

July 2024

GA2

Strategic Masterplan

Part 1: Baseline Evidence Summary

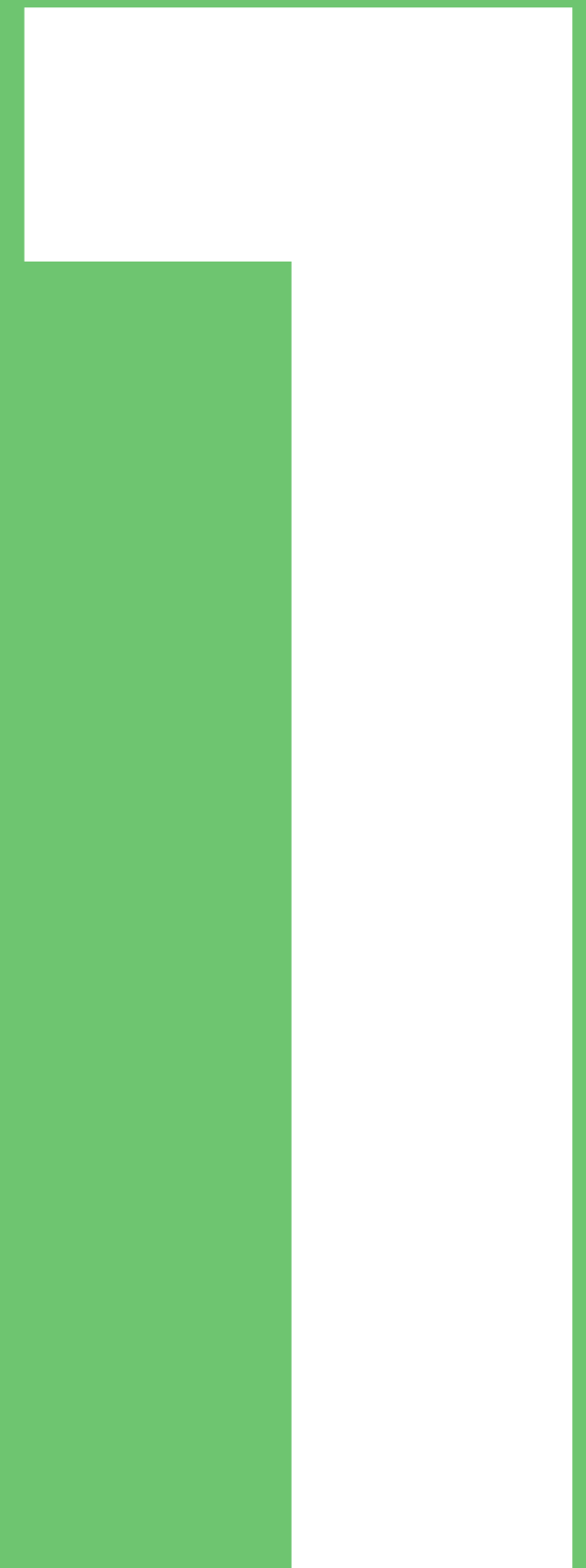
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Introduction



1. Introduction

PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Document has been produced on behalf of Picture Estates Ltd as part of the Strategic Masterplan for the residential-led development at GA2, the land north east of Great Ashby. It sets out a summary of the various baseline and technical studies that have been undertaken, and how they should inform the design of the scheme.
- 1.2 The technical studies which have been undertaken to-date are contained within the Appendices to this Summary.
- 1.3 This Summary concludes with an Opportunities and Constraints plan, which sets out the key influences which will be taken into consideration within the development of the proposals for GA2. The Strategic Masterplan for GA2 sets out the key principles and various design options which have resulted from the baseline studies, and then presents the final Masterplan.
- 1.4 The effects of the proposed development at GA2 is being assessed within the Environmental Impact Assessment which is being undertaken alongside the planning application. Much of the information in this Summary is also available within the Environmental Statement.

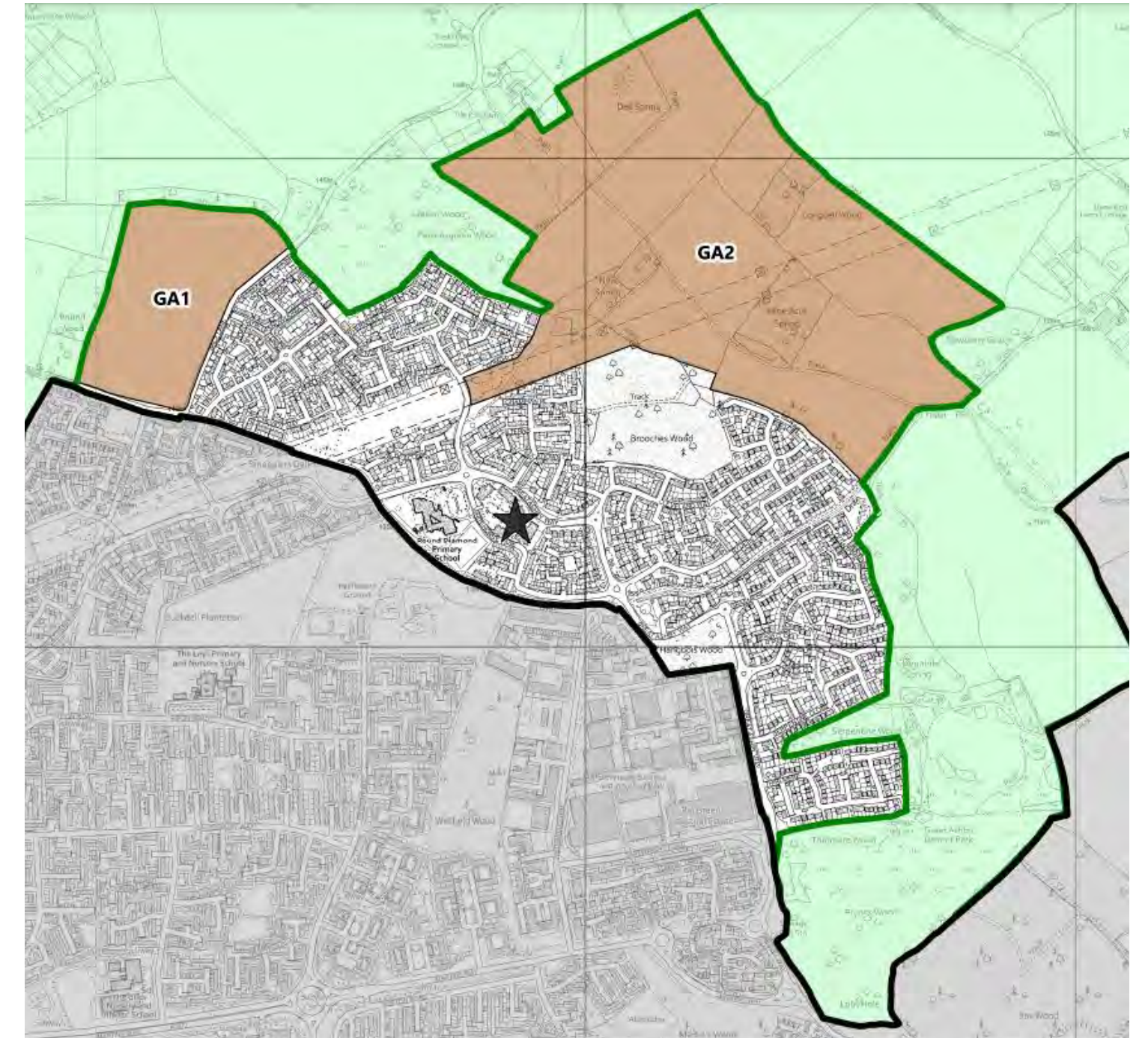
1. Introduction

- 1.5 The adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 allocates the land north east of Great Ashby off Mendip Way ('the Site') as a Strategic Housing Site for a new neighbourhood of approximately 600 homes.

Policy SP18 states:

'Land to the north-east of Great Ashby within Weston parish, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for a new neighbourhood of approximately 600 homes. A comprehensive and deliverable Strategic Masterplan for the entire allocation is to be prepared and agreed between the landowner/developer and the Council. Where applications have already been submitted to the Council a Strategic Masterplan should be agreed prior to the or as part of the grant of planning permission. Any application on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the Strategic Masterplan and must not prejudice the implementation of the site as a whole. Development proposals should provide the following planning and masterplanning requirements:

- a Neighbourhood-level facilities providing approximately 500m² (net) of retail and food and beverage floorspace and other necessary medical and social infrastructure;
- b Four hectares of land at the north of the allocation site, broadly bounded by Footpaths Weston 044 and Weston 027 and Dell Spring reserved for education use to accommodate 2FE of primary-age provision and 4FE of secondary age provision;
- c Principal access from Mendip Way with:
 - provision for sustainable modes of transport having regard to the Stevenage Mobility Strategy; and
 - comprehensive integration into the existing pedestrian and cycle, public transport and road networks;
- d Transport Assessment to identify and secure measures to manage traffic flows arising from the development along Back Lane;
- e A detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery;
- f At least 6 serviced plots for self-build development;
- g Structural planting along site boundaries as informed by detailed landscape assessments to reinforce the revised Green Belt boundary and mitigate landscape impacts;
- h Address existing surface water flood risk issues, particularly running south east from Dell Spring to Newberry Grove, through SuDS or other appropriate solution;
- i Appropriate mitigation, compensation and / or enhancement of key features of biodiversity including:
 - local wildlife sites at Tilekiln Wood, Parsonsgreen Wood, New Spring Wood, Brooches Wood and Claypithills Spring Wood;
 - identified protected species and priority habitats; and
 - retention of green infrastructure connectivity and corridors to the wider countryside;
- j Integration of existing public rights of way within and adjoining the site to provide routes to the wider countryside including
 - Footpaths Weston 027 and Weston 044 and Bridleway Weston 033 as features which help define the perimeters of the site; and
 - Footpath Weston 029 as a potential green corridor through the site;
- k Provision of a green infrastructure corridor beneath the current alignment of the pylon lines to respect statutory safety clearance requirements for residential development; and
- l Lower intensity development and/or green infrastructure provision to the north of the site to minimise harm to the setting of listed buildings.



▲ Figure 1.1 - The Site is allocated as site GA2

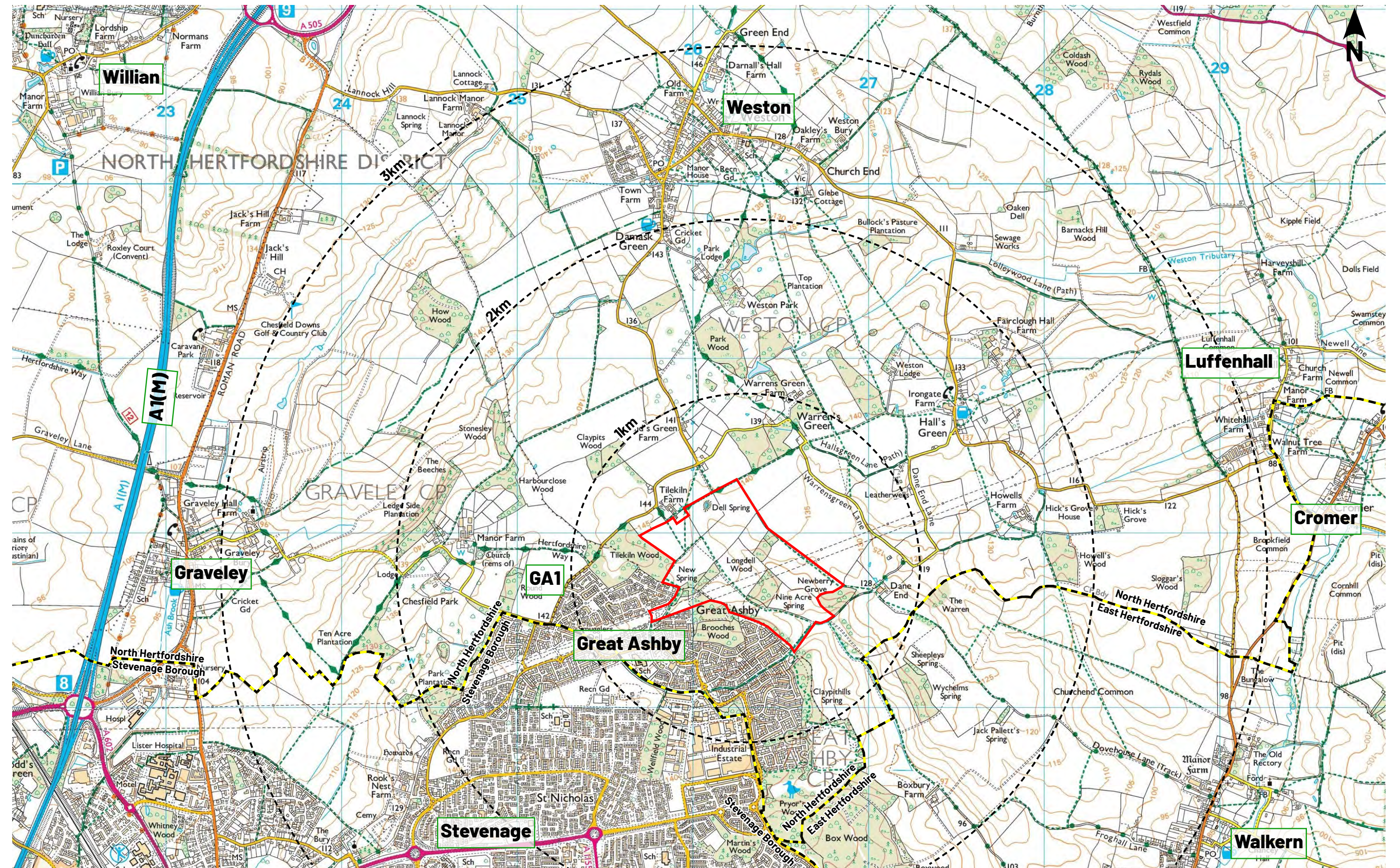
The Site



2. The Site

SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The Site is located on the north eastern edge of neighbourhood of Great Ashby, which is a parish located on the north eastern edge of the town of Stevenage. The Site lies within the far south of the Parish of Weston, with both the Site and Great Ashby located within the North Hertfordshire District. Great Ashby is contiguous with Stevenage to the south (which lies within Stevenage Borough).
- 2.2 Great Ashby is connected to Stevenage to the south and west by Great Ashby Way, which connects to the extensive highway network within Stevenage. The village of Weston lies around 1.5km north of the Site, with the non-designated Weston Park located between the Site and the village. Two further villages/hamlets, Walkern and Cromer, lie around 2-3km to the east and south east of the Site.
- 2.3 The Site lies to the east of Mendip Way, which links the houses in the north of Great Ashby to Great Ashby Way. Back Lane which lies a short distance west of the Site, links the north of Stevenage and Great Ashby to Weston. Around 400m north east of the Site is Warren Lane which connects several farmsteads to larger roads within the wider landscape.
- 2.4 The land to the north of Great Ashby, north west of Back Lane, is also allocated for housing within the Local Plan, and lies around 500m south east of the Site. That site (known site GA1) is allocated for 330 dwellings.



▲ Figure 2.1 - Site location

2. The Site

SURROUNDING LAND USES

- 2.5** The Site is separated from the adjoining houses on the north eastern edge of Great Ashby by blocks of Ancient Woodland as well as woodland belts dating from the late 20th century. Mendip Way recreational park lies within the Site, and is located within a corridor of open space underneath high-voltage overhead powerlines to the east of Mendip Way, south of the houses on Cromdale Walk and north of the houses on The Chilterns and Grampian Place.
- 2.6** The farmstead at Tile Kiln Farm lies to the north west of the Site, south of Back Lane, with paddocks located to the west of the farm, and a pastoral field to the east, between the lane and the Site. The farmhouse at Tile Kiln Farm is Grade II Listed, as are two barns associated with it.
- 2.7** Two semi-detached residential properties known as The Bungalows, lie to the north west of the Site along the south of the junction of Back Lane and Warrengreen Lane, with two further properties on large grounds, as well as Friend's Green Farm (including the Grade II Listed farmhouse, and two associated buildings/barns) located further north along the extension of Back Lane.
- 2.8** An arable field lies south of Warrengreen Lane, and wraps around The Bungalows, with Warrengreen Wood located north east of this field, bound by Warrens Green Lane to the north and east. The Grade II Listed Thatched Cottage is indented into the south eastern corner of the woodland. Large arable fields lie to the north east of the Site, with Warrengreen Lane and further arable fields beyond.
- 2.9** Newberry Grove is indented into the south east of the Site, with Dane End Farm, including the Grade II Listed farmhouse and associated granary, located beyond to the east, surrounded by paddocks/small pastoral fields. Dane End Cottage, also Grade II Listed, is located a short distance north of the farm. A series of smaller fields and woodland blocks lie to the south east of the Site, south and east of the existing drainage basin south east of the Site. The Great Ashby District Park lies a around 500m further south east of the Site.



▲ Figure 2.2 - The key places around the Site

2. The Site

SITE DESCRIPTION

2.10 The Site comprises seven arable fields/parts of arable fields, two fields/parts of fields used for grazing, and three woodland blocks, as well as an area of recreational land located under the pylon and overhead powerline corridor which leads east towards the Site from Mendip Way. The allocation site extends to approximately 53.5ha.

2.11 The uses on the Site, as well as the various boundaries, are shown on the plan at Figure 2.3.

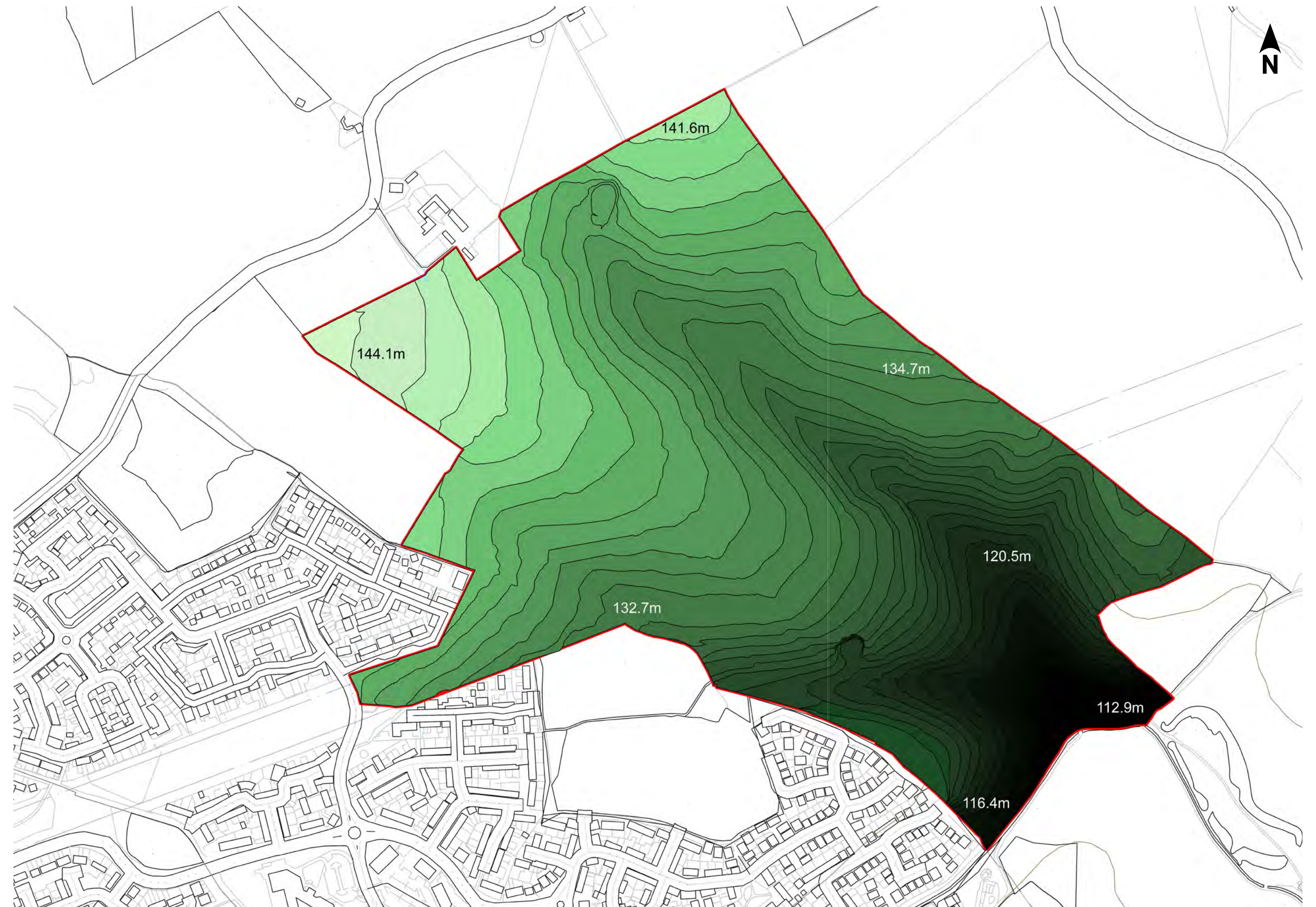


▲ Figure 2.3 - The Site and the surrounding land uses

2. The Site

TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.12** The landscape around the Site is dissected by a network of tributaries leading to the River Beane, located approximately 2.5km to the east of the Site. These watercourses shape numerous valleys in this heavily undulating landscape.
- 2.13** The Site is relatively level in the west, with the land here located on a plateau at around 135-145m Above Ordnance Datum ('AOD'). The Site slopes down relatively steeply to the east, with two localised valleys occurring within the south east of the Site, and low points here of 120m AOD. There is an approximately 25m fall across the Site from the north to the south east. Care will need to be taken in the detailed design of the development within the far south of the Site, to accommodate the relatively steeply sloping land here.



▲ Figure 2.4 - Topography of the Site

Site Context

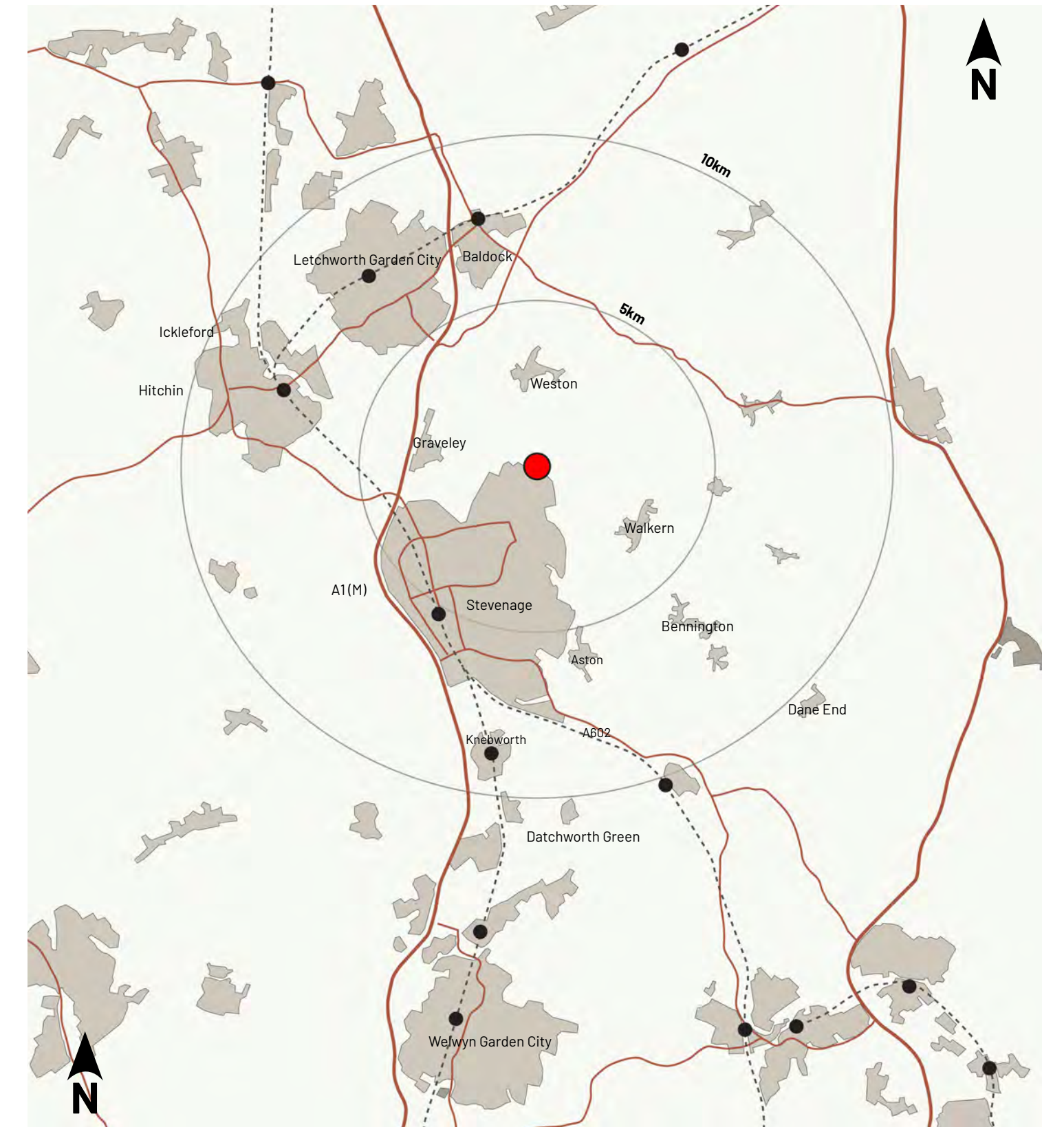


3. Site Context

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

- 3.1** North Hertfordshire is a predominantly rural district covering approximately 375 square kilometres of land. It is characterised by a number of small to medium sized towns with a range of facilities, and smaller settlements located within open countryside. The main settlements within North Hertfordshire are Hitchin, Baldock, Royston and Letchworth Garden City, each representing a significant focus for employment and housing. Most of the Great Ashby estate on the edge of Stevenage lies in North Hertfordshire. There are also about 40 villages and hamlets. Although there is no one dominant centre serving the District, there is a high degree of interdependency between the various towns and villages, as well as with surrounding larger towns like Stevenage, Luton, Milton Keynes, Cambridge, Welwyn Garden City and London.
- 3.2** The District is strategically positioned with good rail and road connections. It is less than 40 miles from central London.
- 3.3** In relation to housing, the North Hertfordshire Local Plan notes that almost one-quarter of homes in North Hertfordshire were detached houses. This proportion was slightly higher than both the Hertfordshire County and national figures. Conversely, the proportion of flats (including converted houses) was slightly lower. It also notes that the population is increasing, migration levels have been high in recent years, more people are living on their own, people are living longer and household sizes are becoming smaller all of which creates a high demand for housing and places additional pressure on community facilities. In addition the market cost of housing is increasingly out of reach for many households. There is also a need for more affordable housing.
- 3.4** There is a higher concentration of people working in the District employed in sectors such as manufacturing, construction, retail, motor trades, property, entertainment and recreation, however, many higher skilled residents commute out of the District for employment.
- 3.5** The natural environment of North Hertfordshire contributes to its character and distinctiveness. North Hertfordshire has a diverse range of green infrastructure and environmental assets of local, regional and national importance. Most of the rural area is farmland, although there is some woodland.

- 3.6** The settlements of Hitchin, Baldock and Royston are all historic market towns, each with their own distinctive character. Letchworth Garden City is based on Ebenezer Howard's original concept of a self-contained settlement combining both town and country living.
- 3.7** The village of Weston lies around 1.5km north west of the Site. Weston is a medium sized village to the south of Baldock. The village sits on a plateau, which drops sharply away on the edge of Baldock as the Weston Hills. The village has a school, shop, village hall, public house and church, and some small businesses. The Weston Conservation Area covers the older parts of the village. The parish church of Holy Trinity is a Grade I Listed Building.



