



GA2, Land north of Great Ashby Environmental Statement

Chapter 2: Description of the Site, Surroundings and Background

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of Picture Estates Limited

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2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE, SURROUNDINGS AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

- 2.1 This chapter provides a summary of the existing Site and its surrounding area, including key features, designations, and key sensitive receptor locations. This provides the context for evaluating the existing baseline conditions and for assessing the Proposed Development. A full description of the baseline conditions relevant to the technical assessments is provided in each technical chapter.

Site Description and Background

- 2.2 The Site is located in Great Ashby, to the north east of Stevenage. The Site is located wholly within the administrative boundary of NHDC. The centre of the Site is located at Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid Reference (NGR) TL262278. The Site covers an area of approximately 62.93 hectares (ha). The planning application boundary is shown in **Figure 1.1**.
- 2.3 The Site currently comprises arable fields and areas of woodland. The arable fields within the Site are demarcated by hedgerows, woodlands, and copses. Arable farmland comprising woodland and hedgerows are found adjacent to the site to the north and the east. The Site has a number of footpaths and bridleways running adjacent to the Site boundary and through the Site itself.
- 2.4 The Site is bound by the following:
- To the north by parcels of woodland and arable land. Tile Kiln Farm lies immediately beyond a section of the north Site boundary;
 - To the east by parcels of woodland and arable land;
 - To the south by the parish of Great Ashby, where the local area comprises low density residential dwellings of typically one to three storey buildings. Areas of Ancient Woodland and a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) lie close to the southeast corner of the Site; and
 - To the west by an area of Ancient Woodland abutting the western boundary, with arable land lying further beyond the area of woodland.
- 2.5 The surrounding area is characterised by agricultural land use to the north, east and south of the Site, with residential land use located to the west of the Site.
- 2.6 The nearest residential properties are located on Cromdale Walk and Grampian Place, which are adjacent to the Site's southwestern boundary.

Environmental Context and Constraints

Introduction

- 2.7 **Figure 2.3** identifies the key environmental designations within and close to the Site. Further details of the key environmental sensitivities are provided in the technical chapters (i.e. **Chapters 6-16** and **Volume II**) and a summary is provided below.

