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Land North of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Green Belt Assessment

Iceni Projects Limited on behalf of
Richborough

December 2024

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ON BEHALF OF
RICHBOROUGH

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Land North of Little Green Lane,
Croxley Green
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND
GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Icení Projects have been instructed by Richborough to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Green Belt Assessment in relation to the planning application for the proposed development at land north of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green (the 'Site').
- 1.2 The description of development is as follows: *Outline Application: Construction of up to 600 residential dwellings (Use Class C3(a)), a 5-bedroom property for children's social care and supported living (Use Class C3(b)). Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane and further pedestrian / cycleway accesses. A one form entry primary school (Use Class F1(a)) (plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school). A mixed use local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)), community building (Use Class F2), retail and café provision (Use Class E(a-c)), car parking and associated infrastructure. A country park, areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage systems. (All matters are reserved except for vehicular access).*
- 1.3 The Site lies within the administrative area of Three Rivers District Council, and within the Green Belt. The Site's location is shown on the plan in **Appendix A1**.
- 1.4 This assessment describes the existing character and quality of the landscape on and around the Site, and also considers the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development on the Site and wider area. It then considers the Site's performance as part of the Green Belt, and the resultant harm to the Green Belt which will result from development at the Site.

Methodology

- 1.5 The assessment is based on Site visits undertaken in June 2024 and November 2024 by a qualified and experienced Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute. The weather conditions at the time of the Site visits were sunny with good visibility.
- 1.6 This report considers the potential impact on both landscape character and visibility, with a distinction drawn between landscape effects (i.e. direct and indirect effects on the landscape resource and character), and visual effects (i.e. the views that people have of the Site and surroundings from publicly accessible places, and also residential views). The methodology utilised in this report is set out in **Appendix A13**, and the Green Belt Assessment methodology is in **Appendix A12**.



PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

- 2.1 The NPPF sets out the national planning policy, with section 15 dealing with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst others:

'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'.

- 2.2 Section 13 of the NPPF sets out the fundamental aim of the Green Belt. Green Belt serves five purposes:

'a) checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land and other urban land.'

- 2.3 Further guidance is set out within the Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG'), supported by the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code, which provide guidance on how well-designed places can be achieved.

- 2.4 The national planning policies and guidance of relevance to this Assessment are summarised in **Appendix A5**.

Local Planning Policy Context

- 2.5 The following Local Planning policies are relevant to the proposed development, landscape and visual matters.

- 2.6 The adopted Development Plan for Three Rivers comprises the Core Strategy and the Development Management Policies, adopted in October 2011 and July 2013, respectively; as well as some saved policies from the Three Rivers Local Plan (2001).

Core Strategy, October 2011

- 2.7 Policies of relevance are noted below:
- 2.8 Policy CP1: Overarching Policy on Sustainable Development, states the Council's intention to ensure development will contribute to the sustainability of the District.
- 2.9 Policy CP9: Green infrastructure, which aims to ensure a net gain in the quality and quantity of Green Infrastructure.
- 2.10 Policy CP11: Green Belt, states the Council's aim to maintain the general extent of the Green Belt, whilst encouraging appropriate positive use and measures to improve environmental quality.
- 2.11 Policy CP12: Design of Development, states an intention for a high standard of design for all development, requires design proposals to sensitively and positively respond to the character of the site and its surroundings while optimizing the site potential.

Development Management Policies, July 2013

- 2.12 Policy DM2: Green Belt, states the Council's intention to maintain the purpose, function and open character of the Green Belt
- 2.13 Policy DM3: The Historic Built Environment, states the Council's intention to preserve and enhance the historic environment.
- 2.14 Policy DM6: Biodiversity, Trees, Woodlands, Watercourses and Landscaping, states that development should be encouraged to include measures to contribute positively to the overall biodiversity of the District.
- 2.15 Policy DM7: Landscape Character, contains three parts. Part 'a' deals with the Chiltern's National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), and is not of relevance to the Site or this Assessment. Part 'b' deals with 'Landscape Regions' and notes that in all landscape regions, the Council will require proposals to make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape. Proposals that would unacceptably harm the character of the landscape in terms of siting, scale, design or external appearance will be refused planning permission. The Council will support proposals that:
- i) Lead to the removal or a reduction in the impact of existing structures and land uses that are detrimental to the visual quality of the landscape.*
 - ii) Enhance public access and recreation opportunities without detriment to the landscape or wildlife.*
 - iii) Contribute to delivery of Green Infrastructure.*
 - iv) Contribute to the measures identified in the Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy 2001 to strength, reinforce, safeguard, manage, improve, restore and reconstruct landscapes' (see Section 3.10-3.21 later on).*

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- 2.16 Part 'c' notes that when considering proposals for development which may affect the management of an area of particular feature of the landscape, details of management proposals to protect or enhance the contribution of the site to the wider landscape will be required.

Local Plan – Preferred Policy Options Consultation Document – Regulation 18 (2021)

- 2.17 The new Local Plan looks to allocate new development sites and contains area-based policies. This document acknowledges a need to allocate land outside the existing built-up areas through planned Green Belt release, with potential sites located sustainably at the edge of existing settlements.
- 2.18 Emerging policies of relevance include:
- Preferred Policy Option 16 - Green Belt;
 - Preferred Policy Option 20 - Landscape Character;
 - Preferred Policy Option 23 - Local Distinctiveness and Place Shaping.

Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan (2017 – 2032) Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.19 The Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan was made in 2017, and key policies of relevance are noted below. The Site lies outside of, but just to the north of the Neighbourhood Plan area, and also the Croxley Green Parish, with the Site located within the south easternmost corner of the Sarratt Parish.
- 2.20 Policy CA1: New Developments, aims to ensure all new development compliments and reinforces the key elements of the existing defined Character Areas.
- 2.21 Policy HO2: Lifetime Neighbourhoods and Security, requires new development to contribute towards the creation of 'lifetime neighbourhoods', with the design principles of 'Secured by Design, New Homes 2014' or any successor document highlighted for reference.
- 2.22 Policy HO3: Connections to Existing Footpaths and Cycle Ways in New Developments, requires new development to be connected into the existing networks.
- 2.23 The Neighbourhood Plan includes a section considering the character of the existing settlement. The Site lies outside of, but adjacent to the northernmost part of the settlement which lies within the Character Area 7: North of Baldwins Lane, Links Way and Little Green Lane.

3. SITE CONTEXT

Site Context

- 3.1 The Site lies on the northern edge of Croxley Green, a village within the Three Rivers District in Hertfordshire. The eastern boundary of the Site is adjacent to the Borough of Watford. The Site extends to 40.69 hectares and is located to the north of Little Green Lane and to the west of Rousebarn Lane. The location and character of the Site are shown on the OS Map and Aerial Photograph contained in **Appendix A1** and **A2**, and photographs of the Site are included in **Appendix A3**.
- 3.2 The Site comprises two large arable fields. The larger eastern field includes a copse of Ancient Woodland (known as Green Lane Wood) roughly within the centre.
- 3.3 The Site is bound to the north by the continuation of Rousebarn Lane, which is little more than a track in this location, with Whippendell Woods located beyond.
- 3.4 To the east of the Site is dense woodland within the Cassiobury Registered Park and Garden, with the West Herts Golf Course located within the wooded landscape here, and the large town of Watford located beyond.
- 3.5 The Site is bound by Little Green Lane to the south. Beyond it to the south is the village of Croxley Green, with the residential area south of the Site predominantly characterised by semi-detached dwellings from the mid- and late-twentieth century. The Grade II Listed Durrants House lies south of the Site along Little Green Lane, west of Norwich Way.
- 3.6 To the west, the Site is bound by a linear band of Ancient Woodland known as Long Newland's Spring, with a public footpath located within this woodland belt. Beyond to the west are further areas of arable land and woodland, with scattered development occurring around York House School and Sarratt Road. Indented into the north west of the Site is Dell Wood, with Newland's Spring and Merlin's Wood located a short distance beyond to the north and north west (all Ancient Woodland).

Landscape Character Assessments

National Landscape Character

- 3.7 Natural England has produced profiles for England's National Character Areas ('NCAs'), dividing England into 159 different natural areas, which are defined by their unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, cultural, and economic activity. The majority of the Site lies within NCA

115: North Thames Valley, with the northernmost part of the Site located within NCA 111: Northern Thames Basin.

3.8 The key characteristics of NCA 115 include:

'Flat and low-lying land, rising to low, river-terraced hills, which include the prominent local outcrop of chalk on which Windsor Castle sits.

The underlying geology is dominated by the London Clay which, over much of the area, is overlain by river-lain sands and gravels.

The numerous hydrological features provide unity to an area which otherwise lacks homogeneity; these features include the River Thames and its tributaries, streams, lakes, canals and open waterbodies (the result of restored gravel workings).

Woodlands characterise the north-western area, with the wooded character extending up to the southern edge of the Chiltern Hills.

Farming is limited. Where it survives, grazed pasture is the major land use within a generally open, flat and featureless landscape. The field pattern is medium-scale and irregular, with smaller fields to the west. Localised areas of species-rich hay meadows provide a splash of colour in summer.

Although densely populated and developed, pockets of woodland, open grassland, parkland, wetlands and intimate meadows provide escape and tranquillity, and include a variety of habitats supporting important populations of many species, notably stag beetle, shoveler, gadwall and other invertebrates and wildfowl.

Towards London in the east, the natural character of the area is overtaken by urban influences: a dense network of roads (including the M25 corridor), Heathrow Airport, railway lines, golf courses, pylon lines, reservoirs, extensive mineral extraction and numerous flooded gravel pits. The area has an urban character, and there are very few villages of more traditional character, although almost half of the area is greenbelt land and development has been restricted in areas like Crown Estate land and Eton College grounds.

The area is important for recreation, both for residents and visitors. Historic parkland and commons provide access to green space, the Thames Path National Trail runs the length of the NCA, and a variety of activities are enjoyed on the river and other waterbodies.'

3.9 The key characteristics of NCA 111 include:

'The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the 'Bagshot Hills' are notable to the northwest and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.

Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.

A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area.

The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.

The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity. Informal patterns of 18th-century or earlier enclosure reflect medieval colonisation of the heaths. Regular planned enclosures dating from the Romano-British period are a subtle but nationally important feature on the flat land to the south-east of the area. In the Essex heathlands 18th- and 19th-century enclosure of heathlands and commons followed by extensive 20th-century field enlargement is dominant.

Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.

The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.

Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London. Landscape parklands surrounding 16th- and 17th-century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.

The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.

Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17th century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls.'

Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2000; extracts contained in Appendix A7)

- 3.10 The Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment identifies over 230 Landscape Character Areas ('LCA's). The Site south western part of the Site is located within both LCA 7: Sarratt Plateau, and the north eastern part lies within LCA 11: Lower Gade Valley.
- 3.11 LCA 7: Sarratt Plateau is defined by 'a gently undulating plateau area locally divided by steep-sided narrow chalk valleys. The area has a mature settled appearance with a number of traditional farm

buildings, parklands and a predominantly pastoral land use. There is minimal impact from intrusive 20th-century development. Chipperfield Common and Commonwood Common are sites of importance for nature conservation and recreation.'

3.12 The key characteristics are:

*'Extensive level plateau with considerable pastoral and equestrian land use;
narrow twisting steep-sided valleys dissecting the plateau;
mix of woodlands throughout the area including ancient, plantation and parkland shelterbelts;
coherent settled pattern of farms and historic villages set around greens and commons;
arable planned estate area to the east;
parkland areas, some in educational and institutional uses;
M25 and associated features severing the area but in partial cutting;
Chipperfield and Commonwood commons; and
few detracting features.'*

3.13 The study notes that the area has a strong sense of historical continuity, and that views from outside the area are generally restricted by the vegetation and elevated landform. In relation to rarity and distinctiveness, the study notes that this LCA is a frequent landscape type, and that the distinctive features are the commons and dry chalk valley.

3.14 The condition of the LCA is noted as being moderate, as is its robustness, which leads to a strategy of 'improve and conserve'.

3.15 The Landscape Character Assessment provides guidance for managing change to improve and conserve, which includes the following:

*'Promote the creation of new woodlands in the open arable landscape to provide mitigation for the M25;
in existing woodland plantations, encourage the replacement of softwoods with indigenous native deciduous communities;
promote the appropriate management of woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest and coppice with standards;
use ancient hedge and field boundaries to determine the most appropriate location for woodland restoration and expansion;
establish realistic and attractive countryside management schemes for all sites with heathland and acid grassland/scrub communities, including Chipperfield Common and Commonwood Common. Maintain a balance between developing a rich variety of habitats and safe public access. Promote local initiatives for traditional management;*

encourage landowners and developers to retain and increase ponds and wetland areas to enhance their visual and wildlife functions. Where their loss cannot be avoided, new ponds and wetland areas will be required;

promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats;

promote the use of reservoirs for water storage and nature conservation interest, rather than groundwater abstraction. Ensure that reservoirs are designed to avoid impact on the character of the local landscape;

promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries where possible. Management to involve locally appropriate measures, including coppicing, laying and replanting/gapping-up;

promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming where possible

promote hedge improvement and planting adjacent to rights of way, green lanes and along parish boundaries;

encourage the re-use of existing agricultural buildings for equestrian activity;

promote the use of locally traditional field enclosure where land is converted to equestrian pasture;

within parklands ensure new planting is encouraged to maintain age diversity. Landscape improvements should respect the historic context and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens, where appropriate;

within parklands encourage reversion from arable uses to pasture and grassland and resist ploughing of grasslands;

ensure that the surroundings of converted buildings are designed and maintained to be in keeping with their agricultural surroundings by ensuring that 'garden' details are screened from view where possible and native species are used on site boundaries;

traffic-calming measures, where considered necessary, must be of a scale and design that relates to the landscape character of the settlement; and

implement a scheme for the restoration of Westwood quarry to a mix of woodland and grassland with landforms to blend with the local landscape.'

- 3.16 LCA 11: Lower Gade Valley is defined by 'a narrow but marked river valley with the predominant influence from a combination of historic parkland and ancient woodland. Moderate slopes rise to either side with occasional dramatic open views across the valley. The eastern slopes of the area are mainly built-up and form part of Watford. The Grand Union Canal flows majestically through the area from whence there are views up to the parkland landscapes.'

- 3.17 The key characteristics are:

*'Narrow valley floor with wide canal and wetland habitats;
historic parkland landscapes, some in declining condition;
historic houses set on the plateau edge looking over the valley;
arterial routes and M25 to north of area;
gently sloping valley sides with minor secondary valleys;
urban development hidden by vegetation or set back from the slopes;
major woodland complex at Whippendell Wood centred on narrow steep dry valley;
individual woods within parklands;
extensive public access to the south; and
important mosaic of wildlife habitats adjacent to urban population.'*

- 3.18 Distinctive features are noted as being the canal locks and bridges, the former watercress beds at Cassiobury Park, and the Grove Mill and mill race by canal, none of which are within the immediate vicinity of the Site.
- 3.19 In relation to visual and sensory perception, the study notes that *'the landscape is generally well contained from surrounding areas, with limited views from the edge of roads encircling the parks, the adjacent plateau and built-up areas. Within the area the landscape is compartmentalised, with a sense of containment in the parklands and confinement within Whippendell Woods'*. In relation to rarity and distinctiveness, the study notes the unique combination of parklands, formal canal and woodland complex close to a large population.
- 3.20 The landscape condition is assessed as moderate within the study, and the strength of character as strong, resulting in a 'conserve and restore' landscape strategy.
- 3.21 The Landscape Character Assessment provides guidance to conserve and enhance the character, which includes the following:
- 'Prepare and implement restoration and management plans for historic parklands in conjunction with existing uses, including Jacotts Hill, Cassiobury Park and Grove Park. Schemes should fully address landscape, historic and ecological issues;
restore historically appropriate and high-quality boundaries to parklands;
promote recording and management of veteran trees for biodiversity value and visual amenity;
promote further tree planting to minimise the visual impact of the A41 and M1;
promote appropriate woodland management for distinct habitats, including high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards and woodpasture. Re-establish a species-rich ground flora;
review public access arrangements to woodlands, including safety and car parks;
improve recreational opportunities and direct public access from adjacent settlements;
maintain local patterns of species diversity within woodlands;
promote education in the community about the historic and ecological importance and appropriate management of woodland;*

seek to resolve conflicts arising from competing uses and activities in woodland;
protect river valley habitats of significant nature conservation interest and support initiatives for management for nature conservation, e.g. Cassiobury Park;
promote the use of low-density stock grazing as a management technique for valleys;
maintain and improve access along and to the Grand Union Canal;
promote crop diversification and the retention/restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming; and
ensure all existing and proposed recreational land uses include appropriate measures to manage and enhance the existing landscape setting and historical and ecological value.'

- 3.22 From our site visit, we would note that the character of the Site is affected by the existing residential edge of Croxley Green to the south, but that the woodlands are characteristic of the wider LCA. The Site does not represent a common nor a dry chalk valley (LCA 7's features of rarity or distinction). The Site shares less characteristics with LCA 11, although it is adjoined by Whippendell Wood and Cassiobury Park.

Designations and Heritage Assets (Plan in Appendix A4)

- 3.23 The Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape or heritage quality or value, however, the Site contains an area of Ancient Woodland in the eastern land parcel, known as Green Lane Wood. The Site is bound by further areas of Ancient Woodland at Dell Wood and Long Newland's Spring, on the western and northern Site boundary.
- 3.24 The Site is due south of Whippendell Wood, a Site of Specific Scientific Interest ('SSSI'), which is also Ancient Woodland.
- 3.25 The Site is approximately 1km to the east of the Chilterns National Landscape, however, there is no intervisibility between them.
- 3.26 The Site is bound to the east and north by Cassiobury Park, a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, notable as the landscape element for the corresponding Cassiobury House (now demolished). The woodland within the west of the park limits intervisibility between the Site and Cassiobury Park.
- 3.27 The Site is west and north west of the Croxley Green Conservation Area, which is primarily located along a ribbon from Watford Road in the south to Little Green Lane in the north. The nearest part of the Conservation Area to lies around 400m west of the Site, however, there is no intervisibility due to the dense intervening vegetation and the gently rolling topography of the area.
- 3.28 To the south of the Site along Little Green Lane, is Durrants House, a Grade II Listed Tudor/Jacobean revival-style country house built in the mid-nineteenth century, that was designated primarily for the quality of its design and the extensive retention of interior features.

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- 3.29 A number of further heritage assets are located within a 500m radius of the Site, however, there is no intervisibility between the Site and these buildings. These are:

Killingdown Farmhouse, The Green – Grade II Listed Building;

1, 2 and 3, Little Green – Grade II Listed Building;

The Hall House at No. 2 The Stables, Sarratt Road - Grade II Listed Building;

Redheath, Sarratt Road – Grade II* Listed Building.

Tree Preservation Orders

- 3.30 No trees on Site are covered by Tree Preservation Orders ('TPOs').
- 3.31 The Site is bound by two Woodland TPOs within Dell Wood:
- TPO026, due west of the Site;
- TPO0182, north west of the Site.
- 3.32 There are several further TPOs to the south of the Site within the residential area. This was confirmed by the examination of Council's online map on 9th August 2024.

Public Rights of Way

- 3.33 The Site is publicly accessible via Public Right of Way ('PRoW') Sarratt 017 which bisects the northern part of the Site in an east-west direction. This footpath is connected to footpath Watford Borough 030 which adjoins the Site along Rousebarn Lane, and which continues east into Cassio bury Park.
- 3.34 The Site is bound to the west by PRoW Sarratt 018 and Sarratt 063, which provide footpath access through and around Dell Wood and Long Newland's Spring.
- 3.35 Additional PRoWs within the wider context of the Site are shown on the base mapping of the Site Location Plan (**Appendix A1**).
- 3.36 Dell Wood and Newlands Spring Wood, as well as Whippendell Wood, are publicly accessible via pedestrian routes within them, with the paths leading off the PRoWs. Little Green Lane west of the junior school comprises a very narrow, unmade track, with very little vehicular movements, and is well used by walkers.



SITE DESCRIPTION AND VISIBILITY

Site Description

- 4.1 The Site extends to 40.69 hectares and comprises two arable fields and an area of broadleaved woodland.
- 4.2 The western field is broadly rectangular. It is bound to the south by a managed hedgerow around 1.5-2m high, with Little Green Lane extending right up to the hedge to the south. To the west, the field is bound by the dense tree and thicket belt within Long Newland's Spring, with the public footpath leading through the centre of the woodland belt. The northern boundary of this field is formed by the woodland at Dell Wood. The hedgerow which forms the boundary between the two fields of the Site, is formed of a low, managed hedgerow, although there is a long gap within the southern part of this hedge, and a single tree within the northern section. At the north eastern corner of this field is a former quarry pit, which is now densely wooded with a scrub understorey. A rectangle of land in the south west of this field (following no identifiable boundaries in the north or east) is excluded from the Site.
- 4.3 The eastern field is irregular in shape, and comprises three main sections set to the west, north and east of the woodland block within this field. The southern boundary of this field is formed by the managed hedgerow, around 1.5-2m high, with a few scattered trees within it, and Little Green Lane located beyond. In the far east along the southern boundary, the hedgerow is outgrown, and more trees occur here, including some of higher quality. The eastern and northern boundary of this field is formed by an outgrown hedgerow, around 3m high, with the mostly unmade track of Rousebarn Lane located beyond. The lane becomes more sunken towards the north, and there is also some bracken within the hedgerow here, as well as several mature oak trees of higher landscape value. The northern part of the western boundary of this field is formed by the dense woodland at Newland's Spring, with an outgrown hedgerow (around 3m high) with several mature oak and ash trees, forming the boundary further south. The western and north western boundary of this field is formed by Dell Wood. Public footpath Sarratt 017 leads east-west across the northern part of this field, from Dell Spring to Rousebarn Lane. Green Lane Wood comprises mature broadleaved trees, and there is a single oak tree within the north west of this field, between the Green Lane Wood and Dell Wood, along what would have been a former field boundary. In the far south east of this field, a short section of hedgerow, around 2m high, connects the woodland block within the Site with the hedgerow along the southern boundary.

