

Land North of Pound Farm, Phases 2 & 3 St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire

Hitchin, Herts



Design and Access Statement
Planning Application - December 2024


ELIVIA
— HOMES —

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Land North of Pound Farm, Phases 2 & 3

St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire

1.0

Background



1.0 Background

1.1 Planning Application

1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Elivia Homes to accompany a reserved matters application to North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) in relation to residential development and associated works at Land north of Pound Farm, London Road, Hitchin.

This reserved matters application follows the granting of outline planning permission which formed part of a hybrid application (Application Ref. 21/00434/HYA) described as follows:

"Hybrid application for a residential development to provide a total of up to 84 dwellings with associated access from London Road, including provision of a roundabout, associated parking, landscaping, open space and ancillary works comprising: Phase 1 – Application for full planning permission for the erection of 36 dwellings; Subsequent Phases – Application for outline planning permission all matters reserved except for access on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 48 dwellings."

The outline element within the hybrid application relates to Phases 2 and 3, and all matters were reserved except for access.

This application seeks the approval of details for the following reserved matters in relation to the Phase 2 and 3 for the remaining 48 dwellings, and relating to conditions 7, 8 and 9 of the hybrid planning permission:

- Layout
- Scale
- Landscaping
- Appearance

The development at Land north of Pound Farm will be delivered in three phases. The first phase relates to the detailed element, comprising 36 dwellings and associated works for which full planning permission has been granted under the hybrid application. The Phase 1 area covers the western portion of the site, including the frontage to London Road, and the land required for the central spine road and the areas of open space.

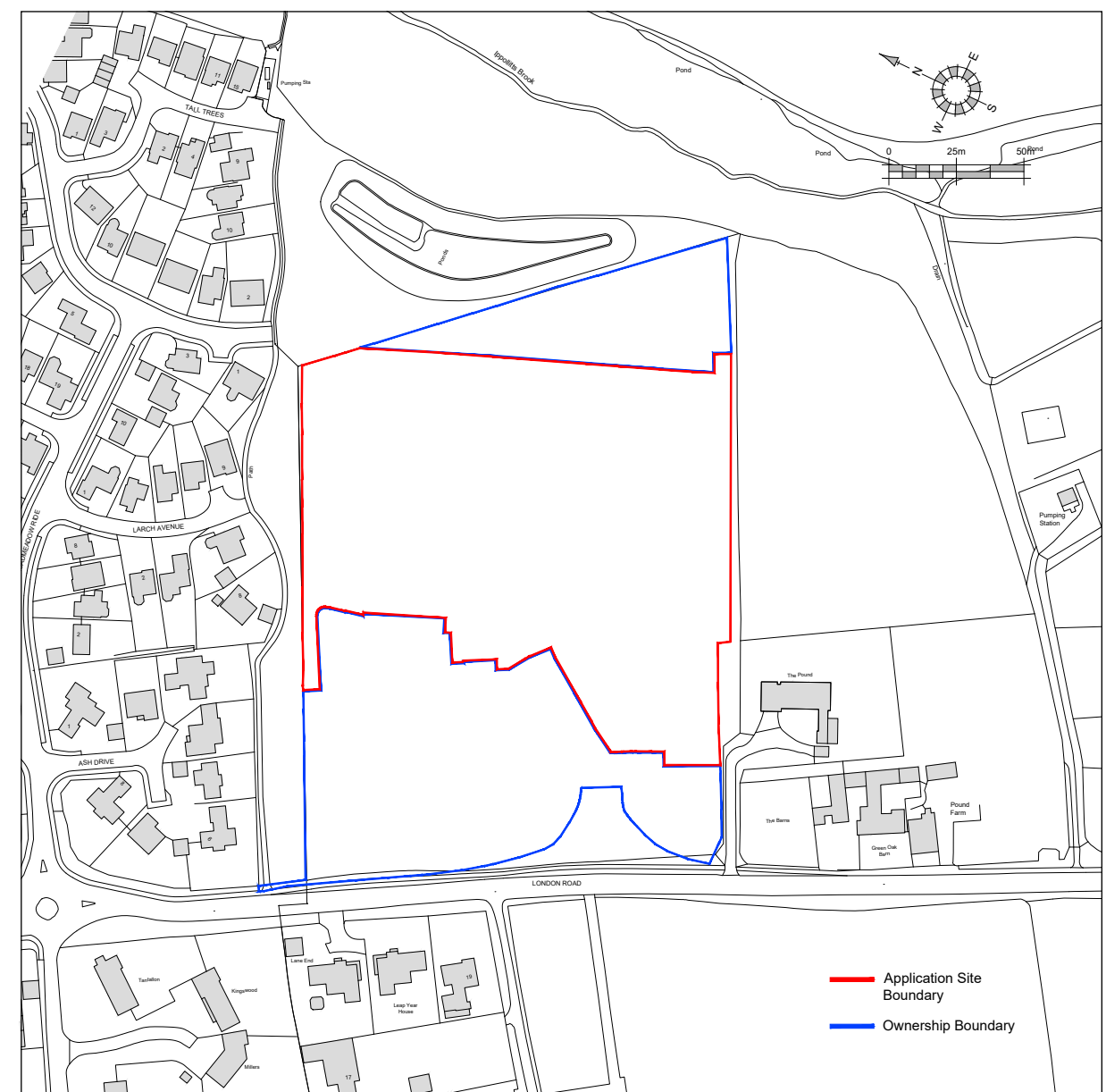
Phases 2 and 3 comprise the central part of the site on either side of the spine road and the eastern developable portion of the site. Phases 2 and 3 have a total of 48 dwellings.