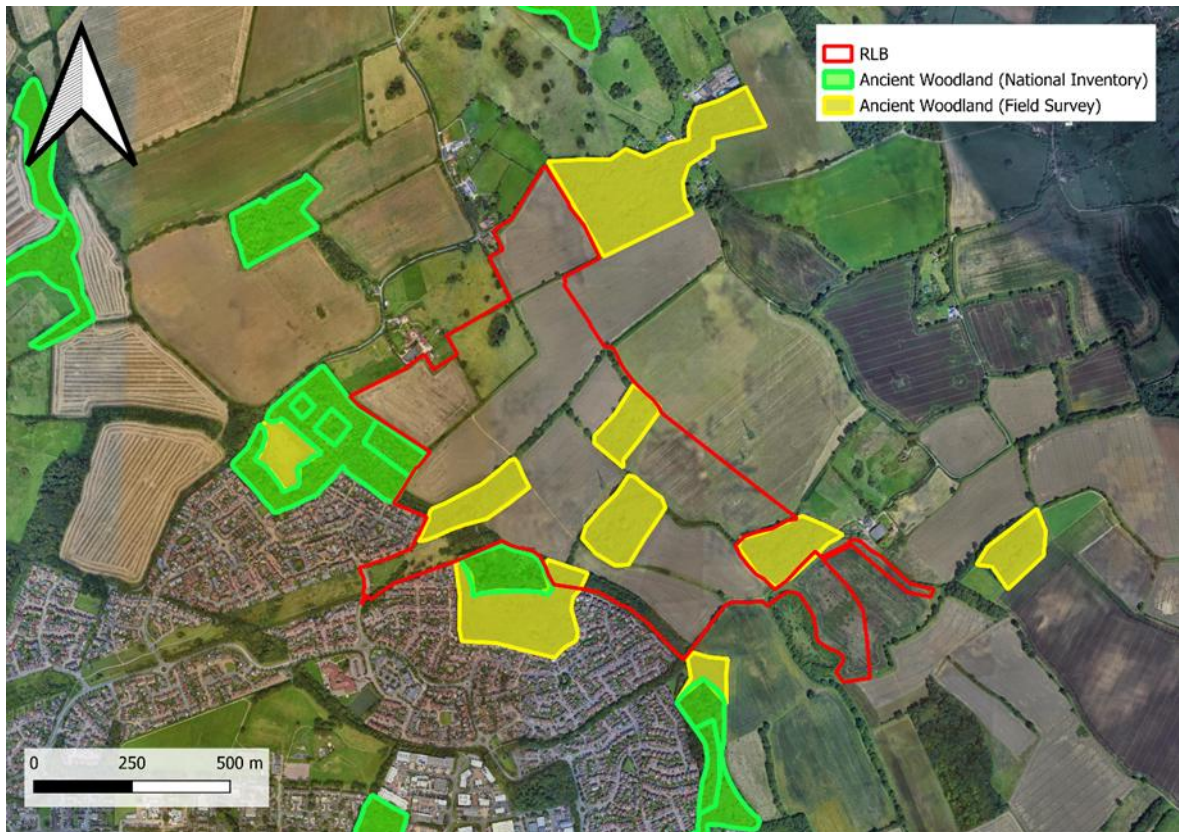
Air Quality

- 2.8 The Site is not located within or adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The nearest AQMA to the Site is located approximately 6.6km north west of the Site.

Ecology and Arboriculture

- 2.9 The Site does not fall within any Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Natural Nature Reserves (NNR) or Local Nature Reserves (LNR). There are no statutory designated sites in proximity to the Site.
- 2.10 Two non-statutory designations lie within the Site, New Spring Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and Brooches Wood LWS. There are further LWS located in proximity to the Site, as set out below:
- Tilekiln Wood LWS, located immediately adjacent to the north west;
 - Parsonsgreen Wood LWS, located immediately adjacent to the north west;
 - The Warren LWS, located 35m to the south east;
 - Claypithills Spring Wood LWS, located 60m to the south;
- 2.11 Each of these designations comprise areas of Ancient Woodland and semi-natural woodland. Field surveys undertaken on the Site have identified parcels of Ancient Woodland that have not been listed under the national inventory. These are shown below in **Figure 2.1**.
- 2.12 
- 2.13 Further details of features of ecological significance are set out in **Chapter 9: Ecology** of the ES.

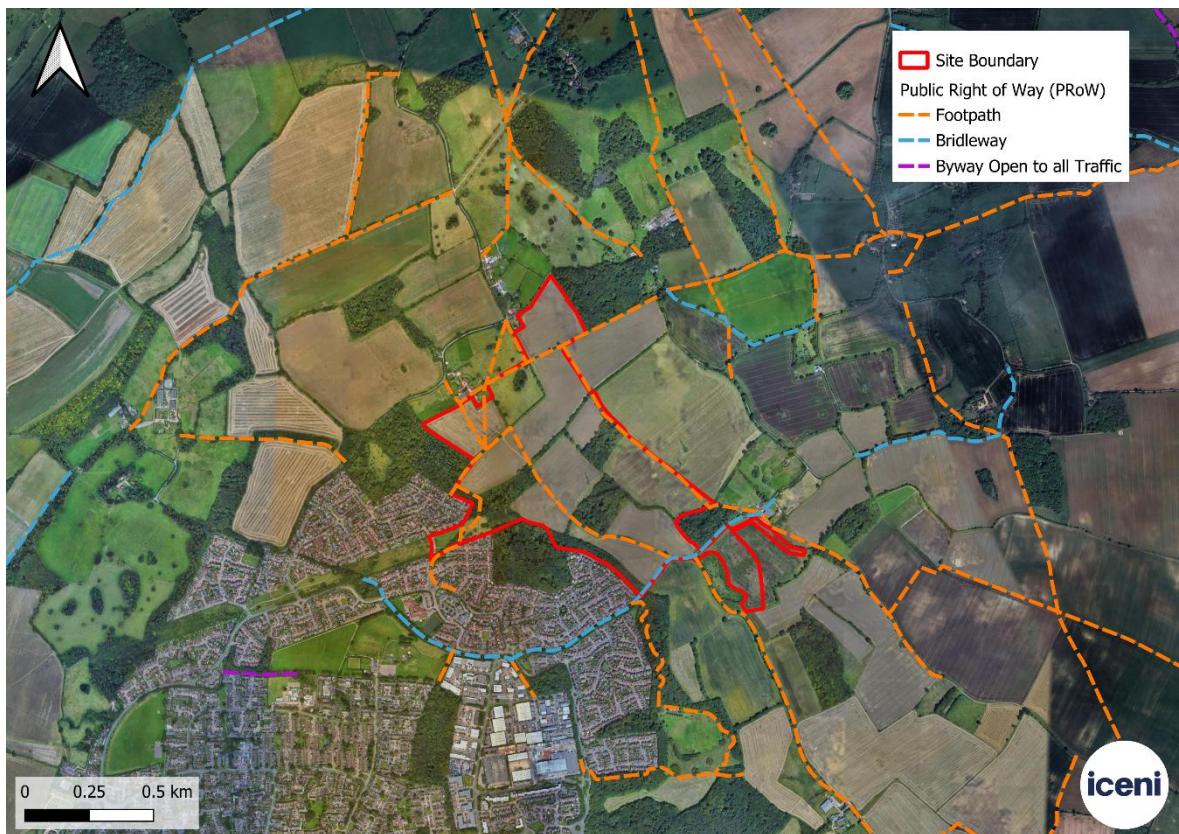
Figure 2.1 Ancient Woodland within and adjacent to the Site



