

Land at Tollgate Road,  
Colney Heath

## Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Green Belt Assessment

Prepared by  
CSA Environmental

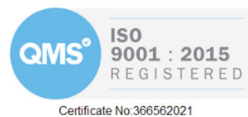
on behalf of  
Vistry Group

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CSA/3925/09	-	17/06/2022	SG	BS	Draft issue for comment
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<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.0 Landscape Policy Context</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3.0 Site Context</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.0 Site Description and Visibility</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5.0 Ability of the Site to Accommodate Development</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>6.0 Green Belt Assessment</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>7.0 Conclusion</b>	<b>22</b>

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: Site Location Plan

Appendix B: Aerial Photograph

Appendix C: Photosheets

Appendix D: Designations and Local Plan Extract

Appendix E: National Landscape Policy Context

Appendix F: Extract from Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment

Appendix G: Development Framework Plan

Appendix H: Extract from Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment 2013

Appendix I: Methodology and Summary Landscape and Visual Effects

Appendix J: Green Belt Assessment Methodology

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 CSA Environmental has been appointed by Vistry Group to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment and Green Belt assessment of the land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath (the 'Site'). The proposal is an outline planning application for up to 150 dwellings.
- 1.2 The Site lies within the administrative area of St Albans City and District Council. The location and extent of the Site is shown on the Location Plan at **Appendix A** and on the Aerial Photograph at **Appendix B**.
- 1.3 This assessment describes the existing landscape character and quality of the Site and the surrounding area. The report then goes on to discuss the ability of the Site to accommodate the development proposals, and the potential landscape and visual effects on the wider area. It also considers the effect of releasing the Site from the Green Belt on the Green Belt purposes.

### Methodology

- 1.4 This assessment is based on a site visit undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced Landscape Architect in September 2020. The weather conditions at the time were sunny and visibility was good.
- 1.5 In landscape and visual impact assessments, a distinction is drawn between landscape effects (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and visual effects (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape from public vantage points, including public rights of way and other areas with general public access, as well as effects from any residential properties). This report therefore considers the potential impact of the development on both landscape character and visibility. The methodology utilised in this report is contained in **Appendix I**, with the Green Belt assessment methodology contained in **Appendix J**.
- 1.6 Photographs contained within this document (**Appendix C**) were taken using a digital camera with a lens focal length approximating to 50mm, to give a similar depth of vision to the human eye. In some instances images have been combined to create a panorama. The photographs and visualisations within this report have been prepared in general conformance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19, as set out in the Methodology in **Appendix I**. A series of Photomontages from key viewpoints have also been prepared (to be submitted as an addendum to the planning application).

## 2.0 LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

### National Planning Context

- 2.1 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'). Section 15 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 174 of the document states that the planning system should contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural and local environment through, among other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, '*... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*'. The paragraph also outlines that the planning system should recognise 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.*'
- 2.2 The Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') adds further context to the policies contained in the NPPF. The guidance as relevant to this assessment covers landscape and the natural environment, and the design of new developments.
- 2.3 The National Design Guide (2019) has been produced as part of the PPG. It provides guidance to *illustrate* '*... how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.*' The National Model Design Code (July, 2021) expands upon the ten characteristics of good design providing an overarching framework for design.
- 2.4 Those sections of the NPPF and PPG relevant to this assessment are summarised in **Appendix E**.

### Local Policy Context

#### St Albans City and District Council Local Plan

- 2.5 The Site lies within the administrative area of St Albans City and District Council. Adopted policy relating to the District comprises the District Local Plan Review 1994. In 2007, a List of Saved Policies from the Local Plan Review 1994 was adopted.
- 2.6 Policies of relevance to the Site and the landscape include:
- 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;
- Policy 93: New Areas of Public Open Space;
- Policy 97: Existing Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways;
- Policy 102: Loss of Agricultural Land; and
- Policy 104: Landscape Conservation.

2.7 The emerging New Local Plan for the District was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in March 2019 for examination, but has since been withdrawn.

## 3.0 SITE CONTEXT

### Site Context

- 3.1 The Site is located within the south of Colney Heath, and extends to around 7.80ha. Its location and its immediate context are illustrate on the Location Plan and Aerial Photograph in **Appendices A** and **B**, and on the photographs contained within **Appendix C**.
- 3.2 The Site comprises two fields of horse grazing with a stable block and manège located in the north of the Site. It also includes the house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road, indented into the Site's north eastern corner. The Site is accessed off Tollgate Road just to the north of No. 42.
- 3.3 The Site is bound by the wooded course of the River Colne to the west. The woodland along the river to the west is dense, with tall mature trees along the river corridor. Dwellings with very large gardens lie beyond the woodland, with Coursers Road located beyond.
- 3.4 To the north west, the Site is bound by public footpath Colney Heath 033 which leads east-west, linking the junction of Tollgate Road and Fellowes Lane in the east, to Coursers Road to the west of the river. Beyond the footpath is a further paddock to the north. The farmyard at Colney Heath Farm, including the Grade II Listed farmhouse and associated Listed barn, lie around 150m north west of the Site, with Coursers Road, one of the main roads into the settlement, located beyond.
- 3.5 Tollgate Road to lies to the north east of the Site, with the rear gardens of the linear development further south along the road bounding the Site to the east. To the south, the Site is bound by further paddocks.
- 3.6 The houses which bound the Site along Tollgate Road to the east, comprise detached and semi-detached properties, with very long rear gardens. Tollgate Farm, a working farm, lies around 120m south east of the Site, at the junction of Tollgate Road and Bullen's Green Lane.
- 3.7 Around 300m south of the Site are further detached residential properties on large grounds at and around Park Cottages, set within and adjacent to the continuation of the woodland belt along the river. There are further stables and another manège within this area.
- 3.8 The existing settlement at Colney Heath extends northwards and eastwards from the Site, with woodland and agricultural land extending to the south and west. The A1(M) motorway is around 730m east of the Site, and the M25 and London Colney are located over 2.5km to the west of the Site. Colney Heath Common lies to the north

of Courses Road and south of High Street, with a further area located around 200m west of the Site, west of Coursers Road.

## **Character Assessment Studies**

### National Character Areas

- 3.9 Natural England has produced profiles for England's National Character Areas ('NCAs'), which divides England into 159 distinct natural areas, defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. The Site lies in NCA 111 – Northern Thames Basin.
- 3.10 The key characteristics of the Northern Thames Basin NCA include varied landform, with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The pattern of woodlands is varied throughout the area with considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. The field pattern is very varied across the basin which reflects historic activity. There is a medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlements which remains in the parts of Hertfordshire and Essex.

### Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (Extract in **Appendix F**)

- 3.11 The Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment forms part of the evidence base for the St Albans City and District Local Plan. It divides the county into a series of Landscape Character Areas, with the Site lying in the Colney Heath Farmland Landscape Character Area (LCA) 30.
- 3.12 As set out within the study (extract in **Appendix F**), the LCA is located between London Colney and St Albans in the west, and Hatfield in the east. It is described as a medium-scale landscape contained by adjacent urban areas and transport routes, with visual containment provided by the good network of hedges, field trees and tree belts. The key characteristics of the Colney Heath Farmland LCA are as follows:
- *'medium-scale arable farmland;*
  - *subtle gently undulating landforms;*
  - *severance by transport corridors, past and present;*
  - *areas of semi-natural restored mineral workings;*
  - *heath habitat at Colney Heath; and*
  - *urban development contains area physically but visually largely concealed.'*



- 3.13 The study notes that views both from outside and within the area are generally well screened by roadside vegetation. It notes that the A414 and A1 (M) provide a major source of noise and disruption. It also notes that the landscape type is frequent, with the heathy habitats being the most distinct features.
- 3.14 The study assessed the landscape condition as moderate, and the strength of character as moderate. The guidelines for change within the LCA recommend '*improving and conserving*' the landscape, and it includes a series of management strategies.
- 3.15 From our own assessment of the Site and immediate surroundings, we would note that the Site is used for horse grazing, and is well contained between an area of woodland and existing housing, with further paddocks located to the north and south of the Site. The character of the Site and its immediate surroundings is heavily influenced by the adjoining settlement.

### **Designations**

- 3.16 The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside Map ('MAGIC') and the Local Adopted Policies Maps indicate that the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality (please refer to plan in **Appendix D**).
- 3.17 The floodplain within the west of the Site is forms part of the larger Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site, which is locally listed for ecological importance, and which follows the course of the adjoining river.
- 3.18 The farmhouse and barn to the north at Colney Heath Farm, are both Grade II Listed, as is the Queen's Head Public House and two London Coal Duty markers to the north of the farm.

### **Public Rights of Way**

- 3.19 No public rights of way cross the Site, and it has no public access.
- 3.20 Public footpath Colney Heath 033 bounds the Site to the north west, and is separated from the Site by a gappy hedgerow and fence.

### **Tree Preservation Orders**

- 3.21 There are no trees on the Site covered by a Tree Preservation Order ('TPO'). This is confirmed by the examination of the online mapping service on the Council's website on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2022.

## 4.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND VISIBILITY

### Site Description

- 4.1 The Site comprises two fields of horse paddocks, comprising a smaller western and a larger eastern field, as well as the house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road. Within the north of the Site in the eastern field is a linear stable block and a manège, with associated storage containers and trailers. The stables are accessed via a concrete track off Tollgate Road, just to the north of the northernmost property along the west of the road, which bounds the Site. There is a small private children's play area, as well as a timber shed, located just south of the access track, within the Site.
- 4.2 The property at No. 42 comprises a detached, 2 storey house, with a detached single garage and several outbuildings, with a deep rear garden located west of the house.
- 4.3 The north western Site boundary is formed by a post and wire fence with a remnant managed, gappy hedgerow occurring in the north, 1.5-2m high. The route of the public footpath lies beyond to the north.
- 4.4 Managed hedgerows, around 2m in height, occur along the southern side of the access track into the Site, along the northern boundary of No. 42 Tollgate Road. There is also a mature hawthorn tree located within the west of this boundary hedge.
- 4.5 The north eastern Site boundary is formed by the rear garden boundaries of the adjoining houses, with trees and hedgerows occurring within many of these gardens. A category A oak tree lies just outside the Site, in the far east of this boundary between the houses and the Site.
- 4.6 In the east, the Site is bound by an outgrown hedgerow around 7m high.
- 4.7 The northern part of the south eastern Site boundary is formed by a remnant, gappy hedgerow, managed at around 1.5m in height. The southern part of this boundary is formed by a post and wire fence.
- 4.8 The western Site boundary is formed by a post and wire fence, with the River Colne located beyond. The river is lined by mature trees, with a dense area of woodland occurring beyond to the west.
- 4.9 The internal field boundary which separates the Site into a smaller western and larger eastern field, is formed by a post and wire fence with a small section of remnant hedgerow and scattered trees along it.

## Topography

- 4.10 The Site is relatively level, sloping down gently from around 75-76 metres Above Ordnance Datum ('AOD') in the west, to around 70-71m in the west.
- 4.11 The land in the vicinity of the Site and the settlement is similarly very gently undulating.

## Visibility

- 4.12 An assessment of the visibility of the Site was undertaken and a series of photographs taken from public vantage points, rights of way and public highways. The viewpoints are illustrated on the Location Plan and Aerial Photograph contained **Appendices A** and **B** and on the photographs in **Appendix C**.
- 4.13 From our assessment, it is apparent that the Site is visually well contained, being mostly visible from the immediate surroundings, with limited middle distance views available. The key views of the Site are described in the tables contained in **Appendix I** and are summarised below.
- 4.14 In views from Tollgate Road adjacent to the Site, and for a short section of Fellowes Lane east of the Site, there are views through the field access gate towards the woodland along the river in the west (**photographs 1, 2**). The Site is seen adjacent to the existing houses to the north east of it, and also adjacent to the grassland field north of the Site. No. 42 Tollgate Road is visible from along Tollgate Road and Fellowes Lane, when near to it.
- 4.15 From further north along Tollgate Road, the Site's north western boundary hedge is visible, with the stables partially visible over the top of the hedge (**photograph 13**). The northern elevation of No. 42 Tollgate Road is partially visible. Views from the houses east of the road, as well as from the properties south of Coursers Road (including the Listed Building) will be similar, although the north westernmost part of the Site will be visible where there is no hedgerow along the boundary, from the first and second floor windows of some of these houses (as seen in **photographs 6, 12, 13**).
- 4.16 Views from Coursers Road to the north are mostly prevented by the intervening built form, although there are filtered views of the Site and the houses adjacent to it, from the bridge along the road where it crosses the river (**photograph 14**).

- 4.17 Views from Colney Heath Common to the north are prevented by the intervening raised embankment along Courses Road, where it crosses the river, as well as the vegetation along this higher ground (**photograph 15**). Views from the Common to the west are prevented by the intervening woodland.
- 4.18 In views from public footpath 33 adjacent to the Site, the hedgerow along the north western boundary is visible, although there are framed views into the Site where there are gaps in the hedgerow (**photographs 3, 4**). The top of the house at No. 42 is partially visible over the intervening hedgerow in places. From further west along this path, from adjacent to the part of this north western boundary which is marked by a fence only, there are views across the Site towards the houses which back onto it to the north east (**photograph 7**). These views become filtered and then screened once the footpath enters and leads through the woodland over the river. The dense woodland and intervening properties prevent most views from further west, although there may be filtered, winter views from the properties to the west of the woodland, east of Coursers Road, as well as from sections of Coursers Road west of the Site.
- 4.19 The Site is partially visible in filtered views from the rear gardens and some rear windows of the houses which bound it to the north east, along Tollgate Road (as seen in **photographs 7, 8 and 9**). The adjoining house at No. 44 Tollgate Road, has views northwards from its garden, but there are no windows on the house's north-facing façade.
- 4.20 In middle distance views, the Site is just visible through and over the intervening vegetation and built form, from the elevated footbridge which crosses over the A1(M) to the south east of the Site (**photograph 19**).
- 4.21 In middle distance views from Tollgate Road to the south east of the Site, the intervening hedgerow on a low bank alongside Tollgate Road to the south, prevents views towards the Site (**photographs 16 and 18**), although there may be winter views through gaps in the hedge. There are partial, filtered private views towards the Site from the access track to the Park Cottage (**photograph 17**).

#### **Landscape Quality, Value and Sensitivity**

- 4.22 The Site does not carry any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape or heritage value or quality. It comprises horse paddocks, which are ordinary in character. The stables and barn within the Site are similarly ordinary in character, and not of any architectural or historic value or interest. The house and garden at No. 42 date from the

early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and are not of particular architecture value or interest. There is no structural landscape features on the Site of value, with only small lengths of remnant hedgerow remaining. The Site is assessed as being of medium to low landscape quality, and it has an edge-of-settlement character due to the stables and paddocks, as well as the clearly evident residential development adjacent and in the near vicinity of the Site.

- 4.23 The houses which back onto the Site to the north east are also ordinary in character, with most separated from the Site by their long rear gardens. The adjoining paddocks to the north and south of the Site are not of particular landscape quality, with the character of the paddock to the north similar to that at the Site, and the landscape south of the Site is of higher quality than that to the north. The woodland and river west of the Site are attractive landscape features, with the floodplain, including that within the Site, designated as a Local Wildlife Site.
- 4.24 The Site has been assessed as being of medium to low landscape quality, and it is not of particular scenic value. There is no public access to the Site, although there are some views of it from the adjoining public footpath to the north west. The Site is not a rare landscape type, nor can it be described as wild or tranquil. No elements on the Site have been identified as being particularly important examples of landscape features or characteristics. The western part of the Site lies within the Local Wildlife Site. There are no known associations with the Site which would elevate its value. Overall, the Site is assessed as being of medium landscape value.
- 4.25 The Site is capable of accommodating housing development, with limited structural vegetation or important landscape features which would be affected. Being located adjacent to existing houses, and considering the edge-of-settlement character evident at the Site, the Site is assessed as having a good ability to accommodate development.
- 4.26 The Site is assessed as being of medium to low landscape sensitivity.

