

An aerial photograph of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, showing a dense residential area with many houses and trees. The town is surrounded by green hills and fields. In the background, a large hill with a forested top is visible. The sky is blue with some clouds.

OAKLEY FARM CHELTENHAM

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PREPARED BY MHP DESIGN LTD
ON BEHALF OF ROBERT HITCHINS LTD
JUNE 2020. FINAL ISSUE V.2

1.0 Introduction Pg. 3

- 1.1.1 Introduction
- 1.1.2 Summary of Development Proposals
- 1.1.3 Topography and Character

2.0 Site Assessment Pg. 5

- 2.1.1 Landscape Context
- 2.1.2 Views into and out of the site
- 2.2.1 Landscape and Trees
- 2.3.1 Biodiversity
- 2.4.1 Cultural Heritage
- 2.5.1 Transport and Access
- 2.6.1 Hydrology, Flood risk and Drainage
- 2.7.1 Air Quality
- 2.8.1 Noise and Vibration
- 2.9.1 Ground Conditions and Contamination
- 2.10.1 Surrounding Character Analysis
- 2.11.1 Design Relevant Planning Policy
- 2.12.1 Opportunities and Constraints

3.0 Involvement Pg. 18

- 3.1.1 Community Involvement

4.0 Design Principles and Proposal Pg. 20

- 4.1.1 Green Infrastructure
- 4.1.2 Landscape Led Design principles
- 4.1.3 Design Development Sketches - GI
- 4.1.4 Design Development Sketches - Access and Movement
- 4.1.5 Design Development Sketches - Ares of Built Development
- 4.1.6 Ecotone 'Hop Over' Principles
- 4.1.7 Illustrative Site Section
- 4.2.1 Detailed Landscape Strategy
- 4.2.2 Parameters Plans
- 4.3.1 Illustrative Masterplan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Oakley Farm Cheltenham

1.1.1 Introduction

This statement has been prepared by MHP Design on behalf of Robert Hitchins Ltd. and their successors in title to the land, to accompany an outline planning application for residential development on land at Oakley Farm, Cheltenham.

Residential development of up to 250 dwellings with parking and supporting infrastructure and utilities; associated open space and landscaping; Vehicular access from Harp Hill and demolition of existing dwellings. Refer to Fig 1 Application Boundary.

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 states the following requirements:

"An application for planning permission ... must be accompanied by a statement ("a design and access statement") about:

- (a) the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; and
- (b) how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.

A design and access statement must:

- (a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
- (b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
- (c) explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;
- (d) state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and
- (e) explain how specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed."

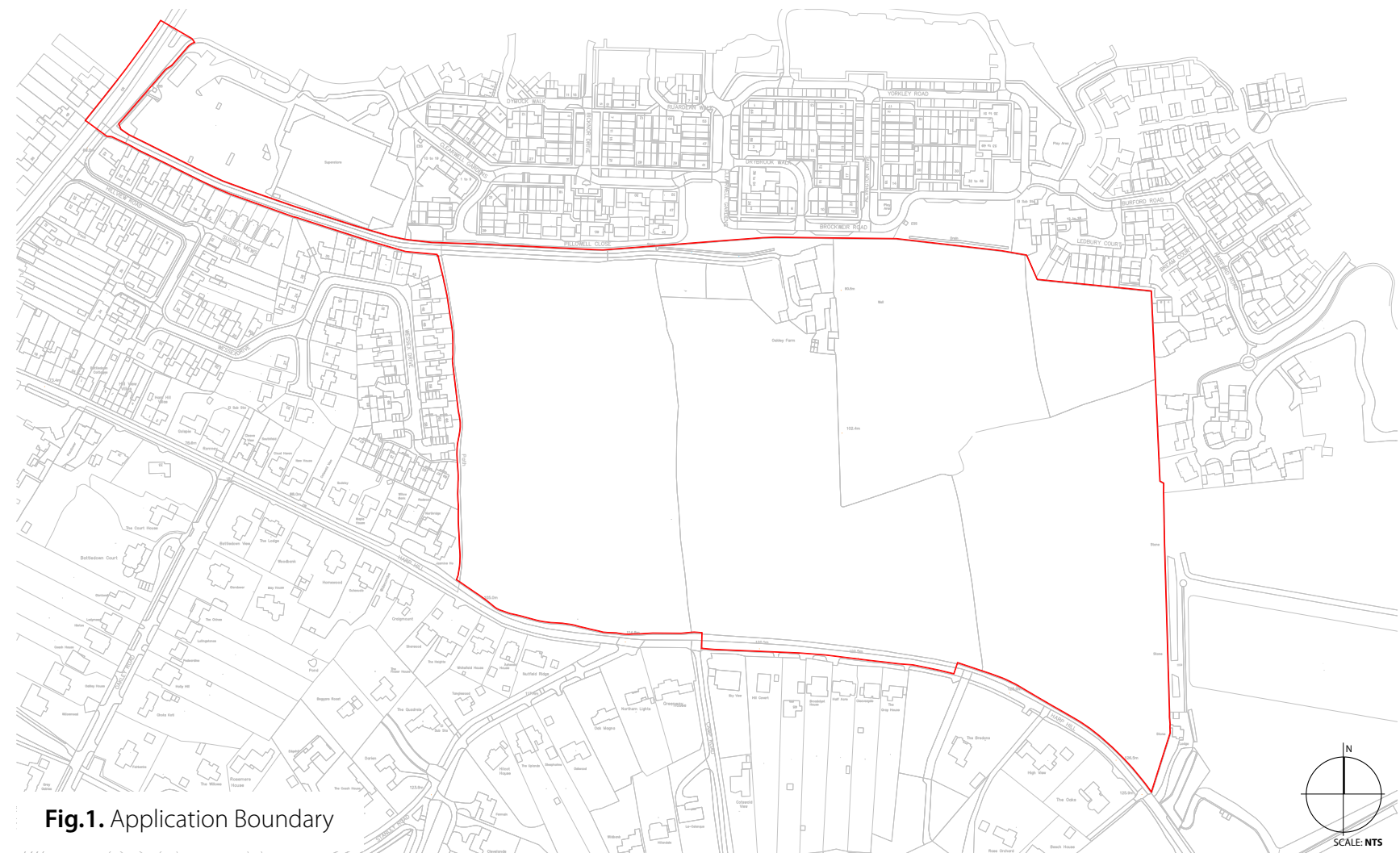


Fig.1. Application Boundary

1.1.2 Summary of development proposals

- Demolition of existing buildings;
- Up to 250 residential dwellings;
- Open space and landscaping;
- Vehicular access from Harp Hill, parking; and
- Supporting infrastructure and utilities.

1.1.3 Topography and Character

The site comprises of sloping topography ascending north to south and forms part of the lower escarpment which contains the main settlement area of Cheltenham.

The site is with the exception of part of the eastern boundary contained by the present settlement edge. This edge comprises modern residential development and some development still under construction. Adjoining residential areas north of site are prominent and form a detractor to the rural character.

Overall the impact of the new housing on the former GCHQ Oakley site has a very significant effect on local character and visual amenity. It has created a stark and harsh edge with the Cotswolds AONB.



Fig.2. Site Aerial Location Plan

2.0 SITE ASSESSMENT

Oakley Farm Cheltenham

2.1.1 Landscape Context










Chapter 6 of the Environmental Statement accompanying this application assesses the landscape and visual constraints to inform the design process. A summary from this statement is outlined below, however, for more details the chapter should be referred to in full.

ES Chapter Summary

The landscape and visual effects of the development proposals will result in the loss of sloping pasture which makes a contribution to local landscape character and visual amenity. The harm will be limited by the extent to which the area is already influenced by existing development, mitigation through retained vegetation and natural topography and the separation of the study site from the wider escarpment landscape and wider Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The development proposals retain the features which make the greatest contribution and have the highest sensitivity, limiting potential adverse impacts. This confirms that the study site has capacity to accommodate development whilst conserving the wider landscape character and scenic beauty of the AONB.

KEY

	Study Site		Scheduled monument
	Listed Building		AONB
	SSSI		Footpath containing views
	Open Access Land		CFP - Cheltenham Footpath
	Greenbelt		SBW - Southam Bridleway
	Registered park and gardens		CBW - Cheltenham, Bridleway

