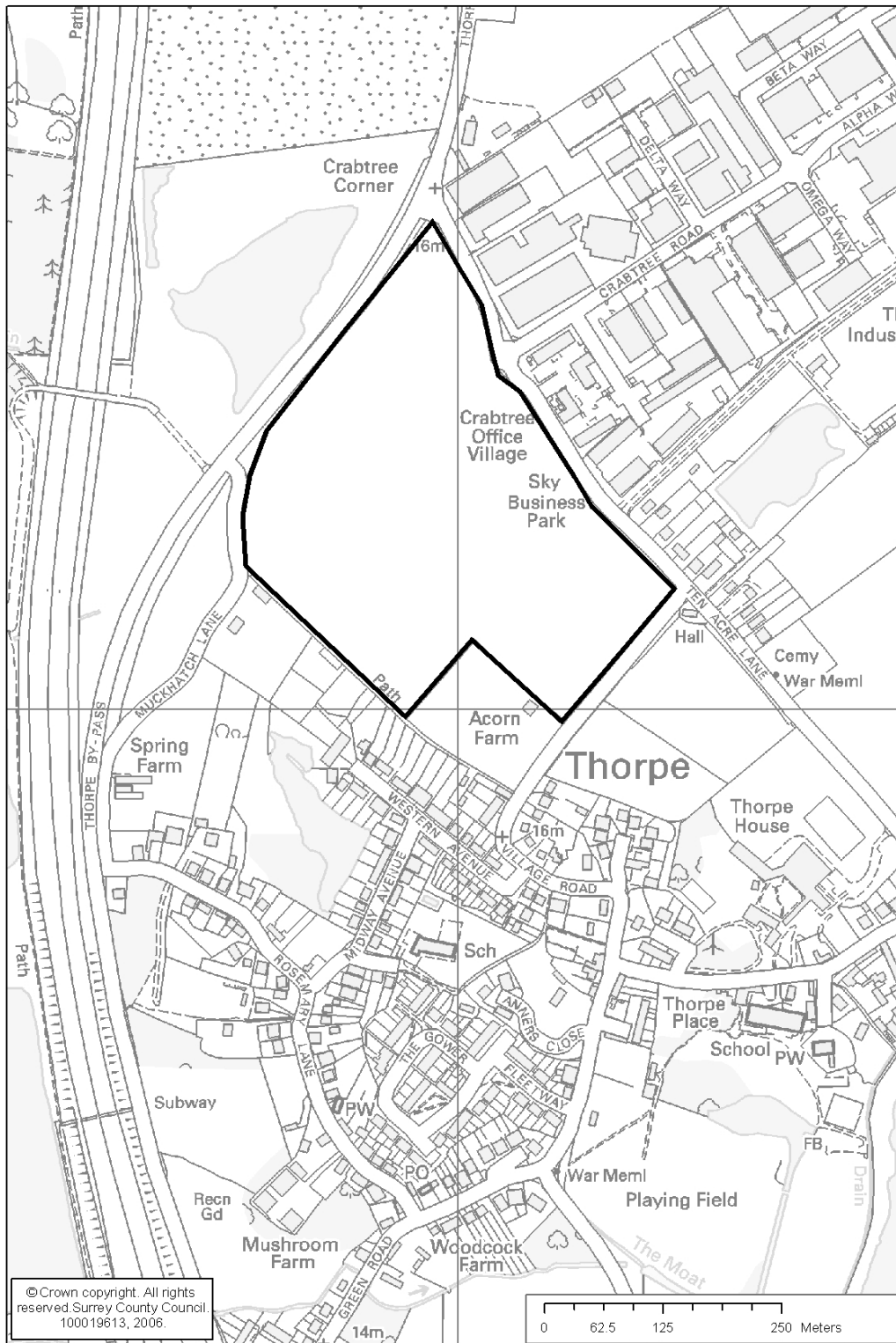


Preferred area I: Land north of Thorpe (Muckhatch Lane), Thorpe



(Runnymede 502024E 169150N)

Location

The land lies to the north of Thorpe village, and east of the M25. On the western side of the M25 lie preferred areas D and E (Whitehall Farm and Milton Park Farm). To the north-east lies Thorpe industrial estate. The Thorpe bypass (B388) runs along the north-west boundary. Residential properties along Western Avenue and Village Road in Thorpe lie to the south, and to the north-east on the opposite side of Ten Acre Lane. There is an enclosed paddock for horses associated with Acorn Farm in the southern corner of the preferred area.

