



## Land East of Pirton, North Hertfordshire

# DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

June 2025

Produced on behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd by



Iceni Projects

Design & Landscape Team

Land at Holwell Road, Pirton

June 2025

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed development on Land East of Pirton, will deliver approximately 130 new homes alongside 2.40 hectares of green infrastructure, including walking and leisure routes, and associated amenities. The homes will be sensitively integrated within a network of connected and accessible green spaces, featuring a landscape enhancement area to the south of the Site, and green and blue corridors with wildflower meadows and structural landscaping surrounding the development.

This Design and Access Statement reviews the Site and its surrounding context to ensure a well-informed and appropriate design approach. It includes a Development Framework Plan, an Illustrative Masterplan, and supporting diagrams to guide and inform future Reserved Matters submissions.



Fig.1: Development Framework Plan

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01

# INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by Icen Projects on behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd (Gladman) for a proposed residential development at Land East of Pirton, as part of a planning application.

The application is in outline with all matters reserved except for access, for up to 130 dwellings and associated open space and infrastructure.

The Site lies within the administrative area of North Herts Council.

The Site measures 6.65 hectares (ha) and is located on the eastern edge of Pirton, 3 miles northwest of Hitchin. The Site comprises a single grassland land and is bound to the west by existing residential development.

## Document Structure

This Design and Access Statement addresses key aspects of the proposed development at Land East of Pirton, including use, amount, access, scale, landscape, and character.

The document is structured into the following seven sections:

- + **01. Introduction:** An overview of the application and the purpose of this document, including the vision for the Site.
- + **02. Policy Overview:** An outline of the relevant planning context and guidance, highlighting key policies and that support the proposals set out in this Design and Access Statement.
- + **03. Wider Context:** An introduction to the Site's location and its broader setting, in terms of landscape, connectivity and local character.
- + **04. Site Analysis:** An in-depth assessment of the Site's characteristics, opportunities, constraints, and key influencing factors.
- + **05. Design Evolution:** A summary of the design development process, incorporating site analysis and feedback from consultations to establish a clear and robust design rationale through a set of design principles.
- + **06. Design Development:** A detailed presentation of the design approach, illustrated through framework plans and a conceptual vision for the proposed neighbourhood.
- + **07. Conclusion:** A summary of the development proposals and the strategy for delivering the scheme at Land off Holwell Road, Pirton.



## 1.2 VISION

Pirton is a village that values its rich heritage and natural setting while looking towards a sustainable and inclusive future. The vision for Pirton emphasises three key principles: Distinctiveness, Harmony, and Connectivity.

### Distinctive:

- + Embracing and reflecting the rich local character of Pirton.
- + Designed with a clear and accessible layout.
- + Responsive to its edge-of-village setting

### Harmonised:

- + In harmony with the mature natural features of the local landscape.
- + Aligned and connected with the Chilterns National Landscape's values and aesthetics.
- + Strengthening connections with the Pirton community and fostering a sense of belonging.

### Connected:

- + Well-integrated into regional and local transport networks.
- + Enriched by an expanded network of leisure walking routes connected to the Public Rights of Way (PRoW).
- + Connected to Pirton's sports and recreation hub, supporting an active lifestyle.



# POLICY OVERVIEW



## 2.1 NATIONAL POLICY OVERVIEW

### ► National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) sets out clear expectations for the planning and development process, emphasising the delivery of well-designed, beautiful, and sustainable places. It provides guidance ensuring that rural developments are well-integrated with the local context while addressing contemporary environmental and social needs.

Key Design Parameters for Rural Developments:

- + **Functionality and Quality:** Developments must be designed to function well throughout their lifespan and contribute positively to the rural area's character, economy, and community. Proposals should enhance the local quality of life by creating spaces that are resilient and adaptable to changing needs.
- + **Visual Attractiveness:** Rural developments should be visually appealing, integrating with their natural surroundings. Thoughtful architectural design, careful layout, and strategic landscaping are essential to ensuring that new developments respect and enhance the rural aesthetic.
- + **Contextual Design:** Developments must respond to the distinct character and history of the rural area. This includes preserving and reinforcing the sense of place through materials, building forms, and layouts that are sympathetic to the local environment, heritage, and traditions.
- + **Efficient Use of Land:** Developments should make optimal use of available land, ensuring a balanced approach to housing, employment, and community facilities. The NPPF encourages creating mixed-use developments that support local economies and reduce the need for travel, especially in rural areas where accessibility may be limited.
- + **Safe, Inclusive, and Healthy Environments:** It is vital to create environments that are inclusive and accessible for all, promoting community cohesion, health, and well-being. This includes ensuring that developments are accessible by sustainable transport options, where possible, and offer spaces for social interaction and community activities.
- + **Green Infrastructure:** The NPPF highlights the importance of green infrastructure in rural areas, including tree-lined streets, the preservation of existing trees, and the creation of new

green spaces. New developments should integrate sustainable landscaping and long-term tree maintenance to enhance biodiversity and resilience against climate change.

- + **Design Quality Tools:** The use of design codes, workshops, and frameworks like "Building for a Healthy Life" is encouraged to ensure that developments align with high design standards. These tools help ensure that rural development is well-planned and contributes positively to both the local community and the environment.
- + **Promoting Excellence:** The NPPF emphasises the need to reject poorly designed developments and supports the approval of high-quality, innovative proposals. In rural settings, this means that designs must not only respond to local needs but also contribute to sustainability goals and environmental stewardship.

**Climate-Conscious Development:**  
Section 14 of the NPPF reinforces the need for climate-conscious development, emphasising proactive measures to reduce carbon emissions, increase energy efficiency, and build resilience to long-term environmental challenges. In rural areas, this includes promoting sustainable agricultural practices, reducing transport emissions, and supporting renewable energy installations that respect the rural landscape.

### ► National Design Guide (2021)

The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places. The fundamental principles for good design are that is:

- + Fit for purpose
- + Durable
- + Brings delight
- + It is relatively straightforward to define
- + Can identify uses and users
- + It can assess the quality of detail, materials, construction, and its potential flexibility

Paragraph 20 identifies the components for places, other than buildings, being:



# 2.1 NATIONAL POLICY OVERVIEW

- + The context for places and buildings.
- + Hard and soft landscape.
- + Physical infrastructure.
- + Social infrastructure.

Paragraph 36 introduces the ten characteristics of a well-designed place. These are:

- + Context – Respect and enhance the local setting, heritage, and culture.
- + Identity – Create distinctive, attractive places that reflect local character.
- + Built Form – Promote coherent, compact development with appropriate building types.
- + Movement – Ensure ease of movement through connected, accessible routes for all transport modes.
- + Nature – Integrate high-quality green spaces, support biodiversity, and manage water effectively.
- + Public Spaces – Design inclusive, safe, and sociable public areas.
- + Uses – Provide a mix of uses, tenures, and housing types to support inclusivity.
- + Homes and Buildings – Ensure they are functional, sustainable, and contribute positively to their surroundings.
- + Resources – Use energy and materials efficiently, and build for resilience.
- + Lifespan – Design places to be durable, adaptable, and well-maintained over time.

► **Building for A Healthy Life (2020)**

Building for Healthy Life (BHL) is a design framework aimed at creating places that support the wellbeing of people and nature. Developed in partnership with Homes England, NHS England, and NHS Improvement, it functions as a Design Code to guide the creation of high-quality new and expanding neighbourhoods.

BHL is structured around 12 key considerations grouped under three themes:

Integrated Neighbourhoods:

- + Natural Connections: Ensure developments are well-integrated with their surroundings, avoiding isolation.
- + Walking, Cycling & Public Transport: Enable short trips via sustainable modes to boost health, reduce emissions, and ease congestion.
- + Facilities & Services: Provide accessible local amenities to support daily life.
- + Homes for Everyone: Deliver a diverse mix of housing that meets local needs.

Distinctive Places:

- + Making the Most of What's There: Design in response to local context.
- + Memorable Character: Create distinctive, memorable environments.
- + Well-Defined Streets & Spaces: Develop enclosed, people-friendly streets and public spaces.
- + Legibility: Design features that make navigation easy and intuitive.