The principle of development and development parameters have been established and accepted under the hybrid application.

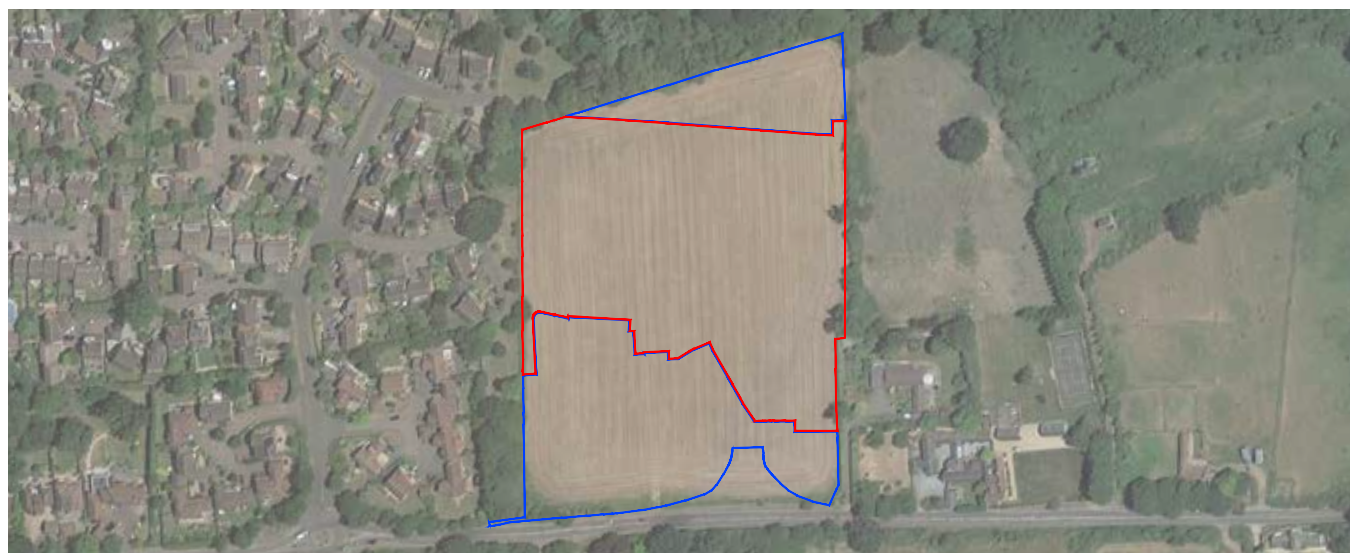
The Phase 2 and 3 area includes minor adjustments along the central spine road area to adjust landscape details and areas of visitor parking to align with the detailed housing layout. In all other respects the central spine road remains as previously consented. The need for a Non-Material Amendment (NMA) to the Hybrid consent to reflect these minor adjustments has been discussed with the NHDC during the pre-application process.

1.2 Location

The site is located on the south eastern outskirts of Hitchin in Hertfordshire, approximately 1.25 miles from the centre of the town. The site is bounded to the west by the B656 London Road. The site is within the parish of St. Ippolyts, approximately 0.25 miles to the south east. The centre of St Ippolyts is a conservation area.