▲ Figure 3.1 - The Site within the context of North Hertfordshire

3. Site Context

STEVENAGE

- 3.8** Stevenage dates from pre-historic times, and developed around what is now known as the Old Town High Street because of its position as an important coaching stop along the Great North Road.
- 3.9** Stevenage as a small hamlet, was recorded in the Domesday Book, and gradually grew into a village, continuing to slowly grow throughout the 19th century and up to just after the Second World War. On 1 August 1946, Stevenage was designated the first New Town under the New Towns Act.
- 3.10** The subsequent design of the New Town focused on creating six self-contained neighbourhoods. Great Ashby is a further 20th century expansion of this concept of neighbourhoods. In more recent times, the town has continued to grow, mainly to the east and north east. This has seen the town expand into the neighbouring District of North Hertfordshire
- 3.11** Stevenage is well served by trains, and lies along the A1(M) motorway. It has a large industrial area, with specialist factories and research facilities, including relating to aerospace and pharmaceuticals.
- 3.12** Stevenage is divided into distinct land use areas, with the town centre, Old Town and railway station serving as the core of the town. Local neighbourhood centres provide shops and community facilities for residents. There are two main employment areas, one to the west of the town centre at Gunnels Wood and one to the north east at Pin Green.
- 3.13** There are a range of leisure facilities, retail parks and supermarkets. Open spaces and play areas are well spread throughout the town. Wide roads and a cycle and pedestrian network link all parts of the town. Stevenage's railway station is on the East Coast Main Line, offering long distance rail links between London and the north. Commuter services connect the town to Kings Cross, Cambridge and Peterborough as well as nearby towns including Hitchin, Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City. There are also trains to London Moorgate and Hertford via a branch line.
- 3.14** The town is connected to Junctions 7 and 8 of the A1(M) which links London, the Midlands and the north. The A602 connects Stevenage to Hitchin and Ware, while the nearby A505 provides connections between Luton Airport and Cambridgeshire. The urban road network of Stevenage comprises three main north-south routes and four main east-west routes.

- 3.15** There is an extensive commercial bus network. Most homes are within 400 metres of a bus stop. It is a short walk from the bus station to the train station.
- 3.16** Stevenage Borough Council, in the 2019 Local Plan, note the challenges to housing and design in the town, including:
- There is a lack of affordable homes.
 - The Development Corporation mainly built homes for 'blue collar' working families. More than half of our housing stock is terraced homes.
 - Only one in every eight homes are detached. There is a lack of more expensive homes to attract higher earners.
 - Some development designs and layouts that were innovative and exciting in the 1950s are now criticised for encouraging crime, anti-social behaviour and other problems.
 - Most of the buildings in the town were built between the 1950s and 1970s and are coming to the end of their useful life.
 - The population is getting older because people are living longer.
 - The average household size has been falling as more people live alone. More houses would be needed even if the population stayed the same.



▲ Figure 3.2 - Extract from Stevenage Borough Local Plan, showing the town

3. Site Context

GREAT ASHBY

3.17 The civil parish and neighbourhood of Great Ashby lies on the outskirts of Stevenage, and to the south west of the Site. Development at the neighbourhood began in 1999 and the area now boasts approximately 2,200 dwellings with a population of around 5,700, a primary school, an inclusive community church, and a neighbourhood centre with local shops and a community centre. Great Ashby includes both private and social housing and has a thriving community.



▲ Figure 3.3 - Extract from Welcome Pack produced by Great Ashby Community Council, showing the neighbourhood

3. Site Context

SERVICES AND FACILITIES

3.18 The neighbourhood centre in Great Ashby is around located around a 15-20 minute walk from the centre of the Site. Within it is:

- Round Diamond Primary School
- Busy Bees Nursery School
- A convenience store
- Takeaway
- Pharmacy
- Community Hall
- Veterinary Surgery
- Post Office
- Other shops and services, including hair salon and barber.

3.19 The neighbourhood centre is also served by local bus services, and the bus routes are proposed to be extended into the Site, to allow easy access to the neighbourhood centre by public transport.

3.20 Larger retail and service areas are located within the Old Town, the Town Centre, and at the various retail parks within the town, with supermarkets also located within these areas. Planning permission has recently been granted for a new supermarket within the south of the Pin Green area, located around 1km south west of the Site.

3.21 Stevenage Train Station is near the Town Centre within the west of the town, as is the bus station, with both located around 4.7km from the Site.

3.22 The nearest secondary school is at Nobel, around 2.5km south of the Site, with further secondary schools located around 3-3.5km south west of the Site. North Hertfordshire College is located within the west of Stevenage, around 5km from the Site.

3.23 Lister Hospital lies within the north west of the town, around 3.6km from the Site, with the nearest Doctor's Surgery located at St Nicholas Health Centre, approximately 1.6km from the Site.

3.24 The Pin Green industrial/employment area is located within 1km of the Site to the south, with further large employment areas located within the west of the town, around 5-6km from the Site. Large employment areas such as London, Cambridge, Peterborough and Stevenage are all available by bus or rail.



▲ Great Ashby Community Hall



▲ Convenience store in Great Ashby Neighbourhood Centre



▲ There are several shops within the Neighbourhood Centre



▲ Nursery at the Neighbourhood Centre



▲ Stevenage Bus Stop



▲ Stevenage Train Station



▲ Pin Green Employment Area

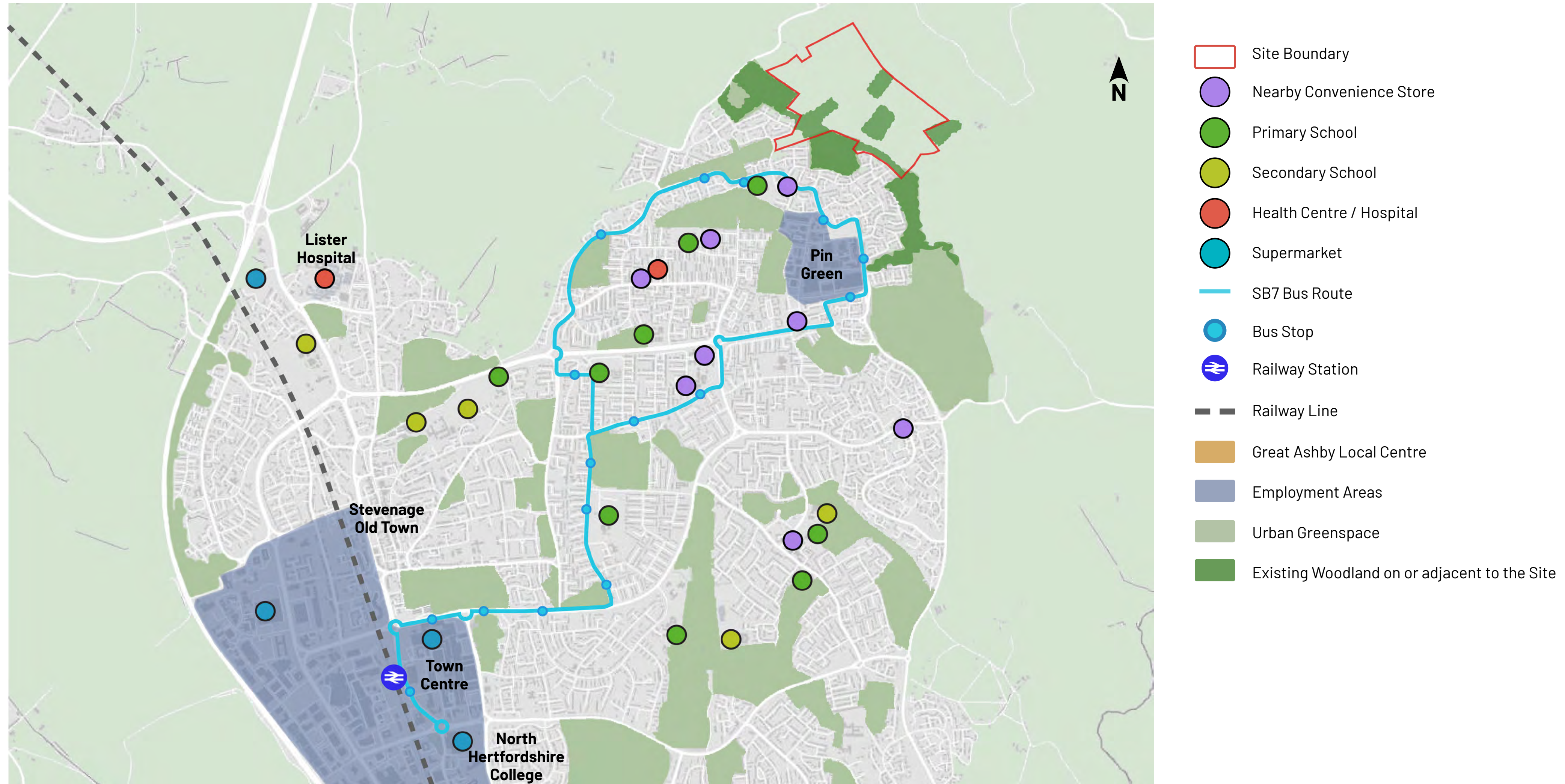


▲ Shops and services are located within the Old Town



▲ Shops and services are located within the Old Town

3. Site Context



▲ Figure 3.4 - Services and facilities in the vicinity of the Site

Mouvement



4. Movement

MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORT

- 4.1 The proposed development provides the opportunity to connect into existing transport and movement infrastructure, and embed positive behavioural choices from the outset. The County Council's Local Transport Plan sets a clear user hierarchy - all opportunities should be taken to reduce the need to travel, with active travel (walking and cycling) prioritised ahead of passenger transport, and then private vehicles.
- 4.2 By road, Stevenage is primarily accessible by the A1(M) which runs in a north-south direction along the western outskirts of the city. The A1(M) enables access to Welwyn Garden City, Edgware and Letchworth Garden City. The A602 runs through Stevenage, and to the north west it provides access to Hitchin, while to the south east it provides access to the southern outskirts of Stevenage, Watton at Stone and Ware. The A505 is accessible to the north of the Site and facilitates access to Royston, Sawston and Great Abingdon.
- 4.3 Within the immediate vicinity of the site, Mendip Way operates under a 30mph speed limit. Pedestrian footpaths and street lighting are provided on both sides of the carriageway. In addition regular pedestrian crossing points and dropped curbs are provided to enable safe and convenient pedestrian travel.



▲ Figure 4.1 - Movement: main vehicle connections

4. Movement

Public Transport

4.4 The Site is located in proximity to 'The Beacons' bus stop which is situated 400m to the west of the Site access and is accessible within a 4 minute walk or a 2 minute cycle (from the proposed Site access off Mendip Way). 'The Beacons' bus stop is served by route SB7 which facilitates access in and around Stevenage. 'The Beacons' Bus stop is sheltered and includes a sign post highlighting the location of the stop, the bus routes being served, and copies of the relevant route's timetable.

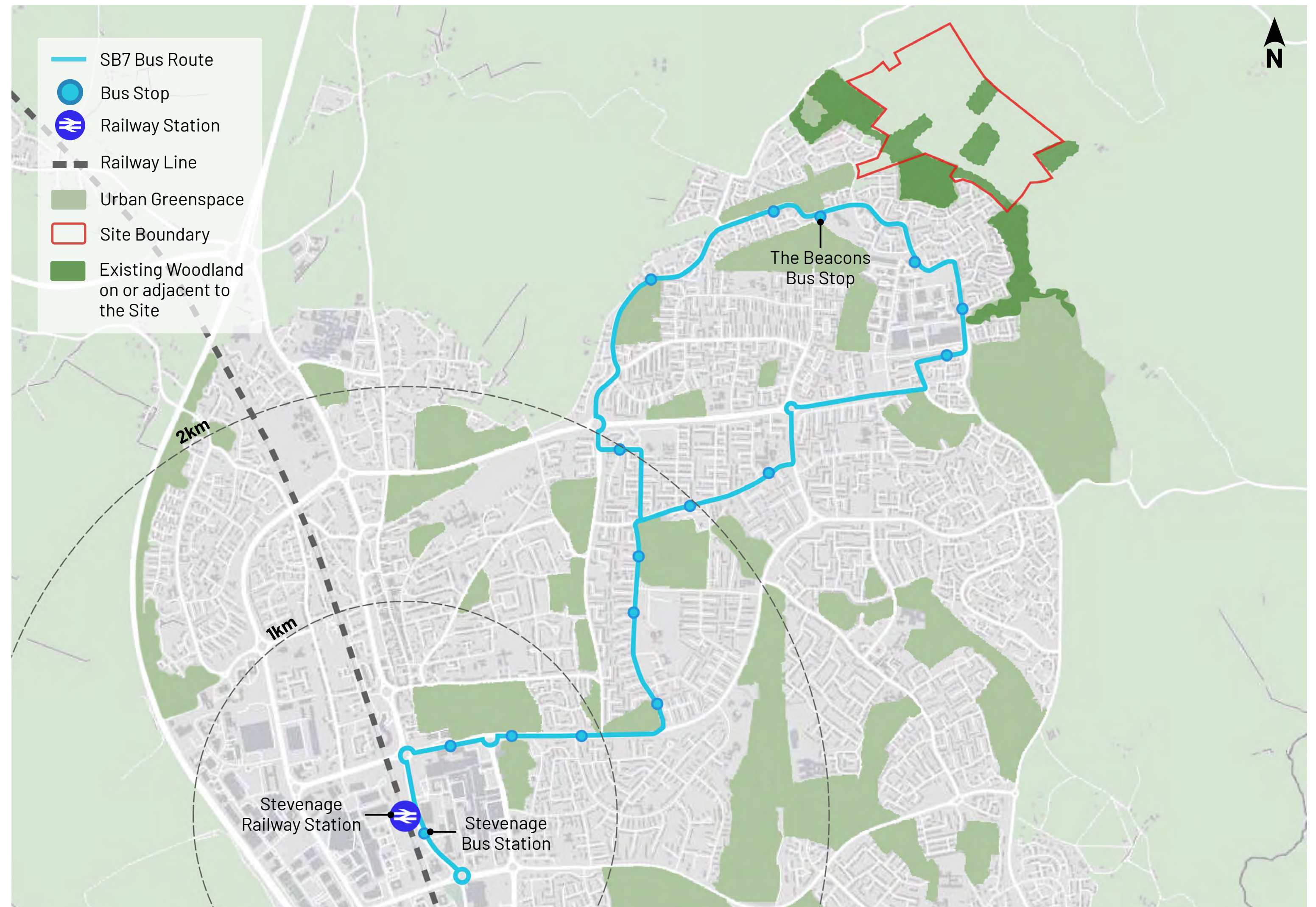
4.5 To access a wider range of bus services, Stevenage Bus Station provides access to an extensive network of bus routes. Stevenage Bus station is located approximately 5km to the south of the Site access and can be accessed within a 19 minute cycle or a 13 minute bus journey from 'The Beacons' bus stop (using route SB7). Bus services from Stevenage Bus Station provide access to the several destinations, including:

- Hertford (Route 384 / 390)
- Hatfield (Route 635)
- Pin Green (Route SB11 / SB10)
- Poplars (Route SB6)
- Chells (Route 856)
- Martins Wood (Route SB3)
- St Nicholas (Route SB2)
- Great Ashby (Route SB7)
- Hitchin (Route 635/ Route 80)
- Luton (Route 100)
- Broadwater (Route SB4)
- Weston (Route 391).

Train Service

4.6 The nearest railway station to the Site, Stevenage Train Station, is located in the western extents of Stevenage approximately 5km to the south of the proposed Site. Stevenage Train Station is served by predominantly London North Eastern Railway (LNER), Great Northern and Thameslink Trains. Key destinations accessible from Stevenage Train Station include: Brighton, London Kings Cross and St Pancras, Moorgate, Horsham, Peterborough, Harrogate, Cambridge, Leeds and Letchworth Garden City.

4.7 Walking and cycling routes from the Site access to Stevenage Train Station are safe, direct, adequately lit (appropriately for the environment) and naturally surveyed (active frontages or fairly busy roads are within clear sight). Where possible, cycleways provide a direct and traffic-free route to the Train Station.



▲ Figure 4.2 - Bus routes in the vicinity of the Site

4. Movement

Walking and Cycling

4.8 A number of Public Rights of Way bound and/or run through the Site.

4.9 These are shown on Figure 4.3 and outlined below:

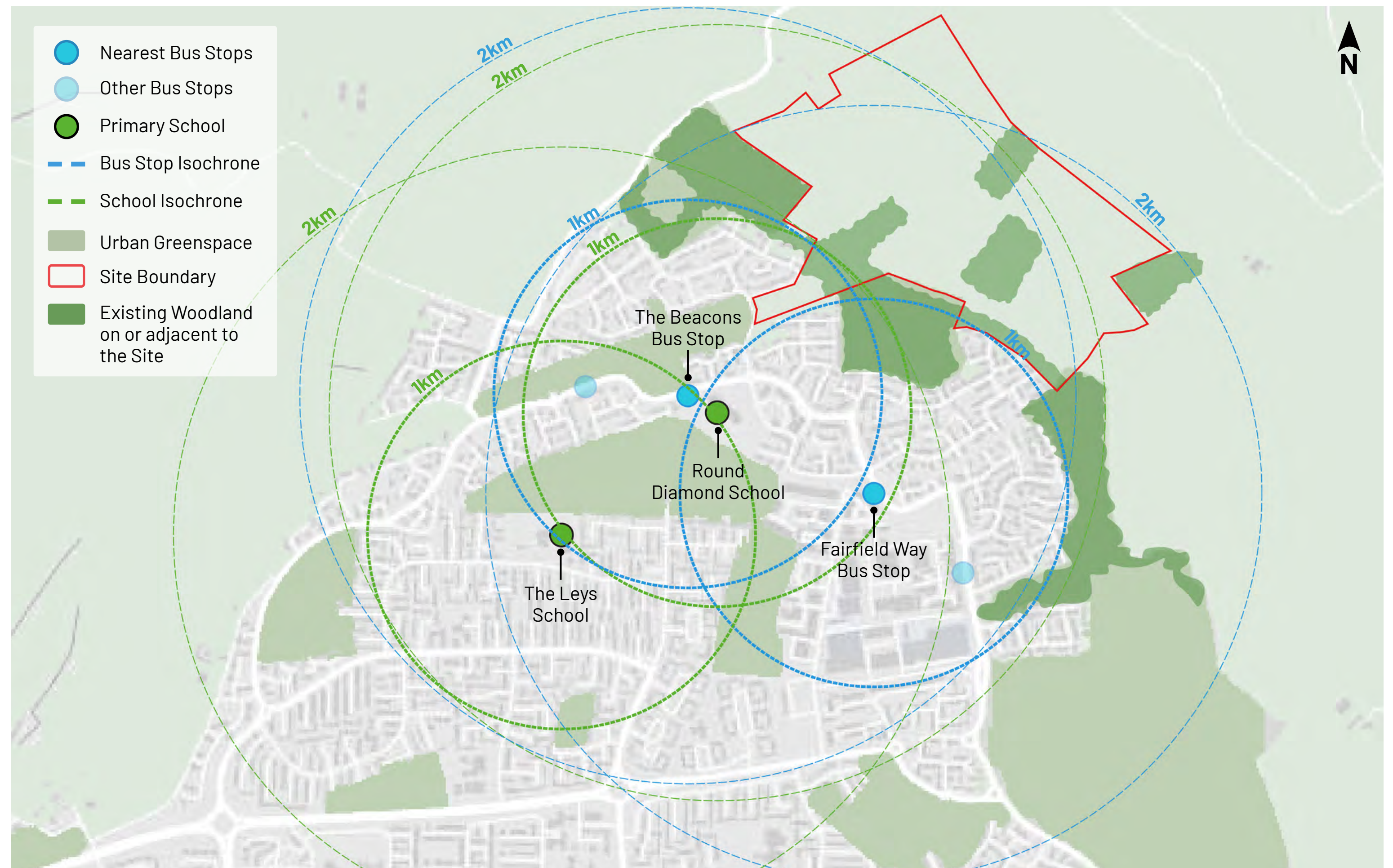
- Bridleway Weston 033 (also known as a Bay Lane) which runs south west to north east along the south eastern boundary of the Site. This provides an east to west connection from Dane End Farm, through the Site and Great Ashby passing close to the District Centre, St Nicholas Park and the Pin Green employment area. This is a key connecting corridor and, in conjunction with the development of Site GA1, provides the opportunity to have a continuous link from the Hertfordshire Way and Back Lane to Warrens Green Lane.
- Footpath Weston 029 which runs north west to south east through the south western half of the Site, connecting Tile Kiln Farm to Bridleway Weston 033 (above) and linking to Footpath Weston 031/Walkern 022 which provides an onward connection to the Beane Valley east of Stevenage.
- Footpath Weston 044 which delineates the north eastern boundary of GA2.
- Footpath Weston 027 which delineates the north western boundary of GA2 linking Back Lane and Tile Kiln Farm to Warrens Green Lane.
- Footpath Great Ashby 011 which connects from Great Ashby District Centre across the pylon/proposed access corridor to the south western edge of the Site.
- Footpath Weston 026 connecting from Merrick Close along the eastern edge of Tile Kiln Wood, traversing the northern end of GA2 to the junction of Back Lane and Warrens Green Lane.



▲ Figure 4.3 - Public Rights of Way on or adjacent to the Site

4. Movement

- 4.10** The preferred maximum walking distance for the purposes of commuting/school journey/sight-seeing is 2km, and therefore the entirety of Great Ashby, in addition to Martins Wood, Woodfield, St Nicholas and Pin Green are accessible within 2km of the Site.
- 4.11** Within the vicinity of the Site, cars, cyclists and pedestrians are generally able to follow the same routes, which are easily navigable towards the centre of the Great Ashby. Additionally, routes through existing residential areas are overlooked by residential dwellings, which allows pedestrians to feel safer along their route. This is in line with the recommendations detailed within Manual for Streets, and it is proposed that these principles will be continued within the Site. The pedestrian infrastructure on Mendip Way extends northwards to Woodfield, and south to Pin Green and St Nicholas, providing access to a number of key amenities including the Great Ashby Neighbourhood Centre.
- 4.12** It is widely recognised that cycling has the potential to substitute for short car trips, particularly those of less than 5km. Cycling is part of longer journeys made by public transport, and it is important to note that Stevenage Train Station, which is situated approximately 5km (24 minute cycle) to the west of the Site, provides 266 secure cycle storage spaces.
- 4.13** National Cycle Route 12 is the closest national cycleway to the Site. At its closest point National Cycle Route 12 can be accessed in the western extents of Stevenage near the train station, approximately 5km (a 23 minute cycle) from the Site. National Cycle Route 12 runs in sections from Enfield Lock in north London to Spalding via Stevenage, St Neots and Peterborough. More locally, National Cycle Route 12 enables access to Potters Bar, Letchworth Garden City, Biggleswade, Baldock and Stotfold.



▲ Figure 4.4 - Bus stops and facilities near the Site

4. Movement

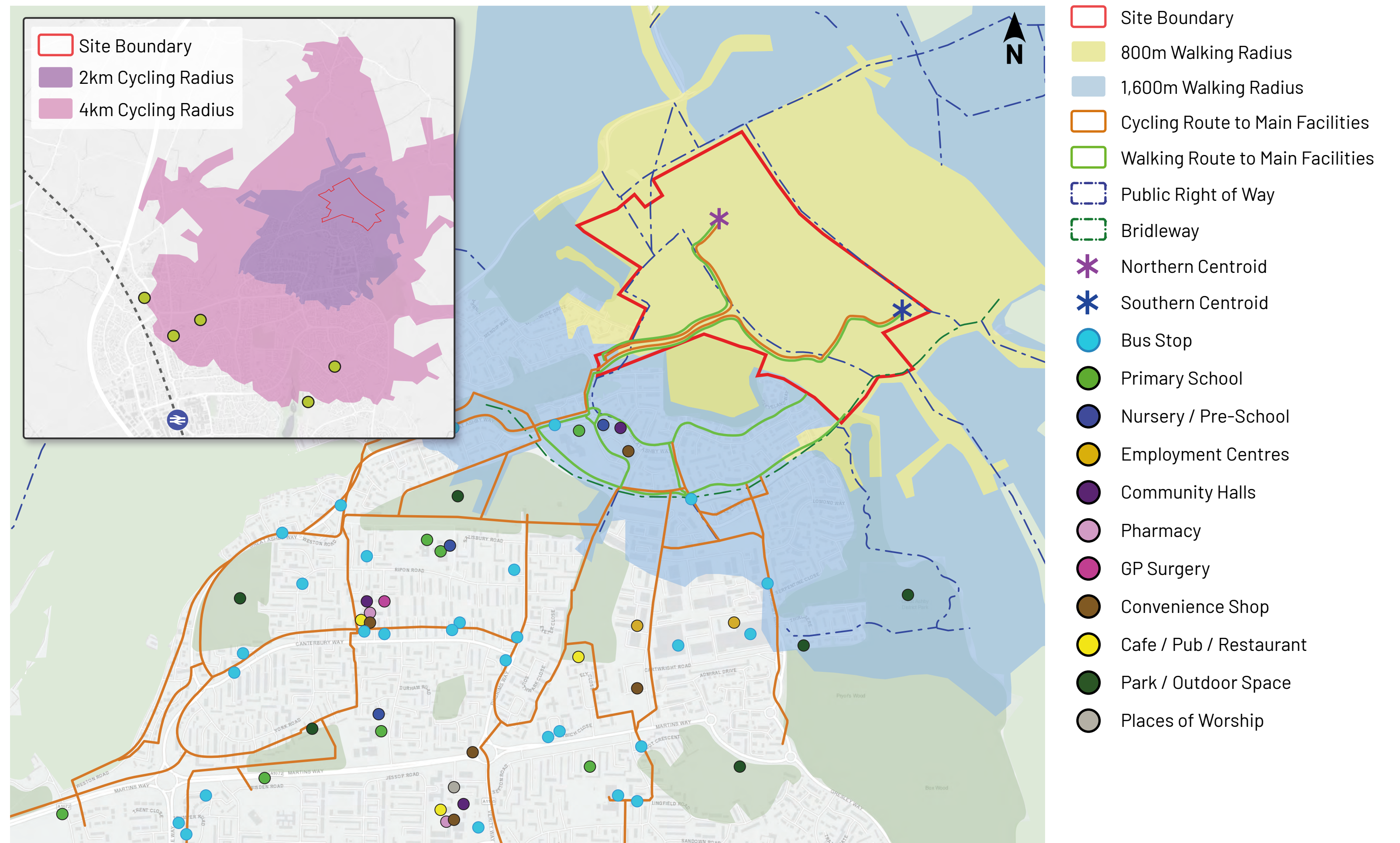
Accessibility Study

4.14 In accordance with Chapter 12 of NHC General Guidance on Transport in Masterplans (Draft, 2023), nearby facilities and services were mapped and walking isodistances applied for 800m and 1,600m. Due to the size of the Site, two centroids were located in the two most remote parts of the Site, one in the north and one in the south. Figure 4.5 has combined the results of both the northern and south centroid analysis to create a combined walking distance.

4.15 In accordance with Paragraph 12.5 of NHC General Guidance on Transport in Masterplans, cycling isodistances were also calculated for a 2km and 4km radius. These are estimated to take 10 and 20 minutes to cycle respectively. The results of this analysis are inset to Figure 4.5.

4.16 Destinations included on Figure 4.5 include:

- Educational Facilities
 - Round Diamond Primary School
 - Busy Bees at Stevenage (Nursery)
 - Martins Wood Primary
 - Trotts Hill Primary School
 - Almond Hill Junior School
- Convenience Stores / Shops
 - Budgens
 - Shell Garage
 - Co-Op Food
- Outdoor / Leisure Spaces
 - Mendip Way Playground
 - North Shore Open Space Park
 - The Great Ashby District Park
 - St Martins Wood Play Area
 - Pryors Wood
 - Sishes Wood
- Other Amenities
 - Great Ashby Community Centre; Fortunes Palace Chinese takeaway; Jhoots Pharmacy; No Bull Fitness; Employment / Industrial Centre; The Oval cluster of amenities; the Neighbourhood Centre, Whitehorse Lane; and Canterbury Way cluster of amenities.



▲ Figure 4.5 - Combined walking and cycling analysis to facilities and services

Heritage & Archaeology



5. Heritage & Archaeology

HERITAGE CONTEXT

- 5.1** The name Stevenage itself has a Saxon origin, deriving from Stithenaece, meaning 'stiff or strong oak'. The original Saxon settlement is thought to have been located on or near the site of the old church of St Nicholas and the 'Bury' in Stevenage. The Site lay within the manor of Weston, which was held by William de Ow in 1086. The great park at Weston, documented from 1231, lies around 1km north east of the Site.
- 5.2** A Map of Weston Parish which dates to 1633 shows the Site, and denotes the areas as an open field knows and Manlands Field. Notably, by this date the rough boundaries to the Site had been somewhat established, with the south western boundary clearly forming the parish line between Weston and Graveley. A number of small woodlands are shown to have existed by this date, including Tilekiln Wood, Newberry Grove, Dell Spring, and the south western portion of Longdell Wood. The field system shown on the Map of Weston Parish illustrates the early enclosure of the Site and agricultural use.
- 5.3** Tile Kiln Farm is recorded on a 1774 map with a cross-plan farmhouse, with an associated yard to the north east, and numerous outbuildings standing close to its boundary. The farmhouse is shown to have a garden and an orchard, whilst three ponds are located within the immediate setting.

