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Whitchurch

DESIGN GUIDANCE
AND CODES

FINAL REPORT |
UPDATED MARCH 2022



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Introduction

01



1. Introduction

01

1.1 About this report

The village of Whitchurch has established a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) in order to shape and influence development within their area. The NPSG are currently in the process of preparing their Draft Neighbourhood Plan. Locality is the national membership network for community organisations that brings local people together to produce Neighbourhood Plans. Through Locality's Government-funded support programme, AECOM have been appointed to prepare this Design Code document, which will form part of the evidence base for their Neighbourhood Plan on behalf of Whitchurch Parish Council.

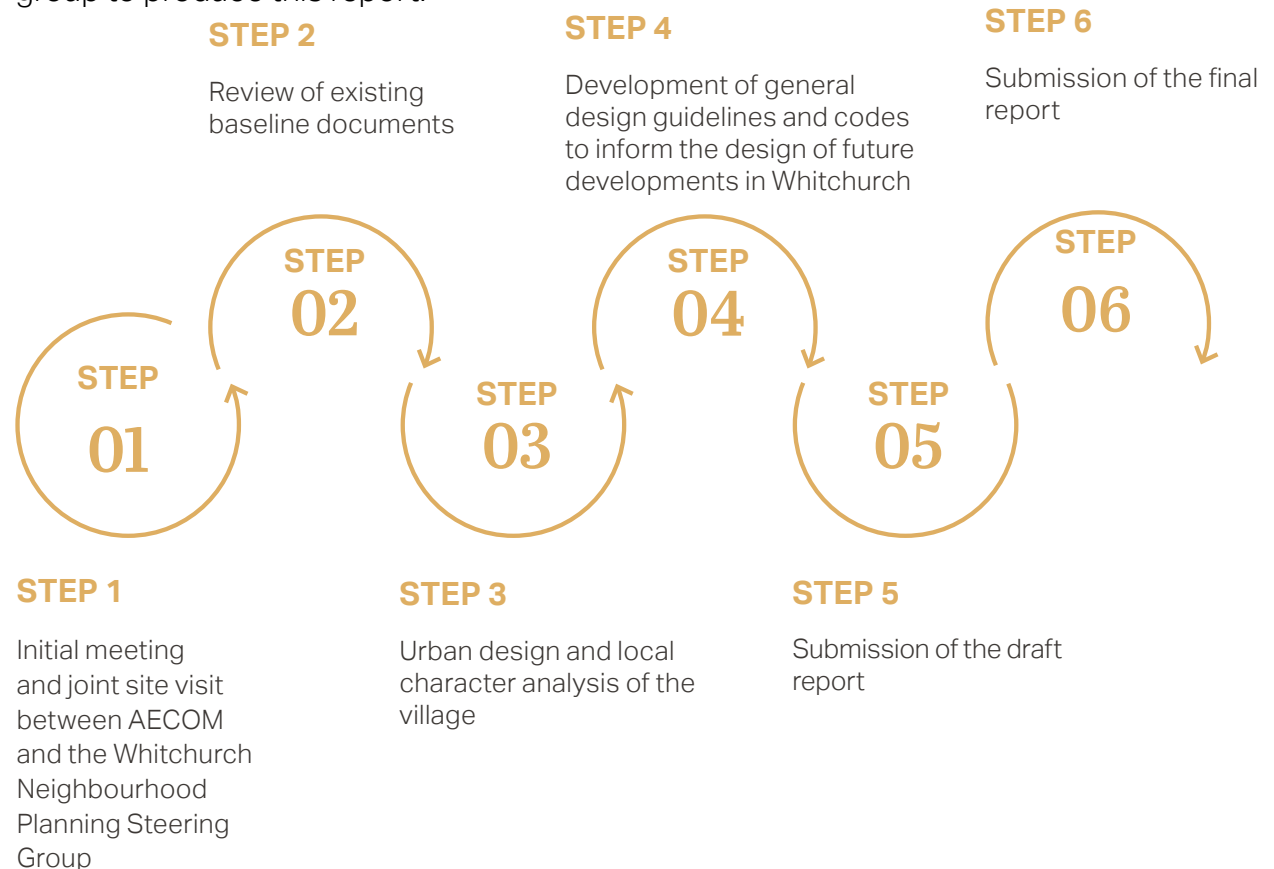
1.2 Aims and objectives

The purpose of this document is to provide an appreciation of Whitchurch Parish's existing character, in order to create a set of design codes which will apply to any future housing development in the village. This will help to ensure that as any new development comes forward, it responds to its context and supports and enhances the quality of the villages' existing character.

AECOM

1.3 Process

Following an inception meeting, AECOM and the members of Whitchurch Parish Council carried out a high-level assessment of the village. The following steps were agreed with the group to produce this report:



F.1 **Figure 01:** Key steps involved in the development of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood design guidance

1.4 Document structure

01 INTRODUCTION - Outlining the background, purpose, process, study area and design code document structure.

02 POLICY AND EVIDENCE BASED REVIEW - Reviewing the planning policy context.

03 NP AREA CONTEXT ANALYSIS
Provides an appreciation of physical influences which will be used to help inform the design codes.

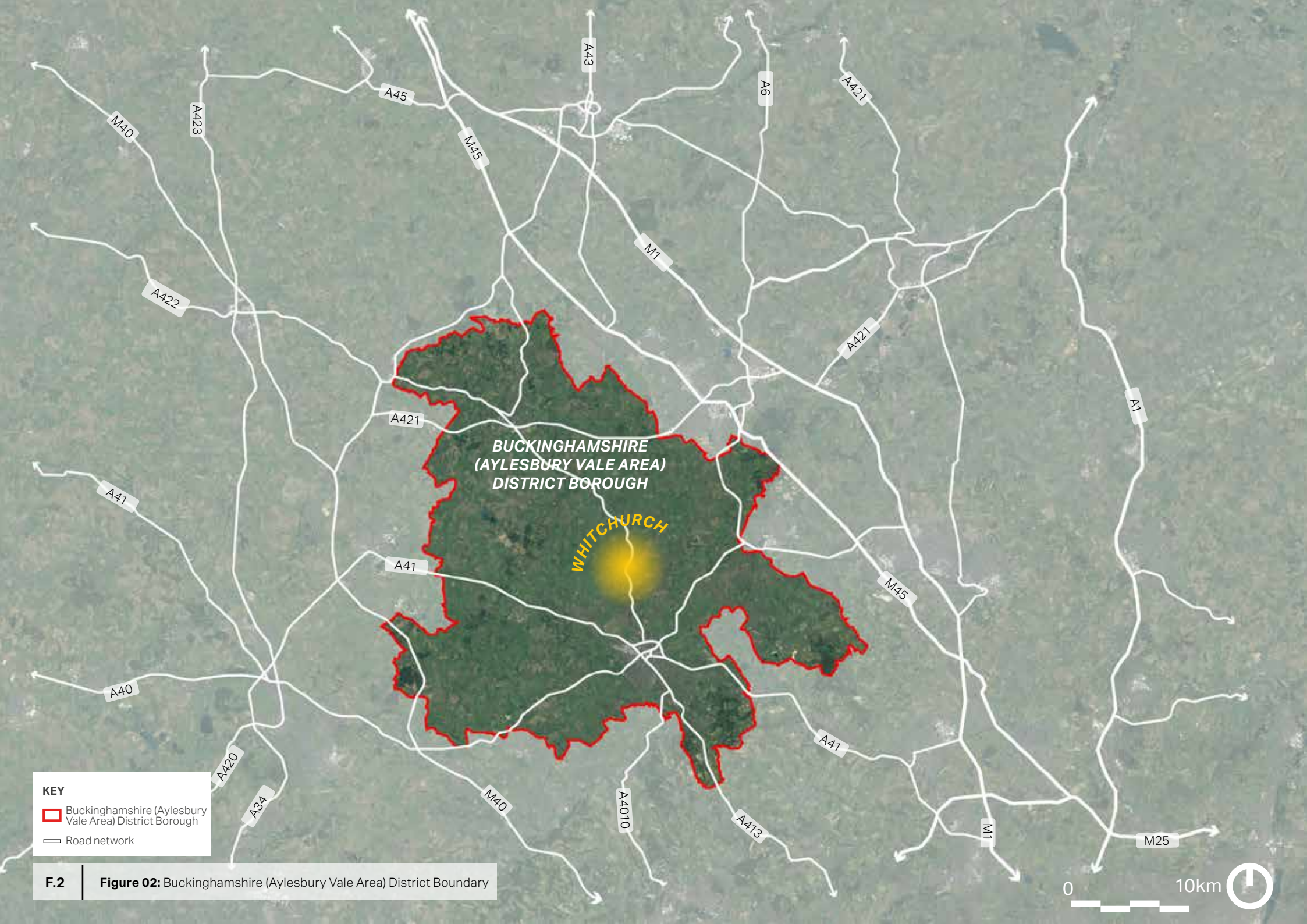
04 VILLAGE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
A more focused understanding of the Parish's built and natural landscape character is provided by undertaking a photographic survey to analyse key characteristics.

05 DESIGN GUIDANCE AND CODES -
The design codes to be applied to future developments in the Neighbourhood Area are established.



06 CHECKLIST - This chapter provides a number of questions based on established good practice against which the design proposal should be evaluated.

07 DELIVERY - Provides guidance on the next steps for the NPSG and potential applicants.






KEY

-  Buckinghamshire (Aylesbury Vale Area) District Borough
-  Road network

F.2 | **Figure 02:** Buckinghamshire (Aylesbury Vale Area) District Boundary

0 10km 

1.5 Area of study

THE VILLAGE OF WHITCHURCH

Whitchurch is located approximately five miles north of Aylesbury and 12 miles south of Buckingham. The settlement is predominately linear, consisting of one street with a few minor roads branching off.

Whitchurch is on a prominent ridge of the Quanton Wing Hills. There are long-distance views in many directions. The surrounding land is mainly pastoral with hedgerows and mature trees. There is grazing land towards the north and several blocks of broadleaved woodlands towards the west.

Whitchurch is a historic settlement with buildings dating back to the 13th century. There are many fine examples of medieval buildings within the village.

Many cottages and houses are listed buildings with two of them grade II* listed. The White Swan Public house and St John the Evangelist Church on Church Headland Lane are important buildings that are celebrated by local residents.



F.3



F.4

Figure 03: The White Swan on the High Street

Figure 04: St John the Evangelist Church on Church Headland Lane

Figure 05: Two-storey dwelling on Church Headland Lane

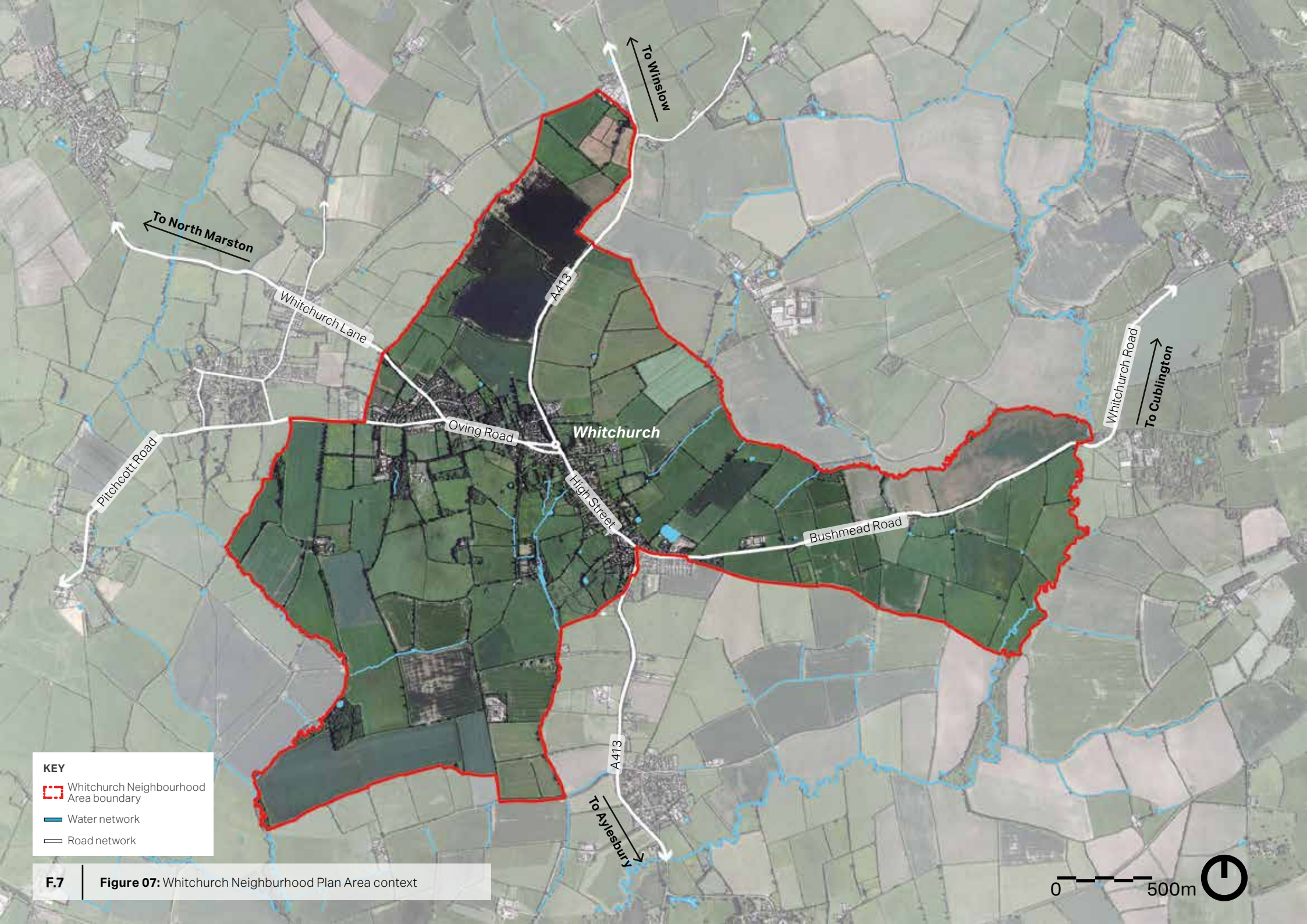
Figure 06: Two-storey semi-detached house built with red brick on Ashgrove Gardens



F.5



F.6



KEY

- Whitchurch Neighbourhood Area boundary
- Water network
- Road network

F.7 | **Figure 07:** Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Area context

0 ————— 500m

**Policy and evidence
based review**

02



2. Policy and evidence based review


2.1 Introduction

This section summarises the relevant design policy, guidance and evidence base produced at national, county and district levels which have informed this design code. Any new development application should be familiar with those documents.

02

National Design Guidance

2021




National Planning Policy Framework - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Relevant national planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2021). The NPPF was updated in July 2021 to include reference to the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code and the use of area, neighbourhood and site-specific design guides. Paragraph 126 states that: "the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and outlines that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."

Householders have a wide range of permitted development rights to extend their homes, such as the ability to extend their homes up to 50% of the curtilage of the original house. Back garden land has been given added protection in the NPPF when it was reclassified from brownfield to formerly undeveloped land. However, the NPPF makes it clear that the key consideration should be whether back garden development would harm local character.

2021



National Design Guide - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

The National Design Guide sets out the government's ten priorities for well designed places and illustrates how well-designed places can be achieved in practice. The ten characteristics identified includes: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan. The Guide also reinforces the National Planning Policy Framework's objective in creating high quality buildings and places. The document forms part of the government planning practice guidance.

2021



National Model Design Code - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

The draft National Model Design Code provides guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote well-designed places. It sets out the key design parameters that need to be considered when producing design guides and recommends methodology for capturing and reflecting views of the local community.

2020



Building for a Healthy Life - Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life updates Homes England's key measure of design quality as the national housing accelerating body. The document sets out 12 considerations for creating integrated neighbourhoods distinctive places and streets for all. While it is not part of the national policy, it is recognised as best practice guidance and design tool in assessing the design quality of developments.

None



Planning Portal on extensions/ modification

The Planning Portal defines infill development as 'The development of a relatively small gap between existing buildings.' (https://www.planningportal.co.uk/directory-record/305/infill_development)

2007



Manual for Streets - Department for Transport

Development is expected to respond positively to the Manual for Streets, the Government's guidance on how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets. It promotes streets and wider development that avoid car dominated layouts but that do place the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first.

2021



Vale of Aylesbury Local plan 2013-2033 - Buckinghamshire (Aylesbury Vale Area) District Council

'Buckinghamshire (Aylesbury Vale Area) District Council adopted their Local Plan in September 2021. The Local Plan defines Whitchurch as one of the "Larger Villages" which are larger, more sustainable and have at least reasonable access to facilities and services and public transport, making them sustainable locations for development.

Holt's Field (D-WHI009) is allocated in Whitchurch in the Local Plan.

Policy D3 provide guidance on proposals for non- allocated sites at larger villages. This policy provides guidance for small scale development and infilling.

- Infilling of small gaps in developed frontages in keeping with the scale and spacing of nearby dwellings and the character of the surroundings; or
- Development that consolidates existing settlement patterns without harming important settlement characteristics, and does not comprise partial development of a larger site

2012



Whitchurch- Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Assessment Report - Buckinghamshire County Council and English Heritage

This report written as part of the Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project is intended to summarise the archaeological, topographical, historical and architectural evidence relating to the development of Whitchurch in order to provide an informed basis for conservation, research and the management of change within the urban environment.

**Neighbourhood Area
context analysis**

03



3. Neighbourhood Area context analysis

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the local context and key characteristics of Whitchurch village. It is important that all development proposals in Whitchurch, whether big or small, are based on an understanding of the context of the village. Development proposals should clearly demonstrate an understanding of that context and how it has been addressed in the preparation of the design and any related planning submissions. Context refers to the current (and sometimes future) conditions within an area, across a range of issues including village history and heritage, morphology, green space, movement and landscape setting. The following pages in this section consider these matters, in the context of Whitchurch, in more detail.

3.2 Village history

Whitchurch originated as a permanent settlement in the Anglo-Saxon period and was mentioned in the Domesday book, beginning as a manor held by the Bolebec family. The Earl of Oxford later obtained this manor in 1245 and created a market

place on Market Hill, establishing the road to Oving and Quainton.

The village has a silk and lace-making history. Silk weaving was introduced in the village by Mr Richard Moscrop. He established silk factory branches at Waddesdon and Whitchurch. A building at the far end of Little London fitted up as factory and later a new factory was built and fitted up with looms and machinery, warehouse and employees houses near, known as 'Little Bolton'. In addition, a large portion of the poorer classes of Whitchurch was employed in making lace. The pillow lace of Buckinghamshire was very valuable. Furthermore, the history shows the high-quality brick and tile making activity of the 19th to early 20th Century, although this maybe has earlier origins. The former brick and tile making yards can be found on Bushmead Road where earthworks survive. Sand and limestone were quarried from pits to the north of the village on Oving Road.

Whitchurch has a few surviving late-medieval buildings, though the majority of its listed buildings are from the period of the "Great Rebuilding" in England

during the 17th century. The village is unusual in having a large variety of visible building materials, in part creditable to its underlying geology which provides both stone and clay as building materials. The predominant building typology from this 17th century period is a vernacular, timber-framed house with walls of stone, render or brick or a combination of these.

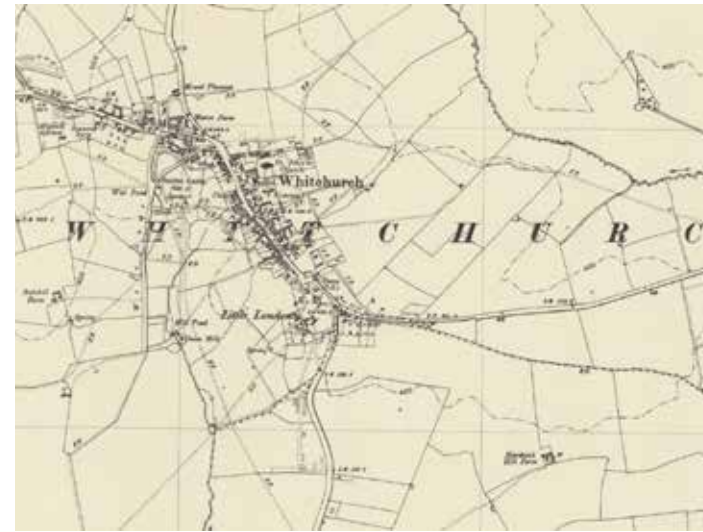
By the early 19th century Whitchurch was home to a community of farmers, tradesmen and labourers. In terms of religion the village was strongly methodist with two chapels, one of which, Wesleyan Chapel, still stands along the High Street today.

Post war the village has experienced modest growth with both private and council housing on Oving Road and North Marston Lane in the west and Bushmead Road in the east. The Whitchurch Conservation Area was established in 1971 and the historic core of the village is well preserved, similarly the village boasts 47 listed buildings. This has enabled Whitchurch to retain its historic character and picturesque appeal.

03



1936

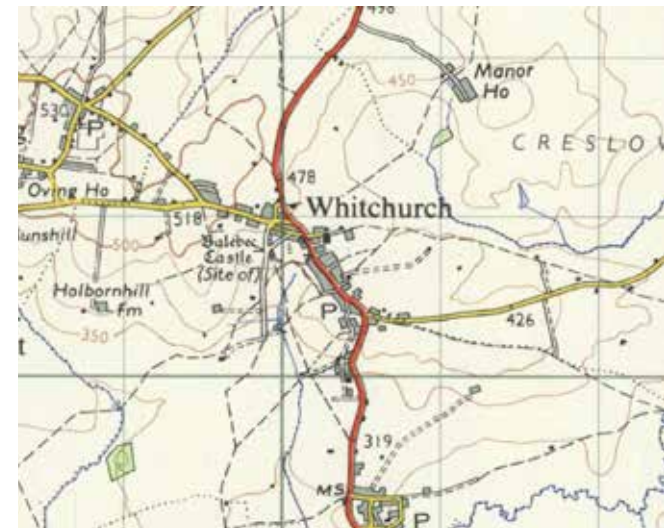


1961

1883



1952



F.8

Figure 08: Village historic analysis



Figure 09: Two- storey, grade II listed building, on High Street

Figure 10: Row of three cottages, grade II listed building, built in early 17th century on Market Hill

Figure 11: Church of St John the Evangelist, a grade II* listed building, built in late 13th century on Church Lane

Figure 12: Thatched cottage, a grade II listed building, on Keinches Lane built with timber and whitewashed brick

3.3 Statuary designations

The Conservation Area, established in 1971, covers the historic core of the village, primarily the High Street.

There are a number of trees within the village that are protected by a Tree Preservation Order, several line the High Street. There are pockets of protected trees at the top of Market Hill, to the west of the village along Green Acres Close and to the north of the village between Mount Pleasant and the A413.

There are few woodland areas within the Parish, the largest is situated between Hampden Veterinarian clinic and Barrettstown Estates south of Oving Road.

Figure 13: Whitchurch House, a grade II listed building, Built in 17th and altered early 20th. Located on Oving Road, constructed in coursed rubble stone on the ground floor and roughcast above.

Figure 14: Mary Monk's House located on High Street, a grade II listed building, constructed in late 18th and extended later on. Red brick with tuck pointing, moulded plinth and slate roof are some of the main materials.

Figure 15: Cobwebs, a grade II listed building on Market Hill, built by a mix of timber frame, rubble stone and brick with thatched roof.

There is one scheduled monument in Whitchurch, the site of Bolebec castle. There is an additional scheduled monument just outside of the neighbourhood boundary, the site of a deserted village at Creslow.



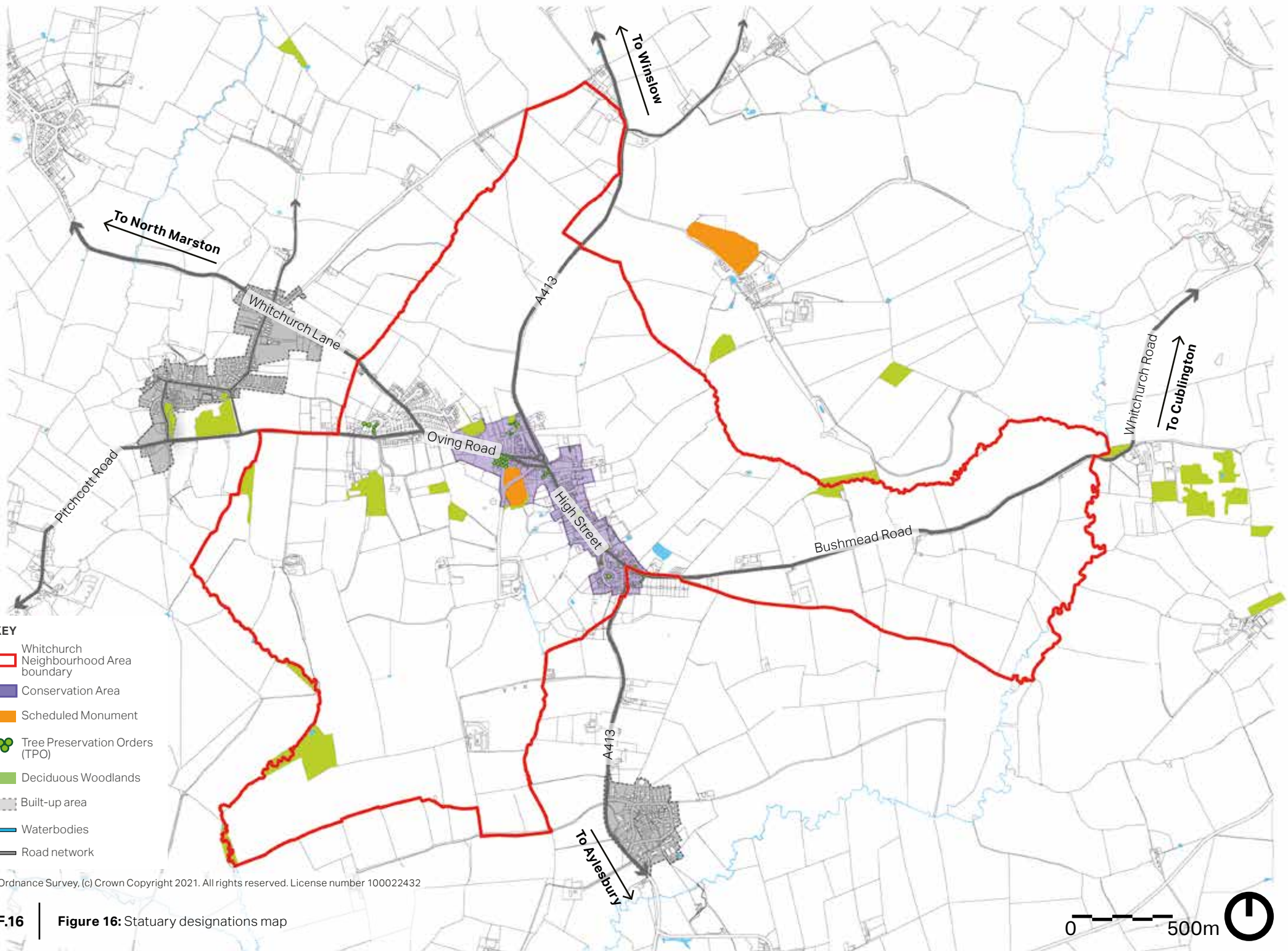
F.13



F.14



F.15



- KEY**
- Whitchurch Neighbourhood Area boundary
 - Conservation Area
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)
 - Deciduous Woodlands
 - Built-up area
 - Waterbodies
 - Road network

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F.16 | **Figure 16:** Statutory designations map

0 ——— 500m

3.4 Heritage designations

Whitchurch village lies on agricultural land and the majority of its building heritage dates back to the 17th century.

The Conservation Area covers the entire village High Street and a small part of Oving Road, the A413 and Little London to the south.

Whitchurch has a number of distinct buildings, constructed in a variation of materials, along its High Street which gives the village a unique character. There are 47 listed buildings predominantly clustered around the High Street and historic core of the village, as well as a scheduled monument at the site of Bolebec castle. The grade II* listed buildings are described here.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

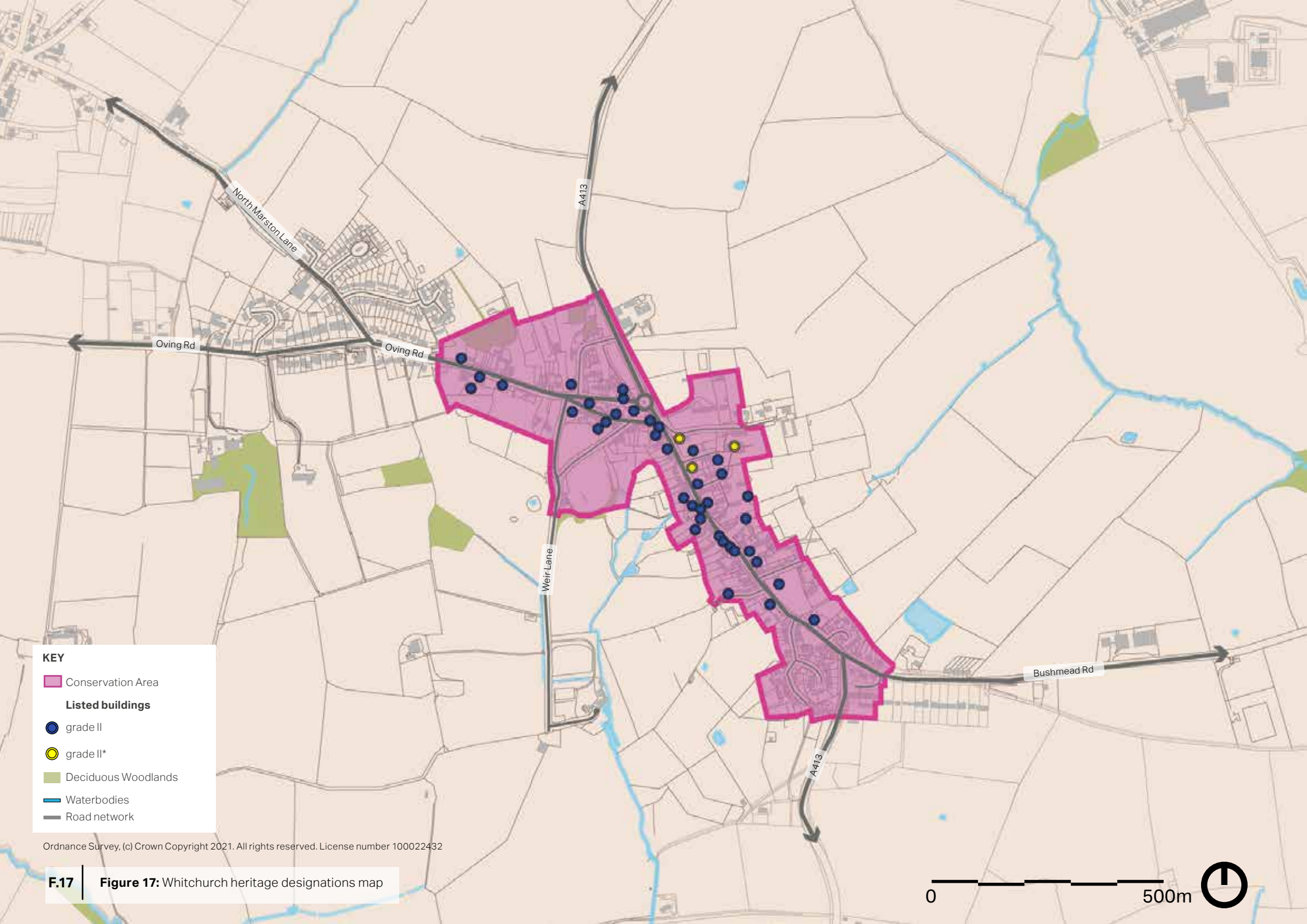
- Bolebec Castle, a motte and bailey castle 300m west of St John's Church (List Entry Number (LEN) 1009536) The Bolebec Castle originally built during the 12th century and the castle buildings were destroyed in the 17th century. Motte and bailey castles are particularly important for the study of Norman Britain.

Listed Buildings

- Church of St John (LEN 1124307) is grade II* listed and is one of the oldest buildings in Whitchurch. It was first listed in 1967 and features built components from the 13th-16th century, though was heavily restored in 1911;
- Priory Hotel (LEN 1159973) is grade II* listed. It was first listed in 1951. Dating back to the 15th century, it was altered in the 16th century and renovated in the early 20th century. It has a timber frame

and tiled roof and notably has a jettied first floor which signifies high status. It has been offices for many years and previously was a hotel;

- The Old House and attached garden walls (LEN 1332786) is grade II* listed. It was first listed in 1951 and dates back to the 15th century. It was altered during the 17th century and late 1930s and 40s. Built from coursed rubble stone, it has an old tile roof, brick chimneys and like Priory Hotel it also has a jettied first floor; and
- The White Swan, High Street (LEN 1159913) is a public house dating back to the early 19th century and is grade II listed. The main building features an old tile roof instead of the former thatch that was damaged by fire. Other materials are flanking brick chimneys, as well as a half-hipped thatch roof top a single storey bay.



KEY

Conservation Area

Listed buildings

grade II

grade II*

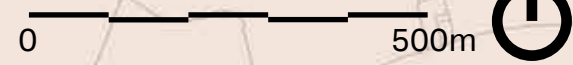
Deciduous Woodlands

Waterbodies

Road network

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F.17 | **Figure 17:** Whitchurch heritage designations map





F.18



F.19

Figure 18: Church of St John the Evangelist, a grade II* listed building with a green churchyard. The church is located at the end of Church Lane and the church tower is visible from the High Street.

Figure 19: Chestnut Corner, a grade II listed building on White Horse Lane, built in late 18th-early 19th Century by red brick with some vitreous headers and projecting plinth and thatch roof



F.20

Figure 20: The Priory Hotel, grade II* listed, faces directly onto the High Street and has a jettied first floor spanning the length of this facade. It has been offices for many years and previously was a hotel

Figure 21: The White Swan pub is grade II listed. The main building is early 19th century of chequered brick, an old tile roof with a single storey bay of red brick and half-hipped thatch roof



F.21

3.5 Built Form

BUILT FORM TYPOLOGIES

The centre of Whitchurch is made up of a variety of building typologies. These include cottages, terraces, mansions and church buildings. There are a few examples of 15-16th centuries buildings, but the 'great rebuilding' period of the 17th century forms the majority of the village's vernacular. The market place was located to the north of the castle and its place commemorated in the name of Market Hill, which was previously the main road to Oving. The buildings on the north side of Market Hill are post- medieval encroachment on the market place.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

In the older, northern part of the High Street, there are buildings with the ground floor constructed of brick and stone and first floor constructed in a timber frame with roofs of old red clay tiles. The southern

part and the area known as Little London is composed of red/brown brick buildings of the late 18th and 19th centuries with clay tile or Welsh slate roofs. Outside of the Conservation Area new developments tend towards red brick.

ROOFS

There are mixed roof types, the dominant styles are pitched and hipped. Some of the more modern developments have dormers. Roof materials vary across Whitchurch, the most predominant are clay tiles,

PLOT BOUNDARIES

The boundary treatments ranges from small fences and hedges, to low stone walls and wooden fences, to more comprehensive boundary treatment including high hedges and fences.

Figure 22: The Firs, built in 1897 and used during World War II for the development and testing of various weapons and was known locally as Winston Churchill's toyshop

KEY BUILDINGS

There are a number of key buildings within the village, many of which are listed. These include:

- St John's Church;
- The Priory;
- Old House;
- The White Swan; and
- The Firs.



F.22

3.6 Route pattern and connectivity

Whitchurch is located approximately 5 miles north of Aylesbury. The A413 runs from north to south through the village and serves as the High Street. The historic core of the village is largely formed around this road which was part of the historic link between London and Birmingham.

The streets in the village are mixed in character, comprising the historic routes within the Conservation Area, such as the High Street and Oving Road, alongside a number of secondary residential roads and a number of cul-de-sacs. Other local roads include North Marston Lane, leading west to North Marston and Bushmead Road which provides links to the east to Cublington.

Whitchurch has a few bus services: 60, 60A, 67 and X60, all of which link the village to Aylesbury and run along the High Street. These services also provide connections to Milton Keynes, Buckingham and Great Horwood.

The PRoW network within the village consists of a number of footpaths which connect different areas of Whitchurch, as well as extending into the surrounding countryside.

National Cycleway (33) also runs through the village. It runs east to west, along Bushmead Road, the High Street and Oving Road and travels north east and south west.

On-street parking is an issue in the village, particularly along the High Street, Oving Road and North Marston Lane around the school.

Figure 23: View from the south of the High Street, also the A413 road, showing the petrol station on the High Street and the White Swan pub on the east side of the road. This road runs from north to south through the village.

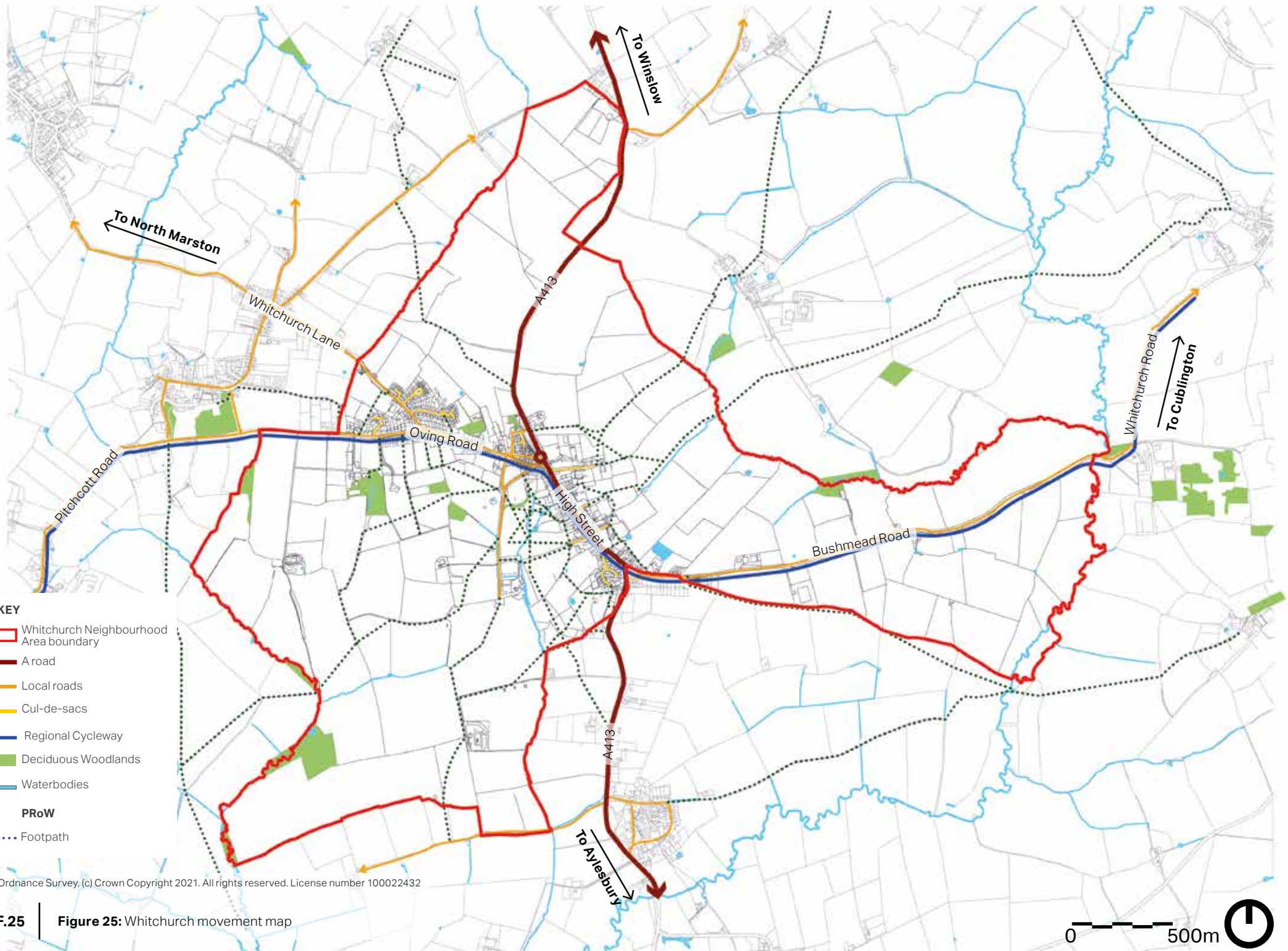
Figure 24: View of Market Hill, a narrow road leading from the High Street around the location of the historic market in Whitchurch.



F.23



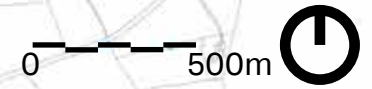
F.24



- KEY**
- ▭ Whitchurch Neighbourhood Area boundary
 - ▬ A road
 - ▬ Local roads
 - ▬ Cul-de-sacs
 - ▬ Regional Cycleway
 - ▭ Deciduous Woodlands
 - ▬ Waterbodies
 - PRoW**
 - ⋯ Footpath

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F.25 | **Figure 25:** Whitchurch movement map



3.7 Landscape setting and green space

Whitchurch's hilltop location results in minimal flooding constraints, apart from potential surface water flooding along Oving Road. The village is at 140m above sea level and the landscape around the village is primarily open farmland, with hedgerow and tree bound fields. There are some woodland areas in the surrounding areas.

The landscape character for Whitchurch was described in the 2008 Landscape Character Assessment as "low hills and ridges with Vale landscape towards the south". The Areas of Sensitive Landscape study assessed Whitchurch's landscape sensitivity to be 90-100%. This assessment covers landscape quality, scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interests and wildness.



F.26

Figure 26: View toward south to Chiltern Hills from Little London



F.27

Figure 27: View towards Church of St John the Evangelist from the surrounding open fields

There are several local open spaces within the village, including:

- Whitchurch Recreation Ground north of Ashgrove gardens known locally as "The Rec";
- St John the Evangelist Churchyard; and
- Whitchurch Cricket Club.

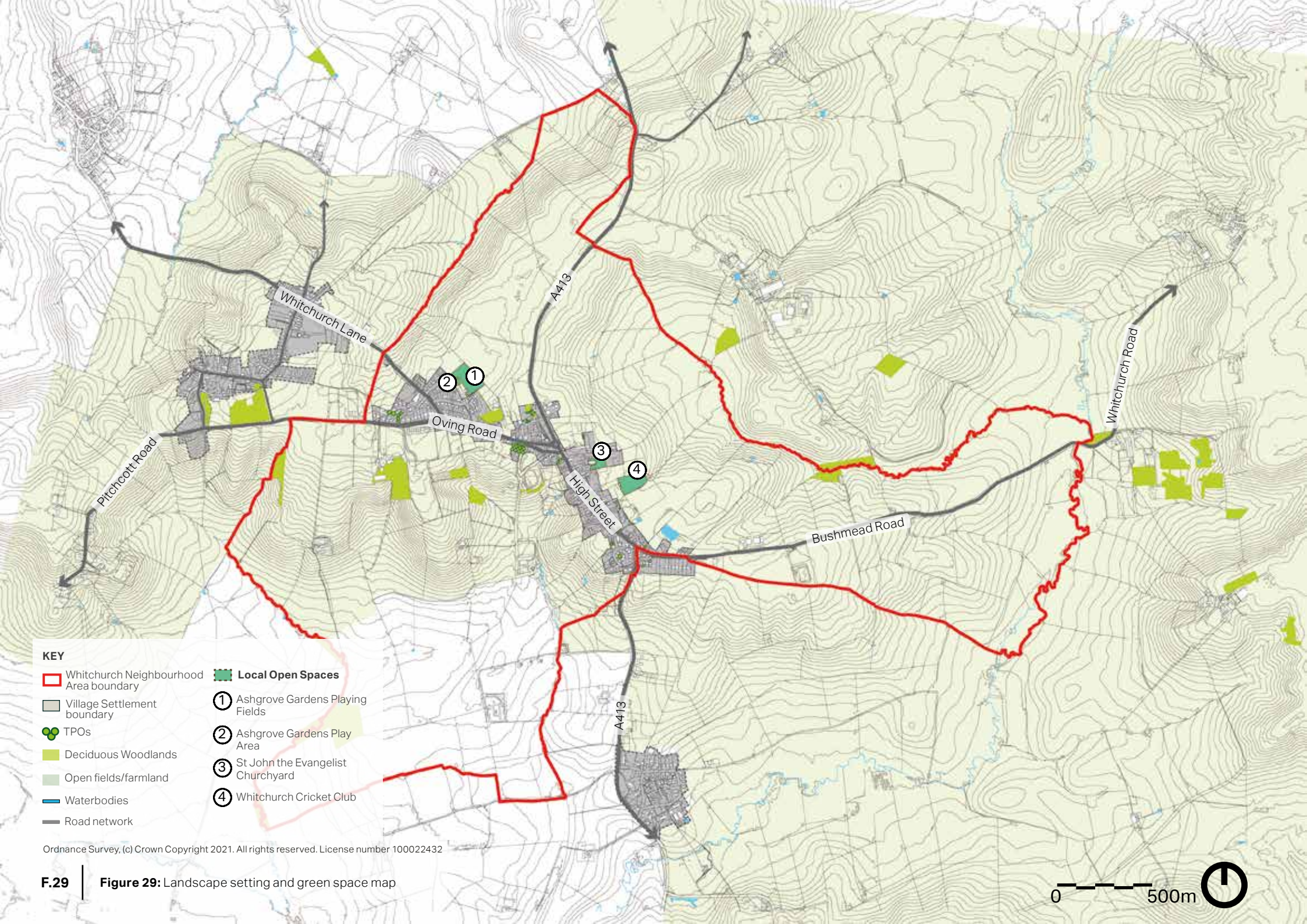
Given Whitchurch's advantageous hilltop location the village enjoys distant views of the Chiltern Hills to the south across lower-lying Aylesbury Vale and to the east across the undulating pastures.

The enclosure act of Parliament made in 1771 resulted in larger, regular fields, particularly noticeably to the north east of Whitchurch. Some fields are used for sheep and cattle grazing, though much land to the west has been taken up by horse paddocks.



F.28

Figure 28: Ashgrove Gardens Playing Fields

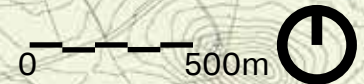


KEY

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Whitchurch Neighbourhood Area boundary |  Local Open Spaces |
|  Village Settlement boundary | ① Ashgrove Gardens Playing Fields |
|  TPOs | ② Ashgrove Gardens Play Area |
|  Deciduous Woodlands | ③ St John the Evangelist Churchyard |
|  Open fields/farmland | ④ Whitchurch Cricket Club |
|  Waterbodies | |
|  Road network | |

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F.29 | **Figure 29:** Landscape setting and green space map



Village character
assessment

04



4. Village character assessment

4.1 Defining the character areas

Following on from the analysis set out in Chapter 3, this part of the report focuses on the different character areas within the village. The different areas are characterised by variations in topography, movement, views and landmarks, green space and landscape cover, public realm and streetscape, built form and architectural details.

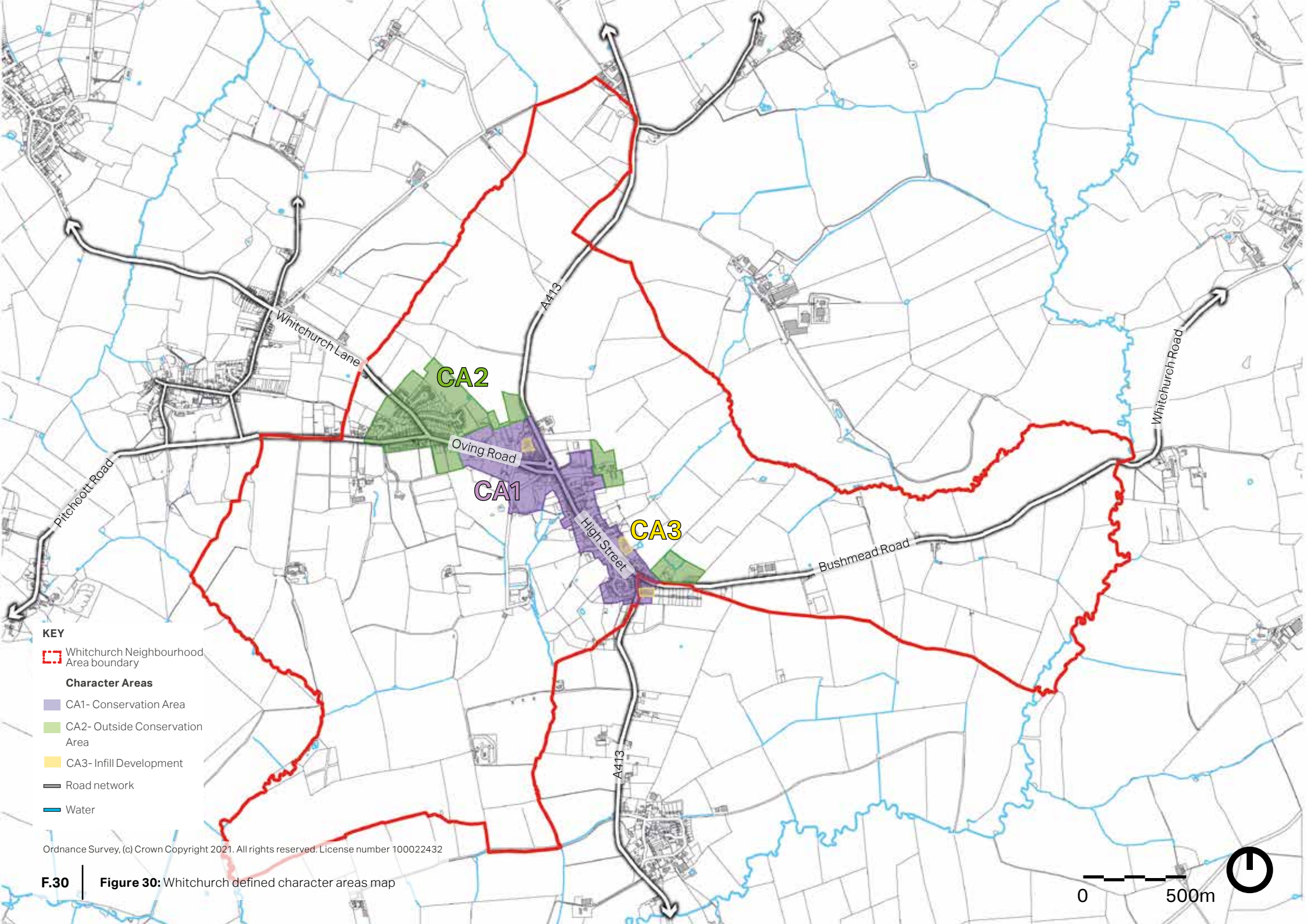
The village of Whitchurch as it stands today has three character areas (See Figure 30), which have been defined with the Neighbourhood Forum, and are as follows:

- CA1- Conservation Area
- CA2- Outside Conservation Area
- CA3- Infill Development

1 CA1- Conservation Area

2 CA2- Outside Conservation Area

3 CA3- Infill Development



KEY

Whitchurch Neighbourhood Area boundary

Character Areas

CA1- Conservation Area

CA2- Outside Conservation Area

CA3- Infill Development

Road network

Water

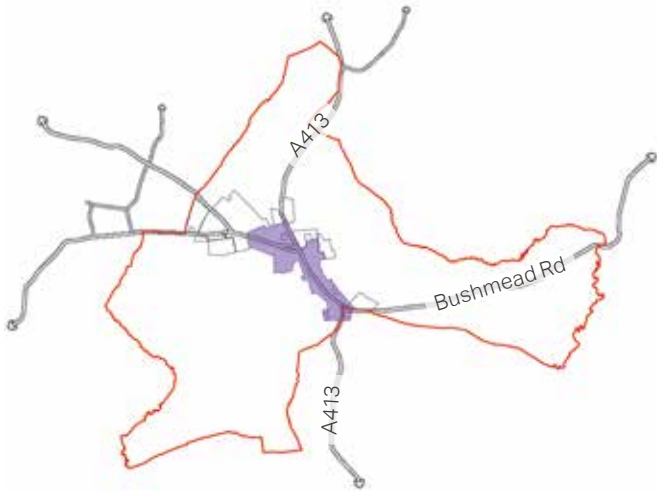
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F.30 | **Figure 30:** Whitchurch defined character areas map

0 500m



1 CA1- Conservation Area



04

Whitchurch Conservation Area, established in 1971, forms the core of the village. Predominantly made up of the High Street and Market Hill, the area also covers a small stretch of the A413 and Oving Road.

There is a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced housing typologies, although towards the top of the High Street and Oving Road the majority of houses are detached.

<p>Land Use</p>	<p>The village is largely residential, however there are religious, retail and business uses within the Whitchurch Conservation Area. These include: Whitchurch Methodist Church, St John the Evangelist Church, the Legion Hall, the Village Hall, a hairdresser, the White Swan Pub, a bed and breakfast, a garage, a petrol station and a post office. The majority of these are located along the High Street amongst residential units.</p>
<p>Pattern Of Development</p>	<p>Linear, with the Conservation Area extending along the High Street and a short stretch of Oving Road to the west and the A413 to the north.</p>
<p>Building Line/Plot Arrangement</p>	<p>Many plots have small or no front gardens, facing directly onto the High Street. There is some variation in set back though generally the building line is quite consistent along the High Street. Plots on the west side of the High Street are narrow and more uniform, whereas plots on the east side are irregular and there are a number of small closes / lanes branching off from the main street. South of the Conservation Area is Little London, which has irregular plot arrangements with some more modern infill development. Older buildings here have little boundary treatment and no front gardens, though this is not consistent through the area.</p>
<p>Boundary Treatment</p>	<p>There is a mix of boundary treatment within the Conservation Area, including small railing fences, low stone walls and low hedges along both the High Street and Oving Road. Many buildings along the High Street, however, have no boundary treatment.</p>
<p>Heights & Roofline</p>	<p>Throughout most of the Conservation Area buildings are two storeys and the predominant roof style is pitched with a couple of hipped roof styles. Many buildings have quite deep roof pitches and the main roofing materials used in this area are slate, clay tile and thatch.</p>
<p>Public Realm</p>	<p>Parking and traffic flow are issues on the High Street. Cars are often parked on pedestrian areas and there is a lack of safe crossing points for pedestrians. The Conservation Area covers a small stretch of the A413 which has grass verges either side, but no pavement which creates accessibility issues. There is an established network of footpaths connected to the Conservation Area.</p>



Figure 31: Little London housing plots are irregular and have varying boundary treatment and building line set backs with some as in this example facing directly onto the street



Figure 32: View towards Market Hill, the historic location of the Whitchurch Market

Figure 33: Parts of the footpath network which falls within the Conservation Area and connects to different part of the village as well as the surrounding countryside

Figure 34: View from the top of the High Street looking south which shows the variety of materials and the building line which along the High Street is generally consistent with buildings facing directly onto the street

Figure 35: A grade II listed mansion style house at the south end of the High Street. Housing typologies and plot sizes along the High Street are varied, examples like this have very large plots with back gardens stretching out into the field behind



2 CA2- Outside Conservation Area



04

This character area lies outside of the Conservation Area and is a predominantly residential area with mixed housing tenure.

The post World War II 1950s social housing estate, called Ashgrove Gardens, was the primary development which formed this area as an extension to the core village. There have since been additions of some private housing, as well as Whitchurch combined school in the 1970s.

<p>Land Use</p>	<p>The dominant land use in this area is residential. The only school in the village, Whitchurch combined School is located in this area. There is a public green space, Whitchurch recreation ground north of Ashgrove gardens.</p>
<p>Pattern Of Development</p>	<p>The site covers two main roads, Oving Road and North Marston Lane and is a 20th century extension to the core village. The area is primarily made up the 1950s Ashgrove Gardens council housing estate, which consists of three separate closes branching off the main roads. There have been private housing additions to these closes post 1980. There is another site on Bushmead Road at the south- eastern fringe of the village. This area includes a mix of late 19th- early 20th century buildings.</p>
<p>Building Line/Plot Arrangement</p>	<p>The dominant housing typologies in this character area are detached and semi-detached, most are set back from the road with front gardens and off road parking. Plot sizes are smaller and more regular in this area than plots in the adjacent Conservation Area on Oving Road.</p>
<p>Boundary Treatment</p>	<p>There is some type of boundary treatment for the majority of buildings in this area including wooden fencing, hedges and low walls between the front garden and pavement. There are also several streets with some buffering between the road and pavement through green verges. Boundary treatment along the three main roads: North Marston Lane, Oving Road and Bushmead Road is greater than on the quieter cul-de-sacs, often comprising large hedges and high fences which provide more privacy for residential plots, but reduce natural surveillance.</p>
<p>Heights & Roofline</p>	<p>Building heights are predominantly two storeys with a few bungalows at the end of the northmost close. Buildings have either pitched or hipped roofs and there are a number of houses with dormer additions. The main roof materials are clay and pan tiles.</p>
<p>Public Realm</p>	<p>Footpaths link these sites to the High Street and to neighbouring villages and countryside. There is inconsistent and narrow pavement provision along roads and on-street parking around the school creates access and traffic flow issues.</p>



Figure 36: Ashgrove Gardens features regular plots, grass verge buffering, front gardens and set back building lines

Figure 37: An example of boundary treatment along Oving Road consisting of large hedges

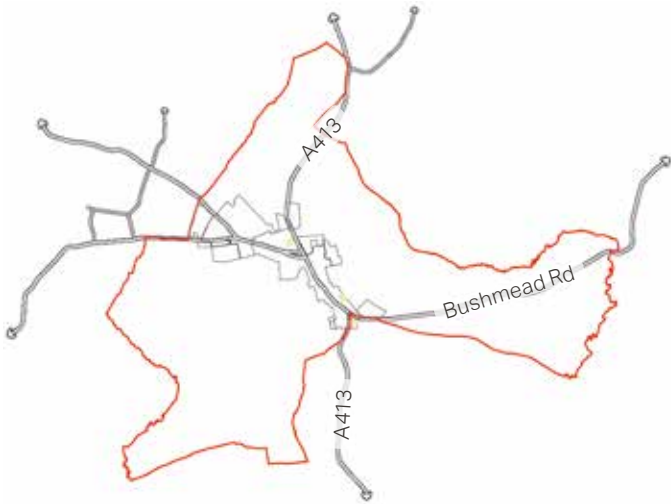
Figure 38: Much of the housing in this area use red brick and either pitched or hipped roof and are often semi-detached houses. Boundary treatments vary with some using low wooden fencing as shown in this example

Figure 39: On street parking along North Marston Lane is an issue, particularly around the school

Figure 40: Whitchurch recreation ground, accessed via Ashgrove Gardens



3 CA3- Infill Development



04

Infill developments has occurred in Whitchurch post 1990 and has primarily consisted of private residential development. It has also included the addition of Whitchurch Surgery, the village's only medical service, located on Oving Road.

Developments in these areas have resulted in expansion of the village at some points.

Land Use	Predominant land use of infill developments is residential, the communal value of this area is low. Whitchurch Surgery, the village's only medical service is part of an infill development along Oving Road.
Pattern Of Development	Developments has occurred post 1990 and consists of mainly private housing. Infill developments are generally a mix of small cul-de-sac estates and individually designed detached houses. There are some infill developments in form of terraced houses on Mount pleasant.
Building Line/Plot Arrangement	The building line is set back in these more modern developments. Buildings have parking provision on site. Plot arrangement is much more uniform than older parts of the village, in general plot sizes for cul-de-sacs are quite generous and the individual detached houses have adequate plot sizes.
Boundary Treatment	Plots which face onto main roads, most often with no boundary treatment and front gardens with green verges separate public road from the plot. An exception of this is the infill development on Hawleys Lane with a row of trees as buffer between the road and front garden.
Heights & Roofline	In keeping with other character areas housing is generally one-two storeys in height and the prominent roofing styles are pitched and hipped roofs. Roof materials consist of clay tile, pan tile, concrete tile and natural slate.
Public Realm	The footpath network covers and connects infill areas to other parts of the village and surrounding countryside.



F.41



F.44



F.42



F.43

Figure 41: Some infill developments on Mount Pleasant with green verges separating the plot from public space

Figure 42: Infill development on High Street (Source: Whitchurch parish Council)

Figure 43: Infill development on North Marston Lane (Source: Whitchurch parish Council)

Figure 44: Infill development on North of Oving Road (Source: Whitchurch parish Council)

**Design guidance
and codes**

05



5. Design guidance and codes

5.1 Introduction

It is important that any new development in Whitchurch responds to and enhances its special sense of place, while meeting the aspirations of its residents. With this in mind, this section identifies design guidelines and design codes for future housing developments to adhere to, based on the contextual analysis presented in the previous sections. These design guidelines and codes consider the unique setting and character of the village.

The following design guidelines and codes have been identified and will be explained in more detail in this section of the report:

GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES:

- SL- Settlement layout
- RC- In keeping with rural character
- B- Built form
- BH- Built heritage
- SM- Safe movement
- SU- Sustainability

GUIDELINES FOR LARGER DEVELOPMENT SITES:

- Code 1- Block principles
- Code 2- Streetscape principles
- Code 3- Plot principles

5.2 Applying the codes

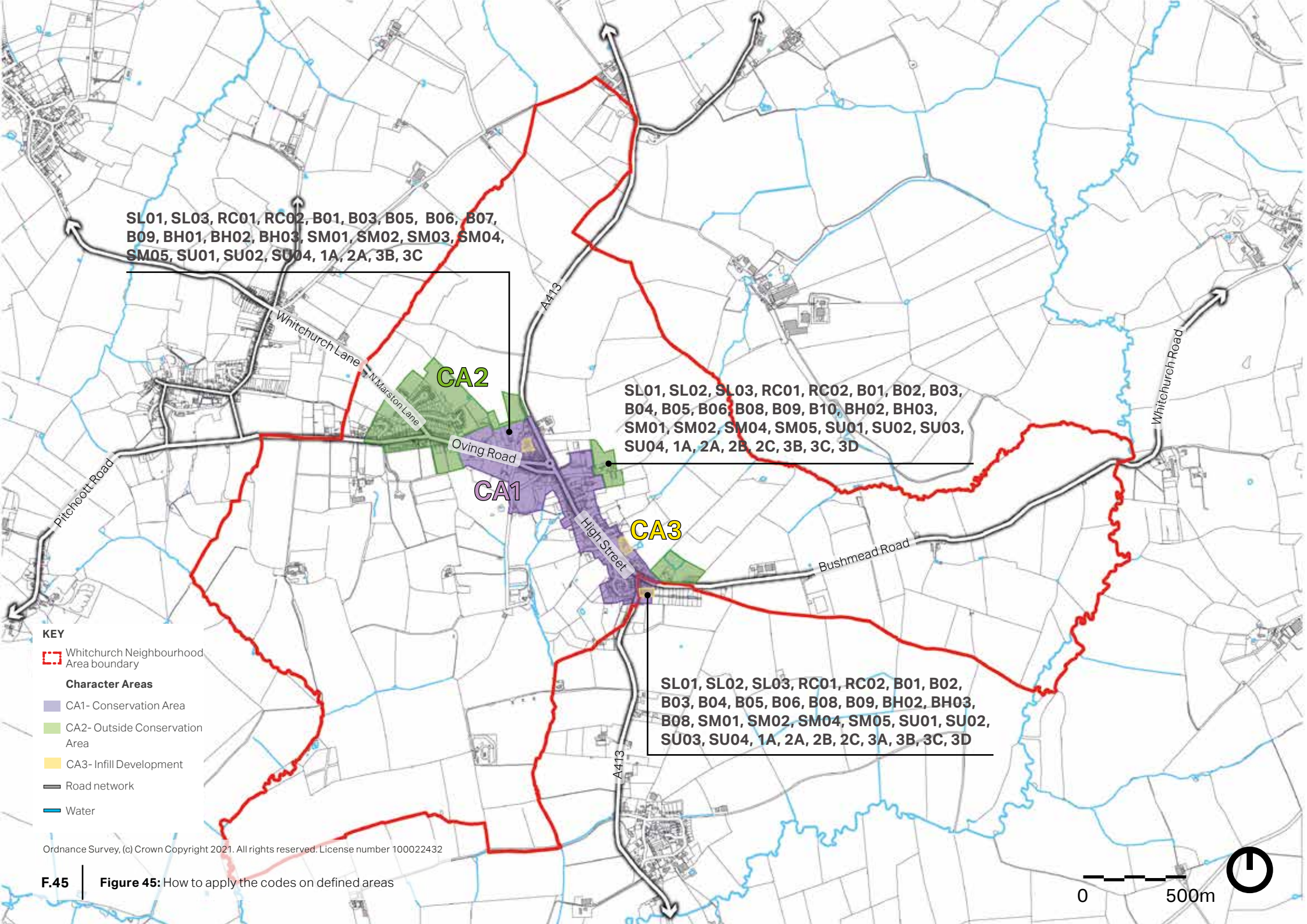
The table below identifies when each of the codes should be used. A prefix has been created for each code to allow simple application of the design codes to the coding areas on the following page.

General principles	Prefix	Code
Settlement layout	SL 01	Pattern of development
	SL 02	Site situation
	SL 03	Layout of building
In keeping with rural character	RC 01	Views and landmarks
	RC 02	Trees and landscaping
Built form	B 01	Proportion and scale
	B 02	Aspect and orientation
	B 03	Enclosure
	B 04	Boundary treatment
	B 05	Building line and setback
	B 06	Roofline
	B 07	Extensions and conversions
	B 08	Designing workspace into new residential developments
	B 09	Architectural details
	B 10	Local materials

General principles	Prefix	Code
Built heritage	BH 01	Heritage and tradition
	BH 02	Respect setting
	BH 03	Respect character
Safe movement	SM 01	Interconnected street network
	SM 02	People- friendly streets
	SM 03	Traffic calming measures
	SM 04	Parking solutions
	SM 05	Legibility and signage
Sustainability	SU 01	Energy efficient housing and energy production
	SU 02	Biodiversity
	SU 03	Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)
	SU 04	Permeable pavements

Guidelines for larger development sites	Prefix	Code
Code 1- Block principles	1A	Spatial definition of the public realm
Code 2- Streetscape principles	2A	Building heights and rooflines
	2B	Street typologies
	2C	Relationship of future development to landscape features
Code 3- Plot principles	3A	Backland developments
	3B	Ratio of private garden space
	3C	Plot boundary line
	3D	Privacy and space between buildings

Each of the areas on the plan (See Figure 45) relates to the appropriate design code prefix from the above tables, to enable an understanding of where each of the codes should be applied in the village.



F.45 | Figure 45: How to apply the codes on defined areas



5.3 Design guidelines

The following design guidelines are applicable to all character areas across the Neighbourhood Area and should be applied as a starting point to all new development, regardless of where it is in the Neighbourhood Area. These guidelines promote landscape and character led design which responds to the natural environment and enhances the existing townscape. Reference to context does not mean to copy or replicate in a pastiche manner, it means taking inspiration and influence from surrounding precedent, helping to form a design rationale which harmonises with the surrounding area.



