

**BRICKET LODGE SPORT AND COUNTRY CLUB:
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3	Landscape sensitivity	11
Purpose of the document	3	Visual effects	13
Aims of the assessment	3	Sensitivity of receptors and magnitude of effects	13
Methodology	3		
Description of study area	3	5. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS	14
Site location	3	Landscape effects assessment	14
Development description	4	Visual effects assessment	14
Legislation, policy and guidance	4	Landscape and visual effects - local draft and adopted policy	15
		6. EMBEDDED MITIGATION	17
2. BASELINE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT	6	7. CONCLUSION	17
Site description	6	8. REFERENCES	18
Topography and soils	6	9. FIGURES	19
Landscape, ecological and historic designations	6	10. ON-SITE PHOTOGRAPHS	27
National landscape character	6	11.. VIEWPOINT LOCATION PLAN & VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHS	31
Local landscape character	7	12. APPENDIX	47
Site landscape character	7		
Landscape value	7		
Landscape condition	8		
Landscape receptors	8		
3. BASELINE VISUAL ASSESSMENT	9		
Potential visual receptors	9		
Visual receptor baseline	9		
On-site photographs	9		
Viewpoint descriptions	9		
4. IMPACT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY	11		
Landscape effects	11		
Landscape receptors	11		

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1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Document

1.1 Ubu Design Landscape Architects were commissioned by MRP Planning to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment for land associated with the former Bricket Lodge Sports and Country Club north of the M25, south of St Albans, for the proposed residential development.

Aims of the Assessment

1.2 This assessment seeks to inform the masterplanning of the allocated site by investigating the landscape and visual issues relating to the site and its setting through a combination of desktop research and field survey work. The assessment aims to:

- Establish a clear understanding of the site and its setting in respect of landscape character and visual amenity;
- Establish an understanding of the proposed development in terms of its relation to landscape character and visual amenity;
- Identify potential direct and indirect effects of the proposed development upon the landscape;
- Identify potential effects on visual receptors;
- Determine mitigation measures necessary to reduce/eliminate any potential adverse effect on the landscape or visual amenity arising as a result of the proposed development;
- Identify opportunities for enhancement measures; and
- Establish the likely residual effects of the proposed development.

Methodology

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Guidance Documents

1.3 The methodology used to carry out the landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development is primarily based upon that set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment – 2nd ed. 2002 and 3rd ed. 2013).

1.4 The process follows a standard approach, namely establishing:

- The baseline conditions, i.e. the character, quality, value and relative sensitivity of the landscape;

- The type and relative sensitivity of visual receptors;
- The sensitivity to change of the landscape in relation to the proposed development;
- The predicted magnitude of impact that the proposed development would bring, allowing for mitigation measures, upon the landscape and upon visual receptors; and
- Assessing the significance of effect that would occur, by aggregating the predicted magnitude of change with the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors respectively.

Site Visit and Conditions

1.5 A site visit was carried out on 14 January 2022 between 10.30 and 13.30, to undertake the assessment of the visual and landscape impacts of the proposed site. The conditions were sunny with good visibility.

1.6 The visit was preceded by a desk top study of landscape designations and analysis of the zones of visual influence. Field work focussed on the site and surrounding roads and footpaths. The appraisal was carried out during winter when the deciduous trees and vegetation on and surrounding the site were denuded. This represents the worst case scenario in relation to screening effects of vegetation. The screening effect of the deciduous trees, hedgerows and understorey shrubs will increase during the summer.

Landscape

1.7 During the site visit the site and local area were assessed through observation, recording of observations and through photographs. The assessment reviewed site and local landscape features, character and condition, and the key views into the site.

Visual Amenity

1.8 The viewpoints used in the assessment were selected in order to:

- Determine the extent of visibility of existing built structures;
- Determine the visibility of the proposed development, utilising the results from the desk study to guide field work;
- Gain further understanding of the components which create the landscape character; and
- Carry out the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

1.9 The following types of viewpoints were investigated:

- Representative viewpoints (for example representing

views of users of a particular footpath);

- Specific viewpoints (for example a key view from a specific visitor attraction);
- Illustrative viewpoints (chosen to demonstrate a particular effect/specific issue); and
- Any important sequential views (for example along key transport routes).

1.10 The potential visual receptors that would be affected at the chosen viewpoints include:

- Public footpath and cycle route users including pedestrians;
- People using public open spaces and parks;
- People living in, working in, or visiting the settlement and the neighbouring properties and farmsteads; and
- People using roads or railways.

Photography

1.11 Photographs were recorded using a 50mm focal length lens on a Nikon DSLR-D3300 digital camera.

1.12 Panoramic views were created by taking a series of overlapping photographs (overlapping by 30-50% as recommended in the guidelines). These have been stitched together using Photoshop, employing the 'reposition photomerge' method.

Description of study area

1.13 The study area for the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development is shown on Figure 1 and covers an area extending up to approximately 3km from the centre of the site. This is considered to be the maximum extent within which significant visual effects could occur for the type of development proposed.

Site location

1.14 Grid Reference: TL134028. The site is located on the southern side of St Albans, to the east of Lye Lane and north of the M25. Woodland adjoins the site to the south and East with residential dwellings set in extensive grounds to the north and shrub to the west.

Development description

- 1.15 The proposals are for a landscape led residential development that will provide a range of different types of accommodation, on a site that extends to 3.5 hectares.
- 1.16 Key design features of the development proposals include:
- 113 new homes and associated parking proposed;
 - Existing access retained from Lye Lane;
 - Internal network of roads and footpaths;
 - Network of greenspace including play area within the main area of open space;
 - Boundary trees and vegetation proposed to be retained, providing a sense of maturity to the development
 - Landscape framework introduced including street trees, open space, hedgerows and boundary treatments, increasing biodiversity and connecting and enhancing green infrastructure networks.

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

- 1.17 The landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken within the context of relevant legislation, planning policies and guidance documents.

Legislation

- 1.18 The site is located within the Metropolitan Greenbelt and is therefore subject to the legislation relating to the spatial designation. The implications of this are covered in Policy 1: Metropolitan Green Belt under Local Policy below.

National policy

- 1.19 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated in July 2021, provides guidance relating to planning and new development in England.
- 1.20 Para 8 of the NPPF sets out the three overarching and interdependent objectives required to achieve sustainable development, which underpin plan-making and decision-taking. The overarching objective of relevance to landscape and visual amenity comprises:
- the 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.’

- 1.21 The landscape aspects of the NPPF as described below are supported by Planning Practice Guidance: Natural Environment, Landscape.
- 1.22 In respect of the natural environment, Section 15, Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that:
- 1.23 ‘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;...

Local policy

- 1.24 The site falls within St. Albans City and District Council and within the Parish Council of St Stephens. St Stephen Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2036 has been submitted for examination and has not been adopted during the preparation of this report.
- 1.25 A new Local Plan 2020 - 2036 was published by SADC but was withdrawn in 2020 following examination. A revised plan is being prepared, therefore the saved Policies from the Local Plan 1994 have been reviewed as part of this assessment.
- 1.26 The following are key policies that relate to the landscape and visual issues. The accompanying Planning Statement identifies key Planning Policy that is of relevance to the application.
- 1.27 Adopted Policies:
- Policy 1: Metropolitan Green Belt
 - Policy 69: General Design and Layout
 - Policy 70: Design and Layout of New Housing

- Policy 74: Landscaping and Tree Preservation

- 1.28 Although the Draft Policies were withdrawn in 2020, it is reasonable to consider that they represent the direction of future policies in relation to the forthcoming Local Plan.
- 1.29 Draft Policies:
- Policy S3: Metropolitan Green Belt
 - Policy L23: Urban Design and Layout of New Development
 - Policy L24: Development Amenity Standards
 - Policy L29: Green and Blue Infrastructure, Countryside, Landscape and Trees
- 1.30 The LVIA has taken account of these policies when considering the sensitivity of the site and surrounding area within the base line study. It has also made reference to the policies within the landscape and visual effects section.

2. BASELINE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Site description

- 2.1 The application site is an irregular shape with a cluster of buildings on the western part of the site and further building towards the southern site boundary, areas of hardstanding and roads across the site, and rough grassland, stored crates, etc on the eastern part of the site that is used as a paintballing area. The site, extending to 3.5 hectares, is shown at Appendix A and slopes gently from west to east.
- 2.2 Key features of the site include:
- Access from Lye Lane on the western boundary of the site;
 - Mature, Ancient Woodland encloses the site to the south and east;
 - A line of conifers on the northern boundary of the site;
 - Mature hedgerow along the western boundary of the site, with 3 mature hedgerow trees in the northern section of this boundary;
 - Existing buildings on site including residential dwellings and the disused Bricket Wood Sports and Country Club, with areas of hard standing and roads circulating the site;
 - The eastern part of the site is rough grassland with stored crates etc, used for paintballing.
- 2.3 Features of the local site context include:
- The local area is well wooded
 - Two telecommunications masts beyond the southern boundary of the site.
 - M25 motorway runs to the south of the site.

Topography and soils

- 2.4 The site slopes down gently from west to east. The highest levels are along the western edge at around 87m AOD falling to around 83m AOD along the eastern edge. Figure 6 demonstrates the topography within the study area.
- 2.5 Reference to the Cranfield Soil and AgriFood Institute (CSAI) Soilscape Viewer identifies the site as having slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soil with low fertility.

Landscape, ecological and historic designations

- 2.6 The site doesn't fall within any local or national landscape or environmental designated areas, but is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The site is near the boundary of the Green Belt and the settlement edge of How Green.
- 2.7 There are no statutory or non statutory heritage designations within the site boundary or immediately adjacent to the site. Figure 4 - Landscape Designations demonstrates the locations of any landscape designations within the study area.
- 2.8 There are no statutory or non statutory nature conservation designations within the site boundary or immediately adjacent to the site. Figure 5 - Environmental Designations demonstrates the locations of any designations within the study area. Moor Hill Quarry West Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is the nearest designation to the site, lying approximately 350m to the east of the site.
- 2.9 Blackgreen/ Roundwoods Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland lies immediately to the south and east of the site.

National landscape character

- 2.10 The site and study area fall within National Character Area (NCA) 111 Northern Thames Basin as defined by Natural England, published in 2014 and superceding the previous Countryside Agency Character Area profile.

NCA 111 Northern Thames Basin

- 2.11 Key characteristics of this NCA pertinent to the site context are defined as:
- The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the 'Bagshot Hills' are notable to the northwest and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.
 - Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.
 - Areas capped by glacial sands and gravels have resulted in nutrient-poor, free-draining soils which support remnant lowland heathlands, although these are now small. Areas that have alluvial deposits present are well drained and fertile.
 - The water bearing underlying Chalk beds are a main source of recharge for the principal London Basin Chalk

aquifer.

- A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area
- The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.
- The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity. Informal patterns of 18th-century or earlier enclosure reflect medieval colonisation of the heaths. Regular planned enclosures dating from the Romano-British period are a subtle but nationally important feature on the flat land to the south-east of the area. In the Essex heathlands 18th- and 19th-century enclosure of heathlands and commons followed by extensive 20th-century field enlargement is dominant.
- Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.
- The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.
- Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London. Landscape parklands surrounding 16th- and 17th-century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.
- The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.
- Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17th century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings

tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls.

Local landscape character

Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment

2.12 Hertfordshire County Council have produced the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment in 2000/ 2005, undertaken by the Landscape Partnership at the 'local authority scale'. This assessment identifies the site as part of LCA (landscape character area) 18 Bricket Wood as shown in Figure 3.

LCA 18 Bricket Wood

2.13 Landscape Character

2.14 *An area of mixed land uses and transitional character, including considerable woodland, unrestored mineral workings, educational, industrial, horticultural and arable land. The area has undergone significant change in the 20th century and is impinged upon by settlement at Bricket Wood and How Wood, together with a marked severance by the M25. The historic pattern is well preserved in Bricket Wood Common, but eroded in many other locations, showing poor management and some dereliction.*

2.15 Key Characteristics

2.16 The key characteristics of this landscape character area are:

- a number of ancient woodlands
- poorly or partly restored mineral workings
- strong severance by the M25 and railway line
- secretive and secluded character of Bricket Wood Common
- tall and poorly-managed hedgerows with significant dieback
- scattered industrial and residential properties

2.17 Distinctive Features

- ornamental grounds of HSBC College and associated sports centre
- wells and ponds at Bricket Wood Common

2.18 Physical Influences

2.19 *Geology and soils. The geology comprises Aeolian silty drift and till. The soils are stoneless, slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged coarse loamy soils and silty over clayey soils (Gresham series). Bricket Wood Common is located on acidic boulder clay which leads to a wet heath habitat. Moor Mill Quarry SSSI is a site of gravels, silts and chalky till which helps trace the diversion of the proto-Thames.*

2.20 *Topography. The area is a gently undulating plateau except at the eastern fringes, adjoining minor tributary valleys next to the River Colne.*

2.21 *Hydrology. Drainage on Bricket Wood Common is poor, particularly to the east of the railway. There are a number of small waterbodies and ponds scattered through the area, associated with either the Common, old farmsteads, old gravel workings or more ornamental lakes linked to the HSBC College. Minor streams flow along some of the local depressions.*

2.22 *Land cover and land use. Land cover can be broadly split between woodland, arable and disused minerals sites. Arable land, although present throughout the area, is not visually prominent due to the presence of tall though poorly-managed hedgerows. There are a few pasture fields remaining, associated with the settled fringe of Bricket Wood Common and adjacent settlement edges. Former mineral workings degrade the area, particularly adjacent to the M25, which itself is flanked by substantial earth bunds, thereby containing the area visually. A former minerals site on Lye Lane is to be restored for golf use.*

2.23 *Vegetation and wildlife. Bricket Wood Common (SSSI) is an important example of lowland heath. Part of the site is ancient oak/hornbeam woodland but much has regenerated from the former open, wet, acidic heath to scrub woodland, including birch and oak. The Common merited three separate field studies in J.G. Dony's Flora of Hertfordshire. Significant areas of hornbeam coppice have developed into a series of eerie anthropomorphic forms. Active management maintains the mix of woodland habitats. Other tree species include hazel, aspen, alder buckthorn and sessile oak. The main elements of heathland flora still survive due to recent management and include heather, heath grass, heath milkwort and heath spotted orchid. The Common also contains the largest colony of violet helleborine in the county.*

2.24 *Many of the other woodlands, including Blackgreen Wood, Nottlers Wood and Mutchetts Wood are ancient, though poorly managed. Woodland edges are marked by deep ditches,*

banks and hornbeam coppice. The woods are relatively drier than the Common and species include hornbeam, beech, oak and ash. Hedgerow species include elm, hawthorn, hazel and holly, although much of the elm is dying back. There are some local areas of dry heath associated with areas of gravel capping.