Topography

- 4.4 The Site is located on a plateau within a landscape that is gently rolling. The high point of the Site is in the south west at around 85m Above Ordnance Datum ('AOD'), and it slopes down towards the

north and east. The western field is relatively level in the south, and then slopes relatively steeply down into a small valley in the north (to around 75m AOD), before sloping back up steeply into Dell Wood. The eastern field slopes down gently from a high point towards the south west of the field at around 80m AOD, towards the woodland set within the field to the east, before sloping down more steeply towards the internal hedgerow opposite Links Road. It then levels out within the easternmost narrow part of the wider field, with a low point at around 55m AOD. The eastern field also slopes down towards the north, gently at first and then more steeply to a local valley between Dell Wood and the woodland within the east of the Site, before sloping up relatively steeply again to the northern Site boundary. The northern boundary of this field slopes down relatively steeply from the west to the east.

- 4.5 The land east of the Site rises up steeply within the woods at Cassiobury Park, while the land to the north of the Site is relatively level with that at the Site. To the east of the Site, the land is relatively level and high at around 85-90m AOD, and located on the plateau. To the south, the land slopes down gently from the west to the east within the residential area north of Baldwins Lane.

Visibility

- 4.6 An assessment of the visibility of the Site was undertaken, and a series of representative photographs were taken from public vantage points, rights of way and public highways. The viewpoints are shown on the plans in **Appendix A1** and **A2**, and the photographs are contained in **Appendix A3**. Two Zone of Theoretical Visibility ('ZTV') plans were also produced, indicating where the proposed development could potentially be visible from, and these are contained in **Appendix A6**.
- 4.7 Views into the Site are limited by the dense vegetation within the area, although there are views of the interior of the Site from the public footpath which crosses it. The key views of the Site are described below and in the tables contained in **Appendix A13**.
- 4.8 The Site is partially visible from the public footpath which crosses the northern part of the eastern field. In these views, the existing houses south of the Site are partially visible over the intervening field and vegetation, and there are views towards the Grade II Listed Durrants House from parts of the path (photographs 5, 9). The western part of the Site is mostly screened in views from the path, due to the intervening vegetation.
- 4.9 Views from Rousebarn Lane to the east and north of the Site are mostly prevented by the intervening hedgerow along the Site boundary, although there are limited instance where views are available over the vegetation into the Site (photographs 4, 25). Winter views are heavily filtered into the northern and eastern parts of the Site.

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- 4.10 From public footpath Watford Borough 031 within the woodland at Cassiobury Park, views towards the Site are mostly prevented by the intervening woodland and trees, and winter views are slightly more open (photograph 6). Only part of the north east of the Site is visible in these views, but views quickly become heavily screened from further east along the path.
- 4.11 Views from public footpath Sarratt 017 outside the Site to the west, and north of Dell Spring, are prevented by the woodland to the south and the dense treed hedgerow to the east (photograph 8).
- 4.12 Views from within Whippendell Wood are prevented by the intervening woodland (photograph 26). Similarly, views from the informal paths within Dell Wood and Newland's Spring are prevented by the intervening vegetation and the fact that the paths do not run very close to the edges of the woods, however, there will be very limited instances where the Site is partially visible from within these woods, during the winter months (photograph 10).
- 4.13 In views from the west, from public footpath Sarratt 018, views of the Site are prevented by the dense intervening woodland at Dell Wood and Long Newland's Spring (photograph 11). Views from the properties further west are similarly screened.
- 4.14 Views from public footpath Sarratt 063 which runs just west of the Site boundary, are prevented by the dense intervening vegetation along the path, although there are heavily filtered views of the western part of the Site during the winter.
- 4.15 Little Green Lane to the south west of the Site is bound by an unmanaged hedgerow to the north, preventing views into the Site, although there are partial, filtered views of the western part of the Site during the winter (photograph 3).
- 4.16 The majority of views from Little Green Lane to the south and south east of the Site are limited by the intervening hedgerow north of the lane, with the interior of the Site screened (photograph 17). There are limited instances where views over the vegetation are available, with the Site partially visible over the intervening vegetation, and the woodland visible in the background (photographs 15, 16, 19, 21, 23). There are also limited opportunities for partial views into the interior of the Site through the two field access gates (photographs 3, 17). Views of the Site from Durrants House are available over the intervening hedgerow, from first floor windows (as seen in photograph 15).
- 4.17 There are also partial views of the interior of the Site, over the intervening boundary vegetation, from first floor windows of some of the properties nearest to the Site along Little Green Lane, Lincoln Drive, Norwich Way, Durrants Drive, Canterbury Way, Links Way, and Rousebarn Lane (as seen in photograph 9). Views from these north-south streets towards the Site are framed by the adjoining houses, with views into the interior of the Site prevented by the hedgerow along Little Green Lane,

with the tops of the woodland to the north just visible over the intervening vegetation (photographs 14, 18, 20, 22, 24).

- 4.18 There are limited opportunities for long and very long distance views of parts of the Site from the higher ground to the south east beyond Croxley Green, as well as from the tall building within Watford on Ascot Road, however, the Site will be seen within the context of much intervening development, and it will form a small component of the wider view, where visible.

Landscape Quality, Value and Sensitivity

- 4.19 The Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape or heritage quality or value, however, the woodland block within the east of the Site is Ancient Woodland. The Site is also located within the Green Belt. Public access to the Site is limited to that available along the footpath within the north of the Site.
- 4.20 The Site comprises mostly ordinary arable land, and the trees, hedgerows and woodland on it are of moderate to high landscape quality and value. It is not a rare landscape type, nor a particularly good example of a landscape type or character. There is some ecological conservation interest in the Ancient Woodland within the Site. There are open views towards the adjoining woodland and settlement from the public footpath within the Site, but the Site is not of particular scenic value. The Site overall is not wild or tranquil, being located adjacent to the settlement edge of Croxley Green, although in relative terms, the north of the Site is more tranquil. Overall, the Site itself is considered to be of medium to high landscape value, because of the open views from the public footpath, and the occurrence of the Ancient Woodland within the Site.
- 4.21 The Site's character is influenced by the adjoining settlement in the south, although the northern and easternmost parts of the Site, as well as the indented woodland block, are more rural in character. The Site is capable of being developed for residential uses whilst retaining the majority of boundary and structural vegetation and sufficient off-set distances to these features. Housing within the Site would form a continuation of that to the south, and would not appear out of character within the wider area. The Site is considered to have a moderate to good ability to accommodate residential development. Overall, the Site is assessed as being of medium to high landscape sensitivity.
- 4.22 The landscape to the east and north of the Site is of high landscape value, being a Grade II Registered Park and Garden. The Ancient Woodlands to the north west of the Site have public access and are relatively tranquil, and are therefore of high landscape value. The landscape beyond the Site to the west comprises more ordinary farmland, with the Conservation Area located beyond. To the south, the townscape character is ordinary, although the Grade II Listed Durrants House is of higher value. Overall, the landscape value and sensitivity in the immediate vicinity of the Site ranges from medium to the south, to medium to high to the west, and high to the north and east. The

landscape north and east of the Site is considered to constitute a valued landscape in line with NPPF paragraph 187a.

- 4.23 The wider landscape around the Site and immediate surroundings is varied, with the landscape sensitivity overall medium to low to the south and east within the highly settled landscape, and medium to the north and west where there is less development.

3. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

The Proposed Development

- 5.1 Full details of the proposed development are set out within the submitted Design and Access Statement ('DAS'). The proposals, which are in outline with all matters reserved except for access, are for up to 600 dwellings, a site for a primary school and potential school expansion land, a local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services, a new country park, and associated infrastructure and open space, as illustrated on the Illustrative Masterplan in **Appendix A10** and the Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan in **Appendix A11**. Key elements of the proposals include:

Housing is proposed within the south western parts of the Site, with the northern and eastern parts of the Site retained for Green Infrastructure ('GI');

A central green corridor is proposed within the development area, along a vista between the public right of way in the north and Durrants House in the south;

The trees and hedgerows on the Site will be retained where possible, with losses limited to sections of the southern and central hedgerows, to allow access and movement through the Site;

The Ancient Woodland will be retained with no built development proposed within 30m of the woodlands;

The existing public footpath on the Site will be retained, and further active and recreational routes will connect to this path to offer wider access;

The proposed built form will range from 2 to 4 storeys in height, with 4 storeys limited to the central core of the development, reducing to 2 storeys in more peripheral and sensitive areas;

The proposed buildings will reflect and respect the vernacular of the wider settlement, with materials and styles chosen to respect the surrounding character;

Several new children's play areas are proposed within the development, as well as a community orchard and allotments; and

A Biodiversity Net Gain ('BNG') of 34% Habitat Units and 42% Hedgerow Units can be achieved on the development.

- 5.2 Below, we consider the effect of the proposed development on the landscape and visual character of the area.

Relationship to Settlement

- 5.3 The development will form a natural and logical extension to the settlement to the south, and will be bound by very strong and clearly defined boundaries between the new settlement edge and the countryside beyond. The new homes will be designed to front onto the areas of open space, to create an attractive aspect and to provide passive surveillance. The proposed buildings will be taller than those within the neighbourhood to the south, but considering the well-contained nature of the Site, and the fact that the design and materiality of the proposed buildings will reflect and respect the vernacular to the south, it is considered that the new built form will harmoniously sit adjacent to the existing settlement, regardless of the additional height. The movement network has also been designed to create a very clear connection between the existing and new neighbourhoods, to ensure a cohesive settlement form within this part of Croxley Green. While the development will be designed to have a character and sense of place of its own, an overall cohesion with the existing neighbourhood to the south, both in terms of character and physical connections, can be achieved.
- 5.4 The built form along the south of the development is proposed to be 2 storeys in height, to reflect and respect the adjoining settlement edge. The development increases in height to up to 4 storeys within the central core of the development, in order to frame the open space here, and to create a sense of place and individual character within the development.
- 5.5 The proposed development will form a logical extension to the existing settlement form to the south, and will also mark the northernmost extent of development here within the settlement, due to the adjoining woodland which prevents further settlement expansion.

Landscape Features

- 5.6 The structural vegetation on the Site's boundaries, as well as the woodland within it, will be retained, although it will be necessary to remove some sections of the hedgerow along Little Green Lane in order to create the vehicular access to the development. Around 100m of hedgerow along Little Green Lane and within the Site require removal to create the two vehicular access points, and a further short section is proposed to be removed to allow pedestrian access near the existing primary school.
- 5.7 Sections of the existing field boundary hedgerow in the centre of the Site will require removal, although this hedge is relatively gappy already, and the potential exists to reinstate some of the missing sections.
- 5.8 The Ancient Woodland and most trees within the Site will be retained, with 30m maintained between built development and the woodland. Development is also contained outside of the Root Protection Areas of the trees and hedgerows, wherever possible. A management plan will be developed and

agreed with the Council to ensure the continued health and quality of the structural vegetation on the Site.

- 5.9 The development includes much new areas of green infrastructure, including a country park with associated paths, seating, trees, and meadows, and also an area with wetland habitat and dry basins, and these areas, amongst others, offer opportunities for new native planting which will more than compensate for the loss of the sections of hedgerow. The proposals are able to achieve a 34% net increase in biodiversity (BNG).
- 5.10 Much new native tree planting is proposed to be incorporated within the proposed areas of open space, as well as along the streets within the development, in order to increase the structural vegetation and diversity on the Site.
- 5.11 A community orchard is proposed within the south of the development, which will further enhance the variety and character of the landscape features in the area.

Public Rights of Way

- 5.12 The existing public footpath which crosses the north of the Site is proposed to be retained along its current alignment, although it is expected that the path will be surfaced in order to accommodate an expected increase in use. As shown within the DAS, and on the Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan in **Appendix A11**, several new paths, both catering for active travel and recreational movement, are proposed within and around the new housing areas. These will connect to the existing public footpaths on and adjoining the Site, to increase the options for walking within the surroundings. New large areas of public open space, including new children's play areas, will also increase public access and recreation within the Site and area.

Visual Effects

- 5.13 As set out in Section 4, views into the Site are limited by the dense vegetation within the area, although there are views of the interior of the Site from the public footpath which crosses it. The visual changes are described below, and the effects are assessed in the tables in **Appendix A13**.
- 5.14 The proposed development will be partially visible from the public footpath which crosses within the north of the Site. In these views, the northern part of the proposed development will be visible, seen behind the new country park. The built development will also be visible along the edges of the proposed green corridor, which will allow a view to be maintained from the footpath to the Listed Durrants House in the south. The existing residential settlement south of the Site is already partially visible from this footpath, but the proposed development will now be located closer to the viewer along the path, albeit still set back behind proposed and existing vegetation. The proposed vegetation will soften the built form in views from the path, and aid in assimilating it into the wider landscape.

Views northwards from the public footpath will remain open, although meadows and tree planting will be evident in these views, as well as recreational elements such as seating and signage within the country park.

- 5.15 There will be winter views of the proposed housing within the south east of the Site from Rousebarn Lane along the east of the Site, although summer views will be screened by the intervening hedgerow along the lane. The proposed houses will be seen within the context of the existing houses to the south, where visible, and will not appear out of character. The wider development beyond within the centre and west of the Site will remain screened by the woodland block within the Site. The interior of the proposed country park, including the proposed drainage basins and elements such as seating areas, may also be visible in filtered winter views through the intervening hedgerow, although summer views will remain screened.
- 5.16 From public footpath Watford Borough 031 within the woodland at Cassiobury Park, there will be limited views of the proposed country park, seen in heavily filtered views through the intervening woodland. During the winter, there may be a small view for a short section of the path, of the new houses within the northernmost development parcels, although new planting in the country park will further filter the development.
- 5.17 There will be limited views of the proposed country park from public footpath Sarratt 017 to the west beyond the Site, with views quickly becoming screened by the intervening vegetation on the eastern Site boundary and at Dell Wood. The proposed built form will not be evident in these views, due to the intervening vegetation and topography.
- 5.18 The proposed built form will remain screened from within Whippendell Wood due to the intervening vegetation and distance between the wood and the new homes. There may be very heavily filtered, limited winter views in places, where the vegetation is less dense. From the informal paths within the woodlands north west of the Site, including Dell Wood, there may be views of the new homes during the winter months when the ground cover is less dense, from paths nearest to the edges of the woodland. Summer views will remain screened in the vast majority of instances, by the intervening vegetation.
- 5.19 From public footpath Sarratt 018 west of the Site, the proposed development will remain screened by the intervening existing and proposed vegetation.
- 5.20 The new homes within the west of the Site are likely to be visible in filtered winter views from public footpath Sarratt 063 along the west of the Site, through the intervening vegetation. As the proposed planting within the west of the Site matures, these views will become more heavily filtered. Summer views will be screened in most instances, especially as the proposed vegetation matures.

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- 5.21 The tops of the proposed built form will be visible over the intervening hedgerow in places, in views from Little Green Lane south west of the Site, and more of the built form will be visible during the winter through gaps in the hedgerows.
- 5.22 Similarly, the proposed development will be partially visible from Little Green Lane to the south and south east of the Site, seen through the proposed new access gaps in the bounding hedgerow. The tops of the proposed buildings will also be visible over the intervening hedgerow. The new buildings and streets will be seen within the context of the existing settlement to the south, and will not appear out of character. New tree planting within the south of the Site will soften the built form in these views. The development will screen most views of the woodland to the north from the lane, although the woodland will remain visible along the green central corridor, and over the eastern parts of the Site. Views from the northern parts of the streets that lead south off Little Green Lane will be similar, albeit more focused on parts of the Site only. Views from the properties near to the south of the Site will also be similar, although views will in most cases be limited to those from first floor windows, over the intervening vegetation.
- 5.23 The proposed development will be visible in long distance views from the taller buildings within Watford, and in very long distance views from the higher ground south of Watford, however, the development will be seen within the context of the existing settlement in wide views, and will not appear dominant nor out of character.

Landscape Character Effects

- 5.24 The character of the Site will change as a result of the proposed development. The open arable land will be lost and will be replaced with a new residential development, and associated open spaces and infrastructure. While the effect on the landscape character of the Site is judged as adverse (due to the loss of the open land), this does not mean that the development will be unattractive or inappropriate. In fact, as set out above, the neighbourhood will be designed to be attractive and safe, with many new areas of publicly accessible open space, as well as space to encourage wildlife through habitat creation. Areas of open space have also been incorporated within the development to respect and acknowledge the Listed Durrants House from a landscape perspective.
- 5.25 The effects on the immediate surroundings of the Site will be limited as a result of careful design, and due to the existing dense vegetation which bounds the Site to the north, east and west. Appropriate transitional characters are proposed within the development through the incorporation of areas of open space within the Site between the built development and the woodland beyond, and these areas and associated planting within them will further minimise effects on the immediate surrounding landscape. The clear edge to the development also limits effects on the wider landscape around the Site and north Croxley Green, with the woodlands physically and visually separating the settlement from the remainder of the open countryside beyond. The proposed design and layout of

the development, in reflecting and respecting the character of the adjoining settlement, will also reduce the effects on the townscape character south of the Site.

- 5.26 The proposed development will form a logical part of the existing settlement, and there will be no material effects on the wider landscape or townscape character around the Site, including on the Conservation Area and Registered Park and Garden within the wider Site context. The well-contained nature of the Site also limits effects on the wider Landscape Character Area.
- 5.27 Overall, there is no landscape or visual reason why development at the Site would be unacceptable, and the Site is capable of being developed in line with the proposals.

3. GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The Site is located within the far south of the Green Belt, as shown on the plan in **Appendix A4**. The Green Belt extends northwards from Little Green Lane. The Site is also adjacent to the Green Belt within Watford Borough, which extends to the borough boundary along the eastern boundary of the Site.

Background Studies

Three Rivers District Council & Watford Borough Council, Green Belt Review: Strategic Analysis (2017; extract in Appendix A8)

- 6.2 Amec Foster Wheeler undertook a Stage 1 Green Belt Study for Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council in 2017 of 81 strategic parcels across the District and the Borough. In paragraph 1.1, the study sets out that *'The overall objective is to test the Green Belt against the five purposes set for it in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (para 80) and to determine the extent to which it is contributing to those purposes which are ...'* In paragraph 2.2.10, the study notes that *'Each parcel was assessed for its contribution against the five Green Belt purposes as set out in national policy ...'*
- 6.3 The Site is located within Parcel C6 which extends to Sarratt Lane to the west, Redhall Lane and Rousebarn Lane to the north, Rousebarn Lane to the east, and a southern boundary provided by the built edge of Croxley Green. The Site forms the easternmost portion of Parcel C6. An extract from the Assessment can be found in **Appendix A8**.
- 6.4 Parcel C6 is described as:
- 'School and playing fields to the east, pasture to the west with some isolated dwellings, mixed and medium scale arable, pasture and dense woodland to the north (Harrock's Wood), with a large school to the west and some isolated dwellings on the periphery. The land has a relatively remote rural character (notwithstanding proximity to Croxley Green to the southeast) and there are some extensive views across flat arable fields, although these are interrupted by blocks of woodland. Despite the proximity to the build edge of Croxley Green, generally the land has a relatively remote rural character.'*
- 6.5 The study assesses the role of Parcel C6 against the five purposes of the Green Belt as established in the NPPF.

- 6.6 For each of the five purposes, the study scored the relative contribution of the parcel to the established purposes of the Green Belt along a three-point scale: Significant Contribution, Contribution and Limited Contribution. A summary of these findings is shown in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Summary of the contribution Parcel C6 makes to the NPPF purposes of Green Belt

Topic	Criteria	Assessment
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	Prevent the sprawl of a built-up area into open land where development would not otherwise be restricted by a permanent boundary. What is the role of the parcel in preventing the extension of an existing development into open land beyond established limits, in light of the presence of significant boundaries?	CONTRIBUTION Contains the northern edge of Rickmansworth.
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Prevent development which would result in the merger or erosion of a gap (physically or visually) between settlements. What is the role of the parcel in preventing the merger of settlements which might occur through a reduction in the distance between them?	LIMITED CONTRIBUTION No role in this location.
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protect the openness of the countryside and its perceived rurality. What is the role of the parcel in maintaining a sense of openness, particularly in light of proximity to a settlement edge?	CONTRIBUTION Generally, helps to maintain the openness of the countryside in this location. Development is limited to isolated farmsteads and some residential properties.