Site location plan - 1:2,500



Aerial photograph of the overall masterplan site (Google Maps)

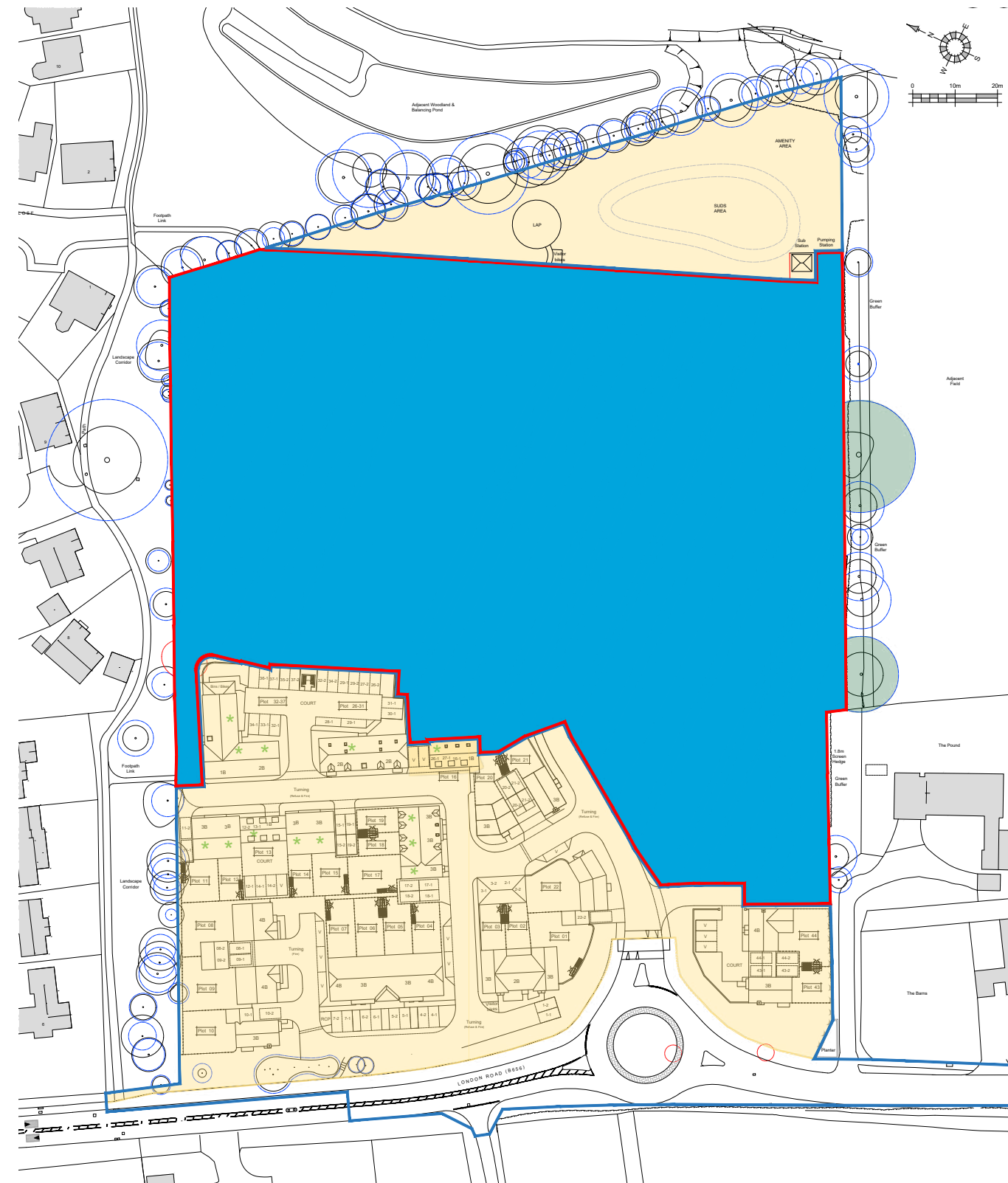
1.0 Background

1.3 Development Phasing

The application site comprises phases 2 & 3 of the original hybrid application for the erection of up to 84 dwellings. The gross site area measures 3.48 hectares (8.61 acres), the Reserved Matters application area (Phases 2 & 3) measures 1.79 hectares (4.42 acres). The location of phases 2 & 3 is illustrated on the plan right.