Streets for All:

- + Healthy Streets: Prioritise people as well as vehicles to support vibrant public life.
- + Cycle & Car Parking: Encourage active travel with well-planned infrastructure while accommodating cars sensitively.
- + Green & Blue Infrastructure: Incorporate features like ponds and rills to support biodiversity and wellbeing.
- + Back of Pavement, Front of Home: Use thoughtful frontages to define space, add character, and support community interaction.



| 14 INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS          | 38 DISTINCTIVE PLACES           | 62 STREETS FOR ALL              |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Natural connections                   | Making the most of what's there | Healthy streets                 |
| Walking, cycling and public transport | A memorable character           | Cycle and car parking           |
| Facilities and services               | Well defined streets and spaces | Green and blue infrastructure   |
| Homes for everyone                    | Easy to find your way around    | Back of pavement, front of home |

## 2.1 NATIONAL POLICY OVERVIEW

### ► Manual for Streets (2007)

The Manual for Streets (2007) sets out principles for creating well-designed residential streets that prioritise people, sustainability, and community well-being. Key design principles include:

- + Place-making: Streets should be designed as public spaces that enhance the sense of place and community identity, rather than simply serving as conduits for vehicles.
- + People-first Approach: Prioritize the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users over those of motor vehicles. Streets should be safe, accessible, and welcoming for all.
- + Integration with the Environment: Design streets that respect and enhance the local natural and built environment, fostering sustainability through biodiversity, water management, and reduced carbon emissions.
- + Connected Networks: Streets should promote connectivity within the neighbourhood and to surrounding areas, supporting efficient and walkable layouts that encourage active travel.
- + High-Quality Design: Focus on aesthetics, durability, and functionality, ensuring that streets contribute positively to the character and visual quality of the area.
- + Flexibility in Design Standards: Move away from rigid design standards to allow context-sensitive solutions tailored to the unique needs and character of each location.
- + Shared Spaces: Encourage the use of shared spaces to reduce dominance of vehicles, lower traffic speeds, and create inclusive, multi-functional areas for diverse activities.

The guidance advocates for streets that balance mobility needs with social and environmental priorities, creating spaces that foster community interaction and sustainable living.

### ► Secured by Design Homes Guide (2024)

The Secured by Design (SBD) Homes Guide 2024 provides strategies to improve residential security through thoughtful design and accredited security products. Its key principles include:

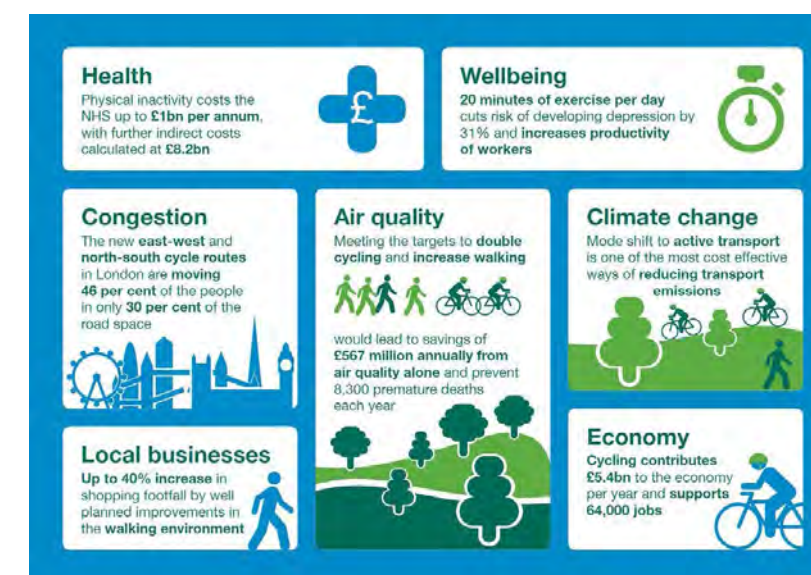
- + Natural Surveillance: Maximise visibility of shared spaces to deter crime.
- + Access Control: Secure private areas with gates, boundaries, and controlled entry.

- + Defensible Space: Clearly define space ownership to promote resident responsibility.
- + Physical Security: Use doors, windows, and hardware that meet SBD standards.
- + Lighting: Ensure consistent, adequate lighting in communal and access areas.
- + Landscaping: Avoid obstructed views and hiding spots while keeping designs attractive.
- + Maintenance & Management: Maintain shared areas and security features to prevent decline.
- + Community Engagement: Involve residents in shaping and caring for their environment.

### ► Cycle Infrastructure Design (2020)

The Cycle Infrastructure Design: Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) provides guidance for creating high-quality cycling infrastructure to support sustainable transport and active travel. Key principles include:

- + Core Design Principles: Ensure infrastructure is safe, comfortable, direct, and accessible for all users, including those with disabilities and varying cycling abilities.
- + Network Approach: Develop a connected network that integrates with public transport and supports both short and long journeys.
- + Inclusive Design: Accommodate a variety of cycle types, including cargo and adapted bikes.
- + Segregation from Motor Traffic: Create dedicated lanes to minimize vehicle conflicts and prioritize cyclist safety.
- + Crossings & Junctions: Design safe and intuitive crossings with features like protected junctions.
- + Safety and Comfort: Provide smooth, wide surfaces and minimize exposure to motor traffic.
- + Continuity: Maintain uninterrupted cycling routes for seamless travel.
- + Adaptability: Design infrastructure to evolve with growing cycling demand.
- + Integration: Facilitate easy transitions between cycling and other transport modes, with bike parking and bike-share schemes.
- + User Experience: Ensure environments are welcoming and convenient, encouraging cycling uptake.



## 2.2 LOCAL POLICY OVERVIEW

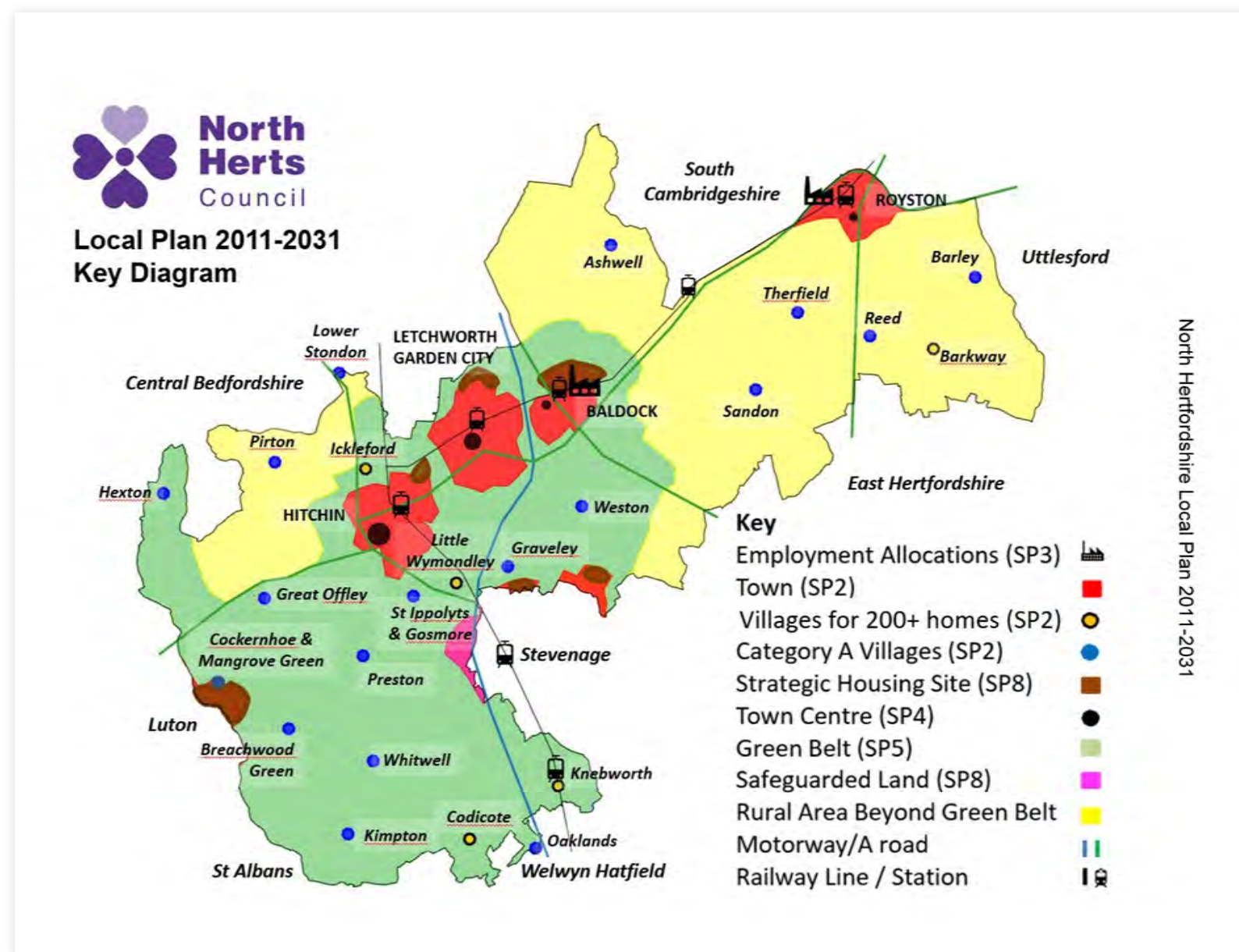
### North Herts Local Plan (2022)

The North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031 outlines a clear strategy for delivering sustainable, well-designed development that respects local character and supports thriving communities.