2.25 Historical And Cultural Influences

2.26 *The traditional cohesion of the area has been disorientated by the extent of built development in the 20th century together with mineral extraction. The Common was historically managed by a combination of grazing, coppicing and burning.*

2.27 *Field pattern. Substantial areas of ancient woodland and common survive although much of the original field pattern has been affected by subsequent non-agricultural land use. Where present, fields are small/medium in size and irregular in form.*

2.28 *Transport pattern. The majority of original local roads are narrow sinuous lanes with no verges. The St Pancras railway line dissects the area, most noticeably on the Common. The M25 severs the area and the M1 lies to the west.*

2.29 *Settlements and built form. The traditional pattern of dispersed properties and small hamlets adjacent to the commons can still be locally seen, e.g. at Smug Oak. However, these are invariably submerged by 20th-century development, including the Building Research Establishment (at Garston), which seems to have infiltrated the area in both open and woodland habitats. The main residential areas of Bricket Wood commenced in the 1930s. The exception is at Bricket Wood Common, where a small hamlet including the Old Fox pub nestles at the end of a sinuous narrow lane through the wood. The HSBC College has an institutional character with strongly ornamental grounds. This was initially the American Ambassador College, founded in 1959 and planned around a stuccoed villa.*

2.30 Visual And Sensory Perception

2.31 *Views are relatively contained both from outside and within the area. The jewel of the area is the Common, where there is a strong sense of seclusion and separation.*

2.32 *Although certain areas, notably the Common, are well maintained, elsewhere the area has a feeling of neglect and transition. Fly-tipping is a common detractor. Unrestored mineral workings are clearly visible from public roads, e.g.*

Smug Oak Lane and Lye Lane, and many of the residential properties display defensive boundary details.

2.33 *Rarity and distinctiveness. Although much of the landscape type is frequent, the Bricket Wood Common is unique within the county. The extensive wet acidic heath is a rare habitat and the area is classified as a High Biodiversity Area in the BAP.*

2.34 Visual Impact

2.35 *The M25 is a major built feature through the area, although it is in cutting for most of its length. At Blackgreen Wood extensive new planting has been undertaken to create a new woodland edge.*

2.36 Accessibility

2.37 *There is an access land agreement over the extensive Bricket Wood Common. East of the railway line the Common can be very wet, which seasonally restricts access. There is limited parking available along School Lane. Although known to the local population the area is not well signed. Elsewhere there are localised footpaths and bridleways. Horse riding is a noted use, although some of the lanes are rat runs and potentially dangerous.*

2.38 Community Views

2.39 *The wooded landscape has some value for distinctiveness, including those for whom woodland is not their primary interest (D).*

2.40 *Re Bricket Wood Common: 'a most fascinating backwoods region. Here are morasses, thick undergrowth, rare orchids and trees of many types' ('Elstree and the Colne Valley', Hertfordshire Countryside Vol.20, No.83, March 1966).*

2.41 Landscape Related Designations

- Watling Chase Community Forest (All).
- SSSI: Moor Mill Quarry (geological interest).
- SSSI: Bricket Wood Common.

2.42 CONDITION

- Land cover change: localised
- Age structure of tree cover: mixed
- Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: widespread

- Management of semi-natural habitat: good
- Survival of cultural pattern: interrupted
- Impact of built development: low
- Impact of land-use change: moderate

2.43 STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

- Impact of landform: apparent
- Impact of land cover: prominent
- Impact of historic pattern: continuous
- Visibility from outside: concealed
- Sense of enclosure: contained
- Visual unity: unified
- Distinctiveness/rarity: unique

2.44 STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: SAFEGUARD AND MANAGE

- support the Watling Chase Community Forest in the realisation of its objectives for the area
- continue the management of the Common to benefit restoration of wet heathland flora
- promote management on the Common to benefit restoration of coppice woodland
- promote the re-establishment of low-density stock grazing and management by rotational cutting, turf stripping and/or controlled burning as appropriate
- establish realistic and attractive countryside management schemes for all sites with heathland and acid grassland/scrub community potential. Create a mix of habitat types with a balance between wildlife and public access. Promote local initiatives for traditional management
- promote the creation of additional woodlands, particularly with a view to visually integrating the intrusive motorways, urban fringe development and former mineral sites
- improve public access arrangements to heaths and woodlands with attention to car park design and public safety
- promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland in order to maintain a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards and wood pasture
- use ancient hedge and field boundaries to identify the most appropriate location for wood restoration and expansion
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and

the creation of links between semi-natural habitats

- promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming where possible
- promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention/enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- promote hedgerow restoration through locally appropriate measures including coppicing, laying and replanting/gapping-up
- ensure that ancient lanes and their associated hedgerows, ditches and hedgebanks are retained, protected, enhanced and integrated into new development with due regard to their historic, ecological and landscape value
- traffic-calming measures, where considered necessary, must be of a scale and design that relates to the local landscape character of the settlement
- promote a clear strategy for the visual and noise mitigation of all motorways to positively integrate these corridors into the local landscape character
- encourage effective management along transport corridors to ensure thinning, selective felling and replanting is undertaken to achieve a varied age structure and locally indigenous species mix.

2.45 The above landscape character review demonstrates that the overall character area contains a range of landscape features that are of varying value from rural elements to settlements. The sensitivity to change for the type of proposed development within the landscape character area is deemed to be Medium.

Site landscape character

2.46 The landscape character of the site's setting and context generally accords with the national and local landscape character assessments.

Landscape value

2.47 The site lies near the edge of the Green Belt however it doesn't lie within or adjacent to any environmental or heritage designations. The site setting and boundaries are characterised by relatively flat topography and existing dense vegetated boundaries that contain the site well. The cutting of the M25 lies slightly to the south of the site, separated by a belt of Ancient Woodland.

2.48 The fabric of the land within the site represents a former sports club with extensive buildings and hard standing, piled scrap

and rough grassland. The site appears to have low ecological value and there are no distinct landscape features within the site. The boundary vegetation is proposed to be retained.

- 2.49 The landscape value is considered to be medium/ low to account for its location within the Green Belt and its brownfield status with buildings, piled scrap and rough ground.

Landscape condition

- 2.50 The current condition of the landscape elements within the site boundary can be described as low. The land cover is part buildings, roads and hardstanding, part rough grassland with stored crates and scrap. The site is bounded by mature woodland, conifers, hedgerow and hedgerow trees, with no distinct landscape features within the site. The woodland to the south and east of the site is Ancient Woodland.

Landscape receptors

- 2.51 A number of landscape receptors were selected for the landscape assessment, representing those landscape receptors considered to be potentially affected by the proposed development, as follows:
- Setting/ character of the Bricket Wood local character area in the vicinity of the site;
 - Application site landscape features, principally boundary trees and grassland.

3. BASELINE VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Potential visual receptors

- 3.1 From a review of the ZTV in Figure 7 and the desktop study, a series of representative viewpoints were chosen to provide coverage of potential views of the proposed development from a range of directions. The potential viewpoints were then tested through field survey and those where no visibility of the development could be achieved were discounted. The selected viewpoints are representative of a range of receptors including residential, recreational, cultural and transport.
- 3.2 A number of potential visual receptors were identified to provide a detailed assessment of the visual effects of the proposed development. The potential receptors are described below.

Recreational receptors

- 3.3 Potential recreational receptors identified included the following public routes, which run in the vicinity of the site:
- Public footpaths surrounding the site including: Public footpaths 015, 033, 025
- 3.4 There are a number of other recreational routes within the study area as illustrated in Figure 3. However the field survey demonstrated that there were no views of the site from these routes due to existing vegetation and landform or the distance was too great to distinguish the site. These potential receptors are therefore scoped out of the assessment.

Residential receptors

- 3.5 Residential properties and other buildings potentially in view of the site have been considered. There are relatively few dwellings within the ZTV in proximity to the site.
- 3.6 The nearest dwellings to the proposed development within the ZTV are those on Lye Lane directly to the north of the site.

Transport receptors

- 3.7 Travelling receptors include those using major and minor roads in close proximity to the site. For this site these roads within the ZTV are:
- Lye Lane
 - Smug Oak Lane.
- 3.8 Major routes such as the M25 and North Orbital Road were generally outside the ZTV due to landform and roadside embankments, with embankment vegetation providing further

screening.

- 3.9 Travelling receptors are considered to be low in terms of sensitivity to development.

Visual receptor baseline

- 3.10 Visual receptors were selected to provide coverage of all receptors or receptor groups with views that may be affected by the proposed development. The selected visual receptors are described as follows, with the relevant representative viewpoints listed:

Lye Lane

- 3.11 This receptor comprises the road immediately to the west of the site. Views from this road are urban fringe in character, with urban and rural influences. Receptors include drivers and cyclists. The viewing distance is 0m - 50m. This is a low sensitivity receptor.
- Representative viewpoints: Lye Lane (Viewpoints 01 - 07)

Smug Oak Lane

- 3.12 This receptor comprises the road to the south-east of the site, south of the M25. Views from this road are semi-rural. Receptors include drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. The viewing distance is 1km from the site. This is a low sensitivity receptor.
- Representative viewpoints: Smug Oak Lane (Viewpoint 08)

Dwellings to immediate north of site

- 3.13 This receptor comprises close range views from the two dwellings to the immediate north of the site, Lye House and Silver Birches, with Lye House lying east of Silver Birches. These dwellings are set within secluded grounds enclosed with tree and shrub vegetation. There are likely to be views towards the site from first floor windows, and possibly ground floor windows of Lye House. Receptors comprise residents. The viewing distance is approximately 70m from the site. This is a high sensitivity receptor.
- Representative viewpoints: Lye Lane (Viewpoints 06 and 07)

On-Site Photographs

- 3.14 Photographs from within the site were also recorded to help describe the visual envelope of the proposals, and to give an indication of the landscape condition and site character. The site photographs do not form part of the visual assessment. They are shown in Chapter 10, with their locations shown in Figure 9.

Viewpoint descriptions

- 3.15 Figure 10 identifies the locations of all the receptor viewpoints (provided in Chapter 11). Descriptions of the receptor viewpoints are provided below.

Viewpoint 01

- 3.16 View 01 is taken from Lye Lane at the entrance into the residential area of the site. The view looks East towards the site. Views of the site are limited due to the residential properties in the foreground. The Southern boundary of the site is visible beyond the dwellings made up of mature trees and a parking area in the foreground partially obscured from the road by established planting along Lye Lane.

Viewpoint 02

- 3.17 View 02 is taken from Lye Lane opposite the South West corner of the site. The view looks North East towards the site. Views of the site are limited by the established vegetation along Lye Lane and the residential development beyond. The Northern site boundary of the site is visible, marked by the row of conifers. The southern boundary of the site is marked by the mature native tree planting on the right of the view which continues south to the M25.

Viewpoint 03

- 3.18 View 03 is taken from Lye Lane as it joins Public Right of Way 015. The view looks North East towards the site. The view shows woodland to the south of the M25, Lye Lane, a narrow road without footpaths crossing the M25, with the site just visible beyond showing the conifers along the northern boundary, the derelict Bricket Lodge Sport and Country Club, the established vegetation along the western boundary and a telecommunication mast.

Viewpoint 04

- 3.19 View 04 is taken from Lye Lane opposite the entrance to Paint balling. The view looks East towards the site. The view shows the established western boundary in the foreground, mature native woodland forming the southern boundary to the right of the view and conifers marking the northern boundary. Residential dwellings are just visible over the boundary vegetation with a few glimpses of the derelict buildings of the Bricket Wood Sports and County Club.

Viewpoint 05

- 3.20 View 05 is taken from Lye Lane opposite the North Western corner of the site. The view looks South East towards the site. The view shows a deciduous mature hedge running along the eastern boundary with some gaps where entrances used to be, filled with temporary boarding. The derelict Bricket Wood Sports and County Club is just visible beyond and to the right of the view, and the top of mature woodland that forms the southern boundary of the site adjoining the M25.

Viewpoint 06

- 3.21 View 06 is taken from Lye Lane outside the first dwelling to the north of the site. The view looks South East towards the site. The view shows the gates, brick walls and planting beds in the foreground associated with the entrance to the residential property. Beyond the foreground, the tall conifer trees on the Northern boundary of the site partially screen the view to the site, with some other deciduous trees within the garden of the property providing further partial screening and with glimpses through to the disused buildings on site.

Viewpoint 07

- 3.22 View 07 is taken from Lye Lane outside the second property to the north of the site. The view looks South East towards the site. The site is not visible beyond the foreground entrance and garden trees.

Viewpoint 08

- 3.23 View 08 is taken from Smug Oak Lane where it rises to the East of Percy Drive. The view looks North West towards the site. The tops of the conifer trees on the northern boundary of the site may just be visible in the view.

Viewpoint 09

- 3.24 View 09 is taken from Public Right of Way 033 as it emerges from the woodland north of the M25. The view looks West towards the site. The tops of conifer trees just visible in the

distance are thought to be those on the northern boundary of the site. The site itself is not discernible in the view due to existing vegetation and therefore this view was scoped out of the assessment.

Viewpoint 10

- 3.25 View 10 is taken from Public Right of Way 025 as it crosses the footbridge over the M25. The view looks West towards the site. The view is thought to show the tops of the conifers along the northern boundary of the site just visible in the distance. The site itself is not discernible in the view due to existing vegetation and therefore this view was scoped out of the assessment.

Viewpoint 11

- 3.26 View 11 is taken from Public Right of Way 007 as it turns a right angle. The view looks North West towards the site. The site is not discernible within the view due to foreground vegetation.

Viewpoint 12

- 3.27 View 12 is taken from Chiswell Green Lane at the entrance to Chiswell Green Riding School. The View Looks South East towards the site. The two telecommunication masts south of the site are possibly visible within the view but hardly discernible in the distance.

