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# **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

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**Land East of Walnut Tree Road, Pirton,  
Hertfordshire, SG5 3PX**

**for**

**Blakeney Homes Ltd**

**13 August 2025**



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## Client

Blakeney Homes Ltd

## Residential development, Land East of Walnut Tree Road, Pirton

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## Planning authority

North Herts District  
Council  
Council Offices  
Gernon Road  
Letchworth Garden City  
SG6 3JF

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (“LVIA”) has been prepared in support of a planning application for residential development and associated landscaping at: Land East of Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire.
- The proposed development will be contained within two land parcels of approximately 3 hectares (“the site”). Access will be from the existing route; Cotman End carriageway from Walnut Tree Road. The proposal is for an outline planning application with all matters reserved except for vehicular access for a high quality, sustainable scheme comprising up to 50 new homes, including affordable housing, together with amenity space, landscaping and all associated infrastructure and works. The proposals include a large public open space (“POS”) on the eastern edge of the site.
- The site is on the southeastern edge of the large village of **Pirton (A)** within two pasture field enclosures with some derelict timber structures thought to be used in small scale animal husbandry. A named trail ‘Icknield Way’ lies on the northern edge and a local footpath on the southern and eastern edge. To the south are the grounds of the village recreation grounds with cricket and football pitches, a play area, tennis courts and social club. To the north, extensive 21<sup>st</sup> century housing is established.
- The proposed residential development will be accessed via the relatively new development and made road at Cotman End. The route will continue within the site along the southern edge with spurs to the north. A circulating footpath will link to existing PROWs on the southern, eastern and northern edges.
- The site is enclosed by mature vegetation including trees and overgrown hedge lines which will be retained as established mitigation. Tree species include ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), oak (*Quercus spp.*), some lime (*Tilia spp.*) and field maple (*Acer campestre*). Hedgerow species includes hawthorn (*Crataegus spp.*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and some sycamore, ash, dog-rose (*Rosa canina*) and field maple. The site is made up of two fields; Field 1 to the north is approximately 1.75 hectares, while Field 2 to the south is approximately 1.25 hectares. The two fields are separated by a poorly structured, partial hedgerow mainly of blackthorn, with occasional common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and some elm (*Ulmus spp.*).

- The topography within the site is relatively level with a fall of approximately 2m to the south over the two fields. Historically the landscape field pattern has remained much the same as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when the land appeared in use as ‘allotments’ (National Library of Scotland, accessed October 2024). The village itself appears to have remained relatively unchanged from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century until extensive development in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- There numerous Public Rights of Way (“PRoW”) within 2km of the site, and three on the site boundaries including the named trail ‘Icknield Way’ (**Footpath 1**) on the northern edge of the site. Icknield Way links with wider interconnecting national walking routes.
- The site is in the northern extents of Hertfordshire. The site is ‘grade 2 very good’ land according to the Agricultural Land Classification, accessed June 2024. The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (“AONB”) lies 340m to the southwest at its nearest point.
- Nationally, the site is part of the **National Character Area 110 (“NCA 110”) Chilterns**. The North Hertfordshire Landscape Study (2011) places the site in ‘Pirton Lowlands’ landscape character area, described as *‘large scale open, flat farming landscape given over predominantly to arable production. Long distance views of features such as water towers, churches and the chalk scarp. Remnant hedges, gappy and predominantly hawthorn but with occasional mature trees’* (NHLS 2011: 114).
- For the site itself, the landscape effects of the introduction of residential development is **slight/moderate** due to the **low** to sensitivity of landscape elements. However, the magnitude of change is considered **medium**, the development will not be uncharacteristic of the settlement edge. Important landscape elements such the tree and hedge lines on the site boundaries will be preserved.
- The assessment of the effects of the proposals on the local landscape character found that there would be a **slight/moderate** to **moderate** effect on the district landscape and a **slight** effect on the wider landscape, however the magnitude of change is **negligible**.
- With regard to the visual effects of the proposed development upon local receptors, three groups of properties and a single dwelling may experience some seasonal **moderate** visual effect to secondary views. This is, according to standard criteria, a significant effect.

- Three footpaths, **Footpath 1, 2 and 3** immediately adjacent the site will experience **slight/moderate to moderate/slight** visual effect to views, however this will lessen when vegetation is in leaf and is for a short duration only.
- Cumulative effects were assessed. It is judged that there is a **slight/moderate** cumulative landscape effect and a **low** cumulative visual effect.
- The construction period is likely to cause some landscape and visual effects above operational effects, however this is for a medium duration depending on phasing of construction and can be mitigated by site hoarding and controls usually applied within a CEMP.
- The receiving landscape exhibits a suburban, settlement edge character and the site is discreet due to the strong boundary vegetation. This will be retained and enhanced including a large area of public open space.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Greenlight Environmental Consultancy Limited has been commissioned by Blakeney Homes Ltd. to carry out a LVIA for a residential development on land east of Walnut Tree Road, Pirton, Hertfordshire.
- 1.2 Landscape and townscape character results from the way that different aspects of the environment (physical, natural, and cultural) interact and how people perceive them. Different combinations and/or patterns of landscape components (geology, soils, topography, hydrology, land cover, land use, vegetation, and settlement) create areas of distinctive character. Landscape and townscape effects may arise as a result of changes to individual landscape components and/or the character of the area.
- 1.3 The existing baseline situation and the proposals for the development are then analysed against the assessed potential visual and landscape effects. The approach to the report is in accordance with current guidance (see Section 2.1 below).
- 1.4 This report forms part of the planning submission and also seeks to inform how the potential landscape and visual effects of the scheme for the surrounding area can be minimised.
- 1.5 The initial 'Study Area' is 2km from the site boundary. This extends north to Mayfield Crescent; east to Bedford Road; south to Hexton Road; and west to Knocking Hoe SSSI.
- 1.6 The proposed development is for approximately forty-six dwellings, a mix of detached and semi-detached properties within two pasture fields that is the site. The development will be accessed from Walnut Tree Road to the west along a new carriageway Cotman End. Although there will be some remnant hedgerow removed from the centre of the site, the majority of boundary trees and hedge plants will be retained and enhanced.
- 1.7 The site appears not to have been subject to planning applications in the past (North Hertfordshire Council).
- 1.8 There are landscape elements that mitigate any possible landscape and visual effect of the proposals including the boundary tree lines and hedgerows.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Relevant guidance**

2.1.1 This appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with best practice as outlined in the following publications:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA3) – Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013.
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment October 2014 Christine Tudor, Natural England
- Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations- Landscape Institute Technical Advice Note 02/21 – 2021
- Landscape Character Assessment - Guidance for England and Scotland – Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage 2002.
- The Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment - Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment 2004.
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals - Landscape Institute Technical Advice Note 06/19 – 2019

### **2.2 Methodology**

2.2.1 The methodology used for this assessment is based on the guidance listed above. The criteria used in the methodology is detailed at [Appendix 2](#).

2.2.2 A desktop review of published data, such as landscape character assessments, OS maps and landscape planning policies, has been carried out. This identified potential landscape and visual receptors that could be affected by the proposed residential development. The field survey visit was carried out on the 09 September 2024 to confirm the findings of the desktop review. Photographs taken at approximately 1.5m height, with a with a Nikon D7200 camera and Nikon DX AF-S NIKKOR 35mm 1:1.8G fixed lens except where stated otherwise. For Type 1 photomontages please refer to A3 Figures Volume under separate cover.

2.2.3 The structure of the report is as follows:

- (i) In Section 3 is the current policy context, which may include emerging Local Plans.

- (ii) In section 4 is the existing situation, i.e. the baseline condition of the landscape is reviewed. This includes the topography, vegetation cover and land uses, published landscape character studies, landscape and other relevant designations, and the current visibility of the site.
- (iii) In Section 5 the proposals for the development are set out, including the proposed mitigation planting proposals.
- (iv) In Sections 6 and 7 respectively, the potential landscape and visual effects are assessed in detail (construction and operational phases) using the landscape and visual receptors identified in Section 4, by considering the interaction between them and the proposals for the development.
- (iv) Finally in Section 8, conclusions are drawn.

2.2.4 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (“ZTV”) mapping has been used to identify the worst-case scenario for potential locations from which the proposed development might be visible. It is important to note that such modelling cannot represent accurately small-scale landscape elements in the terrain. The terrain data is based on landform and vertical structures but does not incorporate weather conditions or the orientation of receptor, and thus does not provide a definitive mapping of actual visibility. The ZTV information is used in conjunction with other desktop study to inform further the understanding of the development in the larger landscape, and to focus the field surveys and the selection of viewpoints (please refer to the A3 Figures Volume under separate cover).

## 2.3 **Assessment of effect**

2.3.1 In this report, in accordance with the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Guidelines, 3rd edition (2013) the landscape and visual effects is ascertained by cross-referencing the sensitivity of the baseline landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of change as a result of the development. Whilst the methodology is designed to be robust and transparent, professional judgement must be applied to determine the scale of each effect.

2.3.2 Please see Appendix 2 which sets out the criteria used to aid determination of landscape or visual effect. Only where the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment forms part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”), will the term ‘significant’ be used in line with the European Parliament Directive 2011/92/EU.

## 2.4 **Positive / Adverse / Neutral**

2.4.1 Effects are defined as **adverse**, **neutral** or **positive**. Neutral effects are those which overall are neither adverse nor positive but may incorporate a combination of both.

2.4.2 The decision regarding the significance of effect and the decision regarding whether an effect is beneficial or adverse are entirely separate. Whether an effect is **positive**, **neutral** or **adverse** is identified based on professional judgement (GLVIA3 indicates at paragraph 2.15 that this is a “*particularly challenging*” aspect of assessment, particularly in the context of a changing landscape).

## 2.5 **Scope**

2.5.1 In the case of this scheme, pre application advice has not been sought from North Hertfordshire Council.

## 2.6 **Limitations of the assessment**

2.6.1 This assessment is based on views from publicly accessible locations. Where impact to private views is noted, it has been estimated.

2.6.2 The viewpoints identified in this assessment are illustrative and represent the potential impact of the development from a range of receptors e.g. dwellings, commercial properties, rights of way, roads etc. This report does not necessarily identify all locations from where the site is potentially visible.

2.6.3 The site survey was conducted on a day of low cloud; views were assessed by noting the land form, elevations and land cover reducing permeability.

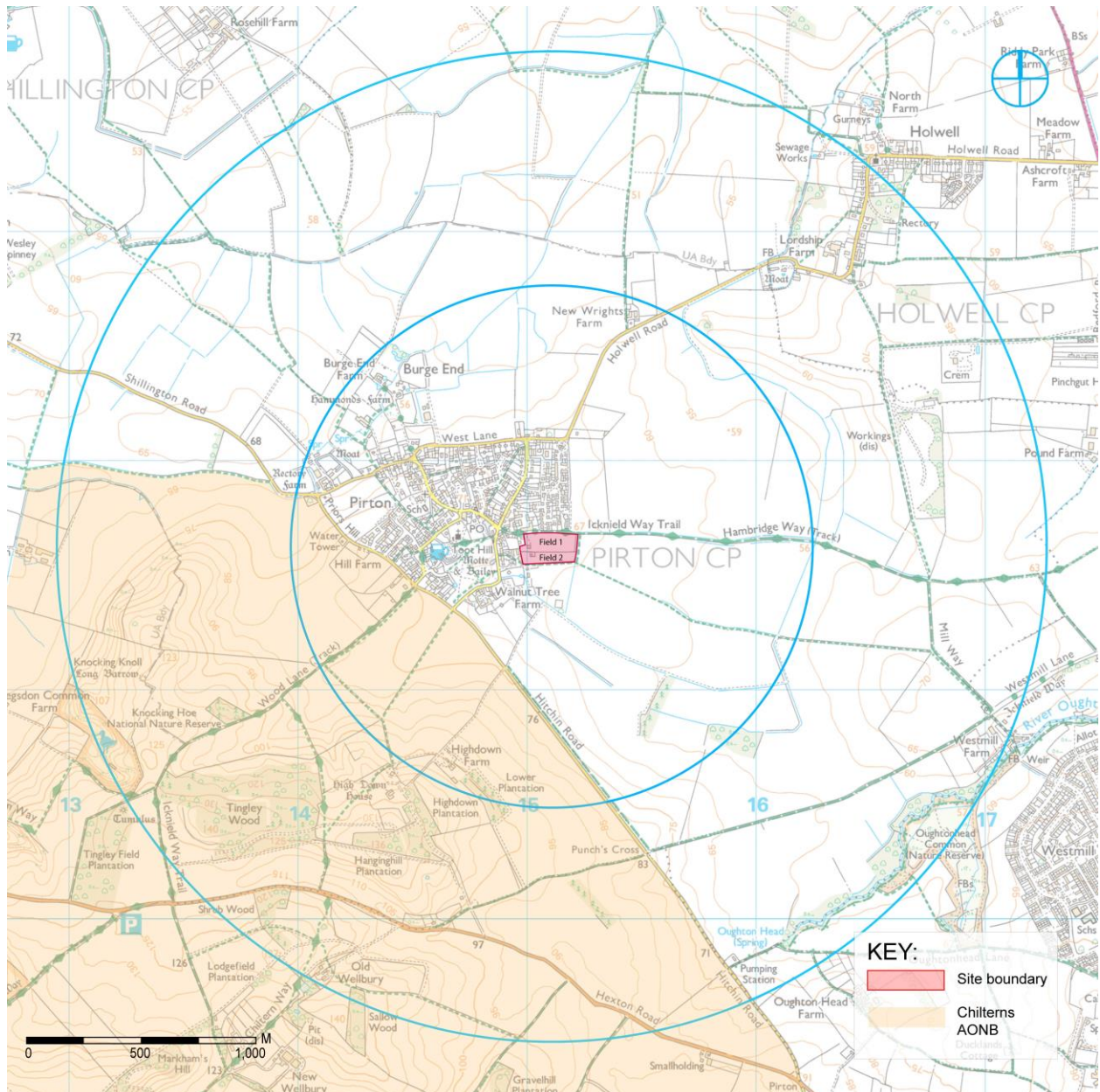
2.6.4 It is important to note that this assessment was carried out in autumn, and therefore ‘in leaf’ vegetation contributes to the enclosure of the development, ‘not in leaf’ vegetation will create some openness, however the enclosure of the site by trees and hedgerows will screen views for approximately seven months of the year between April and November.

