

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

36no. Proposed Dwellings
Land off Station Road, Ashwell
For: Beck Homes
November 2025
M3942-DAS-25.11-01-V3



CONTENTS

01 Executive Summary	01
02 Introduction	02
03 Existing Site	03
04 Evolution of Settlement	08
05 Landscape Character Context	18
06 Topography	20
07 Visual Analysis	22
08 Opportunities and Constraints	28
09 Built Form Opportunity	29
10 Design Principles	30
11 The Proposals	33
12 Landscape Management	48
Appendix 1 - Analysis and Design Responses to Inspectors Appeal Decision for the Adjacent Senuna Park Development	50

01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Barnes Walker Ltd has prepared this Design and Access Statement on behalf of Beck Homes, in support of their planning application for residential development comprising 36no. dwellings and associated formal and informal public open space. The application site is located on Station Road, on the eastern edge of Ashwell, adjacent to the Senuna Park development area which is currently nearing completion.

The development comprises a suitable and varied mix of house types, in terms of size and tenure, with a comprehensive mix of 2, 3, 4 and 5-bed houses, including 14no. affordable dwellings. This mix will go some way to addressing the housing needs of Ashwell and the wider area.

The design proposals associated with this application were developed through a landscape led, iterative design and assessment process to ensure the proposals address and respond positively to the site and its landscape/townscape context and the adjacent development at Senuna Park.

The main body of this Design and Access Statement describes the existing site and its surroundings and sets out how the design and arrangement of the access and public open space provision, the associated landscape proposals and the proposed built form therein have developed and evolved through a landscape led approach.

The location and extent of the proposed open space has influenced the arrangement, position, orientation and density of the proposed built form and ensures it responds positively to and is consistent with, the low-key dispersed nature of the existing residential development to the north of the site and, in particular, the development currently under construction at Senuna Park. This parity

with the existing settlement pattern is achieved through the creation of four distinct character zones:- Farmstead Cluster, Village Green, Eastern Fringe and North-Western Cluster. A central green wedge, along with the central woodland belt, ties these character zones together and provides an attractive interface between proposed properties and those being built at the adjacent Senuna Park development.

The design of the houses and their proposed materiality has been carefully considered with reference to the varied age and style of the built form in and around the village and to compliment the new development to the east. These zones of development ensure the regularity and uniformity associated with suburban estate type development is avoided and, combined with the integral landscape proposals and open spaces, will create an attractive, organic arrangement that will form an appropriately soft transition between the village and the surrounding open, rural landscape.

Proposals include a play space, sited centrally towards the southern site boundary, surrounded by trees, which provides a visual break in filtered views of proposed built form along this edge. A central green space softens the interface between proposed properties and Millennium Wood and provides a valuable area of public open space. To the north-west of the site, where a localised depression in the landform is shared with the adjacent Senuna Park development, a series of attenuation basins are proposed within an open green space complemented by new tree planting. This reflects the adjacent green space that will be delivered as part of the proposals for Senuna Park, creating a natural extension to the preceding development. A robust, and widened native woodland (and understorey) landscape frame is being introduced to both the southern and eastern boundaries to ensure the development will be successfully visually assimilated into the wider setting.

The landscape proposals for the site are comprehensive. In addition to providing a positive aesthetic whilst assimilating the development into its village edge setting, a key objective for the landscape proposals was to enhance the biodiversity of the site by improving the existing woodland and boundary hedgerows and introducing new tree and hedgerow planting, wildflower meadow areas and marginal and aquatic plants to the pond area. With the exception of a limited number of ornamental trees within garden areas, the landscape proposals focus on the provision of appropriate native species.

Given the scale and quality of the development proposals associated with this application and the findings of the submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal, it is clearly evident that the proposals represent an opportunity for the Council to address its increasing local need for housing, without compromising the character of the village of Ashwell or its surrounding countryside.

Furthermore, Appendix 1 of this DAS sets out the key considerations highlighted by the Planning Inspector in the Appeal Decision for the approved development at Senuna Park, and explains how this application for 36no. dwellings follows the same overarching principles and reasoning that supported the previous approval.

02 INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Barnes Walker Ltd, and is submitted on behalf of Beck Homes Ltd to accompany the planning application for 36no. new, high quality dwellings proposed for the land at Station Road, at the south eastern edge of Ashwell.

This document provides comprehensive visual and written content describing the existing site, its landscape and townscape context and the development proposals. It should be read alongside the submitted plans and elevations by Beck Homes Ltd, the Landscape Layout and Landscape and Visual Appraisal by Barnes Walker Ltd and the other associated surveys and reports (including Planning, Arboriculture, Ecology and Highways) submitted with the application.

Detailed consideration of the features and characteristics of the site itself and its setting have, through an iterative process, informed the design and layout of the proposed dwellings.

The design of the new properties and their landscape setting demonstrates an appreciation of the best aspects of quality dwellings in the area and responds to the characteristics of the site and the surrounding landscape and townscape.

The proposals have considered and responded positively to relevant national and local planning policy, SPDs and the planning application for the adjacent Senuna Park development and associated appeal decision.

The proposals will result in a natural extension to the adjacent development site and respond sensitively to the rural settlement edge



Fig.01 Western site frontage to Station Road



Fig.02 View across the site from the north-eastern corner, looking towards Station Road and the Senuna Park development

03 EXISTING SITE

The application site is located at the south-eastern edge of the Ashwell settlement, to the east of Station Road. It adjoins the eastern boundary of the housing development at Senuna Park which is currently under construction.

The site is characterised primarily by the edge of settlement context and the transition from built form to the west and the open agricultural landscape to the east. As such, the site provides an opportunity to create a well-integrated development that results in a natural extension of Senuna Park, while responding sensitively to the wider townscape and rural landscape setting.



 Application Site Boundary

Fig.03 Site Location

03 EXISTING SITE

(To be read in conjunction with photo viewpoints on p5-6 and Existing Site Plan on p7)

The Site

The application site comprises two agricultural fields, separated by a woodland plantation known as Millennium Wood. It is located on the eastern edge of Ashwell, adjacent to the Senuna Park development which is currently under construction. The site covers an area of circa 3.18ha and lies adjacent to, yet outside the settlement area.

An existing field gate at its south-western corner provides a point of access off Station Road, however the application site is private land with no Public Rights of Way. At the time of the fieldwork the site presented as ploughed, bare soil, typical of land managed for arable use. It is enclosed by hedgerows and hedgerow trees and intersected by a block of woodland known as Millennium Wood.

From the highest point of circa 56m AOD at the application site's south-eastern corner, the levels slope gently down in a north-westerly direction to the lowest point of 52m AOD at the north-western boundary.

The northern boundary of the application site connects with a series of smaller enclosed fields containing sports pitches, allotments, tennis courts and a cycling/running track. The western boundary adjoins residential development under construction at Senuna Park, along with Station Road itself, whilst the eastern and southern boundaries border the surrounding agricultural landscape.

To the north, east and south, the application site's boundaries are defined by native species hedgerows and associated trees. The site is bisected by a rectilinear belt of mixed species tree planting (Millennium Wood), which was planted by a previous landowner over 25 years ago, at a time when government grants were available for such projects.

The woodland comprises a mixture of circa 6 to 10m high native and non-native, deciduous and evergreen (conifer) tree and shrub species and is protected by a stockproof fence. The woodland is not considered to be wholly consistent with the character of the wider landscape by virtue of the species mix and rectilinear form. As part of the approved proposals for the adjacent development at Senuna Park there will be improvements made to Millennium Wood, including new woodland planting to create a more organic form to the western end of the woodland.

Given the open, expansive nature of the surrounding agricultural landscape to the east and south, the site's boundary vegetation provides a comparatively high level of containment.

On approach to the village from the south-east on Station Road, the section of road adjacent to the western boundary of both the Senuna Park development and the application site, generates a sense of arrival at the village.

This perceived sense of arrival is induced by a number of elements, which include medium distance views of the dwellings on the western side of Station Road, an Ashwell Village sign, signage on the road surface and on posts defining a change in the speed limit to 30mph, a road narrowing sign warning of a subsequent chicane to reduce traffic speed, the presence of an adjacent footway, a change in the road surfacing and the presence of street lighting columns. The application site sits immediately adjacent to this area defining a sense of arrival to Ashwell.

03 EXISTING SITE

- A  Photo viewpoint location
-  Application Site Boundary



Fig.04 Existing Site Aerial

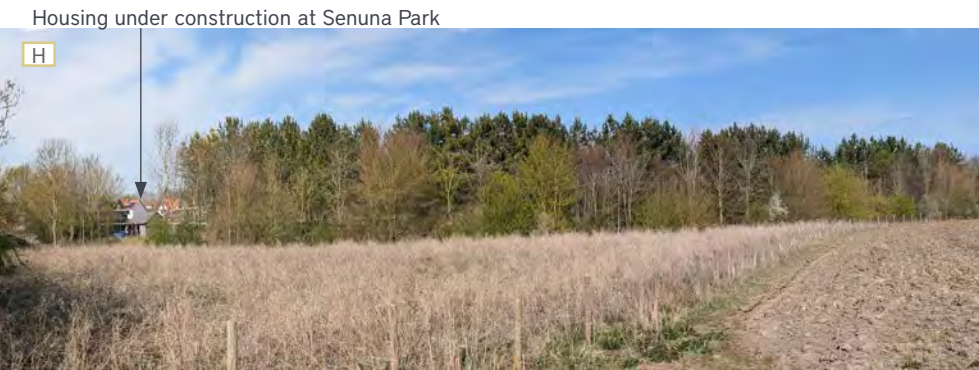
03 EXISTING SITE

See Figure 4 for viewpoint locations



03 EXISTING SITE

See Figure 4 for viewpoint locations



04 EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENT

Introduction

The following analysis establishes an understanding of how Ashwell has developed and expanded from its historic beginning to present day.

Historic Core

- Historic core aligned east to west.
- Period properties and listed buildings within historic core.
- Settlement developed around High Street, Back Street and Silver Street.
- The urban grain is defined by a relatively dense settlement core, with clusters of development and individual properties located beyond the settlement peripheries.
- Clusters of development are located around road intersections and around farmsteads away from the settlement and within the wider landscape.
- The quality, heritage value and setting of the historic core is acknowledged by its Conservation Area status which was designated by NHDC in 1968.

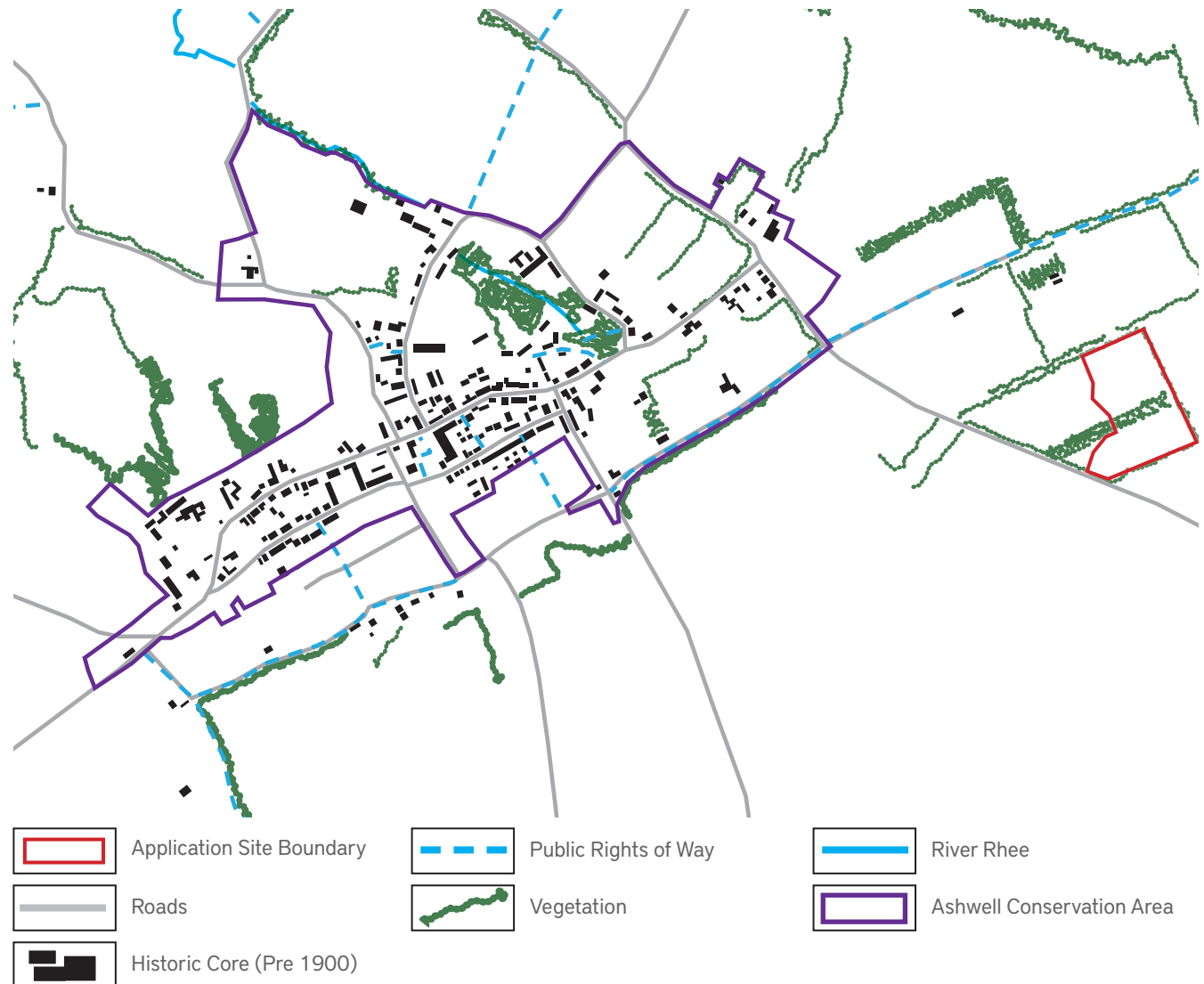


Fig.05 Historic Core Plan

04 EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENT

1900-1950

- During this period, the settlement begins to expand incrementally east, south and west from the historic core.
- Residential properties appear along Claybush Road, Newnham Way and Station Road.
- Development along Claybush Road and Station Road forms the initial departure from previous east to west linear development.