To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Preserve the setting and character of historic town. What is the role of the parcel in respect of the proximity to, and degree of intervisibility with, the core (such as a Conservation Area) of an historic town or settlement?	LIMITED CONTRIBUTION No role in this location.
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Does the parcel act in concert with adjacent parcels to encourage urban regeneration, either generally or more specifically?	LIMITED CONTRIBUTION No role in this location.
Overall Assessment of Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	In light of the assessment of individual purposes, what is the overall contribution of the parcel to the Green Belt, both individually and in a wider context?	CONTRIBUTION Part of open countryside between Croxley Green and the M25, containing sprawl and helping to prevent broader encroachment.

6.7 The study also assesses the Parcel C6 against an identified 'local role' of the Green Belt, as set at Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2 Summary of the contribution Parcel C6 makes to the local role of Green Belt

Topic	Criteria	Assessment
Preserving the setting and character of villages and other settlements	What is the relationship between a village or hamlet and the surrounding Green Belt?	Includes and provides the setting for Croxley Green Conservation Area.

6.8 Finally, the study assesses the role of Parcel C6 to opportunities to promote positive use of the Green Belt, as set out in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3 Summary of the contribution Parcel C6 makes to opportunities to promote positive use of the Green Belt

Topic	Criteria	Assessment
Current public access and opportunities to provide activities/recreation	What is the degree of existing public access and/or provision of recreational facilities	Various PRoW run through
Enhancing landscapes and visual amenity	Does the parcel form part of the setting of a sensitive landscape (historic or otherwise)	Not part of a sensitive landscape
Enhancing biodiversity	Are there any national or local biodiversity designations within the parcel	Local Wildlife Sites across
Improving derelict and damaged land	Is there any derelict land in the parcel	No derelict land

6.9 In assessing the overall importance of Green Belt Parcel C6, the report finds that the parcel 'Contributed' towards the purposes of the Green Belt established in the NPPF (on the three-point scale mentioned earlier).

6.10 This study recognised that further, more specific analysis of Green Belt would be required due to the pressure for development to meet housing needs in Three Rivers and Watford.

Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment for Three Rivers District and Watford Borough (2019; extract in Appendix A9)

6.11 LUC was commissioned by Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council to undertake a Stage 2 study of the Green Belt. This study will form part of the evidence base for the emerging Three Rivers and Watford Local Plans.

6.12 The Stage 2 study involved an assessment of the potential harm to the Green Belt associated with the release of specific areas of land. The harm assessment considers the extent to which the release of different areas of land would reduce contribution to Green Belt purposes, through both the loss of

openness of the released land and the resulting impact that this could have on the strength of the adjacent Green Belt. In paragraph 3.29, the study notes that the Stage 2 assessment followed three key steps:

‘Step 1: Considered the impact on the contribution to the NPPF purposes.

Step 2: Assessed the potential impact of release on the integrity of the remaining Green Belt, including consideration of the strength of residual Green Belt boundaries.

Step 3: Assessed the overall Green Belt harm and any variations of harm within the ‘assessment zone’.

- 6.13 The study notes in paragraph 3.105 that *‘The harm judgement combines steps 1 and 2, considering on the one hand the impact of release in terms of loss of that land’s contribution to Green Belt purposes and on the other the impact of release on the remaining Green Belt, to arrive at an overall judgement (our underlining)’.*
- 6.14 We would highlight that this study is different in scope to the Stage 1 study, and that this Stage 2 study was not considering the ‘performance’ of a parcel in relation to the NPPF purposes, but rather the resultant harm of development and release from the Green Belt.
- 6.15 A total of 152 parcels were identified within the Stage 2 study, with Parcel CG8 comprising the same area as the Site (including HCC owned segment of land).
- 6.16 The impact of release of Parcel CG8 on the contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt established in the NPPF, was assessed within this study, with a focus on purposes 1-3, with purpose 4 and purpose 5 omitted from this study. A summary of these findings is shown in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4 Summary of the impact of release on contribution of Parcel CG8 on the purposes

Purpose	Context	Assessment
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	The parcel is adjacent to the edge of Croxley Green which is contiguous with the large built-up area of Greater London. The boundary with the urban edge (along Little Green Lane) provides some distinction from urbanising uses, giving the parcel a significant role in preventing urban sprawl	Significant impact on contribution (defined as: <i>Development would constitute significant sprawl as the land is close to the large built-up area, contains no or very limited urban development, is not itself contained by any urban development, and has strong distinction from the inset settlement edge.</i>)

To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	The parcel does not lie in the gap between neighbouring towns	Limited or no contribution (defined as: <i>'Development would have limited or no impact on the contribution to Purpose 2 as:</i> <i>• the land is not located within a gap between towns; or</i> <i>• the land plays no role, or a very limited role in maintaining the separation between towns due to the presence of significant separating features and/or significant distances between the towns;</i> <i>or</i> <i>• the land plays no significant role due to the extent of development;</i> <i>or</i> <i>• the land forms a gap that is too narrow to create any clear distinction between towns (i.e. a sense of leaving one and arriving in another).'</i>
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The parcel has no urbanising influences and is uncontained countryside, giving it strong sense of openness. Little Green Lane creates some distinction from the inset edge but only to a minor extent	Significant impact on contribution (defined as: <i>'Development would have a significant impact on the contribution to Purpose 3 as the land contains the characteristics of open countryside (i.e. an absence of built or otherwise urbanising uses in Green Belt terms), is not itself contained by any urban development and has strong distinction from the inset settlement edge.'</i>

6.17 The study then assessed the potential impact of release of Parcel CG8 on the integrity of the remaining Green Belt, including consideration of the strength of residual Green Belt boundaries. In assessing the impact on adjacent Green Belt this study found:

'Releasing this land would have negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land because the surrounding registered parkland and ancient woodland constraints mean there would be no significant increase in the containment of adjacent Green Belt land, nor any weakening of the boundary of the urban edge'

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- 6.18 The overall harm to Green Belt purposes as a result of release of the land was rated on a 7-point scale of *very high, high, moderate-high, moderate, low-moderate, low* and *very low*. The study assessed the overall Green Belt harm and any variations of harm within Parcel CG8 that could follow the release of land, finding this to be 'Moderate-High' on the grounds that:

'Release of the parcel would have a significant impact on preventing urban sprawl and encroachment on the countryside. However, its release would only have a negligible impact on the adjacent Green Belt due to its containment by Cassiobury Registered Park and Garden and ancient woodland. It is therefore concluded that the harm to the Green Belt of releasing this land would be moderate-high.'

- 6.19 The study evaluated that *'there are no notable variations in harm within the parcel'* when assessing the 'Potential to Limit Harm'.

- 6.20 Finally, in an assessment of 'Harm beyond outer boundary', the study concluded that:

'Whippendell Wood forms a significant area of constraint preventing development to the east and north. To the west, ancient woodland borders most of the parcel, creating a strong boundary beyond which any development would constitute high harm.'

Assessment of the Site against purposes of Green Belt, and resultant harm of release

- 6.21 We would note that the Stage 1 study included land beyond the Site within the study parcel, and the Stage 2 study only considered the harm to the Green Belt purposes as a result of the release of the Site, i.e. not the Site's performances against the Green Belt purposes. We have undertaken our own assessment of the contribution of the Site to the purposes of the Green Belt (i.e. its performance), as well as the resultant harm to these purposes which would occur as a result of the proposed development on the Site. The methodology for this assessment is contained in **Appendix A12**. This is set out below.

a. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area

- 6.22 Croxley Green is considered to constitute a large built-up area in relation to this purpose. The Green Belt at the Site plays some role in preventing sprawl, and sprawl (e.g. scattered or ribbon development) could potentially occur along the northern side of Little Green Lane, and potentially along Rousebarn Lane. However, any sprawl would be well contained from the wider Green Belt by the woodland belts and blocks which bound the Site to the north, east and west, and the Green Belt at the Site is therefore well contained from the wider Green Belt, limiting the extent of potential sprawl. The Green Belt at the Site is assessed as making an average contribution to purpose a, and does therefore not strongly perform against this purpose.

6.23 Development as proposed at the Site would come forward through a masterplan, and include a wholistic design for the Site, including buildings and open spaces, and it would not constitute sprawl. The development would also be very well contained by the existing adjoining woodland, limiting any effects on the wider Green Belt beyond the Site, as also noted in the Council's Stage 2 assessment. The development would also form a clear extension to the existing settlement to the south. Development at the Site in line within the proposed masterplan, will result in limited harm to this purpose of the Green Belt.

6.24 As set out within the LUC study, releasing this land would have a negligible impact on the adjacent Green Belt due to its containment, and therefore the Green Belt would continue to function, and continue to serve purpose a beyond the Site.

b. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another

6.25 The only town within the near vicinity of the Site is Watford. The nearest suburb of Watford lies around 1km east of the Site, however, Cassiobury Park, including the large wooded hill within it, comprises the space between the Site and Watford. The existing settlement at Croxley Green south of the Site beyond Baldwin Lane, and the settlement at Watford, are separated by a small area of open land along Grand Union Canal and the River Gade, and the proposed development at the Site will therefor not decrease the existing gap between the settlements.

6.26 Therefore, the Green Belt at the Site plays no role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging, and does therefore not strongly perform against this purpose. Development at the Site will result in no harm to this purpose.

c. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

6.27 The existing settlement edge is well defined along Little Green Lane to the south of the Site, and the Site is clearly countryside. However, the Site benefits from very clearly defined boundaries which form a firm limit to further encroachment into the countryside. The Green Belt at the Site is therefore considered to make an average contribution to this purpose, and does therefore not strongly perform against this purpose.

6.28 The proposed development will be very well contained from the wider Green Belt, as also noted within the Council's Stage 2 assessment, and new, readily identifiable boundaries between the settlement and the wider Green Belt are available. Development would extend into the countryside, but it would be well related to the existing settlement, and will form a logical extension to Croxley Green. The harm to this purpose of the Green Belt as a result of the proposed development is considered to be moderate.

d. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 6.29 Croxley Green is not considered a historic town, but the Conservation Area to the west and south west of the Site protects the historic 'green' and its surroundings. The Site is physically and visually clearly separated from the Conservation Area. The Site therefore plays no role in this purpose of the Green Belt, and does therefore not strongly perform against this purpose. There will be no harm to this purpose as a result of the proposed development at the Site.

e. To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

- 6.30 The Council are unable to meet their growth needs solely on brownfield or derelict sites, and land within the Green Belt is required for development in order for the Council to accommodate its local housing need. Development at the Site will therefore result in a limited level of harm on this purpose.

Conclusion in relation to Purposes

- 6.31 The table below sets out the assessment of the value of the Green Belt at the Site in relation to its purposes, alongside the assessed harm to the Green Belt purposes as a result of the proposed development. We would highlight that the Green Belt at the Site does not strongly perform against any of the Green Belt purposes.

Contribution to Green Belt Purpose		Harm to Green Belt Purpose	
Purpose a	Average	Purpose a	Limited
Purpose b	None	Purpose b	None
Purpose c	Average	Purpose c	Moderate
Purpose d	None	Purpose d	None
Purpose e	-	Purpose e	Limited

Openness of the Green Belt

- 6.32 The National Planning Policy Guidance notes that judgement is required to judge the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt. It sets out that the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to:

openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;

the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and

the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

-
- 6.33 Therefore, openness is often considered to have both a spatial (i.e. physical) element and a visual element, and we consider these below.
- 6.34 The Site is currently undeveloped and physically open and free from built development. The proposed development will inevitably result in a substantial increase in physical built form on the Green Belt on the Site, to the extent that the Site could no longer be described as open. There would therefore be a high level of harm to the physical openness of the Site.
- 6.35 The Site is also visually relatively open to the immediate surroundings, with views within and into the Site available from the roads and paths which adjoin and occur within the Site. While development within the Site will be visible from the immediate surroundings, views from the wider Green Belt will be very limited. There will therefore be a high level of harm to the visual openness of the Green Belt at the Site, with this impact very localised. However, there will be limited to no harm to the visual openness of the wider Green Belt.
- 6.36 Other elements, such as increased movement and activity at the Site as a result of its development, will also result in a high level of harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 6.37 The effect on the openness of the Green Belt is assessed as being moderate to high. However, we consider that overall, aside from the definitional harm caused by development in the Green Belt, given the characteristics of the Site, the level of harm to Green Belt openness is limited to the immediate site (i.e. on-site and localised).

Grey Belt

- 6.38 NPPF Paragraph 155 notes that housing, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:
- The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;
- The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and
- Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157.
- 6.39 Paragraph 156 goes on to state that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions (‘Golden Rules’) should be made:

affordable housing which reflects either: (i) development plan policies produced in accordance with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework; or (ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157;

necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and

the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

- 6.40 Paragraph 159 notes that the improvements to green spaces required as part of the Golden Rules should contribute positively to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery and meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan. Where no locally specific standards exist, development proposals should meet national standards relevant to the development (these include Natural England standards on accessible green space and urban greening factor and Green Flag criteria). Where land has been identified as having particular potential for habitat creation or nature recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies, proposals should contribute towards these outcomes.

Grey Belt Definition

- 6.41 The Glossary of the NPPF defines grey belt as follows:

***‘Grey belt:** For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, ‘grey belt’ is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. ‘Grey belt’ excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.’*

- 6.42 As set out in Section 6.21-6.31, while the Site makes some contribution to purpose a, the land does not make a **strong** contribution to purposes a, b, or d of the Green Belt purpose. The Site does not strongly contribute against of these purposes due to its very well contained nature, and the fact that any harm to the Green Belt will be contained to that occurring within the Site, with no resultant harm to the wider Green Belt (again due to the very strong containment of the Site).
- 6.43 The Site therefore comprises grey belt land. Development at the Site would also not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.

Footnote 7

- 6.44 Footnote 7 sites include irreplaceable habitats, which include Ancient Woodland. The Ancient Woodland within the Site is proposed to be retained and enhanced, and the remainder of the Site is

not covered by any footnote 7 constraints. Given the constraint-led approach to masterplanning, it is considered that footnote 7 applies little relevance to the Site, given the area will not be developed.

Conclusion on grey belt

- 6.45 As set out above, the Site does not strongly contribute to purposes a, b or d of the Green Belt. Development at the Site would also not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan. The Site therefore constitutes grey belt land.
- 6.46 The Planning Statement assesses whether the proposed development at the Site complies with paragraphs 155 and 156 of the NPPF, and it finds that the proposed development at the Site would comply with NPPF paragraph 155, and 156, and it would therefore be appropriate development in the Green Belt.

3. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Icení Projects have been instructed by Richborough to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Green Belt Assessment in relation to the planning application for the proposed development at land north of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green (the 'Site'). The Site lies within the Green Belt.
- 7.2 The Application is in outline with all matters reserved except for access, for up to 600 dwellings, a site for a primary school and potential school expansion land, a local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services, a new country park, and associated infrastructure and open space.
- 7.3 The Site comprises two large arable fields. The larger eastern field includes a copse of Ancient Woodland (Green Lane Wood) roughly within the centre. It extends to 40.69ha. The Site is located on a plateau within a landscape that is gently rolling.
- 7.4 The Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape or heritage quality or value, however, the Site contains an area of Ancient Woodland in the eastern land parcel. The Site is bound by further areas of Ancient Woodland at Dell Wood and Long Newland's Spring, on the western and northern Site boundary. To the south of the Site along Little Green Lane, is Durrants House, a Grade II Listed Tudor/Jacobean revival-style country house. No trees on Site are covered by Tree Preservation Orders. The Site is publicly accessible via Public Right of Way ('PRoW') Sarratt 017 which bisects the northern part of the Site in an east-west direction.
- 7.5 An assessment of the visibility of the Site was undertaken, and a series of representative photographs were taken from public vantage points, rights of way and public highways. Views into the Site are limited by the dense vegetation within the area, although there are views of the interior of the Site from the public footpath which crosses it.
- 7.6 The Site comprises mostly ordinary arable land, and the trees, hedgerows and woodland on it are of moderate to high landscape quality and value. It is not a rare landscape type, nor a particularly good example of a landscape type or character. There is some ecological conservation interest in the Ancient Woodland within the Site. There are open views towards the adjoining woodland and settlement from the public footpath within the Site, but the Site is not of particular scenic value. The Site overall is not wild or tranquil, being located adjacent to the settlement edge of Croxley Green, although in relative terms, the north of the Site is more tranquil. Overall, the Site itself is considered to be of medium to high landscape value, because of the open views from the public footpath, and the occurrence of the Ancient Woodland within the Site.

-
- 7.7 The Site's character is influenced by the adjoining settlement in the south, although the northern and easternmost parts of the Site, as well as the indented woodland block, are more rural in character. The Site is capable of being developed for residential uses whilst retaining the majority of boundary and structural vegetation and sufficient off-set distances to these features. Housing within the Site would form a continuation of that to the south, and would not appear out of character within the wider area. The Site is considered to have a moderate to good ability to accommodate residential development. Overall, the Site is assessed as being of medium to high landscape sensitivity.
- 7.8 The landscape to the east and north of the Site is of high landscape value, being a Grade II Registered Park and Garden. The Ancient Woodlands to the north west of the Site have public access and are relatively tranquil, and are therefore of high landscape value. The landscape beyond the Site to the west comprises more ordinary farmland, with the Conservation Area located beyond. To the south, the townscape character is ordinary, although the Grade II Listed Durrants House is of higher value. Overall, the landscape value and sensitivity in the immediate vicinity of the Site ranges from medium to the south, to medium to high to the west, and high to the north and east. The landscape north and east of the Site is considered to constitute a valued landscape in line with NPPF paragraph 187a.
- 7.9 The development will form a natural and logical extension to the settlement to the south, and will be bound by very strong and clearly defined boundaries between the new settlement edge and the countryside beyond. The new homes will be designed to front onto the areas of open space, to create an attractive aspect and to provide passive surveillance. The proposed buildings will be taller than those within the neighbourhood to the south, but considering the well-contained nature of the Site, and the fact that the design and materiality of the proposed buildings will reflect and respect the vernacular to the south, it is considered that the new built form will harmoniously sit adjacent to the existing settlement, regardless of the additional height.
- 7.10 The structural vegetation on the Site's boundaries, as well as the woodland within it, will be retained for the most part, although it will be necessary to remove some sections of the hedgerow along Little Green Lane in order to create the vehicular access to the development. Much new native tree planting is proposed to be incorporated within the proposed areas of open space, as well as along the streets within the development, to increase the structural vegetation and diversity on the Site.
- 7.11 The character of the Site will change as a result of the proposed development. The open arable land will be lost and will be replaced with a new residential development, and associated open spaces and infrastructure. While the effect on the landscape character of the Site is judged as adverse (due to the loss of the open land), this does not mean that the development will be unattractive or inappropriate. In fact, as set out above, the neighbourhood will be designed to be attractive and safe, with many new areas of publicly accessible open space, as well as space to encourage wildlife

though habitat creation. Areas of open space have also been incorporated within the development to respect and acknowledge the Listed Durrants House from a landscape perspective.

- 7.12 The effects on the immediate surroundings of the Site will be limited as a result of careful design, and due to the existing dense vegetation which bounds the Site to the north, east and west. Appropriate transitional characters are proposed within the development through the incorporation of areas of open space within the Site between the built development and the woodland beyond, and these areas and associated planting within them will further minimise effects on the immediate surrounding landscape. The clear edge to the development also limits effects on the wider landscape around the Site and north Croxley Green, with the woodlands physically and visually separating the settlement from the remainder of the open countryside beyond. The proposed design and layout of the development, in reflecting and respecting the character of the adjoining settlement, will also reduce the effects on the townscape character south of the Site.
- 7.13 The proposed development will form a logical part of the existing settlement, and there will be no material effects on the wider landscape or townscape character around the Site, including on the Conservation Area and Registered Park and Garden within the wider Site context. The well-contained nature of the Site also limits effects on the wider Landscape Character Area.
- 7.14 The Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment for Three Rivers District and Watford Borough found that release of the Site would result in moderate-high harm to the Green Belt, but also noted that *'Releasing this land would have negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land because the surrounding registered parkland and ancient woodland constraints mean there would be no significant increase in the containment of adjacent Green Belt land, nor any weakening of the boundary of the urban edge'*.
- 7.15 The table below summarises our assessment of the contribution (i.e. performance) of the Green Belt at the Site in relation to its purposes, alongside the assessed harm to the Green Belt purposes as a result of the proposed development.

Contribution to Green Belt Purpose		Harm to Green Belt Purpose	
Purpose a	Average	Purpose a	Limited
Purpose b	None	Purpose b	None
Purpose c	Average	Purpose c	Moderate
Purpose d	None	Purpose d	None
Purpose e	-	Purpose e	Limited

- 7.16 As set out in Section 6.21-6.31, while the Site makes some contribution to purpose a, the land does not make a **strong** contribution to purposes a, b, or d of the Green Belt purpose. The Site does not

strongly contribute against of these purposes due to its very well contained nature, and the fact that any harm to the Green Belt will be contained to that occurring within the Site, with no resultant harm to the wider Green Belt (again due to the very strong containment of the Site). The Site therefore comprises grey belt land. Development at the Site would also not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.

- 7.17 The Planning Statement assesses whether the proposed development at the Site complies with paragraphs 155 and 156 of the NPPF, and it finds that the proposed development at the Site would comply with NPPF paragraph 155, and 156, and it would therefore be appropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 7.18 Overall, there is no landscape or visual reason why development at the Site would be unacceptable, and the Site is capable of being developed in line with the proposals.

