

ROSS-ON-WYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Views of Ross, placing it in its landscape

Purpose and method

There are many places within the Neighbourhood Plan area where beautiful views can be enjoyed, through the Neighbourhood Plan 'Key Views' can be given significance and protection through a planning policy.

This report sets out information and reasoning for a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan for protecting Key Views, where those meet three criteria:

- The view is accessible from a public road or path.
- There is a specific reason for selecting the view, i.e. overreaching far view, view to or from an historical or public interest building/monument/natural feature etc.
- The quality and distinctiveness of the *visual amenity*.

A **view** is what can be seen from a particular place and **visual amenity** is the overall pleasantness of a view and its setting.

Each entry includes a map ID (where accompanying maps show point and direction of view), grid reference, short description (giving location description and direction of view), reason for the view, and a photograph.

Method

It is essential to note that almost all of the parish of Ross, and much of the town itself, is in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Wye Valley and the town itself have long been a draw for tourists who come to enjoy the celebrated landscape and dramatic views, the particular situation and landscape character of the Wye Valley means that Ross-on-Wye enjoys some superb views from within and outside the town.

The first step was the identification of a series of viewpoints by Sam Phillips (Chairman of the Ross Walkers and Welcome Steering Group), Bob Selmes (Chairman of the Ross Group of The Ramblers) and Melvin Reynolds (Chairman of the Ross NDP Steering Committee) drawing on their extensive local knowledge. The identified view-points were then visited to check they met the criteria as set out above.

Photographs have been taken by members of the Steering Group. All grid references are taken using OS Maps Explorer 189 & OL14, from the SO square.

The Views

The views covered in this report fall broadly into two groups:

Specific views are selected to demonstrate a key view from a feature or given viewpoint in the landscape.

Illustrative views demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues.

In addition four **Key Views** have been identified:

KEY VIEW 1 NNE from Symonds Yat viewpoint past Goodrich, to Ross (Map ID: L5)

KEY VIEW 2 SE to parish church from the A40 at the Wye Wilton bridge (Map ID: B6)

KEY VIEW 3 Looking W from The Prospect public park.

KEY VIEW 4 Looking W from the start of Wye Street by the Man of Ross pub.

The key views have been identified as they illustrate specific features or characteristics that are important in the setting of Ross-on-Wye. However all views selected for this report demonstrate particular features or issues that should be taken into consideration in any future development.

These are presented in three sections as below.

Long Views To the Town

Ross is visible from many miles distant. Most long views have been selected because of the distinctive landscape location of Ross-on-Wye on a low ridge below the most northerly point of the Forest of Dean National Landscape Area (forming Penyard Park and Chase Woods with the ancient trackway crossing point between them at Hill Farm).

The dominant feature in any view of Ross is almost always the particularly distinctive spire of St. Mary's Church, with the clear separation by the agricultural land above the town from the Penyard and Chase Woods remaining much as it did when described by William Cobbett in his famous 1821 Rural Rides:

“The trees of all kinds are very fine on the hills as well as in the bottoms. The spot where I now am is peculiarly well situated in all respects. The land very rich, the pastures the finest I ever saw, the trees of all kinds surpassing upon an average any that I have before seen in England. From the house, you see, in front and winding round to the left, a lofty hill, called Penyard Hill, at about a mile and a half distance, covered with oaks of the finest growth; along at the foot of this wood are fields and orchards continuing the slope of the hill down for a considerable distance, and, as the ground lies in a sort of ridges from the wood to the foot of the slope, the hill-and-dell is very beautiful.

"Away to the right of Penyard Hill lies, in the bottom, ... and on the bank of the river Wye, the town of Ross, over which we look down the vale to Monmouth and see the Welsh hills beyond it. ... I was much amused for an hour after daylight this morning in looking at the clouds, rising, at intervals, from the dells on the side of Penyard Hill, and flying to the top, and then over the hill."

'Beating the Bounds' Views to the Town

The Neighbourhood Plan consultants suggested this exercise to potentially come closer in to the town than for the Long Views as above. The group named above followed this by, in essence, following the parish boundary ('Beating the Bounds') and highlighting important views along the route.

These have been chosen for the importance of a particular feature, positive or negative within a particular view. The positive content is deemed worth retaining, the negative content is deemed either worth learning from, and/ or worth seeking to mitigate the negative impact upon.

Views Out From the Town

In addition to the important views inward to the town, Ross is also famous for the views that can be had from the town itself. Because of its situation on the low ridge amongst higher hills, there are many glimpses of the surrounding countryside from within the town and these are at least as important as the views into the town.

The most famous of these is that from The Prospect itself; although William Gilpin in his "Observations of the River Wye, and several parts of South Wales" of 1800 damned it with faint praise (and with a landscape painter's compositional eye he was right) it remains a major attraction for visitors and locals alike:

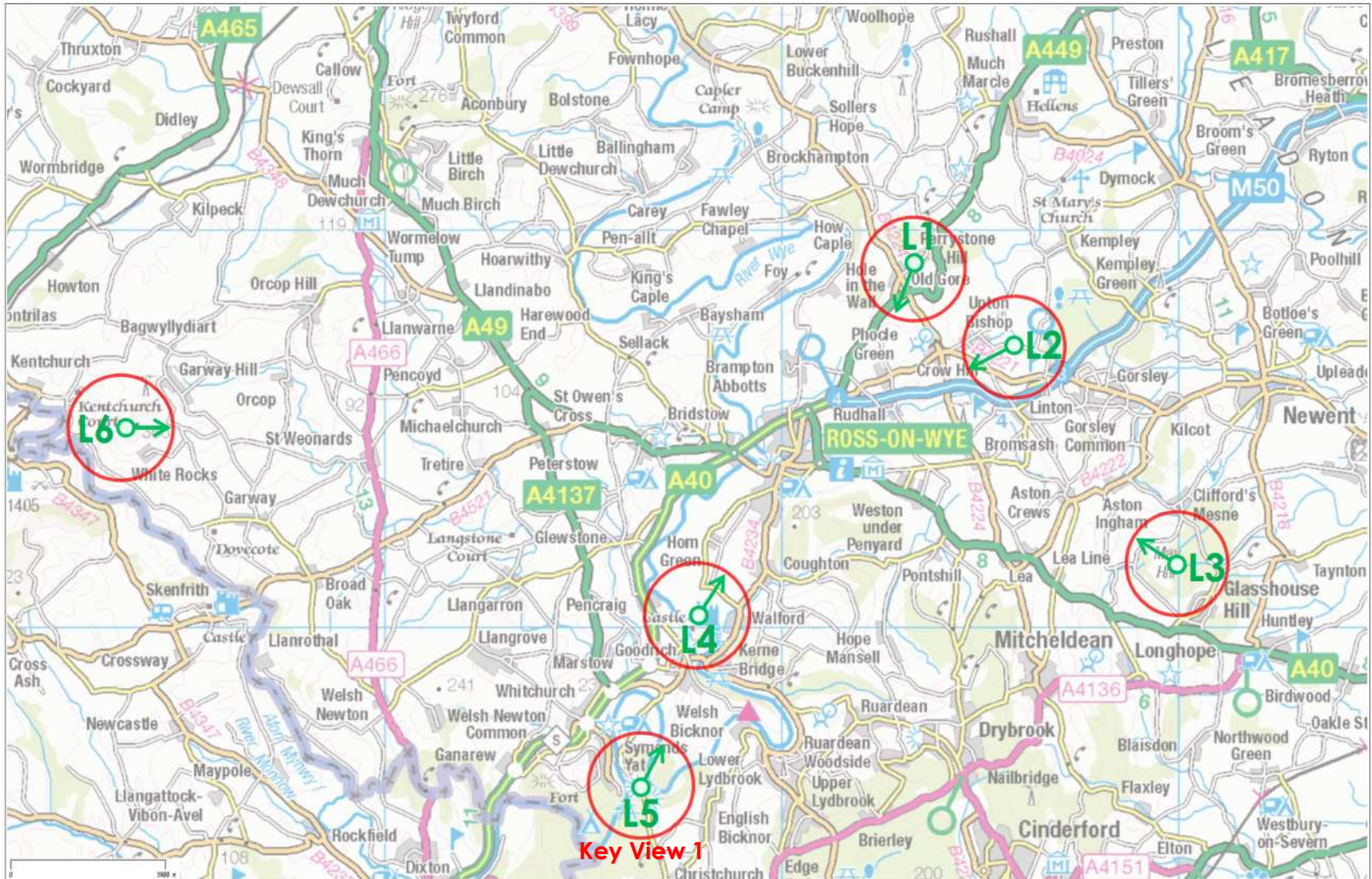
"Ross stands high, and commands many distant views; but that from the churchyard is the most admired, and is indeed very amusing. It consists of an easy sweep of the Wye, and of an extensive country beyond it. But it is not picturesque. It is marked by no characteristic objects: it is broken into too many parts; and it is seen from too high a point. The spire of the church, which is the man of Ross's heaven-directed spire, tapers beautifully."

Long Views to the Town



Ross-on-Wye NDP
Long Views

Ross-on-Wye CP



Map ID:

Grid Ref:

Location description:

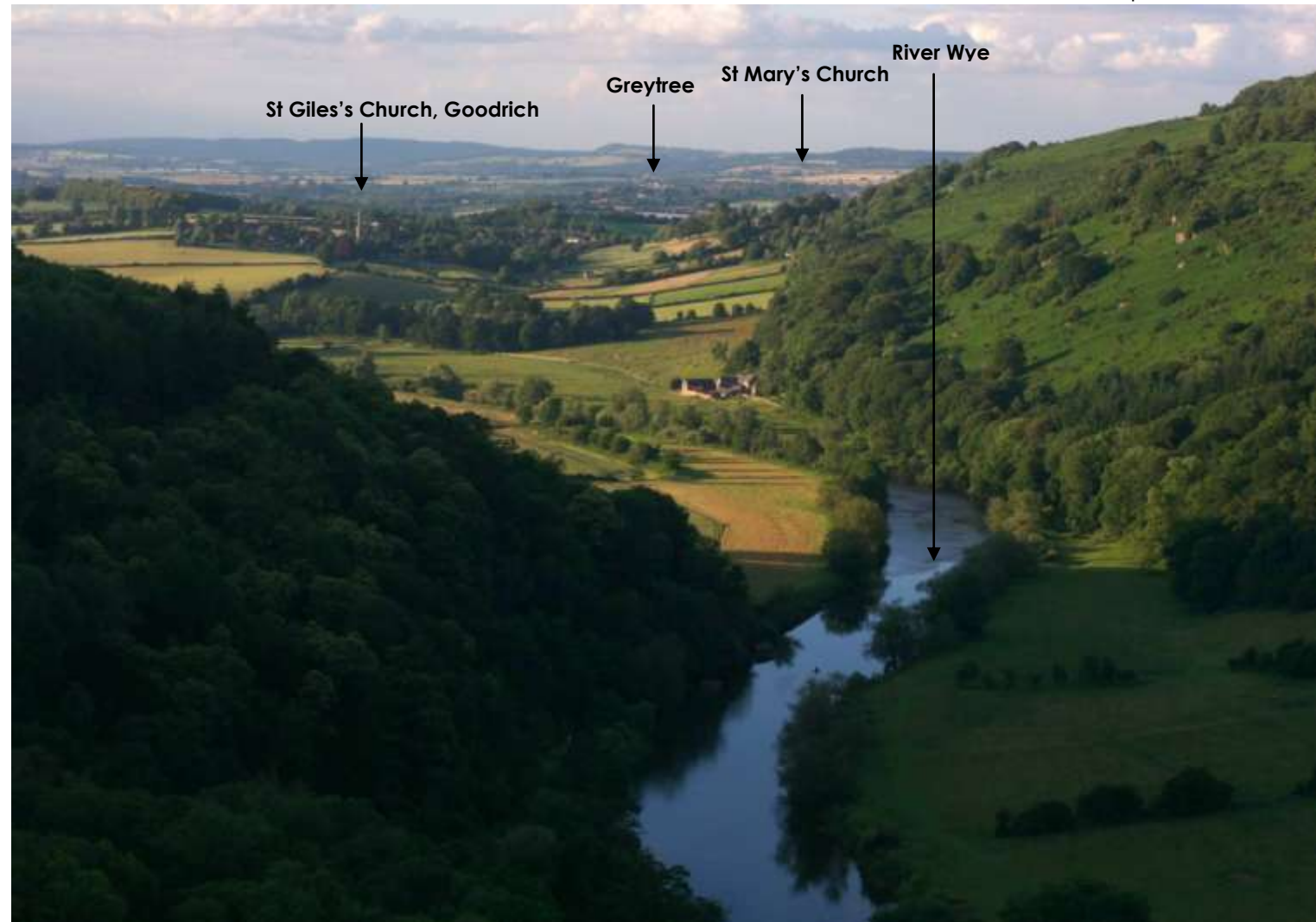
Reason for view:

L5 KEY VIEW 1

63160 (8km to St Mary's)

NNE from Symonds Yat viewpoint past Goodrich, to Ross.

