land parcel would therefore have a level of impact on the countryside.</p>
Landscape sensitivity	<p>The Council's Landscape Sensitivity Study, 2019 (LSS 2019) sets out that SA-59 has a moderate-low sensitivity to change arising from residential and mixed-use development. The landscape may have relatively greater ability to absorb change although care is still needed in locating and designing such developments within the landscape. There may be opportunity for mitigation, enhancement and restoration.</p> <p>The Council's Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, 2023 (LSA 2023) places SA-59 within Landscape Character Area LF2 - Claygate Rolling Clay Farmland, which is defined as predominantly consisting of arable fields. Limited settlement and land use give the area a rural feel, particularly to the south. However, the A3, adjoining roads, and surrounding Built Up Areas, reduce the sense of remoteness and tranquillity in surrounding areas. The LSA concludes that SA-59 has a medium to low sensitivity to change and that development would inevitably have a direct effect on the countryside and narrow the gap between settlements.</p>
<b>Availability</b>	<p>The availability of the site for development was confirmed by the landowners in 2019 through a representation to Regulation 18 consultation. Availability has more recently been confirmed through the submission of outline planning application 2023/0962.</p>

<b>Achievability</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
Absolute constraints	Approximately 15% of the land parcel falls within a functional floodplain.
Other constraints	Other flooding impacts could be addressed through an appropriate mitigation. Protected trees are situated on the periphery of the land parcel and appropriate siting of the development could address any concern relating to their long-term health.
Market factors	N/A
Viability factors	Significant mitigation in association with the identified flood risk is required and this will impact deliverability.

<b>Deliverability</b>	
	If the Council were minded to pursue a development strategy that saw the release of land from the Green Belt to meet its development needs, it is envisaged that it could come forward in the 6-10 year period of the new Local Plan. However, as planning permission was granted for a scheme in May 2021 and an outline application submitted in March 2023, there is the potential for the site to be delivered in the earlier part of the Plan period via the development management process.
Deliverable within 5 years:	Yes
Developable in 6-10 years:	Yes
Developable in 11-15 years:	N/A
Developable beyond 15 years:	N/A

<b>Added beneficial use</b>	<b>Considerations</b>
Provision of public access	Unknown
Opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation	Unknown
Retention/enhancement of landscape	The site is partly greenfield land at present and therefore any form of development would have an urbanising effect.
Improvement to visual amenities & biodiversity	The urbanising effect of any development on site could have an impact on the site's existing biodiversity value. Mitigation for such an impact could potentially be provided. A minimum 10% biodiversity net gain would be required under the Environment Act.

### Sustainability appraisal information

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Homes	+	Contributing to meeting the housing requirement.

Objective	Score	Notes
Heritage	0	No impact on archaeological, historic and cultural assets.
Accessibility	+	Overall score is good.
Brownfield land	0	Mix use of PDL and greenfield.
Economic growth	+	5.1-10km distance to major service centre / employment location and 2.6-5km distance to significant employment site. The site is of a scale (over 0.25ha) to enable the development of new employment units as part of the development.
Employment	0	Only creates temporary construction jobs (not a new workforce).
Flooding	-	Mostly Flood Zone 2 / Flood Zone 3a and / and risk of 1 in 30 year surface water flooding on less than 20% site area. 15% in functional flood plain (FZ3b).
Water	+	Site does not lie within a Groundwater Protection Zone. No waterbody on site. Existing infrastructure serves surrounding area.
Land	++	Site contains urban quality soils.
Pollution	+	Site location does not fall within a proposed or existing Air Quality Management Area or is not in proximity of a major highway network (M25 / A3). The site is adjacent to the built-up urban area - unlikely to be a noticeable intrusion from light or noise pollution.
Landscape	0	Assessment shows low or moderate-low landscape character impact. Site is not covered or near a landmark or strategic view or local green space.
Biodiversity	-	Site is a partially greenfield land.

### Sustainability Appraisal qualitative assessment of the development potential:

Significant positive arises due to the use of low grade quality soils. Minor positives have been identified in connection with the contribution to meeting the housing requirement, accessibility, economic growth, water and pollution objectives. The land parcel scores neutrally on several matters associated with heritage, brownfield land employment and landscape objectives. Minor negatives arise in terms of the flooding and biodiversity objectives.

### Conclusion

The sustainability appraisal of the development potential of the land parcel identifies positive impacts associated with the housing, accessibility, economic growth, water, the use of low grade quality soils and pollution objectives. However, it would also result in negative outcomes associated with the flooding and biodiversity objectives.

The land parcel sits within and contributes to a strategically important arc of Green Belt that can be traced from Heathrow Airport through to Epsom, providing a narrow break between Outer London and several Surrey towns (including Esher, Hersham, Claygate and Walton-on-Thames within Elmbridge), and preventing further coalescence between the Greater London built-up area and settlements in the Borough and the wider Surrey area. This strategic area of Green Belt is identified in the Council's Green Belt Boundary Review, 2016 (GBBR) as 'Strategic Green Belt

Area A'. The GBBR states that this area of Green Belt performs very strongly against purpose 1 and 2 of the Green Belt – checking unrestricted urban sprawl of large built-up areas and preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another.

At the Borough level, the sub area (SA-59) sits within Local Area 45 (LA-45), which also performs strongly against Purpose assessment criteria. The local area is connected to the large built-up area of Greater London along its eastern edge and prevents its sprawl into open land. LA-45 forms much of the essential gap between the non-Green Belt settlements of Hinchley Wood (Greater London), Claygate and Esher, preventing development that would significantly reduce the actual distance between the settlements. The gap is particularly narrow here and any development is likely to result in coalescence. In addition, despite a relatively urban context, only 3% of the LA-45 is covered by built development and the land parcel remains largely open, consisting of open fields and pony paddocks. And a golf course to the south. Development is restricted to a small number of farm buildings and facilities for the rugby club.

Whilst the sub-area itself is not free from development and its level of openness has been reduced, only 19% (approximately) of the sub-area is covered by built form (e.g. open car park). Development of the land parcel would therefore have a level of impact on the countryside. In addition, the LSA 2023 notes that the landscape of SA-59 has a medium to low sensitivity to change and that development would inevitably have a direct effect on the countryside and narrow the gap between settlements.

It is the Council's position that, on the whole, the Ove Arup assessment in regard to the Green Belt sites undervalues their 'performance' against the purposes of Green Belt as well as ensuring the fundamental aim of Green Belt in preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. In addition, the Council considers that, all of the sites, either via Ove Arup's assessment or the Council's own, performs some degree (weakly, moderately, strongly) of function when considered against the purposes of Green Belt. It is the Council's view that whilst some areas are considered to perform 'weakly' in the Ove Arup assessment in regard to the purposes of the Green Belt, they still perform some function. Neither the GBBR 2016 or 2018, identified any part of the Green Belt as no longer performing against the purposes overall.

In conclusion, the land parcel is not considered suitable for a release from the Green Belt designation.