## 5.0 ABILITY OF THE SITE TO ACCOMMODATE DEVELOPMENT

5.1 The proposals relate to an outline planning application for up to 150 dwellings and associated open space and infrastructure, with access off Tollgate Road applied for in detail.

5.2 The proposed development is shown on the Development Framework Plan in **Appendix G**, and further information is set out within the Design and Access Statement. The key principles of the proposals are:

- Residential development is proposed to be located adjacent to the existing houses, within the north east of the Site. The homes will be up to 2.5 storeys in height;
- Access is proposed off Tollgate Road, requiring the demolition of the house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road. The stables and associated areas will also be demolished;
- Green infrastructure corridors will be created within the north west, west and south east of the Site, and will be landscaped with native vegetation, including areas of long grass and meadows, to enhance the landscape structure of the Site and to create an attractive environment;
- The Local Wildlife Site in the west of the Site will be enhanced, with managed public access to respect the ecological sensitivity of this area;
- Sustainable Drainage System ('SuDS') basins are proposed within the northern and southern parts of the Site, and these will be landscaped to create attractive features, while also providing wildlife habitat;
- A new children's play area is proposed within the open space in the north of the development; and
- New native hedgerow, thicket and tree planting is proposed to be incorporated along the north western and south eastern Site boundaries and along the boundary of the Local Wildlife Site, to strengthen the gappy hedgerows which currently occur here.

5.3 The key landscape and visual effects are summarised in the tables in **Appendix I** and described in the relevant section below.

### **Landscape Features**

5.4 The house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road, as well as the stables and associated facilities/storage areas, will be demolished. Sections of

hedgerow along the house's boundary will also require removal, in order to facilitate access and to rationalise the layout of the proposed development.

- 5.5 The structural landscape features of note are contained to the field boundaries. The remnant hedgerows along the north western and south eastern boundaries are proposed to be retained and strengthened with new native hedgerow, thicket and tree planting, to create firm edges to the development here.
- 5.6 The remnant sections of hedgerow separating the two paddocks will be retained within the area of public open space where possible, and enhanced with new native planting.
- 5.7 SuDS basins are proposed within northern and southern green corridors, and these will be landscaped with meadow grass and emergent planting, to enhance their wildlife value while creating attractive landscape features.
- 5.8 The Development Framework Plan shows how new tree and thicket planting can be incorporated within the areas of open space within the development, to mitigate for the losses associated with the access point.
- 5.9 The proposed development will result in an increase in tree stock and tree species on the Site.

### **Relationship to Settlement**

- 5.10 As set out in Section 4, the Site has an edge-of-settlement character, being bound by houses to the north east, and with further residential development within the settlement evident from within the Site. The proposed housing at the Site will therefore be very well related to the existing settlement at Colney Heath.
- 5.11 The new homes are proposed to be located in the north east of the Site, backing onto the existing residential edge (and the rear gardens of the adjoining houses). The proposed areas of green infrastructure, and the enhanced Local Wildlife Site, will allow for appropriate, green transitions to be created between the built settlement and the adjoining open landscape beyond.
- 5.12 The proposed housing development will not extend further south east than the existing adjoining residential area along Tollgate Road adjacent to the Site, nor will it extend the settlement further north than its current extents. To the west, the river and woodland corridor form a clear and robust edge to the settlement, with the settlement further

north similarly contained to the west by the river and the associated heath which runs along it.

- 5.13 At the detailed design stage, the new homes will be designed to reflect the scale of the houses within the wider settlement, as well as the key positive architectural and stylistic characteristics.

#### **Public Rights of Way**

- 5.14 The existing public right of way which adjoins the Site will remain as is and along its current route, although the opportunity exists to create pedestrian links to the Site from this footpath.
- 5.15 The proposals include new recreational footways which will lead around the new homes and within the new areas of open space, creating further opportunities for recreational walks within the surrounding area.

#### **Visibility**

- 5.16 As discussed in Section 4, it is apparent that the Site is visually well contained, being mostly visible from the immediate surroundings, with limited middle distance views available. The key views and the visual effects of development at the Site are summarised in the tables in **Appendix I** and briefly discussed below. A series of Photomontages from key viewpoints have also been produced (to be submitted as an addendum to the planning application).
- 5.17 The new homes in the north of the Site, as well as the new access, will be visible from Tollgate Road adjacent to the Site, and a short section of Fellowes Lane east of the Site. The new homes will be seen adjacent to the existing houses on the road, and will not appear out of character in these views.
- 5.18 The tops of the new homes will be visible from further north along Tollgate Road, over the intervening hedgerow along the Site boundary. Additional native tree and thicket planting along this north western boundary will further filter views of these houses as it matures. The new homes will be seen adjacent to the existing houses on Tollgate Road, and will not appear incongruous. Views from the houses along the eastern section of Tollgate Road to the north of the Site, and also those to the south of Coursers Road (including the Listed Building), will be similar.
- 5.19 There will be filtered views of the tops of the new homes from the section of Coursers Road to the north, at the bridge over the river. In these views, the new homes will replace the filtered views of the



existing houses on Tollgate Road, and will similarly be filtered by the intervening existing and proposed vegetation within the west and north of the Site.

- 5.20 The tops of the new homes will be partially visible over the intervening existing and proposed hedgerows, in views from the adjoining public footpath (33). The new homes will be seen in front of the existing houses at Tollgate Road, and the proposed planting within the areas of open space in the west and north of the Site, will filter and/or screen views of the houses as the vegetation matures. There may be heavily filtered, winter views of the new homes from a short section of this footpath further west within the woodland area.
- 5.21 The tops of the new homes within the north east of the Site will be visible from the rear windows and gardens of the houses on Tollgate Road which back onto the Site. These properties have deep rear gardens for the most part, and the new homes will be filtered in views by the existing and proposed garden and boundary vegetation.
- 5.22 There may be middle distance, filtered, winter views of the new homes, from the elevated footbridge over the A1(M), over and through the intervening development. The existing houses on Tollgate Road will similarly be partially visible, and the new homes will be seen adjacent to these.
- 5.23 Similarly, the tops of the new homes may be visible in limited, filtered winter views from the middle distance, from Tollgate Road to the south east. The new vegetation along the south eastern Site boundary will further filter these views as it matures. There will also be filtered views of the new homes, seen against the backdrop of the existing adjoining houses, in private views from the access track to the Park Cottages, as well as from the northernmost extent of the grounds associated with the Grade I Listed North Mymms Park country house (with the Listed Building located around 1.4km south of the Site).

### **Landscape Effects**

- 5.24 As set out in Section 4, the Site is not covered by any designations for landscape or heritage value or quality. It has an edge-of-settlement character, and is assessed as being of medium to low landscape sensitivity.
- 5.25 The horse paddocks, stables and associated paraphernalia, and the house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road, will be lost/demolished, and replaced with a new residential development, including housing and open space. Large new areas of public open space, including new native planting, will be provided as part of the development, as

well as new children's play area. While the effects on the landscape character of the Site have been assessed as being adverse (due to the loss of the open character of the Site), this does not mean that the development will be unattractive. In fact, the new homes, streets and open spaces will be designed to be beautiful, as set out within the Design and Access Statement and as required by the NPPF. The homes will be designed to reflect the high quality elements of the local vernacular, and the development will be well-landscaped.

- 5.26 New recreational facilities will be provided on the Site, and the new landscaping will be designed to create habitat and provide wildlife benefit, whilst also creating an attractive environment.
- 5.27 Given the Site's edge-of-settlement character (which extends to the fields to the north and south of the Site as well), alongside the settled character clearly evident alongside the Site and on Tollgate Road and Coursers Road in the immediate vicinity, the proposed development at the Site will not appear out of character, and will be well related to the adjoining settlement. The development will remain separated from the more rural countryside around Colney Heath, by the intervening development to the north and east, by the woodland to the west, and by the paddocks to the south (with these paddocks also displaying a character more akin to the edge of a settlement, than to the rural countryside). There will therefore be no significant landscape effects on the character of the landscape/townscape in the immediate vicinity of the Site, as a result of the proposed development, and no material effects on the wider, rural landscape character around Colney Heath.

## 6.0 GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

6.1 The following section sets out our assessment of the Site's performance against purposes 1-4 of the Green Belt, as set out in paragraph 138 of the NPPF. It also considers the effect on the Green Belt as a result of the proposed development at the Site.

6.2 It should be noted that the existing settlement at Colney Heath is a Green Belt Settlement, and therefore lies wholly within the Green Belt.

### Local Green Belt Reviews

6.3 Below, we set out the findings of the Council's Green Belt reviews.

#### Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment 2013 (Extract contained in Appendix H)

6.4 The Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment was undertaken by Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) in 2013 on behalf of St Albans City and District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

6.5 The assessment identifies strategic land parcels in the study area which are then assessed against the Green Belt purposes criteria. It then assesses the level of contribution each strategic parcel makes, or could make, towards each of the first four Green Belt purposes. The methodology used in the assessment also includes a local Green Belt purpose which is, "*Maintaining existing settlement pattern*". The assessment states that it "*is a local purpose identified as a planning objective in the 1998 Hertfordshire Structure Plan*" (para.5.2.21). It explains that the assessment is applied to the spaces between non-1<sup>st</sup> tier settlements. It should be noted that the Hertfordshire Structure Plan has since been revoked.

6.6 The Site lies within Green Belt parcel 'GB34 – Green Belt Land between Hatfield and London Colney'. It should be noted that this study parcel is 419ha in size, with the Site obviously forming a very small component of this area. The assessment also notes that the land use within this area is predominantly arable farmland and heathland: the Site is mostly in use as horse paddocks.

6.7 In relation to purpose 1, to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, the assessment found that parcel GB34 makes a 'limited or no' contribution, noting that the parcel is located away from large built-up areas.

6.8 In terms of purpose 2, to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another, the assessment found a 'partial' contribution, noting that, 'As

*a whole, the gap contains some built development and ribbon development associated to 3<sup>rd</sup> tier settlements in the Green Belt. Overall, any minor reduction in the gap would be unlikely compromise the separation of 1st tier settlements in physical or visual terms, or overall visual openness.'*

- 6.9 The assessment finds a 'significant' contribution to purpose 3, to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. However, it notes the occurrence of linear built development in the northern part of the parcel around Colney Heath and Bullens Green (i.e. the area east and north east of the Site). It also notes that the A1(M) is a major urban influence, but that the level of openness generally high, especially in the south (i.e. around Tyttenhanger Park). We would note that, when considering the assessment, it is clear that there is already development within the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Site, alongside the A1(M), with both affecting the rural, or countryside character, of this area.
- 6.10 In relation to purpose 4, to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns, the assessment finds a 'partial' contribution, noting that there are Conservation Areas at London Colney and Sleapshyde, and comments on the character around Tyttenhanger Park.
- 6.11 The study also considers a local Green Belt purpose, which is '*maintaining existing settlement pattern*'. It notes the parcel makes a 'significant' contribution to this local contribution, however, we would note that this is not one of the national purposes of the Green Belt as set out within the NPPF, and was based on the now revoked Hertfordshire Structure Plan.
- 6.12 The assessment includes a section on the level of openness and the countryside character of the parcel, noting the overall level of built development is low, although there is some ribbon development, especially around villages to the north and east of the parcel (i.e. around Colney Heath), with more visual openness to the north of the parcel. In terms of the 'Countryside Character', the assessment notes a '*Riverine character with many sites subject to past gravel working now restored to pasture, lakes or water meadow along the Colne. Well wooded to the south.*'
- 6.13 It should be noted the Council's Green Belt study is an overview only, and does not take into considerations the specific Green Belt functions of smaller sites, as considered later on in this Section.

#### Green Belt Review Site & Boundaries Study 2014

- 6.14 This document was also undertaken by SKM but for St Albans City and District Council only. The main objectives of this study were to identify potential sites within the strategic sub-areas (identified in the 2013 'Part 1' study) for potential release; estimate the potential capacity of each site; and rank the sites in terms of their suitability for Green Belt release. The Site was not assessed within this study.

#### **Effects of development at the Site on the purposes of the Green Belt**

- 6.15 Colney Heath is wholly covered by the Green Belt. As noted in Section 5, the proposed development will be well contained, and very well related to the existing adjoining settlement. The proposed development would therefore form a logical part of the settlement, and the new houses, along with the adjoining settlement, could be retained wholly within the Green Belt, without significant impact to the functions of the Green Belt, as assessed in detail below (against the CSA Green Belt Methodology contained within **Appendix J**).

##### 1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 6.16 The Site is well contained by the adjoining woodland to the west, and the proposed new structural vegetation along the southern Site boundary will form a strong edge to development there, which reflects the existing residential built extent along Tollgate Road to the north east.
- 6.17 As set out earlier, the Site is very well related to the existing settlement, and the proposed development at the Site will form a logical extension of the settlement in the south west. Furthermore, Colney Heath is not considered to be a large built up area, as set out in the council's Green Belt Review.
- 6.18 A planned development can therefore be accommodated at the Site without resulting in unrestricted sprawl and the Site is considered to make a **weak / no contribution** to this Green Belt purpose.

##### 2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- 6.19 The settlement at Colney Heath comprises three parts, with the Site located adjacent to the south westernmost part of the settlement. Colney Heath is not considered to be a town, although an assessment of the merging of settlements in general is set out below.
- 6.20 The nearest settlement to the west of the Site is London Colney, over 2.5km away. To the south, the nearest settlement is South Mimms, at over 4km away. There is no intervisibility between the Site and these settlements.

6.21 As set out before, the proposed development will be physically and visually very well contained from the wider landscape. This, in combination with the physical distance between the various settlements, means that there will be no impact on the separation of adjoining settlements or towns.

6.22 The Site is considered to make a **weak / no contribution** to this Green Belt purpose.

### 3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

6.23 The Site comprises mostly horse paddocks, with very strong boundaries to the west and east, and further paddocks to the north and south. The woodland to the west prevents views of the Site from the west, and forms a strong barrier to the wider countryside, resulting in the character of the Site being more heavily influenced by the adjoining settlement than that of the wider landscape beyond. The Site also contains some built form in the north, including a linear stable block, manège, and associated storage containers and trailers, as well as the property at No. 42 Tollgate Road. The Site can be described as having an edge-of-settlement character.

6.24 The southern Site boundary to the adjoining paddocks is proposed to be strengthened with new native structural vegetation, and this will ensure a firm edge to the settlement in this location, separating it from the more rural countryside further south, beyond the intervening paddocks. Development at the Site would not materially affect the overall purpose of this Green Belt function, as the settlement will remain clearly separate from the wider countryside.

6.25 The Site is therefore considered to make a **relatively weak contribution** to this Green Belt purpose.

### 4. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

6.26 Colney Heath is not defined as a 'town' within the settlement hierarchy for St Albans District. In addition, it has no Conservation Area. The vast majority of buildings near the Site date from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and are not of historic value. We therefore consider the Site to make a **weak / no contribution** to this Green Belt purpose.

### 5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

6.27 It is considered that all land within the Green Belt contributes equally to this purpose. However, as set out within the Planning Statement, the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, nor does it have sufficient brownfield land to accommodate the necessary

housing growth. Green Belt land will therefore be required to accommodate housing growth within the District.