A1. SITE LOCATION PLAN



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— Site Boundary

SARRATT 016

Public Right of Way
number

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED
Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill
London, EC1N 8FH



PROJECT Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green
DRAWING Site Location Plan
CLIENT Richborough

SCALE @ A4	Not to Scale	DRAWING NO.	I000010_DL05
DRAWN BY	KL	REV	-
CHECKED BY	SG	DATE	August 2024

ICENI PROJECTS ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY UNAUTHORISED AMENDMENTS TO THIS DRAWING.
ONLY FIGURED DIMENSIONS ARE TO BE WORKED TO.

A2. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



© Getmapping plc 2024



Photograph number and
direction of view

— Site Boundary

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED
Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill
London, EC1N 8FH

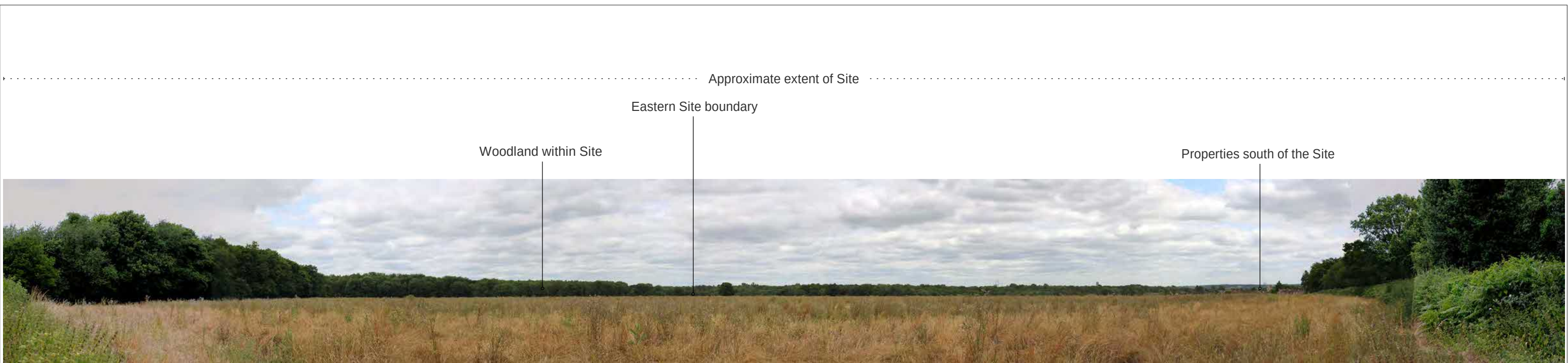


PROJECT **Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green**
DRAWING **Aerial Photograph**
CLIENT **Richborough**

SCALE @ A4	Not to Scale	DRAWING NO.	I000010_DL06
DRAWN BY	KL	REV	-
CHECKED BY	SG	DATE	August 2024

ICENI PROJECTS ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY UNAUTHORISED AMENDMENTS TO THIS DRAWING.
ONLY FIGURED DIMENSIONS ARE TO BE WORKED TO.

A3. PHOTOGRAPHS

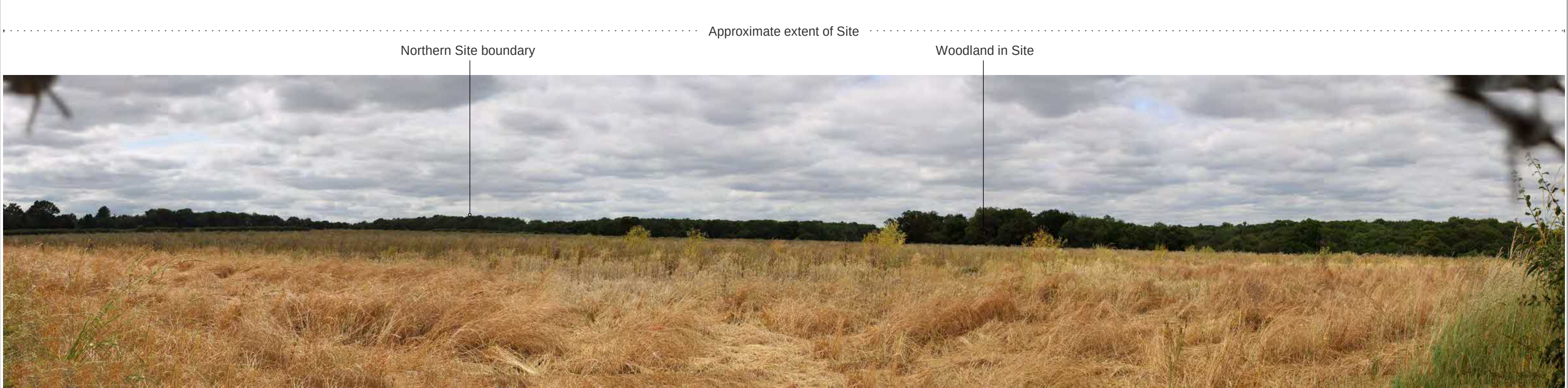


Photograph no. 1a (summer) View east from just inside the Site, off Little Green Lane near junction with public footpath Sarratt 063



Photograph no. 1b (winter) View east from just inside the Site, off Little Green Lane near junction with public footpath Sarratt 063

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Photograph no. 2 (summer) View north from Little Green Lane, over field access gate



Photograph no. 3 (summer) View north from Little Green Lane over the eastern part of the Site

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:16

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH	PROJECT Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO. I000010_DL04
	DRAWING TITLE Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	
	CLIENT Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -

..... Approximate extent of Site

Eastern Site boundary

Rousebarn Lane



Photograph no. 4a (summer) View north from Rousebarn Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North
HfoV: 53 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:18

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -

..... Approximate extent of Site

Eastern Site boundary Rousebarn Lane



Photograph no. 4b (winter) View north from Rousebarn Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North
HfoV: 53 degrees
28.11.2024, 11:48

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Photograph no. 5a (summer) View west from PRow Sarratt 017

Visualisation type 1
Planar projections
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm
Looking direction: West
HfoV: 40 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:22



Panorama for context only

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -

..... Approximate extent of Site

PRoW Sarratt 017



Visualisation type 1
Planar projections
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm
Looking direction: West
HfoV: 40 degrees
28.11.2024, 11:55

Photograph no. 5b (winter) View west from PRoW Sarratt 017

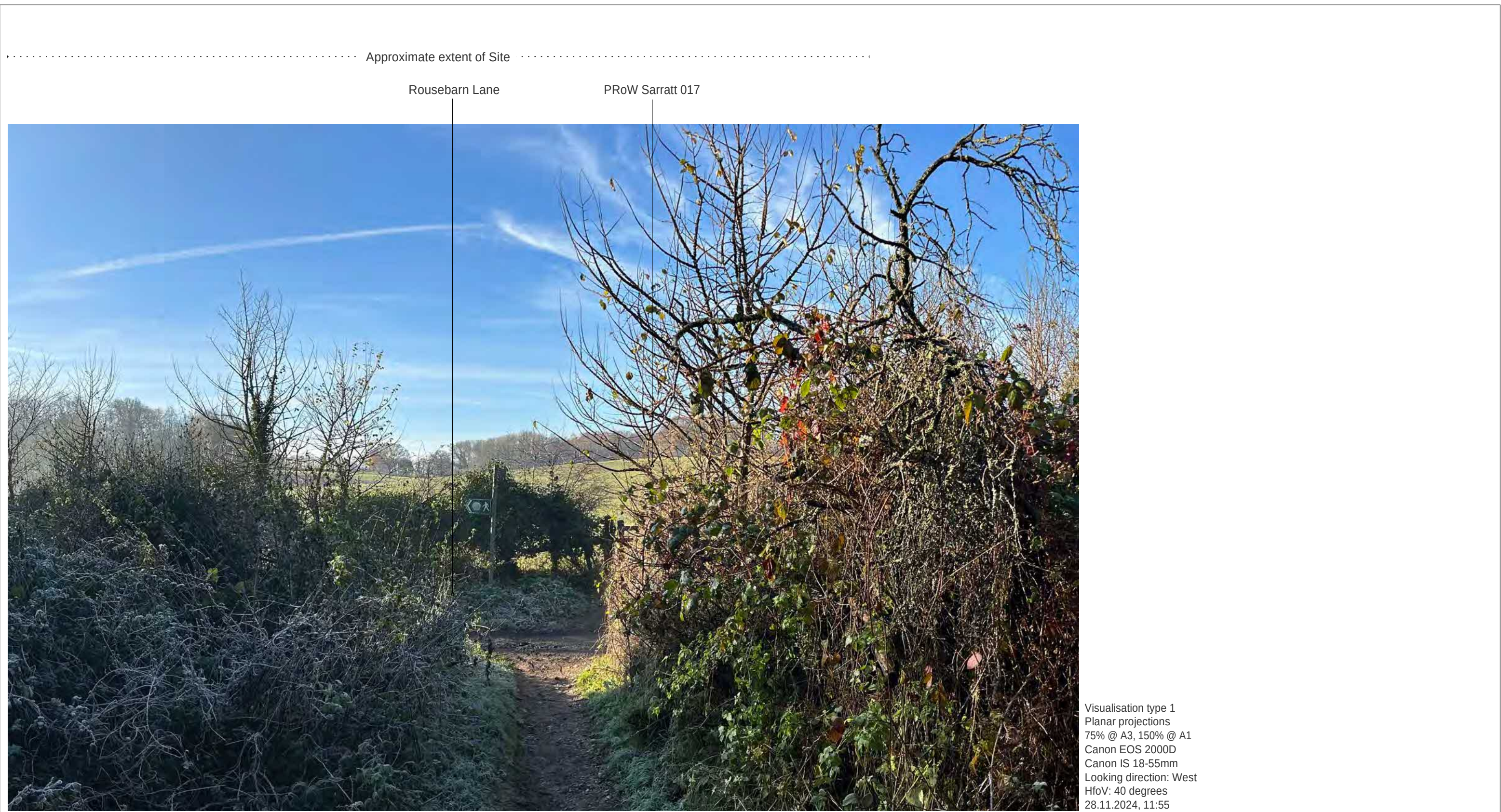
ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 6a (summer) View west from PRoW Watford Borough 031

Visualisation type 1
Planar projections
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm
Looking direction: West
HfoV: 40 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:23

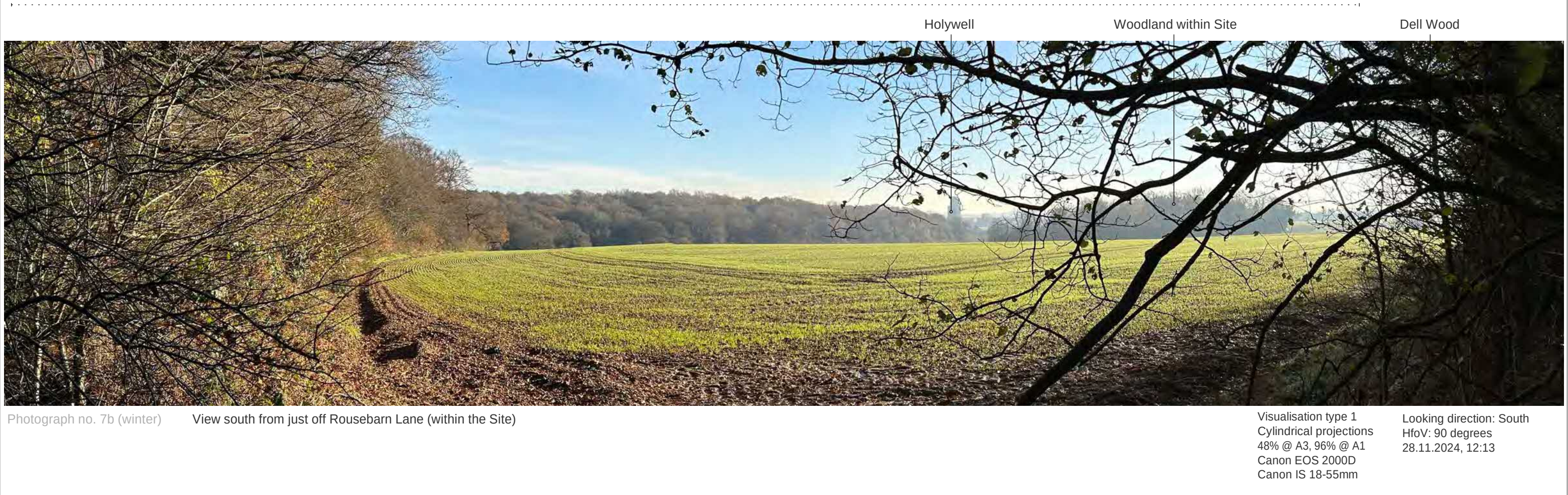
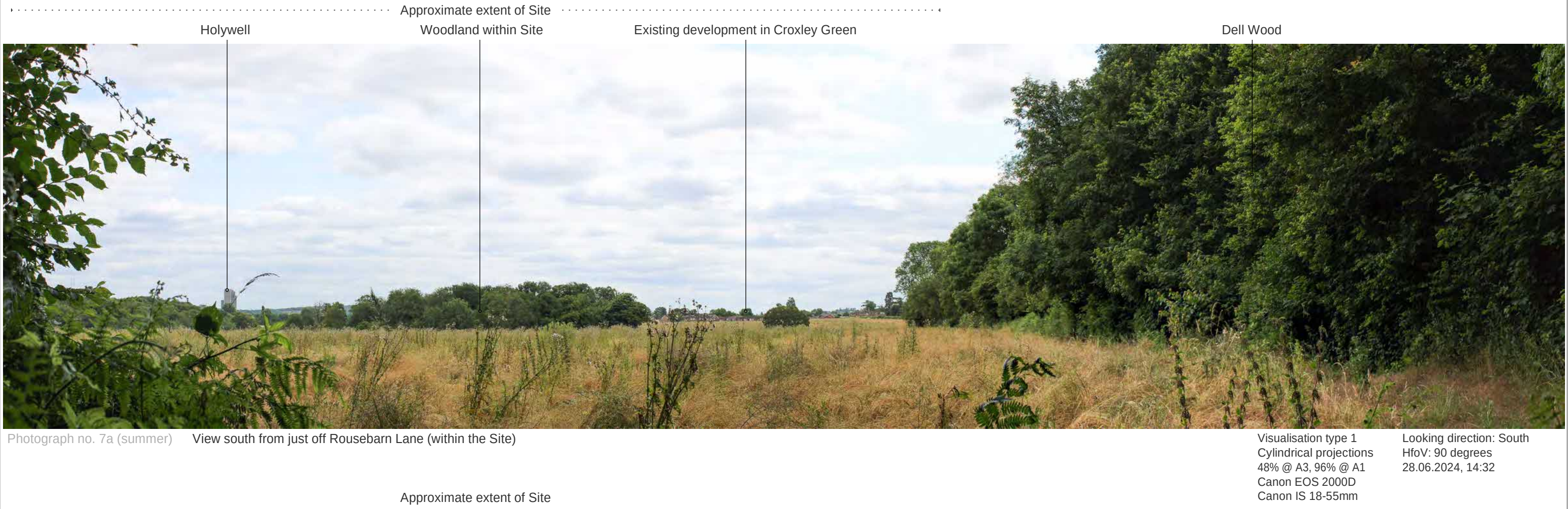
ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



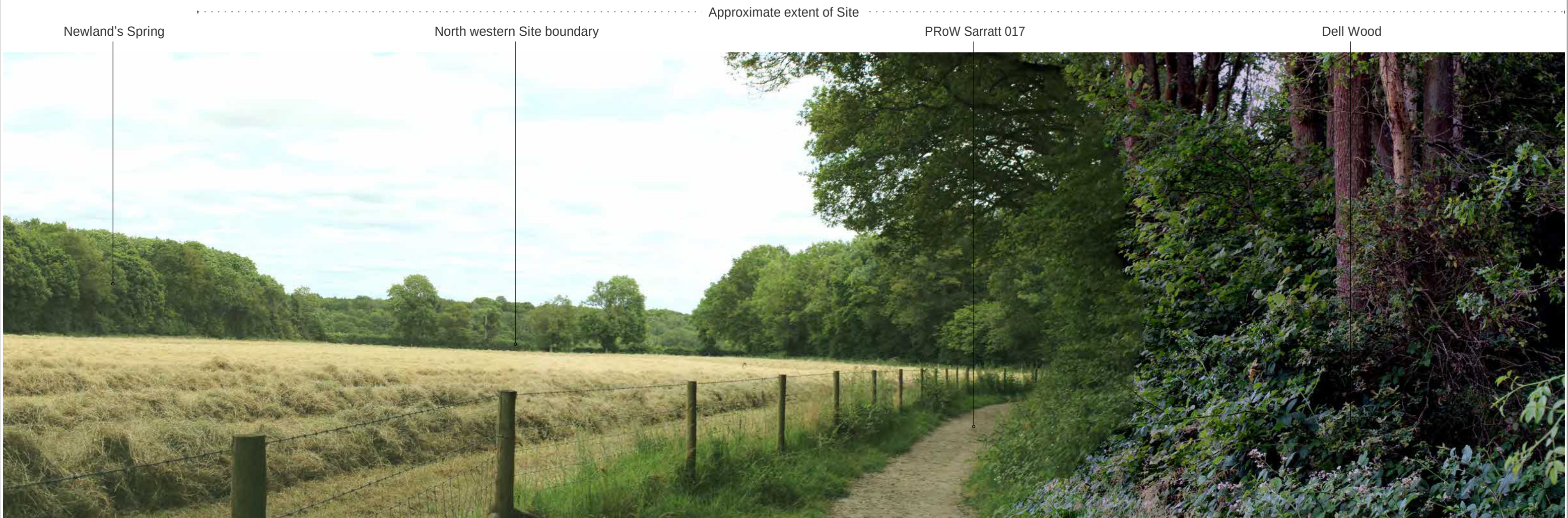
Photograph no. 6b (winter) View west from PRoW Watford Borough 031

Visualisation type 1
Planar projections
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Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm
Looking direction: West
HfoV: 40 degrees
28.11.2024, 11:55

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, EC1N 8FH	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 8a (summer)View east from PRoW Sarratt 017

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: East
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:42

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, EC1N 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Photograph no. 9.1 (summer) View south east from PRow Sarratt 017

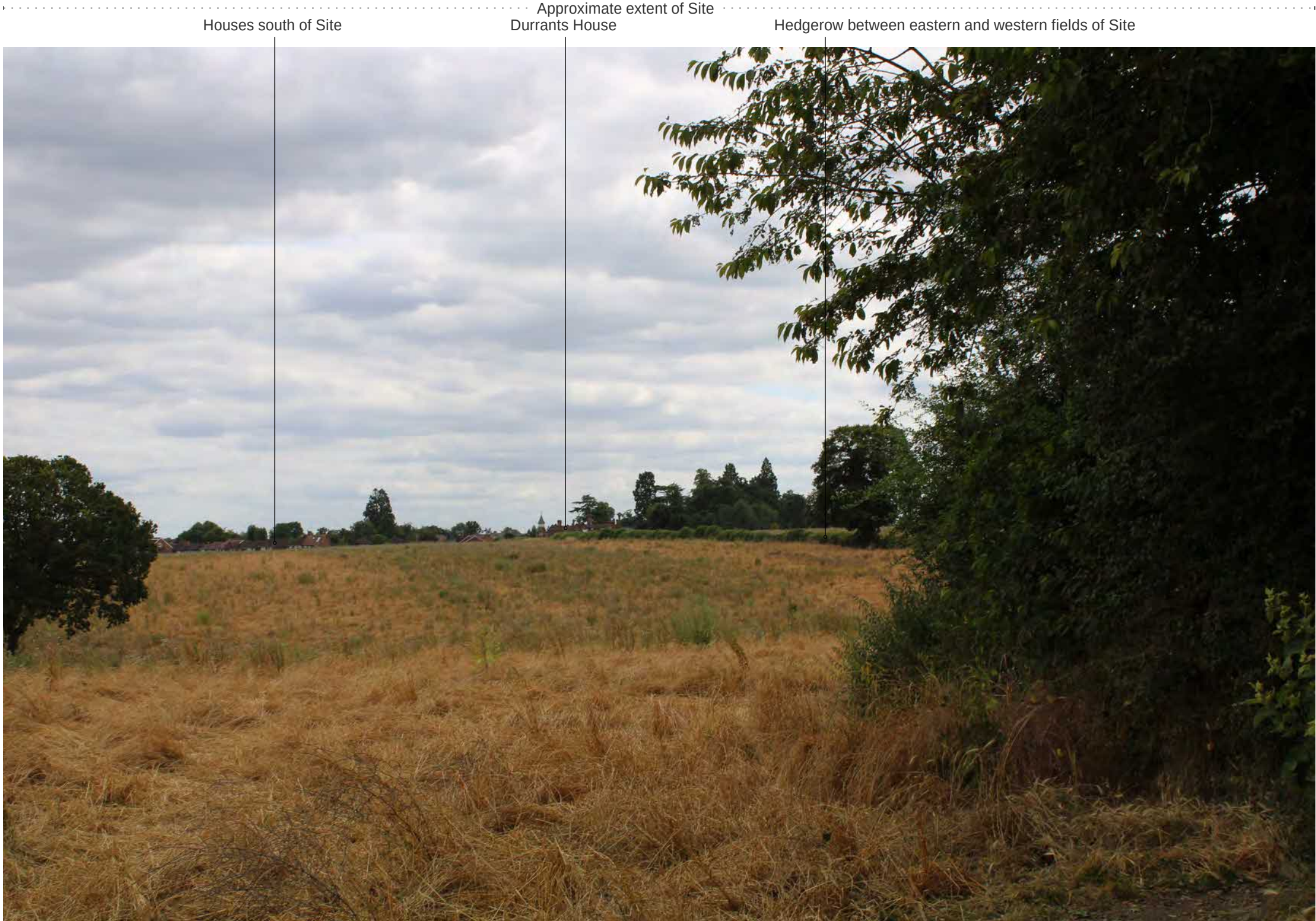
Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: South east
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:46