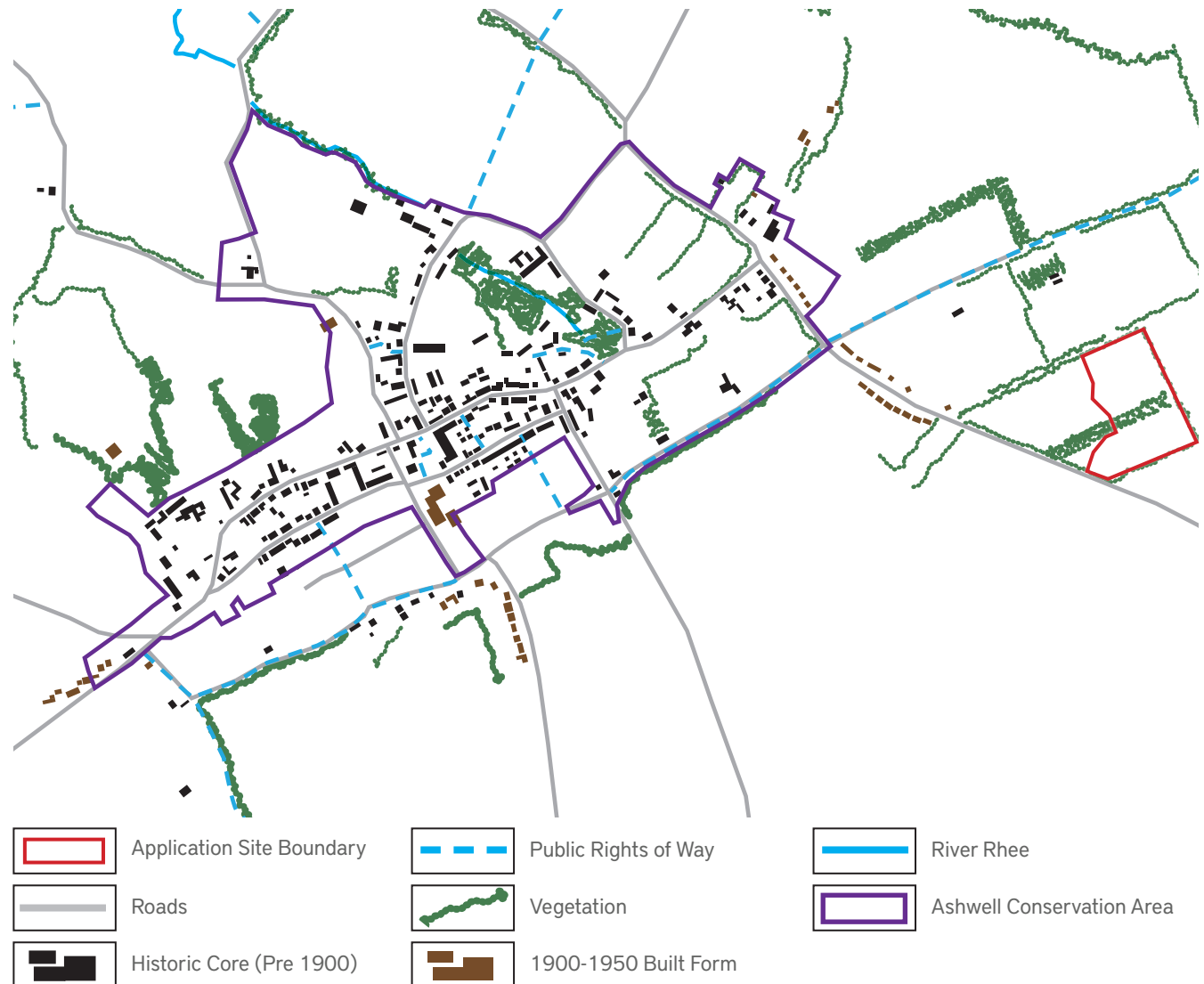


Fig.06 1900-1950 Built Form Plan

04 EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENT

1950-Present

- Significant amounts of development occurred over this period.
- Predominantly residential properties of varying styles and layouts.
- Development primarily to south and east of settlement edges.
- Extensive new residential built form occurred to the south of Back Street.
- Extensive new residential development along and behind Station Road infilling previous existing open plots.
- Recently completed development post 2000 e.g. Philosophers Gate off Station Road, and ongoing development at Senuna Park to the west of the site.

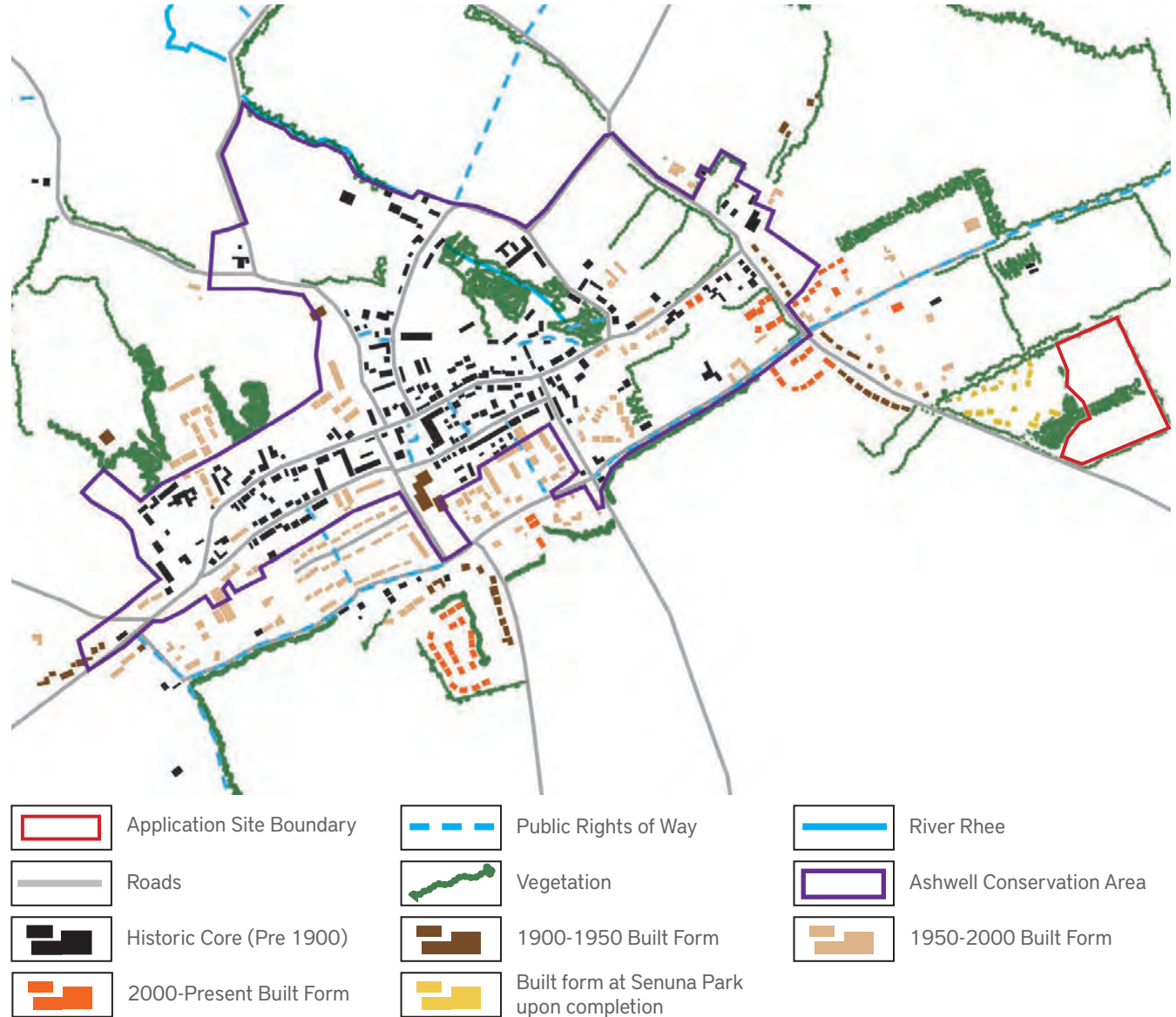


Fig.07 1950-Present Built Form Plan

04 EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENT

Townscape Analysis

- The development of the settlement over time has established distinct character areas that are largely informed by the period of development.
- The settlement has expanded primarily to the south and east in logical progression beyond the historic core.
- The pattern of development has been informed and influenced by the adjacent field pattern, with smaller fields close to the settlement edge being developed first and larger fields within the open landscape remaining undeveloped.

Townscape Typologies

	High Street and West End
	Back Street and Silver Street
	Ashwell Street West
	Ashwell Street East
	Southern and Western Fringe
	Northern Fringe
	Station Road
	River Rhee

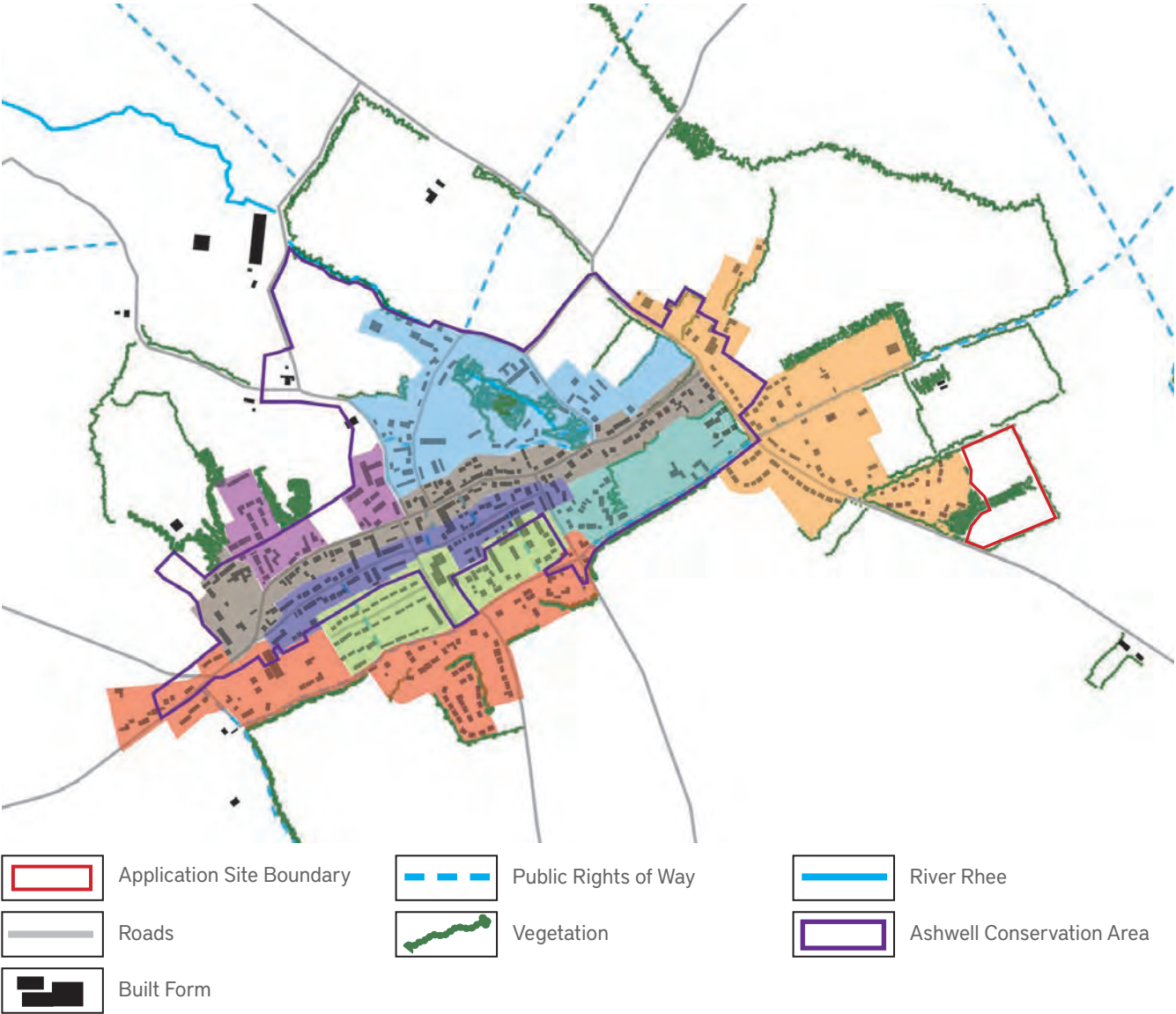


Fig.08 Townscape Analysis Plan

04 EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENT

High Street and West End

- Historic core of the village with a linear form.
- Significant number of listed buildings.
- Mixture of residential and retail including shops and public houses.
- Range of architectural periods and styles from medieval to modern.
- A mixed palette of building materials including brick and render (frequently painted a colour) and a combination of both. Several buildings are half timbered and roofing materials include clay tiles, slate and some thatch.