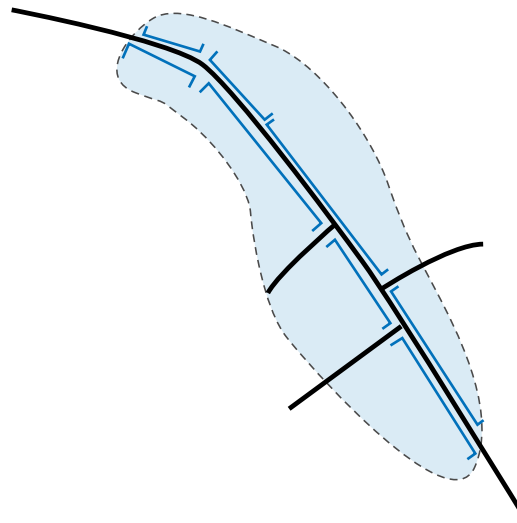
SL. Settlement layout

SL 01- PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT

Whitchurch has a linear development and any new development should respect the following principles:

- Proposals should maintain the continuity of built form along the main route. However, buildings should not be repetitive, and should provide variety of building types and design with coherent scale, massing and detailing;
- Treatment of main road frontages should include tall trees, hedgerows and the boundary walls typical of the village to increase the sense of enclosure and linear form;
- Linear pattern settlement almost always orientates inwards towards the main road and turns its back towards the landscape to the rear. Building frontages should reinforce the linearity of the street, where possible; and

- Boundary treatments can vary, from low walls to soft landscaped edges on the periphery of the settlement. Residential development with a hard edge which imposes an abrupt transition from the settlement to the surrounding countryside should be avoided.



F.46

Figure 46: Diagram showing the linear pattern development



F.47

Figure 47: Whitchurch pattern of development

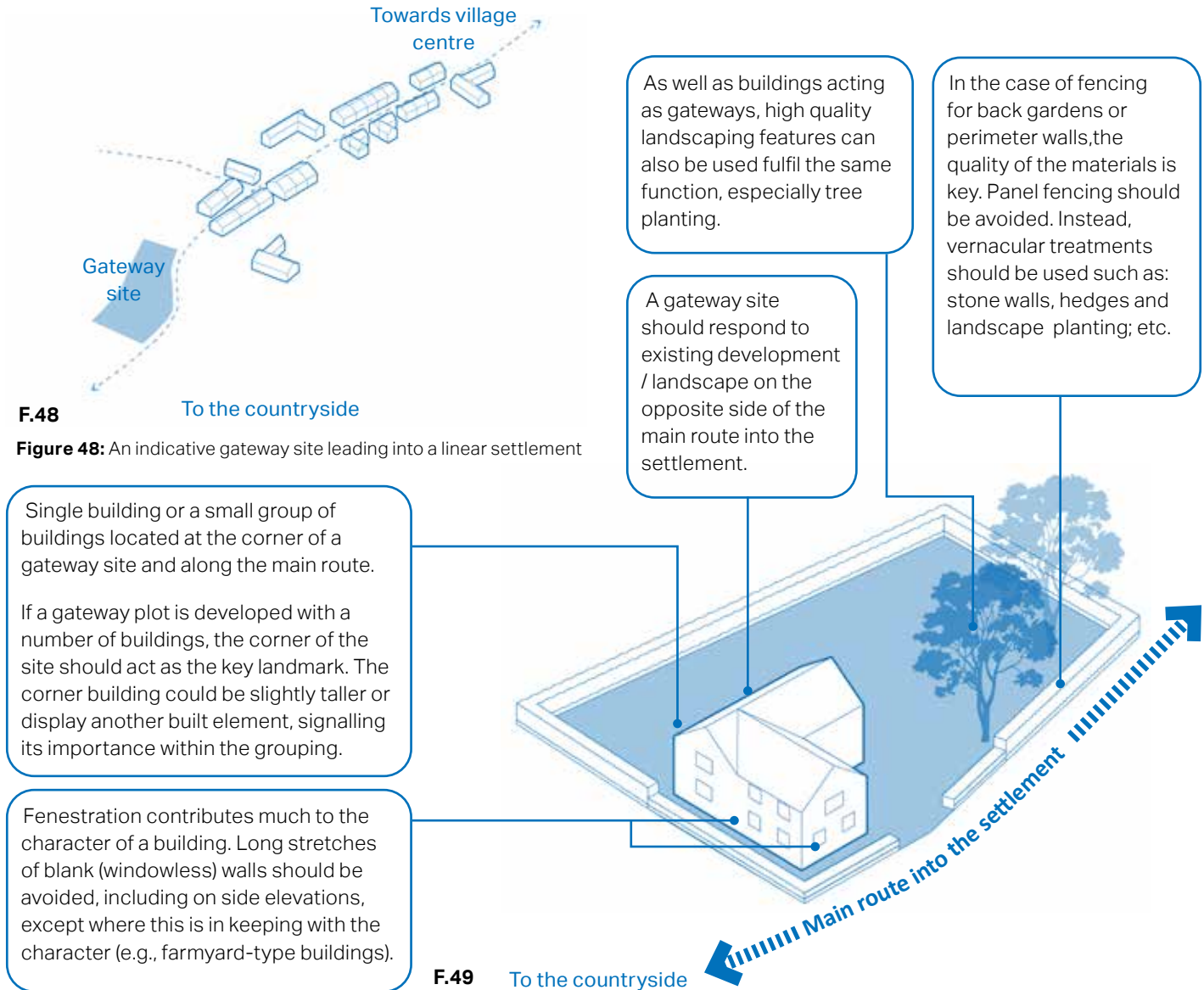
SL 02- SITE SITUATION

GATEWAY

A gateway site is normally situated at the edge of a settlement, near to a main route into the settlement. It marks the transition from one space to another, and is a point of arrival into (and departure from) a settlement, usually from the surrounding landscape setting. The White Swan is a point of arrival situated on Bushmead Road.

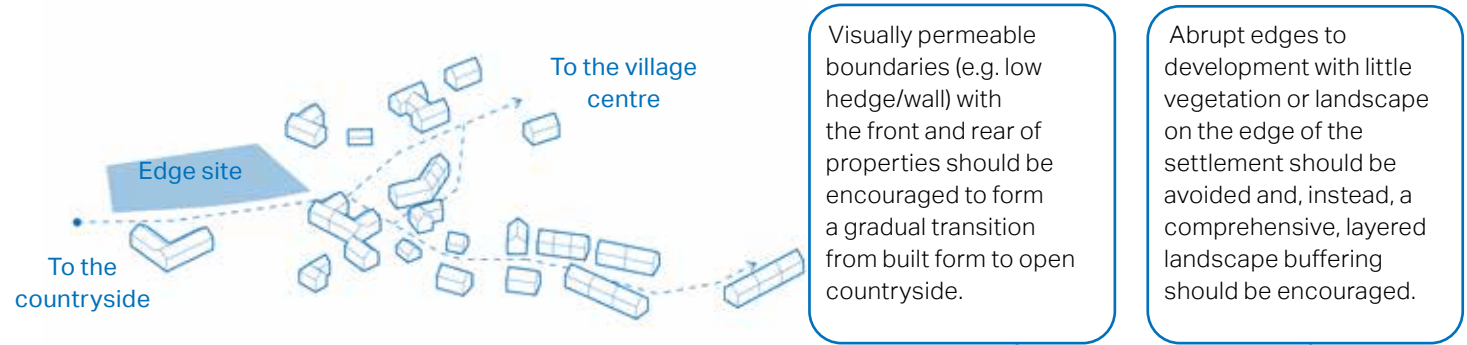
The sense of departure and arrival can often be achieved by a noticeable change in scale, enclosure, or road configuration. The gateway buildings or features should, however, reflect local character.

Figure 49: Indicative sketch highlighting elements of design codes for a gateway site



EDGE SITES

New development often occurs on the edges of a settlement, as the central areas tend to be already developed (except where there might be the odd infill site). Developments on the edge of settlements play an important role in defining the interface between settlement and their surrounding context (be it other developments or the wider landscape). It is, therefore, important to respond positively to the different conditions that occur around the edges of a settlement.

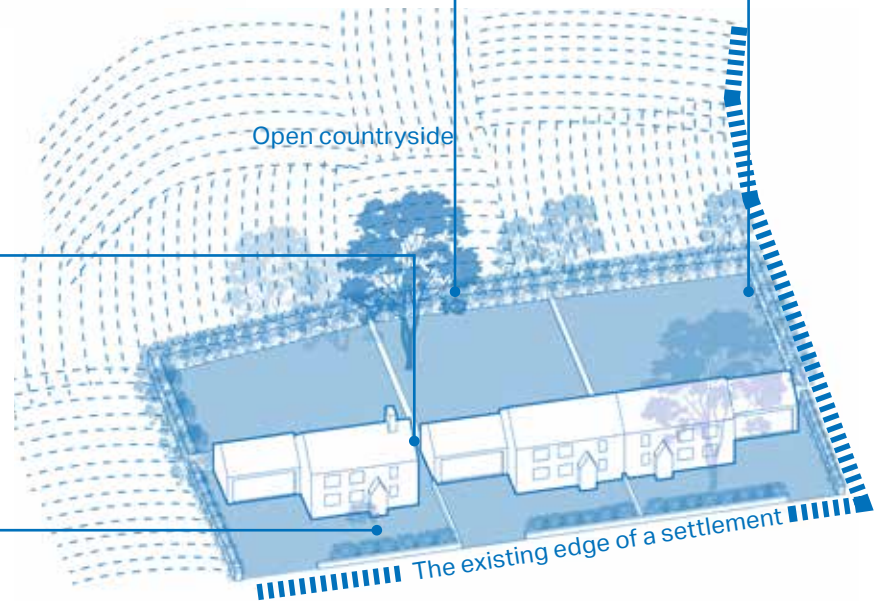


F.50

Figure 50: Indicative edge site to a nucleated settlement

New development proposals should maintain visual connections to the surrounding landscape and long views out of the settlement. Development density should allow for spaces between buildings to preserve views of countryside setting and maintain the perceived openness of the settlement.

Interfaces between the existing settlement edges and any village extension must be carefully designed to integrate new and existing development. Back to back or front to front relationships should be created across the existing settlement edge. Any front to back relationships should be avoided.



F.51

Figure 51: An indicative diagram highlighting elements of design codes for an edge site

INFILL

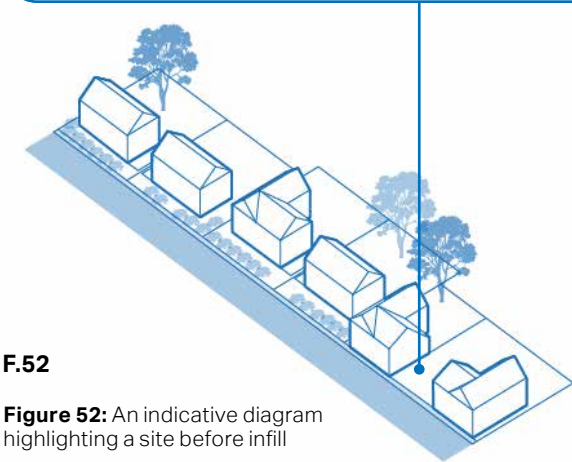
Infill sites will vary in scale, context and location within a settlement. Any new infill can have significant impact on the character and appearance of the built environment. The following principles should be applied in any future infill site:

- Infill development should complement the street scene into which it will be inserted. It does not need to mimic the existing styles but its scale, massing and layout need to be in general conformity with the existing (this is particularly ridge/eave heights, especially for terraced or dense groupings of buildings);
- The building line of new development should be in conformity with the existing. Very often, with terraced or dense groupings, the building line will be exactly the same, but in other cases

it might be acceptable that it closely aligns with the exiting arrangement of buildings where there is an irregular, meandering building line;

- The density of any new infill development should reflect its context and its location in the village (centre or edge), or in a smaller settlement nestled in a wider landscape. The optimum density will respond to surrounding densities whilst making efficient use of land; and
- Where there are opportunities for infill development, proposals should demonstrate that existing views and vistas between buildings and along view corridors have been considered and the aim should be that they are retained, wherever possible.

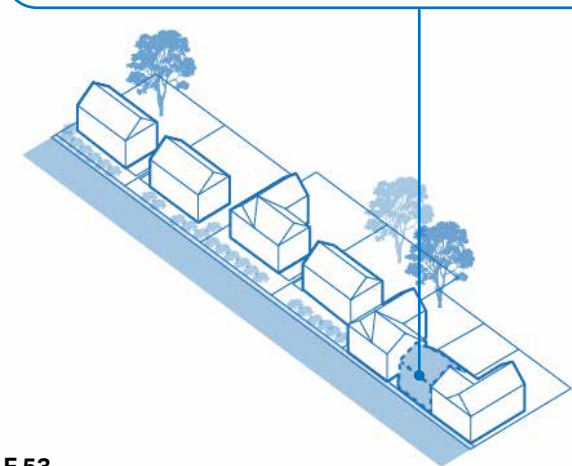
A potential site for infill. The future infill property should complement the street scene.



F.52

Figure 52: An indicative diagram highlighting a site before infill

New building lines should be consistent with existing properties. Some places in Whitchurch have linear or regular meandering arrangements of buildings while others have random and irregular patterns. The infill should also reflect the surrounding context in terms of form, materials and height/massing.



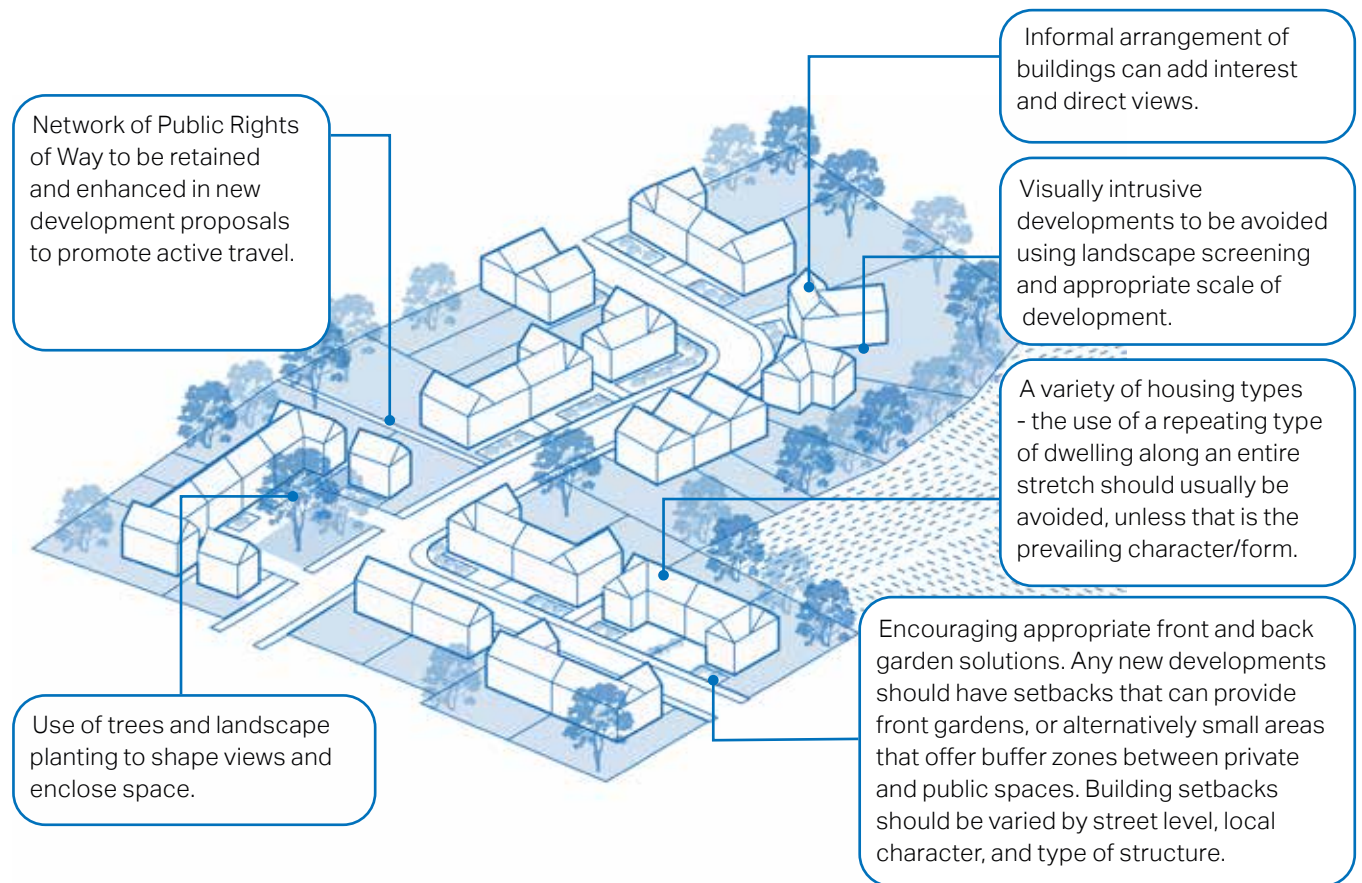
F.53

Figure 53: An indicative diagram highlighting a site after infill building

SL 03- LAYOUT OF BUILDING

The Parish owes much of its character to the historic pattern and layout of its buildings and settlements. New developments should respect the particular building patterns of each settlement in order to contribute positively to their character. In particular:

- Development should adopt the enclosure characteristics demonstrated in the village. New development should strive to knit in with the existing settlement morphology by adopting similar characteristics;
- Development should be considered strategically at the settlement level and should not be considered in isolation;
- New development should be planned to be permeable, promoting active travel at all times, providing plentiful non-vehicular connections;



F.54

Figure 54: Diagram showing layout of buildings elements

- Layout, clustering and massing should take precedent from the best examples of development within the surrounding context. The following page illustrates some precedent examples from the existing Neighbourhood Area; and
- New development should respond to site specific micro-climates and sun paths and use these as key design drivers to increase the environmental comfort for building users, both internally and externally.



Figure 55: Various massing and layout on Market Hill add interest to the Conservation Area

Figure 56: Public Rights of Way network link different parts of the village and encourage active travel. The footpath links Hawleys Lane to the countryside

Figure 57: Detached houses with adequate front gardens along oving Road

RC. In keeping with rural character

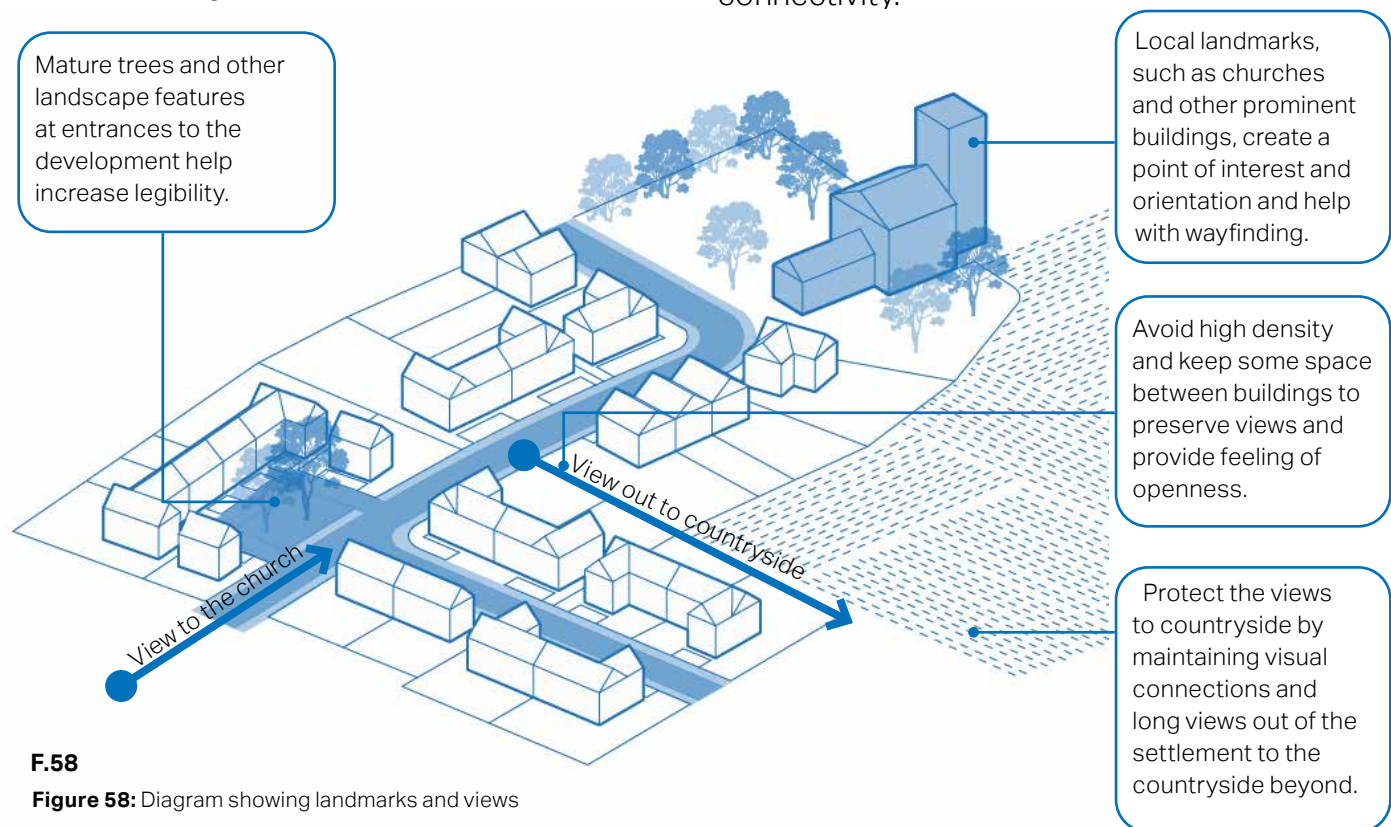
RC 01- VIEWS AND LANDMARKS

- New development proposals should not be visually intrusive. This should be achieved through appropriate scaling and design, including landscape screening, where appropriate;
- As noted above, existing views and vistas should be actively considered when preparing new development proposals. Where possible, new developments should seek to retain existing and frame new views and vistas towards the wider countryside;
- Where appropriate, future development proposals should incorporate landscape and built features to create landmarks, helping with legibility;
- New development proposals should maintain visual connections to the surrounding landscape and long views out of the settlement. Development density should allow for spaces between buildings to preserve views of

countryside beyond and maintain the perceived openness of the settlement; and

- Creating short-distance views broken by buildings, trees or landmarks helps

to create memorable routes and places, and easily intelligible links between places. New developments should be oriented to maximise the opportunities for memorable views and visual connectivity.





F.59



F.61

Figure 59: The White Swan, a well- known landmark on the High Street

Figure 60: Significant view towards the undulating countryside

Figure 61: View to Church of St John the Evangelist, a grade II* listed building on Church Lane

Figure 62: Walnut Cottage, a grade II listed landmark built in 17th Century on Market Hill



F.60



F.62

RC 02- TREES AND LANDSCAPING

The abundance of trees is one of the Parish's greatest assets. They provide shading and cooling, absorb carbon dioxide, act as habitats and green links for species, reduce air pollution and assist water attenuation and humidity regulation. For people, they help alleviate stress and anxiety, help with recovery from ill-health



F.63

Figure 63: Diagram showing green spaces and landscape planting

and create a sense of positive mental health and well-being. In addition, they add life to the landscape and help shape and add character to open spaces.

The following guidelines focus on the design aspects and appearance of planting and trees in private gardens, as well as public open spaces and streets.

PLANTING STANDARD

- Aim to preserve existing mature trees, incorporating them into the new landscape design and using them as accents and landmarks, where appropriate;
- Consider canopy size when locating trees; reducing the overall number of trees but increasing the size of trees is likely to have the greatest positive long-term impact;
- Size of tree pits should allow sufficient soil around the tree. Ensure tree stems

are in the centre of the verge to provide a 1m clearance of the footway or carriageway;

- Tree root zones should be protected to ensure that trees can grow to their mature size. Root barriers must be installed where there is a risk of damaging foundations, walls and underground utilities;
- New trees should be added to strengthen vistas, focal points and movement corridors, while retaining clear visibility into and out of amenity spaces. They should, however, not block key view corridors and vehicular circulation sight lines;
- New trees should be integrated into the design of new developments from the outset rather than left as an afterthought to avoid conflicts with above- and below-ground utilities; and
- To ensure resilience and increase visual interest, a variety of tree species

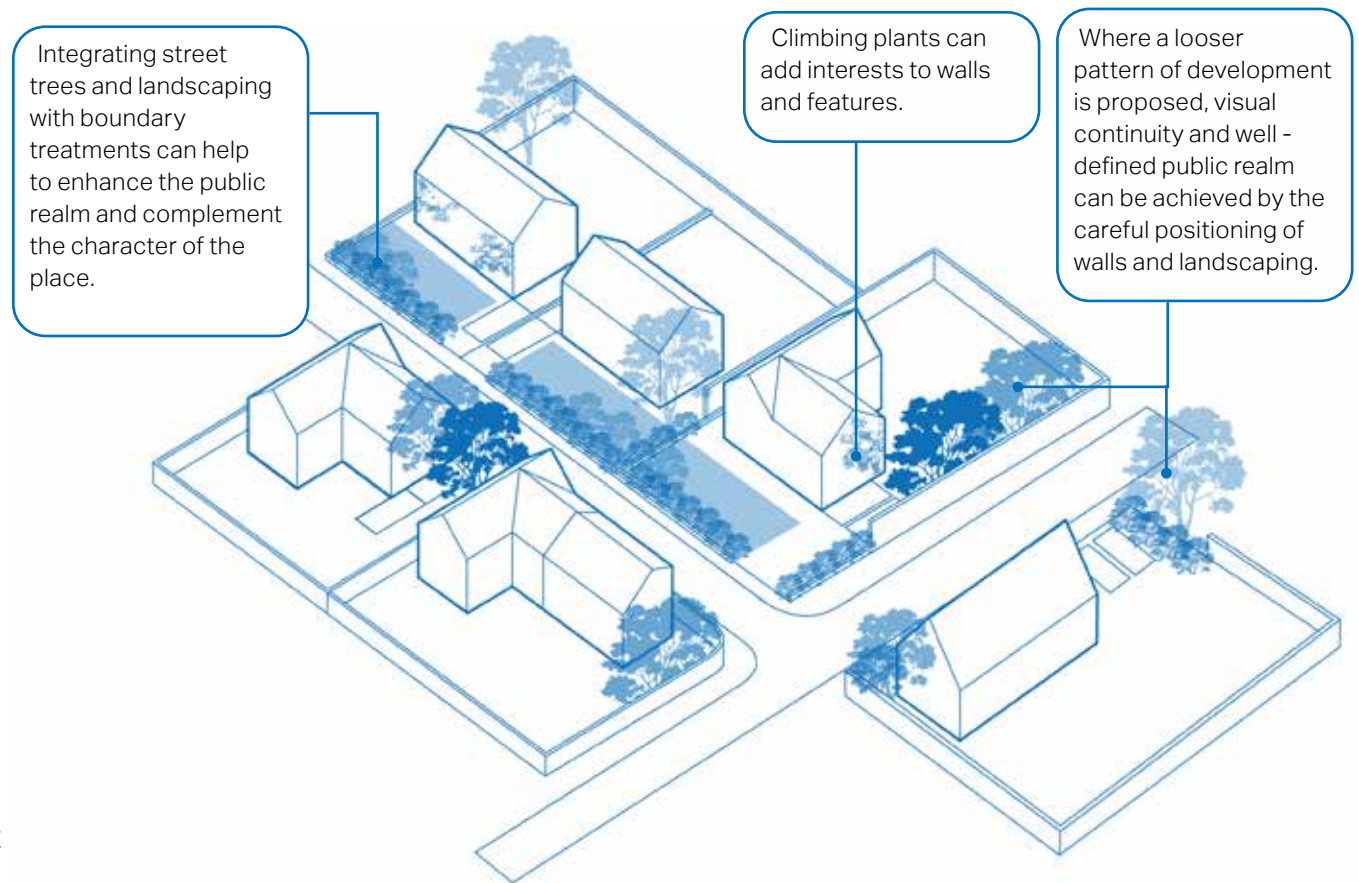
is preferred over a single one. Tree species should be chosen to reflect the prevailing character of the landscape, soil conditions and the associated mix of native species, but should also have regard to climate change, environmental/habitat benefits, size at maturity and ornamental qualities.

- Regulations, standards, and guidelines relevant to the planting and maintenance of trees are listed below:
- Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery;¹
- Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers;²
- Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure;³

¹ Trees & Design Action Group (2012). *Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery*. Available at: http://www.tdag.org.uk/uploads/4/2/8/0/4280686/tdag_trees-in-hard-landscapes_september_2014_colour.pdf

² Trees & Design Action Group (2012). *Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers*. Available at: http://www.tdag.org.uk/uploads/4/2/8/0/4280686/tdag_treesinthetownscape.pdf

³ Trees & Design Action Group (2019). *Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure*. Available at: http://www.tdag.org.uk/uploads/4/2/8/0/4280686/tdag_treespeciesguidev1.3.pdf



F.64

Figure 64: Diagram showing trees and landscaping that complement the public realm and create a sense of enclosure

- BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations;⁴ and
- BS 5837:1991 Guide for trees in relation to construction.⁵

GIVE SPATIAL ENCLOSURE, PROVIDE SCREENING AND PRIVACY

The use of hedges, hedgerows trees and walls contribute to the strong character of the area and a sense of enclosure. To respect the existing context, both the building and the boundary feature should be consistent with the prevailing character, although there should be some allowance for an some of variation to provide added visual interest.

- Existing hedges, hedgerows trees and

⁴ British Standards Institution (2014). *BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations*. Available at: <https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030219672>

⁵ British Standards Institution (1991). *BS 5837:1991 Guide for trees in relation to construction*. Available at: <https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=00000000000258384>

walls should, wherever appropriate, be retained to contribute to this sense of enclosure. Additional or replacement hedges and trees should be planted to maintain the continuity of existing hedges provide continuity of hedge and hedgerow tree cover; and

- Where appropriate and feasible, any new developments should have setbacks that allow for front gardens or else a small area to provide a planted buffer zone between the private space and public space.

COMPLEMENT PUBLIC REALM AND ENHANCE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL IDENTITY

Planting can make an appreciable difference to the appearance of an area, as well as adding to the local identity.

- New development should use boundary features which are complementary to

the street and enhance the character of the village. The use of trees, hedges and planting in publicly visible areas, including edges and interfaces, should be encouraged; and

- Climbing plants are good at screening features such as garages, blank walls and fences.

FORM FOCAL POINTS AND FRAME VIEWS

In addition to the intrinsic value of trees, they can also have practical use value. In a small-scale open space, trees provide focal point of interest.



Figure 65: Use of tall trees and well-kept hedges on Firs Close

Figure 66: Integrating landscape with the built environment create an interesting public realm and enhance local identity on Market Hill

Figure 67: Mature and well-maintained tree on front garden of Mary Monk's House located on High Street

B. Built form

B 01- PROPORTION AND SCALE

The relationships between the building and its elements can provide visual interest and enhance the local character.

- The proportions of a building's elements should be related to each other as well as the scale and proportion of the building;
- The proportions should be dictated by and respond to the type of activity proposed as well as the composition of the existing streetscape;
- The front elevation of the buildings must be arranged in an orderly way to avoid creating cluttered façades; and
- Features such as windows, doors and solid walls should create vertical and horizontal rhythms along the façade providing variety.

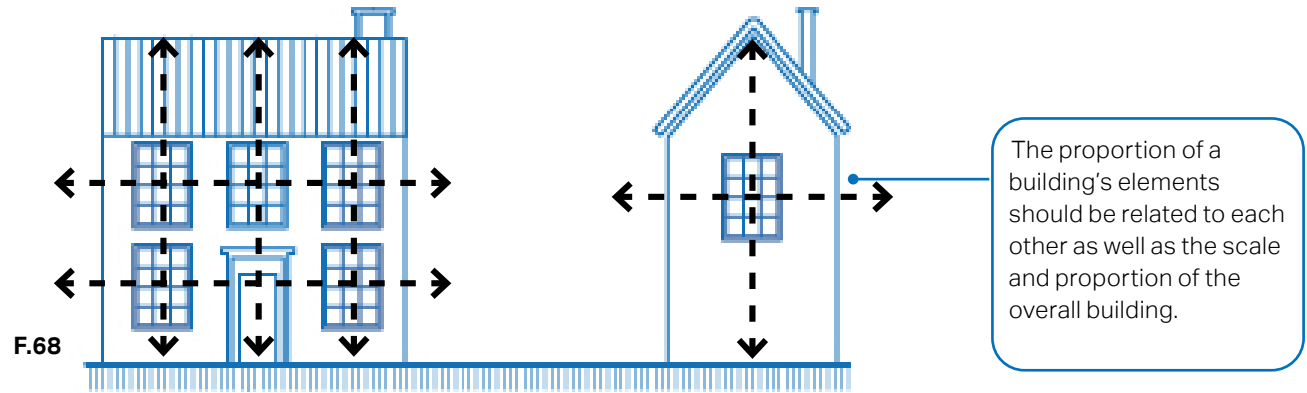


Figure 68: Elevation showing typical building proportion in a detached house



Figure 69: The vertical and horizontal rhythms on Firs Close

Figure 70: The grade II listed building proportion on White Horse Lane

Figure 71: The building proportion on White Horse Lane

Figure 72: Existing composition of a row of terraced buildings on Bushmead Road

B 02- ASPECT AND ORIENTATION

Buildings should be designed to maximise solar gain, daylight and sun penetration, while avoiding overheating. Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, they should be orientated to incorporate passive solar design principles. These principles include:

- One of the main glazed elevations should be within 30° due south to benefit from solar heat gain. Any north-facing façades might have a similar proportion of window to wall area to minimise heat loss on this cooler side (see Figure 73);
- If houses are not aligned east-west, rear wings could be included so that some of the property benefits from solar passive gain (see Figure 74);
- Homes should be designed to avoid overheating through optimisation of glazed areas, natural ventilation strategies via passive/ non mechanical

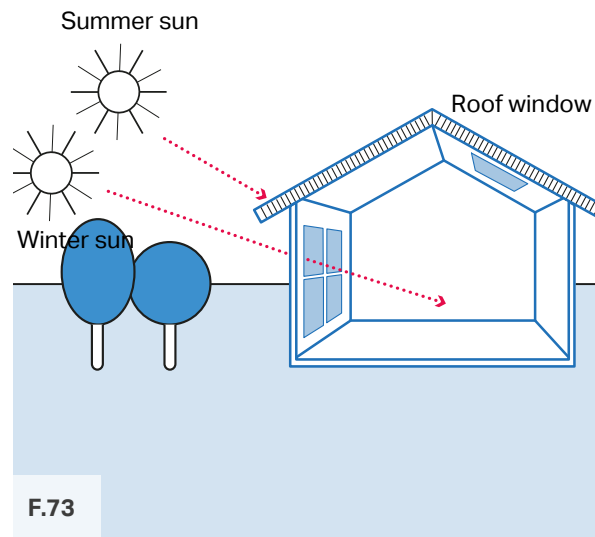


Figure 73: The use of roof window, pitch roof, location and size of windows in favour of maximising solar gain

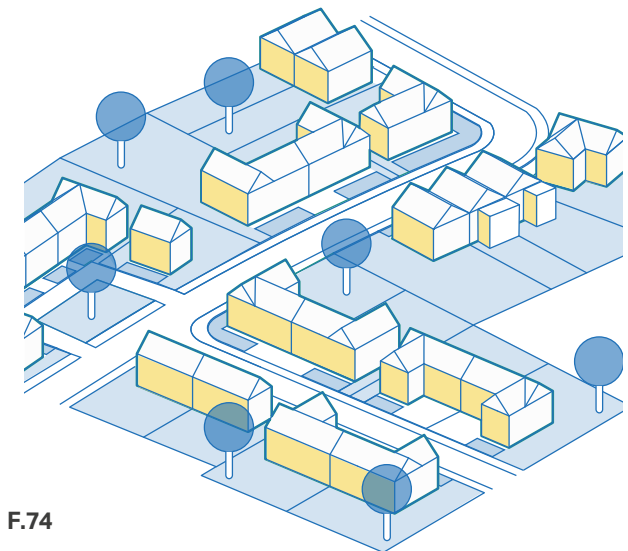
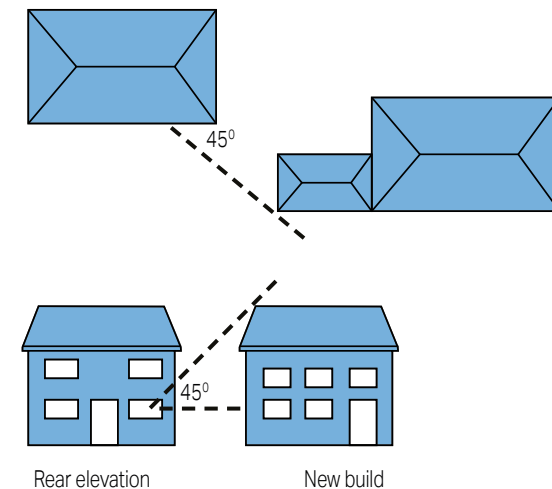


Figure 74: Elevations that would benefit from passive solar gain

design measures. The natural ventilation strategies include high- and low- level openings, longer roof overhangs deep window reveals and external louvers/ shutters to provide shading in hotter summer months (see Figure 74);

- North facing single aspect units should be avoided or mitigated with the use of reflective light or roof windows;
- Providing solar panel on roof of south facing buildings recommended to enhance energy efficiency and sustainability (see Section 6);
- Minimise the degree to which the development aspect faces onto main roads or other significant source of air pollution and/or noise and vibration, which would preclude opening windows; and
- Two storey detached and semi-detached dwellings should not intrude into a 45 degree splay line drawn from the corner of an adjacent residential property. This principle is dependent on the spacing

and relative positions of the dwellings and consideration will also be given to the juxtaposition of properties, land levels and the position of windows and extensions on neighbouring properties (see Figure 75).



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Figure 75: The 45% rule ensures that adequate levels of daylight can be maintained.

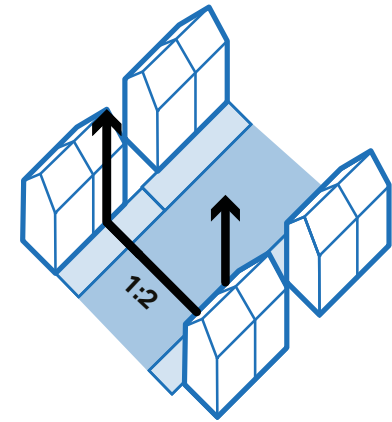
B 03. ENCLOSURE

Enclosure is the relationship between public spaces and the buildings or other features that surround them. A more cohesive and attractive urban form is achieved where this relationship is in proportion.

The following principles serve as general guidelines that should be considered to achieve a satisfactory sense of enclosure:

- Façades should have an appropriate ratio between the width of the street and the building height;
- Buildings should be designed to turn corners and terminate views;
- Narrow gaps between buildings must be avoided, they should be either detached/semi-detached or properly linked;

- Building lines should run parallel to the back of the pavement;
- In places with lower density, the sense of enclosure is provided from the use of natural elements such as trees and hedges; and
- In the case of terraced buildings, it is recommended that a variety of plot widths, and facade alignments should be considered during the design process to create an attractive townscape.



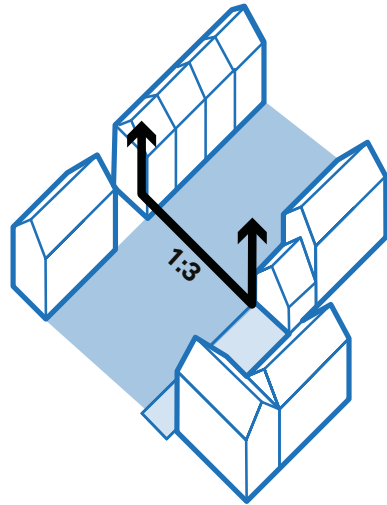
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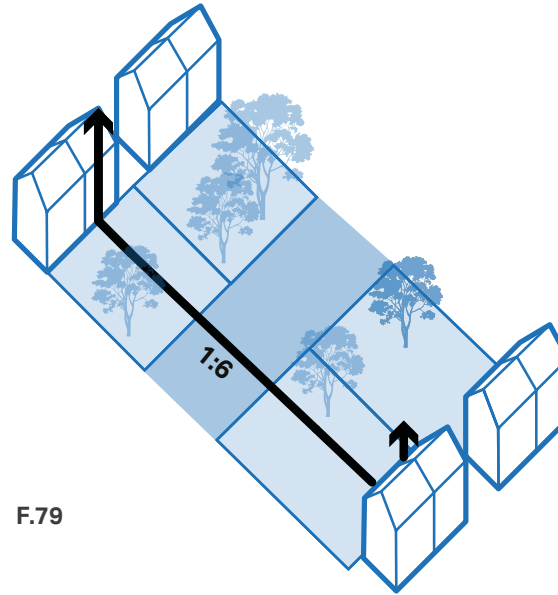
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Figure 76: Enclosure ratio on Little London is about 1:2

Figure 77: Enclosure ration on Little London is 1:2



F.78



F.79

Figure 78: Enclosure ratio on Oving Road is typically 1:3

Figure 79: Enclosure ratio on Market Hill can be more than 1:6

Figure 80: The example of enclosure ratio which is 1:3 on Oving Road

Figure 81: The enclosure ratio on Bushmead Road and some part of Market Hill is about 1:6

05



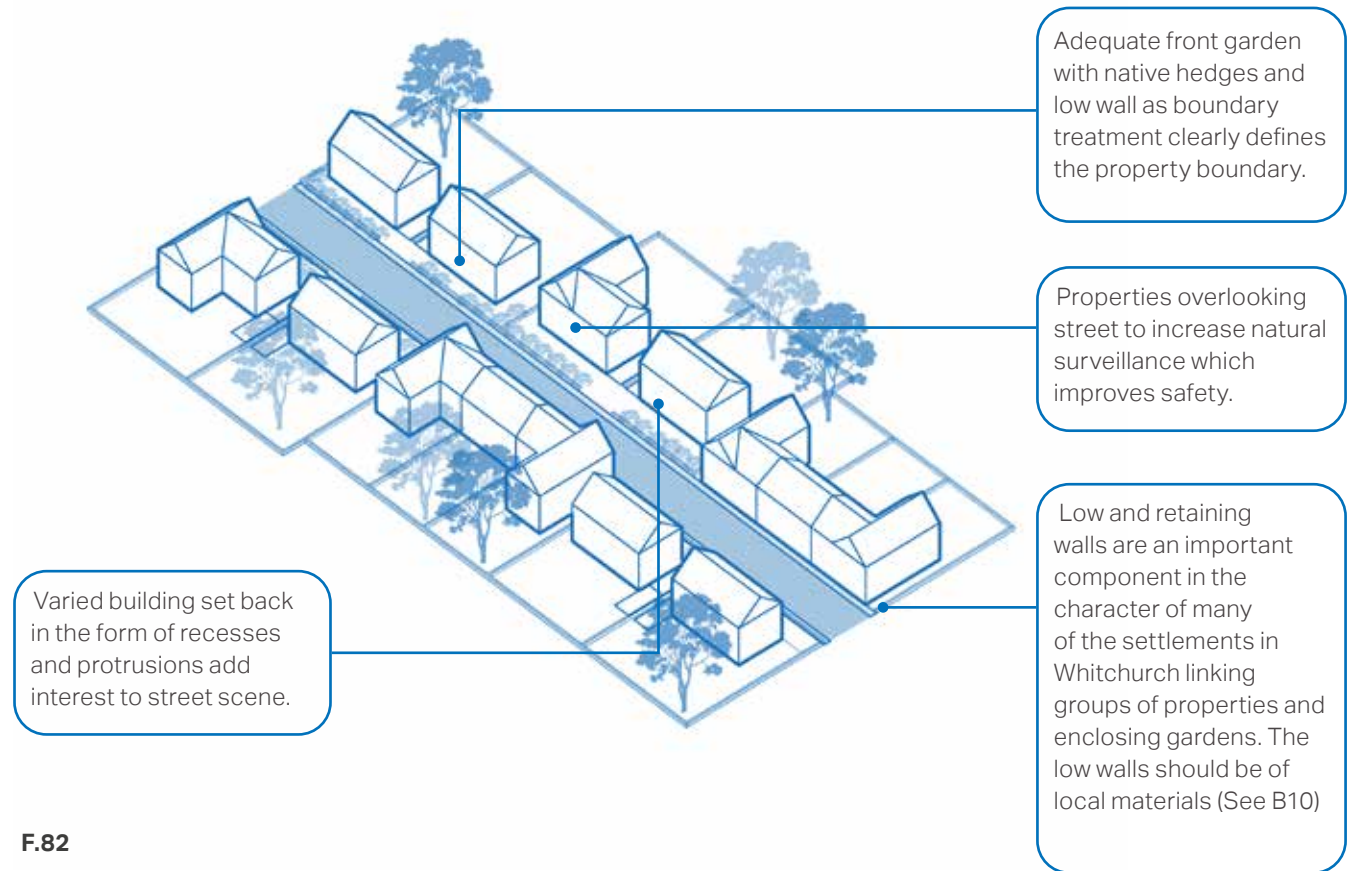
F.80



F.81

B 04- BOUNDARY TREATMENT

- Buildings should ordinarily front onto streets. The building line can have subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions, but will generally follow a consistent line;
- Buildings should be designed to ensure that streets and/or public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from adjacent buildings. This can be achieved by placing ground floor habitable rooms and upper floor windows facing the street;
- Natural boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity of the building line and help define the street, appropriate to the character of the area. They should be mainly continuous hedges and low walls, as appropriate, made of traditional materials found elsewhere in the village;



F.82

Figure 82: Illustrative diagram showing boundary treatments

- Front gardens/soft planted shallow setbacks should be provided in most instances, although it is recognised that there are some parts of Whitchurch where the prevailing character and form is one where buildings sit to the back of the footway/ highway;
- If placed on the property boundary, waste storage should be integrated as part of the overall design of the property. Landscaping could also be used to minimise the visual impact of bins and recycling containers; and
- Locally distinctive landscape features and planting, such as low wall boundary and hedges of native species should be used in new development to define boundaries. Any material that is not in keeping with the local character should be avoided.



F.83



F.85



F.84

Figure 83: Mix of low stone wall and hedges as boundary treatment

Figure 84: Mix of red-brick low wall and hedges as boundary treatment

Figure 85: No boundary treatment on the High street

B 05. BUILDING LINE AND SETBACK

The use of continuous building lines and setback distances contribute to the overall character of the area and the sense of enclosure of the streets and public spaces. Continuous building lines with a minimum gap create a strong distinction between public and private spaces, and provide definition to the public realm. Where buildings are more generously set back from the carriageway, the threshold spaces should be well landscaped.

- To ensure sufficient street enclosure private front threshold should have a modest depth and accommodate a small garden or area for plantation;
- Low to medium densities in residential areas can vary setbacks in order to respond to the landscape context and the more open character of the area; and

- Front gardens can be much deeper where the topography requires so or to respond to the existing character area. It also helps to create a softer transition between countryside, green spaces and built environment.

Figure 86: Subtle changes in building lines with deep front gardens on Bushmead Road

Figure 87: Consistent building line with no front garden on the High Street

Figure 88: Various setbacks with different portion of front gardens along Market Hill



B 06. ROOFLINE

Creating variety and interest in the roofscape is an important element in the design of attractive buildings and places. Traditional buildings within the Parish are unified by their simplicity of form, with gables and pitched roofs, which combined with variations in the height of eaves and ridges levels and the number of storeys, make an important contribution to defining the character of the area.

There are certain elements that serve as guidelines in achieving a well-designed roofscape:

- Interesting local traditions should be considered, such as slate and clay plain tiles and pantiles;

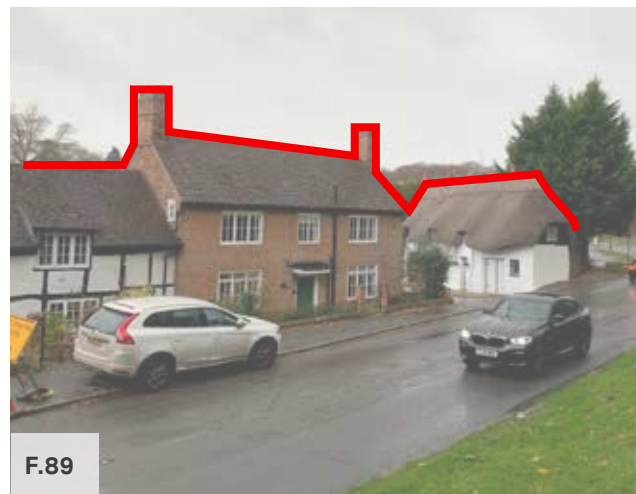
Figure 89: The pitch roof proportion in keeping with the scale of buildings on the High Street

Figure 90: Subtle changes in roofline on Little London. Cross-gabled roof provide variety in roofscape

- The scale and pitch of the roof should always be in proportion with the dimensions of the building itself. Recently steep pitches used in new developments specially along north-western Oving Road which should be avoided in new developments;
- Monotonous building elevations should be avoided, therefore, subtle

changes in roofline can be achieved during the design process. Roof shapes and pitches must, however, employ a restrained palette on a given building; overly complex roofs must be avoided; and

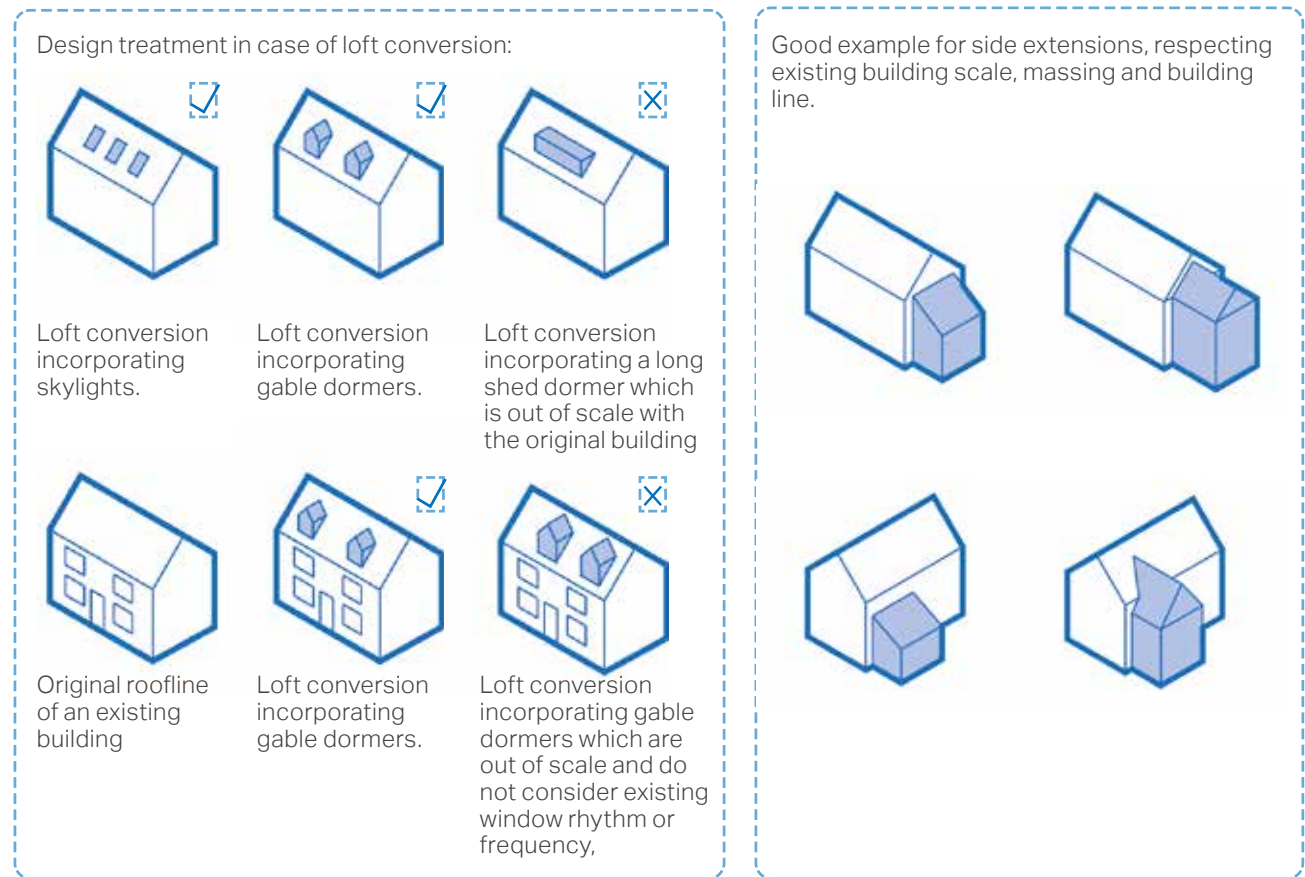
- Rooflines should respect view corridors and not obstruct them. They should also be considerate of topography and existing landmarks.



B 07. EXTENSION AND ALTERATION

There are a number of principles that residential extensions and conversions should follow to maintain character:

- The original building should remain the dominant element of the property regardless of the scale or number of extensions. The newly built extension should not overwhelm the building from any given viewpoint;
- Extensions should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling;
- Designs that wrap around the existing building and involve overly complicated roof forms should be avoided;
- The pitch and form of the roof used on the building adds to its character and extensions should respond to this where appropriate;



F.91

Figure 91: Some examples for different type of building extensions

- Extensions should consider the materials, architectural features, window sizes and proportions of the existing building and respect these elements to design an extension that matches and complements the existing building;
- In the case of side extensions, the new part should be set back from the front of the main building and retain the proportions of the original building. This is in order to reduce any visual impact of the join between existing and new;
- In the case of rear extensions, the new part should not have a harmful effect on neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing, overlooking or privacy issues;
- Many household extensions are covered by permitted development rights, and so do not need planning permission. These rights do not apply in certain locations such as Conservation Areas;



F.92

Figure 92: The Old House extended to left with new gabled and jettied bays symmetrically matching the original part



F.93

Figure 93: Extension to right of a grade II listed building on Market Hill. It was formerly an outbuilding and the extension is of whitewashed brick with one storey and 2 bays of C20 3-light metal casements

- Any housing conversions should respect and preserve the building's original form and character; and
- Where possible, reuse as much of the original materials as possible, or alternatively, use like-for-like materials. Any new materials should be sustainable and be used on less prominent building parts.



Figure 94: A positive example of extension on Priory Hotel matching C19-C20 extension with jettied first floor set back to right. Other C18-C19 stone and brick extensions to rear



Figure 95: A positive example of side extension on Mount Pleasant. Use of local vernacular such as red brick and stone on facade



Figure 96: Incongruous example of side extension. The windows on first floor are not in keeping with the window type used on the wall on the High Street

CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS

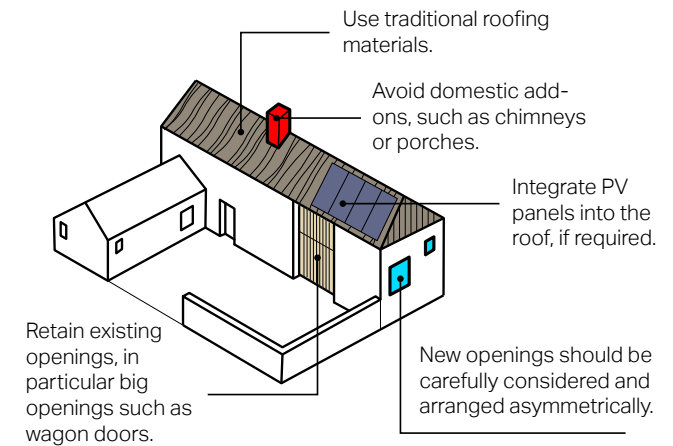
The redevelopment of farm buildings has been a feature in Whitchurch, with some high quality conversions adding to the variety of housing.

- Avoid domestic add-ons such as chimneys, porches, satellite dishes, domestic external lighting and hanging baskets;
- Retain features characteristic of historic working buildings such as the openings, which should not be filled in, ventilation slots and any use-specific historic additions;
- New openings should generally be avoided, and kept to a minimum when necessary. They should never be planned in a regular or symmetrical pattern, as this is overly domestic;
- Avoid features such as dormer windows. If rooflights are used, they should be sited discreetly so as to not become a feature in the landscape;

- Where included, solar PV panels should integrate with the overall pitch, materials and feel of the roof;
- Existing brickwork, cladding and stone work should be reused or reclaimed. Consideration should be given to the material source and matching the colour, texture, size and bond of the existing brickwork;
- Courtyards should be surfaced in a material that reflects its rural setting. Farmyards should remain open and not be divided by fences or walls. Parking spaces should not be formally marked out; and
- Boundary walls should be left intact, and not chopped through or reduced for access or to create visual splays.

Figure 97: Diagram to illustrate some design principles for the conversion of agricultural buildings

Figure 98: Before and after of a barn conversion where the scale, heights, openings of the building have been retained and respected



F.97



F.98

B 08. DESIGNING WORKSPACE INTO NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

After the pandemic impacted the world, many people made the abrupt shift to working from home. More home working should now be expected. The following principles should be considered in this regard:

- Create areas that can be adapted into or used as a designated work area free from distraction;
- If not designed in from the start, design gardens in such a way that home office structures can be installed, subject to planning permission; and
- Build flexibility into new homes so that they can be adapted to changing needs.



F.99

Figure 99: New houses in Cambridge designed with a studio above the garage, ideal for use as a home office

B 09. ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

There are diverse architectural styles in the Parish ranging from Victorian cottages, Georgian detached houses, Gothic houses and 19th mansion houses, plus the use of vernacular arts and craft on the buildings. Terraced houses and semi-detached housing typologies can also be seen the village.

Materials used on walls include brick handmade and machined red, stone, timber frame, render, painted brick, weatherboarding and pebble dash. Tile clay handmade, tile clay machined concrete, slate, pantile and thatch are some of materials used on roofs.

- New developments should encourage and support innovative and proactive approaches to design and opportunities to deliver decentralised energy systems powered by a renewable or low carbon source and associated infrastructure, including community-led initiatives; and



F.100



F.102



F.101

Figure 100: Detached house built by mix of timber frame, red brick and render on little London

Figure 101: A cottage on Market Hill built by painted brick, render, dark brown weatherboarding and thatched roof.

Figure 102: Terraced houses on the High Street constructed by red brick and bargeboard on gabled roof

- New developments should strive for good quality design that meets climatic targets for CO2 emissions and that can be constructed sustainability maximising opportunities for recycling.



Figure 103: Priory Hotel a detached building on the High Street built by red brick and timber frame and multi pane casement windows

Figure 104: A mansion house on Oving Road built by timber, red brick and casement windows plus clay tile and chimney stacks on roof.

Figure 105: Semi- detached houses on Ashgrove Gardens

B 10- BUILDING VERNACULAR

As previously stated, the special character of buildings in Whitchurch Conservation Area arises from the mixture of local stone and red brick and clay tile, alongside slate.

Informed by the local vernacular, the following pages illustrates acceptable materials and detailing for future housing developments in Whitchurch. The use of traditional construction finishes should be specified for all new development and repair work. Material specification quality for repair, replacement and modern developments should be maintained. The requirement for additional housing in the village should not trump architectural quality and character of the area.

Future developments should carefully apply this code to avoid creating a pastiche of the existing local vernacular. Detailing can be interpreted using contemporary methods to avoid this.

In the case of a conversion of an existing historic building into a residential use, this should look to preserve and enhance any existing heritage features, to maintain the integrity of the original building. Any new fenestration should be positioned carefully to maintain the character and balance of the building and reflect the existing design through use of complementary materials and finishes. These buildings create the opportunity to provide large single dwellings or can be split into a series of smaller dwellings

Wall



Red brick



Timber frame and white render



Black weatherboarding



Local stone



Mix or painted brick and timber



Red brick in herringbone pattern

Fenestration



Multi pane casement window



Sash window



Bay window



Casement window



Wooden door and casement window



Decorated gabled porch

Roof



Plain tile



Chimney stack built by red brick



Gabled dormer



Slate



Thatched roof



Clay tile

Colour palette



BH. Built heritage

BH 01- HERITAGE AND TRADITION

Heritage and existing buildings can be a linchpin for new development, giving it more meaning and helping ensure that it is of its place and connected to the past. The approach to heritage must be one of protecting and enhancing historic assets (e.g. listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments), including both statutory designations and local designations should they be made in future. The village fabric of Whitchurch is already interwoven with both traditional and more modern day development (post-war), although predominantly retains its traditional character which is most valued by residents. Indeed, the local preference is for building that responds to heritage and traditional context to preserve and enhance the traditional appearance of the village.

The village shows that we can develop sensitively, whilst referencing local traditions such as building form, scale, types, materials and arrangement.

Future buildings should be predominantly 2 storeys and include changes in roof height with the presence of chimneys to contribute to the visual interest of the village.



F.106

Figure 106:
The mix of vernacular stone and timber frame on Old House Facade on Church Headland Lane



F.107

Figure 107:
The Firs located on Little London built by high quality timber frame and render

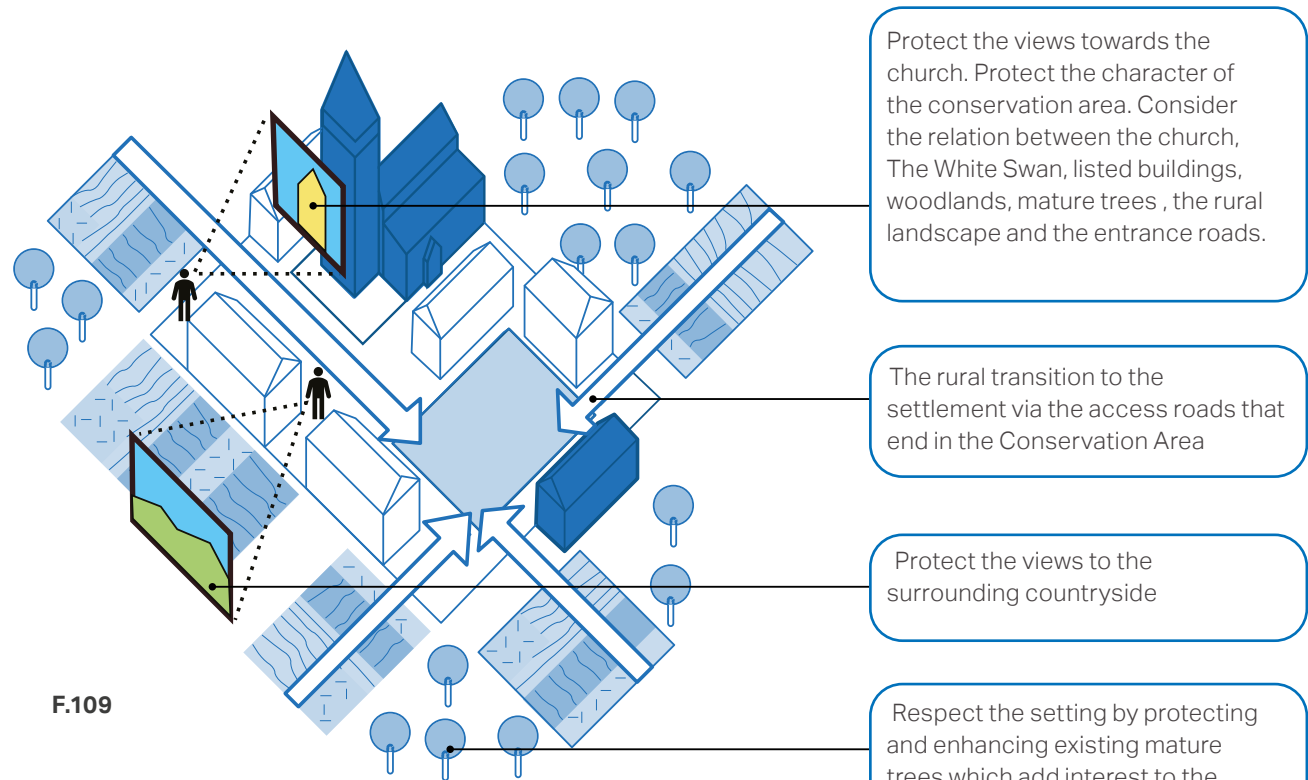


F.108

Figure 108:
Mary Monk's House constructed by red brick, white render and slate roof

BH 02- RESPECT SETTING

- The historical relationships between the settlements, Church of St John the Evangelist, woodlands, mature trees and other community facilities such as The White Swan should be clearly defined;
- Protect the views of Church of St John the Evangelist;
- Protect the character of the Parish by protecting views to the surrounding countryside and into the Parish; and
- Maximise opportunities for the restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats.



F.109

Figure 109:
Diagram to illustrate the different components of respecting the setting

Protect the views towards the church. Protect the character of the conservation area. Consider the relation between the church, The White Swan, listed buildings, woodlands, mature trees, the rural landscape and the entrance roads.

The rural transition to the settlement via the access roads that end in the Conservation Area

Protect the views to the surrounding countryside

Respect the setting by protecting and enhancing existing mature trees which add interest to the surrounding countryside

BH 03- RESPECT THE CHARACTER

There are various architectural styles and diverse traditional materials within the conservation areas and numerous outstanding listed buildings within the Parish.

- Use traditional building materials and feature elements in any new developments, extensions and/ or refurbishment in the area such as red brick, render, weatherboarding, timber frame, stone; and
- Encourage use of current roof style and materials such as gabled roof style, slate, thatch and clay tiled materials.



F.110



F.112



F.111

Figure 110:
Thatched roof and chimney stacks on The White Swan on the High Street

Figure 111:
Use of traditional building materials and feature elements in future developments

Figure 112:
Respect the character of Market Hill and its openness

SM. Safe movement

Safe movement looks at how to create safe, attractive and convenient connections around Whitchurch and to the wider area utilising sustainable modes of transport where possible.

Walking and cycling should be encouraged to support growth, limit the negative impacts of traffic congestion on the roads and create direct and memorable routes. In addition, public transport should be used to support active travel and provide improved links between places.

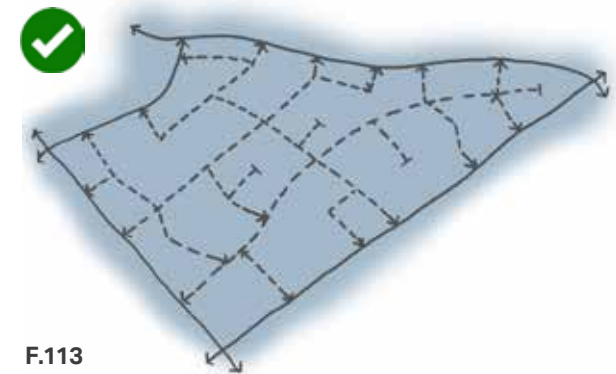
SM 01- INTERCONNECTED STREET NETWORK

Within Whitchurch, the speed of traffic and rat runs are the main issues on Oving Road specially from the High Street to the Surgery. This can be addressed by provision of traffic calming measure (See SM 03).

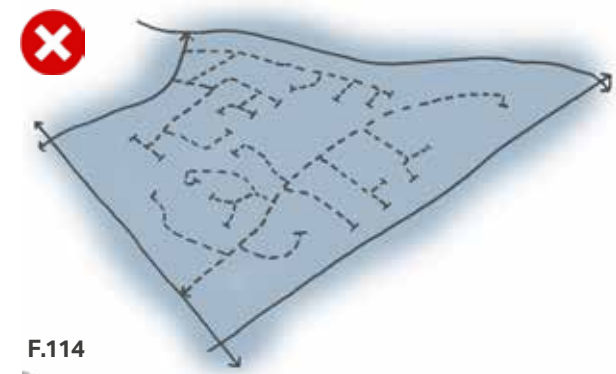
- Proposal shall have regards the existing relationship between buildings and the street or other surrounding open

spaces and how the siting and position of any new buildings can positively respond to this;

- Minimising the number of culs-de-sac should be encouraged to promote permeability. Also there should be a clear hierarchy of streets to facilitate different levels of activity. Streets should incorporate opportunities for landscaping, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage; and
- The design of the street network should respond to the topography and natural desire lines.



