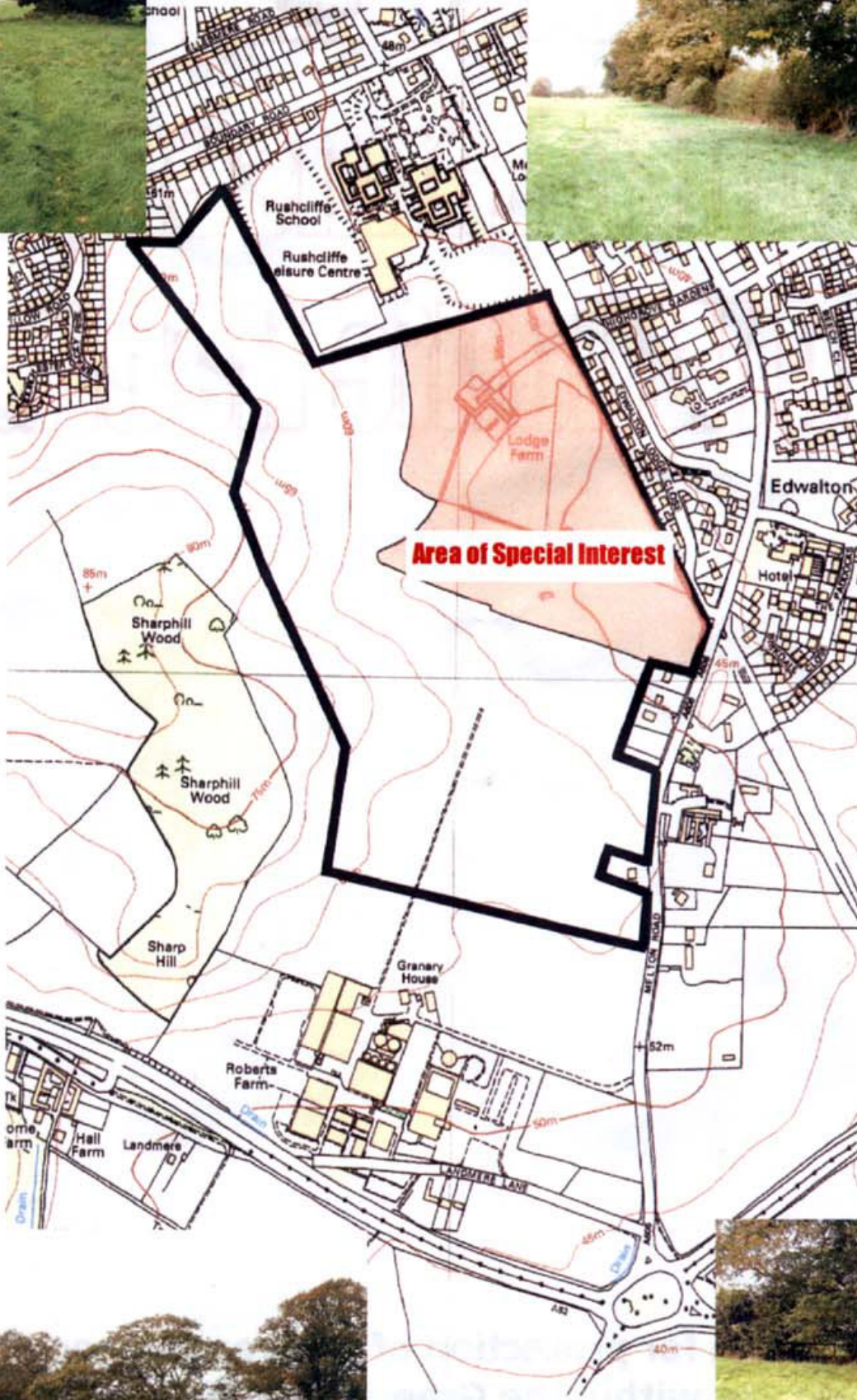


Protecting Mature Landscape and Wildlife Habitat

**Evidence for protection of an Area of Special
Interest within the Greenbelt at Edwalton**



Area of Special Interest

Within the area identified for housing, there exists a small pocket of permanent grassland with enclosing field boundaries (see opposite) that has features of **significant Natural and Archaeological Heritage**. We believe that collectively these features warrant its recognition as an area of special interest and should be protected from development.