Back Street and Silver Street

- Predominantly period residential properties with occasional modern interventions.
- Dense urban grain with narrow streets.
- Properties often fronting the street with no front gardens.
- Mixed palette of materials including stone and render and predominantly slate roofs.



04 EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENT

Ashwell Street West

- Set on rising ground above and to the south of the High Street.
- Predominantly post Second World War residential development arranged around a series of cul-de-sacs.
- Properties are typically two storey red brick mews terraced and semi-detached buildings with pitched roofs of brown tiles and chimneys and front and rear garden areas.
- The eastern part of the area, around Angel's Meadow, consists of more recent residential development often stepping up the slope in a series of terraces set around an area of green amenity space, with a more suburban estate type layout.



Ashwell Street East

- The majority of the area comprises one large detached property and its grounds. It is visually well contained with hedgerows, walls and fences defining and screening an extensive curtilage of private lawn areas with specimen trees together with a pastoral field.
- To the west Woodforde Close forms a cul-de-sac of two storey detached and linked detached, residential properties that were likely constructed during the 1970s/80s.
- Woodforde Close is of an estate like suburban layout with grass verges and front garden areas providing locations for an abundance of shrub and tree planting.



04 EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENT

Southern and Western Fringe

- Predominantly detached residential properties set within generously sized plots set well back from the street.
- The area has a loose 'grain' with few streets and an irregular pattern of buildings and scales.
- On the southern fringe, along Ashwell Street and Claybush Road, the properties are typically more modern and include a large number of single storey buildings of brick and/or render.
- To the north on West End road, which leads onto the High Street and the centre of the village, the properties are generally older and larger and usually of two storeys.



Northern Fringe

- This character area consists of recent residential development.
- There are a number of semi-detached and detached residential properties of different ages and styles.
- The properties generally include front gardens with varying offsets from the street. Front garden boundary treatments include open boundaries, low brick walls with metal railings on top, low hedgerows and low brick walls.
- Property elevations comprise a mixture of brick and render and vary from single to three storeys.
- The density of the built form remains relatively high and as such restricts views of the wider landscape.



04 EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENT

Station Road

- Development around Station Road has formed a steady eastward progression of the village since the Second World War.
- The area includes three recent multihouse developments – Philosopher’s Gate, Walkden’s and Mulberry Gardens, together with some recent individual properties and the Senuna Park development which is currently under construction to the west of the site.
- Mixture of ribbon and backland / infill development.
- Significant amount of post 1950 development.
- The street is wide and includes front garden areas, grass verges and footways.
- Buildings in the area are typically two storeys and semi-detached, interspersed with occasional single storey and detached properties. Materials include brick and render of various colours and timber cladding. Roofs include a mixture of hipped and gabled, often alternating between properties and are typically in brown / red concrete / clay and slate tiles.



River Rhee

- Key characteristics include openness and areas of dense woodland located along the watercourse, with built form set amongst or adjacent to fields and open green spaces.
- Open spaces include the recreation ground at its eastern end and the amenity space associated with Ashwell Springs and the River Rhee.
- Number of listed buildings including St Mary’s Church.
- Cluster of modern properties at Fordham Close cul-de-sac somewhat isolated from the main body of the village.
- Buildings in the area range considerably in age from Medieval to recent. Similarly there is a diverse range of architectural styles and building types including terraced, semi-detached and detached properties, with varied materiality.



04 EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENT

Farm Clusters and Field Patterns

- Historically, farmstead clusters have been a prevailing feature around the village and throughout the wider landscape.
- Existing farmstead clusters are located in isolation beyond the peripheries of village but often are close to main vehicular routes.
- Field patterns and sizes connected to and close to the settlement edge are generally smaller, whereas field sizes increase significantly away from the village edge.
- A number of the smaller field parcels closest to / connected to the settlement edge have been incrementally developed from 1900 onwards.

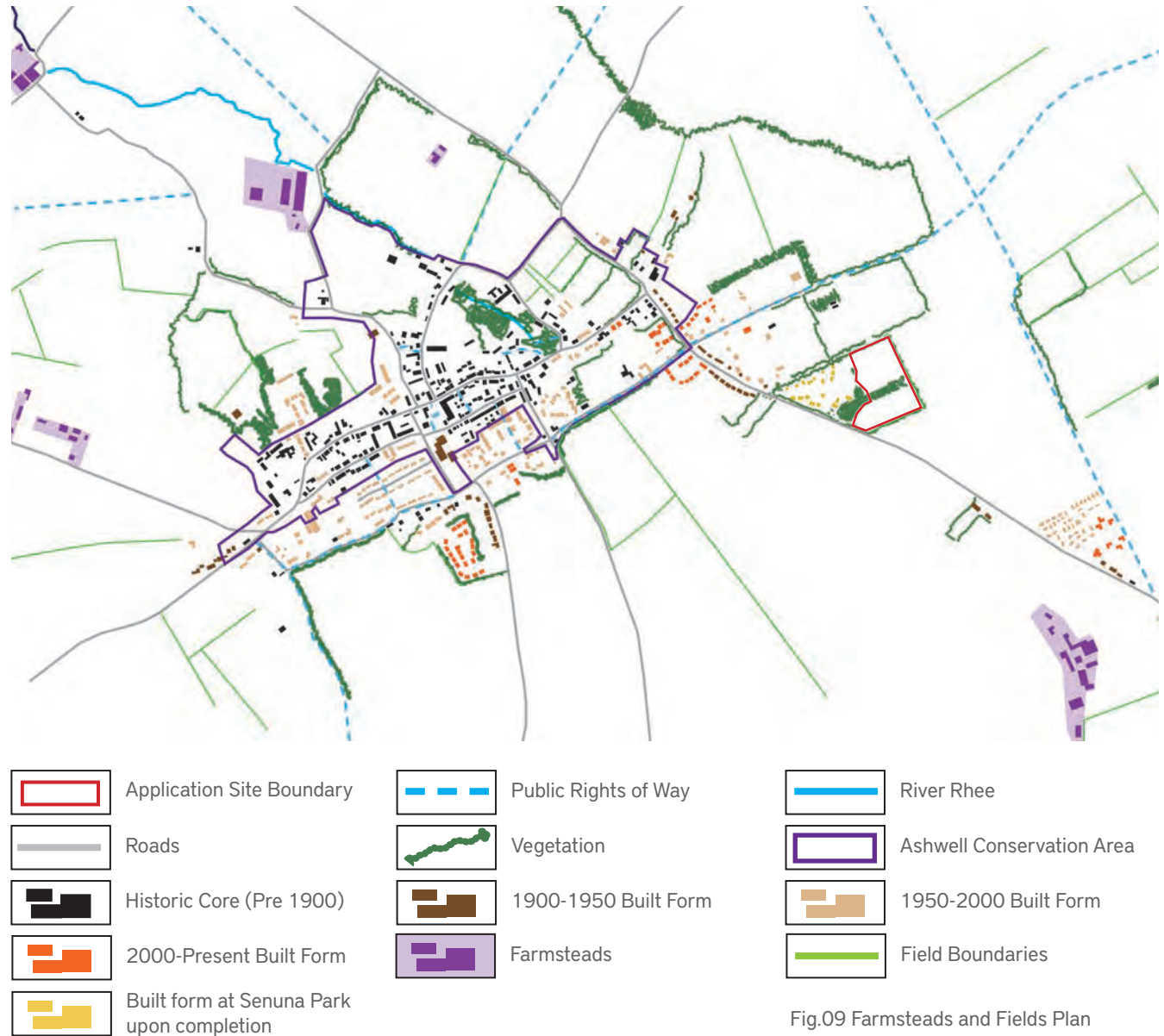


Fig.09 Farmsteads and Fields Plan

04 EVOLUTION OF SETTLEMENT

Ribbon and Infill Development

- Prior to 1900 Station Road was for the most part undeveloped and formed the eastern extent of the built form in the village.
- Residential properties built along Station Road between 1900-1950 established a context for ribbon development representing a departure from the previous east to west linearity of the village.
- Ribbon development continued from 1950 onwards.
- Infill and backland development occurred after 1950 thus increasing the depth of development along Station Road.
- As a result, the built form at the village edge extends back from Station Road to varying distances of between 60m around Lucas Lane and up to 235m around Ashridge Farm.
- Other land uses in this location, such as the recreation ground and caravan site further emphasises the village edge character and extend the perceived edge of the village eastwards by up to 390m.

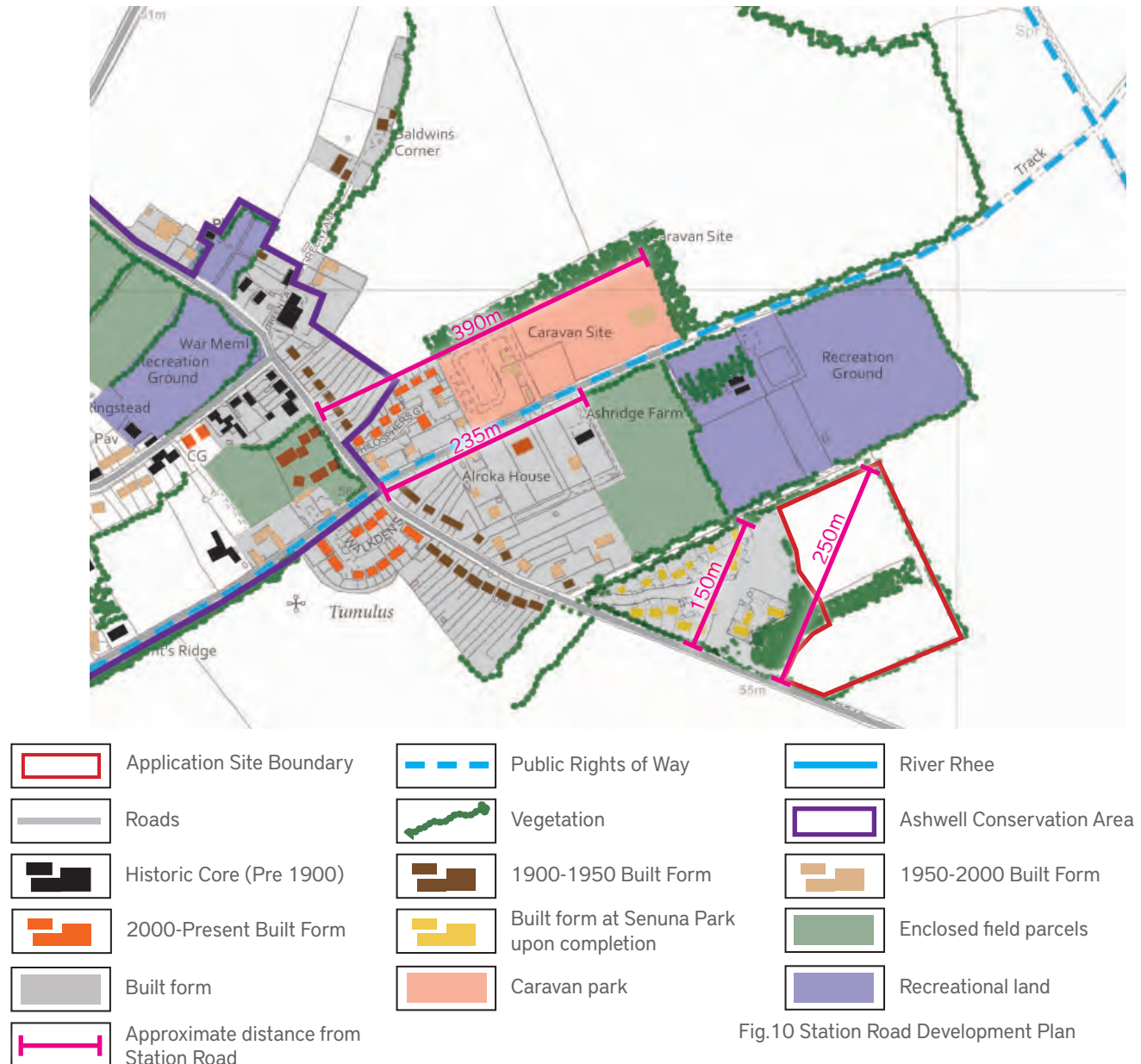


Fig.10 Station Road Development Plan

05 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

The Surrounding Landscape

- Defined by an open agricultural landscape with clusters of built form.
- Gently undulating landscape.
- Large field sizes, often rectilinear.
- Border of North Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire to north and east of the site.
- The site is located within LCA 226 Steeple Morden.
- LCA 224 North Baldock Chalk Uplands located to the south of Station Road.
- LCA 227 Odsey-Royston / Area 2: Chalklands is located to the east, beyond the Public Right of Way.
- Despite the three separate character areas in this location, there is no perceivable change in character experienced on the ground in this location.
- A number of smaller fields located close to and/or connected to the village edge (including the site) are of a smaller scale, and are of a character that is influenced by the village edge location.