F.113



F.114

Figure 113:
A connected layout, with some cul-de-sacs, balances sustainability and security aims in a walkable neighbourhood

Figure 114:
A layout dominated by cul-de-sacs encourages reliance on the car for even local journeys

SM 02. PEOPLE- FRIENDLY STREETS

Public footpaths offer access to the wider landscape from the settlements and the wide variety of lanes play a crucial role in connecting the character areas within the parish. They also provide opportunities for people to enjoy nature, benefiting both their physical and mental health. The following are the principles for interconnected streets, pedestrian/ cycle paths:

- New streets should be considered a space to be used by all, not only vehicles. Therefore, it is essential that street design prioritises the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. Pedestrian and cycle routes need to be continuous and well connected, and can be from point to point or circular depending of the nature of the site and the relationship with the surrounding network;

- Propose short and walkable distances which are usually defined to be within a 10 minute walk or a 5 mile trip by bike. This information can be shown on signage at key points within the Parish. If the design proposal calls for a new street or cycle/pedestrian link, it must connect destinations and origins providing multiple access points where possible; and
- Create improvements to existing green networks to promote active travel opportunities, while also enhancing habitat and biodiversity.



F.115



F.116

Figure 115: A public footpath connects Bushmead Road to other part of the village and the countryside

Figure 116: A footpath linking Ashgrove Gardens to the countryside

SM03- TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

Traffic calming uses physical design and other measures to improve safety for everyone. These measures can be applied on roads that have traffic issues such as High Street and Oving Road.

It aims to encourage safer, more responsible driving and potentially reduce traffic flow. Paving materials in all traffic calming measures should contribute to the character of an area as a place to be read as a coherent whole.

Note that traffic calming is usually outside the remit of neighbourhood planning policies, unless as part of a wider planning application.

SPEED BUMPS / HUMPS AND CUSHIONS

There are traffic calming devices that use vertical deflection to slow vehicle traffic to improve safety conditions.

SPEED TABLES

A speed table is long flat-topped speed humps that slow vehicles more gradually than humps and provide safer conditions.

RAISED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Raised pedestrian crossings act as speed tables, often situated at intersections, as well as improving the walking environment.



F.117



F.118

Figure 117:
An example of raised pedestrian crossing with a plateau in Hemel Hempstead

Figure 118:
Speed cushions

SM 04 - PARKING SOLUTIONS

Parking areas are a necessity of modern development. However, they do not need to be unsightly or dominate views towards the house. Parking provision should be undertaken as an exercise of placemaking.

- When placing parking at the front of a property, the area should be designed to minimise visual impact and to blend with the existing streetscape and materials. The aim is to keep a sense of enclosure and to break the potential of a continuous area of car parking in front of the dwellings. This can be achieved by means of walls, hedging, planting, and the use of quality paving materials;
- When needed, residential car parking can be translated into a mix of on-plot side, front, garage, and courtyard parking, and complemented by on-street parking;
- For family homes, cars should be placed at the side (preferably) or front of the property. For small pockets of housing, a rear court is acceptable;
- Car parking design should be combined with landscaping to minimise the presence of vehicles;
- Parking the cars on pavements should be avoided; and
- Parking areas and driveways should be designed to improve impervious surfaces, for example, through the use of permeable paving. 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings should provide at least 1 on-plot parking space. Dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms should provide 2 on-plot parking spaces.



F.119

Figure 119: On-plot parking on Burshmead Road



F.120

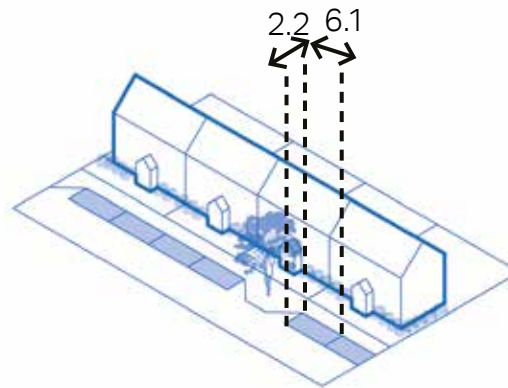
Figure 120: On-plot parking with garage on Firs Close

ON STREET PARKING

On-street parking is the only parking option for several dwellings within the Conservation Area, such as the High Street. In order to reduce the visual impact of parked cars on the street, on-street parking as the only means of parking should be avoided in future development. In addition, there is a problem with on street parking on Ashrgove Gardens at drop off/ pick up times of Whitchurch School which need to be addressed.

- On-street parking must be designed to avoid impeding the flow of pedestrians, cyclists, and other vehicles, and can serve a useful informal traffic calming function;
- On low-traffic residential streets or lanes that are shared between vehicles and pedestrians, parking bays can be clearly marked using changes in paving materials instead of road markings; and

- Opportunities must be created for new public car parking spaces to include electric vehicle charging points. Given the move towards electric vehicles, every opportunity must be taken to integrate charging technologies into the fabric of road and street furniture in the public and private realm.



F.121

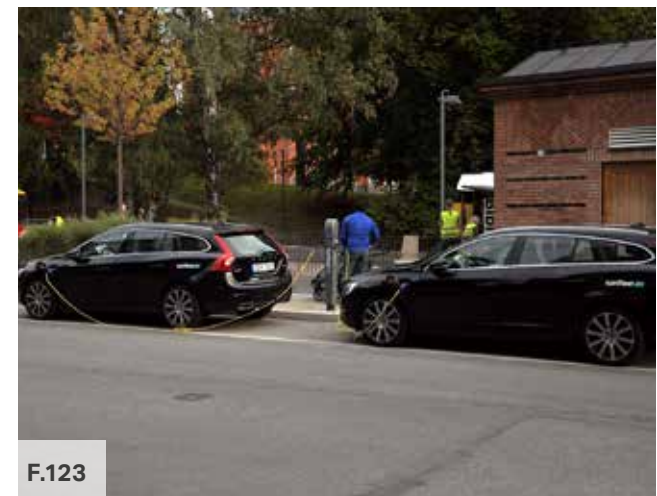
Figure 121: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-street parking

Figure 122: Issue with on- street parking on Ashgrove Gardens parking outside Whitchurch School. It gets very congested at drop off/pick up times

Figure 123: Inset on-street parking with electric vehicle charging points



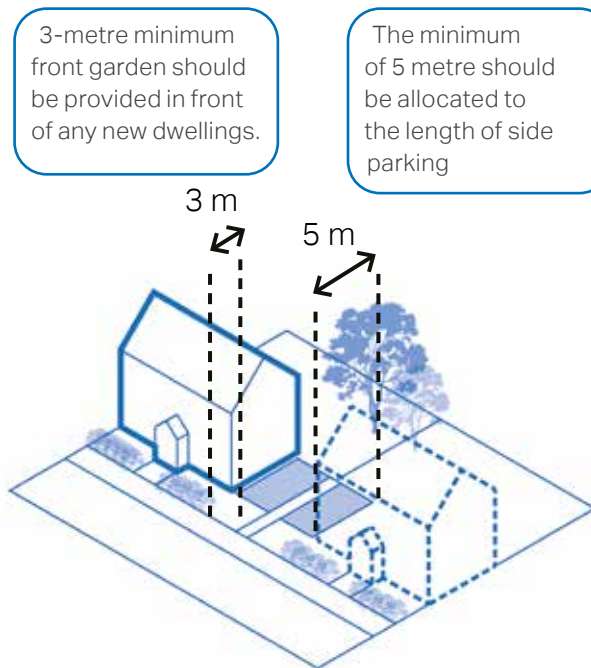
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F.123

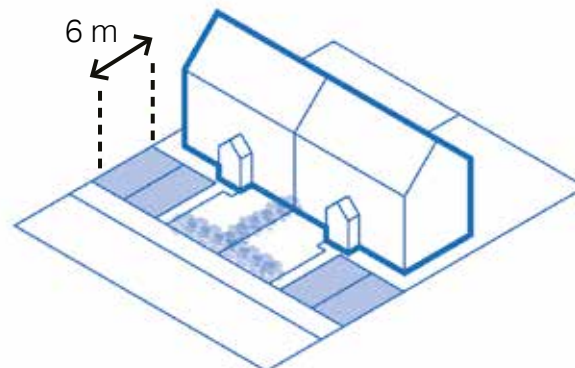
ON- PLOT SIDE OR FRONT PARKING

- Parking provided on driveways in directly in front of dwellings should be restricted due to the visual impact that cars have on the street. Therefore, a maximum of 2 dwellings in a row will be permitted to provide parking in this way. Front gardens should be a minimum depth of 6m to allow movement around parked vehicles and also be well screened with hedgerows when providing parking space to the front of a dwelling.
- Parking being provided on a driveway to the side of a dwelling should be of sufficient length (5m minimum) so that a car can park behind the frontage line of the dwelling. This will reduce the visual impact that cars will have on the street scene. When parking is provided to the side of a dwelling a minimum front garden depth of 3m should be provided,



F.124

The minimum of 6 metre should be allocated to the length of on-plot parking



F.125



Figure 124: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plot side parking

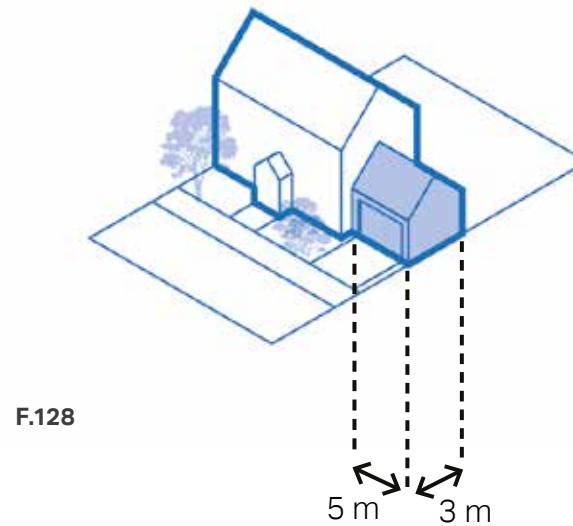
Figure 125: An example of on-plot side parking in the village

Figure 126: On- plot side parking on Ashgrove Gardens

Figure 127: On- plot front parking on Little London

GARAGE PARKING

Parking being provided in a garage to the side of a dwelling should be in line with, or slightly set back from the frontage line of the existing dwelling, which is in keeping with the character of the existing village and will reduce the visual impact of cars on the street. Garages should also provide sufficient room for cars to park inside them, as well as provide some room for storage. The minimum internal dimensions of a garage should therefore be 6m x 3m.



The internal dimensions of a garage should be 6m x 3m

Figure 128: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plot garage parking



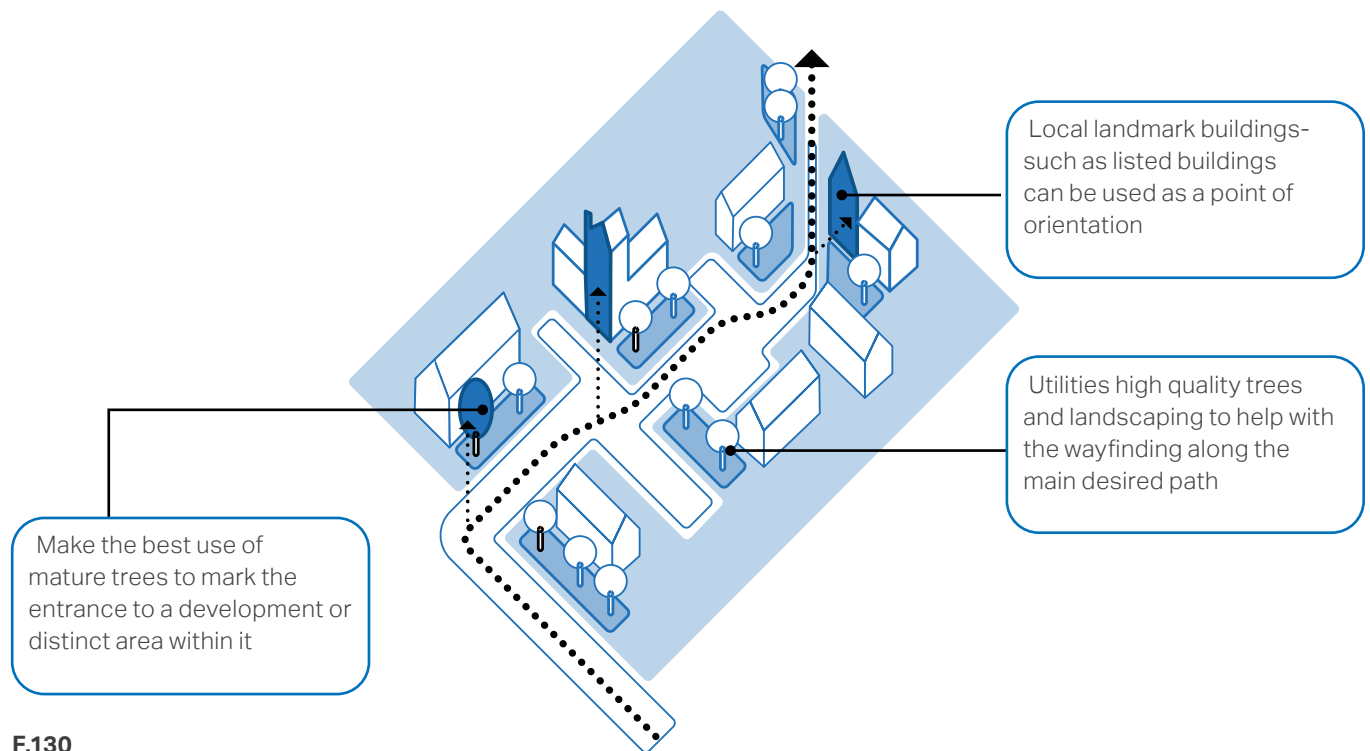
Figure 129: Garage parking on Little London

SM 05. LEGIBILITY AND SIGNAGE

A legible and well signposted place is easier for the public to understand as people can orient themselves with visual landmarks and direct routes. Being able to navigate around a place makes people feel safer as well as offering a more pleasant living environment that functions well.

- Whitchurch should use a variety of identifiable landmarks, gateways and focal points to create visual links and establish a clear hierarchy between places. There are a significant number of listed buildings within the village which are identifiable landmarks;
- The village should be complemented by distinctive architectural elements around gateways and nodes;
- New developments should be designed around a series of nodal points focusing on the relationship with the existing character areas as well as the surrounding landscape ; and

- Wayfinding must be clearly established throughout the village, particularly along pedestrian and cycle routes and should be designed to complement and not clutter the public realm.



F.130

Figure 130: Diagram showing the wayfinding elements in public realm



Figure 131: The White Swan, a point of arrival which is an important landmark and increase legibility in the village

Figure 132: A grade II listed Georgian building on High Street with a pattern brick on facade

Figure 133: The best use of mature trees to enter a distinctive development

Figure 134: Local listed buildings act as unique landmarks which enhance the legibility

SU. Sustainability

Any new housing in Whitchurch Parish should mitigate its impact from the loss of countryside, wildlife and the natural environment and demonstrate that it is responding to climate change with the highest standards of insulation and energy conservation.

SU 01- ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSING AND ENERGY PRODUCTION

The following section elaborates on energy efficient technologies that could be incorporated in buildings and at broader Parish design scale as principles.

Use of such principles and design tools should be encouraged in order to contribute towards a more sustainable environment.

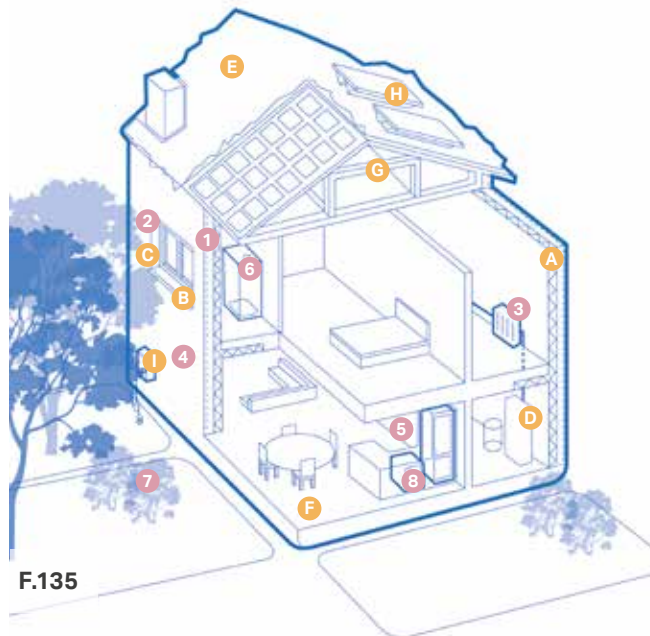
Energy efficient or eco design combines all around energy efficient appliances and lighting with commercially available renewable energy systems, such as solar

Figure 135: Diagram showing low-carbon homes in both existing and new build conditions.









electricity and/or solar/ water heating and electric charging points.

Any changes within the conservation area should look similar to the original. Conditions A.3 Development is permitted by Class A subject to the following conditions- (a) the materials used in any exterior work (other than materials used in the construction of a conservatory) must be of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the exterior of the existing dwelling house¹.










1. National Planning Policy Framework, 2021



Existing homes

- 1  **Insulation** in lofts and walls (cavity and solid)
- 2  **Double or triple glazing with shading** (e.g. tinted window film, blinds, curtains and trees outside)
- 3  **Low- carbon heating** with heat pumps or connections to district heat network
- 4  **Draught proofing** of floors, windows and doors
- 5  **Highly energy-efficient appliances** (e.g. A++ and A+++ rating)
- 6  **Highly waste-efficient devices** with low-flow showers and taps, insulated tanks and hot water thermostats
- 7  **Green space (e.g. gardens and trees)** to help reduce the risks and impacts of flooding and overheating
- 8  **Flood resilience and resistance** with removable air back covers, relocated appliances (e.g. installing washing machines upstairs), treated wooden floors

Existing and new build homes

- A  **High levels of airtightness**
- B  **Triple glazed windows and external shading** especially on south and west faces
- C  **Low-carbon heating** and no new homes on the gas grid by 2025 at the latest
- D  **More fresh air** with mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, and passive cooling
- E  **Water management and cooling** more ambitious water efficiency standards, green roofs and reflective walls
- F  **Flood resilience and resistance** e.g. raised electrical, concrete floors and greening your garden
- G  **Construction and site planning** timber frames, sustainable transport options (such as cycling)
- H  **Solar panels**
- I  **Electric car charging point**

SU 02. BIODIVERSITY

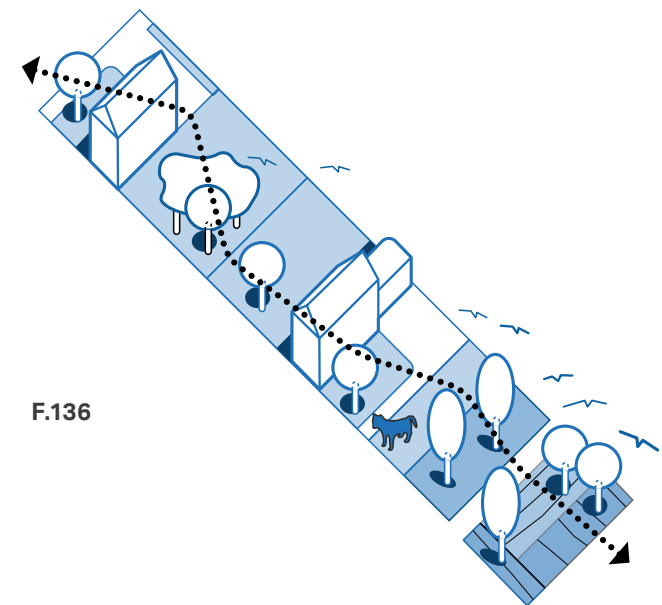
Whitchurch has a rich and varied landscape character and falls within LCA 9.3 Pitchcott-Whitchurch Ridge¹. This area is largely grassland, but also includes significant area of arable habitat. Other habitats are restricted to a very small amount of broadleaved woodland scattered throughout the Pitchcott-Whitchurch Ridge and concentrated in the central part. In addition to this, there is mature tree cover associated with the settlements.

The landscape guidelines for Pitchcott-Whitchurch Ridge are as follows:

- Conserve the extensive network of hedgerows and tree cover;

1. [Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment](#)

- Strengthen the field pattern around the arable areas to the north by planting up gaps in hedgerows and encouraging the development of hedgerow trees;
- Promote good woodland management to conserve the extent of woodland cover;



F.136

Figure 136: Diagram to highlight the importance of creating wildlife corridors.

- Maintain and improve connectivity;
- Protect the integrity and vernacular character of the settlements;
- Encourage planting around suburban fringes in relation to new development;
- The adoption of swift bricks, bat and owl boxes are encouraged to help provide nesting and roosting spaces or bats and birds;
- Conserve the sites and wider setting to the Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other Archaeological Notification Sites; and
- Encourage the preservation of historic earthworks and ridge and furrow by maintaining a continuous grass sward.



F.137



F.138



F.139

Figure 137: Examples of a bughouse decorating rear gardens or public green spaces

Figure 138: Amphibian wood shelter at The Recreation Pond (Source: Whitchurch parish Council)

Figure 139: View towards Pitchcott-Whitchurch Ridge Landscape Character

SU 03. SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE (SUDS)

The term SuDS stands for Sustainable Drainage Systems. It covers a range of approaches to managing surface water in a more sustainable way to reduce flood risk and improve water quality whilst improving amenity benefits.

SuDS work by reducing the amount and rate at which surface water reaches a waterway or combined sewer system. Usually, the most sustainable option is collecting this water for reuse, for example in a water butt or rainwater harvesting system, as this has the added benefit of reducing pressure on important water sources.

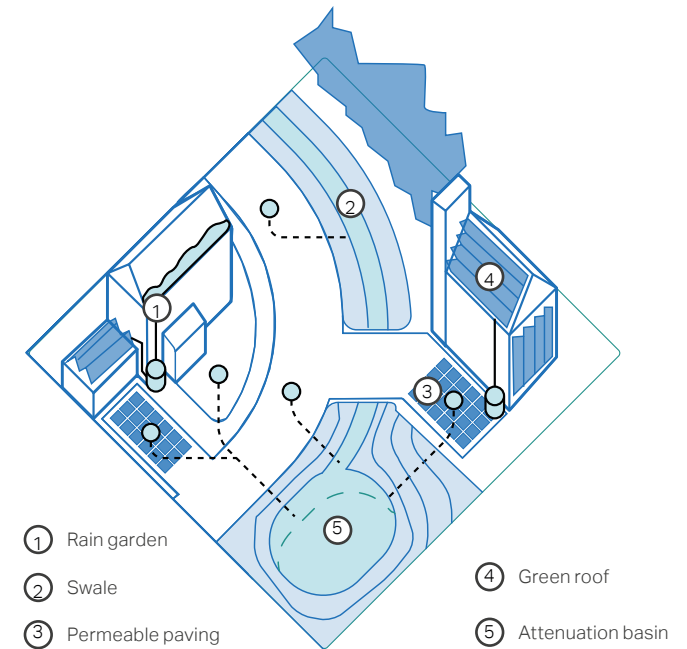
Where reuse is not possible there are two alternative approaches using SuDS:

- Infiltration, which allows water to percolate into the ground and eventually restore groundwater; and

- Attenuation and controlled release, which holds back the water and slowly releases it into the sewer network. Although the overall volume entering the sewer system is the same, the peak flow is reduced. This reduces the risk of sewers overflowing. Attenuation and controlled release options are suitable when either infiltration is not possible (for example where the water table is high or soils are clay) or where infiltration could be polluting (such as on contaminated sites).

The most effective type or design of SuDS would depend on site-specific conditions such as underlying ground conditions, infiltration rate, slope, or presence of ground contamination. A number of overarching principles can however be applied:

- Reduce runoff rates by facilitating infiltration into the ground or by providing attenuation that stores water to help



F.140

Figure 140: Diagram showing the best use of harvesting water systems rain garden, swales, permeable paving, green roofs

slow its flow down so that it does not overwhelm water courses or the sewer network;

- Integrate into development and improve amenity through early consideration in the development process and good design practices;
- SuDS are often as important in areas that are not directly in an area of flood risk themselves, as they can help reduce downstream flood risk by storing water upstream;
- Some of the most effective SuDS are vegetated, using natural processes to slow and clean the water whilst increasing the biodiversity value of the area;
- Best practice SuDS schemes link the water cycle to make the most efficient

use of water resources by reusing surface water; and

- SuDS must be designed sensitively to augment the landscape and provide biodiversity and amenity benefits.



Figure 141: Examples of SuDS designed as a public amenity and fully integrated into the design of the public realm, Sweden

SU 04. PERMEABLE PAVEMENTS

Most built-up areas, including roads and driveways, increase impervious surfaces and reduce the capacity of the ground to absorb runoff water. This in turn increases the risks of surface water flooding. Permeable pavements offer a solution to maintain soil permeability while performing the function of conventional paving. The choice of permeable paving units must be made depending on the local context; the units may take the form of unbound gravel, clay pavers, or stone setts.

Permeable paving can be used where appropriate on footpaths, public squares, private access roads, driveways, and private areas within the individual development boundaries. In addition, permeable pavement must also:

- Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Schedule 3;¹

¹ Great Britain (2010). *Flood and Water Management Act, Schedule 3*. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/schedule/3>

- The Building Regulations Part H – Drainage and Waste Disposal;¹
- Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015;²

Regulations, standards, and guidelines relevant to permeable paving and sustainable drainage are listed below:

- Sustainable Drainage Systems - non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems;³
- The SuDS Manual (C753);⁴
- BS 8582:2013 Code of practice

¹ Great Britain (2010). *The Building Regulations Part H – Drainage and Waste Disposal*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442889/BR_PDF_AD_H_2015.pdf

² Great Britain (2015). *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015*. Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/596/pdfs/ukxi_20150596_en.pdf

³ Great Britain. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2015). *Sustainable drainage systems – non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415773/sustainable-drainage-technical-standards.pdf

⁴ CIRIA (2015). *The SuDS Manual (C753)*.

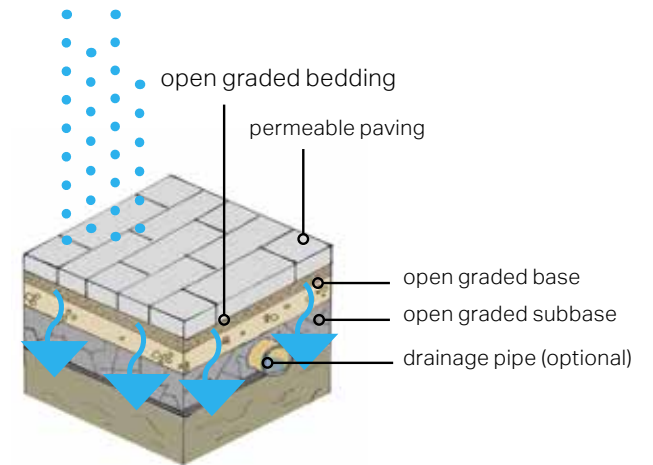
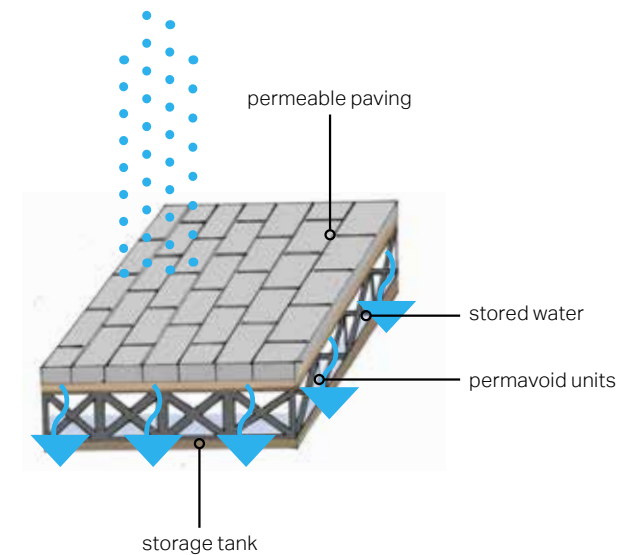
for surface water management for development sites;⁵

- BS 7533-13:2009 Pavements constructed with clay, natural stone or concrete pavers,⁶ and
- Guidance on the Permeable Surfacing of Front Gardens.⁷

⁵ British Standards Institution (2013). *BS 8582:2013 Code of practice for surface water management for development sites*. Available at: <https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030253266>

⁶ British Standards Institution (2009). *BS 7533-13:2009 Pavements constructed with clay, natural stone or concrete pavers*. Available at: <https://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030159352>

⁷ Great Britain. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2008). *Guidance on the Permeable Surfacing of Front Gardens*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf



F.142

Figure 142: Diagrams illustrating the functioning of a soak away.

5.4 Guidelines for larger development sites

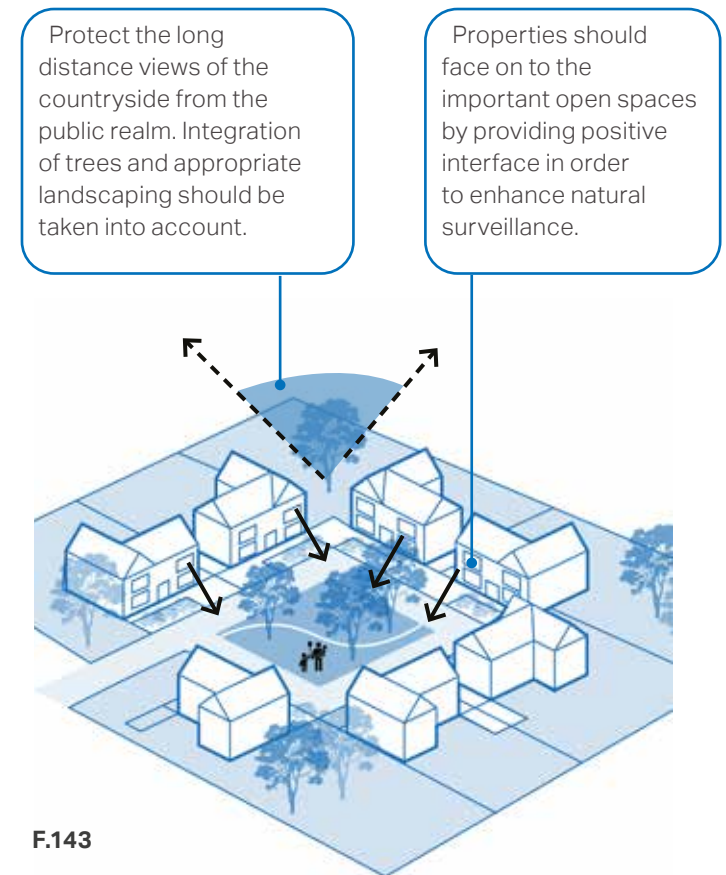
The following issues have been identified and all the codes/ guidelines are to be applied to larger developments. These are sites where new streets will need to be constructed.

CODE 1: BLOCK PRINCIPLES

1A - SPATIAL DEFINITION OF THE PUBLIC REALM

- Development adjoining open spaces and important gaps should enhance the character of these spaces by either providing a positive interface (i.e. properties facing onto them to improve natural surveillance) or a soft landscaped edge;
- Development should not negatively impact on any important views. The topography should be carefully considered when any new buildings are being placed;

- Any trees or woodland lost to new development must be replaced. There should be a non-negative impact on biodiversity from a new development and a biodiversity net gain of 10% should be aimed for;
- The spacing of new development should reflect the rural character and allow for long distance views of the countryside from the public realm. Trees and landscaping should be incorporated in the design;
- The existing quiet and peaceful atmosphere of the village should be preserved. Future development should respond to the rural character of the settlements and retain the existing levels of privacy by including hedgerow and tree screening; and
- Landscape schemes should be designed and integrated with the open fields that currently border the settlements.



F.143

Figure 143:
Diagram showing green spaces and landscape planting

CODE 2: STREETSCAPE PRINCIPLES

2A - ROOFS AND ROOFLINES

- Development building heights should accord with the settlement character of two storey dwellings;
 - Depending on the roofing materials used, pitches from 45 to 55 degrees are commonly seen on traditional houses in Whitchurch. Therefore, new buildings should be sympathetic in mass, height and scale to the existing context;
 - Flat roofs for buildings, extensions, garages and dormer windows should be avoided; and Chimney type and height should be congruent with the typical Neighbourhood Area chimney precedent examples;
- Roofs in the village tend to be generally traditionally pitched, with some hipped examples and new roof type and pitch should reflect this. Pitched roofs The use of clay tile, slate and thatch are widespread and should be the main roofing material for new development in the Neighbourhood Area; and
 - Innovation which explores the integration of green/brown roofs or standing seam roofs should be encouraged. Low quality concrete tiles should be avoided.



F.144
Figure 144: Full gables end at 55 degree



F.145
Figure 145: Full gables end at 45 degree



F.146
Figure 146: Halfhipped end at 50 degree



F.147
Figure 147: Unsympathetic roofline

2B - STREET TYPOLOGIES

Future development should be structured around an interconnected street network which includes a clear hierarchy of streets. This section presents three street typologies: secondary, tertiary and edge lane (assuming that there won't be any major development that requires a new primary road).

A new development should also support a well-connected footpath and cycle network that will link all of the site with the village centre, local facilities, and the surrounding countryside.

Parking provision should primarily include on-plot parking as well as on-street. Green verges and/or street trees should decorate the roads to minimise the impression of car dominance.

Subtle deviations in alignment and small variations in enclosure of streets can allow the creation of small incidental spaces to create interest and legibility.

SECONDARY ROAD

The secondary road should accommodate an approximately 5.5m carriageway and a 2.1m wide on-street parallel car parking on one side. They should also include 2m wide tree verges on both sides and accommodate the appropriate size of street trees (see Figure

148). These roads should also accommodate a minimum of 2m wide footpaths at either side.

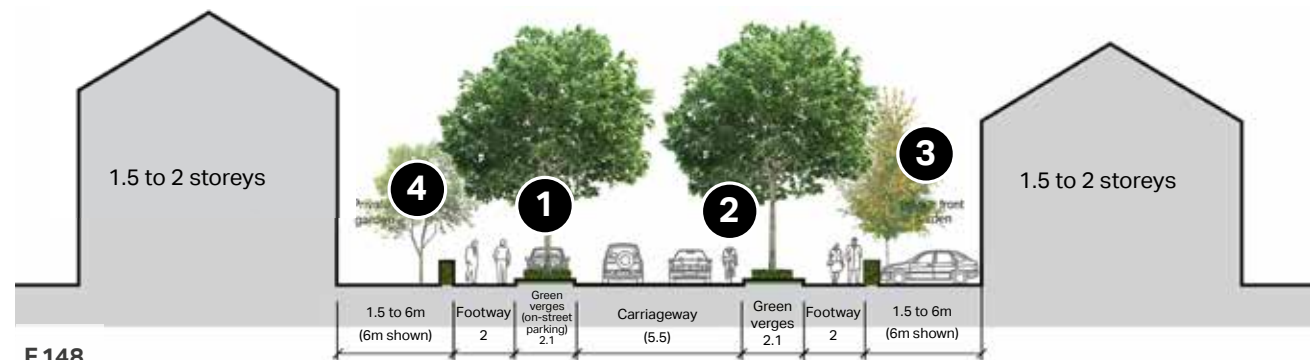


Figure 148: Section showing indicative dimensions for secondary street.

- 1** On-street parking along one side of the road interrupted from green verges and street trees. Traffic calming measures may be introduced at key locations.
- 2** Integrate cycle lanes into design.
- 3** Well-sized front gardens with on-plot parking on the side.
- 4** Physical boundaries and vegetation in front gardens.

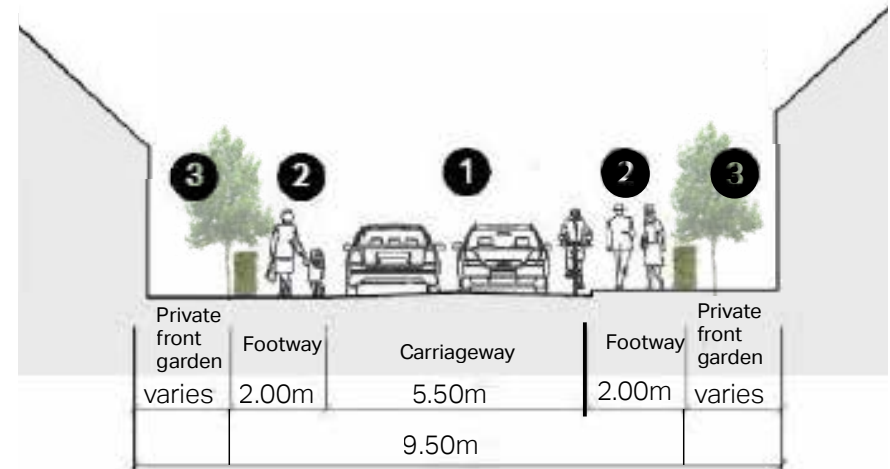
TERTIARY ROAD

Tertiary roads should provide access to the residential areas. They must provide a minimum of 5.5m wide two lane carriageway. These roads should also accommodate a minimum of 2m wide footpaths at either side (See Figure 149). On- street car parking could be avoided in tertiary roads where not required. Otherwise, include verges or street trees between on-street car parking.



F.150

Figure 150: A very narrow single lane on Oving Road which make it difficult for a lorry to manoeuvre (Source: Whitchurch parish Council)



F.149

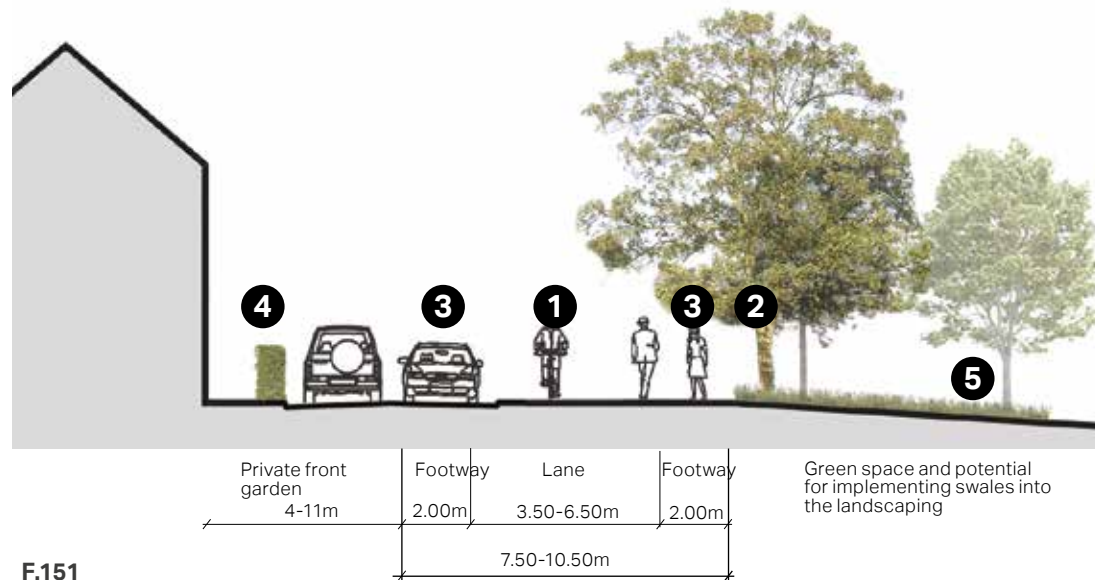
Figure 149: Section showing indicative dimensions for tertiary road

- 1** Shared carriageway (for tertiary residential streets with low traffic). Traffic calming measures may be introduced at key locations.
- 2** Footway (minimum 2m).
- 3** Residential frontage with boundary hedges and front gardens.

EDGE LANE

Edge lanes should be a narrow lane, low-speed with houses with gardens on one side and green space on the other side. Ideally, properties should have on-plot parking access from the lane with a sufficient set-back. However, limited street parking along the lane should be considered.

Carriageways typically consist of a single lane of traffic in either direction, and could be shared with cyclists. The lane width can vary (from 3.5m to 6.5m) to discourage speeding and introduce a more informal and intimate character (See Figure 151). Variations in paving materials and textures can be used instead of kerbs or road markings.



F.151

Figure 151: Section showing indicative dimensions for canal edge

- 1** Carriageway including vehicles and bicycles. The width of the shared lane could vary as shown in the diagram.
- 2** Green verges with trees along either side of the carriageway. Green features would be positive additions in the public realm design. Parking bays to be interspersed with trees to avoid impeding moving traffic or pedestrians.
- 3** Towpath (minimum 2m).
- 4** Residential frontage with boundary hedges and front gardens.
- 5** Green space and potential for implementing swales into the landscaping.

2C- Relationship of future development to landscape features

The interface of development edges to countryside, open space, woodlands, routes or the canal have a critical role in defining the character and quality of the place.

The edge towards natural features should positively be addressed with building frontages facing on to it and pedestrian and cycle links providing natural surveillance. The scale, mass and typologies of buildings must appropriately respond to the topography, existing landscape and context of the area.

Similarly, the welcome presence of various tree preservation orders and harbouring trees should be considered as a beneficial component. Any development proposals will need to take a proactive approach to mitigate and adapt to this specific landscape within the surrounding. In the case of developments along the edges, the insertion of edge land should be considered in line with the

principles highlighted in the previous section on street typologies.

Where possible, encourage tree planting and landscaping along the development limits for visual appeal and recreation purposes.

Avoid hindering the continuity of green and blue infrastructure, by appropriately integrating new green links into the existing networks.

Building frontage facing toward countryside. The building typologies, scale and massing must positively respond to the topography, existing landscape and context of the area.

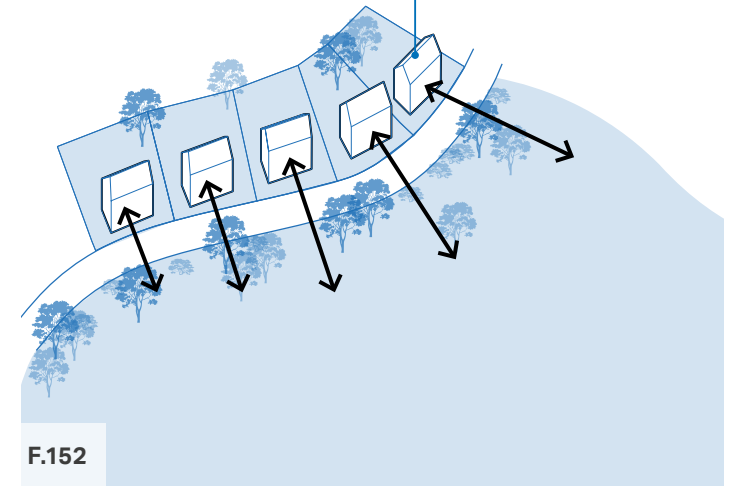


Figure 152: The relationship of housing with surrounding countryside

F.152

CODE 3: PLOT PRINCIPLES

3A - BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

Backland development or plot infill is development on land of an existing dwelling. This sort of development has the potential to cause issues for existing residents including loss of privacy, daylight and parking problems.

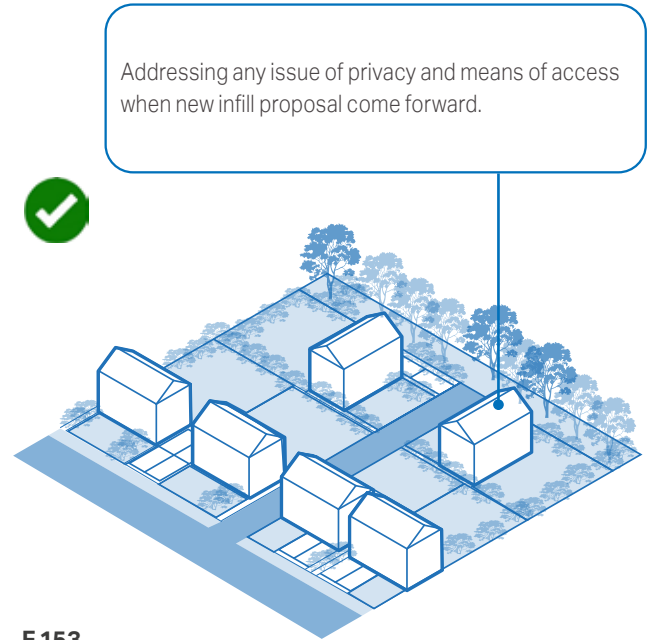
Proposed backland development should ensure that the spacing requirements set out within the coding chapter (5) of this document are maintained and that the density, scale and appearance of the development reflects its immediate context and reduces impacts to the amenity of existing properties.

Tandem development is a form of backland development where a new dwelling is placed immediately behind an existing dwelling and served by the same vehicular access. Tandem developments will generally be

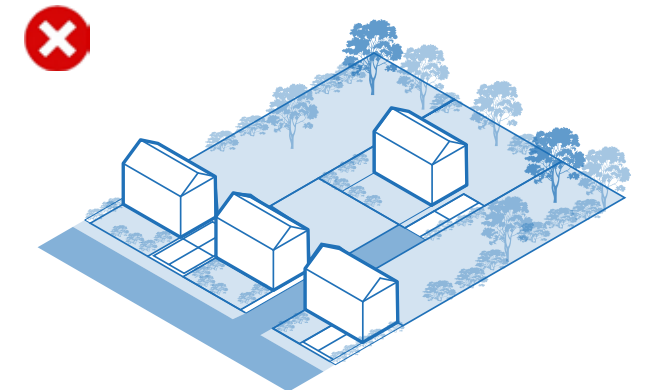
unacceptable due to the impact on the amenity of the dwelling at the front of the site.

Where a proposal encompasses residential development of land behind an existing frontage or placing of further dwellings behind existing dwellings within the site, the proposal should demonstrate the privacy of existing and future residents means of access, and it should not extend the limit of settlements.

The design of backland development should take precedent from good examples within the surrounding architectural context. Poor contextual precedent should not set the standard.



F.153



F.154

Figure 153:
Diagram showing backland development

Figure 154:
Diagram showing tandem development which will generally be unacceptable

3B-RATIO OF PRIVATE GREEN SPACE

The ratio of garden space to built form within the overall plot is exceptionally important to ensure that the sense of openness and green space within the village is maintained.

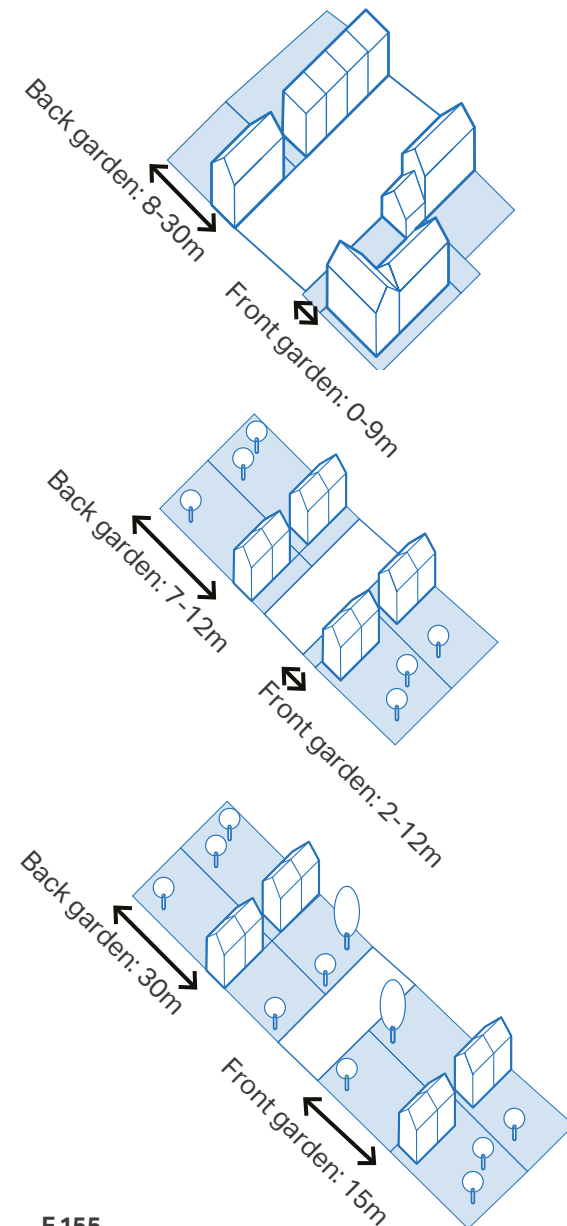
There are different garden dimensions in each of the character areas. In CA1, the front garden proportions range from 0 to 9 m and the back garden are between 8 till 30m. CA2 areas are located to the edge of the settlement and have spacious front garden (10m) with around 30m length for back garden.

CA3 have different width range of front and back gardens. For instance, the infill development on Bushmead Close have the same amount of front and back gardens (12m), while the terraced house infill development on Mount Pleasant has less than 2 m front garden and an average of 7m back garden.

As CA4 sit within the edge of settlement deep front and back gardens should be encouraged, but a careful consideration to the context should be taken into account where the development sit within.

Back gardens should be a minimum depth of 10m and provide a minimum area of 50m² of usable amenity space.

North facing back gardens should exceed 10m in length to ensure sunlight is maximised.



F.155

Figure 155: Different proportion of green space varied. From top (The High Street(CA1)), middle (CA3) and bottom (Ashgrove Gardens(CA2 and CA4))



Figure 156: A building on the High Street with no front garden

Figure 157: The deep front and back gardens on Bushmead Road

Figure 158: Spacious front and back gardens on Ashgrove Gardens

Figure 159: Small front gardens on Mount Pleasant

3C- PLOT BOUNDARY LINE

Front boundaries should respond to the boundaries used within adjacent dwellings to provide continuation of street character. Appropriate boundary choices are illustrated in form of low wall either built by stone or red brick. Use of hedges are predominant in village as boundary treatment.

When rear boundaries abut the settlement edge, surrounding landscape or open green spaces, soft planted boundaries of hedgerows and trees must be used to soften the transition into the natural environment and protect views.

3D- PRIVACY AND SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS

Any proposed backland or infill development must not cause an unacceptable impact on the residential amenities of adjacent residential properties.

Hedges and fences usually protect privacy at ground floor level, so any privacy issues tend

to arise from upstairs windows either looking into neighbours' windows or down into their private garden space.

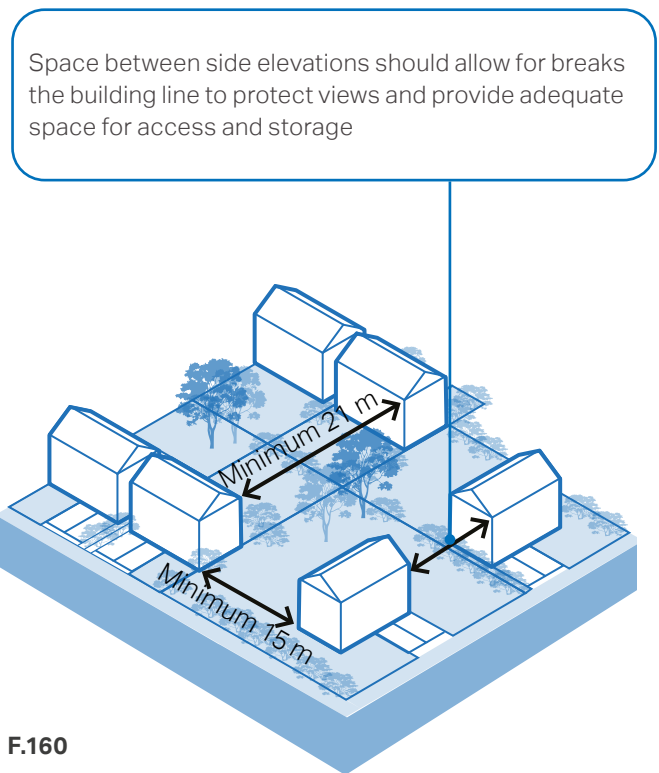
To avoid overlooking of habitable rooms and gardens a minimum distance of 15m should be achieved between dwellings where a side elevation of one dwelling faces a rear elevation of another. Where a side elevation is windowless the separation distance can be reduced to 12m.

A minimum separation distance of 21m should be achieved between facing windowed rear elevations.

Where dwellings with facing elevations are positioned on different levels, the above separation distances should be increased by 2m for every 1m difference in level. Where there is a level difference and distances are increased, the lower dwelling should have the longer garden to compensate for any slopes or retaining structures.

Future housing developments should design the spacing between dwellings to allow for

retrospective introduction of garden and cycle storage, as well sustainable measures such as air source heat pumps.



F.160

Figure 160: Diagram showing privacy and space between buildings

Checklist
06



6. Checklist

6.1 General questions to ask when presented with a development proposal

Because the design guidance and codes in this document cannot cover all design eventualities, this chapter provides a number of questions based on established good practice against which the design proposal should be evaluated. The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has considered the context and provided an adequate design solution.

As a first step there are a number of ideas or principles that should be present in all proposals. These are listed under 'General design guidance for new development'. Following these ideas and principles, several questions are listed for more specific topics on the following pages.

1

General design guidelines for new development:

- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity. In addition, create new footpaths/ pavements so that no new development is cut-off from the village centre (High Street) thereby requiring access by car when many residents should be able to walk;
- Reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;
- Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
- Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
- Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;
- Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;
- Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind; and
- Seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation), before specification of energy efficient building services and finally incorporate renewable energy sources.

2

Street grid and layout:

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?
- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

3 (continues)

Local green spaces, views & character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?

3

Local green spaces, views & character:

- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?
- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention e.g. permeable landscaping, swales etc.?
- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?
- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

4

Gateway and access features:

- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

5 (continues)

Buildings layout and grouping:

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?
- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles?

5

Buildings layout and grouping:

- If any of the buildings were to be heated by an individual air source heat pump (ASHP), is there space to site it within the property boundary without infringing on noise and visual requirements?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night to reduce peak loads? And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?

6

Building line and boundary treatment:

- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

7

Buildings layout and grouping:

- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now, or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over shading?

8

Household extensions:

- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of side extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?
- Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?
- Can any materials be re-used in situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?

9

Building materials and surface treatment:

- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now, or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over shading?

9 (continues)

Building materials and surface treatment:

- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?
- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.
- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced? E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

10

Car parking:

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?
- Can electric vehicle charging points be provided?
- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/ communal facility where appropriate?
- If covered car ports or cycle storage is included, can it incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels or a biodiverse roof in its design?

11

Architectural details and design:

- If the proposal is within a conservation area, how are the characteristics reflected in the design?
- Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties? This means that it follows the height massing and general proportions of adjacent buildings and how it takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features?
- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?
- Is it possible to incorporate passive environmental design features such as larger roof overhangs, deeper window reveals and/or external louvres/shutters to provide shading in hotter months?
- Can the building designs utilise thermal mass to minimise heat transfer and provide free cooling?
- Can any external structures such as balconies be fixed to the outside of the building, as opposed to cantilevering through the building fabric to reduce thermal bridge?

Delivery

07



7. Delivery

7.1 Delivery

This document has set out an evidence base for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan and it is recommended that the codes are embedded within the forthcoming plan as policy.

In addition to providing certainty to the local community, the design codes in this document should give more certainty to developers, as they will be able to design a scheme that is reflective of community aspirations, potentially speeding up the planning application process.

As well as the guidance set out in this document, future developers should also make sure that they have observed the guidance in the Department for Leveling Up, Housing and Communities' National Design Guide. Developers should also note that

housing developments of any size should strive to achieve carbon neutrality in line with the Government's forthcoming Future Homes Standard.

Further standards on residential developments should also be obtained from Building for a Healthy Life, a government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods.

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance and Codes will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high-quality development in Whitchurch. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table on the next page.

Actors	How They Will Use the Design Guidelines
Applicants, developers, and landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The Design Guidance and Codes should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidance and Codes are complied with.
Community organisations	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

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Green Space Designations in the village of
Whitchurch :



Introduction and Process :

Whitchurch is a historic and beautiful village and in public consultation it was clear that maintaining and protecting the rural village feel of the village was an important consideration for the Neighbourhood Plan. That strong sense of being in a rural location is in large part formed by green areas within and surrounding the village. To give extra protection to valued green areas it was considered important to include Green Space designations within the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan. The process started by considering multiple spaces within the village and then evaluating them against the national planning policy framework (NPPF), paragraph 102 criteria for Green Spaces as follows :

Paragraph 102 of the NPPF states that a local Green Space designation should only be used where the Green Space is :

- a) In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.
- b) Be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historical significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife.
- c) Be local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

This process created a shortlist of sites and these were evaluated to ensure that they were not already protected by other designations such as Ancient Monument Heritage listing, and nor could they be seen as a way to protect against development “by the back door”, or where existing planning permission has been granted. The owners and stakeholders of these spaces were then contacted and their opinions on the topic were sought. This raised valid points which in some cases meant that it was inappropriate to pursue the site as Green Space, but in other cases and after some initial concerns, we were able to engage with the owners, make changes as appropriate and secure their support and for this the steering group are grateful for their support. Where no response was received we have proceeded to designate as a Green Space.

At the end of the process the following eleven sites are proposed as designated Green Spaces within Whitchurch as shown in the Draft Submission Plan Policy Maps section. Images and details of each site are shown in the following pages. The evaluation against the three key criteria is shown.

Test		3/ special and local significance to the community						
		1/ Close Proximity	2/ Local in character & not extensive	Beauty	Historic Value	Recreation Value	Tranquility	Wildlife
Site	Location							
i	Duck End Pond							
ii	Mount Pleasant Mound							
iii	Grass Bank Kempson House							
iv	Grass Bank & Verges Market Hill							
v	Wildflower Bank Oving Road							
vi	Green Circle Ashgrove Gdns							
vii	The Meadows Recreation Area							
viii	The Meadows Orchard Area							
ix	Jubilee Tree Triangle							
x	Whittle Hole Spring & Stream							
xi	Allotment Land Ashgrove Gdns							

Green Space Images and further narrative :

Site i : Duck End Pond :



Duck-end Pond is reputedly the site of a traditional witches ducking pond, more latterly known by the less contentious name of Duck End pond. Although on private land it is visible from the footpath running behind the White Swan public house and Mary Monks House. The path is regularly walked by dog walkers and other village residents. The site supports an abundance of wildlife, although some of the willow trees will be thinned-out to absorb less groundwater as the pond did dry out after the hot summer of 2022. Owner : Willis Family, Duck End House, Whitchurch.

Site ii : Mount Pleasant Land :



Tract of land lying between old road (disused) and the newer A413. This area contributes to the highly attractive streetscape as one enters or leaves the village to the north and importantly provides an area where local children can enjoy unstructured play in a densely wooded site. There is a bench at the southern end and also the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Memorial tree and an abundance of wildlife. Owner : Buckinghamshire County Council

Site iii : Grass Bank Kempson House & Old House :



Provides a beautiful entrance to the village and is a key part of the streetscene. Contributes to the setting of the Grade II listed 'Old House' and is a key feature of the entrance to the village having been extensively planted with spring bulbs and wildflowers. The northern part includes a bench which is used for contemplation by residents. Owner : Buckinghamshire County Council

Site iv : Grass Bank and Verges Market Hill :



Market Hill is one of the oldest areas of the village and within the conservation area containing a number of historic buildings, many of which were built using stone from the historic Bolebec Castle. The grass verges frame the ancient setting in the area. Whitchurch was granted a weekly market in 1245 with a fair on St. Johns Day and Market Hill became the site of the market and in more recent years it was the site for the annual May Feast. This also provides a safe and pleasant route to walk from the High Street to Oving Road. Owner : Buckinghamshire County Council

Site v : Wildflower Bank, Oving Road :



This area has been created in the past three years as a village wildlife team initiative with an extensive collection of wild flowers and fauna. It blossoms beautifully throughout the spring and summer providing an attractive area for the residents of the village. This area also contains a bench and is on the route to school for many of the village children and contributes to their appreciation and understanding of the natural world. Owner : Buckinghamshire County Council

Site vi : Green Circle, Ashgrove Gardens :



This is a large circle of grass where residents can sit on the bench and children can play as an informal gathering and play area. There are wooden bollards to prevent cars parking on it which ensures it is a scenic area which makes the road end an attractive green area. Owner :
Buckinghamshire County Council

Site vii : The Meadows (Whitchurch) Recreation Area :



Recreation area and sports field with trim trail, exercise equipment and children's play area, football pitch and nets, together with an unmown area incorporating commemorative trees and bench.
Owner : Whitchurch Parish Council

Site viii : The Meadows Orchard :



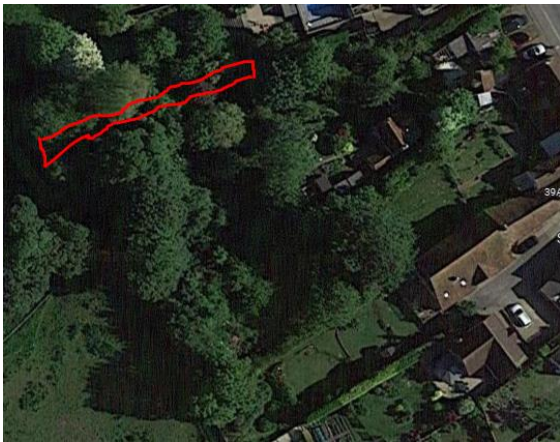
In the heart of one of the more densely populated areas of the village, the area has been planted with various fruit trees for the community to harvest as they wish. It is surrounded by native hedging and established trees making it a haven for a wide variety of wildlife. It is used by many for walking and is an area of peace & tranquillity. Owner Whitchurch Parish Council

Site ix : Jubilee Tree Triangle :



This is a small area of grass which has the Queen Victoria Jubilee Tree growing on it. A plaque commemorates the event. There is also an anniversary commemorative bench courtesy of the WI which is used frequently by many villagers. Owner : Buckinghamshire County Council

Site x : Whittle Hole Spring and Stream :



One of four springs which historically provided Whitchurch with water; the spring surfaces into a purpose built pond by Spring Cottage, disappears and then reappears by a picket gate, flowing down a steep sided cutting to a plank bridge below. It has reputedly never frozen over in the winter or dried up in the summer. It flows down into Mill Head and Whittle Brook, whereupon it becomes a tributary of the River Thames. The Green Space starts from below the picket gate down to the plank bridge, alongside the existing public right of way WHI21/4. Owner : Bignall family, Tudor House, Whitchurch.

Site xi : Allotment Land Ashgrove Gardens :



The allotment is an attractive and functional Green Space which adds to the street scape as one drives or walks down Oving Road towards the Conservation Area. This area has been recently been left wild and provides a sanctuary for wildlife between two areas of housing, strongly reinforcing the sense of rural location. Owner : It has not been possible to identify the owner

Whitchurch

Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)

Whitchurch Parish Council

January 2022

Quality information

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Revision History

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V1	05/11/2021	First Draft	JC	Jessica Cooke	Urban Planner
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V3	23/12/2021	Group Review (by Keith Armour)	PC	Jessica Cooke	Urban Planner
V4	06/01/2022	Locality Review	JW	John Wilkinson	Neighbourhood Planning Officer

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List of acronyms used in the text:

- HNA Housing Needs Assessment
- HRF Housing Requirement Figure (the total number of homes the NA is expected to plan for, usually supplied by LPAs)
- HLIN Housing Learning and Improvement Network
- HRP Household Reference Person
- LHN Local Housing Need
- LPA Local Planning Authority
- DLUHC Department for Leveling up, Housing and Communities (formerly MHCLG)
- NA Neighbourhood (Plan) Area
- NP Neighbourhood Plan
- NPPF National Planning Policy Framework
- ONS Office for National Statistics
- PPG Planning Practice Guidance
- PRS Private Rented Sector
- RQ Research Question
- SHMA Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- VOA Valuation Office Agency

1. Executive Summary

Tenure and Affordability Conclusions

The way residents occupy their homes in Whitchurch broadly aligns with district and national trends. As such the majority of homes are owned, followed by a relatively even split between social rented and private rented and a low level of shared ownership (only 2 dwellings). Since the 2011 Census there were 45 (net) completions, two were offered as affordable tenures. It is also interesting to observe the change recorded between the 2001 and 2011 Census: in Whitchurch the private rented sector expanded by 64% in that period, a rate of growth lower than at district and national levels. Interestingly, social renting increased by almost 10%, whereas this tenure saw a decrease both in Aylesbury Vale and England.

House prices have seen some fluctuations, yet there has not been a significant increase over the past decade. The median, which is the middle number when you sort the data from smallest to largest, while the mean captures the average of all the house prices, both high and low, the few outlying data points on the high end cause the mean to increase, making it higher than the median. The mean price in 2020 was £405,903, while the median was £368,500. Between 2011 and 2020 the mean increased by 16% (or £55,903), while the median prices increased by 12% (or £39,500).

However, in Whitchurch lower quartile prices decreased by 1.3% (or £3,750) between 2011 and 2020 to £280,000. At district level lower quartile prices increased by just over 50%, yet still remain lower than in the neighbourhood area, at £250,000.

It appears that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher than average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most. The median house price would require an annual income 60% higher than the current average.

The most significant finding is the need for affordable home ownership in Whitchurch. AECOM estimates potential demand for an additional 38 affordable home ownership dwellings. Government policy aimed at tackling the housing crisis continues to attach high priority on helping those on modest incomes and others who are unable to afford market housing for purchase, such as younger buyers, to access affordable routes towards homeownership. In the case of Whitchurch, the most appropriate tenures to help implement this policy goal locally are rent to buy, shared ownership (at 10% or 25% share) or the new First Homes product (with a 40% or 50% discount).

The assessment calculated a surplus of affordable rented units over the Plan period; however, this is due to the level of turnover meeting the anticipated newly arising need and addressing the backlog (five households) over time. However, it is not realistic or helpful to limit social rented dwellings when there is a current backlog and, therefore, there should be some delivery of affordable rented dwellings over the Plan period. This is especially important as households with a single lower earner appear unable to afford any of the tenures considered including the smallest socially rented units. Many such individuals will, if unable to secure a social rented dwelling, require additional subsidy through Housing Benefit to access housing.

The Local Plan does not outline a recommended split between tenures of affordable housing that should be sought. Therefore, based on the evidence provided in this assessment it is suggested that a split of 80% affordable home ownership and 20% affordable rented would be best to meet the identified need in Whitchurch.

The expected level of delivery does not meet the quantity of demand identified in estimates of the need for affordable housing. It is therefore recommended that the policy requirement is met wherever possible, and further avenues for delivering greater quantities of Affordable Housing (such as exception sites) to be explored. It is not recommended that the Local Plan policy requirement be exceeded in the neighbourhood plan because such steps are rarely accepted by planning inspectors on the grounds that an extremely high standard of justification is required which goes beyond the scope of this HNA, in particular around the issue of what level of Affordable Housing delivery can be financially viable in the NA. Raising the percentage of Affordable Housing required could, furthermore, have the effect of discouraging new building from coming forward altogether. Should the group wish to consider such an option, it is advisable to discuss this with the LPA in the first instance.

Affordable housing is typically provided and made financially viable by its inclusion as a proportion of larger market developments, as guided by Local Plan policy. However, if the community wishes to boost the supply of affordable housing, there are other, more proactive routes available for its provision. For example, using community development orders, identifying exception sites or developing community land trusts are all ways of boosting the supply of affordable housing.

Type and Size Conclusions

This study provides an indication of the likely need for different types and sizes of homes based on demographic change. It is important to remember that other factors should be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is desirable in the parish or on any particular site. These include the specific characteristics of the nearby stock of housing (such as its condition and design), the role of the NA or site within the wider housing market area (linked to any Local Authority strategies or plans) and site-specific factors which may justify a particular dwelling mix.

There is a varied mix of dwellings in the neighbourhood area; however, there is a smaller proportion of flats and higher proportion of bungalows than at district or national level. This is somewhat unsurprising in a rural area.