Beyond the farm's name, the map provides evidence that the complex specialised in tile manufacturing. For example, to the west of Tilekiln Woods are the fields of First and Second Kiln Close, whilst to the west of the settlement is Clay Pit Close. Moreover, a significant number of ponds are also shown to have surrounded the farm, and are perhaps indication of former clay pits.

- 5.4** Weston has a large Conservation Area with many Listed Buildings. The villages of Graveley and Walkern also have Conservation Areas within their historic centres. A further Conservation Area is located at St Nicholas/ Rectory Lane, set around the historic part of Stevenage around the 12th century Church of St Nicholas, and parts of Stevenage Old Town are designated as a Conservation Area too. There is no intervisibility between the Site and these areas.



▲ Exact from A Map of the Parish of Weston, 1633 (Hals 26885A 1/3)



▲ Extract from a Survey of Mr Robert Prior's estate at Weston, 1774 (Hals 26874)

5. Heritage & Archaeology

HERITAGE CONTEXT

- 5.1** The name Stevenage itself has a Saxon origin, deriving from Stithenaece, meaning 'stiff or strong oak'. The original Saxon settlement is thought to have been located on or near the site of the old church of St Nicholas and the 'Bury' in Stevenage. The Site lay within the manor of Weston, which was held by William de Ow in 1086. The great park at Weston, documented from 1231, lies around 1km north east of the Site.
- 5.2** A Map of Weston Parish which dates to 1633 shows the Site, and denotes the areas as an open field knows and Manlands Field. Notably, by this date the rough boundaries to the Site had been somewhat established, with the south western boundary clearly forming the parish line between Weston and Graveley. A number of small woodlands are shown to have existed by this date, including Tilekiln Wood, Newberry Grove, Dell Spring, and the south western portion of Longdell Wood. The field system shown on the Map of Weston Parish illustrates the early enclosure of the Site and agricultural use.
- 5.3** Tile Kiln Farm is recorded on a 1774 map with a cross-plan farmhouse, with an associated yard to the north east, and numerous outbuildings standing close to its boundary. The farmhouse is shown to have a garden and an orchard, whilst three ponds are located within the immediate setting.

Beyond the farm's name, the map provides evidence that the complex specialised in tile manufacturing. For example, to the west of Tilekiln Woods are the fields of First and Second Kiln Close, whilst to the west of the settlement is Clay Pit Close. Moreover, a significant number of ponds are also shown to have surrounded the farm, and are perhaps indication of former clay pits.

- 5.4** Weston has a large Conservation Area with many Listed Buildings. The villages of Graveley and Walkern also have Conservation Areas within their historic centres. A further Conservation Area is located at St Nicholas/ Rectory Lane, set around the historic part of Stevenage around the 12th century Church of St Nicholas, and parts of Stevenage Old Town are designated as a Conservation Area too. There is no intervisibility between the Site and these areas.



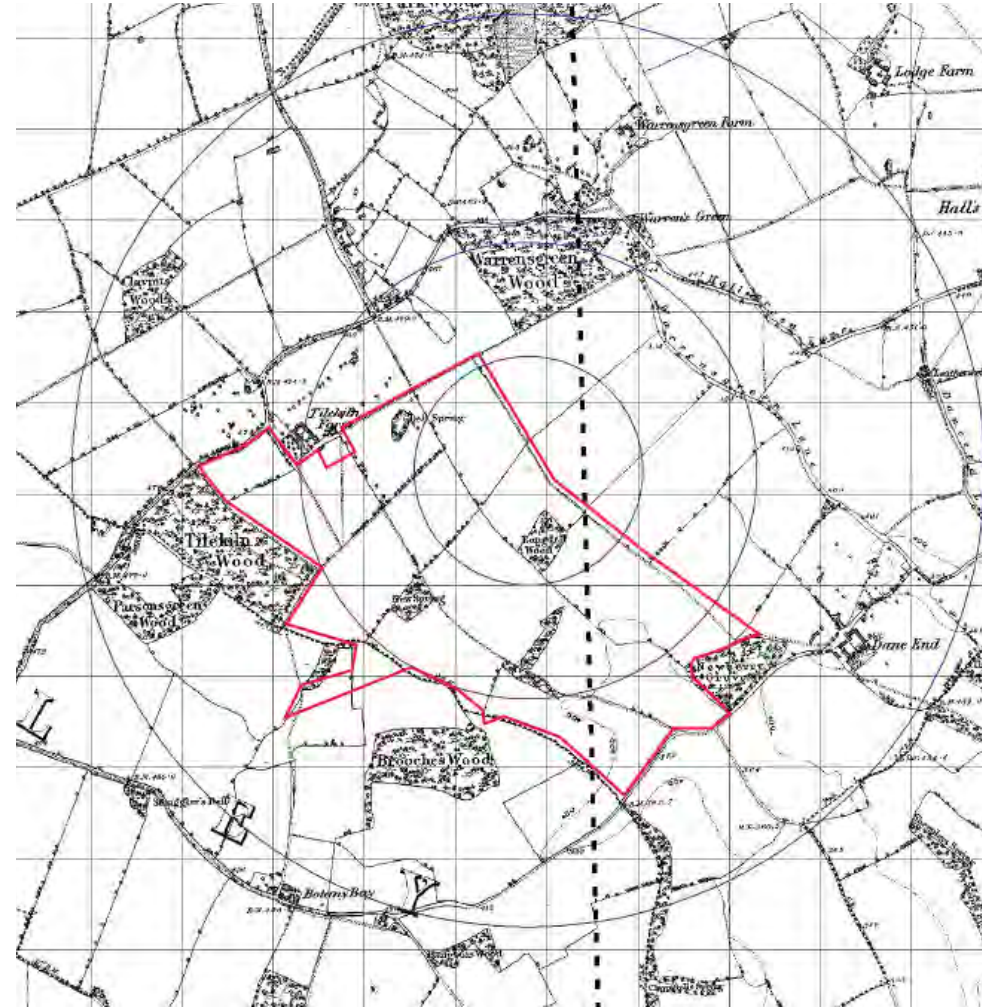
▲ Exact from A Map of the Parish of Weston, 1633 (Hals 26885A 1/3)



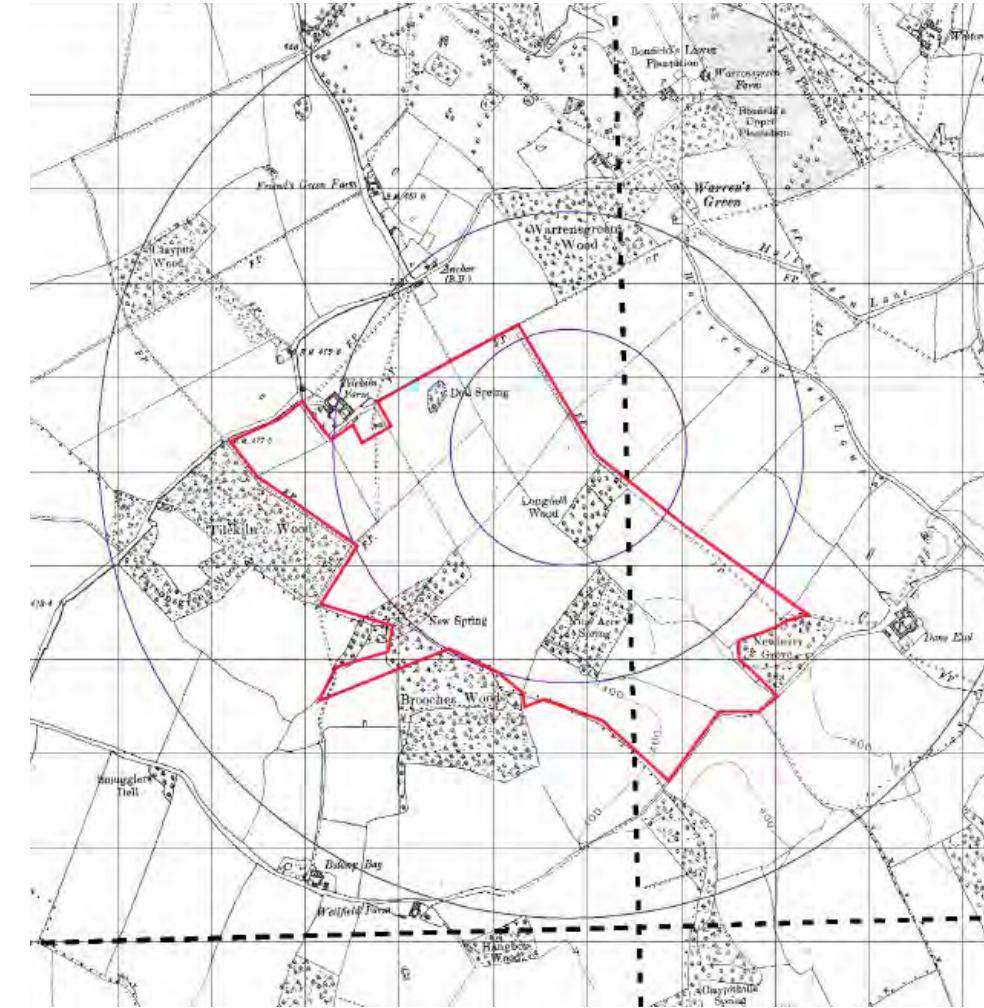
▲ Extract from a Survey of Mr Robert Prior's estate at Weston, 1774 (Hals 26874)

5. Heritage & Archaeology

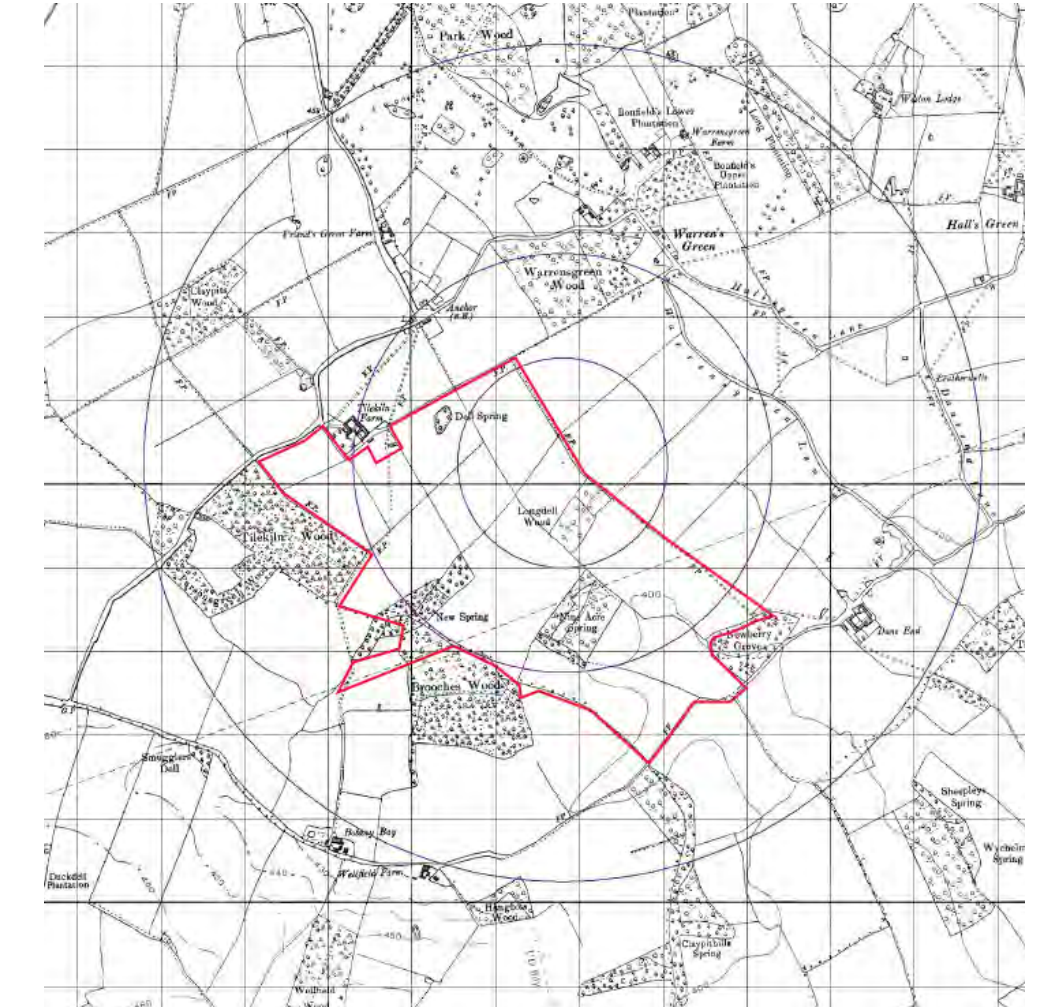
- 5.5** As evident on the historic Ordnance Survey ('OS') maps, the established field system has altered little throughout the 19th and early-mid 20th century, with the 1884 map suggesting no significant change since the middle of the century. Dell Spring is shown in its existing position in the north west of the Site, with New Spring labelled in the south. Tile Kiln Farm and Dane End Farm are detailed in their existing positions, to the west and east of the Site respectively. The largest extent of alteration is found in the renaming of the Nine Acre Spring as a chalk pit and the alteration to the surrounding woodland on the 1924-25 OS Map.
- 5.6** By the 1970s, the land allocations and general appearance of the area had begun to change, with the development of Stevenage to the south east. Notably, the woodland of Nine Acre Spring had expanded beyond its north, east, and west boundaries to encompass the former Brewers Land Spring and alter the course of the nearby footpath. Moreover, numerous field boundaries had now been dissolved and double line electricity pylons erected across the Site in a north east to south west orientation.
- 5.7** Great Ashby was constructed (from the south eastern part of Graveley parish) to the south of the Site between 1999 and 2006, although no significant changes are depicted within the Site from 1979 onwards, as the Site attained its present configuration.



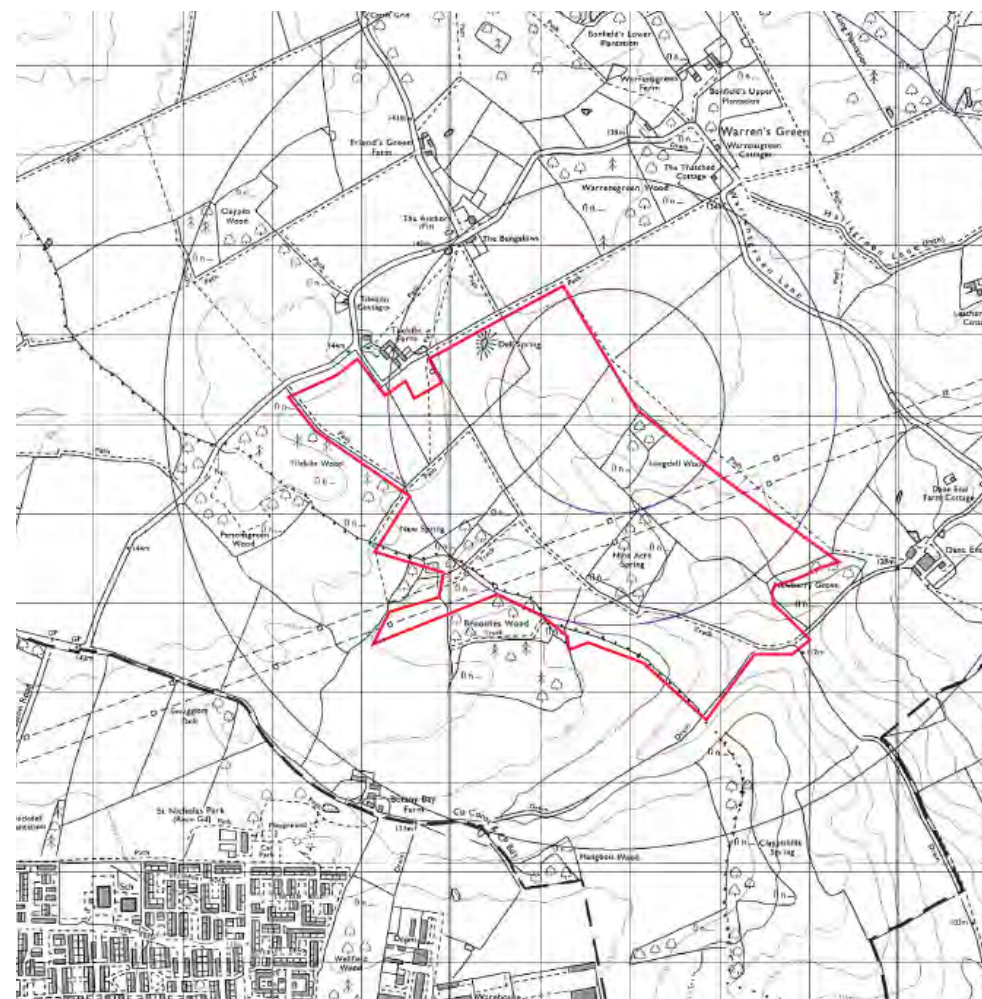
▲ 1884 Ordnance Survey



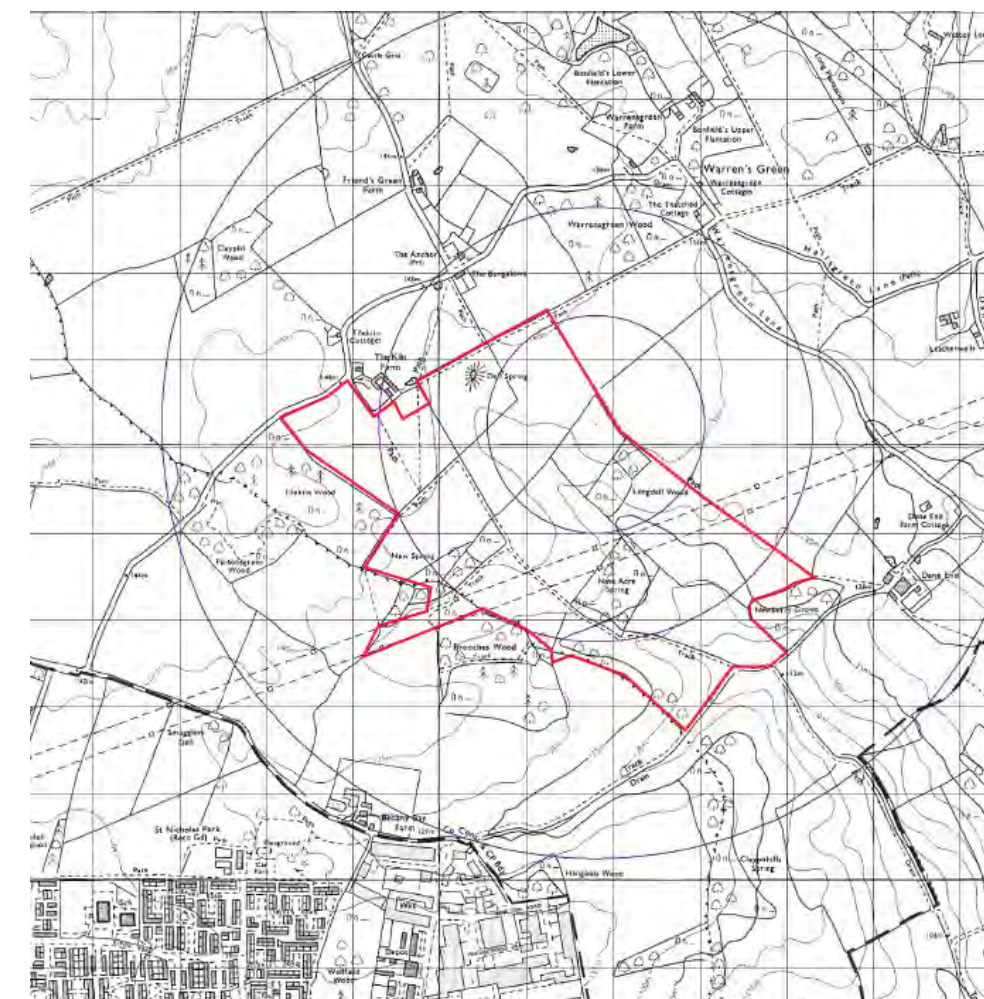
▲ 1924-1925 Ordnance Survey



▲ 1970 Ordnance Survey



▲ 1979 Ordnance Survey



▲ 1994 Ordnance Survey



▲ 2006 Ordnance Survey

5. Heritage & Archaeology

HERITAGE ON SITE

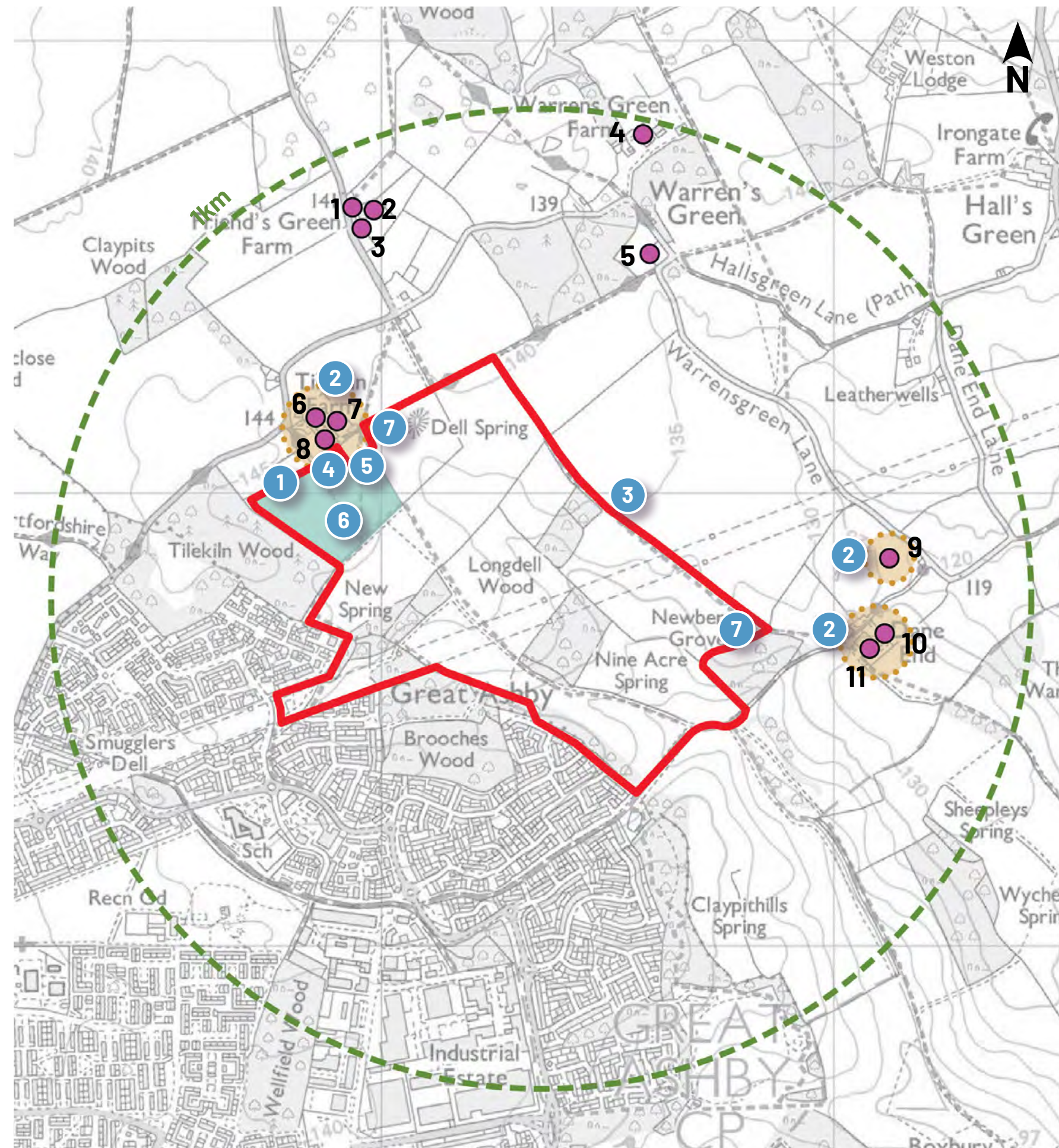
5.8 The Site is not covered by any designations for heritage value or interest, however, there are several Listed Buildings in the vicinity of the Site, as shown on Figure 5.1. The Heritage Impact Assessment sets out a series of opportunities and influences which the design of the proposed development has responded to. These are illustrated on the plan at Figure 5.8 and set out below.

5.9 Influences:

- Respect rural character of setting of Tile Kiln Farm.
- Open north western Site boundary allows views in and out of the Site.

5.10 Opportunities:

- Strengthen landscape boundary in north of Site adjacent to Tile Kiln Farm.
- Potential to set development back from Tile Kiln Farm behind landscape buffer.
- Potential to reflect a more rural character within the north of the Site near Tile Kiln Farm.
- Strengthen landscape near Dane End to reduce visibility of development in the wider rural setting of the house.



- Site Boundary
- Listed Building
- Heritage assets with potential for effects to setting
- Opportunity for more 'rural' character of development

Heritage Opportunity Target Notes

- 1 Sensitive boundary - risk of encroaching on the rural character of Tile Kiln Farm
- 2 Heritage assets with potential for effects to setting
- 3 Slightly sensitive boundary with a small risk of encroaching on views
- 4 Opportunity for buffering
- 5 Opportunity to strengthen existing landscape boundary
- 6 Opportunity for more 'rural' character of development
- 7 Opportunity for small buffer

Listed Buildings

1. Farm Buildings Next the Road at Friends Green Farm (Grade II, List UID: 1347436)
2. East Barn and Attached Outbuildings at Friends Green Farm (Grade II, List UID: 1102482)
3. Friends Green Farmhouse (Grade II, List UID: 1102522)
4. Barn at Warrensgreen (Grade II, List UID: 1308229)
5. The Thatched Cottage (Grade II, List UID: 1102495)
6. Barn Group around Courtyard at Tile Kiln Farm (Grade II, List UID: 1102484)
7. Barn to East of Farmhouse at Tile Kiln Farm (Grade II, List UID: 1102485)
8. Tile Kiln Farm House (Grade II, List UID: 1102483)
9. Dane End Cottage (Grade II, List UID: 1308310)
10. Dane End Farmhouse (Grade II, List UID: 1347416)
11. Granary at Dane End Farm, 4 meters to west of House (Grade II, List UID: 1102518)

▲ Figure 5.1 - Heritage influences and opportunities

5. Heritage & Archaeology

BARN GROUP AROUND COURTYARD AT TILE KILN FARM (GRADE II, LIST UID: 1102484)

(GRADE II, LIST UID: 1102484)

Description

17th century barn group mainly featuring weatherboarded elevations, and a chequered brick wall on the western side. The planform is u-shaped created a courtyard area with half of the western flank linked to the northern wing of the farmhouse. Primary roof form remains with long straight braces to cambered tie beams. The barn within the eastern range features a gabled porch and opposing centralised door which suggest a former threshing functionality.

Significance

The significance of this asset is located in its limited historical and architectural interest, and its group value within the Tile Kiln Farm. The asset is a good example of a specialised 17th century agricultural building, helping to inform upon the setting and character of historic farmsteads.

Setting

This asset is located within the wider farm setting of Tile Kiln Farm. It stands within a rural location which is surrounding by fields and accessed via Back Lane. The residential dwellings of Great Ashby are located to the southwest. The asset holds intervisibility with the Site.



▲ Barns at Tile Kiln Farm

BARN TO EAST OF FARMHOUSE AT TILE KILN FARM (GRADE II, LIST UID: 1102485)

(GRADE II, LIST UID: 1102485)

Description

Purpose built, timber-framed barn of 17th century origin with weatherboarded elevations and a steep, half-hipped roof. 5 bay east facing elevation with opposed double doors suggesting former function as a Threshing Barn. Original roof timber remaining with good display of long straight braces to cambered tie-beams and clasped purlins.