#### Conclusion

- 6.28 Overall, development of the Site would create a well contained extension to Colney Heath, which is very well related to the existing settlement. Colney Heath is a Green Belt Settlement, and the proposed development at the Site would not have a material effect on the purposes of the Green Belt.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 CSA Environmental has been appointed by Vistry Group to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment and Green Belt assessment of the land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath. The proposal is an outline planning application for up to 150 dwellings.
- 7.2 The Site is located within the south of Colney Heath, and extends to around 7.80ha. It comprises two fields of horse grazing with a stable block and manège located in the north of the Site. It also includes the house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road, indented into the Site's north eastern corner. The Site is bound by the wooded course of the River Colne to the west. To the north west, it is bound by public footpath Colney Heath 033, with a further paddock located between the Site and the built settlement to the north. Tollgate Road lies to the north east of the Site, with the rear gardens of the linear development further south along the road bounding the Site to the east. To the south, the Site is bound by further paddocks.
- 7.3 The Site does not carry any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape or heritage value or quality. It comprises horse paddocks, which are ordinary in character. The stables and barn within the Site are similarly ordinary in character, and not of any architectural or historic value or interest. The house and garden at No. 42 date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and are not of particular architectural value or interest. The floodplain within the west of the Site forms part of the larger Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site, which is locally listed for ecological importance, and which follows the course of the adjoining river. There are no structural landscape features on the Site of value, with only small lengths of remnant hedgerow remaining. The Site is assessed as being of medium to low landscape quality, and it has an edge-of-settlement character due to the stables and paddocks, as well as the clearly evident residential development adjacent and in the near vicinity of the Site.
- 7.4 The Site is visually well contained, being mostly visible from the immediate surroundings, with limited middle distance views available.
- 7.5 The horse paddocks, stables and associated paraphernalia, and the house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road, will be lost/demolished, and replaced with a new residential development, including housing and open space. Large new areas of public open space, including new native planting, will be provided as part of the development, as well as new children's play area. While the effects on the landscape character of the Site have been assessed as being adverse (due to the loss of the open character of the Site), this does not mean that the

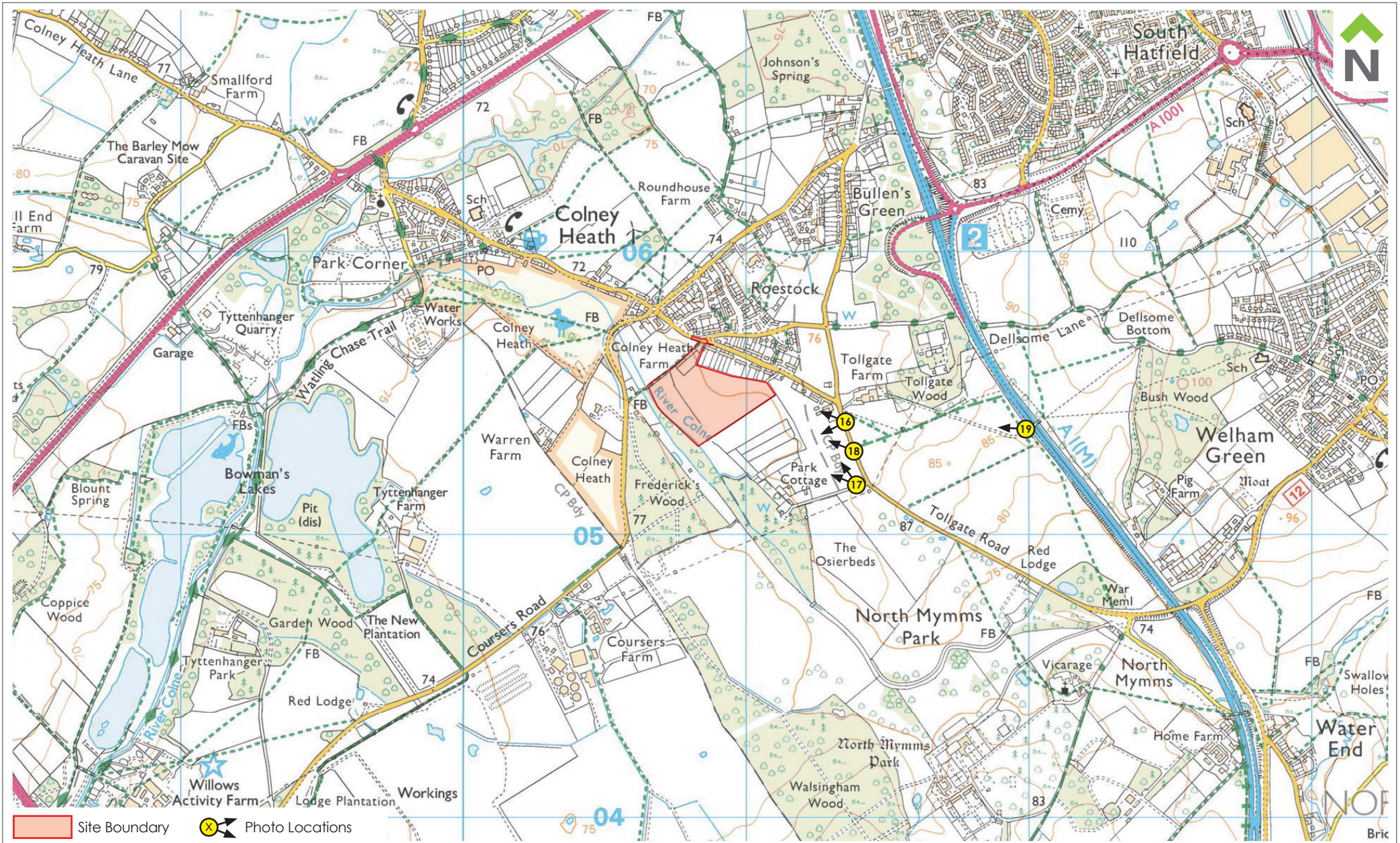


development will be unattractive. In fact, the new homes, streets and open spaces will be designed to be beautiful, as set out within the Design and Access Statement and as required by the NPPF. The homes will be designed to reflect the high quality elements of the local vernacular, and the development will be well-landscaped.

- 7.6 Given the Site's edge-of-settlement character (which extends to the fields to the north and south of the Site as well), alongside the settled character clearly evident alongside the Site and on Tollgate Road and Coursers Road in the immediate vicinity, the proposed development at the Site will not appear out of character, and will be well related to the adjoining settlement. The development will remain separated from the more rural countryside around Colney Heath, by the intervening development to the north and east, by the woodland to the west, and by the paddocks to the south (with these paddocks also displaying a character more akin to the edge of a settlement, than to the rural countryside). There will therefore be no significant landscape effects on the character of the landscape/townscape in the immediate vicinity of the Site, as a result of the proposed development, and no material effects on the wider, rural landscape character around Colney Heath.
- 7.7 The development of the Site would create a well contained extension to Colney Heath, which is very well related to the existing settlement. Colney Heath is a Green Belt Settlement, and the proposed development at the Site would not have a material effect on the purposes of the Green Belt.

## **Appendix A**

Site Location Plan



Site Boundary
 
X Photo Locations



Dixies Barns, High Street,  
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

† 01462 743647  
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk  
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

**Project** Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath

**Drawing Title** Site Location Plan

**Client** Vistry Group

**Date** June 2022

**Scale @ A4** NTS

**Drawn** SG

**Drawing No.** CSA/3925/114


**Rev** B

**Checked** CA

## **Appendix B**

Aerial Photograph



 Site Boundary       Photo Locations



Dixies Barns, High Street,  
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT  
† 01462 743647  
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk  
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project	Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath
Drawing Title	Aerial Photograph
Client	Vistry Group

Date	June 2022	Drawing No.	CSA/3925/115
Scale @ A4	NTS	Rev	B
Drawn	SG	Checked	CA

## **Appendix C**

Photosheets



**Photograph 01** View from Tollgate Road towards the Site

Visualisation Type 1  
 Cylindrical projection  
 48% @ A3, 96% @ A1  
 08.09.2020, 10:14  
 Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 Hfov 90°  
 Looking direction: West

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/3925/103	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> May 2022		
<b>Client</b> Vistry Group	<b>Drawn</b> SG	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> B	

No. 42 Tollgate Road

Woodland on western Site boundary



**Photograph 02** View from within the Site looking west along existing Site access

**CSA**  
environmental

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t 01462 743647  
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk  
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project	Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	Drawing No.	CSA/3925/103				
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	May 2022				
Client	Vistry Group	Drawn	SG	Checked	CA	Rev	B



North western Site boundary

Public footpath 33



**Photograph 03** View south west along public footpath 33 towards the Site

Visualisation Type 1  
Cylindrical projection  
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1  
08.09.2020, 10:15  
Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
Hfov 90°  
Looking direction: south west



Dixies Barns, High Street,  
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT  
t 01462 743647  
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk  
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Project	Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	Drawing No.	CSA/3925/103				
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	May 2022				
Client	Vistry Group	Drawn	SG	Checked	CA	Rev	B



**Panorama 04** For context only



**Photograph 04**

View south from public footpath 33, through gap in the hedge

Visualisation Type 1  
 Planar projection  
 75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
 08.09.2020, 10:16  
 Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 Hfov 40°  
 Looking direction: south



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 Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT  
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<b>Project</b>	Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/3925/103
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Photosheets	<b>Date</b>	May 2022
<b>Client</b>	Vistry Group	<b>Drawn SG</b>	<b>Checked CA</b> <b>Rev B</b>



**Photograph 05** View over the Site from public footpath 33

Visualisation Type 1  
 Cylindrical projection  
 48% @ A3, 96% @ A1  
 08.09.2020, 10:18  
 Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 Hfov 90°  
 Looking direction: south west

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/3925/103	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> May 2022		
<b>Client</b> Vistry Group	<b>Drawn</b> SG	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> B	



**Photograph 06** View from within the Site looking eastwards across the Site

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		<b>Project</b> Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/3925/103	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> May 2022		
<b>Client</b> Vistry Group	<b>Drawn</b> SG	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> B	

Public footpath 33

Houses on Tollgate Road

Southern Site boundary



**Photograph 07** View south east over the Site from public footpath 33

Visualisation Type 1  
 Cylindrical projection  
 48% @ A3, 96% @ A1  
 08.09.2020, 10:21  
 Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 Hfov 90°  
 Looking direction: east



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<b>Project</b>	Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/3925/103
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Photosheets	<b>Date</b> May 2022
<b>Client</b>	Vistry Group	<b>Drawn</b> SG <b>Checked</b> CA <b>Rev</b> B



**Photograph 08a** View from within the south of the Site north east across the Site



**Photograph 08b** View from within the south of the Site looking southwards (showing context)

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		Project Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	Drawing No. CSA/3925/103	
Drawing Title Photosheets	Date May 2022			
Client Vistry Group	Drawn SG	Checked CA	Rev B	

Southern Site boundary in the east

Houses on Tollgate Road



**Photograph 09** View from easternmost corner of the Site, north westwards

Rear boundaries of adjoining properties on Tollgate Road

Southern Site boundary

Woodland on western boundary

Stables within Site

Tollgate Road



**Photograph 10** View south west across Site from near the stables



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Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	May 2022
Client	Vistry Group	Drawn	SG
		Checked	CA
		Rev	B



**Photograph 11** View south across Site, from the access track



**Photograph 12** View north westwards from public footpath 33 (showing context)

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		<b>Project</b> Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/3925/103	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets	<b>Date</b> May 2022			
<b>Client</b> Vistry Group	<b>Drawn</b> SG	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> B	





**Photograph 13** View south towards the Site from Tollgate Road

Visualisation Type 1  
 Cylindrical projection  
 48% @ A3, 96% @ A1  
 08.09.2020, 10:14  
 Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 HfoV 90°  
 Looking direction: south

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/3925/103	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> May 2022		
<b>Client</b> Vistry Group	<b>Drawn</b> SG	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> B	

Approximate extent of Site

Barn at Colney Heath Farm



**Photograph 14** View towards the Site from Coursers Road to the north west

Visualisation Type 1  
Cylindrical projection  
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1  
08.09.2020, 10:48  
Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
Hfov 90°  
Looking direction: north west

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<b>Project</b>	Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/3925/103				
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Photosheets	<b>Date</b>	May 2022				
<b>Client</b>	Vistry Group	<b>Drawn</b>	SG	<b>Checked</b>	CA	<b>Rev</b>	B

Colney Heath Farm



**Photograph 15** View towards the Site from Colney Heath Common

Visualisation Type 1  
Cylindrical projection  
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1  
08.09.2020, 10:14  
Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
Hfov 90°  
Looking direction: west

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<b>Project</b>	Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/3925/103				
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Photosheets	<b>Date</b>	May 2022				
<b>Client</b>	Vistry Group	<b>Drawn</b>	SG	<b>Checked</b>	CA	<b>Rev</b>	B

Approximate extent of Site  
(hidden behind hedge)

Tollgate Farm



**Panorama 16** For context only

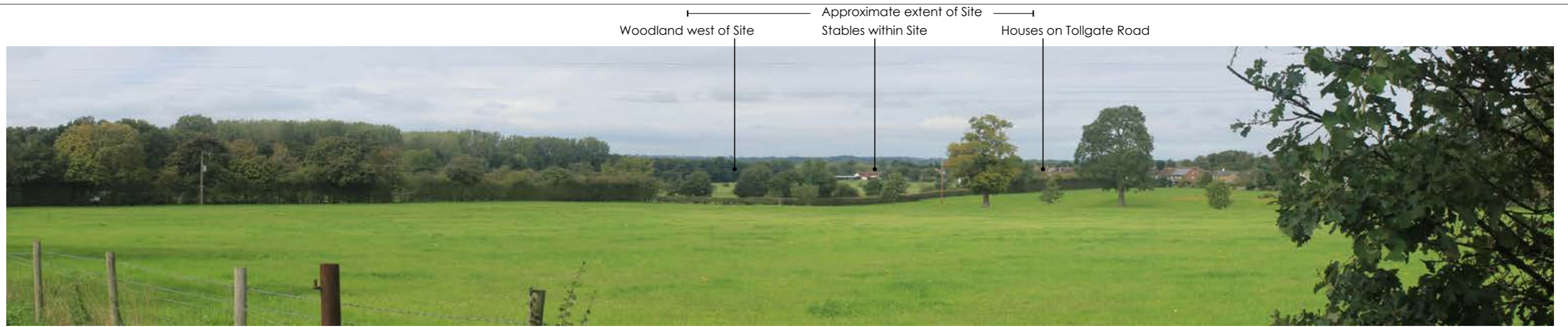


**Photograph 16**

View towards the Site from Tollgate Road south of Tollgate Farm

Visualisation Type 1  
Planar projection  
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
08.09.2020, 11:25  
Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
Hfov 40°  
Looking direction: south east

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk	
Project	Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	Drawing No.	CSA/3925/103
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	May 2022
Client	Vistry Group	Drawn	SG
		Checked	CA
		Rev	B



**Panorama 17** For context only



**Photograph 17**

View from private access track to Park Cottages

Visualisation Type 1  
 Planar projection  
 75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
 08.09.2020, 11:25  
 Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 Hfov 40°  
 Looking direction: south east

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/3925/103	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> May 2022		
<b>Client</b> Vistry Group	<b>Drawn</b> SG	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> B	

Approximate extent of Site

Stables within Site



### Photograph 18

View from Tollgate Road, south of Tollgate Farm

Visualisation Type 1  
Planar projection  
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
08.09.2020, 11:27  
Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
Hfov 40°  
Looking direction: north west