Key principles include:

- + High-Quality Design: Development must be well-integrated with its surroundings, reflect local distinctiveness, and promote attractive, inclusive places.
- + Sustainable Communities: New schemes should support active travel (walking and cycling), reduce car dependency, and connect to existing infrastructure and facilities.
- + Environmental Responsibility: Proposals are expected to: a) Incorporate energy-efficient and water-saving measures, b) Address climate change and flood risk, c) Deliver biodiversity net gain and protect ecological networks
- + Masterplanning for Larger Sites: Strategic sites must be comprehensively planned to ensure coherent layouts, timely infrastructure, and accessible green space.
- + Respect for Character and Heritage: Development must enhance local identity, preserve heritage assets, and respond sensitively to landscape context.
- + Support for Local Economies: Mixed-use and flexible development is encouraged to strengthen village and town centres.
- + Housing Delivery: A variety of housing types, including affordable homes, is required to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population.

Overall, the Plan promotes sustainable growth through thoughtful design, ensuring new development contributes positively to North Hertfordshire's built and natural environment.



## 2.2 LOCAL POLICY OVERVIEW

### Hertfordshire's Health and Wellbeing Guidance (2017)

The purpose of the guide is to aid planning professionals, both local authorities and developers in the delivery of healthy developments and communities by increasing local capacity, knowledge of health and wellbeing and the relationship to spatial planning issues, setting out the key principles and aspirations of the Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) Public Health department.

The document focuses on seven key areas:

- + Air Quality
- + Food and healthy Choices
- + Movement and Access
- + Neighbourhood Spaces
- + Housing and Development Design
- + Local Economy and Employment
- + Quality Open Space, Play and Recreation

### North Hertfordshire Design SPD (2011)

This guide has been produced by NHDC to inspire, raise standards and influence the design of development to ensure that it respects and complements the existing built character and natural environment of the District. It seeks to rationalise and bring together all potential urban design policy in one place. It includes key guidance, and the 'Local Design Principles for the Village of Pirton':

#### History

- + Developed around Toot Hill and the Bury, the ancient core of the village.
- + Has a triangular layout defined by West Lane, Walnut Tree Road, and Priors Hill.
- + The church, rebuilt in 1877, has remnants of a 12th-century tower and is built within the bailey of a former castle.
- + Features historic sites like Pirton Grange (18th century), Hammonds Farm, and Rectory Farm (Elizabethan).

#### Built Form and Layout:

- + Located on the Icknield Way, bordering the Chilterns National Landscape, within a large-scale flat lowland.
- + Much of the village lies within the conservation area.
- + Rich heritage with numerous listed buildings and an archaeological monument.

#### Landmarks and Views

Visual character areas include:

- + Toot Hill: Large open area essential to the village's character.
- + Western Edge: Transition between countryside and built-up area.
- + Eastern Edge: Protects open countryside development.
- + Rear of Fox public house: Preserves an open, undeveloped area.

#### Massing and Materials:

Building styles include timber-framed, red brick, rendering, and Arlesey white brick.

#### Sense of Place:

- + Strong village identity, with well-integrated older and newer parts.
- + Good pedestrian links, green open spaces, and mature vegetation.
- + The village pond is central to its heart.
- + A well-connected, community-oriented environment with a variety of local facilities.

### Pirton Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031 (2018)

The Pirton Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031 outlines a vision for sustainable development that balances growth with the preservation of the village's character. Key points include:

- + Sustainable Growth: Encourages development that meets local needs while protecting the village's rural character and green spaces.
- + Housing: Supports small-scale, high-quality housing that complements the village's existing architecture.

- + Heritage Protection: Safeguards historical sites and the conservation area.
- + Community Infrastructure: Focuses on enhancing local facilities and services for residents.
- + Environmental Preservation: Protects green spaces and the surrounding countryside.
- + Improved Connectivity: Promotes better walking, cycling, and transport options.

The plan aims to ensure that development enhances the village's sustainability and quality of life, while retaining Pirton's unique identity.



03

# WIDER CONTEXT

## 3.1 THE SITE

**The Site lies on the eastern edge of the village of Pirton, within North Hertfordshire, it extends to 6.65ha and comprises a single grassed field.**

The Site is bound to the west by the recent residential development along Drovers Way and Strawplaiters Green, south of Howell Road. These houses mostly back onto a recreational footway, with a hedgerow located along the east of this footway for around two thirds of the length of the Site's western boundary. The continuation of the footway forms the southern third of the western Site boundary. To the south west of the Site is an area of public open space associated with the recent residential development west of the Site, and it includes a children's play area as well as a drainage basin. The settlement of Pirton extends west and south westwards beyond, with much of the settlement covered by a Conservation Area, and also including several Scheduled Monuments.

To the south, the Site is bound by bridleway 021, Hambridge Way, which also forms part of the Icknield Way Trail long distance walking route. Beyond the bridleway to the south are arable and grassland fields, with the Pirton Recreation Ground located a short distance south west of the Site beyond two intervening small fields. Further south, beyond further fields, is Hitchin Road.

To the south west of Pirton and Hitchin Road lies the Chilterns National Landscape, located on rising ground.

East of the Site are a combination of large arable and small grassland fields extending along the gently undulating land towards the village of Ickleford and the town of Hitchin, around 2km from the Site.

The Site is bound to the north by a residential property with a deep garden known as Northmead, with the house located to the north west of the Site. Beyond this property are further mostly large scale arable fields, with the village of Holwell located around 1.2km north east of the Site.



Fig.2: Site Location Plan

## 3.2 WIDER CONTEXT

Located on the edge of the Chiltern Hills, Pirton is a village in Hertfordshire surrounded by landscapes. The village is well-connected to nearby towns and cities.

Pirton's location provides easy access to essential amenities in the nearby market town of Hitchin via the local bus service (route 89). Hitchin boasts a wide range of services, including supermarkets, boutique shops, cafés, restaurants, schools, and healthcare facilities. The town is also a hub for transport, offering a railway station with regular services to London King's Cross in approximately 30 minutes, as well as links to Cambridge and other destinations.

The village is well-connected via bus and rail links, offering convenient access to larger towns and London. Within Pirton itself, essential amenities such as a primary school, village hall, shops, post office, local pub and recreational spaces are all within walking distance for the residents. Its setting near the Chilterns National Landscape provides residents and visitors with access to an array of walking trails, bridleways, and open green spaces.

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span> The Site                                                                                                            | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:2px dashed green;"></span> PRow                                                                                                                                                          |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span> Existing settlements                                                                                             | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:2px dashed black; position:relative; top:-5px;"><span style="position:absolute; left:-5px; top:50%; transform:translateY(-50%); font-size:10px;">+</span></span> Hitchin railway station |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightpink; border:1px solid black;"></span> Conservation Areas                                                                                            | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, lightblue 2px, lightblue 4px); border:1px solid black;"></span> Watercourse                                    |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span> Recreation ground                                                                                            | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; border-bottom:2px solid blue;"></span> Bus route                                                                                                                                                       |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background: repeating-linear-gradient(-45deg, transparent, transparent 2px, lightgreen 2px, lightgreen 4px); border:1px solid black;"></span> Chilterns National Landscape | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border-radius:50%; border:2px solid orange;"></span> Local shops, food & beverage                                                                                |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span> Green belt                                                                                                   | <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; border:2px dashed orange; border-radius:50%;"></span> Nearby local centres                                                                                                                |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgrey; border:1px solid black;"></span> A Road                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgrey; border:1px solid black;"></span> B Road                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