## 2.7 **Establishing Study Area**

2.7.1 The site survey revealed that the site is barely visible beyond the boundaries and that local footpath users will be the main visual receptors. Although the ZTV shows the site to be very open when obstructions are removed, the low lying quite flat, localised landscape means that views are shorten

by the extensive tree and hedge cover even when not in leaf around the village. The ZTV with obstructions indicates that there is more visibility to the east and south than was possible from the ground on the day of survey.

2.7.2 Therefore, the study area for viewpoints and landscape interaction is limited to possible seasonal views to the east and south with no views likely to be possible beyond the built edge of Pirton to the north and west.



**Figure 1:** Map showing the location of the site. Site marked in red; and 1km and 2km from the centre of the site is indicated by the blue circles. The Chilterns AONB is indicated by the pale yellow. The two field enclosures are indicated (OS Map provided by [www.centremaps/live.com](http://www.centremaps/live.com) at scale 1:25,000).

### 3 **POLICY CONTEXT**

#### 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2023 ("NPPF")

3.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development. The framework outlines three mutually dependent dimensions or roles for the planning system:

- a) *'an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) *a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) *an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy' (NPPF 2023: 5).*

#### 3.1.2 Protecting Green Belt land:

*'Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- a) *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land' (NPPF 2023: 41).*

*A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

- a) *buildings for agriculture and forestry;*

- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;*
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;*
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*
- e) limited infilling in villages;*
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and*
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*
  - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
  - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority' (NPPF 2023: 44).*

3.1.3 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) 'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*

- e) *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate’ (NPPF 2023: 50).*

3.1.4 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The NPPF states:

- *‘Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss’ (NPPF 2023: 57).*
- *‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use’ (NPPF 2023: 57).*
- *‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’ (NPPF 2023: 57-8).*

3.1.5 The site is located within a rural landscape adjacent the built edge of Pirton village. Development extends east along Hambridge Way to the north and the to the south extends east within the Pirton Recreational Ground. The proposals are discreet within the heavily vegetated boundaries of the site. This enclosure is likely to continue when vegetation is not in leaf due to the density of stems and branches. Although the site is not adjacent a protected landscape, the village centre contains an extensive scheduled monument Toot Hill motte and bailey and medieval village’ and the Pirton Conservation Area lies 50m west; and the Chilterns AONB lies 340m to the southwest.

### 3.2 North Hertfordshire Council's Local Plan (LP 2022):

3.2.1 The North Hertfordshire Council's Local Plan was adopted in 2022. The emerging Local Plan was drafted in 2022 and currently in consultation. Policies relevant to landscape issues are reproduced below.

#### 3.2.2 Policy SP5 – Countryside and Green Belt

*'We support the principles of the Green Belt and recognise the intrinsic value of the countryside. Green Belt and Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt are shown on the Policies Map. We:*

- a) Have conducted a comprehensive review of the Green Belt. Land has been removed from the Green Belt to:
  - i. enable strategic development at the locations referred to in Policies SP8 and SP3;*
  - ii. enable local development around a number of the District's towns and villages; and*
  - iii. define boundaries for villages referred to in Policy SP2 which fall within the Green Belt but were previously 'washed over' by this designation;**
- b) Have provided new Green Belt to cover, in general terms, the area bounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt to the east, the Luton Green Belt to the west and the A505 Offley bypass to the north;*
- c) Will only permit development proposals in the Green Belt where they would not result in inappropriate development or where very special circumstances have been demonstrated; and*
- d) Will operate a general policy of restraint in Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt through the application of our detailed policies' (LP 2022: 53).*

#### 3.2.3 Policy SP12 – Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Biodiversity

*'We will accommodate significant growth during the plan period whilst ensuring the natural environment is protected and enhanced. We will:*

- a) Protect, identify, manage and where possible enhance a strategic multi-functional network of green infrastructure;*

- b) *Consider and respect landscape character, scenic beauty and locally sensitive features, particularly in relation to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;*
- c) *Protect, enhance and manage designated sites in accordance with the following hierarchy of designations and features:*
  - *Internationally designated sites*
  - *Nationally designated sites*
  - *Locally designated sites;*
  - *Non-designated sites that include important habitats and species*
- d) *Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity networks including wildlife corridors, ancient woodlands and hedgerows, wetland and riverine habitats, Local Geological Sites, protected species, priority species and habitats, and non-designated sites of ecological value and ensure measurable net gains for biodiversity; and*
- e) *Protect other open spaces and support provision of new and improved open space’ (LP 2022: 78).*

### 3.2.4 Policy SP13 - Historic Environment

*‘The Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset’s conservation and the management of its setting. We will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through:*

- a) *Maintaining a strong presumption in favour of the retention, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting according to their significance;*
- b) *Identifying sites on the national register of Heritage at Risk or on the Council’s ‘At Risk’ register;*
- c) *Periodic reviews of Conservation Areas and other locally designated assets; and*
- d) *Publication of detailed guidance (LP 2022: 80).*

### 3.2.5 Policy CBG1 – Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt

*‘In the Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt, as shown on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted provided that the development:*

- a) Is infilling development which does not extend the built core of a Category B village;*
- b) Meets a proven local need for community facilities, services or affordable housing in an appropriate location;*
- c) Is strictly necessary for the needs of agriculture or forestry;*
- d) Relates to an existing rural building;*
- e) Is a modest proposal for rural economic development or diversification; or*
- f) Would provide land or facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries that respect the generally open nature of the rural area’ (LP 2022: 116).*

### 3.2.6 Policy D1 Sustainable Design

*‘Planning permission will be granted provided that development proposals:*

- a) Respond positively to the site’s local context;*
- b) Take all reasonable opportunities, consistent with the nature and scale of the scheme, to:*
  - i. create or enhance public realm;*
  - ii. optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);*
  - iii. reduce energy consumption and waste;*
  - iv. retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting;*
  - v. maximise accessibility, legibility and physical and social connectivity both internally and with neighbouring areas;*
  - vi. future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle;*
  - vii. design-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour; and*

*viii. minimise the visual impact of street furniture and parking provision;*

- c) Have regard to the Design SPD, and any other relevant guidance;*
- d) Within Letchworth Garden City have regard to the Letchworth Garden City Design Principles contained in Appendix 5; and*
- e) For residential schemes, meet or exceed the nationally described space standards and optional water efficiency standards' (LP 2022: 116).*

### 3.2.7 Policy NE1 Strategic Green Infrastructure

*'Planning permission will be granted provided that development:*

- a) Protects, conserves and where possible enhances the strategic green infrastructure network;*
- b) Avoids the loss, fragmentation, severance or negative impact on the function of the strategic green infrastructure network;*
- c) Creates new strategic green infrastructure where appropriate and is accompanied by a plan for its long-term maintenance and management; and*
- d) Has suitable mitigation measures or appropriate replacement to satisfactorily address adverse impacts on the strategic green infrastructure network' (LP 2022: 149).*

### 3.2.8 Policy NE2 Landscape

*'Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:*

- a) Respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and have regard to the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management;*
- b) Do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this;*
- c) Are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and Have considered the long-term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping' (LP 2022: 150).*

### 3.2.9 Policy NE3 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

*'Planning permission for any proposal within the AONB, or affecting the setting of the AONB, will only be granted provided that it:*

- a) Is appropriate in scale having regard to national planning policy;*
- b) Conserves and where possible enhances the Chilterns AONB's special qualities, distinctive character and biodiversity, tranquillity and remoteness in accordance with national planning policy and the overall purpose of the AONB designation;*
- c) Is appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area or is desirable for its understanding and enjoyment;*
- d) Has regard to the statutory Chilterns AONB Management Plan, making practical and financial contributions towards management plan delivery as appropriate;*
- e) Has regard to the Chilterns Building Design Guide and technical notes by being of high-quality design which respects the natural beauty of the Chilterns, its traditional built character and reinforces the sense of place and local character; and Avoids adverse impacts from individual proposals (including their cumulative effects) unless these can be satisfactorily mitigated' (LP 2022: 151).*

### 3.3 Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011 – 2031 (NP 2018)

#### 3.3.1 Policy PNP 2 - Design and Character

*'Residential development proposals will be supported if they are in accordance with the guidance contained in the Pirton Character Assessment, and the following principles:*

*Recognise, respect and reinforce the distinct local, rural character of both Pirton Village and Parish (as set out in the Character Assessment at Evidence Base 1) in relation to height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design, design detail, and building materials, with particular consideration given to these elements reflected in dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development. This should be particularly reflected in areas of high heritage value. Proposals for development that fail to respect this Policy will be refused unless there are special circumstances of an architectural nature that demonstrate innovation in design without impacting adversely on the character and appearance of the area.*

*Are in accordance with the Build for Life Principles (Evidence Base 15).*

*The density of any scheme should be consistent and compatible with the existing and prevailing density and reflect the locally distinctive character of the locality in which the new development is proposed so that the village feel is retained.*

*Where there is a multi- dwelling development:*

- a) The proportions of openness between the houses and roads in the immediate surroundings is continued, and*
- b) A network of spaces of all sizes to preserve the rural balance and amenity spaces within Pirton Village is must be maintained.*
- c) Parked cars do not dominate the streetscape.*

*Should take into account the Chilterns Development Board Position Statement “Development Affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB June 2011” or as updated.*

*Include gardens for all new dwellings.*

*Include secure cycle storage and storage for children’s buggies and mobility scooters, and, where appropriate, a suitable store for refuse bins.*

*Preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of a conservation area or area adjoining a conservation area and to respond to existing scale, height and character of the conservation area, including boundary treatments around and within new development which should reflect the distinct local character in relation to materials and design.*

*Maintain a mix of open spaces, trees and varied housing layout along the edges of the village in order to sustain the current characteristic blending of the village into the countryside with a soft edge.*

*Follow good practice in lighting design for reduction of obtrusive or light pollution such as The Institution of Lighting Engineers: Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light. Developers should reference the design practice used.*

*Ensure by design that a development is fully integrated into the village and is not isolated and thereby form “satellite communities” separate from the main village (NP 2018: 24).*

### 3.3.2 Policy PNP 4 - Hedgerows, Trees and Verges

*‘Proposals for new development should include an assessment of trees and hedges on the site.*

*The retention and maintenance of existing trees and hedgerows is encouraged in all development or if their removal is demonstrated to be necessary they should be replaced in an appropriate location with trees of no less arboriculture or amenity value.*

*Where the boundary of a new development is adjacent to the edge of the village, existing hedgerows and trees should be protected to give the village a green and soft edge, with additional landscaping and planting to minimise the visual impact of new development.*

*Landscaping must be incorporated in the design of all new development to mitigate the visual impact of development and ensure that the development merges into the existing village context.*

*Landscaping schemes should seek to include predominately native species.*

*New development or the construction process of new development must not damage or destroy the Heritage Verge which runs along both sides of the Hitchin Road from Walnut Tree Road to the Barton Road, as shown on the Map on page 30’ (NP 2018: 28).*

### 3.3.3 Policy PNP7 Key Views and Vistas

*‘The Plan seeks to protect and enhance the setting of Pirton village in relation to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the surrounding rural landscape. Any new development in an area within the views specified below, described on pages 34 – 38 and shown on the map on page 36 of the Plan must ensure that key features of the view can continue to be enjoyed including distant buildings and landscape features, sensitive village edges and rural approaches to the village.*

- 1. The view from Highdown north to the Bury, the village and the Pirton Lowlands beyond.*
- 2. The view from Shillington Road and the Driftway looking southwards to Priors Hill (water tower) and St Mary’s Church Tower.*
- 3. The view from Punch’s Cross on Hitchin Road north to the SE corner of Pirton village.*
- 4. View across to the Chilterns AONB on the approach to the NE corner of village from Holwell Road.*

5. *The view from Priors Hill northeast towards Langford Water Tower and beyond.*

6. *View from Little Lane across the Pirton Lowlands.*

7. *View from Hambridge Way E across the Pirton Lowlands and Hertfordshire to the Letchworth ridge.*

8. *View NNW from the Baulk public footpath across Priors Hill towards the westwards extension of the Chiltern ridge and the famous local landmark of Sharpenhoe Clappers.*

*Development proposals should take into account the visual impact of those proposals on key views and vistas, as detailed in the list and map below (NP 2018: 33).*

3.3.4 Although the site is outside of the development boundary of Pirton, the site is bounded by development which extends east along Hambridge Way to the north and to the south extends east within the Pirton Recreational Ground. The site is well integrated to the village centre and would not be a 'satellite' community. The proposals preserve the established vegetation boundaries. Views which are illustrated in the accompanying Figures A3 Volume to this report show that the built nature of the site surrounds and strong tree lines within the village screen the site in views from higher ground.