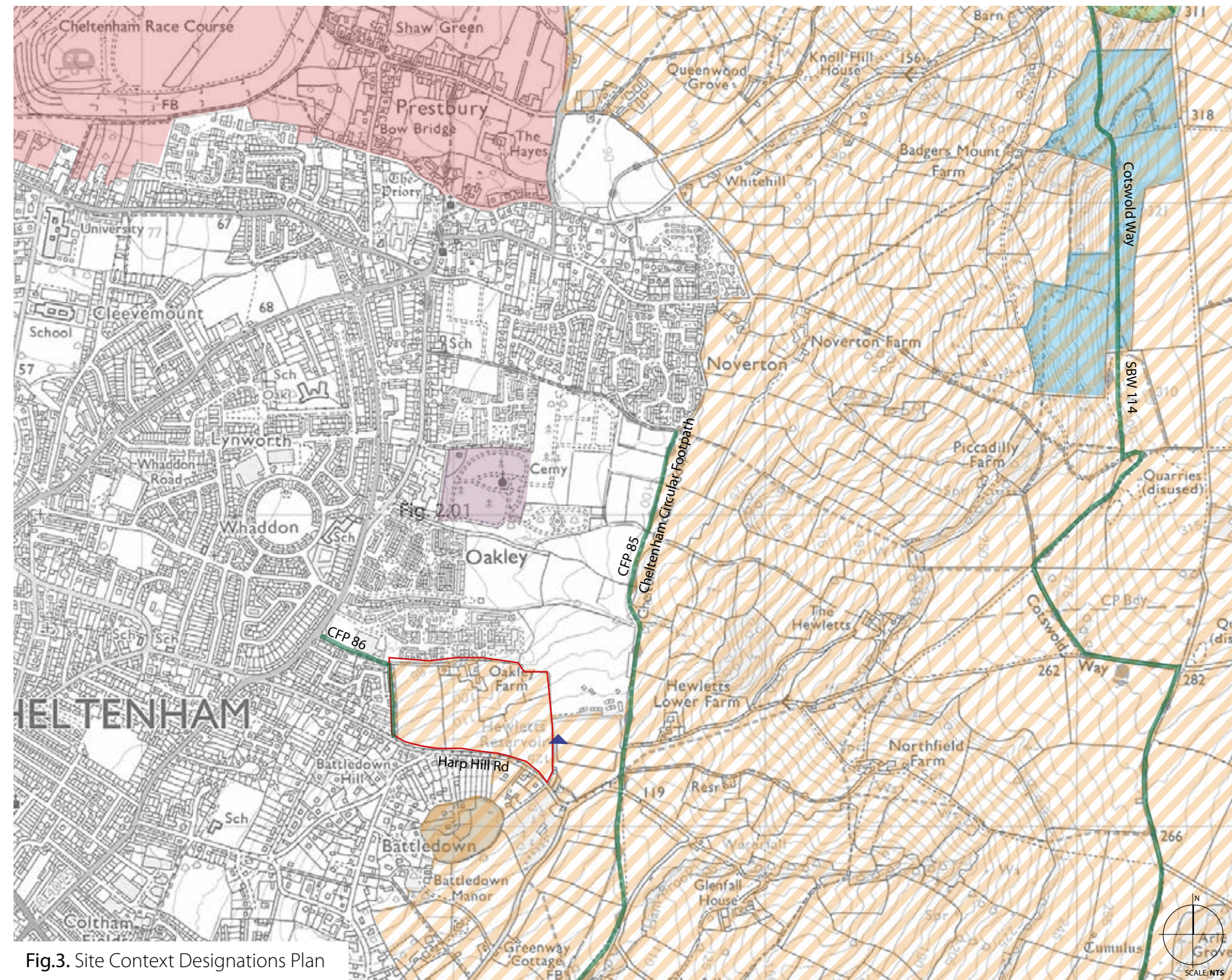


Fig.3. Site Context Designations Plan

2.1.2 Views into and out of the site

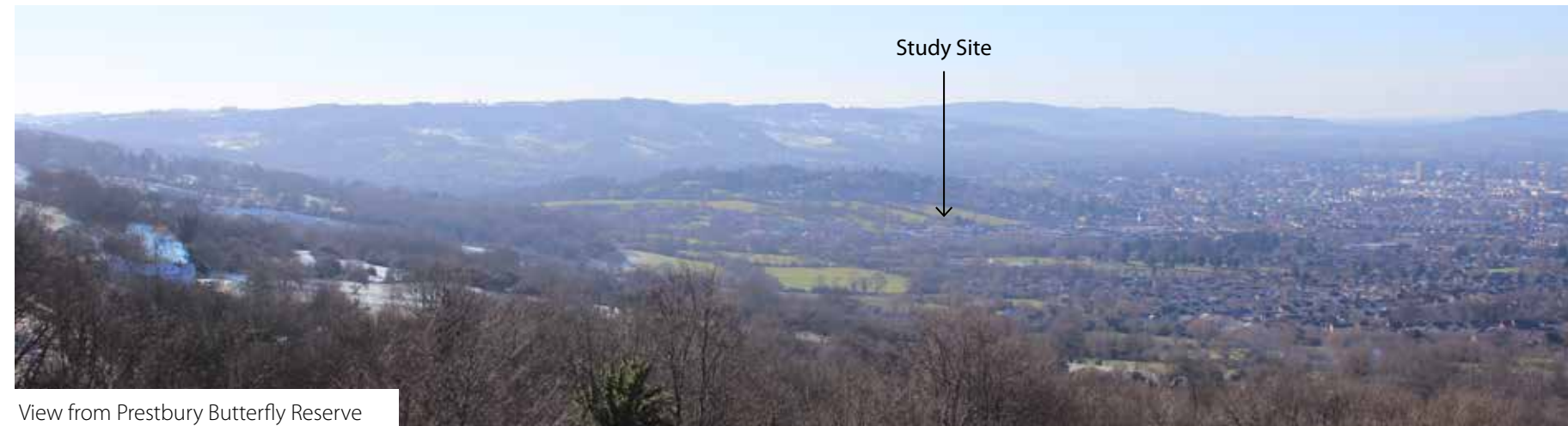
The site has a combination of prominent and generally obscured areas with the upper sloping fields being visually prominent in long distance views from the escarpment at Cleeve Hill and Prestbury Butterfly Reserve. In these views the site is seen as a green wedge of the escarpment protruding into an otherwise densely developed urban area. The Battledown residential area forms the urban edge even though it does not appear so, due to the well treed character of its landscape. As such the site is seen to form a distinct edge to the Cheltenham urban area which contributes to the setting of the town seen from the escarpment.

From local views the site is less visually prominent due to the effect of sloping topography and landcover. From Harp Hill there are important views to the listed pavilion and boundary structures of the reservoir which are only obtained from Harp Hill. The site is generally visually prominent from existing residential receptors to the west and north where it contributes a green space in an otherwise urban environment.

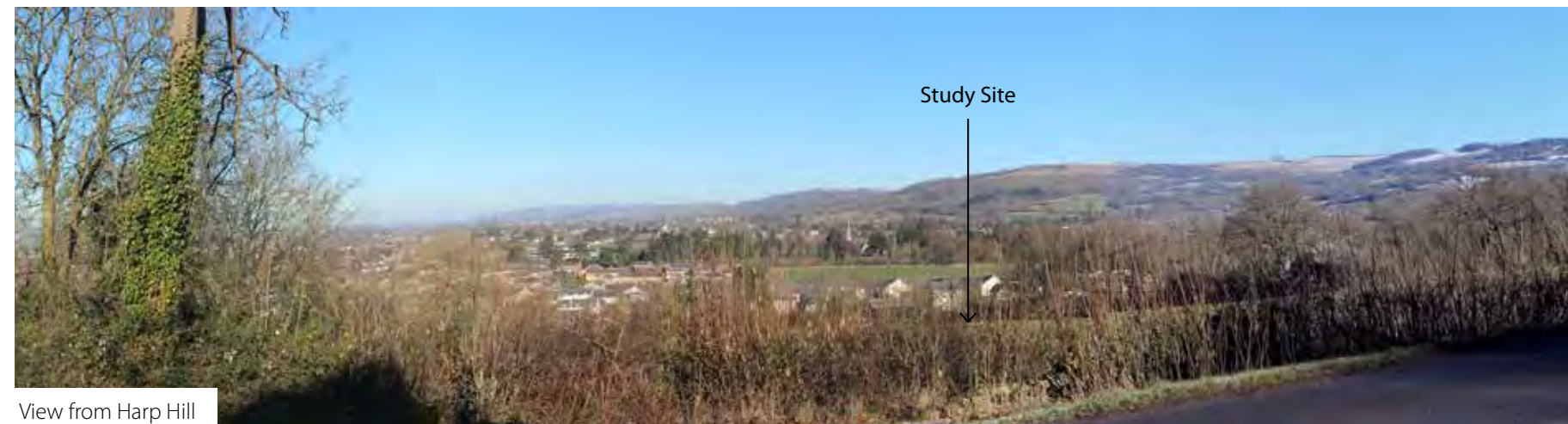
Overall the lower part of the site is assessed to have lower sensitivity than the upper open areas of the site.

Effect of Topography and Landcover

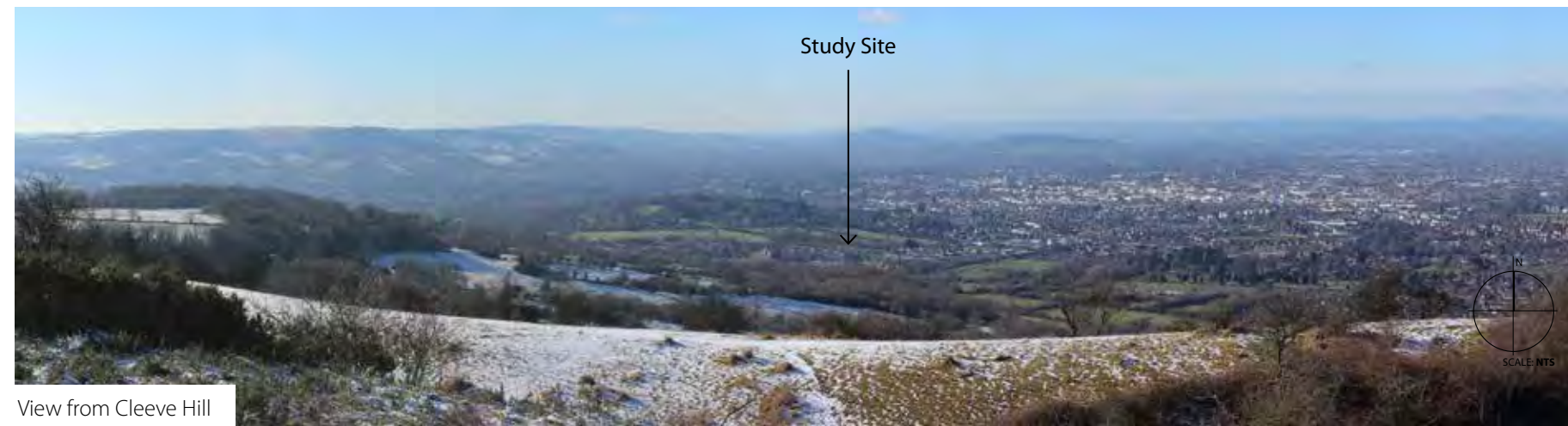
Topography and landcover in particular, reduce the visual prominence of the site at lower levels although there are clear views through degraded or weak boundary vegetation. Overall the lower areas of the site are assessed to have medium sensitivity to development whilst the upper areas (beyond the former hedgerow line) are assessed to have high sensitivity.



View from Prestbury Butterfly Reserve



View from Harp Hill



View from Cleeve Hill

2.2.1 Landscape and Trees

An initial site survey established that numerous large, and occasionally very large, individual oak trees are located within open farmland and within hedgerows, mainly in the north-eastern quadrant of the site. An area of mature trees is present surrounding a small incised valley within the central part of the site. The site features a small number of unmanaged hedgerows and several older trees display some characteristics that are consistent with 'veteran status'.

Drawing on this information a core design concept was to retain significant trees and hedgerows and integrate them into a wider green infrastructure network that would provide enhancements including significant areas of new tree planting.

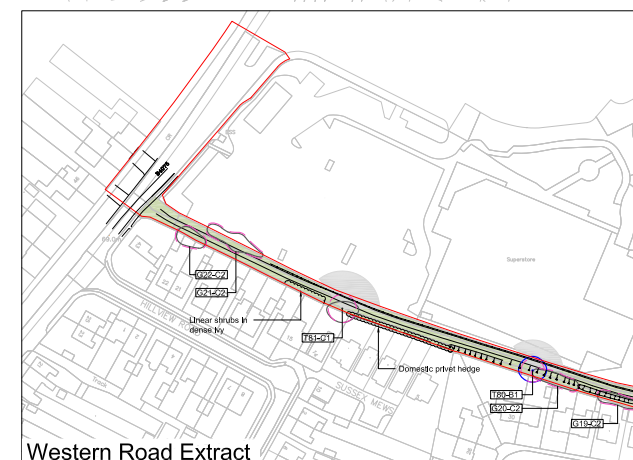
The arboricultural assessment concluded that a considered design process with appropriate arboricultural input could achieve a sustainable and harmonious relationship between new built form and existing trees.

