



CHALKSTREAM HOUSE

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VISION |

reconnecting a landscape informed by chalk, water and gault, which has been lost in time, isolated as an oasis amongst a sea of industrialised arable land.

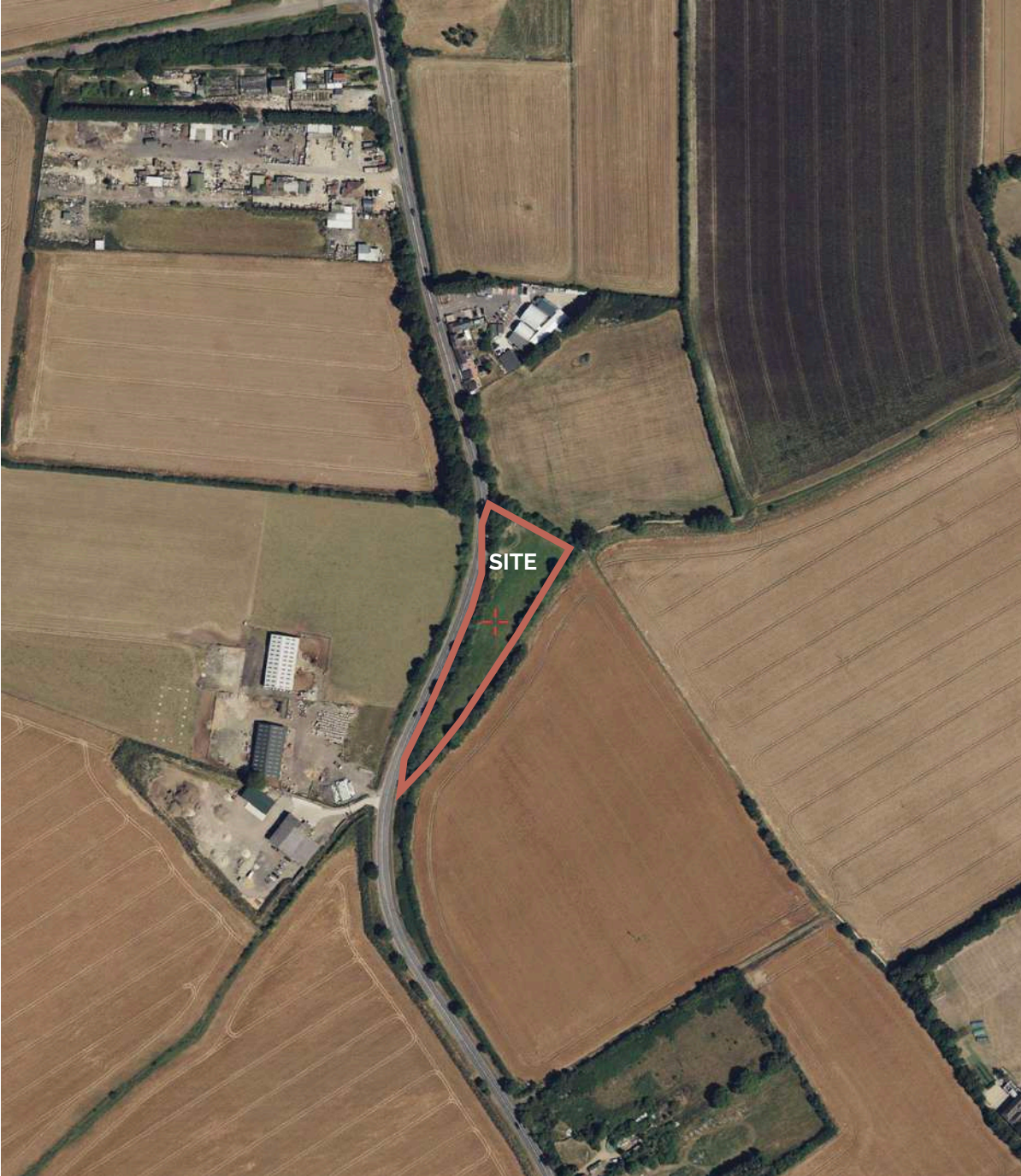




The site is located within the parish of Ickleford north of Hitchin, a market town in north Hertfordshire. The nearest settlement Ickleford is a large village that lies on the western bank of River Hiz and to the east of the A600 road.

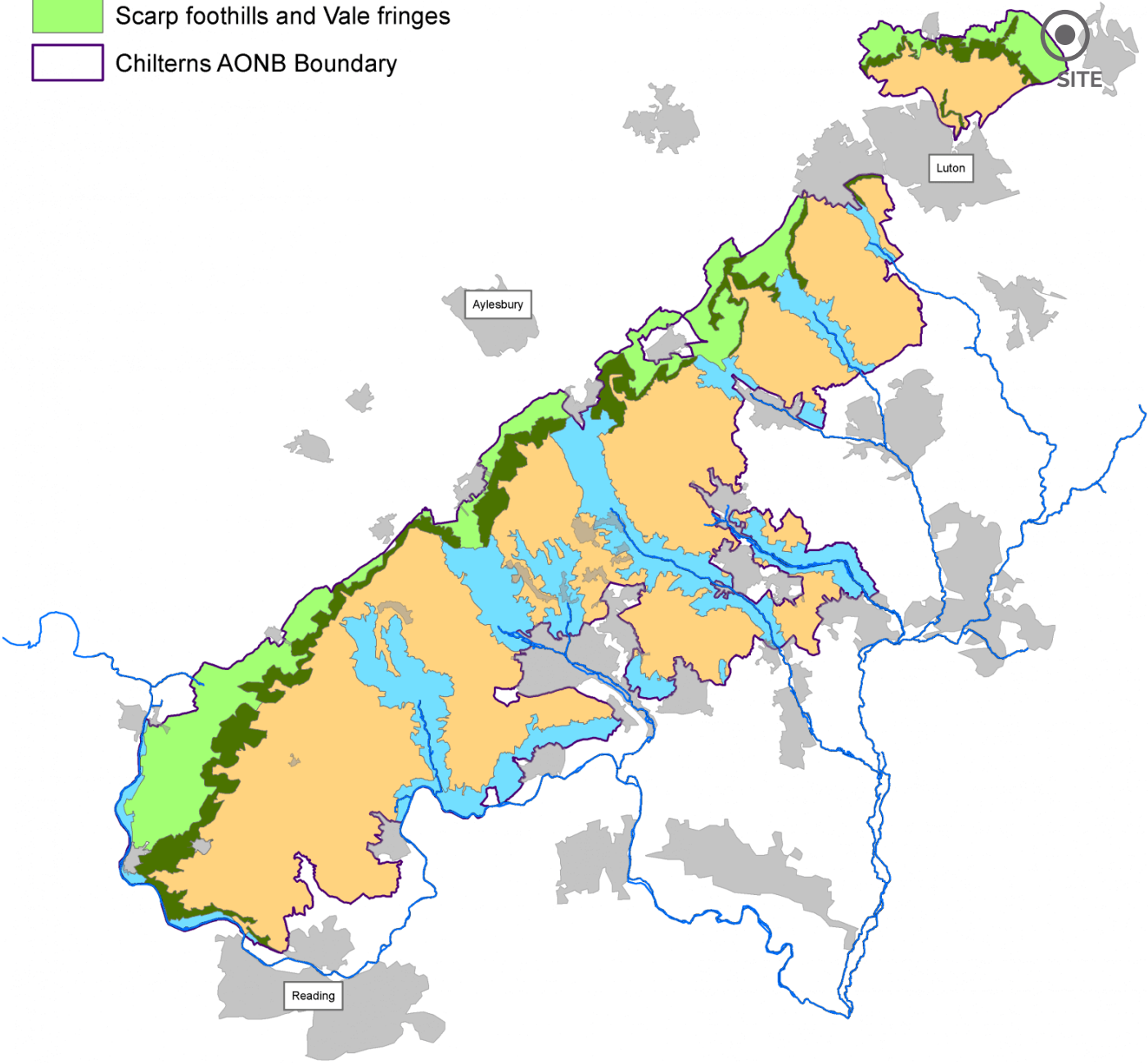
The area is within the London Area Greenbelt, a statutory green belt around London, as well as being approximately just over 2km from the Chilterns AONB.

The site is outside the settlement boundaries, and in the open countryside of north Hertfordshire.



Landscape Character

- Chalk Scarp
- Plateau and Dipslope
- River Valleys
- Scarp foothills and Vale fringes
- Chilterns AONB Boundary



The site sits within close proximity to the Chilterns AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which comes with its own landscape character categorisation and should be considered in the design.

The purposes of a national landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB) are defined as:

- Conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the UK's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, ensuring they can meet the challenges of the future;
- Support the economic and social well-being of local communities in ways which contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty;
- Promote public understanding and enjoyment of the nature and culture of AONB, and encourage people to take action for their conservation;
- Value, sustain and promote the benefits that the UK's AONB provide for society, including clean air and water, food, carbon storage and other services vital to the nation's health and wellbeing.

The landscape type within the Chilterns that the site sits in close proximity to is the Scarp Foothills and Vale Fringes.