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Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	May 2022				
Client	Vistry Group	Drawn	SG	Checked	CA	Rev	B

Approximate extent of Site

Tollgate Farm



**Photograph 19**

View from footbridge over the A1 (M), on public footpath 55

Visualisation Type 1  
Planar projection  
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
08.09.2020, 11:15  
Canon EOS 1100D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
Hfov 40°  
Looking direction: west



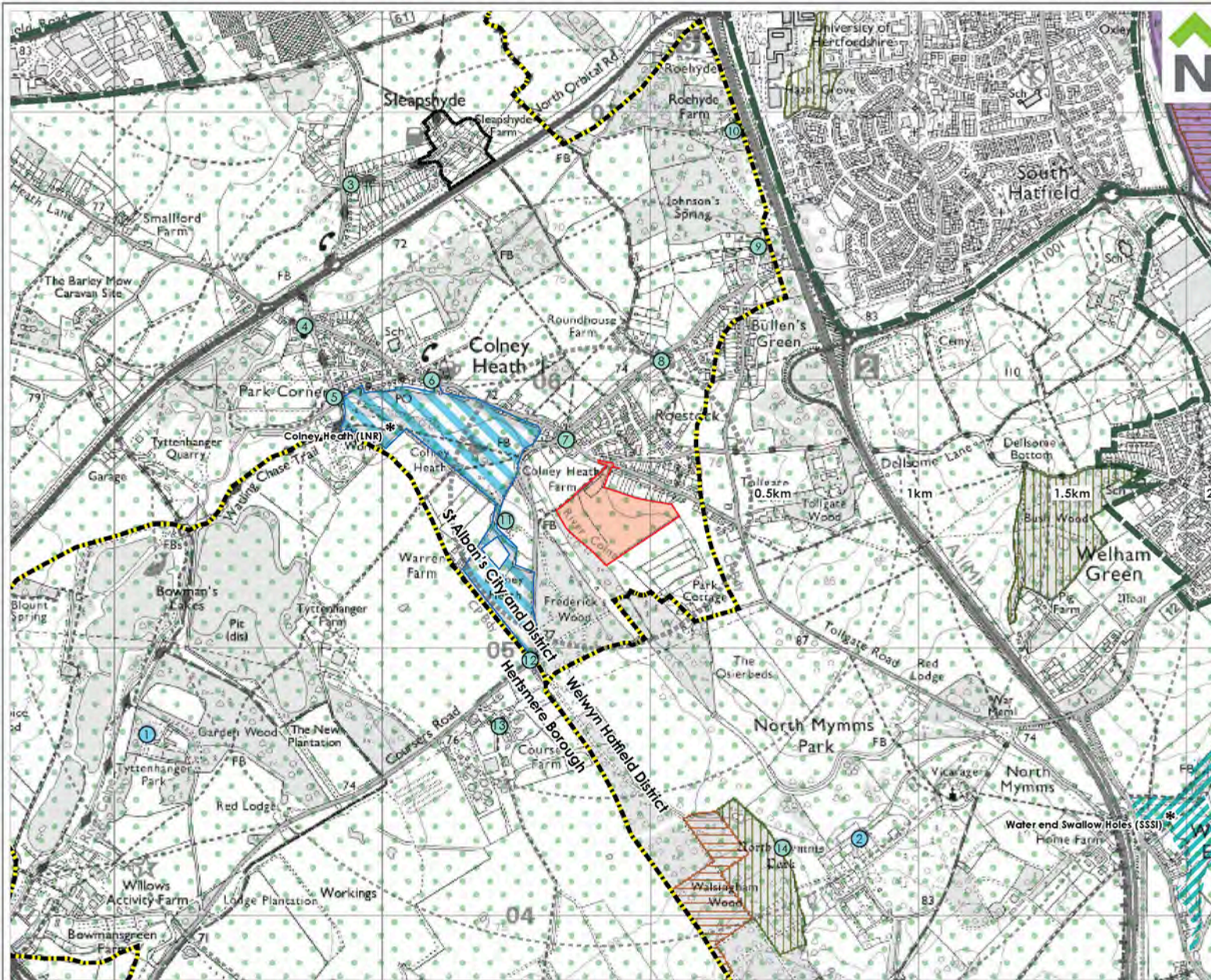
Dixies Barns, High Street,  
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Project	Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath	Drawing No.	CSA/3925/103				
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	May 2022				
Client	Visfry Group	Drawn	SG	Checked	CA	Rev	B

## **Appendix D**

Designation and Local Plan Extract





- Site Boundary
- District Boundary
- Green Belt
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Registered Parks and Gardens (REG)
- Sleepshyde Conservation Area
- Ancient Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland
- Grade I Listed Buildings & Structures within 2.0km
  1. Tyttenhanger House
  2. North Mymms Park with Adjoining Garden Walls and ha-ha
- Grade II Listed Buildings & Structures within 1.5km (Outside Conservation Areas)
  3. Ye Old House
  4. Church of St Mark
  5. London Coal Duty Marker
  6. Group of 3; The Crooked Billet Public House, Apsley Cottage & 94 High Street
  7. Group of 5; London Coal Duty Maker on Colney Heath, Queens Head Public House, London Coal Duty Maker adjoining south corner of garden to Queens Head Public House, Barn at Colney Heath Farm & Colney Heath Farmhouse
  8. 68 Roestock Lane
  9. The Grove
  10. Group of 2; Roehyde Farmhouse & adjoining Barn and Stable
  11. Mill at Mill House
  12. London Coal Duty Marker at Southern Boundary of Parish
  13. Barn 60 metres north west of Courseys Farm House
  14. Ice House at North Mymms Park



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**Project** Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath

**Drawing Title** Designations and Local Plan Extract

**Client** Vistry Group

**Date** June 2022

**Scale @ A4** NTS

**Drawn** SG

**Drawing No.** CSA/3925/116

**Rev** -

**Checked** CA

## **Appendix E**

### National Landscape Policy Context

## 1.0 APPENDIX E – NATIONAL LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

- 1.1 National policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and those parts relevant to this assessment are summarised below.
- 1.2 Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the NPPF state that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be applied in relation to both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 1.3 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for, among other elements, the *'(d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.'*
- 1.4 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Paragraph 127 states that *'... design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.'* Paragraph 128 requires local authorities to prepare design guides and codes which act as a framework to reflect local character and design preferences to create high quality designed places which are beautiful and distinctive.
- 1.5 Paragraph 130 states that planning policies and decisions, should ensure that developments, amongst others:
- *'will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
  - *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and effective landscaping;*
  - *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change...'*
- 1.6 Paragraph 131 highlights the importance of new and retained trees to the character and quality of urban environments, with appropriate species choice for the location and the needs of all users.
- 1.7 Paragraph 132 states that the design quality should be integral to the evolution and assessment of proposals, and paragraph 134 goes on to state

that poorly designed development should be refused, particularly where it does not follow local or government design guidance.

1.8 Section 15 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 174 of the document states that the planning system should contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural and local environment through, among other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, '*... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*'. The paragraph also outlines that the planning system should recognise 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.*'

1.9 Paragraph 175 highlights that plans should:

*'... distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.'*

1.10 Paragraph 180 notes that in the process of determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply several principles. Among these, the paragraph notes that, '*(c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists*'.

1.11 In Section 13 'Protecting Green Belt Land' paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that the essential character of Green Belts is their openness and their permanence, with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl. Paragraph 138 sets out the five purposes which Green Belt should serve:

- *'to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.'*

- 1.12 Paragraphs 140 to 142 outline the national planning policy relating to the definition of Green Belt boundaries. Paragraph 140 states that, *'Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans...'*. Paragraph 143 outlines the elements that should be considered when defining Green Belt boundaries. Paragraph 143 (f) states that plans should, *'define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.'*
- 1.13 Paragraph 147 and 148 deal with inappropriate development, which is by definition deemed to be harmful in the Green Belt. These paragraphs state that only in very special circumstances should inappropriate development be approved, and these circumstances will not be considered to exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 1.14 Paragraph 149 states that new buildings are considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt, but goes on to list some exceptions. These include among others, *'(g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*
- *Not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
  - *Not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.'*

### **Planning Practice Guidance**

- 1.15 The Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') as relevant to this assessment covers landscape and the natural environment, the design of new developments, and Green Belt. The PPG may be out of date in its reference to NPPF paragraph numbers, and where this is the case, the latest paragraph number has been included in the text in square brackets.
- 1.16 Paragraph 001 (ID 26-001-20191001) of the Design: process and tools section sets out the purpose of the guidance, which aims to explain the process and tools that can be employed to achieve well-designed places. The guidance refers to paragraph 130 [134] of the NPPF which relates to ensuring good design, and states that the section should be read in conjunction with the National Design Guide (published Oct, 2019), which it notes should be used in both plan-making and decision making. Ten good design characteristics are

identified in the National Design Guide, and these are set out as follows in the PPG:

- Context
- Identity
- Built form
- Movement
- Nature
- Public places
- Uses
- Homes and buildings
- Resources
- Lifespan.

1.17 Paragraphs 006 and 007 deal with masterplans, stating that they should be site specific and should '*... set the vision and implementation strategy for a development...*'. Paragraph 006 notes that they may need to be accompanied by other technical reports including landscape assessment and proposals for securing biodiversity net gain.

1.18 The Natural environment section of the guidance aims to explain the key issues to consider in relation to the implementation of policies to protect and enhance the natural environment, including local requirements.

1.19 Paragraph 004 defines Green Infrastructure, while in paragraph 005 it explains its importance as a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, including enhanced biodiversity, landscapes and urban cooling. In paragraph 006 the guidance sets out the planning goals green infrastructure can assist in achieving, and these are:

- *Building a strong, competitive economy;*
- *Achieving well-designed places;*
- *Promoting healthy and safe communities;*
- *Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change;*
- *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.*

1.20 The final paragraph (008) in the green infrastructure sub-section notes that:

*'Green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision.'*

- 1.21 Within the Biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystems section, the topic of net gain has been included. Paragraph 020 describes net gain as '*... an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. Net gain is an umbrella term for both biodiversity net gain and wider environmental net gain.*'
- 1.22 In the Landscape section of the guidance, paragraph 036 refers to that part of paragraph 170 [174] of the NPPF which deals with the recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in local plans, and the need for strategic policies to '*... provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.*' Paragraph 036 goes on to note that:
- 'Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.'*
- 1.23 The Green Belt section of the guidance under paragraph 001 notes that judging the openness of Green Belt land depends upon the circumstances of the case. The guidance notes that there are a number of factors to consider, and sets out three examples which include, but are not limited to:
- *openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;*
  - *the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and*
  - *the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.*
- 1.24 Paragraph 002 deals with compensatory measures which local planning authorities should require in relation to the remaining Green Belt land when land is released for development. It notes environmental improvements to the quality and accessibility of the remaining land should be informed by landscape, biodiversity or recreational need and by identified opportunities in local strategies and could include:
- *New or enhanced green infrastructure;*

- *Woodland planting;*
- *Landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal);*
- *Improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital;*
- *New or enhanced walking and cycling routes; and*
- *Improved access to new, enhanced or existing recreational and playing field provision.*

1.25 Paragraph 003 states that in order to secure compensatory improvements, early engagement with landowners and other interest groups once land has been identified for release will be required.

### **National Design Guide**

1.26 The National Design Guide (2019) provides guidance to illustrate '*... how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.*'

1.27 The guidance identifies ten good design characteristics and the following are of most relevance to landscape and visual assessment (our emphasis):

- Context is described as '*... the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings.*' The Guide goes on to state that,

*'An understanding of the context, history and cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion.*

- *The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings and how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses. Local character makes places distinctive. Well-designed, sustainable places with a strong identity give their users, occupiers and owners a sense of pride, helping to create and sustain communities and neighbourhoods.*
- *Nature contributes to the quality of a place, and to people's quality of life, and it is a critical component of well-designed places. Natural features are integrated into well-designed development. They include*



*natural and designed landscapes, high quality public open spaces, street trees, and other trees, grass, planting and water.'*

- 1.28 The National Model Design Code (July 2021) expands upon the ten characteristics of good design providing an overarching framework for design.

## **Appendix F**

Extract from Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment

County map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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Hertfordshire  
County Council  
LA076678



**LOCATION**

This area is located between London Colney and St Albans in the west and Hatfield in the east. The A414 and Colney Heath mark the southern boundary and Hatfield aerodrome the northern limit.

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

A medium-scale landscape contained by adjacent urban areas and transport routes. There is a good network of hedges, field trees and tree belts to the urban areas that visually contain the largely arable character. Mineral extraction has created a number of disturbed and new landscapes that are still young. Areas of heath and semi-natural grassland are locally important at Colney Heath and Smallford gravel pits.

**KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- medium-scale arable farmland
- subtle gently undulating landforms
- severance by transport corridors, past and present
- areas of semi-natural restored mineral workings
- heath habitat at Colney Heath
- urban development contains area physically but visually largely concealed

**DISTINCTIVE FEATURES**

- Smallford gravel pits
- Alban Way



Colney Heath •  
(J. Billingsley)

## PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

**Geology and soils.** To the east the geology comprises Aeolian silty drift and till. The soils are deep stoneless well-drained silty soils over gravel (Hamble 2 series). The gravels were laid down in glacial lakes during the Ice Age by the 'proto-Thames'. To the west around Tyttenhanger the soils overlie a chalky till geology with calcareous subsoils in places. Soils are deep, fine, loamy and clayey, with slow permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging (Hornbeam 3 series).

**Topography.** This is a subtle landform. To the west there are gentle undulations. To the east the landform is a continuation of the De Havilland Plain and the land is virtually flat. The past mineral workings have produced some minor local variations in landform.

**Degree of slope.** Typically less than 1 in 50 to the west, but locally up to 1 in 25. Virtually flat to the east, c.1 in 500.

**Altitude range.** 75-86m to the west and 70 to 74 in the east.

**Hydrology.** The young and seasonal River Colne flows into the south of the area at Colney Heath, where it has been artificially channelled across the common since the early 20th century. There are also a number of seepage lines and spring lines in the heathy woodland. The agricultural land to the north is drained by a series of field ditches and then into Butterwick Brook and Ellenbrook, both of which flow into the Colne within Tyttenhanger Park. There are a number of waterbodies associated with the former mineral workings, e.g. at Smallford gravel pits, and elsewhere there are scattered small ponds.

**Land cover and land use.** The primary land use is arable farming with a pattern of treed farmland. There is a significant area of disturbed land, within which restoration has been variable in its extent and quality. Pasture is limited in extent and confined to the edge of settlements.

**Vegetation and wildlife.** Woodlands are discrete and comprise oak, ash and hornbeam. There are two ancient woods at Coppice Wood and Knight Wood that are a natural oak/hazel mix. Either side of the A414 is a dramatic avenue of hybrid poplars. On the north-west edge adjacent to St Albans there are a number of tree belts that conceal the extent of development behind, e.g. at the former Cell Barnes Hospital. Some mineral restoration sites have lakes and new plantation areas, often willows and poplars. Hedge species include hawthorn, elm and some holly. Field trees are mainly oaks.

- Colney Heath is an open area of common with both acidic woodland and acidic/neutral grassland communities. Species include hawthorn, gorse, bracken, foxgloves and oak, with alders lining the Colne.