#### 3.4 Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 (MP 2019)

##### 3.4.1 Policy DP4

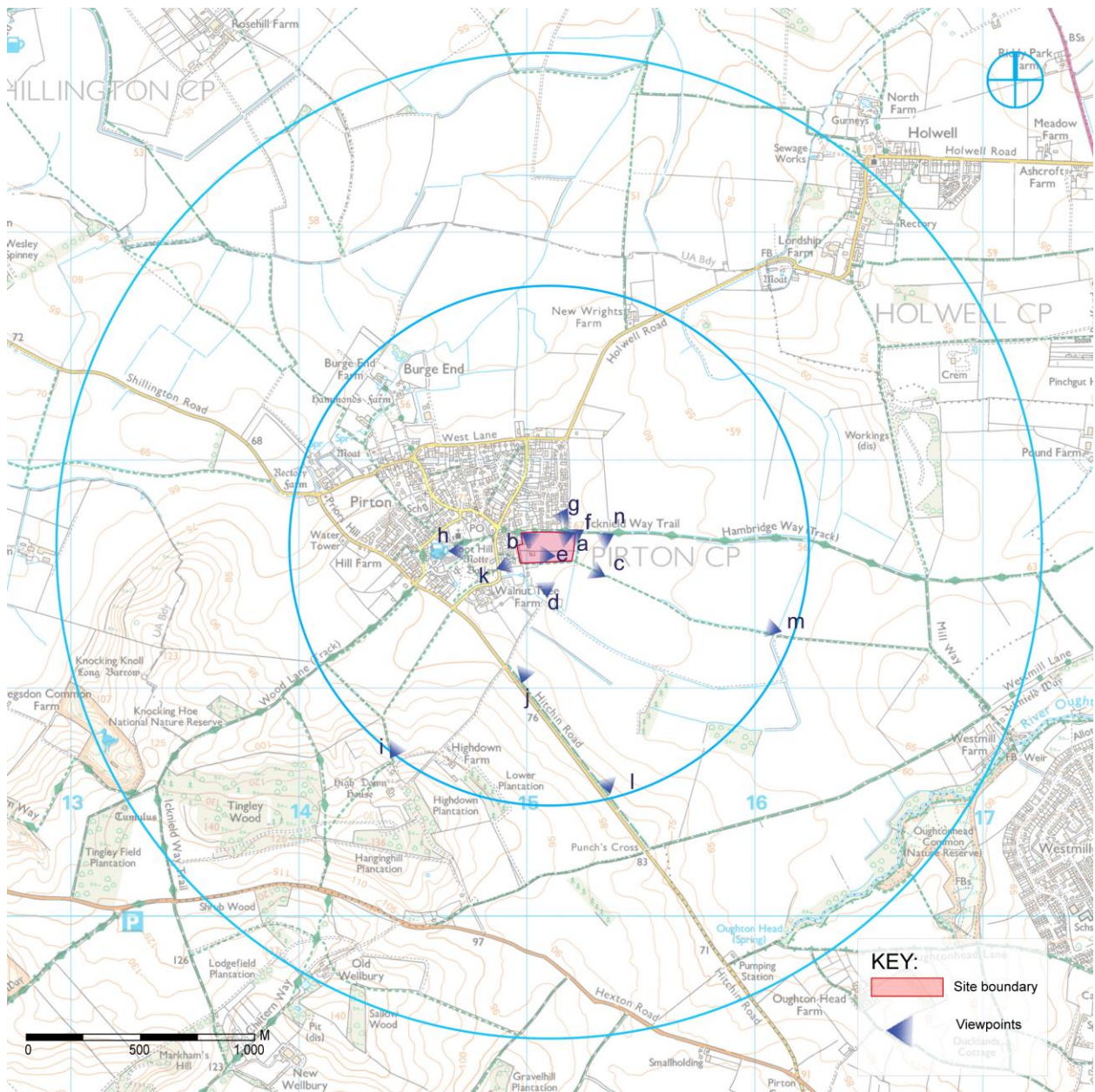
*'In the setting of the AONB, take full account of whether proposals harm the AONB. For example, development of land visible in panoramic views from the Chilterns escarpment, or which generates traffic in or travelling across the AONB, or which increases water abstraction from the chalk aquifer, thereby reducing flow in chalk streams' (MP 2019: 76).*

3.4.2 The site is not considered to be visible from the Chilterns AONB as illustrated by the Figures A3 Volume of photomontages of viewpoints. The built form of the village lies between the AONB and the site.

## 4 SITE CONTEXT

### 4.1 Overview

4.1.1 This section sets out the context of the site within the surrounding area. It outlines the location, topography, vegetation cover, land uses, designations, nearby settlements, existing rights of way. Annotated photographs (Type 1) found in A3 Figures Volume A3 Figures Volume under separate cover.



**Figure 2:** Map showing the location of viewpoints of photographs provided within the A3 Figures Volume under separate cover. 1km and 2km from the centre of the site is indicated by the blue circle (Extract of OS Map provided by [www.centremapslive.com](http://www.centremapslive.com) at scale 1:25,000)

- 4.1.2 For all quoted distances from the site, unless otherwise stated, the measured distance is the approximate distance in kilometres from the closest boundary of the site to the closest boundary of the location being discussed, measured in a straight line.

#### 4.2 **Location and Boundaries**

- 4.2.1 The site is located in Hertfordshire at Grid Reference TL 15104 31620 and the nearest postcode is SG5 3PX. The site is on the eastern edge of the village of **Pirton (A)**. The site is within a rural location where there is a large sized field pattern and infrequent settlement. The immediate landscape is characterised by the settlement edge of Pirton (**Viewpoints e**); however the wider landscape to the east is a flat, arable with hedge and tree lines. Ground rises to the southwest along the Chiltern ridgeline. The landscape is crossed by numerous paths. Some routes, the boundaries of fields and roads routes are tree and hedge lined.
- 4.2.2 The site is contained within established boundaries of mature trees and hedgerow plants. The site is made up of two fields, the northern portion, **Field 1 (Viewpoints a and b)** is approximately 1.75 hectares is bounded by Hambridge Way to the north, a wide verge of trees and overgrown hedgerow plants. To the east a line of ash trees and buckthorn hedge line encloses both fields, the southern edge of the 1.25 hectares **Field 2** is a mixed species hedgerow with ash trees, and the western edge of the two fields is mainly mature horse chestnut trees with a scrub understorey.
- 4.2.3 On the northern edge of the site is the route of Hambridge Way, a single lane unmade road that links **Pirton (A)** to the village of **Ickleford** 2.3km to the east. The route is also part of the 'Icknield Way', a named trail that links 'The Ridgeway' walk with 'Peddars Way' named trails in Norfolk. The northern boundary of **Field 1** has a deep buffer of trees and hedge plants including field maple, ash, oak, lime and horse chestnut. Hedgerow plants include hawthorn blackthorn, elder and elm, some of which has succumbed to Dutch Elm Disease (**Viewpoint f**). There are access points in the northeast and northwest corners. Beyond Hambridge Way, there is a relatively new housing estate completed in the early 2020s that includes Elm Tree Farm Close and Drovers Way. The new extents of the village stretch 400m north to Holwell Road. Beyond this is open countryside of large arable fields on slightly rolling ground. The village of **Holwell (B)** lies 1.5km northeast of the site.
- 4.2.4 On the eastern edge of the two fields there is an intact boundary of ash trees with an understorey of buckthorn, elm and ash (**Viewpoint c**). The boundary is also marked by an external ditch. **Footpath 3** links **Footpath 1** and **Footpath 2** along the boundary of the site. The site feels enclosed along this edge with a small gap in vegetation in the **Field 2** for gated access. Beyond the

boundary, medium to large arable fields extend to the town of **Hitchin** and village of **Ickleford** over 2km to the east. The landscape is relatively open, however hedgerows do line field margins and tracks such as Hambridge Way (**Viewpoint m**).

- 4.2.5 The southern edge of the site lies on the southern edge of **Field 2**, a boundary with **Pirton Recreation Ground (1)**. The boundary is tree lined, mainly ash with a mixed species understorey including hawthorn, field maple, dogwood, hazel, elder and dog-rose (**Viewpoint d**). Within the recreation ground the route of Footpath 2 runs east to west. A row of early mature walnut (*Juglans nigra*) trees mark the route of the PRoW. The recreation ground consists of a large pitch for seasonal games, a clubhouse, playground and to the southern edge tennis courts. Further south are extensive fields and beyond Hitchin Road, land rises to the Chilterns AONB and is distinctively rural.
- 4.2.6 To the west the site's **Field 2** is bound by the new properties on Cotman End, the rear gardens enclosed by close board fencing. A line of horse chestnut trees mark the boundary (**Viewpoint e**). The western boundary of **Field 1** is with **10 Hambridge Way (4)** which forms a dogleg in the northern boundary which is relatively open. The western boundary of the sites lie on the settlement edge of Pirton, although the village extends to the north of the site. The centre of the village lies to the northwest; however the original medieval village lies within a scheduled monument surrounding Toot Hill motte and bailey, which lie 100m to the west. The village conservation area lies 50m to the west. The village effectively encloses the site from the west with the recreation ground to the south and new estate housing to the north. The Chilterns AONB lies on the western edge of the village. Further west, the ground rises across large arable fields to the northern Chilterns ridgeline where the landscape is more wooded.
- 4.2.7 Within the site, there is a remnant hedgerow dividing **Fields 1** and **2**. Mainly alder buckthorn, the hedge line is gappy and inundated by brambles in large sections. Both fields are well managed pasture, although there are some stands of bramble around derelict animal shelters in **Field 2**. A barn lies in the western portion of **Field 1**.
- 4.2.8 Historically the settlement was centred further south around the 12<sup>th</sup> century **Church of St Mary (8)**, which is a grade I listed building and the church lies to the north of the remains of a medieval centre. The site, a scheduled monument includes Toot Hill motte and bailey. The shifting of the built elements of the village are probably the result of devastating population loss as the result of the Black Death. The site itself appears to historically have been part agricultural land and allotments or orchards (National Library of Scotland, accessed October 2024)

4.2.9 The Application Site landscape receptors are summarised in the table below and the overall sensitivity of the site is described.

Table 4.1 - Application Site Landscape Elements and Features

| Landscape Element   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Sensitivity to accommodate change |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Land form           | The application site is on relatively level ground with a fall of approximately 3m from the northwest to southeast, average 68m Above Ordnance Datum ("AOD").                                                                                                            | Low                               |
| Land cover          | The application site is approximately 3 hectare within two field enclosures (Agricultural land classification is Grade 2 according to Natural England).                                                                                                                  | Medium                            |
| Trees and hedgerows | There are mature trees and hedgerows on all boundaries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Medium                            |
| Water features      | There are dry ditches following external boundaries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Low                               |
| Built features      | There are no built elements of substance on site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Low                               |
| Roads and footpaths | The site is currently accessed from the carriageway Walnut Tree Road, sharing an unmade road with the recreation ground. Access is proposed via made road Cotman End. There are PRow's on the northern, eastern and southern edges of the site outside of the boundaries | Medium                            |



**Figure 3:** Satellite map showing the location of the site in red (based on Google map accessed October 2024).

#### 4.3 **Land Cover**

- 4.3.1 The land is Grade 2 'Very Good' agricultural land under the Agricultural Land Classification (Natural England Agricultural Land Classification website, accessed June 2024), however clearly it has been in pasture for some time.
- 4.3.2 There are good boundary trees and hedgerows on field boundaries around the settlement of Pirton. Beyond this, fields are large and some hedgerows non continuous.
- 4.3.3 Hambridge Way is strongly hedge and tree lined. Most local roads have hedgerows, some non-continuous.

#### 4.4 **Land Use**

- 4.4.1 The landscape surrounding the settlement is characterised by extensive large open arable fields. The residential fabric of the settlement includes pasture, and large open green spaces, preserved due to scheduled monuments status.

#### 4.5 **Settlement**

- 4.5.1 There are few settlements across the local landscape, within 2km there is only one other village, **Holwell (B)**. Further east, the large towns of Hitchin, Stevenage and Letchworth characterise the built up nature of the route of the A1 (M). Similarly, settlement is more intense to the west approaching the M1.