Significance

The asset holds some historic significance as an example of a 17th century building which facilitated the rural agricultural activities of the surrounding area. The timber-framed construction and evidence of former threshing capabilities is of some architectural interest as an example of a specialised building within arable farming.

Setting

This asset is located within the wider farm setting of Tile Kiln Farm. It stands within a rural location which is surrounding by fields and accessed via Back Lane. The residential dwellings of Great Ashby are located to the southwest. The asset holds intervisibility with the Site.



▲ Tile Kiln Farmhouse

TILE KILN FARM HOUSE (GRADE II, LIST UID: 1102483)

(GRADE II, LIST UID: 1102483)

Description

Former medieval open hall house, with 16th, 17th, and 20th century additions or alterations. The northern wing is of 16th century origin, with the open hall floored over and significance alterations occurring in the 17th century. The building is timber framed on a brick plinth, with red brick casing to the southern front elevation and west facing gable. The building was heavily renovated in the 1980s which introduced a new north-west angled staircase and rebuilding of the west positioned bay.

Significance

This asset holds significance for its architectural and historic interest. The building survives as an example of an altered open hall house and provides tangible evidence towards the early modern desire to increase privacy within the domestic setting. Architectural interest is found in the building's ability to inform upon the technological advancements of smoke extraction and how medieval halls could be converted into two storey dwellings.

Setting

This asset is located within the wider farm setting of Tile Kiln Farm. It stands within a rural location which is surrounding by fields and accessed via Back Lane. The residential dwellings of Great Ashby are located to the southwest. The asset holds intervisibility with the Site.

DANE END FARMHOUSE (GRADE II, LIST UID: 1347416)

(GRADE II, LIST UID: 1347416)

Description

Farmhouse of late 17th origin with 18th and 19th century alterations. The building stands 2 storeys tall, with cellar and attics presented on a double-pile planform. An 18th century brick southern elevation is symmetrical and features neat fenestrations and a centralised entrance. The northern elevation is more historic and whilst still presenting a degree of symmetry the entrance is off centre to the right of the central window and features 3 gabled dormers on the roof slope.

Significance

The significance of this asset is located in its historic interest as a farmhouse which has been continually updated throughout the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Architecturally, the building's desire to express symmetrical appearances is of interest and showcases the influence of refined architectural styles into rural localities.

Setting

This asset is located at the end of a private track. Its immediate setting is dominated by the 19th century granary which is positioned 4 meters to the north-west. To the further east of the asset is open fields, whilst further west is another associated farm building and the access road. There is limited intervisibility with the Site due to the large woodland positioned to the north west of the asset.

GRANARY AT DANE END FARM, 4 METERS TO WEST OF HOUSE (GRADE II, LIST UID: 1102518)

(GRADE II, LIST UID: 1102518)

Description

Early 19th century, timber-framed granary with weatherboarded elevations and pyramidal red tile roof with finial. The building is single storey with the main entrances located on the northern elevations.

Significance

This asset's significance is located in its contribution to the group identity and historical appreciation of Dane End Farmhouse. The building holds limited architectural interest.

Setting

The asset is located within the immediate vicinity of Dane End Farmhouse, approximately 4 meters to the north west. To the further east of the asset is open fields, whilst to the west is another associated farm building and the access road. There is limited intervisibility with the Site due to the large woodland positioned to the northwest of the asset.



▲ Dane End Farmhouse

DANE END COTTAGE (GRADE II, LIST UID: 1308310)

(GRADE II, LIST UID: 1308310)

Description

17th century house with a northerly positioned 19th century outshot. The building is timber-framed and features a steeply pitched riled roof which is carried down over the 19th century extension. 2 storeys tall with an extremely large brick chimney which features offsets on the south side to the east room. A later, additional, chimney is positioned to the south elevation of the western end.

Significance

This building holds some significance as an example of a 17th century house within a rural location. A small degree of architectural interest is found through its primary timber-frame construction and the 19th century incorporated extension.

Setting

This asset stands within a well-defined setting which is created through mature hedgerows. In the wider vicinity, to the south, is Dane End Farm House and the associated granary.



▲ Dane End Cottage

5. Heritage & Archaeology

ARCHAEOLOGY

- 5.11** The Site lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance which highlights the potential for archaeological remains, particularly associated with later prehistoric and early medieval settlement in Hertfordshire. There are a number of Areas of Archaeological Significance across North Hertfordshire which, although not nationally recognised or designated, are considered to be of local importance.
- 5.12** A Desk-Based Assessment has been undertaken. The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record ('HER') data have been examined to locate known archaeological sites within a 1km study area of the Site, and thus predict and inform the likely archaeological survival on Site.
- 5.13** Whilst early prehistoric material is recorded in north east Hertfordshire, there is very little in the way of evidence for associated settlement. Settlement becomes more evident in the region around modern Stevenage in the later Iron Age, when it becomes characterised by enclosed farmsteads dispersed throughout the landscape. Previous surveys within the study area have produced evidence of later prehistoric activity, as well as evidence related to the late Bronze age through to the middle Iron Age, as well as evidence relating to late Iron Age and Roman enclosed settlement. Most notably in relation to the Site, previous trial trenching within the Site in relation to a previous planning application, recorded an isolated late Iron Age to early Roman rubbish pit containing large pieces of locally made, grog

tempered, Belgic-style pottery and burnt material.

- 5.14** The majority of excavations in the study area and wider landscape around Stevenage have generally produced evidence for Late Iron Age and Romano-British period sites. The evidence for late Iron Age to Roman period activity recorded in the north west of the Site may be representative of a previously unrecorded area of Late Iron Age activity in and around the Site environs.
- 5.15** At Land at Roundwood, Back Lane, medieval field to post-medieval boundaries containing late medieval and post medieval pottery and tile were recorded. The 2008 Tile Kiln Farm trial trenching uncovered a medieval landscape immediately to the south of Tile Kiln Farm, with a potential settlement focus. The focus itself comprised at least four ditches which contained a high quantity of medieval pottery.
- 5.16** The Desk-Based Assessment concluded that there is a high potential for prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval remains on the Site, and that these remains are likely to be of a local area or sub-regional significance.
- 5.17** Following initial consultation with the Senior Historic Advisor at HCC, an archaeological pre-determination evaluation was undertaken across the Site in September 2023, consisting of 72 trial trenches excavated by an archaeological contractor.
- 5.18** A small number of archaeological finds and features were identified on the Site, however the overall significance of the material is considered to be low, having no impact on the overall Masterplan and site layout.
- 5.19** As a result of the findings of the trial trenching and considering the nature of the proposed development, it is anticipated that in advance of construction, further assessment of the Site will be undertaken, in line with National and Local Planning Policy. Potential adverse impacts to sub-surface archaeological remains during the construction phase will be successfully mitigated by a programme of archaeological excavation and recording where remains of higher significance are present, or by an archaeological watching brief where remains of lesser significance are present, or a combination of both where necessary. This is to be secured via an appropriately worded pre-commencement condition and in consultation with the Senior Historic Advisor at HCC.



- Site Boundary
- Archaeological Feature 2008
- Blank Trial Trenches 2008
- Iron Age Romano British 2008
- Medieval 2008
- Trial Trenches 2023

▲ Figure 5.2 - Location of 2008 and 2023 Trial Trenches

Landscape & Green Infrastructure

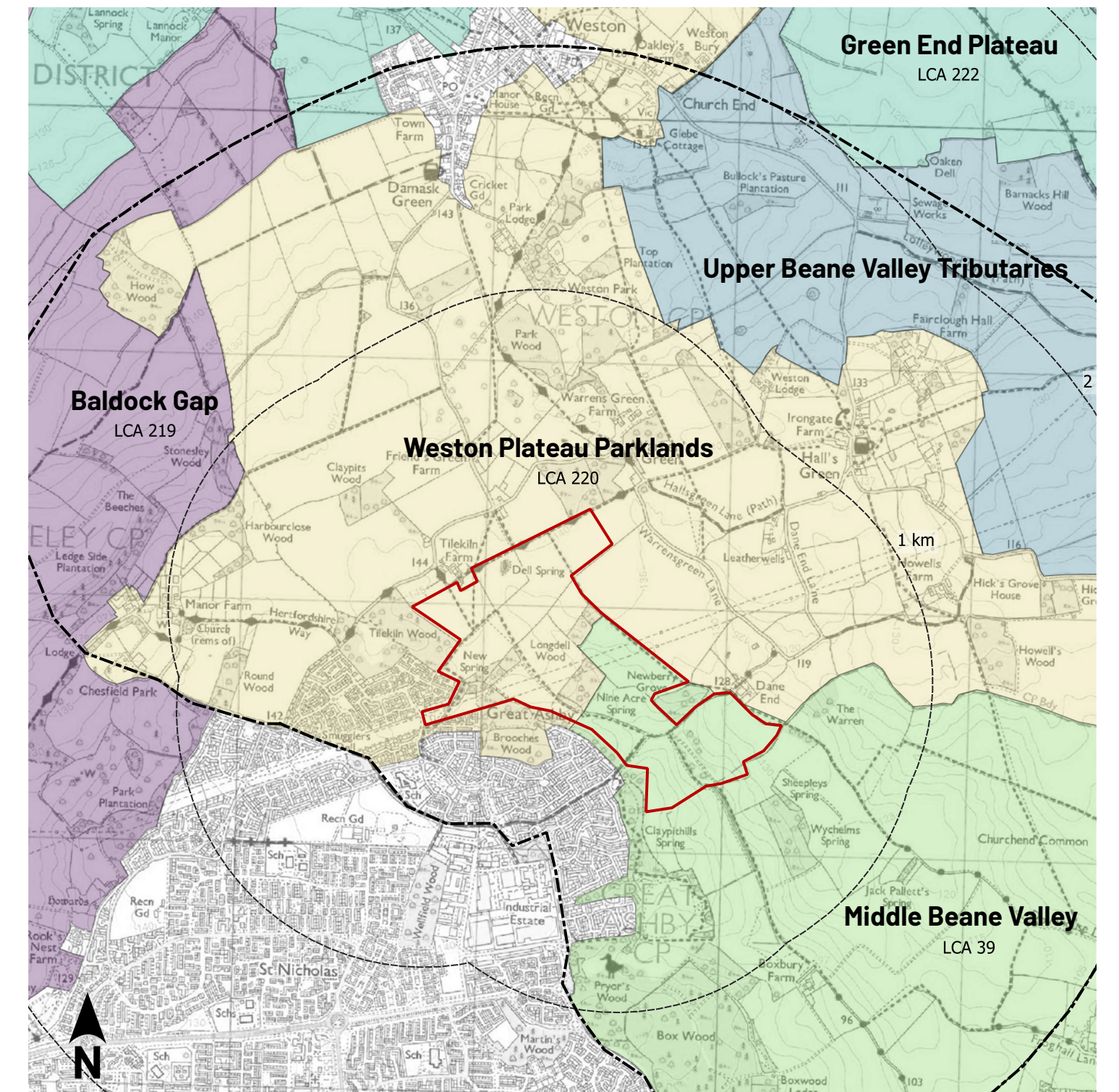


6. Landscape & Green Infrastructure

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

- 6.1** The Site and surroundings are not covered by statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape designations for value or quality, although several of the woodlands on and around the Site are Ancient Woodlands, as illustrated on Figure 7.1. There are no Tree Preservation Orders on the Site or in the immediate surroundings.
- 6.2** The Site lies within the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area (NCA 86). It is described as follows: *'It stretches from Bury St Edmunds in the north-west to Ipswich in the north-east, roughly following the line of the A14 trunk road through the Gipping Valley. It then embraces the Colchester hinterland before encompassing the urban areas of Braintree and Chelmsford in the south and stretching to Bishop's Stortford and Stevenage in the west. It is an ancient landscape of wooded arable countryside with a distinct sense of enclosure. The overall character is of a gently undulating, chalky boulder clay plateau, the undulations being caused by the numerous small-scale river valleys that dissect the plateau. There is a complex network of old species-rich hedgerows, ancient woods and parklands, meadows with streams and rivers that flow eastwards. Traditional irregular field patterns are still discernible over much of the area, despite field enlargements in the second half of the 20th century. The widespread moderately fertile, chalky clay soils give the vegetation a more or less calcareous character.'*
- 6.3** The 'North Herts Landscape Study: Character, Sensitivity and Capacity (2011)' places the Site and surroundings within several Landscape Character Areas ('LCAs'), as shown on Figure 4.13. The Site falls within two LCAs: LCA 220 Weston Plateau Parklands to the north west; and LCA 39: Middle Beane Valley to the south east.
- 6.4** The landscape character of LCA 220 Weston Plateau Parklands is described as: *'Gently sloping chalk plateau overlain by clay soils. Predominantly arable land use but with pockets of grazing adjacent to Weston Park to the southeast of village. Character Area is well wooded – predominantly ancient deciduous woodlands. Density of woodland cover creates a sense of enclosure and is key to the character of the landscape. There is a network of winding lanes, sometimes open and affording views over the plateau.'*

- 6.5** The landscape character of LCA 39 Middle Beane Valley is described as: *'Open arable farmland with small grouped woodlands linked by hedges. Medium to large-scale field pattern over strongly undulating slopes, with remote character despite proximity to Stevenage.'*
- 6.6** These descriptions are generally representative of the landscape on and around the Site.
- 6.7** The Site has a complex topography which determines the level of containment of the Site within the context of the wider landscape. To the north the landscape is relatively flat, gently falling to the south east. Here the intervening vegetation and numerous clumps of woodland screen the Site from wider views. To the south and east, the strongly undulating topography creates more opportunities for views towards the Site from the higher slopes, however, the intervening vegetation limits the views across the Site.
- 6.8** There is a large network of Public Rights of Way on and around the Site, including the Hertfordshire Way Long Distance Route. There are views across the Site from the routes which adjoin and cross the Site. However, the clumps of woodland within the Site and the hedgerows provide screening, so the Site is never visible in full extent. Instead, only part of the Site can be viewed from one location.

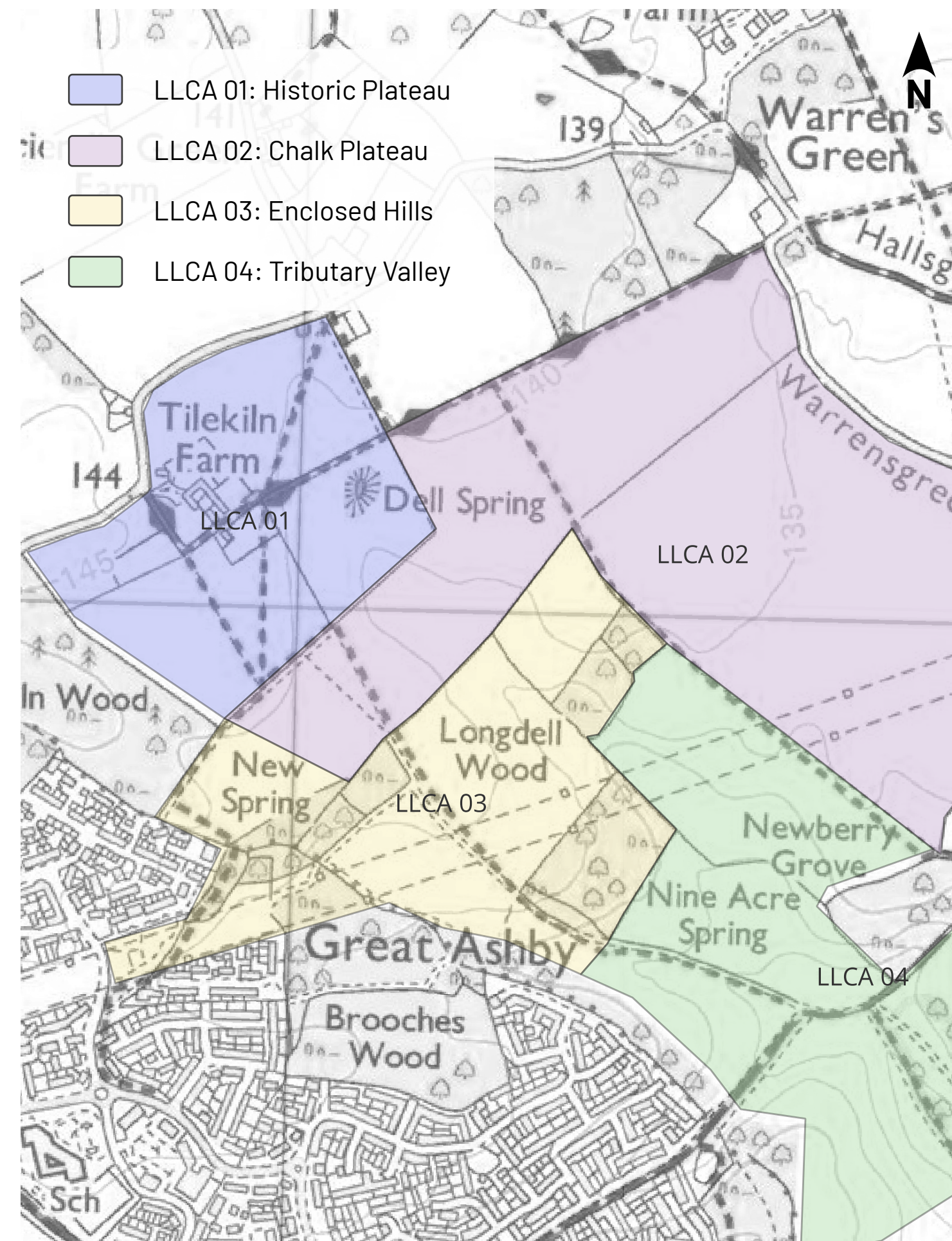


▲ Figure 6.1 – Landscape Character Areas: North Herts Landscape Study: Character, Sensitivity and Capacity (2011)

6. Landscape & Green Infrastructure

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 6.9** The Site can be split on two distinctive areas based on the topography: the relatively flat plateau to the north west of New Spring, and strongly undulating hills to the south east.
- 6.10** The northern part of the Site has limited structural vegetation, focused mainly along the boundaries of the medium scale fields. Limited structural vegetation and the flat topography contribute to a sense of openness within this area.
- 6.11** The central part of the Site contains the most structural vegetation. Small blocks of woodland scattered across area, and hedgerows, create an enclosed landscape character.
- 6.12** Further to the south east, structural vegetation mainly consists of field boundary vegetation. A woodland belt lies adjacent to the western boundary of the Site, separating Great Ashby from the fields.
- 6.13** A double row of overhead powerlines carried by tall pylons dissect the Site from west to east. The pylons extend from the west of Stevenage towards Howells Farm to the east, creating a corridor which strongly influences the character of the Site.
- 6.14** There is well developed network of Public Rights of Way across the Site, which are proposed to form the basis of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Corridors within the Site, alongside existing field boundaries and woodland blocks.
- 6.15** A series of Local Landscape Character Areas ('LLCAs') have been identified on the Site as shown on Figure 6.2, where parts of the Site are similar in character. These will aid in informing the design response to the landscape character on-site. The key characteristics of the LLCAs are described on the following pages:



▲ Figure 6.2 - Local Landscape Character Areas

6. Landscape & Green Infrastructure

6.16 The **LLCA 01 Historic Plateau** comprises the northern section of the Site, where the small scale fields and farmsteads relate to the historic farmland. It is of higher sensitivity due to the Listed Buildings and the trees at Dell Spring. The key characteristics of LLCA 01 are:

- On the plateau;
- Relatively flat topography;
- Enclosed mature hedgerows and trees;
- Grazing, horse paddocks and arable land use;
- Hedgerows;
- Veteran and Category A trees;
- Small scale field pattern;
- Public Rights of Way including Hertfordshire Way Long Distance Route;
- Designated heritage assets including Tile Kiln Farm;
- Farmsteads creating historic landscape pattern; and
- Views over the plateau.



▲ LLCA 01 - Historic Plateau

Design guidelines for LLCA 01:

- Buffer should be provided between the proposed development and Tile Kiln Farm, to protect the heritage asset and its setting.
- Proposed development in proximity to the Tile Kiln Farm should be designed to respect the historic character of the heritage asset.
- Minimise removal of hedgerows to allow for access only.
- Retain the field at Dell Spring free from buildings, as an area of public open space.
- Retain and provide offset from the veteran trees and other high quality trees located near Dell Spring.
- Proposed development on the edge of the Site should be of lower density to match the existing rural character of dispersed farms.
- Proposed development should not exceed 2 storeys on the edge of the Site, and 2.5 storeys beyond the edge, so it respects the existing buildings along Back Lane.
- Proposed development should retain the existing PRow network and enhance recreational opportunities.

6.17 The **LLCA 02 Chalk Plateau** is located along the northern section of the Site between New Spring, Hertfordshire Way and Warrensgreen Lane. It comprises a landscape of gently undulating and open fields. Well contained in most places, this area is of lower sensitivity. The key characteristics of LLCA 02 are:

- On the plateau;
- Gently undulating topography;
- Open views and character;
- Arable land use;
- Medium scale fields;
- Hedgerows on the edges of the LLCA;
- Public Rights of Way including Hertfordshire Way Long Distance Route; and
- Pylons cross the area.



▲ LLCA 02 - Chalk Plateau

Design guidelines for LLCA 02:

- The density of the proposed development should be sensitively distributed across the LLCA, ranging from lower densities along the northern edge of the LLCA to a higher density closer to the southern boundary.
- Proposed building heights should gradually increase from up to 2 storeys on the northern boundary to a maximum of 3 storeys along the southern boundary.
- Proposed development should retain and enhance the existing hedgerows and create a green infrastructure network along them.
- Offsets should be provided from the adjacent woodland beyond the LLCA, i.e. Tilekiln Wood, New Spring and Warrensgreen Wood.
- Proposed development should retain the existing PRow network and should be enhanced by further recreational routes.

6. Landscape & Green Infrastructure

6.18 The **LLCA 03 Enclosed Hills** comprise the central section of the Site, located between New Spring and Nine Acre Spring. The area is characterised by more an enclosed character in comparison to the other parts of the Site, and is of lower sensitivity. The more open character between LLCA 03 and LLCA 02 should be respected. The key characteristics of LLCA 03 are:

- Enclosed views and character;
- Strongly undulating;
- Small scale fields;
- Scattered woodland blocks;
- Hedgerows;
- Pylons cross the area; and
- Visual connections with the wider landscape to the north east. Long distance views to the south.



▲ LLCA 03 - Enclosed Hills

Design guidelines for LLCA 03:

- Proposed development should retain and provide necessary offset from the ancient woodland, i.e. Warrensgreen Wood, Longdell Wood, Nine Acre Spring, the northern part of Brooches Wood and Newberry Grove.
- Minimise removal of the hedgerow and woodland to allow for access only.
- Due to enclosed landscape character, the area is suitable for higher density development corresponding with the existing development in Great Ashby.
- Building heights should not exceed 3 storeys in the south, and 2 storeys in the north.
- The network of PRoW should be retained and enhanced with other recreational uses including public open space, which should be incorporated under the pylon corridor.

6.19 The **LLCA 04 Tributary Valley** comprises the southern section of the Site, located to the south east of Longdell Wood and Nine Acre Spring. This LLCA contains many areas of Ancient Woodland, and development would need to be retained outside of the Root Protection Areas of this woodland, making this area more sensitive. The area is defined by the eastern and western slopes, creating a valley. The key characteristics of LLCA 04 are:

- Open views and character;
- Undulating topography creating a valley slope to the east and west;
- Tributary of the River Beane;
- Clumps of woodland;
- Arable fields;
- Public footpath and bridleway within the area;
- Visual connections with the wider landscape; and
- Greater sense of remoteness from settlement.



▲ LLCA 04 - Tributary Valley

Design guidelines for LLCA 04:

- Development on the northern edge of the LLCA should be of lower density to correspond with the open landscape character to the north.
- Proposed development on the northern edge of the LLCA should not exceed 2 storeys to correspond with the rural character to the north, and 2.5 storeys elsewhere.
- Long distance views to the south-east from Footpath Weston 044 should be incorporated into the layout where possible.
- Higher buildings of up to three storeys should be located within the lower parts of the valley.
- Higher density buildings should be located within lower parts of the valley, so it corresponds with the landscape character of Great Ashby.
- Vegetation proposed along the northern boundary should reflect the more open landscape character to the north.
- Proposed development should retain the existing PRoW network and enhance recreational opportunities.

6. Landscape & Green Infrastructure

- 6.20** A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken in order to assess the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The findings have influenced the layout and design of the proposed development, to minimise landscape and visual effects where possible, and to create a place that is reflective of its setting.
- 6.21** Potential views of the development have been identified, including from residents, recreational users of Public Rights of Way, and road users. From within the Site, there is a sequence of views across it, experienced from the footpaths and bridleways on it. Views across the northern part of the Site are open and extensive due to the flat topography and the medium scale field pattern. Views across the central part of the Site are contained in all directions by the intervening woodland. These views also include the powerlines. In the southern part of the Site, the views are focused south east across the valley. There is a long distance view south, available from the ridge within the north east of the Site marked by footpath Weston 044, which includes views of the undulating fields beyond the Site.
- 6.22** The northern part of the Site is visible from the residents along Back Lane and Warrensgreen Lane which adjoin the Site. This part of the Site is also visible to travellers along the lanes, although views are heavily filtered by the roadside hedgerows. There are limited long distance views of the Site from the elevated Public Rights of Way west of Weston, where there are gaps in the intervening vegetation. Views from the Weston Park are screened by the intervening vegetation. Views from the Weston Park are screened by the intervening vegetation.
- 6.23** There are some partial near distance views of the Site from Dane End, partly prevented by the farm buildings and intervening vegetation, including the woodland at Newberry Grove. There are medium to long distance views of the Site available from the scattered farmsteads beyond, including Howells Farm and Leatherwells. Recreational users have some views of the Site from the elevated Public Rights of Way to the east, particularly along the powerline corridor where there is less intervening vegetation. There are limited views from Warrensgreen Lane and Dane End Lane as both are sunken and lined by tall hedgerows.
- 6.24** To the south, the intervening vegetation and topography limit long distance views of the Site, with the Site coming into view as the viewer nears it along the Public Rights of Way. Residents of Great Ashby and Stevenage have very limited views of the Site, due to the woodland belts along the western edges of the Site.



