

MERIDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Local Green Space Site Assessment: September 2018

Site Address	Site Area	Site Ref
St Laurence Church graveyard and surrounds	Approx. 0.85 ha	LGS No: 16

Plan



Site Description and Current Land Use

The site is a well-maintained burial ground situated within a small clutch of dwellings to the east of Meriden Village. Within the grounds is the Grade I listed, St Laurence Church. The site also forms the setting for a number of Grade II listed dwellings which surround the site’s southern boundary. The grounds of other dwellings surround the site to the east and west. Predominantly older gravestones populate the northern portion of the site with more contemporary headstones within the northwest portion. Open countryside border the site to the north. The entrance to the church at the southwest corner is lined with 12 veteran ‘apostle’ lime trees.

There are panoramic views from the site looking north across Meriden Gap. The Heart of England Way runs along the site’s east boundary. The site is interspersed with a number of benches and a variety of mature trees including ash, hawthorn, beech, holly and yew. A combination of low brick wall and hedging line the site’s periphery.

Relevant Planning History

No relevant planning history found.

Site Ownership

The Incumbent of the Benefice of Meriden with Packington in the County of West Midlands in the Diocese of Coventry and the Incumbent's Successors care of 1 Hill Top, Coventry CV1 5AB

Site Constraints

According to constraint maps produced by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Meriden is inset within the Green Belt. The site is within the conservation area and the grounds of the Grade I listed, St Laurence Church. A number of Grade II listed dwellings surround the site's southern boundary from east to west.

Public Access

The site is open and accessible to the public. An entrance can be found off Albert Road.

Site Photo



Ecological Significance

With the exception of the mature trees, hedges and shrubs that frame and sporadically populate the site, the majority of the site has limited ecological value but serves as a wildlife corridor to the countryside that surrounds it.

The mixed species trees, hedges and shrubs 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. 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.

Trees provide nesting sites for birds as well as habitats for small mammal species e.g. squirrels. These are all vital for the wider food web and species diversity within the village's ecosystem. In the village, 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 village.

Special Qualities and Local Significance

The site is the only burial ground in Meriden. It is a restful and open space that serves as a place of remembrance for the community. Additionally, it forms the setting of the Grade I listed, St Laurence Church and surrounding Grade II listed buildings.

It also has important historical local significance. The site, known as the original heart of Saxon, Alspath (Aelle's way), was part of an estate belonging to Lady Godgifu (Godiva), the Mercian Countess, made famous in Coventry's legend.

The site is demonstrably special and locally significant as it is actively used and valued by the local community as a formal area of open green space. The special qualities of the site include its strong contribution to local character and distinctiveness due to its natural beauty.

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 paragraph 99-101 of the National Planning Policy Framework in that it:

- 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.