Transport and Access

- 2.14 The nearest bus stop to the Site is located on Great Ashby Way, approximately 600m west of the Site. This bus stop is served by service SB7, providing regularly services to Stevenage town centre. The nearest train station is Stevenage, located approximately 4.5km to the south-west of the Site with southbound services to London, and northbound services to Cambridge, Peterborough, York, Leeds, and Edinburgh.
- 2.15 Several Public Rights of Way (PRoW) bisect the Site. These include footpaths and a bridleway, as shown in **Figure 2.2**.

Figure 2.2 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within and around the Site



Water Environment and Flood Risk

- 2.16 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1, indicating that there is a low risk of fluvial and tidal flooding within the Site boundary. The Site is not considered to be at risk from flooding from reservoirs.
- 2.17 The majority of the Site is not at risk from surface water flooding. There are a few minor surface water flow routes that follow the natural low points of the Site's topography. The nearest watercourse is Claypithills Spring, located immediately south of the Site.
- 2.18 The Site is underlain by Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation at bedrock, a principal aquifer, with superficial deposits of Head and Lowestoft Formation, a secondary (undifferentiated) aquifer. The Site is at Medium and High risk of groundwater flooding.
- 2.19 The Site lies within Groundwater Source Protection Zone III (SPZ3).

Archaeology

- 2.20 No Scheduled Monuments, World Heritage Sites, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck sites have been identified on or within the vicinity of the Site.

2.21 The Site lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance which highlights the potential for archaeological remains, particularly associated with later prehistoric and early medieval settlement in Hertfordshire. There are a number of Areas of Archaeological Significance across North Hertfordshire which, although not nationally recognised or designated, are considered to be of local importance.

2.22 Further details on the archaeological potential of the Site are provided in **Chapter 7: Archaeology**.

Built Heritage and Landscape

2.23 The Site does not contain any heritage assets designated as being of national importance, such as listed buildings or Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Site.

2.24 There are a total of 11 listed buildings within 1km of the Site, all of which are Grade II listed:

- Barn to East of Farmhouse at Tilekiln Farm (Grade II, List UID: 1102485);
- Tilekiln Farm House (Grade II, List UID: 1102483);
- Barn Group around Courtyard at Tilekiln Farm (Grade II, List UID: 1102484);
- Dane End Cottage (Grade II, List UID: 1308310);
- Granary at Dane End Farm, 4 meters to west of House (Grade II, List UID: 1102518);
- Dane End Farmhouse (Grade II, List UID: 1347416);
- The Thatched Cottage (Grade II, List UID: 1102495);
- Friends Green Farmhouse (Grade II, List UID: 1102522);
- Farm Buildings Next the Road at Friends Green Farm (Grade II, List UID: 1347436);
- East Barn and Attached Outbuildings at Friends Green Farm (Grade II, List UID: 1102482); and
- Barn at Warrensgreen (Grade II, List UID: 1308229).

2.25 The St Nicholas's Rectory Lane Conservation Area is located approximately 1.35km south-west of the Site.

2.26 Some areas of the Site lie within Landscape Character Areas 220 and 221 (North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment). Some areas of the south-east of the Site lie within Landscape Character Area 39 (Middle Beane Valley).

- 2.27 Further details on the surrounding landscape are provided in **Chapter 11: Landscape and Visual Impact** and further details on built heritage are provided in **Chapter 8: Built Heritage**.

Figure 2.3 Environmental Sensitivities