▲ Parts of the Site are more visually contained, due to the boundary vegetation, woodland, and topography



▲ The north eastern Site boundary is more exposed, and bound by a public footpath

6. Landscape & Green Infrastructure

6.25 A series of landscape opportunities and influences have been identified, based on the landscape character of the Site and surroundings, as well as on the assessment of potential effects. These are illustrated on the plan at Figure 6.3, and include:

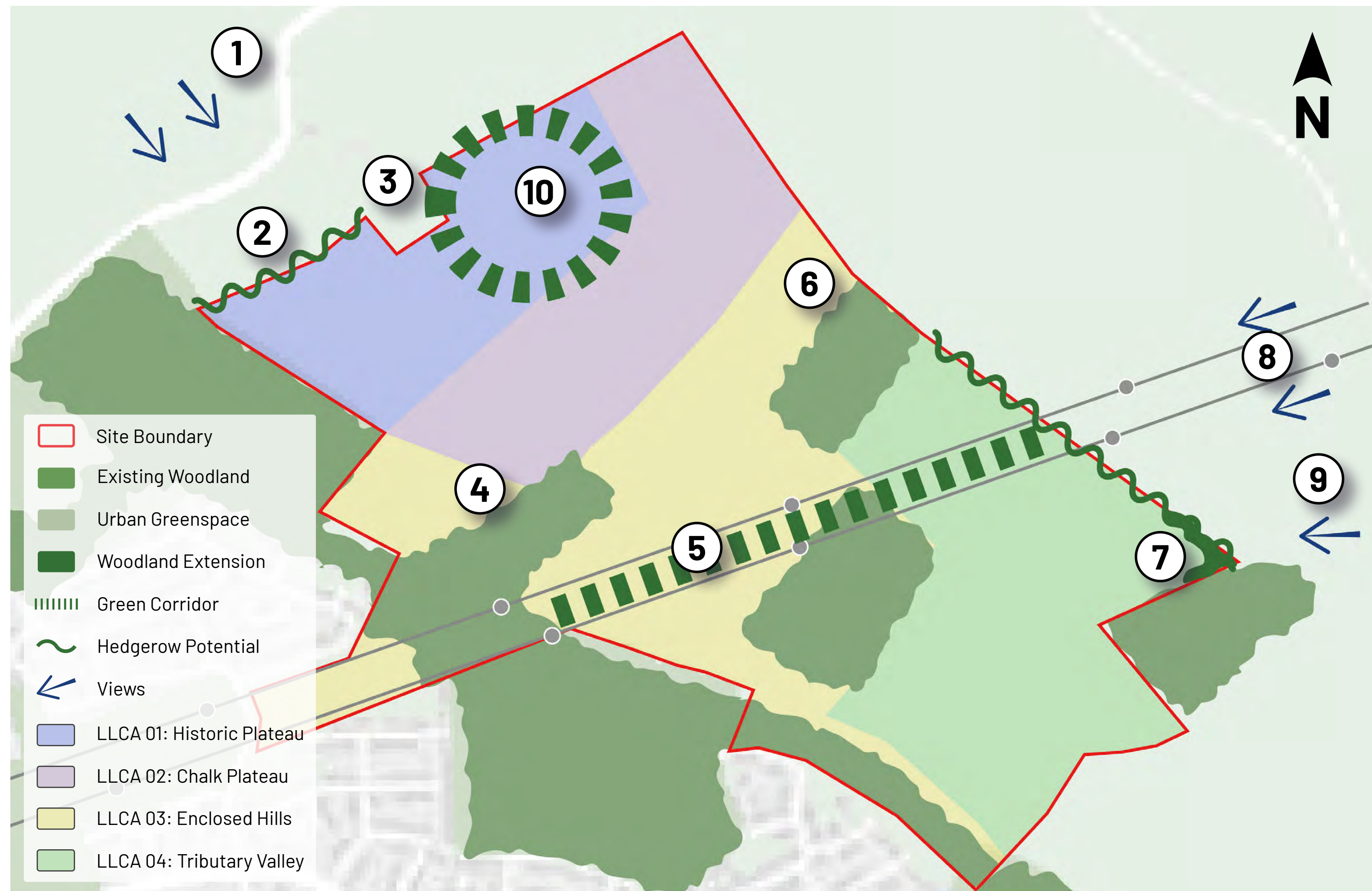
6.26 Influences:

- Long distance views towards the Site from the elevated footpaths to the north west.
- Near distance views from Tile Kiln Farm (including Listed Buildings) towards the Site. Potential to reduce the impacts through sensitive design to reflect the rural character of the area.
- There is a transitional area between the more level land at LLCA 02 and the strongly undulating land within LLCA 03. Both character areas are relatively open, and there is an opportunity for hedgerow with tree planting to mark the Green Belt boundary to the north west of the Site, whilst retaining the more open character of the area.
- Long distance views along the powerline corridor due to limited intervening vegetation and the undulating topography.
- Views from the upper floors of Dane End (Listed Building) available above the surrounding farm buildings. Potential to extend woodland block to further limit views of the new development.
- A 15m offset will be incorporated around the Ancient Woodlands.
- Appropriate buffers will be maintained to mature trees and hedgerows, which will be retained and incorporated into the layout of the proposed development wherever possible.

6.27 Opportunities:

- Opportunity for a hedgerow with trees to mark the field boundary, to reduce views of the proposed development from the footpaths to the north west.
- Blocks of woodland, hedgerows and trees divide the Site into parcels, and therefore, only parts of the proposed development will be present in views, as opposed to the entire extent of the development.
- Potential for continuation of the green corridor under the pylons to provide recreational space and ecological benefits.
- Sensitive design of the proposed development to reflect the rural landscape character along the western and northern parts of the Site, which could be achieved through lower density housing, as well as ensuring built form is of an appropriate scale, mass and materials.
- Incorporating new vegetation to limit some of the views experienced by the residents and recreational users to the north and east of the Site.
- Sensitive boundary treatment to respect the more open landscape character of the northern Site boundary.
- Retaining attractive views (such as long distance views to south from Weston 044) where appropriate, through sensitive siting of development.
- Increasing the recreational value of the Site by retaining the existing Public Rights of Way, and enhancing recreational opportunities through implementation of new green spaces available to the public, as well as play and fitness areas.
- Enhancing biodiversity through new planting.
- Retaining and enhancing the vegetation on the Site boundaries to integrate the proposed development into the surrounding landscape.

6. Landscape & Green Infrastructure



▲ Figure 6.3 - Landscape influences and opportunities

- ① Distant views towards the Site from the elevated footpaths to the north west.
- ② Opportunity for hedgerow with trees marking the field boundary along LLCA 01, to reduce the visual exposure of the proposed development in distant views from the footpaths to the north west.
- ③ Short distance views from Tile Kiln Farm towards the proposed development. Potential to reduce the impacts through buffer and sensitive design to reflect the rural character of the area.
- ④ Areas of woodland, hedgerows and trees subdivide the Site in LLCA 03. Therefore, only parts of the proposed development will be present in views, rather than the entire extent of the development.
- ⑤ Potential for the continuation of a green corridor, creating recreational space and ecological value through LLCA 03 and 04.
- ⑥ A transition area between LLCA 02 and strongly undulating LLCA 04. Both character areas are relatively open, as such there is opportunity for hedgerow/hedgerow with trees planting to mark the Green Belt boundary and retain the more open character.
- ⑦ Opportunity to extend the existing woodland to screen some of the closest views from Dane End in LLCA 04.
- ⑧ Long distance views along the powerline corridor due to a lack of intervening vegetation and the undulating topography.
- ⑨ Views from the upper floor of Dane End available over the surrounding farm buildings.
- ⑩ Area around Dell Spring in LLCA 01 is of higher landscape quality, containing the mature area of trees within the pastoral field. This area should remain free from built development, and serve as public open space.

Ecology & Arboriculture

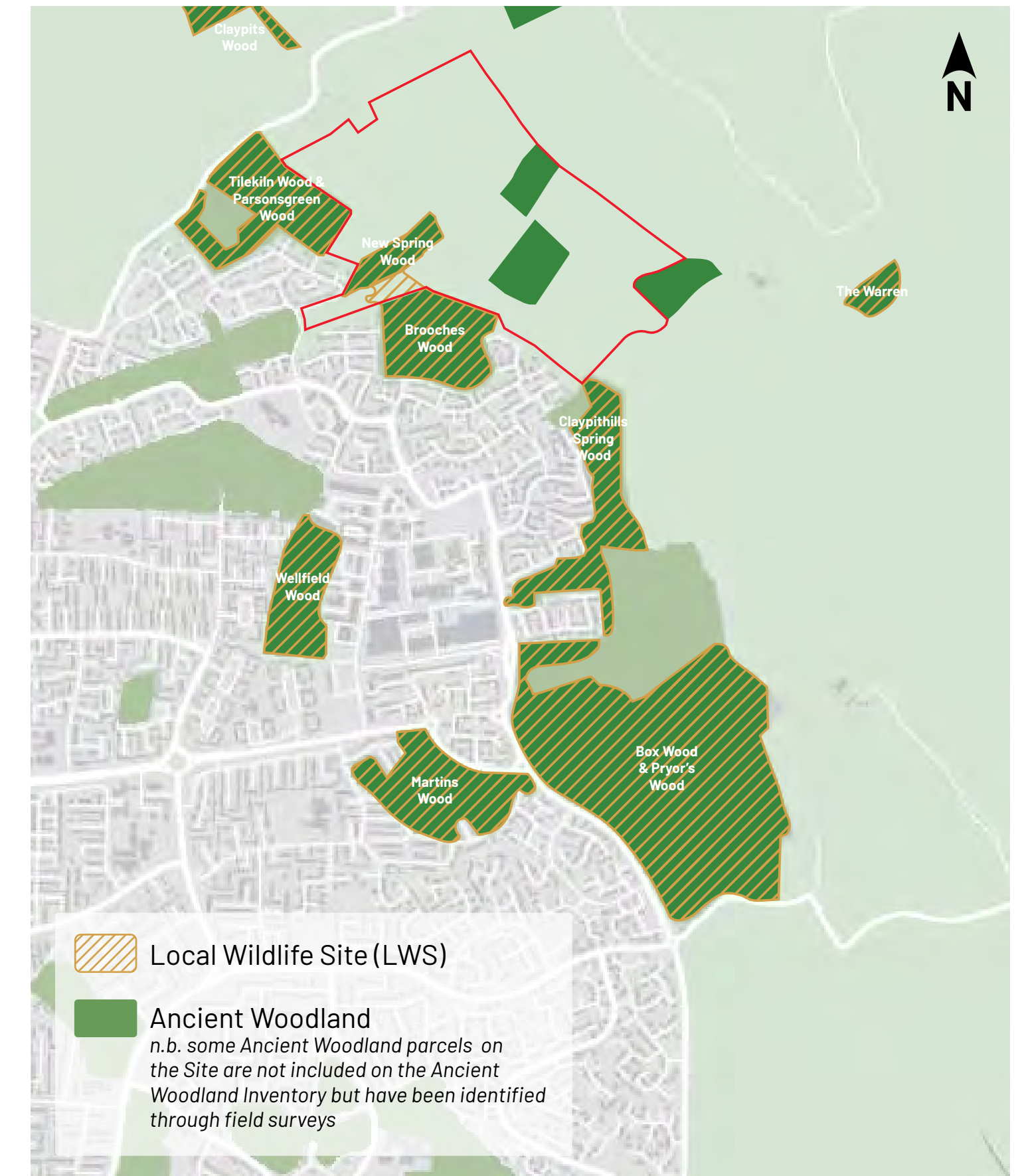


7. Ecology & Arboriculture

ECOLOGY CONTEXT

- 7.1 There are no statutory ecology designations covering any part of the Site or within 10km of its boundary. No national/local statutory designations were identified within 3km of the Site. Eleven non-statutory designations were identified within 1km of the Site, as set out in the table alongside.
- 7.2 Ancient Woodland listed on the Ancient Woodland inventory are present adjacent to the Site, including Tilekiln Wood, Parsonsgreen Wood, Brooches Wood and Claypithills Spring, all of which are identified as Local Wildlife Sites, as set out above. A further LWSs, New Spring Wood, is designated for its ancient woodland interest.
- 7.3 In addition, habitat surveys have confirmed a large proportion of a other woodlands within and adjacent to the Site as likely ancient in origin. These include Nine Acre Spring, Longdell Wood, Newberry Grove and Warrensgreen Wood. Further Ancient Woodlands are present north west and south east of the Site.
- 7.4 No trees on or adjacent to Study Area are listed on the Ancient Tree Inventory.

Name	Location	Special interest or qualifying features
New Spring Wood LWS 22/009	Within the Site	Ancient woodland comprising pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i> and ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> with some hornbeam <i>Carpinus betulus</i> and hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> coppice.
Brooches Wood LWS 22/008	Partially within and adjacent to the Site	Ancient woodland. Divided into two compartments by a central ride. The south compartment is comprised largely of planted conifers. The north is mostly old secondary woodland of mainly mature ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> .
Tilekiln Wood & Parsonsgreen Wood LWS 22/010	Adjacent to Site	Ancient semi-natural pedunculate oak/hornbeam coppice-with-standards woodland with areas cleared and replanted with conifers, mostly larch <i>Larix sp.</i> and Pine <i>Pinus spp.</i>
Claypithills Spring Wood (Stevenage) LWS 22/007	Adjacent to Site	Ancient semi-natural pedunculate oak/hornbeam coppice woodland. Ground flora supports a good diversity of woodland indicators.
Claypits Wood (N. of Stevenage) LWS 22/011	c. 0.4km north	Ancient semi-natural pedunculate oak/hornbeam woodland with some suckering elm <i>Ulmus sp.</i>
The Warren (N.E. of Stevenage) LWS 22/047	c. 0.4km south east	Ancient semi-natural hornbeam coppice woodland with pedunculate oak and ash standards.
Wellfield Wood LWS 22/005	c. 0.5km south	Ancient semi-natural pedunculate oak/hornbeam coppice woodland replanted with mainly beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> , sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> , birch <i>Betula spp.</i> , poplar <i>Populus sp.</i> , field maple <i>Acer campestre</i> and various conifers.
Box Wood & Pryor's Wood LWS 22/006	c. 0.7km south	Ancient woodland. Notable for having a diversity of bird species and records of hazel dormouse <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i> .
Martins Wood	c. 1.0km south	Ancient woodland with pedunculate oak, hornbeam coppice and a mature ground flora.
Halls Green Grassland LWS 22/030	c. 0.7km north	Small area of old neutral pasture with a good diversity of flora. The grassland is variable, with dwarf thistle <i>Cirsium acaule</i> (a chalk grassland species) present and some wet acid grassland flora and two ponds.
Harbourclose Wood LWS 21/029	c. 0.7km north west	Ancient semi-natural pedunculate oak/hornbeam/ash/field maple woodland of mainly neglected coppice.
Stonesley Wood LWS 21/033	c. 0.9km north west	Ancient semi-natural pedunculate oak/hornbeam/ash and field maple woodland. Ground flora supports indicator species.



▲ Figure 7.1 - Ancient Woodland and LWS near the Site

7. Ecology & Arboriculture

ECOLOGY ON SITE

- 7.5** Ecological Assessments have been undertaken on the Site. The initial surveys recorded a range of habitats on the Site, as shown on the plan in Figure 7.2.
- 7.6** Arable land covers a large proportion of the Site, with large field margins occurring within several of the fields.
- 7.7** The majority of woodlands on and adjacent to the Site are considered ancient in origin. Four ancient semi-natural woodlands occur within or partially within the Site, including on-site section of Brooches Wood, New Spring Wood, Nine Acre Spring and Longdell Wood. New Spring Wood and Brooches Wood are additionally designated as Local Wildlife Sites.
- 7.8** All Ancient Woodlands within the Site are broadleaved and are broadly similar in composition, comprising canopies of predominantly oak, ash and beech, with hornbeam and field maple. Notable exceptions to this include dominant beech to the east of Nine Acre Spring on exposed chalk substrates, and small-leaved lime along the western boundary of Newberry Grove. Other canopy trees recorded include sycamore, silver birch, wild cherry, purple beech, elm, grey willow and European larch. Shrub layer species varies across the woodlands, although typically includes hazel (including old stools), common hawthorn, elder, holly, and dog rose. Other shrub species recorded included blackthorn, broom, gorse, goat willow, dogwood, cherry plum, and spindle.
- 7.9** A network of hedgerows bound and divide many of the fields, particularly in the north of the Site. The hedgerows are of mixed management with some being intensively managed and stock proof, and others being old and outgrown with significant gaps. A number of hedgerows comprise associated ditches. Many hedgerows comprise associated mature/semi-mature trees, predominantly oak and ash. All hedgerows within the Site comprise predominantly native woody species and are categorised as habitats of Principal Importance and are of intrinsic ecological importance. The majority of hedgerows are also likely to be species-rich and qualify as 'Important' under the Hedgerow Regulations.
- 7.10** The pond known as Dell Spring is located within a grassland field in the north west of the Site. It is surrounded by a number of scattered mature trees on the banks of the steep-sided depression, predominantly mature oak and beech. Some of these trees are storm damaged, thereby creating veteran features, potentially of importance for associated fauna such as invertebrates and bats. A further three scattered mature oak trees are present within the

field, two of which are of special importance given their significant size and age.

- 7.11** An artificial wet ditch lies along the south of the Site. The banks are artificially constructed of concrete slabs with little, if any, aquatic/marginal vegetation recorded in association with the channel or banks.

7.12 The hedgerow network and woodlands provide important potential foraging and navigational opportunities for bats.

- 7.13** Badgers are active across the Site and within the local area. The Site continues to provide significant foraging and sett digging opportunities for badgers, principally within wooded habitats, and along hedgerows.



▲ Figure 7.2 - Habitats present on the Site

7. Ecology & Arboriculture

- 7.14** Wooded habitats at the Site and surroundings, including woodland, scrub and hedgerows, provide suitable habitat opportunities for dormice, with key plants, hazel, bramble and honeysuckle recorded across the area along with a range of other associated shrubs/trees.
- 7.15** The Site provides suitable habitat for farmland and woodland birds, with trees, woodlands and boundary hedgerows providing nesting and foraging opportunities. In addition, arable habitats provide opportunities for ground nesting farmland birds, namely skylark, as recorded within the Site and surroundings previously.
- 7.16** The majority of the Site, being dominated by intensively managed arable land provides limited opportunities for reptiles. However, the arable field margins, hedgerow bases, woodland edges and areas of longer grassland (such as in the area of the existing SuDS feature) provide suitable basking, foraging and refuge opportunities for common reptiles, as well as connectivity to similar habitats in the wider landscape.

- 7.17** The on-site and adjoining ponds have been surveyed for their suitability to support Great Crested Newts, and none were found to be suitable, or to contain Great Crested Newts. The majority of the Site, being dominated by arable habitat, provides suboptimal opportunities for amphibians during their terrestrial phase. However, field margins, hedgerows and woodlands which cross the Site provide suitable dispersal corridors, foraging and hibernation opportunities for any Great Crested Newts which may be present within the Site or surrounding area.
- 7.18** The arable habitats which dominate the Site are unlikely to support a locally important assemblage of invertebrates. Field margins, hedgerows, grassland and Ancient Woodland present within the Site have the potential to support a range of invertebrates, including important saproxylic invertebrates or invertebrate assemblages associated with woodland habitats.
- 7.19** Emerging legislation and existing policy supports the provision of Biodiversity Net Gain ('BNG') through development. The NPPF states that planning

decisions should provide net gains for biodiversity, and central government have legislated a requirement for at least 10% net gain in relation to all planning permissions, expected to take effect in early 2024. Applying the Biodiversity Metric to quantify BNG in association with development is supported in current Planning Practice Guidance. Arable land which covers much of the is of limited ecological interest, with greater biodiversity value associated principally with woodland habitats, as well as grassland, scrub, hedgerows, arable field margins and ponds. In accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, the scheme design will be required to avoid all losses of irreplaceable habitats, with losses of any priority habitat avoided as far as possible. Residual losses of non-priority and low distinctiveness habitats will need to be compensated for through appropriate habitat creation and restoration to ensure the BNG objective can be met. The iterative scheme design process will be informed by the application of the relevant Biodiversity Metric published by Natural England, to provide a quantitative assessment of losses or gains in biodiversity, with due consideration for wider BNG best practice and guidance.



▲ Most of the Site is in arable use, with several woodland blocks also occurring

7. Ecology & Arboriculture

7.20 A series of ecological opportunities, influences, and mitigation measures have been identified, based on the various surveys and assessment of potential effects. These include:

7.21 Influences:

- Avoidance of any further woodland losses to development footprint.
- Maintaining minimum 15m buffer from all woodlands regardless of confirmed Ancient status, comprising landscaping dedicated for nature conservation (i.e. no formalised recreational use) and, where appropriate, defensive thorny native planting. Design of development blocks to prevent all 'backing on' of private gardens to woodland to prevent dumping of garden waste.
- Robust tree, woodland and hedgerow protection, including protective fencing prior to any major works within the vicinity of woodlands.
- Careful design of walking routes and scheme as a whole to minimise as far as possible directing recreation into or close to woodlands. Where necessary and achievable, exclusion of access to particularly sensitive areas of woodland should be considered.

7.22 Opportunities:

- High quality design recreational spaces, including adequate provision of non-woodland habitats (amenity grasslands, play spaces and dog walking routes) to divert as much recreational pressure from woodland as possible.
- Information provided (leaflets to residents) and signage installed at all entrances to woodlands to highlight the sensitive nature of habitats, and celebrate their value, to encourage good stewardship of habitats by new residents
- Inevitable pressure upon woodlands to be combatted through long term woodland management to maximise their condition and resilience.

- Creation of mosaic of habitats both within the Site and on adjacent land to address any mitigation or compensation requirements (such as for woodland fragmentation); deliver BNG objectives; and provide qualitative ecological/biodiversity benefit, targeting creation of priority habitats, including :
 - Woodland and scrub habitats to further extend the woodland network on-site;
 - Species-rich grassland, targeting appropriate seed mix to the soils, which vary locally from chalky clay/flints to acidic and neutral; and
 - Ponds.
- Restoration of woodland habitats within the Study Area through long term woodland management.
- Restoration of chalk pit to the centre of the Site through scrub removal and ongoing management.
- Inclusion of species-rich habitats into SuDS design, including wet grassland, willow carr and ephemeral ponds.
- Creation of new permanent wildlife ponds away from SuDS network.
- 'Hedgehog cut-outs' to be cut/built into bases of new timber fencing erected between private gardens to enable small mammals and other wildlife to disperse through the development site and forage.
- Incorporation of native plants and those of wildlife importance in to landscaping scheme as a whole to provide foraging opportunities for birds, invertebrates and bats.
- Improved connectivity of green infrastructure with new hedgerow planting and infill planting.
- Provision of new bat roosting and bird nesting opportunities within new buildings and retained mature trees.



▲ There are several mature trees at Dell Spring, within an area of grassland

7. Ecology & Arboriculture

ARBORICULTURE

7.23 A survey has been undertaken of the trees and hedgerows on the Site, to assess their arboricultural condition and value, and to inform the layout of the proposed development. The plan at Figure 7.3 shows the results of this survey. No trees on the Site are covered by Tree Preservation Orders.

7.24 The survey included 141 trees, groups of trees, hedgerows, and woodlands. The majority of trees and woodland were assessed as being of high to moderate quality, with the hedgerows being of moderate to low quality.

7.25 The most important arboricultural features at the Site are the many parcels of mature woodland, most of which are Ancient.

7.26 Mature and veteran oak trees, common ash and common beech were also present across the Site, some within field boundaries and hedgerows, but some are located within more open grown locations within the field interiors. They more often than not have large-diameter stems (some hollowing) and some are of pollard/lapsed-pollard form.

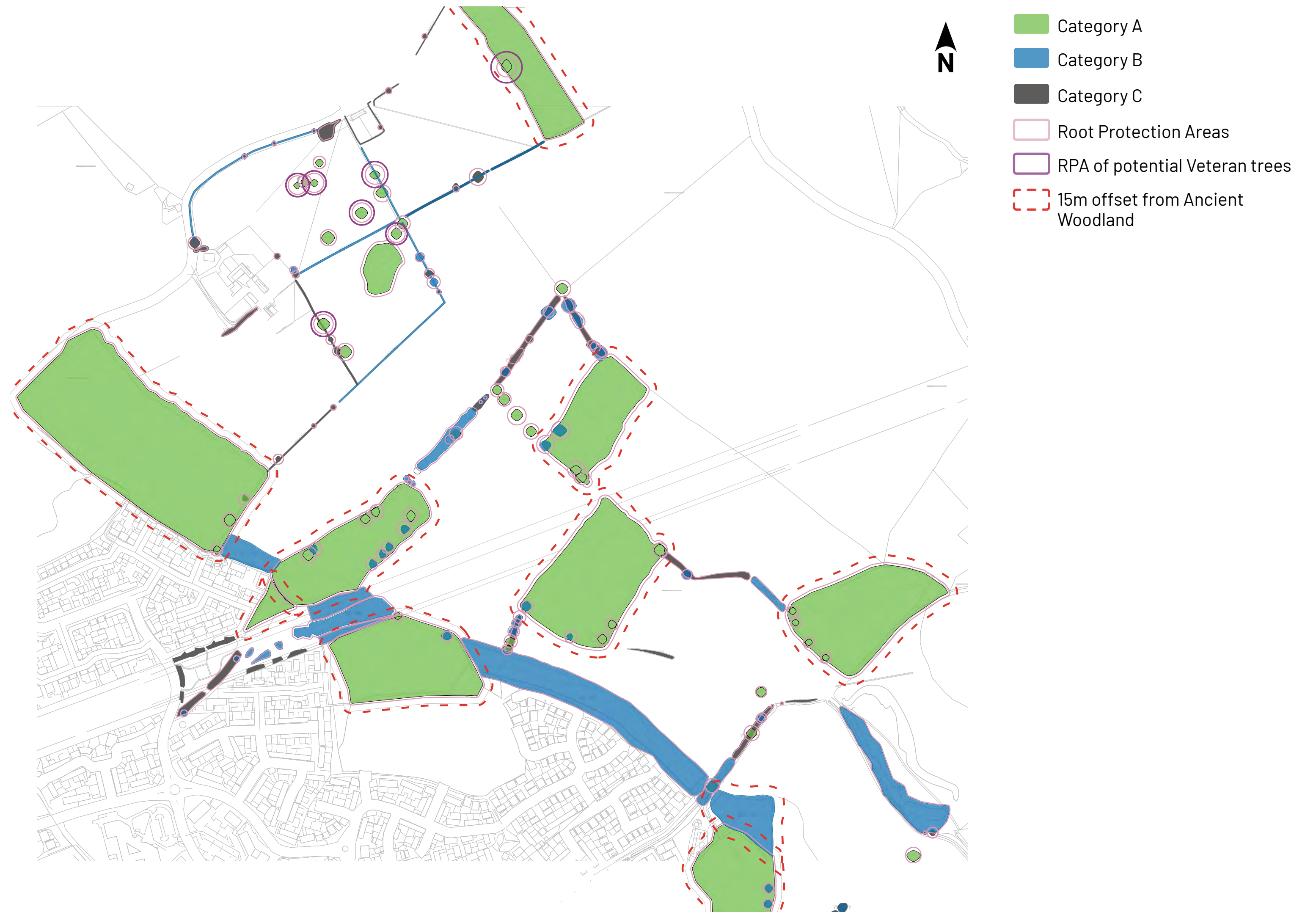
7.27 Situated away from the Ancient Woodland and field boundaries are some particularly important veteran and Category A oak and ash trees, located within the north of the Site. These include T8, T9, T10, T7, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T31, T32, T33 and G4 (Dell Spring). T33, a mature English oak with some veteran tree features, has been acknowledged as a 'notable tree'. The term 'notable' carries no weight within the NPPF but is a term that recognises a mature and often exceptional tree that may stand out in the local environment and has the likelihood of becoming a future veteran or ancient tree.

7.28 The approach of providing all woodland at the Site with at least a 15m buffer from development will allow for the potential for shading and encroachment from tree canopies, and how this may impact the development in the future.

IMPORTANT HEDGEROWS

7.29 The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 aims to control the removal of most hedgerows, and in particular 'Important Hedgerows' without permission from the LPA. There is a series of criteria setting out what comprises an Important Hedgerow, including that it has existed for at least 30 years, as well as several ecological and historical criteria.

7.30 Considering the OS map from 1884, it is likely that all the hedgerows on and adjacent to the Site are Important, as they were likely part of a field system that existed before 1845.