The site, although only 11 hectares in area, has the visual and intrinsic qualities of a larger NCC Mature Landscape Area

- semi-improved Permanent Grassland with elements of a 17th-18th century Ridge and Furrow Landscape
- mature hedgerows and hardwood trees tracing the line of intact medieval field boundaries

Ecologically the site supports a rich biodiversity of wildlife

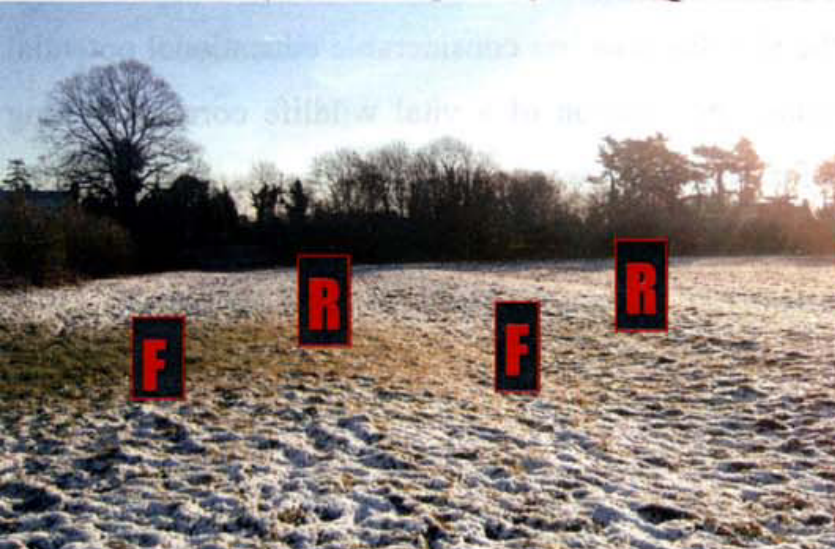
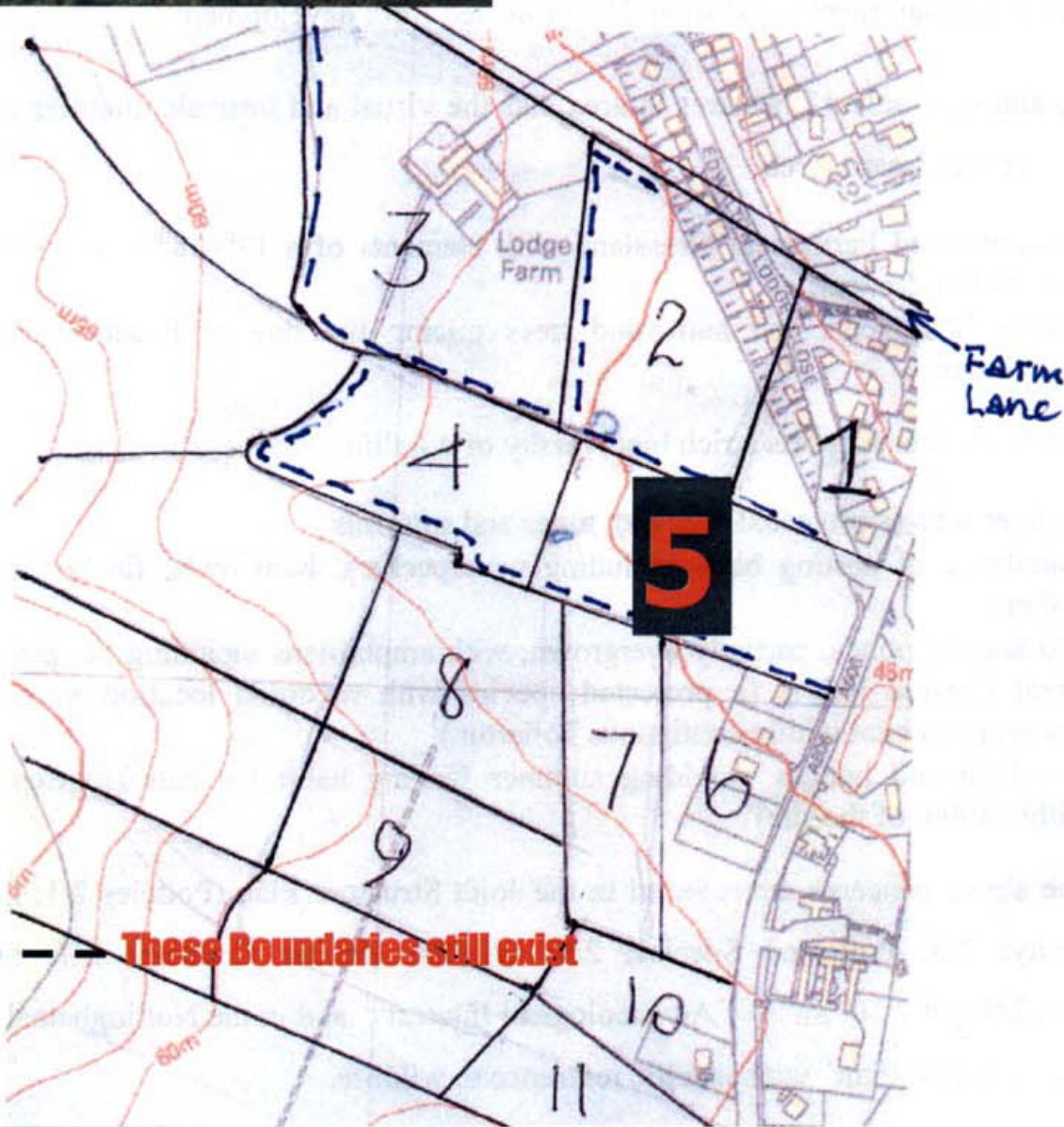
- 6 badger setts (a protected species), foxes and squirrels
- abundance of nesting birds including woodpeckers, barn owls, finches and winter visitors
- two ancient ponds, partially overgrown, with amphibians including the possibility of Great Crested Newts (a protected species with recorded location in comparable landscape habitat within contiguous Tollerton)¹
- grassland and hedges providing summer feeding habit for bats (registered roosts within 400m of the site)¹