Whitchurch is made up of predominantly larger dwellings with 3 or 4 or more bedrooms. Although recent completions have somewhat addressed this imbalance by providing primarily 2 bedroom dwellings, the low level of 1 bedroom dwellings and continued provision of larger homes means the strong weighting towards bigger properties persists.

The demographic structure is reflective of what is seen at both district and national level. However, there is a slightly higher proportion of those aged 45-65 and a slightly lower proportion of those aged 16-24 and 25-44 in Whitchurch than in Aylesbury Vale and England more widely. Between 2011 and 2019, the demographic structure changed slightly, with an

increase in those aged 65-84 and a minor increase in those aged 85 and over, coupled with small decreases in in all other age categories.

The vast majority of people in Whitchurch live in dwellings with one or two extra bedrooms (85%), while 13% live in homes with no extra bedrooms. Only 2% live in dwellings with fewer bedrooms than those households would be expected to need. However, this differs depending on the makeup of the household. As such, only families under 65 with dependent children experience over occupancy. While families who are all aged over 65 have the highest rates of under occupancy. This suggests that the larger housing is not being occupied by households with the most family members, but by the people with the most wealth or my older people who have not chosen or been able to move to smaller properties.

The results of a life-stage modelling exercise, which looks at the sizes of dwelling occupied by different age groups and projects the growth and decline of those age groups over the Plan period in order to understand what should be built, demonstrates that in Whitchurch an appropriate response would be to prioritise the supply of smaller to mid-sized dwellings with 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms, with a far smaller number of larger homes with 4 or more bedrooms likely to be required.

This model, however, operates on the assumption that households can and will wish to occupy only housing specifically suitable for their household size, which is not a realistic prospect given that people are willing to pay for extra bedrooms for a range of reasons. It is not surprising, then, that demand for all dwelling sizes will remain. Therefore, the weighing suggested provides a helpful guideline of what should be delivered in the Parish but it should be interpreted with a degree of flexibility.

In the Tenure and Affordability chapter analysis, it was found that market housing for sale (as opposed to market housing for rent and all types of Affordable Housing) is increasingly unaffordable and that those on the median incomes are unable to afford to live outside of the rented sector. While Affordable Housing should be well balanced in terms of size to cater for all circumstances, the provision of smaller and mid-sized homes for sale and rent should make an important contribution to improving affordability more widely. This is supported by the evidence in the HEDNA, which shows that for affordable housing for rent and intermediate housing 2 and 3 bedroom properties should take precedence.

If older households wishing to 'rightsize' and younger ones seeking to form their own independent households are to be able to afford to live in Whitchurch, increasing the provision of small to mid-sized homes will be crucial.

2. Context

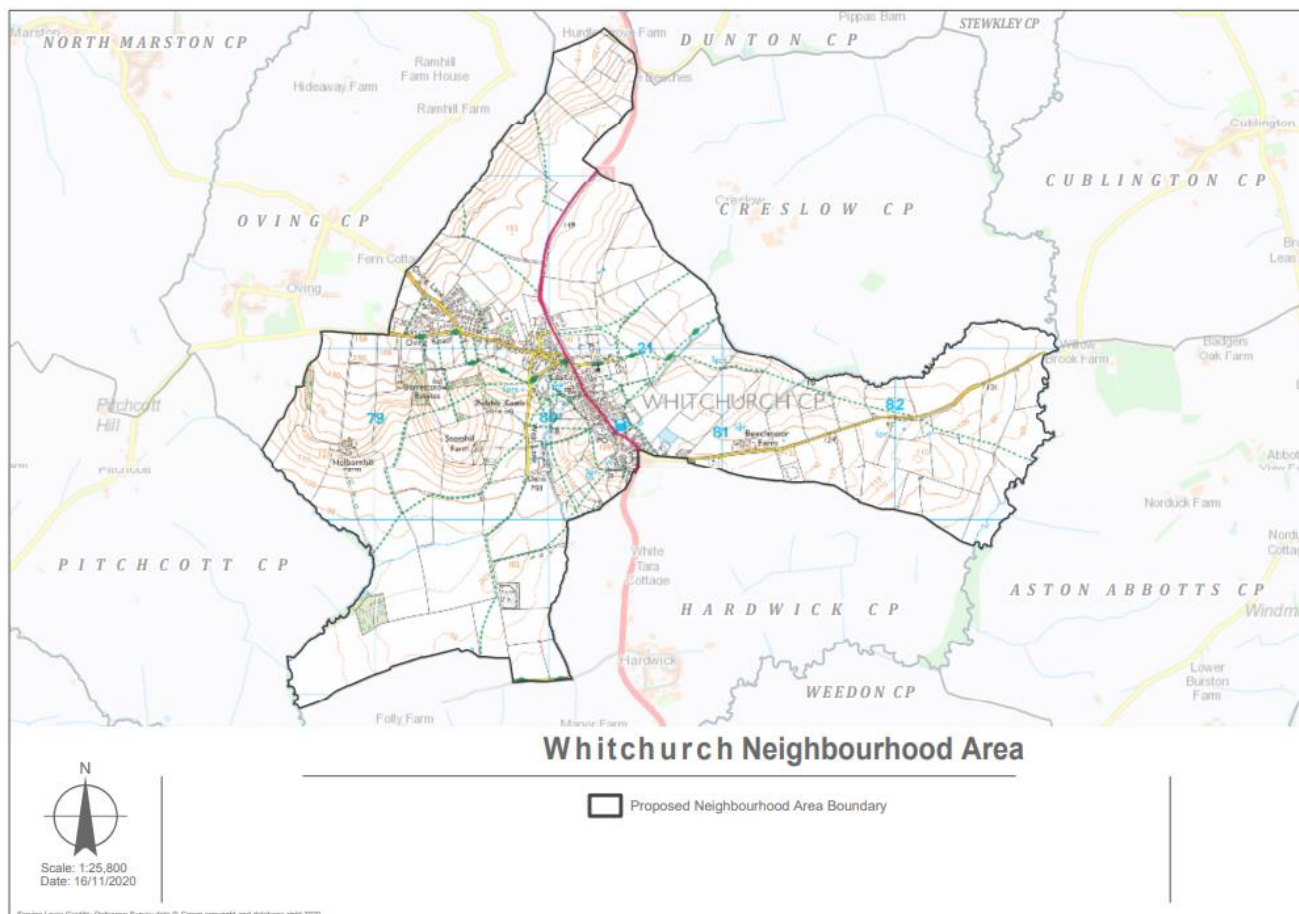
Local context

1. Whitchurch is a Neighbourhood Plan area located in the former Aylesbury Vale district area, Buckinghamshire. The Neighbourhood Area (NA) boundary is synonymous with the Parish boundary and was designated in November 2019.
2. The proposed Neighbourhood Plan period starts in 2021 and extends to 2040, therefore comprising a planning period of 19 years. The evidence supplied in this report will look forward to the Plan end date of 2040, but where possible will also provide annualised figures which can be extrapolated to a different term if the Plan period changes.
3. Whitchurch straddles the A413, Aylesbury to Buckingham road, and is located approximately five miles north of Aylesbury and 12 miles south of Buckingham. The settlement is predominately linear, mostly consisting of one street with minor roads surrounding it. Whitchurch is on a prominent ridge of the Brill-Wing Hills, and there are long-distance views in all directions. The surrounding land is mainly pastoral with hedgerows and mature trees, although there is grazing land towards the north and several blocks of broadleaved woodlands towards the west. Whitchurch is a historic settlement with buildings dating back to the 13th century, and there are many fine examples of medieval buildings within the village.
4. The closest train station is Aylesbury Vale Parkway providing regular services to London.
5. The data source used for the neighbourhood plan area comprises the Parish of Whitchurch, as well as neighbouring parish of Creslow. This is due to the census data not breaking down far enough to just Whitchurch. However, given the lack of development in Creslow (one farmstead), this should not impact the findings and the relatability to the neighbourhood plan area.
6. Whitchurch is located in the planning area of Buckinghamshire Council. However, as this is a unitary authority formed relatively recently (April 2020), the majority of the published data and planning documents relevant to this study and the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the smaller former Aylesbury Vale district area.
7. The statistics show that in the 2011 Census the NA had a total of 932 residents, formed into 378 households and occupying 394 dwellings. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces mid-year population estimates for parishes and wards throughout the country. The mid-2019 population estimate for Whitchurch is 934 – indicating population growth of around two individuals since 2011. It is worth noting that this figure is an estimate only, based on data which is mostly available at local authority level such as administrative registers of births and deaths, data on moves between local authorities, small-area population estimates and official population projections, and not based on a survey count.
8. Between the 2011 census and 30th September 2021 there have been 45 (net) completions in the Parish, 31 houses and 16 flats all in primarily in market tenures, two of the dwellings came forward as shared ownership. Additionally, as of 30th September there are a further 53 (net) dwellings committed. This does not align with the small increase in the population

as noted above, however, this may be due to when the dwellings were built and the estimated nature of the population figure.

9. A map of the Plan area appears below in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2-1: Map of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan area¹



Source: Aylesbury Vale Neighbourhood Planning Webpage

¹ Available at <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/whitchurch%20parish%20council%20area%20designation%20request%20and%20map%20nov%202020.pdf>

Planning policy context

11. Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in general conformity with adopted strategic local policies.² In the case of Whitchurch, the relevant adopted Local Plan for Aylesbury Vale consists of:
- Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013-2033. This Plan manages and directs growth up until 2033 in a way that will protect what makes the area a special place.
12. On 1st April 2020 Buckinghamshire Council was created and became the local planning authority for the area previously covered by four local planning authorities, namely Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council and Wycombe District Council, as well as Buckinghamshire County Council, which was responsible for Minerals and Waste Planning. Therefore, moving forward local planning documents will be published by Buckinghamshire Council.
13. With the creation of Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority in 2020, work is now progressing on the Buckingham Local Plan, which must be in place for the whole council area by April 2025. This work is at an early stage, with issues and options consultation expected soon. Bucks Council is currently undertaking a questionnaire survey and seeking help in identifying Brownfield sites.

Policies in the adopted local plan

14. Table 2-1 below summarises adopted Local Plan policies that are relevant to housing need and delivery in Whitchurch.

Table 2-1: Summary of relevant adopted policies in the Aylesbury Vale adopted Local Plan

Policy	Provisions
H1 Affordable Housing	This policy requires developments of 11 dwellings or more or sites of 0.3 ha or more to provide a minimum of 25% affordable homes on site. It goes on to note that the type, size, tenure and location of the affordable housing will be agreed with the council.
H2 Rural Exception Sites	This policy notes that in rural areas, small scale development for affordable housing may exceptionally be permitted providing it meets local housing needs, is located within or adjoining the existing development footprint of the settlement, is appropriate in scale and design and would remain in perpetuity for those in affordable local need.
H6a Housing Mix	This policy states that new residential development will be expected to provide a mix of homes to meet current and expected future requirements in the interest of meeting housing need and creating socially mixed and inclusive communities. The housing mix will be negotiated having regard to the council's most up-to-date evidence on housing need, available evidence from developers on local market conditions and shall be in general conformity with the council's latest evidence and Neighbourhood Development Plan evidence where applicable for the relevant area.

Source: *Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan*³

² A description of the Basic Conditions of Neighbourhood Planning is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#basic-conditions-for-neighbourhood-plan-to-referendum>

³ Available at:

<https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/VALP/AppendixA/Adopted%20Vale%20of%20Aylesbury%20Local%20Plan%201.pdf>

Quantity of housing to provide

15. The NPPF 2021 (paragraphs 66 and 67) requires Local Authorities to provide neighbourhood groups upon request with a definitive or an indicative number of houses to plan for over the Neighbourhood Plan period.
16. Given that Buckinghamshire Council is at an early stage of plan-making the spatial strategy for the area is not yet clear and an indicative housing requirement figure has therefore not been requested at this stage. Whilst there is an expectation that approximately 30 dwellings would be acceptable to the local community, the decision to extend the plan period to 2040, and securing longevity of the neighbourhood plan, in particular securing the protection of Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, is yet to be considered in establishing an appropriate figure for Whitchurch to 2040. However, for the purposes of calculations used in this report, the proxy figure of around 30 dwellings has been used at this stage.

3. Approach

Research Questions

17. The following research questions were formulated at the outset of the research through discussion with the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Planning Group. They serve to direct the research and provide the structure for the HNA.
18. The Neighbourhood Planning Group carried out a village consultation in July 2021. In the summary note it states that *‘there appears to be consensus around the need for more affordable housing suitable for single people, retired people and young families. This reinforces the findings of our 2019 survey. No comments were in favour of large homes or large developments. The needs of local people were highlighted. A number of comments referred to sustainable, environmentally friendly, eco design of new houses. A number of comments mentioned sympathetic design to the existing built environment’*. Therefore, the research questions are based on these topics.

Tenure and Affordability

19. The neighbourhood planning group would like to understand the needs of the community for housing of varying tenures, as well as the relative affordability of those tenures that should be provided to meet local need now and into the future.
20. This evidence will allow Whitchurch to establish the right conditions for new development to come forward that is affordable, both in the broader sense of market housing attainable for first-time buyers, and as Affordable Housing for those who may be currently priced out of the market.
21. The neighbourhood planners are interested in exploring the need for Affordable Housing for sale (also known as affordable home ownership) and are therefore eligible for support under the Affordable Housing for sale element of the Neighbourhood Planning Technical Support programme. Analysis and commentary on this issue has been provided where relevant and possible in the HNA.

RQ One: What quantity and tenures of Affordable Housing should be planned for over the Neighbourhood Plan period?

Type and Size

22. The neighbourhood planning group is seeking to determine what size and type of housing would be best suited to the local community. The group are looking to diversify away from the standard luxury developments that have come forward in the past couple of years to provide smaller, more affordable dwellings, both suitable for new home owners and those seeking to downsize.
23. The aim of this research question is to provide neighbourhood planners with evidence on the types and sizes needed by the local community. This will help to shape future development so that it better reflects what residents need.
24. While this study is not able to advise on space standards or home configurations, it may reveal imbalances between the available stock and demographic trends.

25. Note, however, that the evidence gathered here takes the current population as its starting point and projects forward trends that exist today. It therefore risks embedding features of the housing stock and occupation patterns that the community may actually wish to change. In that sense, the findings in this report might be viewed as the baseline scenario on top of which the community's objectives and primary evidence should be layered to create a more complete picture and vision for the future.

RQ Two: What type (terrace, semi, bungalows, flats and detached) and size (number of bedrooms) of housing is appropriate for the Plan area over the Neighbourhood Plan period?

Relevant Data

26. This HNA assesses a range of evidence to ensure its findings are robust for the purposes of developing policy at the Neighbourhood Plan level and is locally specific. This includes data from the 2011 Census and a range of other data sources, including:

- Other Office of National Statistics (ONS) datasets providing more up-to-date demographic information;
- ONS population and household projections for future years;
- Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data on the current stock of housing;
- Land Registry data on prices paid for housing within the local market;
- Rental prices from Home.co.uk;
- Local Authority housing waiting list data;
- Village Questionnaire (July 2021); and
- Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (2016).

27. More recent data sources for the population and existing housing stock will be used wherever possible in this report. However, Census datasets providing, for example, the breakdown of households (as opposed to individuals) by age and the tenure of dwellings, cannot be accurately be brought up to date in this way. Such patterns are instead generally assumed to persist to the present day.

4. RQ One: Tenure, Affordability and the Need for Affordable Housing

RQ One: What Affordable Housing (eg social housing, affordable rented, shared ownership, discounted market sale, intermediate rented) and other market tenures should be planned for in the housing mix over the Neighbourhood Plan period?

Introduction

28. This section approaches the question of affordability from two perspectives. First, it examines what tenure options are currently available in the parish and which of them might be most appropriate going forward, based on the relationship between how much they cost and local incomes. Second, it estimates the quantity of Affordable Housing that might be required during the Neighbourhood Plan period. The scale of need for these homes can justify planning policies to guide new development.
29. Tenure refers to the way a household occupies their home. Broadly speaking, there are two categories of tenure: market housing (such as homes available to purchase outright or rent from a private landlord) and Affordable Housing (including subsidised products like social rent and shared ownership). We refer to Affordable Housing, with capital letters, to denote the specific tenures that are classified as affordable in the current NPPF. A relatively less expensive home for market sale may be affordable but it is not a form of Affordable Housing.
30. The definition of Affordable Housing set out in the NPPF 2021 makes clear the Government's commitment to home ownership by broadening the definition to include a range of low-cost housing opportunities for those aspiring to own a home. As part of this effort, the Government has recently introduced a new product called First Homes.⁴
31. Because the First Homes product is new and expected to be an important part of the strategy for improving access to home ownership, it is worth summarising its key features and implications:
- First Homes should be available to buy with a minimum discount of 30% below their full market value (i.e. the value of an equivalent new home);
 - The discount level can be set higher than 30% – at 40% or 50% – where this can be suitably evidenced. The setting and justifying of discount levels can happen at neighbourhood as well as local authority scale;
 - After the discount is applied the initial sale price must not exceed £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London), and lower caps can be set locally;

⁴ The shape that the new First Homes product will take is set out in a Ministerial Statement issued in May 2021, available here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hlws48>. The relevant update to PPG is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes#contents>.

- Purchasers must be first-time buyers with an income less than £80,000 (or £90,000 in Greater London), and First Homes can be prioritised for local people and/or key workers;
- They will be subject to legal restrictions ensuring the discount is retained for future occupants, and renting out or sub-letting will not normally be permitted;
- In addition to setting the discount level, local authorities and neighbourhood planning groups can apply additional criteria, such as a lower income cap, local connection test or prioritisation for key workers through adopted plans, emerging policy or Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 25% of all homes delivered through section 106 developer contributions on sites enabled through the planning process should be sold as First Homes. In simpler terms, 25% of all subsidised Affordable Housing on mainstream housing developments should be First Homes. This is likely to mean that First Homes will take the place of shared ownership housing in many circumstances, and in some cases may also displace social or affordable rented homes.

Current tenure profile

32. The current tenure profile is a key feature of the Neighbourhood Plan Area (NA). Patterns of home ownership, private renting and affordable/social renting reflect demographic characteristics including age (with older households more likely to own their own homes), and patterns of income and wealth which influence whether households can afford to rent or buy and whether they need subsidy to access housing.
33. Table 4-1 below presents data on tenure in Whitchurch compared with Aylesbury Vale and England from the 2011 Census, which is the most recent available source of this information.
34. The way residents occupy their homes in Whitchurch broadly aligns with district and national trends. As such, the majority of homes are owned, followed by a relatively even split between social rented and private rented and a low level of shared ownership (only 2 dwellings).
35. Between the 2011 census and 30th September 2021 there have been 45 (net) completions in the Parish, 31 houses and 16 flats all in market tenures. This suggests that the proportion of homes in ownership is even higher today than in 2011. Additionally, as of 30th September there are a further 53 (net) dwellings committed; however, an accurate tenure breakdown is not available for these dwellings.
36. There is no current data on the proportion of housing that is rented because the choice to let out a property does not require planning permission or other changes that would be recorded centrally. The 2021 Census will provide the most robust and up-to-date picture of this when the results are released in the coming months. However, it is interesting to observe the change recorded between the 2001 and 2011 Census: in Whitchurch the private rented sector expanded by 64% in that period, a rate of growth

lower than at district and national levels. Interestingly, social renting increased by almost 10%, whereas this tenure saw a decrease both in Aylesbury Vale and England.

Table 4-1: Tenure (households) in Whitchurch, 2011

Tenure	Whitchurch	Aylesbury Vale	England
Owned; total	75.4%	71.6%	63.3%
Shared ownership	0.5%	0.9%	0.8%
Social rented; total	11.9%	12.9%	17.7%
Private rented; total	10.8%	13.3%	16.8%

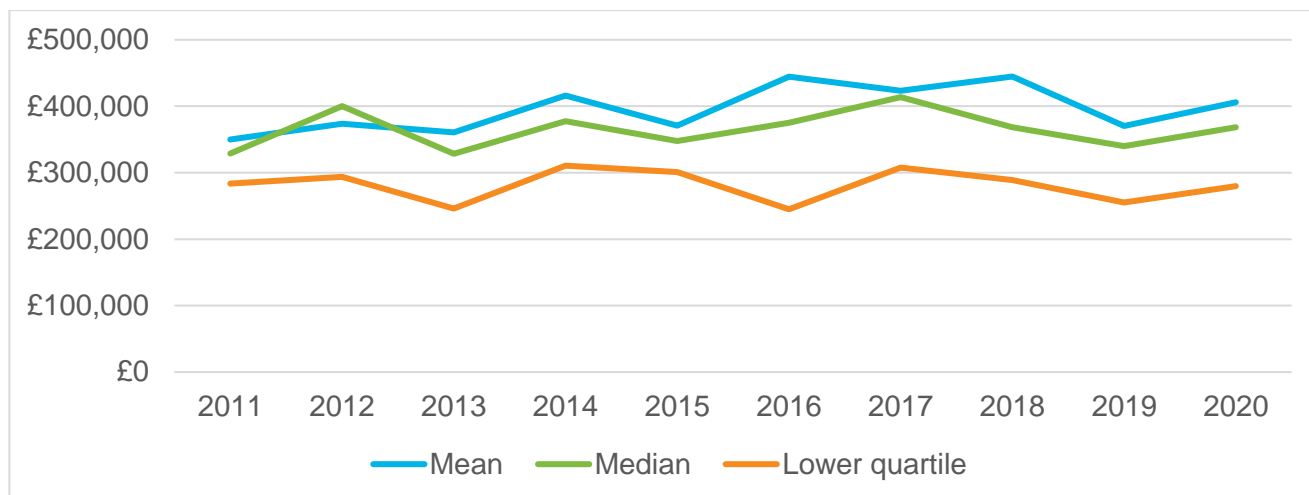
Sources: Census 2011, AECOM Calculations

Affordability

House prices

37. House prices provide an indication of the level of demand for homes within an area. The relationship between house prices and incomes determines whether housing is affordable to local households and, to a large extent, what tenure, type and size of home they occupy. Changes in affordability over time can indicate pressures in the housing market. As such, it is useful for the evidence base for plans to examine trends in prices and consider what this reveals about the local housing market.
38. Figure 4-1 below looks at selected measures of house prices in Whitchurch. It shows that while house prices have seen some fluctuations on a generally upward trajectory, there has not been a significant increase overall.
39. The median is the middle number when you sort the data from smallest to largest, while the mean captures the average of all the house prices, both high and low, the few outlying data points on the high end cause the mean to increase, making it higher than the median. The mean price in 2020 was £405,903, while the median was £368,500. Between 2011 and 2020, the mean increased by 16% (or £55,903), while the median prices increased by 12% (or £39,500).
40. These prices are higher than the mean and median house prices at district level (£385,007 and £335,000 respectively), however prices across the district significantly increased by 46% between 2011 and 2020.
41. In Whitchurch lower quartile prices decreased by 1.3% (or £3,750) between 2011 and 2020 to £280,000. At district level lower quartile prices increased by just over 50%, yet still remain lower than in the neighbourhood area, at £250,000.
42. This demonstrates the consistent high prices of dwellings in Whitchurch, although this has seemingly resulted in less significant changes in price over the past decade.

Figure 4-1: House prices by quartile in Whitchurch, 2011-2020



Source: Land Registry PPD

43. Table 4-2 below breaks down house prices by type. It shows that detached and terraced dwellings have appreciated the most, by over 80% and 50% respectively. Semi-detached dwellings appreciated by a less significant amount (10%). While flats actually depreciated; however, this may be due to the small sample of flats (there were a total of 13 in 2011, which increased to 29 by September 2021). The overall small sample size also accounts for the significant variation in the average price of detached homes – with 2011 being a particularly low and 2020 being a particularly high year.

Table 4-2: House prices by type in Whitchurch, 2011-2020

Type	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Growth
Detached	£340,000	£420,000	£451,250	£512,500	£380,000	£693,000	£455,000	£600,000	£510,000	£625,000	83.8%
Semi-detached	£250,000	£294,000	£261,250	£342,500	£342,500	£504,998	£380,000	£350,000	£320,500	£275,000	10.0%
Terraced	-	£247,000	£226,250	£240,000	£345,750	£307,500	£261,000	£240,000	£340,000	£375,000	51.8%
Flats	-	-	-	-	£239,999	£233,000	-	£175,000	£223,000	-	-7.1%
All Types	£329,000	£400,000	£328,500	£377,500	£347,500	£374,995	£413,750	£368,500	£340,000	£368,500	12.0%

Source: Land Registry PPD

Income

44. Household incomes determine the ability of households to exercise choice in the housing market, and consequently the level of need for affordable housing products. Two sources of data are used to examine household incomes in the NA.
45. The first source is ONS's estimates of incomes in small areas. This is locally specific but limited to the overall average income (i.e. it does not provide the average income of lower earners). The average total household income before housing costs locally was £59,600 in 2018. A map of the area to which this data applies is provided in Appendix A.
46. The second source is ONS's annual estimates of UK employee earnings. This provides lower quartile average earnings (i.e. the income of the lowest 25% of earners). However,

it is only available at the Local Authority level. It also relates to individual earnings. While this is an accurate representation of household incomes where there is only one earner, it does not represent household income where there are two or more people earning. Buckinghamshire's gross individual lower quartile annual earnings were £16,706 in 2019. To estimate the income of households with two lower quartile earners, this figure is doubled to £33,412.

47. It is immediately clear from this data that there is a large gap between the spending power of average earning households and those earning the lowest 25% of incomes, particularly where the household in question has one earner only.

Affordability Thresholds

48. To gain a clearer understanding of local affordability, it is useful to understand what levels of income are required to afford different tenures. This is done using 'affordability thresholds': the estimated amount of annual income required to cover the cost of rent or a mortgage given local housing prices.
49. AECOM has determined thresholds for the income required in Whitchurch to buy a home in the open market (average and entry-level prices), and the income required to afford private rent and the range of Affordable Housing tenures as set out in the NPPF. These calculations are detailed and discussed in more detail in Appendix A.
50. The key assumptions made in assessing the affordability of different tenures are explained alongside the calculations, but it is worth noting here that we have assumed that the maximum percentage of household income that should be spent on rent is 30% and that mortgage financing will be offered at a maximum of 3.5 times household income.
51. Table 4-3 summarises the estimated cost of each tenure, the annual income required to support these costs within the NA, and whether local incomes are sufficient. The income required column assumes the household already has access to a deposit (which we have assumed to be 10% of the value to be purchased) but does not reflect the possibility that households may already hold equity from an existing property. Although these factors may be crucial to whether housing will be affordable, they are highly dependent on individual circumstances that cannot be anticipated here.
52. The same information is presented as a graph in Figure 4-2 on a subsequent page, with selected measures from the table presented for clarity.

Table 4-3: Affordability thresholds in Whitchurch (income required, £)

Tenure	Mortgage value (90% of price)	Annual rent	Income required	Affordable on average incomes? £59,600	Affordable on LQ earnings (single earner)? £16,706	Affordable on LQ earnings (2 earners)? £33,412
Market Housing						
Median House Price	£331,650	-	£94,757	No	No	No
LA New Build Mean House Price	£369,000		£105,429	No	No	No
LQ/Entry-level House Price	£252,000	-	£72,000	No	No	No
Average Market Rent	-	£14,700	£49,000	Yes	No	No
Entry-level Market Rent	-	£13,956	£46,520	Yes	No	No
Affordable Home Ownership						
First Homes (-30%)	£232,155	-	£66,330	No	No	No
First Homes (-40%)	£198,990	-	£56,854	Yes	No	No
First Homes (-50%)	£165,825	-	£47,379	Yes	No	No
Shared Ownership (50%)	£165,825	£4,606	£62,733	No	No	No
Shared Ownership (25%)	£82,913	£6,909	£46,721	Yes	No	No
Shared Ownership (10%)	£33,165	£8,291	£37,113	Yes	No	No
Affordable Rented Housing						
Affordable Rent	-	£7,931	£26,410	Yes	No	Yes
Social Rent	-	£5,576	£18,568	Yes	No	Yes

Source: AECOM Calculations

53. Before considering each tenure category in turn, it is important to stress that these affordability thresholds have been calculated to give a sufficiently robust indication of the costs of various tenures to inform Neighbourhood Plan policy choices. These figures rely on existing data and assumptions, and it is not possible to estimate every possible permutation. The income figures also disguise a large degree of variation. For simplicity the analysis below speaks in terms of tenure products being ‘affordable’ or ‘not affordable’ for different groups, but individual circumstances and the location, condition and other factors of specific properties in each category have a large impact. These conclusions should therefore be interpreted flexibly.

Market housing for purchase and rent

54. Thinking about housing for purchase on the open market, it appears that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher than average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most. The median house price would require an annual income 60% higher than the current average.
55. Private renting is generally only affordable to average earners. Households made up of one or two lower quartile earners cannot afford the given rental thresholds. Affordability is improved if households are able or willing to dedicate a larger proportion of their incomes to rental costs, although this has repercussions for other quality of life aspects and cannot be assumed to suit all individuals’ circumstances.

Affordable home ownership

56. There is a relatively large group of households in Whitchurch who may be able to afford to rent privately but cannot afford home ownership. They are typically earning between around £46,520 per year (at which point entry-level rents become affordable) and £72,000 (at which point entry-level market sale homes become affordable). This ‘can rent, can’t buy’ cohort may benefit from the range of affordable home ownership products such as First Homes and shared ownership.
57. First Homes are to be offered at a discount of at least 30% on equivalent market prices (i.e. new build, entry-level properties). Local authorities and neighbourhood plan qualifying bodies will have discretion to increase the discount on First Homes to 40% or 50% where there is evidence to suggest this is appropriate.
58. This report has estimated the income required to afford First Homes and tested the implications of 30%, 40% and 50% discount levels. First Homes are accessible to those on average incomes when a discount of 40% or 50% is applied. This suggests that there is evidence to push for higher levels of discount than the minimum of 30% in this area, with 40% likely being most appropriate.
59. Table 4-4 below shows the discount required for First Homes to be affordable to the three income groups. Because it is not possible to estimate the cost of a typical First Home due to a lack of data on new build entry-level house prices in the NA, it is worth considering the discounts required for some additional price benchmarks. The table above uses median house prices in the NA as the best proxy for the cost of a newly built entry-level home in the area, because this reflects the local market and accounts for the price premium usually associated with newly built housing (which would bring the price closer to the price of median existing homes than existing entry-level homes). However, it is worth thinking about First Homes in relation to the cost of new build prices in the wider area, and of entry-level existing prices locally to get a more complete picture. The discount levels required for these alternative benchmarks are given below.

Table 4-4: Discount on sale price required for households to afford First Homes

Tenure/product	Mean Income	LQ Income x1	LQ Income x2
NA Median house price	37%	82%	65%
LA New build mean house price	43%	84%	68%
NA Entry-level house price	17%	77%	54%

Source: Land Registry PPD; ONS MSOA total household income

60. Shared ownership appears to be more affordable than First Homes, but is broadly accessible to the same groups. Government has recently announced that the minimum equity share for shared ownership will fall to 10% of the property value.⁵ If this is delivered in the NA, it will make shared ownership easier to access for more people. However, while the income threshold for a 10% equity shared ownership home is lower, this product may not necessarily be more attractive than the alternatives (such as

⁵ The previous minimum equity share was 25%. This change took effect from 28 June 2021 and transitional arrangements are in place for planning policy documents that are prepared during the implementation timeframe. Changes are also introduced to make the process of staircasing to full ownership more gradual with lower minimum increments of 1%. The ministerial statement confirming and detailing the changes is available here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hlws48>.

shared ownership at higher equity shares and First Homes) for those who can afford them.

61. The transition from 10% to 100% ownership would be long, and during this period the rent on the 90% unsold value would not be subsidised, meaning that monthly costs for occupants will remain relatively high and the build-up of equity will be relatively slow. This product would therefore only be a realistic route to full ownership for households prepared to take a long-term view.
62. The income required to access rent to buy is assumed to be the same as that required to afford market rents. On that basis, First Homes and shared ownership are less affordable options.
63. These three products need to be considered in relation to what they offer occupants in the long term beyond simply being affordable to access or not.
 - First Homes allow for a greater ownership stake in the property, enabling occupiers to benefit from price appreciation over time. Monthly outgoings are also limited to mortgage costs alone, which tend to be cheaper than renting.
 - Shared ownership at high equity shares performs a similar function to First Homes, but there are additional costs associated with the rented portion.
 - Shared ownership at low equity shares can usually be accessed by lower earning households (than First Homes) and requires a smaller deposit. However, this is a potentially less attractive route to eventual ownership because monthly outgoings remain high. The occupant has to pay a significant monthly rent as well as service charges and other costs, so it can be harder for them to save funds to buy out a greater share in the property over time.
 - Rent to buy requires no deposit, thereby benefitting those with sufficient incomes but low savings. It is more attractive than renting but results in a much slower accumulation of the funds that can provide an eventual route to ownership than the other tenures discussed above.
64. In conclusion, all of these products would provide valuable to different segments of the local population, with shared ownership at a lower than 25% equity share potentially allowing lower earning households to get a foot on the housing ladder, while rent to buy is helpful to those with little or no savings for a deposit, and First Homes (especially at 40% or 50% discount) may provide a better long-term investment to those who can afford to access it.

Affordable rented housing

65. Affordable rented housing is generally affordable to households with two lower quartile earners depending on their household size (average earning households are unlikely to be eligible). However, households with a single lower earner appear unable to afford any of the tenures considered including the smallest socially rented units. Many such individuals will, if unable to secure a social rented dwelling require additional subsidy through Housing Benefit to access housing.

66. The evidence in this chapter suggests that the affordable rented sector performs a vital function in Whitchurch as the only option for a large segment of those in the greatest need. Social rents are cheaper and would therefore leave households on lower earnings better off and better able to afford their other living costs, such as food and fuel etc. Where households are supported by housing benefit the difference in the cost of affordable and social rents may be irrelevant as the level of housing benefit flexes according to the rent. This mean that households supported by housing benefit may be no better off in social rented accommodation because they receive a lower rate of housing benefit to cover their rent.

Figure 4-2: Affordability thresholds in Whitchurch, income required (additional cost of deposit in black)



Source: AECOM Calculations

Affordable housing- quantity needed

67. The starting point for understanding the need for affordable housing in Whitchurch is the relevant Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA). A HEDNA was undertaken for Buckinghamshire in 2016 (with a 2017 update). This study estimates the need for affordable housing in the District based on analysis of the Council's waiting list and analysis of other data sets in line with Planning Practice Guidance at the time. The HEDNA identifies the need for 210 additional affordable homes each year in Aylesbury Vale as a whole. 83% of those are in need of affordable rented, while 17% are required to be intermediate housing.
68. When the HEDNA figures are pro-rated to Whitchurch based on its share of the population (0.54% of the LPA's population), this equates to 0.9 homes per annum (for social/affordable rent) or 17 homes over the Neighbourhood Plan period 2021-2040. In addition, there is a need for 0.2 homes per annum (for intermediate tenures) or 3.5 homes over the Plan period.
69. However, pro-rating District level estimates of affordable housing need to rural areas presents problems in practice. The District level figures are likely to represent higher needs in the urban areas of the District where there is a large social housing stock and larger numbers of households living in the PRS on housing benefit. Both of these factors tend to generate higher needs. By contrast, in rural villages like Whitchurch the lack of social housing means there is no need generated from households already living in the sector. Similarly, households who may need social housing often move away to areas where their needs are more likely to be met (either because there is social housing available or more private rented housing). This means it is difficult to identify need for social/affordable rented housing within Whitchurch.
70. Consequently, in Table 4-5 below we have calculated, using PPG as a starting point,⁶ an estimate of the total need for affordable rented housing in Whitchurch over the Plan period using more locally-specific data. It should, however, be noted that the accuracy of the findings generated by the model is only as strong as the evidence we have available to us. For example, Census 2011 data is increasingly out-of-date. However, given the test of proportionality for evidence supporting neighbourhood plans, and the need to be in conformity with Local Authority strategic policies, the calculations set out here are considered a reasonable basis for understanding and planning for neighbourhood-level affordable housing need.
71. It should also be noted that figures are largely dependent on information provided by Buckinghamshire in its capacity as manager of the local housing waiting list. The Planning Officers notes that there were five households currently on the Bucks Home Choice Applications from addresses within the Whitchurch area. Others

⁶ Paragraphs 024-026 Reference ID: 2a-026-20140306, at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment>

may have family connection or preference to reside in the area but the LPA does not hold that data.

72. The table shows that there are currently about five households in Whitchurch unable to access affordable rented homes suitable to their needs. The table also suggests that, over the Plan period, 13.8 additional households in the Neighbourhood Plan area will fall into need. However, because of the expected rate of turnover in the existing stock, it is anticipated that there will in fact be a surplus for affordable rented homes of approximately 9.5 units over the plan period.
73. This result may initially be surprising since there is understood to be a current backlog of need (in the region of five households). The reason for the apparent surplus over the long-term is that model assumes a rate of turnover in the existing affordable housing stock of 3%. So of the 45 units of affordable rented accommodation existing currently, it can be expected that around 1.6 will come vacant in any given year as their current occupants move to a new location, pass away or cease to be eligible as their circumstances change. This satisfies the projected newly arising need as well as some of the backlog, which is effectively spread out over the 10-year period to produce an annualized figure.
74. An important caveat to this finding is that there are almost certainly households currently in need in the NA, and to 'spread them out' over the Plan period suggests that some of them can be accommodated in ten years' time once a sufficient surplus has been built up through new supply and turnover of the existing stock. While possible, this is not favourable to the individuals involved. In practice, it would be better to frontload any future affordable rented provision to meet those needs as soon as possible, leaving newly arising need in future to be met by turnover in the existing stock.
75. A further caveat worth emphasizing is that one unit of Affordable Housing does not necessarily service one household worth of need, since the unit might have 2 bedrooms while the applicant household might require 4 bedrooms, may be located in an inappropriate location, or be otherwise unsuitable.
76. As such, it is recommended that Whitchurch considers encouraging the delivery of some affordable rented housing, particularly early in the Plan period, with the understanding that if this results in oversupply in future years, the vacancies created when existing occupants leave their properties may need to satisfy new need from elsewhere in the district. This is particularly important in Whitchurch as when the total need for the district is pro-rated to the neighbourhood it suggests that approximately 17 affordable dwellings (primarily for social rented) should be provided in the area – either to meet Whitchurch's own needs or to contribute to those of the wider area.

Table 4-5: Estimate of need for Affordable Housing for rent in Whitchurch

Stage and Step in Calculation	Total	Description
STAGE 1: CURRENT NEED		
1.1 Current households in need	5	Neighbourhood level data if provided by LA.
1.2 Per annum	0.3	Step 1.1 divided by the plan period to produce an annualised figure.
STAGE 2: NEWLY ARISING NEED		
2.1 New household formation	92.8	DLUHC 2018-based household projections for the LA between start and end of plan period. % increase applied to NA.
2.2 Proportion of new households unable to rent in the market	14.9%	(Steps 1.1 + 2.2.1 + 2.2.2) divided by number of households in NA.
2.2.1 Current number of social renters in parish	45	2011 Census social rented occupancy + recent completions
2.2.2 Number of private renters on housing benefits	8.3	Housing benefit caseload May 2018. Pro rata for NA.
2.3 New households unable to rent	13.8	Step 2.1 x Step 2.2.
2.4 Per annum	0.7	Step 2.3 divided by plan period.
STAGE 3: TURNOVER OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING		
3.1 Supply of social/affordable re-lets (including transfers) %	3%	Assumed proportion of stock re-let each year.
3.2 Supply of social/affordable re-lets (including transfers)	1.6	Step 3.1 x NA social rented stock (2.2.1).
NET SURPLUS OF RENTED UNITS PER ANNUM		
Overall surplus per annum	0.5	Step 1.2 + Step 2.4 - Step 3.2

Source: AECOM model, using Census 2011, English Housing Survey 2018, DLUHC 2018 based household projections and net additions to affordable housing stock. 2018 is the latest reliable data for some datasets so is used throughout for consistency. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

77. Turning now to Affordable Housing providing a route to home ownership, Table 4-6 below estimates the potential demand in Whitchurch. This model aims to estimate the number of households might wish to own their own home but cannot afford to – the ‘can rent, can’t buy’ group described in the previous section. The model is consistent with methods used at Local Authority scale in taking as its starting point households currently living in or expected to enter the private rented sector who are not on housing benefit.
78. There may be other barriers to these households accessing home ownership on the open market, including being unable to save for a deposit, or being unable to afford a home of the right type/size or in the right location. The model also discounts 25% of households potentially in need, assuming a proportion will be renting out of choice. This is assumption is based on consistent results for surveys and polls at the national level which demonstrate that most households (typically 80% or more) aspire to home ownership.⁷ No robust indicator exists for this area or a wider scale to suggest aspirations may be higher or lower in the NA.
79. The result of the calculation is two households per annum who may be interested in affordable home ownership (or 38 for the entirety of the Plan period).

⁷ <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/housing.html>

80. Again this assumes a rate of turnover in the existing stock will satisfy some need, though this is extremely minimal because of the lack of shared ownership in the NA currently.
81. It is important to keep in mind that the households identified in this estimate are, by and large, adequately housed in the private rented sector, Affordable Housing, or living in other circumstances. They do not necessarily lack their own housing but would prefer to buy rather than rent. They have been included in the national planning definition of those in need of Affordable Housing, but their needs are less acute than those on the waiting list for affordable rented housing.

Figure 4-6: Estimate of the potential demand for affordable housing for sale in Whitchurch

Stage and Step in Calculation	Total	Description
STAGE 1: CURRENT NEED		
1.1 Current number of renters in parish	50	Census 2011 number of renters x national % increase to 2018.
1.2 Percentage renters on housing benefit in LA	16.5%	% of renters in 2018 on housing benefit.
1.3 Number of renters on housing benefits in parish	8.3	Step 1.1 x Step 1.2.
1.4 Current need (households)	31.3	Current renters minus those on housing benefit and minus 25% assumed to rent by choice. ⁸
1.5 Per annum	1.6	Step 1.4 divided by plan period.
STAGE 2: NEWLY ARISING NEED		
2.1 New household formation	92.8	LA household projections for plan period (2018 based) pro-rated to NA.
2.2 % of households unable to buy but able to rent	8.2%	(Step 1.4 + Step 3.1) divided by number of households in NA.
2.3 Total newly arising need	7.6	Step 2.1 x Step 2.2.
2.4 Total newly arising need per annum	0.6	Step 2.3 divided by plan period.
STAGE 3: SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING		
3.1 Supply of affordable housing	5.3	Number of shared ownership homes in parish (Census 2011 + LA new build to 2018/19 pro-rated to NA).
3.2 Supply - intermediate resales	0.3	Step 3.1 x 5% (assumed rate of re-sale).
NET SHORTFALL (OR SURPLUS) PER ANNUM		
Overall shortfall (or surplus) per annum	2	(Step 1.5 + Step 2.4) - Step 3.2.

Source: AECOM model, using Census 2011, English Housing Survey 2018, DLUHC 2018 based household projections and net additions to affordable housing stock. 2018 is the latest reliable data for some datasets so is used throughout for consistency.

82. There is no policy or legal obligation on the part either of the Local Authority or Neighbourhood Plan to meet affordable housing needs in full, though there are tools available to the Steering Group that can help ensure that it is met to a greater extent if resources permit (e.g. the ability to allocate sites for affordable housing).

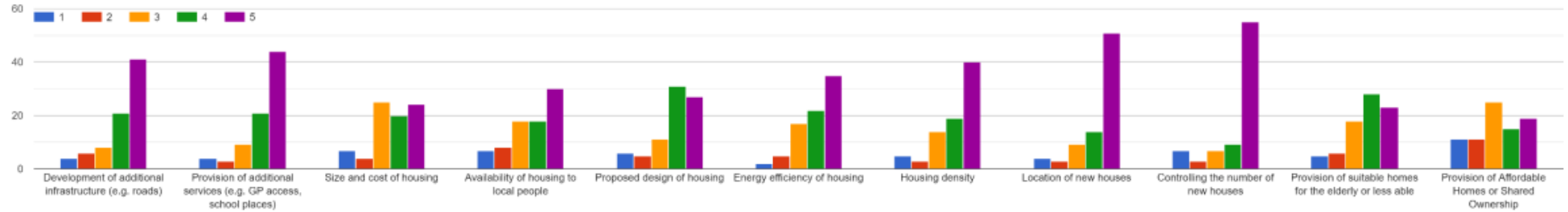
⁸ The assumption of approximately 25% preferring to rent and 75% preferring to buy is AECOM's judgement, based on national level polls which consistently reveal that most households who prefer home ownership eg <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/housing.html> and informed by our experience across numerous neighbourhood level HNAs. The assumption is based on the fact that some households choose to rent at certain stages in their life (e.g. when young, when needing flexibility in employment market, or when new migrants move into an area). While most households prefer the added security and independence of owning their own home, private renting is nevertheless a tenure of choice at a certain points in many households' journey through the housing market. The actual percentage of preference will differ between areas, being higher in large metropolitan areas with younger households and more new migrants, but lower in other areas. 25% is used as a reasonable proxy and for consistency across HNAs and similar assumptions are used in some larger scale assessments such as LHNAs and SHMAs. If the neighbourhood planning group feel this is not an appropriate assumption in their particular locality they could use the results of a local residents survey to refine or confirm this calculation.

83. It is also important to remember that even after the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted, the assessment of need for Affordable Housing, the allocation of affordable rented housing to those in need, and the management of the housing waiting list all remain the responsibility of the Local Authority rather than the neighbourhood planning group.

Village Questionnaire findings

Figure 4-3 Bar chart results from the Village Questionnaire

8. What is most important when considering future housing for Whitchurch?



84. Residents were asked to rate the above issues out of five for which they see as most important. As shown in Figure 4-3, the issues seen as most important are location of new houses, controlling the number of new houses and provision of additional infrastructure and services. The size and cost of housing and provision of affordable homes or shared ownership have a more mixed view; however, all are still considered to be relatively important to residents.

i) Affordable Housing policy guidance

85. Aylesbury Vale’s adopted policy on this subject, Policy H1, requires 25% of all new housing to be affordable. Given that Affordable Housing made up 4% of new housing in Whitchurch over the last decade according to Aylesbury Vale completions figures, it is understood that this target is not usually met on sites in the NA.
86. The overall proportion of housing that must be affordable is not an area of policy that a Neighbourhood Plan can usually influence, but it is worth emphasizing that the HNA finds there to be robust evidence of need for Affordable Housing in the NA, and every effort should be made to maximise delivery where viable.
87. How the Affordable Housing that comes forward through mainstream development sites is broken down into specific tenures – such as the balance between rented tenures and routes to home ownership – is left as a matter to be informed by the latest evidence. The 2016 HEDNA suggests a mix of 83% affordable rented and 17% affordable for sale. However, the HNA can supply more localized evidence, and this section summarises the factors that might be taken into account before proposing a suggested Affordable Housing tenure mix that might be suitable for Whitchurch specifically.
88. The following evidence and considerations may be used as a starting point in the development of policy concerning the Affordable Housing mix:

A. **Evidence of need for Affordable Housing:** This study estimates that Whitchurch requires no units of affordable rented housing and 38 units of affordable home ownership over the Plan period. However, due to reasons already discussed, both forms of Affordable Housing appear to be valuable in meeting the needs of people on various incomes, particularly in the shorter term.

However, as noted above, these figures are not directly equivalent: the former expresses the identified need of a group with acute needs and no alternative options; the latter expresses potential demand from a group who are generally adequately housed in rented accommodation and may not be able to afford the deposit to transition to ownership.

B. **Can Affordable Housing needs be met in full?** How far the more urgently needed affordable rented housing should be prioritised in the tenure mix depends on the quantity of overall housing delivery expected.

If the Local Plan target of 25% were achieved on every site, up to around 8 affordable homes might be expected in the NA based on an overall housing target of 30. If the majority of Whitchurch’s HRF is expected to come forward in the form of small infill developments, those schemes are unlikely to be large enough to meet the threshold of 11 dwellings, above which the Affordable Housing policy applies. If that is the case, the potential delivery of Affordable Housing is likely to be lower still. This is not sufficient to satisfy the total potential demand for Affordable Housing identified here.

As a result, affordable rented housing should have a higher weighting in the tenure mix (than suggested by the need figures summarized in A above) to ensure that the most acute needs are met as a priority. But given the expected volume of future delivery and historic delivery rates it is reasonable to assume that supply will be limited; however, given that there has been no affordable rented need identified, the ratio of 80% affordable for sale and 20% affordable rented is appropriate to aim for in the neighbourhood area.

- C. **Government policy (eg NPPF) requirements:** current NPPF policy requires 10% of all homes to be delivered for affordable home ownership. For 10% of all housing to be affordable ownership in Aylesbury Vale, where 25% of all housing should be affordable, 40% of Affordable Housing should be for affordable ownership.

There can be exceptions to this requirement if it would prevent the delivery of other forms of Affordable Housing. Based on the findings of this HNA, there is no evidence that meeting the 10% threshold in Whitchurch would prejudice the provision of much needed affordable rented homes/ delivery 10% or more of homes as affordable home ownership would impact on the ability to deliver social/affordable rented homes.

- D. **Local Plan policy:** As noted above, the adopted Local Plan does not seek a specific affordable tenure split. However, the HEDNA suggests a split of 83% affordable rented and 17% affordable for sale.
- E. **First Homes policy:** the Government recently concluded a consultation on the introduction of First Homes (to provide at least 30% discount on new build home prices). The proposals have now been enacted through a ministerial statement. A minimum of 25% of all Affordable Housing secured through developer contributions are now required to be First Homes.

This new minimum requirement may have the effect of displacing other products in any established tenure mix, and will reduce the amount of social or affordable rent if this was proposed to be more than 75% of Affordable Housing. This is not the case in Whitchurch.

After the 25% First Homes requirement has been met, the remaining 75% of Affordable Housing units should as a first priority protect the provision for social rent set out in the Local Plan. The remaining units should then be allocated to other tenure products in the relative proportions set out in the Local Plan.

This guidance generally applies to district-level policy, and there may still be potential for a neighbourhood plan tenure mix to deviate from how the other tenures are rebalanced if appropriate.

- F. **Viability:** HNAs cannot take into consideration the factors which affect viability in the neighbourhood area or at the site-specific level. Viability issues are recognised in the Local Plan and it is acknowledged that this may affect the provision of affordable housing, the mix of tenures provided and the discounts that can be sought on First Homes properties.

- G. **Funding:** the availability of funding to support the delivery of different forms of Affordable Housing may also influence what it is appropriate to provide at a particular point in time or on any one site. The neighbourhood planning group may wish to keep this in mind so that it can take up any opportunities to secure funding if they become available.
- H. **Existing tenure mix in Whitchurch:** In 2011, there were 45 socially rented dwellings, while there were only 2 dwellings in shared ownership. Since then there has been very limited development of affordable housing for either rent or sale. This suggests that some provision of Affordable Housing would offer a wider choice of homes for local residents and, importantly, may allow those on lower incomes including newly forming households and younger families to remain in or move to the area.
- I. **Views of registered providers:** it is not within the scope of this HNA to investigate whether it would be viable for housing associations (registered providers) to deliver and manage affordable rented homes in the parish. The funding arrangements available to housing associations will determine rent levels.
- J. **Wider policy objectives:** the neighbourhood planning group may wish to take account of broader policy objectives for Whitchurch and/or the wider district. These could include, but are not restricted to, policies to attract younger households, families or working age people to the NA. These wider considerations may influence the mix of Affordable Housing provided.
89. On the basis of the considerations above, Table 4-7 below proposes an indicative Affordable Housing tenure mix that might be sought through Neighbourhood Plan policy.
90. This indicative mix is chiefly a response to the need identified in this HNA. In this context, affordable rented tenures should still be delivered where possible but do not need to be excessively prioritised. Whereas the lack of affordable options for home ownership suggest that this should have a greater focus.
91. Since shared ownership at 10% and 25% shares and First Homes at 40% or 50% discount appear to be the most affordable and helpful option locally, the tenure split is weighted in favour of those tenures. In the interests of diversity and maximizing choice, rent to buy is also included.
92. This mix should be viewed as a starting point, based primarily on secondary evidence, which should be reconsidered in light of considerations F to J above, and in particular the views and objectives of the community.
93. Where the neighbourhood planning group wish to develop policy that deviates from that outlined in the Local Plan – either by differing from the headline split between renting and ownership or by specifying a greater level of detail around sub-tenures, it is important that they liaise with Aylesbury Vale to gather more

detailed income and viability information, and to ensure that departures from the local policy context have their support⁹.

94. Another option when developing Neighbourhood Plan policies on tenure splits is to add caveats to the policy in question, to the effect that the precise mix of affordable housing will be considered on the basis of site-by-site circumstances in addition to this evidence.

Table 4-7: Indicative tenure split (Affordable Housing)

Tenure	Indicative mix	Considerations and uncertainties
Routes to home ownership, of which	80%	
First Homes	30%	Product untested so uncertainties around viability, developer, lenders and buyer appetite etc.
Shared ownership	30%	Recently confirmed changes to the model to allow purchases of 10% share - impact on viability unknown. RPs business plans currently reliant on shared ownership model. Impact of displacement by First Homes unknown.
Rent to buy	20%	Emerging product with popularity and effectiveness as yet unknown. Impact of displacement by First Homes unknown.
Affordable Housing for rent, of which	20%	
Social rent	To be set by Registered Providers	Uncertain how much funding available to support this tenure in local area. Uncertain whether RPs willing to own/manage stock in this area.
Affordable rent	To be set by Registered Providers	Uncertain whether RPs willing to own/manage stock in this area.

Source: AECOM calculations

Conclusions- Tenure and Affordability

95. The way residents occupy their homes in Whitchurch broadly aligns with district and national trends. As such the majority of homes are owned, followed by a relatively even split between social rented and private rented and a low level of shared ownership (only 2 dwellings). Since the 2011 Census there were 45 (net) completions, 0 were offered as affordable tenures. It is also interesting to observe the change recorded between the 2001 and 2011 Census: in Whitchurch the private rented sector expanded by 64% in that period, a rate of growth lower than at district and national levels. Interestingly, social renting increased by almost 10%, whereas this tenure saw a decrease both in Aylesbury Vale and England.
96. House prices have seen some fluctuations, yet there has not been a significant increase over the past decade. The median, which is the middle number when you sort the data from smallest to largest, while the mean captures the average of all the house prices, both high and low, the few outlying data points on the high end cause the mean to increase, making it higher than the median. The mean price in 2020 was £405,903, while the median was £368,500. Between 2011 and 2020 the mean increased by 16% (or £55,903), while the median prices increased by 12%

⁹ The Parish Council have indicated they will not pursue this.

(or £39,500).

97. However, in Whitchurch lower quartile prices decreased by 1.3% (or £3,750) between 2011 and 2020 to £280,000. At district level lower quartile prices increased by just over 50%, yet still remain lower than in the neighbourhood area, at £250,000.
98. It appears that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher than average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most. The median house price would require an annual income 60% higher than the current average.
99. The most significant finding is the need for affordable home ownership in Whitchurch. AECOM estimates potential demand for an additional 38 affordable home ownership dwellings. Government policy aimed at tackling the housing crisis continues to attach high priority on helping those on modest incomes and others who are unable to afford market housing for purchase, such as younger buyers, to access affordable routes towards homeownership. In the case of Whitchurch, the most appropriate tenures to help implement this policy goal locally are rent to buy, shared ownership (at 10% or 25% share) or the new First Homes product (with a 40% or 50% discount).
100. The assessment calculated a surplus of affordable rented units over the Plan period; however, this is due to the level of turnover meeting the anticipated newly arising need and addressing the backlog (five households) over time. However, it is not realistic or helpful to limit social rented dwellings when there is a current backlog and, therefore, there should be some delivery of affordable rented dwellings over the Plan period. This is especially important as households with a single lower earner appear unable to afford any of the tenures considered including the smallest socially rented units. Many such individuals will, if unable to secure a social rented dwelling, require additional subsidy through Housing Benefit to access housing.
101. The Local Plan does not outline a recommended split between tenures of affordable housing that should be sought. Therefore, based on the evidence provided in this assessment it is suggested that a split of 80% affordable home ownership and 20% affordable rented would be best to meet the identified need in Whitchurch.
102. Table 4-8 below summarises Whitchurch's position with regards to the expected delivery of Affordable Housing, and how this might ideally be apportioned among sub-categories of tenure to meet local needs over the Plan period. This exercise simply applies the proxy housing figure for the area to the Local Plan policy expectation, and shows the quantities of affordable housing for rent and sale that would be delivered if the tenure mix proposed in this HNA were to be rigidly enforced. In this sense it is hypothetical, and the outcomes in practice may differ, either as a result of measures taken in the neighbourhood plan (e.g. if the group plan for more housing (and therefore more affordable housing) than the local plan, or if the group decide to influence the tenure mix in other ways), or as a result of site-specific constraints.

Table 4-8: Estimated delivery of Affordable Housing in Whitchurch

	Step in Estimation	Expected delivery
A	Provisional capacity figure	30
B	Affordable housing quota (%) in LPA's Local Plan	25%
C	Potential total Affordable Housing in NA (A x B)	8
D	Rented % (e.g. social/ affordable rented)	20%
E	Rented number (C x D)	2
F	Affordable home ownership % (e.g. First Homes, Rent to Buy)	80%
G	Affordable home ownership number (C x F)	6

Source: AECOM estimate based on LPA's affordable housing policies, AECOM's indicative tenure mix

103. This expected level of delivery does not meet the quantity of demand identified in estimates of the need for affordable housing. It is therefore recommended that the policy requirement is met wherever possible, and further avenues for delivering greater quantities of Affordable Housing (such as exception sites) to be explored¹⁰. It is not recommended that the Local Plan policy requirement be exceeded in the neighbourhood plan because such steps are rarely accepted by planning inspectors on the grounds that an extremely high standard of justification is required which goes beyond the scope of this HNA, in particular around the issue of what level of Affordable Housing delivery can be financially viable in the NA. Raising the percentage of Affordable Housing required could, furthermore, have the effect of discouraging new building from coming forward altogether. Should the group wish to consider such an option, it is advisable to discuss this with the LPA in the first instance.

104. Affordable housing is typically provided and made financially viable by its inclusion as a proportion of larger market developments, as guided by Local Plan policy. However, if the community wishes to boost the supply of affordable housing, there are other, more proactive routes available for its provision. For example, using community development orders, identifying exception sites or developing community land trusts are all ways of boosting the supply of affordable housing.

¹⁰ Although the Parish Council have indicated they will not pursue this.

5. RQ Two: Type and Size

RQ Two: What type (terrace, semi, bungalows, flats and detached) and size (number of bedrooms) of housing is appropriate for the Plan area over the Neighbourhood Plan period?

Introduction

105. The evidence in this chapter is intended to give a snapshot of the existing dwelling stock in Whitchurch in terms of type and size, as well as some of the population characteristics that tend to influence housing needs. From this, it is possible to develop an understanding of what sort of housing would be appropriate going forward.
106. It is worth emphasising that this evidence assumes that existing demographic and occupation patterns will persist into the future. It can therefore be thought of as the baseline or default scenario, into which the community may wish to intervene – for example to attract a different or more balanced demographic. The recommendations in this chapter, particularly the final suggested size mix, are a starting point that may be adjusted in light of other community objectives and primary evidence.

Existing types and sizes

Background and definitions

107. Before beginning to explore issues of dwelling type and size, it is important to note that the demand for housing by size and type tends to be determined primarily by wealth – with those having more buying power choosing to occupy larger homes, and often preferring detached properties to denser types, such as flats.
108. This study is concerned primarily with need rather than demand. Need for homes of different sizes is chiefly determined by the number of people occupying the home. In the strict sense, there is no ‘need’ for dwellings of any particular type, other than the specific needs of those with certain disabilities for level access properties, for example.
109. The best proxy for the number of people in a household is age or ‘life stage’, with younger and then older households tending to have one or two people, and those in between these poles more likely to have larger families including children. Life stage is therefore a main indicator considered here for the size of housing needed. But it is worth pointing out that wealth is also correlated with age, so it is not possible to attain a pure view of what is needed from the secondary data alone.
110. It is also useful to clarify the terminology around dwellings and households. Dwellings are counted in the Census by combining address information with Census returns on whether people’s accommodation is self-contained. As such,

all dwellings are classified as either shared or unshared dwellings. Households are groups of people who live together as a coherent unit (such as a family), and a dwelling is shared where there is more than one household occupying it (e.g. two families or a group of individual students). Hence, there is usually a different number of households and dwellings in any given area. The number of dwellings can also exceed that of households in areas with large numbers of holiday or second homes.

111. As noted in the Context section of this report, there is no perfect data source for the current mix of dwellings in the NA. For some aspects, such as the size mix of homes, adding together Census figures and completions data for the intervening period is highly accurate. For others, such as the type mix of homes, this method is not available and Valuation Office Agency (VOA) must be used. The most appropriate combination of approaches is used in this section. However, it must be noted that the VOA data only goes down to LSOA level, this covers a much larger area than the parish boundary and therefore cannot be directly compared with census data.

Dwelling type

112. There is a varied mix of dwellings in the neighbourhood area; however, there is a small proportion of flats and higher proportion of bungalows than at district or national level. This is somewhat unsurprising in a rural area.

Table 5-1: Accommodation type, various geographies, 2020

Dwelling type	Whitchurch	Aylesbury Vale	England
Bungalow	14.1%	5.3%	9.4%
Flat	4.2%	9.4%	23.0%
Terrace	14.1%	20.5%	26.4%
Semi-detached	29.6%	23.6%	23.8%
Detached	36.6%	40.5%	15.9%
Unknown/other	1.4%	0.7%	1.4%

Source: VOA 2020, AECOM Calculations

Dwelling size

113. Whitchurch is made up of predominantly larger dwellings with 3 or 4 or more bedrooms; however, recent completions have somewhat looked to address this imbalance providing primarily 2 bedroom dwellings. However, the low delivery of 1 bedroom dwellings has further exaggerated the imbalance weighted towards larger dwellings.

Table 5-2: Dwelling size (bedrooms), Whitchurch, 2011 and 2020

Number of bedrooms	2011 (Census)	Completions 2011-2021	2021 total (Census + completions)
Studio	0	0	0
1	21	3	24
2	82	25	107
3	136	10	146
4+	139	9	148
Unknown	0	0	0
Total	378	47	425

Source: ONS 2011, VOA 2020, AECOM Calculations, Aylesbury Vale Completions Data

114. Again it is useful to look at the percentage breakdown of dwelling sizes in comparison with the wider district and country. Whitchurch and Aylesbury Vale have a similar breakdown in sizes of dwellings, with more larger (3, 4 or more bedroom) dwellings, some 2 bedroom dwellings and a small proportion of 1 bedroom dwellings. Whereas nationally, there is a more even split across the sizes with a predominance of 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings.

Table 5-3: Dwelling size (bedrooms), various geographies, 2020

Number of bedrooms	Whitchurch	Aylesbury Vale	England
1	5.8%	5.6%	12.0%
2	23.2%	19.5%	27.7%
3	37.7%	37.0%	43.0%
4+	31.8%	36.9%	15.2%

Source: VOA 2020, AECOM Calculations

Age and household composition

115. Having established the current stock profile of Whitchurch and identified recent changes to it, the evidence gathered below examines the composition and age structure of households living in the NA. Many of these indicators have a bearing on what housing might be needed in future years.

Age structure

116. Table 5-4 below shows the most recent estimated age structure of the NA population, alongside 2011 Census figures. The data suggests that there has been an increase in population of two people between 2011 and mid-2019. Though this might not be realistic when viewed against the increase of 47 dwellings, the estimated population breakdown remains a valuable source. The demographic structure has changed slightly, with an increase in those aged 65-84 and a minor increase in those aged 85 and over, coupled with small decreases in in all other age categories.

117. Note that ONS advises exercising caution with population estimates by single year of age (from which this 2019 data has been derived), as patterns of variance and bias make it relatively less accurate compared to Census data.

118. It is also worth noting that only the age structure of the population (individuals) can be brought up to date in this way. The life stage of households, which forms

the basis of the subsequent analysis of future dwelling size needs, is not estimated each year. The 2011 Census therefore remains the most accurate basis to use in those areas, and the brief comparison here demonstrates that the change from 2011-2019 has not been so significant as to invalidate the 2011 household data used in modelling later in this chapter.

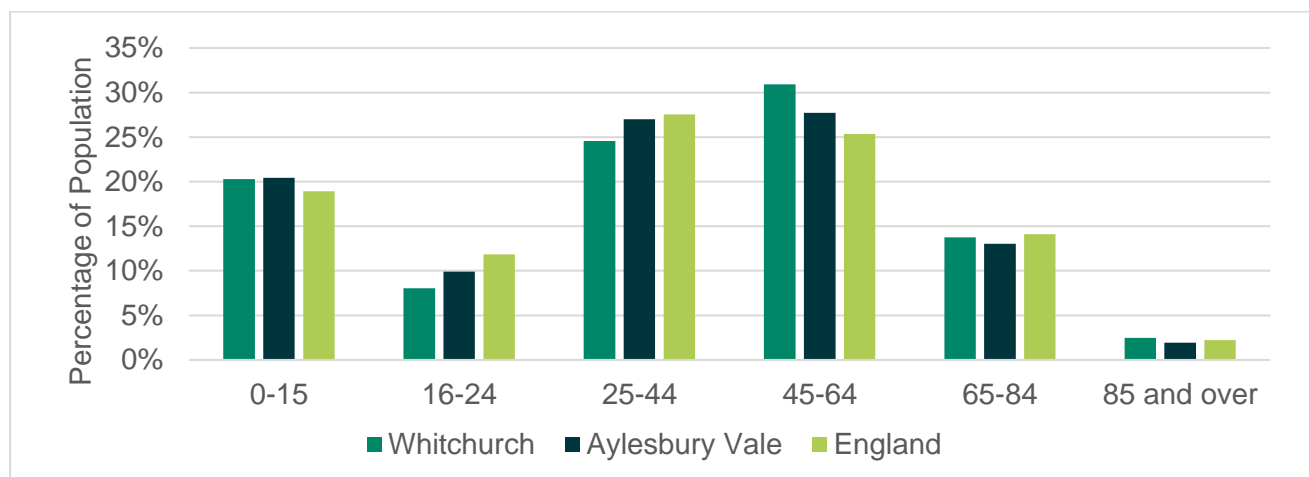
Table 5-4: Age structure of Whitchurch population, 2011 and 2019

Age group	2011 (Census)		2019 (ONS, estimated)	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
0-15	189	20%	174	18.6%
16-24	75	8%	68	7.3%
25-44	229	25%	179	19.2%
45-64	288	31%	272	29.1%
65-84	128	14%	221	23.7%
85 and over	23	2%	20	2.1%
Total	932	100%	934	100%

Source: ONS 2011, ONS mid-2019 population estimates, AECOM Calculations

119. For context, it is useful to look at the parish population structure alongside that of the district and country. Figure 5-1 below (using 2011 Census data) shows that the demographic structure is reflective of what is seen at both district and national level. However, there is a slightly higher proportion of those aged 45-65 and a slightly lower proportion of those aged 16-24 and 25-44 in Whitchurch than in Aylesbury Vale and England more widely.

Figure 5-1: Age structure in Whitchurch, 2011



Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

Household composition

120. Household composition (i.e. the combination and relationships of adults and children in a dwelling) is an important factor in the size (and to an extent, the type) of housing needed over the Neighbourhood Plan period. Table 5- shows that there is a higher proportion of family households in Whitchurch than one person households, compared with wider geographies. In addition, within the family households there is a larger proportion with no children when compared with Aylesbury Vale and England.

121. Note that non-dependent children refer to households in which adult children are living at home, or which students still call their primary residence despite living for most of the year near to university. A marked increase in this category can be taken to indicate the relative unaffordability of entry-level homes, where young people are financially unable to move out and form their own households. While the data is quite old at this point, it is interesting to observe that this category decreased by 15.8% between 2001 and 2011 in the parish – whereas at higher level geographies saw an increase in this category.