- At Smallford gravel pits an interesting and valuable mosaic of semi-improved grassland, scrub, ephemeral ponds and pockets of undisturbed species-rich acidic/neutral grassland has developed on old mineral working sites that were 'poorly' restored with rubble. These areas have been grazed by gypsy horses to create an interesting 'common'. The ponds contain great crested newts, (BAP species).
- At Sleapshyde, where the pits have not been filled there is good marsh vegetation. There are also areas of naturally occurring bog communities.

## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The open unenclosed heath of Colney Heath is the last remnant of the old manorial lands of Tyttenhanger, owned by the abbey until the dissolution of the monasteries. The heath lay just outside the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Police and was the haunt of highwaymen and the location of cockfights and prize fights. The inns around the heath were all connected by a series of footpaths.

**Field pattern.** The field pattern is mainly pre-18th century organic enclosure which has largely been retained in areas that have not been extracted. To the north of Colney Heath there is more evidence of parliamentary enclosure. In contrast to the adjacent character areas of the Vale of St Albans and the De Havilland Plain, fields are medium in size and irregular in shape. In areas that have not been subject to mineral extraction, hedgerows are medium to tall, particularly north of the A414, which creates a sense of enclosure from the adjacent urban areas and road corridors. The extracted area north east of Colney Heath is more open in character.

**Transport pattern.** The historic road pattern is of narrow winding lanes within the farmed landscape. This has been largely retained, although the area is divided by the linear A414 dual carriageway. The Smallford Trail follows the line of a disused railway and is also a valuable wildlife corridor.

**Settlements and built form.** The traditional pattern is of dispersed settlement. There are a number of clusters, including the older settlements of Tyttenhanger, Wilkins Green, Sleapshyde and Colney Heath. These have been added to and, together with ribbon development and expansion from the adjacent urban areas, there is a sense of urban pressure. There are a number of traditional buildings, using weatherboard, render and brick alongside 20th-century materials.

**VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION**

Views both from outside and within the area are generally well screened by roadside vegetation along both the narrow lanes and the dual carriageways. The A414 and A1(M) provide a major source of noise and disruption.

**Rarity and distinctiveness.** The landscape type is frequent with the heathy habitats being the most distinct features.

**VISUAL IMPACT**

The extent of built development within and on the perimeter of the area is generally well concealed by vegetation. Exceptions are some of the large industrial units and glasshouses at Smallford and the A414. There is some localised fly-tipping which is visually detrimental.

**ACCESSIBILITY**

There is open public access to Colney Heath and a good network of footpaths and the Albans Way/Smallford Trail within the area. Public access to Smallford gravel pits is present but not well signed. There is angling at Smallford gravel pits.

**COMMUNITY VIEWS**

The heathland landscapes are valued for their distinctiveness amidst an otherwise unremarked-upon setting (D).

**LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS**

Watling Chase Community Forest.  
LNR: Colney Heath Common.

**CONDITION**

<i>Land cover change:</i>	<b>localised</b>
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	<b>mature or young</b>
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	<b>fragmented</b>
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	<b>good</b>
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	<b>interrupted</b>
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	<b>moderate</b>
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	<b>moderate</b>

**STRENGTH OF CHARACTER**

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	<b>apparent</b>
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	<b>apparent</b>
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	<b>interrupted</b>
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	<b>locally visible</b>
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	<b>contained</b>
<i>Visual unity:</i>	<b>incoherent</b>
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	<b>frequent</b>

<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	<b>MODERATE</b>	Improve and reinforce	<b>Improve and conserve</b>	Conserve and restore
	<b>POOR</b>	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		<b>WEAK</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>STRONG</b>
<b>STRENGTH OF CHARACTER</b>				

### STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

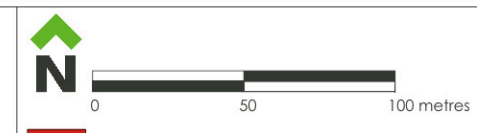
- support the Watling Chase Community Forest in the realisation of its objectives for the area
- promote the appropriate management of ancient woodland, including Knights Wood, in order to maintain a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest, coppice and coppice-with-standards
- use ancient hedge and field boundaries to identify the most appropriate location for woodland restoration and expansion
- promote new woodland planting to maintain and improve visual separation from the adjacent urban uses and transport corridors, including A414 and A1(M). Scale of planting to typically comprise small woods, copses and shelterbelts
- encourage effective landscape management along transport corridors to ensure thinning, selective felling and replanting is undertaken to achieve a varied age structure and locally indigenous species
- reduce the visual impact of adjacent built areas, e.g. Smallford
- improve public access and signing to areas of interest including the Alban Way (Smallford Trail) and Smallford gravel pits. Provide stopping places along the Alban Way for sitting and picnicking
- encourage maintenance of the existing pattern and scale of hedgerows and field trees that provide enclosure
- promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries where possible
- encourage planting of new hedges adjacent to rights of way
- support the retention and management of heath habitats including Colney Heath. Encourage opportunities of extending this habitat
- develop appropriate management strategies to maintain and improve the mosaic of wildlife habitats areas including wetland and semi-improved grassland, in association with former mineral extraction sites. Include the continued use of grazing and management by wildlife organisations
- promote the creation of valuable new nature conservation sites, the restoration of degraded sites associated with mineral extraction and addressing areas of fly-tipping
- 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
- encourage the restoration of ditches and discourage the enclosure of existing open drainage systems
- provide new uncropped or grass field margins to link areas of wildlife importance and/or existing and proposed rights of way
- promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention/enhancement of existing ponds for wildlife
- where ancient lanes and their associated hedgerows fall within or abut a proposed development ensure that developers retain, protect, enhance and integrate such features into the new development with due regard to their historic, ecological and landscape value
- where hedgerow removal is deemed to be unavoidable, replacement planting should use locally native species of local provenance to maintain local distinctiveness



- From Tyttenhanger towards St Albans (J. Billingsley)

## **Appendix G**

### Development Framework Plan



- Site Boundary: 7.82ha
- Developable Area**
- Proposed residential area: 3.75ha (Up to 150 dwellings @ 40 dph)
- Movement & Circulation**
- Proposed primary vehicular access point
- Proposed spine street through the development
- Proposed secondary streets
- Proposed lanes and private drives
- Recreational routes and Trim-Trail Stations
- Mown paths
- Potential pedestrian links
- Public Rights of Way
- Green & Blue Infrastructure**
- Public open space to serve the new development
- Avenue street tree planting
- Proposed new boundary hedgerow planting
- Proposed play provision for children and young people
- Proposed sustainable drainage basins and swales (SuDS)
- Existing vegetation
- Potential seating/picnic area
- Proposed location for pumping station and 15m cordon sanitaire
- Surrounding Context**
- Existing waterbodies and water courses
- Listed Buildings
- Colney Heath Local Nature Reserve
- Existing bus route and bus stops

Rev	Date	By	Description
A	16/06/2022	KP	Pumping station added, landscaping within LWS amended

**CSA**  
environmental

Dixies Barns, High Street,  
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

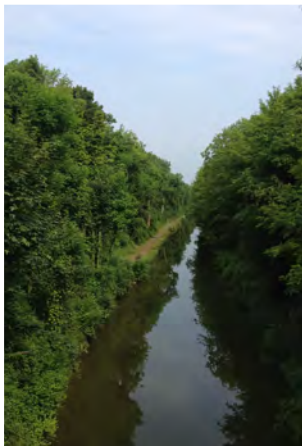
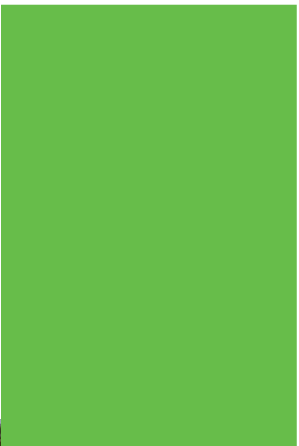
t 01462 743647  
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk  
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

<b>Project</b>	Land at Tollgate Road <b>COLNEY HEATH</b>
<b>Title</b>	Concept Masterplan
<b>Client</b>	Vistry Group
<b>Scale</b>	1:2500 @ A3
<b>Date</b>	June 2022
<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/3925/117
<b>Drawn</b>	KP
<b>Checked</b>	JC
<b>Rev</b>	A



## **Appendix H**

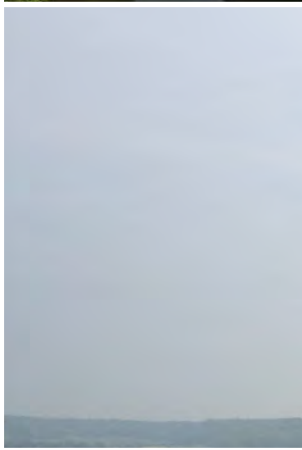
Extract from Green Belt Review Purposes Assessment 2013



**GREEN BELT REVIEW PURPOSES ASSESSMENT**  
(Prepared for Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council)

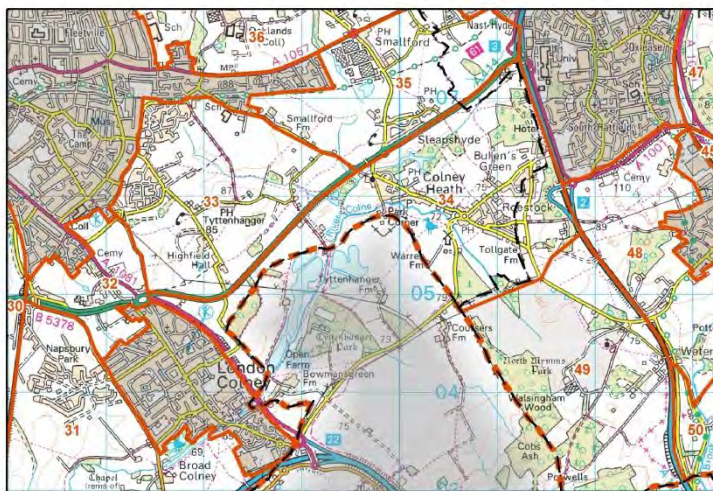
**Annex 1 – Parcel Assessment Sheets for St Albans City and District Council**

November 2013



## GB34 –Green Belt Land between Hatfield and London Colney

**Description** The parcel is located to the southwest of Hatfield and the northeast of London Colney. The boundary to the north follows the North Orbital A414 to the south follows Coursers Road. It is 419 ha in size and comprises the broad and shallow basin of the meandering upper River Colne.



**Land use** Predominantly arable farmland and heathland. It includes significant areas of water in lakes created by sand and gravel working and some blocks of woodland.

Colney Heath and Bullens End narrow local gap



View to north shows strong rural and open characteristics



## Principal Function / Summary

Significant contribution towards safeguarding the countryside and maintaining the existing settlement pattern (providing gap between Hatfield and London Colney). Partial contribution towards preventing merging (of St Albans and Hatfield) and preserving the setting of London Colney, Sleepshyde and Tyttenhanger Park. Overall the parcel contributes significantly towards 2 of the 5 Green Belt purposes.

<b>GB34 – Green Belt Purposes Assessment</b>		<b>Contribution</b>
<b>To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</b>		<b>LIMITED / NO</b>
The parcel is located away from large built-up areas of London, Luton and Dunstable and Stevenage. It does not form a connection with a wider network of parcels to restrict sprawl.		
<b>To prevent neighbouring towns from merging</b>		<b>PARTIAL</b>
The parcel does not fully separate neighbouring 1 <sup>st</sup> tier settlements. However it contributes with GB33, 35 and 36 towards the strategic gap between St Albans and Hatfield. As a whole, the gap contains some built development and ribbon development associated to 3 <sup>rd</sup> tier settlements in the Green Belt. Overall, any minor reduction in the gap would be unlikely compromise the separation of 1 <sup>st</sup> tier settlements in physical or visual terms, or overall visual openness.		
<b>To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</b>		<b>SIGNIFICANT</b>
The parcel displays typical rural and countryside characteristics, especially to the south, in medium sized arable fields with hedgerow boundaries, sheep pasture and substantial riverine wetland habitats along the Colne, and areas of heath and semi natural grassland which are locally important at Colney Heath. Tyttenhanger Park and Hall is located to the south. There is evidence of linear built development in the north part of the parcel which contains Colney Heath and Bullens Green. The A1(M) is also a major urban influence which is audibly intrusive. Levels of openness are generally high especially to the south due to an absence of built development.		
<b>To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</b>		<b>PARTIAL</b>
The parcel adjoins London Colney and Sleafshyde conservation areas however visual connection or views are limited by local routes and wooded areas. Tyttenhanger Park the setting of the Hall is encircled by sand and gravel working and mounds of overburden and spoil, with associated conveyor belts and plant at present but future restoration should remedy this impact in countryside character..		
<b>To maintain existing settlement pattern</b>		<b>SIGNIFICANT</b>
<p>The parcel provides a range of gaps. It provides the primary local gap between Hatfield (1<sup>st</sup>) and London Colney (2<sup>nd</sup>) and contributes with parcels GB33 to GB36 and GB43B to the overall gap with St Albans. The gap is large at 4.3km but contains ribbon development at Colney Heath (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Bullens End (3<sup>rd</sup>). The gap to the south to Colney Heath is 2.6km and well maintained (relatively free of development) however the gap to the north is more built up and narrower at 1.7km.</p> <p>Therefore any reduction in the gaps would compromise the separation of settlements in physical and visual terms to the north, and local levels of visual openness. A minor reduction to the south would lead to a less significant impact.</p>		

### **Level of openness and countryside character**

**Existence of built development** The level of built development is low at 1.0%. Some ribbon development has taken place especially around villages to the north and east of the parcel.

**Visual Openness** The parcel is generally open to the north and more enclosed to the south where it is more wooded although there are some extensive panoramas over arable fields towards the Shenley ridge to the south.

**Countryside Character** Riverine character with many sites subject to past gravel working now restored to pasture, lakes or water meadow along the Colne. Well wooded to the south.

## **Appendix I**

Methodology and Summary Landscape and Visual Effects

## METHODOLOGY FOR LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- M1 In landscape and visual impact assessment, a distinction is normally drawn between **landscape/townscape effects** (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape (or townscape), irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and **visual effects** (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape, principally from public rights of way and areas with public access, but also private views from residential properties). Thus, a development may have extensive landscape effects but few visual effects if, for example, there are no properties or public viewpoints nearby. Or alternatively, few landscape effects but substantial visual effects if, for example, the landscape is already degraded or the development is not out of character with it, but can clearly be seen from many residential properties and/or public areas.
- M2 The assessment of landscape & visual effects is less amenable to scientific or statistical analysis than some environmental topics and inherently contains an element of subjectivity. However, the assessment should still be undertaken in a logical, consistent and rigorous manner, based on experience and judgement, and any conclusions should be able to demonstrate a clear rationale. To this end, various guidelines have been published, the most relevant of which, for assessments of the effects of a development, rather than of the character or quality of the landscape itself, form the basis of the assessment and are as follows:
- 'Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment', produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Institute (GLVIA 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2013); and
  - 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', October 2014 (Christine Tudor, Natural England) to which reference is also made. This stresses the need for a holistic assessment of landscape character, including physical, biological and social factors.

### LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

- M3 Landscape/townscape quality is a subjective judgement based on the condition and characteristics of a landscape/townscape. It will often be informed by national, regional or local designations made upon it in respect of its quality e.g. AONB. Sensitivity relates to the inherent value placed on a landscape / townscape and the ability of that landscape/townscape to accommodate change.