A specific view, which is a classic and internationally famed one of Ross-on-Wye. The River Wye in the foreground, bends out of sight drawing the eye along the river valley toward the town which sits with the gently undulating landscape. The landmark spire is visible and some rooftops within trees of the town which contribute to a sense of connection and interaction between the built and natural landscapes.



Map ID:

L1

Grid Ref:

633292 (6.2km to St Mary's)

Location description:

From the Herefordshire Trail at Old Gore, Perrystone Hill looking SSW.

Reason for view:

This is an **illustrative view** of the town and the landscape setting of the town below wooded valley sides and sloping fields, together with the hedgerows and trees of the gently undulating pastoral land. The landmark church spire of St Mary's is visible as well the office, retail and warehouse / transport buildings north of A40.



Map ID:

L2

Grid Ref:

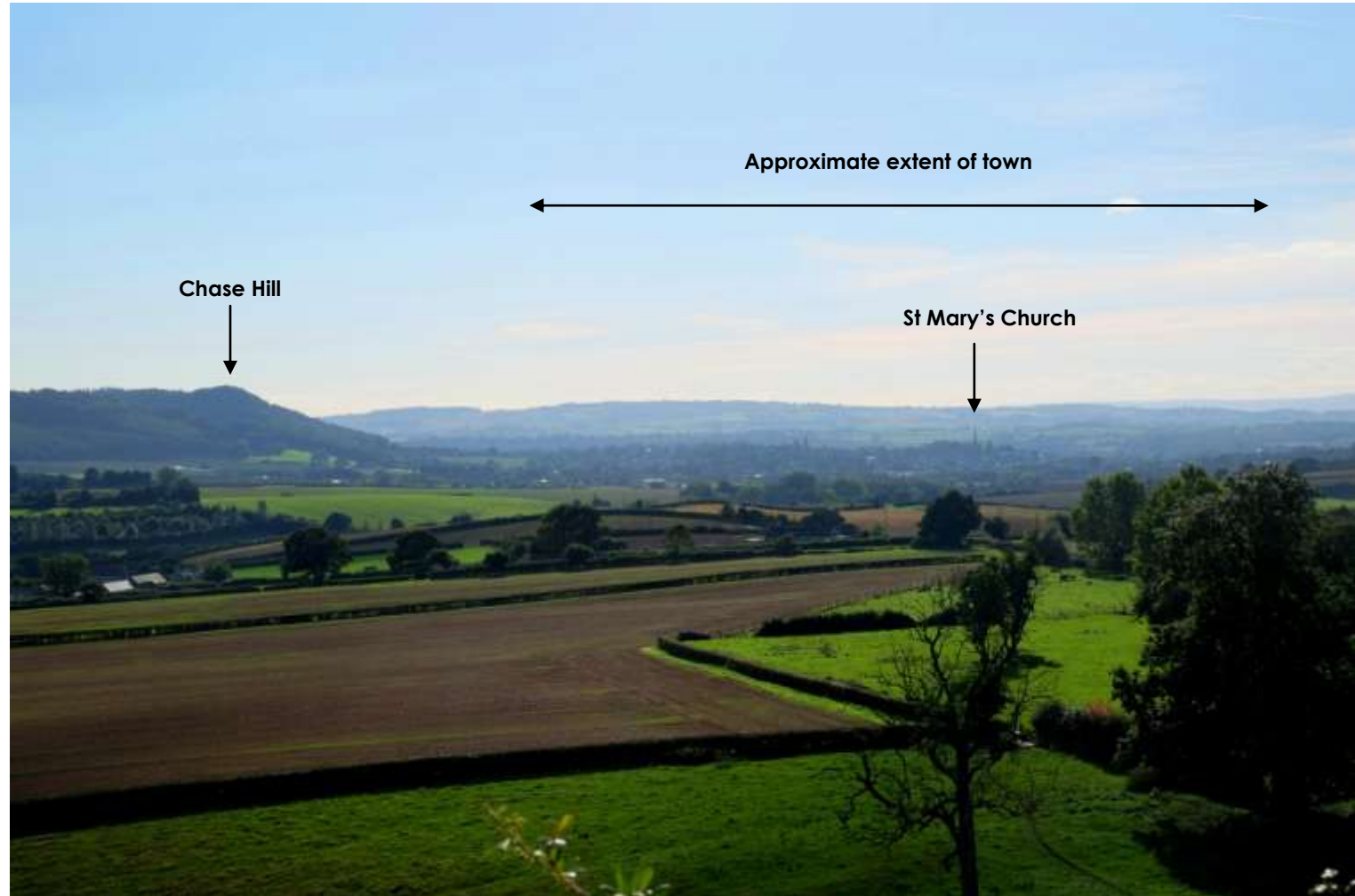
646268 (5.6km to St Mary's)

Location description:

SWN from B4221 SE of Upton Crews

Reason for view:

This **illustrative view** captures the well-demarcated situation below Penyard Hill and the extensive tree cover within the town as it straddles the ridge in the middle distance.



Photo

Map ID:

L3

Grid Ref:

693217 (10km to St Mary's)

Location description:

WNW From May Hill

Reason for view:

An **illustrative view** of the wider landscape setting of the town. Showing Weston-Under-Penyard, Penyard Park & Ross (middle distance right) toward the broken ridge from Orcop to Garway, and beyond the Welsh border to the Black Mountain and Brecon Beacons.