Table 5-5: Household composition, Whitchurch, 2011

Household composition		Whitchurch	Aylesbury Vale	England
One person household	Total	21.2%	25.4%	30.2%
	Aged 65 and over	10.8%	10.7%	12.4%
	Other	10.3%	14.7%	17.9%
One family only	Total	74.1%	68.2%	61.8%
	All aged 65 and over	9.0%	8.1%	8.1%
	With no children	27.0%	20.8%	17.6%
	With dependent children	29.6%	29.9%	26.5%
	All children Non-Dependent ¹¹	8.5%	9.3%	9.6%
Other household types	Total	4.8%	6.5%	8.0%

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

Occupancy ratings

122. The tendency of households to over- or under-occupy their homes is another relevant consideration to the future size needs of the NA. A person is considered to under-occupy their home when there are more bedrooms in their home than a family of their size and composition would normally be expected to need. This is expressed as an occupancy rating of +1 or +2, indicating that there is one surplus bedroom or at least two surplus bedrooms (respectively). Over-occupancy works in the same way, with a rating of -1 indicating at least one bedroom too few.

123. Census data on occupancy rating is only provided down to MSOA level. So for the purpose of this analysis, the NA is represented by MSOA Aylesbury Vale 008. The vast majority of people in this area live in dwellings with one or two extra bedrooms (85%), while 13% live in homes with no extra bedrooms. Only 2% live in dwellings in over occupancy.

124. However, this differs depending on the makeup of the household. As such only families under 65 with dependent children experience over occupancy. While families who are all aged over 65 have the highest rates of under occupancy.

125. This suggests that the larger housing isn't being occupied by households with the most family members, but by the people with the most wealth or my older people who have not chosen or been able to move to smaller properties.

¹¹ Refers to households containing children who are older than 18 e.g students or young working people living at home.

Table 5-6: Occupancy rating by age in Whitchurch, 2011

Age group	+2 rating	+1 rating	0 rating	-1 rating
Family 65+	73.5%	23.5%	2.9%	0.0%
Single person 65+	58.5%	29.3%	12.2%	0.0%
Family under 65 – no children	66.7%	29.4%	3.9%	0.0%
Family under 65 – dependent children	34.8%	39.3%	21.4%	4.5%
Family under 65 – adult children	43.8%	43.8%	12.5%	0.0%
Single person under 65	43.6%	38.5%	17.9%	0.0%
All households	51%	34%	13%	2%

Source: ONS 2011, ONS mid-2019 population estimates, AECOM Calculations

Dwelling mix determined by life-stage modelling

Suggested future dwelling size mix

126. As noted above, there is a strong link between the life stage of a household and the size of dwelling that household can be expected to need. The final part of this chapter presents the results of a model that aims to estimate the dwelling size needs of the parish at the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period. The steps involved in this model are not presented in full, but can be summarised – along with the underpinning assumptions and some limitations – as follows:

- The starting point is the age distribution of Whitchurch households in 2011.
 - The life stage of a household is determined by the age of the household reference person (HRP), a more modern term for the head of household.
 - As noted above, household life stages are not estimated annually, so the older Census data must be used.
- This life stage data is then projected forward to the end of the Plan period by applying the growth rates for each household age group as suggested by the latest household projections. This allows for an estimate of how the parish population might evolve in future.
 - ONS household projections are produced every two years but are only available at Local Authority level. The growth rates are therefore applied to the 2011 starting household age profile of the NA.
- Next, we turn to a Census dataset that shows the occupation patterns or preferences of each household life stage (e.g. what proportion of households aged under 24 tend to live in 1 bedroom homes as opposed to 2, 3 or 4 bedroom homes). This data is mapped to the distribution of the projected NA population for each life stage and each dwelling size category to form a picture of what mix of homes might be appropriate in future.
 - This occupation data is again only available at Local Authority scale, so it does risk embedding any unusual characteristics present in the area.
 - The model also assumes that today's occupation patterns persist into the future, which is not a given, particularly with the change in preferences for home working space and other features arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there is no better indication of what those patterns might look like. It is considered more appropriate to adjust the end mix that results from this model to reflect such trends than to build further speculative assumptions into the model.
- Finally, this 'ideal' future mix of dwelling sizes can be compared to the current stock of housing in the NA. From this we can identify how future development might best fill the gaps.
 - The 2011 dwelling size mix is used for consistency, so any imbalances in new development since then may justify adjustments to the final results.

127. It is important to keep in mind that housing need is not an exact science and this exercise provides an estimate based on demographic trends and occupancy patterns alone. It does not take into account income and wealth, other than in an indirect way through the tendency of households to occupy more or less space than they 'need'. It also does not anticipate changes in how people may wish to occupy their homes in response to social and technological change.
128. The approach therefore embeds existing patterns of occupancy which may or may not be desirable. As such, it is appropriate for the result of this model to be taken as a baseline scenario – what would occur if current trends persisted. It may well be the intention of the community to intervene to produce a different outcome more in line with their interpretation of emerging trends and their place- and community-shaping objectives. Layering these factors on top of the indicative picture provided by this model is considered entirely appropriate for the purpose of drafting neighbourhood plan policy.
129. Before presenting the results of this exercise, it may be interesting to review two of the inputs described above.
130. The first, given as Figure 5-2 below, sets out the relationship between household life stage and dwelling size for Aylesbury Vale in 2011. This shows how the youngest households occupy the smallest dwellings, before rapidly taking up larger homes as their families expand, and then more gradually downsizing to smaller homes again as they age.

Figure 5-2: Age of household reference person by dwelling size in Aylesbury Vale, 2011



Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

131. The second dataset of note is the result of applying Local Authority level household projections to the age profile of Whitchurch households in 2011 and the updated estimates of household numbers described in the bullets above. Table 5-7 below makes clear that population growth can be expected to be driven by the oldest households, with the number of those aged 65 and over more than doubling by 2040. There is also a significant increase in those aged 55-65, while young age groups are likely to see a smaller rise.

Table 5-7: Projected distribution of households by age of HRP, Whitchurch

Year	Age of HRP 24 and under	Age of HRP 25 to 34	Age of HRP 35 to 54	Age of HRP 55 to 64	Age of HRP 65 and over
2011	7	26	154	83	108
2040	8	31	181	116	217
% change 2011-2040	12%	20%	17%	40%	101%

Source: AECOM Calculations

132. The final result of this exercise is presented in Table 5- below. The model suggests that primarily 3 bedroom dwellings should be prioritised, followed by those with 2 bedrooms then 1 bedroom. The table suggests that dwellings with 4 or 5 or more bedrooms should still be delivered but as a lower proportion than those with fewer bedrooms.

Table 5-8: Suggested dwelling size mix to 2040, Whitchurch

Number of bedrooms	Current mix (2011)	Target mix (2040)	Balance of new housing to reach target mix
1 bedroom	5.6%	9.5%	18.0%
2 bedrooms	21.7%	22.7%	24.9%
3 bedrooms	36.0%	40.1%	49.0%
4 bedrooms	27.5%	20.8%	6.2%
5 or more bedrooms	9.3%	6.9%	1.9%

Source: AECOM Calculations

133. It is never advisable to restrict future housing delivery to selected size categories only. The result of this model is a relatively blunt measure of what could be beneficial given population change and existing imbalances in housing options. It is a starting point for thinking about how best to address the more nuanced needs of the future population.
134. For example, the young starter families and downsizing older households mentioned above may both need 'mid-sized' homes, but are likely to have extremely different requirements and degrees of purchasing power. There is limited scope for Neighbourhood Planning policy to influence the more detailed characteristics of new housing, but additional guidance and prioritisation could be informed by further primary research.
135. The preceding chapter found that affordability is a serious and worsening challenge in the NA. While the provision of Affordable Housing (subsidised tenure products) is one way to combat this, another is to ensure that homes come forward which are of an appropriate size, type and density for local residents' budgets. Continuing to provide smaller homes with fewer bedrooms would help to address this situation.
136. To best meet the needs of the large cohort of older households expected to be present by the end of the Plan period, it should be considered whether the existing options are well tailored to older people's requirements in terms of space, flexibility, quality, location and accessibility. Variety should be sought within the mid-sized homes that come forward in future to attract both newly forming households on lower budgets and older households with substantial equity from their existing larger homes. Facilitating downsizing among older households may release those larger homes for use by families who need more bedrooms.
137. That said, it may not be realistic to expect growing families to be able to afford the larger detached homes that are currently under-occupied in the parish. Reducing the issue of dwelling size to a number of bedrooms is potentially unhelpful in this case. There may be a strong justification to continue supplying larger homes despite their abundance because a different kind of larger home is needed to accommodate growing families with less buying power. This is too speculative to quantify in a percentage size mix, but is among the good reasons not to inhibit any size of dwelling entirely.

138. More generally, it would be unwise for any new housing that does come forward to be delivered in an unbalanced way. Those wishing to move within or relocate to the area will have a range of circumstances and preferences, and they should be offered a range of choices. As such, it is recommended that priority is given to smaller and mid-sized homes but that this is done to a degree that aligns with the wider objectives of the community and does not limit choice or threaten viability. The evidence in this section represents a starting point for further thought and consultation.

The HEDNA findings

139. The HEDNA provides a breakdown in the size of homes which should be sought in Aylesbury Vale. These are shown in Figure 5-3 below.

140. The Figure shows that for market housing the greatest need is 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings, whereas affordable rented dwellings and intermediate housing should primarily be brought forward as 2 and 3 bedroom houses.

Figure 5-3 Break down in tenure and size of dwellings required in Aylesbury Vale

		Aylesbury Vale
		Plan period 2013-33
MARKET HOUSING		
Flat	1 bedroom	560
	2+ bedrooms	530
House	2 bedrooms	1,940
	3 bedrooms	7,920
	4 bedrooms	3,200
	5+ bedrooms	1,050
Total Market Housing		15,200
AFFORDABLE HOUSING		
Flat	1 bedroom	360
	2+ bedrooms	250
House	2 bedrooms	1,530
	3 bedrooms	1,650
	4+ bedrooms	410
Total Affordable Housing		4,200
TOTAL		19,400
AFFORDABLE RENT		
Flat	1 bedroom	330
	2+ bedrooms	200
House	2 bedrooms	1250
	3 bedrooms	1330
	4+ bedrooms	390
Total Affordable Rent		3500
% of affordable housing		83%
INTERMEDIATE HOUSING		
Flat	1 bedroom	30
	2+ bedrooms	50
House	2 bedrooms	280
	3 bedrooms	320
	4+ bedrooms	20
Total Intermediate Housing		700
% of affordable housing		17%

Conclusions- Type and Size

141. This study provides an indication of the likely need for different types and sizes of homes based on demographic change. It is important to remember that other factors should be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is desirable in the parish or on any particular site. These include the specific characteristics of the nearby stock of housing (such as its condition and design), the role of the NA or site within the wider housing market area (linked to any Local Authority strategies or plans) and site-specific factors which may justify a particular dwelling mix.
142. There is a varied mix of dwellings in the neighbourhood area; however, there is a smaller proportion of flats and higher proportion of bungalows than at district or national level. This is somewhat unsurprising in a rural area.
143. Whitchurch is made up of predominantly larger dwellings with 3 or 4 or more bedrooms. Although recent completions have somewhat addressed this imbalance by providing primarily 2 bedroom dwellings, the low level of 1 bedroom dwellings and continued provision of larger homes means the strong weighting towards bigger properties persists.
144. The demographic structure is reflective of what is seen at both district and national level. However, there is a slightly higher proportion of those aged 45-65 and a slightly lower proportion of those aged 16-24 and 25-44 in Whitchurch than in Aylesbury Vale and England more widely. Between 2011 and 2019, the demographic structure changed slightly, with an increase in those aged 65-84 and a minor increase in those aged 85 and over, coupled with small decreases in in all other age categories.
145. The vast majority of people in Whitchurch live in dwellings with one or two extra bedrooms (85%), while 13% live in homes with no extra bedrooms. Only 2% live in dwellings with fewer bedrooms than those households would be expected to need. However, this differs depending on the makeup of the household. As such, only families under 65 with dependent children experience over occupancy. While families who are all aged over 65 have the highest rates of under occupancy. This suggests that the larger housing is not being occupied by households with the most family members, but by the people with the most wealth or my older people who have not chosen or been able to move to smaller properties.
146. The results of a life-stage modelling exercise, which looks at the sizes of dwelling occupied by different age groups and projects the growth and decline of those age groups over the Plan period in order to understand what should be built, demonstrates that in Whitchurch an appropriate response would be to prioritise the supply of smaller to mid-sized dwellings with 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms, with a far smaller number of larger homes with 4 or more bedrooms likely to be required.
147. This model, however, operates on the assumption that households can and will wish to occupy only housing specifically suitable for their household size, which is not a realistic prospect given that people are willing to pay for extra

bedrooms for a range of reasons. It is not surprising, then, that demand for all dwelling sizes will remain. Therefore, the weighing suggested provides a helpful guideline of what should be delivered in the Parish but it should be interpreted with a degree of flexibility.

148. In the Tenure and Affordability chapter analysis, it was found that market housing for sale (as opposed to market housing for rent and all types of Affordable Housing) is increasingly unaffordable and that those on the median incomes are unable to afford to live outside of the rented sector. While Affordable Housing should be well balanced in terms of size to cater for all circumstances, the provision of smaller and mid-sized homes for sale and rent should make an important contribution to improving affordability more widely. This is supported by the evidence in the HEDNA, which shows that for affordable housing for rent and intermediate housing 2 and 3 bedroom properties should take precedence.
149. If older households wishing to 'rightsize' and younger ones seeking to form their own independent households are to be able to afford to live in Whitchurch, increasing the provision of small to mid-sized homes will be crucial.

6. Conclusions

Overview

150. Table 6-1 below sets out in full the conclusions and recommendations of this Neighbourhood Plan housing needs assessment, based on the evidence reviewed and analysed.

Table 6-1: Summary of study findings specific to Whitchurch with a potential impact on Neighbourhood Plan housing policies

Issue	Summary of evidence and data assessed	Conclusions and recommendations
Housing tenure and affordability	<p>The way residents occupy their homes in Whitchurch broadly aligns with district and national trends. As such the majority of homes are owned, followed by a relatively even split between social rented and private rented and a low level of shared ownership (only 2 dwellings). Since the 2011 Census there were 45 (net) completions, two were offered as affordable tenures.</p> <p>House prices have seen some fluctuations, yet there has not been a significant increase over the past decade. The mean price in 2020 was £405,903, while the median was £368,500. Between 2011 and 2020 the mean increased by 16% (or £55,903), while the median prices increased by 12% (or £39,500).</p> <p>However, in Whitchurch lower quartile prices decreased by 1.3% (or £3,750) between 2011 and 2020 to £280,000. At district level lower quartile prices increased by just over 50%, yet still remain lower than in the neighbourhood area, at £250,000.</p> <p>It appears that local households on average incomes are unable to access even entry-level homes unless they have the advantage of a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher than average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most. The median house price would require an annual income 60% higher than the current average.</p>	<p>The most significant finding is the need for affordable home ownership in Whitchurch. AECOM estimates potential demand for an additional 38 affordable home ownership dwellings. Government policy aimed at tackling the housing crisis continues to attach high priority on helping those on modest incomes and others who are unable to afford market housing for purchase, such as younger buyers, to access affordable routes towards homeownership. In the case of Whitchurch, the most appropriate tenures to help implement this policy goal locally are rent to buy, shared ownership (at 10% or 25% share) or the new First Homes product (with a 40% or 50% discount).</p> <p>The assessment calculated a surplus of affordable rented units over the Plan period; however, this is due to the level of turnover meeting the anticipated newly arising need and addressing the backlog (five households) over time. However, it is not realistic or helpful to limit social rented dwellings when there is a current backlog and, therefore, there should be some delivery of affordable rented dwellings over the Plan period. This is especially important as households with a single lower earner appear unable to afford any of the tenures considered including the smallest socially rented units. Many such individuals will, if unable to secure a social rented dwelling, require additional subsidy through Housing Benefit to access housing.</p> <p>The Local Plan does not outline a recommended split between tenures of affordable housing that should be sought. Therefore, based on the evidence provided in this assessment it is suggested that a split of 80% affordable home ownership and 20% affordable rented would be best to meet the identified need in Whitchurch.</p>

Issue	Summary of evidence and data assessed	Conclusions and recommendations
		<p>The Local Plan does not outline a recommended split between tenures of affordable housing that should be sought. Therefore, based on the evidence provided in this assessment it is suggested that a split of 80% affordable home ownership and 20% affordable rented would be best to meet the identified need in Whitchurch.</p> <p>The expected level of delivery does not meet the quantity of demand identified in estimates of the need for affordable housing. It is therefore recommended that the policy requirement is met wherever possible, and further avenues for delivering greater quantities of Affordable Housing (such as exception sites) to be explored. It is not recommended that the Local Plan policy requirement be exceeded in the neighbourhood plan because such steps are rarely accepted by planning inspectors on the grounds that an extremely high standard of justification is required which goes beyond the scope of this HNA, in particular around the issue of what level of Affordable Housing delivery can be financially viable in the NA. Raising the percentage of Affordable Housing required could, furthermore, have the effect of discouraging new building from coming forward altogether. Should the group wish to consider such an option, it is advisable to discuss this with the LPA in the first instance.</p> <p>Affordable housing is typically provided and made financially viable by its inclusion as a proportion of larger market developments, as guided by Local Plan policy. However, if the community wishes to boost the supply of affordable housing, there are other, more proactive routes available for its provision. For example, using community development orders, identifying exception sites or developing community land trusts are all ways of boosting the supply of affordable housing.</p>

Issue	Summary of evidence and data assessed	Conclusions and recommendations
Housing type and size	<p>There is a varied mix of dwellings in the neighbourhood area; however, there is a smaller proportion of flats and higher proportion of bungalows than at district or national level. This is somewhat unsurprising in a rural area.</p> <p>Whitchurch is made up of predominantly larger dwellings with 3 or 4 or more bedrooms. Although recent completions have somewhat addressed this imbalance by providing primarily 2 bedroom dwellings, the low level of 1 bedroom dwellings and continued provision of larger homes means the strong weighting towards bigger properties persists.</p> <p>The demographic structure is reflective of what is seen at both district and national level. However, there is a slightly higher proportion of those aged 45-65 and a slightly lower proportion of those aged 16-24 and 25-44 in Whitchurch than in Aylesbury Vale and England more widely. Between 2011 and 2019, the demographic structure changed slightly, with an increase in those aged 65-84 and a minor increase in those aged 85 and over, coupled with small decreases in in all other age categories.</p> <p>The vast majority of people in Whitchurch live in dwellings with one or two extra bedrooms (85%), while 13% live in homes with no extra bedrooms. Only 2% live in dwellings with fewer bedrooms than those households would be expected to need. However, this differs depending on the makeup of the household. As such, only families under 65 with dependent children experience over occupancy. While families who are all aged over 65 have the highest rates of under occupancy. This suggests that the larger housing is not being occupied by households with the most family members, but by the people with the most wealth or my older people who have not chosen or been able to move to smaller properties.</p>	<p>The results of a life-stage modelling exercise, which looks at the sizes of dwelling occupied by different age groups and projects the growth and decline of those age groups over the Plan period in order to understand what should be built, demonstrates that in Whitchurch an appropriate response would be to prioritise the supply of smaller to mid-sized dwellings with 1, 2 or 3 bedrooms, with a far smaller number of larger homes with 4 or more bedrooms likely to be required.</p> <p>This model, however, operates on the assumption that households can and will wish to occupy only housing specifically suitable for their household size, which is not a realistic prospect given that people are willing to pay for extra bedrooms for a range of reasons. It is not surprising, then, that demand for all dwelling sizes will remain. Therefore, the weighing suggested provides a helpful guideline of what should be delivered in the Parish but it should be interpreted with a degree of flexibility.</p> <p>In the Tenure and Affordability chapter analysis, it was found that market housing for sale (as opposed to market housing for rent and all types of Affordable Housing) is increasingly unaffordable and that those on the median incomes are unable to afford to live outside of the rented sector. While Affordable Housing should be well balanced in terms of size to cater for all circumstances, the provision of smaller and mid-sized homes for sale and rent should make an important contribution to improving affordability more widely. This is supported by the evidence in the HEDNA, which shows that for affordable housing for rent and intermediate housing 2 and 3 bedroom properties should take precedence.</p> <p>If older households wishing to 'rightsize' and younger ones seeking to form their own independent households are to be able to afford to live in Whitchurch, increasing the provision of small to mid-sized homes will be crucial.</p>

Recommendations for next steps

151. This Neighbourhood Plan housing needs assessment aims to provide Whitchurch with evidence on a range of housing trends and issues from a range of relevant sources. We recommend that the neighbourhood planners should, as a next step, discuss the contents and conclusions with Buckinghamshire with a view to agreeing and formulating draft housing policies, bearing the following in

mind:

- All Neighbourhood Planning Basic Conditions, but in particular Condition E, which is the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan;
- The views of Buckinghamshire;
- The views of local residents;
- The views of other relevant local stakeholders, including housing developers and estate agents; and
- The numerous supply-side considerations, including local environmental constraints, the location and characteristics of suitable land, and any capacity work carried out by Buckinghamshire.

152. This assessment has been provided in good faith by AECOM consultants on the basis of housing data, national guidance and other relevant and available information current at the time of writing.

153. Bearing this in mind, it is recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan steering group should monitor carefully strategies and documents with an impact on housing policy produced by the Government, Buckinghamshire or any other relevant party and review the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly to ensure that general conformity is maintained.

154. At the same time, monitoring on-going demographic or other trends over the Neighbourhood Plan period will help ensure the continued relevance and credibility of its policies.

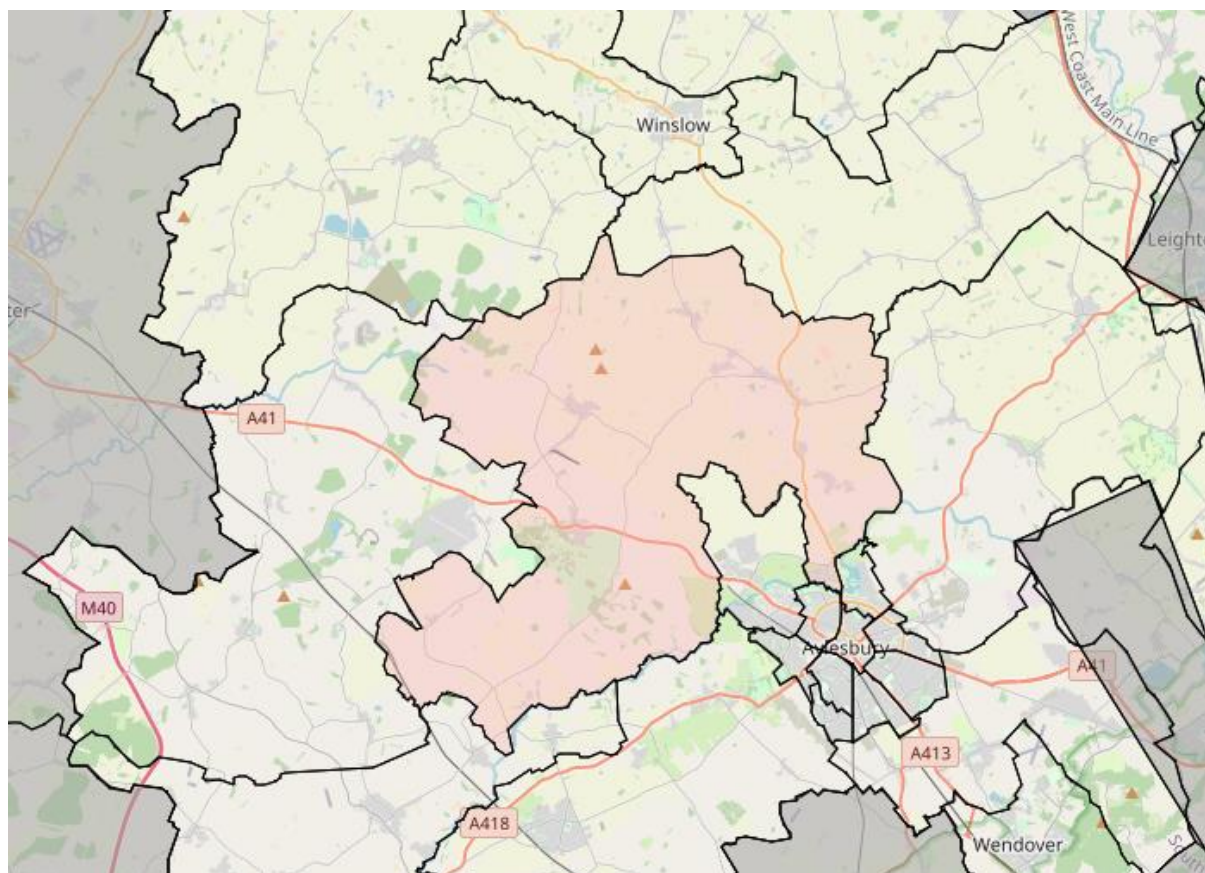
Appendix A : Calculation of Affordability Thresholds

A.1 Assessment geography

155. As noted in the Tenure and Affordability chapter above, affordability thresholds can only be calculated on the basis of data on incomes across the Neighbourhood Plan area. Such data is available at MSOA level but not at the level of neighbourhood plan areas.

156. As such, when calculating affordability thresholds, an MSOA needs to be selected that is a best-fit proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area. In the case of Whitchurch, it is considered that MSOA Aylesbury Vale 008 is the closest realistic proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary, and as such, this is the assessment geography that has been selected. A map of Aylesbury Vale 008 appears below in Figure . This MSOA covers a much larger area than the neighbourhood plan area but is used as a proxy.

Figure A-1: MSOA Aylesbury Vale 008 used as a best-fit geographical proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area



Source: ONS

A.2 Market housing

157. Market housing is not subsidised, and tends to be primarily accessible to people on higher incomes.
158. To determine affordability in market housing, this assessment considers two primary indicators: income thresholds, which denote the maximum share of a family's income that should be spent on accommodation costs, and purchase thresholds, which denote the standard household income required to access mortgage products.

i) Market sales

159. The starting point for calculating the affordability of a dwelling for sale (i.e. the purchase threshold) from the perspective of a specific household is the loan to income ratio which most mortgage companies are prepared to agree. This ratio is conservatively estimated to be 3.5.
160. To produce a more accurate assessment of affordability, the savings required for a deposit should be taken into account in addition to the costs of servicing a mortgage. However, unlike for incomes, data is not available for the savings available to households in Whitchurch, and the precise deposit a mortgage provider will require of any buyer will be determined by their individual circumstances and the state of the mortgage market. An assumption is therefore made that a 10% purchase deposit is required and is available to the prospective buyer. In reality it is possible that the cost of the deposit is a greater barrier to home ownership than the mortgage costs.
161. The calculation for the purchase threshold for market housing is as follows:
- Value of a median NA house price (2020) = £368,500;
 - Purchase deposit at 10% of value = £36,850;
 - Value of dwelling for mortgage purposes = £331,650;
 - Divided by loan to income ratio of 3.5 = purchase threshold of £94,757.
162. The purchase threshold for an entry-level dwelling is a better representation of affordability to those with lower incomes or savings, such as first-time buyers. To determine this threshold, the same calculation is repeated but with reference to the lower quartile rather than the median house price. The lower quartile average in 2020 was £280,000, and the purchase threshold is therefore £72,000.
163. Finally, it is worth assessing the purchase threshold for new build homes, since this most closely represents the cost of the new housing that will come forward in future. Land Registry records sales of only four new build properties in the NA in 2020; therefore, the average for the LPA has been used.
- Detached - £527,498
 - Semi Detached - £360,000
 - Terraced - £412,500

- Flats - £410,000

ii) Private Rented Sector (PRS)

164. Income thresholds are used to calculate the affordability of rented and affordable housing tenures. It is assumed here that rented housing is affordable if the annual rent does not exceed 30% of the household's gross annual income.
165. This is an important assumption because it is possible that a household will be able to afford tenures that are deemed not affordable in this report if they are willing or able to dedicate a higher proportion of their income to housing costs. It is becoming increasingly necessary for households to do so. However, for the purpose of planning it is considered more appropriate to use this conservative lower benchmark for affordability on the understanding that additional households may be willing or able to access housing this way than to use a higher benchmark which assumes that all households can afford to do so when their individual circumstances may well prevent it.
166. The property website [Home.co.uk](https://www.home.co.uk) shows rental values for property in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The best available data is derived from properties available for rent within the HP22 postcode area, which covers a larger area than the Plan area itself but can be used as a reasonable proxy for it. Moreover, because it forms a larger geography with a greater number of rental properties offered, the larger sample size is likely to generate more robust findings.
167. According to [home.co.uk](https://www.home.co.uk), there were 12 properties for rent at the time of search in October 2021, with an average monthly rent of £1,225. There were four two-bed properties listed, with an average price of £1,163 per calendar month.
168. The calculation for the private rent income threshold for entry-level (2 bedroom) dwellings is as follows:
- Annual rent = £1,163 x 12 = £13,956;
 - Multiplied by 3.33 (so that no more than 30% of income is spent on rent) = income threshold of £46,520.
169. The calculation is repeated for the overall average to give an income threshold of £49,000.

A.3 Affordable Housing

170. There are a range of tenures that constitute the definition of Affordable Housing within the NPPF 2021: social rent and affordable rent, discounted market sales housing, and other affordable routes to home ownership. More recently, a new product called First Homes has been introduced in 2021. Each of the affordable housing tenures are considered below.

i) Social rent

171. Rents in socially rented properties reflect a formula based on property values and average earnings in each area, resulting in substantial discounts to market rents. As such, this tenure is suitable for the needs of those on the lowest incomes and is subject to strict eligibility criteria.
172. To determine social rent levels, data and statistical return from Homes England is used. This data is only available at the LPA level so must act as a proxy for Whitchurch. This data provides information about rents and the size and type of stock owned and managed by private registered providers and is presented for Aylesbury Vale in the table below.
173. To determine the income needed, it is assumed that no more than 30% of income should be spent on rent. This is an assumption only for what might generally might make housing affordable or unaffordable – it is unrelated to the eligibility criteria of Affordable Housing policy at Local Authority level. The overall average across all property sizes is taken forward as the income threshold for social rent.

Table A-1: Social rent levels (£)

Size	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	All
Average social rent per week	£95.53	£106.30	£114.88	£133.43	£107.23
Annual average	£4,968	£5,528	£5,974	£6,938	£5,576
Income needed	£16,542	£18,407	£19,893	£23,105	£18,568

Source: Homes England, AECOM Calculations

ii) Affordable rent

174. Affordable rent is controlled at no more than 80% of the local market rent. However, registered providers who own and manage affordable rented housing may also apply a cap to the rent to ensure that it is affordable to those on housing benefit (where under Universal Credit the total received in all benefits to working age households is £20,000).
175. Even an 80% discount on the market rent may not be sufficient to ensure that households can afford this tenure, particularly when they are dependent on benefits. Registered Providers in some areas have applied caps to larger properties where the higher rents would make them unaffordable to families under Universal Credit. This may mean that the rents are actually 50-60% of market levels rather than 80%.
176. Data on the most realistic local affordable rent costs is obtained from the same source as social rent levels for Aylesbury Vale. Again it is assumed that no more than 30% of income should be spent on rent, and the overall average is taken forward.
177. Comparing this result with the average 2 bedroom annual private rent above indicates that affordable rents in the NA are actually closer to 55% of market rates than the maximum of 80%, a feature that is necessary to make them achievable to those in need.

Table A-2: Affordable rent levels (£)

Size	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	All
Average affordable rent per week	£120.89	£146.71	£172.33	£214.05	£152.52
Annual average	£6,286	£7,629	£8,961	£11,131	£7,931
Income needed	£20,933	£25,404	£29,841	£37,065	£26,410

Source: Homes England, AECOM Calculations

iii) Affordable home ownership

178. Affordable home ownership tenures include products for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. The three most widely available are discounted market housing (a subset of which is the new First Homes product), shared ownership, and rent to buy. These are considered in turn below.
179. In paragraph 65 of the NPPF 2021, the Government introduces a recommendation that “where major housing development is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership.” The recently issued Ministerial Statement and updates to PPG state that 25% of all Affordable Housing should be First Homes – the Government’s new flagship discounted market sale product. When the NPPF is next updated, it is expected that the 10% affordable home ownership requirement referenced above may be replaced by the First Homes requirement.
- First Homes**
180. Whether to treat discounted market housing as affordable or not depends on whether discounting the asking price of new build homes of a size and type suitable to first time buyers would bring them within reach of people currently unable to buy market housing.
181. The starting point for these calculations is the median house price in Aylesbury Vale noted above of £368,500. The assumption is that the existing median price will be broadly similar to the price of a newly built entry-level home, with the premium associated with new housing accounting for the difference.
182. For the minimum discount of 30% the purchase threshold can be calculated as follows:
- Median house price = £368,500;
 - Discounted by 30% = £257,950;
 - Purchase deposit at 10% of value = £25,795;
 - Value of dwelling for mortgage purposes = £232,155;
 - Divided by loan to income ratio of 3.5 = purchase threshold of £66,330.
183. The income thresholds analysis in the Tenure and Affordability chapter also compares local incomes with the costs of a 40% and 50% discounted First

Home. This would require an income threshold of £56,854 and £47,379 respectively.

184. All of the income thresholds calculated here for First Homes are below the cap of £80,000 above which households are not eligible.
185. The 30% discounted price is above £250,000 resulting in it failing to meet the criteria, so either a greater discount is justified, developers would need to bring the price down, or smaller or lower value properties would need to be delivered than our assumed benchmark.
186. Note that discounted market sale homes may be unviable to develop if the discounted price is close to (or below) build costs. Build costs vary across the country but as an illustration, the build cost for a 2 bedroom home (assuming 70 sq m and a build cost of £1,500 per sq m) would be around £105,000. This cost excludes any land value or developer profit. This would not appear to be an issue in Whitchurch.

Shared ownership

187. Shared ownership involves the purchaser buying an initial share in a property, typically of between 25% and 75% (but now set at a minimum of 10%), and paying rent on the share retained by the provider. Shared ownership is flexible in two respects, in the share which can be purchased and in the rental payable on the share retained by the provider. Both of these are variable. The share owned by the occupant can be increased over time through a process known as 'staircasing'.
188. In exceptional circumstances (for example, as a result of financial difficulties, and where the alternative is repossession), and at the discretion of the provider, shared owners may staircase down, thereby reducing the share they own. Shared equity is available to first-time buyers, people who have owned a home previously and council and housing association tenants with a good credit rating whose annual household income does not exceed £80,000.
189. To determine the affordability of shared ownership, calculations are again based on the estimated costs of new build housing as discussed above. The deposit available to the prospective purchaser is assumed to be 10% of the value of the dwelling, and the standard loan to income ratio of 3.5 is used to calculate the income required to obtain a mortgage. The rental component is estimated at 2.5% of the value of the remaining (unsold) portion of the price. The income required to cover the rental component of the dwelling is based on the assumption that a household spends no more than 30% of the income on rent (as for the income threshold for the private rental sector).
190. The affordability threshold for a 25% equity share is calculated as follows:
- A 25% equity share of £368,500 is £92,125;
 - A 10% deposit of £9,213 is deducted, leaving a mortgage value of £82,913;
 - This is divided by the loan to value ratio of 3.5 to give a purchase threshold of £23,689;
 - Rent is charged on the remaining 75% shared ownership equity, i.e. the unsold value of £276,375;

- The estimated annual rent at 2.5% of the unsold value is £6,909;
- This requires an income of £23,031.25 (annual rent multiplied by 3.33 so that no more than 30% of income is spent on rent).
- The total income required is £46,721 (£23,689 plus £23,031.25).

191. The same calculation is repeated for equity shares of 10% and 50% producing affordability thresholds of £37,113 and £62,733 respectively.

Rent to buy

192. Rent to buy is a relatively new and less common tenure, which through subsidy allows the occupant to save a portion of their rent to build up a deposit to eventually purchase the home. It is therefore estimated to cost the same as private rents – the difference being that the occupant builds up equity in the property with a portion of the rent, but this portion is still a monthly outgoing for the occupant.

Help to Buy (Equity Loan)

193. The Help to Buy Equity Loan is not an affordable housing tenure but allows households to afford market housing through a loan provided by the government. With a Help to Buy Equity Loan the government lends up to 20% (40% in London) of the cost of a newly built home. The household must pay a deposit of 5% or more and arrange a mortgage of 25% or more to make up the rest. Buyers are not charged interest on the 20% loan for the first five years of owning the home.

194. It is important to note that this product widens access to market housing but does not provide an affordable home in perpetuity.

Appendix B : Housing Needs Assessment Glossary

Adoption

This refers to the final confirmation of a local plan by a local planning authority.

Affordability

The terms 'affordability' and 'affordable housing' have different meanings. 'Affordability' is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. 'Affordable housing' refers to particular products outside the main housing market.

Affordability Ratio

Assessing affordability involves comparing housing costs against the ability to pay. The ratio between lower quartile house prices and the lower quartile income or earnings can be used to assess the relative affordability of housing. The Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Governments publishes quarterly the ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings by local authority (LQAR) as well as median house price to median earnings by local authority (MAR) e.g. income = £25,000, house price = £200,000. House price: income ratio = £200,000/£25,000 = 8, (the house price is 8 times income).

Affordable Housing (NPPF Definition)

Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

c) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative

affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Affordable rented housing

Rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). The national rent regime is the regime under which the social rents of tenants of social housing are set, with particular reference to the Guide to Social Rent Reforms (March 2001) and the Rent Influencing Regime Guidance (October 2001). Local market rents are calculated using the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors (RICS) approved valuation methods¹².

Age-Restricted General Market Housing

A type of housing which is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens but does not include support or care services.

Annual Monitoring Report

A report submitted to the Government by local planning authorities assessing progress with and the effectiveness of a Local Development Framework.

Basic Conditions

The Basic Conditions are the legal tests that are considered at the examination stage of neighbourhood development plans. They need to be met before a plan can progress to referendum.

Backlog need

The backlog need constitutes those households who are eligible for Affordable Housing, on account of homelessness, over-crowding, concealment or affordability, but who are yet to be offered a home suited to their needs.

Bedroom Standard¹³

The bedroom standard is a measure of occupancy (whether a property is overcrowded or under-occupied, based on the number of bedrooms in a property and the type of household in residence). The Census overcrowding data is based on occupancy rating (overcrowding by number of rooms not including bathrooms and hallways). This tends to produce higher levels of overcrowding/ under occupation. A detailed definition of the standard is given in the Glossary of the EHS Household Report.

Co-living

Co-living denotes people who do not have family ties sharing either a self-contained dwelling (i.e., a 'house share') or new development akin to student housing in which people have a bedroom and bathroom to themselves, but share living and kitchen space with others. In co-living schemes each individual represents a separate 'household'.

¹² The Tenant Services Authority has issued an explanatory note on these methods at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1918430.pdf>

¹³ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2011-to-2012-household-report>

Community Led Housing/Community Land Trusts

Housing development, provision and management that is led by the community is very often driven by a need to secure affordable housing for local people in the belief that housing that comes through the planning system may be neither the right tenure or price-point to be attractive or affordable to local people. The principle forms of community-led models include cooperatives, co-housing communities, self-help housing, community self-build housing, collective custom-build housing, and community land trusts. By bringing forward development which is owned by the community, the community is able to set rents and/or mortgage payments at a rate that it feels is appropriate. The Government has a range of support programmes for people interested in bringing forward community led housing.

Community Right to Build Order¹⁴

A community right to build order is a special kind of neighbourhood development order, granting planning permission for small community development schemes, such as housing or new community facilities. Local community organisations that meet certain requirements or parish/town councils are able to prepare community right to build orders.

Concealed Families (Census definition)¹⁵

The 2011 Census defined a concealed family as one with young adults living with a partner and/or child/children in the same household as their parents, older couples living with an adult child and their family or unrelated families sharing a household. A single person cannot be a concealed family; therefore one elderly parent living with their adult child and family or an adult child returning to the parental home is not a concealed family; the latter are reported in an ONS analysis on increasing numbers of young adults living with parents.

Equity Loans/Shared Equity

An equity loan which acts as a second charge on a property. For example, a household buys a £200,000 property with a 10% equity loan (£20,000). They pay a small amount for the loan and when the property is sold e.g. for £250,000 the lender receives 10% of the sale cost (£25,000). Some equity loans were available for the purchase of existing stock. The current scheme is to assist people to buy new build.

Extra Care Housing or Housing-With-Care

Housing which usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24 hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are included in retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.

Fair Share

¹⁴ See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary>

¹⁵ See http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107160832/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_350282.pdf

'Fair share' is an approach to determining housing need within a given geographical area based on a proportional split according to the size of the area, the number of homes in it, or its population.

First Homes

The Government has recently confirmed the introduction of First Homes as a new form of discounted market housing which will provide a discount of at least 30% on the price of new homes. These homes are available to first time buyers as a priority but other households will be eligible depending on agreed criteria. New developments will be required to provide 25% of Affordable Housing as First Homes. A more detailed explanation of First Homes and its implications is provided in the main body of the HNA.

Habitable Rooms

The number of habitable rooms in a home is the total number of rooms, excluding bathrooms, toilets and halls.

Household Reference Person (HRP)

The concept of a Household Reference Person (HRP) was introduced in the 2001 Census (in common with other government surveys in 2001/2) to replace the traditional concept of the head of the household. HRPs provide an individual person within a household to act as a reference point for producing further derived statistics and for characterising a whole household according to characteristics of the chosen reference person.

Housing Market Area

A housing market area is a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work. It might be the case that housing market areas overlap.

The extent of the housing market areas identified will vary, and many will in practice cut across various local planning authority administrative boundaries. Local planning authorities should work with all the other constituent authorities under the duty to cooperate.

Housing Needs

There is no official definition of housing need in either the National Planning Policy Framework or the National Planning Practice Guidance. Clearly, individuals have their own housing needs. The process of understanding housing needs at a population scale is undertaken via the preparation of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (see below).

Housing Needs Assessment

A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is an assessment of housing needs at the Neighbourhood Area level.

Housing Products

Housing products simply refers to different types of housing as they are produced by developers of various kinds (including councils and housing associations). Housing products usually refers to specific tenures and types of new build housing.

Housing Size (Census Definition)

Housing size can be referred to either in terms of the number of bedrooms in a home (a bedroom is defined as any room that was intended to be used as a bedroom when the property was built, any rooms permanently converted for use as bedrooms); or in terms of the number of rooms, excluding bathrooms, toilets halls or landings, or rooms that can only be used for storage. All other rooms, for example, kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, utility rooms, studies and conservatories are counted. If two rooms have been converted into one they are counted as one room. Rooms shared between more than one household, for example a shared kitchen, are not counted.

Housing Type (Census Definition)

This refers to the type of accommodation used or available for use by an individual household (i.e. detached, semi-detached, terraced including end of terraced, and flats). Flats are broken down into those in a purpose-built block of flats, in parts of a converted or shared house, or in a commercial building.

Housing Tenure (Census Definition)

Tenure provides information about whether a household rents or owns the accommodation that it occupies and, if rented, combines this with information about the type of landlord who owns or manages the accommodation.

Income Threshold

Income thresholds are derived as a result of the annualisation of the monthly rental cost and then asserting this cost should not exceed 35% of annual household income.

Intercensal Period

This means the period between the last two Censuses, i.e. between years 2001 and 2011.

Intermediate Housing

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing. Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as 'low-cost market' housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

Life Stage modelling

Life Stage modelling is forecasting need for dwellings of different sizes by the end of the Plan period on the basis of changes in the distribution of household types and key age brackets (life stages) within the NA. Given the shared behavioural patterns associated with these metrics, they provide a helpful way of understanding and predicting future community need. This data is not available at neighbourhood level so

LPA level data is employed on the basis of the NA falling within its defined Housing Market Area.

Life-time Homes

Dwellings constructed to make them more flexible, convenient adaptable and accessible than most 'normal' houses, usually according to the Lifetime Homes Standard, 16 design criteria that can be applied to new homes at minimal cost: <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>.

Life-time Neighbourhoods

Lifetime neighbourhoods extend the principles of Lifetime Homes into the wider neighbourhood to ensure the public realm is designed in such a way to be as inclusive as possible and designed to address the needs of older people, for example providing more greenery and more walkable, better connected places.

Local Development Order

An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Local Enterprise Partnership

A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

Local housing need (NPPF definition)

The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in paragraph 60 of this Framework).

Local Planning Authority

The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority apply to the District Council, London Borough Council, County Council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority or the Greater London Authority, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local Plan

This is the plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies form part of the Local Plan and are known as 'Development Plan Documents' (DPDs).

Lower Quartile

The bottom 25% value, i.e. of all the properties sold, 25% were cheaper than this value and 75% were more expensive. The lower quartile price is used as an entry level price

and is the recommended level used to evaluate affordability; for example for first time buyers.

Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio

The Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio reflects the relationship between Lower Quartile Household Incomes and Lower Quartile House Prices, and is a key indicator of affordability of market housing for people on relatively low incomes.

Market Housing

Market housing is housing which is built by developers (which may be private companies or housing associations, or Private Registered Providers), for the purposes of sale (or rent) on the open market.

Mean (Average)

The mean or the average is, mathematically, the sum of all values divided by the total number of values. This is the more commonly used “average” measure as it includes all values, unlike the median.

Median

The middle value, i.e. of all the properties sold, half were cheaper and half were more expensive. This is sometimes used instead of the mean average as it is not subject to skew by very large or very small statistical outliers.

Median Affordability Ratio

The Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio reflects the relationship between Median Household Incomes and Median House Prices, and is a key indicator of affordability of market housing for people on middle-range incomes.

Mortgage Ratio

The mortgage ratio is the ratio of mortgage value to income which is typically deemed acceptable by banks. Approximately 75% of all mortgage lending ratios fell below 4 in recent years¹⁶, i.e. the total value of the mortgage was less than 4 times the annual income of the person who was granted the mortgage.

Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)

An NDO will grant planning permission for a particular type of development in a particular area. This could be either a particular development, or a particular class of development (for example retail or housing). A number of types of development will be excluded from NDOs, however. These are minerals and waste development, types of development that, regardless of scale, always need Environmental Impact Assessment, and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

Neighbourhood plan

A plan prepared by a Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Older People

¹⁶ See <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2017/08/how-your-income-affects-your-mortgage-chances/>

People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Output Area/Lower Super Output Area/Middle Super Output Area

An output area is the lowest level of geography for publishing statistics, and is the core geography from which statistics for other geographies are built. Output areas were created for England and Wales from the 2001 Census data, by grouping a number of households and populations together so that each output area's population is roughly the same. 175,434 output areas were created from the 2001 Census data, each containing a minimum of 100 persons with an average of 300 persons. Lower Super Output Areas consist of higher geographies of between 1,000-1,500 persons (made up of a number of individual Output Areas) and Middle Super Output Areas are higher than this, containing between 5,000 and 7,200 people, and made up of individual Lower Layer Super Output Areas. Some statistics are only available down to Middle Layer Super Output Area level, meaning that they are not available for individual Output Areas or parishes.

Overcrowding

There is no single agreed definition of overcrowding, however, utilising the Government's bedroom standard, overcrowding is deemed to be in households where there is more than one person in the household per room (excluding kitchens, bathrooms, halls and storage areas). As such, a home with one bedroom and one living room and one kitchen would be deemed overcrowded if three adults were living there.

Planning Condition

A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning Obligation

A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Purchase Threshold

Purchase thresholds are calculated by netting 10% off the entry house price to reflect purchase deposit. The resulting cost is divided by 4 to reflect the standard household income requirement to access mortgage products.

Proportionate and Robust Evidence

Proportionate and robust evidence is evidence which is deemed appropriate in scale, scope and depth for the purposes of neighbourhood planning, sufficient so as to meet the Basic Conditions, as well as robust enough to withstand legal challenge. It is referred to a number of times in the PPG and its definition and interpretation relies on the judgement of professionals such as Neighbourhood Plan Examiners.

Private Rented

The Census tenure private rented includes a range of different living situations in practice, such as private rented/ other including households living “rent free”. Around 20% of the private rented sector are in this category, which will have included some benefit claimants whose housing benefit at the time was paid directly to their landlord. This could mean people whose rent is paid by their employer, including some people in the armed forces. Some housing association tenants may also have been counted as living in the private rented sector because of confusion about what a housing association is.

Retirement Living or Sheltered Housing

Housing for older people which usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.

Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes

Housing for older people comprising of individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.

Rightsizing

Households who wish to move into a property that is a more appropriate size for their needs can be said to be rightsizing. This is often used to refer to older households who may be living in large family homes but whose children have left, and who intend to rightsize to a smaller dwelling. The popularity of this trend is debatable as ties to existing communities and the home itself may outweigh issues of space. Other factors, including wealth, health, status and family circumstance also need to be taken into consideration, and it should not be assumed that all older households in large dwellings wish to rightsize.

Rural Exception Sites

Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority’s discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable dwellings without grant funding.

Shared Ownership

Housing where a purchaser part buys and part rents from a housing association or local authority. Typical purchase share is between 25% and 75%, and buyers are encouraged to buy the largest share they can afford. Generally applies to new build properties, but re-sales occasionally become available. There may be an opportunity to rent at intermediate rent level before purchasing a share in order to save/increase the deposit level

Sheltered Housing¹⁷

¹⁷ See <http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-sheltered-housing.aspx>

Sheltered housing (also known as retirement housing) means having your own flat or bungalow in a block, or on a small estate, where all the other residents are older people (usually over 55). With a few exceptions, all developments (or 'schemes') provide independent, self-contained homes with their own front doors. There are many different types of scheme, both to rent and to buy. They usually contain between 15 and 40 properties, and range in size from studio flats (or 'bedsits') through to 2 and 3 bed roomed. Properties in most schemes are designed to make life a little easier for older people - with features like raised electric sockets, lowered worktops, walk-in showers, and so on. Some will usually be designed to accommodate wheelchair users. And they are usually linked to an emergency alarm service (sometimes called 'community alarm service') to call help if needed. Many schemes also have their own 'manager' or 'warden', either living on-site or nearby, whose job is to manage the scheme and help arrange any services residents need. Managed schemes will also usually have some shared or communal facilities such as a lounge for residents to meet, a laundry, a guest flat and a garden.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a document prepared by one or more local planning authorities to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the Plan period. SHLAAs are sometimes also called LAAs (Land Availability Assessments) or HELAAs (Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments) so as to integrate the need to balance assessed housing and economic needs as described below.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (NPPF Definition)

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is a document prepared by one or more local planning authorities to assess their housing needs under the 2012 version of the NPPF, usually across administrative boundaries to encompass the whole housing market area. The NPPF makes clear that SHMAs should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures the local population is likely to need over the Plan period. Sometimes SHMAs are combined with Economic Development Needs Assessments to create documents known as HEDNAs (Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments).

Specialist Housing for the Elderly

Specialist housing for the elderly, sometimes known as specialist accommodation for the elderly, encompasses a wide range of housing types specifically aimed at older people, which may often be restricted to those in certain older age groups (usually 55+ or 65+). This could include residential institutions, sometimes known as care homes, sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement housing and a range of other potential types of housing which has been designed and built to serve the needs of older people, including often providing care or other additional services. This housing can be provided in a range of tenures (often on a rented or leasehold basis).

Social Rented Housing

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in Section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.). Guideline target rents for this tenure are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be

owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with Homes England.¹⁸

¹⁸ See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/doc/1980960.doc#Housing>



Important Views

Whitchurch is a hilltop village, with an elevated position on the Wing to Quanton ridge in an Area of Attractive Landscape. Consequently, the village has numerous far-reaching views in all directions, the majority of which can easily be accessed from the many public footpaths that crisscross the Parish. The village views are an integral part of what makes Whitchurch so special and it is our duty to protect them for villagers to enjoy in the many years to come.

Policy W9

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies Important Views on the Policies Map.**
- B. Development proposals should preserve or enhance the local character of the landscape and through their design, height and massing should recognise and respond positively to the various Important Views.**
- C. Development proposals which would have a significant adverse impact on an identified Important View will not be supported.**

5.22 The Important Views policy, and Policies Maps, identifies these views from public vantage points in and beyond the edge of the village that are considered in the Important Views report, published in the evidence base, as especially important in defining the relationship between the village and its rural hinterland.

5.23 The policy does not seek to prevent any development lying within a view but requires that proposals recognise and take account of these in their design. In each case, only the minimum area of land necessary to define the view has been identified.

Policy W9 and the associated list of important views, were largely based on a 'walkabout' appraisal of the Parish neighbourhood conducted by members of the Environment Task Group who subsequently produced the Village Asset Log. This Asset Log was created from the Team's knowledge of the village and supported by notes taken by the team during their walkabout of the Parish.

As a result, nine views were identified as important and this section details the nine important views, identification of key characteristics of the landscapes and descriptions of the views with selected photographs. It is worth noting that, given the elevated and rural nature of the area, there are many other attractive views across the parish characterised by open landscapes undisturbed by development. The nine identified important views have been selected because they are closest to the existing settlements, or look towards the village and all are accessible from public rights of way. Detailed locations are shown in the Policy Maps in the Whitchurch Pre-Submission plan.

View	View Name	Location	Direction and description of View	Key characteristics
1	Waddesdon View	At the stile, on the western boundary of the wind turbine field	Looks west towards Waddesdon but also takes in views beyond Berryfields and across to the Chilterns and Stokenchurch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited impact from built urban development Panoramic views over meandering valley floor Tranquil and remote
2	Village View	At the stile, on the eastern boundary of wind turbine field	Looks east towards the middle and southern section of the village and beyond to Weedon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paddocks in association with village margins Landmark church tower
3	Whistlers View	At the top of the field, east of Weir Lane and accessed through the stile where Castle Lane meets Weir Lane	Looks south towards the Chilterns, encompasses Wendover Woods and Coombe Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immortalised in Whistler's Painting Limited impact from built urban development Panoramic views over meandering valley floor Tranquil and remote
4	Castle View	Half way along the footpath that runs from the top of Weir Lane, behind Moat Cottage towards Fair Alice Spring.	Historic lookout from the Castle Mound south toward Aylesbury Vale and the Chilterns. NB: <i>As the actual Mound is in private ownership please view from the footpath</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited impact from built urban development
5	Bolebec View	Through the right hand stile at the end of Keinches Lane	Looks north west back towards Bolebec Castle mound, also taking in Scotts Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited impact from built urban development medium scale mixed woodlands
6	Chilterns View	Through the stile facing you at the end of Keinches Lane	Looks south and takes in Berryfields and beyond to Aylesbury and the Chilterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited impact from built urban development
7	Vale View	By the 'broken down tree' where the footpaths meet in the field accessed by the footpath from Keinches Lane and from Little London	Looks south and west across the Aylesbury Vale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited impact from built urban development
8	Creslow View	At the far end of The Butts where the footpath divides	Looks east towards Creslow and also beyond Cublington/Aston Abbots ridge to the Dunstable Downs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panoramic views over large open, predominantly arable fields forming part of the Creslow 100 Limited impact from built urban development
9	Recreation View	At the northern end of the Recreation Field	Looks north from the mound towards Buckingham, northwest to the Mursley Water Tower and south east to the Dunstable Downs where the Whipsnade Lion is visible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited impact from built urban development Panoramic views which extend in excess of 5/10 miles

View 1 – Waddesdon View



Photo taken from the stile (WHI/30/1) at the western edge of the 'wind turbine' field. Looking west towards the Waddesdon Hills and beyond to Ashendon. It is possible to see the towers of Waddesdon Manor (*but not in this photo!*). In future, this vista will provide an excellent view of HS2 slicing through the Vale. This view illustrates how the Vale is predominantly grazing land but also some recently ploughed fields in the Vale ready for arable crops.

View 2– Village View



Taken from the stile (WHI/30/1) on the eastern edge of the 'wind turbine' field looking east, back towards the village with the listed Grade2* Church tower clearly visible above the trees, and the houses in Little London, *towards the right of centre of the shot*, at the south end of the village. Grazing land dominates this view and these 'pony paddocks' at the margin of the village clearly illustrates the importance of the equestrian industry to the village having numerous Livery Yards within a very close proximity and the Barrettstown Equine Clinic located along the Oving Road.

View 3 – Whistler’s View



A view of the ‘Vale of Aylesbury’ immortalised by the Rex Whistler’s painting of 1933. This photo is taken from half way along the footpath (WHI/26/2) and not far from ‘Whistler’s Tree’. It looks due south across the Vale toward the Chilterns which can be clearly seen in the distance approximately 10/12 miles away. The Vale’s wind turbine can be seen slightly to the right of centre of the view. To the left can be seen the villages of Weedon and Hardwick spanning right across Aylesbury with Wendover Woods and Combe Hill on the horizon and further over to the right you can see the Whiteleaf Cross standing above Princes Risborough. Spectacular on a clear day!

View 4 – Castle View



Taken just below the Castle mound from the footpath (WHI/21/5), looking south into the Vale and beyond which clearly illustrates the vantage point the castle lookout would have had in centuries long gone.

View 5 – Bolebec View



Looking west from the end of Kinches Lane (WHI/59/1) at the south end of the village, back up towards the Mound of Bolebec castle (left of centre) and directly across to Scotts Hill. All the fields are grazed by either sheep, cattle or horses and appear to show limited impact from built urban development with medium scale mixed woodland towards the top of the hills.

View 6 Chilterns view



This is the view that greets you as you walk through the stile at the end of Keinches Lane (WHI/12/1). You look south towards Berryfields and beyond to the Chilterns in the far distance, with the Waddesdon Hills spanning left and right behind the tree in the centre of the photo. As you walk further into the field, towards the tree in the centre, the view opens out to in excess of 180 degrees, towards Hardwick on the left and to the right as far round as Scotts Hill. The view takes in land that is used for both grazing and, in the near distance evidence of ploughed land ready for crops. The Waddesdon Hills have wooded areas and the small copse on Scotts Hill leads the eye on towards more heavily wooded areas on the approach to the village.

View 7 – Vale View



Taken from the south end of the village (WHI/1/1) looking out over the Vale with far reaching views to Stokenchurch and the Chilterns in the distance. This field has not been actively grazed for many, many years but beyond it the fields are used for equestrian grazing like many others around the village.

View 8 – Creslow View

.....part 1 – view left to right continuously with part 2



.....part 2



This photo is taken from the eastern end of the Butts (WHI/35/1), left it looks towards the A413, sweeping across to Creslow Manor and the two photos join at the Creslow 'barns' and continue through 180 degrees to the right, towards Parrots and the Cublington Road. This is an expansive long-distance view giving a sense of wide-open space that is quiet and undisturbed and apart from the modern barns at Creslow there is little evidence of encroachment from modern building.

This view would be very different today if London's Third Airport had gone ahead at the prime location of Cublington as had been recommended by the Roskill Report in 1969. Local villages banded together and fought for two years to stop being completely destroyed to make way for the runway and due to the extensive, well organised opposition the 'Wing' Airport was scrapped in favour of Essex. Whitchurch would have been a haven for plane spotters and this view would likely now be within the perimeter fence!

View 9 – Recreation view

....part 1 – view left to right continuously with parts 2 and 3



....part 2



....part 3



This photo is taken from the Mound at the northern end of the Recreation Ground, part 1 looks left towards the eastern end of Oving, then sweeping across the landscape with Winslow/Swanbourne in the distance towards Cublington/Aston Abbots in the far right - at least a 180 degree sweep and showing the different effect of sunlight on the landscape.

WHITCHURCH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT

March 2023

Published by
Whitchurch Parish Council

WHITCHURCH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT

MARCH 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report summarises the site assessment process and its conclusions that informed the selection of housing site allocations in the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). Whitchurch Parish Council has been advised throughout this process by officers of Buckinghamshire Council (Bucks Council) and by the professional planning consultancies, O’Neill Homer and AECOM.

2. The Parish Council is aware that the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) confirms that Whitchurch has already met its housing requirement for the plan period 2013 – 2033 through completions and commitments. This includes 22 homes it allocates at Newman Close. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan is under no obligation to find more housing land for the next decade. However, the Parish Council is also mindful of the provisions of §14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in respect of securing protection for its Plan and of the preparation of a new Bucks Council Local Plan to cover the whole county and a longer plan period through to 2040. It has therefore made housing site allocations of a total quantum that will be consistent with its status as a ‘Larger Village’ in the settlement hierarchy (per PPG §41-003) and takes into consideration its environmental constraints.

3. A total of 8 sites out of the total number of 11 sites qualified for Stage 2 assessment. Three sites chose not to proceed. Together these sites could deliver between 145 – 167 new homes, which is likely to be considered as disproportionately high in relation to the existing size of the village, its environmental constraints, and its position (as a ‘larger village’) in the settlement hierarchy (as per Planning Practice Guidance §41-103) and of a scale that is unlikely to receive community support. The next stage of the assessment is therefore needed to inform the choice of sites for allocation in the Plan.

4. The outcome of the interim SEA report is that all sites have the potential for adverse effects in varying degrees. Once mitigation measures are taken into consideration the only minor distinguishing effects relate to the physical location of sites on Oving Road, the distance of sites to village amenities, the loss of valued green space and avoiding the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. As a result, there is a modest difference between Sites A, B, C and L when compared to Sites F, G, H and J which are located away from Oving Road in terms of the potential to increase traffic and congestion on Oving Road. Site J is close to many of the village amenities, including the village hall, pub, shop, petrol station, hairdressers, etc. However, it is furthest from the doctors surgery and school. There remains a high likelihood that Site F is underlain by best and most versatile agricultural land and there remains likely adverse effects from the loss of valued green space at Site G.

5. The outcome of community consultation in respect of judging community preferences is that there are two sites, Sites F and H, that have attracted substantially less concern from

the community than others. There also remain concern at Sites A and J, but less so than the remaining sites of Sites B, C, G and L which have attracted substantially more objection, mainly due to their location on Oving Road and impact on the environment and site J with its impact on the amenity and views of residents in the Little London area and challenging access. The community's opinions, thoughts and observations on all sites has sufficiently indicated that inclusion of Sites B, C, G, J and L may undermine the ability of the WNP to pass the referendum in due course.

6. When balancing the outcome of the two tests, it is recommended that Sites H is selected to deliver a total of approximately 23 homes over the plan period with Site F allocated as a reserve site delivering up to 35 homes if required.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report summarises the site assessment process and its conclusions that informed the selection of housing site allocations in the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). Whitchurch Parish Council has been advised throughout this process by officers of Buckinghamshire Council (Bucks Council) and by the professional planning consultancies, O’Neill Homer and AECOM.

1.2 The Parish Council is aware that the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) confirms that Whitchurch has already met its housing requirement for the plan period 2013 – 2033 through completions and commitments. This includes 22 homes it allocates at Newman Close. As a result, the WNP is under no obligation to find more housing land for the next decade. However, the Parish Council is also mindful of the provisions of §14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in respect of securing protection for its Plan and of the preparation of a new Bucks Council Local Plan to cover the whole county and a longer plan period. It has therefore considered making one or more housing site allocations of a total quantum that will be consistent with its status as a ‘Larger Village’ in the settlement hierarchy (per PPG §41-003) and takes into consideration its environmental constraints.

1.3 The assessment process comprised three stages. The first stage generated a schedule of potential development sites through a ‘land availability’ exercise. The second stage disqualified sites that do not adjoin the observed settlement edge of Whitchurch or are deemed unavailable in the plan period. The third stage carried out two distinct tests: a technical assessment via the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a community assessment via a community survey of site preferences. From the combination of the tests are drawn conclusions for site allocations and their necessary policy requirements.

1.4 A draft version of this report was published alongside the Pre-Submission version of the WNP and draft SEA report for consultation. This final version takes into account the representations made on both documents and will form part of the submission documentation.

2. STAGE ONE

2.1 The process began with the Parish Council forming a Steering Group (SG) to oversee the project on its behalf. The SG engaged with the local community to publicise the WNP and to seek opinions and preferences on its vision and objectives through 2021. At the end of March 2021, it commenced a 'land availability' exercise, which led to 10 sites in the Parish being put forward for their potential housing development. They included a number of sites identified and appraised in AVDC's 'Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment' (HELAA) of January 2017.

Site Name	Area/Capacity
A. North of Oving Road	0.39 Ha (10)
B. Barrettstown West*	1.9 Ha (48)
C. Barrettstown East*	3 Ha (75)
D. North West of Village*	9.11 Ha (228)
E. North of Mount Pleasant*	0.69 Ha (17)
F. Manor Farm North*	1.78 Ha (45)
G. Kempson House North*	1.09 Ha (5)
H. Kempson House West*	1.05 Ha (26)
J. Little London North	0.25 Ha (6)
K. Little London South	1 Ha (25)

Table A: Original submissions

2.2 The sites (including the HELAA sites indicated*) were numbered and are shown in Table A above and on Plan A overleaf. The table includes a stated or estimated gross site area and an indicative housing capacity (at 25 dwelling per Ha, except where there are already specific proposals).

2.3 The SG requested additional information from all landowners following original submissions. A late submission (Site L) had also been received at this stage and was included in the list of sites. Sites D, E and K were withdrawn and therefore no longer available for the WNP to consider. The sites that were finally submitted are shown in Table B below and Plan B on page 6, and final submissions are included at Appendix A. The table includes a stated gross site area and an indicative housing capacity.