Viewpoint 13

- 3.28 View 13 is taken from Public Right of Way 028 as it continues south past Public Right of Way 044. The view looks South East towards the site. The view is believed to show distant views of the telecommunications mast south of the site.

Viewpoint 14

- 3.29 View 14 is taken from Public Right of Way 018. The view looks South East towards the site. The view is constrained by foreground vegetation resulting in no views towards the site.

4. IMPACT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Landscape Effects

- 4.1 The landscape impact assessment considers the potential effects of the proposed development on the landscape as an environmental resource.
- 4.2 The sensitivity to change and magnitude of impacts on landscape receptors are classified and aggregated to determine the significance of effect. Table 4 indicates the assessment matrix used to determine the significance of the proposals impact on landscape receptors.

Landscape receptors

- 4.3 The landscape receptors comprise the physical elements and combinations of those elements that are affected by and form the setting of the proposed development.

Landscape sensitivity

- 4.4 The sensitivity to change of a landscape receptor is reflected in the degree to which that area is able to accommodate change resulting from a proposed development without adverse effects on its character. This may be influenced by a number of factors including the physical quality and perceived value of the landscape in question, general visibility (influenced by topography and vegetation etc), scale (of both the landscape and of the development), and robustness of the characteristic landscape elements.
- 4.5 Landscape receptors are assessed in terms of their sensitivity by combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of development proposed and the value attached to the landscape.
- 4.6 Susceptibility factors are particular to the specific landscape and nature of the proposed development, and as such do not lend themselves to generic classification. However, Table 2 is shown opposite as an example of the type of assessment criteria employed. Judgements about susceptibility are tailored to the project and graded on an incremental scale from high to low.

Figure 5 - Assessment of significance of effects

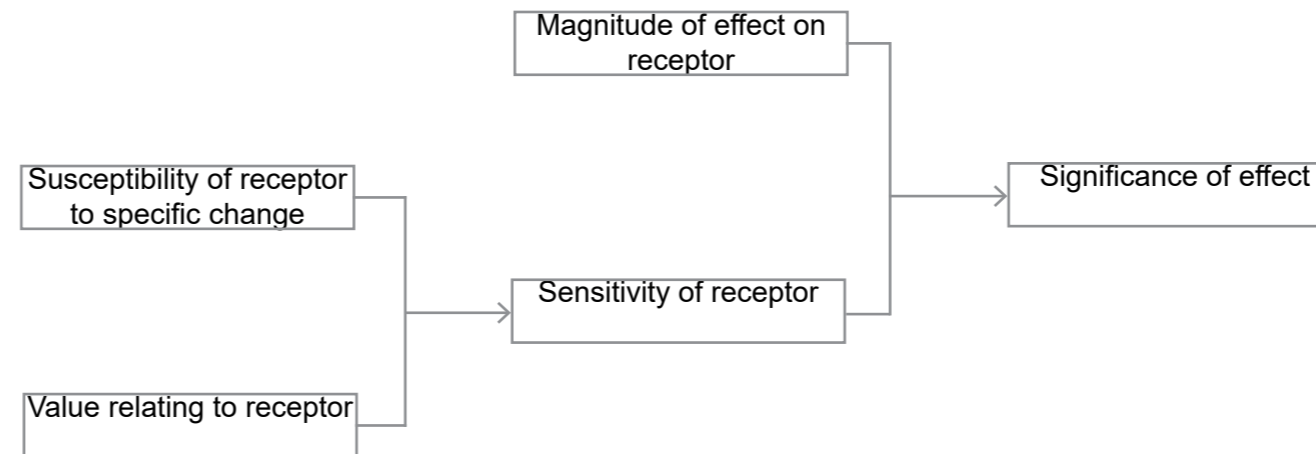


Table 1 - Landscape Receptor Quality/Value

Landscape receptor type	Quality/value
Areas of strong positive character that are highly valued by virtue of their scenic beauty, cultural value or with valued features that combine to give an experience of unity, richness and harmony. The quality and value of such landscapes is often recognised through statutory designation as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). These landscapes may be considered particularly worthy of conservation and which may be particularly sensitive to change if dealt with inappropriately	High
Areas that exhibit positive character but which may exhibit evidence of alteration, degradation and erosion of features. Also applicable to areas with degraded features but which remain well used/highly valued.	Medium
Areas that are bland, neutral or negative in character with few notable or valued features and/or evidence of alteration, degradation and erosion of features, resulting in areas of variable or negative character, with ample scope for improvement.	Low

Table 2 - Landscape Receptor Susceptibility

Landscape receptor:	Susceptibility to change
Nationally or regionally scarce features or elements having particularly distinctive characteristics; or mature vegetation with provenance or in very good condition, e.g. features within a statutorily designated area (e.g. dry stone walls), ancient woodland or feature parkland trees, national trails, cycle routes, or regionally important rights of way.	High
Features or artefacts that are locally distinctive but commonplace; or mature vegetation that is in good or moderate condition or is readily replicated; or locally important footpaths etc.	Medium
Features or artefacts that are regionally or nationally ubiquitous and do not contribute to local distinctiveness; or vegetation that is in poor condition or is poorly maintained (e.g. gappy hedgerows). Features or artefacts that detract from landscape character such as obtrusive man-made artefacts (e.g. power lines, large areas of hard-standing etc).	Low

- 4.7 Landscape quality refers to the physical condition and state of repair of the landscape, and its intactness. Landscape value refers to the importance of the landscape to society, which may be due to a range of factors including its scenic beauty, cultural associations and tranquil or wild feel. Both are assessed on a three level scale as per Table 1.
- 4.8 The magnitude of impact of the development proposals on landscape receptors are assessed as per Table 3. The criteria take into account whether the change is temporary or permanent and also any contemplated mitigation measures.
- 4.9 For residual effects, planting mitigation measures are assessed at 15 years' post completion.
- 4.10 A significant effect is a severe, major or moderate effect.

Table 3 - Magnitude of Landscape Change Criteria

Impact on landscape receptor	Magnitude
Permanent removal of, or a significant change to, the characteristics of the landscape element in question. Limited or no scope for replacement, reinstatement or other mitigation.	Large
Partial removal of, or moderate changes to the characteristics of the landscape element in question. Also applies to complete removal that can be suitably mitigated against.	Medium
Small scale changes to a landscape element or loss of/change to a small proportion of an extensive feature. Larger scale losses that can be fully mitigated against through provision of equivalent replacement features.	Small
Very small scale changes to a landscape element or loss of/change to a small proportion of an extensive feature. The changes can be fully mitigated against through provision of equivalent replacement features.	Negligible

Table 4 - Landscape Effect Significance Assessment Matrix

Landscape effect significance matrix		Sensitivity to change of landscape receptor		
		High	Medium	Low
Magnitude of change	Large	Severe	Major	Moderate
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Small	Moderate	Minor	Slight
	Negligible	Minor	Slight	Neutral

Visual effects

4.11 A visual impact assessment analyses the potential effects resulting from a proposed development upon the population likely to be affected. It assesses the change in visual amenity undergone by specific receptors that would arise from any change in the nature of views experienced.

Sensitivity of receptors and magnitude of effects

4.12 The relative sensitivity of each visual receptor as per Table 5 is determined by the combination of the susceptibility of the receptor to change and the value or nature of the view experienced from that receptor.

4.13 The magnitude of visual effects are also considered and quantified as per Table 6. Factors considered may include the potential for weather conditions to restrict views, the principle aspect of the viewpoint/viewer, the proportion of any particular view affected, the potential for the development to attract the eye or to become a focal point in the view to the detriment/benefit of competing visual elements.

4.14 Where appropriate a commentary is provided to justify the reasoning for the magnitude and sensitivity criteria selected.

4.15 Once sensitivity to change and magnitude of impact have been classified, the two are aggregated as per the matrix shown in Table 7, to determine the significance of the impact experienced by each receptor.

4.16 Visual impacts may also either be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive), or neutral (of no material effect). This is a subjective judgment based on the individual perceptions of the assessor and is not directly related to significance of effect. For residual effects, planting mitigation measures are assessed at 15 years' post completion.

4.17 A significant effect is a severe, major or moderate effect.

Table 5 - Receptor Visual Sensitivity

Receptor	Sensitivity
Observers whose attention or interest may be focussed on the landscape and recognised views in particular. Public viewpoint of important cultural or aesthetic significance, including those identified within and protected by policy or tourist destinations marked on maps; views in a recreational context with the expectation of a rural outlook, such as a public footpath in a rural context, or users of land with public access (i.e. Open Access Land and National Trust Land). A valued community view or community setting. Private views from principal living spaces. Designed views, including from within historic landscapes.	High
Views of the landscape are part of, but not the sole purpose of the receptors' activities. Those playing or participating at outdoor sports or undertaking formal outdoor recreation. Public view of less significance or a number of private views from non-principal living spaces. Users of local roads or rural lane where there are clear/ open views across the landscape or other rural outlook and low levels of traffic.	Medium
Attention is focussed upon the activity of the receptor and not upon the wider views. Small number of private views visible from non-principal living spaces. Views from outdoor sport or recreation facilities which are not dependent on appreciation of the landscape. Views from transport corridors; users of main roads travelling at speed, or local roads where the focus is upon the road ahead owing to traffic conditions and the context / composition of views; views from places of work where the setting is not important to the quality of working life.	Low

Table 6 - Magnitude Of Visual Change Criteria

Visual impact	Magnitude
A total loss or major alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the view. The introduction of prominent elements of a scale, form and colour uncharacteristic from the surrounding landscape.	Large
Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the view. Introduction of prominent elements that are not wholly uncharacteristic of the existing landscape.	Medium
Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the view. Introduction of minor features not uncharacteristic of the existing landscape.	Small
Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the view. Introduction of elements of a form, scale and colour characteristic of the existing landscape.	Negligible

Table 7 - Visual Effect Significance Assessment Matrix

Visual effect significance matrix		Sensitivity to change		
		High	Medium	Low
Magnitude of change	Large	Severe	Major	Moderate
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Small	Moderate	Minor	Slight
	Negligible	Minor	Slight	Neutral

5. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

Landscape effects assessment

Bricket Wood local character area in the vicinity of the site

- 5.1 The application site lies in the Bricket Wood character area at a local level.
- 5.2 The sensitivity of the overall landscape character is considered to be medium due to the balance of landscape value and susceptibility to change, and its location on the edge of the Green Belt, as described in Section 2.
- 5.3 Overall, the wider Local Character Area will remain intact with the general characteristics remaining unaltered as a result of the introduced development. The site is brownfield, located within existing ribbon development, and adjacent to the M25. The only landscape features are along the boundaries and will be retained. Therefore the magnitude of change is considered to be small.
- 5.4 The significance of effects at the post construction stage will therefore be minor neutral and not deemed to be significant.
- 5.5 The boundary vegetation will be retained and the planting that will be introduced as part of the proposals will mature over time contributing to the overall quality of the scheme and increasing the biodiversity value of the site, connecting to the wider green infrastructure and wildlife networks. This will lead to a reduced magnitude of change from small to negligible and leading to residual effects of slight beneficial.

Application site landscape features principally boundary trees and grassland

- 5.6 There are no major landscape elements and features within the site as it is primarily hardstanding, tracks and waste grassland of limited ecological value. The boundaries of the site are in general heavily vegetated with trees, conifers, hedgerow or adjoining woodland, and these will be retained, apart from the minor loss of some hedgerow at the widened access to the site. Therefore the sensitivity to change is considered to be medium.
- 5.7 The site features within the development will undergo a large magnitude of change with the transformation to a residential development, within the landscape structure of the existing mature vegetation on and surrounding the site boundaries.

Table 8 - Landscape Effects Assessment

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Post construction		Residual	
		Magnitude	Significance	Magnitude	Significance
Bricket Wood local character area in the vicinity of the site	Medium	Small	Minor neutral	Negligible	Slight beneficial
Application site landscape features, principally boundary trees and grassland	Medium	Large	Major beneficial	Medium beneficial	Moderate beneficial
Setting of the site	Medium	Small	Minor beneficial	Negligible	Slight beneficial

- This will lead to a major significance of effects which can be considered to be beneficial due to the increased quality of the landscape within the development.
- 5.8 The planting that will be introduced as part of the proposals will mature over time contributing to the overall quality of the scheme. This will lead to a reduced magnitude of change from large to medium, leading to residual effects of moderate beneficial.
- #### Setting of the site
- 5.9 The boundaries of the site are well vegetated with trees, conifers, hedgerow and adjoining woodland and the site is generally well contained. The boundary effectively encloses features within the site boundary apart from along Lye Lane where the existing buildings are partially visible above the hedgerow. Therefore the sensitivity to change is considered to be medium which accounts for its location in the Green Belt.
- 5.10 The proposals seek to retain and enhance as much of the existing perimeter vegetation as possible except for where the proposed access route may necessitate the removal of a portion of roadside hedgerow to allow for the carriageway and visibility splays.
- 5.11 The setting of the site will remain mostly unaltered apart from the access and therefore the magnitude of change is considered to be small. This will lead to a minor significance of effects which can be considered to be neutral due to the introduction of native species within the development which will improve the general landscape condition.
- 5.12 The planting that will be introduced as part of the development will mature over time to provide an attractive setting to the development and contribute to the overall quality of the

scheme. This will lead to a reduced magnitude of change from small to negligible and leading to residual effects of slight.

Visual effects assessment

Transport routes: Lye Lane

- 5.13 Lye Lane runs along the western boundary of the site and is represented in Viewpoints 01-07. As they demonstrate, the vegetation along the boundary restricts views into the site apart from at gateway openings, with glimpsed or fleeting views of the existing buildings on site. Beyond the site, views from this road are generally enclosed due to roadside vegetation, woodland etc.
- 5.14 There will be fleeting views into the site at the site access showing dwellings nearest the site access, and views of rooflines may be visible above the hedgerow along the western boundary.
- 5.15 Transport receptors are considered to have low sensitivity. The magnitude of change is likely to be small and the overall significance of effects will be slight neutral, as fleeting or partial views of existing buildings will be replaced with fleeting or partial views of the new dwellings.
- 5.16 Reinforcement planting along the boundary and new tree planting that can take place behind the hedgerow on the open space and within the rear gardens of dwellings on the south-western corner of the site will mature, ensuring that the proposed development is integrated into the street scene and the overall landscape. The residual effects will therefore be a small beneficial magnitude of change with a slight beneficial significance of effects.