#### 4.6 **Topography**

- 4.6.1 The topography of the immediate area of the site is relatively level with slight undulations, with ditches often following field margins.
- 4.6.2 Land rises to the southwest and west to the Chilterns AONB.
- 4.6.3 The geology of the site is West Marlbury Marly Chalk Formation – Chalk bedrock. Superficial deposits are unrecorded about from the eastern edge which is Lowestoft Formation - Diamicton (British Geological Survey website, accessed October 2024).
- 4.6.4 The application site is generally level with a fall to the south and southeast from 69m AOD to 66m AOD to the southeast.

#### 4.7 **Water and drainage**

4.7.1 The site is on land in Flood Zone 1 that has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea.

4.7.2 The land has a low chance of surface water flooding (Environment Agency website, date accessed October 2024). There is a ditch along the eastern edge of the site.

#### 4.8 **Existing Rights of Way (PRoWs) and access land**

4.8.1 In general, the use of the PRoWs will vary according to their proximity to a settlement, and then according to the size of that settlement, such that the footpaths closest to the largest settlements will be those most frequently used. Footpaths appeared well used in this location.

4.8.2 There a strong network of Public Rights of Way ("PRoW") within 2km of the site and three routes lie on the boundaries of the site although they do not run through it.

4.8.3 **Footpath 1** a bridleway Hambridge Way, is also the named trail Icknield Way.

#### 4.9 **Landscape and other designations**

4.9.1 The site is not within any local, national or international landscape designations. However, Chilterns AONB lies 340m to the southwest on Hitch Road. The Green Belt lies 1.3km to the south and 1.5km to the east.

#### 4.10 **Sites of Special Scientific Interest ("SSSI")**

4.10.1 Knocking Hoe SSSI lies 1.9km to the southwest.

#### 4.11 **National Nature Reserves ("NNR")**

4.11.1 Knocking Hoe NNR lies 1.9km to the southwest.

#### 4.12 **Local Nature Reserve ("LNR")**

4.12.1 Oughtonhead Common LNR lies 1.8km to the southeast.

#### 4.13 **Listed buildings**

4.13.1 There are numerous listed buildings within the village. The listed buildings are largely found around the original medieval centre and in farmsteads. The 12<sup>th</sup> century **Church of St. Mary (8)** is grade I listed; relevant listed structures are:

- **Walnut Tree Farmhouse (7)**, also associated barns and buildings at the farmstead, 170m southwest of the site, grade II listed, list entry number 1103161, grid reference TL 14846 31428;
- **Church of St. Mary (8)**, grade I listed, is 265m west of the site, list entry number 1347110, grid reference TL 14694 31661;
- **High Down House with buildings and walls around courtyard north side (10)**, grade I listed is 1.1km to the southwest of the site, list entry number 1175442, grid reference TL 14395 30544.

#### 4.14 Scheduled Monuments

4.14.1 There are several scheduled monument within 2km of the site three within the village of Pirton:

- **Toot Hill motte and bailey castle and shrunken medieval village at Pirton**, 110m to the west of the site, list entry number 1012325, grid reference number TL 14729 31525;
- **Anglo-Saxon settlement, and probable prehistoric ring ditches, west of Pirton village**, 565m north west of the site, List entry number 1434415, grid reference number TL1430531752;
- **Moated site and associated enclosure at Rectory Farm**, 745m northwest of the site, list entry number 1009451, grid reference TL 14181 32000;
- **Bowl barrow at Knocking Knoll**, 1.7km southwest of the site, list entry number 1010367, grid reference TL 13326 31050.

#### 4.15 Conservation areas ("CA")

4.15.1 The site is not with in a CA; however the CA is 50m west of the site.

#### 4.16 Registered Parks and Gardens

4.16.1 There are no registered parks and gardens within 2km of the site.

#### 4.17 Published Landscape Character Assessments/ Landscape Effects

4.17.1 National Character Areas:

4.17.2 The site is located within the **National Character Area Profile: 110 Chilterns ('NCA 110')**. The landscape of NCA 110 is described as *'countryside is a patchwork of mixed agriculture with woodland, set within hedged boundaries'* and *'Arable farming is concentrated on deep, welldrained soils found in the valleys, along the scarp foot and beneath the hills in the north. Nucleated settlements, often featuring historic buildings dating back to medieval times, are found in the valleys and along the scarp foot, as are the major routes. Chalk streams are found only in the main valleys and can be dry in their upper reaches'* (NCA 110: 3).

4.17.3 Key characteristics are:

- *'The chalk plateau is incised by parallel branching valleys gently shelving to the south-east into the London Basin. The large chalk aquifer is abstracted for water to supply London and its surrounds and also supports flows of springs, chalk streams and the River Thames.*
- *There are several chalk streams. Features associated with a history of modification include historic mills, watercress beds, culverts and habitat enhancements.*
- *The north-west-facing escarpment is an abrupt relief feature beside low-lying vales, breached notably by the Thames at the Goring Gap. The escarpment lowers northwards, terminating as distinct hills. The Chiltern ridge offers panoramic views.*
- *Within the Chilterns, views are enclosed within branching valleys, sunken routeways and extensive woodland and hedgerow-enclosed fields. There are hidden, tranquil pockets along single track lanes and rights of way.*
- *.. mixture of arable, grassland and woodland and the numerous commons reflects the dominance of Grade 3 agricultural land. Ancient woodland has remained on extensive clay-with-flint deposits, while very steep slopes are rarely cultivated. There are, however, not inconsiderable areas of Grade 1 and 2 land that are associated with lower-lying areas and river valleys*
- *The Chilterns are one of the most wooded lowland landscapes in England. The area is particularly renowned for its extensive native beechwoods*
- *Pre-18th-century fields defined by ancient, often sinuous hedged boundaries are scattered throughout, including co-axial fields. Parliamentary enclosure fields are limited.....*

- *Remnants of various historic land use types can combine rich and diverse habitats and archaeology. Many key places are publicly accessible, including Registered Parks and Gardens, historic downland and common land. Traditional flood plain landscapes and orchards are the most restricted in extent. Historic routeways, hedged boundaries and watercourses provide connectivity.*
- *Historic downland preserves prehistoric archaeology and supports high numbers of rare and scarce chalk grassland vascular plants, mosses and liverworts. Diversity is enhanced by a mosaic of chalk grassland, scrub and woodland, with Hartslock Wood SAC being one example.*
- *Species strongly associated with the Chilterns include the red kite, pasque flower, stag beetle, Chiltern gentian, shepherd's needle, chalkhill blue butterfly and native box.*
- *Nucleated settlements of medieval origin and land farmed since prehistory are found alongside watercourses and springs in the through-valleys and at the foot of the scarp. Elsewhere, dispersed farmsteads dating from the medieval period and mid-19th-century development around commons are characteristic of the plateau.*
- *The River Thames and its flood plain mark a distinctive area in the south. The river is a focus for settlement, abstraction and recreation.*
- *Major transport routes, including motorways, radiate from adjacent Greater London, associated with significant 20th-century development and extensive urban fringe areas.*
- *Brick and flint are the dominant traditional building materials, with Totternhoe Stone (clunch) being less common, but still distinctive*
- *Numerous parkland landscapes define large, historic estates. Designs by Humphry Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown are represented, and the houses, follies and wooded features provide local landmarks.*
- *Extensive rights of way, commons, open access downland, woodland and some parklands provide access to the countryside. The Thames Path, the Ridgeway and the Grand Union Canal are high-profile recreation routes; locally promoted routes include the Chilterns Cycleway. Private leisure land uses, including golf courses and horse paddocks, are common near urban centres' (NCA 110: 7-8).*

#### 4.17.4 Identified environmental opportunities relevant to the site include:

- *‘SEO2 In pockets of historic land use where natural and cultural heritage are both particularly rich, aim to restore and strengthen the historic landscape, ecological resilience and heterogeneity, and to conserve soils. Ensure that species-rich habitats are conserved and extended, including internationally important species-rich Chiltern downland. Secure environmentally and economically sustainable management to ensure conservation in the long term.*
- *SEO 4 Enhance local distinctiveness and create or enhance green infrastructure within existing settlements and through new development, particularly in relation to the urban fringe and growth areas such as Luton. Ensure that communities can enjoy good access to the countryside’ (NCA 110: 19-28).*

4.17.5 Key habitats include native beech woodland; chalk downland; chalk grassland; Chalk rivers and streams; wet meadow; and farm landscapes (NCA 110: 36-7).

4.17.6 Settlement is described proximity of the area to London meant that many of the towns along major road and rail corridors expanded greatly in the 19th and 20th centuries, (NCA 110: 38).

#### 4.18 **Landscape Character Assessment (District level)**

4.18.1 The North Herts Landscape Study (Character, Sensitivity & Capacity) (NHLS 2011) places the site in the Area 218: Pirton Lowlands landscape character type.

4.18.2 The main and distinctive characteristics are:

- *‘Large scale open flat farmland landscape*
- *Arable production*
- *Remnant hedgerows*
- *Woodland shelter around settlements*
- *Hexton Manor and Gardens*
- *A600 Bedford Road’ (NHLS 2011: 114).*

4.18.3 Sensory perception is described as *‘Bland, featureless, vast scale landscape with remnant hedges. Farmsteads tend to be large scale and dominant features not integrated in to the landscape. Vehicles on the A600 prominent in the landscape’ (NHLS 2011: 117).*

4.18.4 The landscape condition is described as 'poor' due the widespread change to land cover; not obvious management of natural habitat; moderate impact of land use change and the built environment. The landscape robustness is described as 'weak' due to prominent impact of land form and historic pattern; widely visible; open landscape; and common occurrence of landscape type. The Pirton Lowlands evaluation is to 'reconstruct' in regard to the landscape condition and robustness (NHLS 2011: 118).

4.18.5 The overall landscape sensitivity of Pirton Lowlands are 'moderate to low' (NHLS 2011: 119).

4.18.6 Visual sensitivity is considered 'moderate', and the landscape value is considered 'low' (NHLS 2011: 119a).

4.18.7 In regard to small urban extensions less than 5 hectares, the landscape capacity is considered 'low' due to the landscape rural character (NHLS 2011: 119b).

4.18.8 Built development guidelines include:

- Edge or integrated development to villages to use local vernacular
- Protect rural lanes and hedgerows
- Plant native, species appropriate hedgerows and trees
- New development to be sited well, and respect scale, form and style of Pirton Lowlands
- Avoid intrusive locations
- Avoid development requiring removal of woodlands, species rich grasslands and hedgerows
- Avoid intrusive lighting design
- Conserve open chalk landscape and views (NHLS 2011: 119d).

#### 4.19 **Value**

4.19.1 The value attached to the landscape is based on national and local landscape protection; status of the elements within the landscape including natural and cultural heritage; landscape condition; associations; distinctiveness; recreation; scenic and tranquillity perceptual value;

and landscape functional value (LI Technical Advice Note 02/21 – 2021). The site is in a landscape that has no statutory protection.

- Natural Heritage – the site is within two pasture fields with established boundary hedgerow plants and trees. Although there is some ecological value in the boundary vegetation, the interior pasture has limited value and is not connected to local wildlife sites. The interior hedgerow is non continuous. There is a **low** sensitivity to change.
- Cultural Heritage – the site is not in a protected landscape or conservation area. However, Pirton is the location of many scheduled monument sites and Areas of Archaeological Significance, although the site itself is not identified. The Cultural Heritage value is **medium**.
- Landscape condition – as previously discussed the immediate landscape condition is good, there is strong tree and hedge lines on the boundary edges linking to hedge lines. The landscape character type landscape condition is described as poor. The landscape condition is **low** value.
- Associations – the site is not strongly associated with any event or figure. There is a **low** association value.
- Distinctiveness – the immediate landscape Pirton Lowlands as described has low distinctiveness. However, within the village itself, the open areas of preserved archaeological value has some distinctiveness and leads to a **medium** distinctiveness value.
- Recreation – the landscape to the immediate south is in recreational use, and the site is bound by rights of way. The footpaths in this location appear to be well used. There is a **medium** recreational value within the landscape.
- Perceptual (Scenic) – the landscape is settlement edge and long views are reduced due by hedgerows and trees. The landscape views are valued outside of the site due to their openness and the lack of built structures. There is **medium** perceptual (scenic) value.
- Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity) – the landscape has little remoteness due to location adjacent the settlement. It is an active landscape in terms of recreation. The

landscape is however relatively tranquil, the landscape to the east is strongly rural. There is **medium** perceptual (wildness and tranquillity) value.

- Function – the site is under used at present. The small pasture fields appear to be regularly mown, site has a **medium** functional value.

4.19.2 The overall value that would be placed on the site's landscape would be **medium**.

## 5 **DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT**

- 5.1.1 The proposed approximate 3 hectare development consists of fifty dwellings on small spurs from access route long southern edge. The homes will feature a mix of detached and semi-detached properties, reducing in density reducing to the east, where a large area of public open space will link with the existing open space to the north. Interior footpaths will link to the existing PRowS on the site boundaries.
- 5.1.2 The site boundary hedgerows and trees will be retained within the scheme utilising existing breaks for road and foot access onto the site. The poorly structured and non-continuous hedge between **Fields 1** and **2** will be removed and replaced within the design of the scheme.
- 5.1.3 Access is established from Walnut Tree Road from the west along the new carriageway Cotman End that serves a new development on the western edge of the site. The access route will extend through a gap in the hedge lines into the **Field 2**.
- 5.1.4 The proposals will lead a greater area of public open space in the village whilst providing homes well integrated into the existing extents of the village on the northern and southern edge of the site.