This area is characterised by the following:

- gently undulating chalk slopes*
- chalk springs between the base of the scarp and clay vale*
- can be a striking contrast in colour, texture and form between the vale and the scarp as it rises to the east*
- most of the area is under intensive agricultural land use*
- field patterns date from the 17th century when medieval open fields were divided up through parliamentary enclosure*
- relatively few hedgerows or semi-natural habitats*
- There is little woodland cover across much of the area*

The site sits adjacent to the following designations:

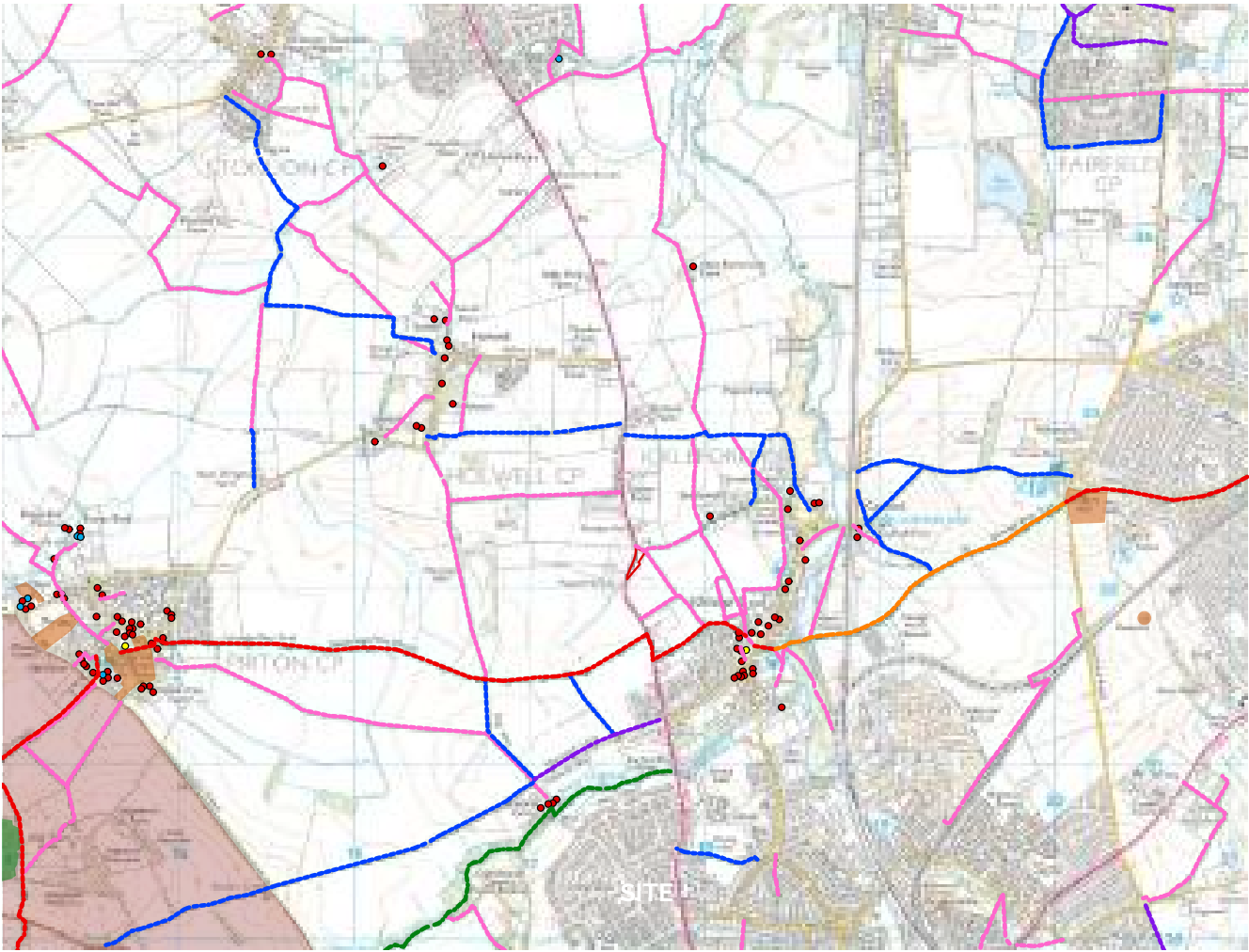
- **Chilterns AONB** - is a nationally, as well as internationally, important landscape, consisting of a complex mix of geological and ecological features. Some of these are extremely rare, including a steep chalk escarpment, globally rare chalk streams, broadleaved woodlands, tranquil valleys and a network of ancient routes, adding to the significance of the area. Although the site is not within the border of the Chilterns AONB, it is within close proximity, approximately 2.5km to the south west.
- **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** - there are no SSSI's within the study area map, however several appear in the wider landscape, primarily in the form of woodlands, grasslands or hills. The closest of these appear to the west and south of the site, with Deacon Hill (SSSI) and Knocking Hoe (SSSI) approximately 5-6km to the south west. Additionally Wain Wood (SSSI) is approximately 6km to the south, and the closest to the site is Oughtonhead Lane (SSSI) which leads to the Oughtonhead common nature reserve, approximately 2km to the south.
- **Ancient Woodlands** - only one appears in within the study area map, Tingley Wood approximately 3.5km to the south west of the site. However several more appear within close proximity, just outside of the study map, predominantly within the Chilterns AONB.
- **Listed Buildings** - there are several listed buildings within the study area map, predominantly Grade II that are focused within the settlement areas, with the occasional sporadic listed farmstead. There are the occasional Grade I listed building in the form of churches and Grade II* listed building, again found within the settlement areas.
- **Scheduled Monuments** - there are a few scheduled monuments within the study area map, which focus on the outside edge of the settlement blocks. There is an old medieval village, and an Anglo Saxon settlement on the south and western edge of Pirton, approximately 3km to the west of the site. Additionally there is an old hill fort on the edge of Letchworth, approximately 2.5km to the east of the site.
- **Public Access** - multiple public routes cut through the landscape within the study map area, with a focus around the River Oughton that cuts through Ickleford, along the northern edge of Hitchin, continuing northwards. Others cut through the countryside, linking the settlement areas. There are two public footpaths that run directly adjacent to the site, running along both the northern and western boundary.

The site sits within the following designations:

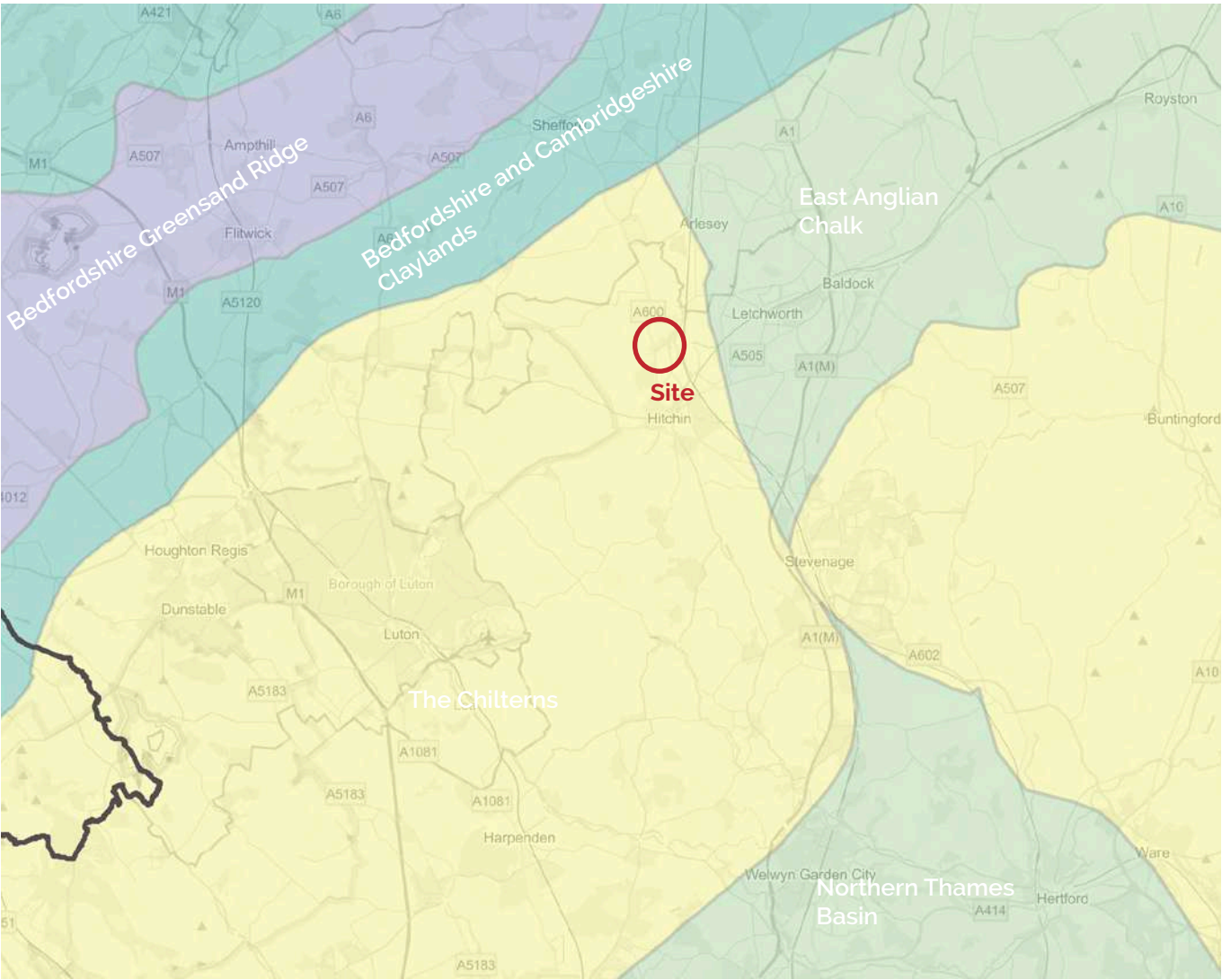
- **The London Green Belt** - an area that is a permanent area of open land, preventing urban sprawl, as well as providing space for food growing, recreation and wildlife habitats and helps to mitigate the impacts of climate change. The NPPF does allow development on the Green Belt in very special circumstances.

Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan

The local neighbourhood plan 2022-2035 provides a clear vision which includes "protecting and enhancing the distinct natural and historical heritage in the Parish" and "Green spaces, views and local wildlife habitats, including rare chalk streams will be maintained and enhanced" It also identifies key policies related to landscape including Policy E2: Protecting the Landscape and Policy E3: Rural Character.



Key	
	Site location
	Grade I listed
	Grade II listed
	Grade II* listed
	Public footpath
	Bridleway
	Road used as public path
	Other routes with public access
	Byway open to all traffic
	Recreational route
	Area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) - chilterns
	Ancient woodlands
	Scheduled monument



The site sits on the edge of two national character zones, with it being within the north eastern edge of 'The Chilterns - 110', whilst being within close proximity to 'East Anglian Chalk - 87'.

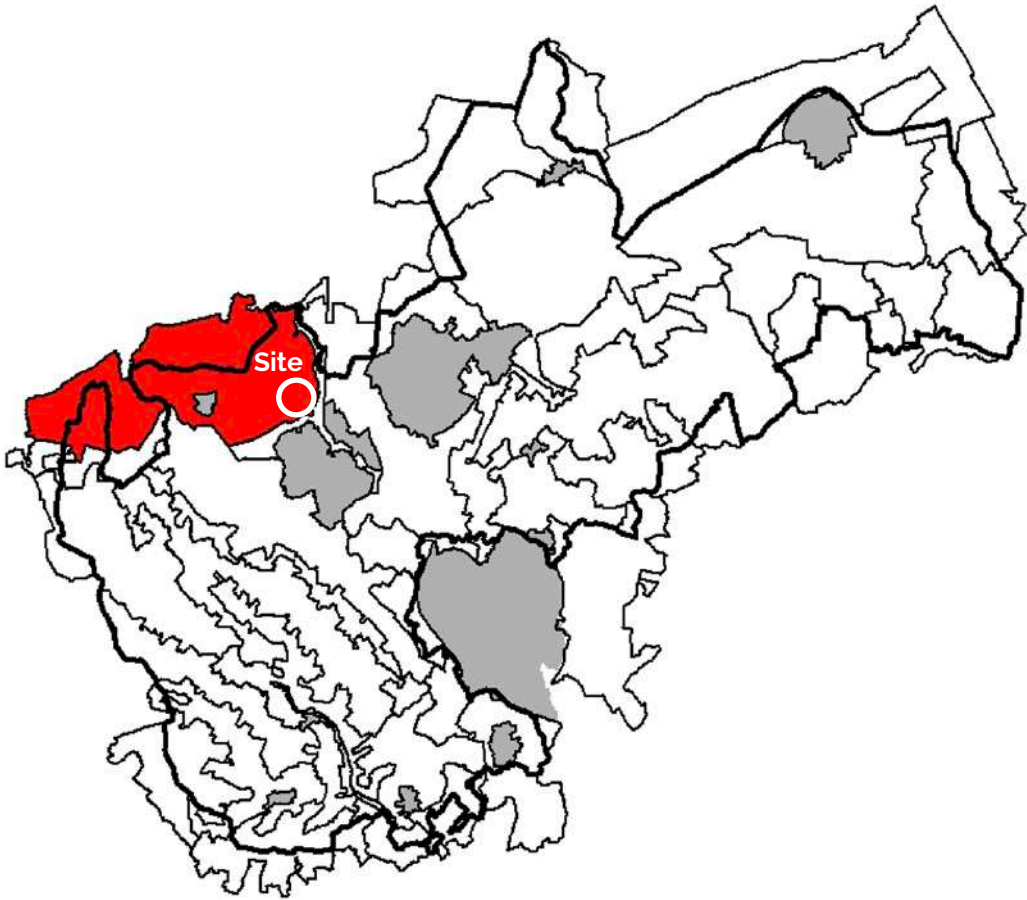
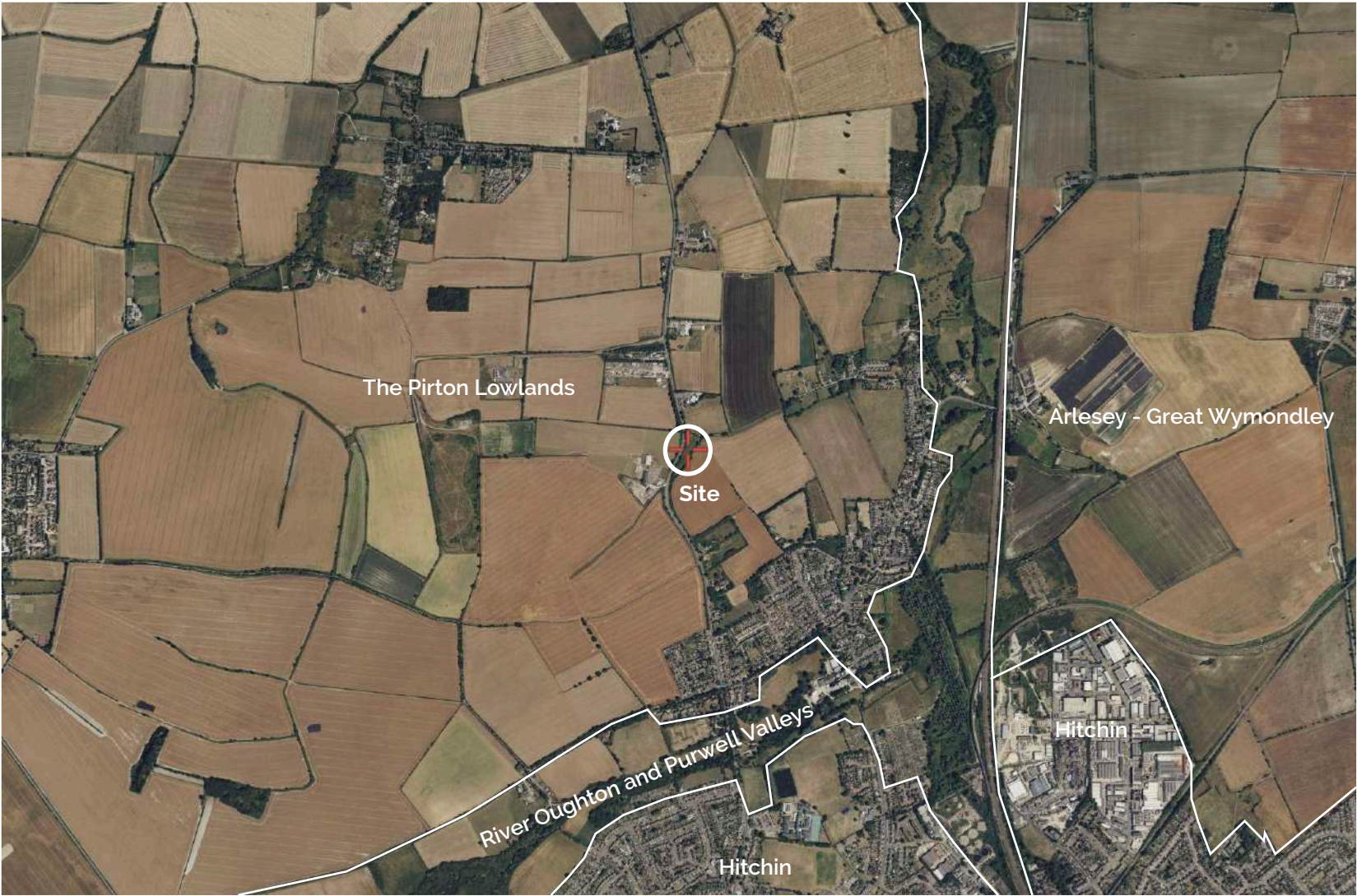
Both of these zones are characterised by their chalk geology, but it is important to assess both areas, with the following highlighted characteristics being most relevant to our site.

The Chilterns - 110

- One of the most wooded lowland landscapes in England
- Several chalk streams
- Views enclosed with branching valleys, sunken routeways and extensive woodland and hedgerow enclosed fields
- Mixture of arable, grassland and woodland and the numerous commons reflect the dominance of Grade 3 agricultural land
- Chalk plateau incised by parallel branching valleys gently shelving to the south easy into the London Basin
- Nucleated settlements of medieval origin and land farmed since prehistory are found along watercourses
- Brick and flint are the dominant traditional building materials
- Remnants of various historic land use types combine rich and diverse habitats and archaeology
- Extensive rights of way, commons, open access, woodland and parkland provide access to the countryside

East Anglian Chalk - 87

- Geology dominated by Upper Cretaceous Chalk
- The chalk bedrock gives it nutrient-poor and shallow soils
- Distinctive chalk rivers, the River Rhee and River Granta flow in gentle river valleys
- Rolling downland, mostly in arable production, has sparse tree cover
- Remnant chalk grassland supports chalkland flora and vestigial populations of invertebrates
- Certain high points have small beech copses or 'hanger', which are prominent in the open landscape



Within the NCA of 'The Chilterns', the site borders two landscape character types, highlighted in the North Herts District Council Landscape Character Assessment (2011). These are the 'Pirton Lowlands - 218', which the site sits within, and the 'River Oughton and Purwell Valleys - 217', which the site is within close proximity of.