Landscape sensitivity can vary with:

- (i) *existing land uses;*
- (ii) *the pattern and scale of the landscape;*
- (iii) *visual enclosure/openness of views, and distribution of visual receptors;*
- (iv) *susceptibility to change;*
- (v) *the scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape; and*
- (vi) *the condition and value placed on the landscape.*

- M4 The concept of landscape/townscape value is considered in order to avoid consideration only of how scenically attractive an area may be, and thus to avoid undervaluing areas of strong character but little scenic beauty. In the process of

making this assessment, the following factors, among others, are considered with relevance to the site in question: landscape quality (condition), scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreation value, perceptual aspects and associations.

- M5 Nationally valued landscapes are recognised by designation, such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty ('AONB') which have particular planning policies applied to them. Nationally valued townscapes are typically those covered by a Conservation Area or similar designation. Paragraph 170 of the current NPPF outlines that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes '*...in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*'.
- M6 There is a strong inter-relationship between landscape/townscape quality, value and sensitivity as high quality/value landscapes/townscapes usually have a low ability to accommodate change.
- M7 For the purpose of our assessment, landscape/townscape quality, value and sensitivity is assessed using the criteria in Tables LE1 and LE2. Typically, landscapes/townscapes which carry a quality designation and which are otherwise attractive or unspoilt will in general be more sensitive, while those which are less attractive or already affected by significant visual detractors and disturbance will be generally less sensitive.
- M8 The magnitude of change is the scale, extent and duration of change to a landscape arising from the proposed development and was assessed using the criteria in Table LE3.
- M9 Landscape/townscape effects were assessed in terms of the interaction between the magnitude of the change brought about by the development and the quality, value & sensitivity of the landscape resource affected. The landscape/townscape effects can be either beneficial, adverse or neutral. Landscape effects can be direct (i.e. impact on physical features, e.g. landform, vegetation, watercourses etc.), or indirect (i.e. impact on landscape character as a result of the introduction of new elements within the landscape). Direct visual effects result from changes to existing views.
- M10 In this way, landscapes/townscapes of the highest sensitivity, when subjected to a high magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to give rise to 'substantial' landscape/townscape effects which can be either adverse or beneficial. Conversely, landscapes of low sensitivity, when subjected to a low magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to give rise to only 'slight' or neutral landscape effects. Beneficial landscape effects may arise from such things as the creation of new landscape features, changes to management practices and improved public access. For the purpose of this assessment the landscape/townscape effects have been judged at completion of the development and in year 15. This approach acknowledges that landscape/townscape effects can reduce as new planting/mitigation measures become established and achieve their intended objectives.

#### **VISUAL EFFECTS**

- M11 Visual effects are concerned with people's views of the landscape/townscape and the change that will occur. Like landscape effects, viewers or receptors are categorised by their sensitivity. For example, views from private dwellings are generally of a higher sensitivity than those from places of work.

- M12 In describing the content of a view the following terms are used:
- No view - no views of the development;
  - Glimpse - a fleeting or distant view of the development, often in the context of wider views of the landscape;
  - Partial - a clear view of part of the development only;
  - Filtered - views to the development which are partially screened, usually by intervening vegetation - the degree of filtering may change with the seasons;
  - Open - a clear view to the development.
- M13 The sensitivity of the receptor varies according to its susceptibility to a particular type of change, or the value placed on it (e.g. views from a recognised beauty spot will have a greater sensitivity). Visual sensitivity was assessed using the criteria in Table VE1.
- M14 The magnitude of change is the degree in which the view(s) may be altered as a result of the proposed development and will generally decrease with distance from its source, until a point is reached where there is no discernible change. The magnitude of change in regard to the views was assessed using the criteria in Table VE2.
- M15 Visual effects were then assessed in terms of the interaction between the magnitude of the change brought about by the development and also the sensitivity of the visual receptor affected.
- M16 As with landscape effects, a high sensitivity receptor, when subjected to a high magnitude of change from the proposed development, is likely to experience 'substantial' visual effects which can be either adverse or beneficial. Conversely, receptors of low sensitivity, when subjected to a slight magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to experience only 'slight' or neutral visual effects, which can be either beneficial or adverse.
- M17 Unless specific slab levels of buildings have been specified, the assessment has assumed that slab levels will be within 750mm of existing ground level.

#### **MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS**

- M18 Mitigation measures are described as those measures, including any process or activity, designed to avoid, reduce and compensate for adverse landscape and/or visual effects resulting from the proposed development.
- M19 In situations where proposed mitigation measures are likely to change over time, as with planting to screen a development, it is important to make a distinction between any likely effects that will arise in the short-term and those that will occur in the long-term or 'residual effects' once mitigation measures have established. In this assessment, the visual effects of the development have been considered at completion of the entire project and at 15 years thereafter.
- M20 Mitigation measures can have a residual, positive impact on the effects arising from a development, whereas the short-term impact may be adverse.

#### **ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS**

- M21 The assessment concisely considers and describes the main landscape/townscape and visual effects resulting from the proposed development. The narrative text demonstrates the reasoning behind judgements concerning the landscape and visual effects of the proposals. Where appropriate, the text is supported by tables



which summarise the sensitivity of the views/landscape/townscape, the magnitude of change and describe any resulting effects.

### **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

- M22 Cumulative effects are *'the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together.'*
- M23 In carrying out landscape assessment it is for the author to form a judgement on whether or not it is necessary to consider any planned developments and to form a judgement on how these could potentially affect a project.

### **ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)**

- M24 A ZTV map can help to determine the potential visibility of the site and identify those locations where development at the site is likely to be most visible from the surrounding area. Where a ZTV is considered appropriate for a proposed development the following methodology is used.
- M25 The process is in two stages, and for each, a digital terrain model ('DTM') using Key TERRA-FIRMA computer software is produced and mapped onto an OS map. The DTM is based on Ordnance Survey Landform Profile tiles, providing a digital record of existing landform across the UK, based on a 10 metre grid. There is the potential for minor discrepancies between the DTM and the actual landform where there are topographic features that are too small to be picked up by the 10 metre grid. A judgement will be made to determine the extent of the study area based on the specific site and the nature of the proposed change, and the reasons for the choice will be set out in the report. The study area will be determined by local topography but is typically set at 7.5km.
- M26 Different heights are then assigned to significant features, primarily buildings and woodland, thus producing the first stage of an 'existing' ZTV illustrating the current situation of the site and surrounding area. This data is derived from OS Open Map Data, and verified during the fieldwork, with any significant discrepancies in the data being noted and the map adjusted accordingly. Fieldwork is confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, the highway network and other publicly accessible areas.
- M27 The second stage is to produce a 'proposed' ZTV with the same base as the 'existing' ZTV. The proposed development is introduced into the model as either a representative spot height, or a series of heights, and a viewer height of 1.7m is used. Illustrating the visual envelope of the proposed development within the specific site.
- M28 The model is based on available data and fieldwork and therefore may not take into account all development or woodland throughout the study area, nor the effect of smaller scale planting or hedgerows. It also does not take into account areas of recent or continuous topographic change from, for instance, mining operations.

### **VISUALISATION TYPE METHODOLOGY**

- M29 The photographs and visualisations within this report have been prepared in general conformance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19. The 'types', as set out within the Guidance, comprise the following:
- Type 1 - annotated viewpoint photographs;
  - Type 2 - 3D wireline / model;
  - Type 3 - photomontage / photowire;
  - Type 4 - photomontage / photowire (survey / scale verifiable).

- M30 Photographs were taken with a digital camera with a lens that approximates to 50mm, to give a similar depth of view to the human eye. In some cases images have been joined together to form a panorama. The prevailing weather and atmospheric conditions, and any effects on visibility are noted. Images are displayed at the most appropriate size, taking into account the published guidance, legibility at A3 paper size, and context (which is often shown for illustrative purposes only), and allows for enlarged scale printing if required.
- M31 The Guidance Note advocates a proportionate and reasonable approach, which includes professional judgement, in order to aid informed decision making.
- M32 The determination of the suitable Visualisation Type to aid in illustrating the effects of the scheme, has been determined by a range of factors as set out below, including the timing of the project, the technical expertise, and costs involved.
- M33 Where it is deemed suitable or necessary to utilise the Visualisation Types set out within the Guidance Note, the table below has been used to determine which Visualisation Type is most appropriate to the project, unless otherwise specified within the report.
- M34 The table below (based on Table 1 within the Guidance Note) sets out the intended purpose and user of the report, and the Likely Level of Effect. The Likely Level of Effect is based on Tables LE4 and VE3 in this methodology, and takes into consideration the type and nature of the proposed development, as well as the sensitivity of the host environment and key visual receptors. The Likely Level of Effect is based on an initial consideration of the landscape and visual effects of the project as a whole, and the subsequent assessment may conclude a lesser or higher level of overall effect, once completed. Table VMT also provides an indication as to the appropriate Visualisation Type, noting that it is not a fixed interpretation and that professional judgement should always be applied.
- M35 Additional photographs (which do not conform to any Type) may be included to illustrate the character of the landscape/townscape, or to illustrate relevant characteristics, for example the degree and nature of intervening vegetation, or reciprocal views from residential properties.

<b>Table VTM</b>		<b>VISUALISATION TYPE METHODOLOGY</b>				
		<b>Type 1</b>	<b>Type 2</b>	<b>Type 3</b>	<b>Type 4</b>	
<b>User, Purpose, and Likely Level of Effect</b>	<b>A</b>	Evidence submitted to most Public Inquiries, most planning applications for EIA development accompanied by Landscape and Visual ES Chapters.				
		Neutral	Negligible	Slight	Moderate	Substantial
	<b>B</b>	Planning applications for most non-EIA development accompanied by LVIA/LVA, where there are concerns about landscape and visual effects and effective mitigation may be required. Some Landscape and Visual ES Chapters.				
		Neutral	Negligible	Slight	Moderate	Substantial
<b>C</b>	Planning applications where the character and appearance of the development is a material consideration, but where a LVIA/LVA may not be required.					
	Neutral/Negligible/Slight		Moderate	Substantial		
<b>D</b>	To inform the iterative process of assessment and design with client, and/or pre-application consultations with the competent authority.					
	Neutral/Negligible/Slight/Moderate			Substantial		

Table LE 1

LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE QUALITY AND VALUE

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Description of Landscape/Townscape Quality and Value	<p><b>Landscape Quality:</b> Intact and very attractive landscape which may be nationally recognised/designated for its scenic beauty. e.g. National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or World Heritage Site.</p> <p><b>Townscape Quality:</b> A townscape of very high quality which is unique in its character, and recognised nationally/internationally, e.g. World Heritage Site</p> <p><b>Value:</b> Very high quality landscape or townscape with Statutory Designation for landscape/townscape quality/ value, e.g. National Park, World Heritage Site, Registered Park or Garden. Contains rare elements or significant cultural/historical associations.</p>	<p><b>Landscape Quality:</b> A landscape, usually combining varied topography, historic features and few visual detractors. A landscape known and cherished by many people from across the region. e.g. County Landscape Site such as a Special Landscape Area.</p> <p><b>Townscape Quality:</b> A well designed townscape of high quality with a locally recognised and distinctive character e.g. Conservation Area</p> <p><b>Value:</b> High quality landscape/townscape or lower quality landscape with un-fettered public access, (e.g. commons, public park) or with strong cultural associations. May have important views out to landmarks/designated landscapes and few detracting features. May possess perceptual qualities of tranquility or wildness.</p>	<p><b>Landscape Quality:</b> Non-designated landscape area, generally pleasant but with no distinctive features, often displaying relatively ordinary characteristics. May have detracting features.</p> <p><b>Townscape Quality:</b> A typical, pleasant townscape with a coherent urban form but with no distinguishing features or designation for quality.</p> <p><b>Value:</b> An ordinary landscape/townscape of local value which may have some detracting features. No recognised statutory designations for landscape/townscape quality. A landscape which may have limited public access and/ or have pleasant views out, or be visible in public views.</p>	<p><b>Landscape / Townscape Quality:</b> Unattractive or degraded landscape/townscape, affected by numerous detracting elements e.g. industrial areas, infrastructure routes and un-restored mineral extractions.</p> <p><b>Value:</b> Landscape/townscape generally of lower quality. A landscape with limited public access, no designations or recognised cultural significance. Limited public views.</p>

Table LE 2

LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE SENSITIVITY

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Description of Sensitivity	<p>A landscape/townscape with a very low ability to accommodate change such as a nationally designated landscape.</p> <p>A landscape/townscape with limited ability to accommodate change because such change may lead to some loss of valuable features or elements. Development of the type proposed could potentially be discordant with the character of the landscape/townscape.</p> <p>A landscape/townscape with reasonable ability to accommodate change. Change may lead to a limited loss of some features or characteristics. Development of the type proposed would not be discordant with the character of the landscape/townscape.</p> <p>A landscape/townscape with good ability to accommodate change. Change would not lead to a significant loss of features or characteristics, and there would be no significant loss of character or quality. Development of the type proposed would not be discordant with the landscape/townscape in which it is set and may result in a beneficial change.</p>			

**Table LE 3 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE**

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
<b>Description of the Change predicted</b>	Total loss of or significant impact on key characteristics, features or elements				
		Partial loss of or impact on key characteristics, features or elements			
			Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements		
				Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements	
					No loss or alteration of key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements

**Table LE 4 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS**

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
<b>Description of the Effect</b>	The proposals will alter the landscape/ townscape in that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will result in substantial change in the character, landform, scale and pattern of the landscape/townscape;</li> <li>• are visually intrusive and would disrupt important views;</li> <li>• are likely to impact on the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting;</li> <li>• will impact a high quality or highly vulnerable landscape;</li> <li>• cannot be adequately mitigated.</li> </ul>				
		The proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• noticeably change the character, scale and pattern of the landscape/townscape;</li> <li>• may have some impacts on a landscape/townscape of recognised quality or on vulnerable and important characteristic features or elements.</li> <li>• are a noticeable element in key views;</li> <li>• not possible to fully mitigate.</li> </ul>			
			The proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do not quite fit the landform and scale of the landscape/townscape and will result in relatively minor changes to existing landscape character;</li> <li>• will impact on certain views into and across the area;</li> <li>• mitigation will reduce the impact of the proposals but some minor residual effects will remain.</li> </ul>		
				The proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape/townscape;</li> <li>• development may occupy only a relatively small part of the Site;</li> <li>• maintain the majority of landscape features;</li> <li>• incorporates measures for mitigation to ensure the scheme will blend in well with the landscape/townscape and mitigates any loss of vegetation.</li> </ul>	
					The proposals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain existing landscape/townscape character;</li> <li>• has no impact on landscape features, such as trees, hedgerows, watercourses, etc.;</li> <li>• utilises a highly degraded landscape or brownfield site.</li> </ul>

**Footnote:**

1. Each level (other than neutral) of change identified can be either regarded as 'beneficial' or 'adverse'. The above table relates to adverse landscape effects, however where proposals complement or enhance landscape character, these will have a comparable range of beneficial landscape effects.