Transport routes: Smug Oak Lane

5.17 The transport receptor along Smug Oak Lane (Viewpoint 08) has been discounted due to the lack of visual connection with the site.

Short, medium and long range visual receptors from PRowS

5.18 The footpath network has been considered as part of the assessment and has been tested through field survey. Generally, no views of the development are achievable and it will have no significant effects on these receptors.

Residential amenity

5.19 Dwellings to the immediate north of the site on Lye Lane are represented in Viewpoints 06 and 07. There are 2 properties, Lye House and Silver Birches, that may have upper floor windows facing towards the site. It is likely that views from ground floor windows (principal rooms) of will be screened by intervening garden vegetation. They may experience a slight change to the view, glimpsed through the boundary vegetation, with the potential for glimpses of dwellings beyond the vegetation on the northern site boundary.

5.20 There is an opportunity to introduce reinforcement planting along the northern boundary, and infill planting at the one gap in the boundary vegetation, to further soften views towards the proposed built form.

5.21 The sensitivity of the residential amenity is considered to be high due to the possible views from principal rooms of Lye House.

5.22 The magnitude of change is likely to be small as these are glimpsed views through existing evergreen vegetation, replacing views of existing buildings or the paintball area. The overall significance of effects is therefore likely to be moderate neutral.

5.23 As the new planting matures and thickens the boundary vegetation, this will lead to a slight improvement to the view, resulting in a negligible beneficial magnitude of change and a minor beneficial significance of residual effects.

5.24 It is unlikely that the site will be visible from any of the other surrounding residential amenity, only those described that lie adjacent to the northern boundary. Therefore other dwellings have been discounted from the assessment.

Table 9 - Visual Effects Assessment

Receptor description	Sensitivity	Post construction		Embedded mitigation	Residual	
		Magnitude	Significance		Magnitude	Significance
Lye Lane	Low	Small	Slight neutral	Design of new buildings set back into the site; western boundary hedge and tree planting.	Small	Slight beneficial
Smug Oak Lane	Low	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Short, medium and long range PRowS	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Residential amenity	High	Small	Moderate neutral	Design of new buildings; northern boundary tree and hedgerow planting.	Negligible	Minor beneficial

Landscape and visual effects - local draft and adopted policy

Local Plan Policies

5.25 The proposals forming this planning application will not have a significant detrimental impact to the local character of the landscape within the St Albans City and District Council area.

5.26 The following is a summary to demonstrate that there will be no likely significant effects on the policies of St Albans City and District Council.

DRAFT POLICY

Policy S3: Metropolitan Green Belt

5.27 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of the Green Belt are its openness and permanence. The proposed development is on an area of brownfield land currently used for dwellings, a disused sports and country club, and a paintballing area, which has a low landscape condition. The replacement with a residential development could provide an improvement and benefit in terms of the enhanced landscape and ecological treatments that will also be introduced into the scheme.

5.28 The development is near the boundary of the Green Belt where it meets the settlement edge of How Wood, within ribbon development on Lye Lane. There is an opportunity to enhance the rural character of Lye Lane near the edge of the Green Belt, by providing a stronger vegetated boundary to Lye Lane and setting the development further back from the boundary.

Policy L23: Urban Design and Layout of New Development

5.29 The proposals for the new development are to be well designed and of an appropriate and human scale that will respond positively to its environmental context and is efficient in use of land.

Policy L24: Development Amenity Standards

5.30 The proposed development should achieve a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of both the new development and neighbouring buildings. The design will give high regard to privacy, outlook, aspect, sunlight/ daylight and landscape quality.

Policy L29: Green and Blue Infrastructure, Countryside, Landscape and Trees

5.31 The proposed development will provide an opportunity to enhance the existing green infrastructure as well as introducing trees and landscape into an area that is currently limited in any valuable vegetation.

ADOPTED POLICY

Policy 1: Metropolitan Green Belt

5.32 The proposed development site is on an area of brownfield land currently used for dwellings, a disused sports and country club, and a paintballing area, which has a low landscape condition. The replacement with a residential development could provide an improvement and benefit in terms of the enhanced landscape and ecological treatments that will also be introduced into the scheme.

5.33 The development is near the boundary of the Green Belt where it meets the settlement edge of How Wood, within ribbon development on Lye Lane. There is an opportunity to enhance the rural character of Lye Lane near the edge of the Green Belt, by providing a stronger vegetated boundary to Lye Lane and setting the development further back from the boundary.

Policy 69: General Design and Layout

5.34 The proposed development will consider appropriate materials and settlement pattern which will be policy compliant.

Policy 70: Design and Layout of New Housing

5.35 The massing and siting of the proposed development will be designed to provide safe and attractive spaces at a human scale.

Policy 74: Landscaping and Tree Preservation

5.36 The proposed development will retain the majority of the existing perimeter trees and hedgerow and furthermore will enhance these with supplementary planting to the boundary and within the site.

6. EMBEDDED MITIGATION

- 6.1 There will be multiple opportunities to introduce appropriate mitigation measures that will reduce and offset identified landscape and visual impacts as described in the assessment in Section 5.
- 6.2 These will include:
- Retaining the existing boundary vegetation and infilling any gaps in the vegetation, while reinforcing and supplementing the vegetation particularly along the western and northern boundaries;
 - Setting the built form into the site, with surrounding landscape buffers and areas of open space, will help to mitigate any visual impact;
 - Providing a high quality landscape scheme that responds to the local character and enhances the ecological value of the site as well as increasing the aesthetic and recreational quality of the site;
 - Use of native species to reflect locally found species will help to integrate the landscape scheme within its urban/rural fringe location, and enhance the ecological value of the site.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application site is located at Bricket Lodge Sport and Country Club on Lye Lane, west of the settlement of How Wood and south of St Albans. The site is not within any environmental designation or a Conservation Area, and does not contain any historic designations. There are no public rights of way that cross the site. The site lies within the boundary of the Green Belt, near the settlement edge of How Wood.
- 7.2 The application site broadly consists of a collection of buildings on the western and southern parts of the site, areas of hardstanding and roads across the site, and rough grassland, stored crates, etc on the eastern part of the site used as a paintballing area. The site boundaries are generally heavily vegetated with woodland to the east and south, conifers on the northern boundary and trees and hedgerow along the western boundary.
- 7.3 The development will therefore sit within an existing robust landscape boundary framework where the majority will be retained apart from where the access will be widened into the site. There are no landscape features within the site.

- 7.4 The findings of the landscape and visual assessment concludes that there will be no long term significant adverse effects arising as a result of a proposed residential development and it can be considered as being beneficial due to the landscape enhancements that will be brought into a site which, apart from its retained boundaries, is currently limited in any valuable vegetation or ecological diversity.

Landscape and visual effects

- 7.5 The landscape and visual effects of the proposals have been assessed and found to result in a combination of slight, minor, moderate and major neutral and beneficial effects at the post construction stage, and these are reduced to slight, minor and moderate beneficial residual effects with the maturing of the planting introduced as mitigation measures.
- 7.6 Therefore, the overall conclusion is that the proposed development can be accommodated within the landscape character and visual amenity and is acceptable in terms of landscape and visual impact.

Landscape effects summary

- 7.7 The residual landscape effects will be slight beneficial to the Bricket Wood character area.
- 7.8 The post construction stage will lead to a major beneficial effect on the site and a minor beneficial effect to its setting, due to the introduction of proposed vegetation and ecological enhancements.
- 7.9 Following 15 years' growth of the introduced mitigation measures to the development, the residual landscape effects will be moderate beneficial on the site features and slight beneficial on the setting of the site.

Visual effects summary

- 7.10 The receptors that will experience moderate neutral significant visual effects at the post construction stage are the two residential receptors in immediate proximity of the site. However the reinforcement planting and planting across the development that is introduced as part of the proposals will lead to minor beneficial effects as the planting matures.
- 7.11 Post construction, the visual effects on the transport route of Lye Lane will comprise a slight neutral significance of effect.
- 7.12 Following 15 years' growth of the mitigation provided by

additional planting along the western boundary and within the development, views towards the site from Lye Lane will become increasingly screened, filtered and softened. The residual visual effect will be a slight beneficial significance of effect on views from Lye Lane.

Local policy

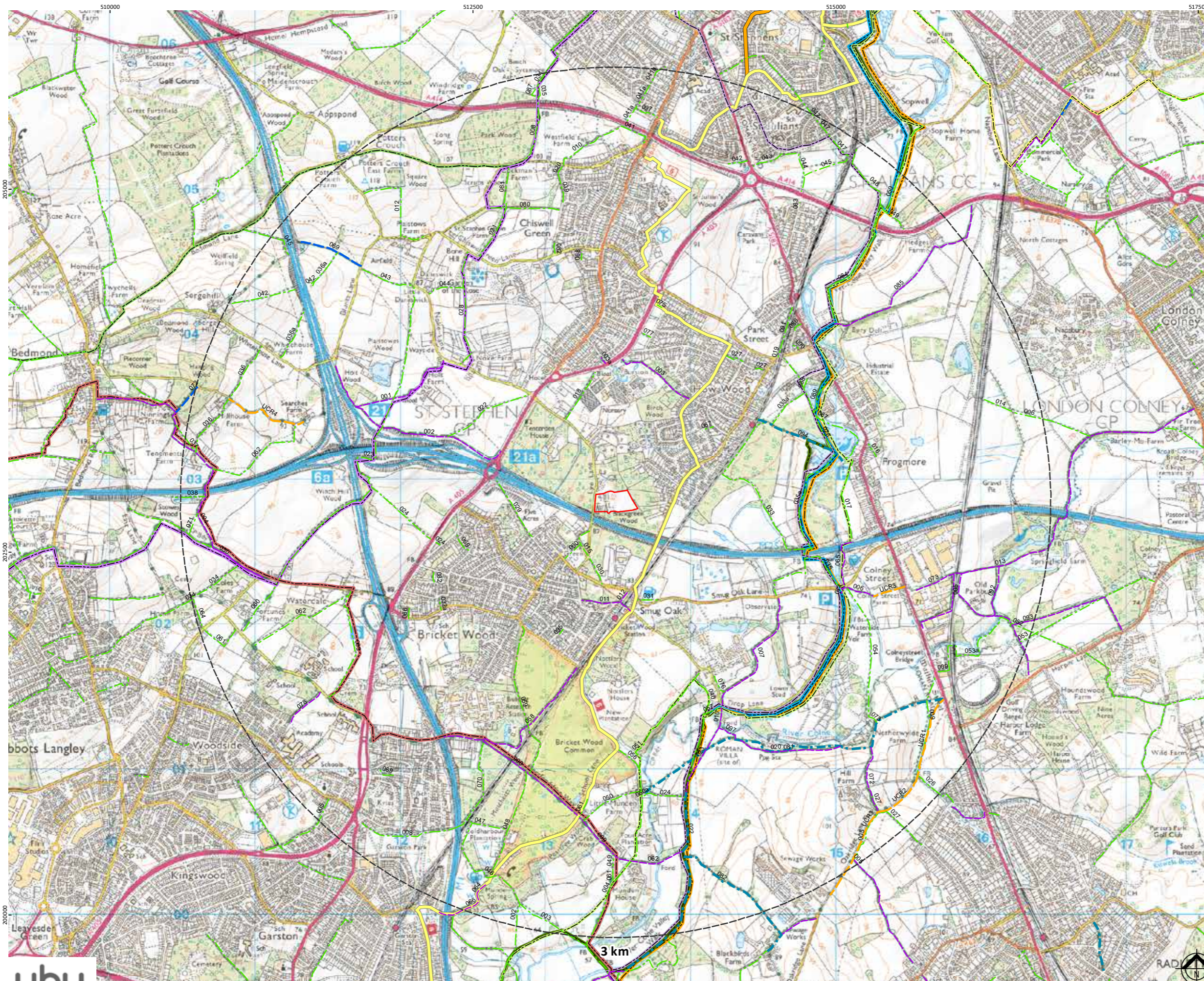
- 7.13 The development proposals are in accordance with St Albans City and District Council's Local Plan policies regarding landscape and the Countryside. A proposed development will not have a significant detrimental impact to the character of the landscape as the layout, materials and planting will be designed to recognise and protect the local landscape and settlement within the context of the site.
- 7.14 Landscape mitigation features such as reinforcement planting around the perimeter and a high quality landscape framework across the site, will enable the residential development to integrate into the local landscape character area, improve the immediate landscape condition, and provide benefits to the visual amenity.

8. REFERENCES

- 8.1 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Second Edition, The Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2002.
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- 8.3 Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland. Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002.
- 8.4 Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland: Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity. Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2004.
- 8.5 Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/04 as Amended (August 2008): Use of Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Assessment. The Landscape Institute, 2008.
- 8.6 Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/17: Visual Representation of Development Proposals. The Landscape Institute, 2017.
- 8.7 National Character Area Profile 111 Northern Thames Basin, 2014.
- 8.8 Hertfordshire :Landscape Character Assessment. Hertfordshire County Council, 2000/ 2005.