Panorama for context only

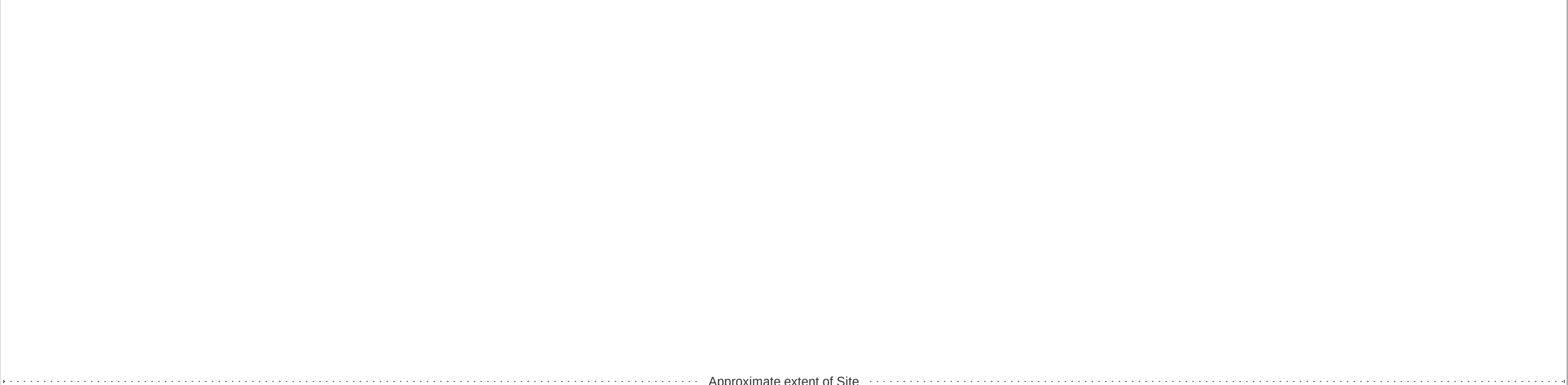
ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Visualisation type 1
Planar projections
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm
Looking direction: South
HfoV: 40 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:46

Photograph no. 9.2 (summer) View south from PRoW Sarratt 017

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Approximate extent of Site

Western Site boundary



Photograph no. 10 (summer) View south from within Dell Wood (a little off one of the informal paths)

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: South
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:51

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, EC1N 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 11 (summer) View south from PRoW Sarratt 017

Visualisation type 1
Planar projections
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm
Looking direction: South
HfoV: 40 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:56



Panorama for context only

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Photograph no. 12a (summer) View east from just off PRow Sarratt 063 (within the Site)

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: East
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:01

Approximate extent of Site



Photograph no. 12b (winter) View east from PRow Sarratt 063 (outside the Site)

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: East
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.11.2024, 12:38

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, EC1N 8FH	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 13a (summer) View east from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1 Cylindrical projections 48% @ A3, 96% @ A1 Canon EOS 2000D Canon IS 18-55mm	Looking direction: East HfoV: 88 degrees 28.06.2024, 15:06
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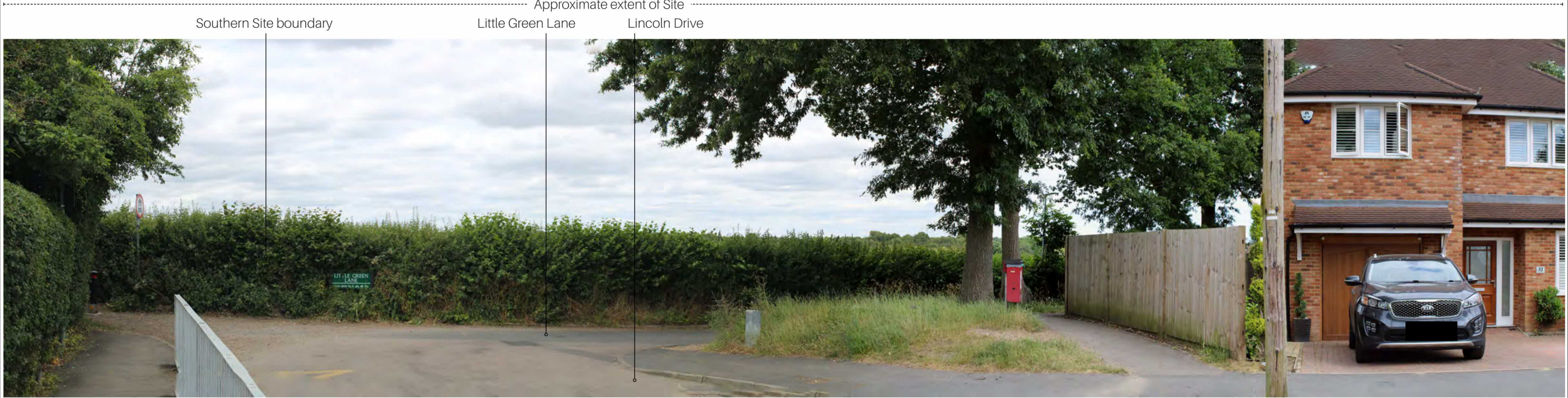
ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 13b (winter) View east from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1 Cylindrical projections 48% @ A3, 96% @ A1 Canon EOS 2000D Canon IS 18-55mm	Looking direction: East HfoV: 88 degrees 28.11.2024, 11:17
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ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 14a (summer) View north from Lincoln Drive

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:16



Photograph no. 14b (winter) View north from Lincoln Drive

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.11.2024, 11:23

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-

..... Approximate extent of Site

Southern Site boundary

Durrants House

Little Green Lane

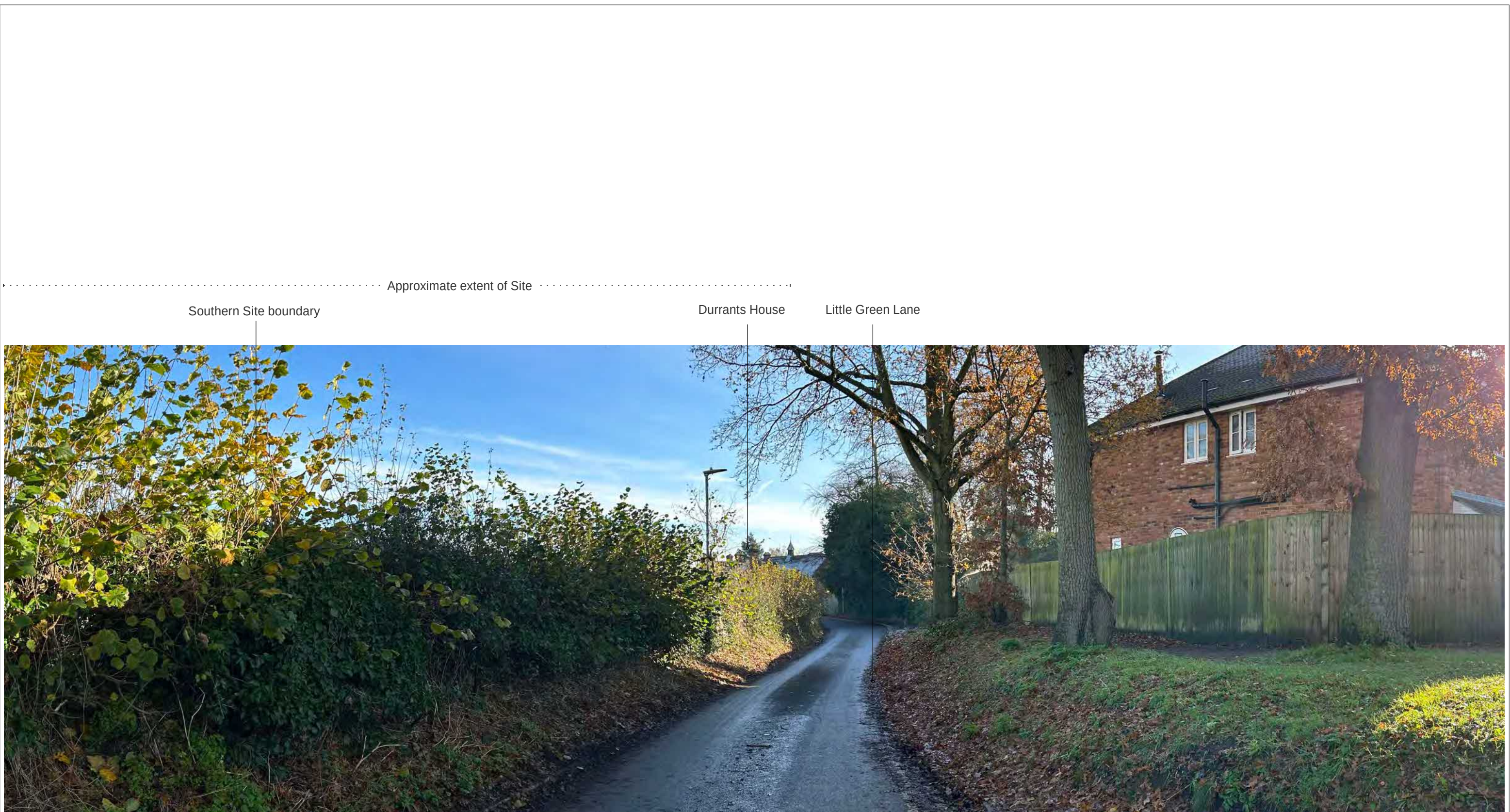


Photograph no. 15a (summer) View east from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: East
HfoV: 81 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:16

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 15 b (winter)

View east from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: East
Hfov: 90 degrees
28.11.2024, 11:26

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Photograph no. 16a (summer) View north from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1
Planar projections
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm
Looking direction: North
HfoV: 40 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:17



Panorama for context only

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Visualisation type 1
Planar projections
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm
Looking direction: North
HfoV: 40 degrees
28.11.2024, 11:29

Photograph no. 16b (winter) View north from Little Green Lane

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -

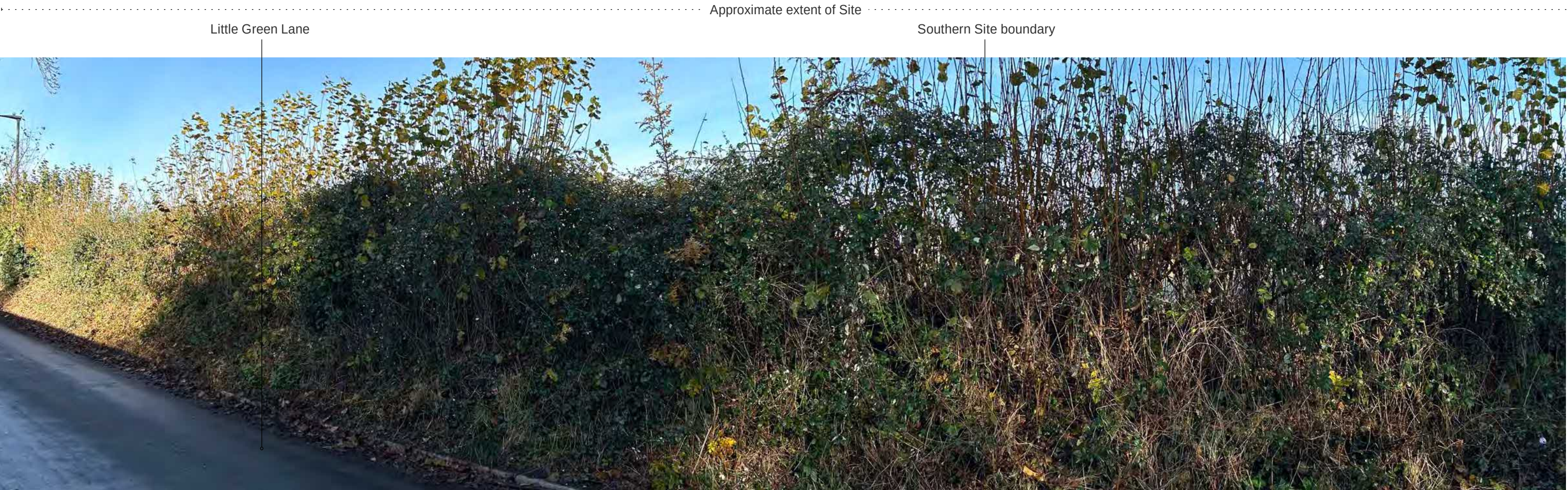


Photograph no. 17.1a (summer) View north-west from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North-west
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:18

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Photograph no. 17.1b (winter) View north-west from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North-west
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.11.2024, 11:32

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH iceni	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Photograph no. 17.2 (summer) View north-east from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North-east
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:18

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH iceni	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 18a (summer) View north from Norwich Way

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:20

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, EC1N 8FH	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-

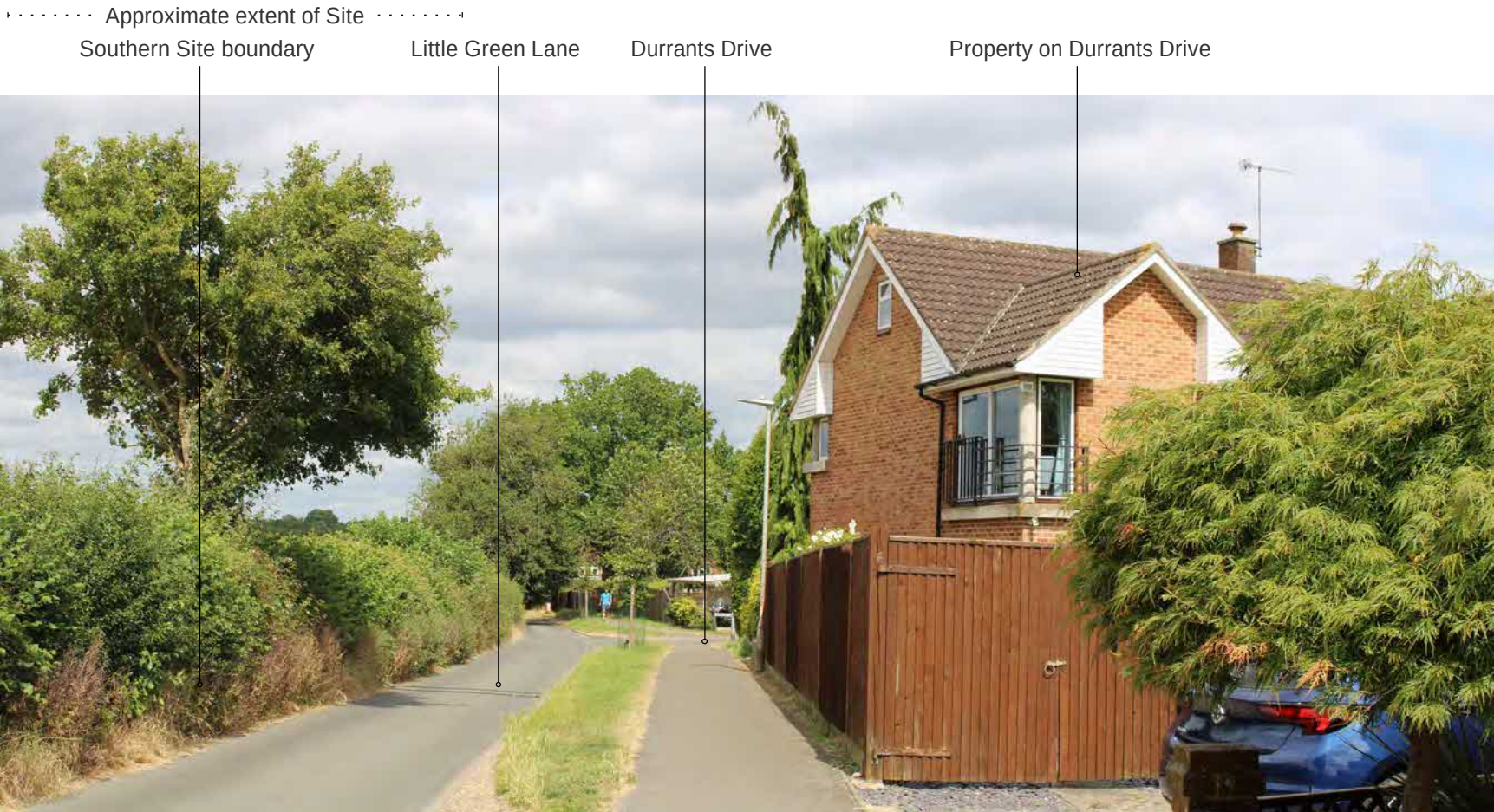


Photograph no. 18b (winter) View north from Norwich Way

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.11.2024, 11:36

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-

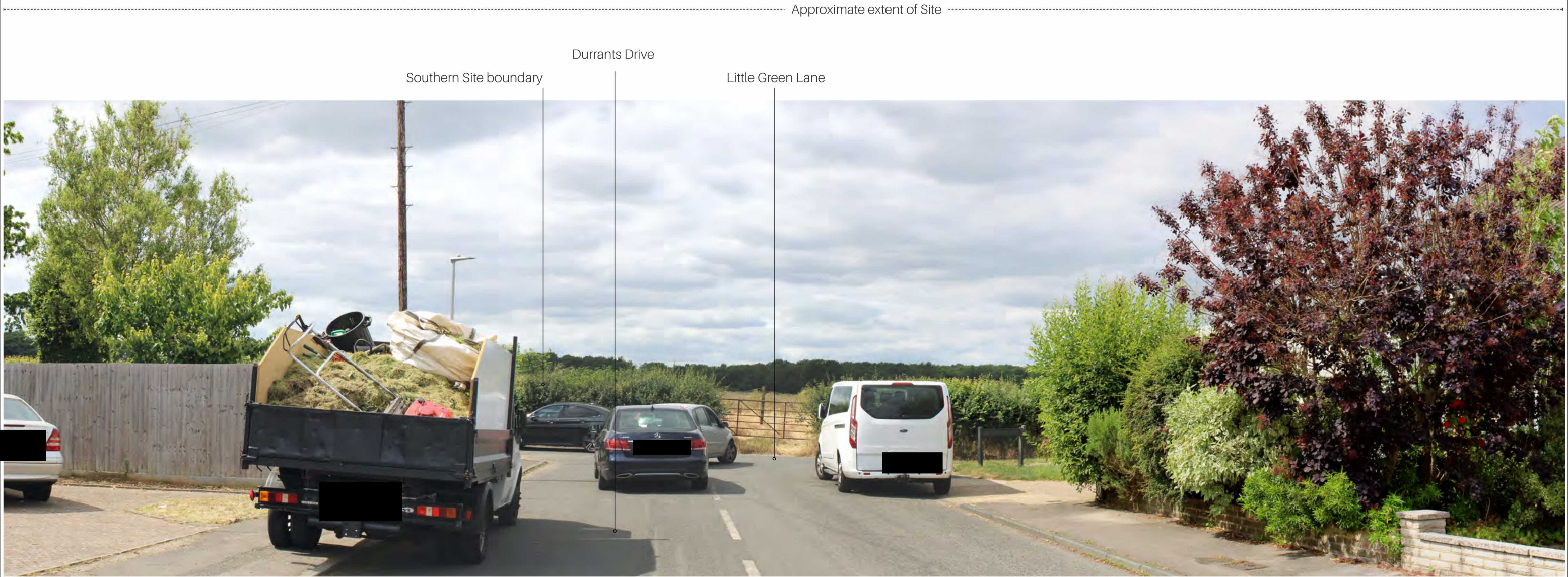


Photograph no. 19 (summer) View east from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: East
HfoV: 50 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:20





Photograph no. 20 (summer) View north from Durrants Drive

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:22

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 21a (summer)