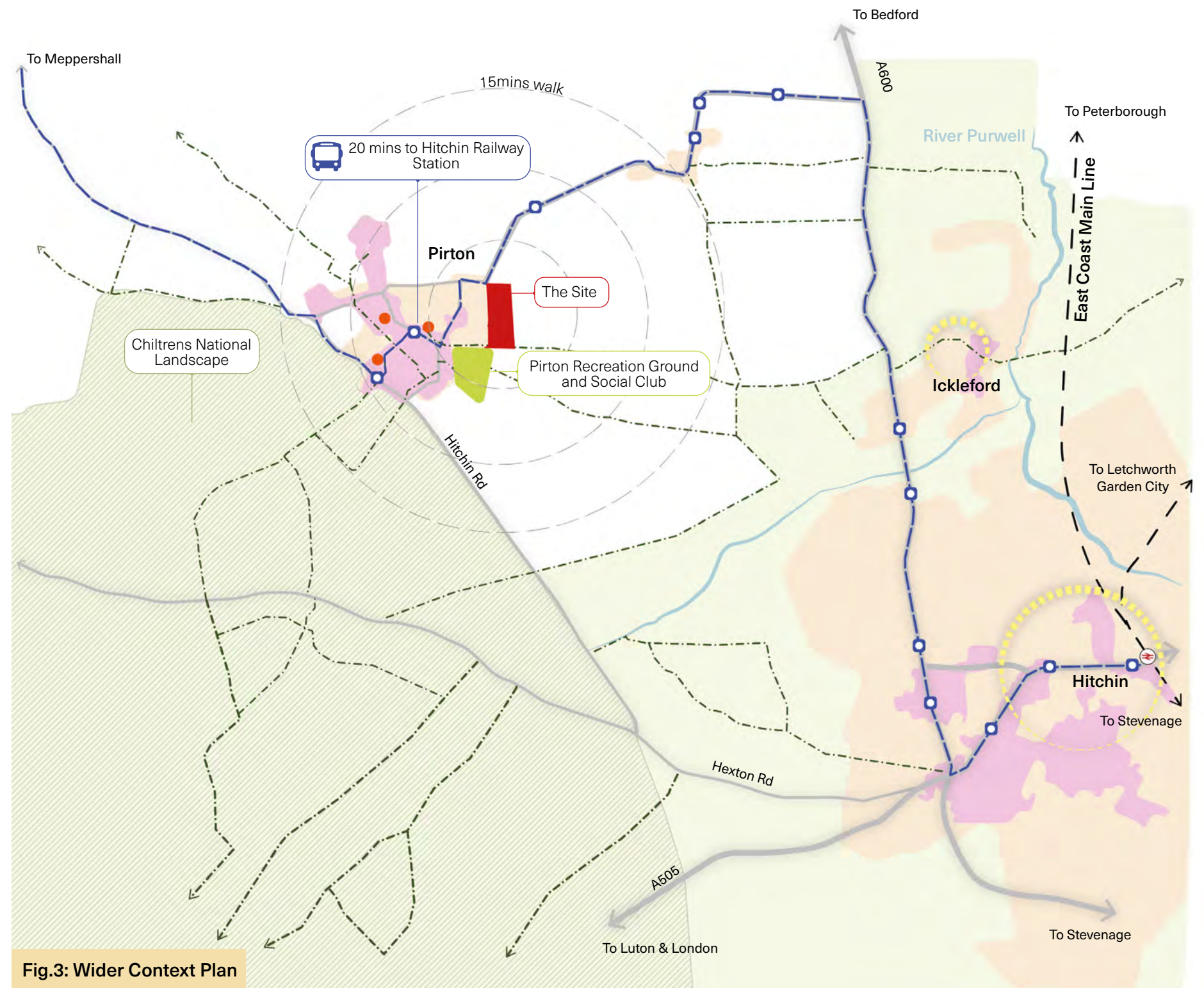


Fig.3: Wider Context Plan

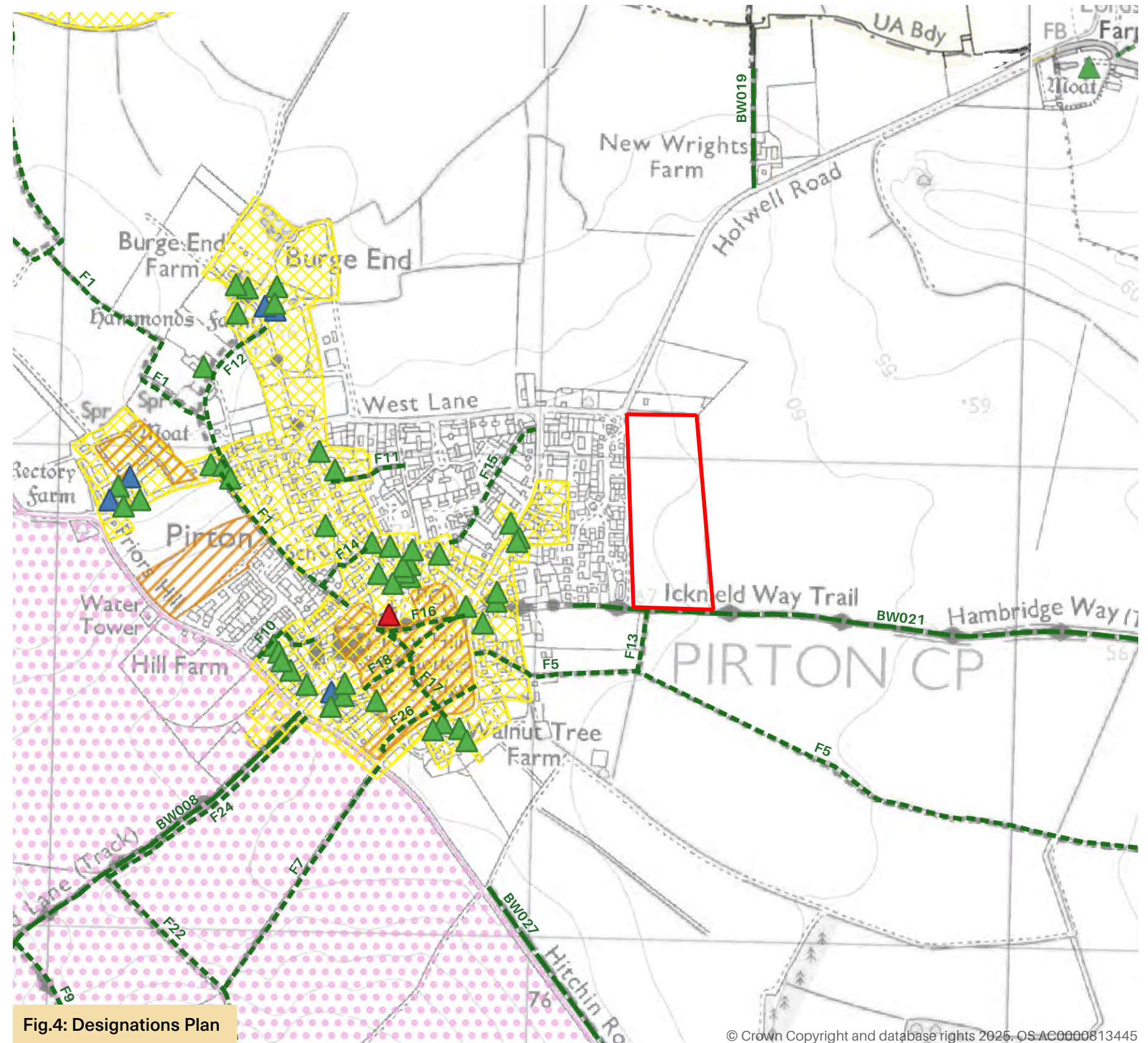
### 3.3 DESIGNATIONS AND WIDER LANDSCAPE

The area surrounding Pirton is located close to the Chilterns National Landscape, a designation that seeks to protect the region's natural beauty. This area is characterised by rolling chalk hills, woodlands, and valleys, and any development must respect and integrate with these distinctive landscape features.

Pirton also includes a Conservation Area, with several listed buildings and a Scheduled Monument in proximity. These heritage designations require careful consideration to ensure new development complements the historic and architectural significance of the area.

In this context, there is opportunity for new development to be successfully integrated with these designations through thoughtful and sustainable design. By respecting the Pirton Conservation Area and heritage assets, the proposal can contribute to both the local community and the surrounding environment. Additionally, incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable transport links will enhance the local environment and promote local connectivity.

- |                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  The Site                   |  Green Belt                   |
|  Public Footpath            |  Conservation Area            |
|  Bridleway                  |  Scheduled Monument           |
|  Byway                      |  Chilterns National Landscape |
|  Cycleway                   |                                                                                                                  |
|  Grade I Listed Buildings   |                                                                                                                  |
|  Grade II Listed Buildings  |                                                                                                                  |
|  Grade II* Listed Buildings |                                                                                                                  |



## 3.4 HISTORIC URBAN FORM

Pirton is rich in history, with roots tracing back to the Saxon period and earlier. The village's name is thought to derive from "Peritone," meaning a settlement surrounded by pear trees. Its historical prominence grew around St. Mary's Church, a Norman structure dating to the 12th century, which still stands as a landmark today.

Pirton has experienced expansion and transformation over the 19th and 20th centuries, evolving from a traditionally dispersed rural settlement into a village.

During the Victorian era, a distinctive architectural character emerges, with the introduction of terraces constructed using Arlesley white brick, a locally sourced material. These developments were complemented by the construction of larger and more prominent residences, such as Pirton Court and Pirton Hall, which reflected the growing affluence and social prominence of the village at the time.