Figure 1: Access and Circulation

Scale 1:25,000

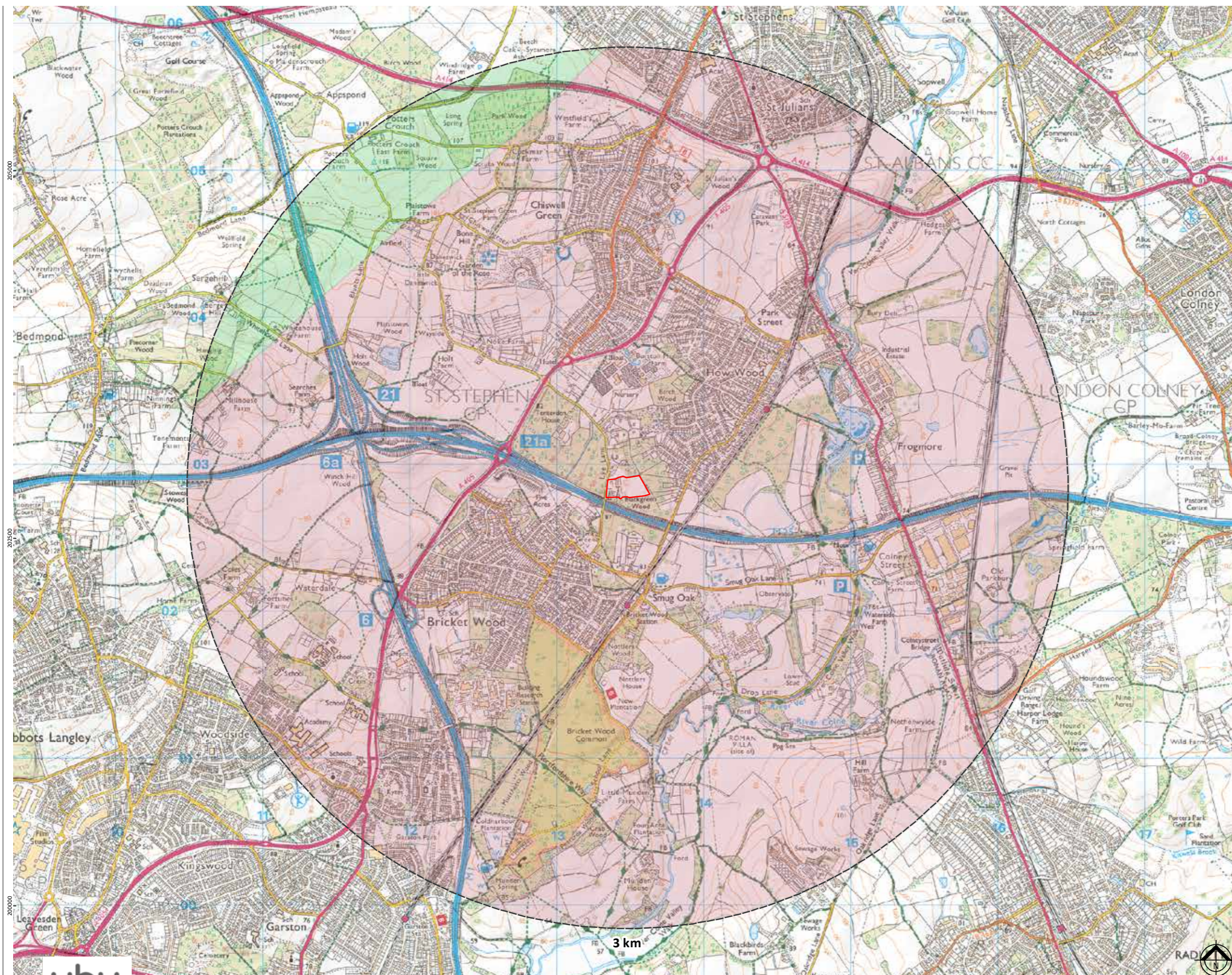


- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Public Right of Way**
- Byway Open to All Traffic
- Bridleway
- Footpath
- Restricted Byway
- County Road
- National Cycle Network**
- Route 6
- NCN Link Route (56)
- Promoted Walking & Cycling Route**
- Abbey Line Trail
- Hertfordshire Way
- London Country Way
- London Green Belt Way
- London to St. Albans
- River Ver Trail
- St. Albans Way
- St. Bernard's Way
- Ver Colne Valley Walk

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Figure 2: National Landscape Character

Scale 1:25,000

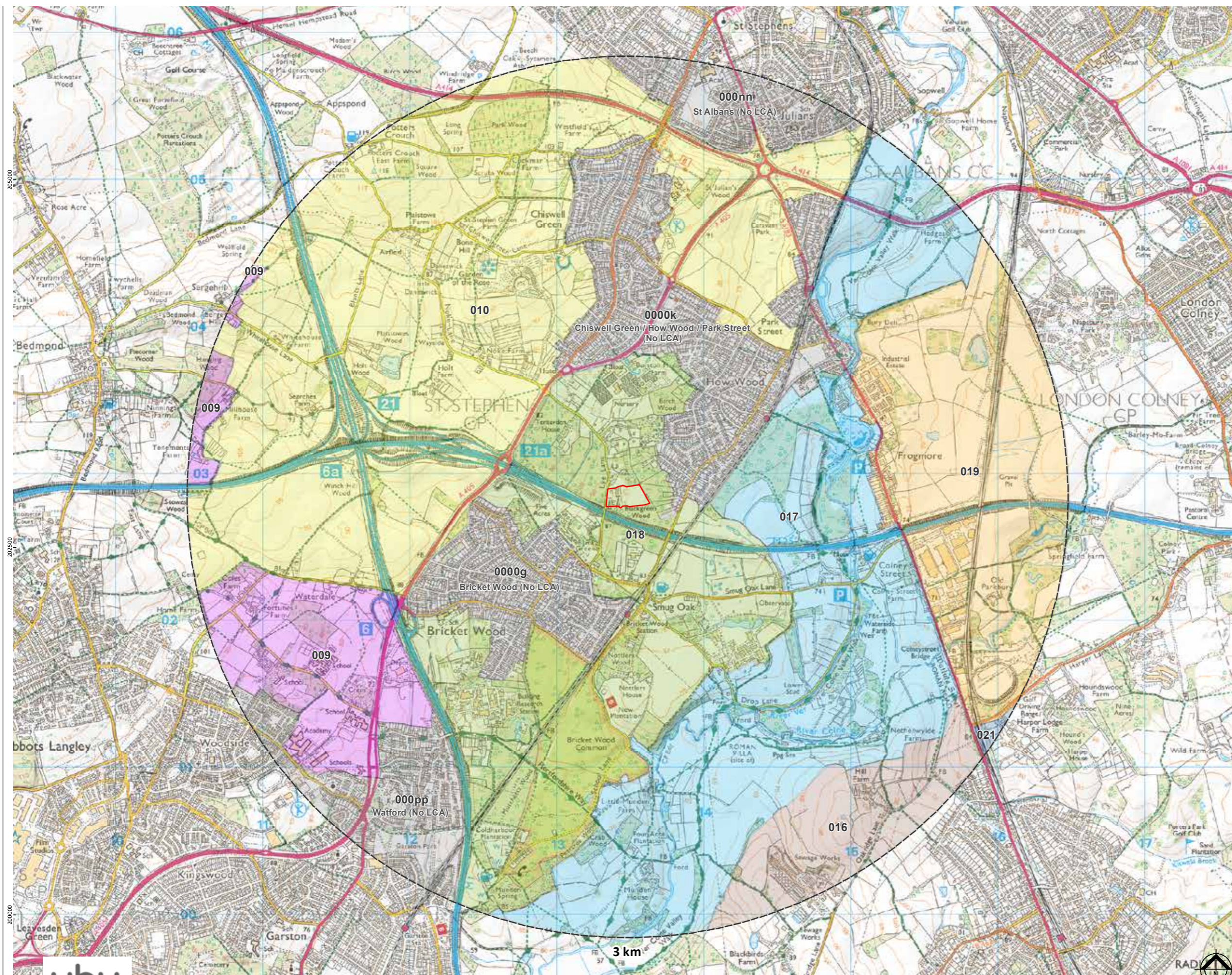


- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- National Character Areas**
- Chilterns
- Northern Thames Basin

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Figure 3: Local Landscape Character

Scale 1:25,000

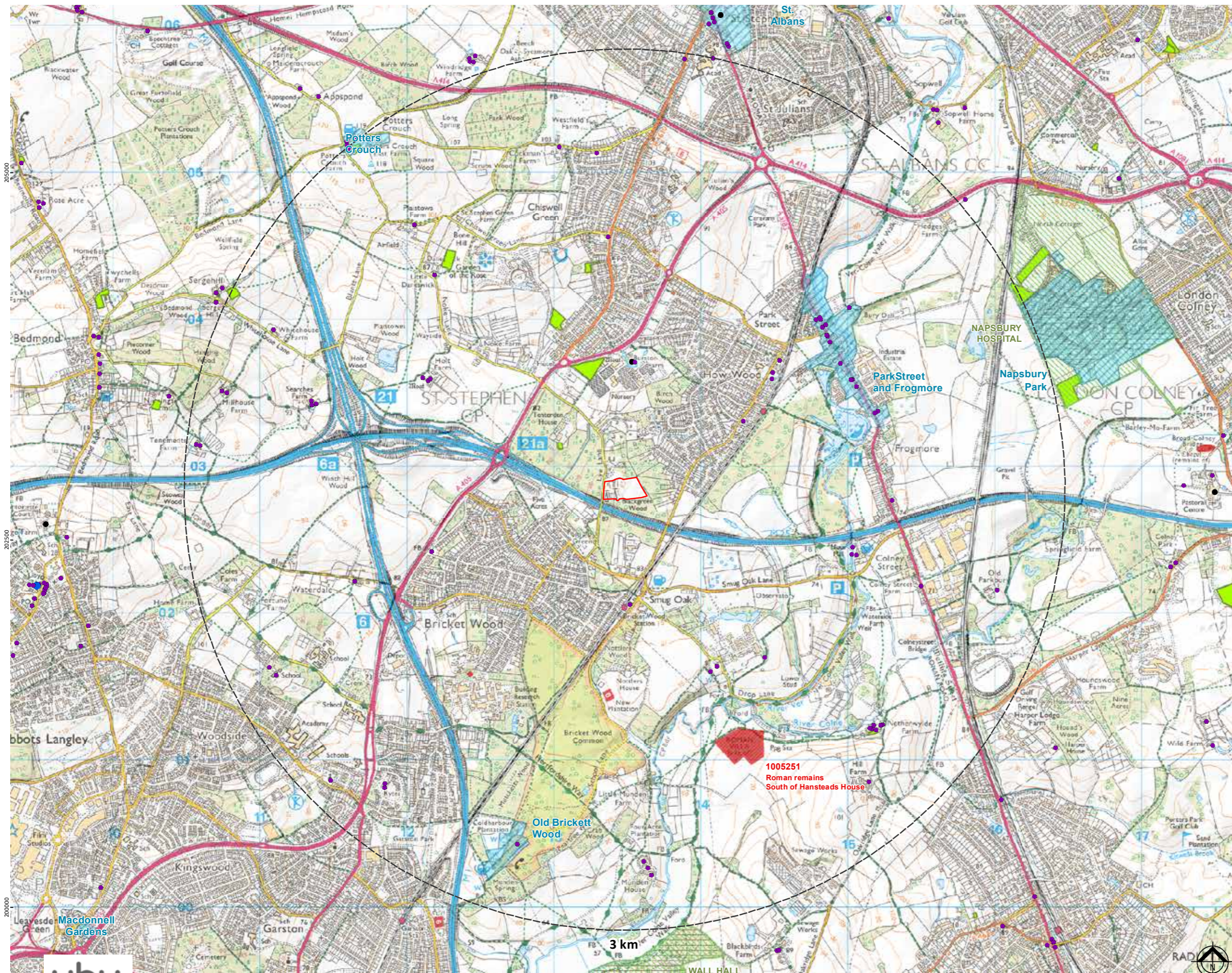


- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Local Landscape Character**
- Aldenham Plateau
- Bedmond Plateau
- Bricket Wood
- High Canons Valleys and Ridges
- St Stephens Plateau
- Vale of St Albans
- Ver / Colne River Valley
- Urban Area (No LCA)

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Figure 4: Landscape Designations

Scale 1:25,000

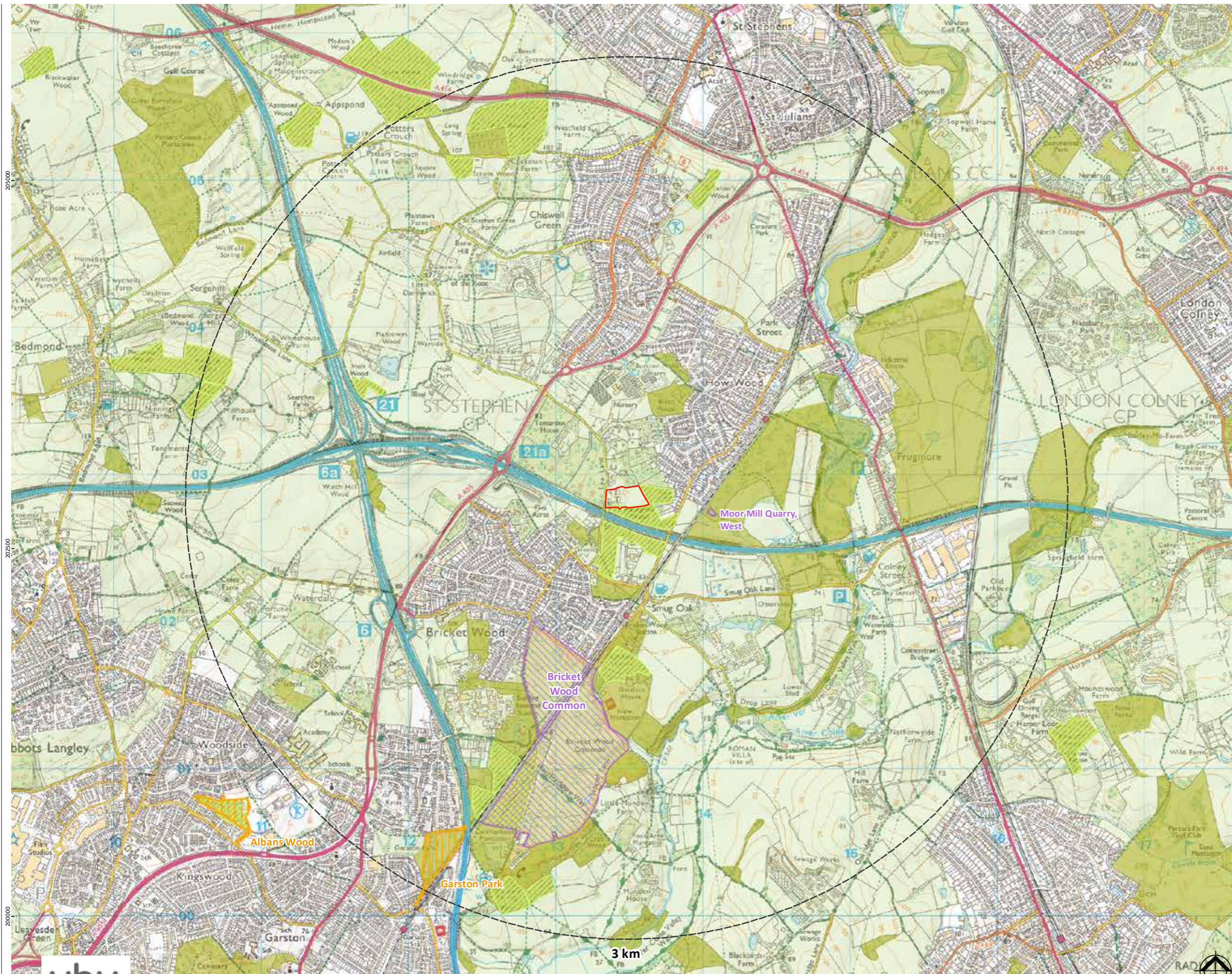


- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Listed Buildings**
- Grade I
- Grade II
- Grade II*
- Conservation Area
- Registered Park & Garden
- Scheduled Monument
- Traditional Orchard
- Woodpasture and Parkland