View north-east from Little Green Lane

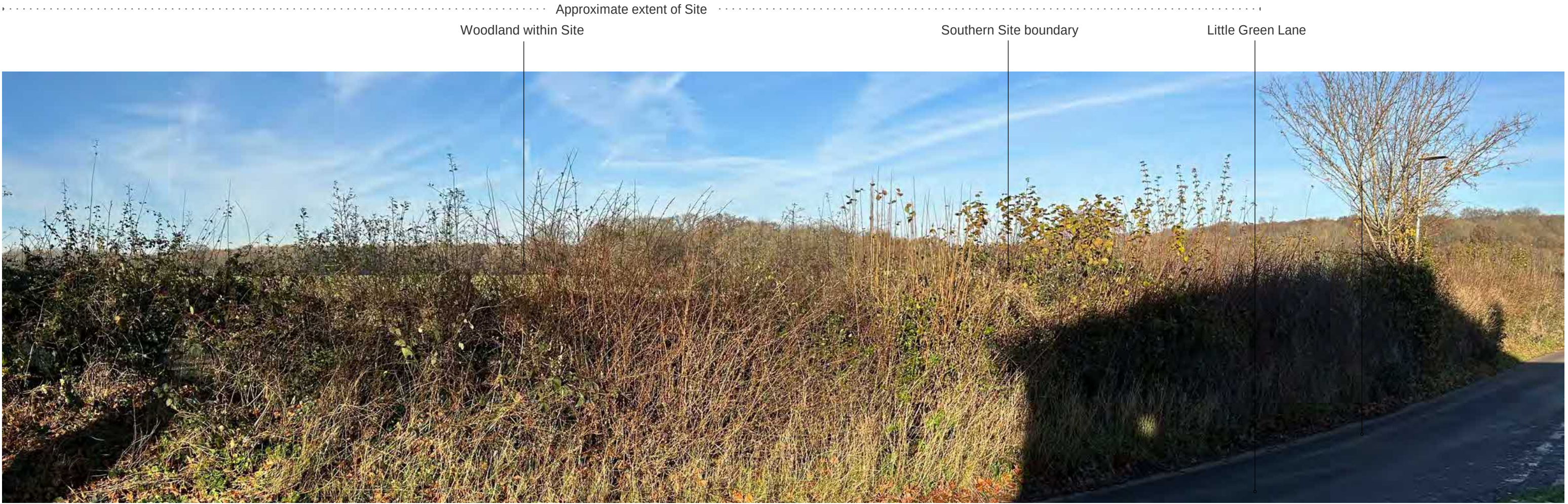
Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North-east
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:24



Panorama for context only

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Photograph no. 21b (winter) View north-east from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North-east
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.11.2024, 12:28

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Photograph no. 22 (summer) View north from Canterbury Way

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North
HfoV: 74 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:25

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



Photograph no. 23 (summer) View north from Little Green Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: North
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 15:26

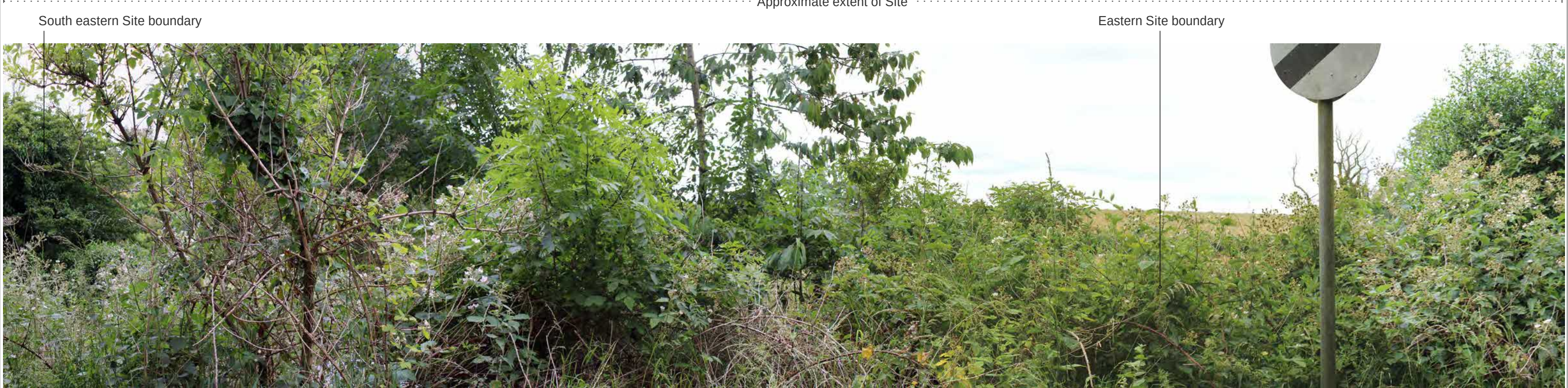
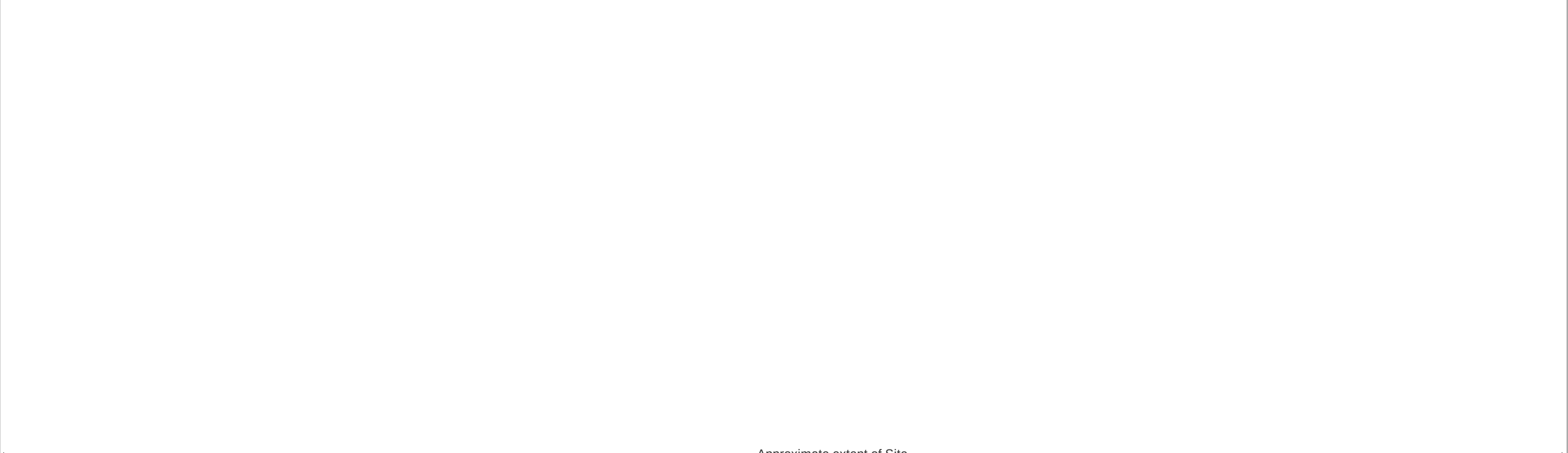
ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 24 (summer) View north-west from Rousebarn Lane

Visualisation type 1	Looking direction: North-west
Cylindrical projections	HfoV: 90 degrees
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1	28.06.2024, 14:17
Canon EOS 2000D	
Canon IS 18-55mm	

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, EC1N 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -

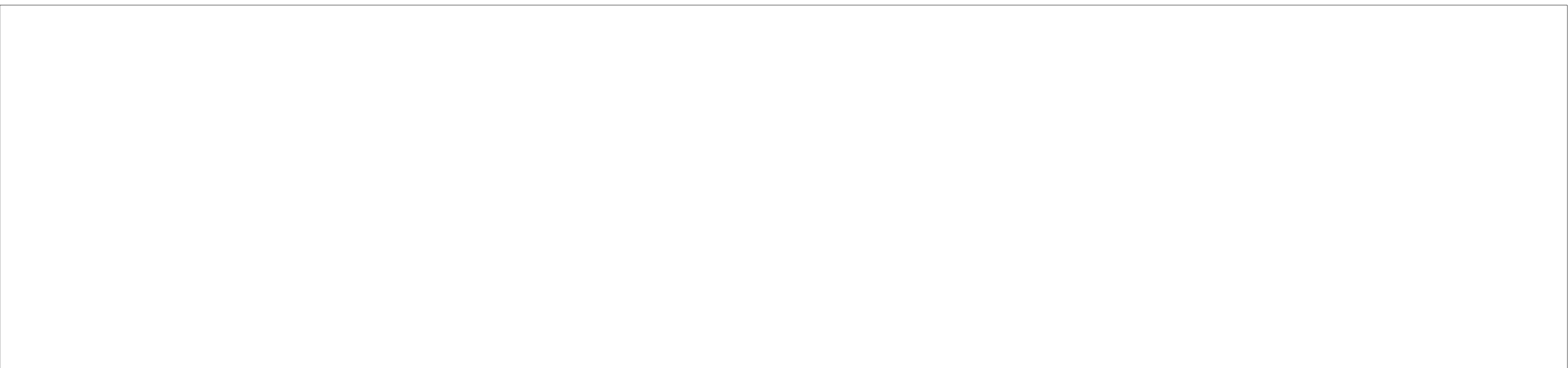


Photograph no. 25a (summer) View south-west from Rousebarn Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

Looking direction: South-west
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:17

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, EC1N 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE August 2024	REV -



----- Approximate extent of Site -----

South eastern Site boundary

Eastern Site boundary

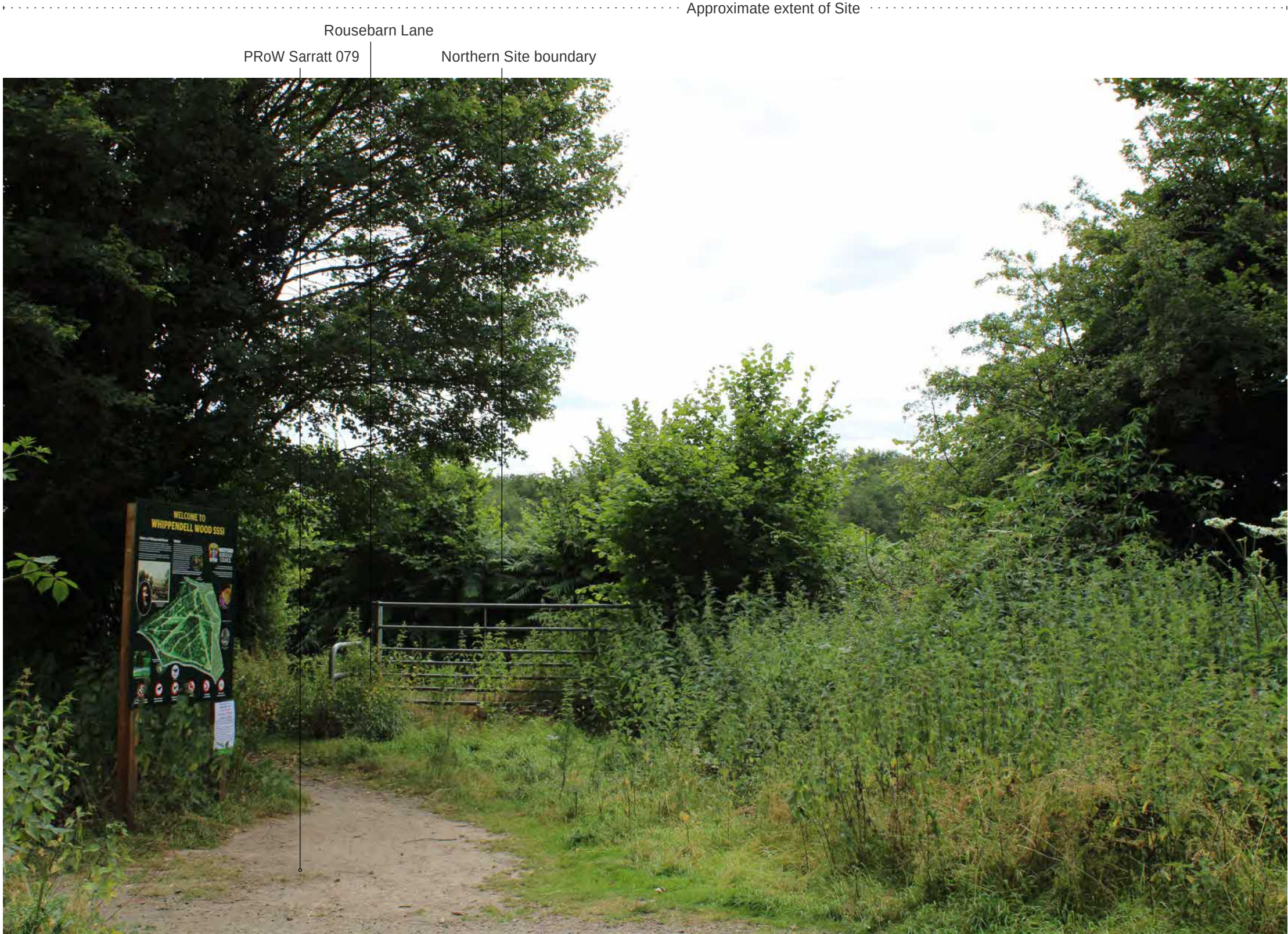


Photograph no. 25b (winter) View south-west from Rousebarn Lane

Visualisation type 1
Cylindrical projections
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm

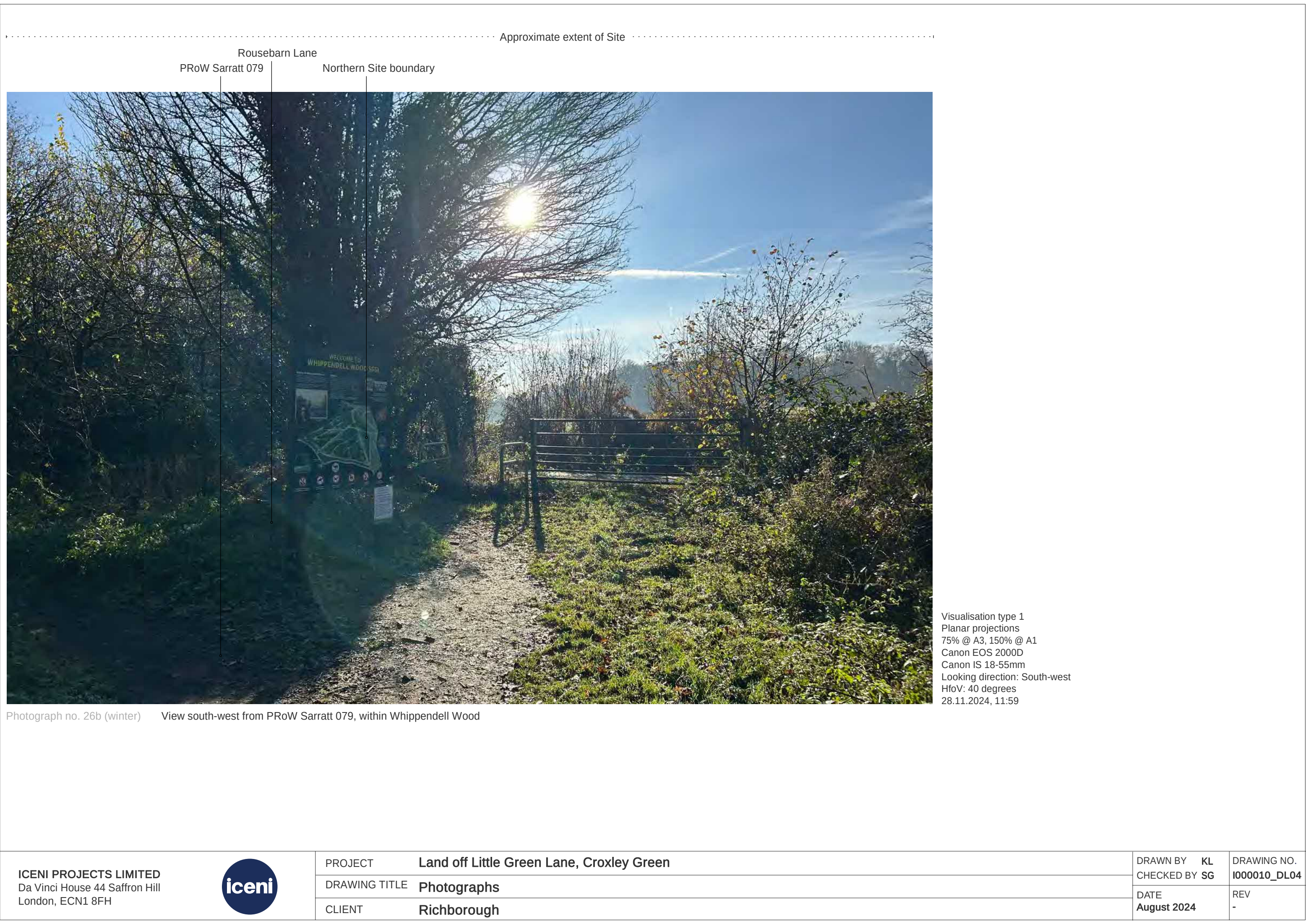
Looking direction: South-west
HfoV: 90 degrees
28.11.2024, 11:53

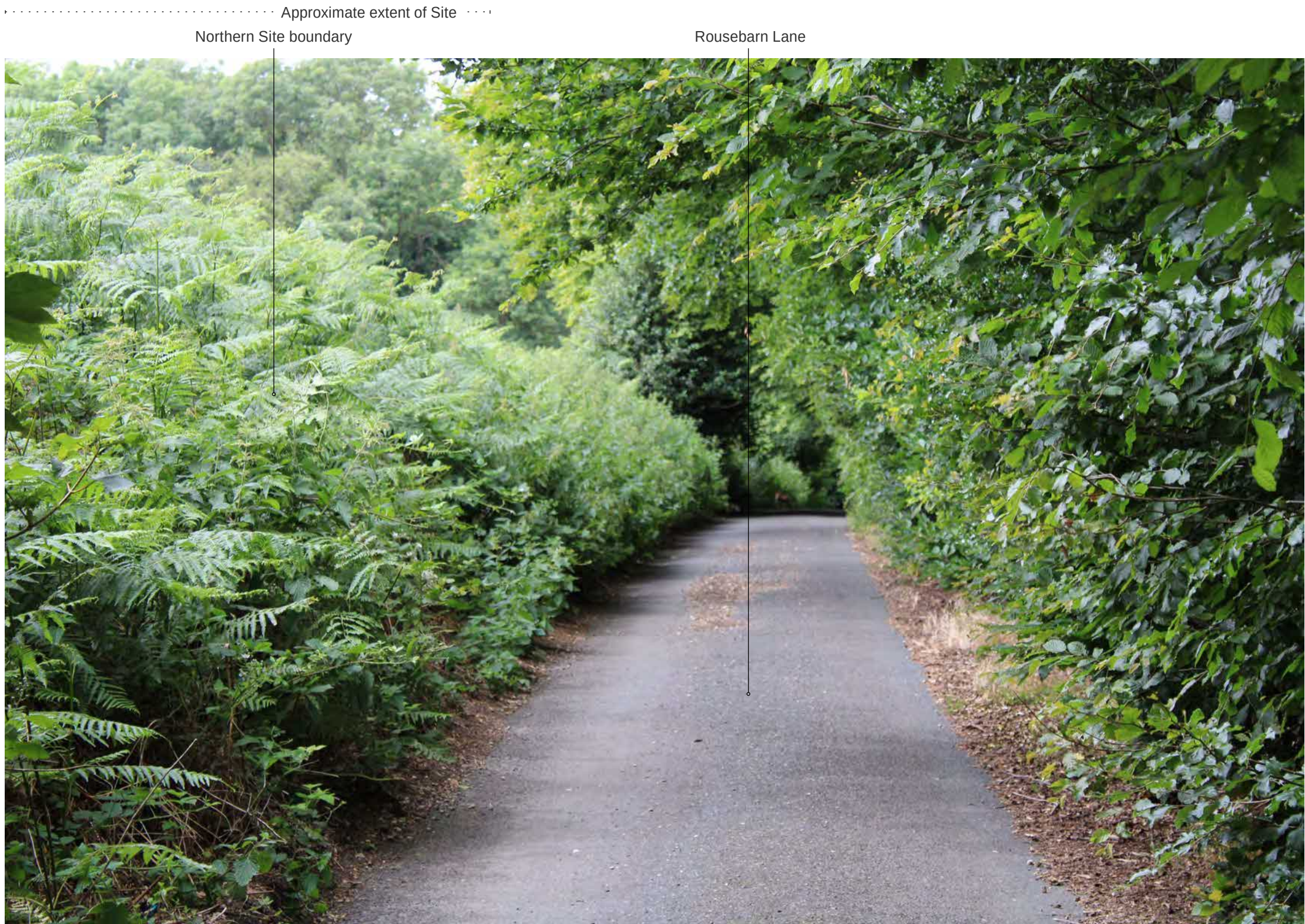
ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, EC1N 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



Photograph no. 26a (summer) View south-west from PRoW Sarratt 079, within Whippendell Wood

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, EC1N 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-