Site Name	Area/Capacity
A. North of Oving Road	0.39 Ha (4)
B. Barrettstown West*	0.6 Ha (7)
C. Barrettstown East*	2.4 Ha (26)
F. Manor Farm North*	1.78 Ha (25-35)
G. Kempson House North*	1.09 Ha (20-30)
H. Kempson House West*	1.05 Ha (23)
J. Little London North	0.36 Ha (8-10)
L. Greenacres Stables	2.8 Ha (32)

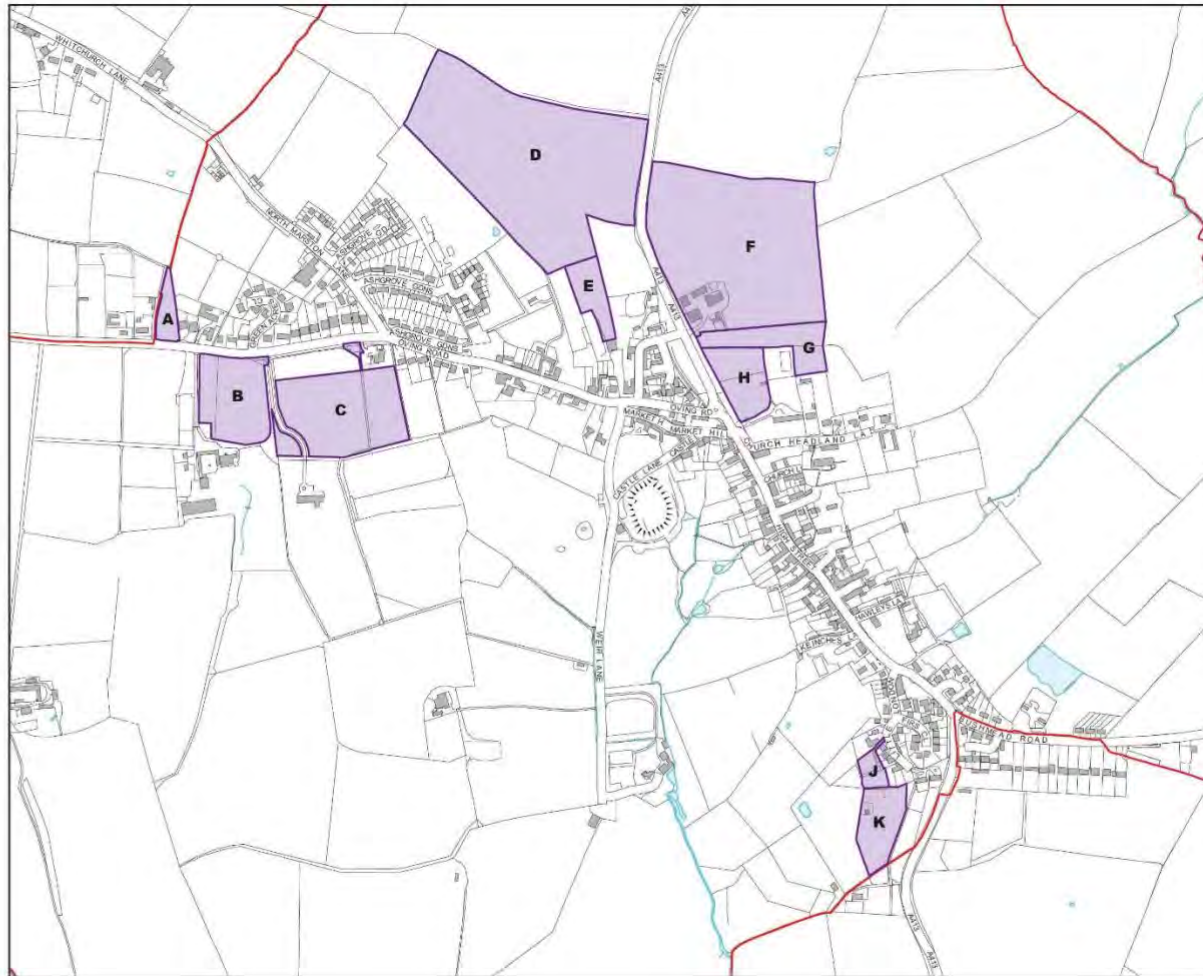
Table B: Stage 1 Sites

**Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan
Sites
May 2021**

Key



 Parish Boundary

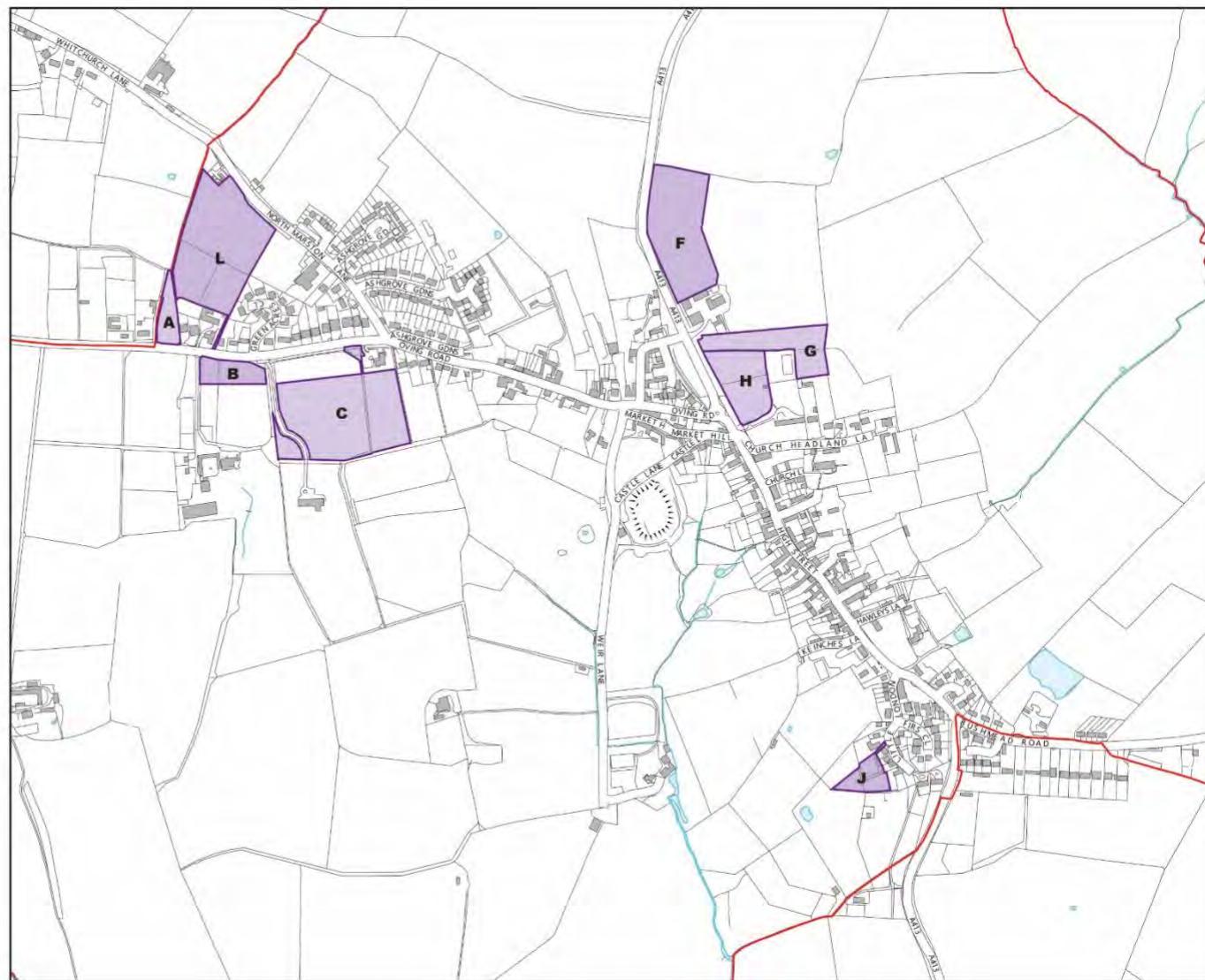
 Original submissions



**Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan
Stage 1 Sites
September 2021**

Key

-  Parish Boundary
-  Stage 1 Site Boundaries



3. STAGE TWO

3.1 All sites qualify for Stage 3 assessment as all sites adjoin the observed settlement edge of Whitchurch. This is an exclusionary criterion as both the NPPF and VALP require housing site allocations to be sustainable in their location. In practice, this requires a sequential approach to be taken, whereby priority is given to promoting new development inside the existing built-up area and then on its immediate outside, if there are no or insufficient available sites within the boundary. Only if there are no such candidate sites should those that do not adjoin the boundary be considered and this is clearly not the case here.

3.2 In making allocation decisions, the NPPF requires that sites are available, as well as suitable and achievable. Sites D, E and K are no longer available to the WNP and have therefore been excluded from further consideration. As a result, a total of 8 sites qualify for Stage 3 assessment (see plan C below). Together these sites could deliver between 145 – 167 new homes, which is likely to be considered as disproportionately high in relation to the existing size of the village, its environmental constraints, and its position (as a 'larger village) in the settlement hierarchy (as per Planning Practice Guidance §41-103) and of a scale that is unlikely to receive community support. The next stage of the assessment is therefore needed to inform the choice of sites for allocation in the Plan.

**Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan
Stage 2 Sites
January 2022**

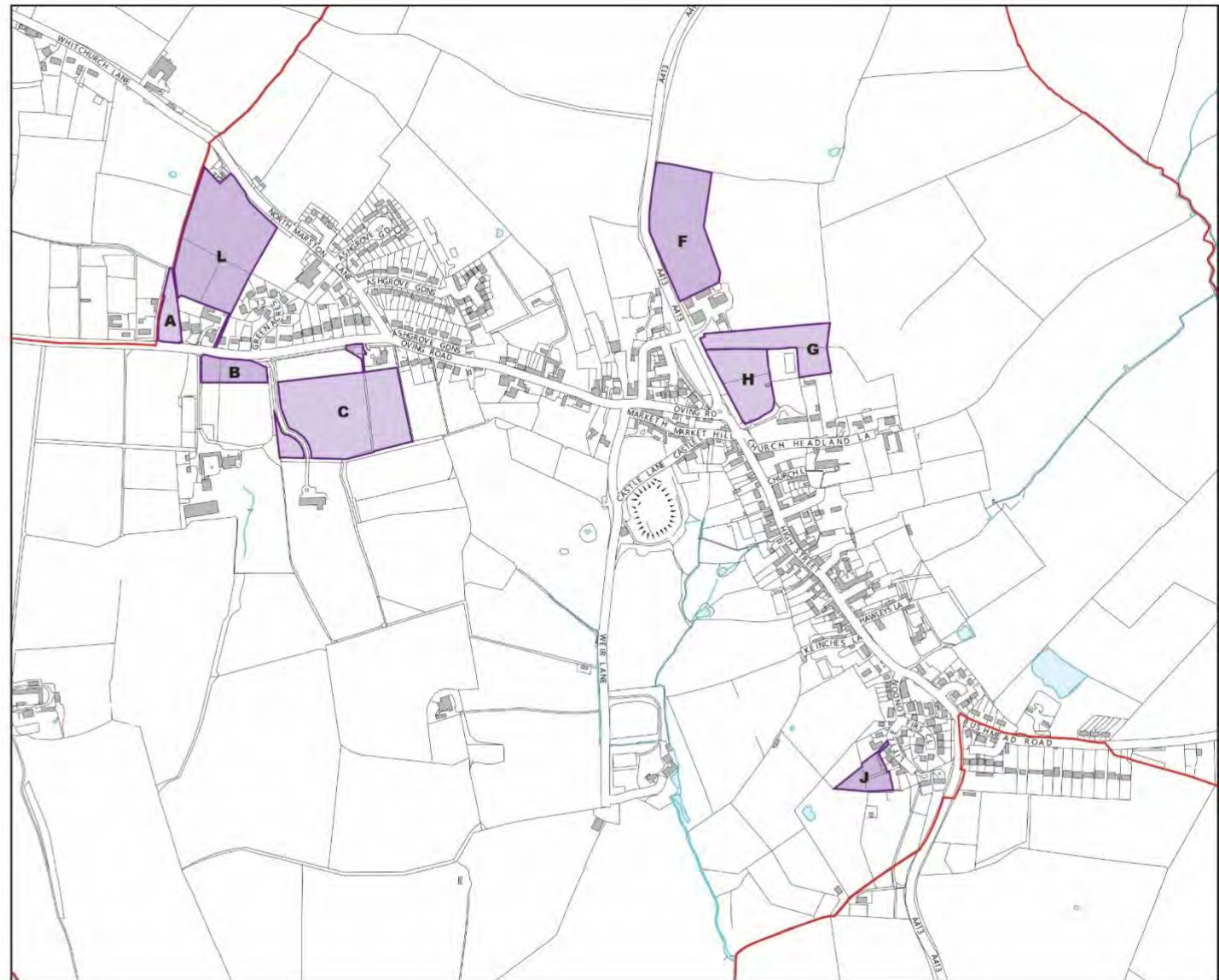
Key



Parish Boundary



Stage 2 Site Boundaries



4. STAGE THREE

4.1 This third stage of the process combines two assessment exercises: a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and a community survey. The first provides an assessment of the technical attributes of the sites using a set of agreed environmental criteria as required by the Regulations.

4.2 The second indicates the preferences of the local community of each site for development. This bears in mind that the Plan can only be made following a successful referendum in due course. In which case, the first may be tempered by the second, but only if there is a compelling case to do so.

4.3 To inform both exercises, the SG has sought additional information from the owners/promoters of each of the Stage 2 sites to confirm that the land is available, confirmation of access to the site, basic layout features and an indication of housing type and proposed numbers. All landowners provided indicative proposals and scheme layouts which are attached at Appendix A.

Technical Assessment: SEA

4.4 The SEA is being carried out in iterations by AECOM for the SG, based on the site information provided by the landowners and using the environmental objectives and baseline data agreed in the SEA scoping exercise.

4.5 An interim report has assessed the 8 sites as shown in Table C below. It has used the 11 environmental objectives and has determined the potential for the likely significant and minor, positive or adverse effects (not taking into account mitigation measures) and neutral effects of development resulting from an allocation in the Plan. The report does not itself give weight to the objectives and does not seek to rank the sites.

Summary of the likely effects of each site

SEA theme	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site F	Site G	Site H	Site J	Site L
Air quality	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Climate change and flood risk	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Yellow
Health and wellbeing	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red	Green
Historic environment	Yellow	Yellow	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Yellow
Land, soil, and water resources	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Landscape	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Red

SEA theme	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site F	Site G	Site H	Site J	Site L
Population and communities	Light Blue	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Transportation and movement	Red	Red	Red	Light Blue	Red	Light Blue	Red	Red

Key	
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)	Likely positive effect
Neutral / no effect	Uncertain effect

Table C: Summary of the likely effects of each site, AECOM

4.6 The outcome of the exercise is that all sites have the potential for adverse effects on air quality given that occupants of new homes will need to travel further afield to access a wider range of services and facilities. All sites also provide an opportunity to secure a biodiversity net gain. There remains some concern on surface water flooding at Sites C and B. The physical location of Site J means that access through the narrow lanes of Little London and onto the site via a very narrow new road is a significant issue for transportation and movement and the proposed location on landscape. The impact of development on the enjoyment of the footpath along the northern boundary of the Site G, as a result of the loss of valued green space, has resulted in likely adverse effects on health and wellbeing being identified. Without mitigation measures Sites F, G, H and J, all have the potential to harm the character and significance of the Conservation Area. Only J is however within the Conservation area. There is a high likelihood (>60%) that Sites F, G and L are underlain by best and most versatile agricultural land although none are actively farmed today. Sites B, C, F, G, J and L performs the least well on landscape impact with the enclosed character of Site H being a particular advantage in terms of wider landscape impact. All sites could contribute to the provision of affordable homes, although there is potential for the developable area of Site A and J to fall below the threshold for the provision of affordable housing of 0.3 Ha. Finally, the physical location of Sites A, B, C, J and L has resulted in the identification of likely adverse effects on transportation and movement given their position on Oving Road for Sites A, B, C and L and the narrow site of Site J at Little London and the great difficulty of turning south onto the A413 from that area.

4.7 There may be scope to successfully mitigate some or all of the likely adverse effects. If only one or two of the sites are selected, then this will minimise the adverse air quality effects by confining the total number of new homes in the village that will generate car trips. The Environment Act 2021 now enforces a biodiversity net gain of 10%. The allocation policy of a site(s) could include appropriate safeguarding measures to deal with flood risk and mitigation measures relating to scheme layout, access, and effective landscaping on the most sensitive boundaries in relation to the connection and enjoyment of footpaths and landscape impact. High quality design schemes will conserve and enhance the character and significance of the Conservation Area. The only minor distinguishing effects relate to the physical location of sites on Oving Road, the distance of sites to village amenities, and the loss of valued green space.

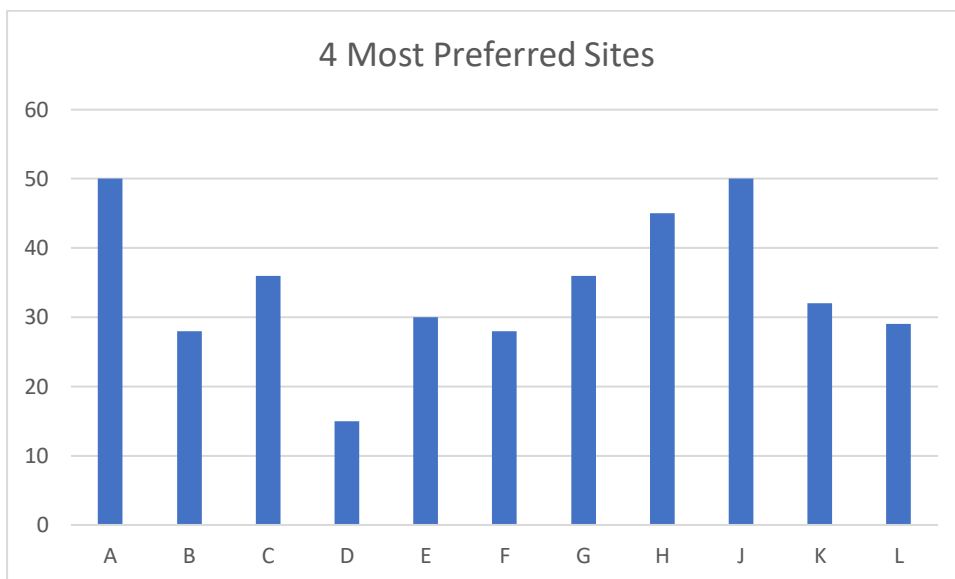
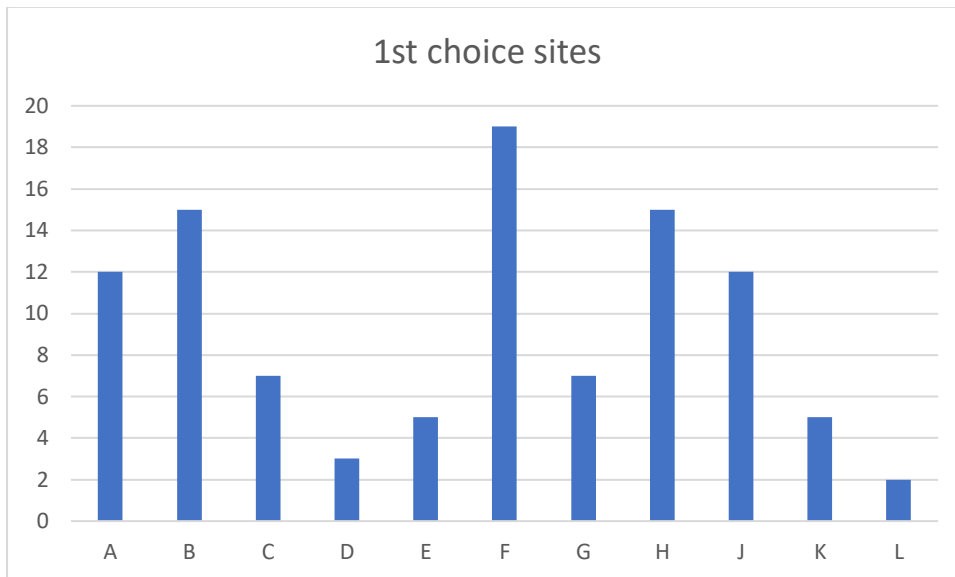
4.8 As a result, there is a modest difference between Sites A, B, C and L when compared to Sites F, G, H and J which are located away from Oving Road in terms of the potential to increase traffic and congestion on Oving Road. There remains likely adverse effects from the loss of valued green space at Site G and the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land at Site F.

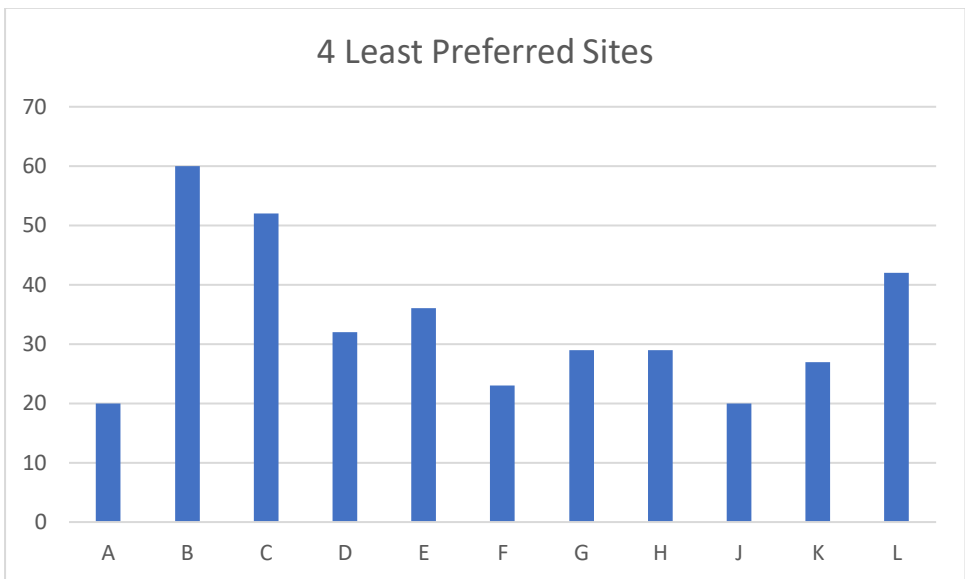
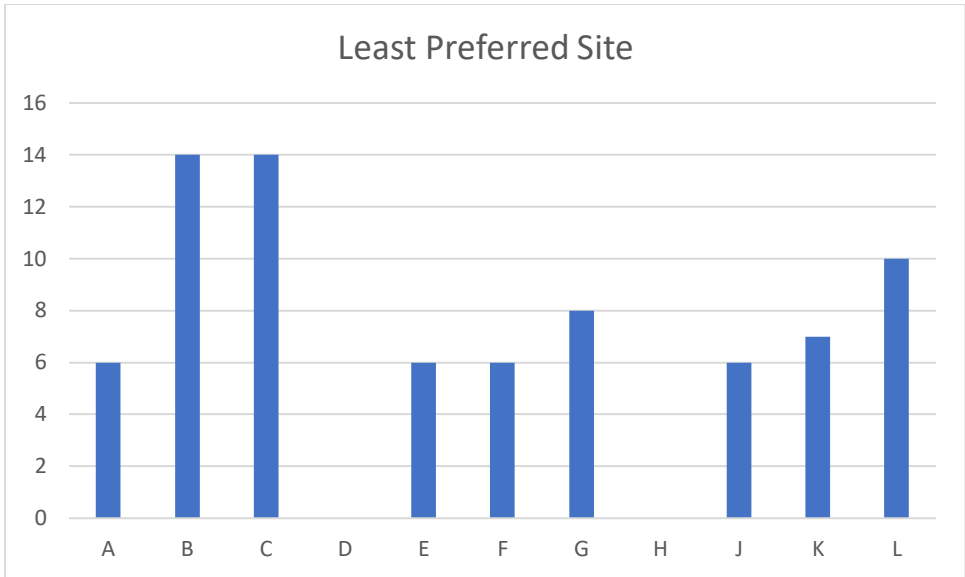
Community Assessment

4.9 As outlined above, it is also necessary to consider the ranking of those sites in a Community Survey. A Survey was undertaken on the sites in July 2021 and November 2021 and the results are summarised below. The Surveys were an effective and statistically relevant exercise to inform decision making.

July 2021

4.10 Prior to the submission of any sketch schemes and the withdrawal of Sites D, E and K from the process, the community were asked to list their 4 'Most favoured sites' and their 4 'Least favoured sites'. A questionnaire analysis recorded the following outcome:





November 2021

4.11 In November 2021, the community was invited to agree/disagree with important considerations for selecting sites which included:

- Safe pedestrian and vehicle access
- Site access that avoids adding excess traffic to known pinch points in the village
- That development proposed is proportionate to the size of the site and in keeping with the rural nature of the village
- That valued green spaces are protected as far as possible

4.12 93% of respondents agreed with the important considerations set out above.

4.13 The community were also invited to provide opinions, thoughts and observations on all sites remaining under consideration. Based on the responses collected the community least

favoured sites Sites A, B, C, G and L due to access being provided from Oving Road which is a significant pinch point in the village for Sites A, B, C and L. Site L is also considered by the community to be a valued green space as an active wildlife area with many trees and hedgerows and pleasant views as well as habitat loss at Site A and the closure of any remaining sense of a gap between Whitchurch and Oving if Site A was developed. Some concern was also recorded in relation to access to Site L. There is much local opposition to Sites B and C due to access being provided from Oving Road, water management issues and long running historical opposition to the development of site C which attracted hundreds of people to village meetings before site C experienced some limited building of ten homes.. Site G's concerns relate mainly to its value as a green space. Site G is valued green space considered to be a significant wildlife corridor in the village. There has also been some opposition to Site J due to access from the A413 into Little London, movement within the Little London area itself and impact on the landscape. Some concern was also raised at Sites F and H due to habitat loss but not to the same extent as other concerns.

4.14 Although the survey and engagement activities have been effective in terms of the number of local people engaging with the project, it is acknowledged that no survey can provide a definitive view of community opinion. However, experience elsewhere suggests that those people that do engage at this stage of a neighbourhood plan project are also more likely to comment at the Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) and Pre-Examination Publicity (Regulation 16) stages, as well as to turn out to vote at the referendum. It is therefore a helpful insight, and its conclusions must be given some weight in the final selection of sites.

4.15 The outcome of community consultation in respect of judging community preferences is that there are two sites, Sites F and H, that have attracted substantially less concern from the community than others. There also remain concern at Sites A and J, but less so than the remaining sites of Sites B, C, G and L which have attracted substantially more objection, mainly due to their location on Oving Road at Sites, B, C and L and impact on the environment at all of these sites. The community's opinions, thoughts and observations on all sites has sufficiently indicated that inclusion of Sites B, C, G and L may undermine the ability of the WNP to pass the referendum in due course.

4.16 Following Stage 3 testing planning permission for change of use of an existing storage barn on site to a residential dwelling has been approved (20/03073/APP) at Site A. Consequently, Site A officially withdrew from the Neighbourhood Plan process and the site is no longer available to be considered as part of the site allocation process for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SITE ALLOCATIONS

5.1 There is a reasonable correlation between the two tests, perhaps unsurprisingly as local communities will often have an instinct for distinguishing the relative environmental effects between sites.

5.2 As a result, Site H was one of the better performing sites in the interim SEA report and less concerns were raised by the community, it is at the top of the preferred list as the best candidate for site allocation in the WNP. The owner has proposed a scheme of 23 new homes and is committed to delivering a safe and convenient access route for pedestrians including a new road crossing to village amenities across the A413 which will be made a requirement in the policy. The scheme will also contribute to the need for additional affordable homes as set out in the Housing Needs Assessment of March 2022.

5.2 In coming to a final view on site selection, additional completions and commitments and the potential for additional infill development have also been taken into consideration. The Steering Group considers that there is the potential for approximately 3-10 new homes to come forward through infill schemes. The supply of an additional 23 new homes in the village to 2033 (the VALP plan period) will also represent an increase in the existing housing stock of the village over the next twelve years.

5.3 However, the new Bucks Local Plan is likely to cover a longer plan period to 2040. It is therefore prudent for the WNP to extend its provision to cover the same period. Identifying another medium sized scheme will provide for a similar scale of housing growth for the additional years beyond the VALP plan period. This means a total supply of up to 68 (10+23+35) new homes over the plan period of 2021 – 2040 which is an approximate 13% increase in the existing housing stock. This seems a reasonable approach to assess the future housing supply of a large village with environmental constraints like Whitchurch.

5.4 In which case, the second site on the preferred list should be reserved for later in the plan period. The interim SEA report identifies that both Sites F and G will continue to result in adverse effects once suitable mitigation measures has been taken into account. Development at Site G will harmfully distract from and interfere with the rural experience of users of the public right of way located here valued by the local community and therefore impact on the amenity value associated with use of the public right of way. Development at both Site F and Site G is likely to lead to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land but neither are currently actively farmed and the landowners have confirmed that the land is currently vacant. As such, there is no potential to meaningfully differentiate between the site options using the interim SEA alone.

5.5 The ability of the WNP to pass the referendum is an important consideration in selecting sites. Both sites will continue to lead to the loss of valued green space, however the community survey indicated that there were only two sites, Site F and H, which attracted substantially less concern from the local community.

5.6 When balancing the outcome of the interim SEA and community opinion, it is therefore recommended that Site F is selected to be reserved. This will deliver a total of

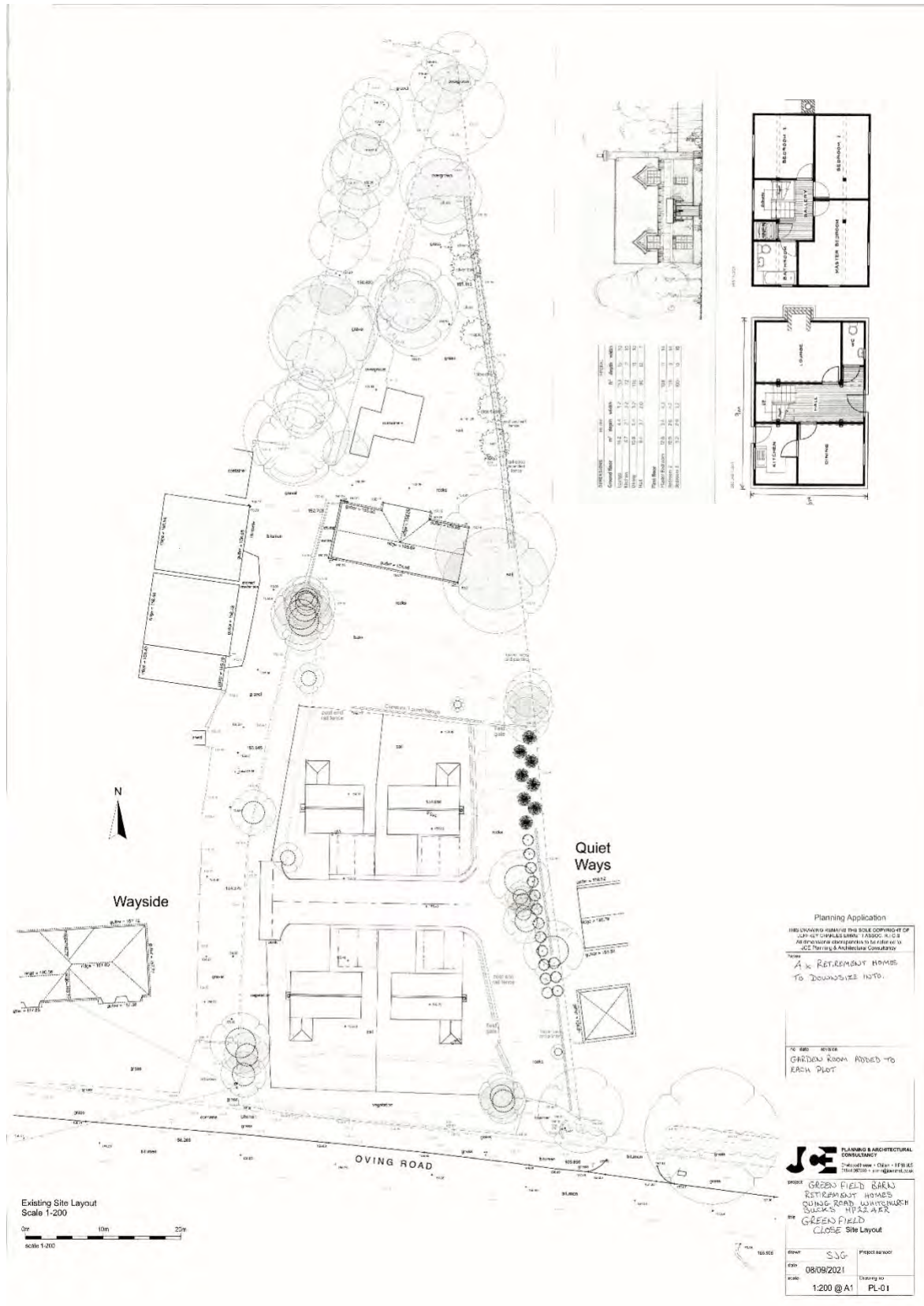
approximately 58 homes over the plan period. Reserving, rather than allocating land for development is encouraged by the NPPF to enable land to be developed later in the plan period without having to modify or replace the neighbourhood plan.

5.7 Following comments received during the Regulation 14 consultation, there have been additional submissions from the landowners of Site F and Site H. These consist of 'Preliminary Landscape and Visual Findings' (attached as Appendix B) and a Heritage Appraisal (attached as Appendix C) for Site F and a 'Heritage Statement' (attached as Appendix D) and a 'Summary Landscape and Visual Appraisal' (attached as Appendix E) for Site H. These submissions continue to indicate that mitigation measures will be necessary in respect of landscape and heritage matters, and as such these have been made policy requirements.

5.8 It is therefore recommended that Site H is allocated, and Site F is reserved. The SEA assessment has indicated how the sites should seek to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects and these requirements have been made in the respective allocation policies.

APPENDIX A: SITE INFORMATION

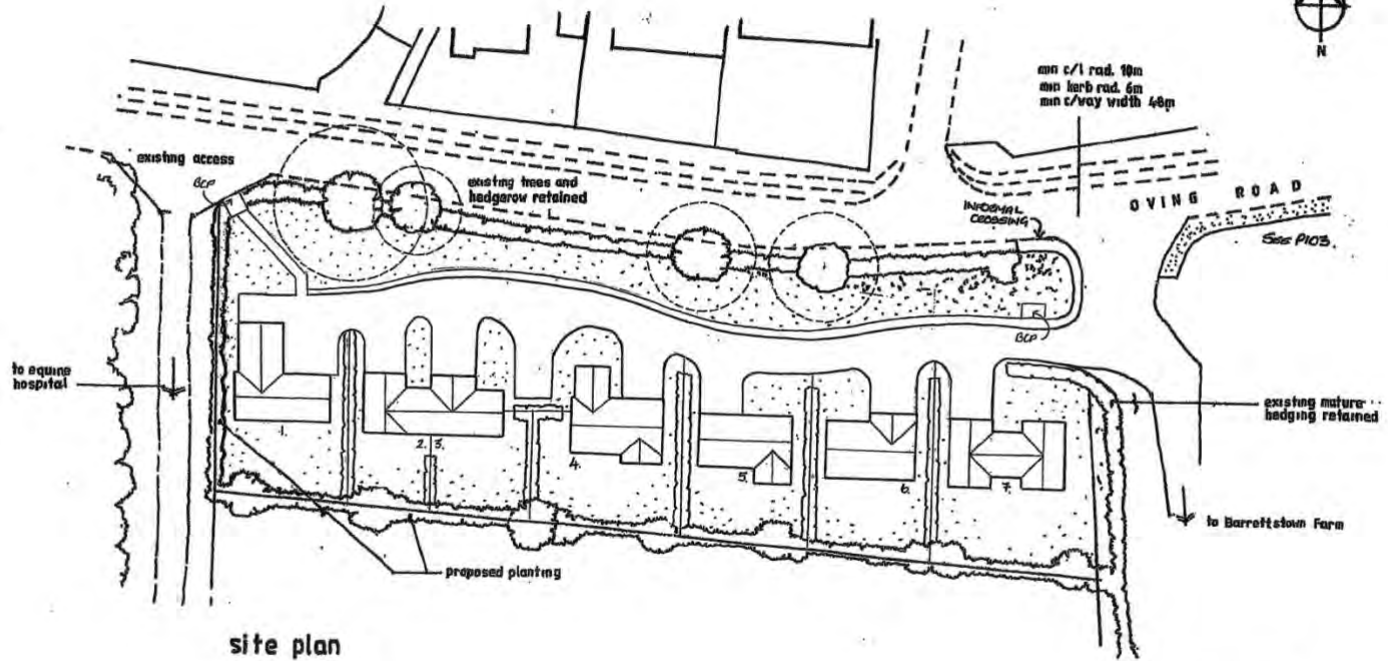
SITE A



SITE B

①

PLOT B



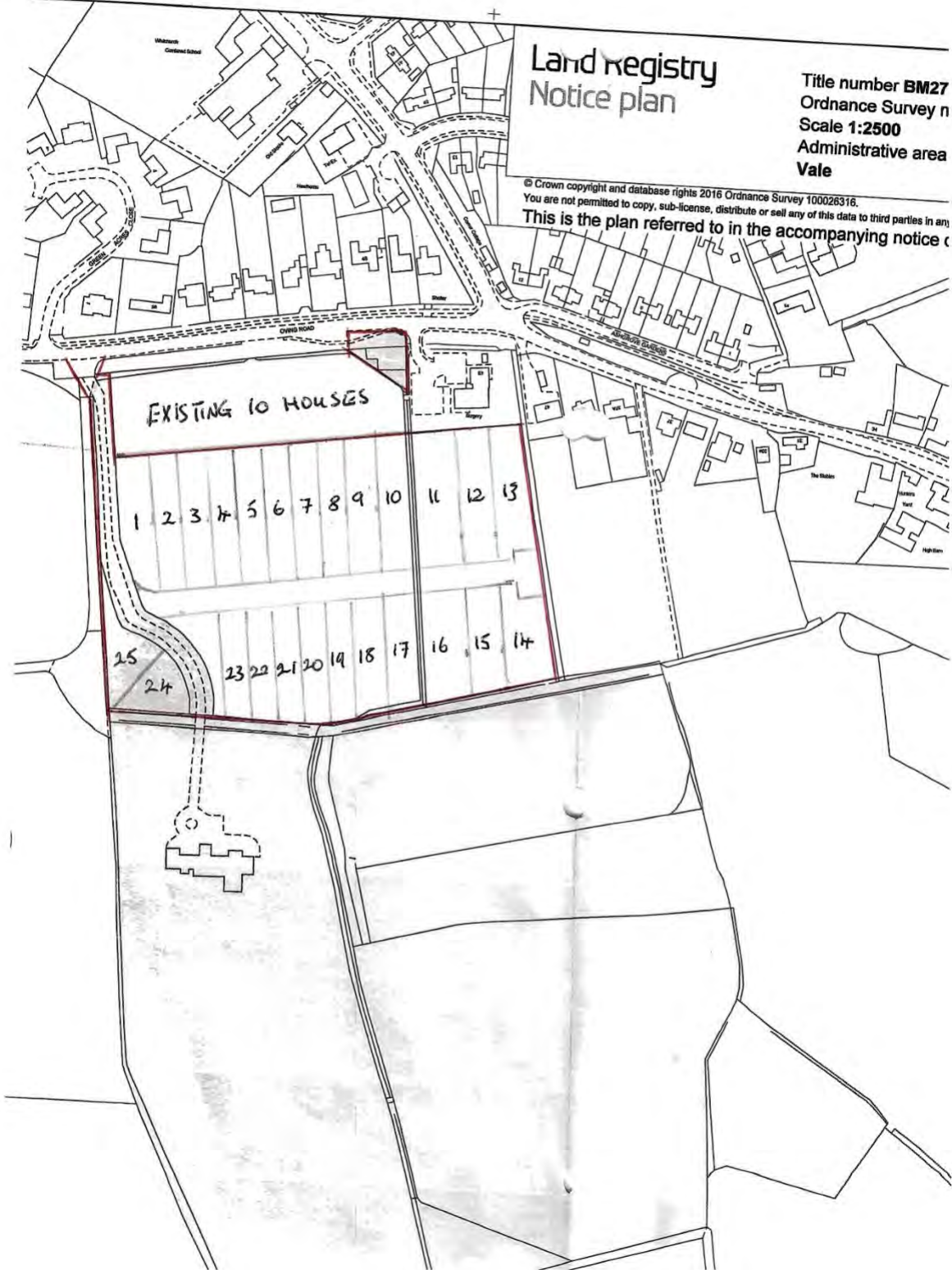
site plan
1:500

P102B
Illustrative Site Plan
Dashed Lines = Roof Protection Area
BCP = Bin Collection Point

SITE C

③

PLOT C



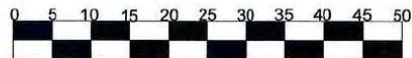
2


Bungalow off Oving Road Whitchurch - Block Plan

Bungalow
Road Frontage C



1:200@A3
Dwg.No.PH/NL/02
Drawn By Paul Hems



 Hexon Planning Consultants

SITE F



Private & Confidential
Mr Keith Armour
Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Group

Sent by email to: [REDACTED]

26th August 2021

Dear Keith,

Re: Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Land Availability Exercise - Bond Plot 35

Further to your letter of 19th July 2021, please find below additional details regarding the above site for your consideration. Also attached are illustrative proposals for the site. Please note that these proposals are by no means fixed and are just to show how the site could be developed.

1	Is the land available?	Yes. The site currently comprises vacant agricultural land, which is being actively promoted by Victoria Land on behalf of the landowners. There are no legal arrangements, complex land ownership or significant constraints which could limit development. The site is therefore immediately developable, subject to planning.
2	Proposed access points	Currently a new access coming in off the A413 is proposed on our draft plans. This would include some traffic calming and separate the proposed residential element from the extant commercial space.
3	Provide basic layout features	Please see attached draft scheme and concept village setting plans. One of the most important factors is the scheme's impact on the surrounding countryside and views across the special character area. We have carried out a high-level Land & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), which indicates that landscaping features can mitigate the long views from Creslow. A footway links the scheme to the village by joining up to existing footways to the south. The buildings are designed to be low-rise, barn-style single and 1.5 - 2 storey buildings, in-keeping with the agricultural setting.

4	Provide an indication of housing types and proposed numbers	<p>Anticipated number of Units Proposed: c.25-35</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2/3 bedroom retirement bungalows - 2-4 bedroom open market cottages (Mix to be determined by policy needs assessment, either from NP or Local Plan). - 1-3 bedroom affordable houses (Mix & proportion to be determined by policy needs assessment, either from NP or Local Plan).
5	Potential abnormal costs that could hinder viability	<p>None. The site has no physical constraints that would prevent or delay development coming forward, all matters can be dealt with as part of a planning application and consultation. The site is suitably and sustainably located for residential development with good accessibility to local services, facilities and employment opportunities via foot and other sustainable modes of transport.</p>
6	Ideas for traffic calming / mitigation and safety	<p>The site at Manor Farm is located on the edge of the village with good access to all local facilities. There is an opportunity to create safe footpath links into the village away from the main carriageway, either by connecting to the existing footpath network or through a new provision. The site thus provides a sustainable location for new housing, whilst minimising further pressures on local roads both from new residents and construction traffic.</p> <p>It is anticipated that any scheme would be accompanied by proposals to provide new traffic calming measures along the A413, in order to reduce the speed of traffic entering the village from the north. Such measures could include moving the 30mph speed limit further north, introducing build outs / chicanes and additional signage and road markings, which would all be carefully considered through consultation with County Highways and the local Parish Council and secured by way of a Section 106/278 agreement to accompany any planning application.</p> <p>The speed of traffic entering the village from the north is often excessive and it will be important to reduce speeds effectively as far out as possible. Signage and physical measures will assist, as well as a potential new access with colour road markings and speed limit amendments.</p>

We hope you can see from the above and attached that a low-density, landscape-led development on this site would be in keeping with the scale of the village and help to meet identified needs for investment and sustainable growth in housing. The location of the site would allow for growth, whilst minimising any further impact on existing infrastructure.

We have taken care to design a scheme that sits well within the surrounding area, with low-rise barn-style development in-keeping with the adjacent farm setting. In recent years the landowners have provided commercial space for small local businesses, and this has worked well. The site is adjacent to the village without impacting greatly upon it. Traffic generated by the scheme would exit directly onto the A413 without adding to the central village congestion experienced around the Oving Road. In addition, traffic calming measures could make a considerable impact on speeding vehicles travelling from the north, where there is little to warn motorists of the need to reduce speed as they enter the village.

Our proposals are not definitive, and we remain flexible to new ideas and suggestions. Housing numbers are a guide and the site could also be phased in-line with the wishes of the local community. We are also keen to design homes for local needs; low cost open market housing for younger residents and down-sizer accommodation for those wanting to remain in the village without the on-going maintenance burden of older housing stock. The latter also releases existing housing for new families wishing to expand. Affordable housing would be designed to fit in with the private dwellings and offered in a policy-compliant number.

Should you have any queries or require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact us.

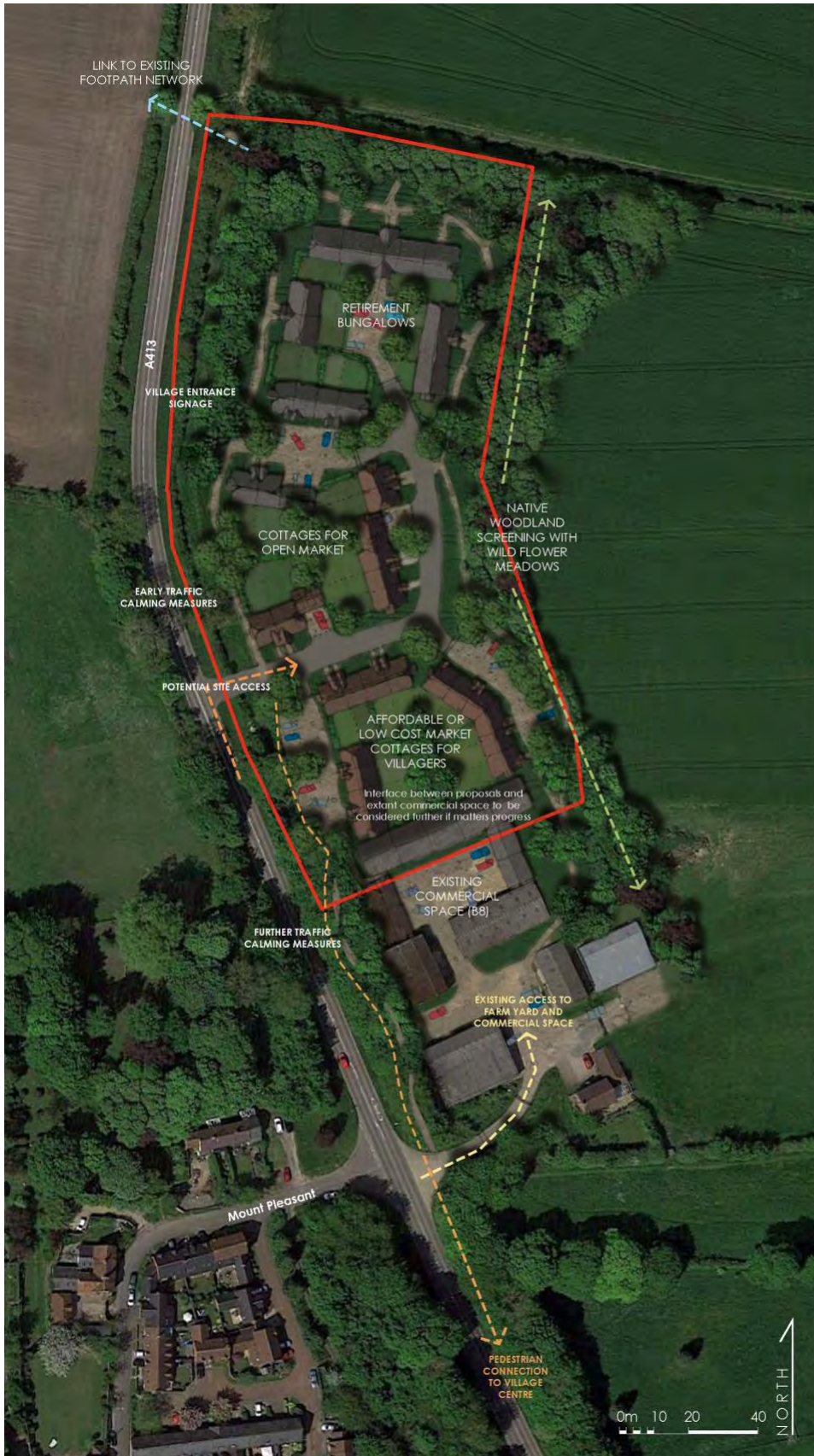
We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Jenny Hutchings
Director





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REVISIONS

Rev.	Date	Description

Client:
Victoria LAND

Job:
 Manor Farm, Whitchurch

Drawing Title:
 Initial Concept Schematic for Residents & NP Group Comments

Scale:
 1:1000 @A3

Date: Aug 2021
 Drawn By: MM
 Checked: ***

Drawing No: 3465.SK03
 Revision: E

PRELIMINARY

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 Warrage, Cheshire, CH12 8NE
 01256 765322
 The Manor House, Hill Farm Park, Copham
 Wiltshire, SN13 0QP
 01249 700407
 info@bhp-harwood.co.uk - www.bhp-harwood.co.uk





SITE G

MACLEEDS & CO.
A PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

MacLeeds & Co. Ltd
C/o Ben Machekanyanga

21 September 2021

FAO Keith Armour
Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Group

By Email

Dear Keith et al,

RE: INITIAL OUTLINE PROSPECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND ATWHITCHURCH, AYLESBURY, HP22 4RB

We are pleased to confirm that the land referred owned by Julian and Stephen Jakobi is available for development. Following our conversation September 10th 2021, we have collated a high level development options appraisal illustrating our intentions for the land. Please note these may change nominally as the design is developed and further feasibility studies are undertaken, in any case this will form the benchmark for direction of design and development.

Access

We plan on creating an access on the site from the A413. We note there is an existing public right of way along the northern boundary of the site which will be maintained as such. This existing public right of way leads into the fields lying to the east of the land.

A highways consultant will be appointed to review and design an appropriate highways scheme that will manage traffic flow from the new development in the most effective manner. The boundary trees currently creating a natural border of the site to the east will be mostly retained. The existing access to the land may be widened marginally.

Registred of v8 Edg leard d/Makim-
Company Number: 10491988



Access Area



The Scheme

The land can accommodate a pleasant development of between 20 – 30 houses. Please see attached extract from our appraisal pack that illustrates our benchmark option for 28 homes. The housing mix is deemed to provide suitable accommodation for a variety of people and circumstances.

In brief, the housing mix on this scheme will be as follows;

Large 2 / 3 bed homes, circa 100m² | 1,076sqft

- 9 affordable
- 2 Private

Large 3 / 4 bed homes, circa 135m² | 1,453sqft

- 1 affordable
- 7 private

Large 4 / 5 bed homes, circa 145m² | 1,561sqft

- 9 private



We trust this provides enough insight into the development planned on this land at this stage of consultations.

If you have any queries or would like any clarification, please do let me know.

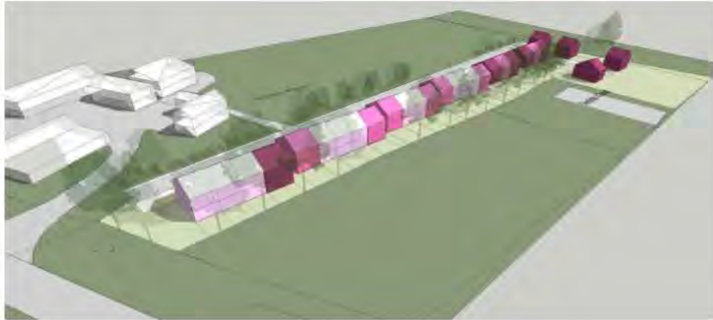
Yours Sincerely



Ben Machekanyanga BSc. (Hons) MSc MRICS
Director



2.6 Proposed Scheme - Layout Option A



Project Name: 206_Whitchurch
 Project Stage: Concept Design
 Date: Sep-21
 Option A

Type	Unit No	Bedroom No	Hab Room No	Gross Internal Area M ²	Amenity Type
Private	1	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Private	2	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Affordable	3	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Affordable	4	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Affordable	5	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Affordable	6	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Affordable	7	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Affordable	8	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Affordable	9	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Affordable	10	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Affordable	11	2/3	3/4	100	Garden
Private	12	3/4	4.5	135	Garden
Private	13	3/4	4.5	135	Garden
Private	14	3/4	4.5	135	Garden
Private	15	3/4	4.5	135	Garden
Private	16	3/4	4.5	135	Garden
Private	17	3/4	4.5	135	Garden
Private	18	3/4	4.5	135	Garden
Affordable	19	3/4	4.5	135	Garden
Private	20	4.5	5.6	145	Garden
Private	21	4.5	5.6	145	Garden
Private	22	4.5	5.6	145	Garden
Private	23	4.5	5.6	145	Garden
Private	24	4.5	5.6	145	Garden
Private	25	4.5	5.6	145	Garden
Private	26	4.5	5.6	145	Garden
Private	27	4.5	5.6	145	Garden
Private	28	4.5	5.6	145	Garden
Total	28 Units	110	138	3485	-

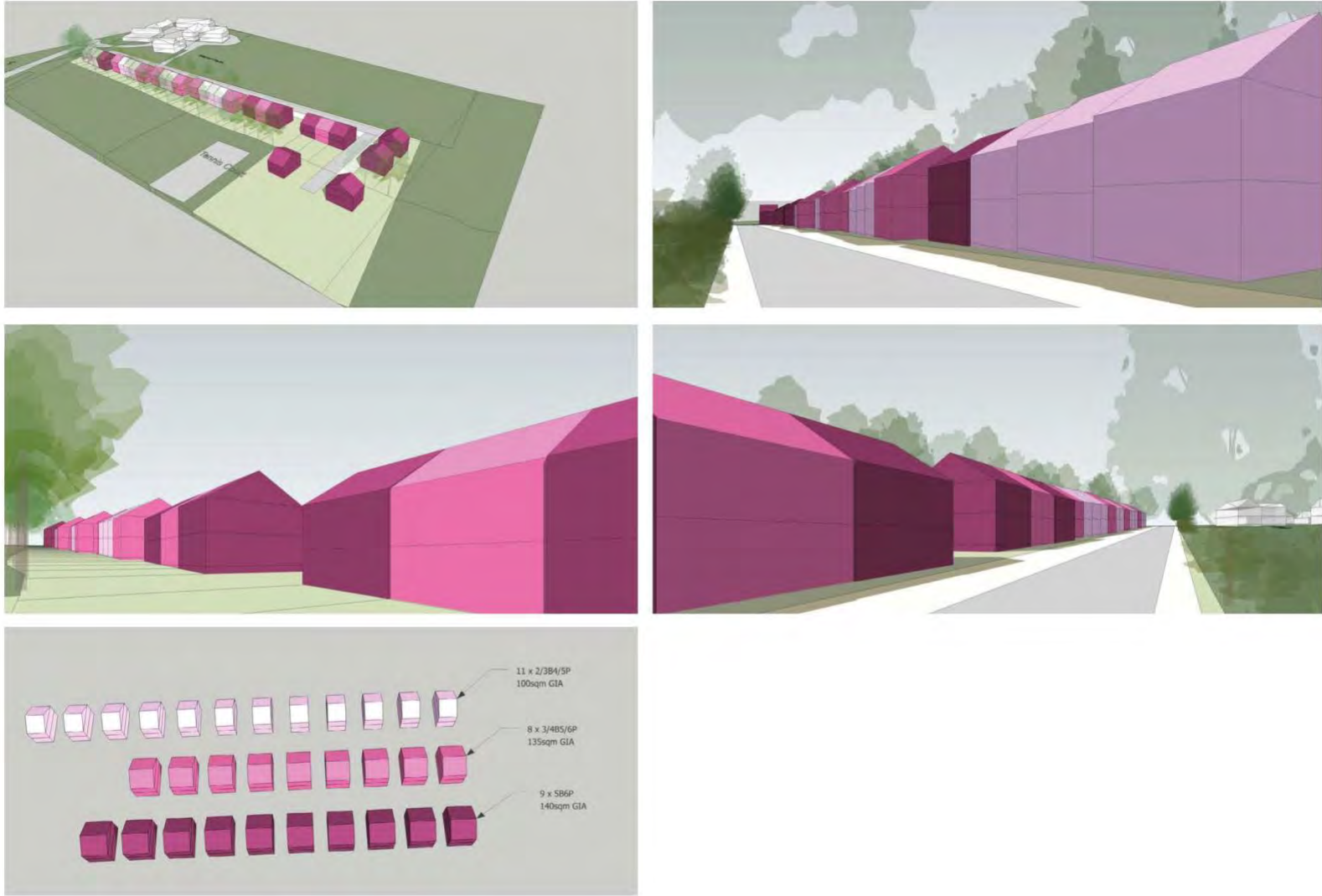
Site Area (Ha)	Total Units	Total Habitable Rooms
1.0682	31	138

Habitable Room per Unit Ratio	4
Habitable Room per Hectare Ratio	129.2
Unit per Hectare Ratio	29.0

- The areas are approximate and can only be verified by a detailed dimensional survey of the completed buildings;
- Any decisions to be made on the basis of these predictions, whether as to project viability, pre-letting, lease agreements or the like, should include due allowance for the increases and decreases inherent in the design development and building processes;
- Figures relate to the likely areas of the building at the current state of the design and using the Gross External Area (GEA) / Gross Internal Area (GIA) / Net Internal Area (NIA) method of measurement from the Code of Measuring Practice, 6th Edition (RICS Code of Practice);
- All areas are subject to Town Planning and Conservation Area Consent, and detailed Rights to Light analysis;
- Development provide dedicated storage space for cycles at the following levels: 1 cycle per 1 bedroom dwelling, 2 cycle per 2+ bedroom dwelling;
- The amount of on-site car parking provided relate to the public transport accessibility and is considerably less than one space per dwelling (LHDG);
- 10 % of all parking spaces is provided to the mobility standards of 3.6m x 4.8m with these spaces specifically marked out and positioned as near as possible to the entrance of the buildings.



2.6 Proposed Scheme - Layout Option A



SITE H



NOTES:

AT ARCHITECTURE LIMITED
 WWW.ATARCHITECTURE.LTD.COM
 OXFORD HOUSE, CLIFFONWALK, NW1 3SE
 ASHLEY THOMPSON@ATARCHITECTURE.LK

NO DIMENSIONS TO BE SCALED FROM DRAWING
 ALL DIMENSIONS ARE APPROXIMATE AND TO BE CHECKED ON SITE

THIS DRAWING IS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY
 SUBJECT TO BUILDING CONTROL STANDARDS AND COMMENTS
 AND COMMENTS
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DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION
18.05.2022	AJT	SCHEDULE APPROVED
15.11.2021	AJT	SCHEDULE APPROVED
05.09.2021	AJT	SCHEDULE APPROVED
	BY:	DATE



PROJECT:
**Kempson House
 WHITCHURCH**

DRAWING TITLE:
Proposed Site Plan

SCALE:	STAGE:	DATE:
1:750(A3)	Concept	March 2022

DRAWING NO:	REVISION:
A_2128 P100	C

SITE J

Whitchurch neighbourhood plan

Site J design proposals
August 2021

CONTENTS

- 1.0 introduction**
- 2.0 context**
- 3.0 the site**
- 4.0 constraints**
- 5.0 options**
- 6.0 sketch masterplan**
- 7.0 summary**



Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan: Site Assessment Report
(March 2023)

1.0 introduction

Introduction

This report has been prepared on behalf of the landowners of land to the west of Little London, Whitchurch referred to as site J in the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). It is being considered for allocation in the WNP and the purpose of this report is to provide information for the WNP steering group to understand how the site might be developed to meet the aspirations of the neighbourhood plan, be sympathetic to the setting and character of the village and be in conformity with local plan policies. The report provides an analysis of the site's constraints and a sketch masterplan to illustrate how it could be developed and its capacity.

Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan

The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) is in its early stages of development anticipated to be put to a referendum in the second quarter of 2022. The WNP group has undertaken a Call for Sites and is currently progressing a formal site selection process. Whilst the full detailed scope of the plan is unclear at this stage, it has been confirmed that it is anticipated that the WNP is seeking to allocate a site/s for approximately 30 new homes with a preference for schemes that make provision for homes for younger persons housing/downsizing within the community and/or enable traffic management improvements. The WNP draft vision paper dated Nov 2019 details the following policy ideas:

- o Protection of local business/shop uses
- o Green infrastructure planning

- o Green infrastructure planning
- o Protection of landscape character
- o Design guidance to protect heritage and character
- o Mix of housing types and tenure (including older persons)

The development of these policy ideas will be important for new development sites as it will control the type of schemes which may come forward. Where possible, this report has responded to existing assets by identifying existing key constraints that will need to be considered for the development.

NPPF and the Local Plan

The development of this site will also have to be in conformity with the latest version of the NPPF and Buckinghamshire development plan policies. The AVDLP 2004 is the current adopted Local Plan, however the emerging VALP 2013 – 2033 is expected to be adopted by the end of 2021. The new Bucks Council is also in the very early stages of its first county wide Local Plan. Relevant policies likely to apply include emerging VALP policies: H1 Affordable Housing, H6 Housing Mix, H7 Dwelling Sizes, T5 Vehicle Parking, T6 Footpaths and Cycle Routes, T7 Electric vehicle infrastructure, BE1 Heritage Assets, BE2 Design of new development, BE3 Protection of amenity of residents, BE4 Density of new development, NE2 Biodiversity and geodiversity, NE5 Landscape character and locally important landscape, NE9 Trees, hedgerows and woodlands, C4 Protection of public rights of way, and I1 Green Infrastructure.

page 1

2.0 context

Location and setting

Whitchurch is a linear settlement with three clusters of dwellings at its key junctions; at the northern end around the North Marston Lane/Oving Road junction, in the centre around the Oving Road/A413 junction, and at the southern end around the Bushmead/A413 junction. The site is an undeveloped parcel of land located off Little London on the western side of the southern cluster (**fig. 1**); with access onto the A413 which runs between Winslow and Aylesbury.

The village is within a rural setting characterised by a patchwork of arable fields with treed and hedged boundaries. Closer to the settlement, the field pattern is smaller scale with copses and tree groups, particularly on the southern side of the settlement.

The site is visually contained, set behind the existing dwellings along Little London, although it is visible from the network of public footpaths (**fig. 7**) that crisscross the south western part of the parish.

Although the site is visually contained, any development will need to be sensitive to the setting of the settlement edge. It will also need to be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenity of the adjoining properties.

Site area

The site put forward through the call for sites was a parcel A of 0.26 hectares. In considering how this could be developed it became apparent that the addition of the adjoining triangular parcel B of 0.14 hectares could have advantages in terms of sustainable design and minimising the impacts on the adjoining properties. The thinking behind this is set out in the options in Section 4.0 and the following description and assessment of the site's constraints in Section 3.0 are for the combined parcel of 0.40 hectares.

The sketch masterplan in Section 6.0 is also for the combined parcel. However, if it is preferred that development is limited to the smaller parcel an alternative sketch layout will be provided.

Accessibility

With its proximity to bus stops and the village centre, the site is in a sustainable location and its access to Aylesbury via the A413 south will help reduce traffic movements through the village.

Landscape and Habitat designations

There are no Land Based Habitats and Species, or Landscape designations that apply to the site or its immediate context that would constrain the development of the site.



page 3

Fig. 1 site location

3.0 the site

The site

The site (fig. 2) is relatively level and broadly triangular on a E/W orientation. It is currently mown grassland with an unmanaged area in the south west corner. The northern boundary is defined by a partial hedgeline with a small tree group at the western apex and two standalone trees. The southern boundary is open along its western side with landscape features defining its eastern side. The eastern boundary is to a group of four detached dwellings and is defined by a managed garden hedgeline. There is another detached property adjoining the site along the northern boundary at the entrance. The northern and southern boundaries overlook small pasture fields with well defined boundaries, which include mature trees, adding further visual enclosure to the site.

Access

The site is within a 30mph restricted zone with bus stops within 250m. The approach to the site is from the A413 along Little London and there is an existing unadopted vehicle access off Little London (fig. 3) which serves an existing parking area (fig. 4) to the rear of the properties along Little London.

There are three Public Rights of Way footpaths within the immediate proximity of the site (fig. 7): WHI/58/1 from the north runs alongside the southern boundary of the site where it intersects with WHI/5/1 and WHI/1/1.

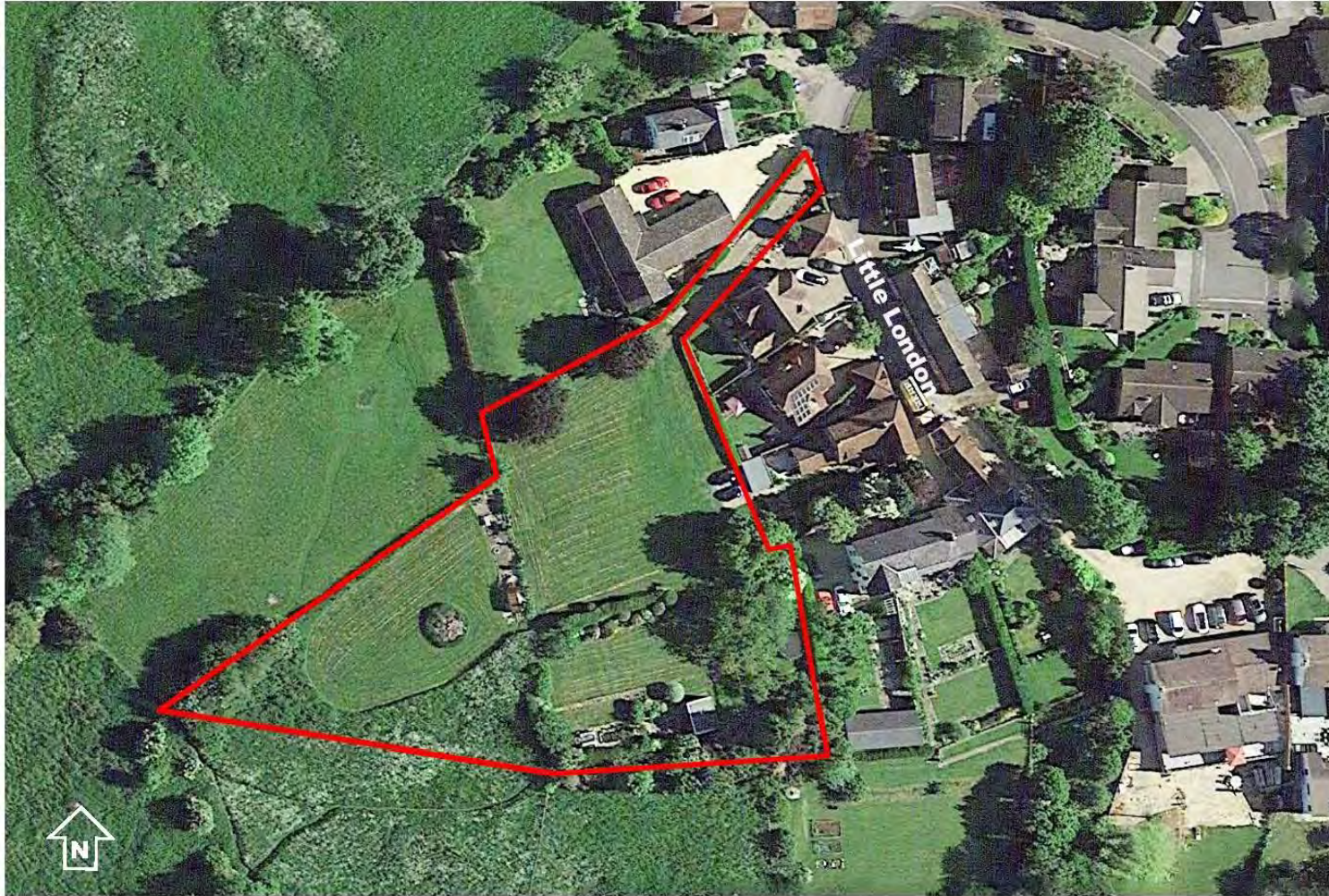
Character and setting

The Little London area of Whitchurch is predominantly pre C20th with a strong rural settlement character in the form and scale buildings which are planned tight to the street edge with an informal rhythm of street edge frontages and set backs that create a sense of containment creating a low traffic/low speed environment (fig. 5).

The buildings are large scale detached with a palette of materials including brick, stone walling and clay tiled pitched roofs (fig.6). The rural character of Little London, which is a narrow cul de sac lane with a single footpath along the eastern side, is reinforced by the verges, kerb setts and absence of road signage and markings. (fig. 5 & 6).

Passive design

The E-W orientation of the site has a relatively unobstructed southerly aspect that creates potential for a passive design approach to reduce energy use. This will need to be balanced against other requirements including the amenity and privacy of the adjoining properties, but is a key consideration for low energy design.



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Fig. 2 the site



Fig. 3 existing vehicle access



Fig. 4 existing parking area to the rear of Little London



Fig. 5 building frontages onto Little London



Fig. 6 character and materials

4.0 constraints

Access

Although the access to the site is on a bend, satisfactory visibility splays for vehicles should be achievable. The access will be subject to further detailed work and Highway's approval. Given the small scale of the proposed development and the character of the setting, a shared surface to the access lane is proposed to further contribute to traffic calming. Consideration will also need to be given to minimising any impacts on servicing and parking along Little London, with the potential for the development to provide some shared off street parking to serve the existing residents of adjacent properties. The layout will also need to be sensitive to the setting and character of the three footpaths, and opportunities for integrating them in the layout should be considered.