Table VE 1

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

	High	Medium	Low
Description of the Receptor	<p>Residential properties with predominantly open views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from ground and first floors and from two or more windows of rooms mainly in use during the day.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way in sensitive or generally unspoilt areas.</p> <p>Predominantly non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside.</p> <p>Views from within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Park, World Heritage Site or Conservation Area and views for visitors to recognised viewpoints or beauty spots.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside - e.g. Country Parks, National Trust or other access land etc.</p>	<p>Residential properties with partial views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from first floor windows only, or an oblique view from one ground floor window, or may be partially obscured by garden or other intervening vegetation.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views or where the purpose of that recreation is incidental to the view e.g. sports fields.</p> <p>Schools and other institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas.</p> <p>Users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside, whether motorised or not.</p>	<p>People in their place of work.</p> <p>Users of main roads or passengers in public transport on main routes.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views and where the purpose of that recreation is unrelated to the view e.g. go-karting track.</p>

## LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

Direct effects on landscape features	Quality & Sensitivity	Existing Conditions	Impact and Mitigation	Magnitude of Change	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 15
<b>Trees and hedgerows</b>	Medium	The Site is bound by a range of managed hedgerows, with a remnant internal gappy hedgerow. The eastern boundary comprises an outgrown hedgerow. There are some scattered hedgerow trees.	Sections of hedgerow along the house's boundary will require removal, in order to facilitate access and to rationalise the layout of the proposed development. The remnant hedgerows along the north western and south eastern boundaries are proposed to be retained and strengthened with new native hedgerow, thicket and tree planting. The remnant sections of hedgerow separating the two paddocks will be retained where possible, and enhanced with new native planting. The Development Framework Plan shows how new tree and thicket planting can be incorporated within the areas of open space within the development, to mitigate for the losses associated with the access point.	Moderate	Negligible beneficial	Moderate beneficial
<b>Public footpaths and public access</b>	n/a	There is no public access to the Site, and no public rights of way cross it.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Land Use (paddocks, stables, and residential property)</b>	Medium to low	The Site comprises two fields of horse paddocks, comprising a smaller western and a larger eastern field, as well as the house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road. Within the north of the Site in the eastern field is a linear stable block and a manège, with associated storage containers and trailers. The property at No. 42 comprises a detached, 2 storey house, with a detached single garage and several outbuildings, with a deep rear garden located west of the house.	The house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road, as well as the stables and associated facilities/storage areas, will be demolished. The paddocks will be lost and will become a new residential development with associated open space.	Substantial	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Indirect effects on landscape / townscape character	Quality & Sensitivity	Existing Conditions	Impact and Mitigation	Magnitude of Change	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 15
<b>Landscape character the Site</b>	Medium to Low	The Site does not carry any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape or heritage value or quality. It comprises horse paddocks, which are ordinary in character. The	The horse paddocks, stables and associated paraphernalia, and the house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road, will be lost/demolished, and replaced with a new residential	Substantial	Moderate adverse	Slight adverse as the proposed vegetation

		<p>house and garden at No. 42 date from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and are not of particular architecture value or interest. There is no structural landscape features on the Site of value, with only small lengths of remnant hedgerow remaining. The Site has an edge-of-settlement character due to the stables and paddocks, as well as the clearly evident residential development adjacent and in the near vicinity of the Site.</p> <p>It is not of particular scenic value. There is no public access to the Site, although there are some views of it from the adjoining public footpath to the north west. The Site is not a rare landscape type, nor can it be described as wild or tranquil. No elements on the Site have been identified as being particularly important examples of landscape features or characteristics. The western part of the Site lies within the Local Wildlife Site. There are no known associations with the Site which would elevate its value. Overall, the Site is assessed as being of medium landscape value.</p>	<p>development, including housing and open space. Large new areas of public open space, including new native planting, will be provided as part of the development, as well as new children's play area. While the effects on the landscape character of the Site have been assessed as being adverse (due to the loss of the open character of the Site), this does not mean that the development will be unattractive. In fact, the new homes, streets and open spaces will be designed to be beautiful, as set out within the Design and Access Statement and as required by the NPPF. The homes will be designed to reflect the high quality elements of the local vernacular, and the development will be well-landscaped.</p> <p>New recreational facilities will be provided on the Site, and the new landscaping will be designed to create habitat and provide wildlife benefit, whilst also creating an attractive environment.</p>			matures and the homes become assimilated into the surrounding landscape/townscape
<b>Landscape/ Townscape character of immediate surroundings</b>	Medium	<p>The houses which back onto the Site to the north east are also ordinary in character, with most separated from the Site by their long rear gardens. The adjoining paddocks to the north and south of the Site are not of particular landscape quality, with the character of the paddock to the north similar to that at the Site, and the landscape south of the Site is of higher quality than that to the north. The woodland and river west of the Site are attractive landscape features, with the floodplain, including that within the Site, designated as a Local Wildlife Site.</p>	<p>Given the Site's edge-of-settlement character (which extends to the fields to the north and south of the Site as well), alongside the settled character clearly evident alongside the Site and on Tollgate Road and Coursers Road in the immediate vicinity, the proposed development at the Site will not appear out of character, and will be well related to the adjoining settlement.</p>	Slight	Moderate adverse	Slight adverse
<b>Wider Landscape Character</b>	Medium	<p>The landscape around Colney Heath includes higher quality elements,</p>	<p>The development will remain separated from the more rural</p>	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Neutral as the



		such as the Common and the landscape at North Mymms. However, it is also influenced by the mineral workings, the A1(M), and suffers from fly-tipping. Many paddocks and single modern properties on large grounds, affect the rural character of the wider area. Colney Heath is ordinary in townscape character.	countryside around Colney Heath, by the intervening development to the north and east, by the woodland to the west, and by the paddocks to the south (with these paddocks also displaying a character more akin to the edge of a settlement, than to the rural countryside). Views from the wider area will also be very limited.			proposed vegetation matures and the homes become assimilated into the surrounding landscape/ townscape
<b>Heritage Assets e.g. Registered Park and Garden, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments &amp; Listed Buildings</b>	High	The farmhouse and barn to the north at Colney Heath Farm, are both Grade II Listed, as is the Queen's Head Public House and two London Coal Duty markers to the north of the farm.	A full assessment of the effects on heritage assets is contained in the Heritage Assessment which is submitted with the application. The proposed development will remain separated from the Listed Buildings to the north by the intervening paddock, and the new vegetation along the north west of the Site will create a firm edge to the development, clearly separating it from the Listed Buildings to the north. The new homes will also be located adjacent to existing modern development, with the heritage assets to the north similarly located adjacent to modern development.	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse
<b>Other Effects</b>						
<b>Cumulative impacts</b>	<p>The land at Roundhouse Farm, off Bullens Green Lane in Colney Heath, on the south eastern side of the settlement, has planning permission for up to 100 dwellings and associated infrastructure (application reference: 5/2020/1992/LSM). Similarly to the Site, this land has a clear edge-of-settlement character, and development at this site will be very well related to the existing settlement at Colney Heath. That site also benefits from strong, defensible boundaries.</p> <p>It is unlikely that there will be views in which both developments are visible together, however, even if there were, the new homes on both sites will be seen within the context of the existing settlement, and will not appear out of character. Sequential views are most likely from Fellowes Lane, which is already a residential street. Again, development on both sites will be seen within the context of the existing settlement, and will not appear out of character.</p> <p>Development on both sites will increase the settlement size materially. Nevertheless, both developments are very well related to the existing settlement form, and both are well contained by defensible boundaries, from the wider rural landscape beyond. While there will be material change to the character of Colney Heath, there will be no material effects to the character of the wider countryside.</p>					
<b>Lighting</b>	The Site is currently unlit, except for the house at No. 42 Tollgate Road. The residential area to the immediate north east of the Site has background lighting from properties. Tollgate Road north and east of the Site is lit, as is a section of Coursers Road north of Colney Heath Farm. The paddocks north and south of the Site, as well as the woodland to the west, are unlit. The proposal is for a medium density residential development with associated lighting. The development is not anticipated to give rise to any abnormal night time effects and will result in a moderate increase in background lighting levels which will be seen in the context of existing lighting within the adjoining residential area.					

**Construction Phase**

There will be temporary landscape and visual effects arising from the construction phase of the scheme. These will include, amongst other things, stock piling of materials, temporary hoardings/fencing and vehicle and plant movements, both on Site and on the surrounding road network. It is not anticipated that the scheme will give rise to any abnormal landscape or visual effects above those that would be expected from a development of this nature. It is anticipated that the extent and timing of these effects will be controlled through a Construction Management Plan.

## VISUAL EFFECTS

Views	Sensitivity	Existing Conditions	Proposals and mitigation	Magnitude of Change	Visual Effect Year 1	Visual Effect Year 15
<b>Near distance views from Tollgate Road (Photographs 1, 13)</b>	Medium	In views from Tollgate Road adjacent to the Site, and for a short section of Fellowes Lane east of the Site, there are views through the field access gate towards the woodland along the river in the west. The Site is seen adjacent to the existing houses to the north east of it, and also adjacent to the grassland field north of the Site. No. 42 Tollgate Road is visible from along Tollgate Road, when near to it. From further north along Tollgate Road, the Site's north western boundary hedge is visible, with the stables partially visible over the top of the hedge. The northern elevation of No. 42 Tollgate Road is partially visible.	The new homes in the north of the Site, as well as the new access, will be visible from Tollgate Road adjacent to the Site. The new homes will be seen adjacent to the existing houses on the road, and will not appear out of character in these views. The tops of the new homes will be visible from further north along Tollgate Road, over the intervening hedgerow along the Site boundary. Additional native tree and thicket planting along this north western boundary will further filter views of these houses as it matures. The new homes will be seen adjacent to the existing houses on Tollgate Road, and will not appear incongruous.	Moderate	Moderate adverse	Slight adverse as the proposed boundary planting matures and the houses become assimilated into the surrounding landscape/ townscape
<b>Fellowes Lane (Photograph 1)</b>	Medium	Views are only available from the northernmost section of Fellowes Lane, in the near vicinity of its junction with Tollgate Road. Views will be similar to those from Tollgate Road adjacent to the Site, as set out above.	From the northernmost section of the road, the new homes in the north of the Site, as well as the new access, will be visible from Tollgate Road adjacent to the Site. The new homes will be seen adjacent to the existing houses on the road, and will not appear out of character in these views.	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse
<b>Coursers Road (Photograph 14)</b>	Medium	Views from Coursers Road to the north are mostly prevented by the intervening built form, although there are filtered views of the Site and the houses adjacent to it, from the bridge along the road where it crosses the river. From sections of Coursers Road west of the Site, the dense woodland and intervening properties prevent most views, although there may be filtered, winter views.	There will be filtered views of the tops of the new homes from the section of Coursers Road to the north, at the bridge over the river. In these views, the new homes will replace the filtered views of the existing houses on Tollgate Road, and will similarly be filtered by the intervening existing and proposed vegetation within the west and north of the Site.	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse
<b>Footbridge over A1(M) (Photograph 19)</b>	Medium	In middle distance views, the Site is just visible through and over the intervening vegetation and built form, from the elevated footbridge which crosses over the A1(M) to the south east of the Site.	There may be middle distance, filtered, winter views of the new homes, from the elevated footbridge over the A1(M), over and through the intervening development. The existing houses on Tollgate Road will similarly be partially visible, and the new homes will be seen adjacent to these.	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse

<b>Middle distance views from Tollgate Road (Photographs 16, 18)</b>	Medium	In middle distance views from Tollgate Road to the south east of the Site, the intervening hedgerow on a low bank alongside Tollgate Road to the south, prevents views towards the Site, although there may be winter views through gaps in the hedge.	The tops of the new homes may be visible in limited, filtered winter views from the middle distance. The new vegetation along the south eastern Site boundary will further filter these views as it matures.	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse
<b>Colney Heath Common (Photograph 15)</b>	High	Views from Colney Heath Common to the north are prevented by the intervening raised embankment along Courses Road, where it crosses the river, as well as the vegetation along this higher ground. Views from the Common to the west are prevented by the intervening woodland.	There may be limited, middle distance, heavily filtered views of the new homes from the Common to the west, during the winter months.	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse
<b>Public footpath 33 (Photographs 3, 4, 5, 7)</b>	Medium to High	In views from public footpath 33 adjacent to the Site, the hedgerow along the north western boundary is visible, although there are framed views into the Site where there are gaps in the hedgerow. The top of the house at No. 42 is partially visible over the intervening hedgerow in places. From further west along this path, from adjacent to the part of this north western boundary which is marked by a fence only, there are views across the Site towards the houses which back onto it to the north east. These views become filtered and then screened once the footpath enters and leads through the woodland over the river. The dense woodland and intervening properties prevent most views from further west, although there may be filtered, winter views from the properties to the west of the woodland, east of Coursers Road, as well as from sections of Coursers Road west of the Site.	The tops of the new homes will be partially visible over the intervening existing and proposed hedgerows, in views from the adjoining public footpath (33). The new homes will be seen in front of the existing houses at Tollgate Road, and the proposed planting within the areas of open space in the west and north of the Site, will filter and/or screen views of the houses as the vegetation matures. There may be heavily filtered, winter views of the new homes from a short section of this footpath further west within the woodland area.	Moderate	Moderate to Substantial adverse	Moderate adverse as the proposed planting matures
<b>Residential Views</b>						
<b>Park Cottages (Photograph 17)</b>	Medium	Views from the houses are largely prevented by intervening vegetation, although there may be partial, middle distance views of the Site during the winter, from the gardens of these properties and from the upper storey of the Grade I Listed North Mymms Park house. There are views towards the Site from the private drive that serves these properties.	There will be filtered views of the new homes, seen against the backdrop of the existing adjoining houses, in private views from the access track to the Park Cottages, as well as from the northernmost extent of the grounds and upper floor windows of the Grade I Listed North Mymms Park country house (with the Listed Building located around 1.4km south of the Site).	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse

<p><b>Houses on Tollgate Road adjacent to the Site (Photographs 7, 8, 9)</b></p>	<p>High</p>	<p>The Site is partially visible in filtered views from the rear gardens and some rear windows of the houses which bound it to the north east, along Tollgate Road. The adjoining house at No. 44 Tollgate Road, has views northwards from its garden, but there are no windows on the house's north-facing façade.</p>	<p>The tops of the new homes within the north east of the Site will be visible from the rear windows and gardens of the houses on Tollgate Road which back onto the Site. These properties have deep rear gardens for the most part, and the new homes will be filtered in views by the existing and proposed garden and boundary vegetation.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Moderate adverse</p>	<p>Moderate adverse</p>
<p><b>Houses along the northern side of Tollgate Road, north of the Site, and along the south of Coursers Road, north of the Site (as seen in photographs 6, 12, 13)</b></p>	<p>Medium to High</p>	<p>The Site's north western boundary hedge is visible, with the stables partially visible over the top of the hedge. The northern elevation of No. 42 Tollgate Road is partially visible. The north westernmost part of the Site will be visible where there is no hedgerow along the boundary, from the first and second floor windows of some of these houses.</p>	<p>The new homes in the north of the Site, as well as the new access, will be visible. The new homes will be seen adjacent to the existing houses on the road, and will not appear out of character in these views. The tops of the new homes will be visible from further north along Tollgate Road, over the intervening hedgerow along the Site boundary. Additional native tree and thicket planting along this north western boundary will further filter views of these houses as it matures. The new homes will be seen adjacent to the existing houses on Tollgate Road, and will not appear incongruous.</p>	<p>Slight</p>	<p>Moderate adverse</p>	<p>Slight adverse as the proposed boundary planting matures and the houses become assimilated into the surrounding landscape/ townscape</p>
<p><b>Seasonal Variation</b></p>						
<p>While the site visit was undertaken in the summer, the appraisal of effects considers winter views, when the development would be at its most visible.</p>						

## **Appendix J**

### Green Belt Assessment Methodology

# GREEN BELT METHODOLOGY

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## Approach

The purpose of this review is to consider the performance of Green Belt land at the Site against the Green Belt purposes identified in the NPPF. The assessment is focused on Green Belt purposes and does not consider other factors which may affect the potential suitability of the site for development, e.g. transport and sustainability.