▲ Figure 7.3 - Trees, hedgerows and woodland on Site

Drainage

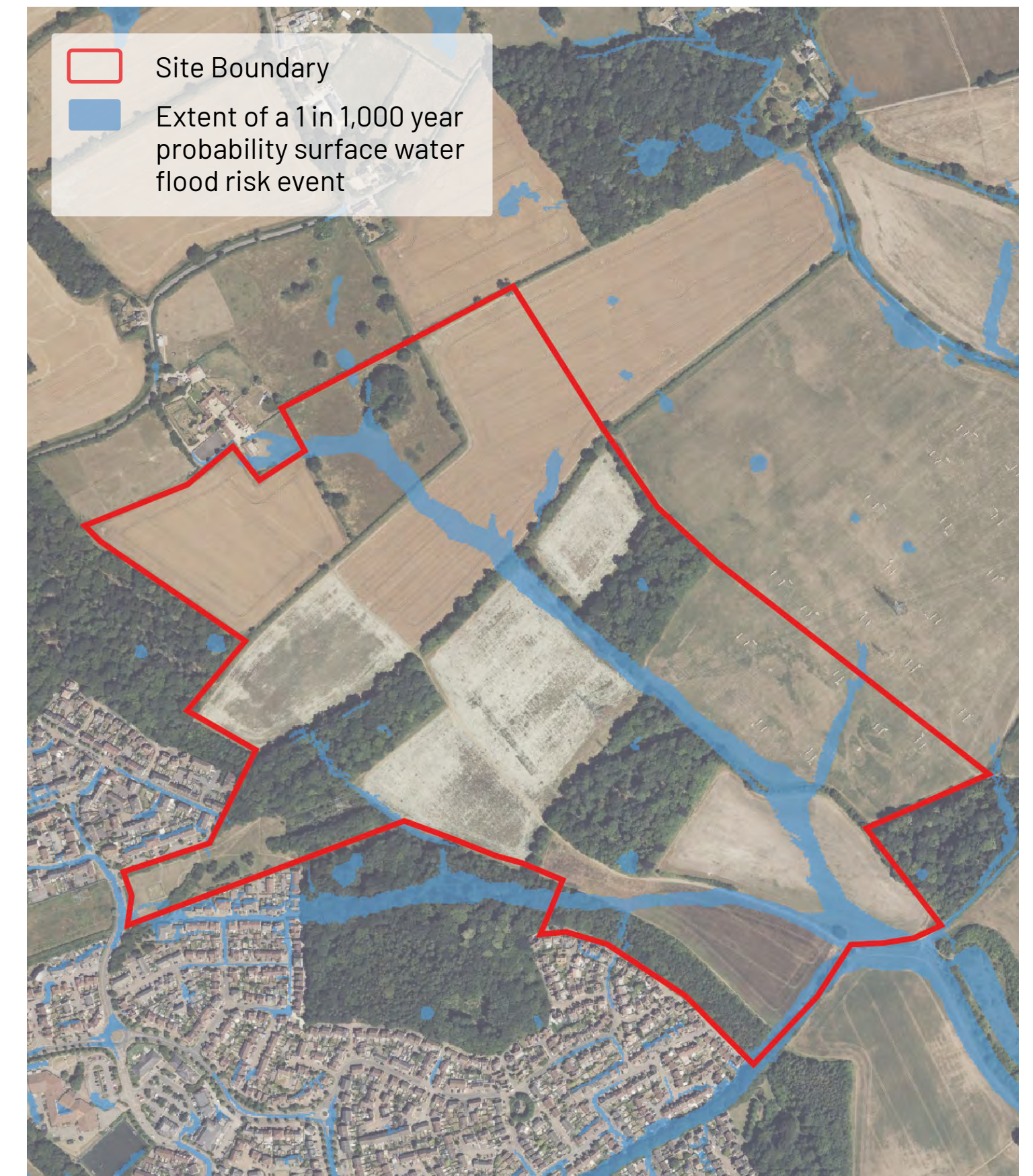


8. Drainage

FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

- 8.1** A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been prepared for the Site and proposed development, based on the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems ('SuDS').
- 8.2** The Site is situated in Flood Zone 1, land which has less than a 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding. The nearest watercourse is the River Beane, a tributary of the River Lea, and is located approximately 8.5km to the east of the Site.
- 8.3** The potential for overland flows has been considered, to ensure that neither the development nor adjacent land and/or property is placed at an unacceptable risk of flooding. From the EA Surface Water Flood map for the Site (Figure 8.1) it can be seen that the majority of the Site is not shown to be within the extent of any surface water flooding. There are however surface water flow routes through the Site which correlate with the natural valleys on the Site. The proposed surface water drainage strategy takes in to account these surface water flow routes. The blue and green corridors on the Site predominantly follow the natural flow routes, and where this is not possible, surface water flows have been diverted towards the proposed drainage features.
- 8.4** The drainage system has been designed in line with recent guidance and best practice, applying a hierarchy of surface water disposal. The first choice for surface water disposal which should be pursued is via infiltration. Only where it has been determined that the ground conditions are not suitable should the second choice of disposal to a ditch and/or watercourse be considered. If there is no alternative the third and last choice of disposal to the public sewer can be considered.
- 8.5** The Surface Water Drainage Strategy has split the Site into three main catchments based upon the Site's topography. A series of large attenuation basins will be provided to attenuate the flows for storm events up to an intensity of 1 in 100 years + 40% climatic change. A further allowance will be made for urban creep. The surface water will be conveyed to and between the basins by a combination of landscaped swales and a piped network. Flows will ultimately be discharged to the existing ditch network.

- 8.6** Consultation with Thames Water have indicated that currently there is insufficient capacity within the network and at the receiving treatment works for this development. Modelling will be undertaken by Thames Water to determine the necessary mitigation works, which they will then undertake, as Thames Water are obligated to provide consented development with a suitable foul drainage solution.
- 8.7** Based upon the topography of the Site, it is anticipated that all foul water flows from the Site will be pumped to a suitable connection point.



▲ Figure 8.1 - Surface water flood routes on the Site

Utilities, Noise & Air Quality



9. Utilities, Noise & Air Quality

UTILITIES

- 9.1** The most obvious utility infrastructure on the Site which is likely to influence the design of the development, are the two overhead electricity lines which cross the Site from west to east. These comprise a 400kV National Grid line (in the north), and a 132kV UKPN (line in the south). Although initial information on safe design and planting distances to these lines have been received from the power companies, the detailed design of the scheme will need to be developed through further consultation with the utility companies.
- 9.2** In order to supply the proposed development, a load of 4,113kVA is required. A Point of Connection application was made and a response from UK Power Networks was received, advising that a 11,000V High Voltage Connection can be provided from the Verity Way Primary substation on Coventry Close, and that approximately 3km of off-site works will be required. Further reinforcement works are also required, entailing two transformer upgrades. An indicative cost for the works has been provided to the Applicant.
- 9.3** Affinity Water have confirmed the likely point of connection and available capacity for the development. A point of connection has been confirmed at the 180mm HPPE Water Main within Mendip Way, however, the modelling undertaken by the utility company has confirmed that the existing network does not have sufficient capacity to supply the proposed development site without upstream reinforcement works. Affinity Water have indicated what reinforcement works are required, and that the cost associated with this will be covered via their infrastructure charge which will be levied against each new property connected to the network.
- 9.4** In relation to telecommunications, Openreach are currently providing Fibre to The Premise for all residential developments that consist of more than 20 dwellings, therefore it is expected that this development would qualify for a full fibre to the premise network. The Openreach FTTP network is already fully compliant with the upcoming changes to building regulations for 'Gigabit' ready homes.
- 9.5** It is not proposed to extend the piped gas network into the Site, nor to provide the proposed dwellings with direct gas connections.
- 9.6** While there are several utilities located within Mendip Way, no other utilities except the overhead electricity lines, cross the Site or are located underground within it.



▲ Figure 9.1 - Utilities on the Site

9. Utilities, Noise & Air Quality

NOISE

- 9.7** A baseline noise survey has been undertaken to establish noise levels on the Site. During the daytime period the measured noise levels are considered to be of negligible noise risk to residential development as they do not exceed 50dB LAeq,16h. During the night-time period, the measured noise levels are considered to be low risk.
- 9.8** At all of the four long term noise monitoring locations at the Site, no specific dominant noise source was noted - just general ambient noise typically associated with a rural location such as birdsong, occasional distant road traffic noise, insects and vegetation noise, together with the occasional walker.
- 9.9** Noise levels measured during the weekday and weekend period were broadly comparable. Birdsong was considered to be the primary source of noise on the Site. Measured background sound levels (dB LA90) were low, especially during the night-time, and this is considered reflective of the rural location.
- 9.10** Design influences in relation to potential noise concerns are set out below:
- The change in prevailing noise levels at the location of the new access road from Mendip Way into the Site will be a potential risk area, given the relatively low prevailing noise levels. Maximising the buffer between the new access road and existing receptors should be considered, together with landscape options to screen noise from this source where possible. This will however be dependent on the predicted overall noise level from the new access road into the Site.
 - Where possible it is considered that new roads within the Site should not be located adjacent to the Site boundary, as introducing a new noise source where existing prevailing noise levels are low, with no screening, may have an adverse effect.
 - Noise from the proposed school playground/playing fields should be an early design consideration. Strategic location to maximise screening or provision of inherent mitigation may be required to ensure the potential for adverse effects on existing sensitive receptors is minimised.

AIR QUALITY

- 9.11** A baseline air quality study has been undertaken to provide an overview of the existing air quality conditions and to identify any potential air quality constraints in relation to the site. Overall, it was considered that air pollutant concentrations were not a constraint to development at the Site.
- 9.12** The Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). There are two AQMAs located nearby, including NHDC Air Quality Management Order No.1 2012 located approximately 6.6km north-west of the Site, and NHDC Air Quality Management Order No.2 2016 - Paynes Park Roundabout located approximately 7.5km north-west of the Site.
- 9.13** Air quality monitoring is undertaken by both North Hertfordshire District Council and Stevenage Borough Council. Within recent years, the annual mean NO₂ objectives were not exceeded at any monitoring sites within 6.5km of the Site, with the exception of two diffusion tubes within Stevenage in 2019.
- 9.14** The Site is located close to a number of existing air quality sensitive land uses, including residential properties within 20m of the Site's western perimeter. Therefore, there is the potential for dust nuisance during construction which would require mitigation and commitment to best practice methods to ensure effects from construction remain insignificant.
- 9.15** Within the wider locality, a number of residential receptors, Busy Bees Nursery and Round Diamond Primary School are also located within 1km of the Site. However, construction traffic and construction plant emissions will be temporary and short-term.
- 9.16** Design influences in relation to air quality include:
- The provision of sustainable travel options.
 - The use of tree and green planting to provide buffers between pedestrians and traffic.
 - The provision of energy and thermal efficient housing.

Open Space & Recreation

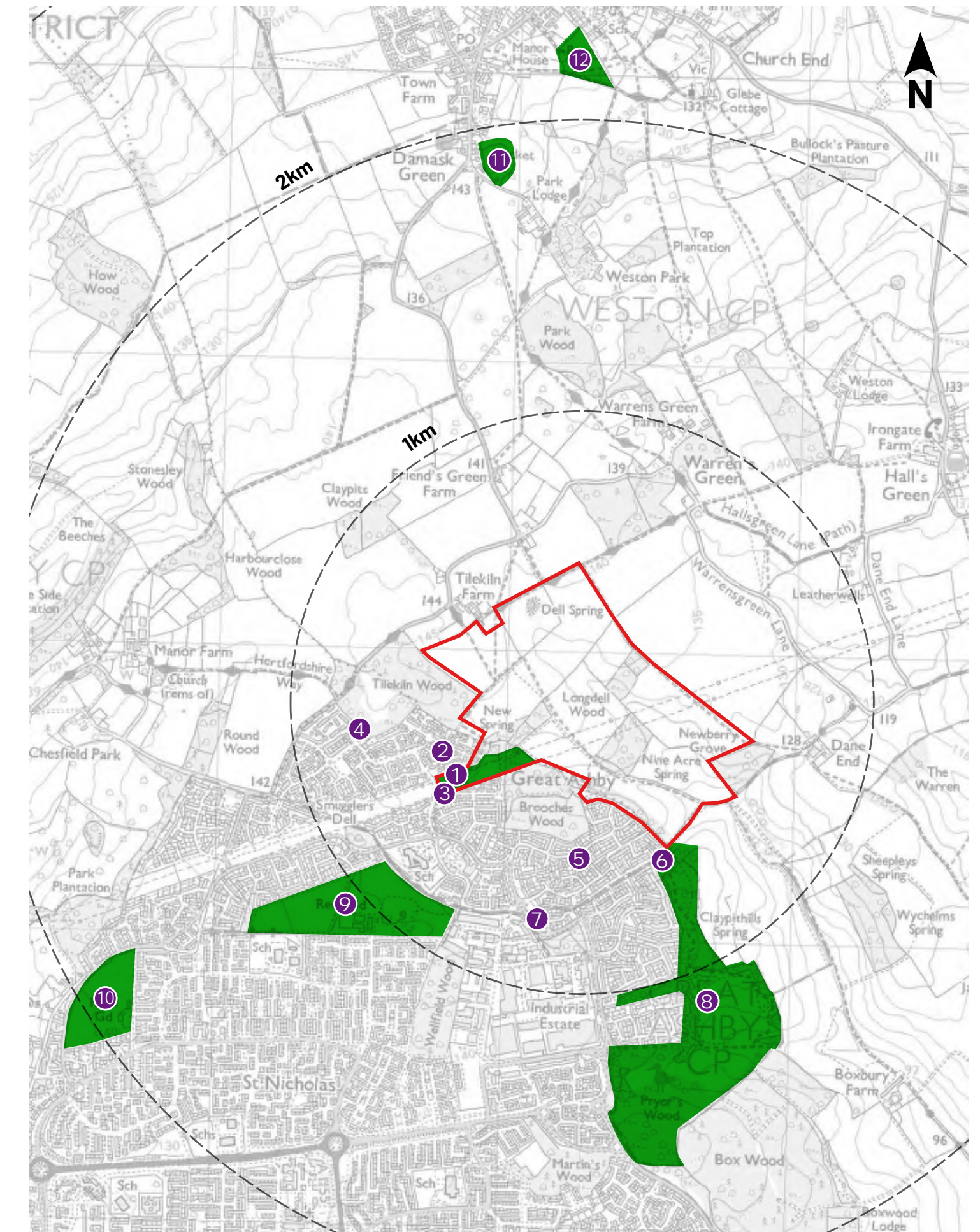
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10. Open Space & Recreation

EXISTING OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITIES

10.1 Great Ashby and Stevenage benefit from a good range of outdoor recreational facilities and opportunities. The table below sets out the various public open spaces, their facilities, and relevant comments, based on the Fields in Trust's Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (2020):

No.	Name	Location	FIT Typology and within walking distance of Site	Facilities
1	Mendip Way Park and Play Area	Within the west of the Site	Equipped/Designated Play Area (LEAP) Amenity Greenspace Parks and Gardens Natural and semi-natural greenspace	Yes Yes Yes Yes An area of amenity grass, long grass, native vegetation and recreational routes, with a fenced children's play area, as well as trim-trail equipment. This park and play area is proposed to be relocated within the Site in order to accommodate the access road.
2	Merrick Close LAP	200m from the Site along public footpath and road	Equipped/Designated Play Area (LAP) Amenity Greenspace	No Yes A small area of neatly maintained open space with a fenced toddler play area. The paintwork on the ground could do with being repainted.
3	The Chilterns LAP	Just south of Mendip Way Park	Equipped/Designated Play Area (LAP)	No A small fenced play area for toddlers within a green corridor of open space adjacent to Mendip Way Park.
4	Snowdonia Way Play Area	570m from the Site along public footpath and road	Equipped/Designated Play Area (LEAP)	No Small fenced grassed play area with equipment.
5	Cleveland Way formal Play Area and formal small park	440m from Site along bridleway and road	Equipped/Designated Play Area (LAP) Amenity Greenspace Parks and Gardens	No Yes Yes A formal, landscaped seating area/small park with a fenced equipped play area.
6	Quantock Close Play Area	Just south of the south western corner of the Site	Equipped/Designated Play Area (LEAP) Amenity greenspace	Yes Yes Fenced equipped play areas with amenity grass, set within the north of the larger Great Ashby Woodland and District Park.
7	Great Ashby Way Play Area and park	600m from Site along bridleway	Equipped/Designated Play Area (LEAP) Amenity Greenspace Parks and Gardens	No Yes Yes A formal park with amenity grass and a fenced equipped play area.
8	Great Ashby Woodland and District Park	Just south of the south western corner of the Site. Play area is 550m from Site along bridleway and public footpath	Equipped/Designated Play Area (NEAP) Parks and Gardens Natural and semi-natural greenspace	Yes Yes Yes District park with almost 9ha of open space, with 2.6ha in total retained as amenity grassland, and several areas of woodland located within the park. Adjacent to the main car park at Serpentine Close is a well-equipped play area. There is also a landscaped area originally intended as a cricket pitch, with young trees around it. The rest of the grassland area of 6ha is managed as a traditional meadow. The park includes recreational footways and a public footpath, as well as a trim-trail.
9	St Nicholas Park	800m from the Site on recreational footway and road. 850m from Site along bridleway	Equipped/Designated Play Area (NEAP) Parks and Gardens Natural and semi-natural greenspace Playing Pitches Other outdoor provision	Yes No No Yes No This 28 acre parkland is one of the newest in the town and provides sports facilities and large open space. It includes a play area suitable for children and teenagers of all ages, as well as a BMX track and gym equipment. It also has a pavilion/changing rooms/hall, junior football pitches, a basketball hoop and a kick wall. Parking provided on site. The Adventure Play area is closed at present, and the pavilion is in need of maintenance and potentially some refurbishment.
10	Canterbury Way Playing Fields	1.7km from Site along roads and footways	Equipped/Designated Play Area (LEAP) Parks and Gardens Playing Pitches	No No No The 12 acres of parkland has a mixture of sports pitches, children's play area and informal open space. Includes parking area and equipped play area for toddlers and young children. The site has full size and junior football pitches.
11	Weston Cricket Ground	1.8km from the Site along lanes and public footpaths	Playing Pitches	No Cricket pitch and changing rooms.
12	Weston Recreation Ground	1.9km from the Site along lanes, public footpath and bridleway	Equipped/Designated Play Area Playing Pitches Other outdoor provision	No No No Includes a football pitch, tennis courts, and a children's play area.



▲ Figure 10.1 - Recreation and open space facilities near the Site

10. Open Space & Recreation

- 10.2** In terms of playing field and sports provision at the Site, initial Sport England advice is that the scheme should focus on improving existing sports provision at St Nicholas Park and/or the 3G pitch at Round Diamond School subject to continued secured community use.
- 10.3** There is no full MUGA within the vicinity of the Site (Other outdoor provision), and it may be that one could be incorporated within St Nicholas Park, for use by the new and existing residents. This, as well as the existing playing fields, will be within the recommended walking distance of the Site. Large areas of Parks and Gardens and Natural and Semi-natural Open Space occur just south of the Site at Great Ashby Country Park.
- 10.4** There is a lack of allotments in the area, with none within Great Ashby. The proposed development offers the opportunity to provide growing space for new and existing residents. Areas of Amenity Green Space, Natural and Semi-natural Open Space, Parks and Gardens, and Designated Play Areas will be provided within the development in line with FiT and Council standards.



▲ Mendip Way Park within the Site



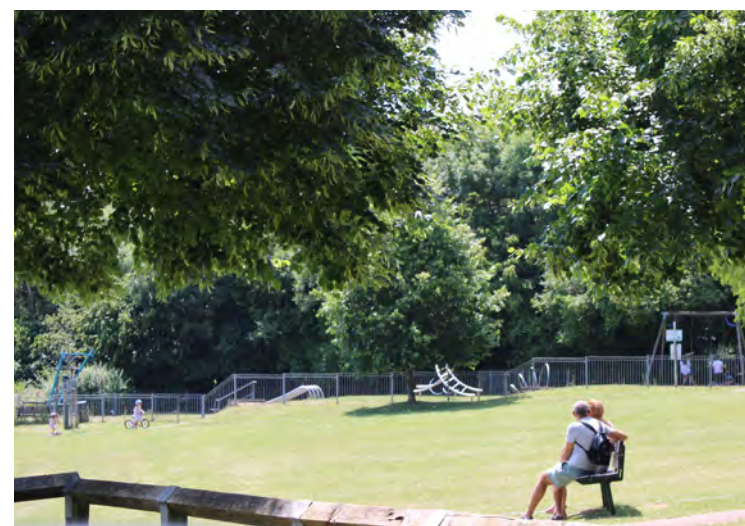
▲ Mendip Way trim-trail within the Site



▲ Mendip Way trim-trail and grassland within the Site



▲ The Chilterns LAP



▲ Great Ashby Woodland and District Park



▲ Play area at Great Ashby District Park



▲ Play area at Cleveland Way



▲ LAP at Merrick Close



▲ Play area and football pitches at Canterbury Way



▲ Weston Cricket Ground and pavilion



▲ Trim-trail and lawns at Great Ashby District Park



▲ Play area at Great Ashby Way



▲ Play area at Snowdonia Way



▲ Play area at Quantock Close



▲ Play area and football pitches at St Nicholas Park



▲ Outdoor gym at St Nicholas Park

Housing Requirement & Social Infrastructure



11. Housing Requirements & Social Infrastructure

HOUSING NEED

- 11.1** As set out within the NPPF, it is recognised that new development should deliver housing of a size, type and tenure needed for different groups in the community including, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes, and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.
- 11.2** The Local Plan sets out a requirement to provide 40% affordable housing. A range of dwellings types and tenures will be agreed with the Council at the Reserved Matters stage, to ensure a range of options are available within the development.
- 11.3** We have undertaken a review of the need for older people's accommodation within the area. Our research found that, currently, there is an over-provision of C2 Care Home within the area, and that there is not a market need or desire for a further facility. In relation to potential Assisted Living Accommodation (C3), our research found that providers do not consider the Site to be a suitable location, as it is not within very near distance of Stevenage town centre and associated recreational facilities located in there, which is a requirement when locating successful Assisted Living dwellings.
- 11.4** A proportion of the dwellings will be built to Lifetime Homes Standard, to ensure they are accessible and adaptable in order to provide homes for a range of people of different abilities and ages.
- 11.5** As required by policy, the Site will include six self-build plots.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Schools

- 11.6** The existing primary school for Great Ashby, Round Diamond, is undersized relative to the Great Ashby development and its 60-pupil intake is regularly significantly oversubscribed. Two-forms of entry of primary school provision is required within the development to meet the requirements arising from the site itself and also to help alleviate pressures arising from existing and planned development in Great Ashby, including site GA1.
- 11.7** Discussions have been ongoing between Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) Education team, North Herts District Council, and the landowner and design team, to determine the educational provision strategy on the GA2. Since the adoption of the Local Plan, the HCC have confirmed that, due to the difference in anticipated timing of the demands for the primary and secondary schools, that these should be planned to be functionally separate. While the Local Plan set out that a 4ha combined education site should be provided within the northermost part of the Site, the requirements are now as follows:
- A 2.1ha primary school site, to be located either in the far north of the Site or within the centre of the Site;
 - A 1.9ha reserve site for educational use, to be located within the far north of the Site, with the potential to extend playing fields into the adjoining Green Belt at a later stage.
- 11.8** The Councils requested that the Masterplan consider the opportunities and constraints to delivery of schools within the parameters of the potential locations as set out above.

11. Housing Requirements & Social Infrastructure

Neighbourhood-level facilities

- 11.9** Local Plan Policy SP18 sets out that 'neighbourhood-level facilities providing approximately 500m² (net) of retail and food and beverage floorspace and other necessary medical and social infrastructure' should be provided on Site.
- 11.10** Although this Site will not generate a requirement for a local centre which forms part of the formal retail hierarchy, the Local Plan notes that it will be necessary to provide neighbourhood-level shops and facilities to ensure that the new development is sustainable. The Council's evidence identifies that the three housing allocations to the north of Stevenage within the District will generate a requirement for two additional GPs. The most appropriate location and format for this provision will be determined in consultation with health service providers also having regard to existing and proposed patterns of provision within Stevenage.
- 11.11** However, while the allocation policy noted the requirement for retail and food and beverage floorspace within GA2, this policy was written some years ago. Since then, Covid-19 has changed the way that many of us work and shop, and it has also, alongside other world events, created a challenging retail market.
- 11.12** From Icen's experience, we note that it is highly unlikely that a retail provider would want to take on premises at GA2, due to the proximity of the existing convenience store at Great Ashby Neighbourhood Centre, and the relatively small-scale community that a shop at GA2 would serve, as well as recent planning permission for a larger food store near Pin Green. An additional shop may also threaten the viability of the existing units at Great Ashby Neighbourhood Centre.
- 11.13** It is considered that a multi-use community building would be more suited and useful to the community at and around GA2. At this stage, the exact uses within the building are not known, although it could take the form of a Community Hall, which is multi-use, and which could include for some indoor sports uses (table tennis, dance classes, yoga etc.), as well as meeting spaces, performance uses, and co-working space, for example. The building could include a café, or even a small community shop. This building should be located close to the primary school, to create a community hub, or focus to the neighbourhood, around which daily life could be centred, and which allows for combined journeys.
- 11.14** The exact uses proposed within the neighbourhood centre will be ascertained through consultation with the community and the LPAs.

Social Infrastructure Type	Nearest Facility	Walking Distance	Demand for Additional Infrastructure
Early Years	Bunnies Pre School (Great Ashby)	0.56km	No recent childcare sufficiency report for Hertfordshire. Latest Ofsted reports indicate that there are more children on roll than places but nursery aged children might not be attending every day therefore it isn't an accurate indication of capacity.
	Busy Bees at Stevenage	0.59km	
GP Surgeries	Canterbury Way Surgery	1.5km	Yes. Canterbury Way Surgery is part of the Stanmore Medical Group which has patient ratio of 1: 2,874 which is over the recommended benchmark 1:800.
Dentist	Exeter Close Dental Practice	1.17km	Yes. Not currently accepting new patients.
Hospital	Lister Hospital	3.2km	No
Open Space	Great Ashby District Park	0.4km	No
Play Space	Mendip Way and Cromdale Walk Play Area	Adjacent to the Site	No, although Mendip Way Play Area will be lost due to the new entrance to the Site, but this will be relocated within the development.
	Cleveland Way Play Area	0.27km	
	Snowdonia Way Play Area	0.4km	
Sport and Recreation Facilities	Artificial grass pitches at Round Diamond Primary School	0.6km	Potential for sports facilities. Great Ashby Community Council indicated in their scoping opinion that there are no sports facilities in Great Ashby. The North Hertfordshire Indoor Sports Facilities Study Assessment (2016) indicates that North Hertfordshire appears to have an under supply of sports halls in terms of numbers, capacity and distribution, equating to approximately one badminton court worth of additional provision. The impact of population growth in the area will see the need for an additional 9.63 badminton courts worth of sports hall space.
	Sports Hall - Marriotts Sports Centre	2.9km	
Community Centre	Great Ashby Community Centre	0.5km	No
Libraries	Stevenage Old Town Library	3.7km	Yes
Places of Worship	Great Ashby Community Church	0.5km	No
Emergency Services	Stevenage Police Station	4.5km	No
	Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue	3.5km	
Retail Provision	Budgens Great Ashby (within Whitehorse Lane parade of shops. Also includes pharmacy, hairdressers, post office and hot food takeaway)	0.5km	It is unlikely that a convenience store will be viable in this location, so close to the Budgens, and it is unlikely that an operator would want to take it on. Potential for a cafe. The exact uses would be decided through consultation with the LPAs and the wide community.
	Morrisons Daily	1.6km	

Urban Design Context

12

12. Urban Design Context

ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN

Settlement context

- 12.1** There are a number of characteristics of surrounding settlements that provide inspiration for the Great Ashby growth allocation. These hamlets, towns and villages contain forms of housing, streets and spaces that exhibit qualities that can strengthen the identity of the development at the Site.
- 12.2** Consideration will include the New Town expansion of Stevenage, and the Garden Cities of Letchworth and Welwyn, as well as the rural villages.
- 12.3** This will include an understanding of:
- Their urban structure and 'grain', their routes and spaces, the pattern of plots and buildings;
 - Their density and mix – the amount of development and the range of uses, height and massing;
 - Their landscape setting, including its form, distribution, ecology and natural features; and,
 - Their appearance, where details and material offer the opportunity to delight.
- 12.4** These aspects taken together, will influence the physical character of the new neighbourhood, including its patterns of movement of people and vehicles, with the routes and linkages being as important as the physical characteristics of the project's setting.