Again, it is important to assess both of these landscape types, with the following relevant characteristics highlighted:

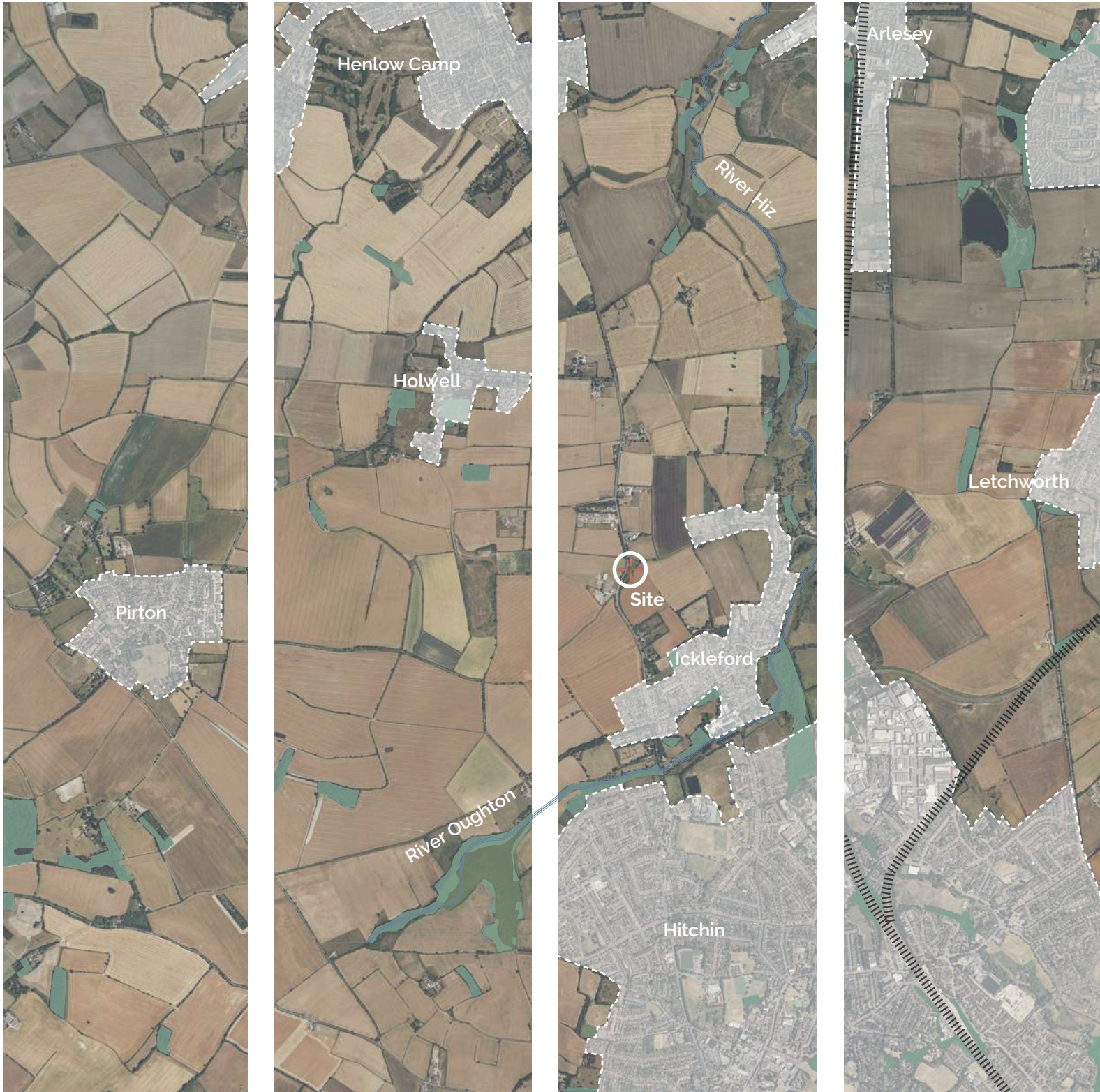
The Pirton Lowlands - 218

- Large scale open, flat farming landscape, predominantly arable production
- Remnant hedges, gappy and predominantly hawthorn, but with occasional mature trees
- Very little woodland cover except adjacent to settlements
- Settlement pattern is nucleated with older settlements maintaining the use of local vernacular materials
- Occasional farmsteads are less well integrated in terms of materials and general scale of farm buildings
- A600, Bedford Road is quite prominent in the east.
- Free draining, loaming brown soils over Chalk and Chalk Marl
- Flat topography, low lying with a gentle fall to the north

River Oughton and Purwell Valleys - 217

- Traditionally cattle grazed water meadows with poplar, willow and ash trees along the watercourses. Self seeded mature hawthorns sporadically distributed
- Mature landscape well defined by urban development (Hitchin)
- Tree cover restricts views
- General change in land use adjacent to Ickleford where land is predominantly used for horse grazing and stabling.
- Meandering watercourse with associated ponds and water bodies
- Linear woodland belt following the water course
- Flat valley bottom topography
- Poor draining gleyed soils over alluvial drift predominate

Source information: <https://suffolklandscape.org.uk/>



- There is a very distinct cross section of landscape typologies within the context of the site, with multiple settlement areas of varying size cutting through intense agricultural land.
- A prominence in arable farmland make up the local landscape.
 - River Oughton runs to the south of the site, which is a 2 mile tributary of the River Hiz, rising at Oughtonhead, and flows north east between Oughtonhead common and Oughtonhead Nature Reserve.
 - Multiple settlement groups, varying from large market towns such as Hitchin to the south of the site, and villages such as Pirton to the west.
 - There are few farmsteads found within the countryside between the settlement blocks, surrounded by arable fields.
 - Blocks of priority deciduous woodland focused along waterways, such as the River Oughton and River Hiz. Additionally to the west where woodland blocks start to become more apparent within the Chilterns AONB.
 - 27 ha nature reserve found to the south of the site, consisting of wet and dry grassland, running along the River Oughton.
 - National railway line cutting through, from Hitchin, northward toward Biggleswade.



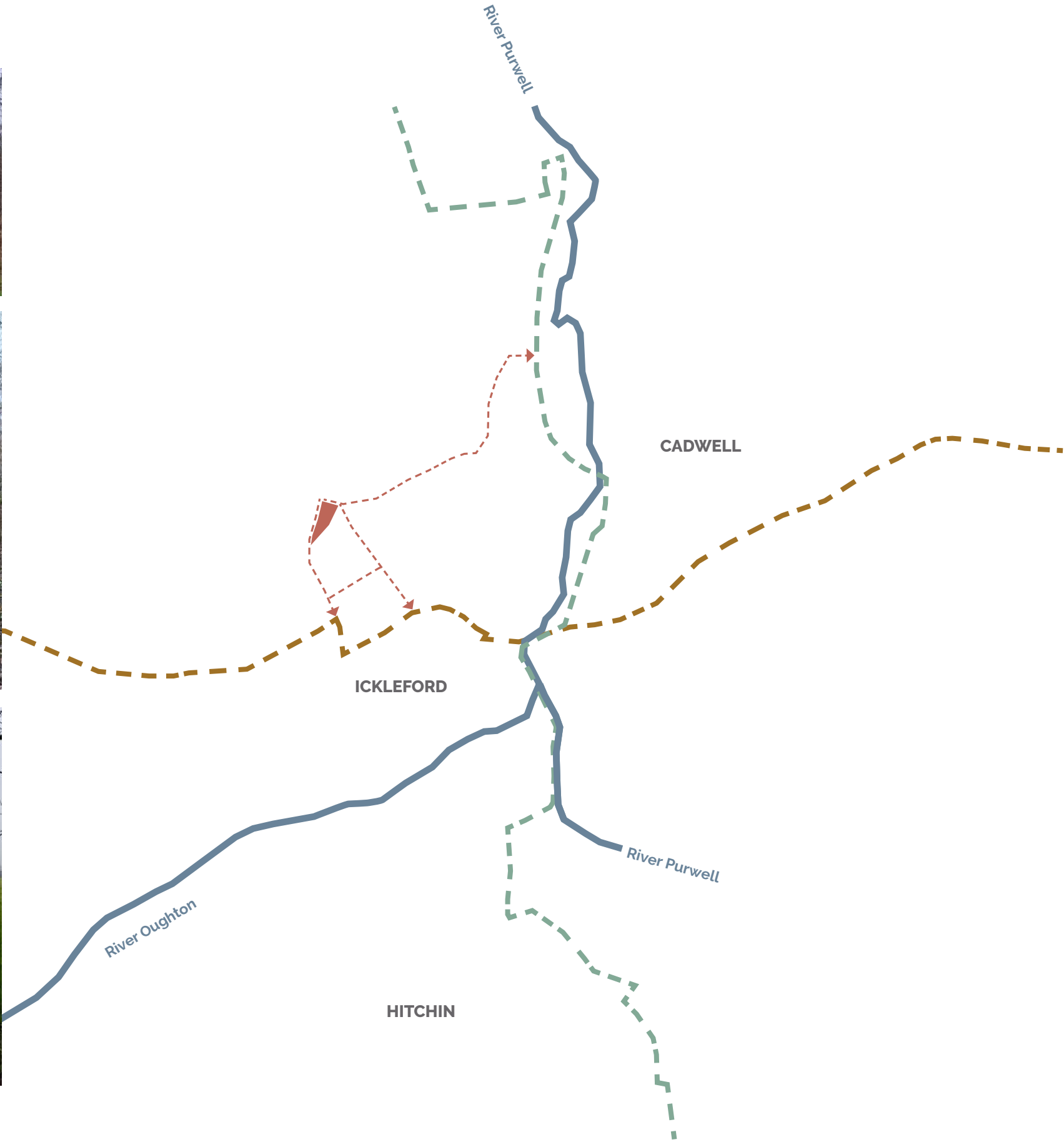
The majority of the surrounding landscape is dominated by arable farmland and large urban settlements, with Ickleford and Hitchin to the south and Letchworth to the east in the local landscape.