In the post-war years, between 1920 and 1955, municipal housing estates began to take shape, marking a response to national housing demands. These developments reshaped the village's rural character by introducing more uniform architectural styles and planned residential layouts, further solidifying the village's structural evolution (Figure 4: Historic Map 1822).

Later in the 20th century, modern housing developments such as Cromwell Way and Bunyan Close transformed former orchard lands into planned residential neighbourhoods. These developments introduced suburban-style housing forms that stood in contrast to the traditional village fabric, contributing to a more contemporary residential landscape. Infill projects, including Coleman's Close and Elm Tree Farm Close, further altered the historic layout of the village. While the village was formerly characterised by more dispersed housing clusters, Pirton has gradually adopted a more nucleated form as it has expanded.

The land immediately to the west of the Site, has recently been developed with the construction of 78 houses, for which outline planning permission was granted by the Council in 2016.

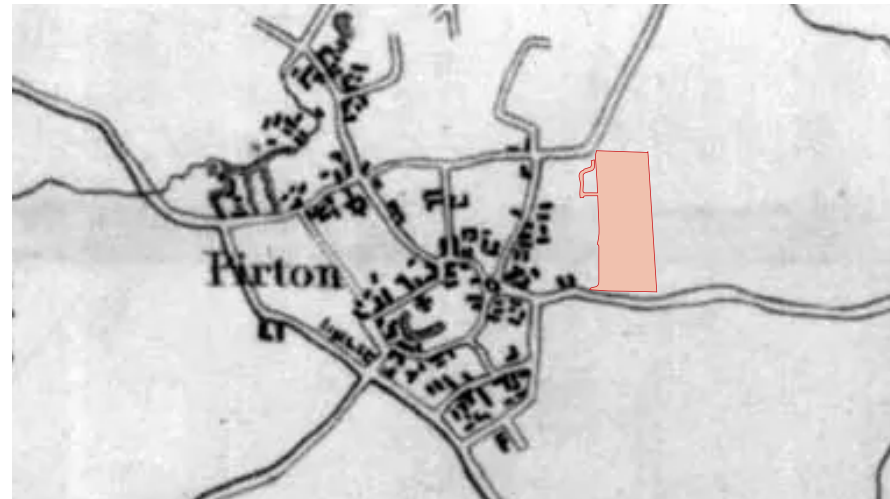


Fig.5: Historic Map 1822 - Andrew Bryant

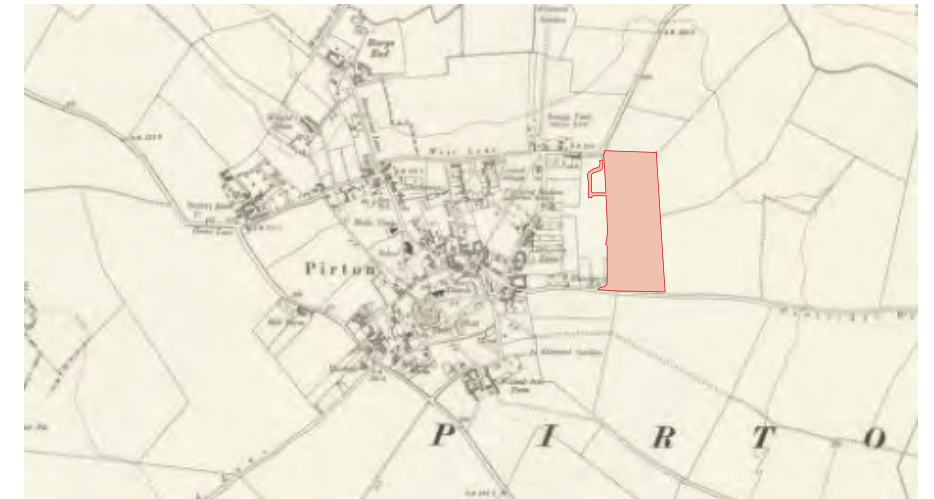


Fig.7: Historic OS Map 1922

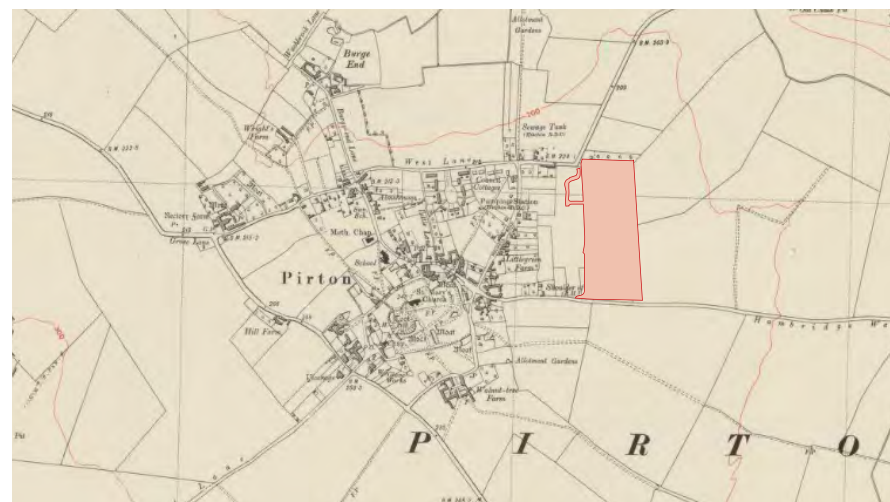


Fig.6: Historic OS Map 1947



Fig.8: OS Today

04

# SITE ANALYSIS

## 4.1 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL ASSESSMENT

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken, and has informed the proposed layout and planting of the scheme.

The Site is not covered by any landscape designations for character of quality, however, there are limited opportunities for views of the Site from a small part of the Chilterns National Landscape to the south of the Site. In these views, the Site is seen adjacent to the existing settlement, and the proposed development on the Site will therefore be seen as a small extension to the settlement, with the new houses adjoining the existing village. New planting within the development, especially within the south and east of the Site, will further minimise views of the proposed development as the planting matures.

Views towards the Site are available from the immediate surroundings, with longer distance views available from places to the south and east. Where the new houses are visible, they will be seen within the context of the existing houses west of the Site, and will therefore not appear out of character within the views. The new homes will be filtered by the existing and proposed vegetation in a similar manner to the existing houses west of the Site, which are also visible where the Site is visible.

The proposed development will be well related to the existing settlement and settlement form, with housing extending one field eastwards. The development will be bound by the existing property to the north, and similar to the development to the west, it will be bound by the bridleway. The new planting will aid in assimilating the proposed development into its immediate setting, and as the planting matures and the new homes become assimilated, the effect on the character of the landscape/townscape adjoining the Site will reduce.

While the landscape and townscape in the wider area beyond the Site includes areas of higher value and sensitivity, the effects of the proposed development beyond its immediate surroundings will be relatively localised. Due to the well-contained nature of the development and its location adjacent to the existing modern edge of the village, there will be no material effects on the landscape character of the Chilterns National Landscape as a result of the proposed development, nor on its setting.

Overall, there is no landscape or visual reason why development at the Site would be unacceptable, and the Site is capable of being developed in line with the proposals.