KEY

- Phases 2 & 3 Reserved Matters application site
- Phase 1 approved application site



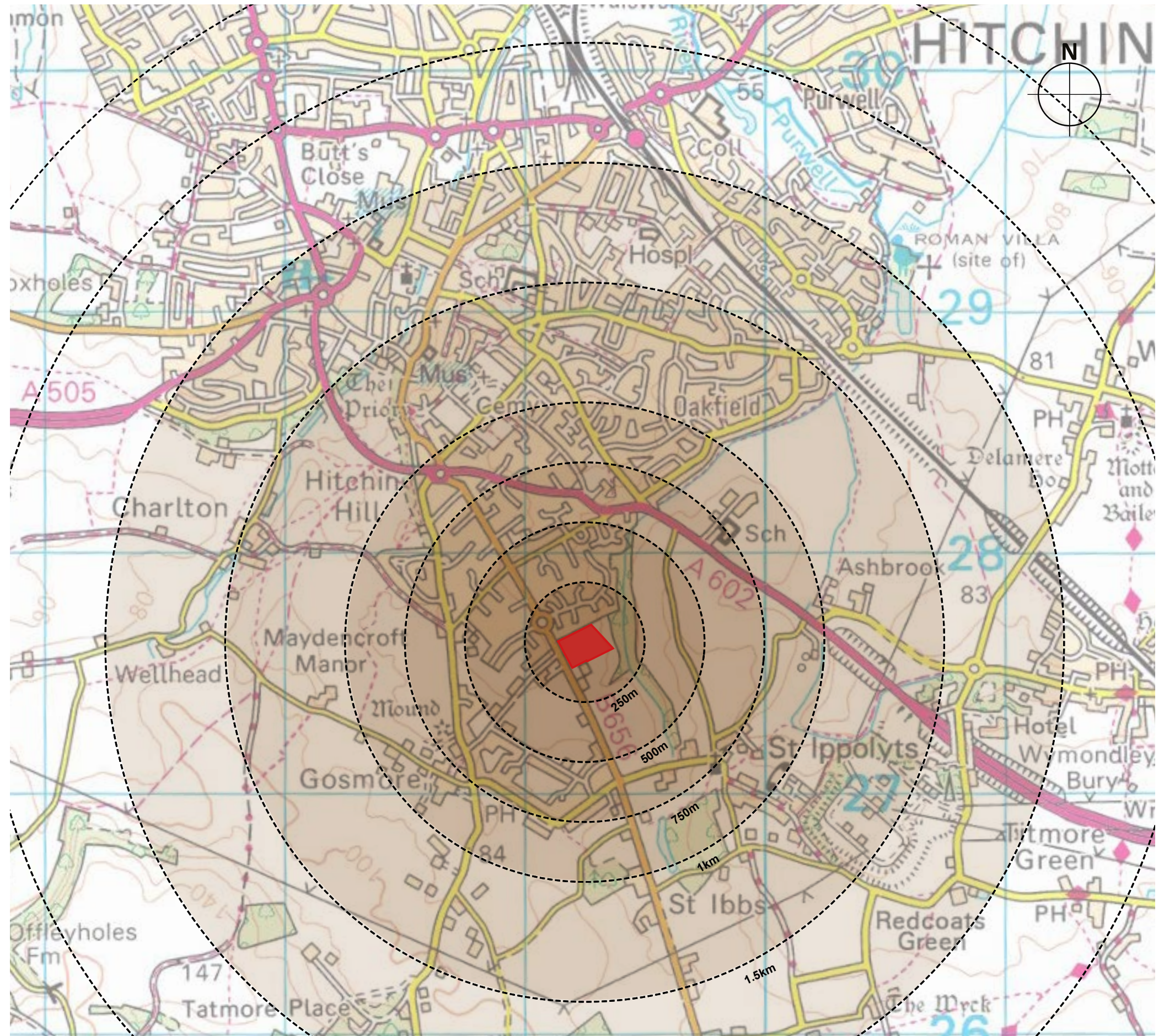
Phasing Plan

1.0 Background

1.4 Site Context

The site is located on the south eastern edge of Hitchin. Access is available to the site from the B656 London Road.

The site is part of the St Ippolyts valley that runs north to south extending out from Hitchin. To the north is the wider Langley Valley. The site is classified as Grade 3 agricultural land.



OS Map showing site location and context

Land North of Pound Farm, Phases 2 & 3

St Ippolyts, Hertfordshire

2.0

Existing Site



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2.0 Existing Site & Context

2.1 Site Description

This reserved matters application relates to the Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas (1.79 hectares) of the wider residential development at Land north of Pound Farm, granted planning permission for up to 84 dwellings under a hybrid application (application reference 21/00434/HYA).

This planning application for Phase 2 and 3, form part of the wider development site – which itself comprises an undeveloped parcel of land, measuring 3.49 hectares in area, located on the eastern side of London Road and to the north of the group of buildings and their associated land known as Pound Farm.

The red line site area for the hybrid application included part of the highway land along London Road to be used for the new access and roundabout that will serve the development, as well as visibility plays and other associated highways works. These works will allow for improved visibility at the junction where Mill Lane meets London Road, which lies directly opposite the site.