### 5.2 **Proposed Mitigation**

- 5.2.1 Mitigation is defined as the ‘measures proposed to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any adverse effects (or to avoid, reduce and if possible, remedy identified effects), including landscape and visual effects’ (GLVIA3: 41).
- 5.2.2 It is recommended that existing and retained boundary vegetation be protected in accordance with “Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations” (BS5837:2012).
- 5.2.3 No permanent external night lighting should be used and lighting for the dwelling should be timed, down lit and follow the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (GN08/23) and the CIE 150:2017 Guide on the Limitation of the Effects of Obtrusive Light from Outdoor Lighting Installations to avoid effects on night skies.

### 5.3 **Proposals for new landscape planting:**

5.3.1 The proposals should seek to follow the design principles within the North Herts Design SD (NHD 2011) which include:

*'Design Principles*

- *Retain the strong pattern of footways.*
- *Views out northward from West Lane should be protected.*
- *Views of the church from Hitchin Road should be protected.*
- *Retain network of green open spaces.*
- *Refer to The Chilterns AONB Building Design Guide' (NHD 2011: 50).*

5.3.2 The scheme will retain boundary vegetation and therefore there is little requirement for mitigation. However, new hedgerow and infill planting on the northern edge, and bringing existing hedgerow into management will provide better screening for views from the north. The scheme will provide street tree planting and hedgerows to enclose new dwellings. The POS will provide opportunities to extend tree planting and extend the range of species. Views are not affected by the scheme.

5.3.3 All existing boundaries except the southwestern edge are in the public realm which will ensure management of the hedgerows and trees will include improvements to screening value and will be retained for landscape value and biodiversity.

5.3.4 It is recommended that all new tree planting avoids ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) which is dominant in the boundaries and includes species that are resilient to climate change and disease.

5.3.5 Careful design and visual impact consideration will be applied at the detailed planning stage to reduce the landscape and visual impacts. The main issue arising is the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows and trees, and lighting designed not to reduce dark skies. Any lighting scheme should be designed to reduce light pollution, including motion sensor lighting which is down lit to reduce effect on dark skies and movements of mammals.

5.3.6 Proposed hedgerow species:

- Hawthorn – *Crataegus monogyna*
- Dogwood – *Cornus sanguinea*
- Hazel – *Corylus avellana*
- Buckthorn – *Frangula alnus*
- Crab apple – *Malus sylvestris*
- Field maple – *Acer campestre*

5.3.7 Proposed tree species:

- Hornbeam - *Carpinus betulus*
- Silver birch – *Betula pendula*
- English oak – *Quercus robur*
- Lime – *Tilia cordata*
- Rowan – *Sorbus aucuparia*

## 6 **ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS**

### 6.1 **Overview**

6.1.1 In an assessment of **landscape effects**, the effects of the development are assessed on the landscape as a resource in its own right (GLVIA3: 70). They consist of the key characteristics of the landscape which contribute to its character; any individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape (*Ibid.*: 86).

6.1.2 This section describes first the landscape effects of any changes the proposed development will have on the nature of the landscape of the site and its environs; and then district and wider landscape character. By combining the understanding of the landscape baseline situation with the details of the proposed change, i.e. the development. In particular, the landscape is assessed according to its sensitivity to change, the proposed development is assessed according to the magnitude of change imposed on the landscape by it, and then the effects upon the landscape can be determined. Therefore, in the case of development of a small housing estate, the **landscape effects** are the likely results the proposal might have on the existing fabric and character of the landscape.

### 6.2 **Assessment of Landscape Effects on the Site and its Environs: Operational Stage**

6.2.1 The individual elements which are found in the immediate surroundings of the site, and which are all judged to be intact, are:

- (i) Pasture fields
- (ii) Boundary hedge and tree lines;
- (iii) Tree'd lanes;
- (iv) Settlement edge
- (v) Surrounding arable fields.

6.2.2 The landscape receptors upon which there would be landscape effect caused by the proposed development at site scale are:

- (i) Pasture fields;
- (ii) Boundary hedge and tree lines;

(iii) Settlement edge.

6.2.3 The landscape elements identified above (in section 6.2.1) are judged to be representative of the immediate and wider landscape character type of the area; the wider landscape elements are described in the regional landscape assessment as in 'poor' condition. However, in the same report the rural landscape is considered to have a low capacity in receiving small urban extensions. Additionally, the site overall has a 'low to medium' value in regard to the existing landscape elements (Table 4.1). The site however is also on the settlement edge, and has development to the north, with the village recreational grounds to the south and is therefore integrated into the fabric of the village. This report considers that landscape to have a **low** sensitivity due to the landscape elements; location; local landscape designation value and lack of connectivity to protected landscapes and features.

6.2.4 The long term change to the fabric of the site will be an introduction of the built form, including access routes and parking. Although this affects the land cover and land use of the site, it does not change the landform or larger field pattern within the wider landscape. The development would introduce new elements into the landscape at close scale and owing to site conditions, including the visible settlement edge, this would be an extension to the settlement. The site is in a rural location; however the site relates strongly to its suburban surroundings. It is therefore judged that the proposal does introduce some new built elements into the landscape, however these will be in the context of the existing settlement. The sensitivity of the site receptor is **low** due to the overall evaluation.

6.2.5 The magnitude of change for the site itself is considered to be **medium**. The site sits comfortably within the settlement edge and although there will be an introduction of the built form, important landscape elements will be retained.

6.2.6 The **low** magnitude nature of the operational effects on the **medium** sensitivity of the landscape elements, would therefore be **slight/moderate** effect on the immediate site.

### 6.3 Assessment of Landscape Effects on the District/Local Landscape Character

6.3.1 The proposals are within the North Herts Landscape Study (Character, Sensitivity & Capacity) (NHLS 2011) places the site in the Area 218: Pirton Lowlands landscape character type. The key build management guidance relevant to the site are integration of proposals by use of local vernacular, use of unobtrusive locations and preservation of vegetated lanes and boundaries, all of which can be achieved on site.

- 6.3.2 The local landscape character is intact although the landscape assessment describes the character area as 'moderate to low'; a 'low' landscape value and a 'moderate' visual sensitivity (NHLS 2011). However, the site itself is enclosed and has little intervisibility with the rural landscape to the east, although there is visual permeability with the settlement edge. In regard to value beyond the statutory designations the site and locale is judged to be **medium**.
- 6.3.3 The numerous scheduled monuments within the village including Toot Hill motte and bailey castle and shrunken medieval village at Pirton, 110m to the west; Anglo-Saxon settlement, and probable prehistoric ring ditches, west of Pirton village 565m to the northwest; and Moated site and associated enclosure at Rectory Farm 757m to the northwest. The site proposals will not affect the setting of these protected landscapes and there is no visual relationship.
- 6.3.4 In this regard the local landscape character is judged to have **low to medium** sensitivity to change.
- 6.3.5 However, the proposals do constitute a **medium** magnitude of change to the local landscape, the site is likely to have a landscape effect on the rurality of the landscape to the east of the settlement extending the suburban edge. The proposals do not affect the setting of protected structures, and the landscape has no designations. There will be some increase in activity within the local landscape.
- 6.3.6 Due to the **low to medium** sensitivity of the local landscape character and **medium** magnitude of change, there would therefore be a **slight/moderate to moderate** effect on the immediate landscape. However, the proposals would see underused land on the settlement edge providing housing without visual intrusion into the countryside.

#### 6.4 **Assessment of Landscape Effects on Wider Landscape Character**

- 6.4.1 The proposals lie in the **National Character Area Profile: 110 Chilterns** as previously described. On the basis of the study area being representative of the NCA, it is considered that the overall sensitivity of the landscape character type is **medium** (see Appendix 3). The site has few features of the character type, and the proposals lie beyond influencing distance of the Chilterns AONB. Although in the wider landscape long views are possible, the site is well tree'd and discreet. Therefore, the wider landscape character has a **medium** sensitivity, however there is a **negligible** magnitude of change.

- 6.4.2 There is a **negligible** magnitude of change on the **medium** sensitivity of the landscape elements, which would therefore have a **slight** effect on the wider landscape due to the sensitivity of the landscape.

6.5 **Assessment of Landscape Effects on the Site and its Environs: Construction Stage**

- 6.5.1 During construction of the development, expected to be of medium to extensive duration, the potential area from where the development may be more than the existing and operational visibility. Delivery lorries and other plant and equipment are likely to be visible from the immediate area although there will continue to be enclosure by the existing vegetation. Construction traffic should use existing access route from the southwest on Cotman End. Given the temporary nature of the construction phase and medium size of the proposals it is considered that the magnitude of change during construction would be **medium** for landscape receptors.
- 6.5.2 The landscape receptors that would be affected by the proposed development at site scale are the same as those discussed above, and walking routes which does include sensitive receptors.
- 6.5.3 Both the development and construction area fit within the property boundaries.
- 6.5.4 The construction of the development will be a **medium** magnitude of change to the immediate landscape which is considered to have **low** sensitivity to change.
- 6.5.5 The construction effects of the proposals to the fabric of the site's landscape would be **slight/moderate**.

6.6 **Cumulative Landscape Effects**

- 6.6.1 Consideration has been given to the potential cumulative landscape effects of the proposed housing development. For the purposes of this report, this assessment has been limited to other major developments which could be considered as having cumulative effects within the 1km study area on the landscape character.
- 6.6.2 The site is located on the settlement edge. The site would not lead to a reduction in settlement gaps, or a major intrusion into the countryside. There are no other applications within the planning system other than small domestic extensions that would lead to a cumulative effect.

- 6.6.3 The existing extension of the village to the north contains the site. The proposals will lead to an extension of the settlement edge.
- 6.6.4 The landscape has a **low** sensitivity to change. The introduction of new built elements to the landscape is a **medium** magnitude due to retention of landscaped elements. Therefore, there is **slight/moderate** cumulative effect.

| Landscape Receptors                            | Nature of Effect       | Sensitivity   | Value  | Magnitude               | Potential Effect        | Additional Mitigation                                     | Residual Effect                                   |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Effects on Site Landscape Receptors            |                        |               |        |                         |                         |                                                           |                                                   |
| The site                                       | Construction Localised | low           | Medium | Construction Medium     | Construction Medium     | Hoarding CEMP                                             | Construction Slight-moderate/ Adverse             |
|                                                | Operation Limited      |               |        | Operation Medium        | Operation Low           | Maintain/enhance boundary vegetation in public realm/ POS | Operation Slight-moderate/ Adverse                |
| Effects on Local Landscape Character           |                        |               |        |                         |                         |                                                           |                                                   |
| Area 218: Pirton Lowlands                      | Construction Localised | Low to medium |        | Construction Medium     | Construction Medium     | Hoarding CEMP                                             | Construction Slight -moderate to Moderate/Adverse |
|                                                | Operation Limited      |               |        | Operation Medium        | Operation Low           | Maintain/enhance boundary vegetation in public realm      | Operation Slight -moderate to Moderate/neutral    |
| Effects on Wider Landscape Character           |                        |               |        |                         |                         |                                                           |                                                   |
| National Character Area Profile: 110 Chilterns | Construction Localised | Medium        |        | Construction Negligible | Construction Negligible | Hoarding CEMP                                             | Construction Slight/Adverse                       |
|                                                | Operation Limited      |               |        | Operation Negligible    | Operation Negligible    | Maintain/enhance boundary vegetation in public realm      | Operation Slight/Neutral                          |
| Cumulative Landscape Effect                    |                        |               |        |                         |                         |                                                           |                                                   |
| Settlement edge of Pirton                      | Construction Localised | Low           | Medium | Construction Low        | Construction Low        | Hoarding CEMP                                             | Construction Slight-moderate /Adverse             |
|                                                | Operation Limited      |               |        | Operation Low           | Operation Low           | Maintain/enhance boundary vegetation in public realm      | Operation Slight/Adverse                          |