All of the above concerns are referred in the Joint Structure Plan (Policies 2/1: Sustaining Biodiversity; 2/5: Protected Species; 2/6: Wildlife Habitat Creation; 2/7: Landscape Character; 2/9 and 2/10: Sites of Archaeological Interest)² and in the Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan³ with specific reference to wildlife.

Having two schools within 400m of the site, the area has considerable educational potential as a field study area and would facilitate the creation of a vital wildlife corridor linking adjacent SINC's (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation). Development would deny our community the opportunity to appreciate and experience its natural and archaeological heritage and, in doing so, produce isolated pockets of wildlife with little chance of sustainable existence.



All images are of Ridge and Furrow In Medieval Field 5 Named Townend Close



**Field Boundaries
shown on the Tithe Map
1846 superimposed on
an OS map**

Mature Landscape and Archaeological Importance

Because of its small size and limited NCC resources, the site was not included in the NCC Mature Landscape Areas (MLA) Study (1989-92)⁴. Nevertheless it displays 2 of the prime criteria subsequently used to underpin the Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines (1998)⁵

- Intact field patterns, including ancient species-rich hedgerows associated with early enclosures
- Permanent grassland

These guidelines refer specifically to the conservation of all remaining ridge and furrow landscapes, and to encourage the traditional use of permanent grassland.

Mature Landscape

The 'Area of Special Interest' comprises small, irregular fields of permanent pasture that have not been irreversibly modified by fertiliser or herbicide. It is enclosed by mixed hedges with mature hardwood trees and presents a unified, undisturbed, aesthetic character to the urban fringe. We believe the area warrants MLA status and should be surveyed. (The Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines are largely incomplete for RBC).

The hedgerows also comply with the 'importance criteria' embodied within the Hedgerow Regulations of the Environmental Act 1995⁶.