The site is on the southern edge of the built-up area of Hitchin and lies approximately 1.7km southeast of the town centre. It is referred to as 'HT2 – Land North of Pound Farm' in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 84 dwellings.

The site lies just to the south of the urban boundary of Hitchin and within the Parish of St Ippolyts. To the north of the site is a relatively modern housing estate, primarily comprised of relatively large, detached houses. To the east of the site is a wooded area, through which the Ippollitts Brook runs.

Pound Farm, to the south of the site, features a Grade II listed farmhouse building. Beyond Pound Farm, and further to the south, is open countryside before reaching St Ippolyts village. To the west of the site is London Road, beyond which is Mill Lane, where the Grade II listed Mill Farm is located.



View 2 - Existing access from London Road looking north

2.2 Existing Site Access

The second and third phase of the development will be accessed through the approved first phase of the development for all modes of travel.



View 1 - Existing site access from London Road

2.3 Topography

The topography of the site slopes gently from west to east. Prior to development the site was an agricultural arable field with no built development. There are some mature trees and hedging around parts of the perimeter the site. A public footpath runs just to the north of site between the site and the residential area to the north. The gentle fall from west to east is approximately 10m overall, over a distance of approximately 230 metres.

2.4 Flood Risk

A Flood Risk Assessment and been compiled by SDP Consulting Engineers to inform the application. The key conclusions of this Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) with regard to potential flood risk are as follows:

- The site is considered to be in Flood Zone 1 comprising land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding as a result of river or sea flooding.
- The development site is at a low risk of surface water and groundwater flooding.
- The risk of flooding from overland flow, artificial drainage systems and infrastructure failure is considered to be low.



Environment agency flood map for planning

Aerial photograph of the site with view locations ►



KEY

- RM application site boundary
- Approved hybrid application site boundary

2.0 Existing Site & Context

2.5 Site Photographs



View 3 - Existing site frontage to London Road looking north



View 4 - Existing site frontage to London Road looking south



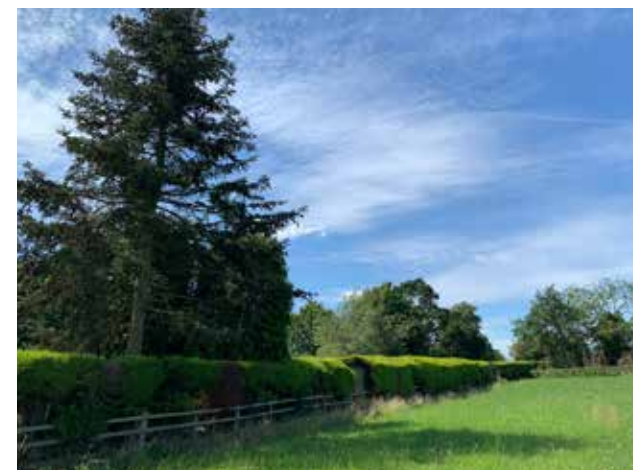
View 5 - Entrance to Mill Lane opposite site on London Road



View 6 - Existing access to The Pound from London Road



View 7 - Southern boundary with The Barns and The Pound from inside the site



View 8 - West along the southern boundary with the Pound



View 9 - East along the southern boundary



View 10 - Eastern boundary



View 11 - North along eastern boundary



View 12 - South along eastern boundary

2.0 Existing Site & Context



View 13 - Northern boundary with public open space and properties in Larch Avenue and Ash Drive



View 14 - Public open space and properties on Larch Avenue



View 15 - West along the northern boundary



View 16 - Footpath adjacent to northern boundary



View 17 - Public open space adjacent to northern boundary



View 18 - Public open space adjacent to northern boundary from within the site



View 19 - South across the site from the northern corner adjacent to the Public Open Space



View 20 - From northern boundary looking south across the site with London Road on the right

2.0 Existing Site & Context

2.6 Site Context

Whilst connected to the settlement of Hitchin, at this point of Hitchin's outer reaches there is little of architectural merit and local character, except within individual properties. The scheme can take more reference from St Ippolyts and the wealth of character in the conservation area.

The settlement of St Ippolyts is principally centred around the medieval Church of St Ippolyts, with the village green and Victorian primary school also key in this quaint grouping that rolls out to agricultural land all around. The village is not linear along a routeway and instead forms a series of spaces that focus on key buildings or generous public space. This is an excellent model for the urban design of the scheme at Pound Farm.