## 7 **ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS**

### 7.1 **Overview**

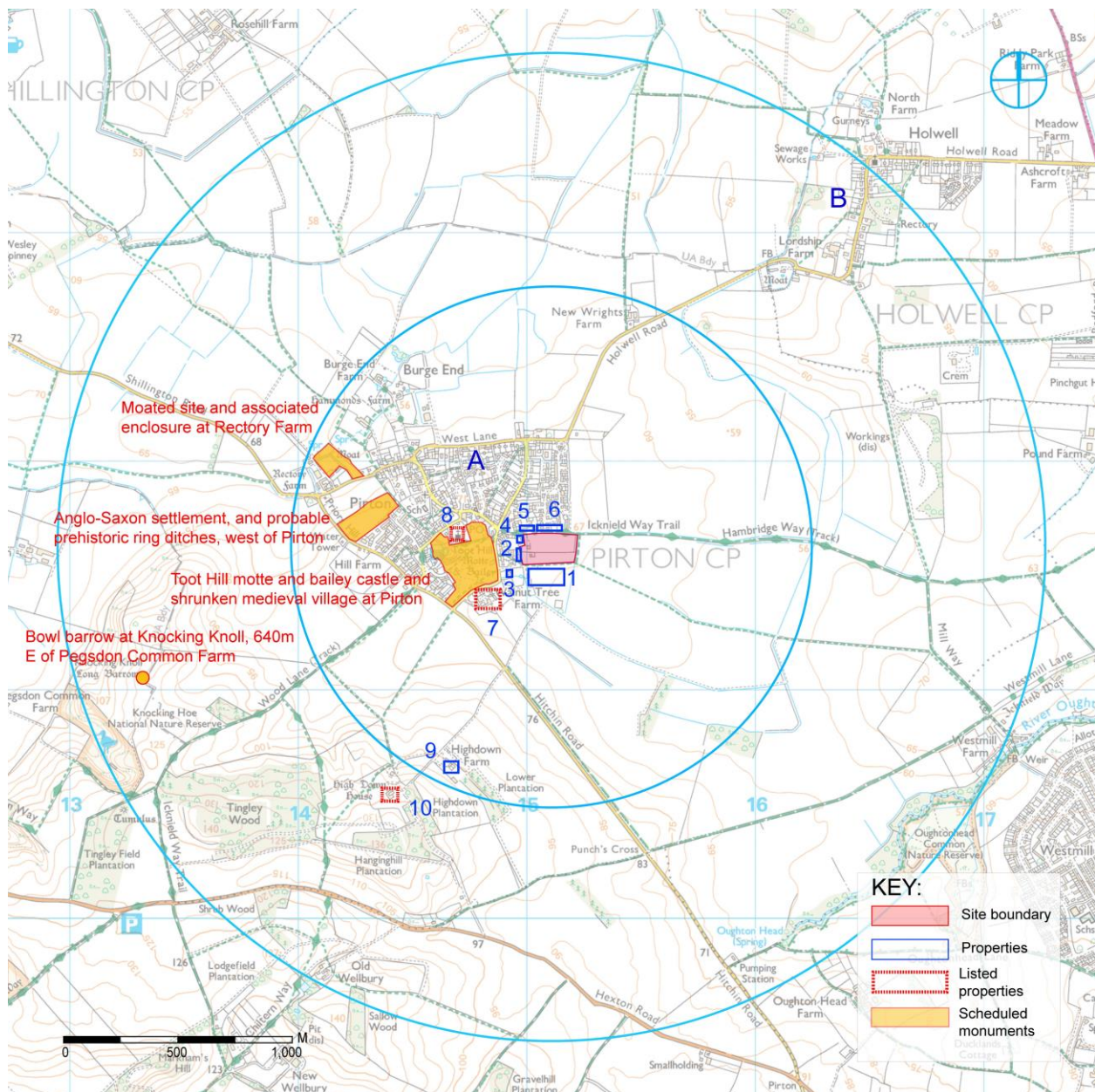
- 7.1.1 In this section, **visual effects** are considered by assessing both the views which specific receptors are likely to see, and the general visual amenity experienced by people. These are then considered in conjunction with the baseline situation and the proposals for the development to enable the assessment of likely extent of visual effects (GLVIA3: 98).
- 7.1.2 Thus, the section describes the visual effect of the development where there are views towards the site, and any factors that limit or prevent views. The desktop studies and field surveys have identified viewpoints regarded as representative of the range of views and receptors from around the site. The selected viewpoints are not intended to cover every possible view, but rather are representative of a range of receptor types e.g. residents, walkers and road users from various directions and distances from the site boundary. Some viewpoints were selected from which the ZTV indicated that there would be a view of the site, however, at a number of these locations, no views of the site were possible. This illustrates the conservative nature of the ZTV process, as it does not include the screening effects of smaller trees and hedgerows. Conversely, it is possible that some views which are not highlighted by the ZTV mapping analysis become clear during the field study, these are discussed if relevant below. The ZTV analysis is located in the A3 Figures Volume submitted under separate cover.
- 7.1.3 A visual analysis from the representative viewpoints has been carried out to determine how the proposed development might influence the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape. The assessment was carried out as part of the site survey, with the photographic assessment recording the character of the view and the existing visibility of the site. It should be noted that there are no long distance views of the site whilst vegetation is in leaf.
- 7.1.4 The site survey and photographic assessment were undertaken on a day of some cloud on 09 September 2024. The locations of the representative viewpoints are shown at Figure 2.

**Assessment of visual effects on the site and its environs: Operational stage****7.2 Transport routes**

- 7.2.1 The site will be accessed from Walnut Tree Road along the Cotman End carriageway from west of the site. Views are limited from Walnut Tree Road and Cotman End by the existing built form (**Viewpoint k**).
- 7.2.2 On the northern edge of the site is Hambridge Way, which is not suitable for vehicles past the entrance to 10 Hambridge Way heading east, there is some visibility at breaks in the hedgerow, the north western and north eastern access to **Field 1**. The whole site is not visible. The visual receptors would have a **low** sensitivity, with drivers usually focussed on the road, with only glimpsed views being affected. The magnitude of change is judged to be **low**, as changes on site will be of new planting and partially of new built elements, and any possible views will be glimpsed and/or seasonal. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **slight** for drivers only. The proposals for tree and boundary planting will reduce the magnitude of change over time to **negligible** and the visual effect to **effectively no change** and neutral.
- 7.2.3 Views from the access route to the recreation ground and **The Vicarage (3) (Viewpoint k)** will be glimpsed views of the interior of **Field 2**. The visual receptors would have a **low** sensitivity as drivers are usually focussed on the road, with only glimpsed views being affected. The magnitude of change is judged to **low**, as views of changes on site will be glimpsed and/or seasonal. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **slight** for drivers only.
- 7.2.4 Views from Hitchin Road approaching the village from the south has some non-continuous views depending on managed hedgerow heights towards the south eastern edge of the village. Despite the location of the site on the southeast of the settlement edge, the character of the view is defined by numerous tree lines through the built form, reducing the possible perception of new built forms within the fabric of the village. The enclosed nature of the recreation ground and the site's southern boundary means changes are barely perceptible. The visual receptors would have a **low** sensitivity, with drivers usually focussed on the road. The magnitude of change is judged to **negligible**, as views of changes on site will be glimpsed and/or seasonal. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **effectively no change** for drivers.

### 7.3 Settlements, residential and commercial properties

7.3.1 Distances in this section are approximate. Properties and settlements have been mapped and approximate distances measured from the closest boundary of the site to the closest development boundary of the village, town, group of properties or property in a straight line unless otherwise stated. Site analysis and visit has been used to select those properties likely to have a visual relationship with the site. The main settlements around the site are marked for completeness.



**Figure 5:** Map showing the location of settlements and properties. Blue circles indicate 1km and 2km from the centre of the site. Noted properties indicated in blue, each numbered. Settlements are denoted by letter. (OS Map provided by [www.centremaps/live.com](http://www.centremaps/live.com) at scale 1:25,000)

- 7.3.2 Figure 5 (above) shows the locations of the settlements (marked with letters), and the dwellings, other properties or groups thereof (marked with numbers). Dwellings and settlements within the study area include:
- 7.3.3 **Pirton Recreation Ground (1)** lies on the southern edge of the site. A large open green area contains a large pitch; sports clubhouse; tennis courts and enclosed play area. The route of **Footpath 2** lies within the grounds. The boundary hedge is dense approximately 2m wide and 4m high with frequent ash trees, there is no visual permeability. This is likely to persist even when vegetation is not in leaf (**Viewpoint d**).
- 7.3.4 **2 - 8 Cotman End (2)** is part of a relatively new development on the western edge of the site. A close board fence separates the sites. Additionally there are a line of mature horse chestnut and sycamore trees, however the vegetation is non-continuous (**Viewpoint e**). It is unlikely that views will be possible from ground floor windows, however in winter views from the upper floor windows will be likely. Although these views are generally enclosed whilst in leaf, there will be open views when not. The visual receptors would have a **medium** sensitivity due to secondary views being affected. The magnitude of change is judged to **medium**, as changes on site will be visible but not dominant, and any possible views likely to be only seasonal. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **moderate** for seasonal views only. This is a **significant**, adverse change.
- 7.3.5 **The Vicarage (3)**, building line lies 55m southwest of the site. The dwelling is orientated away from the site and views will be limited even when vegetation is not in leaf due to the number of trees within the grounds of the property (**Viewpoints k**).
- 7.3.6 **10 Hambridge Way (4)** is a bungalow on the western edge of **Field 1**. The boundary is relatively open (**Viewpoint a**). The bungalow is orientated to the north away from the site, and it appears that non-living rooms do not overlook the site. The visual receptors would have a **medium** sensitivity due to secondary views being affected. The magnitude of change is judged to be **medium**, as changes on site will be visible but not dominant at this settlement edge location. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **moderate**. This is a **significant**, adverse change. The proposals for tree and boundary planting will reduce the magnitude of change over time to **low** and the visual effect to **slight/moderate** over time, which will not be a significant effect.

- 7.3.7 **8 – 12 Elm Tree Farm Close (5)** are a group of buildings built around a cul-de-sac on the northern edge of Hambridge Way. The building line is 20m north of the site. Ground floor windows are obscured by close board fence on the garden boundaries. There are possible views from upper storey windows that will be more open when vegetation is not in leaf. The visual receptors would have a **medium** sensitivity due to secondary views being affected. The magnitude of change is judged to **medium**, as changes on site will be visible but not dominant at this settlement edge location. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **moderate**. This is a **significant**, adverse change to seasonal views only.
- 7.3.8 **84 and 31 Drovers Way/1 and 3 Apostles Close (6)** to the north of Hambridge Way as part of a large 21<sup>st</sup> century extension to Pirton to the east. The dwellings are largely obscured by the trees and hedgerows along the route of Hambridge Way. However, there are possible views from upper storey windows when trees are not in leaf. The visual receptors would have a **medium** sensitivity due to secondary views being affected. The magnitude of change is judged to be **medium**, as changes on site will be visible but not dominant at this settlement edge location. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **moderate**. This is a **significant**, adverse change to seasonal views only.
- 7.3.9 **Walnut Tree Farmhouse (7)** is a group of grade II listed buildings 185m southwest of the site. There is no intervisibility with the site due to intervening built elements and vegetation. The setting of these protected structures is not affected by the proposals.
- 7.3.10 **Church of St Marys (8)** is grade I listed and lies 275m west of the site. The structure, and the surrounding protected scheduled monument was not visible from the site at the time of survey, and any likely changes on site will be screened by existing built elements and vegetation (**Viewpoint h**).
- 7.3.11 **Highdown Farm (9)**, 885m southwest, and grade 1 listed **High Down House (10)**, 1.1km southwest of the site lie on high ground. The ZTV indicates that the site may be visible from these dwellings due to elevation, however even when vegetation is not in leaf the tree lines around the properties, tree cover and built elements within the village will preclude any views or have a visual effect over the distance.
- 7.3.12 **Pirton (A)** settlement edge is directly on the western boundary and other than those described, there are no views of the site due to built elements in the village.

7.3.13 **Holwell (B)** lies 1.5km to the northeast and although the ZTV indicates there are views from the settlement edge, the intervening land form precludes views of Pirton.