**Fig.9: View towards the Site from bridleway to the south**



**Fig.10: View north west across the Site**



**Fig.11: View towards the Site from within the Chilterns National Landscape**

# 4.2 HERITAGE

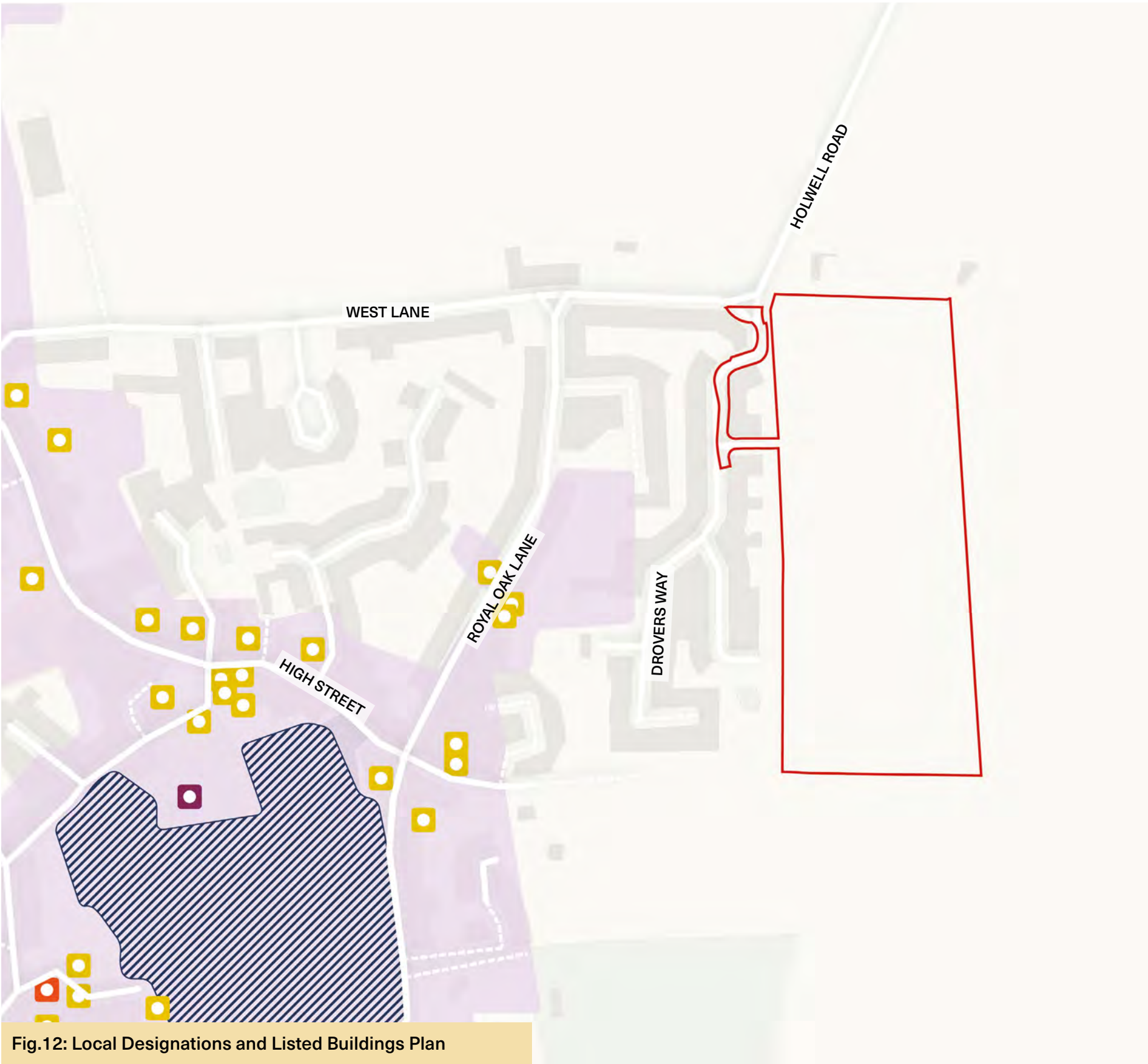
Pirton is a village and civil parish located in Hertfordshire, near the town of Hitchin. It has a rich historical and cultural heritage, with notable structures and landmarks.

A key heritage site is the Pirton Windmill, which is designated as a scheduled monument due to its historical significance. The village is home to various Grade II listed buildings.

Pirton Conservation Area encompasses the historic core of the village, a settlement which initially dates to pre-medieval period. It is surrounded by a predominantly agricultural landscape, the village features a compact, triangular layout focused around St Mary's Parish Church and the remains of a long demolished motte and bailey castle, as well as the original medieval settlement.

As open fields, the Site does not contribute to the setting of the nearby heritage assets, as there is not visual connection between them. Its influence is primarily derived from its history as former agricultural land, reflecting the settlement's agricultural origins and contributing a sense of openness.

-  The Site
-  Existing Buildings
-  Pirton Conservation Area
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Grade II\* Listed Building
-  Grade II Listed Building
-  Grade I Listed Building



## 4.3 LOCAL CHARACTER

The settlement of Pirton is roughly triangular in shape and nucleated in form. Aside from a few estate-style projects, the buildings visible throughout the village are varied in both their age and architectural style.

### Historic core

The village's layout reflects its long history, with a central cluster of older buildings surrounded by newer developments.

Key Features:

- + St. Mary's Church: A Grade I listed building with origins in the 12th century.
- + Toot Hill: The site of the Norman motte-and-bailey castle, offering historical and archaeological significance.
- + Historical cottages: Timber-framed and thatched houses that exemplify traditional English architecture.

### Landscape and Natural Environment

Pirton is characterised by its rolling hills, open fields, and proximity to the Chilterns National Landscape. The landscape around Pirton is characterised by farmland, rolling hills, and woodland.

Key Features:

- + The Icknield Way Path: A historic trail that provides opportunities for walking and cycling.
- + Woodlands and hedgerows: These natural elements create habitats for wildlife and enhance the village's rural charm.
- + Green space: Open spaces like the Recreation Ground serve as community hub.

### Village character

A series of urban design principles shape the village's character and guide future development.

Key Features:

- + Settlement pattern: The village follows an organic growth pattern with a central core and radiating streets, preserving its historical layout.
- + Scale and massing: Buildings are predominantly two stories, maintaining a human scale that aligns with the rural setting.
- + Connectivity: Narrow lanes and footpaths connect different parts of the village, fostering walkability and reducing reliance on vehicles.
- + Public realm: Shared spaces such as the village green and Recreation Ground enhance community interaction and provide aesthetic value.
- + Boundary treatments: Traditional hedgerows, stone walls, and wooden fences define property edges, reinforcing the village's rural identity.



Fig.13: The Village Hall



Fig.14: Properties frame the street



Fig.18: Hedgerows as a boundary treatment



Fig.15: St. Mary's Church: A Grade I listed building



Fig.17: Pirton's recreation ground



Fig.16: Mature vegetation along key pedestrian routes



Fig.19: Village pond

# 4.4 TOPOGRAPHY & FLOOD RISK

The topography of Pirton is characterised by gently sloping terrain, with the village primarily situated on elevated ground relative to the surrounding areas.

The Site is relatively level, lying at around 30m Above Ordnance Datum ('AOD'), and sloping very gently down towards the north. The landscape within the surrounding area is similar relatively level, at around 30-40m AOD, with localised hills at around 45m AOD.

While small areas around the site show some risk of surface water flooding, there is no fluvial flood risk in a proximity to the Site.

-  The Site
-  Existing Buildings
-  Surface Flood Risk
-  Topography Contours (0.5m)