However, within this is a vein of green corridor that runs along the River Oughton/Purwell, cutting in between Ickleford and Hitchin, and running north following the meandering nature of the river.

The landscape within this catchment has such a significant difference from that surrounding it, that it has its own landscape character categorisation, with it being a part of the River Oughton and Purwell Valleys area, as described on page 8.

Our site sits just one field away from this catchment, and so has the opportunity to connect to this landscape character through encouraging ecological enhancements on site.

- River Hiz, Purwell and Oughton
- Ickleford Way
- Application Boundary
- Hicca Way



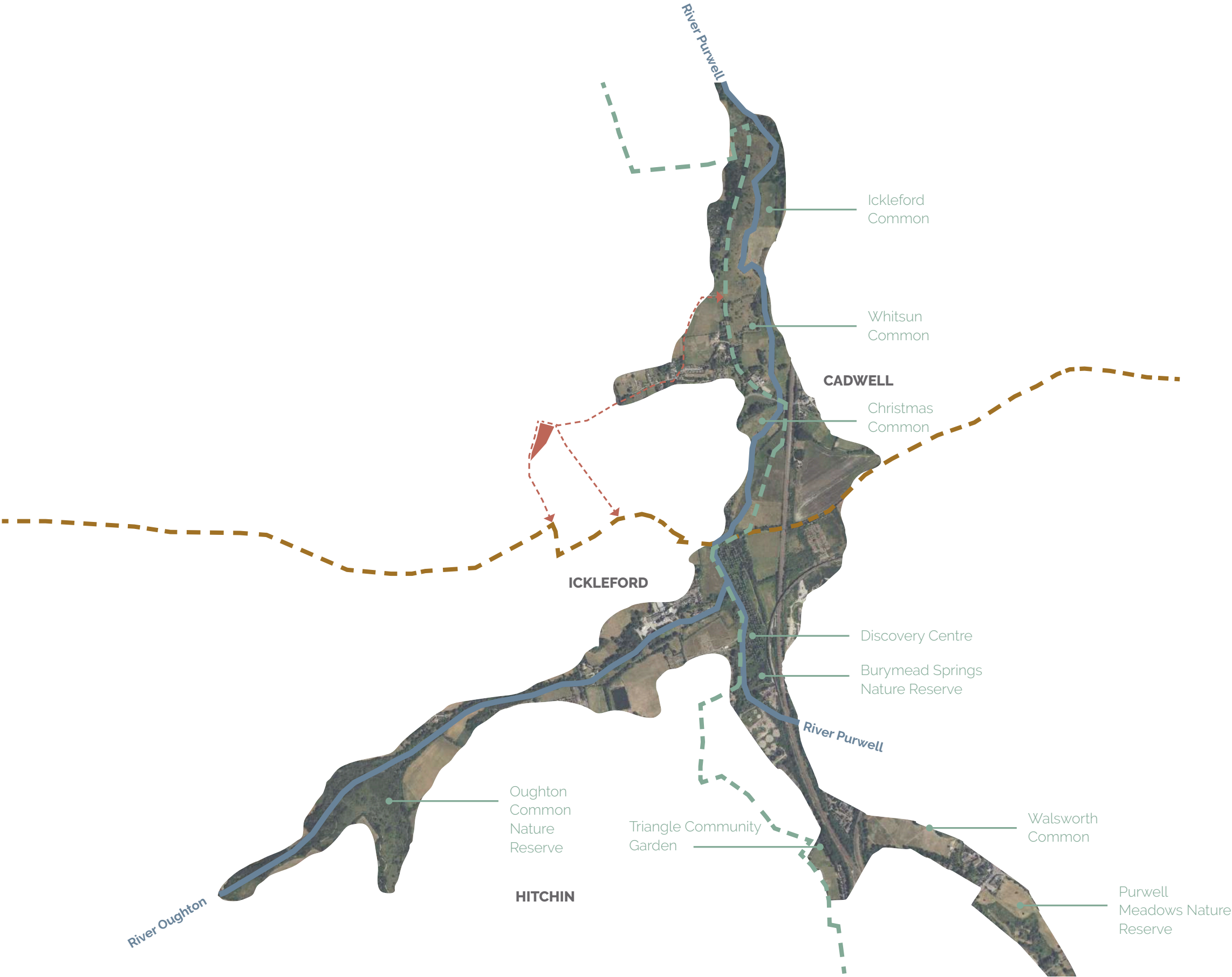
Within the local context of the site are as series of public footpaths providing community connection throughout the countryside, which include two historically significant trails; the Icknield Way and the Hicca Way.

The Icknield Way is generally recognised to be one of the oldest routes in Great Britain, believed to have existed before Romans occupied the area. It runs from Norfolk to Wiltshire, following the chalk escarpment, including the Chiltern Hills.

The Hicca Way runs along the River Purwell/Hiz, and historically used by the Danes, who founded a religious settlement in Hitchin when invading Great Britain. This route connected them from Hitchin to Danish forts which were built along the riverways.

These routes provide historical context of the local landscape and significant character, and the public footpaths that run adjacent to the site connect directly to these pathways, with Icknield Way being within closest proximity to the south of the site.

As the routes stand today, there is a sense of them being 'lost trails' with large sections being seen as simply worn grass through meadows, with very little formal layout. This opaqueness to many key landscape features starts to inform the emerging concept of the site.



Following the River Oughton/Purwell, an ecological corridor of habitats and community engagement can be seen as part of the character of the River Oughton and Purwell Valleys.

This area is made up of a series of commons and nature reserves that follow the meandering form of the river.

Common land offers areas of shared land use, predominantly grazing or recreational for the local community, whilst nature reserves provide opportunity for engagement between the locals and nature in its organic form.

There is opportunity to replicate these values on site, with public routes running along the west and northern boundary, with potential for choreographed views through to the site.

The public footpath to the north of the site runs through this meadow and its current form is difficult to navigate, primarily due to it haven fallen into the ditch. Its improvement and that of the immediate setting could offer direct community engagement and social and ecological connectivity.



The site consists of a managed meadow approximately 1 acre in size. Historically it was grazed by livestock and in recent years has been cut annually for hay.

The boundaries consist of a well-established and dense native mixed hedgerow with footpath along the north boundary. A dense stand of established deciduous tree cover combined with layers of scrub around the entirety of the site, with only a break for an existing access gateway in the north west corner. The tree cover is predominantly ash and the scrub layer has a dominance of brambles.

The land on site is relatively flat, whilst in the wider context is a low point in comparison with the adjacent fields.

The site is directly connected with local watercourses, with a running ditch along the northern boundary

Access is gained off A600 via an existing field gate, which is a main road, with a 40mph speed limit.

- 1. Existing access via field gate
- 2. Established boundary planting around entirety of site
- 3. Watercourse running along the northern boundary
- 4. Managed grassland
- 5. Existing agricultural building on site
- 6. Neighbouring farming properties
- 7. Dominance of arable farmland in direct area
- 8. Main road running adjacent to the western boundary



Generally flat topography, with managed grassland



Existing agricultural building in north east site



Existing gate access in the north east corner



PRoW that runs adjacent to the northern boundary along the watercourse



Generally flat arable farmland in the direct local area



Dense layers of scrub around all boundary lines, with watercourse along the northern boundary



A Preliminary ecological assessment has been carried out on the site with the following findings:

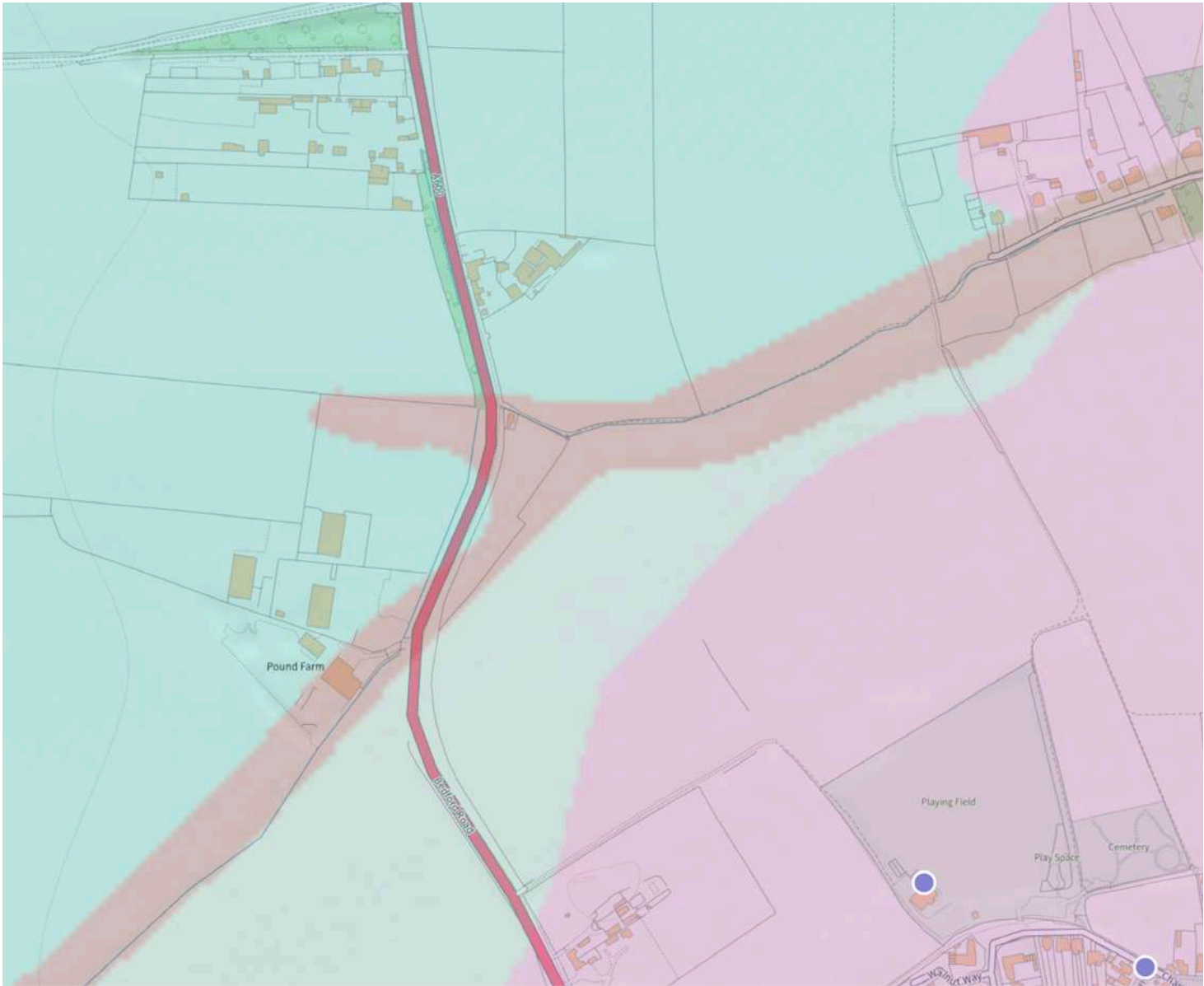
The site comprises of a grassland field, bordered on all sides by unmanaged native hedgerows and trees. The grassland is no longer used for cattle grazing and is now mown for hay approximately once every three years. A wet ditch that was associated with a hedgerow was located along the northern boundary. This ditch was connected to the River Hiz 950m east of the site. A disused cattle barn lies in the north-western corner. Collectively the habitats within the proposed development site are assessed as being of Lower value at the Parish level.

Based on the habitat types present, it is considered that the site has potential to support the following protected species or groups of species: breeding birds, aquatic mammals and foraging/commuting bats.

The results of the detailed botanical survey indicated that the grassland was not a priority habitat and that no protected, priority, or rare plant species were present on site. The results of the reptile survey indicated that reptiles were not present in detectable quantities within the site.

Based on the above together with continued coordination with the project ecologist, we believe a considerable uplift in biodiversity is achievable and should become a core part of the landscape strategy.

Refer full ecological assessment including BNG calculations carried out by The Landscape Partnership.

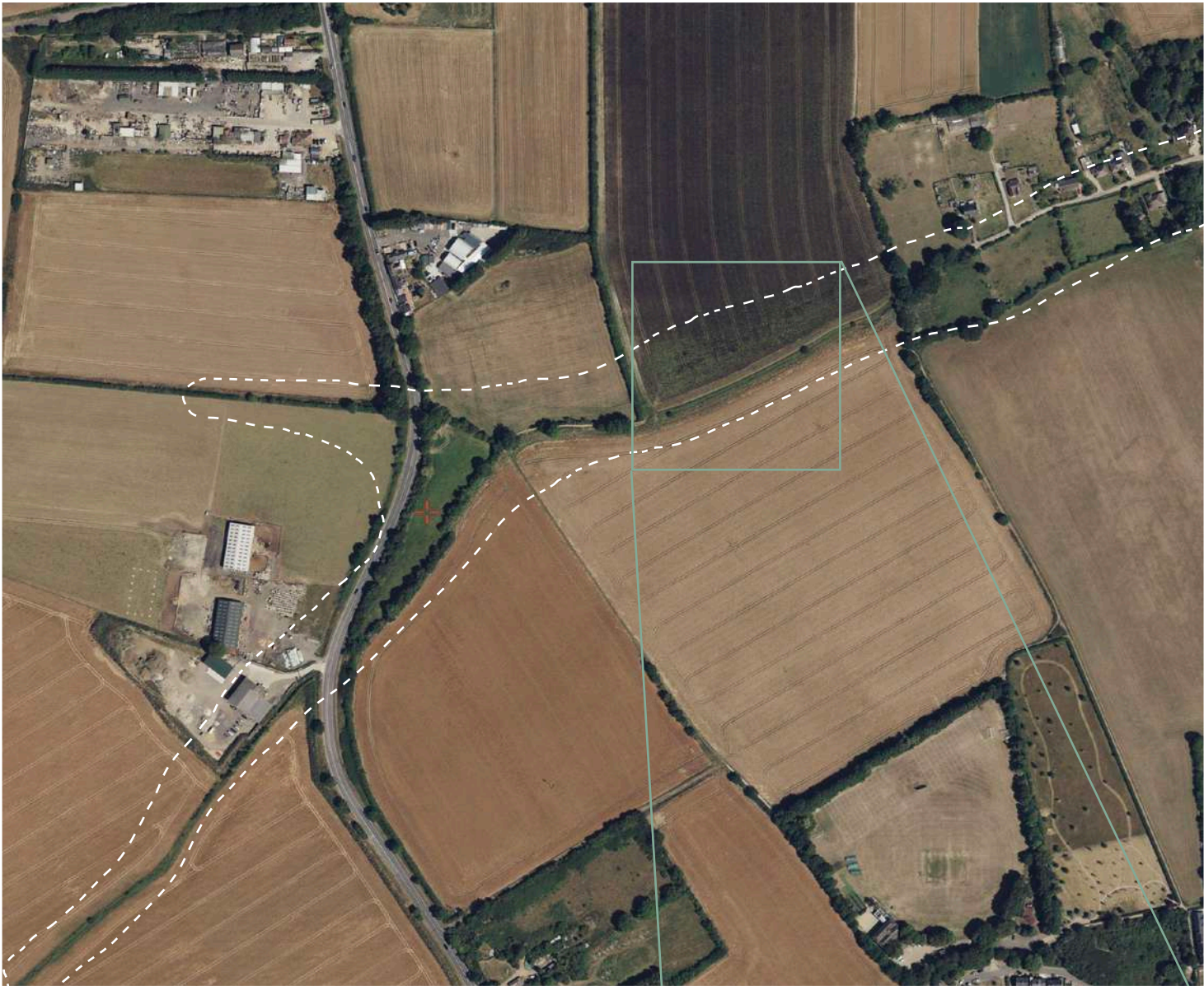


Looking at the localised geology reveals that a seam of 'Gault Clay' runs along the adjacent waterway, and makes up the majority of the site.

This seam has left the site as undesirable with regards to arable land use, which dominates the surrounding landscape, leaving the site as an unused 'lost landscape'.

'Pinch-Gut', the farms original name, is an old term for 'leftover' or infertile land, which would essentially be left to its own devices. This has become apparent due to the very geology from which it sits and will inform the emerging concept.