7.3.14 There are no other settlements within 2km of the site.

#### 7.4 Public Rights of Way, other paths, and public open spaces

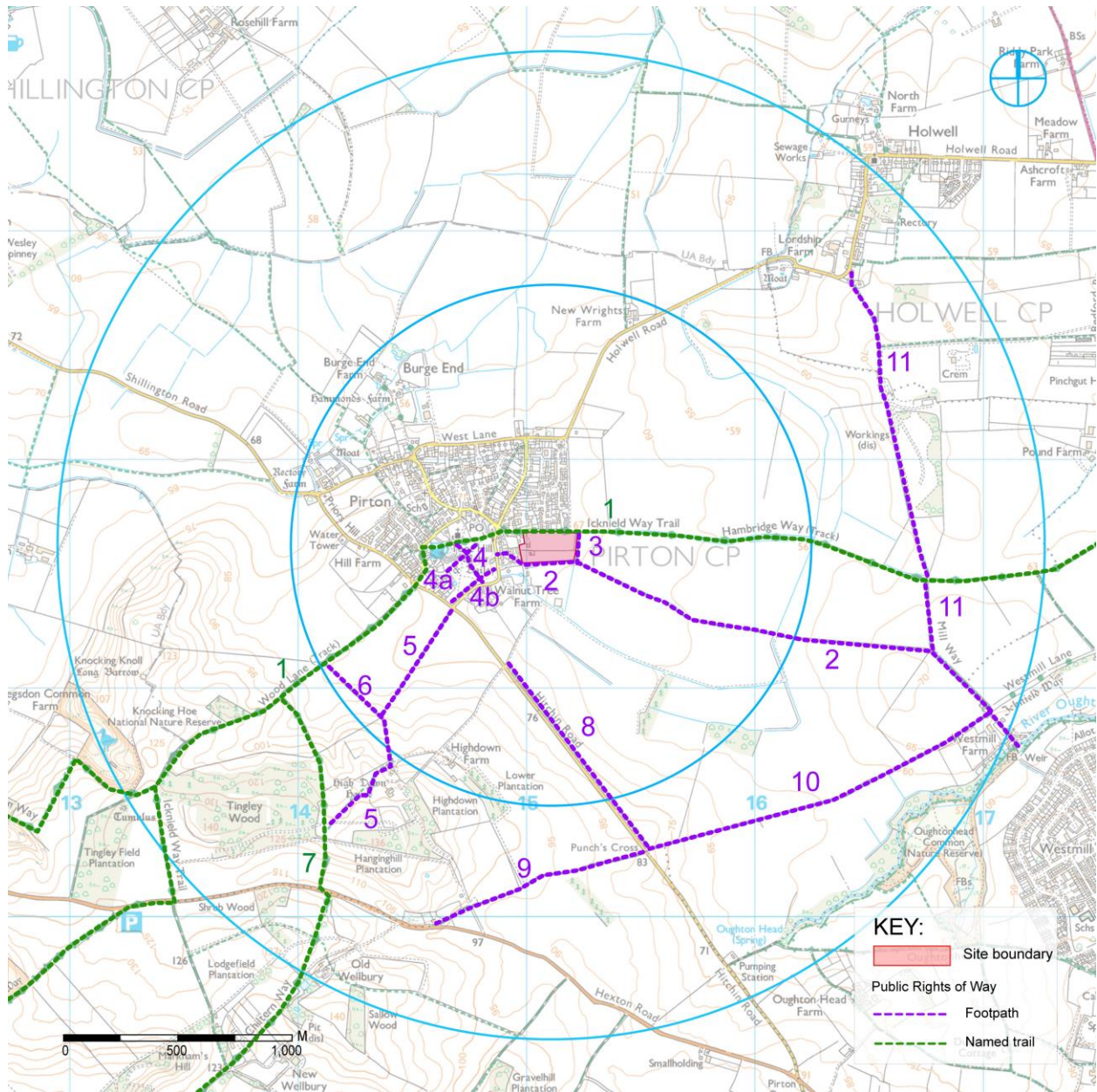
7.4.1 There is an extensive number of PROWs within 2km of the site. Please refer to Figure 6 for the locations of the identified footpaths and Figure 3 for the locations of the images within A3 Figures Volume submitted under separate cover.

7.4.2 **Footpath 1**, is a named trail 'Icknield Way' follows Hambridge Way along the northern boundary of the site. This national trail links walking routes to the southwest 'The Ridgeway' to routes in the northeast including 'Peddars Way'. Icknield Way is 180km of footpaths from Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire to Knettishall Heath in Suffolk. The local route is a bridleway, Hertfordshire County Council ("HCC") reference BW 21 Pirton. The route appears well used and links to other routes around the site. Views will change for the users of the footpath with the introduction of built elements to the south for a short duration, and these will be seasonal views due to the enclosure of the site by existing trees and hedge plants (**Viewpoint f**). Further to the west, the built form of the village precludes views, and to the east apart from some field openings the route is densely tree and hedge lined (**Viewpoint n**). Walkers as visual receptors would have a **high** sensitivity to change in visual amenity. The magnitude of change is judged to be **low**, as change is only seasonally visible, and the current character of the route is of settlement edge to the north. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **moderate/slight** for a short duration only. In regards mitigation, the proposals will include new tree planting and management of hedgerows improving enclosure of the site will reduce the magnitude of change over time to **negligible** and the visual effect to **slight/moderate** over time, which will not be a significant effect.

7.4.3 **Footpath 2** (Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) ref. Pirton 05), lies on the southern edge within the recreation ground. The route starts to the west at Walnut Tree Road and passes through the newly built dwellings at Cotman End where views are obscured, before heading east into the open fields. Approaching the site from the east, the strong tree'd eastern edge of the site will reduce the visual effect of the new built form. The built form is set back from the boundary by the POS proposed on the eastern edge of the site (**Viewpoint c and m**). Walkers as visual receptors would have a **high** sensitivity on this well used route. The magnitude of

change is judged to be **low**, as change is only seasonally visible, and the settlement edge character will not change. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **moderate/slight** for a short duration in close proximity of the site.

- 7.4.4 **Footpath 3** (HCC ref. Pirton 13) is a short route linking **Footpath 1** and **Footpath 2** following the eastern boundary. Boundary vegetation strongly encloses the site from the east and views will be seasonal. Walkers as visual receptors would have a **medium** sensitivity. The magnitude of change is judged to be **low**, as change is only seasonally visible, and the settlement edge character will not change. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **slight/moderate** for a short duration only.



**Figure 6:** Map showing the locations of public rights of way of relevance to the site. Blue circles indicate 1km and 2km from the centre of the site. (OS Map provided by [www.centremaps/live.com](http://www.centremaps/live.com) at scale 1:25,000)

7.4.5 **Footpath 4** (HCC ref. Pirton 17), crosses The Bury, a POS 100m west of the site. **Footpath 4a** (HCC ref. Pirton 18), and **Footpath 4b** (HCC ref. Pirton 21) also cross The Bury west of the site. The Bury is also the site of the scheduled monument 'Toot Hill motte and bailey castle and shrunken medieval village at Pirton', however due to the built edge on Walnut Tree Road there is not visible relationship to the site.

- 7.4.6 **Footpath 5** (HCC ref. Pirton 07), heads southwest from Hitchin Road 370m southwest of the site. The route rises as it moves from the site, and on lower ground there are no views of the site. Even on higher ground, the built elements and tree cover within the village precludes views of the proposals (**Viewpoint i**) and this is likely to persist even when vegetation is not in leaf. The ZTV indicates that the site is visible from higher ground and the network of PROWs in the southwest, however when these routes were surveyed, the site was barely perceptible in views.
- 7.4.7 **Footpath 6** (HCC ref. Pirton 22), links Wood Lane, the route of Icknield Way to **Footpath 5**, 925m southwest of the site on higher ground and no views could be discerned of the site.
- 7.4.8 **Footpath 7** (HCC ref. Pirton 09), is part of the 'Chiltern Way' walk, a long circular walk 1.5km southwest of the site. There are no views from this high elevation.
- 7.4.9 **Footpath 8** (HCC ref. Pirton 27), is a bridleway that follows the northern edge of Hitchin Road 470m south of the site (**Viewpoint j and l**). The enclosing vegetation of the southern edge of the recreational ground and the addition of the southern site boundary trees preclude views of the site.
- 7.4.10 **Footpath 9** (HCC ref. Offley 54), is a bridleway rising from Hitchin Road, heading southwest 1.3km from site. Although the ZTV indicates views are possible from this location, on the site survey land form and trees within the village precludes views of the site.
- 7.4.11 **Footpath 10** (HCC ref. Pirton 28), is a bridleway linking Hitchin Road to Westmill Lane 1.3km southeast of the site at its nearest point at Punches Cross. The bridleway is contained within hedgerows and slightly sunken leading to no views at all. At punches Cross where the views are more open, vegetation within the village precludes views of the site. If ridgelines were visible there would be barely discernible from the existing rooftops north of Hambridge Way.
- 7.4.12 **Footpath 11** (HCC ref. Pirton 6; BW 19), heads north from **Footpath 10** to the settlement **Holwell (B)**. The route is generally level with the site and at this distance the tree lined Hambridge Way, and land form precludes views from the northeast.
- 7.4.13 Other footpaths are not considered likely to have a visual relationship with the site due to the tree cover and built form. Views are not possible from the POS at Strawplaiters Green.

| No./<br>Ref               | Location                                                                                                        | Approx Distance (m) and<br>Direction<br>(N, S, E, W) | Scale of Effect<br>Adverse / Neutral / Positive |                                  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                           |                                                                                                                 |                                                      | Construction<br>Medium Term                     | Operation<br>Permanent           |
| Representative Viewpoints |                                                                                                                 |                                                      |                                                 |                                  |
| c                         | Footpath 2 (HCC ref. Pirton 05)                                                                                 | 160m NW                                              | Substantial/moderate<br>Adverse                 | Moderate/slight<br>Neutral       |
| d                         | Pirton Recreation Ground (1)                                                                                    | 140m N                                               | Slight<br>Adverse                               | Effectively no change<br>Neutral |
| f                         | Icknield Way<br>Footpath 1 (HCC ref. BW 21 Pirton)                                                              | 5m SW                                                | Substantial/moderate<br>Adverse                 | Moderate/slight<br>Adverse       |
| g                         | POS Strawplaiters Green                                                                                         | 75m SW                                               | Effectively no change<br>Neutral                | Effectively no change<br>Neutral |
| h                         | Toot Hill motte and bailey castle and shrunken<br>medieval village at Pirton scheduled monument<br>The Bury POS | 100m E                                               | Effectively no change<br>Neutral                | Effectively no change<br>Neutral |
| i                         | Footpath 5 (HCC ref. Pirton 07)                                                                                 | 1km E                                                | Effectively no change<br>Neutral                | Effectively no change<br>Neutral |
| j                         | Footpath 8 (HCC ref. Pirton 27)                                                                                 | 600m N                                               | Effectively no change<br>Neutral                | Effectively no change<br>Neutral |
| k                         | Walnut Tree Road                                                                                                | 115m E                                               | Substantial/moderate<br>Adverse                 | Effectively no change<br>Neutral |

|   |                                                                                       |          |                                         |                                                |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| l | <b>Footpath 8</b> (HCC ref. Pirton 27)                                                | 1.1km NW | Effectively no change<br><i>Neutral</i> | Effectively no change<br><i>Neutral</i>        |
| m | <b>Footpath 2</b> (HCC ref. Pirton 05)                                                | 950m NW  | Slight<br><i>Adverse</i>                | Slight<br><i>Neutral</i>                       |
| n | <b>Icknield Way</b><br><b>Footpath 1</b> (HCC ref. BW 21 Pirton)<br><b>Footpath 3</b> | 175m SW  | Moderate/slight<br><i>Adverse</i>       | Slight to<br>Slight/moderate<br><i>Adverse</i> |

## 7.5 Conclusions: Visual Effects – Operational phase

- 7.5.1 The greatest effect on visual amenity is likely to be experienced when walking immediately adjacent the site. The changes will be viewed through existing hedgerows and tree lines that are likely to be managed for better structure and screening. Only brief views from three footpaths and roadways are affected.
- 7.5.2 However, the properties on the western edges of the two field enclosure and along the northern edge will have seasonal views from upper storey windows and these **significant** changes to visual amenity are judged by standard criteria used in this report. These are views that can only be mitigated by additional planting in some circumstances due the seasonal screening that trees offer. However, these are only seasonal changes.
- 7.5.3 Beyond these receptors, the site is screened by the tree cover and the built form within **Pirton**, and in wider views by land form.

## 7.6 Assessment and Conclusions of Visual Effects on the Site: Construction Stage

- 7.6.1 The construction of the development will take place within defined boundaries. The visual effects of construction activity during this phase would be temporary, however the activity may be more visible during construction.
- 7.6.2 Some transport vehicle and equipment may be visible above the boundaries or seasonally when vegetation is not in leaf. Some visual effects will be experienced from the adjacent boundaries. These would include **Footpath 1, 2 and 3** due to the proximity to the site.
- 7.6.3 Vehicular movement to and from the site would be confined to the access route from Walnut Tree Road along Cotman End. This is likely to have a greater effect on properties along Cotman End and **The Vicarage (3)** than operational stage.
- 7.6.4 Given the existing context and the temporary nature of the effects which are, the magnitude of change is **medium**. The visual receptors are likely to be from the PRowS on the boundaries of the site and properties on Cotman End that have a **high** sensitivity to change. The visual effect is therefore judged to be **substantial/moderate** which is significant.

## 7.7 Cumulative Visual Effects

- 7.7.1 Consideration has been given to the potential cumulative visual effects of the proposed development. There are no current planning applications for development within the vicinity of the proposals of a size that would lead to a cumulative effect.
- 7.7.2 However, the settlement edge would be extended to the east in this location, albeit contained to the north by 21<sup>st</sup> century development and the south by the recreation ground.
- 7.7.3 Given the landscape sensitivity is **low** and the magnitude of change is cumulatively **low**, the cumulative landscape effect is **slight**.

## 8 **CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 Based on an assessment of the landscape character area of the application site and its surroundings, and using the North Herts Landscape Study (Character, Sensitivity & Capacity), and North Herts District Council's Local Plan, national classification and field study, the proposals are considered in regard landscape effect and is not thought to be significant (Appendix 2 Assessment Criteria). However, the proposals would have a significant effect on secondary, seasonal views from some of the surrounding properties according to the assessment criteria.
- 8.2 The landscape elements identified at site scale and its immediate environs, and considered affected by the proposed development are limited by the strong boundary vegetation that will be retained. Given the condition of the landscape elements identified, these landscape receptors are judged as having a **low** sensitivity to change. The overall magnitude of change as a result of the development at the site scale is considered to be **medium** due to the introduction of built elements, retention of vegetation and the current site condition. Therefore, for site landscape receptors the effect is **slight/moderate**.
- 8.3 The district landscape of character area is considered to have a **low** to **medium** sensitivity to change. There is no protected landscape features on or adjacent the site itself. The introduction of new built elements is considered a **medium** magnitude of change to the receiving local landscape character. This judgement is based on the change in land cover which sits comfortably on the settlement edge and the boundary vegetation that will be retained. The result is therefore considered to be **slight/moderate** to **moderate** effect on the immediate surroundings in the long-term.
- 8.4 The wider landscape is considered to have a **medium** sensitivity. The proposals are considered a **negligible** magnitude of change at the wider landscape scale due to the minor change and discreet nature of the site. Therefore, this is a **slight** effect on the wider landscape.
- 8.5 It is judged that there would be **slight/moderate** cumulative landscape effects caused by the proposal which is an extension to the settlement edge.
- 8.6 The greatest effect on visual amenity is likely to be experienced immediately adjacent to the site by properties to the west and north. Fourteen properties may experience seasonal changes, with **moderate** visual effect to views from upper storey windows. In regard to

footpath users, the visual effect is to the immediate boundaries as views quickly fall away due to built form to the west and the strong boundary vegetation to the east and south.