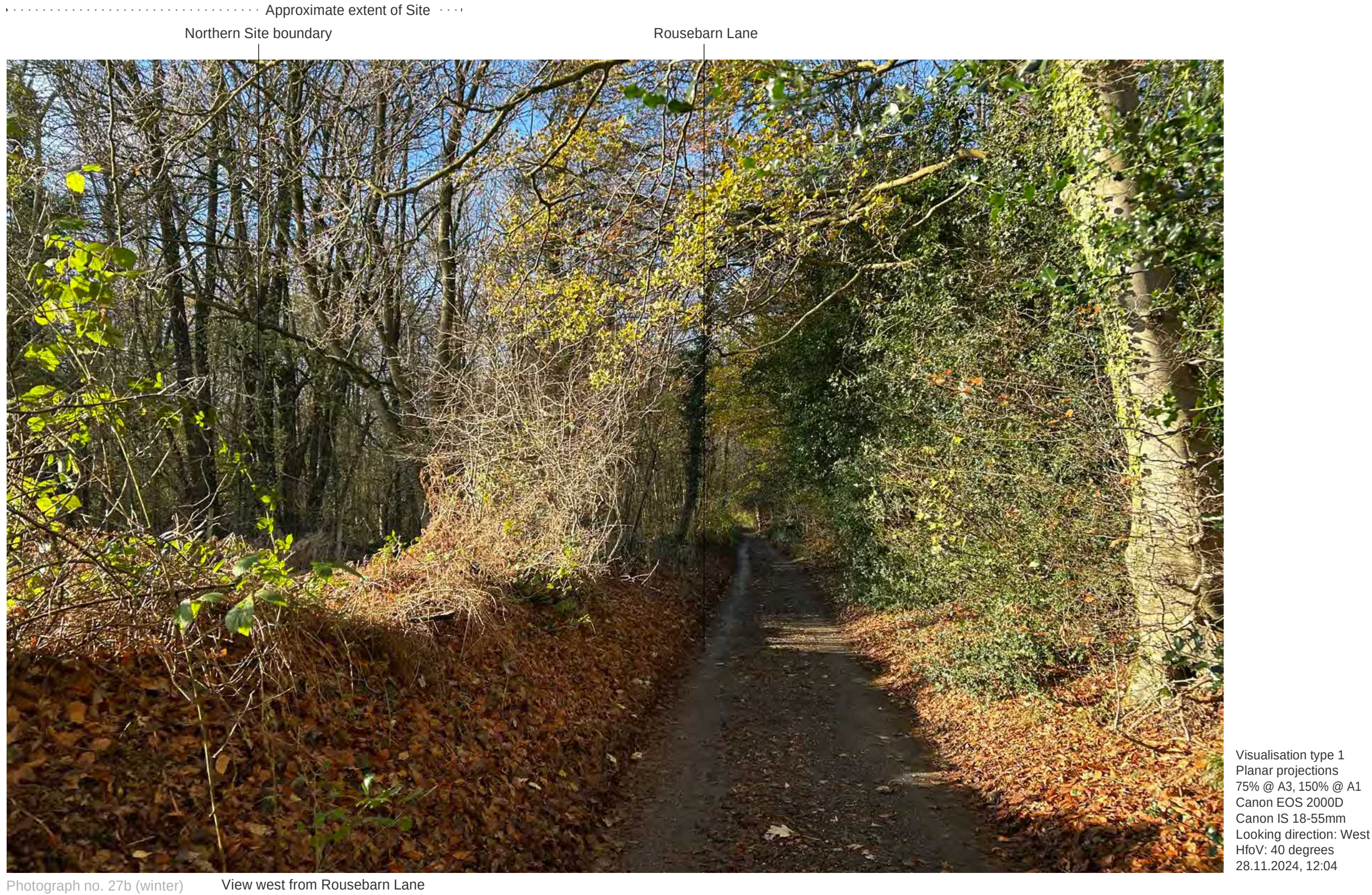




Visualisation type 1
Planar projections
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
Canon EOS 2000D
Canon IS 18-55mm
Looking direction: West
HfoV: 40 degrees
28.06.2024, 14:29

Photograph no. 27a (summer) View west from Rousebarn Lane

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill London, ECN1 8FH 	PROJECT	Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green	DRAWN BY	KL	DRAWING NO.
	DRAWING TITLE	Photographs	CHECKED BY	SG	I000010_DL04
	CLIENT	Richborough	DATE	August 2024	REV
					-



A4. DESIGNATIONS PLAN

A5. NATIONAL LANDSCAPE POLICY SUMMARY

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE POLICY SUMMARY

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

- 1.1 In December 2024, the government published the updated National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'), which maintains the focus on sustainable development that was established as the core of the 2012 NPPF. Those parts relevant to this assessment are summarised below.
- 1.2 Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the NPPF state that at the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be applied in relation to both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 1.3 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for, among other elements, the **conservation and enhancement of the natural built and historic environment including landscapes and green infrastructure and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.**
- 1.4 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Paragraph 132 states that **design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each areas defining characteristics.** Paragraph 133 requires Local Authorities to prepare design guides and codes which act as a framework to reflect local character and design preferences to create high quality designed places which are beautiful and distinctive.
- 1.5 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions, should ensure that developments, amongst others:

will function well and add to the overall quality of the area not just or the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

are visually attractive as a result of good architecture layout and effective landscaping

are sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

- 1.6 Paragraph 136 highlights the importance of new and retained trees to the character and quality of urban environments, with appropriate species chosen for the location and the needs of all users.
- 1.7 Paragraph 137 states that design quality should be integral to the evolution and assessment of proposals, and paragraph 139 goes on to state that poorly designed development should be refused, particularly where it does not follow local or government design guidance.
- 1.8 Section 15 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 187 of the document states that the planning system should contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural and local environment through, among other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, **in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan**. The paragraph also outlines that the planning system should recognise **the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land and of trees and woodland**.
- 1.9 Paragraph 188 highlights that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international national and locally designated Sites allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value here consistent with other policies in this framework take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure and plan or the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.
- 1.10 Paragraph 193 notes that in the process of determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply several principles. Among these, the paragraph notes that **development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists**.
- 1.11 Section 13 of the NPPF concerns Protecting Green Belt land. Paragraph 142 notes that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
- 1.12 Paragraph 143 continues, setting out the five purposes of the Green Belt:
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

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

- 1.13 Paragraph 145 goes on to state that once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of plans. It notes that strategic policies should have regard for the intended permanence in the long term of Green Belt boundaries.
- 1.14 Paragraph 146 goes on to state that exceptional circumstances in this context include, but are not limited to instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means. If that is the case, authorities should review Green Belt boundaries in accordance with the policies in this Framework and propose alterations to meet these needs in full, unless the review provides clear evidence that doing so would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt, when considered across the area of the plan.
- 1.15 Paragraph 148 highlights that strategic policymaking authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously developed, then consider grey belt land which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations. The importance of considering Green Belt release in the context of sustainable patterns is also reinforced.
- 1.16 Paragraph 150 continues, stating that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land. Where Green Belt land is released for development through plan preparation or review, the 'Golden Rules' in paragraph 156 apply.
- 1.17 Paragraph 154 highlights that there are certain forms of development that are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. These include:

buildings for agriculture and forestry;

the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

limited infilling in villages;

limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

i. mineral extraction;

ii. engineering operations;

iii. local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;

iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;

v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and

vi. development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

1.18 Paragraph 155 notes that in addition to the above, housing, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:

The development would utilise grey belt ¹land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;

¹ 'For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.'

The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and

Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.

- 1.19 Paragraph 156 goes on to state that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made:

affordable housing which reflects either: (i) development plan policies produced in accordance with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework; or (ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157 below;

necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and

the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

- 1.20 Paragraph 158 states that development which complies with the Gold Rules should be given significant weight in favour of the grant of permission.

- 1.21 Paragraph 159 notes that the improvements to green spaces required as part of the Golden Rules should contribute positively to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery and meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan. Where no locally specific standards exist, development proposals should meet national standards relevant to the development (these include Natural England standards on accessible green space and urban greening factor and Green Flag criteria). Where land has been identified as having particular potential for habitat creation or nature recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies, proposals should contribute towards these outcomes.

- 1.22 Regarding renewable energy projects in the Green Belt, Paragraph 160 states that elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.

- 1.23 Section 14 of the NPPF focuses on climate change, flooding and coastal change. Paragraph 161 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and should help to support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
- 1.24 Paragraph 165 of the document asks that plans should:
- provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);
 - consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and
 - identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for collocating potential heat customers and suppliers.
- 1.25 Paragraph 189 notes that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The paragraph goes on to state that planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Applications for development should include an assessment of potential detrimental effects on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and should show the extent to which these could be moderated. The paragraph also notes that development within the setting of a designated area **should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated area.**
- 1.26 Paragraph 190 states that **permission should be refused for major development** within the National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes apart from where exceptional circumstances and public interest can be demonstrated. Such applications will require assessments of the need for the development, other options for the location of the development outside the designated area and any detrimental effects on the environment, landscape and recreational opportunities.
- 1.27 The definition of major development for the purposes of paragraphs 189 and 190, is noted as being a matter for the decision maker, and should be considered in terms of its **nature scale and setting and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes or which the area is designated or defined.**

Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG'; July 2021)

- 1.28 The Planning Practice Guidance PPG as relevant to this assessment covers landscape and the natural environment, and the design of new developments. The PPG may be out of date in its reference to NPPF paragraph numbers, and where this is the case, the latest paragraph number has been included in the text in square brackets.
- 1.29 Paragraph 001 ID 26-001-20191001 of the Design process and tools section sets out the purpose of the guidance, which aims to explain the process and tools that can be employed to achieve well-designed places. The guidance refers to paragraph 130 – 134 [131 – 135] of the NPPF which relates to ensuring good design, and states that the section should be read in conjunction with the National Design Guide published October 2019, which it notes should be used in both plan-making and decision making. Ten good design characteristics are identified in the National Design Guide, and these are set out as follows in the PPG:
- Context
 - Identity
 - Built form
 - Movement
 - Nature
 - Public spaces
 - Uses
 - Homes and buildings
 - Resources
 - Lifespan.
- 1.30 Paragraph 006 and 007 deal with masterplans, stating that they should be site specific and should **set the vision and implementation strategy for a development**. Paragraph 006 notes that they may need to be accompanied by other technical reports including landscape assessment and proposals for securing biodiversity net gain.
- 1.31 The Natural Environment section of the guidance aims to explain the key issues to consider in relation to the implementation of policies to protect and enhance the natural environment, including local requirements.
- 1.32 Paragraph 004 defines Green Infrastructure, while in paragraph 005 it explains its importance as a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, including enhanced biodiversity, landscapes and urban cooling. In paragraph 006 the guidance sets out the planning goals green infrastructure can assist in achieving, and these are:

Building a strong competitive economy;

Achieving well designed places;

Promoting healthy and safe communities;

Mitigating climate change flooding and coastal change;

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

- 1.33 The final paragraph 008 in the green infrastructure sub-section notes that green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision.
- 1.34 Within the Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Ecosystems section, the topic of net gain has been included. Paragraph 020 describes net gain as **an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it as beforehand. Net gain is an umbrella term for both biodiversity net gain and wider environmental net gain.**
- 1.35 In the Landscape section of the guidance, paragraph 036 refers to that part of paragraph 170 - 174 [187 – 191] of the NPPF which deals with the recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in local plans, and the need for strategic policies to **provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.** Paragraph 036 goes on to note that:
- ‘Where landscapes have a particular local value it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals or development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures such as appropriate design principles and visual screening here necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.’*
- 1.36 In the section on Climate Change, paragraph 007 highlights how local planning authorities can identify appropriate mitigation measures in plan-making. It notes that different sectors may have different options for mitigation including the generation of renewable energy.
- 1.37 The section on the Green Belt highlights issues surrounding what factors can be taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt as well as how plans might set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset by compensatory improvements, including landscape and visual enhancements. Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 64-001-20190722 notes that judgement is required to judge the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt. It sets out that

the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to:

openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;

the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and

the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

National Design Guide 2019

- 1.38 The National Design Guide 2019 provides guidance to illustrate how well designed places that are beautiful enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.
- 1.39 The guidance identifies ten good design characteristics and the following are of most relevance to landscape and visual assessment.

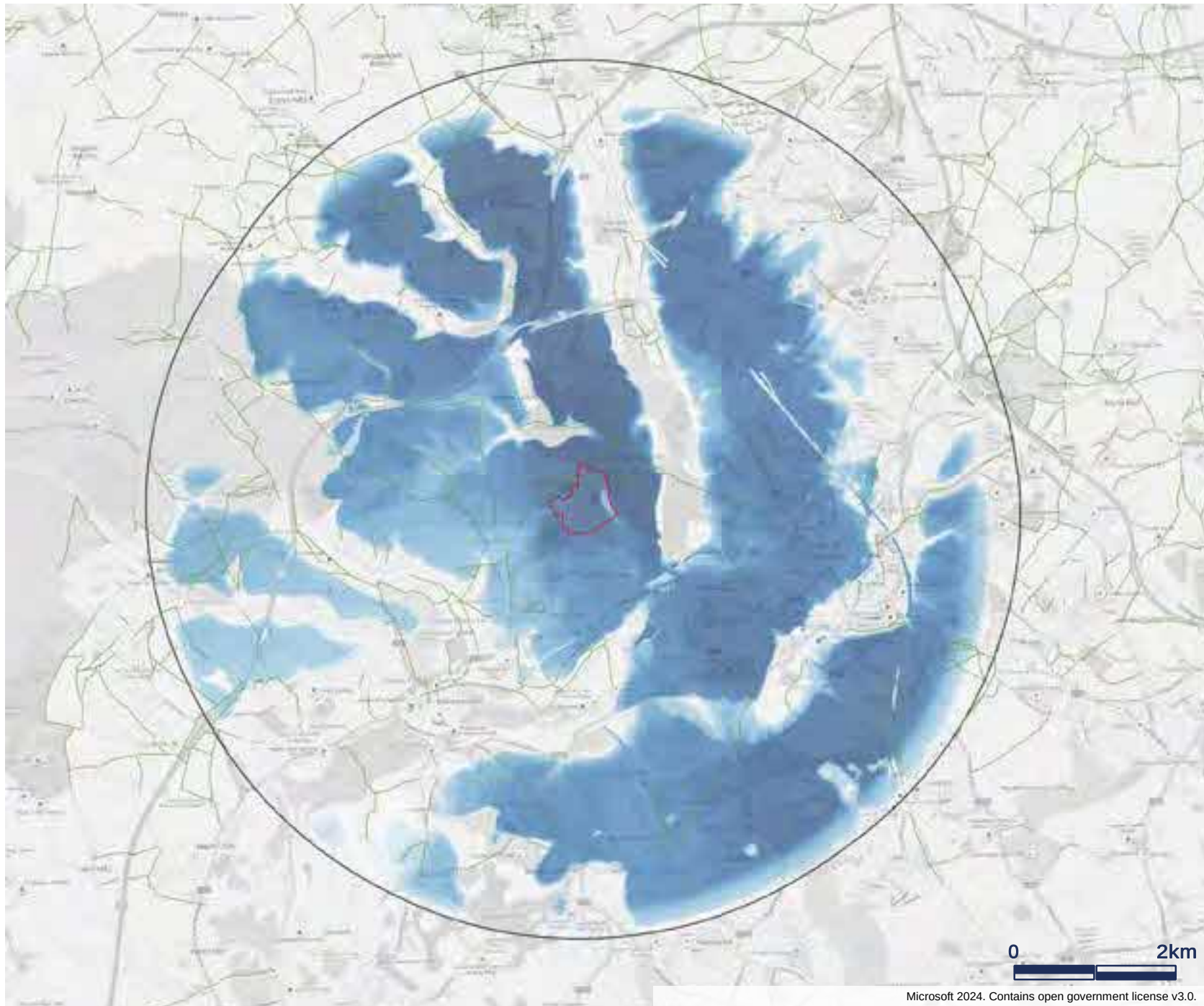
Context is described as the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate local and regional surroundings. The Guide goes on to state that: *‘An understanding of the context history and cultural characteristics of a site neighbourhood and region influences the location siting and design on new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion.’*

The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings streets and spaces landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings and how a place looks but how it engages with all of the senses. Local character makes places distinctive. Well-designed sustainable places with a strong identity give their users occupiers and owners a sense of pride helping to create and sustain communities and neighbourhoods.

Nature contributes to the quality of a place and to people’s quality of life and it is a critical component of well-designed places natural features are integrated into well designed development. They include natural and designed landscapes, high quality public open spaces, street trees, and other trees, grass, planting and water.

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

A6. ZTV PLANS



Microsoft 2024. Contains open government license v3.0.

KEY

- Site Boundary
- 5km distance from the Site
- Public Rights of Way

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- Areas of high potential visibility
- Areas of low potential visibility

NOTES

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been generated using EA 2m Digital Terrain Model. The ZTV has been generated based upon an observer eye level of 1.60m, and is based on 12.4m and 9.3m high points spaced out on the perimeter of the Proposed Development Areas. All heights mentioned are above ground level (AGL).

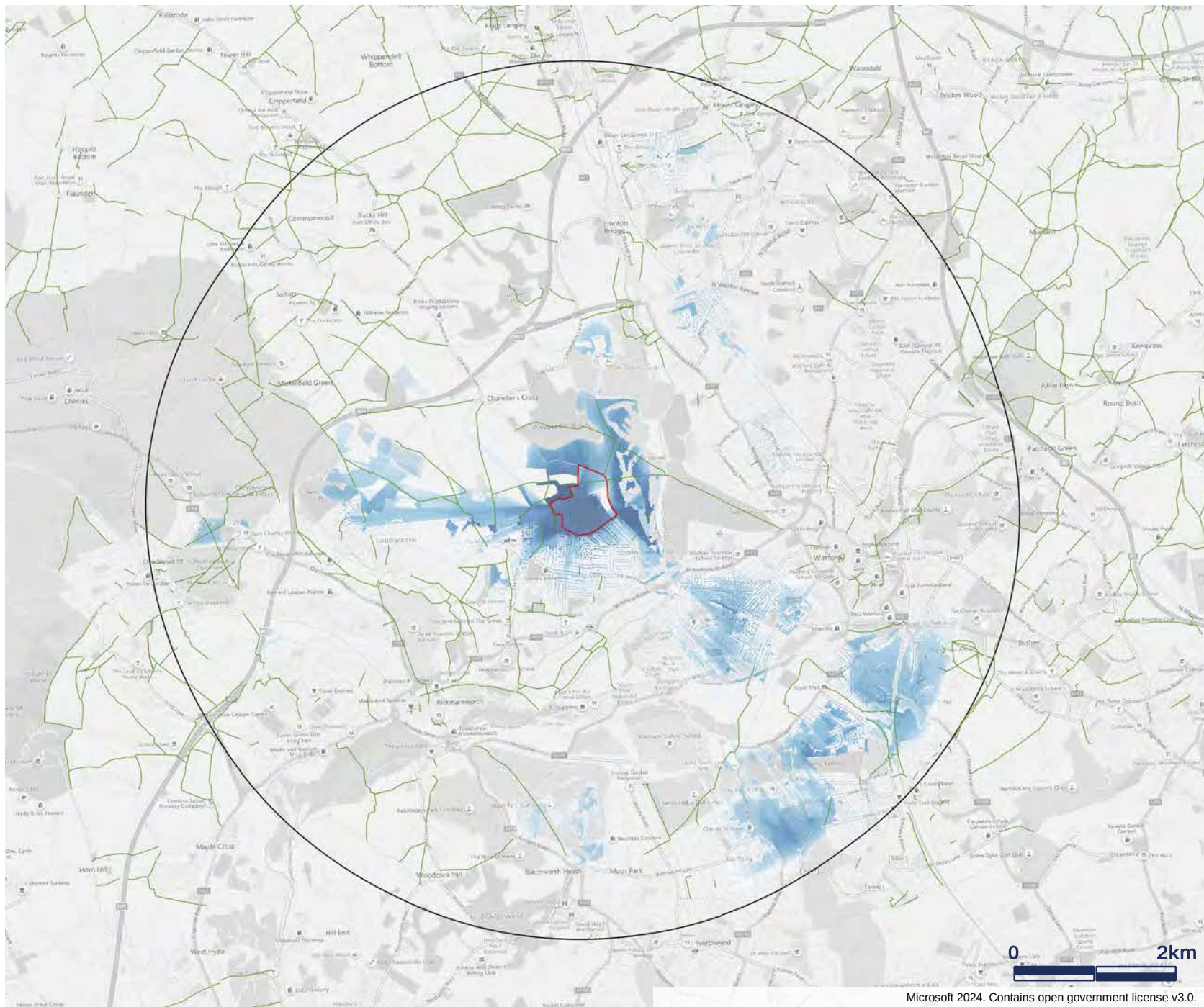
ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED
Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill
London, EC1N 8FH



PROJECT Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green
DRAWING Zone of Theoretical Visibility - Bare Earth
CLIENT Richborough

SCALE @ A4 Not to Scale
DRAWN BY KL
CHECKED BY SG
DRAWING NO. I000010-DL03
REV -
DATE August 2024

ICENI PROJECTS ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY UNAUTHORISED AMENDMENTS TO THIS DRAWING.
ONLY FIGURED DIMENSIONS ARE TO BE WORKED TO.



KEY

- Site Boundary
- 5km distance from the Site
- Public Rights of Way

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- Areas of high potential visibility
- Areas of low potential visibility

NOTES

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been generated using EA 2m Digital Terrain Model. The viewshed output includes the existing buildings at 9m height and woodland at 12m height. The ZTV has been generated based upon an observer eye level of 1.60m, and is based on 12.4m and 9.3m high points spaced out on the perimeter of the Proposed Development Areas. All heights mentioned are above ground level (AGL).

Microsoft 2024. Contains open government license v3.0.