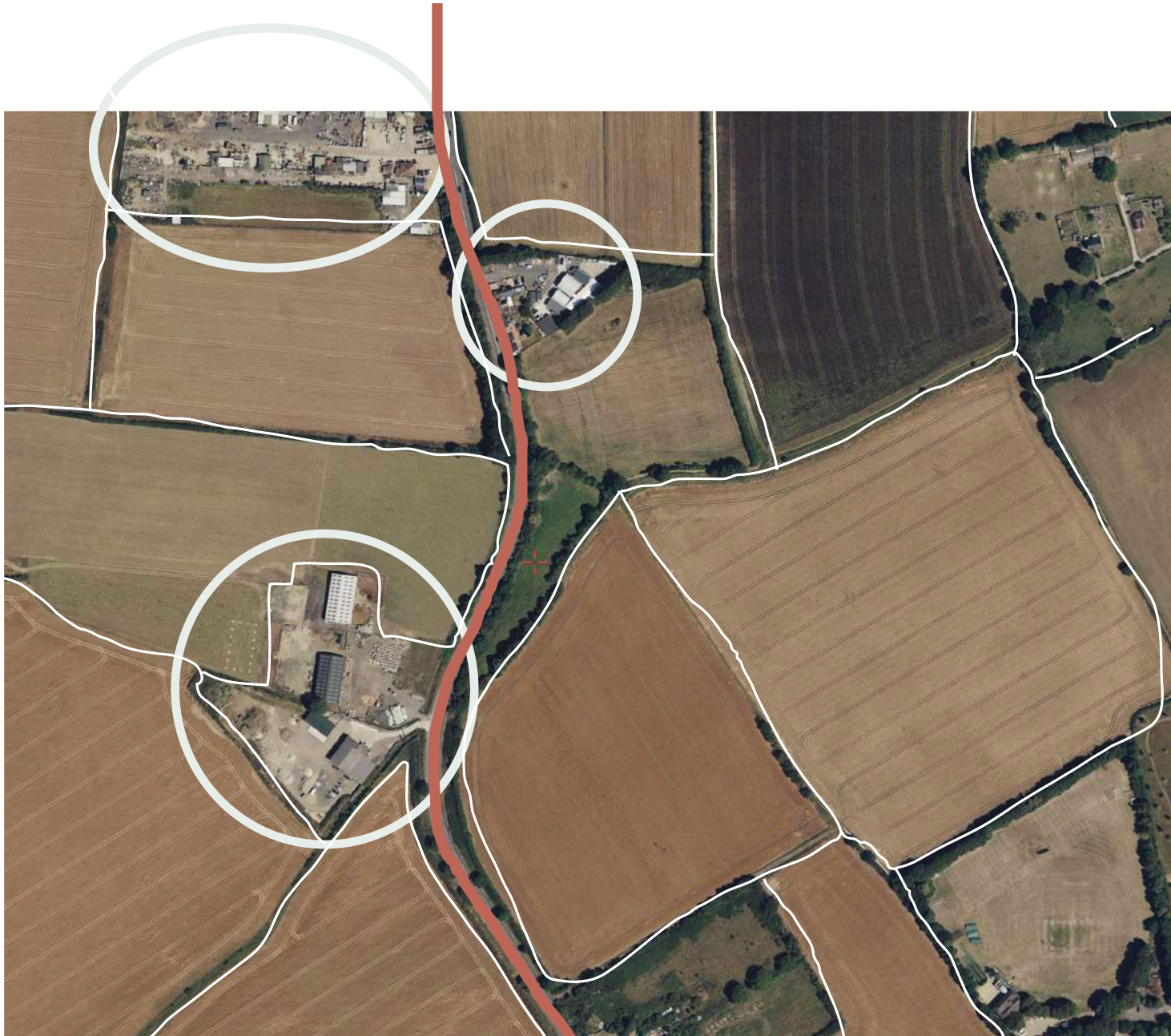
The impact of the seam of 'Gault Clay' on the arable land is visible on aerials with field margins that run adjacent appearing wider, as well as the land within the seam appearing wetter, with an effect on the crops evident.



The wet nature of the site



'Gault Clay' impact on arable land



The theme of 'lost landscape' runs through the wider context of the site, with series of dilapidated buildings commonly seen adjacent to public footpaths, the old disused railway line that features along the Hicca Way highlights this emerging theme.

The local farms, including Pound Farm, appear to be industrialised in its nature, and not necessarily sitting in with the landscape like traditional farmsteads would, which can appear more 'neglected' as a visual.

The busy A600 that runs along the western boundary comes with noise pollution and urban neglect in the form of littering, which adds to the narrative of a forgotten landscape,



Disused railway line



Neglected pathways



Litter along busy A600 road



Dilapidated buildings along public footpaths



The developing concept for the site is to celebrate the character of a 'lost landscape' that runs through the local context of the area. This theme comes with the opportunity to encourage connectivity and focus on themes of social and ecological enhancements.

As the site stands, it is a monoculture low value grassland, and with the public footpaths in close proximity, allows for multiple opportunities for improvement in habitat as well as community engagement, which include the following:

1. Enhancements to the public footpath that runs along the northern boundary
2. Enhancement to existing monoculture grassland, with more diverse species of wildflower meadow development
3. Introduction of waterways, working with the wet nature of the land to create new habitat, as well as aid in the drainage scheme on site
4. Utilising the existing dilapidated barn in connection to the theme of 'lost landscape'
5. Choreographed views from public spaces to encourage the community engagement
6. Maintenance and enhancement of existing boundary vegetation, encouraging feature species to thrive.
7. Use of vernacular materiality and form to help create a sense of built form being lost within the landscape
8. Enhanced tree cover for improved green corridor and choreographed views.



A key element to the design is the connectivity to significant features within the area directly adjacent as well as within the wider landscape. These include:

- Historic and cultural trails
- Green corridor and commons
- Riparian corridor
- Habitat connectivity
- Geology
- Community engagement through the extension of the green corridor

There is opportunity for these to be achieved with the following principles:

1. Improvement of existing footpath that runs along the northern boundary. It is currently in poor condition, with opportunity to strengthen the waterway structure that runs parallel, and move the public footpath into the meadow. This will make a safer route with better visual connection with the meadows, as well as improving connectivity to the wider trails.
2. Riparian habitat improvement with movement of public footpath to create a wider margin from the existing waterway, along with management to improve existing conditions. Proposed waterways on site will also encourage water retention, and improvement of water quality that feed into the wider waterways.
3. Enhanced tree cover and scrub development along the site boundaries, as well as management of the existing vegetation, will encourage an improved habitat connection and extension of the local green corridor.
4. The connection with the geology will be reflected through the land use, as well as the materiality of hard landscaping, with a focus on Gault Clay and Chalk.
5. Significant improvement of the meadow species diversity and introduction of additional habitats relevant to the local ecology. This is with a view of creating wildlife corridors to other locally significant habitats.

Locally important wildlife habitats - Refer page 12 of the document for the wider map.



Ickleford Common



Purwell Meadows



Oughton Common Nature Reserve



Burymead Springs Nature Reserve Unmanaged Dry Meadow



Positive meadow management for species diversity



'A Lost Landscape' - connecting the architecture



Orchards with locally relevant species



Positive water management for ecology





The landscape strategy responds to the existing landscape character and setting. Through the identified site assessments within this document, key opportunities have been identified to significantly enhance the site and the setting from which it sits.

Taking guidance from the existing **Landscape Character** assessments, both local and national, the strategy addresses key opportunities, including:

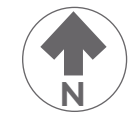
- *promote the creation of buffer-zones between intensive arable production and areas of seminatural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas,*
- *promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas,*
- *promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees,*
- *maintain and extend the rights of way network,*
- *encourage the development of unimproved species-rich grassland habitats*
- *promote the creation of new ponds and the retention of existing ponds for wildlife,*
- *encourage the planting of trees and other appropriate vegetation along watercourses.*

The sensitive design development and process for the landscape reflects the very special circumstances required within **Greenbelt Policy**. The existing condition, enclosed nature of the site and the proposed site improvements provide mitigation against the potential harm of the development in the context of 'openness' and wider greenbelt policy.

The local **Neighbourhood Plan** provides key guidance on the future of the parish which includes key policies in relation to new developments, some of which include:

- *proposals take advantage of the local topography, landscape and water features, trees and plants in the vicinity and on the site,*
- *boundary treatment and landscaping schemes are carefully designed so as to maintain the rural character of the area,*
- *All development proposals affecting identified local heritage assets will be required to take into account the character, context and setting of the assets. This includes trails such as the Icknield Way*
- *Opportunities should also be taken by developers and landowners to link with existing wildlife corridors and sustainable drainage solutions in new development to complement nature conservation objectives*

The local area is very fortunate to have so many **Local Nature Reserves**, many of which have potential to connect with the project site. The management plans for these nature reserves have fed into the proposed landscape strategy.





1. Access driveway, reflecting the nature of a rural gravel track.
2. Car port utilising the form of the existing agricultural building, with entrance turning circle.
3. Feature entrance space with locally relevant scrub planting to give the impression of the house emerging from a lost landscape.
4. Belts of new tree/scrub development, wrapping around the house, encouraging the visual of the landscape having a prominence on the site and enveloping the built form.
5. Formal lawn space hidden from view from the busy A600, looking instead onto the surrounding farmland.
6. Feature walls extending from the building, cutting into the landscape, blurring lines between landscape and built form.
7. Wildflower meadow, improving biodiversity and habitat value, with simple mown pathways.
8. New ecological ponds on site, connected via new waterways/scrapes, creating new habitat that can connect to the existing riparian corridors in the area.
9. Enhancement of existing boundary vegetation with additional tree cover and scrub layers, improving the green corridor connection with the wider landscape, as well as enhancing the screening value.
10. Drainage mound as part of the wider drainage strategy.
11. New orchard planting, using locally relevant species.

Key

Proposed residential curtilage

Gravel permeable driveway

Scrub planting

Lawn

Existing hedgerow with additional gapping up planting

Wildflower meadow

Paving

Water

Proposed tree



1. Access driveway, reflecting the nature of a rural gravel track with sett paving where it meets the highway.
2. Car port and gravel parking area utilising the form of the existing agricultural building.
3. Belts of new tree/scrub development, wrapping around the house, encouraging the visual of the landscape having a prominence on the site and enveloping the built form.
4. Feature entrance space with locally relevant scrub planting to give the impression of the house emerging from a lost landscape.
5. Lawn space for family amenity.
6. Attenuation pond for site wide water strategy.
7. Formal terraces tucked out of view from adjacent public areas.
8. Pollinator planting with a natural form to blend the emerging architecture into the setting.
9. Green roofs to soften the built form and to connect with the wider concept/setting.
10. Swale connecting the ponds and management of site wide surface water.
11. Wildflower meadow, improving biodiversity and habitat value, with simple mown pathways.