Description

The land comprises a flat open field currently in agricultural use. The land is grade 3a farmland and is bounded by hedgerows, and has been historically used and valued for ploughing matches. The south-west of the preferred area is bounded by a public footpath that links Village Road to Muckhatch Lane. The footpath runs between the preferred area and the rear gardens of the residential properties in Western Avenue. Thorpe Village Conservation Area adjoins the land and extends up to the southern side of Village Road.

Estimated yield:	0.37 million tonnes of concreting aggregate
Area:	13ha
Planning designations:	Green Belt

This preferred area, together with land to the south was included as a Category 2 site in the *Surrey Minerals Local Plan 1993* with a strong presumption against working as it was regarded as one of the few open stretches of land adjoining Thorpe village and created an attractive approach. The southern part of the 1993 site could not be worked without harm to local amenities and Thorpe Conservation Area, but there is scope for the northern part of that site to be worked if care is taken in the planning of any screening, unworked margins and landscaping due to its visual sensitivity. This preferred area therefore includes only land to the north of Village Road. A previous planning application to work this land as a borrow pit in 2004 was refused on the grounds of traffic generation, and because the site was identified at the time as a Category 2 site in the *Surrey Minerals Local Plan 1993*.

Planning applications to work this preferred area should address:

Access

Access could be gained directly from Thorpe Bypass Road (B388) from the B388/Ten Acre Lane roundabout or direct from a new access to Ten Acre Lane. The chosen access solution should be justified in a transportation assessment.

Processing

Although it may be possible to process material on-site with mobile plant, preference would be for processing to occur off-site to reduce the landscape and amenity impacts of this proposal on residents and on the setting of the adjoining Conservation Area.

Conservation area

This land provides an open approach to the Thorpe Village conservation area from the north, but is not itself within the conservation area. Proposals should demonstrate that they would not have unacceptable impacts on the visual setting and character of the conservation area. An existing hedge runs along the boundary with Village Road; further planting will be required along this boundary with a significant unworked margin. In addition, views of the conservation area when approaching Thorpe village from the north should be protected by further planting and unworked margins as appropriate. The siting of noise and soil bunds, or any stockpiles of material will need careful consideration in relation to the location and setting of the conservation area.

Local amenity and footpaths

Unworked margins and further screening should be provided adjacent to the south-west, alongside the boundaries with Acorn Farm. Applications should assess the potential environmental impact of noise, dust, visual impact and traffic on nearby properties. The public right of way alongside the site should be safeguarded.

Hydrology

High groundwater levels locally mean that groundwater flows and water levels in the gravel aquifer are important considerations. The land lies within the Chertsey public water supply, and mineral extraction and subsequent reinstatement as lakes may increase risk of pollution to the aquifer. Therefore, a detailed appraisal of the groundwater regime in the form of a hydrological and flood risk assessment should be prepared for the area to understand the impact of working and restoration on the public water supply. The study should include risk management mitigation measures to protect the supply. Restoration proposals should address the flow of groundwater from the north to the south of the preferred area via exposed gravel faces. Recharge channels would need to be included to allow movement of groundwater.

Aircraft

The site lies within 13km of Heathrow Airport. Planning applications should take into account the potential hazard to aircraft from birds attracted by the development during the operational and restoration stages of mineral working.

Ecology

The land has no ecological designations, but proposals should assess local ecology and biodiversity and ensure these are addressed in working and restoration schemes.

Landscape

Appropriate margins and screening will be required to protect the amenities of properties in the south-west corner of the site, and to screen open views of any working from the commercial and industrial units and housing along Ten Acre Lane.

Archaeology

The land is within an area of high archaeological importance, and prior archaeological assessment, and if necessary evaluation, would be required as part of any proposal.

Restoration

The working could be filled with inert material and returned to agricultural use, or it could be partially filled with inert material, with a small waterbody on the remainder of land. Restoration options are covered in more detail in the *Mineral Sites Restoration SPD*.