Furthermore the retention of a substantial green infrastructure buffer at the south of the site presented considerable scope for new woodland planting. In addition, sustainable tree planting could also be incorporated into detailed proposals for built development. On this basis, provided that the existing trees are retained appropriately, it is considered reasonable to anticipate a net gain of tree canopy cover (with associated positive GI function) on the site as the new trees establish and mature.

Overall it is concluded that new tree planting incorporated into the proposals will, over time substantially enhance the arboricultural qualities of the site and give rise to a high level of positive impact over time.



Fig.4. Arboricultural Parameters Plan



Western Road Extract

Quality and Suitability For Retention

- Category A - High quality and value (Highly desirable for retention)
- Category B - Moderate quality and value (Desirable for retention)
- Category C - Low quality and value (Optional for retention)
- Category U - Poor quality and value (Unsuitable for retention)

Root Protection Areas (RPA)

Root Protection Areas (RPA) identified are in accordance with BS5837:2012. RPA's are shown as a pink dashed polyline

- Tree Key
- Existing shade segment (where applicable)
- Root Protection Area (RPA)
- Tree / Group canopy extent (calculated using N.E.S.W cardinal points - not shown)
- Tree / Group Number ID and Quality

Group / Area / Woodland / Hedgerow Key

- Root Protection Area (RPA)
- Woodland, group or hedge
- Hedge / Group Number ID

Key

- Tree Preservation Order
- Area of green infrastructure
- Area of built development
- Highway corridor flexibility zone

2.3.1 Biodiversity

Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement accompanying this application assesses the ecological site constraints to inform the design process. A summary from this statement is outlined below, however, for more details the chapter should be referred to in full.

Ecological surveys have been undertaken at the Application Site, between January 2018 and October 2019

The Application Site comprises six semi-improved grassland fields, which are separated by woodland and hedgerow. There are no statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest located within or immediately adjacent to the site. The nearest statutory designated site is Cleeve Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that lies approximately 2.7km north-east of the Application Site. The Proposed Development will not effect any of these statutory or non-statutory designated sites.

Effects on Habitats

The development proposals will lead to the loss of semi improved grass land and sections of hedgerow from the landscape. However, the loss to habitat will be more than offset through the creation of habitats of equal or greater value, included within areas of open green space, and planted with species of known value to wildlife.

Where it is considered that there is a reduction in potential habitat for protected species, the development proposals will ensure that these are compensated for by replacement habitat of equal size and greater quality.

Following mitigation and enhancement measures, overall impacts are considered to be positive at the site to European level and will ensure no net loss in biodiversity terms.



Fig.5. Ecological Features Plan

2.4.1 Cultural Heritage

Chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement accompanying this application assesses the archaeological and built heritage constraints to inform the design process. A summary from this statement is outlined below, however, for more details the chapter should be referred to in full.

Fig 6 opposite identifies the listed buildings and archaeological assets of the site.

ES Chapter Summary

Mitigation has already been designed into the Proposed Development, with there being a buffer of open space proposed between the listed buildings and the edge of built development. This has already been considered in relation to the effects on the asset.

All effects on the buried archaeological assets will take place during the Construction Phase. Any archaeological assets are likely to be destroyed by the construction process, but the assets are considered to be of low to negligible sensitivity on account of their state of preservation, lack of dating evidence, and lack of interpretation.

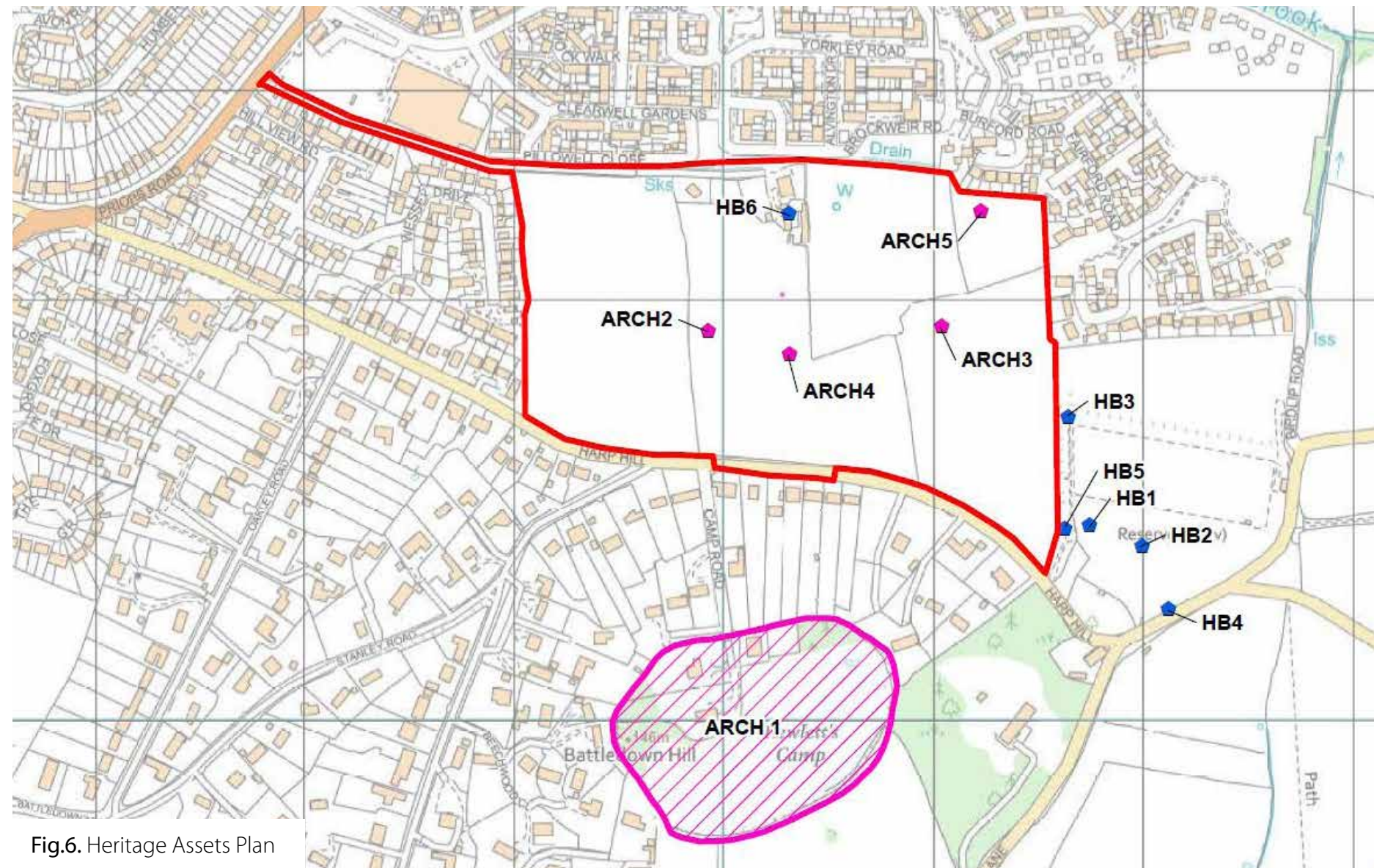


Fig.6. Heritage Assets Plan

There are six listed buildings close to the site:

- No 1 Reservoir (Grade II listed, **HB1**)
- No 2 Reservoir (Grade II listed, **HB2**)
- Pavilion at Hewlett's Reservoir (Grade II listed, **HB3**)
- Gates, Gatepiers and Boundary Walls at Hewlett's Reservoir (Grade II listed, **HB4**)
- Stone Lodge at Hewlett's Reservoir (Non-designated Heritage Asset, **HB5**)
- Agricultural Buildings at Oakley Farm (Non-designated Heritage Asset, **HB6**)

The archaeological assets considered were:

- Battledown Camp (Scheduled Monument, **ARCH1**)
- A single probable Prehistoric feature (Non-designated asset, **ARCH2**)
- Three small pits, undated (Non-designated asset, **ARCH3**)
- Ditch, probably Post-Medieval (Non-designated asset, **ARCH4**)
- Shallow linear feature, probably a furrow (Non-designated asset, **ARCH5**)

2.5.1 Transport and Access

Chapter 9 of the Environmental Statement accompanying this application assesses the transport and access opportunities and constraints to inform the design process. A summary from this statement is outlined below, however, for more details the chapter should be referred to in full.

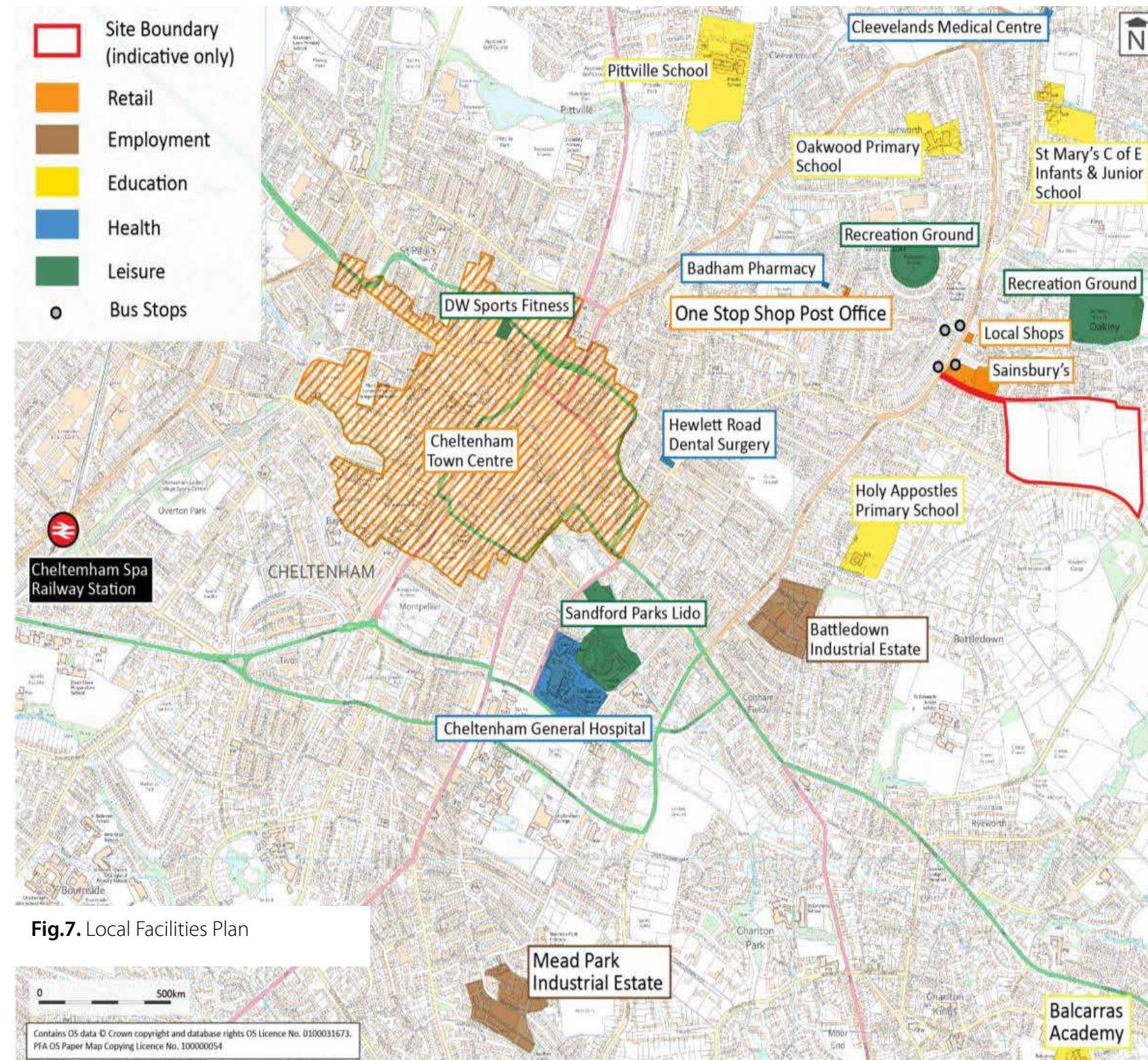
Fig. 7 opposite identifies the walking/cycling distance from the site to the existing local facilities. Figures 6 & 7 on Page * show the existing PRoW network and bus routes.