▲ Much of the architecture in Stevenage is reflective of the era in which it was built



▲ The historic village has been subsumed into the New Town

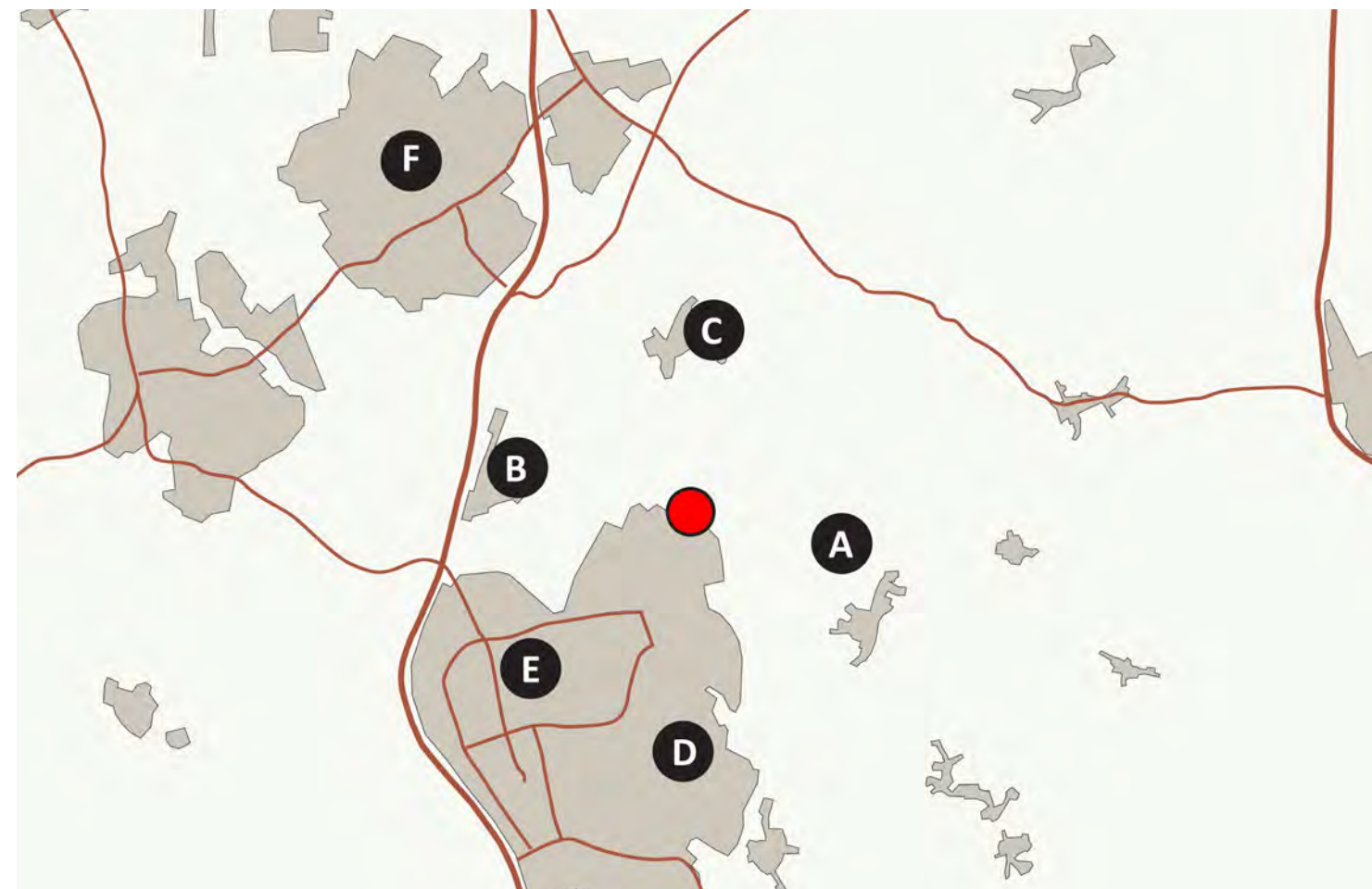


▲ More recently, higher density development has occurred within the town

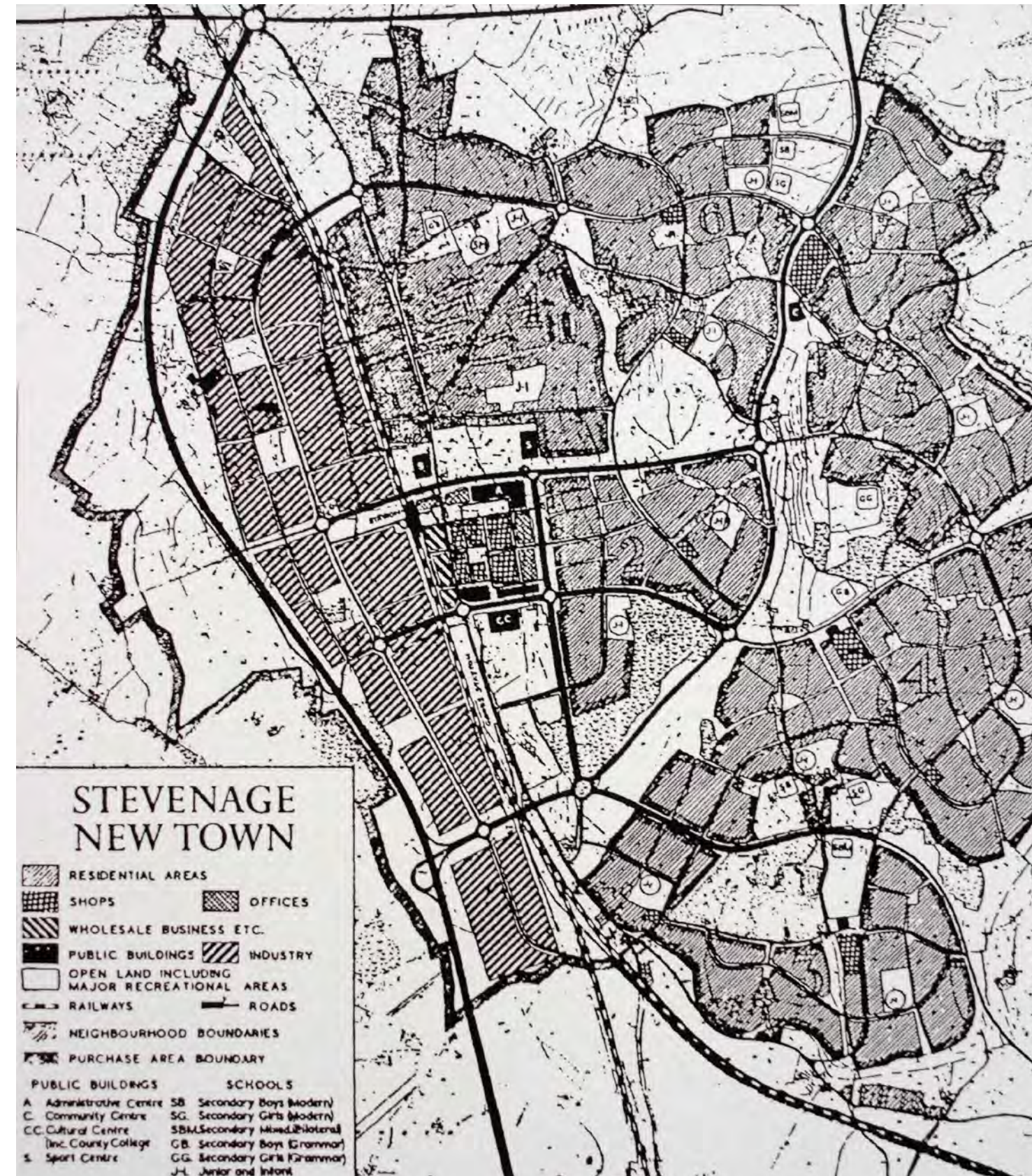
12. Urban Design Context

12.5 This character study commences with an overview of Stevenage as a New Town, before identifying the useful characteristics of the neighbourhood of Great Ashby as well as some of the older hamlets and villages:

- A) Great Ashby
- B) Graveley
- C) Weston
- D) Chells
- E) Old Stevenage
- F) Letchworth Garden City



▲ Figure 12.1 - Character area locations



▲ The original masterplan for Stevenage



▲ The original masterplan for Letchworth Garden City

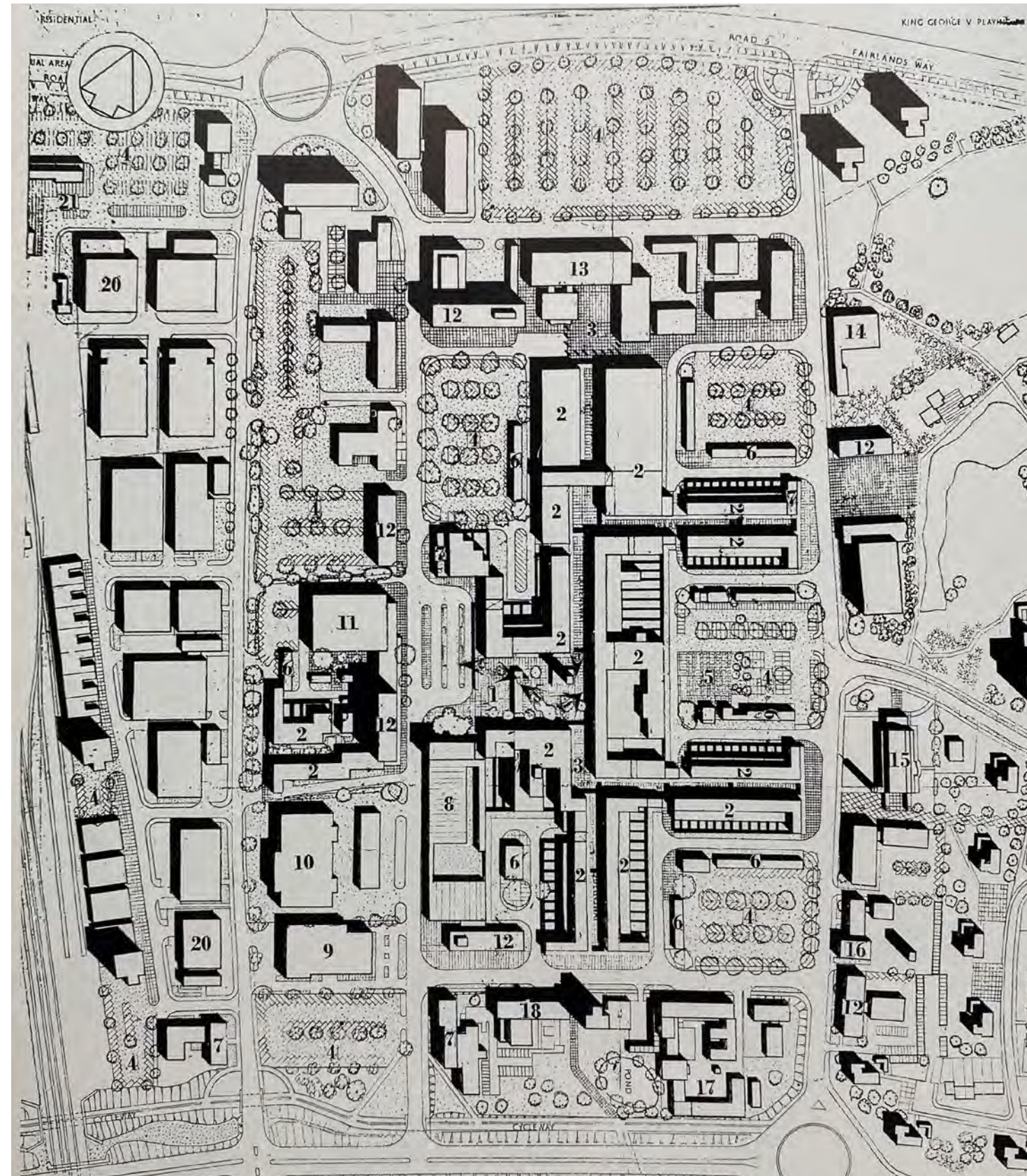
12. Urban Design Context

Stevenage New Town

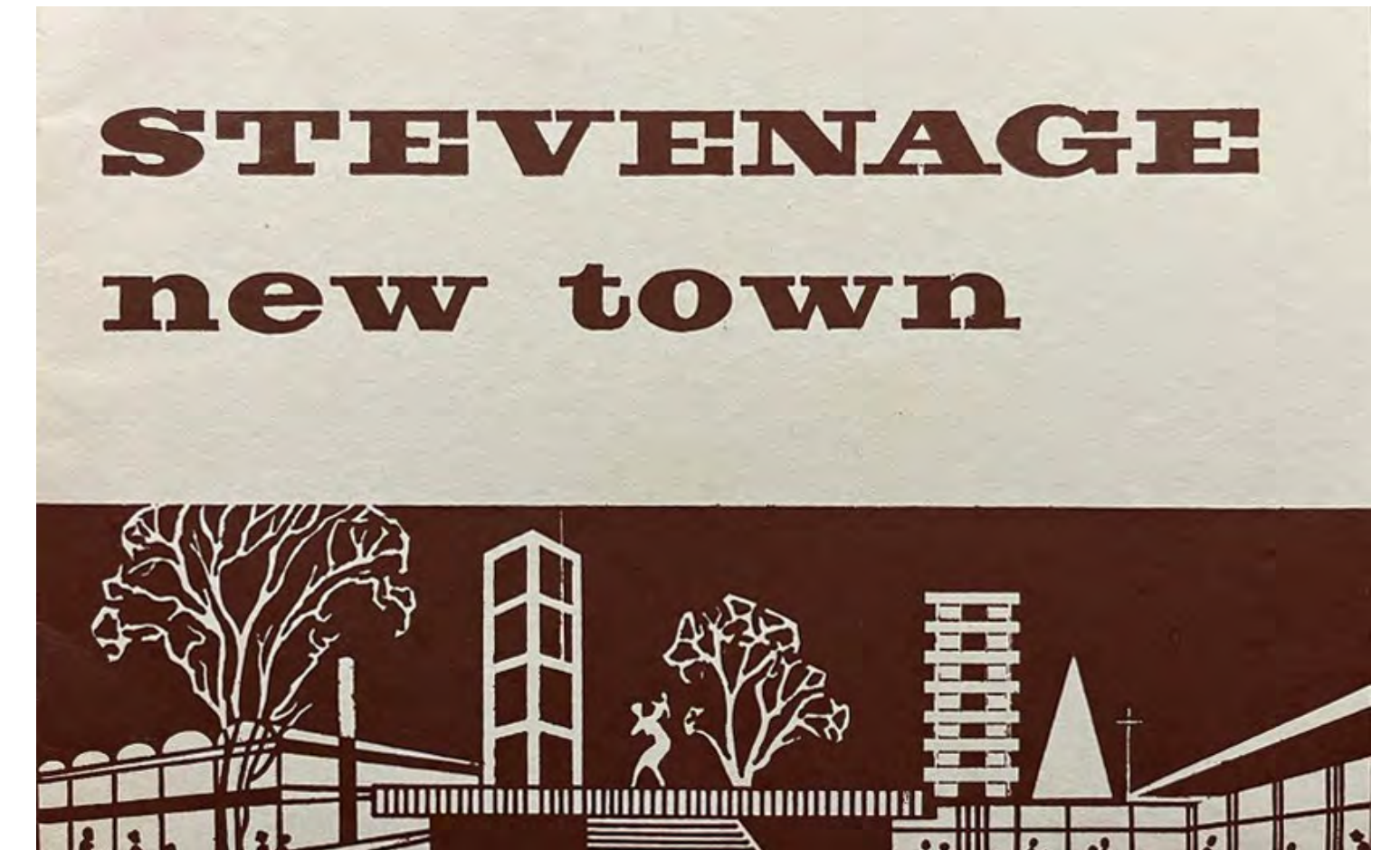
12.6 The most significant settlement by size in relation to the Site, is Stevenage itself. Commissioned under the 1946 New Towns Act, it is one of a ring of new towns built beyond the Green Belt of London to provide housing away from the war-damaged city.

12.7 The neighbourhoods that developed in Stevenage are part of a long history of community experiments. Creating neighbourhood was one of the founding objectives. It included a careful range of streetscapes and designs, using cul-de-sacs and village greens. The separation of people and cars were also a key theme, and Stevenage's extensive system of segregated cycleways was pioneering. Much of the original vision has stood the test of time and people are rightly proud of the place.

12.8 However, whilst the original vision of green spaces and segregation of people from car movement, may have been laudable in the early years, the increased ownership of cars since the 1970's has led to some negative impacts of community. Streets are poorly over-looked, there are vulnerable back garden boundaries, and some pedestrian routes can feel threatening, a lot due to the segregation of cars from public spaces.







▲ The original masterplan for Stevenage town centre

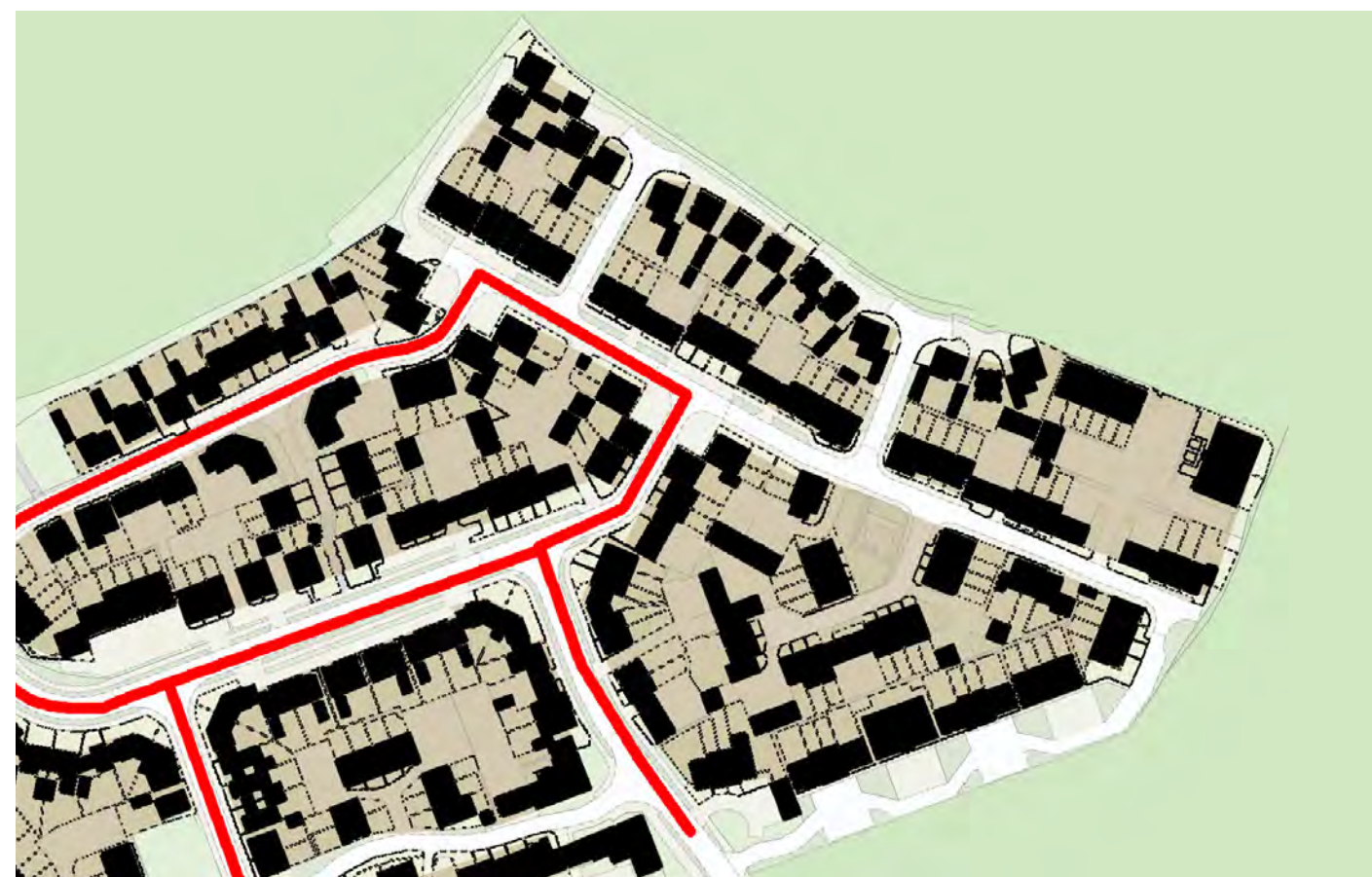


12. Urban Design Context

Great Ashby

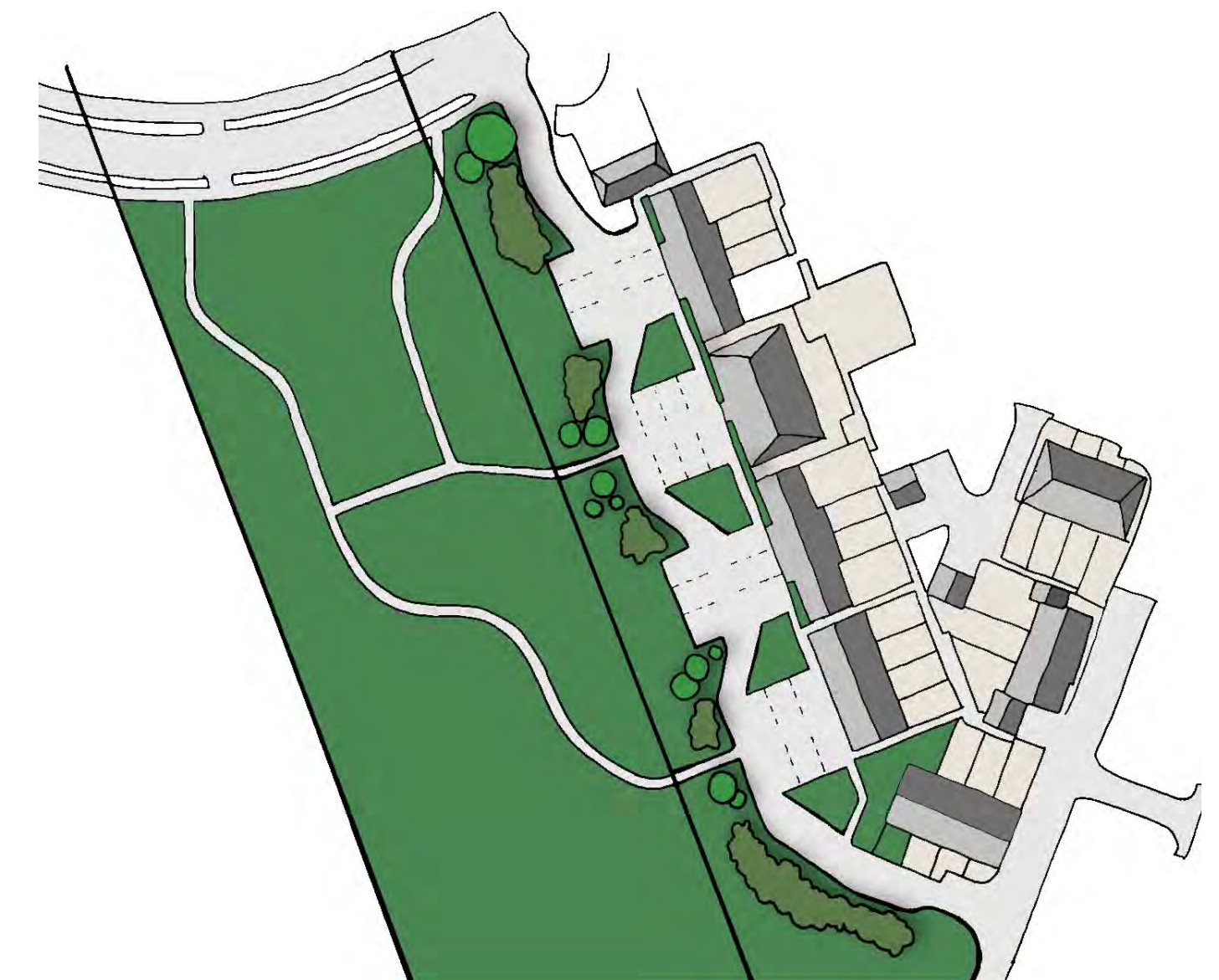
- 12.9 The layout of the most recent phase of Great Ashby did go some way to resolve the issues of New Town layouts, whilst resolving other challenges specific to the area, such as the electric pylons that pass through the neighbourhood.
- 12.10 Though Great Ashby remains a car-movement-led layout, there are useful lessons in:
 - the organisation of street fronts and backs;
 - footways as part of street spaces;
 - reducing the visual impact of cars; and
 - the use of street trees and soft landscaped boundaries to houses.
- 12.11 These attributes have gone some way to resolving the segregation of movement types and reduced reliance on cars as a dominant design consideration.

Key features	
	Multi-tone red brick
	Natural grey slate
	Light orange buff brick
	Shrub planted buffer



Cromdale Walk, Great Ashby

- Characteristics and setting similar to GA2.
- Set within a green edge.
- Edge of development abutting the pylons.
- The landscape setting draws attention away from the pylons.
- Higher density housing along the edge.
- A non-linear street pattern intended to manage speed.
- The edge street has features that compliment the green space.



12. Urban Design Context

Graveley

12.12 The village is formed around an historic north-south high road between old Stevenage and Baldock. It contained farmsteads clusters, individual houses and supporting uses such as school, chapel and public house. There are a number of streets and lanes branching off from the High Street.

12.13 Many wide frontage buildings are orientated towards the High Street. The buildings do not form continuous frontages and the grain of the layout is mixed, with some buildings set within individual plots, while others form a row of terraced houses.

12.14 The set-back of buildings from the High Street also varies, including individual plots with narrow set-backs and wide footways, soft landscaped set-backs with clipped hedges, high brick garden walls, low flint garden walls, terraced cottages, and widened carriageway for parking.



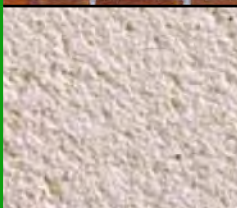

12.15 It has an informal layout with no overarching design. Rather, the placement of buildings and plots have mostly taken place on an ad-hoc basis over many years.

12.16 The regular window patterns add architectural character. The roof line and gables are disbursed with chimney features.

12.17 No buildings are over two storeys, however, the scale of buildings varies, with the use of parapets on grander buildings, hip roofs, and single storey additions.

12.18 Multi-tones red brick with Flemish bond predominate, and this is disbursed with whiter rendered buildings.

12.19 The charm of the place is the richness of form and how it relates to the High Street.

Key features	
	Multi-tone red brick
	Natural grey slate
	Roughcast render
	Flint panel within brick

Graveley High Street

- A high street through a rural village setting.
- A primary route within a rural nature with informal plots and irregular densities along it.
- The buildings have a minimal set back and face directly onto the street.
- Consists of red brick terraced housing with red brick and irregular window patterns that add architectural character.
- The street widens at points, creating opportunities for incidental landscaping, parking, and spaces for social interaction.



12. Urban Design Context

Weston

12.20 Weston is a village clustered on the confluence of rural roads: Damask Green, Fore Street, Maiden Street, and Hitchin Road. A tree forms the centre point of the village, and plots of land are irregular due to the convergence of the different routes.

12.21 There is extensive tree planting, managed hedgerows and mown grass verges forming the setting of routes that pass through the village. There are no footways in parts of the village centre, and some footways on one side of the street only – much would be considered shared surface. There is irregular carriageway width and alignment, with some buildings abutting narrow footways which provide natural traffic calming features.



12.22 There is a diverse mix of narrow and wide frontage houses, many orientated towards the street. Some buildings form the outer boundary of farmyards, set at the back of the footway and with no windows at ground level. Buildings adapted for commercial uses now contribute to the rich mix of uses within the village centre.

12.23 The buildings do not form continuous frontages, and the grain of the layout is mixed, with some buildings set within individual plots, while others form groups of two to three adjoining houses. There are large plots that abut Damask Green Road, such as at Damask Close and Marlborough Close. These form cul-de-sacs of quiet residential pockets, well screened by landscape.

12.24 There are a range of architectural features, from plain architectural features on workers cottages, to gothic revival on the chapel.