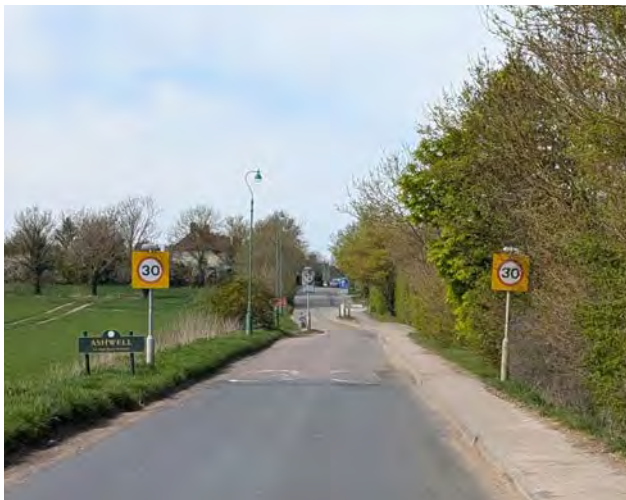


Fig.11 Landscape Character Plan

05 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

The Site

- The local character is defined by settlement edge and its interface with the wider, open, rural landscape to the south and east.
- The character of the site itself is defined by adjacent built form at the Senuna Park development and the open unmanaged fields therein, and the mature hedgerows and trees to the boundaries.
- The western boundary with Station Road generates a sense of arrival at the village edge by virtue of a number of urbanising elements including signage, traffic calming measures and lighting. The long stretch of bitmac pavement running from the properties (including no. 1 and 2 Station Road, 'The Fox', 'Wainscott' and 'Adelante') some 800m to the south of the site, right through to the village (passing the site frontage) along Station Road, is also an indication of the proximity to the settlement of Ashwell on the south-eastern approach. This sense of arrival is experienced adjacent to the southern corner of the site circa 200m prior to passing the built form on the edge of the village.
- Millennium Wood forms a rectilinear plantation which, whilst containing the site effectively, represents a somewhat ambiguous element within the context of the site and wider landscape that is not wholly consistent with the local landscape character.



06 TOPOGRAPHY

The Surrounding Landscape

- The landscape surrounding Ashwell gently undulates between circa 40-55m AOD.
- The landform rises to the south to a localised high point at Claybush Hill to the south-west of the site at circa 90-100m AOD.
- Ashwell village and the application site are set at a similar level between 50-55m.

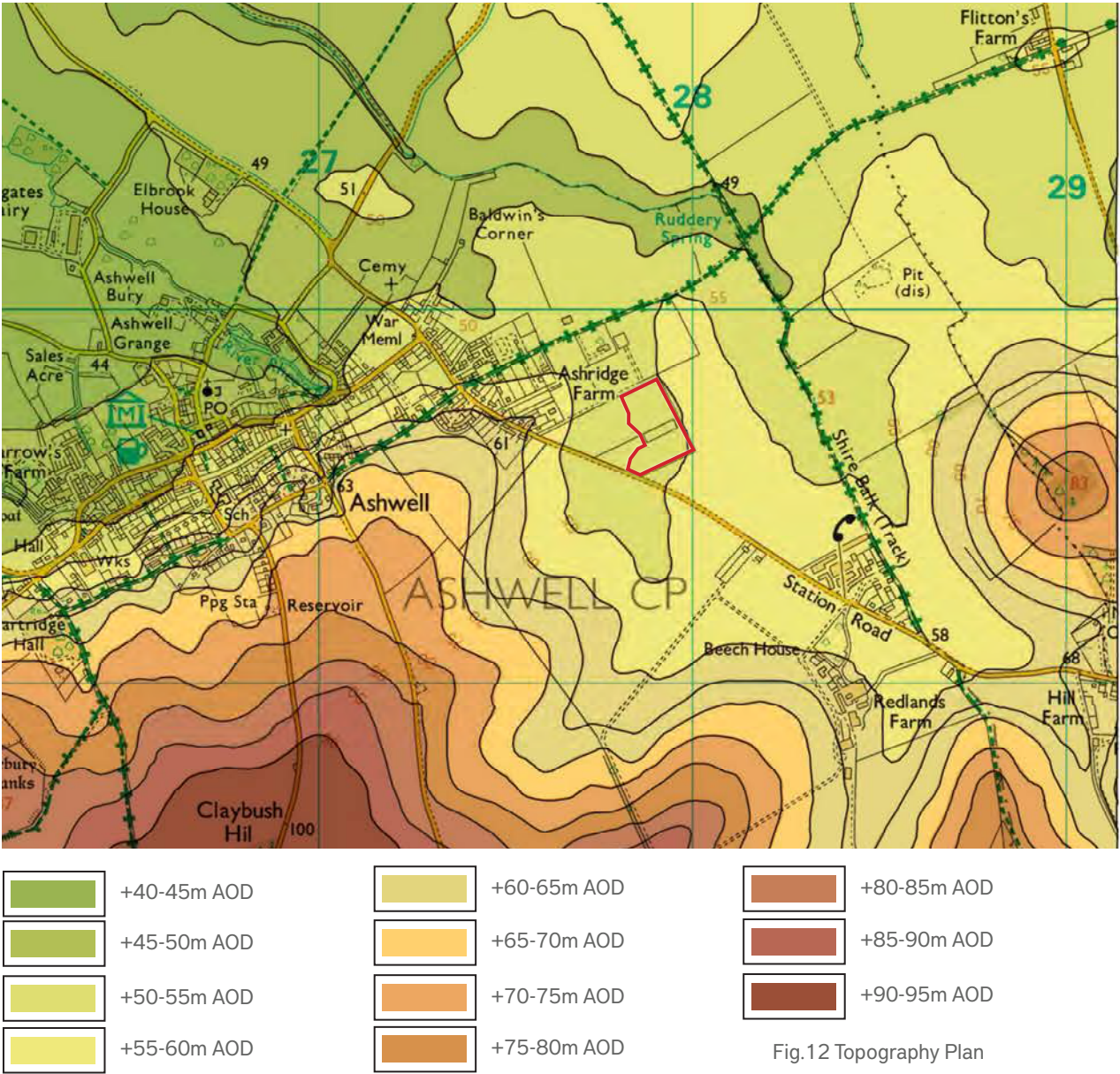


Fig.12 Topography Plan

06 TOPOGRAPHY

The Site

- The site falls gently in a north-westerly direction and shares part of a localised depression with the adjacent Senuna Park development at its north-western boundary.
- The south-eastern extents of the site reach an elevation of circa 56-57m AOD, whereas to the north-west, the levels drop to 52-53m AOD.

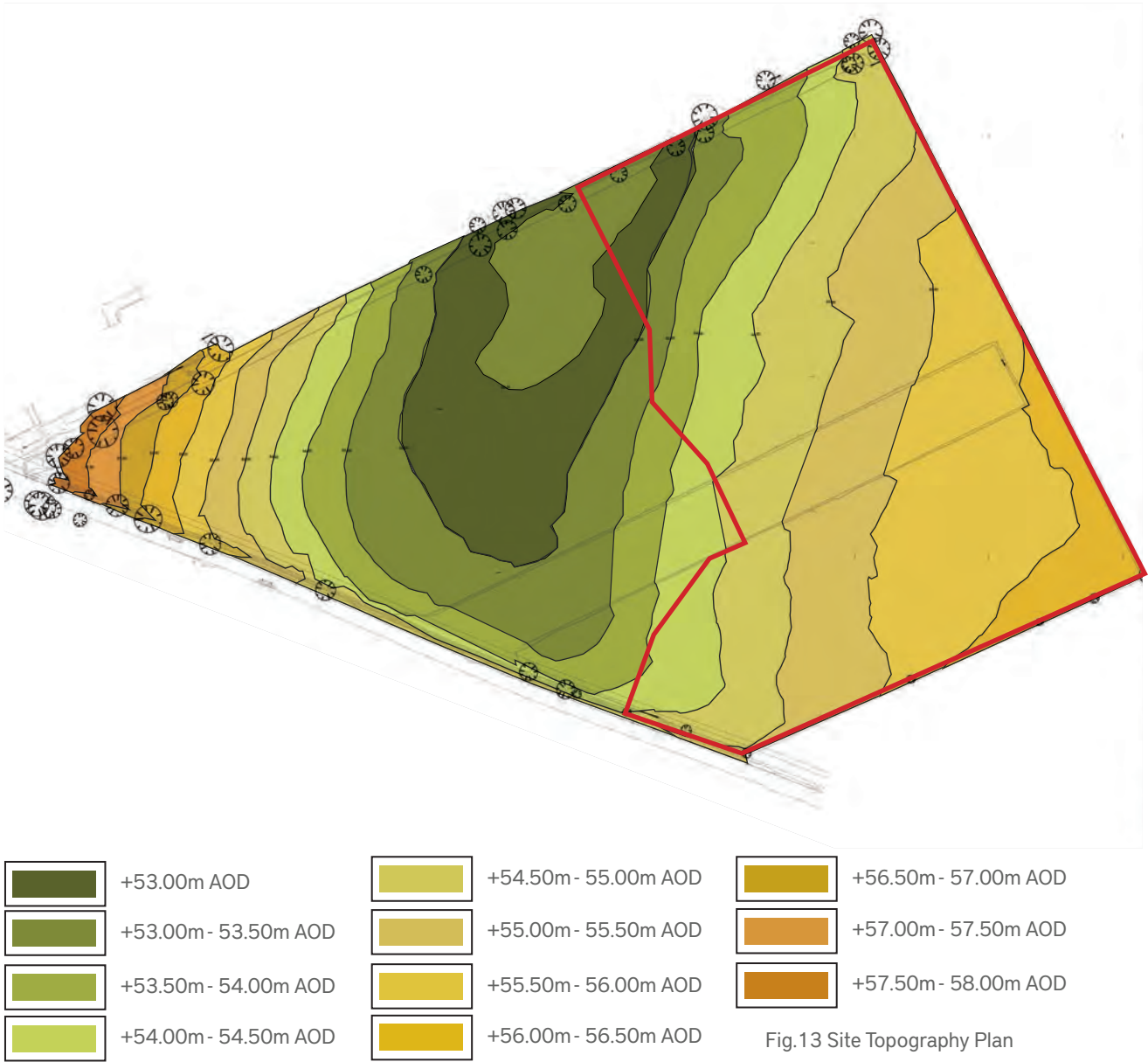


Fig.13 Site Topography Plan

07 VISUAL ANALYSIS

Views have been considered in detail within the Landscape and Visual Appraisal and viewpoints are numbered in accordance with that document.

Views from Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

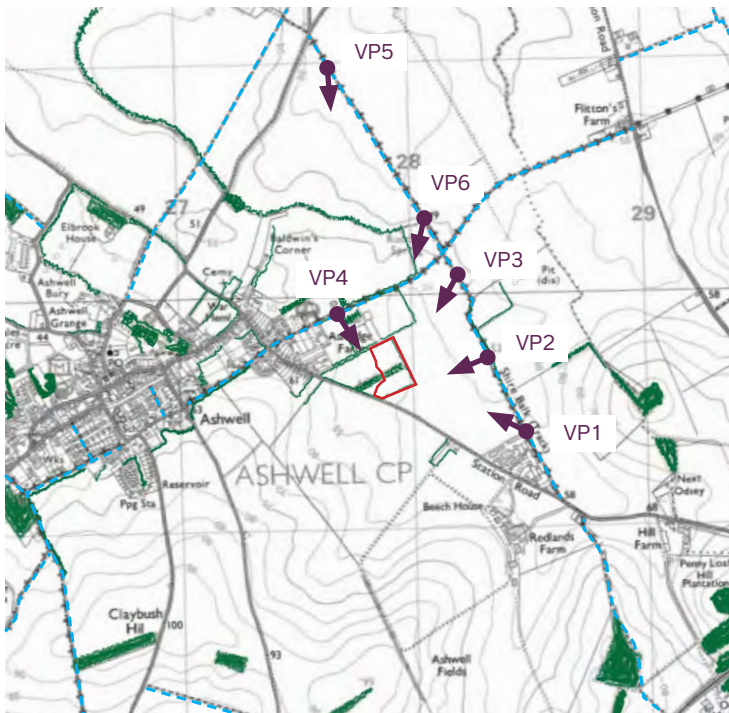
- A limited number of views are experienced from PRoW to the east of the application site, particularly Ashwell 17, FP 108/49 and 108/51.
- Views from these receptors comprise the surrounding open agricultural landscape with the application site and the village set amongst existing tree cover.
- Views are experienced from locations close to the site and up to a maximum distance of 1.3km (VP5).
- Views looking towards the village often incorporate built form set amongst existing tree cover and the church spire of St Mary's.