Archaeological Importance

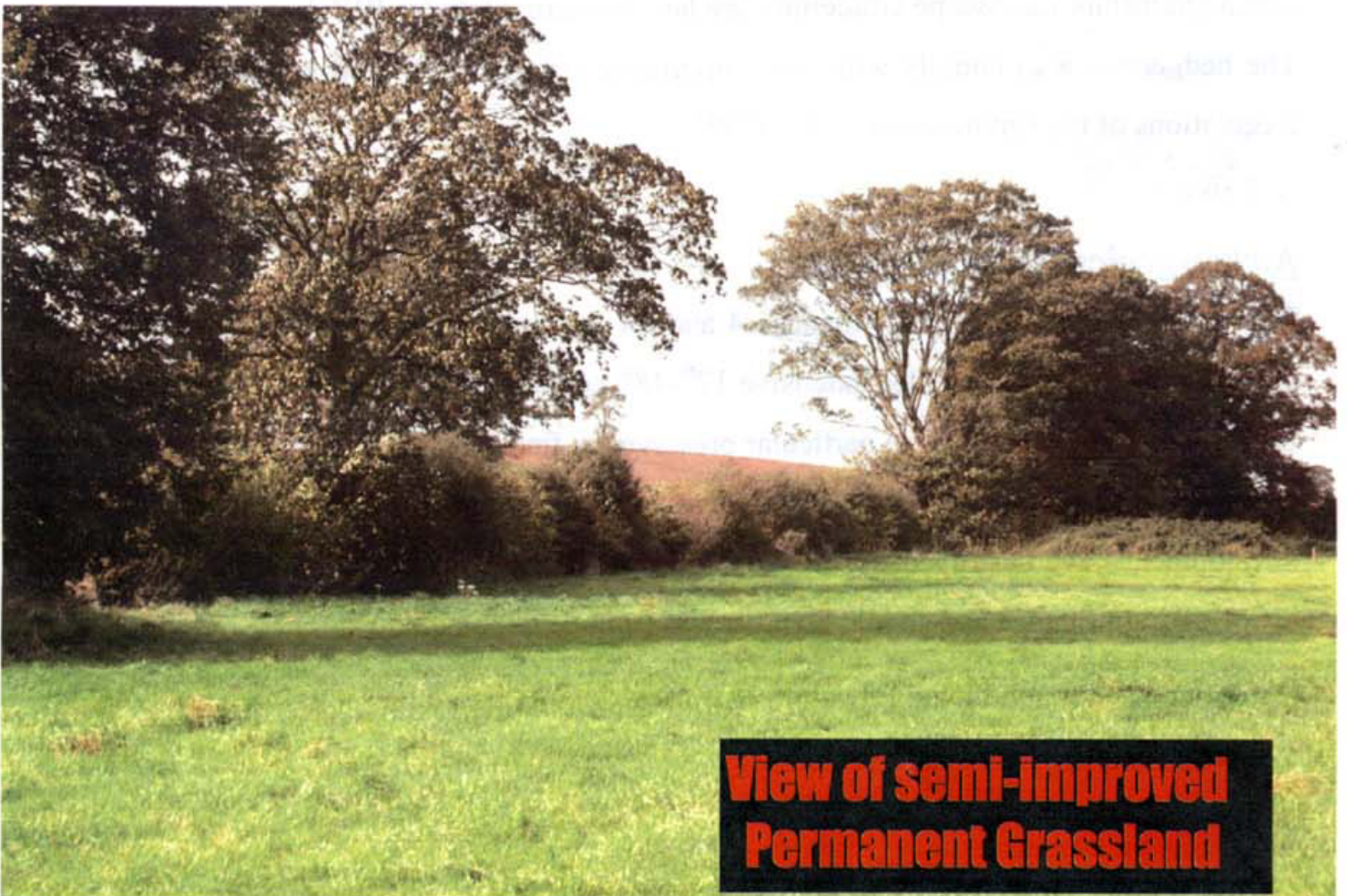
The 'Area of Special Interest' includes 4 ancient 'named' fields with intact boundaries that are a rare fragment of the once extensive 17th-18th century enclosures, or even earlier, around Edwalton village. One field in particular preserves in fine detail an example of ancient Ridge and Furrow farming. Elsewhere in the Edwalton area, modern arable farming and urban development have destroyed the archaeological evidence. It is our opinion that the site has historical significance and should be protected from development.