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Figure 5: Environmental Designations

Scale 1:25,000

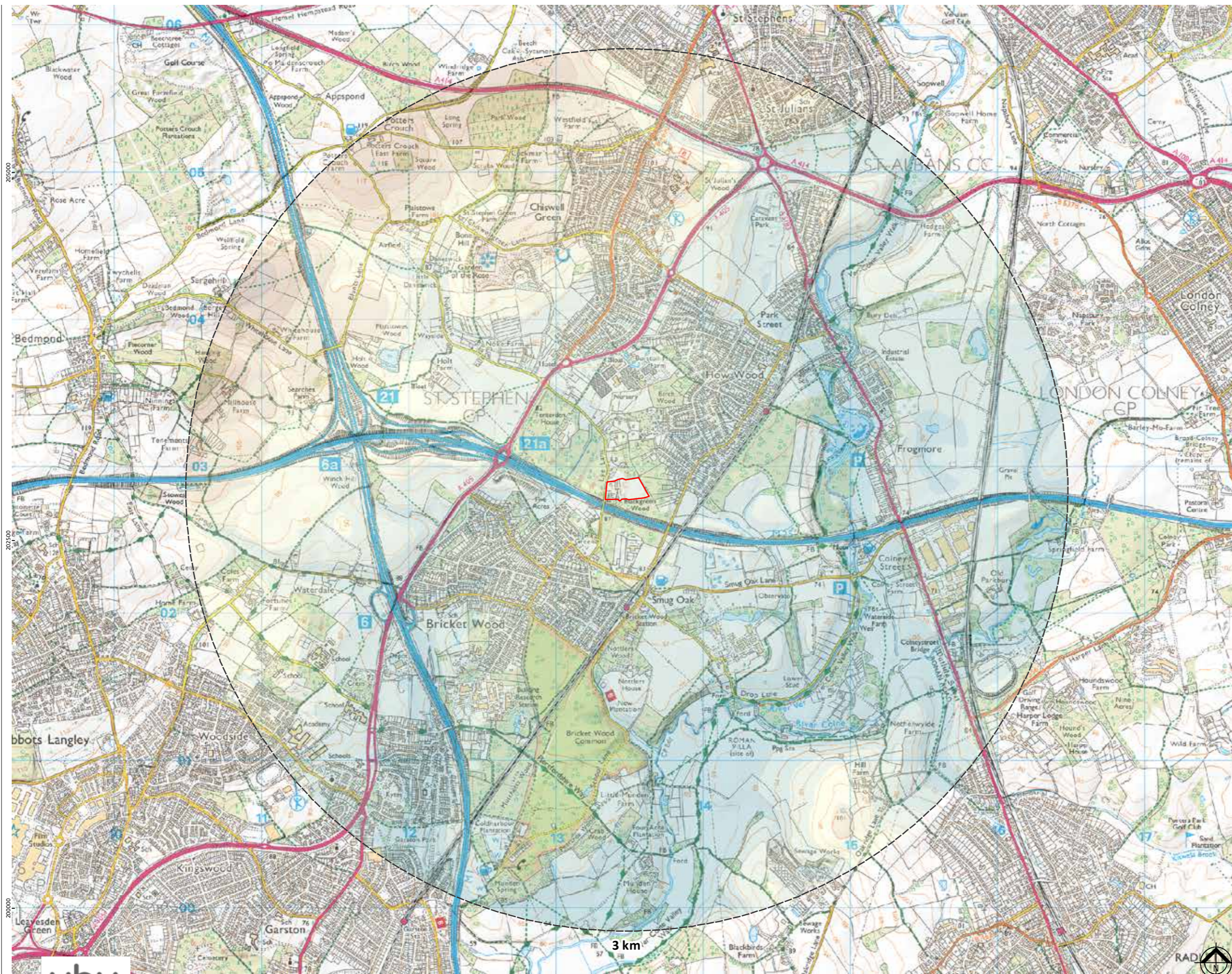


-  Site Boundary
-  Study Area (from site centre)
-  Ancient Woodland Inventory
-  Local Nature Reserve
-  Local Wildlife Site
-  London Area Green Belt
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest

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Figure 6: Topography

Scale 1:25,000

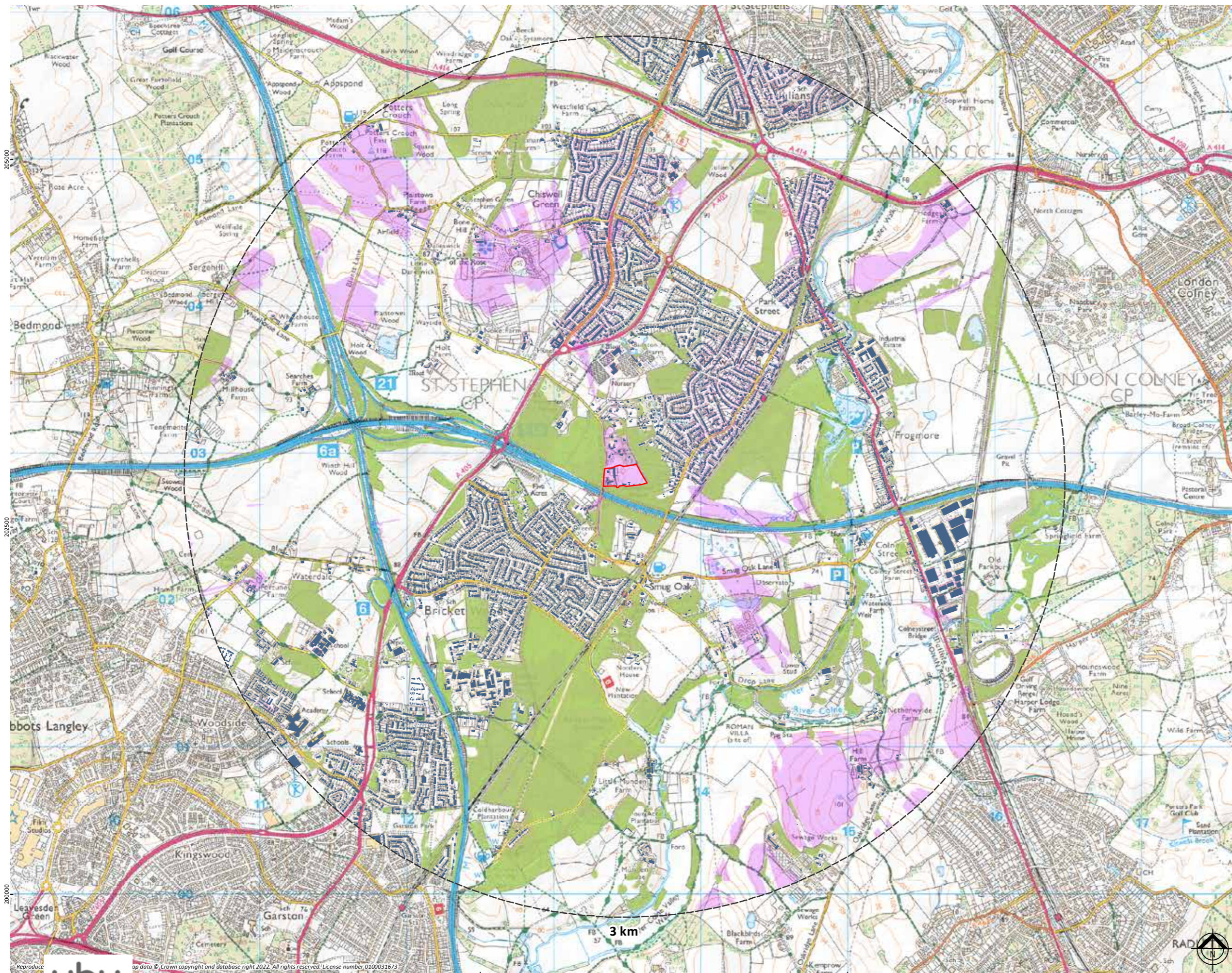


- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Height AOD
 - 56m - 70m
 - 71m - 80m
 - 81m - 90m
 - 91m - 100m
 - 101m - 110m
 - 111m - 120m
 - 121m - 130m

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Figure 7: Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Scale 1:25,000



- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Building
- Woodland
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility**
- Area where Development may be visible

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Conifers marking the Northern boundary

Disused building associated with the former Bricket Wood Sports and social club

Residential properties

Residential properties



On-site View A - Looking North East from the SW corner of the residential area on site

Existing storage shed to be removed

Residential properties

Residential properties



On-site View B - Looking North West from the South East boundary of the residential area on site



On-site View C - Looking South West from the North East corner of the residential area on site

Disused building associated with the former Bricket Wood Sports and social club
 Conifers marking the Northern boundary



On-site View D - View is taken from the North East corner of the residential area looking East across the site



On-site View E - View from North West corner of the residential area of the site looking North across the site



On-site View F - View looking east from the centre of the site

Ancient Woodland
to the South

Conifers marking the
Northern boundary



On-site View G - View from the North East corner of the site looking South West across the site

Conifers marking the
Northern boundary

Ancient Woodland
to the East

Ancient Woodland
to the South



On-site View H - View looking North East across the site from the car park for the Paintball

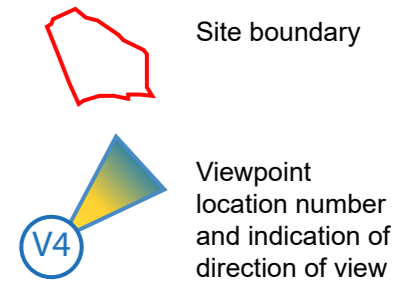
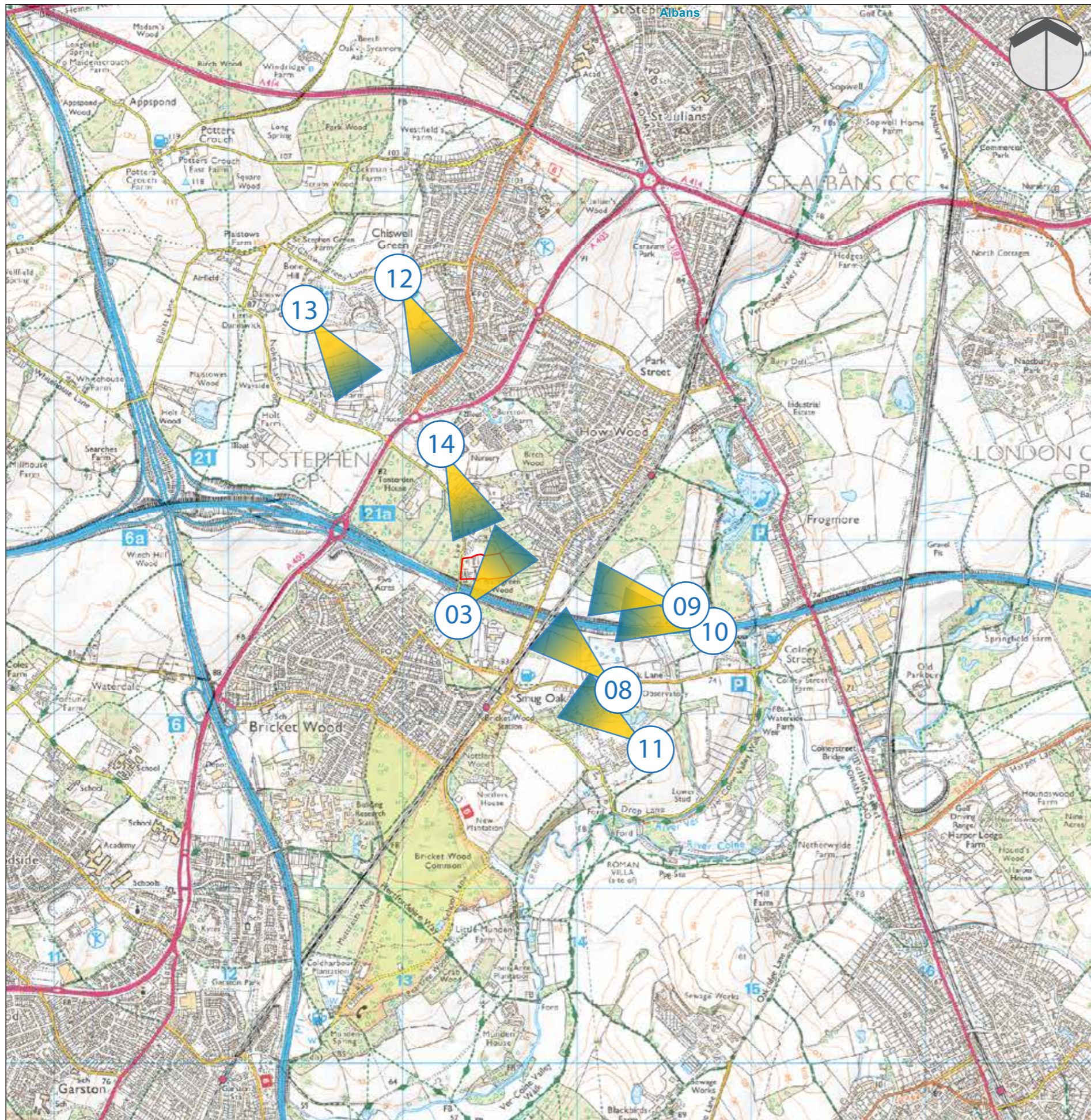
11. VIEWPOINT LOCATION PLAN & VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 10: Close Up Viewpoint and Site Photos Location Plan