VP1 - View looking north-west from public footpath 108/51, adjacent to Sunnymead Orchard Park Homes, circa 500m from the site



VP3 - View looking south west at the junction of public footpaths Ashwell 17, 108/49, 108/50 and 108/51 circa. 415m from the site



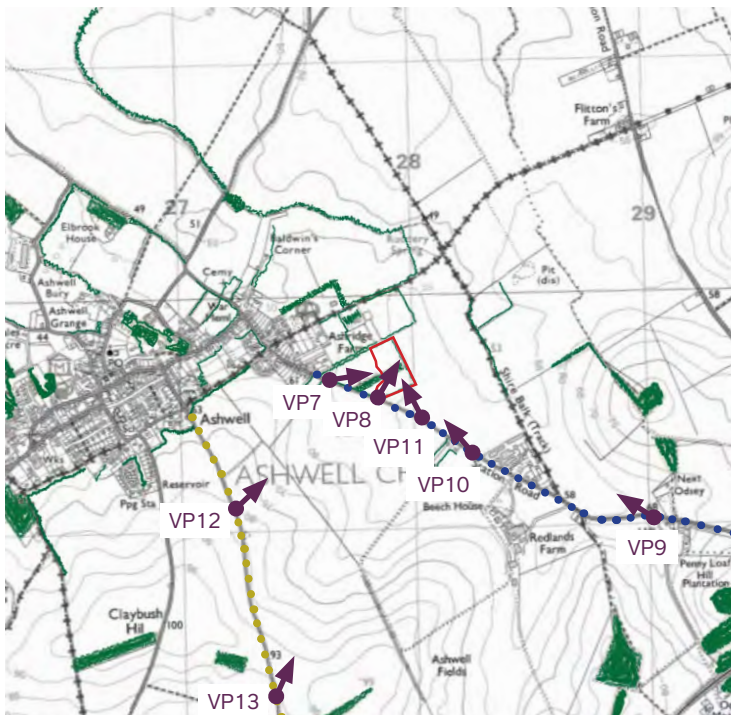
07 VISUAL ANALYSIS

Views from the road network

- A sequence of medium to close range views of the site are experienced from Station Road, particularly when approaching the village from the south (these views are considered in more detail within the following Station Road Approach section of this document).
- Expansive, longer distance, clear and open views of the site and surrounding landscape are possible from Kingsland Way to the south-west of the site, however these views are intermittent and glimpsed due to the presence of hedgerows containing the road.



VP8 - View looking south-east at the site's western access off Station Road, circa 3m from the site



VP12 - View from Kingsland Way looking north-east, circa 0.8km from the site

07 VISUAL ANALYSIS

Visual Prominence

- Despite the open character of the rural landscape, the adjacent plan demonstrates the relatively limited visual prominence of the site.
- This limited visual prominence is due to the topography, screening qualities of existing trees and vegetation which are predominantly located in and around the village.

Visual Receptors

- Public Views - the visual receptors are limited to people using Public Rights of Way to the east of the site and road users travelling along Station Road and Kingsland Way to the south-west.
- Private Views - views of the site are experienced by a limited number of residents located immediately adjacent to the site on Station Road and at Sunnymead Orchard Park Homes circa 600m to the south-east.
- The future residents of housing under construction at the adjacent Senuna Park development are likely to experience views of new housing proposed at the application site.

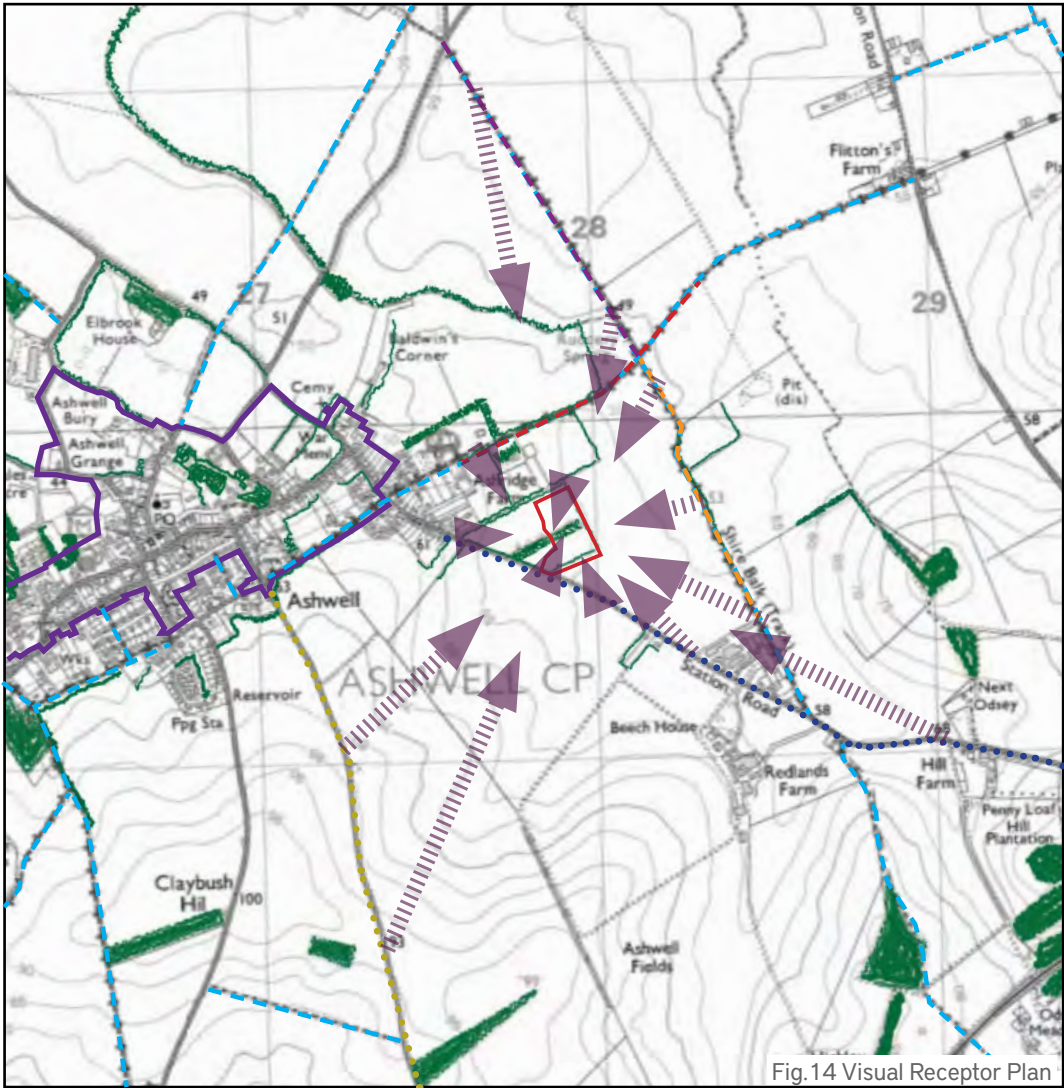
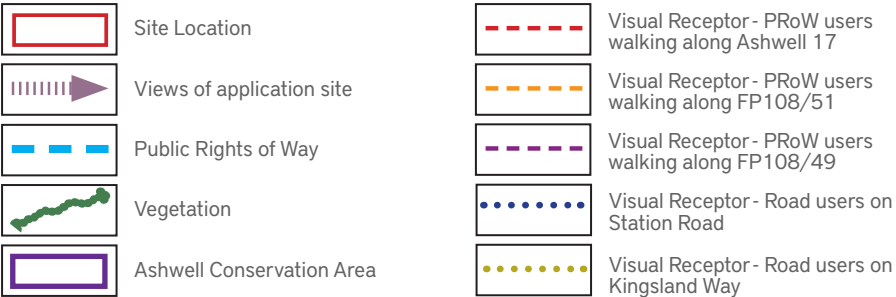


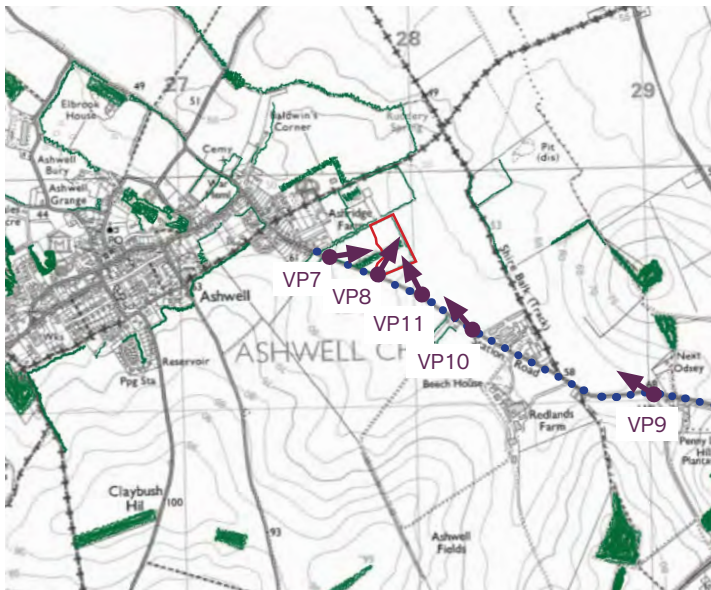
Fig.14 Visual Receptor Plan



07 VISUAL ANALYSIS

Station Road Approach

- Road users travelling in a north-westerly direction along Station Road experience the main approach to Ashwell from the south-east. Road users experience intermittent views of scattered private properties and farmstead clusters, such as Hill Farm and Redlands Farm, on the approach to Ashwell.
- Views are experienced from distances up to circa 1.17km. Distant views are experienced from higher ground on Station Road and adjacent to Sunnymead Orchard Park Homes. When travelling north-west on Station Road, views are continually experienced until passing the site and entering the village of Ashwell.
- Ashwell is very much set within a wooded setting, however occasional views of the roof tops and ridge lines of built form and the church spire are often apparent within the views experienced.
- Millennium Wood restricts views of the northern portion of the site on approach from Station Road.



VP9 - View from Station Road looking north-west, circa 1.17km from the site. Built form is visible in the distance which interrupts views towards the site.

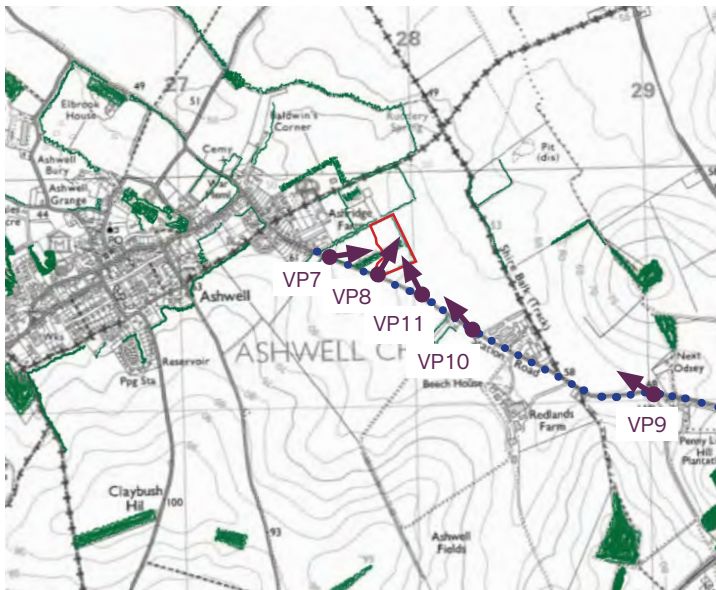


VP10 - View from Station Road looking north-west, circa 415m from the site. Built form on Station Road is evident in the foreground of the view.

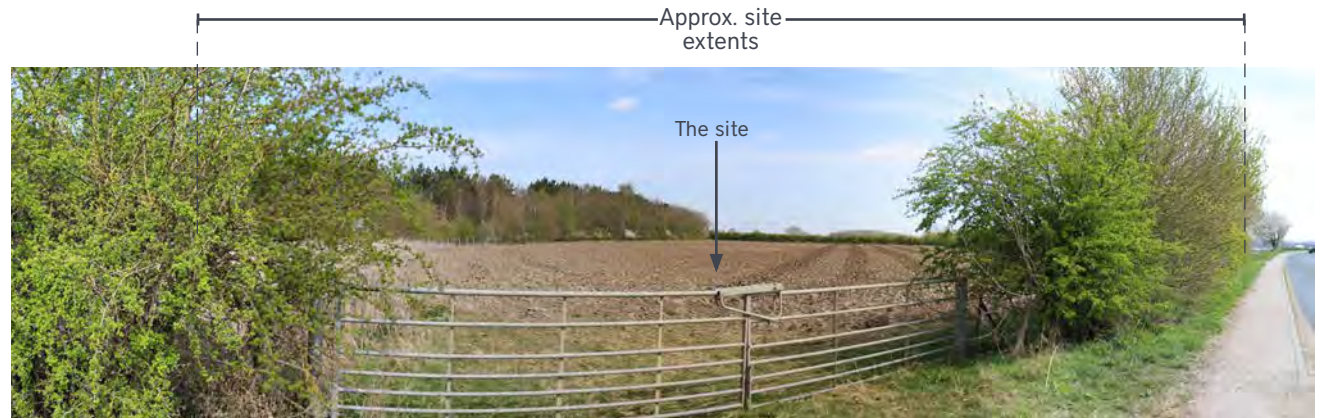
07 VISUAL ANALYSIS

Station Road Approach

- Views from locations on Station Road, which are closer to the site, are partially restricted by Millennium Wood and the boundary hedgerow and trees that separate the site from Station Road. However, partial views of the residential properties on the western side of Ashwell are visible from these viewpoints, particularly as the vegetation is less to the western side of the road, leading to a more open view.
- When passing the site on Station Road, views into the main body of the site are restricted by the boundary hedgerow, although a clear view is experienced through an existing field gate at the site's far western corner.
- The visual prominence of the site from the various viewpoints discussed may vary on a seasonal basis.