(Information supplied by the Edwalton Historical Society based on Tithe Maps and *publicly available* records.)

One of the ancient Ponds



View of mature hedgerows and hardwood trees



View of semi-improved Permanent Grassland

Biodiversity, Habitat and Protected Species

The hedgerows, trees and grassland provide a rich habit for wildlife and this is reflected in the high degree of biodiversity recorded and observed. The area of mature landscape provide all the insects, earthworms and seeds for the large range of nesting birds and mammals. Several of the species (badgers, bats and Great crested newts) are protected by law. The only official survey of the area, the 1999 Nottinghamshire Wildlife Audit, was by necessity

- rapid in design
- recorded primarily flora
- fauna not systematically assessed.

The Badger population uses all of the mature landscape for foraging; stoats are present, together with the wide range of rodents (details not known).

The Bat population is of major concern since removal of hedgerows and wet grassland would have an adverse effect on insects and hence feeding habitats.

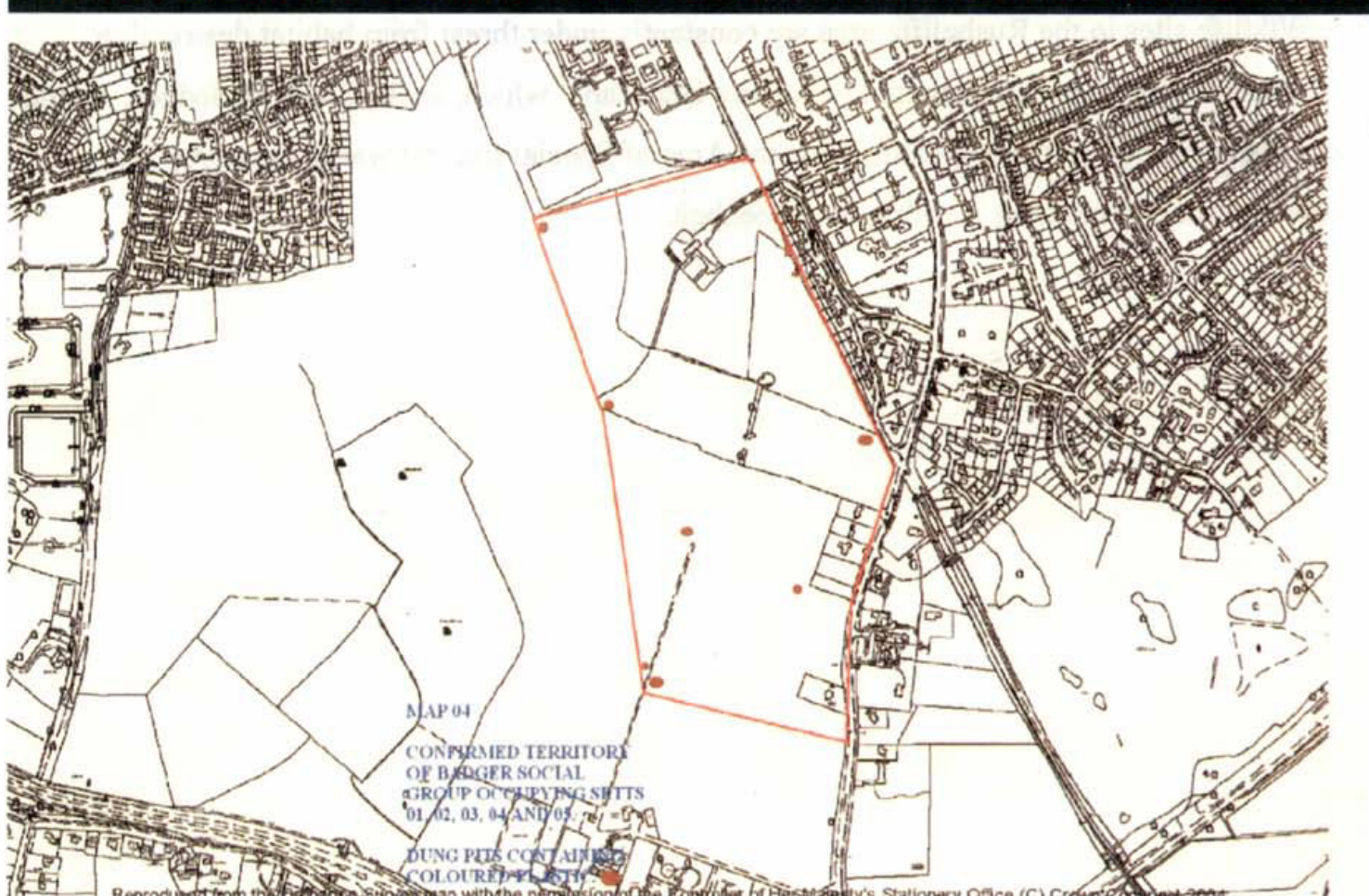
Records for Great Crested Newts refer to sites within very short distance of the area and the two ancient ponds provide perfect breeding habitats. The probability of finding these amphibians is very high.