There is a wide variety of materials used in the Conservation Area including red brick, flint and stone, flint and brick, exposed timber frame, weatherboarding and cobb. This forms an excellent palette for a sympathetic development nearby.



Mill Lane, west of the site



Grade II Listed Pound Farmhouse, south of the site



Ash Drive, north of the site



Chestnut Walk, north of the site



London Road, opposite site

2.0 Existing Site & Context



St. Ippolyts



Victoria House, St. Ippolyts



St. Ippolyts



St. Ippolyts



St. Ippolyts



St. Ippolyts



St. Ippolyts



St. Ippolyts

2.0 Existing Site & Context

2.7 Heritage

The Heritage and Setting Statement by The Heritage Collective for the hybrid application remains relevant. The reserved matters scheme has had regard to this assessment and has been sensitively designed accordingly.

The proposal will not involve physical change to Pound Farm or any other nearby heritage assets. The Heritage and Setting Statement has found that the development is nominally within the setting of Pound Farm and that although there will be a material change in the appearance of the site, the proximate setting of and prospect from the historic part of Pound Farm will remain largely unaffected. The wider setting will be affected, in the sense that the most immediate remnants of its rural context will be changed permanently. However, it is concluded that the contribution of the current setting to significance of the asset is minimal and there will be little material harm as a result of the proposed development.

The summary and conclusion of the report is as follows:

- The proposal relates to a parcel of land located to the north of Pound Farmhouse, listed at Grade II status. The site is currently an arable field and is located to the south of Hitchin town centre within the St Ippolyts area and to the east of London Road.
- Pound Farm was first listed 28th May 1987.
- Nearby the site, Mill Farm, Mill Lane (Grade II) is situated some 200m to the west.
- The most proximate Conservation Area is St Ippolyts, some 500m to the south and east.
- The proposal will not involve physical change to Pound Farm or any nearby heritage assets.
- The settings of nearby assets, by virtue of relative disposition, intervening forms and lack of causal relationship will not be impacted upon and there will be no harm to significance.
- The development is nominally within the setting of Pound Farm. Although there will be a material change in the appearance of the site, the proximate setting of and prospect from the historic part of Pound Farm will remain largely unaffected. The wider setting will be affected, in the sense that the most immediate remnants of its rural context will be changed permanently. However, it is concluded that the contribution of the current setting to significance of the asset is minimal and there will be little material harm. Any harm arising from the proposals would remain as 'less than substantial' and assist in securing the 'optimum viable use' of the heritage asset recognised within paragraph 196 of the NPPF.
- The site has been the subject of lengthy consideration during the plan making process and is has been determined to be suitable for removal from the Green Belt. It has been allocated for residential development within the emerging Local Plan and it is considered that all relevant matters will have been taken into account. The listed building has been there prior to and all the time that this work has been undertaken. It is considered that any harm caused to the significance of the asset would be offset by the already agreed benefits that the development will bring.
- The proposal will therefore have no impact on the significance of the nearby conservation area.
- The development, by virtue of intervening urban forms, lack of inter-visibility and no appreciable causal link, will have no impact on the setting and therefore the significance of any other heritage asset in the vicinity.
- It is concluded that the proposed development in principle accords with all relevant national and local heritage policy and advice.



Figure 5 - O.S. map extract 1884



Figure 6 - O.S. map extract 1899



Grade II Listed Mill Farm, 200m west of the site



Figure 7- O.S. map extract 1925



Figure 8 -O.S. map extract 1948



Grade II Listed Pound Farmhouse, south of the site

2.0 Existing Site & Context

2.8 Landscape

Detailed landscaping drawings, prepared by Aspect Landscape Planning, accompany the application.

Key landscape features across the development site as a whole include:

- Landscaped frontage along London Road;
- Street tree planting;
- Use of trees and planting to break up parking forecourts;
- Creation of central 'village square' to provide amenity landscape space;
- Creation of open space at eastern end of site to provide landscaped buffer with adjacent established woodland which lies to the east;
- Creation of green buffer along southern boundary through new planting that will reinforce the existing vegetation;
- Landscaped buffer along part of the northern boundary shared with the Broadmeadow Ride development to the north.

The proposed approach to landscaping for Phases 2 and 3 is as set out within the detailed hybrid application landscaping proposals. The visual impact of the development is mitigated and blended into the surrounding environment through various landscape features detailed within the accompanying Landscape Proposals drawings, prepared by Aspect Landscape Planning.

Key landscape features within Phases 2 and 3 include street tree planting, the creation of a green buffer along the southern boundary through new planting that will reinforce the existing vegetation and a landscaped buffer along part of the northern boundary shared with the Broadmeadow Ride development. These features, in conjunction with those contained within the Phase 1 area, including the central 'village square' and open space at the eastern end of site will provide an attractive environment, with a landscaped buffer to the adjacent established woodland which lies to the east.