Services

There are no known services running across the site constraining development and it is understood that foul drainage, water and electricity connections are available to serve the site.

Heritage

The eastern part of the site is within the Whitchurch Conservation Area, the western part is outside. Any development on the site will need to respect the setting of the Conservation Area. There are no other heritage designations, assets or Listed buildings whose setting would be affected by the development of the site.

Ecology and biodiversity

Arboricultural and ecological surveys will be carried out to inform the detailed design and planning application. At this stage it is assumed that the perimeter landscape features of the boundaries may have ecological value and potential habitat opportunities and these should be integrated into the layout. Any development will also require a sustainable drainage strategy (SUDs) which could be used to provide habitat and biodiversity benefits.

The constraints plan

The constraints plan (**fig. 7**) summarises the key constraints for the development of the site.

KEY

1. Access
2. Back garden boundaries and residential amenity
3. Retention of existing trees and hedgelines
4. Open southern boundary
5. Public rights of way
6. Solar orientation



page 8

Fig. 7 constraints plan

5.0 options

Options have been considered for development of the smaller eastern parcel on its own and both parcels combined assuming a scheme that will deliver homes for single people, retired people and young families, using the following assessment criteria:

Option A: the eastern parcel

The dimensions of the eastern parcel require a north-south building orientation with back gardens on the eastern side to protect the amenity of the back gardens of the existing dwellings.

- o **Impacts on neighbours:** The building orientation screens the existing outlook to the west from the existing properties.
- o **Impacts on the setting:** The depth of the site limits space for landscape screening and visual containment.
- o **Access, servicing, and parking:** The depth of the site limits space for parking and servicing.
- o **Sustainable design:** The orientation of the buildings reduces south facing aspects.
- o **Nature and biodiversity:** The site leaves little space for landscape to provide for nature and biodiversity.

Option B: both parcels

Using both parcels would allow the development to be oriented east-west with access along the northern side and back gardens on the southern side.

- o **Impacts on neighbours:** The building orientation maintains the existing outlook to the west from the existing properties.
- o **Impacts on the setting:** The site provides space for landscape screening and visual containment.
- o **Access, servicing, and parking:** The depth and format provides space for parking and servicing.
- o **Sustainable design:** The orientation of the buildings maximises south facing aspects.
- o **Nature and biodiversity:** The depth and format of the site provides space for landscape to provide for nature and biodiversity.

Summary

Using both parcels provides a small increase in capacity, but more importantly the additional area allows the buildings to be orientated to minimise impacts on views from existing properties, provide space for a courtyard to ensure the scheme is self sufficient in terms of servicing and parking, and create opportunities for landscape and biodiversity gains.

Based on this analysis, Option B is recommended and has been used in the following sections. Option A is still available if preferred by the parish council and the community.



Fig. 8 option A



Fig. 9 option A

5.0 sketch masterplan

The Sketch Masterplan (**fig. 10**) illustrates how the site could be developed within the constraints set out in Section 4.0 and provides a set of design principles for ensuring the development will meet the ambitions of the neighbourhood plan and create an attractive and safe environment in keeping with the character of the village.

A 'barn' building is proposed as it has a scale, roofscape and material character that is appropriate to the rural settlement edge, and also provides an efficient and flexible envelope for accommodating a mix of dwelling types with the opportunity for a shared heating system to reduce energy costs and the carbon footprint.

The access will be a shared surface to create a pedestrian priority environment with an informal courtyard as an arrival space and focus within the scheme with provision for servicing and visitor parking. The landscape to the existing properties along the eastern boundary will be reinforced to maintain privacy and preserve views.

Orientation of the barn will give a south facing aspect for gardens and maximise the passive design potential of the building. Parking will be distributed in small pockets to minimise the impact of cars.

In the western apex of the site an area will be provided for a SUDS pond with the landscape designed to provide wildlife habitat and biodiversity gain, and potentially provide for a new route through the site linked into the existing footpaths.

Existing trees and landscape features will be retained, and the boundaries reinforced to create a definitive settlement edge and contain the development.

KEY

1. Pedestrian priority shared surface access Lane.
2. Courtyard as a focus and for servicing & visitor/resident parking
3. Landscape buffer to the existing properties with views preserved.
4. Barn building in keeping with the character of the village.
5. South facing aspect for gardens and low energy design
6. Potential low energy services
7. Parking distributed in small pockets to reduce impact of cars.
8. SUDS pond & landscape to improve Ecology and Biodiversity.
9. Potential footpath link through site.
10. Existing trees and landscape features retained
11. Landscape reinforced to create strong settlement edge.

Capacity

The sketch masterplan shows a building footprint with a capacity for 8 to 10 depending on the size and mix and has the flexibility to accommodate a range of dwelling sizes without affecting the quality and feel of the scheme.

References

The reference images (**fig. 11**) are intended to illustrate the character of the scheme.



Fig. 10 sketch masterplan



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Fig. 11 character and materials

7.0 summary

This report sets out a concept for site J as a basis for agreeing and developing a scheme that meets the aspirations of the neighbourhood plan and would be a sympathetic addition to the village. It is not a fixed proposal, but a development framework that can be used to agree a set of design principles for the site, including the dwelling number and types, and inform the neighbourhood plan policy to ensure the quality of the detailed design.

The concept provides the following:

- o A location that minimises traffic impacts on the village centre
- o A design approach that is in keeping with the rural landscape setting
- o Flexibility to accommodate the dwelling types and sizes required by the neighbourhood plan
- o A layout and design principles that minimise impacts on existing dwellings and views
- o A layout that will mitigate traffic and parking impacts on Little London with the potential for a shared off street parking area to serve the existing residents of adjacent properties.
- o Additional trees and a wildlife SUDS area to create biodiversity gain
- o The potential to link into the existing public footpaths and enhance their setting
- o The creation of a strong village boundary that will control expansion of the village envelope

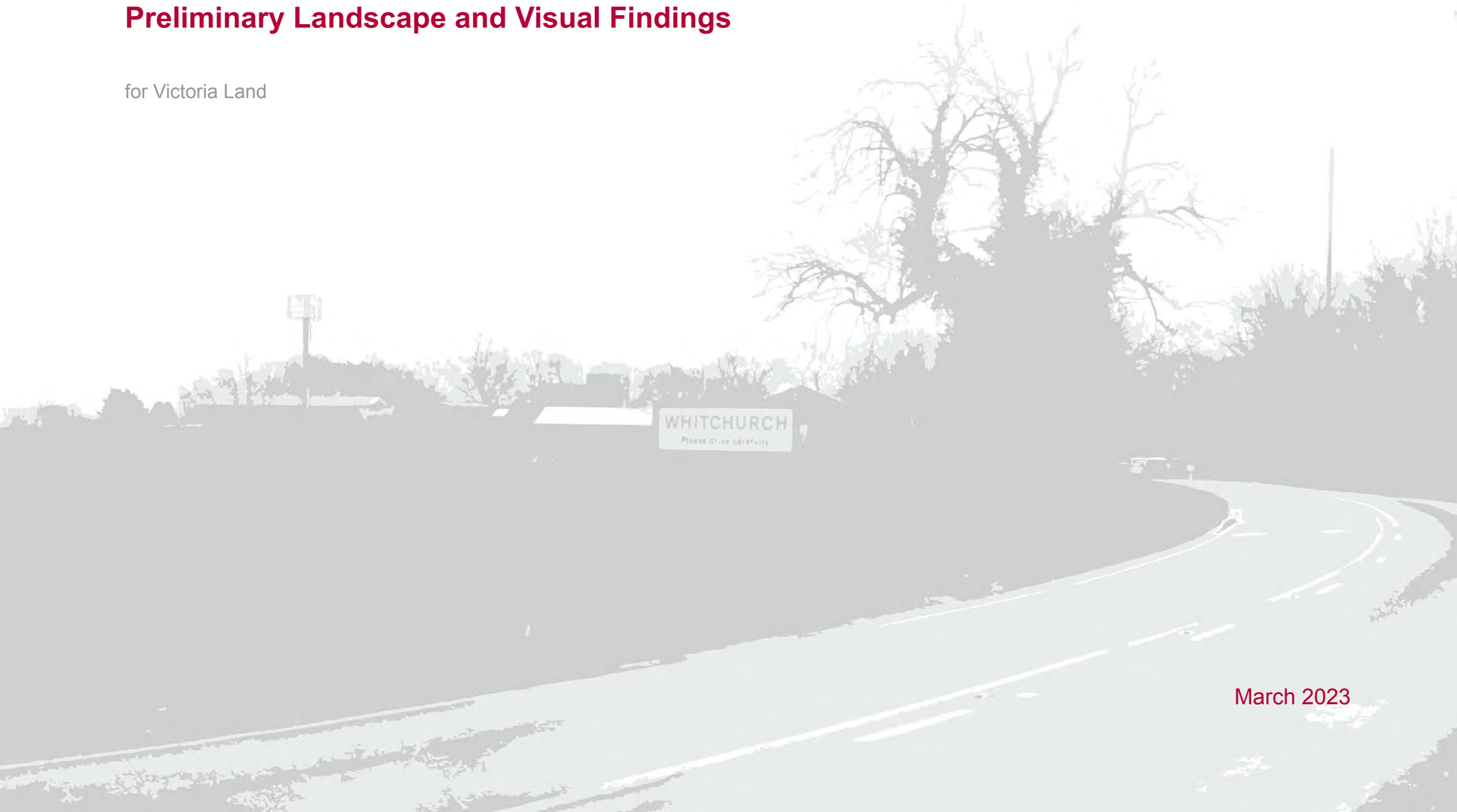
Further information will be provided as required for the Examination of the WNP. And if the site is allocated, following a successful referendum, the detailed design proposals will be developed in consultation with the WNP and the community.

APPENDIX B: SITE F PRELIMINARY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL FINDINGS

Land at Manor Farm North, Whitchurch, Aylesbury

Preliminary Landscape and Visual Findings

for Victoria Land



March 2023

Land at Manor Farm North, Whitchurch, Aylesbury : Preliminary Landscape and Visual Findings			Document Ref: 19-28-CR01	
Revisions				
Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Approved
0	13/03/2023	Document created	JBG	

Contents

Section 1

Introduction

Section 2

Landscape Character

Section 3

Visual Context

Section 4

Evidence Base

Section 5

Indicative Proposals

Section 6

Summary

Purpose of the Document

This preliminary landscape and visual report has been prepared on behalf of Victoria Land in relation to the potential for residential development on Land at Manor Farm North, Whitchurch, Aylesbury (the site). It has been prepared by The Richards Partnership, an experienced practice of landscape architects and urban designers.

The Parish of Whitchurch is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2040 Pre-Submission Plan was published in December 2022. This document identifies the site as *Policy W3: Reserve Site - Land at Manor Farm North*, as being suitable for approximately 35 new homes. Among the items listed that would be needed to support such a development, the draft plan requires that:

A landscape strategy is prepared, and the layout and heights of buildings, having full regard to Local Plan policy requirements on landscape character and the location of the land within an Area of Attractive Landscape and on the retention of trees and hedgerows where possible;

This report will consider the site as an individual parcel of land and the role it plays within the character and visual amenity of the wider landscape and how a landscape strategy might be developed that would ensure the successful assimilation of development upon it into wider area.

Introduction to the Site

The site is located to the east of the A413 at the northern edge of Whitchurch and measures circa. 2.35 Ha.

The site occupies the western edge of a larger field. It is approximately 90m in depth, its eastern boundary lining up with the existing farm buildings immediately to the south. Aerial and satellite images going back to the end of WWII show that it has been under arable cultivation for more than seventy years.

The site sits on rising ground with its western boundary with the road lying at approximately 145m Above Ordnance Datum. The land falls as it extends eastward, with a distinct dip in the centre of the site, to approximately 140m AOD along the eastern boundary, from where it continues to fall towards a small stream some 850m further to the east.

The site is separated from the farm buildings to the south by a large bund, which appears from satellite images, to have been introduced in the last decade. The farm buildings themselves were constructed circa 1990.

The northern boundary is formed by a field hedge, which is gappy and allows views through in winter. Nonetheless, it is currently being managed to encourage some height, with only the sides being cut back.

There is a drop of between 1 to 1.5m between the road and the site, with a ditch along the eastern side of the boundary hedge. The hedge which comprises a mixture of native species including field maple and elder is thicker towards the northern half of the site. The southern element is more gappy with a large proportion of bramble. There are several ash trees along this stretch, it is understood from the site owner that these have not, as yet, begun to succumb to ash dieback.

There is currently no vehicular access into the field from the road, with tractors accessing via the farm yard.

There is no public access onto the site.

The wider landscape is gently undulating and comprises large irregular shaped fields which appear to be predominantly managed as arable. These are generally defined by well maintained hedgerows with sporadic mature trees.

Whitchurch itself is a linear village which has grown up on either side of the A413. A study of historic maps shows that it has extended both to the north-west (along Oving Road) and south over the course of the last century. The village sits on a ridge of high land, close to the historic site of Bolebec Castle which sits just of the west of the village centre.

The older part of the village comprises a mixture of architectural styles with properties predominantly facing directly onto the main road with little in the way of front gardens. Materials are predominantly red brick and tile, with stone, wood and render also in evidence. The gardens, small fields and paddocks to the rear of these properties are home to numerous mature trees. The value of this area is recognised by its designation as a Conservation Area, the boundary of which extends northwards alongside the A413 and includes the group of trees along the south-western corner of the site.

In addition to this, the site and the whole village is overwashed by an Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) as designated in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013-2033 (September 2021).

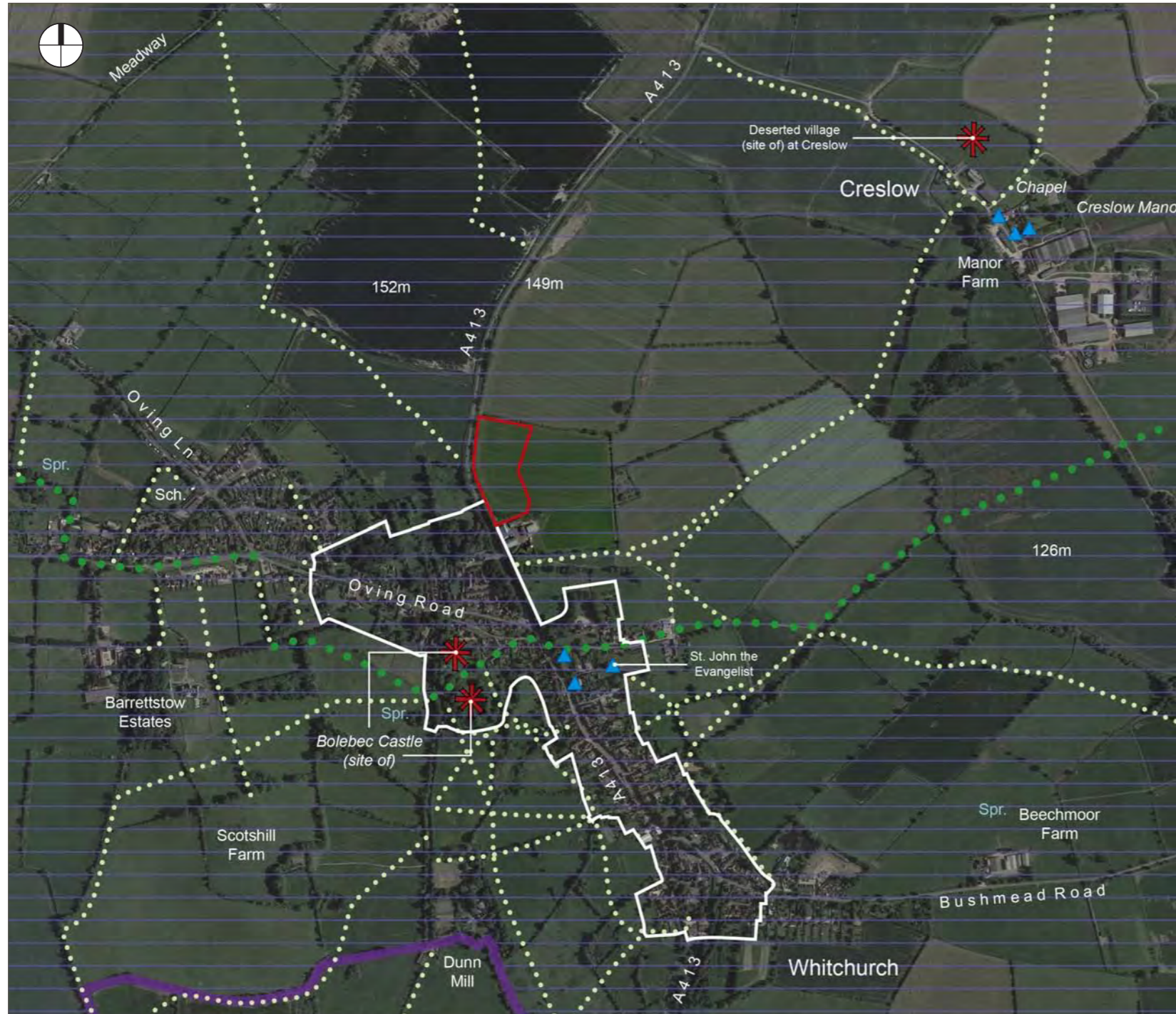
The AVLP notes:

“Neither of these designations are seeking to resist development in principle, unless regard has not been given to distinctive features and key characteristics of the AALs and LLAs”. (para 9.27, page 259)




Policy NE4 Landscape character and locally important landscape states:

Development must recognise the individual character and distinctiveness of particular landscape character areas set out in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), their sensitivity to change and contribution to a sense of place.

Site Location and Planning Context



Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  Whitchurch Conservation Area
-  Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL)
-  Public Right of Way
-  Bridleway
-  Scheduled Ancient Monuments
-  Listed Buildings (Grade I & II*)

Landscape Character

Landscape Character of the Wider Area

Natural England has recorded the landscape character of England through the identification of a series of National Landscape Character Areas (NCAs). The site lies at the north-eastern edge of NCA109 Midvale Ridge which occupies a large swathe of land extending south-west from Whitchurch to the edges of Swindon. The land to the east of the site, with which there this a visual relationship falls within NCA 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales.

More locally, the Aylesbury Vale Landscape Assessment (2008) identifies the site as being Landscape Character Type 'Low Hills and Ridges' and falling within Landscape Character Area 9.3 Pitchcott - Whitchurch Ridge. The character of this area is described as follows:

"Landscape character *This is an extensive prominent ridge with rolling landform, predominantly in pastoral land use where the settlement is concentrated on the ridge tops. Earthworks support evidence of earlier historic settlement. The overgrown hedges contain mature trees and eroded valleys draining off the ridge are distinctive features. There are distant views in all directions and the church towers are local landmarks. Some settlements have stone walls and thatched roofs but buildings are predominantly of brick and tile construction. There has been some local development with intensive land use as horse paddocks".*

The **key characteristics** are listed as follows:

- *"Broad ridge eroded by network of small streams*
- *Gently rolling landform with distinctive local promontories*
- *Predominantly pastoral land use*
- *Small fields enclosed by mature hedge*
- *Extensive settlement along top of ridge*
- *Long distance views over surrounding landscape"*

With regard to condition, the assessment notes:

"Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be good. The ridge represents the boundary between the Vale landscape to the south and the rolling landscape of shallow valleys and eroded clay plateau to the north. The general pattern of elements is considered to be unified. There are few visual detractors, notably these are mainly associated with small pockets of horse paddocks enclosed by post and rail fencing concentrated around the fringes of the main settlements. Cultural integrity is good as disruption of field pattern is minimal. The landscape also contains several historic settlements and some significant archaeological sites. Ecological integrity is weak due to poor connectivity and a lack of designated sites and habitats of District significance. Overall the functional integrity is very coherent".

The assessment of this LCA concludes by addressing the relative sensitivity of the area and notes:

"The area has a distinctive character deriving from the relationship of the ridge to the surrounding landform. There is a perception of historic continuity and the sense of place is considered to be moderate. The degree of visibility increases with the elevation of the ridge above the lower slopes to the north and the Vale to the south. Tree covers is intermittent. Overall the degree of sensitivity is considered to be high".

Landscape Character of the Site

As previously noted the site comprises a small part of a larger field which has been under arable cultivation for many years. There are no significant landscape features within the field itself, albeit there are a number of trees along the western boundary hedge. The hedgerows are gappy in places and this results in the site being open to the road, particularly in the winter months.

The south-western corner of the site falls within the Conservation Area and as such the trees within this area are afforded automatic protection.



Viewpoint A. Looking south towards Manor Farm North from the site's northern boundary

Existing Site Conditions Plan



The bund at the southern end of the site was installed as part of the planning permission associated with the units to the south. While screening the lower elements of the units, it is in itself an incongruous and unattractive feature, resulting in a somewhat abrupt junction with the countryside.

The A413 is a very busy and fast road, with vehicles moving at speed as they pass the site, resulting in it being an intrusive element to the character of the site.

Sitting on elevated land the site has a strong inter-visibility with the wider landscape, particularly to the east.

Should development come forward the character of the site itself would inevitably experience a notable change. The layout, scale and massing would need careful consideration, as would the choice of materials. There is the space to incorporate large swathes of planting which would help to and assimilate the development into its surroundings, as well as bringing forward nature conservation benefits.

In light of the above it is judged that there is scope to introduce a sympathetic development into this area which would maintain the linear character of the village and provide a new entrance to the north, with improved delineation which could help to slow traffic entering the village.

The Indicative Proposals included later in this document illustrate how this might be achieved.

Visual Context

Viewpoint Locations



Visual Context

The site was visited in May 2019 and again in March 2023 and as such we have had an opportunity to view the site both with and without full leaf cover. The photographs included in this report were taken in March 2023 and represent the site at its most open.

The visual prominence or visual inter-relationship of an area, or parcel of land, is a principal consideration in establishing the potential impact on its character or the experience of the area.

The roads and footpaths in the vicinity have been travelled in order to access the site's visibility in the wider landscape. As previously noted, the site sits on high ground and has a visual relationship with the landscape to the north and east, with views to the west and south being contained by vegetation and built form. There is no public access onto the site and the clearest views of the site are from the A413 and the footpath network to the east.

Views from the A413 approaching the village

Photographs 1 - 3 illustrate the sequence of views available to motorists as they approach Whitchurch along the A413 from the north.

Viewpoint 1 is located approximately 975m to the north-east of the site and illustrates the first view of the site that becomes available as the road comes over the crest of the hill. From this location there is a wide panorama over the landscape to the south. The landscape is largely rural, with some elements of the village visible in the distance, including the tower of St John the Evangelist, which forms a prominent feature. The barns at Manor Farm north are also visible, with the site towards the foreground.

The skyline is predominantly formed by trees and woodland and as part of any future development, it would be possible to retain this backdrop, ensuring that development would not form the new skyline. New planting would, over time, help to screen and filter views in a similar manner to the existing village.

Viewpoint 2 is located some 600m to the south-west of Viewpoint 1 as the road nears the site, where Footpath WH1/52/1 meets the road. From this location there are heavily filtered views towards the site in the winter, which are screened in summer by the roadside vegetation.

Viewpoint 3 is located opposite the site where footpath WH/53/1 meets the road. From this stretch of road there are views into the site, with glimpse views to the wider landscape. The farm units, mast and bunds are also visible beyond the site.

This is a fast moving road through a rural landscape and for approximately 1km as the road approaches the village, there are brief views available towards the site. For most of this stretch it would be possible to assimilate development into the landscape without a notable change to the views. Once alongside the site, for a distance of some 250m, the view would change from one of glimpsed views to the wider landscape to built form in the short term, and new roadside vegetation in the long term.



Viewpoint 1. Looking south from the A 413 as it approaches the turning to Creslow (approximately 975m from the site).

Visual Context



Viewpoint 2. Looking south from the A413 next to Footpath WHI/52/1 (approximately 380m from the site).



Viewpoint 3. Looking south-east from the A413 where Footpath WHI/53/1 meets the road (opposite the site).

Views from the A413 leaving the village.

For those leaving the village there is no awareness of the site until the road draws level with it. Viewpoint 4 is located opposite the entrance to Manor Farm North and illustrates the strong channelling and screening nature of the existing trees even in the winter months.

Moving northwards the view opens out, as illustrated in Viewpoint 5. For this brief stretch there would be changes to the view, with the channelled nature of the road being extended northwards by the proposed planting, prior to it opening out again as the road passes the site.



Viewpoint 4. Looking north along the A413 at the junction with Mount Pleasant (approximately 70m from the site). View within Conservation Area

Visual Context



Viewpoint 5. Looking north along the A413 adjacent to the site.



Viewpoint 6. Looking east from Footpath WHI/53/1 (approximately 150m from the site).

Views from the landscape to the west.

The land to the west of the site and the A413 continues to rise in elevation to a height of circa 150m AOD in the adjoining field. Beyond the brow of this hill the site is lost from view. However, from footpath WHI/53/1 which crosses the field, there is a brief stretch where walkers are afforded clear views over the wider landscape, including the site, as illustrated in Viewpoint 6.

In this view the village is largely hidden, albeit it is possible to see the buildings on Manor Farm North. Development on the site would introduce a new element of built form, which would be clearly visible in the early years. However, it could be configured to ensure it does not break the distant skyline and over time attendant planting along the western boundary could be designed to ensure that it rises above the rooflines to form the new skyline while at the same time providing a screening and filtering function.

Views from the wider landscape to the east

As noted previously, the site has a strong visual relationship with the landscape to the east. There are many footpaths crossing this area and Viewpoints 7, 8 and 9 have been selected as being representative of the views that are available towards the site from this area.

Viewpoint 7 is located on the track leading to Creslow, approximately 1km from the site, and is indicative of the view available not only from the paths in this area but the buildings at Creslow.

The foreground of this view is given over to pasture, with Whitchurch village partially visible on the skyline. The most prominent feature is the church tower, however, in the winter months, it is also possible to discern a number of the houses. Manor Farm North is visible to the right of the church and sits in the foreground of the trees and woodland which form the greater part of the skyline.



Viewpoint 7. Looking south-west from Creslow (approximately 1km from the site).

Visual Context



Viewpoint 8. Looking west from the Aylesbury Outer Ring long distance trail (approximately 1.1km from the site)



Viewpoint 9. Looking west from the Aylesbury Outer Ring long distance trail (approximately 900m from the site)

Viewpoints 8 and 9 are both located on the Aylesbury Outer Ring long distance path. They are located 1.1km and 900m distant from the site respectively.

Viewpoint 8 is located at an elevation of circa. 125m AOD and illustrates the view across the valley towards the village and the site. The church remains a prominent feature and from this angle slightly more of the village is discernible. Manor Farm North is visible to the right of the church with the trees in the background.

Viewpoint 9 is located where the footpath crosses the stream at an elevation of circa. 110m AOD. While at the bottom of the valley the view is slightly less expansive, it nonetheless remains open, with both the village and the farm visible along and just below the skyline.

Should development come forward on the site, it would be visible from these locations in the early years, before attendant planting has had an opportunity to mature. When viewed from the higher locations it would be possible to configure the built form to sit below the treeline in the background from the outset, albeit from lower elevations the northern elements of built form may break the skyline. Nonetheless, it is judged that it would be possible to provide mitigation planting along the site's eastern boundary, which would, over time provide a robust screen helping to assimilate the development into its wider surroundings.

Wider Views

Given the nature of this wide, undulating landscape there are opportunities to view Whitchurch and the ridge on which it sits from the surrounding villages including Littlecote and Aston Abbots. These distant views are largely the same in composition as those previously described and development and attendant mitigation would give rise to similar, albeit less notable effects.

Visual Summary

As illustrated by the photographs contained within this report, the site is located on high ground and has a wide visual relationship with the surrounding landscape to the north and east, whilst being well contained to the south and south-west by both the village and the mature vegetation in the surrounding area. These trees and blocks of woodland form a skyline feature from many viewpoints and also a backdrop to the site.

As such it is deemed that development could be configured such that, from many of these viewpoints, it would not break the skyline from the outset.

Choice of materials would inevitably be important in ensuring that development recedes into its surroundings and is not overly prominent. It is anticipated that the local red brick would be the most appropriate.

Further mitigation would take the form of generous belts of native woodland planting, with a notable proportion of understorey material to ensure a robust screen in the long term. This would be allowed to mature, so that in time it grows above the rooflines of development.

Evidence Base

As previously stated the site is currently identified in the Pre-submission Plan as a reserve allocation.

The emerging local plan has been informed by a number of supporting studies including the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (November 2022). This assessment considered a number of sites across the village with reference to their suitability for residential development; the site was identified as Site F - Manor Farm North. With reference to landscape the assessment noted:

"The site is not within or within proximity to a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or any Green Belt land. However, the site is located within an Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) as identified by the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)". (page 26)

and concluded that would be *'likely adverse effect(s) (without mitigation matures.*

This conclusion applied to six of the eight sites considered, with the remaining two being judged to experience likely *'uncertain effect(s) .*

The assessment noted:

"Sites A and F perform most favourably overall, with likely positive effects on health and wellbeing and population and communities respectively. The main weakness of site A, other than air quality, is its position on Oving Road. The main weakness of site F is its value as greenfield land". (page 39).

Considering the landscape around the village as a whole, the SEA states:

"9.24. Whitchurch is a village surrounded by rural hinterland. The relationship between the neighbourhood area, and the locally designated Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL), is a defining feature and contributes strongly to the neighbourhood area's sense of place and quality of its environment.

9.25 The site allocation proposed under Policy W2 is located within the AAL, and the policy provisions reflect this sensitivity (as is the case for the reserve site proposed under Policy W3). The policies require the preparation of a landscape strategy whereby the layout and heights of buildings have full regard to Local Plan policy requirements on conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the AAL.

9.26 Identifying a settlement boundary of the neighbourhood area also provides a clear distinction as to what constitutes development in the countryside (Policy W1). Important viewpoints emerging from the

evidence base have also been identified and protected through Policy W9, these views are defined as especially important in defining the relationship between the village and its rural hinterland. As such, positive effects are anticipated by means of the new policy provisions seeking to retain such features in future development.

9.27 Further contributing to the quality of the natural and built environment, are the design codes proposed under Policy W4. This policy ensures that any new development demonstrates a connection with local character and place making. This will, in turn, facilitate opportunities for high quality design and layout to be incorporated within new development areas which are sensitive to the character of the surrounding environment.

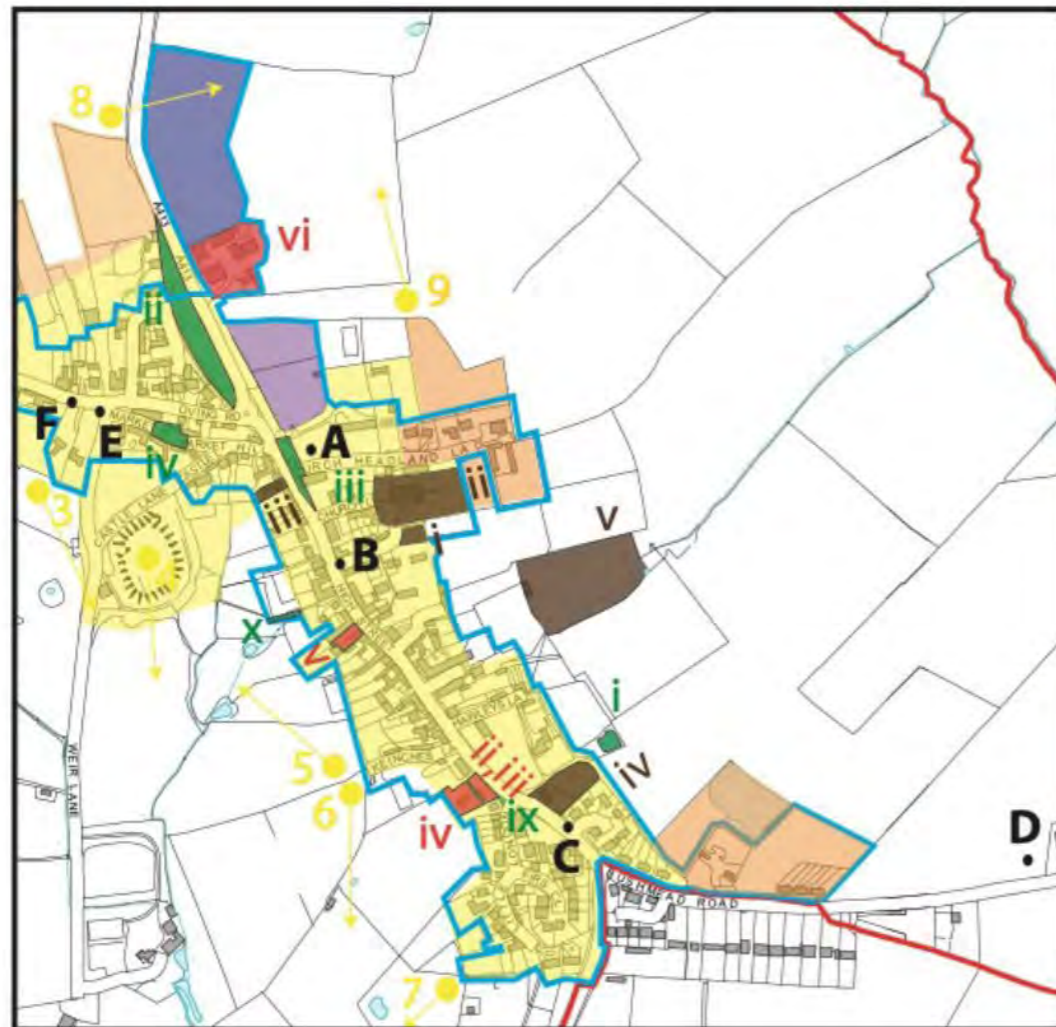
9.28 More broadly, delivering net gains in biodiversity and facilitating green infrastructure enhancements can have beneficial impacts in terms of the built environment and public realm, as can the facilitation of improved transport flows. Key policies in this regard include W2, W3, W5 and W10. This will be further supported by the Policy W8, which aims to conserve a network of identified green spaces

9.29 Overall, the WNP policies have a strong focus on protecting and enhancing landscape and townscape character, the quality of the public realm, sense of place, and local distinctiveness. The proposed greenfield development and settlement expansion is considered likely to lead to residual negative effects, but these are not considered likely to be significant. Minor negative effects are therefore concluded

As shown on the plan opposite, the site is now proposed as a reserve allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan. In relation to the site the Pre-submission Plan notes:

"The development of this site also provides an opportunity to create a new 'gateway' to the village. The site comprises vacant agricultural land with a number of constraints, but the evidence shows that it is possible to avoid or mitigate any significant adverse environmental effect by making series of requirements in this allocation policy. "

Extract from Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission Plan



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**Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan
Policies Map
Inset 2 (Central and Eastern Side of Village)
December 2022**

-  Parish Boundary
-  W1 Settlement Boundary
-  W2 Housing Allocation - Land at Kempson House West
-  W3 Reserve Site - Land at Manor Farm North
- W4 Design Codes**
-  Conservation Area
-  Outside Conservation Area
-  Key Locations
-  Essential Commercial, Business and Service Uses
-  Local Community Uses and Pubs
-  Local Green Spaces
-  Important Views

Note: the location of View 8 on this plan is incorrect - it does not overlook the site of Manor Farm North. As such reference to this has not been included in this report

Indicative Proposals

Indicative Proposals

The adjacent plan illustrates an indicative layout showing how the site might be sensitively developed should it come forward.

It is recognised that the site offers an opportunity to form a new entrance, considered gateway into the village, including the extension of the 30mph speed limit further to the north thus slowing the traffic as it approaches the roundabout.

Development on this site would extend the existing linear character of the village northwards. As it would occupy only a small portion of the western edge of the field it would not widen the limits of existing built form.

Housing could be configured to retain the high, two storey, elements to the south, adjacent to the existing units, with the potential to position lower, one and a half and single storey buildings further to the north where they would make a suitable transition to the wider countryside.

The choice of materials would be key in helping future development to assimilate well into the village and the wider landscape. Ideally this would take its cue from the existing materials in the village and would predominantly reflect those that are darker, such as the dark red brick which is prevalent.

The opportunity to form a new entrance on the A413 would necessitate the removal of some vegetation. However, the majority of the vegetation around the site's perimeter could be retained. In addition, there is the opportunity to reinforce existing hedgerows and incorporate large swathes of planting along the site's eastern boundary. This would not only help to filter and screen the development from views to the north and east, helping it to assimilate into the wider landscape, but would also provide additional green infrastructure links helping to increase bio-diversity.

It is suggested that this planting is comprised of a mix of native species which includes both species that will eventually reach a large stature as well as a denser unstorey mix, that will help to screen lower level views.

Indicative Proposals



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REVISIONS

No.	Date	Description

Client:
Victoria LAND

Job:
 Manor Farm, Whitchurch

Drawing Title:
 Initial Concept Schematic for Residents & NP Group Comments

Scale:
 1:1000 @A3

Date:
 Aug 2021

Drawn By:
 MM

Checked By:

Drawing No.:
 3465.SK03

Revision:
 E

PRELIMINARY

The information contained herein is preliminary and is not intended to constitute an offer of any financial product. It is provided for information only and should not be relied upon for investment decisions. It is subject to change without notice.

BHP HARWOOD ARCHITECTS

Summary

This preliminary landscape and visual report has been prepared on behalf of Victoria Lane in relation to the potential for residential development on Land at Manor Farm North, Whitchurch (the site).

The Parish of Whitchurch is currently preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2040 Pre-Submission Plan was published in December 2022. This document identifies the site as *Policy W3: Reserve Site - Land at Manor Farm North*, as being suitable for approximately 35 new homes. Among the items listed that would need to be satisfied to support such a development the draft plan requires that:

“A landscape strategy is prepared, and the layout and heights of buildings, having full regard to Local Plan policy requirements on landscape character and the location of the land within an Area of Attractive Landscape and on the retention of trees and hedgerows where possible”;

This report has considered the site as an individual parcel of land and the role it plays within the character and visual amenity of the wider landscape and how a landscape strategy might be developed that would ensure the successful assimilation of development into the wider area.

The Richards Partnership visited the site in May 2019 and March 2023 to undertake a review of the landscape character of the site and its wider context and the role that it plays in the visual amenity of views in the surrounding area.

The site comprises the western portion of a single arable field and measures circa 2.35Ha. There are few landscape features on site, beyond the perimeter hedgerow vegetation and a some trees located along the boundary.

The site is located at the northern end of Whitchurch, a long linear village, which is located on a shallow ridge. As a result of this, while the site is well contained to the south and south-west, it has a wide visual relationship with the landscape to the north and east.

This report has considered how development might come forward on this site without giving rise to unacceptable effects.

The site itself would inevitably experience a change in character were development to come forward. Similarly, development would be visible from the wider area in the early years. However, there is a good opportunity to develop a scheme which continues the linear form of the village, reflects local materials, and is configured to ensure the roofline do not break the skyline from the majority of wider viewpoints. In addition, there is ample room to incorporate robust belts of planting which would mature to soften and screen the development, and, eventually form part of the skyline.

The Indicative Proposals included in this report illustrate how such a scheme might look.

Both the Landowners and their promoters, Victoria Land, are committed to high quality proposals and will continue to engage proactively with the Neighbourhood Plan Group if proposals for the reserve site W3 come forward.

The Richards Partnership
March 2023





APPENDIX C: SITE F HERITAGE APPRAISAL

Site at Manor Farm Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire

Heritage Appraisal

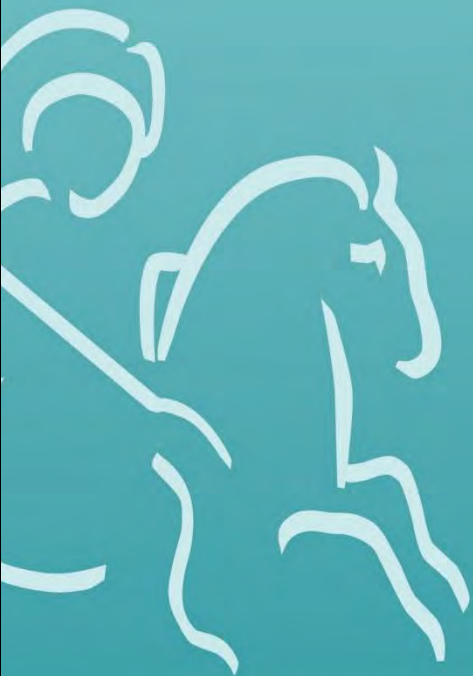


Report prepared for:
Victoria Land Ltd

CA Project: MK0883

CA Report: MK0883_1

March 2023



Site at Manor Farm Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire

Heritage Appraisal

CA Project: MK0883

CA Report: MK0883_1

prepared by	Julia Sulikowska, Senior Heritage Consultant
date	March 2023
approved by	Rebecca Wills, Senior Heritage Consultant
date	March 2023
issue	1

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2.	SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE	6
3.	SUMMARY OF DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS	11
4.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15
5.	REFERENCES.....	17

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 Recorded archaeological remains

Fig. 2 Designated heritage assets

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In March 2023, Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned by Victoria Land Ltd to undertake a Heritage Appraisal in respect of site at Manor Farm, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’). The Site, situated to the north of Whitchurch, on the eastern side of the A413, encompasses approximately 1.78ha of land within a larger agricultural field (NGR: 480005, 221300; Fig. 1).

1.2. This appraisal has been commissioned to provide high level information with regard to potential heritage and archaeology constraints and to inform the promotion of the land for a residential scheme. The Site was selected as a preferred reserve allocation site for c. 25 units in the Draft Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (Whitchurch Parish Council 2022: Policy W3).

Aims and objectives

1.3. The primary aim of this appraisal is to identify any potential archaeological and heritage constraints which may need to be considered in site allocation process, and future preparation of a masterplan and planning application. This appraisal focusses upon the heritage resource within the Site itself, although the resource within the wider landscape is considered where appropriate (Figs. 1-2), as required to understand the archaeological potential and possible constraints within the Site.

1.4. Designated heritage assets within the environs of the Site were also considered to the extent to which their settings may be affected by development.

1.5. The objectives of the appraisal are:

- To summarise recorded heritage assets within the Site and in its environs;
- To summarise the potential significance of known or potential buried archaeological remains within the Site boundary; and
- To identify any designated heritage assets that may be considered as sensitive receptors to development within the Site.

Statute, policy and guidance context

1.6. The Site is located in the local authority of Buckinghamshire Council. Whilst the Council is working on a new Local Plan, the relevant local plan is the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, prepared by the former local authority of Aylesbury Vale (adopted September 2021). The relevant policies with regard to heritage assets

include policy BE1. Within the emerging Draft Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan, the Site is considered under policy W3.

1.7. This appraisal has been undertaken with reference to the key statute, policy and guidance context presented within Table 1.1. The applicable provisions contained within these statute, policy and guidance documents are referred to, and discussed, as relevant, throughout the text. Fuller detail is provided in Appendix 1.

Statute	Description
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)	Act of Parliament providing for the maintenance of a schedule of archaeological remains of the highest significance, affording them statutory protection.
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)	Act of Parliament placing a duty upon the Local Planning Authority (or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State) to afford due consideration to the preservation of Listed Buildings and their settings (under Section 66(1)), and Conservation Areas (under Section 72(2)), in determining planning applications.
National Heritage Act 1983 (amended 2002)	One of four Acts of Parliament providing for the protection and management of the historic environment, including the establishment of the Historic Monuments & Buildings Commission, now Historic England.
Conservation Principles (Historic England 2008)	Guidance for assessing heritage significance, with reference to contributing heritage values, in particular: <i>evidential</i> (archaeological), <i>historical</i> (illustrative and associative), <i>aesthetic</i> , and <i>communal</i> .
National Planning Policy Framework (2021)	Provides the English government's national planning policies and describes how these are expected to be applied within the planning system. Heritage is subject of Chapter 16 (page 55).
National Planning Practice Guidance (updated July 2019)	Guidance supporting the National Planning Policy Framework.
Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 2 (GPA2): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015)	Provides useful information on assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.
Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets, Second Edition (Historic England, 2017)	Provides guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes.
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (2021)	Comprises the local development plan (local plan), as required to be compiled, published and maintained by the local authority, consistent with the requirements of the NPPF (2021). Intended to be the primary planning policy document against which planning proposals within that local authority jurisdiction are assessed. Where the development plan is found to be inadequate, primacy reverts to the NPPF (2021).

Table 1.1 Key statute, policy and guidance

Methodology

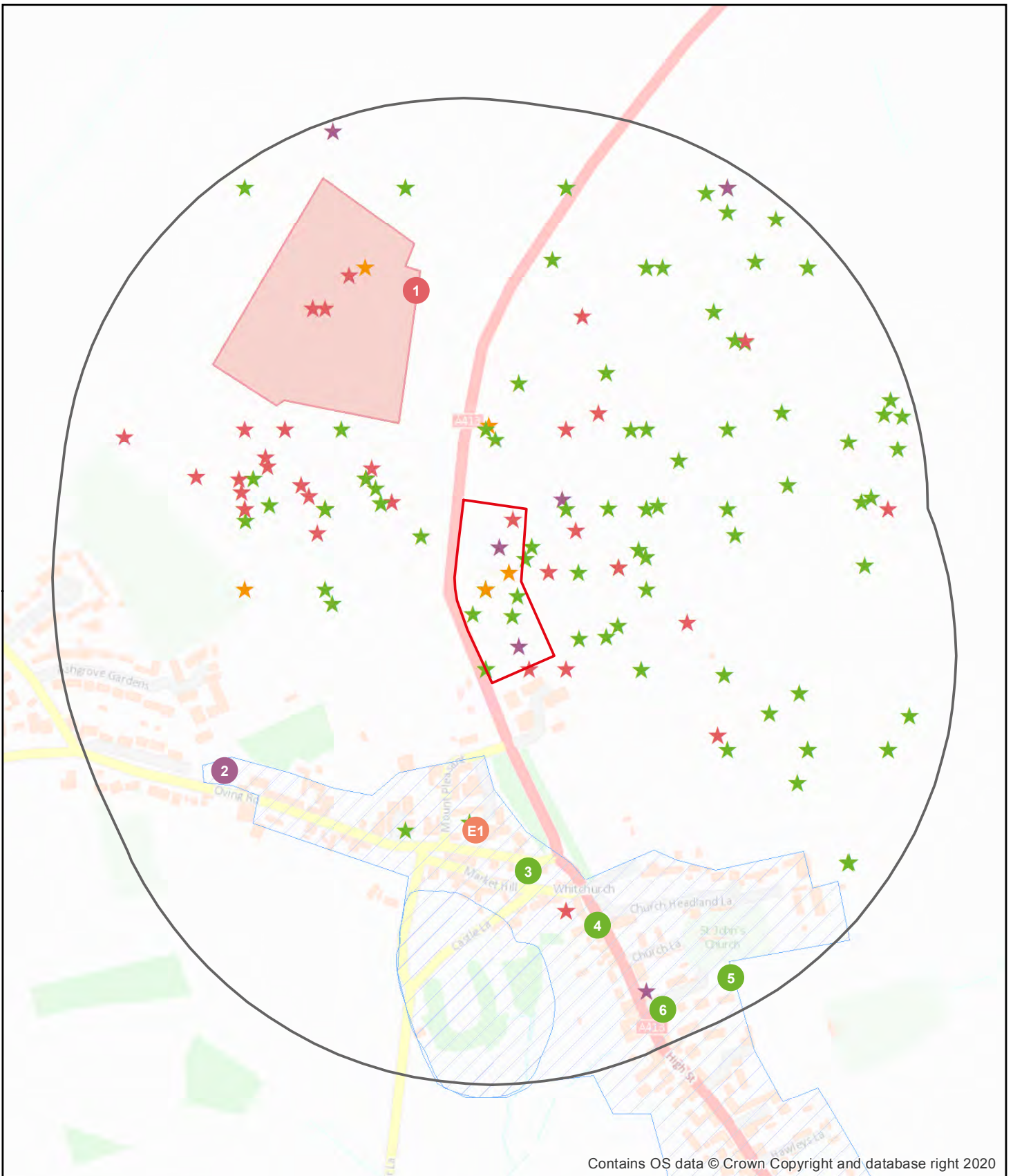
1.8. The main repositories of information consulted in the preparation of this appraisal comprised:

- Historic England's National Heritage List (NHLE) for information about designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments;
- Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (HER) for known heritage assets and previous archaeological works (enquiry reference 1402);
- Previous archaeological reports and assessments, including Whitchurch Assessment Report (Buckinghamshire County Council 2012); and
- Other online sources, including British Geological Survey (BGS) Geology of Britain Viewer, local authority information including in relation to Conservation Areas, aerial imagery and historic mapping.

1.9. Known and potential heritage assets within the Site and its surroundings are discussed in Section 2 (for archaeological remains) and Section 3 (for designated heritage assets in its environs) and are illustrated on Figs. 1 and 2, respectively. To ensure the appraisal is informed by sufficient information, a 1km study area has been adopted for designated heritage assets, and 500m study area for the archaeological resource. Heritage assets are referred to in the text by a unique reference number (**1**, **2**, etc.) keyed to the figures. A gazetteer of assets relevant to the understanding of the potential of this Site has been compiled and is presented as Appendix 2. A bibliography of sources consulted has been included in the References section.

Limitations

1.10. This appraisal is a desk-based study and has utilised information derived from a variety of available sources, including Buckinghamshire HER. While the level of detail included within the appraisal provides an overview of the heritage resource and constraints within the Site, any planning applications would need to be accompanied by a full desk-based heritage assessment, in line with the relevant guidance (CIfA 2020).



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- Site
- 500m study area
- Archaeological Notification Area
- ☆ Prehistoric
- ☆ Roman
- ☆ Early medieval
- ☆ Medieval
- ☆ Previous investigations (selected)
- ☆ Findspot

Contains data from Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (c) 2023. Enquiry ref. 1402



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PROJECT TITLE

Site at Manor Farm
 Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire

FIGURE TITLE

Recorded archaeological remains

DRAWN BY JS	PROJECT NO MK0883	FIGURE NO. 1
CHECKED BY RW	DATE 17/03/2023	
APPROVED BY RW	SCALE@A4 1:6,500	

2. SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

Landscape context

- 2.1. The Site is situated within a single agricultural field on the eastern side of the A413, to the north of Whitchurch. To the north, east and west, the Site is surrounded by agricultural landscape, with tree and hedge-lined boundaries, and to the south by small complex of industrial units at Manor Farm, and the settlement beyond.
- 2.2. The Site lies on east facing slopes overlooking a valley of a minor watercourse which feeds into a tributary of the River Thames, at an elevation between 140-145m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.3. The underlying geology within the Site comprises Limestone of the Purbeck Group and Portland Stone Formation. No superficial deposits are recorded within the Site or in its surroundings (British Geological Survey 2023).

Previous investigations

- 2.4. A small number of archaeological interventions, including watching briefs, evaluations and excavations, have previously been undertaken within the study area. No archaeological remains were found in a number of these, including the trial trench evaluation at Manor Farm c. 185m south of the Site (Fig. 1, **E1**, Network Archaeology Ltd 2001). The results of the relevant investigations, including strip map and record at 34 Oving Road (Fig. 1, **2**), evaluation at the Vicarage (Fig. 1, **5**), and evaluation to the read of the White Horse Pub (Fig. 1, **6**, John Moore Heritage Services 2010) are referred to as relevant below.

Prehistoric

- 2.5. The evidence for prehistoric activity within the parish of Whitchurch is largely limited to findspots and flint scatters, with the majority of the finds within the environs of the settlement dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods (Buckinghamshire County Council 2012; not illustrated).
- 2.6. Evidence for Iron Age activity within the environs of Whitchurch has come to light in recent investigations and through metal detecting. A pit containing a sherd of Iron Age pottery was investigated during a strip, map and record excavation at 34 Oving Road approximately 335m to the south-west of the Site (Fig. 1, **2**). Whilst no further features of Iron Age date are recorded, a number of Iron Age coins have been found during metal detecting surveys, including two within the Site (Fig. 1: prehistoric

findspots). Whilst the findspots are evidence of general background activity within the wider area, rather than an indication of the presence of buried remains within the Site, these finds, and the recorded feature, suggest some potential for further later prehistoric remains to be encountered.

Roman

- 2.7. During the Roman period, Whitchurch would have been located at significant distance from major Roman roads and settlements, with the Site situated over 6km north of Akeman Street at Aylesbury, a road which linked major Roman towns at London and Cirencester. A small town at Fleet Marston and numerous rural settlement sites are recorded within the environs of the road near Aylesbury. It has been suggested (Buckinghamshire County Council 2012) that a route of a Roman road passed through the Whitchurch parish. Whilst there is currently no evidence for this, a Roman funerary site is recorded at Creslow Manor Farm approximately 1.2km to the north-east of the Site (Allen *et al.* 2016, not illustrated), indicating this landscape would have been settled during this period.
- 2.8. The majority of the evidence for Roman activity within the surroundings of the Site comes from findspots of metalwork or pottery, collected during metal detecting surveys and other works. A major concentration of findspots was found within fields c. 120m north-west of the Site (Fig. 1, 1), with over 100 coins found, which could be indicative of a local focus of activity. As shown on Figure 1 (Roman findspots) further Roman findspots are widely recorded within the surrounding area, including coins found at the Site and immediately east and south. As discussed above, the discovery of those coins does not prove associated buried remains are situated within the Site, however they do indicate potential for Roman activity within the environs of Whitchurch.

Early medieval and medieval

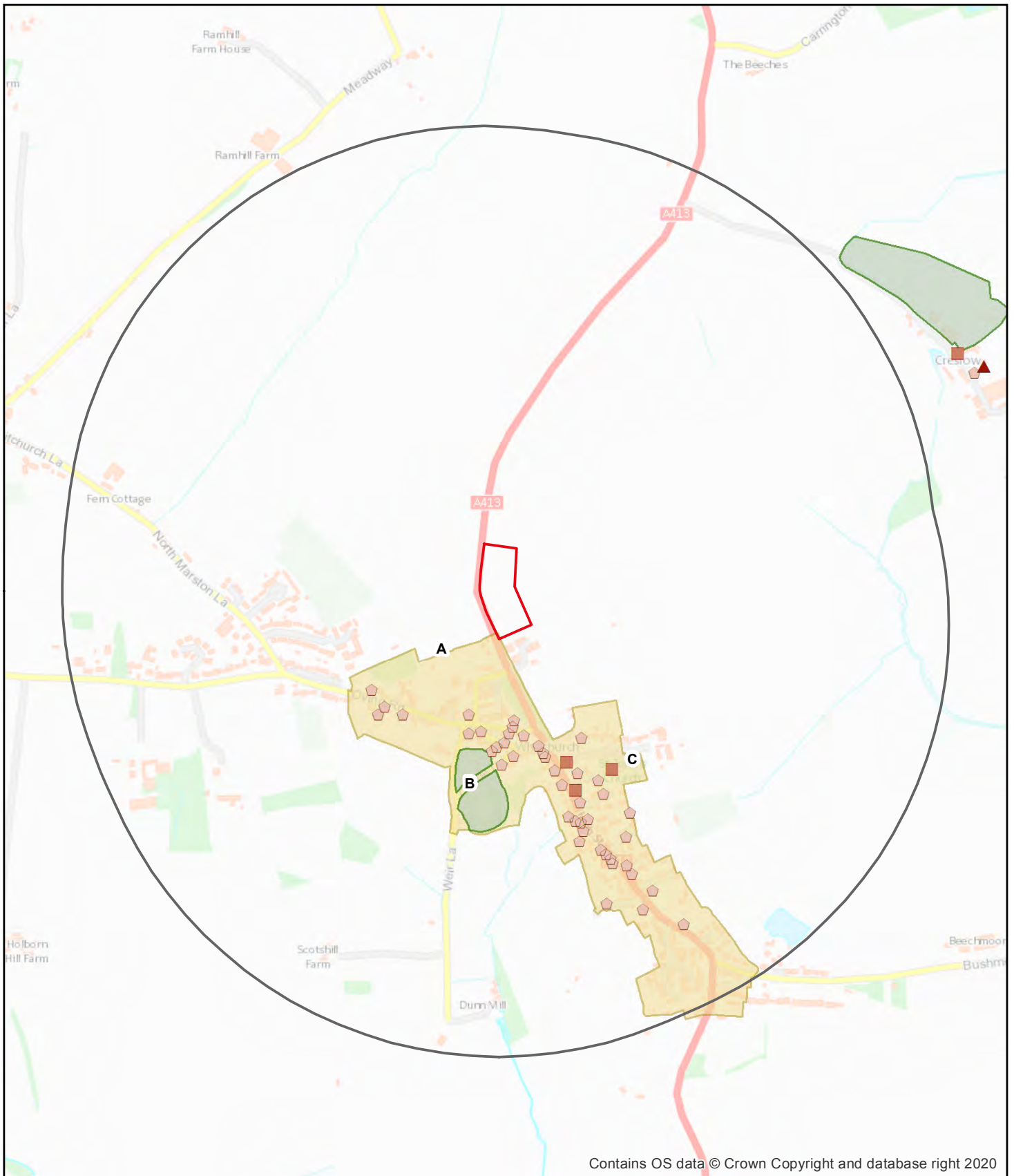
- 2.9. Whitchurch (Fig. 1: 4), formed from two Saxon manors, is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and it is considered that the settlement is of early medieval origin, although there is limited archaeological or documentary evidence for the establishment of the settlement. The archaeological evaluation at the Vicarage (Fig. 1, 5) revealed a small number of Anglo-Saxon pottery sherds, broadly dated to AD 400-800, although it is unconfirmed whether the area would have been settled during this period (Buckinghamshire County Council 2012). Based on currently available information, Buckinghamshire County Council (2012) suggests the potential Saxon

settlement would have focused around the Church of St John (Fig. 2, **C**), and along the main streets, potentially extending northwards as far as Oving Road c. 230m south of the Site.

- 2.10. Whitchurch grew during the medieval period, and a motte and bailey castle, Bolebec Castle, was established to the west of the settlement likely in the 12th century, approximately 280m south of the Site (Scheduled Monument: Fig. 2: **B**). The detailed development of Whitchurch during the medieval period is presented within the Buckinghamshire County Council assessment (2012) and it is not repeated here, but in summary, although the settlement never received a charter of incorporation, Whitchurch (Fig. 1: **4**) was a borough at least for some time in the medieval period and the right to hold a weekly market was granted by King Henry III in the mid-13th century (Fig. 1: **3** shows likely location of the market, c. 250m south of the Site).
- 2.11. Archaeological Notification Areas (ANA) have been defined by the Buckinghamshire HER around the castle and the medieval settlement core, and these are illustrated on Figure 1. ANA are not designated heritage assets, but are defined to highlight potential for the presence of archaeological remains. Indeed, previous investigations within the core of the settlement have recorded remains associated with medieval activity including a ditch and a hearth at the Vicarage (Fig. 1, **5**) and quarry pits to the rear of the White Horse (Fig. 1, **6**), c. 450m south-east of the Site. The Site is considered to have been located outside the limits of the medieval settlement, with the ANA situated 100m south of the Site at its closest point.
- 2.12. Further evidence for early medieval and medieval activity within the landscape surrounding Whitchurch comes from finds collected during metal detecting surveys (Fig. 1: Early medieval and medieval findspots). Some of these were collected within the Site, including a Saxon hooked tag and a sceat (coin), medieval coins and other artefacts, with over a hundred recorded within 500m of the Site. Discovery of these finds, which appear to be chance losses and/or the result of scattering by agricultural practices (such as manuring), is consistent with the likely location of the Site and surrounding fields on the peripheries of the settlement, and potential agricultural use during this period. Whilst potential for some buried remains cannot be ruled out, these most likely would reflect the agricultural use (such as field boundaries or animal pens) rather than settlement features.

Post-medieval and modern

- 2.13. Whitchurch continued to develop into the post-medieval period, as attested by the Listed Buildings within the settlement, many of which date to the 16th and 17th centuries (Fig. 2: Listed Buildings). The layout of the development, largely within the limits of the ANA, is detailed within the Buckinghamshire County Council assessment (2012) and not repeated here, as the Site would have been situated outside the town.
- 2.14. Historic mapping evidence reviewed to inform this appraisal, including the 1760s Jefferys' map, 1771 Whitchurch Parish Map, 1820s Ordnance Survey drawing and late 19th century Ordnance Survey mapping (not reproduced, available in Buckinghamshire County Council (2012) and online) indicate the Site was located within a field on the peripheries of Whitchurch, with the key archaeological potential therefore associated with agricultural land use (such as former field boundaries). During the 20th and into the 21st century, the Site retained its agricultural use, with no evidence of development aside from the establishment of the small complex of business units associated with Manor Farm immediately to the south.



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- Site
- 1km study area
- Scheduled Monuments
- ▲ Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II* Listed Building
- ▭ Grade II Listed Building
- Conservation Area

0 500m



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PROJECT TITLE

Site at Manor Farm
 Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire

FIGURE TITLE

Designated heritage assets

DRAWN BY JS	PROJECT NO MK0883	FIGURE NO. 2
CHECKED BY RW	DATE 17/03/2023	
APPROVED BY RW	SCALE@A4 1:12,500	

3. SUMMARY OF DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

3.1. There are no designated heritage assets within the Site. Within the study area, the designated heritage assets include:

- Whitchurch Conservation Area (Fig. 2, **A**), adjacent to the south-western corner of the Site;
- Bolebec Castle, a motte and bailey castle 300m west of St John's Church Scheduled Monument (Fig. 2, **B**), located c. 280m south of the Site; and
- Forty-seven Listed Buildings, all of which are situated within the Conservation Area (Fig. 2). Three Grade II* Listed Buildings, including the Church of St John (**C**), Priory Hotel and the Old House are situated in the centre of Whitchurch, c. 350m south of the Site. The remaining buildings are all Grade II Listed. The nearest Grade I Listed Building is the Manor House at Creslow, over 1.2km to the north-east of the Site (Fig. 2).

3.2. There are no World Heritage Sites, Registered Battlefields, or Registered Parks and Gardens within the 1km study area around the Site. No impacts are anticipated upon the designated heritage assets within the wider landscape.

3.3. Buckinghamshire Council is compiling a local list of heritage assets (non-designated heritage assets)¹. This was also reviewed as part of this appraisal. No such assets (buildings, gardens, or archaeological sites or landscapes) that are candidates for the inclusion on local heritage list are located within the Site. A number of buildings within the Conservation Area, and ROC post to the west of Whitchurch are included (not illustrated).

Settings appraisal

3.4. This section considers receptors that might be affected by development within the Site through the alteration of their setting. This appraisal at this initial stage has been prepared in accordance with the guidance contained in the Second Edition of Historic England's 2017 'Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3' (GPA3).

3.5. Step 1 of this guidance is to 'identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected' (see Appendix 1). GPA3 notes that Step 1 should identify the heritage

¹ [Home - Buckinghamshire's Local Heritage List \(local-heritage-list.org.uk\)](http://local-heritage-list.org.uk)

assets which are likely to be affected as a result of any change to their experience, brought about by the development proposal (GPA3, page 9).

- 3.6. The initial appraisal has identified that changes to the use and/or appearance of the Site associated with a residential scheme would be unlikely to result in any non-physical impact upon the significance of the majority of the designated heritage assets within the study area. Their setting would not be altered, due to lack of inter-visibility between the Site and these assets, primarily as a result of intervening built form, vegetation and topography. There are no other discernible (non-visual) historical or landscape associations between any of these assets and the Site, and as such, they have not been assessed in any further detail.
- 3.7. However, a number of the designated heritage assets within the 1km study area may be considered sensitive to development within the Site and the potential effects upon these assets are discussed below.

Whitchurch Conservation Area

- 3.8. The Conservation Area (Fig. 2, **A**) encompasses the historic core of Whitchurch, and includes Listed Buildings, heritage assets of local interest, and the Scheduled remains of the castle. There is no formal appraisal of the Conservation Area available from the Local Planning Authority, but a summary note is included (Aylesbury Vale District Council 2008).
- 3.9. The character of the Conservation Area derives from its many attractive historic buildings, including Listed and non-designated heritage assets, which include 16th and 17th century timber framed houses with clay tile roofs, as well as the red/brown brick buildings dating to the late 18th and 19th centuries, with Welsh slate roofs, which characterise the southern part of the High Street. The Church of St John (Fig. 2, **C**, see below) is set back from the High Street and accessed via three short lanes. Trees, vegetation and historic property boundaries, including stone walls, are also important elements of the street scene.
- 3.10. The Site is adjacent to the northern extent of the Conservation Area, where it abuts the south-western corner of the Site (Fig. 2). This part of the Conservation Area is characterised by dense vegetation along the A413 and modern housing along Mount Pleasant on the western side of the road. The nearest Grade II Listed Buildings including Whitchurch House, Church Hall and School House are over 200m south of the Site, and separated from it by modern development around Mount Pleasant and

vegetation. These buildings, and further assets within the core of the settlement are unlikely to be affected by the proposed residential scheme.

- 3.11. It is recommended that development of the Site should be informed by an assessment which considers the contribution of the Site to the significance, character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This would inform any future development plans and allow a thorough understanding of potential effects upon the designated area as a result of change within its setting. However due to the separation of the Site from the core of the settlement, the enclosure provided by vegetation within the northern part of the Conservation Area, and the already extant modern commercial units adjacent to the Conservation Area immediately to the south of the Site, it is considered that a carefully designed development would be unlikely to affect this designated heritage asset.

Bolebec Castle Scheduled Monument

- 3.12. Bolebec Castle (Fig. 2, **B**) is located c. 280m to the south of the Site. The setting of this asset comprises the vegetation around the ramparts and in the surrounding area, agricultural fields, and the historic development along Castle Hill and Market Hill to the north, and the High Street/the A413 to the east, which is historically associated with the motte and bailey castle.
- 3.13. Due to the intervening vegetation and built form, there is no intervisibility between the Scheduled Monument and the Site. As a result it is considered that the development within the Site would not affect Bolebec Castle in any way.

Grade II* Listed Church of St John

- 3.14. Church of St John (Fig. 2, **C**) is located c. 400m to the south-east of the Site. It is a late 13th to mid-14th century structure with later alterations and early 20th century restoration. Built of coursed limestone rubble with lead roofs, the church has a characteristic west tower of three stages with battlemented parapet. It is set back from Whitchurch High Street, accessed via small lanes (i.e. Church Lane and Church Headland Lane) and is situated within a roughly rectangular churchyard.
- 3.15. Due to the intervening built form and vegetation, there are no views of the Site from the asset. The key setting of the church includes the churchyard, nearby historic buildings and the wider settlement of Whitchurch with which it is associated.

-
- 3.16. The church is situated on a prominent position at the eastern edge of the village and its tower is visible from the wider landscape, including in southerly views from the A413 to the north of Whitchurch. Whilst the Site (adjacent to existing built form of the commercial units at Manor Farm) and the tower can be seen in these views, it is generally accepted that church towers – tall structures – are commonly visible across wider landscapes and ‘they are unlikely to be affected by small-scale development, unless that development competes with them, as tower blocks and wind turbines may’ (GPA 3, page 7).
- 3.17. On this basis it is considered that a small residential scheme within the Site may be accommodated without affecting the heritage significance of the church, subject to appropriate design, layout and vegetation screening. Such a design should be informed by a comprehensive understanding of the significance of the asset and contribution of its setting, considered within a detailed settings assessment.

Designated heritage assets at Creslow

- 3.18. The complex of designated heritage assets Creslow (Fig. 2, c. 1.2km north-east of the Site and outside the study area) includes Grade I Listed Manor House, Grade II* Listed chapel, Grade II Listed outbuildings and a Scheduled deserted village. The assets lie in an isolated rural position, with the Manor used as a wedding venue, and adjacent to large agricultural barns. The complex is situated on an opposite side of the valley and therefore there may be potential for visibility between the Site and the assets.
- 3.19. Due to distance, and the fact that any development within the Site would be seen alongside existing built form of Whitchurch, it is considered unlikely that a carefully designed scheme would affect the heritage significance of these assets. However, any scheme should be informed by a detailed settings assessment, which would consider the contribution of the Site to the significance of those highly graded designated heritage assets.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. This heritage appraisal has been prepared to inform the promotion of the Site for allocation within the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan. The aim of this appraisal was to identify any constraints with regard to the historic environment resource, including potential for impacts on archaeological remains within the Site and relating to the settings of designated heritage assets within the Site's environs.