Map ID:

L4

Grid Ref:

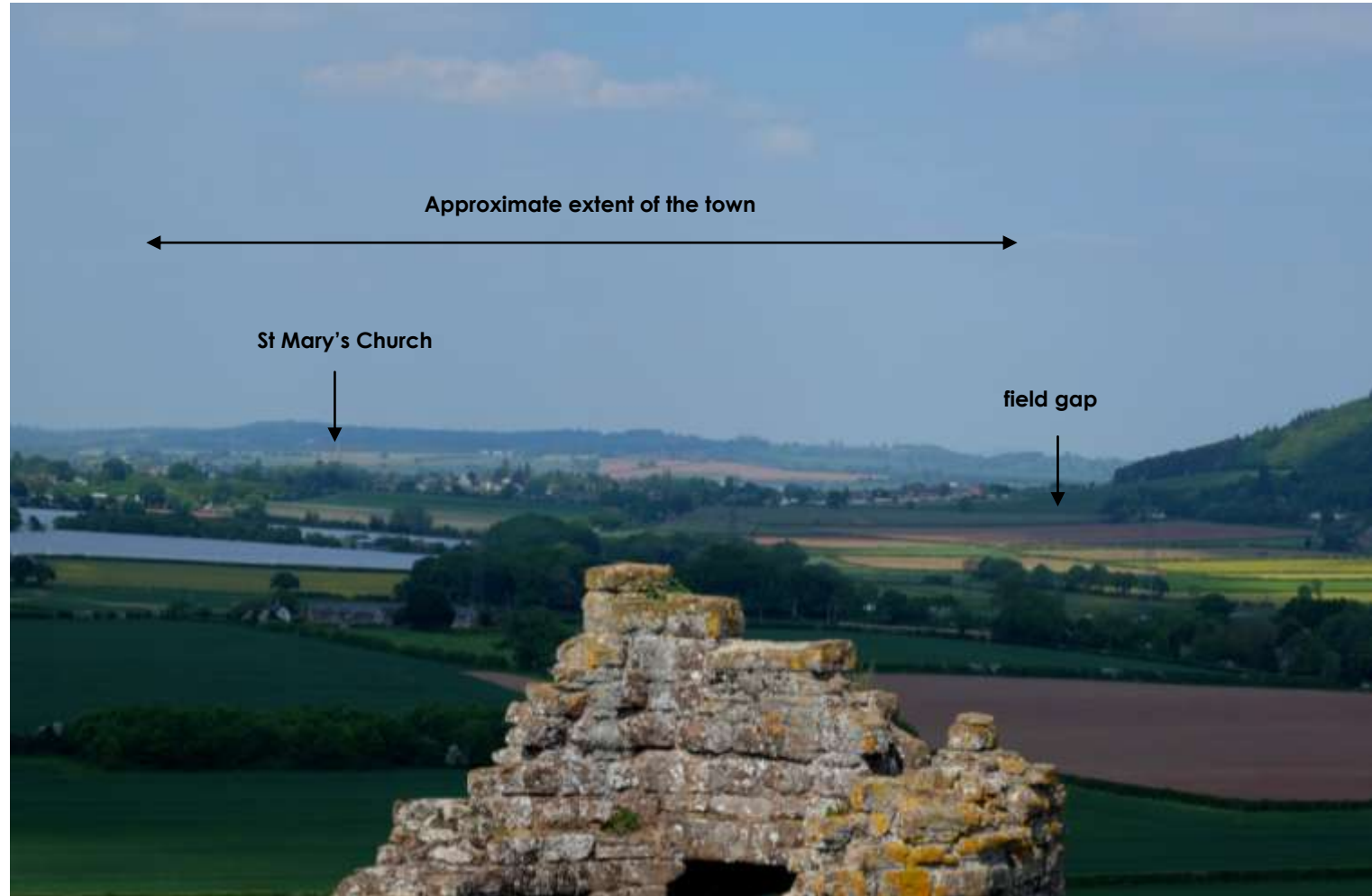
578190 (4.6km to St Mary's)

Location description:

NNE from Goodrich Castle Keep over Homme Green, to Ross (Greytree at left to Tudorville at right)).

Reason for view:

Illustrative view, showing the general situation of Ross and the landscape impact of the 'field gap' below the woods, although that is most eroded in this and the B5 view.



Map ID:

L6

Grid Ref:

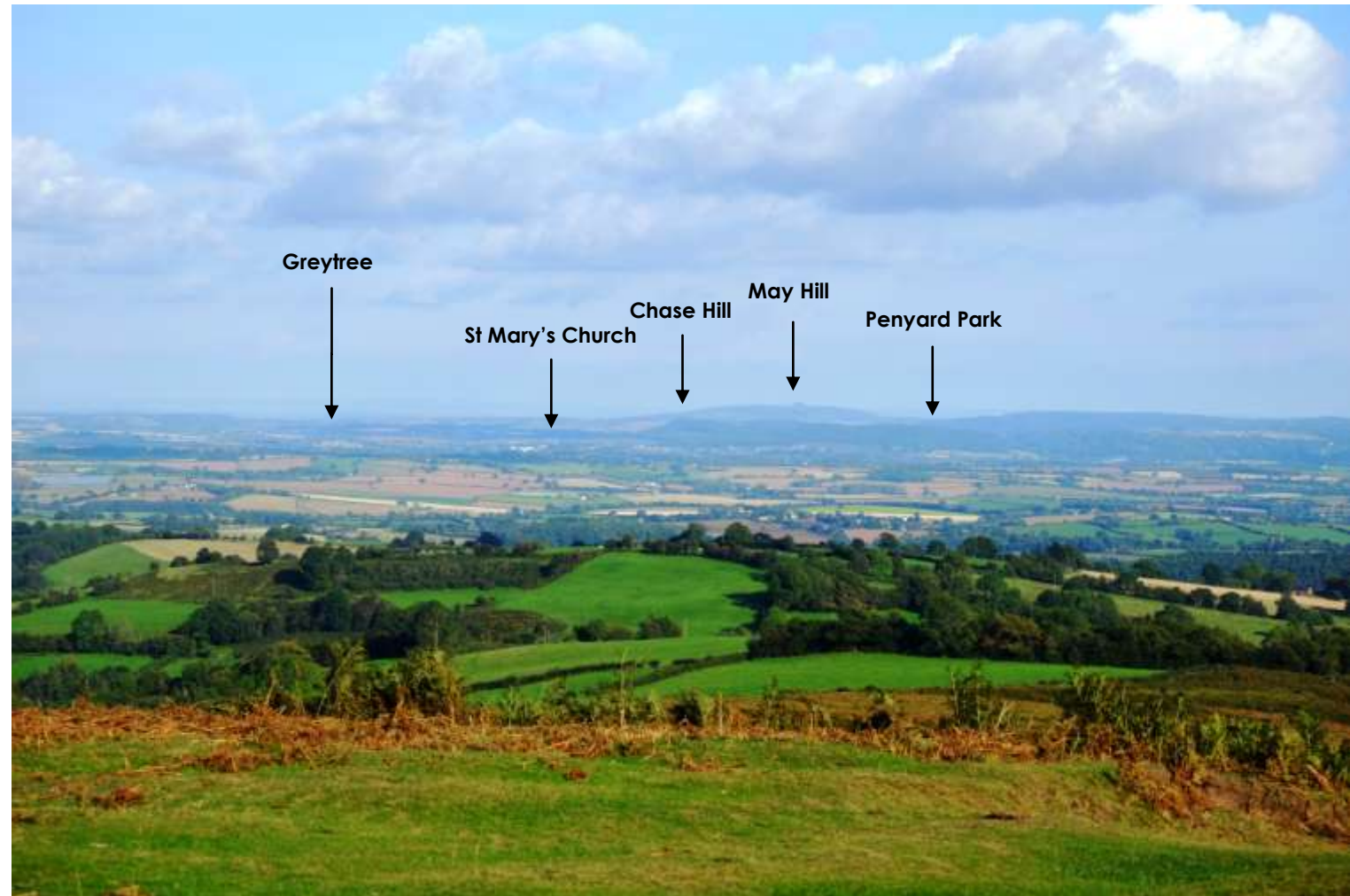
444247 (16km to St Mary's)