Within Phases 2 and 3, a comprehensive scheme of hedge, shrub and tree planting is proposed to provide suitable landscaping and ensure a high quality environment is achieved.

Open space will comprise the central square, the larger open space at the eastern end of the site that will incorporate a Local Area of Play (LAP) and the area adjacent to part of the northern boundary that links into the existing open space to the south of the Broadmeadow Ride development. The open space at the eastern end of the site and the central square are included within Phase 1. The area of open space adjacent to part of the northern boundary, as referred to above, falls within the Phase 2 and 3 area. This was detailed on the Masterplan submitted with the hybrid application and has been maintained as such.

SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- *The Landscape & Capacity Assessment by Cooper Partnership, 2009 and the council's assessment of this area being moderate to high in the capacity for development has all concurred that this is a suitable site for development.*
- *The site is located on the edge of existing dense development. It is largely inward looking apart from the poor hedgerow to the London Road boundary which would be recommended to be reinforced and replaced if this site were to be developed.*
- *It has significant woodland areas and planting belts in its immediate surroundings. It is a low lying site which would reduce the sensitivity of the site as there are no long distance views. The site is of very low biodiversity currently as discussed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report produced by 'Green Environmental Consultants', 2016.*
- *The landscape character of the area would be similar to the adjacent surrounding developments in scale and character. There are little landscape character and landscape effects to note in this site not having any notable landscape features within it.*

SUMMARY OF VISUAL EFFECTS

- *It is concluded that the proposal overall have a varied effect on the Landscape Visual Impact of the Site*

PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

- *The landscape proposals show that existing trees and hedgerows are to be retained where possible.*
- *The mitigation plan should respond to the suggestions put forward by the 'Landscape and Capacity Assessment' by the Cooper Partnership 2009, the Ecology Report by Green Environmental Consultants, 2020, The 'Heritage and Setting Statement' by Heritage Collective, June 2020 as well as with this visual impact assessment.*
- *The London Road boundary shows that it is to be enhanced with a wider green boundary of a native hedgerow and additional native trees to assist in the screening of the proposed housing from the transient view from the road and footpath.*
- *The southern boundary shows the existing buffer planting of native hedge and existing field boundary trees are to be retained. This is to be further enhanced with more native trees and hedge planting. This is to provide additional screening of the site from the Pound Farm buildings. There are some ornamental hedges and existing shrubs around the garden of the farm and little views in this location.*
- *The eastern boundary is a dense woodland area which should be retained and protected, the ecology report suggested that biodiversity could be increased in this location with a thorny indigenous edge. the play area and open space would provide potential for another green space and could be incorporated with semi-indigenous tree planting.*
- *The northern boundary adjacent the existing housing shows some existing woodland edge planting which covers a significant part of this boundary. Additional open space has been designed to provide an additional area for the open space, a greater distance and a natural break from the new development. Some semi-indigenous planting and trees help to further screen any views from existing housing into this area.*

2.0 Existing Site & Context

2.9 Trees

Existing tree planting

There is a landscape corridor to the north of the site, a large wooded area to the north-east and north-west with a line of large mature trees in between that include Maple, Sycamore, Alder, Ash, Pine, Fir and Oak, There are also hedges to part of the northern edge of the site.

The boundary with London Road consists of a native hedge with a number of small trees within it, this provides less screening to the site than the other boundaries.

To the southern boundary there is a significant band of mature trees that include Oak, Ash, Hawthorn, Maple, Fir & Pine trees. The tree survey shows a buffer of hedgerow planting. Beyond this and adjacent the farm buildings / house is further dense boundary planting.

To the east there is a mature woodland belt that starts at the A602 and finishes just before St Ippolyts. It contains St Ippolyts brook, it is an important woodland area, as it is a largely inaccessible site with a watercourse.