- 8.7 There is a **low** cumulative visual effect due to the enclosure of the site.
- 8.8 Mitigation planting would include reinforcing the existing vegetation to the site boundaries, including infill mixed species hedgerow along the northern edge. New interior hedgerows should include mixed species hedgerows to create connectivity across the site. Most boundary trees and hedgerows will be in the public realm and therefore subject to a management plan to ensure their retention and enhancement. A large POS has been included in the scheme on the eastern edge to provide sustainable drainage; biodiversity enhancement and connectivity to footpaths and POS to the north and south.
- 8.9 The site is within a landscape that exerts an intact character, however the site is characterised by the surrounding settlement, is private and underused. The site can provide a positive landscape in which to site new housing.

## **Appendix 1**



NOTE: NO DIMENSIONS TO BE SCALED FOR CONSTRUCTION. DRAWINGS MAY BE SCALED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY.  
ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE CHECKED ON SITE. COPYRIGHT RESERVED.



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REV: BY: DATE: DETAILS:

PROJECT:  
**Land South of Hambridge Way  
Pirton**

CLIENT:  
ISSUE STATUS:

DESIGN ☐ B of Q ☐ CONSTRUCTION ☐ RECORD ☐

DRAWING TITLE:  
**Illustrative Site Plan**

SCALE: **~1:1250 (A3)** DATE: **July 2025** BY: **JB**  
DRAWING NO: REVISION:

**22130 (D) 025** -

## Appendix 2

### **Assessment Criteria**

In accordance with the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Guidelines, 3rd edition (2013) the significance of effects is ascertained with the aid of cross-referencing the sensitivity of the baseline landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of change as a result of the development. However this report is not part of an Environmental Statement ("ES"), in line with Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017.

#### **Sensitivity of Landscape Character**

The sensitivity of landscape character is a measure of a landscape's capacity to accommodate change. It varies depending on factors such as the scale and form of the landscape, landscape pattern, sense of enclosure, sense of tranquillity and remoteness, the settlement pattern and transport network etc. We used our professional judgement to determine the sensitivity of the character areas, based on relevant regional and local landscape character studies.

**Table 1 Levels of sensitivity for landscape character**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Low</b>    | Areas that exhibit a neutral or negative character. May have a strong sense of enclosure that reduces visual sensitivity, are likely to be already affected by man-made elements, have reduced tranquillity, are likely to have little inter-visibility with adjacent landscapes and exhibit a low density of sensitive landscape elements. Includes detractors such as power-lines, industrial derelict or inappropriate built forms with no aesthetic value or evidence of strategic planning. There is a lack of mature vegetation cover, and no landscape designations apply |
| <b>Medium</b> | Areas that exhibit a positive character. May have some sense of enclosure, or be affected by some man-made elements, or have little inter-visibility with adjacent landscapes and exhibit a moderate density of sensitive landscape elements. There is a reasonable                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             | distribution of semi-natural vegetation, trees and shrub cover and the overall view of the area is pleasant. Local landscape designations of cultural and historic value may be present.                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>High</b> | Areas that exhibit a strong positive, character. May be open or exposed with a remote character and an absence of man-made elements. They are often highly visible from adjacent landscapes and exhibit a high density of sensitive landscape elements. Includes landscapes highly valued for their scenic quality, e.g. nationally designated areas such as National Parks, AONB. |

### **Sensitivity of landscape elements**

The sensitivity of an individual landscape element reflects factors such as its quality, value, contribution to landscape character and the degree to which the particular element can be replaced. We used our professional judgement to determine the magnitude of direct physical impacts on individual existing landscape elements as follows:

**Table 2 Levels of sensitivity for landscape elements**

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Low</b>    | Landscape elements in below average or poor condition which detract from landscape character, such as obtrusive man-made structures such as power lines or large areas of hard standing. |
| <b>Medium</b> | Landscape elements in good condition but with no statutory protection. Locally distinctive but commonplace features.                                                                     |
| <b>High</b>   | Landscape elements with statutory protection, which are unique or scarce, for example ancient woodland or feature parkland trees, national trails or cycle routes.                       |

**Table 3 Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape character and landscape elements**

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Negligible</b> | No notable introduction of new elements into the landscape or change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape. The proposals would be apparent as a landscape feature without being conspicuous. In addition, the proposals are short to medium term in duration and reversible.                                                                                          |
| <b>Low</b>        | Introduction of minor new elements into the landscape or some minor change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape. In addition, the proposals are medium to long term in duration and reversible                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Medium</b>     | Introduction of some notable elements into the landscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape. The balance of the landscape characteristics are not altered but the proposals would be a conspicuous feature of the make-up of the character area. In addition, the proposals are medium to long term in duration and reversible or permanent. |
| <b>High</b>       | Introduction of major elements into the landscape or some major change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape. The proposals would be a prominent feature in the make-up of the character area. In addition, the proposals are long term to indefinite in duration and permanent.                                                                                       |

#### **Sensitivity of Visual Receptors**

We used representative viewpoints in the assessment to represent different visual receptor groups at various distances and directions from the site. Generally speaking, residential receptors, recreational users of Public Rights of Way or people at recognised vantage points have a higher sensitivity to change than people travelling along roads or conducting their daily business e.g. at their place of work.

**Table 4 Levels of sensitivity for visual receptors**

|            |                                                                                                                                      |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Low</b> | Includes people at place of work e.g. industrial and commercial premises, public rights of way with low levels of use and road users |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               | engaged in commuting or commercial travel and people engaged in outdoor sporting activities.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Medium</b> | Includes non-strategic footpaths or other rights of way, secondary or oblique views from residences, and people travelling through the landscape on roads and trains engaged in tourism or journeys of a recreational nature.                                |
| <b>High</b>   | Includes principal views by occupiers of residential properties and users of strategic recreational footpaths or other rights of way. Important landscape features with physical, cultural or historic attributes. Views from beauty spots and picnic areas. |

**Table 5 Criteria for magnitude of change for visual receptors**

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Negligible</b> | No notable change in the view. In addition, the proposals are short to medium term in duration and reversible.                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Low</b>        | Some change in the view that is not prominent / few visual receptors affected. Proposals would be visible but not eye-catching or noticeably distinct. In addition, the proposals are medium to long term in duration and reversible.                                               |
| <b>Medium</b>     | Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view. The proposals would be conspicuous and form a noticeably distinct feature. In addition, the proposals are medium to long term in duration and reversible or permanent. |
| <b>High</b>       | Major change in the view that has a defining influence on the overall view / many visual receptors affected. A fundamental change in the view with proposals being dominant. In addition, the proposals are long term to indefinite in duration and permanent.                      |

**Significance of Effect**

The significance of the landscape and visual effects is determined by considering the sensitivity of the landscape element, landscape character or view in conjunction with the magnitude of change. The significance of effects is described as substantial, moderate or slight, as guided by the matrix in Table 6 below. Those effects identified as being of substantial, substantial/moderate and moderate may be regarded as having the greatest significance.

Significance of effect may be affected by factors such as the potential for weather conditions to restrict views, the principal aspect of the viewpoint/viewer, the proportion of a view affected, or the potential for the development to attract the eye or become the focal point in the view to the detriment/benefit of competing visual elements.

Visual effects may be either adverse or beneficial in nature, and relate to the individual perceptions of the assessor. If no material effect is experienced, this may be seen as being neutral.

#### **The term 'significant'**

The term 'significant' is specifically used when considering developments with the greatest effect on the environment. These developments are considered as set out in the European Parliament Directive 2011/92/EU and require an Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA"). Where it has been agreed with the LPA that the development does not require an EIA, or where the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is being submitted as a stand-alone document, this term will not be used.

**Table 6 Visual and Landscape Assessment Matrix**

|                    | <b>Magnitude of change (grey shading shows greatest effect)</b> |                 |                      |                      |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Sensitivity</b> | Negligible                                                      | Low             | Medium               | High                 |
| High               | Slight/Moderate                                                 | Moderate/Slight | Substantial/Moderate | Substantial          |
| Medium             | Slight                                                          | Slight/Moderate | Moderate             | Substantial/Moderate |
| Low                | Effectively no change                                           | Slight          | Slight/Moderate      | Moderate/Slight      |

#### **Duration of effects**

For the purposes of this assessment the following time scales have been used:

Short term: 0 to 10 years;

Medium Term: 10 to 25 years;

Long term: 25 to 50 years;

Indefinite: more than 50 years and permanent.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Methods for Visualisations**

#### **Introduction**

The photomontage methodology conforms to the latest Landscape Institute (LI) Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals (December 2019) for photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment. This document outlines the process by which all photomontage images have been produced.

#### **Data Collection**

The viewpoints for photomontage are selected by a Landscape Architect. Consideration to safety and legal access is also given when electing the viewpoint positions for the photomontages. The team conducting the site-work consists of both a photographer and a surveyor who will be responsible for the entire process from image capture to final photomontage. When collecting visual data, relevant control points within the photo are surveyed to a high level of accuracy to ensure that the proposed development accurately correlates to the photo.

#### **Equipment**

Relevant camera settings such as focal point are also noted in the document. These settings are selected in accordance with the LI guidance, and are set for the conditions at the time of the photo. When appropriate, surveying equipment is used to establish the position of the photo.

#### **Image Processing**

Each panoramic image is produced by the stitching together of a number of individual photographs using industry standard software. The images are then individually checked to ensure both that the original photographic quality is maintained and that the resulting image is clear and realistically stitched together. An overlap of 30% is applied for each image.

#### **Photomontage**

Industry standard image-handling software is used to produce the final photomontage image. The

stitched image is the base for the photomontage viewpoint, with additional images captured from the survey or previous surveys introduced where relevant. As per the LI Advice Note, the photomontage composition process includes the digital manipulation of these images. Final images are saved as .jpg format.

### **Presentation**

Industry standard drafting software is used to produce the final deliverable drawing. Both existing and proposed images are shown at the same size and scale, with all required details displayed in the title block of the drawing.

## Appendix 4

### Data sources:

Accessed between 01.09.2024 and 21.10.2024

An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/396192/landscape-character-assessment.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396192/landscape-character-assessment.pdf)

Bing maps: <https://www.bing.com/maps>

Biodiversity 2020:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf)

British Geological Survey:

[https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/?\\_ga=2.191637357.692369165.1661159011-199718199.1661159011](https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/?_ga=2.191637357.692369165.1661159011-199718199.1661159011)

British Standards: BS5837:12 Trees in relation to design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations BSI Standards Ltd April 2012

Chilterns AONB

The Chilterns AONB Management Plan: <https://www.chilterns.org.uk/what-we-do/future-proofing-the-chilterns/management-plan/>

English Heritage listed buildings entries: <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/results.aspx>

Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/flood-zone>

Google Earth

Google Earth Pro

Hertfordshire County Council:

Footpath map: <https://webmaps.hertfordshire.gov.uk/row/row.htm>

Ickniel Way: <https://icknielwaypath.co.uk/>

Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge

Landscape Institute website: Visual Representation of Development Proposals- Technical Guidance Note 06/19– 2019.

Listed buildings: <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/map>

Magic Map: <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

National Library of Scotland: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/101568362>

National Planning Policy Framework (2023): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Natural England Publications:

National Character Area (“NCA”) 110 Chilterns:

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4977697>

Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) (England):

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/127056?category=5954148537204736>

North Hertfordshire District Council:

General Council Map:

<https://maps.north-herts.gov.uk/Maps/Map.aspx?&initialDialog=layersDialog>

Interactive Planning Map:

<https://maps.northherts.gov.uk/Maps/Map.aspx?MapName=LocalPlan&initialDialog=layersDialog>

Design SPD: [https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/files/design\\_spd\\_july\\_2011a-2.pdf](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/files/design_spd_july_2011a-2.pdf)

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (2022): <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-12/North%20Hertfordshire%20Local%20Plan%202011-2031.pdf>

Map A Luton Borders and Chilterns AONB: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/Appendix%205b%20-%20Map%20A%20Luton%20borders%20and%20Chilterns%20AONB.pdf>

Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/Pirton%20Neighbourhood%20Development%20Plan.pdf>

[herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/NPfinal2540528.pdf](https://herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/NPfinal2540528.pdf)

North Herts Landscape Study (2011): <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/northherts-cms/files/CG16%20NHerts%20Landscape%20Study%202011%20-%20Part%201.pdf>

Pirton Local History Group: <https://pirtonhistory.org.uk/about-the-village/>