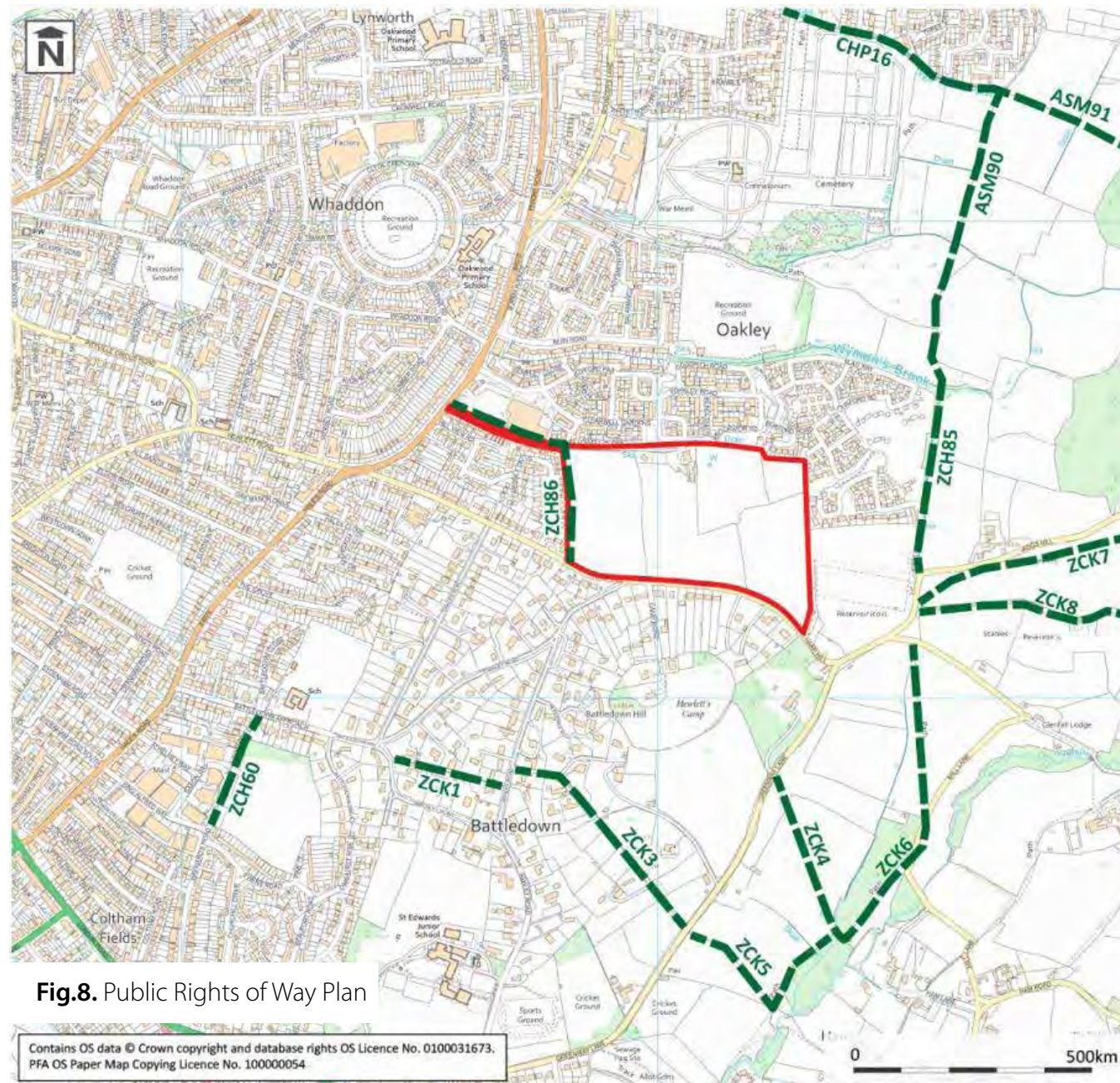
ES Chapter Summary

The Application Site is located north of Harp Hill, approximately 3km east of Cheltenham town centre. Cheltenham Footpath 86, a Public Right of Way, routes along the western boundary connecting Harp Hill with the B4075 Priors Road, via the existing farm access. The farm access extends eastwards from the B4075 Priors Road along the northern extent of the Application Site. A number of local services and facilities are within proximity.

It is concluded that with the implementation of the mitigation and enhancement measures outlined, including the Interim Residential Travel Plan aimed at encouraging travel by sustainable modes, the additional traffic demand would be safely and satisfactorily accommodated on the local transport network.

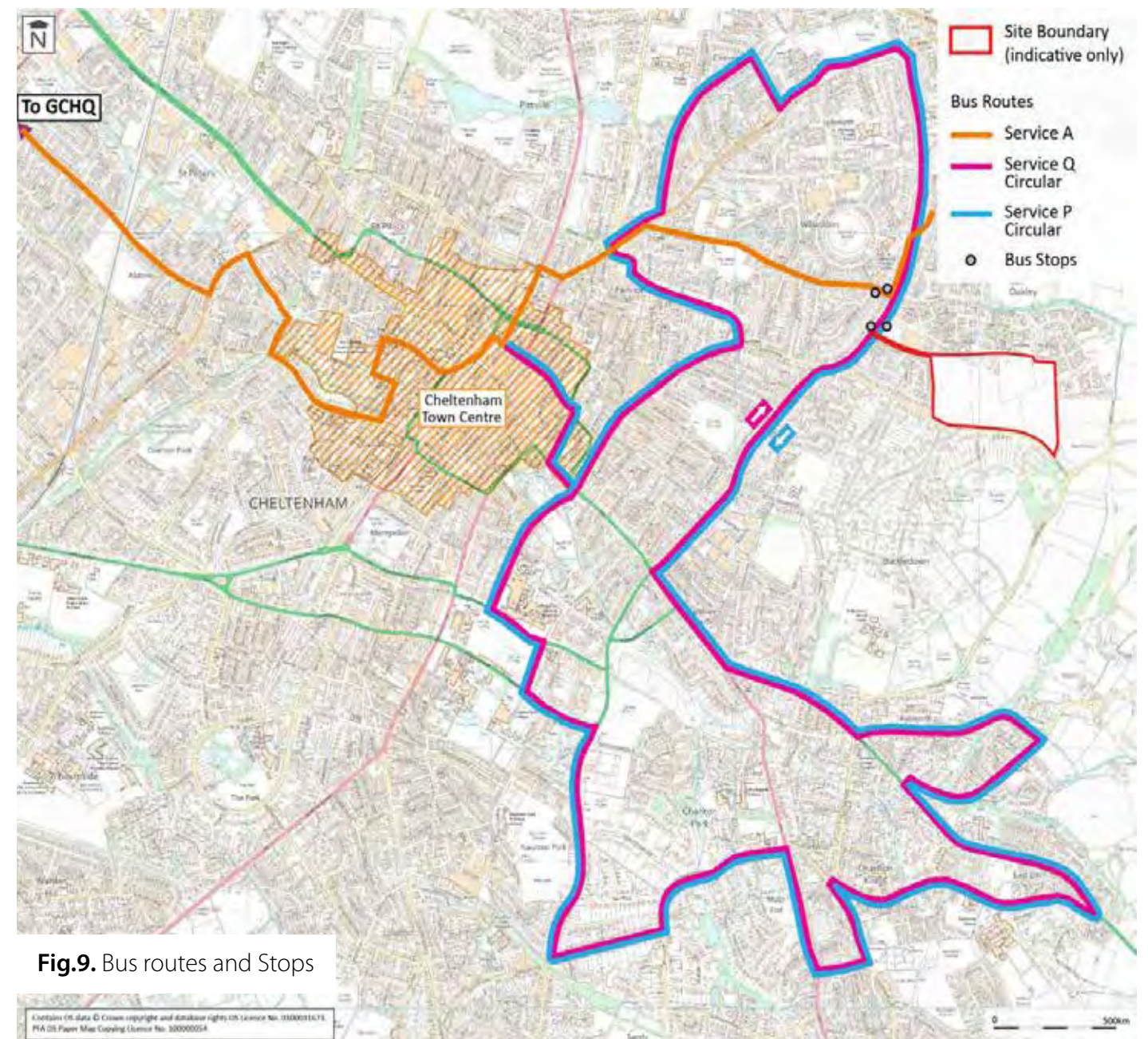
The overall residual effect of the Proposed Development in transport terms is likely to be generally Minor to Moderate Beneficial.





2.5.2 Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

Cheltenham Footpath 86 (ZCH86), an existing public right of way, routes along the western edge of the site, from Harp Hill to the north-western corner of the site, and continues west to link with Priors Road. there are a number of PRoW with access to the open countryside further to the east. Cheltenham town centre is within 3km of the site. From Priors Road and Harp Hill towards the Town centre, the network of pedestrian facilities is comprehensive with lit footways and pedestrian crossing points.