Wildlife sites in the Rushcliffe area are constantly under threat from habitat destruction, especially areas of biodiversity and mature landscape⁷ which, as RBC acknowledges, should not suffer adverse development. Thus the Area of Special Interest warrants appropriate protection by retaining it within the Greenbelt.

Aerial View of Area Surveyed and Bait Marked



Confirmed Territory of Badger Social Groups Occupying Setts



Badger Protection

Protected species under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992⁸

Planning Authorities required to take account of protected species and habitat conservation (Planning Policy Guidance: Nature Conservation (PPG9)⁹

Independent Badger Survey and Bait Marking* confirms:

- 6 Badger setts
- Active family social group of +12 adults and juveniles
- Well defined territory and feeding habitat (marked by pathways and dung pits)
- Territory centred on area of permanent grassland (Area of Special Interest)

Conclusion

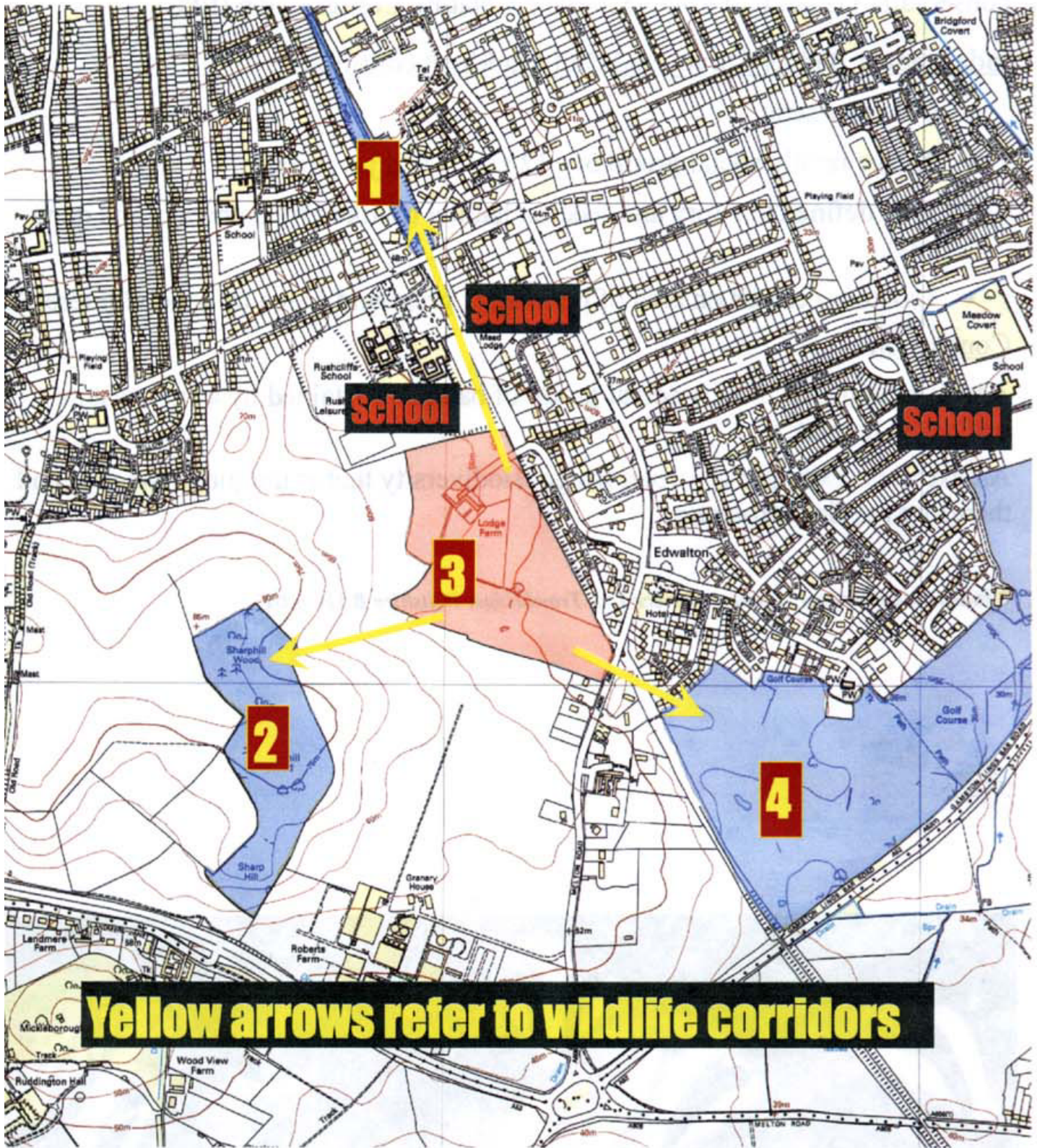
A well established, family social group of badgers sustained by a rich pasture/hedgerow habitat.