## Stage 1: Desk Based Assessment

An initial desk-based assessment was undertaken to identify any absolute/primary constraints which would prevent development at the site. Whilst these factors are unrelated to the function or performance of the Green Belt, land in these locations is not considered suitable for housing.

As part of the desk based assessment the following sources of information were consulted:

- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside ('MAGIC') mapping;
- Adopted Local Plan Policies Maps;
- Aerial Photography; and
- Ordnance Survey Mapping.

Absolute constraints are constraints which would preclude development, and are as follows:

- Flood Zone 3;
- National and International Ecological Designations
- Site of Special Scientific Interest;
- Special Protection Area;
- Special Area of Conservation;
- Ancient Woodland;
- Statutory Landscape designations e.g. AONB and National Park;
- Registered Park and Garden; and
- Scheduled Monument.

Primary constraints pose a substantial obstacle to development and these include:

- Non-statutory Ecology Designations;
- Local wildlife Site and Local Nature Reserve;
- Area of publicly accessible open land e.g. country park;
- Presence of strong, permanent existing Green Belt Boundaries – e.g. Major highway infrastructure can present a strong boundary to prevent sprawl and encroachment on the countryside; and
- Local landscape designations.

## Stage 2: Evaluation

The Site and the effect of the proposed development on it were assessed against the national Green Belt purposes using the methodology set out below.

## Assessment Methodology

The NPPF sets out the five purposes for including land within the Green Belt:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The NPPF does not attach a hierarchy to the Green Belt purposes and it is assumed that each purpose is of equal importance. In addition, neither the NPPF nor the National Planning Policy Guidance provides direction on how to assess the performance of Green Belt parcels. The most relevant non-policy guidance in relation to Green belt Assessment is published by the Planning Advisory Service ('PAS', Planning on the Doorstep: the Big Issues – Green Belt [2015]). This methodology has therefore been informed by this guidance, and by past experience and relevant examples.

The following assessment methodology considers the first four Green Belt purposes. The fifth purpose has not been included, as it is considered that if the Green Belt achieves this purpose, then all Green Belt land performs this function to the same extent. This is supported by the PAS guidance, which states that the application of this purpose is unlikely to distinguish differences in contribution to Green Belt.

In order to assess the performance of the Site against each of the four Green Belt Purposes, a five point scale has been used.

<b>Strong Contribution</b>	Land makes a significant contribution to this purpose and should remain in the Green Belt.
<b>Relatively Strong Contribution</b>	Land performs well against this purpose.
<b>Moderate Contribution</b>	Land performs moderately well against this purpose.
<b>Relatively Weak Contribution</b>	Land makes some contribution to this purpose.
<b>Weak / No Contribution</b>	Land makes little or no contribution to this purpose.

### Green Belt Boundaries

An important part of the assessment of the performance of any site in relation to the Green Belt purposes, is consideration of the effectiveness of the existing Green Belt boundaries. The NPPF states that boundaries should be defined 'clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent'.

The following features are considered most likely to fulfil this requirement:

- Major transport infrastructure, motorways, main trunk roads and railways;
- Landscape features including woodland blocks and bands and watercourses; and
- Topography such as ridgelines.

Where these features are absent secondary boundaries could include field hedgerows or minor roads/private roads.

Where Green Belt boundaries follow the rear of existing housing at the periphery of the settlement, these can lack visual containment and result in a poor relationship between the edge of settlement and the adjoining land parcel. Where such situations exist, consideration should be given to whether an improved boundary could be provided through planned expansion.

When considering the performance of a site against the Green Belt purposes, the presence of alternative, durable boundaries can help reduce the perception of sprawl, countryside encroachment and loss of separation. In addition, release of land will typically form part of a planned extension, and consideration should be given to whether new appropriate Green Belt boundaries can be created.



### **Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas**

National Planning Policy does not define what constitutes a large built up area. For the purpose of this methodology large built up areas have been defined with reference to the Local Planning Authorities settlement hierarchy, typically this will include main urban areas and local service centres. Villages or settlements washed over by the Green Belt are not normally included within this definition.

In relation to sprawl, the PAS guidance notes: '...is development that is planned positively through a local plan, and well designed with good masterplanning, sprawl?'

All Green Belt land which adjoins a large built up area plays some role in preventing further expansion of the urban area. The degree to which Green Belt land prevents sprawl however is dependent on the relationship between the Green Belt parcel and the existing urban edge and its containment from the wider countryside. In this sense this purpose is closely related to the third Green Belt purpose. If a land parcel is well contained by logical physical and visual boundaries it will be more effective at preventing sprawl. Locations where land, and existing boundaries play an important role in containing the edge of the settlement, and there are no alternative boundaries which would provide a similar function, make an important contribution to containing sprawl.

In addition, the perception of sprawl can be reduced/mitigated by providing a suitable landscape framework/masterplan. Accordingly, whilst areas may perform this function strongly, there may be scope to accommodate development sensitively which mitigates the perception of sprawl. In addition, in locations where the perception of sprawl is already evident, there may be scope to provide alternative boundaries which provide a more robust edge to the Green Belt.

The following factors are of relevance:

- The degree to which the land parcel is associated with the existing urban area/wider countryside. Parcels which are adjoined on more than one side by urban development, or are indented into the urban edge (infill) are likely to perform weakly against this function. Similarly, landform and landscape features can provide a strong degree of separation between the urban area and/the wider countryside;
- The degree to which the existing Green Belt boundary is well defined and provides containment to the urban area; and
- The presence, or absence of other physical/landscape boundaries which could provide containment to potential urban expansion.

The following table sets out the criteria against which this purpose has been assessed:

<b>Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas</b>	
<b>Strong Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing boundary with urban area well defined by established and robust landscape/physical feature which strongly contains the existing urban area;</li> <li>Little/no relationship with the established pattern of development and strong relationship to the wider countryside;</li> <li>Landform may provide separation between the urban edge and the wider landscape;</li> <li>No logical alternative boundaries which would contain built development;</li> <li>Expansion would result in a substantial intrusion into the wider landscape and would be poorly contained and/or would result in ribbon development.</li> </ul>
<b>Relatively Strong Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing boundary with urban area well defined by established landscape/physical feature which contains the existing urban area;</li> <li>Poor relationship with the established pattern of development and strong relationship to the wider countryside;</li> <li>Landform may provide some separation between the urban edge and the wider countryside;</li> <li>Alternative boundaries which would contain built development are less well defined;</li> <li>Development could result in ribbon development and would be poorly related to the main built-up area;</li> <li>Expansion would result in a significant intrusion into the wider landscape and would be poorly contained.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing boundary with urban area follows a logical landscape/physical feature and provides some containment to the urban area;</li> <li>Some relationship with the established pattern of development which may have a visible presence along one or more sides;</li> <li>Landform plays little role in separating the urban edge and the wider countryside;</li> <li>Alternative boundaries may be present which could provide a redefined edge to the Green Belt, although may require additional strategic landscaping which could be provided as part of a planned extension;</li> <li>Expansion would result in some intrusion on the wider countryside but would be better related to the existing urban area.</li> </ul>
<b>Relatively Weak Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land may be physically and visually related to the existing urban area and be perceived as part of/closely related to it;</li> <li>Existing boundary may be poorly defined and alternative boundaries may exist, or there is an opportunity to create a more robust edge to the urban area;</li> <li>Landform may assist in separating the land parcel from the wider countryside;</li> <li>Expansion in this area would relate to the existing settlement pattern and would have little impact on the perception of sprawl.</li> </ul>
<b>Weak / No Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The land parcel is effectively indented (infill) into the existing urban area and plays little/no role in the countryside setting of the adjoining urban area;</li> <li>It is largely contained by built development and may be perceived as part of the existing settlement envelope;</li> <li>Land parcel is unrelated to an existing urban area and plays no role in preventing sprawl.</li> </ul>

## **Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another**

The NPPF specifically refers to preventing the merging of towns, not the merging of towns with smaller settlements, or the merging of small settlements with each other. Despite this, the methodology recognises the role that Green Belt plays in maintaining the setting and settlement pattern hierarchy within the District / Borough. In addition, the cumulative erosion of the separation of smaller settlements can impact on the perceived separation of larger settlements. This assessment therefore considers the separation between the main urban areas but also their relationship to other smaller settlements of significance.

The nature and size of an existing gap are important considerations in determining the role that a land parcel plays in maintaining separation between settlements. The PAS guidance however states that when assessing this purpose, 'A 'scale rule' approach should be avoided. The identity

of a settlement is not really determined just by the distance to another settlement; the character of the place and of the land between must be taken into account.'

In determining the function that a land parcel plays in maintaining separation between neighbouring settlements the following factors are of relevance:

- Intervisibility between settlements;
- The role of landform and land cover in maintaining separation;
- The effect of development on the transition between settlements; and
- The individual character and setting of the settlements.

The following table sets out the criteria against which this purpose has been assessed:

**Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another**

<b>Strong Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The land parcel occupies the physical gap/or the majority of the gap between the main settlements and any reduction in the existing gap would result in coalescence or the perceived coalescence of these towns.</li> </ul>
<b>Relatively Strong Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development would result in a significant reduction in the physical and visual separation between the settlements;</li> <li>• Development may be readily apparent in views from the adjoining settlement edges and from the approaches along the principle routes between settlements, resulting in a significant reduction in the perceived separation between the settlements;</li> <li>• Development could significantly impact on the separation between a main settlement and a smaller settlement resulting in a noticeable erosion of the separation of main settlements.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land parcel forms part of a wider gap between neighbouring settlements;</li> <li>• Limited intervisibility between settlements, and landform and land cover play some role in maintaining a sense of separation;</li> <li>• Development may encroach on views from sections of the intervening highway network;</li> <li>• Development would result in some reduction in the gap between a main settlements and smaller settlements and there may be a cumulative erosion in the separation between main settlements.</li> </ul>
<b>Relatively Weak Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The land parcel forms part of a wider gap;</li> <li>• Landform and/or land cover prevent intervisibility and would preserve a sense of separation;</li> <li>• May be limited impact on separation with a smaller settlement, but separate identity would remain;</li> <li>• Development in this location would not result in actual or perceived coalescence but there may be some reduction in the physical extent of the gap.</li> </ul>
<b>Weak / No Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The land parcel forms part of a much wider land parcel between settlements and makes little/no contribution to maintaining separation between settlements; or does not lie between two towns/smaller settlements.</li> </ul>

### **Purpose 3: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment**

In respect of safeguarding countryside from encroachment the PAS guidance makes the following statement: "The most useful approach is to look at the difference between urban fringe – land under the influence of the urban area - and open countryside, and to favour the latter in determining which land to try and keep open, taking into account the types of edges and boundaries that can be achieved".

All open land at the edge of settlement plays some role in protecting the countryside from encroachment. In order to assess the role that a land parcel plays in safeguarding countryside it is important to understand the degree to which it displays characteristics of the countryside. This should be distinguished from a judgement about landscape quality/condition which is not a Green Belt consideration.

An assessment of the role of a parcel in meeting this purpose should consider its existing land-use, its relationship to the wider landscape and the degree to which it is influenced by the adjoining urban area.

A planned urban extension on the periphery of a settlement is likely to encroach on the wider

countryside. Any consideration of this purpose should assess the ability of the land parcel to accommodate change and its impact on the wider countryside.

The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- Degree to which a land parcel displays rural characteristics;
- Current land use and does it display urban fringe characteristics;
- Its relationship to the wider rural landscape and the degree to which it forms a component of this landscape;
- Its proximity to built development and the extent to which this influences the character of the land parcel.

A site which has a strong rural character and few visual detractors; forms an integral part of the wider rural landscape; and is visually and physically linked to the wider countryside will perform this purpose strongly. A site which is closely related and influenced by existing development will perform less well. The assessment also takes into account the presence of existing boundary features which would minimise the impact of future growth on the character of the wider countryside.

<b>Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment</b>	
<b>Strong Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site has an un-spoilt rural character with few visual detractors and is visually and physically connected to the wider rural hinterland;</li> <li>• Contains no built development within the site, apart from that of a rural character;</li> <li>• There is an absence of established boundaries which would reduce encroachment on the wider countryside;</li> <li>• The existing urban edge follows a logical and robust boundary which limits the perception of encroachment and provides containment to the urban area.</li> </ul>
<b>Relatively Strong Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The land parcel has a predominately rural character and forms a component of the wider rural landscape;</li> <li>• There is limited development within the site and it is predominately of a rural character;</li> <li>• Physical or visual boundaries are largely absent and development would encroach on the character of the wider landscape;</li> <li>• The existing urban edge is well defined but development maybe visible at the edge of the Green Belt.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a perception of encroachment from the urban edge and the parcel has a semi-rural character;</li> <li>• The area may contain a number of urban fringe land-uses/buildings, however remains largely green field;</li> <li>• Existing landscape/topographic features reduce the link between this area and the wider countryside and provide some visual and physical containment.</li> </ul>
<b>Relatively Weak Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The land parcel is heavily influenced by the adjoining urban edge;</li> <li>• The land is largely urban fringe, and may contain some built development;</li> <li>• The land parcel relates more strongly to the urban area than the wider countryside;</li> <li>• May contain degraded land and there are opportunities for enhancement.</li> </ul>
<b>Weak / No Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land parcel is very closely related to the built edge and is largely divorced from the wider countryside. Land exhibits few rural characteristic and is semi-urban in character.</li> </ul>

#### Purpose 4: To Preserve the Setting and Special Character of Historic Towns

The fourth NPPF purpose is specifically aimed at protected the setting and special character of historic ‘towns’, and does not refer to smaller settlements which may have a historic character. The PAS guidance notes that in reality this purpose will relate to very few settlements, as in most cases there is more recent development between the historic core and the edge of town.

Whilst Green Belt plays a role in protecting the setting of historic towns it also maintains the setting of smaller settlements which have an acknowledged historic character. In most cases these settlements will have a designated historic core which lies within an identified Conservation Area. Although it is not the function of Green Belt to preserve the historic setting of these smaller

settlements, where relevant reference to nearby heritage assets is made within the main report.

The following factors have been taken into consideration:

- Conservation Area Appraisals and guidance;
- Visual relationship between historic core and wider countryside;
- Views to landmark buildings in historic core; and
- Extent to which historic core is contained by built development/extends to edge of the settlement.

<b>Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns</b>	
<b>Strong Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a strong visual/physical relationship between the land parcel and the designated historic asset;</li> <li>• There are views from the historic asset towards the site which would be a visible component within the wider landscape;</li> <li>• The site would be visible in the foreground in key views towards the historic assets from public vantage points;</li> <li>• The land parcel identifies key characteristics identified in a Conservation Area Appraisal which contribute to the landscape setting of the area.</li> </ul>
<b>Relatively Strong Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a visual relationship between the site and the historic asset;</li> <li>• There are some views from the historic asset to the site;</li> <li>• The land parcel contains characteristics identified in a Conservation Area Appraisal which contribute to the landscape setting of the area.</li> <li>• The existing urban edge is well defined but development maybe visible at the edge of the Green Belt.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are some views of parts of the historic asset from the site and from the neighbouring area, but the relationship is interrupted by intervening development;</li> <li>• The site plays a limited role in providing a landscape setting for the historic settlement.</li> </ul>
<b>Relatively Weak Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site is separated from the historic asset by more recent built development and/or there is no visual connection between them;</li> <li>• The historic asset is inward looking and the surrounding landscape makes little contribution to its landscape setting.</li> </ul>
<b>Weak / No Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site is separated from the asset by significant built development, and or there is no visual relationship and the site makes no contribution to the landscape setting of the historic settlement.</li> </ul>



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