2.5.3 Existing Bus Routes and stops

The nearest bus stops are located to the north west of the Application Site in the vicinity of Sainsburys on Priors Road and in the vicinity of the Community Centre on Whaddon Road. Cheltenham Spa Railway Station is located approximately 4.6km from the centre of the Application Site and provides a variety of rail links to destinations across the country.

2.6.1 Hydrology, Flood Risk and Drainage

Chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement accompanying this application assesses the hydrology, flood risk and drainage opportunities and constraints to inform the design process. A summary from this statement is outlined below, however, for more details the chapter should be referred to in full.

Fig. 10 opposite identifies the emerging drainage strategy for the site

ES Chapter Summary

The Application Site is considered to be in an area of low to moderate sensitivity in terms of the water environment. The entirety of the Application Site is located in Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk of fluvial flooding).

The Proposed Development will be safe from flooding, that flood risk will not be increased downstream, and overall flood risk in the area will be reduced.

The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will manage and reduce flood risk and will ensure that there is no adverse effect on water quality. The effects of the Proposed Development on flooding and surface water drainage are considered to be beneficial.

Overall the development is considered to have a negligible to minor beneficial effect on Hydrology, Drainage and Flood Risk.



Fig.10. Site Drainage Strategy

2.7.1 Air Quality

Air Quality has been considered in the Environmental Statement. A summary of the findings of the studies is provided below.

ES Chapter Summary

Existing Baseline

The Application Site lies within the borough-wide Air Quality Management Area declared by CBC for exceedances of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective. Monitoring undertaken by the Council shows that concentrations of nitrogen dioxide within the study area have been below the objective in recent years.

The assessment showed that the effect of additional road traffic emissions on air quality at existing residential properties is 'not significant' and is therefore acceptable; air quality for future residents of the Proposed Development was also shown to be acceptable.

2.8.1 Noise and Vibration

Noise and vibration are considered and assessed in the Environmental Statement. A summary of the findings of the studies is provided below.

ES Chapter Summary

Existing Baseline

A series of noise surveys were carried out to ascertain the noise levels around the Application Site, which have been used as the basis of the current assessment to identify potential effects.

Noise levels within the Proposed Development were generally low and principally influenced by distant road traffic travelling along surrounding roads and occasional light aircraft operating into Gloucestershire Airport during daytime periods.

In summary, with appropriate mitigation and control measures adopted during the construction of the Proposed Development, potential noise and vibration effects would be reduced to an acceptable level, thus ensuring the Application Site is suitable for a residential development.

2.9.1 Ground Conditions and Contamination

Ground Conditions and Contamination are considered and assessed in the Environmental Statement. A summary of the findings of the studies is provided below.

ES Chapter Summary

Existing Baseline

Various environmental issues have been considered and assessed in terms of their likely impact upon human health, controlled waters and the surrounding ecosystem. The risks have been assessed by consideration of the "source-pathway-receptor" concept, the behaviour of potential contaminants within the environment, current and foreseeable legislation, and the views of and good practices expected by the environmental regulators.

Pre-mitigation effects have been assessed and the type and description of an appropriate mitigation strategy outlined, again relating to the construction and operation phases of the development. On the basis that the required mitigation strategy is complied with, all potential impacts are considered to be 'insignificant'. There are not considered to be any residual impacts.

2.10.1 Surrounding Character Area Analysis

The core of Cheltenham town is situated to the south west of the study area and historically Battledown area and Battledown Hill was gradually developed with residential housing before the area to the immediate north and west of the site. The most recent development is that which encloses the site to the north and east of the study site.

At the turn of the century in 1900 the Battledown area featured some residential development. Harp Hill brickworks were situated to the immediate west of the site and the reservoir to the east. It wasn't until the 19 50's that the area to the north of the site became occupied by government buildings, in the 1960's the former brickworks site started to be developed with residential housing and within this century the area to the north and the east of the site was developed with residential dwellings.



KEY	
	Study Site
	Residential Areas
	Long view into/ across site
	Short view into/ across site
	Pasture now associated with parcel 'I' formerly a separate field. Ridge and furrow, Well contained.
	Pasture, small scale no part of parcel 'H' but formerly a separate field. Ridge and furrow. Well contained.
	Farmstead. Some opportunity for redevelopment but trees a constraint.
	Former pasture now well treed. Trees are a constraint.
	Pasture closely associated with farmstead. Trees are a constraint.
	Pasture, small scale. Ridge and furrow. Open due to degraded boundary hedgerow.
	Sloping pasture, well contained with ridge and furrow. open field allows views from Harp Hill to listed structures of reservoir.
	Sloping pasture with ridge and furrow. Weak hedgerow along Harp Hill allows short and long distance views.
	Sloping pasture with ridge and furrow. Weak hedgerow along Harp Hill allows short and long distance views.
	Battledown residential area set amongst well treed landscape.
	Prominent residential area around Wessex Drive.
	Prominent residential area around Pillowell Close and Brockweir Road.
	Prominent new development around Bream Court and Ledbury Court.
	Hewletts Reservoir Listed Structures.

Fig.11. Character Areas Plan

Area J : Battledown residential area is characterised by low density, large scale housing set within a well-treed landscape. Buildings are predominately 2.5 storey and feature a mixture of stone, render and brick building materials and mixture of architectural styles.



Area K : Former Harp Hill Brickworks, Wessex Drive residential development. 1960's red brick, detached, single and two storey estate housing. Higher density than Battledown.



Area L : 21st century residential development centred on the old government building site. Predominately terraced rendered town houses and apartment complexes with some detached brick dwellings. The area features a mixture of two and three storey dwellings.



Area M : 21st century residential development currently under construction. centred on the old government building site. Predominately detached brick dwellings 2 to 2.5 storeys high.



Image Source: Google Street View 2020

2.11.1 DESIGN RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

NPPF

Government Guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and a core principle of this is to:

“Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard for amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”

COTSWOLDS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2018-2023

Development should be:

- compatible with the distinctive character of the location
- Incorporate designs and landscaping consistent with the above
- Respecting the local settlement pattern and building style
- Incorporate appropriate sustainability elements and designs
- Have regard to the impact on tranquillity
- Not have an adverse impact on local community amenities and services as well as access to these
- Protect, and where possible enhance, landscape and biodiversity
- Be in accordance with a more sustainable pattern of development, reducing dependence on car travel

AONB LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES

The AONB landscape strategy and guidelines identifies new development as a local force for change and outlines strategies and guidelines to address these including recommendations for ensuring new development does not interrupt the setting of settlements or views across the vale.

- Maintain the open, sparsely settled character limiting new development to existing settlements.
- Ensure new development is proportionate and does not overwhelm the existing settlement.
- Ensure that new development does not adversely affect settlement character and form.
- Layout of development should respect local built character and avoid cramming up to boundaries resulting in hard suburban style edge to the settlement.
- Control the proliferation of suburban building styles and materials
- Ensure new built development is visually integrated with the rural landscape setting and does not interrupt the setting of existing villages or views.
- Promote the use of local stone and building styles in the construction of new buildings and extensions to existing dwellings
- Retain existing trees, dry stone walls, hedges etc as part of the scheme.
- Ensure new development is integrated into its surroundings and does not interrupt the setting of existing settlements. Break up harsh edges of new development with appropriate and adequate tree planting ideally in advance of the development taking place

GLOUCESTER, CHELTENHAM AND TEWKESBURY JOINT CORE STRATEGY (2011-2031)

- Proposals will demonstrate how they contribute to the aims of sustainability. All development will be expected to be adaptable to climate change in respect of the design, layout, siting, orientation and function of both buildings and associated external spaces.
- Proposals should consider context, character, sense of place; legibility and identity; public realm and landscape.
- Landscape character is to be protected and proposals should ensure they have regard for local distinctiveness and historic character, protecting and enhancing the landscape character.
- All development proposals within the setting of the Cotswolds AONB will be required to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance its landscape, scenic beauty, wildlife, cultural heritage and other special qualities.
- Development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, having regard to valued and distinctive elements of the historic environment.
- Habitat features should be incorporated into the design, creating and enhancing wildlife corridors and ecological stepping stones between sites.
- Residential development should seek to achieve the maximum density compatible with good design, the protection of heritage assets, local amenity and the character and quality of the local Environment.
- Development proposals should consider and contribute positively towards green infrastructure. Where assets are created, retained or replaced within a scheme, they should be properly integrated into the design and contribute to local character and distinctiveness.



2.12.1 Opportunities and Constraints

CONSTRAINTS

- Retain existing significant and specimen trees, hedge-rows and other landscape features.
- Provide a landscape buffer along the southern slopes of the site to protect long distant views from the cotswold escarpment and views from dwellings on Harp Hill.
- Provide SUD's infiltration and attenuation areas within the scheme;
- Protect and maintain the routes of the existing public rights of way running along the boundaries of the site.
- Maintain views across the scheme from Harp Hill towards the Cotswold Escarpment
- Contain built development within the northern portion of the site where the topography is lower

OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide sustainable development that can accommodate up to 250 dwellings supported by amenity space and new infrastructure;
- Make efficient use of land through the application of appropriate densities;
- Opportunity to create quality architecture that takes cues from locally desirable vernacular, the considers local design guidance and responds positively to the surrounding character of adjacent built form and its AONB location.
- Provide green infrastructure enhancements that build positively upon the local character and existing landscape structures and integral part of the development.
- Provide new connections including pedestrian access points and new footpath routes that provide access to land that was not previously publicly accessible.
- Create a new woodland belt that will provide biodiversity enhancements an improvements to the local Green Infrastructure Network.
- Create publically accessible playspaces for the benefit of new and existing residents within the local community

KEY

-  Area with some capacity for development
-  New structural tree planting
-  Potential public access

The constraints and opportunities presented by the site are used to inform and structure the development proposals. These are outlined adjacent and summarised where appropriate on the constraints and opportunities plan shown below.



Fig.12. Constraints and Opportunities Plan

3.0 INVOLVEMENT

Oakley Farm Cheltenham

3.1.1 Community Engagement

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Stakeholder participation has consisted of a Public Consultation held on the 26th June 2019, which was advertised in the press on the 13th and 20th of June as well as the distribution of 1,500 leaflets.

A number of positive comments were received on the impact of the proposed landscape buffer by residents of Harp Hill.

The public consultation allowed members of the local community to raise potential issues at an early stage of the design process. This has allowed these issues to be addressed through continued dialogue and iterative design process as the design progresses in detail.

The main issues raised were concerns over traffic congestion and safety and queries on the use and effectiveness of landscaping in minimising impacts on the AONB, adjacent residents and views.

HOW THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

A number of measures have been incorporated into the scheme to protect and enhance the landscape and public accessibility of the site to improve access and enjoyment of the AONB for everyone.