VP11 - View from Station Road looking north-west, circa 150m from the site



VP8 - View looking south-east at the site's western access off Station Road, circa 3m from the site

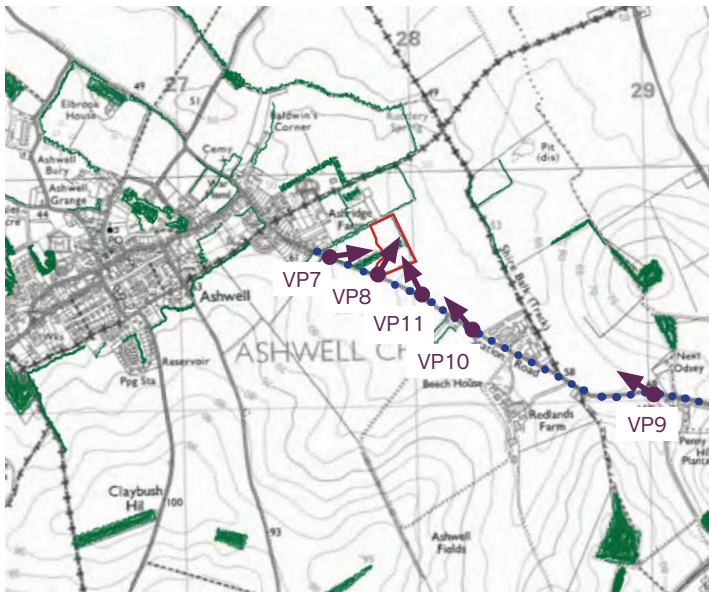
07 VISUAL ANALYSIS

Station Road Approach

- From Station Road, adjacent to the Senuna Park development, the northern portion of the application site is partially visible between the recently constructed housing within Senuna Park.
- From this viewpoint Millennium Wood screens views towards the southern portion of the site and partly curtails any longer distance views beyond the site.



VP7 - View from Station Road, looking south-east across the Senuna Park development, circa 250m from the site



08 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

1. Landform

To the north-west, the site shares a localised depression with the adjacent development at Senuna Park. This presents scope for SUDS integration alongside the POS and attenuation basins that will be delivered as part of the landscape strategy for the adjacent development.

2. Smaller Fields

The site and the adjacent field parcels to the north, near the village edge, are notably smaller and more contained than those found within the wider landscape to the east and south. The character of these smaller parcels is influenced by the proximity of the existing built form of the village.

3. Existing field boundaries

The existing native species hedgerows and trees along the northern, eastern, southern and western boundaries of the site provide the opportunity for enhancement with supplementary planting and management, where required, to strengthen the visual containment and biodiversity value.

4. Millennium Wood

The woodland belt provides the site with significant visual and physical containment, however the woodland is somewhat incongruous within the wider rural landscape by virtue of its rectilinear form and mixed, native and non-native species. As such there are opportunities to improve the species mix and form of the woodland through positive woodland management proposals.



Fig.15 Opportunities and Constraints Plan

5. Development to the north-west & west

The existing residential development to the north-west, and new properties at the Senuna Park development to the west, influence the character of the site and other small fields in the vicinity. There is opportunity to relate new development to the adjacent Senuna Park development.

6. Station Road approach

Road users travelling north-west along Station Road experience a sequence of views approaching the village. Millennium Wood currently provides a very abrupt transition from heavily wooded enclosure to abrupt appreciation of urban edge. This is being improved by opening up some views through the wood as part of the development proposals for Senuna Park. The application site offers an opportunity to further soften this transition by introducing filtered views of new built form that reflect the character of the surrounding landscape and the traditional pattern of farmsteads at settlement edges.

7. Views from the road network

From Station Road and Kingsland Way, road users gain occasional glimpses of the site and the village edge, with intervening vegetation and landform filtering longer views. In the distance from Kingsland Way, housing at Senuna Park is visible, set on lower ground amongst mature trees. On the approach to Ashwell, views of scattered private properties and farmstead clusters are experienced, providing a contextual reference for form and materiality. The southern part of the site offers scope for a responsive built form and material palette that reinforces the rural settlement edge by creating a 'farmstead cluster' at the edge of Ashwell. The northern part of the site is screened by Millennium Wood from the road network to the south and south-west.

8. Views from PRoW

Views of the site experienced from Public Rights of Way are limited to three footpaths located to the east and north of the site.

9. Ashwell Smallgains

The recreation ground and allotments to the north of the site extend the urban influence of the settlement edge beyond that of the built form.

09 BUILT FORM OPPORTUNITY

In the wider context, farmsteads are frequently located at the settlement edge, marking the transition from rural landscape to village settlement. Proposed built form can reflect this established pattern, creating the impression of a farmstead cluster on the edge of Ashwell and contributing to the perceived sense of arrival on the approach from Station road. This would provide a strong, legible gateway into Ashwell and enhance the rural settlement edge character.

- Opportunity to create a **‘farmstead cluster’** as the first element on the approach to Ashwell from Station Road.
- Reflecting the local pattern of farmsteads at the edge of, or just beyond, villages.
- Proposed built form would mark the transition from countryside to settlement edge.

The proposals will create a strong, legible gateway into Ashwell that reinforces local character and village identity.

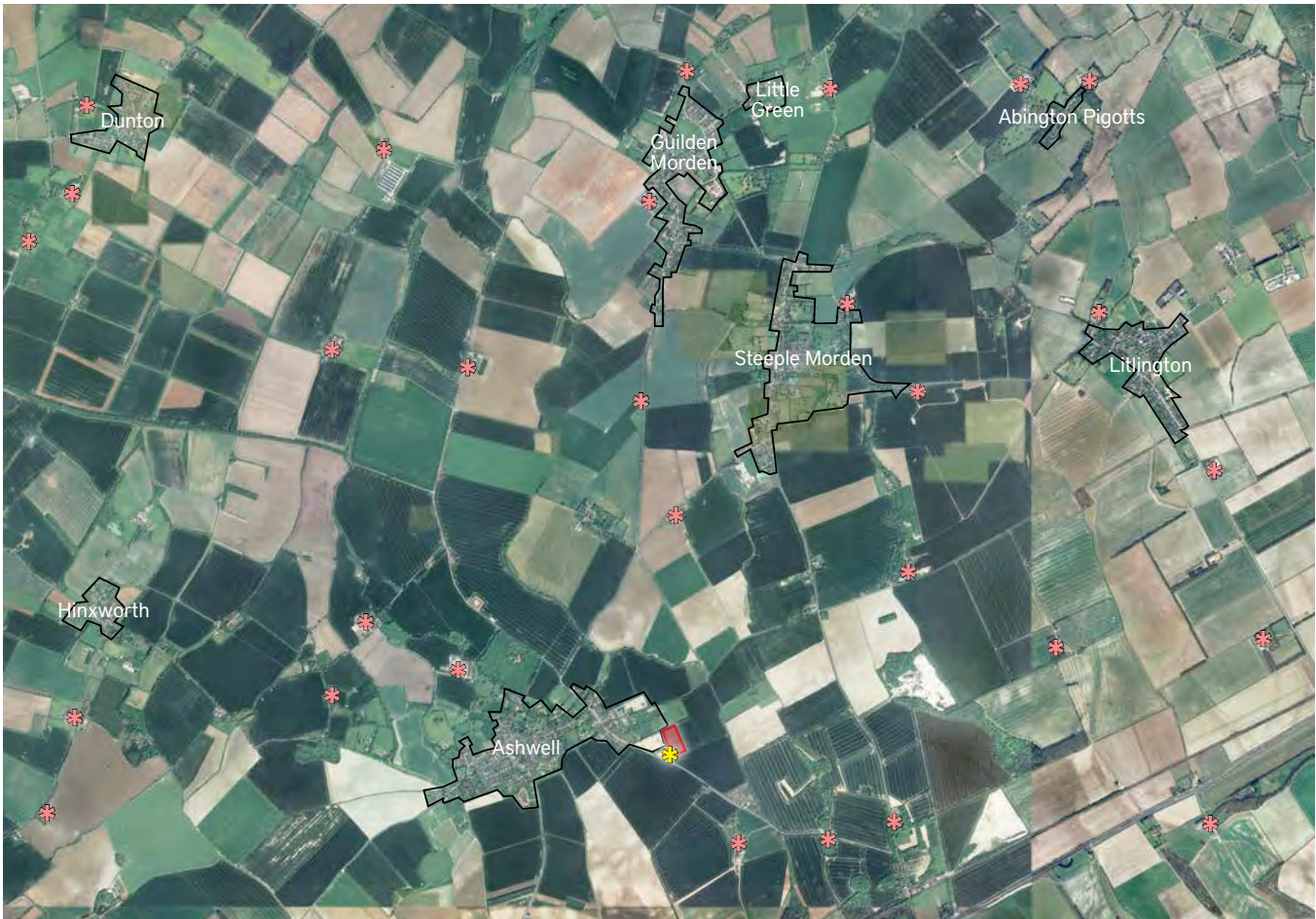
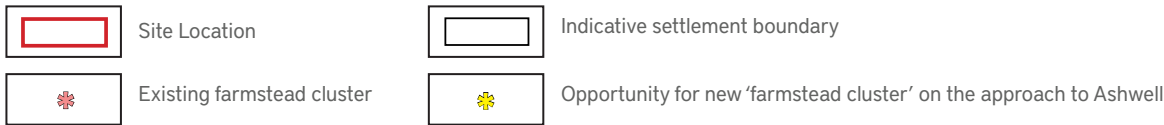


Fig.16 Wider Context and Farmstead Cluster Location Plan



10 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Enhanced Approach To Ashwell

- Rationalise and expand Millennium Wood.
- Create farmstead character on the edge of Ashwell.
- Reinforce Station Road hedgerow and trees.
- Supplement and enhance southern and eastern boundary vegetation to embed new housing.
- Access sited to south-west where minimal hedge removal will allow for sight lines.

Create Transitional Character

- Establish character areas within the site appropriate to the village edge context.
- Farmstead character fronting Station Road, with only glimpses of the development beyond.
- To the south of Millennium Wood:
 - Introduce dwellings of appropriate scale, spacing, orientation and materiality, with generous green infrastructure enveloping and running through the proposed built form.
 - Create a sense of place, ensuring that the density and character of the proposed housing respects the edge-of-settlement context.
- Dwellings aligned to the existing village edge to the North.

Make Openness, Views and Biodiversity Key

- Provide extensive open space.
- Integrate trees and landscape features as defining elements of the scheme, ensuring they enhance and frame key views in a positive way.
- Landscape-led approach, with green spaces and planting woven throughout the layout and defining residential parcels.
- Sensitive management and significant enhancement of Millennium Wood with appropriate species.
- Establish species rich grassland and wetland meadow.
- SUDS / ecology basin.
- Maintain and enhance existing native species hedgerows and provide significant lengths of new native species hedgerows and trees.

Design for Pedestrians

- Pedestrian access and permeability through site connecting to key areas beyond the site such as Ashwell, playing fields and open landscape.
- Recreational walking routes through woodland.
- Linkages to the adjacent Senuna Park development across POS and through/around the woodland.

10 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following considerations informed by the opportunities and constraints of the site have informed the overarching principles of the design proposals:



Views/Visibility of and into the application site

Ensure visual permeability and depth into the site from the approach on Station Road to enhance experience and character of the village approach.



Existing Boundary Vegetation

The existing mature hedgerows and trees to site boundaries are to be retained and enhanced through supplementary planting. Proposed planting will significantly strengthen the depth and screening effects of the southern and eastern site boundaries.



Millennium Wood

The rectilinear plantation along the southern boundary is to be retained and enhanced with sensitive management and supplementary planting with more appropriate native species.



Green Wedge

A green wedge extends through the site creating a soft interface between the two phases of development. This landscaped corridor complements the rural character of the settlement edge while providing visual and physical connectivity to the open countryside to the south.



Topographical Depression

The localised topographic depression will be utilised for proposed SUDS / ecology pond, reflecting the green space strategy at the adjacent Senuna Park development and creating a cohesive interface between the two phases of development.