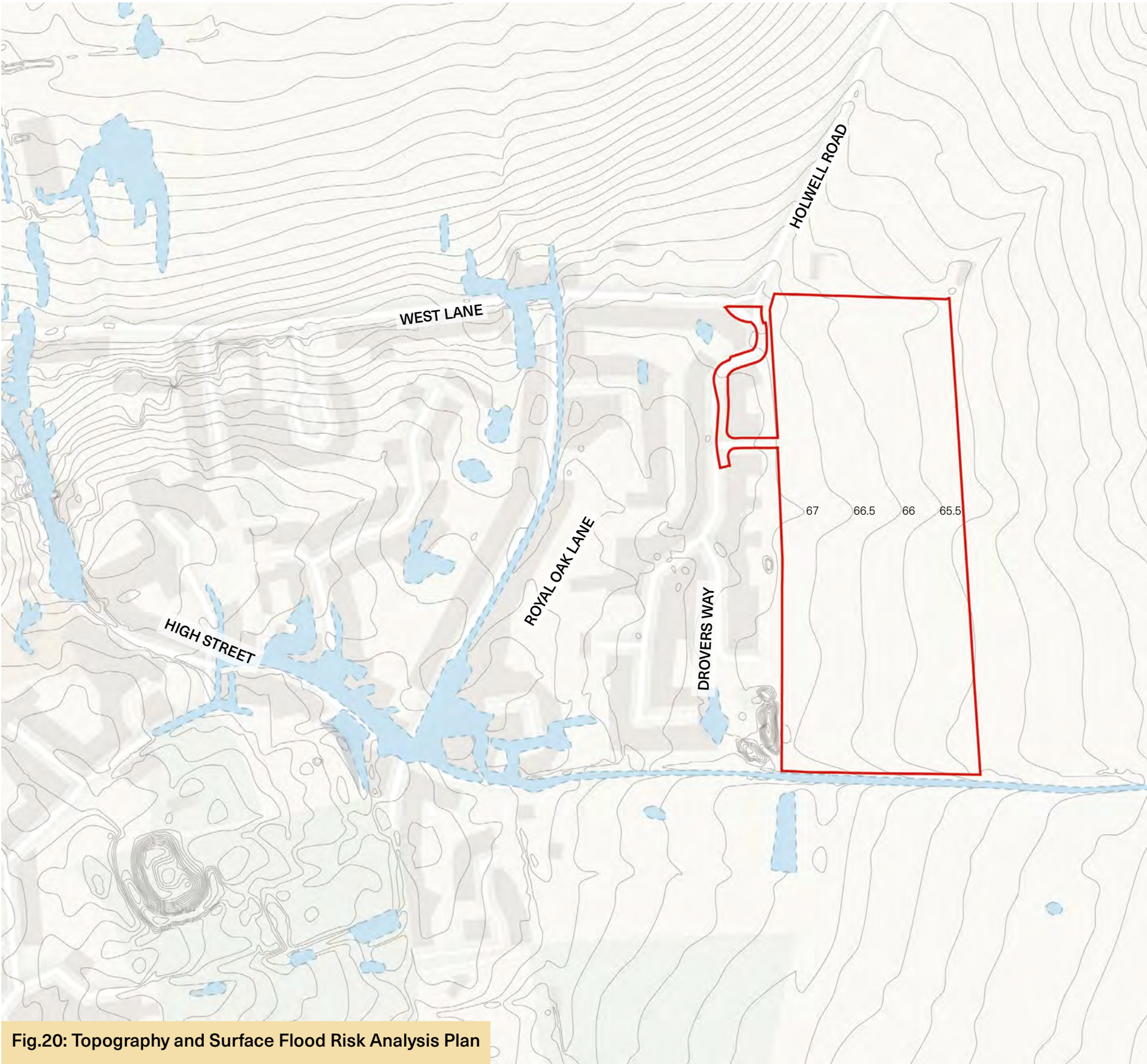


Fig.20: Topography and Surface Flood Risk Analysis Plan

# 4.5 MOVEMENT

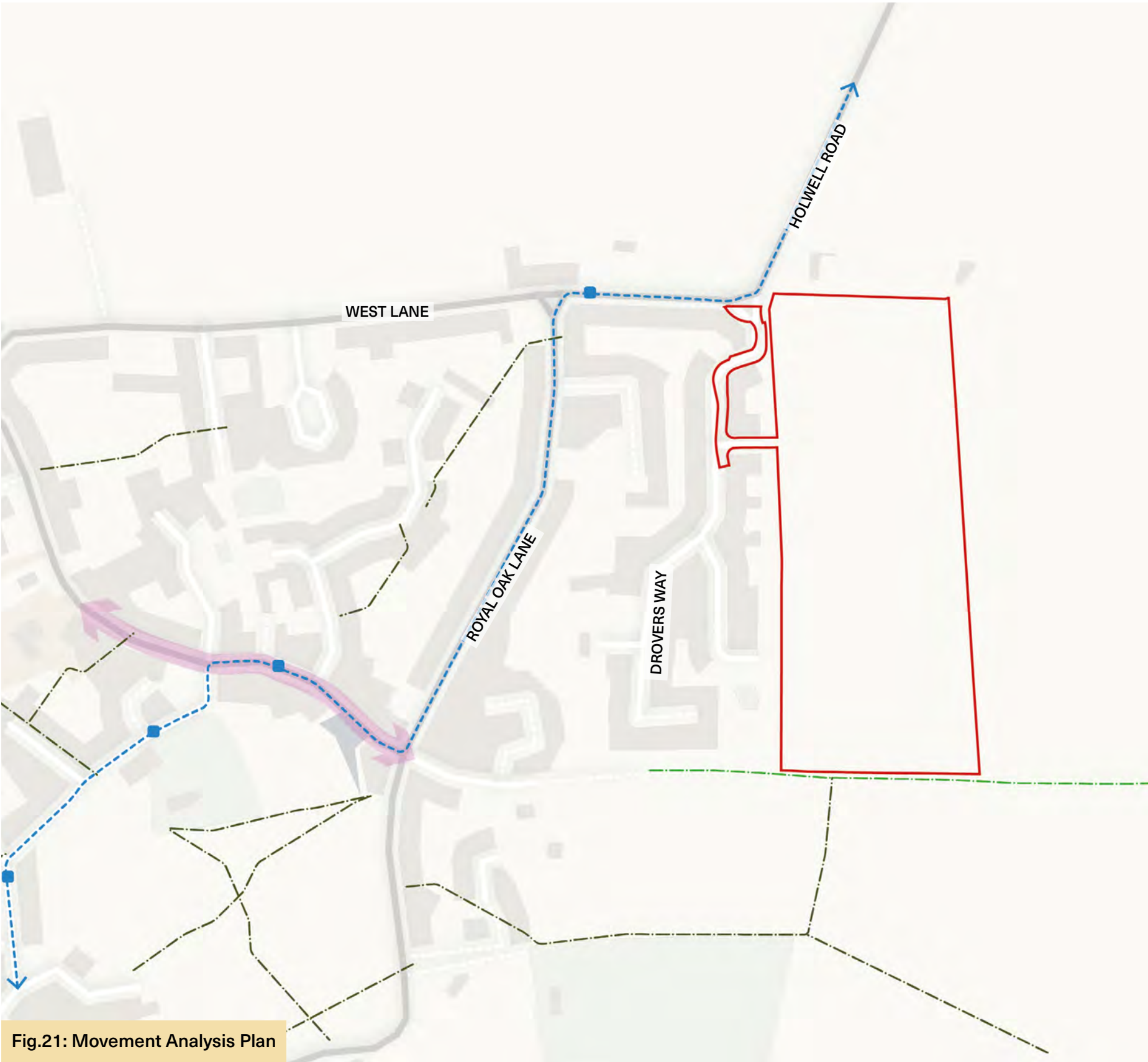
The Site is conveniently situated in both a local and strategic context, offering access to a range of amenities, including the Hitchin Railway Station and the High Street.

The Site is located to the east of the village centre, with easy access to the local road network. The main road through Pirton is the B655, which connects to the A505, providing direct links to the nearby towns of Hitchin and Letchworth. The surrounding streets form a cohesive network, with smaller lanes and cul-de-sacs creating a traditional village layout. To the east, the A505 connects the site to Hitchin, while to the west, it leads to Letchworth and beyond.

Pirton is served by bus routes that link the village to nearby towns and destinations. The bus stop nearest to the Site is 'Royal Oak Lane', where route 89 offers a connection to the Hitchin Railway Station, with a journey time of approximately 20 minutes.

The village and its immediate surroundings are well-served by a network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and footpaths, promoting sustainable access to local services, open spaces, and nearby attractions.

-  The Site
-  Existing Buildings
-  Distributors
-  PRoW - Footpath
-  PRoW - Bridleway
-  Bus Route
-  Bus Stop
-  High Street



## 4.6 LOCAL SERVICES

**The Site benefits from local services and amenities within easy walking distance.**

Pirton Primary School, along with a nearby local shop, is located approximately 600 meters from the edge of the Site. Pirton High Street offers a shop, cafe and services catering to the local community's needs.

The village also has several places of worship, including churches and burial grounds, as well as the Pirton Village Hall, all contributing to the community's strong sense of place.

Several open spaces and recreational facilities, particularly to the south and east of the village, support an active and engaged community lifestyle.

Hitchin Railway Station is located within a 20-minute bus or cycle ride of the Site, offering excellent transport links to surrounding areas and London.

- |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  The Site                     |  Food and Beverage   |
|  Existing Buildings           |  Play and Sports     |
|  Pirton High Street           |  Community Buildings |
|  PRoW - Bridleway             |  Post Office         |
|  PRoW - Footway               |  Places of Worship   |
|  Primary School and Preschool |  Supermarket         |