A substantial landscaped buffer is proposed across the more sensitive areas of the site leading to significant net biodiversity enhancements and the strengthening and revitalisation of the local green infrastructure network.

LAND AT OAKLEY FARM, BATTLEDOWN, CHELTENHAM

01

INTRODUCTION

Pegasus Group is preparing an application for outline planning permission for the development of up to 250 dwellings on Land at Oakley Farm, Battledown, Cheltenham.



PROPOSED SITE

The land is situated on the eastern side of Cheltenham to the north of Harp Hill, around 1.3 miles to the north east of the town centre on the lower slopes of the Cotswold Scarp at Oakley and is within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The site currently comprises a series of five open fields that are bounded by hedgerows and mature trees. The former farmstead of Oakley Farm is located towards the northern boundary of the site and is accessed by a single track from the west.

The site is bounded on three sides, to the south, west and north by existing residential development and to the east by the listed structures of Hewlett's Reservoir. The site is bounded to the south by Harp Hill Road and to the west by Wessex Drive both of which are established residential areas. The site is bounded to the north by the former GCHQ Oakley site which has recently been redeveloped for residential purposes with Pillowell Close, Brockweir Close and Fairford Road situated adjacent to the northern boundary of the site and Bream Court and Birdlip Road to the north east of the site.

The site is well connected to the existing residential suburbs of Cheltenham with Battledown to the south, Whaddon to the west and Prestbury to the north. There is a public right of way along but outside of the western boundary of the site, no public footpaths cross the site.



LAND AT OAKLEY FARM, BATTLEDOWN, CHELTENHAM

02



THE PROPOSAL

The emerging masterplan for the new planning application comprises the following:

- Demolition of existing buildings;
- Up to 250 residential dwellings;
- Open space and landscaping;
- Vehicular access from Harp Hill, parking; and
- Supporting infrastructure and utilities.

The Concept Plan shows some of the key principles guiding the proposals that are being developed. These include restricting built development to the lower lying northern areas, providing substantial green infrastructure with new public access to the south, and retaining and enhancing significant and specimen trees. The objective being to make a positive contribution to the AONB.

Principal access will be from Harp Hill with pedestrian links from Harp Hill and from the existing pedestrian network.

Before the application is submitted to Cheltenham Borough Council we are seeking the views of the local community on the draft proposals.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The application will be accompanied by an Environmental Statement including a number of technical documents covering matters such as transport and access, hydrology, flood risk and drainage, landscape and visual impact, heritage and ecology.

These reports are currently being prepared.



LAND AT OAKLEY FARM, BATTLEDOWN, CHELTENHAM

03

Heritage

An initial assessment identifies that the site is bounded to the east by Hewlett's Reservoir, which includes Grade II Listed Buildings. It is not anticipated that the proximity of Hewlett's Reservoir would preclude development across the entirety of the site. However, it is anticipated that it would constrain development at the south east, adjacent to the reservoir. This is reflected in the initial concept plan.

There is no evidence to suggest that the buildings at Oakley Farm would be of any greater significance than a non-designated heritage asset.

Although ridge and furrow is within the site, it is not anticipated that these earthworks would represent a major constraint to development.

Current evidence does not indicate that below-ground archaeological remains which would preclude development are likely to be present within the site.

Heritage assets are therefore not considered to represent a constraint to the bringing forward of development at the site.

Landscape

An initial Landscape and Visual Assessment has been undertaken and a more detailed assessment is underway. This assessment considers the capacity of the site for residential development.

The report states that by limiting development to the lower sloping areas adjoining the farmstead and ensuring that the upper slopes remain free of built form, it would be possible to retain the rural and green wedge character that contributes to the setting of Cheltenham as experienced in present views. The site would continue to provide 'green space' which both contributes to the wider and local setting.

Importantly the report points to the opportunities that development of the site offers to provide enhancements in landscape terms, including the potential to restore degraded or lost hedgerows and the potential to provide public access where none currently exists.

Ecology

An initial ecology assessment has been undertaken, a walkover of the site and a desk top study has been completed.

There are no ecological red flags to prevent development coming forward at the site, and no badger setts were identified on the site during the walkover.

Further field-based surveys and a Phase 1 survey are being done to support the submission of the planning application.

Housing Land Supply

Since the start of the plan period Cheltenham Borough Council has undersupplied against the identified housing requirement in every year except 2017/18.

National policy states that the Council are required to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing. The Council acknowledge in their Housing Supply Position Statement that the Borough is no longer able to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land and that this is due to the delay in sites coming forward, in particular the strategic sites of North West Cheltenham and West Cheltenham. The Council have stated that the North West Cheltenham site will not be completed in the plan period.

Consequently, there is need for additional housing sites to come forward to ensure that the minimum 5 year supply is maintained and that housing is delivered to meet housing needs. Land at Oakley Farm can help to meet the housing shortfall in a sustainable way.



GRADE II LISTED PAVILION AT HEWLETT'S RESERVOIR



4.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND PROPOSAL

Oakley Farm Cheltenham

4.1.1 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The strategy for the development of the site has been landscape led.

Existing green infrastructure assets have been retained, conserved and enhanced.

The following design development sketches illustrate the landscape led design process

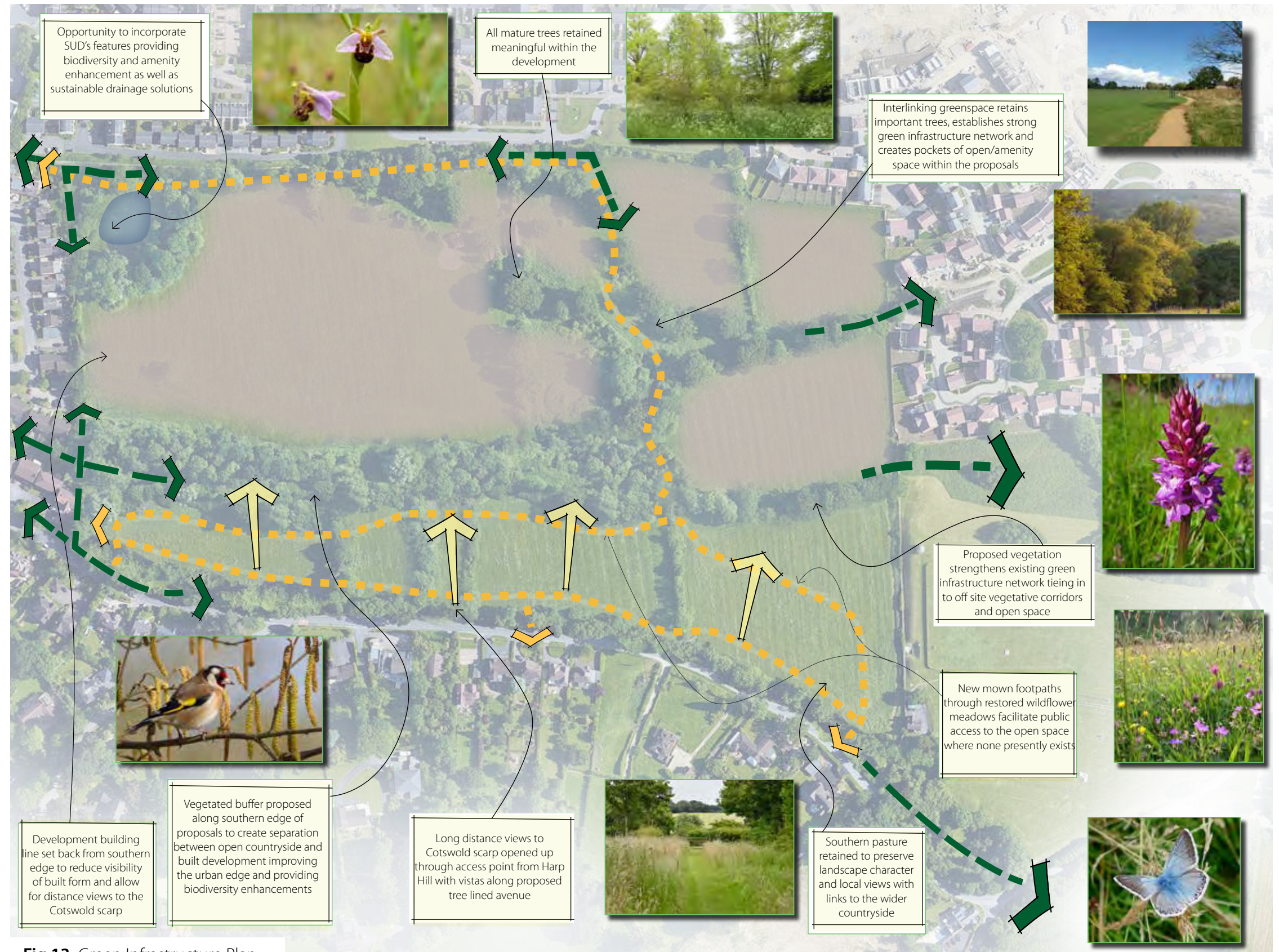
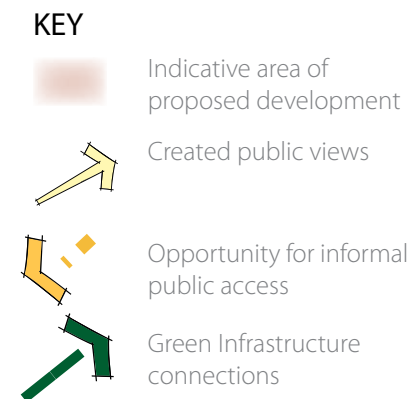


Fig.13. Green Infrastructure Plan

4.1.2 LANDSCAPE LED DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- **Public access** facilitated into a currently publically inaccessible area of the AONB
- **Views opened up and retained** towards the Cotswold Escarpment
- **Green buffer** to soften the proposed development, improve the urban edge, strengthen the green infrastructure network and provide biodiversity and amenity enhancements
- **Wildflora meadows** provide biodiversity and amenity enhancements
- Building line to be set back from the southern edge to reduce the visibility of built form and allow **views towards the Cotswold Escarpment**
- **Mature trees** to be meaningfully retained within green corridors and public open space of the development.
- **Green corridors** extend through the development protecting hedge lines and specimen trees whilst creating pockets of public open space throughout the proposals
- Southern areas of pasture retained to **protect local character**, views and green infrastructure links to the open countryside.
- New mown grass and gravel paths enable **public accessibility to the meadows**, link to the existing footpath network and provide local recreational access to the AONB for existing and proposed residents.