Farmstead Cluster

Create a 'farmstead cluster' fronting Station Road as the first development experienced on the approach to Ashwell from the south-east.



Walking routes through the site

The proposals will encourage pedestrian movement throughout the site and surrounding landscape / townscape with logical and coherent walking routes between areas of open space that link to existing key areas, such as Ashwell Smallgains to the north, and connect the two phases of development.



Developable Area

The proposed developable area is informed by the aforementioned key features of the site. Three distinct areas of development are defined by existing and proposed green infrastructure. Development will be set back from the site's boundaries to the open countryside.



Fig.17 Design Principles

DESIGN PROPOSALS

11 THE PROPOSALS

Landscape Layout

The proposals are considered to have the following key areas, defined by their distinctive character and context with regard to the site and surrounding landscape/townscape:

- 1 - Farmstead Cluster
- 2 - Village Green
- 3 - Eastern Fringe
- 4 - North-Western Cluster
- 5 - Green Wedge
- 6 - Millennium Wood
- 7 - Wooded Edge

The proposals will enhance the character of the Ashwell settlement edge



Fig.18 Landscape Layout Plan

11 THE PROPOSALS

1. Farmstead Cluster

The approach to Ashwell from the south-east passes clusters of built form, farmsteads of Hill Farm and Redlands Farm and 2no. adjacent dwellings as glimpses of the built form within Ashwell come into view.

The design approach for the Station Road frontage positions the Farmstead Cluster as the first element encountered on the approach to Ashwell, arranged in a traditional farmstead layout with architecture to reflect this narrative.

Key Characteristics

- The principal 'farmhouse' building (apartments 1-4) fronts Station Road. It is unapologetically embracing the site frontage, although it is partially assimilated behind a frontage hedgerow and new hedgerow tree planting.
- Entering the site one passes through the farmstead threshold (brick walls and piers), beyond the farmhouse and the rear of a typical frontage barn, (garaging to plot 38) and into the 'farmyard' beyond.
- Within the 'farmyard', barn-like dwellings (plots 5-14) are arranged typically to the rear of the principal farmhouse, subservient in stature to the 'farmhouse', yet a denser arrangement with all parking and manoeuvring hidden to the rear of the built form, in a working 'yard' to the rear.
- Workers cottages (plots 38 and 37) complete the farmstead cluster before one passes beyond the 'farmstead'.
- The 'farmstead' is of a typical enclosed character.
- Feature trees (including new specimen oak tree planting at key locations) help to elevate the landscape setting.
- The architecture is agricultural in form and the materiality responsive to the setting and nature of the development, combining, charred timber cladding, brickwork and clay roof tiles.
- Externally along the southern boundary, new enlarged hedgerows, and new staggered / layered tree planting will embed the built form within the wider landscape setting.



Fig.19 Extract of Landscape Layout Plan



Farmstead of Hill Farm on the approach to Ashwell from Station Road - barn backs onto the road



Farmhouse at Highfield Farm on Royston Road with barns visible beyond

Station Road, Ashwell

11 THE PROPOSALS

1. Farmstead Cluster - Architecture

The farmhouse has two primary elevations. The main elevation fronts Station road, the form and design keys of this elevation have been taken from Westbury Farmhouse, a listed farmhouse in the West End of the village.

The elevation has 2no. symmetrical end gables, with the first floor facing forward of the ground floor. The main dwelling wall is set back where the red clay pitched roof is supported. This wall houses the main entrance, which is surrounded by a moulded stone surround and hood. The secondary elevation faces East and the new accessway, this elevation has an entrance door with a traditional style timber porch with a red clay pitched roof.

The ground floor and main front wall are constructed from facing brick with the first floor being finished in weather board cladding with black painted windows accentuating the openings, and stone detailing. The design also includes 2No brick chimney stacks with brick detailing.

The agricultural style barn buildings are rectangular in form, the corners of the buildings have facing brick supporting walls and a red clay pitched roof. The infill walls are finished in weather board cladding, with black plain casement windows.

The workers cottages are also agricultural in form and have a reduced eaves and ridge height. The first floor windows are located in the 3 main feature gables and 4No brick dormers. The feature gables have red facing brick corner supporting style walls with a mixture of glazing and weather board horizontal cladding infill.

The main walls of the building are finished in red facing brick with black painted windows accentuating the openings, and stone detailing. The North and East facades have an entrance door within a raised height glazing detail.



Fig.20 Plots 1-4 (apartments) Elevations

11 THE PROPOSALS

2. Village Green

Beyond the farmstead, a generous area of green space divides the farmstead from the Village Green character area.

It consists of an informal cluster of housing, part-fronting small central greens (plots 29 and 34) and around a central 'village green' (plots 30-33). This low-density arrangement reflects the position to the edge of the settlement and affords views through the site.

Key Characteristics

- Housing fronts green space, reflecting aspects of a Village Green design.
- New tree planting within village green and street scene.
- Hedgerows, generous grass verges and new tree planting, all help to establish a tranquil, low-density and green character.
- The generous buffer trees and hedgerow to the southern and eastern boundaries of the site, fall outside of private ownership boundaries and will screen and/or assimilate the development into the wider setting. The trees and hedgerow will be managed and maintained by the development management company, to ensure their effective longevity.



Fig.21 Extract of Landscape Layout Plan

11 THE PROPOSALS

2. Village Green - Architecture

Two storey houses, designed in traditional form, with red facing brick ground floor and weathered cladding first floor and slate pitched roofs. Plots 29 and 34 have white render ground floor walling with clay red pitched roofs.

Main facades gain three dimension by the way of 3 bay windows and first floor cantilevered gables, these are both design keys taken from important buildings in Ashwell.

All properties benefit from a brick chimney stack with brick detailing. Windows to be traditional in form and proportion and finished in black. Entrance doors to have a moulded stone surround or traditional timber porch with a pitched roof.

The style is traditional, in that the massing, style and detailing reflects the vernacular buildings and buildings of interest in the local village of Ashwell. This includes steeply pitched roofs of clay tiles and chimneys, walling material of white render, red facing brick and weathered cladding. Black painted windows accentuating the openings, the occasional bay window and stone detailing.



Fig.22 Plot 32 Elevations

11 THE PROPOSALS

3. Eastern Fringe

A meandering, yet generously spaced, row of dwellings fronting the eastern wooded boundary of the site. Significant new tree planting and garden boundary hedgerows create a verdant rural character at the site's boundary to the countryside beyond and the PRow network therein.

Key Characteristics

- Informal arrangement of housing, generously spaced within large plots.
- New tree planting and hedgerows to enhance rural settlement edge character.
- Soft landscaping used to integrate development into the wider landscape setting, responding sensitively to views from PRowS to the east and the north-east.
- Parking and vehicular access is from the rear / west, and properties generally have an active elevation facing out towards the open countryside.
- A stabilised, compacted gravel footpath serves all of these properties in an informal manner to the eastern side and allows effective linkages to the wider footpath network, both within and beyond the site, to the north.



Fig.23 Extract of Landscape Layout Plan

11 THE PROPOSALS

3. Eastern Fringe - Architecture

Two storey houses, designed in traditional form, with either white rendered walls and clay red pitched roofs or red facing brick ground floor and weathered cladding first floor and slate pitched roofs.

Main facades gain three dimension by the way of 3 bay windows and first floor cantilevered gables, these are both design keys taken from important buildings in Ashwell.

All properties benefit from a brick chimney stack with brick detailing. Windows to be traditional in form and proportion and finished in black. Entrance doors to have a moulded stone surround or traditional timber porch with a pitched roof.

The style is traditional, in that the massing, style and detailing reflects the vernacular buildings and buildings of interest in the local village of Ashwell. This includes steeply pitched roofs of clay tiles and chimneys, walling material of white render, red facing brick and weathered cladding. Black painted windows accentuating the openings, the occasional bay window and stone detailing.



Fig.24 Plot 24 Elevations

11 THE PROPOSALS

4. North-Western Cluster

A dispersed arrangement of detached homes set within generous plots, featuring garages, boundary hedgerows, and an abundance of tree planting. Dwellings are orientated to overlook the 'streets' and paths, with dual-aspect homes positioned to overlook the public open space to the west, enhancing natural surveillance. Public footpaths are set within green corridors enhancing connectivity and introducing green visual corridors within the site.

Key Characteristics

- Sited adjacent to proposed POS and SUDS basin.
- Provides an attractive interface to the POS and the housing opposite at the Senuna Park development.
- Proposed native species hedgerow and native species trees.
- Informal layout of dwellings centred around shared private drives, resulting in cul-de-sac arrangements.
- Green pedestrian links to POS.
- Cars are very much to the core of the housing only and thus all main footpath networks are car-free and pedestrian/cyclist dominant.



Fig.25 Extract of Landscape Layout Plan

11 THE PROPOSALS

4. North-Western Cluster - Architecture

Two storey houses, designed in traditional form, with either white rendered walls and clay red pitched roofs or red facing brick ground floor and weathered cladding first floor and slate pitched roofs.

Main facades gain three dimension by the way of 3 bay windows and first floor cantilevered gables, these are both design keys taken from important buildings in Ashwell.

All properties benefit from a brick chimney stack with brick detailing. Windows to be traditional in form and proportion and finished in black. Entrance doors to have a moulded stone surround or traditional timber porch with a pitched roof.

The style is traditional, in that the massing, style and detailing reflects the vernacular buildings and buildings of interest in the local village of Ashwell. This includes steeply pitched roofs of clay tiles and chimneys, walling material of white render, red facing brick and weathered cladding. Black painted windows accentuating the openings, the occasional bay window and stone detailing.



Fig.26 Plot 17 Elevations

11 THE PROPOSALS

5. Green Wedge

A generous green wedge extends through the site, forming a sensitive transition between the two phases of development. This landscaped corridor reinforces the rural character of the settlement edge while providing visual and physical connectivity to the open countryside to the south. Open space responds to existing landform and provides positive aesthetic, functional recreation and enhanced biodiversity.

Key Characteristics

- Establish improved approach to village and edge to settlement.
- Improve Millennium Wood with sensitive removal of unfavourable species and reshape for a more natural appearance.
- Significant proposed native species trees appropriate to local landscape character.
- Wildflower planting with mown paths.
- Play area to the southern boundary forming a visual break in proposed built form in views from the approach on Station Road.
- Improved accessibility and visual permeability through site linking to open space to north and into woodland.
- Proposed pond utilised for sustainable drainage also provides opportunity for ecological enhancements with marginal aquatic planting etc.
- Informal seating.
- Green space well overlooked by proposed housing for positive natural surveillance.



Fig.27 Extract of Landscape Layout Plan

11 THE PROPOSALS

6. Millennium Wood

The proposed reshaping of the woodland plantation with additional sections of new woodland planting and positive woodland management works will create a woodland block appropriate to its landscape setting and context.

Key Characteristics

- Sensitive management of retained woodland involving the removal of unfavourable species to be replaced with native species to enhance biodiversity.
- Improved accessibility with proposed informal paths leading from open space into woodland. All paths in sensitive locations to avoid conflict with sensitive biodiversity.
- Proposed reshaping of woodland edge with new native species woodland planting to establish a species mix and shape / form that is more appropriate with regard to the context of the wider landscape.
- The woodland extends to the north, south and to the eastern boundary, its form is softened, some glades are created and it will be effectively managed by the development management company.



Fig.28 Extract of Landscape Layout Plan

11 THE PROPOSALS

7. Wooded Edge

The existing hedgerows along the eastern and southern boundaries will be enhanced and supplemented to create a more substantial, woodland-style edge where the site meets the open countryside. Over time, as the planting matures, this green buffer will help soften views of the development from Public Rights of Way to the east and from the road network to the south and west. In addition to screening, the wooded edge will create an attractive, natural setting for adjacent properties. Footpaths will weave through this landscaped boundary, offering recreational routes and connecting the development to its wider setting.

Key Characteristics

- Enhanced boundary planting with reinforced hedgerows to form a wooded interface to the countryside setting
- Soften views of the development from Public Rights of Way and surrounding road network
- Integration with the landscape to provide a natural, rural setting for properties at the site edge
- Improved connectivity with footpaths woven through the landscaped boundary and access to the wider countryside



Fig.29 Extract of Landscape Layout Plan

11 THE PROPOSALS

Aerial Overlay

The adjacent aerial image of the site/Ashwell has been overlaid with the proposals plan for the application site and the adjacent development at Senuna Park, to illustrate the assimilation of the proposals within its village edge landscape/townscape context.



Fig.30 Aerial Imagery with Proposed Layout Overlay

11 THE PROPOSALS

Vistas Through the Site

- The layout of the site has been designed to maintain a sense of openness through the creation of corridors with an absence of built form.
- Views into the site of Millennium Wood are maintained through the green wedge which creates a visual break in proposed built form along the southern boundary.
- Reshaping of the woodland plantation edge to envelope areas of proposed housing and terminate vistas through the adjacent Senuna Park development.



Fig.31 Vista Plan

11 THE PROPOSALS

Sketch Views of the Proposals



View 1



View 2



View 3



View 4

The series of sketch views were created using an accurate 3D modelling base. These images demonstrate a characterful development that is truly landscape led and befitting of the high-quality village edge setting.