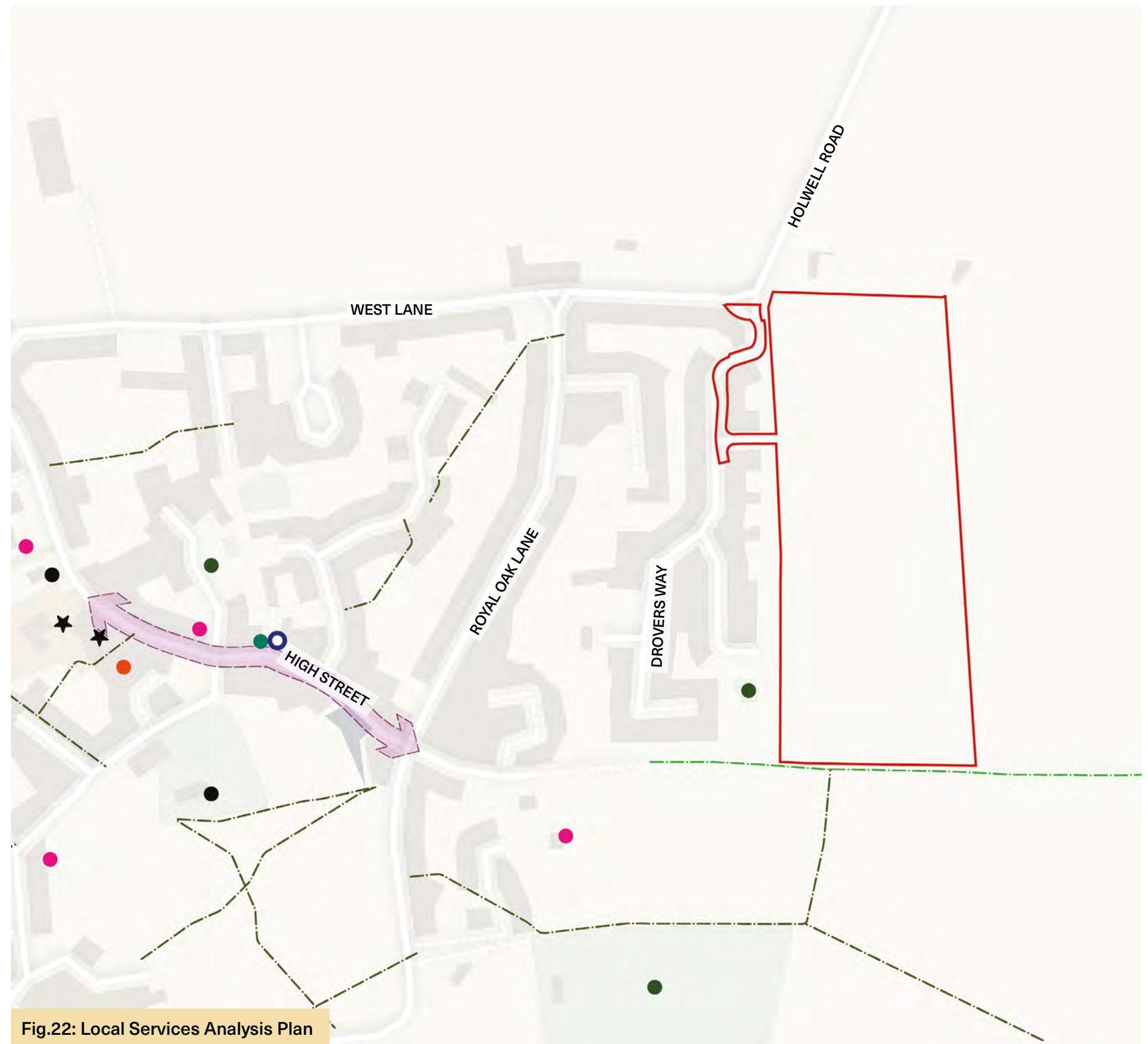


Fig.22: Local Services Analysis Plan

## 4.7 ECOLOGY

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) has been prepared in support of the planning application and assesses any impact in relation to the proposed development.

The Site is not located within the Impact Risk Zone for any Site of Special Scientific Interest and no direct impact pathways have been identified between the Site and these designations.

There is also a Local Nature Reserve and a number of Local Wildlife Sites in the vicinity of the Site. Given distances and connections to these features, effects from recreation are unlikely to be a significant impact and no mitigation is required.

There is also a Local Nature Reserve and a number of Local Wildlife Sites in the vicinity of the Site. Given distances and connections to these features, effects from recreation are unlikely to be a significant impact and no mitigation is required.

Overall, the proposed development will have minimal ecological constraints, with the key habitats such as hedgerows being retained and protected and proposed areas of landscape enhancement to improve biodiversity.

## 4.8 ARBORICULTURE

A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impacts Assessment has been prepared in support of the planning application to assess the impact of the development on the Site's existing trees and hedgerows and those immediately adjacent. The survey was undertaken in April 2025.

The main arboricultural features at the Site are the linear hedgerow and tree groups located along the western, northern, eastern and southern boundaries. A series of newly planted pear trees line part of the boundary in the south western corner of the site, associated with the recently constructed development to the immediate west of the site.

It is proposed that a small section of hedgerow is removed on the western boundary in order to provide access to the Site.

Comparing the Development Framework Plan and existing features on the Site, the Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impacts Assessment found the hedgerow removal identified will have little visual impact within the wider locality and is only of moderate quality.

The Development Framework Plan indicates a potential to deliver significant new tree planting to mitigate this small loss.

Due to the peripheral location of the main arboricultural features on Site, and providing they are retained and protected, the Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impacts Assessment found there should be minimal arboricultural constraint to development.



**Fig.23: Site view from the south**



**Fig.24: Site view from the west**



**Fig.25: Mature vegetation along the south boundary**

# 4.9 SITE INFLUENCES

The Site has minimal constraints, with relatively flat topography and vegetation running along its boundary.

Access could potentially be provided through Coopers Elm.

Pirton's Conservation Area, which includes several Grade II Listed Buildings, is located nearby. Additionally, a bridleway runs along the southern boundary of the Site, while an informal footpath along the western boundary. These links offer an opportunity to connect it to Pirton's recreation ground to the southwest.

Wherever possible, the mature vegetation surrounding the Site should be retained. In accordance with local guidelines, development should be situated 12 meters away from all existing vegetation.

The southern part of the Site presents an opportunity for an are of public open space, which could enhance the existing landscape while integrating with the adjacent open space and play area.

- The Site
- Opportunity for Green Corridor
- 0.5m Contour
- Opportunity for SuDS
- Existing Vegetation
- Bridleway
- Existing Informal Footpath
- Existing SuDS
- Existing Play Area
- Conservation Area
- Listed Buildings
- Opportunity for new area of Public Open Space
- Hedgerow to be Removed due to Access
- Existing Vegetation 12m Protection Zone



Fig.26: Site Influences Plan



Fig.29: Interface with the surrounding development



Fig.30: Adjacent informal footpath



Fig.27: View from the existing PRow



Fig.31: Adjacent SuDS feature



Fig.28: Mature vegetation enclosing the Site

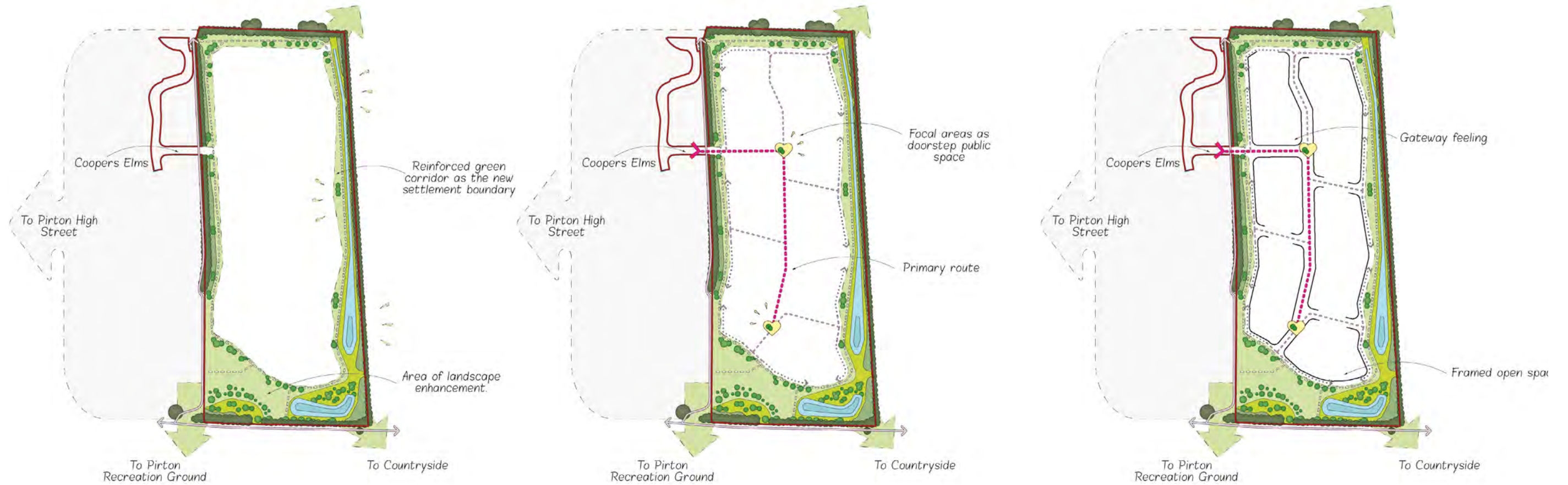


Fig.32: Proposed access point

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# DESIGN EVOLUTION

## 5.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES



### Enriched landscape

- + Existing boundary hedgerows to act as a robust boundary treatment and settlement edge.
- + Provide a new area of landscape enhancement with a combination of green and blue infrastructure.
- + Create a leisure route through the landscape and linked with the wider networks of footpaths.

### Clear Street Hierarchy

- + Create key frontages along the primary route.
- + Animate focal areas with elements of public seating and planting.
- + Design a clear hierarchy of streets and mews, reflective of the village's street character.

### Well-defined Edges

- + Well-framed open spaces.
- + Radiating lanes to offer view corridors to the surrounding landscape.
- + Key building frontages to incorporate change in material and diversified appearance.

# DESIGN PROPOSALS

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