Fig.14. Landscape Led Design Principles

4.1.3 SITE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT SKETCHES - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

KEY

- Local Green Links
- Green Infrastructure Spine
- Existing Woodland/Trees
- New Woodland
- Retained strategic hedgerow links
- Open Space
- Local Green Infrastructure Links



4.1.4 SITE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT SKETCHES - Access and Movement and Permeability

KEY

- Existing Vehicular Routes
- New Vehicular Route
- Secondary Routes
- New Junction
- - - Existing footpath
- - - New footpath/cycleway



4.1.5 SITE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT SKETCHES - Areas of Built Development

KEY

-  Areas of built residential development of varying density set within Existing and proposed Green Infrastructure





Naturalistic play



Eco tone zones



LANDSCAPE
& GI LED

Detention and wildlife ponds



Swales



Multifunctional Green Infrastructure



Tree lined avenues



Enhanced pedestrian links



Access to countryside



Celebrating, opening and enhancing views

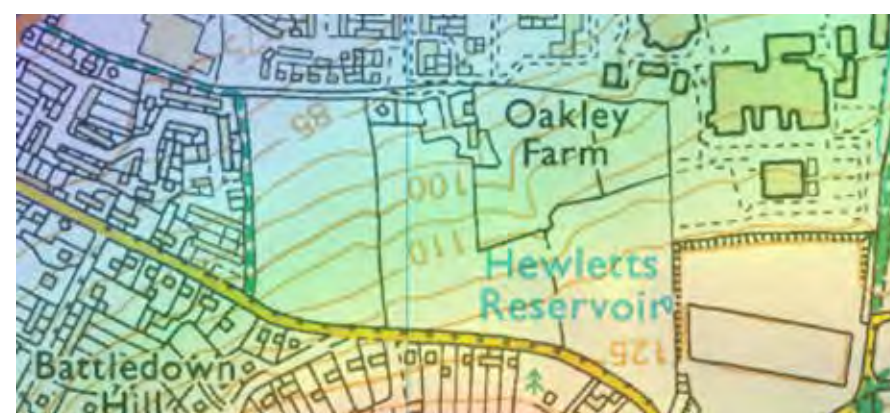


IDENTITY
AND
QUALITY OF
PLACE

Forging footpath connections



Softening the urban to rural transition



Working with natural topography



Linking to long distance walking trails



Celebrating the landscape setting



Community engagement, tree planting



Bioswales, rainwater capture



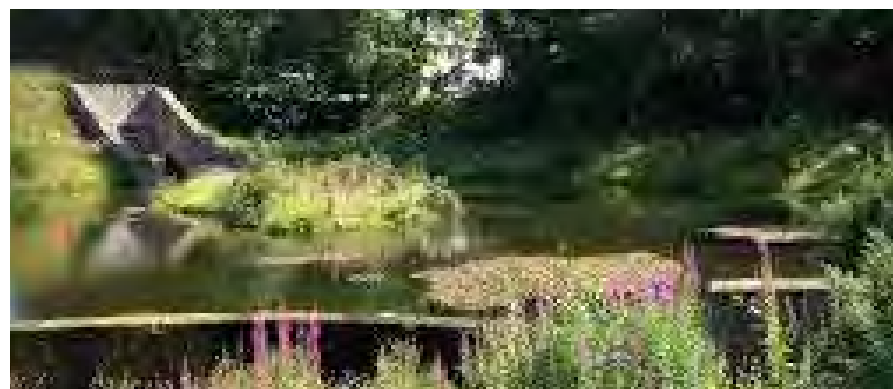
Restoring wildflower meadows



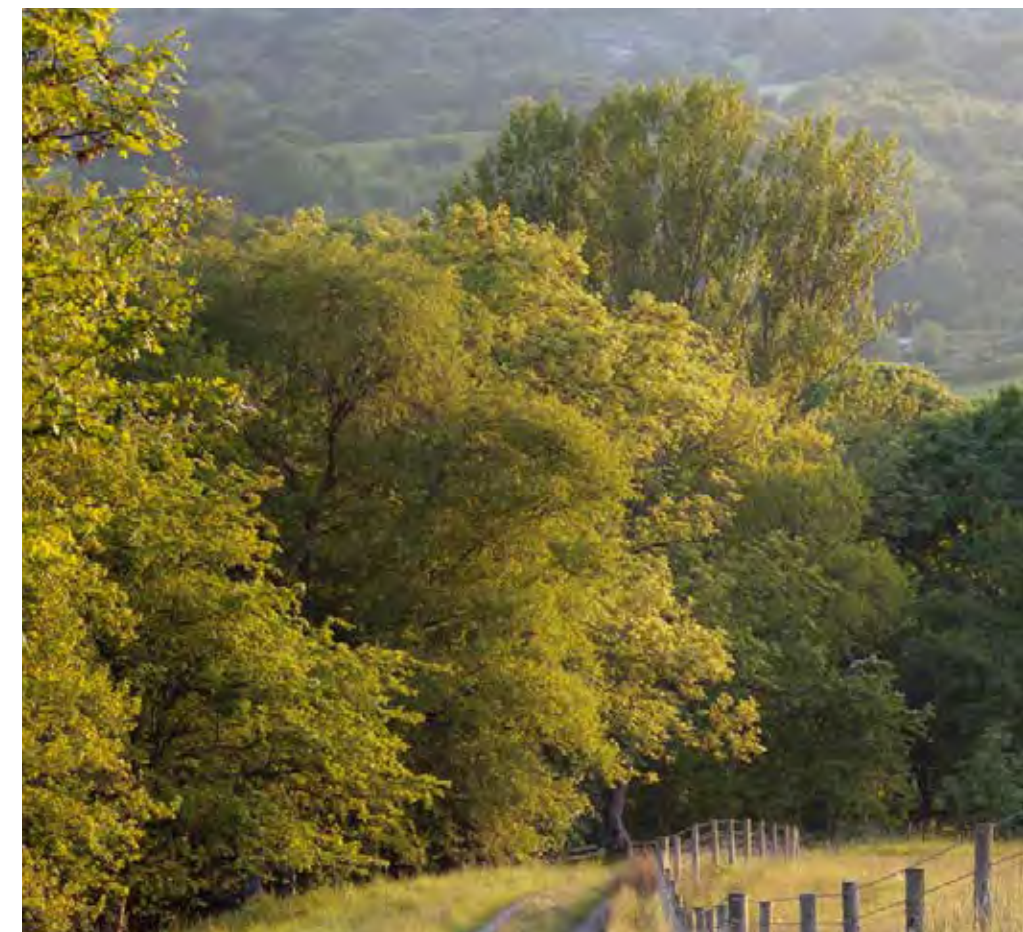
Cycle paths and sustainable transport networks



Net gains in biodiversity



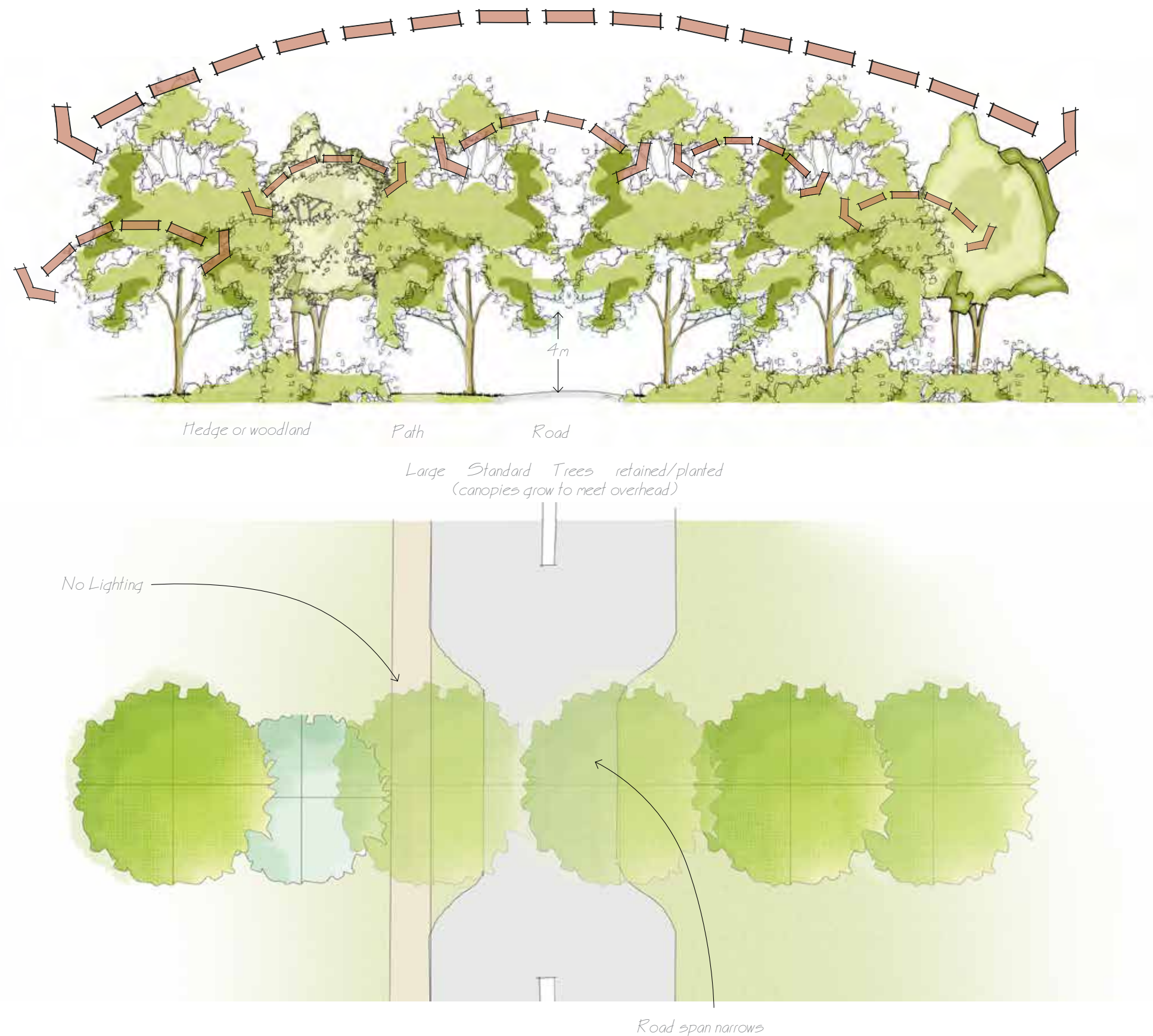
Water efficiency measures



Retaining valuable trees

4.1.6 ECOTONE - 'Hop Over' Principles

Where trees are both retained and proposed and habitat links are still able to be maintained. The illustrative Ecotone 'Hop Over' principles can be applied to ensure that wildlife can continue to thrive across the site.