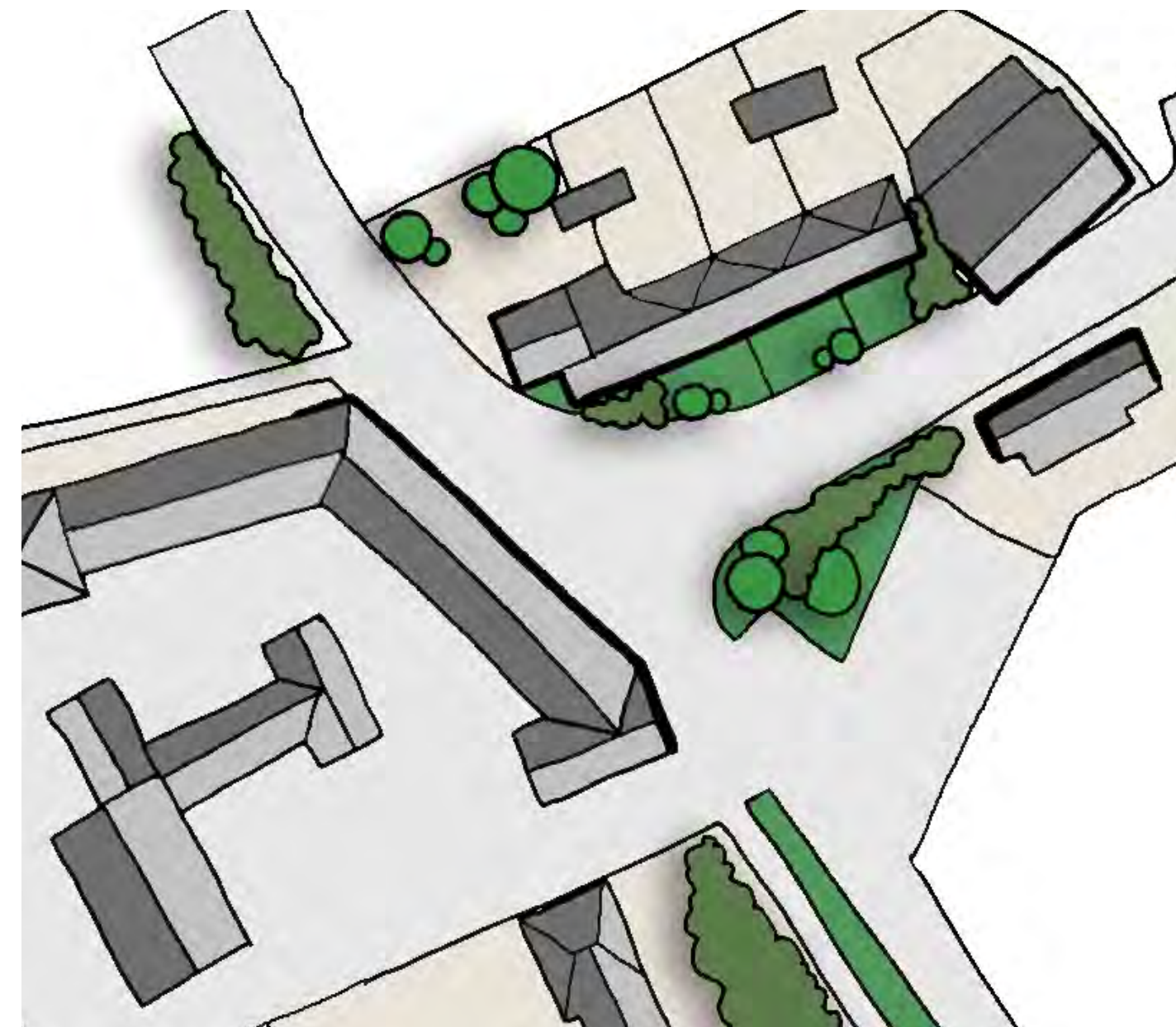
12.25 Features include gable ornamentation, piers and base features.

12.26 The roof line is set against the canopy of mature trees.

Key features	
	Multi-tone red brick
	Natural grey slate
	Picket fence
	Brick piers

Hitchin Road - Weston

- Terraced housing set within village landscape.
- Repurposed agricultural buildings.
- Picket fencing as boundary treatment.
- Dispersed settlement pattern with irregular building line.
- Buildings set back from street.
- Soft landscaping frontages and symmetrical window pattern.
- Green space forming streetscape.



12. Urban Design Context

Grass Meadows, Stevenage

12.27 This residential infill is located on one of Stevenage's oldest lanes. The lane and much of its landscape has remained intact through the evolution of the New Town. A mature hedgerow is located along the northern edge of the route, whilst the southern edge has house plots in close proximity.




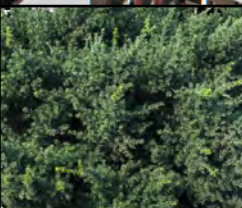
12.28 Grass Meadows is a cul-de-sac off Chells Lane which is an infill group of three houses. Its layout responds to the setting of Chells Manor, the neighbouring Grade II Listed Building. The three houses sit within the original curtilage of the manor.

12.29 The scheme is an arrangement of low density detached houses which could be said to have a loose grained composition. Grass Meadows is also narrow at around 3m wide, which contributes to keeping the lane clear of parked cars in a self-policing manner, as parking would block access to others.

12.30 The house plots have no boundary fences to their front gardens, which are defined by lawns and ornamental shrub planting.

12.31 The cul-de-sac illustrates how a pocket of land can be used without adverse visual impact on its surroundings.

12.32 There are minimal architectural references to the manor, with tile roofs and the applied heritage decoration. These are less successful than the pronounced gables of uniform height, and include the dormer roofs that emphasise first floor windows.

Key features	
	Multi-tone red brick
	Ornamental timber
	Gable feature on eave
	Shrub planting

Grass Meadows, Stevenage

- Soft landscaping features.
- Single carriageway width.
- Plots facing inwards onto central area.
- Gable roofs.
- Symmetry design of properties.
- Half brick and exposed wood with stucco.
- Green edge.
- Uniform heights.



12. Urban Design Context

Old Town, Stevenage

12.33 The streets within the Old Town appear on the 1922 OS map. They show the growth of Stevenage during the Edwardian period, where an expanding middle class were living in family houses, close to the railway station and benefiting from the opportunity of commuting.

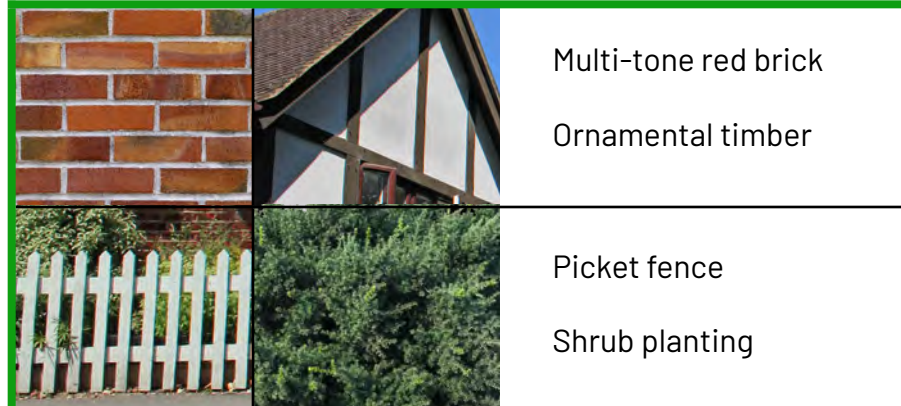
12.34 The streets are linear with a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, most of a wide frontage type, and all two storey. There is an overarching design composition to the streets that is formal, in that there is a consistent building line and regularised front gardens spaces. The houses are laid out in a perimeter block form. It is close grained, with clear definition of public frontages and private back gardens. Front boundaries are made up of dwarf walls with masonry pillars, and with a mixture of hard landscaping with soft landscaping features.

12.35 At the time of construction, cars would have been a rare commodity and much of the street space would be for service access only. Occupiers would walk to work or take public transport.

12.36 As car ownership has increased over time, demand for parking integrating into housing has also increased. These streets have limited ability to accommodate such parking demands. Two private cars per house is not achievable without constraining other ways of moving about. This has also resulted in making parked cars the central feature of the street.

12.37 There is a range of building ornamentation based on arts and crafts pattern books. Elements that enrich buildings include bay windows, porches, and combinations of each. The proportion of glazing bars within the window frames provide an additional richness to building appearance. There is also the use of ornamental gables which provide proportion to the whole street elevation. The uniform appearance is reinforced by the use of a single type of red brick.

Key features



Old Stevenage, Stanmore Road

- Linear street with on street parking.
- Massing is uniform along Stanmore Road.
- Dwarf walls with masonry pillars.
- Set back with mixture of hard landscaping with soft landscaping features.
- Wide frontages.
- Edwardian style building.
- Glazing frames and sailing jetty feature.
- Mix of mono pitched bay windows and double height bay windows.



12. Urban Design Context

Letchworth Garden City





12.38 Letchworth's plan is made up of perimeter blocks and a hierarchy of linear streets, creating an overarching town composition. The structure of streets, houses and landscape is clear and legible. In places where a regular geometry of perimeter blocks cannot be made, a number of residential 'pockets' are made. Rather than referring to these as cul-de-sacs, which imply they are dictated by car movements, these pockets are civic spaces with their own unique identity.

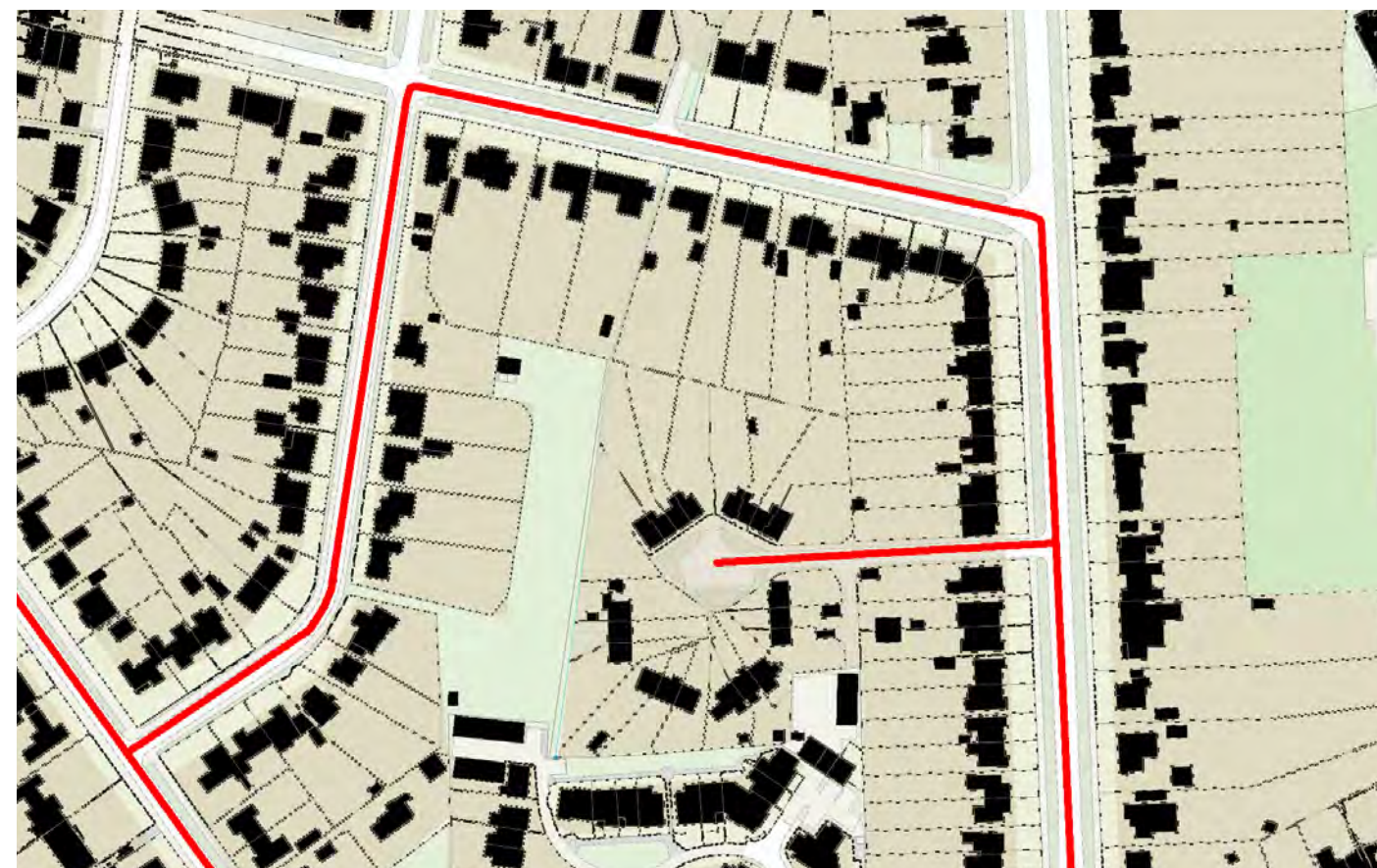
12.39 The core of these pocket streets are often made up of formal green spaces. The movement of cars is secondary to the movement of people, and the sense of enclosure is provided by buildings and landscape.

12.40 Campers Road, Letchworth, is one such example. Although the houses are linked as terraces, the amount of space provided results in a low density scheme. The geometric loop lane provides access to frontages, while the terraces of buildings form a rectangular enclosure. The two features are linked by varying sizes of front gardens. The composition is highly ordered, with the grain made up of wide frontage terraced houses. The central green space is empty of features and comprises mown grass which is available for informal recreation.

12.41 Building appearance is made up of off-white roughcast render and red clay tile roofs, deep eaves, and extenuated dip mouldings over windows and doors. The composition of gables and windows illustrate that the whole elevation of each terrace was designed as a whole.

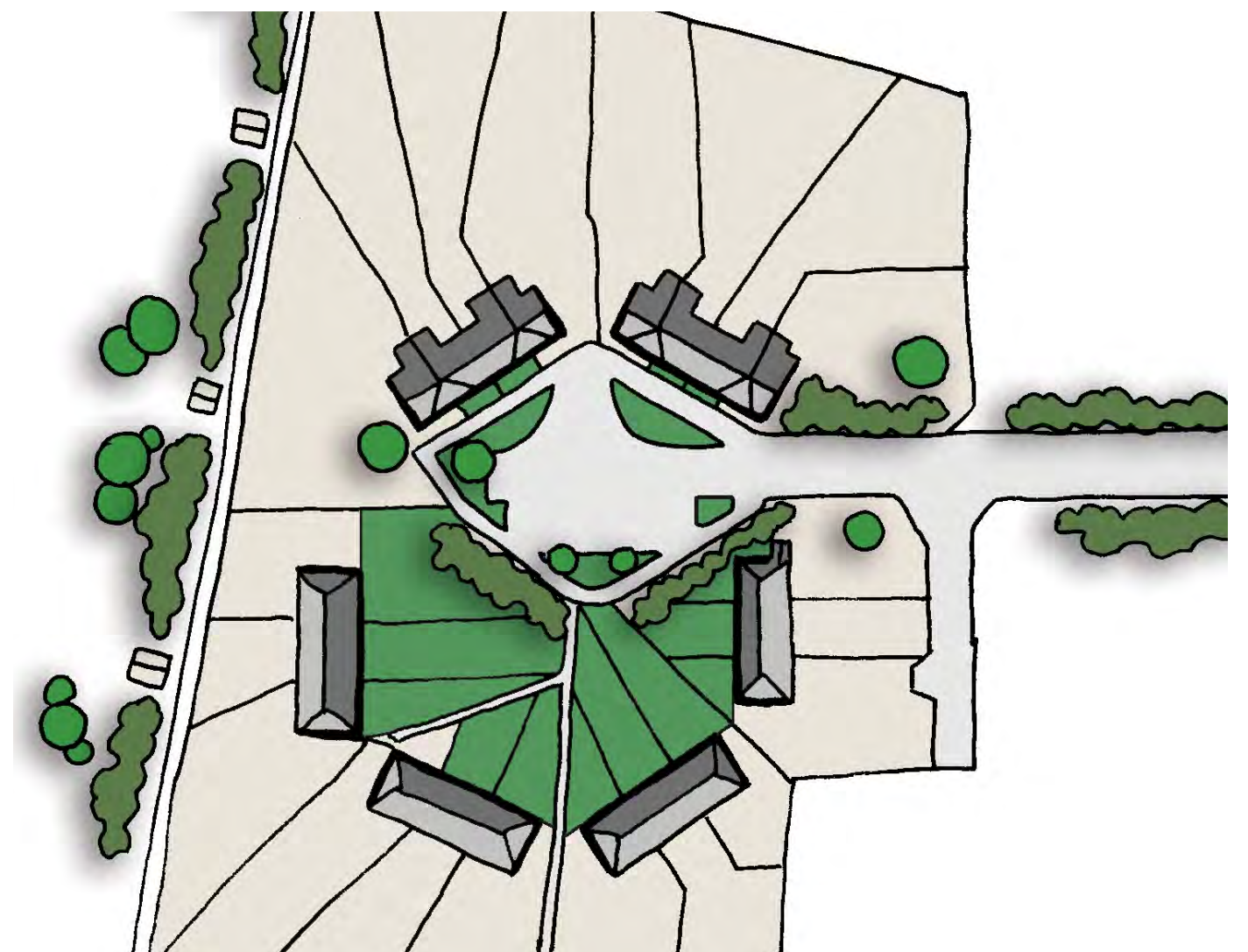
12.42 The varying depth of front gardens provide a soft landscape setting. Boundaries to front gardens would have historically been clipped hedged. However due to the increase in car ownership, several of these have been removed.

Key features	
	Multi-tone red brick
	Natural grey slate
	Roughcast render
	Flint panel within brick



Paddock Close - Letchworth Garden City

- Cul de sac with Inward facing plots.
- Mixed white render and brick.
- Set back from street, wide grass verge defining relationship between plot, footpath and road.
- Gable roof.
- Symmetrical design properties.
- Soft landscaping frontage.

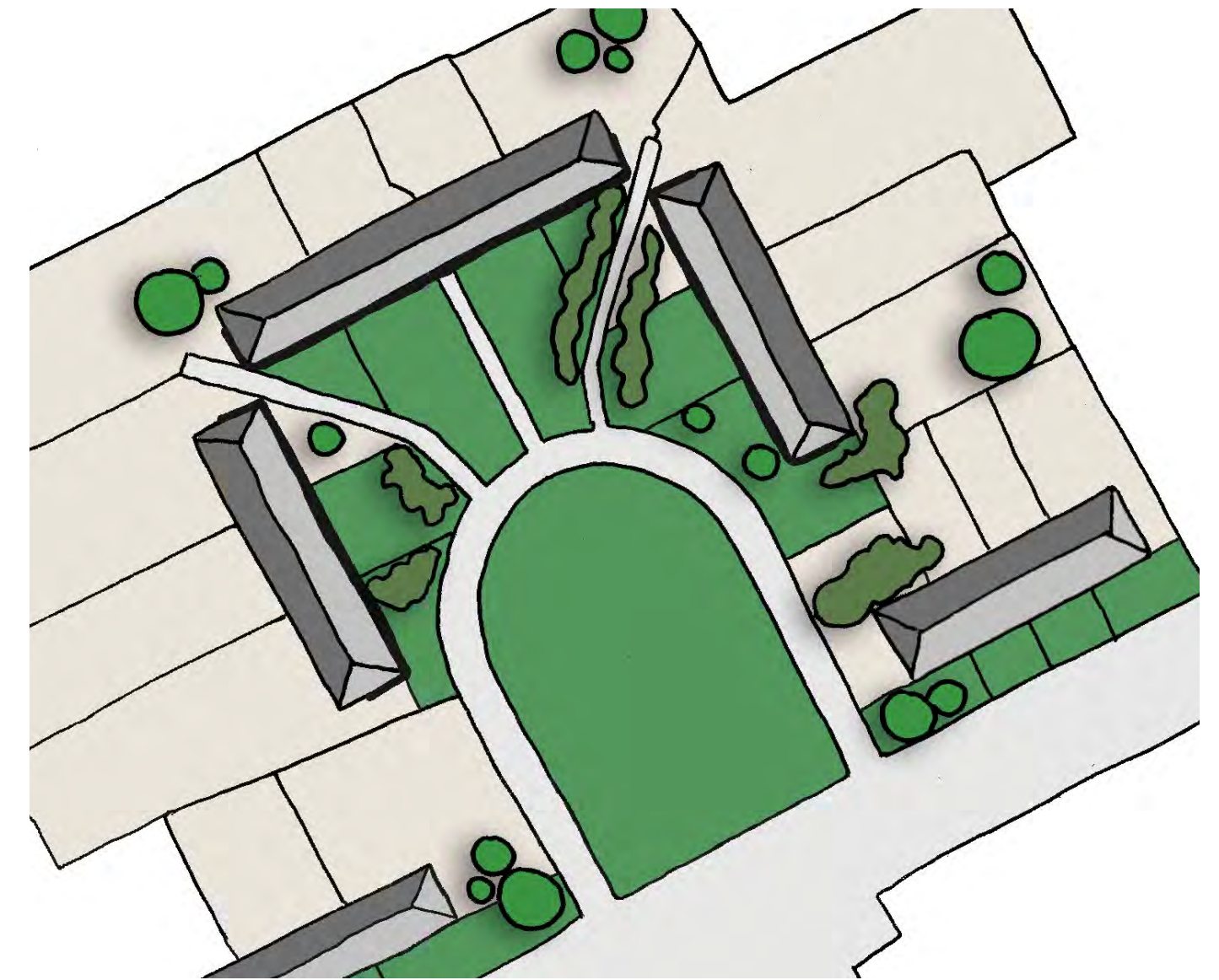


12. Urban Design Context



Campers Road - Letchworth Garden City

- Cu-de-sac.
- White and off-white render.
- Long windows.
- Deep front garden, soft landscaping boundary treatment.
- Street in crescent shape.
- Inward facing plots.
- Square building with eave line and gable.



12. Urban Design Context

LESSONS LEARNT FOR GA2

12.43 These local examples provide the opportunity to create a positive and coherent identity for the development that all can enjoy. They encourage a neighbourhood character that suits its context, its history, how we live today, and how we are likely to live in the future. They show:

Good practice from places that have endured over time

- This is demonstrated through formal frontages that are arranged on straight streets, allowing for efficient plots and buildings. These highway standards allow circulation. The variety of building form and distribution, including use of materials, colour, massing and boundary treatments, show consideration to how architectural styles and requirements evolve.

Reflecting on which places encourage walking

- Retaining PRow and integrating them into local residential streets demonstrate examples of active travel. The integration of PRow with footway connections to the town centre include Stevenage 102, Great Ashby 011.

Response to utility corridors such as pylons

- The use of planting mitigates the appearance of the intrusive features such as pylons, and is composed at various scales to accommodate the swing of cables and the servicing of pylons. Through integrating play and leisure footpaths within the pylon area, it enables the space to be used for connecting the community and avoids long views along utility corridors that emphasis the severance caused by the pylon corridor.

Response to landscape preservation such as hedgerows

- Preserved hedgerows are associated with PRow and the setting of PRow provide a width of green corridor that links across residential areas towards further landscapes such as the woodlands of Chells Manor.

Allowing different parts of the development to respond to different locations' characteristics, such as edges to countryside and local centres

- The use of varied boundary treatments, scale and soft landscaped frontages show an approach to softening edges and responding to countryside setting without disrupting character.

Provide clues to enriching housing appearance and streetscape quality, making them visually attractive, and to delight occupants and visitors

- Quiet cul-de-sacs in natural settings and residential pockets within larger grain urban blocks are examples of layout that are dictated by building form and landscape, rather than movement network. The variety of building types and uses such as terraced rows, detached houses and a mix of traditional materials and colours, support this.

12. Urban Design Context

Woodland Edge

12.44 There are several recent examples where housing is well integrated with woodland edges. Off-set distances are established for the preservation of tree health, where root protection and overshadowing are clear of dwellings.

12.45 For residential areas, useful good design attributes include:

- Housing should front onto woodland, reducing the need for back garden fences forming the boundary of woodland. This can be achieved by either orientation of the main dwelling aspect towards trees, or dual aspects along circulation routes that provide access to the trees.
- Pedestrian circulation is used to define the edge of dwellings facing onto the woodland. This can either be footpath or shared surface edge lanes. It is rarely successful for frontages to be accompanied by private drives only.
- Discrete parking, either to the side or rear of dwellings, means that long views between woodland and development are not dominated by parked cars.
- Soft planted boundaries of shrubs can form an attractive boundary to properties and avoids the need for fences or walls.
- Reducing the use of hard materials at woodland edges can create a less engineered appearance. One example is to replace standard kerbs with flush kerbs.



▲Accordia, Cambridge

12. Urban Design Context

Wetland Edge

- 12.46** Many of the good design attributes of woodland edges are also useful for wetland edges: aspect of dwellings, use of materials, pedestrian circulation, soft planting, and reducing the visual impact of cars, are all useful considerations.
- 12.47** However, recent examples show that there are additional design requirements with the open spaces around housing which contain swales, ponds and ditches.
- 12.48** Safety measures to prevent people from falling into water should not be imposed as an afterthought, but integrated into designs at the earliest stages of design development.
- 12.49** Level changes are not just a drainage engineering outcome, but must be integrated into hard and soft landscape solutions that address safety needs, whilst allowing a degree of public access.
- 12.50** Recent well-designed solutions include beached levels, which are areas that are not permanently wet but also allow for marginal planting.
- 12.51** Landscape planting need not be only used for biodiversity or aesthetic purposes, but also to steer or prevent public access from areas of risk.
- 12.52** Providing places to sit are an important contribution to the experience of wetland, whether these are benches in mostly dry areas, or decks that allow a closer experience of water edges.
- 12.53** Unlike woodland management, wetlands need considerable maintenance, both to perform well in their drainage function, but also to control planting, whether designed or invasive.



▲ Barton Park, Oxford

Opportunities & Constraints

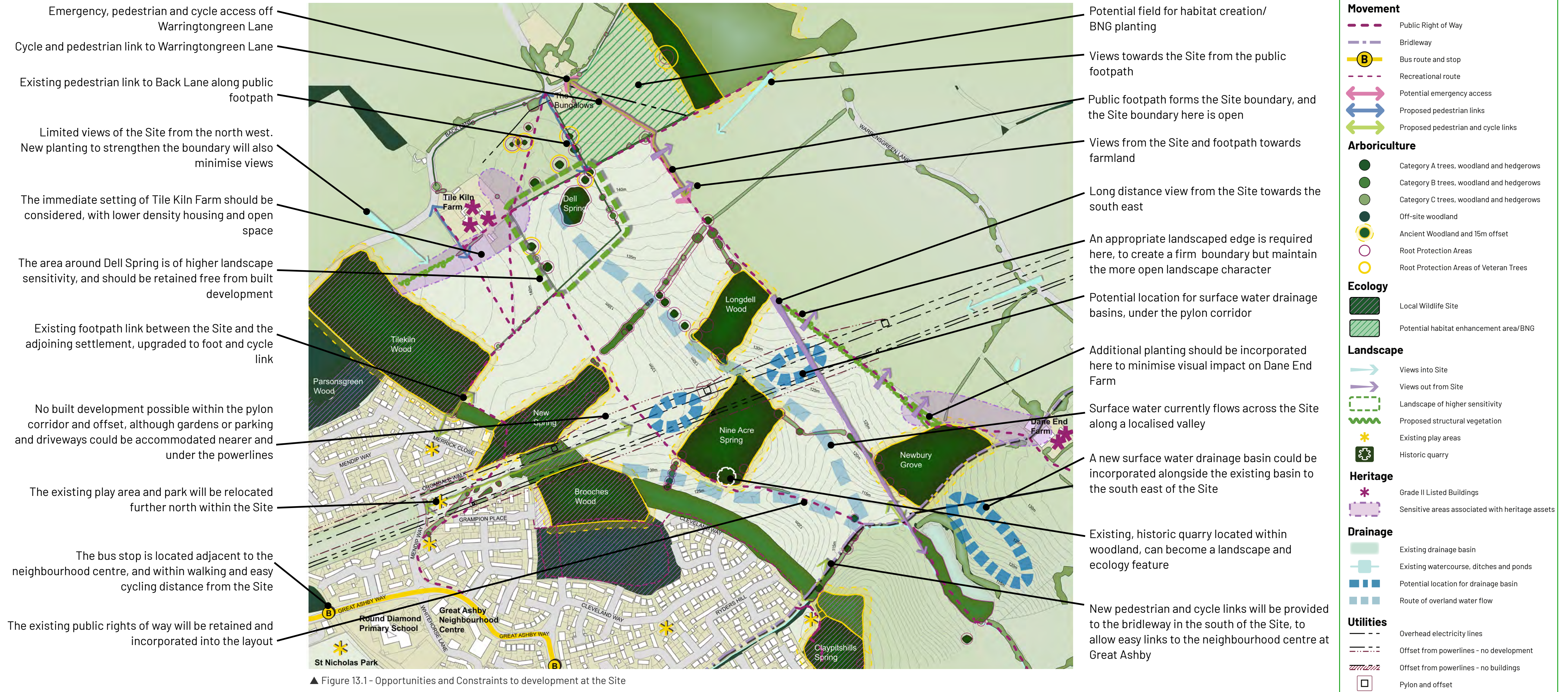
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13. Opportunities & Constraints

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

- 11.1 The plan on the following page combines the various opportunities and constraints to development at GA2, which have been ascertained from the baseline and technical studies.
- 11.2 This plan will form the basis for design options and decisions going forward. However, good design sometimes requires compromises to be made to achieve the most beneficial results overall, and while the baseline information influences the final Masterplan, other considerations will also be taken into account as the design of the proposals evolves.
- 11.3 The effects of the proposals on the baseline conditions is considered in detail within the Environmental Impact Assessment. The process of designing the scheme is iterative, and where the initial research and studies highlights potential significant effects, the design will evolve to avoid or mitigate these effects, wherever possible.

13. Opportunities & Constraints



▲ Figure 13.1 - Opportunities and Constraints to development at the Site