Scale: NTS



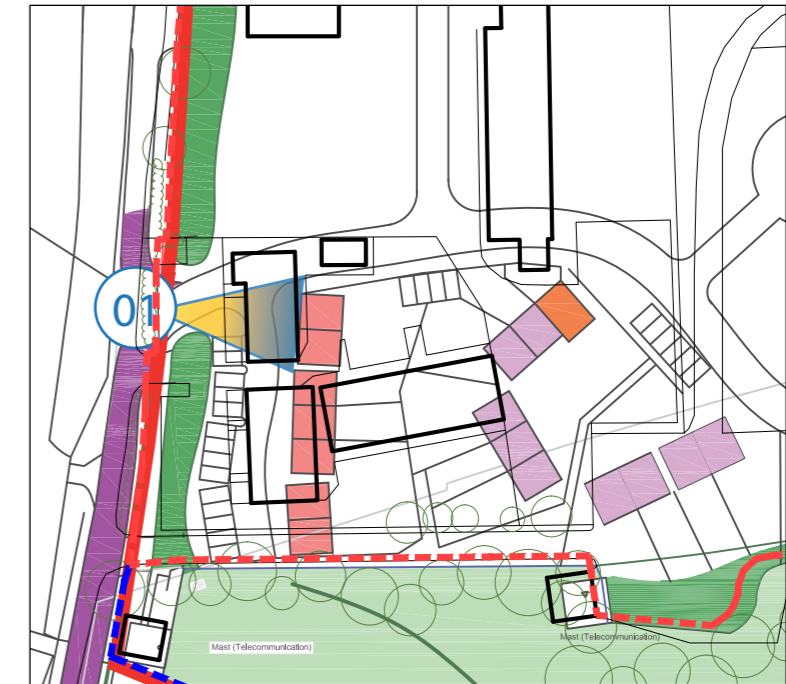
Figure 11: Distant Viewpoint
Location Plan
Scale: NTS



Viewpoint 01

View 01 is taken from Lye Lane at the entrance into the residential area of the site. The view looks East towards the site. Views of the site are limited due to the residential properties in the foreground. The Southern boundary of the site is visible beyond the dwellings made up of mature trees and a parking area in the foreground partially obscured from the road by established planting along Lye Lane.

Viewpoint 01 Location Thumbnail



NTS

Established planting limits views to the entrance opening

Existing one and a half and single storey dwellings on site

Car parking for residents

Viewpoint 01



Panoramic view from Lye Lane at the current entrance into the residential area of the site looking East towards the site.

Viewpoint 02

View 02 is taken from Lye Lane opposite the South West corner of the site. The view looks North East towards the site. Views of the site are limited by the established vegetation along Lye Lane and the residential development beyond. The Northern site boundary of the site is visible, marked by the row of conifers. The southern boundary of the site is marked by the mature native tree planting on the right of the view which continues south to the M25.

Viewpoint 02 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Conifers delineate the Northern boundary of the site

One and a half storey residential development

Established boundary along the eastern boundary of the site adjoining Lye Lane

Single storey residential development

Entrance to paint balling area of the site which covers the eastern two thirds of the site

Mature woodland forms the southern boundary of the site and continues to the M25

Viewpoint 02



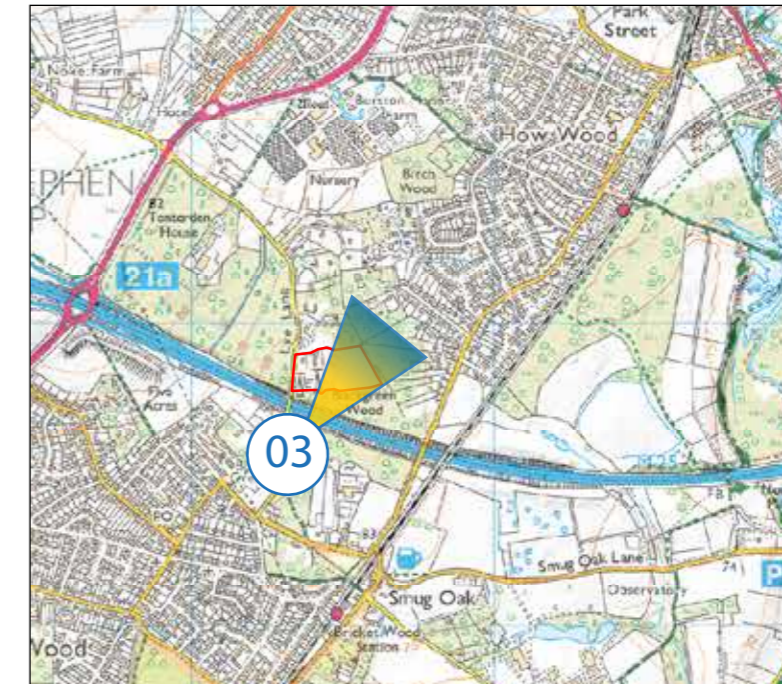
Panoramic view from Lye Lane opposite the SW corner of the site looking North East towards the site.

Viewpoint 03

View 03 is taken from Lye Lane as it joins Public Right of Way 015. The view looks North East towards the site. The view shows woodland to the south of the M25, Lye Lane, a narrow road without footpaths crossing the M25, with the site just visible beyond showing the conifers along the northern boundary, the derelict Bricket Lodge Sport and Country Club, the established vegetation along the western boundary and a telecommunication mast.

Viewpoint 03 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Lye Lane as it crosses the M25

Telecommunication mast beyond the SW corner of the site

Woodland to the south of the M25 with footpath access

Viewpoint 03



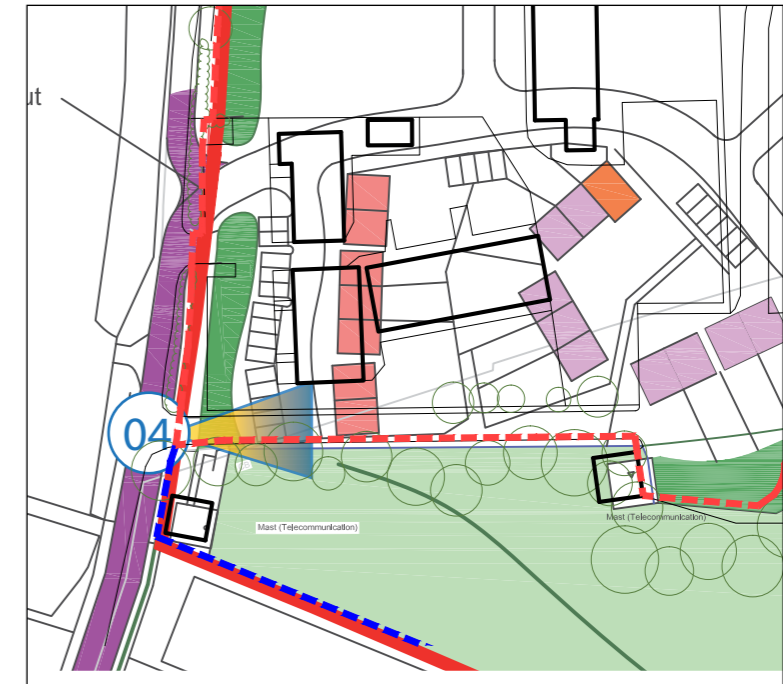
Panoramic view from Lye Lane as it joins Public Right of Way 015 looking North East towards the site.

Viewpoint 04

View 04 is taken from Lye Lane opposite the entrance to Paint balling. The view looks East towards the site. The view shows the established western boundary in the foreground, mature native woodland forming the southern boundary to the right of the view and conifers marking the northern boundary. Residential dwellings are just visible over the boundary vegetation with a few glimpses of the derelict buildings of the Bricket Wood Sports and Country Club.

Viewpoint 04 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Conifer trees along the northern boundary

Established vegetation along Lye Lane

Access track to paint balling on the western two thirds of the site

Established mature native woodland that forms the southern boundary of the site and extends to the M25

Viewpoint 04



Panoramic view from Lye Lane at the site entrance into the Paintball, looking East towards the site.

Viewpoint 05

View 05 is taken from Lye Lane opposite the North Western corner of the site. The view looks South East towards the site. The view shows a deciduous mature hedge running along the eastern boundary with some gaps where entrances used to be, filled with temporary boarding. The derelict Bricket Wood Sports and County Club is just visible beyond and to the right of the view, and the top of mature woodland that forms the southern boundary of the site adjoining the M25.

Viewpoint 05 Location Thumbnail

NTS



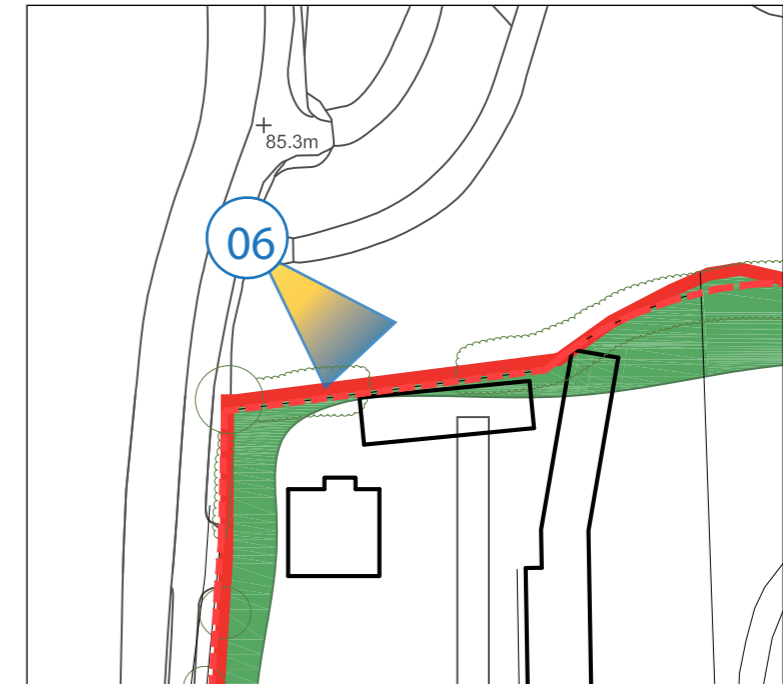
Panoramic view from Lye Lane opposite the North Western corner of the site, looking South East towards the site.

Viewpoint 06

View 06 is taken from Lye Lane outside the first dwelling to the north of the site. The view looks South East towards the site. The view shows the gates, brick walls and planting beds in the foreground associated with the entrance to the residential property. Beyond the foreground, the tall conifer trees on the Northern boundary of the site partially screen the view to the site, with some other deciduous trees within the garden of the property providing further partial screening and with glimpses through to the disused buildings on site.

Viewpoint 06 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Conifer trees on the northern boundary of the site

Deciduous trees in the garden of the residential property

Roofs of disused buildings on site

Conifer trees on the northern boundary of the site

Lye Lane

Viewpoint 06



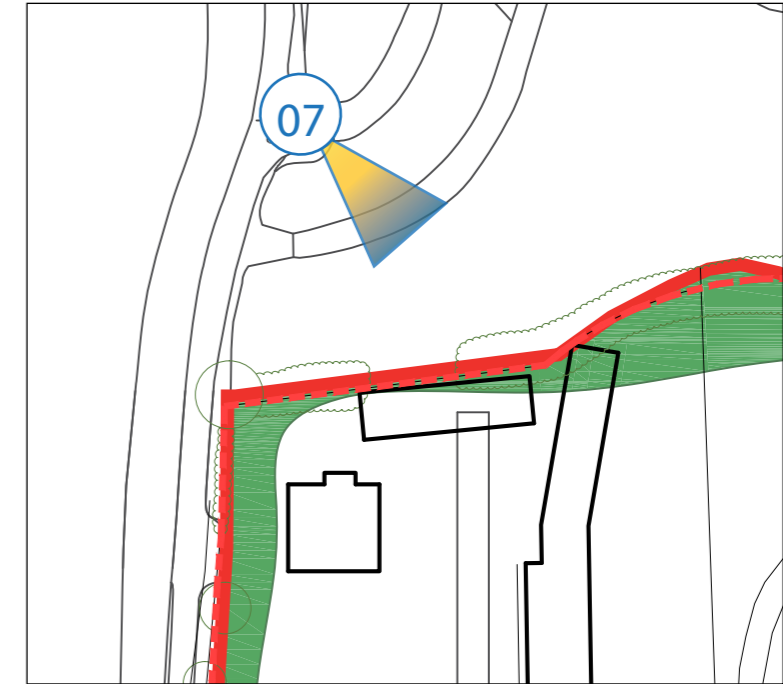
Panoramic view from Lye Lane outside the residential property to the north of the site, looking South East towards the site.

Viewpoint 07

View 07 is taken from Lye Lane outside the second property to the north of the site. The view looks South East towards the site. The site is not visible beyond the foreground entrance and garden trees.

Viewpoint 07 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Gate to residential property with associated brick pillars and railings, with tall pine trees beyond within the gardens of the residential properties



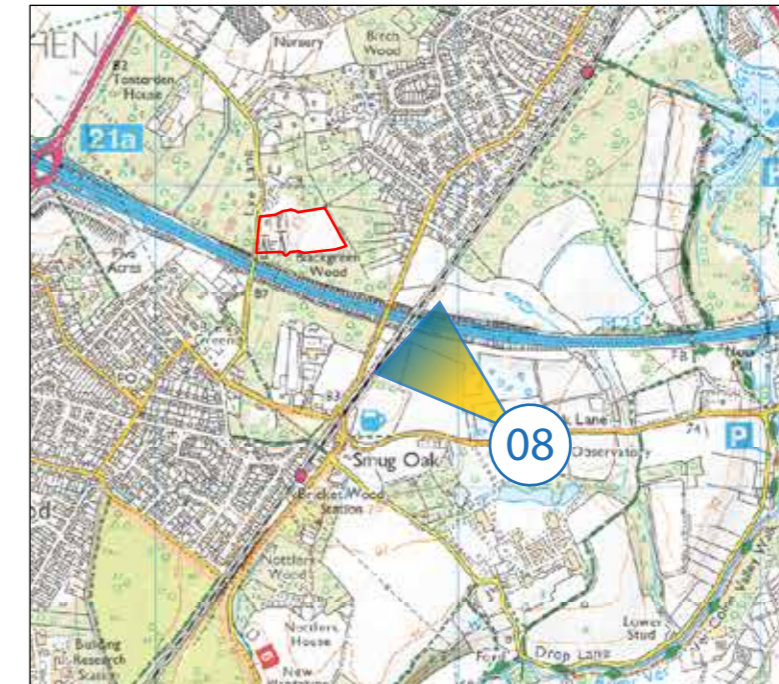
Panoramic view from Lye Lane outside the second residential property north of the site, looking South East towards the site.