12 LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

Landscape Management

To safeguard the long-term quality of the landscape across the development, a Landscape Management Areas Plan has been prepared. This ensures that the perimeter landscape buffer and internal landscape assets are managed and maintained in perpetuity.

Communal areas within the development will be maintained by a dedicated management company in accordance with management schedules and plans to be agreed prior to occupation. This arrangement will ensure the ongoing health, longevity, and appearance of all communal landscaping. Private residential gardens will be the responsibility of individual plot owners.

Defining ownership and management responsibilities at the outset will ensure that the scheme delivers a high-quality, well managed landscape setting that supports biodiversity, visual amenity and a distinct sense of place.

KEY & NOTES



Communal areas covered by dedicated Management Company in accordance with schedules and plan to be determined.



Private residential areas to be managed by individual plot owners.



Fig.32 Extract from Landscape Management Areas Plan

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Consideration of the Inspector’s Decision to allow the Appeal (Ref: APP/X1925/W/21/3279843) and grant planning permission for residential development at Senuna Park, April 2022.

The approved planning application for the adjacent Senuna Park development comprises a residential development of up to 28no. dwellings and landscaping including ponds, Wildflower meadow and woodland.

The following table identifies the pertinent points made by the Inspector with respect to Character and Appearance of the approved proposals for Senuna Park, and explains how the proposals for the application site have responded to and incorporated these key considerations.

APPENDIX 1

Inspectors Comments	Response	Plan Extract
• Para 5 – <i>‘The appeal site comprises a wedge-shaped area of field, situated in countryside on the south-eastern approach to Ashwell village. The site is located in a modest dip within gently rolling landscape, and slopes down towards its Station Road frontage.’</i> • Para 6 – <i>‘A couple of houses to the north-west look over the site, and the road leading into the village from the site is characterised by mainly two-storey pitched roof dwellings, of twentieth century style, with some more recent residential infill development. Hedging, some of which includes trees, along boundaries including at the front of properties, is a noticeable characteristic of the residential area along Station Road that leads up to the site. This helps contribute to a verdant and visually relaxed ‘edge of village’ feel to the western foreground of the site. The hedging theme then segues and evolves into field boundaries in the countryside, including around much of the appeal site.’</i>	The application site is situated immediately to the east and south-east of the Senuna Park development. As such, it shares similar attributes to the adjacent site, being located in countryside on the south-eastern approach to Ashwell village. The application site shares open space with Senuna Park at the described ‘modest dip’ in the landscape. In comparison, the application site gently rises towards the south-east. Therefore, proposed housing along the southern and eastern edges of the site has been set well in from the boundaries, ensuring that the new built form is positioned on relatively lower ground when compared to adjacent land outside the site. This also retains the opportunity to plant around the perimeter of the site. The new housing on the eastern edge of Senuna Park will overlook the application site. Upon completion, the new housing at Senuna Park will effectively screen views towards the development proposals from other properties within Ashwell. This description highlights how the surrounding dwellings, landscaping, and hedgerows combine to create a pleasant edge-of-village environment. The proposals for new housing will reflect the local vernacular and enhance the landscape features that define the area. Existing hedgerow boundaries are to be retained and enhanced, and the landscape proposals include new areas of woodland, tree planting and hedgerows to reinforce the existing landscape character, ensuring the scheme blends harmoniously with both the residential context along Station Road and the adjoining countryside. At the western foreground of the site the new housing plots are arranged in the style of a traditional farmstead, in line with the local pattern of farmstead clusters on the approach to villages. In combination, these elements will contribute to a verdant and relaxed ‘edge of village’ feel to the development.	 <i>Site location and immediate context - see pg 3</i>  <i>Artist's impression of the site entrance off Station Road.</i>

APPENDIX 1

Inspectors Comments	Response	Plan Extract
• Para 7 – <i>‘Within this context, the proposal’s introduction of built form to the site, with consequent reduction in openness and verdancy, would modestly extend the built-up area of the village in a south-easterly direction, with associated urbanising impact.’</i> • Para 8 – <i>‘However, that said, the development would be located on a relatively lower lying site within the gently rolling landscape. This topography, together with the dense, established deciduous and evergreen tree and shrub buffer strip along the south-eastern boundary of the site would substantially contain views of the proposal from countryside to the east.’</i>	The development proposals would create a natural and contained extension to the settlement edge in a south-easterly direction and a logical continuation of the adjacent Senuna Park development. The proposed landscaping and green infrastructure, along with the lower density of housing to the ‘edges’, would help to retain the verdant and more open qualities described, while softening the transition between the proposed built form and open countryside, thereby limiting the urbanising impact of the development proposals. The application site is located to the east of the Senuna Park development, on land that rises gently beyond the site to the south-east. Proposed housing along the southern and eastern edges of the site has been set back from the boundaries, ensuring that the new built form is positioned on relatively lower ground compared to adjacent land outside the site. This topography, together with the screening provided by Millennium Wood, would largely restrict views of the proposed housing to the north of Millennium Wood, when seen from the countryside to the south. The development proposals include strengthened planting along the eastern and southern site boundaries, incorporating a substantial number of new trees and hedgerow to further soften the visual impact of the development from the surrounding countryside. A central ‘green wedge’ runs through the site, comprising areas of meadow, tree and hedgerow planting, additional woodland and attenuation basins. This green corridor maintains views to Millennium Wood and creates a visual break along the southern edge. In combination with the lower density of housing to the southern and eastern boundaries of the site, this filters and mitigates views of the proposed built form from the east and south.	 Green Wedge - see pg 42  Wooded Edge - see pg 44

APPENDIX 1

Inspectors Comments	Response	Plan Extract
• Para 9 – <i>‘Also, the locality’s distinctive hedgerow theme would be continued by the proposed retention of hedging along much of the site’s perimeter, and new structural hedge and tree planting along the meandering roadway within the development. The set-back of houses from the hedge-lined perimeter would lessen the visual impact of proposed housing, viewed from Station Road. And the proposed on-site green space would include a naturalistic pond, meadow and additional woodland planting. Together these elements would to some extent visually soften the interface of the proposed development and village edge.’</i>	The scheme retains existing hedgerows along the site’s boundaries and incorporates new structural hedgerows and tree planting within the proposed layout, ensuring continuity of the locality’s distinctive hedgerow theme and verdant character. Proposed houses are set back from the perimeter hedgerows, thus reducing their visual impact from Station Road and from the PRowS within the surrounding countryside. Furthermore, a generous ‘green wedge’ runs through the site, providing a sensitive transition between the two areas of development. The proposed ‘green wedge’ comprises new areas of meadow, tree planting, hedgerow planting, additional woodland planting and attenuation basins. The site layout has been carefully designed to maintain a sense of openness through the creation of corridors with an absence of built form. Views into the site of Millennium Wood are maintained through the ‘green wedge’ which creates a visual break in proposed built form along the site’s southern boundary. In addition, the woodland plantation edge has been reshaped to frame areas of new development and to provide a natural termination to vistas extending through the adjacent Senuna Park development. Together these elements would visually soften the interface of the proposed development with both its village edge and rural context.	 Landscape Layout - see pg 33-44  Views and Vistas - see pg 46

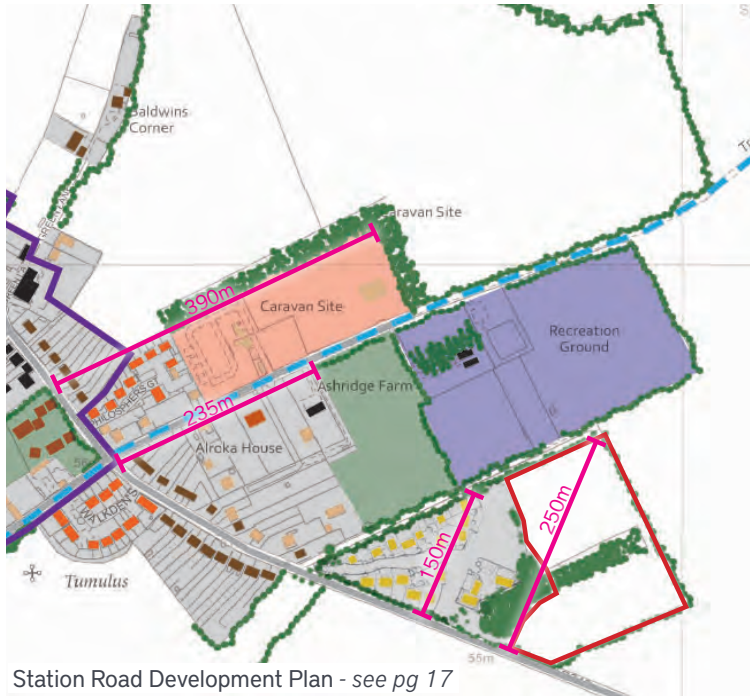
APPENDIX 1

Inspectors Comments	Response	Plan Extract
• Para 10 – <i>‘Furthermore, the proposed development site would adjoin a stretch of Station Road that contains the village entrance sign, lighting columns on one side, and a combination of speed calming measures in the form of chicane road layout, speed signs and road markings. Together these elements to some extent dilute the rural character of this part of the south-eastern approach to the village, and result in a somewhat transitional feel between the village edge and the wider countryside beyond.’</i>	The development proposals provide an opportunity to enhance the approach to Ashwell by introducing a farmstead-style cluster that draws on the local pattern of traditional farmsteads found on the outskirts of villages. This approach creates a softer, more gradual transition from open countryside into the village via Station Road. By reflecting the established settlement pattern, the scheme builds on the design principles supported in the previous appeal, ensuring that the development sits comfortably within the village edge without causing abrupt or intrusive changes to the transitional feel between the village edge and the countryside.	 Artist's impression of the proposals on the approach to Ashwell via Station Road.

APPENDIX 1

Inspectors Comments	Response	Plan Extract
• Para 11 – <i>‘Together, the above factors would help visually soften the proposed development’s presence, contained mainly to viewpoints within the site itself, around its access and in the immediate vicinity of its perimeter.’</i>	Despite the open character of the rural landscape, the site has relatively limited visual prominence, aided by the local topography and the screening provided by existing woodland, boundary hedgerows and the built form to the south and east of Ashwell and at the adjacent Senuna Park development. All of the aforementioned landscape proposals would help to visually soften the proposed developments presence, which is largely limited to users of nearby Public Rights of Way and road users along Station Road and Kingsland Way. In the longer term, it is expected that the landscape proposals would become increasingly effective at filtering and softening views of built form as proposed planting establishes.	View from Station Road looking north west towards the site at a distance of circa 150m:  Visualisation of the proposed development upon completion (Year 1)  Visualisation of the proposed development upon maturity of the proposed planting (Year 15)

APPENDIX 1

Inspectors Comments	Response	Plan Extract																
• Para 12 – ‘Also, the depth of development in the locality on the north-eastern side of Station Road, including the recent Philosophers Gate residential development, and the caravan site beyond, would go some way to contextually limit the discordance of the depth of proposed housing.’	Station Road historically marked the eastern limit of the village until development began, between 1900–1950, introducing ribbon housing that shifted the settlement pattern away from its original east–west linearity. Post-1950 infill and backland schemes further extended the village edge to the east. Additional land uses, including the recreation ground and caravan site, further reinforce this eastward expansion and define the character of the village edge. The depth and layout of the proposed housing would align with the existing pattern of development along the north-eastern side of Station Road. By respecting the established scale of nearby residential schemes and other surrounding land uses, the proposals would limit discordance with the existing village edge.	 Station Road Development Plan - see pg 17 <table><tr><td></td><td>Application Site Boundary</td><td></td><td>Recreational land</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Approximate distance from Station Road</td><td></td><td>Caravan park</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Ashwell Conservation Area</td><td></td><td>Enclosed field parcels</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Built form</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>		Application Site Boundary		Recreational land		Approximate distance from Station Road		Caravan park		Ashwell Conservation Area		Enclosed field parcels		Built form		
	Application Site Boundary		Recreational land															
	Approximate distance from Station Road		Caravan park															
	Ashwell Conservation Area		Enclosed field parcels															
	Built form																	

APPENDIX 1

Inspectors Comments	Response	Plan Extract
• Para 13 – <i>‘Moreover, the extent of green open space around three sides of the ‘farmstead’ style cluster of housing would help avoid an overly cramped sense of place within that part of the development.’</i>	The development proposals include generous areas of green space, maintaining a sense of openness and avoiding a cramped appearance. A central ‘green wedge’ runs through the site, incorporating meadow, tree and hedgerow planting, additional woodland, and attenuation basins. The existing woodland will be enhanced and reshaped through new native planting, sensitive management, and informal paths, creating a well-integrated woodland block with softened edges, glades, and improved accessibility. The new ‘farmstead’ is enhanced through a landscape frame consisting of the wooded backdrop to the north, the ‘green wedge’ to the east and the open fields to the south, beyond the site. Along the eastern and southern boundaries, reinforced hedgerows and new tree belt planting will form a strong green buffer that provides a natural setting for properties at the rural interface of the development. Proposed perimeter footpaths will enhance connectivity, linking the site to the wider landscape and the Public Rights of Way network.	 Artist's impression of the proposed housing within the proposed open green space setting.