Key

- Proposed residential curtilage
- Gravel permeable driveway
- Scrub planting
- Lawn
- Existing hedgerow with additional gapping up planting
- Wildflower meadow
- Paving
- Water
- Proposed tree



Visuals by Studio Bark





Visuals by Studio Bark





The proposed materiality for the new development has a focus on reflecting the local geology, with Gault Clay and Chalk bricks providing visual connection with the prominence of chalk in the area, as well as the Gault Clay seam that makes up the majority of the site. Additionally flint and timber are proposed as part of the structure, which is evident within the local vernacular.

The strategy for hard landscaping follows similar principles, with a focus on the local vernacular and geology, whilst also drawing from farmsteads for the form and detail in which these materials are used.

The rural character of the local landscape is to be reflected in the informal layout of materials, with loose gravel tracks proposed for the access and broken up paving surfaces that allow planting to diffuse through. These are characterful visuals for traditional farmsteads and follows the idea of the lines between the soft and hard landscaping blurring, linking to the theme of 'lost landscape'.

The farmstead track and car entrance space is proposed to be a limestone gravel, tying into the chalk geology of the wider landscape, whilst the more formal spaces and feature entrance area are proposed to be constructed with reclaimed Gault Clay pavers. These tie in directly to the seam of clay found underneath the site, and is also proposed for the feature walls that cut into the soft landscaping.



Gault Clay



Chalk



Flint



Timber



Woodland - Oughtonhead



Riparian Habitat - Burymead



Riparian Habitat - Purwell



Dry Meadow - Purwell

The strategy for planting is to reflect and strengthen the locally significant species that characterise the green corridor, using the local nature reserves as the blueprint for species selection of meadow mixes and new tree planting.

Purwell Meadows Nature Reserve, Burymead Springs Nature Reserve and Oughtonhead Commons Nature Reserve have combinations of dry and wet habitat which can be mirrored in our design.

The reedbed at Burymead Springs is a high priority habitat and one of the largest in North Hertfordshire, consisting of *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed), *Phalaris arundinacea* (Reed Canary Grass) and *Lythrum salicaria* (Purple Loosestrife). This significant habitat can be recreated around the proposed ecological ponds within the design.

Purwell Meadows consists of a diverse mosaic of neutral-calcareous grassland and wet grassland including species such as *Cynosurus cristatus* (Crested Dog's Tail), *Lolium perenne* (Perennial Ryegrass), *Arrhenatherum elatius* (False Oat Grass), *Poa trivialis* (Rough Meadow-Grass) and *Festuca rubra* (Red Fescue), whilst also having wildflowers including *Ononis spinosa* (Spiny Restharrow), *Centaurea nigra* (Black Knapweed) and *Ranunculus acris* (Meadow Buttercup). The distinct character that the collective of these species create is to be created within the wildflower/grass areas of the design, including the meadow to the north of the site, which is within the clients ownership.

Oughtonhead Commons contains a variety of habitats, including wet and dry woodland, which has inspired the species selection for the proposed enhanced tree coverage, along the existing boundary vegetation, but also with new tree belts proposed to cut through the landscape on site. Species for scrub/understorey development on site include *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn), *Prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn), *Ligustrum vulgare* (Privet) and *Corylus avellana* (Hazel), whilst larger tree cover will consist of *Salix alba* (Willow), *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech) and *Quercus robur* (Oak).



Fagus sylvatica



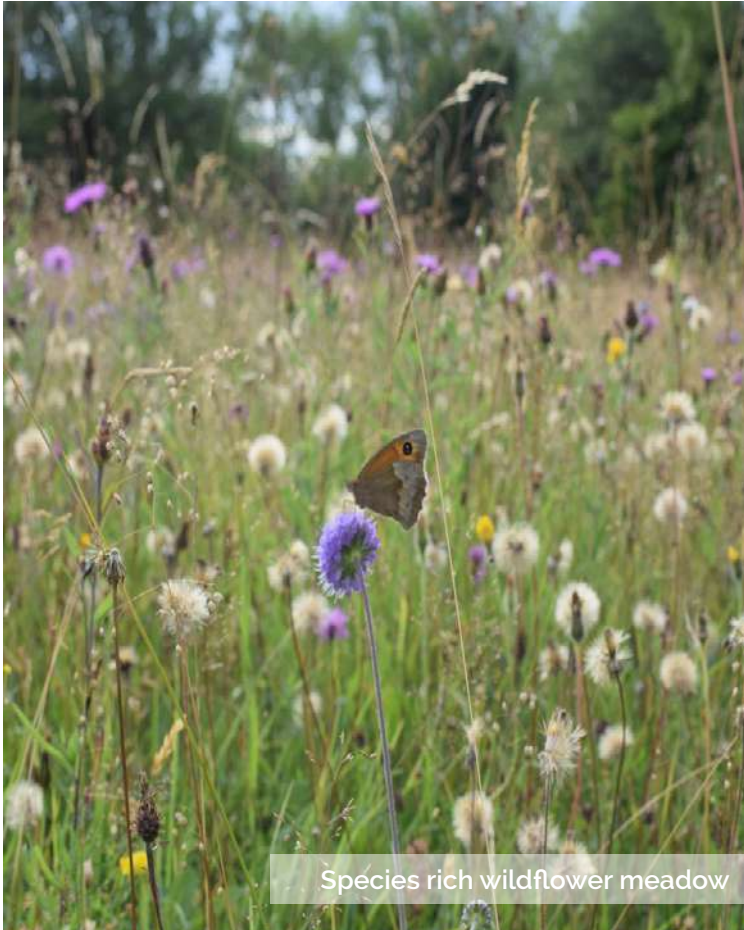
Prunus spinosa



Corylus avellana



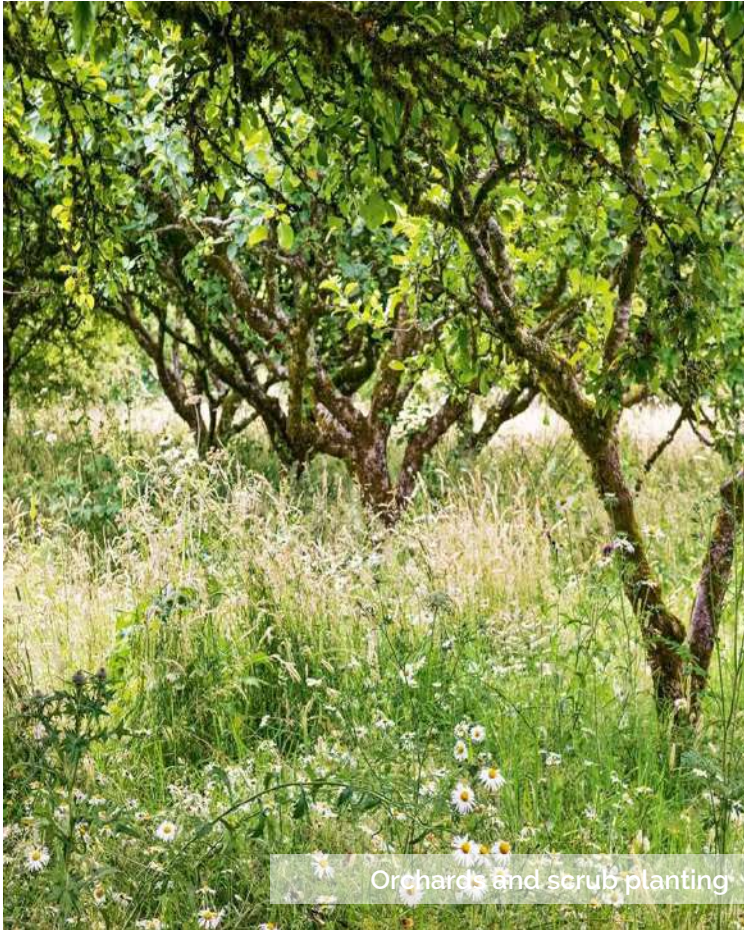
Quercus robur



Species rich wildflower meadow



Pond creation with aquatic margins



Orchards and scrub planting



Swale with wet meadow species

The landscape strategy has been developed in collaboration with the project ecologist consultant to ensure a locally relevant and significant enhancement of the sites habitats is achieved.

The general approach has been two pronged, the first, to assess and understand what is on the site in its current form in order to understand how best to enhance it. The second is to study the landscape setting to identify key habitats locally and how best to enhance the connectivity generally within the wider landscape.

The main strategy include the following:

1. gap up and improve the diversity of the existing hedgerows using a mix of locally relevant and climate resilient species,
2. significantly improve the meadow diversity by utilising local nature reserves and commons as a locally relevant seed bank,
3. introduce a new scrub habitat to enhance the connectivity of the site with adjacent habitat corridors,
4. the creation of a water attenuation pond to manage and improve water quality from the proposed dwelling and associated hard standing areas,
5. creation of an ecological pond with aquatic planting margin to create a new habitat type in site which compliments near by waterway and significantly enhances the biodiversity opportunity,
6. the introduction on a swale with wet meadow marginal planting to connect the ponds and create a new habitat type, improving the site biodiversity potential.
7. additional tree planting to hedgerows and within the meadow setting for additional arboreal habitats and to maintain the local landscape character,
8. creation of a new orchard using locally relevant heritage species

Please refer to the ecology reports for detailed biodiversity calculations and site condition.

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