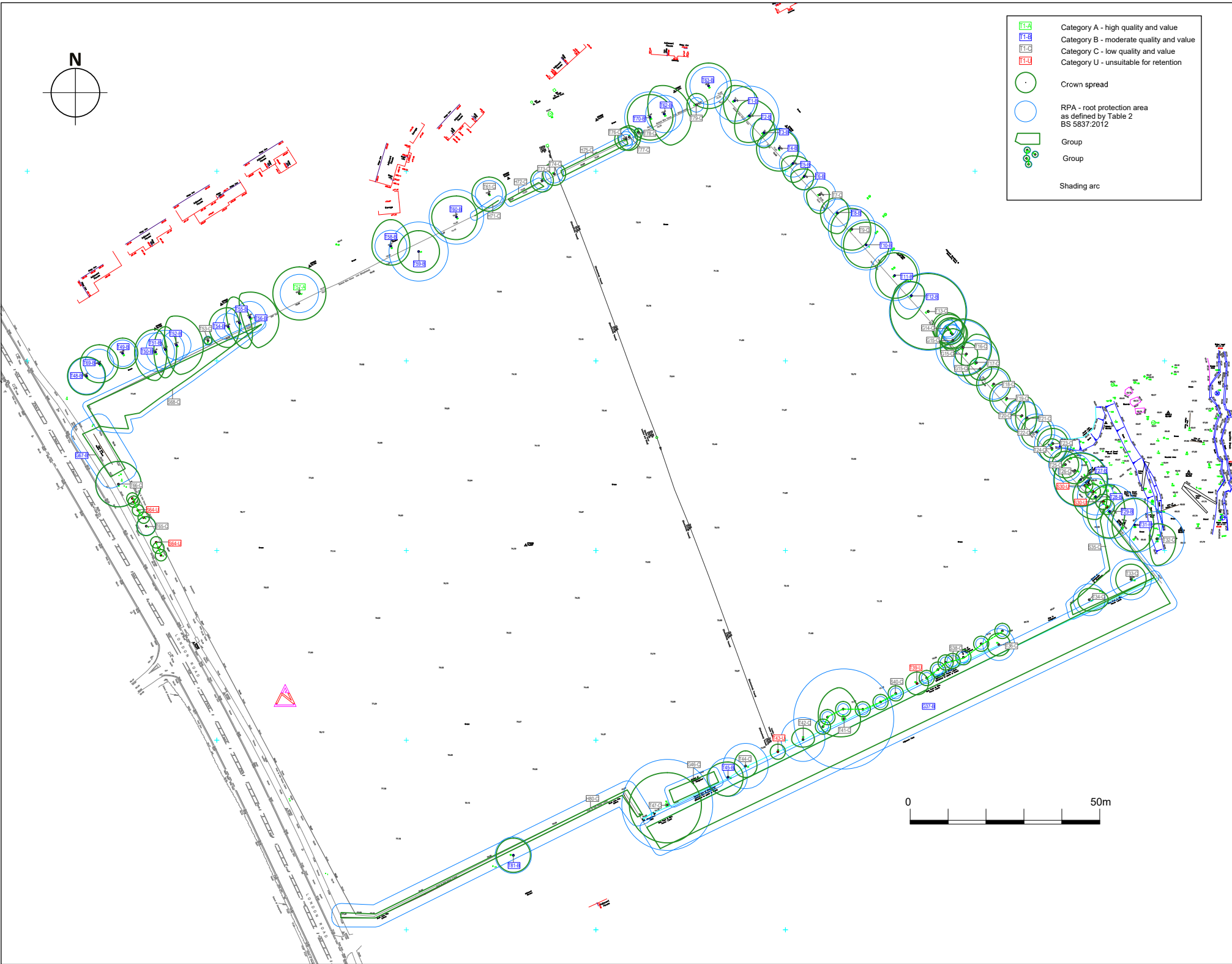
Tree Report

A tree survey has been carried out by Sharon Hosegood Associates and submitted with the application. This follows the previous reports submitted with the hybrid application.

The trees in this area are not in a conservation area and we do not believe there are any TPOs related to the trees on site.

Trees are located to the site perimeter and will be retained, except for a minimum number of trees to be removed as identified in the report and considered unsuitable for retention.

Overall, the removal of trees is relatively minor, and the development provides an excellent opportunity for new on site tree planting. Many new trees and some new native hedging are proposed in mitigation.



Tree Survey (Sharon Hosegood Associates)

2.0 Existing Site & Context

2.10 Ecology

The Ecological Impact Assessment by Green Environmental Consultants submitted with the hybrid application is relevant to this reserved matters application. The conclusions of the report are: -

- The Site is a single field of rank grass with very restricted wildlife potential. Potentially good wildlife habitat is present to the immediate east (Brook Corridor and woodland) although this is fenced off and in poor condition due to lack of management.
- The loss of a low biodiversity field to development is unlikely to have increased impacts on the woodland as access is not possible. Mitigation for potential lighting impacts on boundary trees would be required as will drainage. Subject to this happening it is believed that this development could proceed with limited biodiversity impacts and for which biodiversity gain is possible.



Habitat map (Green Environmental Consultants)