Archaeological remains

4.2. The development within the Site would not cause physical impacts on any designated heritage assets of archaeological interest.

4.3. No major development is recorded within the Site and therefore any previous impacts upon the underlying archaeological remains would be limited to those caused by ploughing.

4.4. There are no known archaeological features present within the Site. Findspots collected within the Site and in the surrounding area through metal detecting surveys, as well as archaeological remains recorded within the wider landscape indicate some potential for activity dating to the later prehistoric and Roman periods, as well as for medieval and later agricultural features.

4.5. Development within the Site would result in the disturbance to, or loss of, any archaeological features which may be present. Archaeological remains comprise an important, non-renewable and finite resource, and the construction impacts associated with the proposed development would have the potential to result in permanent and irreversible loss of, or damage to, any potential buried archaeological remains which may be present within the Site. On the basis of the available information reviewed for this appraisal, however, potential buried archaeological remains within the Site would be unlikely to comprise remains of highest significance and would not require preservation in situ, nor would they influence development design. However, such remains would require consideration as part of the planning process.

4.6. As the presence/absence, extent and significance of any archaeological remains within the Site is not sufficiently understood to fulfil the requirements of paragraph 194 of the NPPF, a programme of further investigations is likely to be required by the archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority before any determination of

a planning application can be made. This will include, in the first instance, a desk-based assessment, which would likely be followed by a programme of fieldwork, probably comprising geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation.

Designated heritage assets

- 4.7. This appraisal has considered designated heritage assets within the 1km study area around the proposed Site, and those beyond this buffer which could be potentially sensitive. It has been ascertained that the majority of these assets would not be affected by development within the Site.
- 4.8. The Site is adjacent to Whitchurch Conservation Area, with a number of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in the wider landscape. Whilst the majority of these assets would be unlikely to be affected, there is the potential for development within the Site to introduce change within the surroundings of the Conservation Area, the Church of St John and the assets at Creslow. No major constraints have been identified within this appraisal, but these potential sensitivities will need to be considered as part of preparation of development proposals.
- 4.9. A detailed settings assessment will be required to inform any future development plans and planning application. Such an assessment would allow a thorough understanding of the significance of the assets, and the contribution the Site makes to such significance. These heritage assets should be considered within any proposal plans which may be come forward in the future. It is considered that it may be possible to identify mitigation measures to remove or reduce impacts of proposals. Such measures could include appropriate landscaping, layout (including provision of open space), improvements to hedgerow boundaries/vegetation, and scale and design detail.

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APPENDIX 1: HERITAGE STATUTE POLICY & GUIDANCE

Heritage Statute: Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments are subject to the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The Act sets out the controls of works affecting Scheduled Monuments and other related matters. Contrary to the requirements of the Planning Act 1990 regarding Listed buildings, the 1979 Act does not include provision for the ‘setting’ of Scheduled Monuments.

Heritage Statute: Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are buildings of ‘special architectural or historic interest’ and are subject to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (‘the Act’). Under Section 7 of the Act ‘no person shall execute or cause to be executed any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised.’ Such works are authorised under Listed Building Consent. Under [Section 66](#) of the Act ‘In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’.

Note on the extent of a Listed Building

Under Section 1(5) of the Act, a structure may be deemed part of a Listed Building if it is:

- (a) fixed to the building, or
- (b) within the curtilage of the building, which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948

The inclusion of a structure deemed to be within the ‘curtilage’ of a building thus means that it is subject to the same statutory controls as the principal Listed Building. Inclusion within this duty is not, however, an automatic indicator of ‘heritage significance’ both as defined within the NPPF (2021) and within Conservation Principles (see Section 2 above). In such cases, the significance of the structure needs to be assessed both in its own right and in the contribution it makes to the significance and character of the principal Listed Building. The practical effect of the inclusion in the listing of ancillary structures is limited by the requirement that Listed Building Consent is only needed for works to the ‘Listed Building’ (to include the building in the list and all the ancillary items) where they affect the special character of the Listed building as a whole.

Guidance is provided by Historic England on ‘[Listed Buildings and Curtilage: Historic England Advice Note 10](#)’ (Historic England 2018).

Heritage Statute: Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are designated by the local planning authority under Section 69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (‘the Act’), which requires that ‘*Every local planning authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*’. Section 72 of the Act requires that ‘*special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*’.

The requirements of the Act only apply to land within a Conservation Area; not to land outside it. This has been clarified in various Appeal Decisions (for example APP/F1610/A/14/2213318

Land south of Cirencester Road, Fairford, Paragraph 65: *'The Section 72 duty only applies to buildings or land in a Conservation Area, and so does not apply in this case as the site lies outside the Conservation Area.'*

The NPPF (2021) also clarifies in Paragraph 207 that *'Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance'*. Thus land or buildings may be a part of a Conservation Area, but may not necessarily be of architectural or historical significance. Similarly, not all elements of the setting of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance, or to an equal degree.

National heritage policy: the National Planning Policy Framework

Heritage assets and heritage significance

Heritage assets comprise 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest' (the NPPF (2021), Annex 2). Designated heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas (designated under the relevant legislation; NPPF (2021), Annex 2). The NPPF (2021), Annex 2, states that the significance of a heritage asset may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' looks at significance as a series of 'values' which include 'evidential', 'historical', 'aesthetic' and 'communal'.

The July 2019 revision of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) expanded on the definition of non-designated heritage assets. It states *that 'Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.'* It goes on to refer to local/neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals/reviews, and importantly, the local Historic Environment Record (HER) as examples of where these assets may be identified, but specifically notes that such identification should be *made 'based on sound evidence'*, with this information *'accessible to the public to provide greater clarity and certainly for developers and decision makers'*.

This defines *non-designated heritage assets* as those which have been specially defined as such through the local HER or other source made accessible to the public by the plan-making body. Where HERs or equivalent lists do not specifically refer to an asset as a *non-designated heritage asset*, it is assumed that it has not met criteria for the plan-making body to define it as such, and will be referred to as a *heritage asset* for the purpose of this report.

The assessment of *non-designated heritage assets* and *heritage assets* will be equivalent in this report, in line with industry standards and guidance on assessing significance and impact. They may not, however, carry equivalent weight in planning as set out within the provisions of the NPPF, should there be any effect to significance.

The setting of heritage assets

The 'setting' of a heritage asset comprises 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral' (NPPF (2021), Annex 2). Thus it is important to note that 'setting' is not a heritage asset: it may contribute to the value of a heritage asset.

Guidance on assessing the effects of change upon the setting and significance of heritage assets is provided in 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets', which has been utilised for the present assessment (see below).

Levels of information to support planning applications

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2021) identifies that 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'.

Designated heritage assets

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF (2021) explains that heritage assets 'are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance'. Paragraph 199 notes that 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. Paragraph 200 goes on to note that 'substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building...should be exceptional and substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance (notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites)...should be wholly exceptional'.

Paragraph 202 clarifies that 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.

Development Plan

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033 (September 2021)

Policy BE1: Heritage assets. The historic environment, unique in its character, quality and diversity across the Vale is important and will be preserved or enhanced. All development, including new buildings, alterations, extensions, changes of use and demolitions, should seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, including their setting, and seek enhancement wherever possible.

Proposals for development shall contribute to heritage values and local distinctiveness. Where a development proposal is likely to affect a designated heritage asset and/or its setting negatively, the significance of the heritage asset must be fully assessed and supported in the submission of an application. The impact of the proposal must be assessed in proportion to the significance of the heritage asset and supported in the submission of an application. Heritage statements and/or archaeological evaluations will be required for any proposals related to or impacting on a heritage asset and/or possible archaeological site.

Proposals which affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be properly considered, weighing the direct and indirect impacts upon the asset and its setting. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining heritage assets wherever practical, including archaeological remains in situ, unless it can be demonstrated that the harm will be outweighed by the benefits of the development. Heritage statements and/or archaeological evaluations may be required to assess the significance of any heritage assets and the impact on these by the development proposal.

The council will:

- a. Support development proposals that do not cause harm to, or which better reveal the significance of heritage assets
- b. Require development proposals that would cause substantial harm to, or loss of a designated heritage asset and its significance, including its setting, to provide a thorough heritage assessment setting out a clear and convincing justification as to why that harm is considered acceptable on the basis of public benefits that outweigh that harm or the four circumstances in paragraph 133 of the NPPF all apply. Where that justification cannot be demonstrated proposals will not be supported, and
- c. Require development proposals that cause less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset to weigh the level of harm against the public benefits that may be gained by the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Development affecting a heritage asset should achieve a high quality design in accordance with the Aylesbury Vale Design SPD and the council will encourage modern, innovative design which respects and complements the heritage context in terms of scale, massing, design, detailing and use.

Good Practice Advice 1-3

Historic England has issued three Good Practice Advice notes ('GPA1-3') which support the NPPF. The GPAs note that they do not constitute a statement of Government policy, nor do they seek to prescribe a single methodology: their purpose is to assist local authorities, planners, heritage consultants, and other stakeholders in the implementation of policy set out in the NPPF. This report has been produced in the context of this advice, particularly 'GPA2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and 'GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets'.

GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment

GPA2 sets out the requirement for assessing 'heritage significance' as part of the application process. Paragraph 8 notes 'understanding the nature of the significance is important to understanding the need for and best means of conservation.' This includes assessing the extent and level of significance, including the contribution made by its 'setting' (see GPA3 below). GPA2 notes that 'a desk-based assessment will determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation to do so' (Page 3).

GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets

The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) defines the setting of a heritage asset as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced...'. Step 1 of the settings assessment requires heritage assets which may be affected by development to be identified. Historic England notes that for the purposes of Step 1 this process will comprise heritage assets 'where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way)...'.

Step 2 of the settings process 'assess[es] the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated', with regard to its physical surrounds; relationship with its surroundings and patterns of use; experiential effects such as noises or smells; and the way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated. Step 3 requires 'assessing the effect of the

proposed development on the significance of the asset(s)' – specifically to 'assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it', with regard to the location and siting of the development, its form and appearance, its permanence, and wider effects.

Step 4 of GPA3 provides commentary on 'ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm'. It notes (Paragraph 37) that 'Maximum advantage can be secured if any effects on the significance of a heritage asset arising from development liable to affect its setting are considered from the project's inception.' It goes on to note (Paragraph 39) that 'good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement'.

Heritage significance

Discussion of heritage significance within this assessment report makes reference to several key documents. With regard to Listed buildings and Conservation Areas it primarily discusses 'architectural and historic interest', which comprises the special interest for which they are designated.

The NPPF provides a definition of 'significance' for heritage policy (Annex 2). This states that heritage significance comprises 'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic'. This also clarifies that for World Heritage Sites 'the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance'.

Regarding 'levels' of significance the NPPF (2021) provides a distinction between: designated heritage assets of the highest significance; designated heritage assets not of the highest significance; and non-designated heritage assets.

Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' expresses 'heritage significance' as comprising a combination of one or more of: evidential value; historical value; aesthetic value; and communal value:

- Evidential value – the elements of a historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including physical remains, historic fabric, documentary/pictorial records. This evidence can provide information on the origin of the asset, what it was used for, and how it changed over time.
- Historical value (illustrative) – how a historic asset may illustrate its past life, including changing uses of the asset over time.
- Historical value (associative) – how a historic asset may be associated with a notable family, person, event, or moment, including changing uses of the asset over time.
- Aesthetic value – the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a historic asset. This may include its form, external appearance, and its setting, and may change over time.
- Communal value – the meaning of a historic asset to the people who relate to it. This may be a collective experience, or a memory, and can be commemorative or symbolic to individuals or groups, such as memorable events, attitudes, and periods of history. This includes social values, which relates to the role of the historic asset as a place of social interactive, distinctiveness, coherence, economic, or spiritual / religious value.

Effects upon heritage assets

Heritage benefit

The NPPF clarifies that change in the setting of heritage assets may lead to heritage benefit. Paragraph 206 of the NPPF (2021) notes that 'Local planning authorities should look for

opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably’.

GPA3 notes that ‘good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement’ (Paragraph 28). Historic England’s ‘Conservation Principles’ states that ‘Change to a significant place is inevitable, if only as a result of the passage of time, but can be neutral or beneficial in its effects on heritage values. It is only harmful if (and to the extent that) significance is reduced’ (Paragraph 84).

Specific heritage benefits may be presented through activities such as repair or restoration, as set out in Conservation Principles.

Heritage harm to designated heritage assets

The NPPF (2021) does not define what constitutes ‘substantial harm’. The High Court of Justice does provide a definition of this level of harm, as set out by Mr Justice Jay in *Bedford Borough Council v SoS for CLG and Nuon UK Ltd*. Paragraph 25 clarifies that, with regard to ‘substantial harm’: ‘Plainly in the context of physical harm, this would apply in the case of demolition or destruction, being a case of total loss. It would also apply to a case of serious damage to the structure of the building. In the context of non-physical or indirect harm, the yardstick was effectively the same. One was looking for an impact which would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced’.

Effects upon non-designated heritage assets

The NPPF (2021) [paragraph 203](#) guides that ‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

APPENDIX 2: GAZETTEER OF SELECTED RECORDED HERITAGE ASSETS

Selected designated heritage assets and archaeological remains

Ref	Description	Grade/Period	NGR	HE ref. HER ref.
A	Whitchurch Conservation Area	Conservation area	480174 220831	-
B	Medieval motte and bailey castle known as Bolbec Castle, surviving as earthwork remains. The remains are designated as Archaeological Notification Area	Scheduled Monument Archaeological Notification Area Medieval	479963 220818	0030600000 0030600001 DBC8938 1009536
C	Church Of St John	Grade II* Listed Building	480278 220871	1124307
1	Roman pottery and metalwork found on ground surface and whilst metal-detecting – concentration of findspots	Roman	479806 221642	0246301000
2	Land north-west of 34 Oving Road. Possible Iron pit identified during groundworks for new dwellings. Also post-medieval remains	Prehistoric Post-medieval	479672 221075	0785300000 0785400000
3	Market Hill: Historical records of site of medieval market and tradition of medieval market cross at this location	Medieval	480050 220950	0400000000 0400001000
4	Medieval to modern settlement of Whitchurch, recorded in Domesday Book. Historic town core of Whitchurch designated as Archaeological Notification Area	Medieval and later Archaeological Notification Area	480267 220667	0279900000 0938800000 DBC9412
5	Vicarage, White Horse Lane: Late medieval ditch and late medieval/ post medieval hearth found during evaluation.	Medieval Post-medieval	480303 220818	0736700000
6	Rear of the White Horse, 60 High Street: Medieval quarry pits and pottery found during evaluation trial trenching	Medieval	480220 220779	1552800000
E1	Manor Farm, 4 Oving Road, Whitchurch – Evaluation. No archaeological remains were recorded	Previous investigation	479985 220997	EBC16475

Listed buildings

Description	Grade	NGR	HE ref.
Fairings	II	SP 80043 20902	1124305
3, Church Lane	II	SP 80246 20845	1124306
Stable Block 20 Metres South East Of The Old House	II	SP 80196 20863	1124308
31, High Street	II	SP 80263 20669	1124309
33, High Street	II	SP 80251 20680	1124310
Tudor House	II	SP 80192 20748	1124311
63 And 65, High Street	II	SP 80118 20901	1124312
Greenbanks	II	SP 80114 20911	1124313
28 And 30, High Street	II	SP 80314 20643	1124314
Kempson House	II	SP 80206 20945	1124315
Barn 25 Metres To South East Of Number 13	II	SP 79991 20916	1124316
Cobwebs	II	SP 80103 20928	1124317
Barn 15 Metres North East Of Quaker Farmhouse	II	SP 80032 20957	1124318
Barn To North Of Townsend Farm	II	SP 79734 21021	1124319

Description	Grade	NGR	HE ref.
Church Hall	II	SP 80044 20988	1124320
34, Oving Road	II	SP 79703 21061	1124321
29, High Street	II	SP 80275 20657	1159856
Milestone 5 Metres To South East Of Number 49	II	SP 80204 20744	1159879
Spider's Web	II	SP 80141 20868	1159906
The White Swan	II	SP 80450 20500	1159913
Beech Moor And Railings To Front	II	SP 80326 20622	1159920
58, High Street	II	SP 80220 20752	1159947
Priory Hotel	II*	SP 80192 20822	1159973
Walnut Cottage	II	SP 79936 20956	1160020
St Osyth	II	SP 80067 20952	1160028
Barn To South Of Townsend Farm	II	SP 79719 21002	1160056
Whitchurch House	II	SP 79935 21002	1160084
1 And 2, Post Office Lane	II	SP 80312 20711	1310720
Quaker Farmhouse	II	SP 80021 20935	1310736
School House	II	SP 80041 20973	1310748
Mullions And Wall To North East And South East Sides Of Garden	II	SP 80003 20924	1310754
37 And 37a, High Street	II	SP 80200 20700	1310812
The Old Barns	II	SP 80174 20759	1310822
7, High Street	II	SP 80352 20536	1310844
Mary Monks Close	II	SP 80375 20581	1332750
1 AND 2, WHITE HORSE LANE	II	SP 80202 20792	1332751
Thatched Cottage	II	SP 80265 20549	1332752
10, 12 And 14, Market Hill	II	SP 79966 20962	1332753
Rose Bank	II	SP 79778 21001	1332754
5, Castle Lane	II	SP 80015 20882	1332785
The Old House And Attached Garden Walls	II*	SP 80170 20888	1332786
No 27 And Barn Attached To Left	II	SP 80279 20647	1332787
The Old Cottage And Stone End	II	SP 80210 20724	1332788
Melbury Cottage	II	SP 80158 20835	1332789
Chestnut Corner	II	SP 80258 20812	1365347
The Vicarage, Stable, Summerhouse And Eastern Boundary Wall	II	SP 80297 20789	1391585

Findspots

Description	Eastings	Northings	HER ref.
Roman coin found on ground surface in the early twentieth century	480100	220900	0414100000
Roman metalwork found on ground surface in the early twentieth century	480100	220900	0414101000
Medieval metalwork found whilst metal-detecting	479820	221500	0509200000
Roman metalwork found in metal-detecting survey	479550	221490	0510400000
Saxon metalwork found whilst metal-detecting	479700	221300	0541800000
Medieval findspot of coin	480500	221100	MBC28877
Medieval findspot of coin	480500	221100	MBC28878
Medieval findspot of harness pendant	480300	221800	MBC28934
Medieval buckle found during metal-detecting rally	479900	221800	MBC28938
Medieval buckle plate found during metal-detecting rally	479900	221800	MBC28939
Medieval harness fitting	480500	221100	MBC29056
Modern book corner found whilst metal-detecting	479600	221700	MBC29108
Bronze Age awl found during metal-detecting rally	479810	221870	MBC29239
Roman vessel fragment found whilst metal-detecting	479700	221400	MBC29569
Possible findspot of a Saxon brooch, found whilst metal detecting	480004	221505	MBC31415
Roman coin found whilst metal-detecting	480100	221200	MBC31575

Description	Eastings	Northings	HER ref.
Roman ring found whilst metal-detecting	480100	221400	MBC31577
Medieval or post-medieval weight found whilst metal-detecting	480100	221800	MBC31579
Medieval belt fitting found whilst metal-detecting	480100	221800	MBC31580
Medieval coin found whilst metal-detecting	480000	221500	MBC31660
Roman metalwork found whilst metal-detecting	480288	221118	MBC31717
Roman metalwork find	480176	221263	MBC31718
Medieval metalwork found whilst metal-detecting	480400	221100	MBC31805
Medieval or post-medieval metalwork found whilst metal-detecting	480400	221100	MBC31807
Medieval coin found whilst metal-detecting	479980	221010	MBC31808
Medieval harness fitting found whilst metal-detecting	479900	221000	MBC31809
Roman pottery found on ground surface and whilst metal-detecting	479785	221650	0246300000
Roman metalwork found whilst metal-detecting	479785	221650	0246301000
Saxon and medieval metalwork found whilst metal-detecting	479850	221700	0246301001
Roman metalwork found whilst metal-detecting	479800	221650	0246302000
Medieval buckle found whilst metal-detecting	479700	221800	MBC38460
Iron Age brooch found whilst metal-detecting	480095	221412	MBC38461
Medieval coin found whilst metal-detecting	480083	221710	MBC38462
Roman coin found whilst metal-detecting	479830	221691	MBC38463
Roman coin found whilst metal-detecting	479700	221500	MBC38464
Medieval coin	480310	221610	MBC38466
Medieval coin	480310	221610	MBC38467
Saxon coin	480310	221610	MBC38468
Medieval brooch	480310	221610	MBC38469
Roman copper alloy object	480500	221400	MBC39338
Medieval coin	480150	221241	MBC39357
Medieval coin found whilst metal-detecting	480012	221487	MBC39358
Roman coin	480250	221259	MBC39883
Medieval buckle	480300	221100	MBC39955
Medieval coin	480193	221199	MBC39956
Medieval coin	480471	221330	MBC40066
Medieval coin	480296	221193	MBC40263
Medieval buckle	480200	221300	MBC40266
Medieval harness fitting	480527	221142	MBC40274
Medieval harness pendant	480274	221794	MBC40299
Roman coin found whilst metal-detecting	480078	221322	MBC40301
Medieval Venetian coin found whilst metal-detecting	479731	221405	MBC40302
Medieval coin found whilst metal-detecting	480039	221292	MBC40306
Medieval coin	480495	221518	MBC40308
Medieval coin	480512	221475	MBC40309
Medieval buckle	480518	221516	MBC40310
Medieval clasp	480503	221536	MBC40311
Medieval brooch	480322	221608	MBC40482
Medieval coin	480452	220961	MBC40486
Medieval coin	480450	220960	MBC40489
Medieval brooch	480450	220960	MBC40490
Medieval buckle	480387	221059	MBC40768
Medieval coin	480390	221170	MBC40780
Medieval coin	480353	221145	MBC40781
Medieval coin	480300	221400	MBC40964
Medieval coin	480200	221400	MBC40965
Medieval strap fitting	480214	221404	MBC40982

Description	Eastings	Northings	HER ref.
Medieval coin	480310	221368	MBC40994
Medieval coin	480152	221401	MBC40998
Medieval floor tile	480451	221484	MBC41005
Medieval scabbard	480283	221646	MBC41006
Medieval stirrup	480375	221430	MBC41013
Saxon hooked tag found whilst metal-detecting	480029	221321	MBC41017
Medieval coin	480467	221409	MBC41018
Medieval coin found whilst metal-detecting	479984	221269	MBC41019
Medieval coin	480300	221500	MBC41085
Medieval coin found whilst metal-detecting	479800	221300	MBC41088
Medieval buckle fragment found whilst metal detecting	479700	221400	MBC41134
Medieval brooch	480479	221414	MBC41150
Medieval floor tile	480368	221521	MBC41160
Medieval vessel	480180	221499	MBC41162
Medieval brooch	480361	221761	MBC41163
Medieval strap fitting	480400	221400	MBC41165
Roman ring found whilst metal detecting	479726	221464	MBC41177
Medieval buckle found whilst metal detecting	479701	221385	MBC41178
Medieval cloth seal found whilst metal detecting	480049	221338	MBC41179
Medieval mount	480165	221327	MBC41180
Medieval coin	480190	221349	MBC41181
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	479711	221438	MBC41182
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	480034	221387	MBC41183
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479696	221421	MBC41184
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479693	221437	MBC41185
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	480165	221327	MBC41186
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	480112	221373	MBC41188
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	480054	221200	MBC41190
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479728	221453	MBC41192
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	479919	221366	MBC41204
Medieval key	480335	221708	MBC41205
Saxon brooch	480323	221609	MBC41207
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479780	221416	MBC41209
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479800	221400	MBC41217
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479858	221451	MBC41218
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	480057	221353	MBC41219
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	480000	221300	MBC41220
Medieval jetton found whilst metal detecting	480000	221300	MBC41221
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479800	221400	MBC41223
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479800	221400	MBC41224
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	479800	221400	MBC41225
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479800	221400	MBC41226
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479800	221400	MBC41227
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	479800	221400	MBC41228
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	479800	221400	MBC41229
Medieval or post-medieval buckle found whilst metal detecting	479809	221282	MBC41259
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479883	221409	MBC41260
Medieval or post-medieval pendant found whilst metal detecting	480033	221267	MBC41268
Iron Age coin found whilst metal detecting	480041	221229	MBC41275
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	480041	221557	MBC41302
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	480100	221500	MBC41304
Medieval buckle found whilst metal detecting	480100	221400	MBC41507

Description	Eastings	Northings	HER ref.
Roman coin	480140	221520	MBC41508
Roman coin	480120	221640	MBC41509
Medieval coin	480240	221460	MBC41511
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	480000	221200	MBC41523
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	480000	221200	MBC41524
Medieval strap mount found whilst metal detecting	480000	221200	MBC41540
Medieval or post-medieval buckle found whilst metal detecting	480000	221300	MBC41541
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479700	221400	MBC41542
Saxon sceat found whilst metal detecting	480000	221300	MBC41543
Post-medieval buckle found whilst metal detecting	479700	221400	MBC41544
Medieval coin	480200	221400	MBC41545
Iron Age coin	480300	221800	MBC41559
Saxon tag	480220	221700	MBC41569
Medieval brooch	480300	221770	MBC41571
Medieval Buckle	480150	221570	MBC41574
Medieval strap end	480200	221500	MBC41583
Medieval buckle found whilst metal detecting	479863	221426	MBC41585
Medieval coin found whilst metal detecting	479869	221407	MBC41589
Medieval or post-medieval vessel fragment found whilst metal detecting	479869	221407	MBC41590
Medieval vessel	480200	221500	MBC41591
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479640	221440	MBC41594
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479790	221370	MBC41595
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479770	221430	MBC41596
Roman coin found whilst metal detecting	479750	221500	MBC41597
Roman coin found whilst metal-detecting	479851	221438	MBC41629
Roman coin found whilst metal-detecting	479851	221438	MBC41647
Roman coin found whilst metal-detecting	479851	221438	MBC41649
Roman coin found whilst metal-detecting	479851	221438	MBC41650
Roman coin found whilst metal-detecting	479851	221438	MBC41651
Medieval buckle found whilst metal-detecting	479851	221438	MBC41652
Medieval buckle found whilst metal-detecting	479851	221438	MBC41653
Medieval coin	480199	221340	MBC41657
Medieval coin	480199	221340	MBC41658
Medieval coin	480400	221700	MBC41682
Medieval casket	480400	221700	MBC41684
Medieval key	480200	221700	MBC41685
Medieval coin	480200	221700	MBC41686
Iron Age coin found whilst metal-detecting	480017	221352	MBC41745
Iron Age coin	480200	220800	MBC41947
Medieval seal matrix found whilst metal-detecting	480115	221321	MBC42177
Medieval buckle	480164	221255	MBC42178
Medieval or post-medieval mount found whilst metal-detecting	480116	221239	MBC42179

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APPENDIX D: SITE H HERITAGE STATEMENT

Heritage Statement

ANNE DAVIES BA (Hons), MSc, Dip TP, MSc
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Description of development: Proposed housing allocation, Whitchurch Neighbourhood
Plan

Site address: Kempson House, 76 High Street, Whitchurch HP22 4JS



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This heritage statement has been prepared to support the designation of land at Kempson House, 76 High St, Whitchurch, HP22 4JS, as a housing allocation site in the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan, site reference W2 Kempson House West.

1.1.2 The proposed allocation site forms part of the site of Kempson House, a Grade II listed building.

1.1.3 The proposed allocation site abuts the northeast boundary of the Whitchurch Conservation Area.

1.1.4 The site is the subject of Policy W2 of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan 2020 - 2040 Pre-Submission Plan, which identified the site for the development of 23 dwellings. It states, inter alia, that,

'v. Proposals have full regard to all the relevant provisions of the Whitchurch Design Guidelines and Codes Report unless Development Management policies indicate otherwise;

vi. Proposals have full regard to Local Plan policy requirements on preserving and where possible enhancing heritage assets in responding to the location of the land adjacent to the Whitchurch Conservation Area;

vii. The scheme sustains and where possible enhances the significance of the Grade II listed building Kempson House in close proximity to the site;

2.0 SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

2.1.1 Background

The majority of the built development of the village of Whitchurch lies along the route of the A413, Aylesbury to Buckingham road as it rises to cross the Oving Hills to the north-west. There is some development in depth to the north along and beside Oving Rd and around Little London to the south. The historic core of the village lies in the north around the junction of the A413 with Oving Rd, Market Hill, Church Headland Lane and Church Lane. The historic marketplace which was located on the south side of Market Hill lies to the west of the A413 and St John's Church to the east. The early history of the village is associated with establishment of Bolebec Castle following the Norman Conquest, the mound that is the remnant of the former castle, lies to the south-west of the village. The village developed southwards from the core, along what is now High St, and is characterised by many notable buildings of the C16th and C17th. At the southern end and around the area known as Little London the buildings are predominantly C18th and C19th.

2.1.2 The village is surrounded by agricultural land which falls away to the south-west of the village but comprises rolling countryside to the north and east.

2.1.3 The Whitchurch Conservation Area was designated on 1st January 1971. The boundary mainly encompasses the historic development alongside the High St, extending in depth to incorporate the Parish Church to the east and the development on either side of the lower part of Oving Rd including the site of Bolebec Castle. The Conservation Area has not yet been the subject of an Appraisal by the Council, the latest published document being a resume of the character dated February 2008.

2.1.4 Whitchurch has been the subject of detailed review as part of the Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project. The project formed part of an extensive historic and natural environment characterisation programme by Buckinghamshire County Council and funded by the English Heritage (now Historic England). The report on Whitchurch was published in 2012.

2.1.5 The proposed allocation site forms part of the land holding attached to Kempston House and is located on the northernmost edge of the contiguous built development of the village on the east side of the A413. The land holding is accessed from the A413 at the bottom end of Church Headland Lane. The only other buildings to the north of the curtilage of Kempson House are those of the Whitchurch Business Park at Manor Farm.

2.1.5 Site.

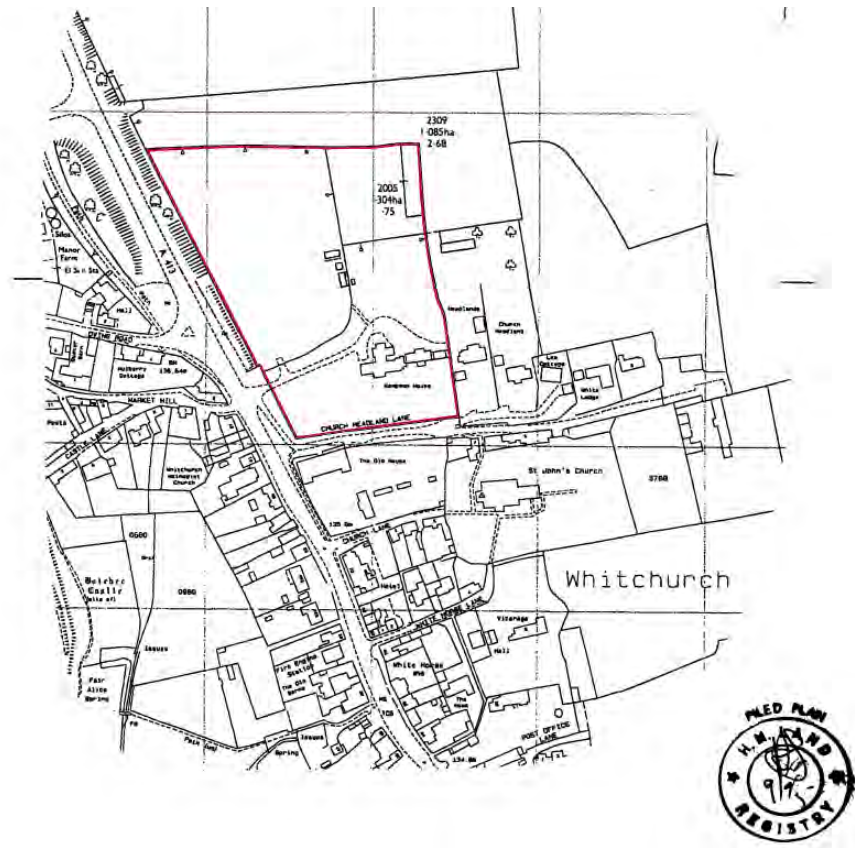
Kempson House is a Grade II listed building, first listed on 25 October 1951 with the list description most recently amended on 29 January 1985. The list description is reproduced below.

'House. Late C17, with early C20 extension of 3 bays to east, and later C20 extensions to rear. Coursed rubble stone with chamfered plinth, C17 bays with slightly projecting ground floor or band course. Old tile roof with brick chimneys to original gables and between left bays. Extension has fine external stone stack to right gable with irregularly chequered brick and stone top and 3 square brick shafts, the outer ones set diagonally. 2 storeys and attic, 7 irregular bays with wide bays to left and narrow ones to right. Leaded cross casements, renewed C20, with flush stone voussoir heads. 3 attic dormers with leaded casements, 2-light in centre bays, 3-light to right. Left bay has C20 half-glazed door. Third bay has wide projection, the front having a parapet of red and vitreous brick with modillion cornice and brick pediment above. Projection has similar cross casements, that to right side old with a brick head and stone keyblock. Front has segmental moulded brick arch over upper window and similar semi-circular arch over C20 door below. Left gable of main block has early C20 colourwashed render above first floor, the gable half-timbered and overhanging. Extensions to rear are of similar style, built of stone with half-timbered gables. Interior has good C17 staircase in projection, with turned balusters, moulded handrail, closed string and square new&posts with fine moulded and panelled finials. Stop-chamfered spine beams, one room also with moulded wooden cornice. 2 bolection-moulded marble fireplaces similar re-sited fireplace of stone with moulded cornice.'



South (front) elevation of Kempson House

2.1.6 The existing landholding associated with Kempson House is shown on the title plan below.



The proposed housing allocation plot occupies the top third of the plot and comprises an area of open pasture. This is clearly excluded from the Conservation Area as shown in the extract from the Conservation Area map. The boundary flows the line of the A413 to the west and loops around the pasture before enclosing part of the current garden of Kempson House.





Views north (above) and west (below) across the allocation site.

2.1.7 The proposed allocation site is enclosed by metal estate fencing. Inside the fencing is a further timber post and rail fence. The area along this fence and between the two fencing has been partially planted as part of a scheme for screen planting of the proposed allocation site. The intention being to ensure that the planting has time to mature and be effective should the proposed allocation site be approved. The planting area is shown above. The access to Kempson House (and Kempson Lodge), together with the wide treed bank (see below) form the southern boundary of the site. The line of mature trees on the bank forms a visual and physical boundary between the proposed allocation site and the recreational garden area associated with the listed building. Access to the paddock is obtained via a 5 bar timber gate located inside the man access to the site from High St.



Trees alongside allocation site boundary

- 2.1.8 Kempson House is located in the lower third of its wider plot. The wide gravelled access drive sweeps around the rear of the house to access a parking area and to provide separate access to Kempson Cottage. To the north of the drive there is an area of lawn and an enclosed tennis court.



View of the rear of the listed building and wide drive that separates it from the rear garden and proposed allocation plot.

The enclosed private residential garden associated with the listed building is now found to the front of the property where it is enclosed by a substantial stone wall on the south boundary to Church Headland Lane. To the west further enclosure is provided by a dense shrubbery screen along the south side of the drive. There is a timber gate in the stone boundary wall. This with the historic orientation of the listed building would seem to indicate that access to the site was originally from Church Headstone Lane.



View northwards from the rear of Kempson House towards the tennis court.



Gateway access to Church Headland Lane.

- 2.1.9 The form of the landholding now associated with Kempson House appears to have developed over relatively recent years. The historic maps reproduced in the Whitchurch Historic Town report are a useful means of illustrating the former and possibly original status of the house as the last detached residence at the north-eastern end of the High St. Maps from 1771, 1889 and 1955 are reproduced from the document on pages 8 and 9 below. The 1771 parish map shows the house located near the corner of land owned by a Mr Hedges. It is not known whether he was also the owner of the property at that time, but two clear property boundaries are discernible within the field, one of which is around Kempson House. Surrounding fields are allocated to many other names. It does not appear from this map that Kempson House was associated with any form of parkland setting.
- 2.1.10 The 1880 and 1955 OS maps are similar. The nearest agricultural holding was Manor Farm to the north-west. (The former farmyard for this farm has been redeveloped as Rickyard Close). The land to the north of Kempson House has the appearance of being part of an agricultural

landscape criss-crossed by footpaths. By 1955 there is some development to the east of the listed building where the detached dwellings of Headlands, Church Headland and Lea Cottage now stand.



1771 parish map



1880 OS map



1955 OS map

(all of the above reproduced from the Whitchurch Historic Towns Report)

2.1.11 The above maps also illustrate how the route of the A413 was altered in the latter C20th such that a new route was cut due north of the end of the High St. The remains of the former route now form a cul de sac access to the Grade II listed School House which fronts Oving Rd. The cutting of the new route has resulted in the bank with its extensive vegetation cover that marks the western boundary to the proposed allocation site. There is similar vegetation cover on the opposite side of the A413, collectively providing a visual barrier between the proposed allocation site and the western extent of the village as shown below.



View south down A413, proposed allocation site behind tree screen to left.

2.1.12 The north of the site is bounded by further vegetation beyond which is the current position of Manor Farm, a late C20th dwelling, together with a number of industrial buildings which now comprise the Whitchurch Business Park. Their relationship with the proposed allocation site and the edge of the village is perhaps best illustrated in a view from the north, looking toward the village from the road to Creslow. The church tower lies to the left, the Business Park in the middle and the tree canopy and proposed allocation site to the rear. This illustrates the hidden nature of the proposed allocation site in the landscape when viewed from the north and towards the entry to the village.



3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.1.0 Introduction

Initial proposals for the proposed allocation site have been developed in the form of a potential layout for the proposed 23 dwellings and a new access off the existing roundabout at the junction of Oving Rd with the A413 at the north end of the High Street. In addition, specialist advice has been sought regarding a landscape strategy to protect and enhance the setting of the listed building Kempson House.

3.1.1 The primary heritage issues that arise from the proposed allocation are the potential impact of the proposals on the setting of two heritage assets, the Grade II listed Kempson House and the Conservation Area. It is acknowledged that there are other listed buildings within the wider setting of the site, such as those in Oving Rd (e.g. the School House and the former British Legion Hall) as well as the Old House in Church Headland Lane and possibly the parish church. However, the curtilages of these are physically and functionally separated by some distance from the proposed site such that it is thought that there any impacts are likely to be minimal.

3.1.2 Any potential impacts on the listed building and the Conservation Area must be assessed in terms of an understanding of contribution that the proposed allocation site makes to the significance of the heritage assets identified. This is the approach contained in the policies of the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) and guidance provided by Historic England. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the 1990 Act) requires that special regard shall be had for the desirability of the preservation of listed buildings including their setting and the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas.

3.1.3 Significance/Character

The significance of the listed building is considered to lie in the evidence that it provides of the continued occupation of the site from the C17th onwards, together with the historical and aesthetic interest derived from the design and use of local building materials resulting in a dwelling that makes a positive contribution to the built form of the village. The significance of the Whitchurch Conservation Areas derives from its historic connections with the Bolebec family, the construction of the castle which indicates the local importance of the site, together with the establishment of the market. The built form of the Conservation Area illustrates the use of a wide range of building materials, including wood, brick, and stone derived from the abundant local resources. This has resulted in a distinctive built form of a range of buildings displayed around the former market area, Oving Rd, along the High St and Little London.

3.1.4 Impact

1. Kempson House

The proposed allocation site is an area of paddock that is separated within the landholding by fencing and a continuous line of mature trees located on the north side of the drive to the house. This land is not and has not been used as part of the cultivated garden space that supports the residential occupation of the site. There is no known evidence that this land was ever part of a planned parkland that supported or provided a setting for the house. Historic maps indicate that the dwelling had a location at the edge of the village and at the edge of the surrounding agricultural land. The earliest part of the building faces and has access to Church Headland Lane.

3.1.5 In physical terms the land to the north of Kempson House, i.e. the proposed allocation site, lawn and tennis court are separated from the house by the width and extent of the access drive and parking area. Whilst there is a main door to the house in the C20th extensions at the rear of the building, facing the drive, this is purely for ease of access. The house interacts with and has its primary setting on the south side within its enclosed garden. Here it is part of the looser knit development at the north of the village. This includes the three houses to the east as well as the Old House.

3.1.6 Whilst the redevelopment of the land to the rear of Kempson House will deprive it of some sense of openness to the north, the connection to the wider agricultural surroundings are now much more limited. Effectively the house turns it back to the agricultural land to the north and east, separation is also reinforced by the existing drive.

3.1.7 It is considered that the proposed allocation site as part of the setting of Kempson House adds very little to the significance or understanding of the significance of the listed building. The mature trees that line the north side of the drive will continue to provide a visual and physical screen to the listed building particularly when in full leaf. This screen will be reinforced by the planned planting in the site.

3.1.8 The proposed development of land to the rear of the listed building will not preserve the current setting but will introduce a change to that setting. The setting of heritage assets is something that inevitably alters over time as circumstances change, an alteration to setting is not necessarily a negative occurrence. The key in this case is achieving building designs and a layout that reflects and enhances the established character of the village and will not compete with the listed building.

3.1.9 the proposal will not threaten the retention of the heritage asset that is Kempson House thus there is no conflict with national or local policies that seek to preserve heritage assets. In NPPF terms the alteration to the setting may be seen to result in some harm to the setting of the

listed building but any such harm is more than mitigated by the public benefits arising from the proposal in terms of the contribution to the local housing supply.

3.1.10 2. Whitchurch Conservation Area

The Whitchurch Conservation Area boundary encompasses the majority of the village. It is a tightly defined area with almost an urban character displayed in the continuous frontages to High Street. The compact nature of development is such that there is limited awareness of the agricultural surroundings of the village from the main highways. The proposed allocation site is located at the very edge of the settlement. It is not an integral part of the spatial form of the village in the manner that open green spaces can be. The land is privately owned and enclosed, there is no tangible public interaction with the space that can be linked to village life or the character of the Conservation Area. Any views into the village from land to the north or even public footpaths will be exceedingly limited due to the existing tree cover within the site and along the highway edge to the A413. As illustrated on page 11, views from the north towards the village are screened by trees and the Whitchurch Business Park buildings.

- 3.1.11 The private and semi-enclosed nature of the proposed allocation site is such that it does not tangibly contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area at the present time. However, the appropriate development of the site, in a manner that reflects proposed Design codes, respects the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and includes appropriate landscaping has the capacity to enhance the setting of the Conservation Area.

4.0 SUMMARY

4.1 The proposed housing allocation site W2: Kempson House West, includes land which is currently part of the land holding associated with the Grade II listed Kempson House. The site abuts the north-eastern edge of the Whitchurch Conservation Area boundary.

4.2 The site comprises an area of enclosed paddock which does not form part of the garden that sustains the residential use of the plot. There is some physical separation of the site from the listed building by means of the distinct nature of the access drive and a row of substantial mature trees. Historically the land is not known to have functioned as a park sustaining the use or enjoyment of the listed building, nor does map evidence point to such a use. The significance of the listed building is considered to lie principally in the age, design and use of materials of the structure such that the site is thought to make a limited contribution to its significance. Any harm to significance in NNPF terms is likely to be less than substantial and outweighed by the benefits of additions to the local housing stock.

4.3 The site lies adjacent to the boundary of the Conservation Area. It is largely enclosed such that there is no interaction with the Conservation Area and it plays no part in views into and out of the northern part of the village. The land appears to have been part of the agricultural surroundings of the village up until at least the C19th and early C20th. In latter years the paddock has become part of the plot of Kempson House. The nature of the site is such that it does not make any obvious contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area.

4.4 Proposed policy W2 of the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan sets out the criteria to be met in the development of the proposed allocation site. Taking each element specific to the heritage assets in this context.

4.5 *'v. Proposals have full regard to all the relevant provisions of the Whitchurch Design Guidelines and Codes Report unless Development Management policies indicate otherwise;*

Once the Design Guidelines and Codes are agreed it is vital that any new development adheres to them in the interest of achieving a vibrant, relevant and appropriate development on the proposed site. This is a matter of detail for a later stage.

4.6 *'vi. Proposals have full regard to Local Plan policy requirements on preserving and where possible enhancing heritage assets in responding to the location of the land adjacent to the Whitchurch Conservation Area;'*

Fulfilling this criterion requires an understanding of the significance of the Conservation Area, and the relative impacts of any proposals on any other heritage assets in the locality. A scheme for the site provides the opportunity to not only preserve but enhance the Conservation Area by reason of the quality of development and will thus fulfil both national and local planning policy objectives.

4.7 *'vii. The scheme sustains and where possible enhances the significance of the Grade II listed building Kempson House in close proximity to the site;'*

The development of the proposed allocation site will result in a degree of change for the site of the listed building. The curtilage of the listed building is sufficiently spacious that it has the capacity to encompass change without detriment to the significance or setting of the listed building. This will be dependent on the design, materials, siting and most importantly landscaping of the site.

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APPENDIX E: SITE H SUMMARY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL



LAND AT KEMPSON HOUSE,
WHITCHURCH

**SUMMARY LANDSCAPE AND
VISUAL APPRAISAL**

Prepared for

GADE

MARCH 2023

Ref: A331-AS01-REV B

ARC LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND PLANNING LTD.

Land at Kempson House, Whitchurch

Summary Landscape Appraisal

Prepared by Vanessa Ross
File Ref: A331-AS01revB

Client: Gade Homes
Date: March 2023

Introduction and Planning Background

1. This report has been prepared in order to provide a summary landscape and visual appraisal relating to land to the north of Kempson House in Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire which has been identified for residential development within the emerging Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan.
2. The report, commissioned by Gade Homes has been prepared by Vanessa Ross FLI, a Chartered Landscape Architect and Director of Arc Landscape Design and Planning Ltd., who has extensive experience in undertaking both landscape and visual impact assessments and appraisals. Whilst the report is not a full Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVA), it does draw on best practice guidance as set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3). The report does, however seek to summarise the anticipated likely effects resulting from any future development on the site and identify areas for further consideration in developing a scheme for planning. It is anticipated that a full LVA will be submitted with any future planning application.
3. The note is based on a combination of desk and site based assessment with two visits with an initial review of the site in October 2021 and a more comprehensive visit to the surrounding area in March 2023. This was supported by a review of mapping and existing documents including the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan (and accompanying Design Code), the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan and Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment.
4. The village of Whitchurch is located approximately 4miles to the north of Aylesbury and approximately 8miles to the southwest of Milton Keynes. The village falls within the former Aylesbury Vale District which is now part of the unitary authority, Buckinghamshire Council.
5. The site is not covered by any statutory landscape designation however does fall within the locally designated Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) which is identified as locally important and consequentially, considered to fall within the definition of a 'valued landscape' as set out in para 174a of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2021). Whitchurch is some 8miles northwest of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundary.
6. The site comprises a broadly rectangular paddock of approximately 1ha and sits to the northwest of Kempson House a Grade II Listed Building and therefore forms part of the setting of the listed building. Much of the village of Whitchurch is covered by a Conservation Area which takes in the buildings either side of the High Street (A413). The Conservation Area includes a number of other listed buildings including The Old House and Garden Walls (Grade II*) and the stable block to the south (Grade II) as well as St John's Church (Grade II*) all of which are within 140m to the south of the site. A number of other listed buildings are located within close proximity to the site to the site on the other side of the A413

and off Market Hill and Oving Road. Whilst Kempson House falls within the Conservation Area, the site itself sits outside but adjacent to it.

- This report considers the proximity of the listed buildings and Conservation Areas but only insofar as they relate to potential landscape impacts resulting from any future residential development. The report therefore does not seek to assess the impact on the heritage assets and matters relating to heritage are addressed separately by DLA .

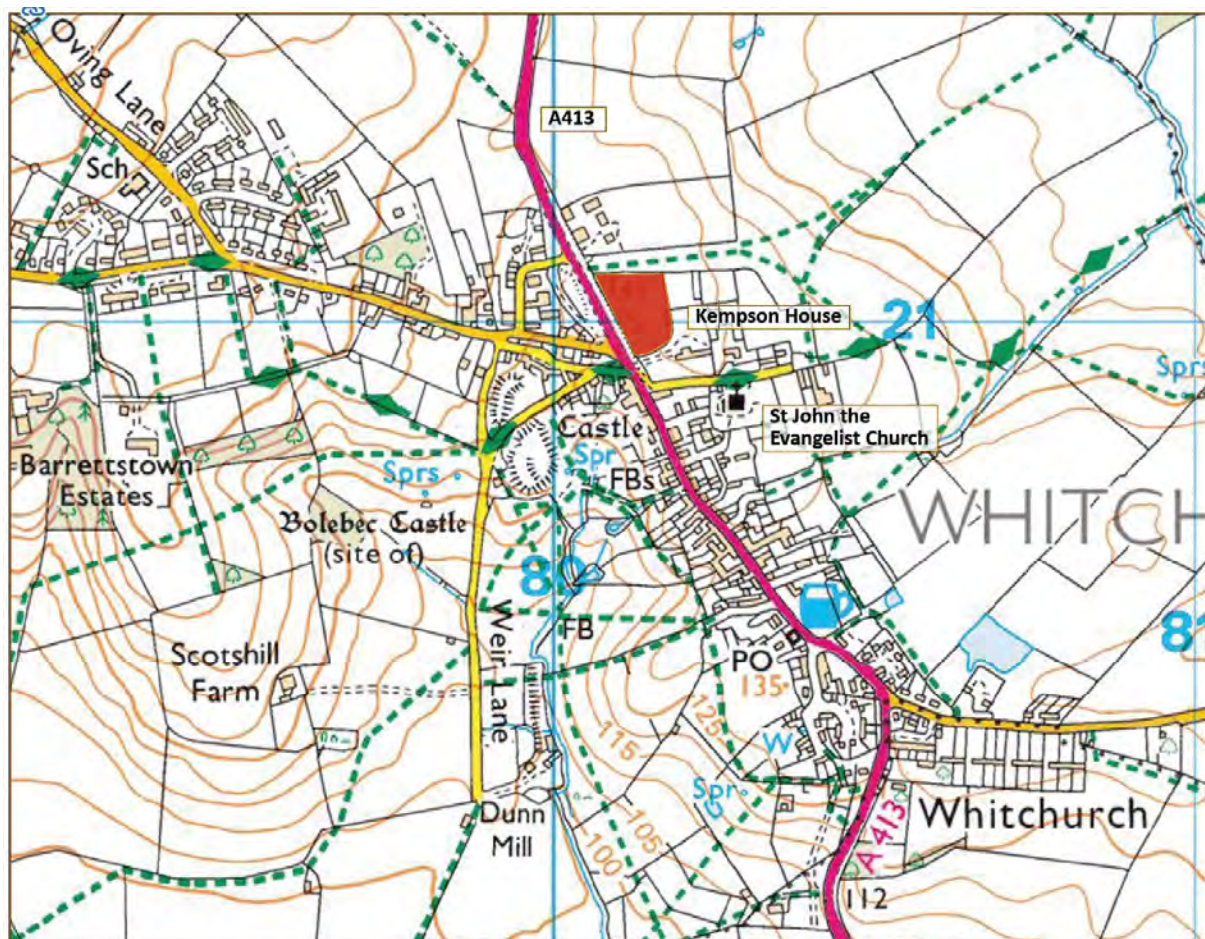


Fig. 1 - Site Location – (site shown in red)

Planning Policy – Summary of Relevant Policy

- This section summaries the planning policy relevant to this study and it is note that will be a wide range of other policies that would need to be addressed within any future planning application.

Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan

- As set out above the site is allocated in the emerging Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan under Policy W2: Housing Allocation – Land at Kempson House West, and the wording set out in the December 2022 Pre-Submission Plan is as follows:

The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land at Kempson House West, as shown on the Policies Maps, for residential development. Proposals will be supported provided they accord with the following site-specific requirements alongside other relevant policies of the development plan;

- i. The scheme delivers approximately 23 new homes comprising a mix of open market and affordable homes in accordance with Local Plan policies, including the interim position statements on the provision of First Homes (or successor policies) or any subsequent update with an emphasis on one, two and three bedroom homes suitable for first time buyers, those looking to rent their first home and downsizers and as guided by the Whitchurch Housing Needs Assessment;
- ii. The scheme demonstrates safe and convenient access for pedestrians to services and facilities off the A413, including to public transport services;
- iii. Vehicular access is made from a single access point off the A413 in a location which is acceptable to the Highways Authority, balanced with minimising the loss of thick hedges and mature trees;
- iv. The scheme provides for traffic management measures that are required by the Highways Authority in connection with the development of this site;
- v. Proposals have full regard to all the relevant provisions of the Whitchurch Design Guidelines and Codes Report unless Development Management policies indicate otherwise;
- vi. Proposals have full regard to Local Plan policy requirements on preserving, and where possible enhancing heritage assets in responding to the location of the land adjoined to the Whitchurch Conservation Area;
- vii. The scheme sustains and where possible enhances the significance of the Grade II listed building Kempson House in close proximity to the site;
- viii. A landscape strategy is prepared, and the layout and heights of buildings have regard to Local Plan policy requirements on landscape character and the location of the land within an Area of Attractive Landscape and on the retention of trees and hedgerows where possible;
- ix. A biodiversity strategy is prepared that delivers a net gain in biodiversity having full regard to Local Plan policy requirements on the protection and enhancement of biodiversity;
- x. A sustainable drainage strategy is prepared, which seeks to maximise the use of sustainable drainage systems in the design of the scheme and approved by the local planning authority to address the effects of surface water run-off within the land, or as such surface water run-off from the land might impact elsewhere within the village.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

10. The NPPF, which sets out national policy, has been updated with the most recent iteration being published on 20th July 2021, however it is anticipated that a further revision is due to be published in the spring of 2023, and therefore any changes would need to be addressed in any future appraisals and planning application. For the purposes of this note, a summary of the relevant parts of the 2021 NPPF are considered below.
11. At a national level the NPPF at para 8, sets out the three ‘overarching objectives’ which are required to achieve sustainable development, namely economic, social and environmental, with the latter two of particular relevance.
 - **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and

by fostering well-designed beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

- ***an environmental objective*** – *to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*
12. Whilst the NPPF must be read as a whole, Paragraphs 126-136 provide guidance on ensuring the delivery of well-designed buildings and places, with paragraph 126 stating *“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities’*. Paragraph 127 stresses the need for design policies should be *‘grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each areas defining characteristics’*”.
 13. Paragraphs 128 and 129 introduce the need for councils to provide clarity about design expectations early on and introduce the (new) requirement for councils to prepare *“design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design guides and codes. These provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design’*”.
 14. Paragraph 130 sets out 6 elements that: *“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*
 - a. 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;*
 - b. are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
 - c. are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
 - d. establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
 - e. optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
 - f. create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*
 15. Paragraph 130 goes on to state that *“Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development’*”.

16. Section 15, (paragraphs 174-188) of the NPPF focuses on **conserving and enhancing the natural and local environment**. Paragraph 174 states that planning policies and decisions should do this by:
- a. *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
 - b. *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
 - c. *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
 - d. *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
 - e. *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
 - f. *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*
17. Paragraphs 179-182 relate to Habitats and Biodiversity, including a requirement at part c) of paragraph 180 where it states “c) *development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate improve biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.*”
18. Section 16 of the NPPF addresses the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and at para 194, states the applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected and as noted above, this matter is separate to the landscape appraisal.

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013-2033

19. At a local level the Adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, sets out a wide range of policies that are relevant to the appraisal of the site, though it is noted that in respect of policies relating specifically to Whitchurch, the Neighbourhood Plan, once complete, will prevail.
20. The VALP does include policies that will apply including **BE2 – Design of New Development** which states:

All new development proposals shall respect and complement the following criteria:

- a. *The physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings including the scale and context of the site and its setting.*
- b. *The local distinctiveness and vernacular character of the locality, in terms of ordering, form, proportions, architectural detailing and materials*
- c. *The natural qualities and features of the area, and*
- d. *The effect on important public views and skylines. More guidance on the detail for the application and implementation of this policy will be provided in the Aylesbury Vale Design SPD.*

21. And in respect of Section 9 - Natural Environment, of specific relevance to this note is **Policy NE4 – Landscape Character and Locally Important Landscape** which states:

Development must recognise the individual character and distinctiveness of particular landscape character areas set out in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), their sensitivity to change and contribution to a sense of place. Development should consider the characteristics of the landscape character area by meeting all of the following criteria:

- a. minimise impact on visual amenity*
- b. be located to avoid the loss of important on-site views and off-site views towards important landscape features*
- c. respect local character and distinctiveness in terms of settlement form and field pattern, topography and ecological value*
- d. Carefully consider spacing, height, scale, plot shape and size, elevations, roofline and pitch, overall colour palette, texture and boundary treatment (walls, hedges, fences and gates)*
- e. minimise the impact of lighting to avoid blurring the distinction between urban and rural areas, and in areas which are intrinsically dark and to avoid light pollution to the night sky*
- f. ensure that the development is not visually prominent in the landscape, and*
- g. not generate an unacceptable level and/or frequency of noise in areas relatively undisturbed by noise and valued for their recreational or amenity value*

The first stage in mitigating impact is to avoid any identified significant adverse impact. Where it is accepted there will be harm to the landscape character, specific on-site mitigation will be required to minimise that harm and, as a last resort, compensation may be required as part of a planning application. This reflects the mitigation hierarchy set out in paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2012). Applicants must consider the enhancement opportunities identified in the LCA and how they apply to a specific site.

The Policies Map defines areas of attractive landscape (AALs) and local landscape areas (LLAs) which have particular landscape features and qualities considered appropriate for particular conservation and enhancement opportunities. Of the two categories, the AALs have the greater significance. Development in AALs and LLAs should have particular regard to the character identified in the report 'Defining the special qualities of local landscape designations in Aylesbury Vale District' (Final Report, 2016) and the LCA (2008).

Development will be supported where appropriate mitigation to overcome any adverse impact to the character of the receiving landscape has been agreed.

Where permission is granted, the council will require conditions to best ensure the mitigation of any harm caused to the landscape.

The Site and its Landscape Context

22. As noted above, the site is currently a paddock and sits to the north west of Kempson House. The house is accessed from a gated driveway and shares an access off the A413 with Church Headland Lane which leads to St John the Evangelist Church and serves a number of properties to the south and east of Kempson House.

23. Kempson House includes an area of garden to the south which is predominantly laid to lawn with mature trees and hedgerow to the perimeter. A further area of garden exists to the north of the turning area at the head of the drive, again bounded by mature trees. A hard surface tennis court is located in a paddock to the north.
24. The site, which has a broadly flat topography sits several meters above the carriageway of the A413 which runs parallel with the western boundary which includes a belt of mature trees on top of the vegetated road embankment. The access driveway to the house is lined with an avenue of mature trees forming which wrap around the paddock to form part of the eastern boundary of the site. A recently planted belt of trees and shrubs sit to the north and west of the existing trees and to create a new boundary parallel to the existing trees.
25. The northern section of the site boundary is formed by a fence and the northern boundary is formed by a hedgerow which whilst. Land to the north comprises a narrow field with a public footpath that connects the A413 to the west with a network of paths to the east.
26. A small industrial area is located beyond the narrow field to the north with land beyond to the north and east comprising paddocks around the eastern periphery of the village with farmland beyond.
27. The historic centre of the village, including a castle mount sits to the west of the A413 with the village extending west along Oving Road and south along the A413 and Bushmead Road.
28. The Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying Design Code provide detailed information on the development and architectural of the village and it is not intended to repeat it however in summary the village has developed in a linear form along the A413 and Oving Road; it has an historic and varied mix of buildings and, with the exception of some later 20th century development at the edges, much of the village falls within a Conservation Area. Building materials vary reflecting the varied underlying geology. Many houses are of red brick and also include locally quarried sandstone and limestone.

Landscape Character

29. The site, whilst falling within the village settlement boundary, is located within the Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Area LC9.3 Pitchcott-Whitchurch Ridge. The LCA includes three villages and is predominantly rural with the key characteristics are described as
 - *Broad ridge eroded by network of small streams*
 - *Gently rolling landform with distinctive local promontories*
 - *Predominantly pastoral land use*
 - *Small fields enclosed by mature hedges*
 - *Extensive settlement along top of ridge*
 - *Long distance views over surrounding landscape*

And Distinctive Features being:

- *Church towers*
- *Large area of arable land north of Whitchurch adjacent to A413 corridor*
- *Historic earthworks of Bolbec castle*
- *Mature woodland around earthworks to west of Whitchurch*

- *Limestone walls and thatched properties*
- *Timber framed buildings*
- *Thatched roofs*
- *Ridge and Furrow*
- *Creslow*

30. Intrusive elements are listed as ‘traffic on the A413’ and ‘horse paddocks’.

31. The Character Assessment includes a summary of Condition and Sensitivity as follows:

Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis	
Condition	Good
Pattern of elements:	Unified
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Strongly Unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Coherent
Sensitivity	High
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High
Guidelines	Conserve

32. Landscape Guidelines for LCA 9.3 are:

- *Conserve the extensive network of hedgerows and tree cover.*
- *Strengthen the field pattern around the arable areas to the north by planting up gaps in hedgerows and encouraging the development of hedgerow trees.*
- *Promote good woodland management to conserve the extent of woodland cover.*
- *Maintain and improve connectivity.*
- *Protect the integrity and vernacular character of the settlements.*
- *Encourage planting around suburban fringes in relation to new development.*
- *Conserve the sites and wider setting to the Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other Archaeological Notification Sites.*
- *Encourage the preservation of historic earthworks and ridge and furrow by maintaining a continuous grass sward.*

Summary of Potential Effects on Landscape Character

33. The introduction of residential development as anticipated in the Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan will, inevitably lead to a degree of harm to the landscape of the site itself, however it is considered that there would be only a limited impact on the surrounding landscape character. This is due to the site’s adjacency to the existing settlement and the fact that it is visually contained. The character of the surrounding landscape encompasses settlement within it and therefore on the basis that any new development will be sympathetic to the local built form and follow the prescriptions set out within the Design Code appended to the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that the site has the capacity to accept new residential buildings without causing any undue impact on the character of the surrounding area or on the locally designated Area of Attractive Landscape.

Views and Visual Amenity

34. As described above the site is largely surrounded by existing vegetation which limits views into (and out of) the site. The site is, however, visible through gaps in the younger hedgerow that runs along the site's northern boundary, from the footpath that runs parallel to it, and glimpsed views from the surrounding network of public rights of way.
35. Views from the A413 and from within village, are limited largely as a result of the boundary vegetation along the A413 however views can be gained when looking directly towards the site from the pavement opposed. It is noted that should development occur within the site, an additional vehicular entrance will need to be provided which will, therefore open up views into the development.
36. It is possible that the site may be visible from some locations along roads to the north, eg when travelling south along the A413, however as traffic is generally fast moving, the site remains largely indiscernible and those driving along the road would not, in any case, be considered a sensitive receptor.
37. The following key plan identifies the location of a number of representative views and the accompanying table provides a summary description of each, along with a short commentary on the anticipated change in the view resulting from future development within the site, as anticipated in the Neighbourhood Plan. These are supported by photographs taken on the site visit in March 2023. Due to the location of the views, either from public rights of way (and within the AAL) or from within the Conservation Area the receptors and locations, are likely to fall within a high-medium high category of sensitivity, however a full assessment will be undertaken as part of a detailed LVA at the time of any future planning application.

Viewpoint	Description and photo of view
View 2	<p>View looking west from the junction of two public rights of way approximately 225m from the site. The viewpoint is from the network of paths within the paddocks, The southern part of the site is located beyond two lines of trees and the northern half beyond a hedgerow. The view also takes the Church and the roof tops of some of the buildings in the vicinity of Kempson House</p> <p>Future development on the site is likely to appear within part of the view, however will have the potential to be further mitigated as existing and new vegetation grows and therefore any perceived harm resulting from any change will be reduced.</p>
View 3	<p>View looking west from the public right of way approximately 800m away at a low point of the shallow valley to the east. Due to the distance the views are wider taking in both the eastern side of the village in the distance and the intervening fields. Due to the fence bounding the footpath, the view is focussed towards the site, however this is largely imperceptible due to perimeter vegetation. It is possible that some rooftops of new development within the northern part of the site may be visible, however due to the existing context along with potential to further mitigate with planting, it is unlikely that development will result in any harm to the views from this location.</p>
View 4	<p>View looking south west from the public right of way on the approach to Creslow, approximately 1.1km from the site. The site is visible in the far distance in this wider panoramic view and whilst it is possible that some of the roof tops of future development will be visible, they will sit as a small part of the wider view towards the village and will not cause any harm to visual amenity.</p>

Viewpoint	Description and photo of view
View 5	View looking towards the site from the public right of way approximately 130m away from the site, part of which is visible beyond the boundary vegetation. Due to the proximity of this view, it is anticipated that new buildings will become visible but seen as filtered through existing vegetation. As a result of this and the ability to mitigate with further planting, it is not considered that the introduction of houses within the site will result in any undue harm to the visual amenity.
View 6	View looking south from the western end of the public right of way as it approaches the A413. There are clear, albeit partly filtered views into the site and towards Kempson House beyond. Any new development on the site will be visible from this location and care will be needed to ensure the existing hedge is maintained and reinforced and that the design of buildings follow the local architectural style in order that they sit comfortably within the view.
View 7	This view is taken from the eastern end of Oving Road with the roundabout and A413 in the foreground. There are views into the site from this location albeit filtered through existing trees and boundary vegetation. New development on the site is likely therefore to be visible, though partially screened by existing and, if necessary additional planting. Any new road access will result in the greatest degree of change to the view and therefore junction design will need to be carefully reviewed to reduce impact visually in this part of the village.

Viewpoint	Description and photo of view
View 8	This view is looking north towards the existing entrance to Kempson House. From this location much of the site is screened behind existing vegetation, and it is anticipated that any new houses will remain largely screened. As noted for view 7, the access into the site is likely to result in the biggest change to the view and will need to be designed accordingly to reduce any visual harm from within the Conservation Area.

Table 1 – Representative viewpoint descriptions and photos

Conclusion

38. In summary the site allocated for development within the emerging Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan is likely to result in a direct but very localised harm on the landscape of the site itself, however if delivered in accordance with the Design Code and with additional planting to the periphery of the site, it is not considered that there will be any undue harm to the surrounding landscape or the local landscape designation within the VALP.
39. In visual terms whilst visible from some surrounding viewpoints including those from the countryside beyond, the site in its existing form is largely screened by existing trees and hedgerows. It is likely that parts of any new development on the site may appear within some views, however if designed appropriately any such change is likely to be acceptable and not reduce the visual amenity of those using the public rights of way.
40. The addition of a new access road into the site is likely to result in a change in the view from the streets within the vicinity of the site which fall within the conservation area and therefore care will need to be taken in producing a sensitive design that limits any impact on view and on the conservation area.
41. Any future scheme proposal will be developed alongside a full assessment of the effects on landscape and visual receptors, and any such receptors should be agreed in advance with the local planning authority; any future planning application will be accompanied by a landscape and visual assessment/appraisal undertaken in accordance with best practice methodology set out in GLVIA3.
42. In overall conclusion, and notwithstanding the above, this initial summary landscape and visual appraisal confirms that the site has the capacity to accept future residential development of the nature anticipated in the Neighbourhood Plan, and that with careful design and appropriate additional planting, any localised effects are likely to be able to be successfully mitigated.



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