Viewpoint 08

View 08 is taken from Smug Oak Lane where it rises to the East of Percy Drive. The view looks North West towards the site. The tops of the conifer trees on the northern boundary of the site may just be visible in the view.

Viewpoint 08 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Smug Oak Lane

Conifer trees thought to possibly be those on site

Viewpoint 08



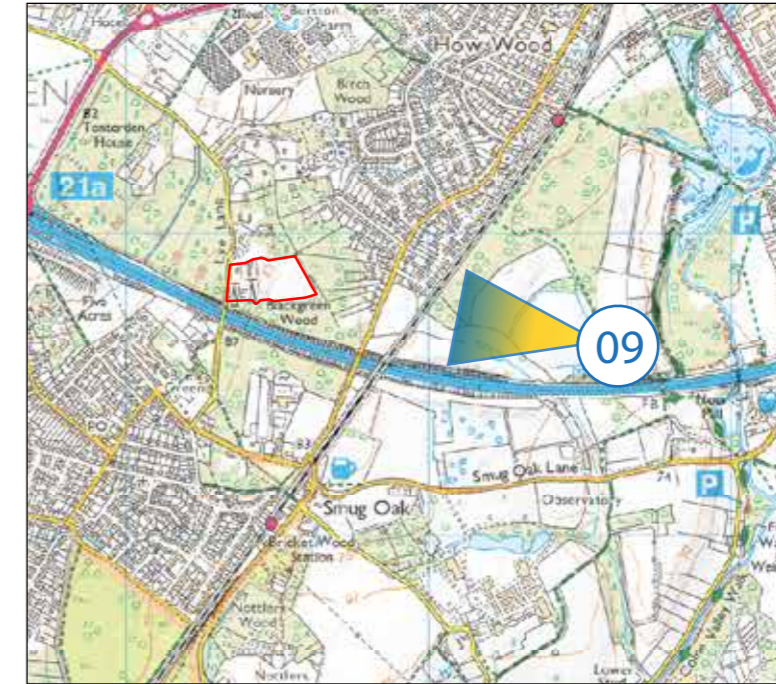
Panoramic view from the informal footpath along the northern side of Smug Oak Lane, looking North West towards the site.

Viewpoint 09

View 09 is taken from Public Right of Way 033 as it emerges from the woodland north of the M25. The view looks West towards the site. The tops of conifer trees just visible in the distance are thought to be those on the northern boundary of the site.

Viewpoint 09 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Embankment along the M25

Conifer trees thought to be those on site

Viewpoint 09



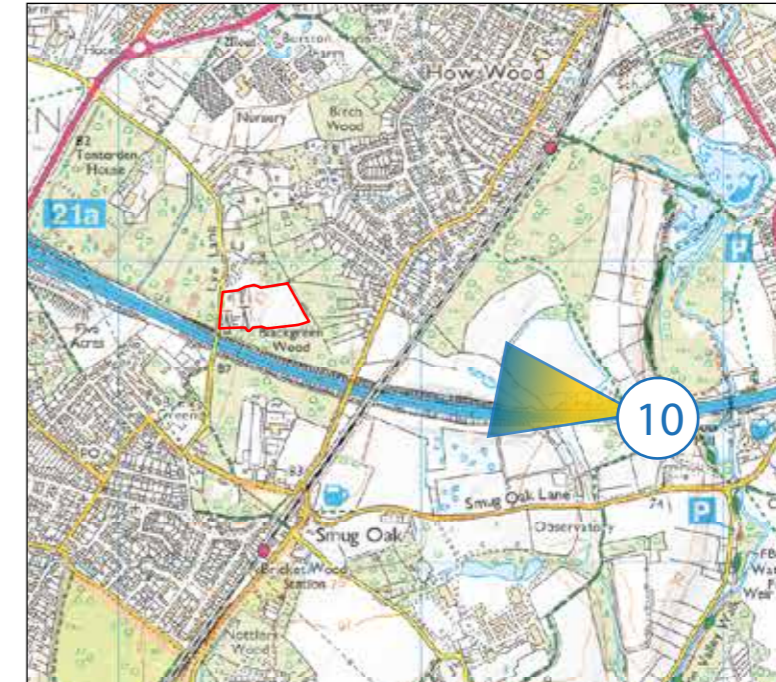
Panoramic view from Public Right of Way 033 as it emerges from the woodland north of the M25 looking West towards the site.

Viewpoint 10

View 10 is taken from Public Right of Way 025 as it crosses the footbridge over the M25. The view looks West towards the site. The view is thought to show the tops of the conifers along the northern boundary of the site just visible in the distance.

Viewpoint 10 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Conifer trees thought to be those along the northern boundary of the site

M25

Viewpoint 10



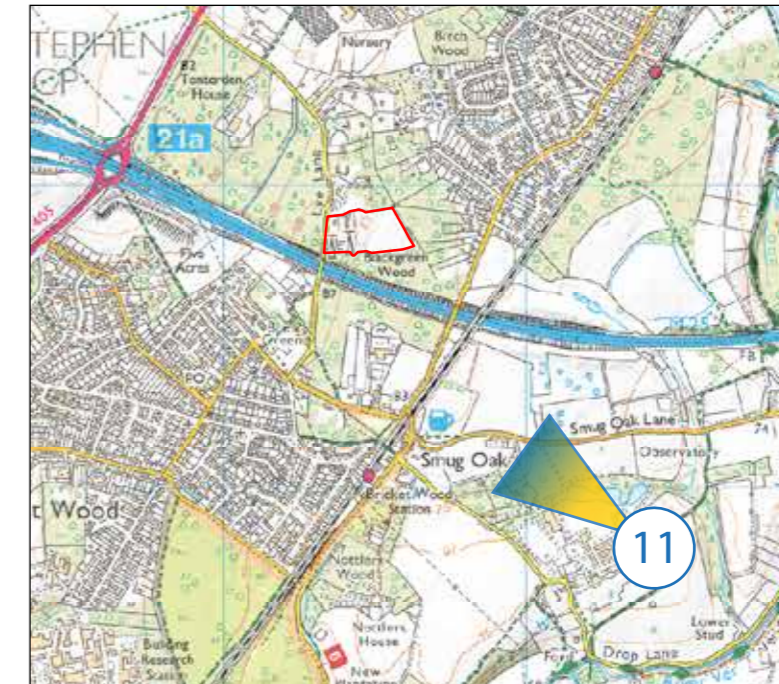
Panoramic view from Public Right of Way 035 as it crosses the footbridge over the M25 looking West towards the site.

Viewpoint 11

View 11 is taken from Public Right of Way 007 as it turns a right angle. The view looks North West towards the site. The site is not discernible within the view due to foreground vegetation.

Viewpoint 11 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Viewpoint 11



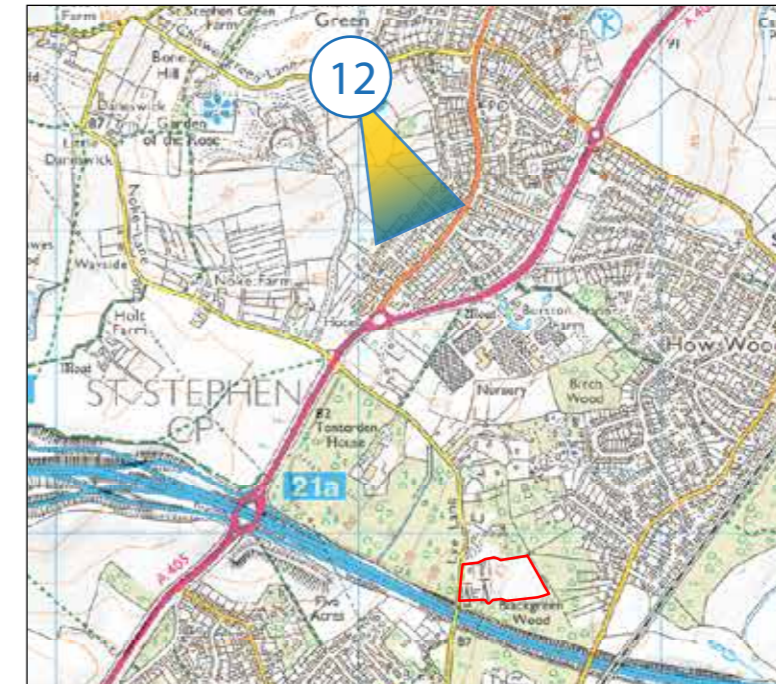
Panoramic view from Public Right of Way 007 as it turns a right angle, looking North West towards the site

Viewpoint 12

View 12 is taken from Chiswell Green Lane at the entrance to Chiswell Green Riding School. The View Looks South East towards the site. The two telecommunication masts south of the site are possibly visible within the view but hardly discernible in the distance.

Viewpoint 12 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Possibly the two telecommunication masts south of the site

Viewpoint 12



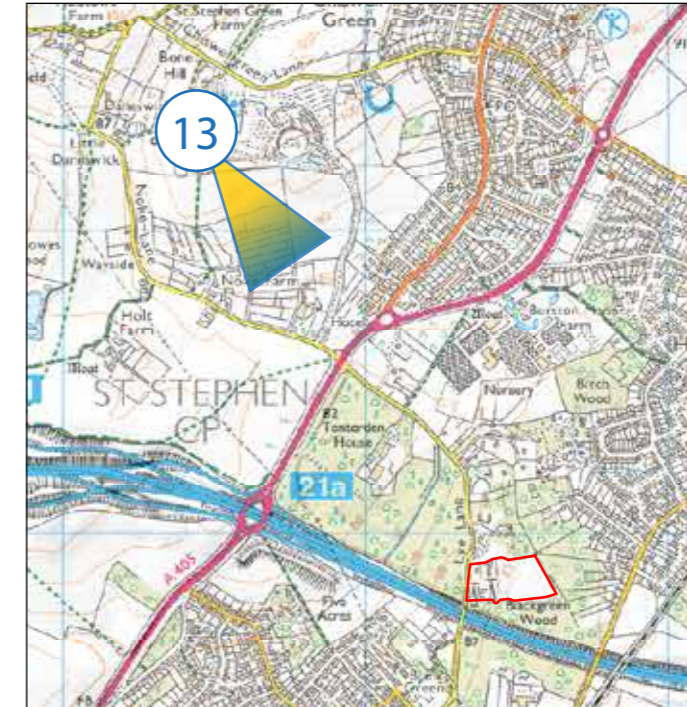
Panoramic view from Chiswell Green Lane at the entrance to Chiswell Green Riding School, looking South East towards the site

Viewpoint 13

View 13 is taken from Public Right of Way 028 as it continues south past Public Right of Way 044. The view looks South East towards the site. The view is believed to show distant views of the telecommunications mast south of the site.

Viewpoint 13 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Line of conifer trees believed to be those at Tenterdene House Care Home with telecommunication mast south of the site behind

Viewpoint 13



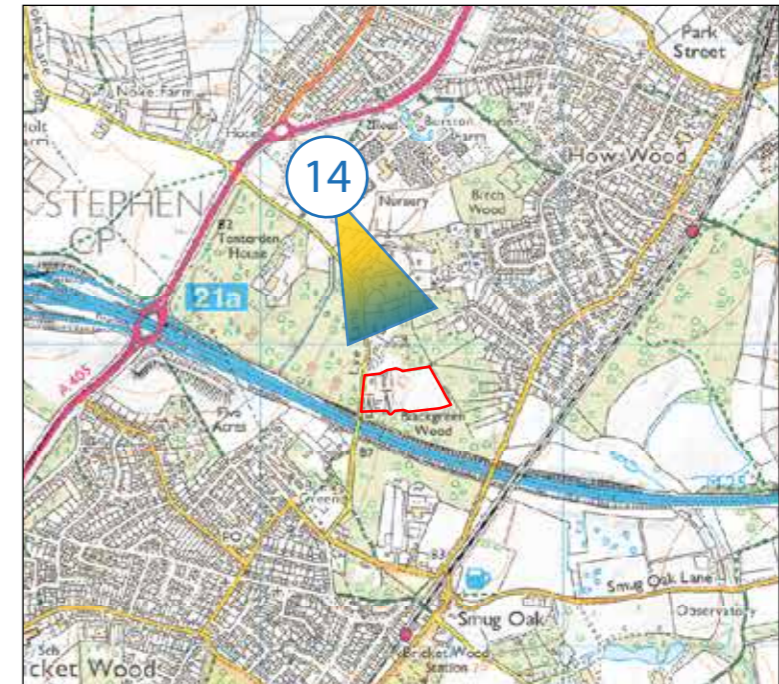
Panoramic view from Public Right of Way 028 as it continues south of PRow 044, looking South East towards the site.

Viewpoint 14

View 14 is taken from Public Right of Way 018. The view looks South East towards the site. The view is constrained by foreground vegetation resulting in no views towards the site.

Viewpoint 14 Location Thumbnail

NTS



Vegetation to the sides of the Public Right of way prevents distant views

Viewpoint 14



Panoramic view from Public Right of Way 018 looking South East towards the site.



UNIT NUMBERS

●	1-bed unit, 2 storey, 58sqm	33	20%
●	2-bed unit, 2 storey, 70sqm	35	31%
●	3-bed unit, 2 storey, 93sqm	34	30%
●	4-bed unit, 2 storey, 107sqm	13	12%
●	5-bed unit, 2.5 storey, 139sqm	8	7%
Total		113	100%

OPEN SPACE AREAS

Open frontage space	700sqm
Linear space A	600sqm
Linear space B	900sqm
Open space & play area	2,000sqm
Total	4,200sqm

Proposed Site Plan - 1:1000@A3