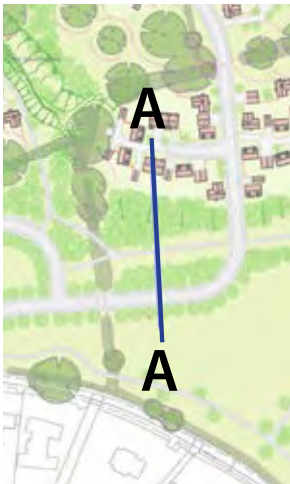




4.1.7 Site Section through Illustrative masterplan

The site section through the illustrative masterplan indicates the principles of new woodland establishment and creation of publicly accessible open space set within wild flower meadows. Tree planting on regraded landform forms a soft edge to new development proposals.

Key Plan



Oakley Farm, Cheltenham Landscape Strategy



4.2.1 Detailed Landscape Strategy

Key

- Site boundary
- Existing trees
- Existing green infrastructure
- Native tree and shrub planting
- Tree planting
- Hedge planting
- Grass meadow with wildflowers
- Herb margin
- Amenity grass
- Pasture retained (reinstated areas seeded with flowering lawn mixture)
- Wetland meadow and planting to SuDS basin
- Mown grass path through pasture
- Native bulbs/wildflower planting
- Area for natural play to meet EN1176 and EN1177
- Nature trail/country park sign
- Timber trim trail equipment and sign
- Bench
- Dog waste bin
- Bound gravel footpath
- Slope
- Notes on key views to/from the site
- Easement/wayleave associated with existing services

Landscape Strategy

The network of green infrastructure has been developed from a landscape-led approach where ecological and amenity benefits have been prioritised to give an overall gain in species diversity and to provide an accessible green resource with a 'country park' feel for the whole community to enjoy.

The naturalistic quality of the site is to be retained with the existing mature trees and hedges protected and reinforced with additional native planting. Enhanced opportunities and connectivity for wildlife are to be created by increasing diversity and providing a net gain of trees and shrubs. New woodland and woodland edge planting will encourage thick and dense vegetation for improved foraging and shelter for wildlife. Native hedgerows and specimen trees are to be planted, retained hedges restored and grassland diversity increased.

Planting Strategy

Planting within areas of public open spaces shall be predominantly native, of known value to wildlife and reflect species in the locality. Oak trees will predominate in areas of public open space in-keeping with the site character and provide a replacement stock for the future. Hedges and woodland will contain a mix of native species providing flowers, fruits, seeds and shelter. Consideration should also be given to selection of species which are shown to adapt to climate change and to reduce the risk of pests and diseases. The following lists give species which are to be included in the scheme.

TREES

Species	Common name
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Common alder
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver birch
<i>Betula pubescens</i>	Downy birch
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Common hornbeam
<i>Crataegus mongyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Native crab apple
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild cherry
<i>Prunus padus</i>	Bird cherry
<i>Pyrus communis</i>	Wild pear
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English oak
<i>Sorbus aria</i>	Whitebeam
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan/Mountain ash
<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Small leaved lime

WETLAND PLANTS

Species	Common name
<i>Calla palustris</i>	Marsh marigold
<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>	Meadowsweet
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow flag iris
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple loosestrife

SHRUBS AND HEDGES

Species	Common name
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	Common hornbeam
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Dogwood
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Eucornus europaeus</i>	Spindle
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Common holly
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Wild privet
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Field rose
<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog rose
<i>Salix viminalis</i>	Osier
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat willow
<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Yew
<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Gelder rose

BULBS

Species	Common name
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	Wood anemone
<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>	Snowdrop
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell
<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i>	Wild daffodil

GRASSLAND

Providing a variety of grassland areas will create a range of potential habitats for amphibians, bats, birds, insects and invertebrates. A combination of flowering lawn, meadow, wildflowers and wetland meadow will give a rural feel while shorter amenity areas are suitable for path edges, entrances, verges and play areas. Tall herb grass areas are to be sown along hedgerow margins to maximise habitat value for wildlife. Areas of ridge and furrow are to receive minimal disturbance to the existing grass sward in order to conserve the topography. Within the ridge and furrow fields new areas of wildflower meadows are to be introduced at field edges and adjacent to new areas of planting. Smaller swathes of native bulbs and wildflowers selected for their pollen and nectar will be located at path junctions and focal points.

All seed mixes should be sown at rates in accordance with the suppliers recommendations. Soils are to be ameliorated as required to provide a suitable growing medium. Wild flower areas should receive sub-soil cover for successful establishment. Amenity grass areas to be turfed or seeded with an appropriate wear-tolerant mix.

Grass and Wildflower Mixes (80% grasses, 20% wildflowers) from Emorsgate Seeds or equivalent)

Special General Purpose Meadow Mixture EM3

Flowering Lawn Mixture EL1

Meadow Mixture for Wetlands EM8

Special Pollen & Nectar Meadow Mix EN1F

Hedgerow and Light Shade Mix

Fig.15. Landscape Strategy

4.2.2 Parameters Plans

A series of parameters plans have been produced to convey the parameters for the development for the site.

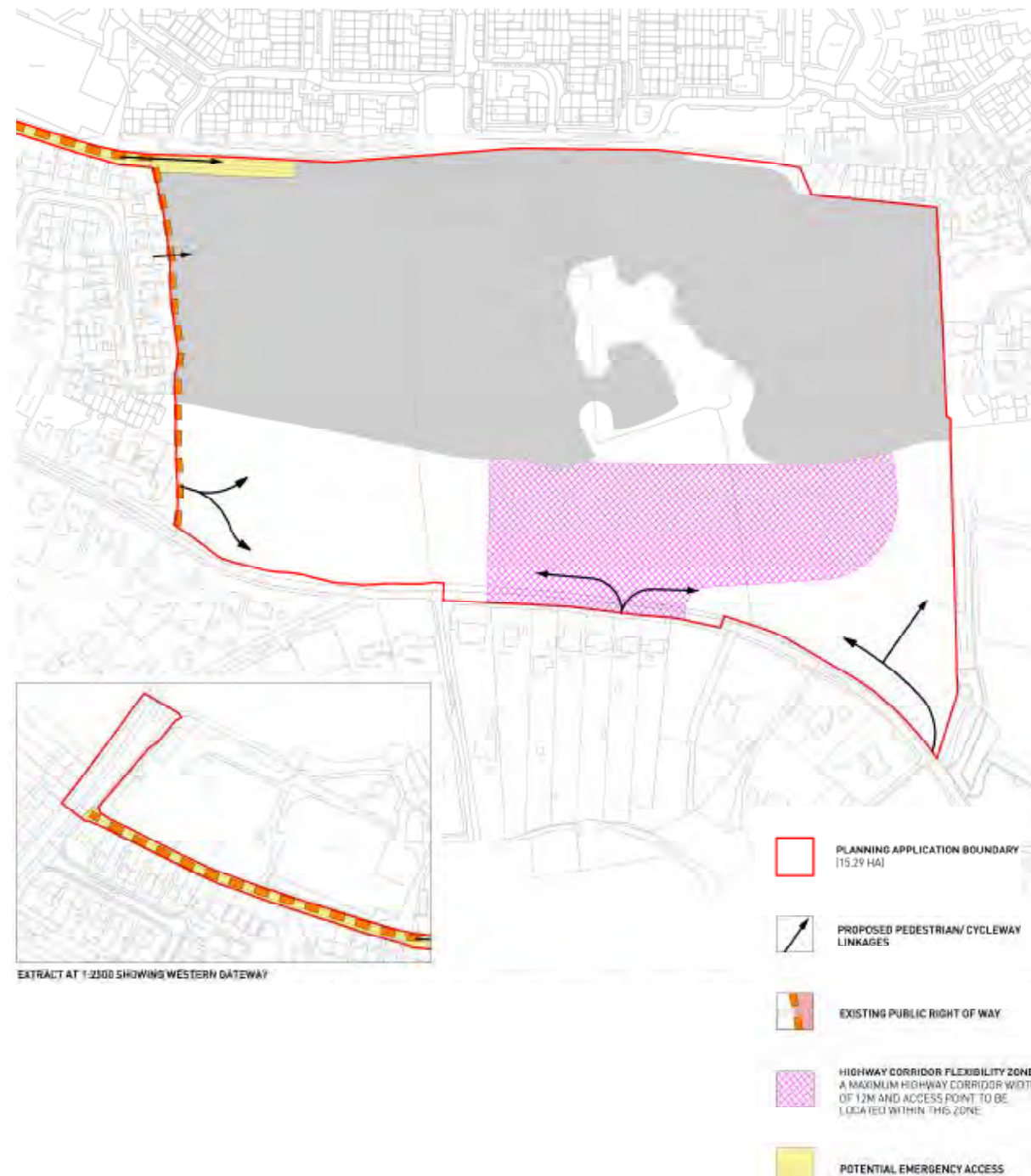
4.2.3 Land Use and Green Infrastructure Parameters Plan



4.2.4 Building Heights Parameters Plan



4.2.5 Access and Movement Parameters Plan



4.2.6 Building heights

The height and massing of proposed development varies across the scheme with lower height dwellings being situated near to existing urban built form to minimise the impact of proposed development. At key locations taller built form will be located to improve legibility and distinctiveness of the street scene. These will assist in creating a hierarchy of streets within the development and demarcating landmark buildings to act as focal points alongside a use of variations in style and materials of built form. This will also facilitate a range of sizes of units to accommodate a diverse variety of households and accommodation needs.

Appearance and Character

The design for the site will reflect the variety of townscapes and street typologies found within the local vicinity whilst drawing on the locally desirable characteristics found within the Cotswolds AONB.

The proposals will be designed to contain a range of dwellings varied enough to create interest and reflect the natural variety of dwellings found within a townscape but with unifying themes that will complement each other as a whole, reinforcing a sense of place and local character.

Use and Amount of Development

A variety of house types, tenures and sizes will be provided which will assist in creating a mixed community with a balanced variety of households encouraging social inclusion.

4.3.1 Illustrative Masterplan

The proposed development will create a range of housing choice and accessible amenity space with improved public access, as well as reinforcing the local green infrastructure network and retaining the best and most valuable landscape features with in a strong network of public open space and green corridors.

Situated within the Cotswolds AONB the proposed development will draw on the best practices of design providing for range of housing needs whilst being sympathetic to most desirable features of local character and drawing on locally identifiable vernacular building styles and materials. The aim is to create a townscape with a distinct identity and strong sense of place whilst carefully integrating with its context and retaining and enhancing the most valuable natural features integrating it sensitively into its surroundings.



www.mhpdesign.com

Chartered Landscape Architects | Arboriculturists

79 Promenade
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 1PJ

Telephone: (01242) 250822
Email: mhp@mhpdesign.com

COPYRIGHT: The contents of this document must not be copied or
Reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of MHP Design Ltd.