An excellent example of Urban fringe Biodiversity that is unique to the area and therefore requires protection.

** Independent Badger Advisory Service Ltd, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 6RN*



Natural Solution to maintain Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat



Yellow arrows refer to wildlife corridors

**No 1 Green Line SINC
No 2 Sharphill Wood SINC**

**No 3 Proposed New SINC
No 4 Golf Course**

Recommendations

In the absence of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)¹⁰ and incomplete records for the historical and ecological status of the area, we contend that the Area of Special Interest conforms to the objective criteria laid down by the NCC for a MLA and should be retained within the Greenbelt and protected from development pending

1. Ecological Assessment including consultation, survey, evaluation, impact assessment and mitigation; with special reference to MLA guidelines and Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
2. Archaeological survey to assess its significance for education and local heritage.

Natural Solution

Occupying a strategic position between three existing SINC's, the RBC, working in partnership with the present land owners, local schools and interest groups, could establish the Area of Special Interest as a new SINC (see opposite). This would:

- Create wildlife corridors¹¹ and a Network of Natural Habitats (DPPS9)¹² along the edge of the urban fringe
- Maintain the quality of the landscape
- Resolve the problem of sustainable biodiversity and secure a habitat for protected species
- Conserve important aspects of our historical heritage
- Enhance local educational and amenity facilities



Rushcliffe School



**Local
Wildlife
In the
Edwalton
Area**



Sources of Information

- 1 Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Records Centre, Wollaton Hall, Nottingham
- 2 Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint Structure Plan 2003; Policies 2/1, 2/5, 2/6, 2/9 and 2/10
- 3 Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Nottinghamshire 1998
- 4 Nottinghamshire County Council Mature Landscape Areas Study 1989-1992.
- 5 Nottinghamshire County Council Landscape Guidelines 1998
- 6 Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (Environmental Act 1995)
- 7 RBC Chief Executive report of 29th August 2000 (para 24) with reference to the Edwalton site - 'Site has Badgers and Mature Landscape area to the North East'.
- 8 Badger Protection Act 1992 (c.51)
- 9 Planning Policy Guidance 9 'Nature Conservation'; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- 10 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999.
- 11 Nature Conservation Strategy: a better future for Rushcliffe
- 12 Draft Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, section 11 Networks of Natural Habitats.