Location description:

E from Garway Hill

Reason for view:

Illustrative view of the distinctive situation of Ross below the Chase / Penyard ridge as it makes the northerly extent of the Forest of Dean into Herefordshire, with May Hill and Cotswold scarp beyond. Note Greytree outlier of town to the N of A40.

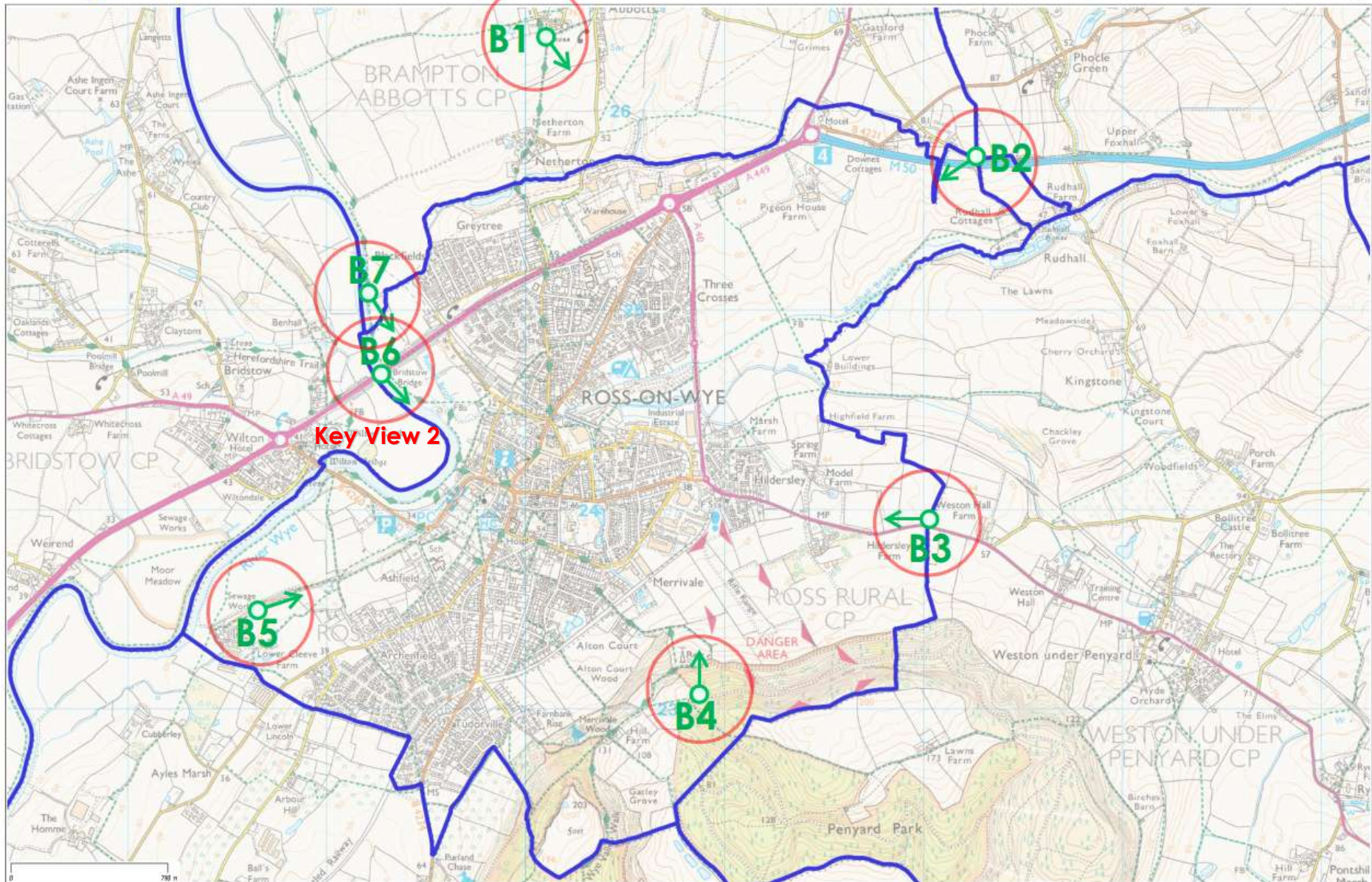


Beating the Bounds views to the Town



Ross-on-Wye NDP
Boundary Views

Ross-on-Wye CP 



Map ID:

B6 KEY VIEW 2

Grid Ref:

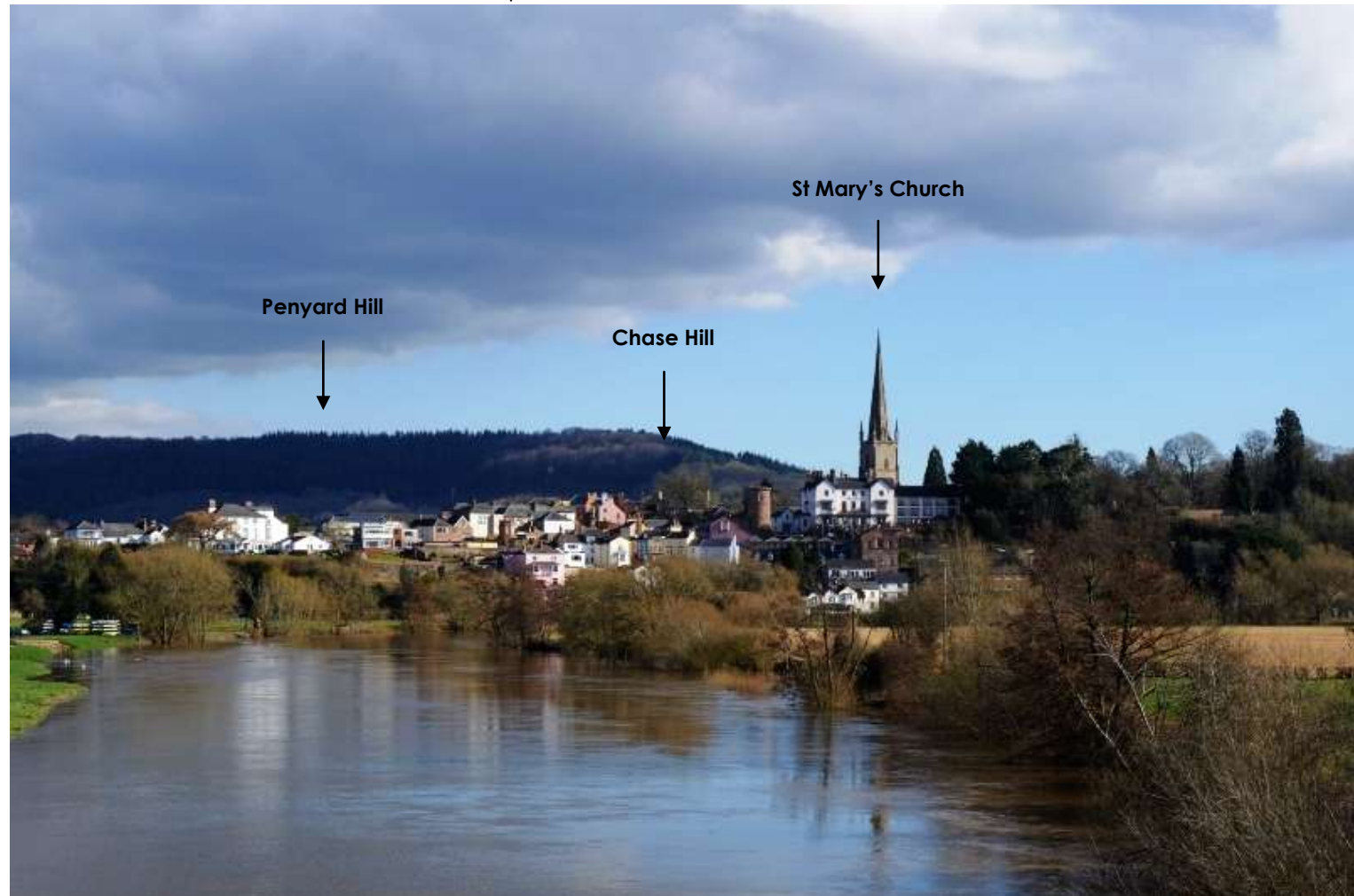
593247

Location description:

SE to parish church from the A40 at the Wye Wilton bridge

Reason for view:

This **specific** and classic view demonstrates the distinctive landscape dominance of church and spire situated on the sandstone bluff at the apex of the river bend.



Map ID:

B1

Grid Ref:

601264

Location description:

On footpath BA4 at the gateway SSE from Brampton Abbots churchyard.

Reason for view:

Illustrative view of the highly visible, negative impact in wider landscape of depot development to north of A40 at Overross in the foreground. Penyard Hill with it's wooded upper slopes and pastoral lower slopes in the background.



Map ID:

B2

Grid Ref:

622258

Location description:

SWW from C1283 at north end of M50 over bridge, north of Rudhall

Reason for view:

Illustrative view showing contained situation as glimpsed by approaching westbound traffic on M50. The land to the low ridge in the centre beyond Pigeon House Farm (centre-right middle distance) has outline permission for housing development.



Map ID:

B3

Grid Ref:

620239

Location description:

View W from field gateway on Parish boundary adjacent A40 east of Ross.

Reason for view:

An **illustrative view** of the integration of the built environment into the wider rural landscape by extensive tree growth. The proposed Hildersley business park will occupy the middle-ground land in the left of this photo montage, and the proposed Pigeon House farm development that on the right.



Map ID:

B4

Grid Ref:

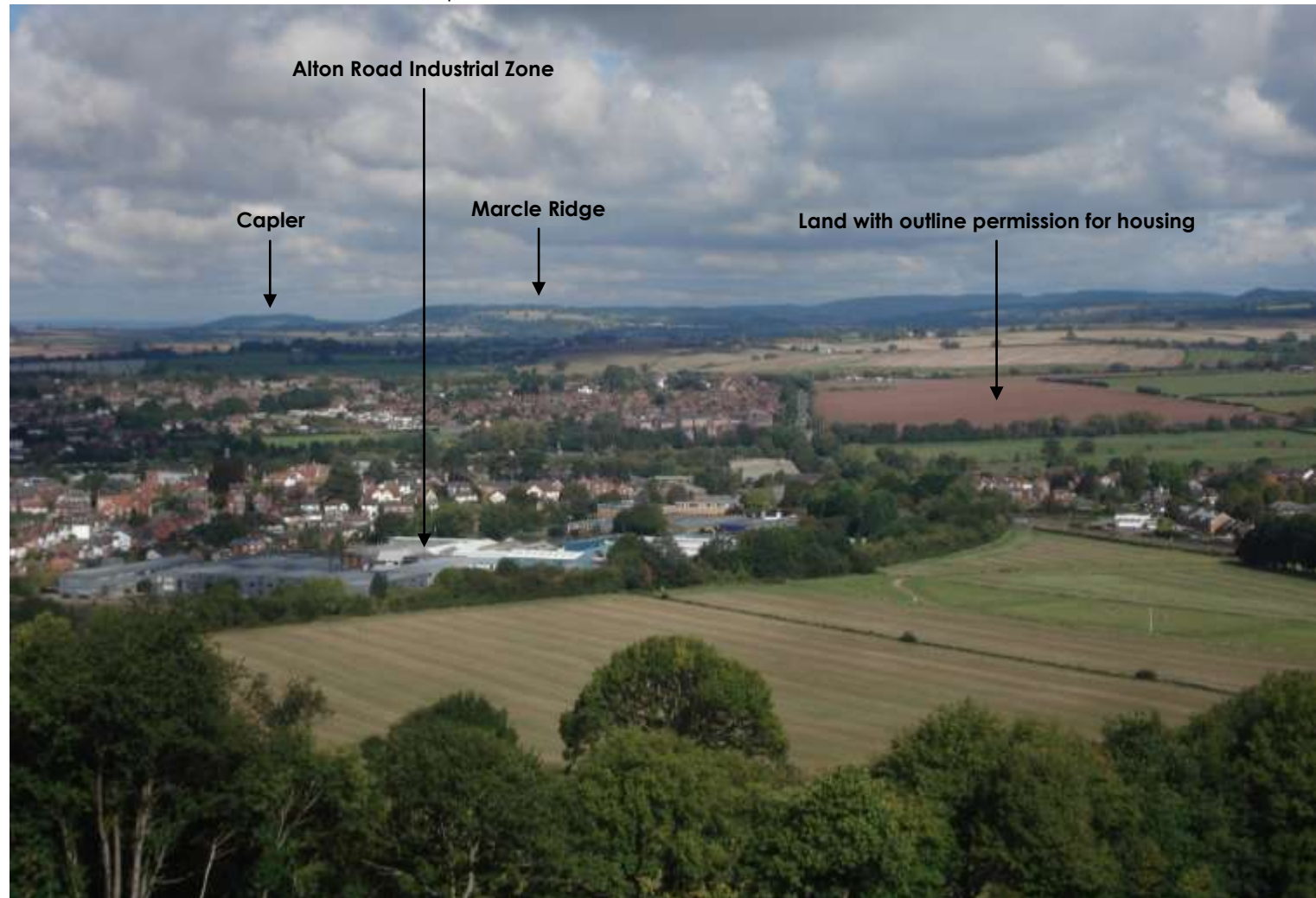
608231

Location description:

View N from forestry track just NE of junction with RR6

Reason for view:

Illustrative view showing Alton Road Industrial zone, Tanyard field (centre left), Firing range, and (ploughed) Pigeon House Farm housing site NE of A40 and in the distance the Marcle ridge, with the gently sloping fields to the base of the wooded slopes.



Map ID:

B5

Grid Ref:

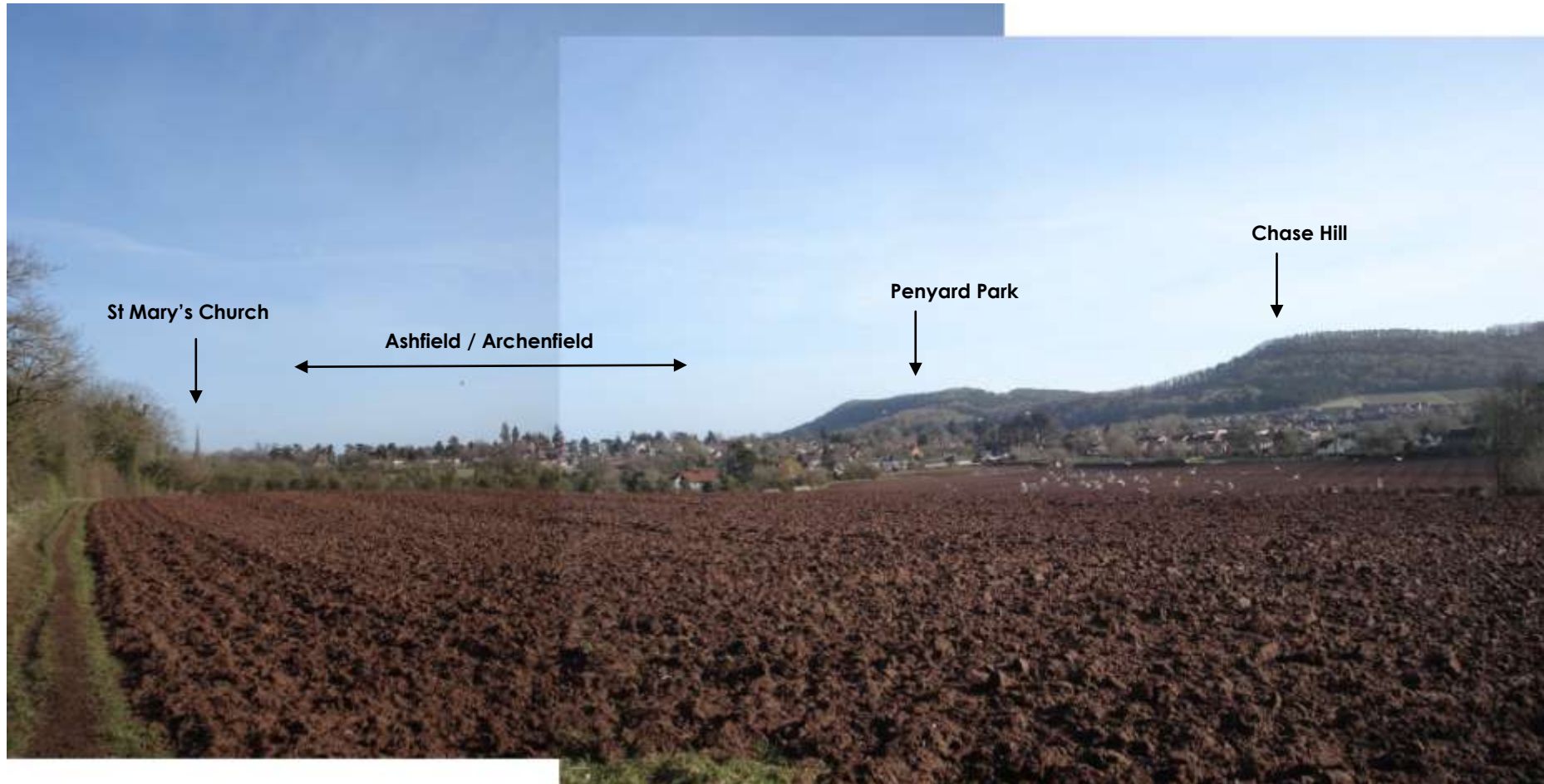
587235

Location description:

NEE from John Kyrle Walk ZK21 over Cleeve Lane housing site (low ground at centre right) to Penyard Park, with Ashfield area along the ridge in left middle ground

Reason for view:

Illustrative view showing distinctive mature tree profile of Ashfield / Archenfield beyond Cleeve Orchard (end of field below spire).



Map ID:

B7

Grid Ref:

593252

Location description:

On footpath BA2, S where the Wye Valley Walk strikes E from the bank of River Wye below Blackfields.

Reason for view:

Illustrative view of traditional management of riverside willows as a result of pollarding to stools. This helps to create more, and to frame, views.



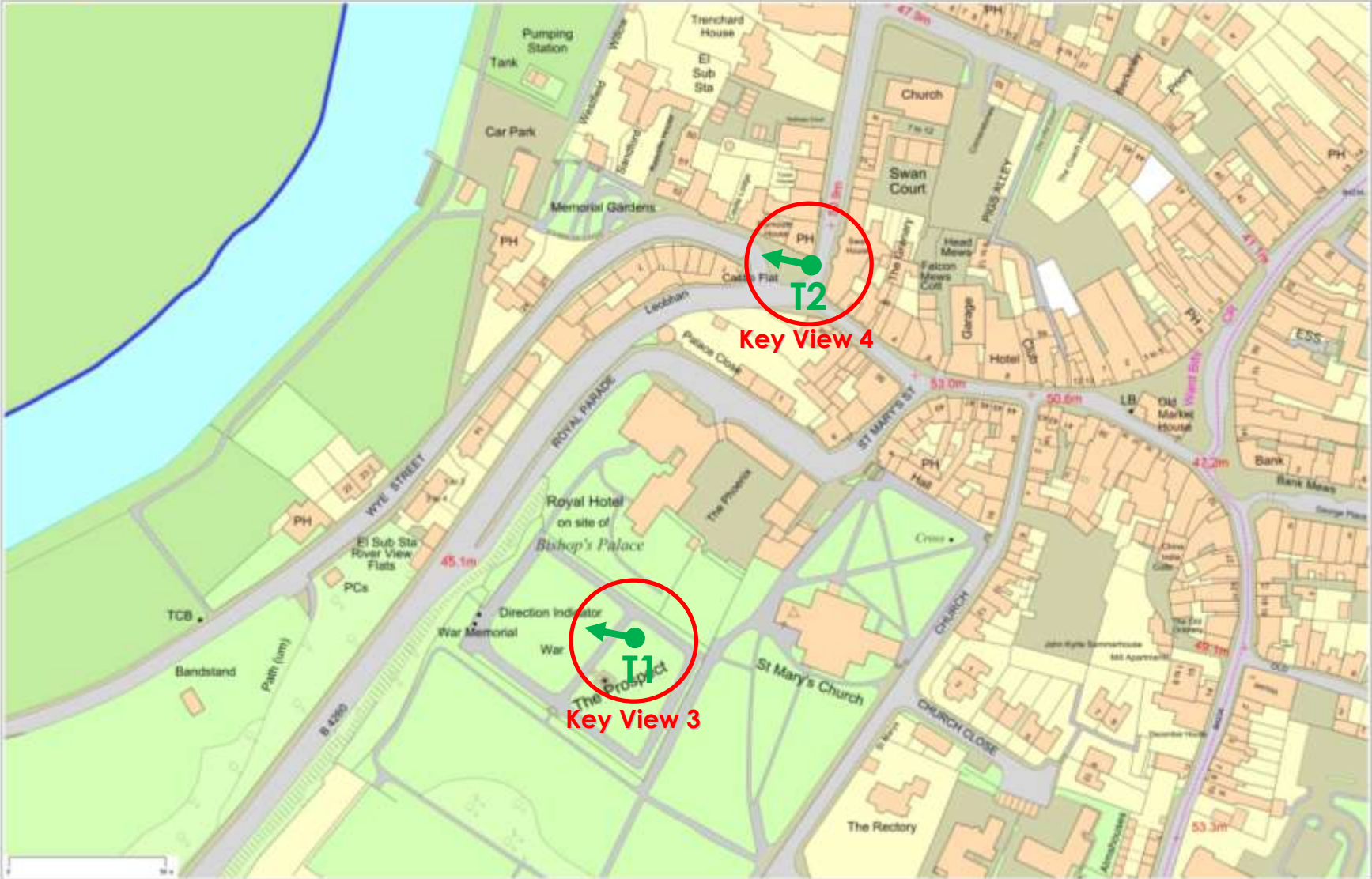
Views out From the Town – KEY VIEWS

The two views here have been selected because of their long standing historical value, as shown, in one case, by the earlier quotation from William Gilpin.



Ross-on-Wye NDP
Views from town

Ross-on-Wye CP



Map ID:

T1

KEY VIEW 3

Grid Ref:

597241

Location description:

Looking W from The Prospect public park.

Reason for view:

A **specific** and again classic view from Ross to the river Wye (just below the view line here) and the landscape beyond.



Map ID:

T2

KEY VIEW 4

Grid Ref:

598242

Location description:

Looking W from the start of Wye Street by the Man of Ross pub.

Reason for view:

A **specific view**, with buildings framing and channelling a view to the surrounding landscape.



Appendix: Glimpses Out of the Town

The photos that follow below are illustrative only. This is because glimpses through to the countryside can be found in very many locations around the town highlighting the importance of the rural backcloth to the character of the town.