ICENI PROJECTS LIMITED
Da Vinci House 44 Saffron Hill
London, EC1N 8FH



PROJECT **Land off Little Green Lane, Croxley Green**
DRAWING **Zone of Theoretical Visibility - with visual barriers**
CLIENT **Richborough**

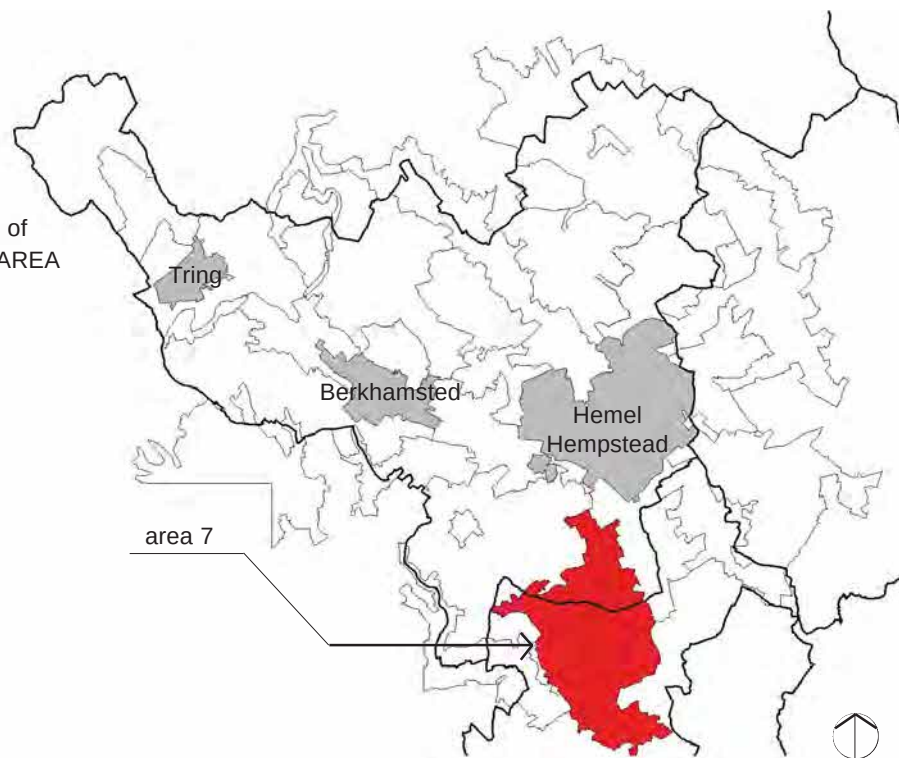
SCALE @ A4	Not to Scale	DRAWING NO.	I000010-DL03
DRAWN BY	KL	REV	-
CHECKED BY	SG	DATE	August 2024

ICENI PROJECTS ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY UNAUTHORISED AMENDMENTS TO THIS DRAWING.
ONLY FIGURED DIMENSIONS ARE TO BE WORKED TO.

**A7. EXTRACT FROM HERTFORDSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
ASSESSMENT (2000)**

District Map showing location of
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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Hertfordshire County Council
LA076678 2003



LOCATION

This area is located between the valleys of the River Chess to the west and the River Gade to the east. Chipperfield marks the northern limit and Croxley Green the southern.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A gently undulating plateau area locally divided by steep-sided narrow chalk valleys. The area has a mature settled appearance with a number of traditional farm buildings, parklands and a predominantly pastoral land use. There is minimal impact from intrusive 20th-century development. Chipperfield Common and Commonwood Common are sites of importance for nature conservation and recreation.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- extensive level plateau with considerable pastoral and equestrian land use
- narrow twisting steep-sided valleys dissecting the plateau
- mix of woodlands throughout the area including ancient, plantation and parkland shelterbelts
- coherent settled pattern of farms and historic villages set around greens and commons
- arable planned estate area to the east
- parkland areas, some in educational and institutional uses
- M25 and associated features severing the area but in partial cutting
- Chipperfield and Commonwood commons
- few detracting features

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Sarratt Green
- beech woods to slope edges in chalk valleys
- Westwood quarry by M25
- range of vernacular buildings

Deadmans Ash Lane to Bottom Lane dry valley •
(HCC Landscape Unit)



PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. To the north the soils are characterised by a mix of well-drained fine loamy over clayey soils and coarse and fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging (Marlow and Hornbeam 2 associations). Some soils are very flinty. The underlying geology is a combination of plateau and river-terrace drift. To the south of the M25 the soils comprise well-drained flinty coarse loamy and sandy soils over plateau gravel and river-terrace drift (Sonning 1 association). In the narrow valleys, chalk forms the underlying geology. Westwood Quarry SSSI is a key site for an understanding of the early history of the Thames, with deposits of bedded sands and gravels.

Topography. The plateau is a gently undulating area. A distinct feature within the plateau is a steep-sided dry valley system.

Degree of slope. Across the plateau slopes are generally less than 1 in 30. However, in the narrow chalk valleys slopes are often as steep as 1 in 6.

Altitude range. From 133m in the north-east down to 85m in the south towards the Colne Valley.

Hydrology. There are no significant streams; however, there are a number of ponds associated with parklands, farmsteads or field corners.

Land cover and land use. The land-use pattern is wooded farmland. To the west and around the village edges equestrian and livestock pasture predominates, while to the east and in the open tracts between settlements land use is typically larger arable units.

Vegetation and wildlife. The plateau is a transitional area for the natural woodland species mix. To the north oak/ash/beech predominates while to the south, on the more acidic ground, the mix is oak/hornbeam. The woodland pattern is one of discrete blocks, with a number of conifers in the plantations. In the steep-sided valleys there is an interlocking pattern along and at the edges, particularly in the south where beech is the dominant species on calcareous loams. Hedges are occasionally tall, particularly along roads and with mixed species including holly. Field trees are mainly oak.

Parkland trees are locally important and include cedar, pine and avenues of lime, e.g. Redheath School. The two main commons have largely reverted to secondary woodland. Commonwood Common sits on the edge of the chalk valley. The higher part of the site is on very acidic clay-with-flints while the lower part is on pure chalk.

Chipperfield Common is a distinctive area of wet acidic common with some gravels and heathy conditions. There are also a number of veteran limes, oak and sweet chestnut.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Individual features of interest include 'Apostles Pool' (a monastic fish pool) on Chipperfield Common and the earthwork at Marginia Wick at Sarratt.

Field pattern. The field pattern is largely pre-18th century in origin with both organic and irregular sinuous enclosures. These traditional patterns are still relatively intact around the villages, particularly at Bucks Hill which has an ancient feel. There has been field enlargement for arable cropping throughout the area, but the presence of woodland and hedgerows with field trees contain this impact. The exception to this general pattern is in the east, where there has been more extensive post-18th century parliamentary enclosure. Some of this followed the 'disparking' of the former medieval deer park around Langley Lodge (see also Upper Gade character area) between 1558 and the 18th century, where large rectangular fields were created.

Further parliamentary enclosure followed. Now there is an open estate feel, with isolated farms, e.g. Model Farm. Current field shapes are typically irregular and medium in scale apart from in the east, where there is a move to larger geometric units. Post-and-wire fences provide some enclosure in the narrow chalk valleys.

Transport pattern. The pattern of roads comprises a number of secondary and minor roads that are typically sinuous in form and locally sunken on the steeper slopes. Verges are variable, some wide with bracken and others non-existent on the steeper slopes. The M25 and A41 sever the area, but they are mainly located in cuttings.

Settlements and built form. The area has a planned and settled appearance with a number of dispersed farmsteads, particularly to the south and west. There are a number of traditional settlements with wayside properties located around greens or fronting commons, e.g. Croxley Green and Chipperfield. Sarratt, located on a drovers' route, with its three ponds, wide green and five inns, provided an ideal stopover. There is a good range of traditional buildings in the area using brick, flint, timber frame, weatherboard, render, clay tile and 'puddingstone' (in the foundations of Sarratt church). Most of the large houses are set in small parkland areas, e.g. Micklefield Hall, Great Westwood Farm and Redheath School, while some are within the villages, e.g. the Manor at Chipperfield. There is little 20th-century development that adversely affects the area.

Other sources of area-specific information

English Heritage: Schedule entry

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The area generally has a strong sense of historical continuity due to the intact field patterns and groupings of traditional architectural styles within the settlements. It feels relatively remote despite the close proximity to the M25. Views of the area from outside are generally restricted by vegetation and the elevated landform. Views within the area are generally filtered by woodland and contained by hedgerows along narrow roads. The area has a coherent and unified character with mature trees having a strong influence. It is medium in scale, being relatively wooded and well treed which helps to create a visually contained and coherent landscape. Along the narrow Bottom Lane the meandering landform creates very strong enclosure.

Rarity and distinctiveness. A frequent landscape type. Distinctive features are the commons and dry chalk valley.

VISUAL IMPACT

The M25 and its associated pylons and radio masts are the major detracting features in the area. The A41 is generally well integrated. Localised fly-tipping is a problem on some of the minor roads. Pylons along Bottom Lane detract from its enclosed character. Inappropriate use of conifers on Oldhouse Lane locally detracts from the area. The Westwood quarry is a large area of disturbed and unrestored ground concealed from the local minor roads but highly visible from the M25. There has been considerable land-use change from pasture to arable with loss of field boundaries, particularly around the M25.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is a good network of footpaths and bridleways, including routes through some of the parklands. There are a few car parks, e.g. Chipperfield Common, which has an adjacent cricket pitch, and Commonwood Common and an equestrian centre at Coltspring School of Riding. The attractive and contained character of the landscape adds to the enjoyment of the recreational facilities.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Much of this area is hardly remarked upon by the community (E) with the notable exception of Chipperfield Common (D).

Re Chipperfield: *'more thickly wooded'; 'fine trees on the edge of this lovely common'. 'Opposite the manor house gates one can walk into the woods to see some exceptionally fine old trees. One is a Spanish chestnut said to be over 300 yrs old'.*

(*'Common Heritage' Herts Countryside* Vol. 19, No. 77 April/May 1965, pp 214-5.)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

- AONB: (part-north of Sarratt)
- Landscape Conservation Area (majority)
- SM: two barrow sites on Chipperfield Common
- SSSI: Westwood Quarry (geological interest).
- Area of Archaeological Significance: Chipperfield Common

CONDITION		ROBUSTNESS	
<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised	<i>Impact of landform:</i>	apparent
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature or young	<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	apparent
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	fragmented	<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	interrupted
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	variable	<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	locally visible
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	interrupted	<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	partial
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low	<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent (locally unified)
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	moderate	<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	frequent

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
ROBUSTNESS				

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

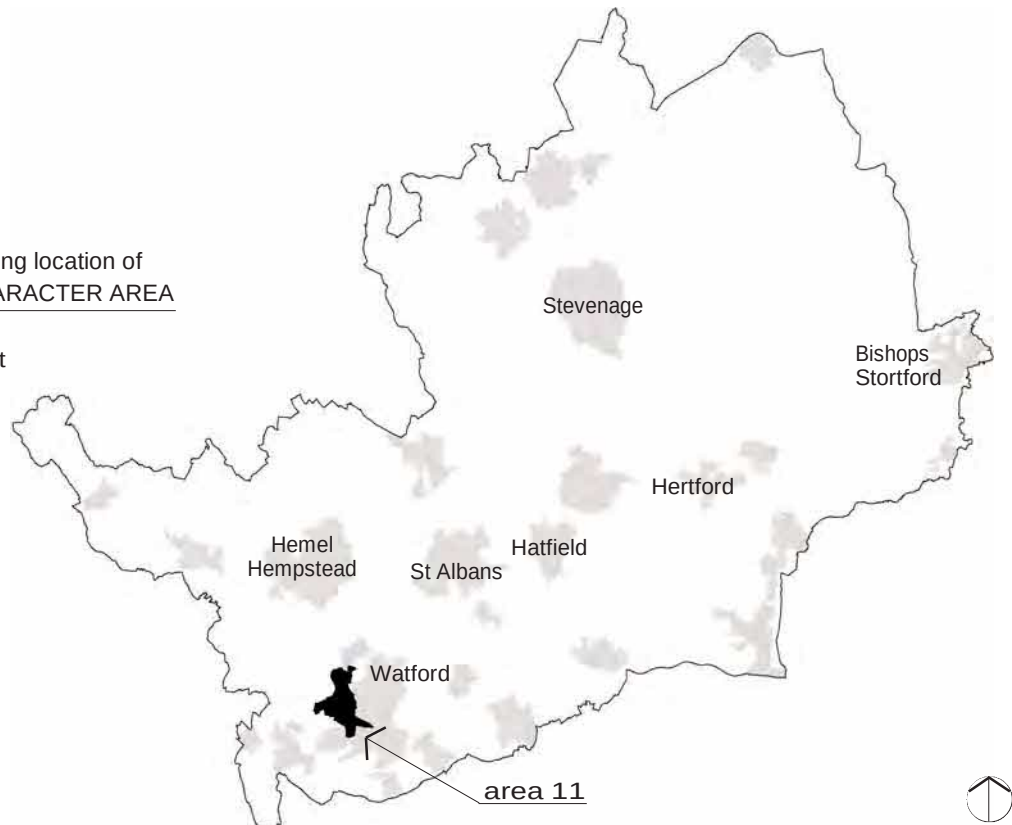
- promote the creation of new woodlands in the open arable landscape to provide mitigation for the M25
- in existing woodland plantations, encourage the replacement of softwoods with indigenous native deciduous communities
- promote the appropriate management of woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest and coppice with standards
- use ancient hedge and field boundaries to determine the most appropriate location for woodland restoration and expansion
- establish realistic and attractive countryside management schemes for all sites with heathland and acid grassland/scrub communities, including Chipperfield Common and Commonwood Common. Maintain a balance between developing a rich variety of habitats and safe public access. Promote local initiatives for traditional management
- encourage landowners and developers to retain and increase ponds and wetland areas to enhance their visual and wildlife functions. Where their loss cannot be avoided, new ponds and wetland areas will be required.
- promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and important semi-natural habitats and the creation of links between semi-natural habitats
- promote the use of reservoirs for water storage and nature conservation interest, rather than groundwater abstraction. Ensure that reservoirs are designed to avoid impact on the character of the local landscape
- promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries where possible. Management to involve locally appropriate measures, including coppicing, laying and replanting/gapping-up
- promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming where possible
- promote hedge improvement and planting adjacent to rights of way, green lanes and along parish boundaries
- encourage the re-use of existing agricultural buildings for equestrian activity
- promote the use of locally traditional field enclosure where land is converted to equestrian pasture
- within parklands ensure new planting is encouraged to maintain age diversity. Landscape improvements should respect the historic context and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens, where appropriate
- within parklands encourage reversion from arable uses to pasture and grassland and resist ploughing of grasslands
- ensure that the surroundings of converted buildings are designed and maintained to be in keeping with their agricultural surroundings by ensuring that 'garden' details are screened from view where possible and native species are used on site boundaries
- traffic-calming measures, where considered necessary, must be of a scale and design that relates to the landscape character of the settlement
- implement a scheme for the restoration of Westwood quarry to a mix of woodland and grassland with landforms to blend with the local landscape



• Chipperfield Common
(J. Billingsley)

County map showing location of
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

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Hertfordshire
County Council
LA076678



LOCATION

This area follows the Gade valley and its side slopes from Hunton Bridge into Watford. The area also includes Whippendell Wood and Cassiobury Park.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A narrow but marked river valley with the predominant influence from a combination of historic parkland and ancient woodland. Moderate slopes rise to either side with occasional dramatic open views across the valley. The eastern slopes of the area are mainly built-up and form part of Watford. The Grand Union Canal flows majestically through the area from whence there are views up to the parkland landscapes.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- narrow valley floor with wide canal and wetland habitats
- historic parkland landscapes, some in declining condition
- historic houses set on the plateau edge looking over the valley
- arterial routes and M25 to north of area
- gently sloping valley sides with minor secondary valleys
- urban development hidden by vegetation or set back from the slopes
- major woodland complex at Whippendell Wood centred on narrow steep dry valley
- individual woods within parklands
- extensive public access to the south
- important mosaic of wildlife habitats adjacent to urban population



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- canal locks and bridges
- former watercress beds at Cassiobury Park
- Grove Mill and mill race by canal

- Grand Union Canal at Cassiobury Park (HCC Landscape Unit)

area 11

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The soil pattern is relatively complex. On the side slopes to the north the soils are characterised by a mix of well-drained fine loamy over clayey soils and coarse and fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable sub soils and slight seasonal waterlogging (Marlow series). The underlying geology is a combination of plateau and river terrace drift. To the south the soils include well-drained flinty coarse loamy and sandy soils over some gravels (Sonning 1 association). They cover the same geology as to the north, with the exception of the narrow valley of Whippendell Wood, where chalk is present. On the valley floor soils comprise shallow calcareous and non-calcareous loamy soils over flint gravel and small areas of peat (Frome series).

Topography. The valley floor varies between 200-300m wide. The side slopes rise up to the plateau edge and there is a subtle pattern of secondary valleys. To the west there is both a narrow plateau area and a narrow twisting chalk valley which form part of the Chilterns dip slope.

Degree of slope. Valley slopes range between 1 in 10 and 1 in 20. In the narrow western chalk valley, slopes locally reach 1 in 7. Along the river valley the gradient is less than 1 in 300.

Altitude range. Between 55-67m along the valley floor and 80-90m along the western ridge.

Hydrology. The River Gade and the Grand Union Canal combine along most of the valley producing a wide and sometimes majestic, slow-moving watercourse, e.g. at Grove Park. There are secondary channels, some of which act as millraces, and a number of weirs and locks. At Cassiobury Park the river and canal separate into a number of channels fringed with lush vegetation. There a number of now redundant watercress beds, some being managed by the Wildlife Trust. There are no significant streams or ponds on the slopes.

Land cover and land use. The primary land cover is parkland and woodland. In the parkland there has been a considerable shift towards recreation, golf, playing fields, and institutional uses from the traditional grazing pattern, which survives only locally, e.g. Hazelwood. Cassiobury Park extends into Watford and comprises a mix of informal park, semi-natural habitats and more urban leisure facilities.

Vegetation and wildlife.

- Whippendell Wood (SSSI) is an ancient woodland site in the clay-with-flints region. Stands of oak, hazel, ash and sycamore are found on the calcareous loams in the damp valley bottoms, with areas of pure beech on the acidic upper slopes. Oak/hornbeam woodland is also present. The wood complex contains both high forest and coppice-with-standards, with hazel in the shrub layer, and holly, hawthorn, dogwood, wild cherry and occasional spindle. The ground flora is dominated by bluebell, honeysuckle and bracken and there are remnants of wild strawberry fields, now regenerating to birch/hazel scrub. The scarce coralroot bittercress is found in the woods. The woodland supports a diverse breeding bird community, including hawfinch and wood warbler.

Plantations extend onto the plateau sides next to the parklands.

- The golf course on Jacotts Hill occupies a well-treed site, formerly ancient wood pasture, and contains a number of fine veteran trees. There are areas of acidic heathy grassland and ancient chalk pits with locally rare chalk grassland communities. The area is noted for important rare insects.
- The Gade has chalk spring sources which support areas of alder and willow swamp. The watercress beds by the River Gade are managed by the Wildlife Trust for nature conservation.
- The parklands contain small woodland plantations and significant numbers of mature and over-mature trees, including lime, oak, cedar, and pine. Hedges are variable, with the tallest to the east against the neighbouring urban areas.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

- Grove Park was the home of the Earls of Clarendon from the late 18th century to 1920. The original garden features include dual-level formal terraces with ponds, a sunken garden and a 4-acre walled garden of 1881. The wider park is being cleared and redeveloped as a golf course.
- Cassiobury Park is an extensive and varied park radiating from the site of the former Cassiobury House, demolished in 1927. In the 16th century the estate comprised a hunting park where Elizabeth I was once entertained. Following the Restoration, the grounds were laid out in the formal French style by Moses Cook, author of *The Manner of Raising, Ordering and Improving Forest Trees*. Little of the formal 17th-century grounds associated with the house remain. One notable exception is the towering avenue of limes, planted by Cook in 1672, crossing the golf course towards Whippendell Woods. Following the agreement of large sums of compensation, the Grand Union Canal was routed through Grove Park and Cassiobury Park. Humphrey Repton was employed by the 5th Earl of Essex in 1796 to create a widened canal, islands and associated water features at Cassiobury, which contribute so much to the current relaxed and elegant character of the park. The park was acquired as a 'people's park' for the population of Watford in the early 20th century. Clumps of Repton's trees still remain amid the leisure facilities.

Field pattern. The parkland areas have an open character. The majority of the boundaries to the parks are open or marked by rough fencing. Where present, the field pattern comprises irregular and small to medium fields.

Transport pattern. To the north the M25 Watford spur and the A41 are prominent features locally, severing the valley and parklands. Secondary roads follow the perimeter of the parkland boundaries, e.g. Grove Mill Lane. To the south there are no roads across the area. The Grand Union Canal flows through the entire area from north to south.

Settlements and built form. The parkland landscapes are sparsely settled, apart from the houses and associated farmsteads. This has long been a very planned landscape. All the parks were recorded by 1766. There are also two major houses.

- Langleybury School is early Georgian red brick with a stable block and distinctive cupola. Some of the later school extensions are visually discordant.
- The Grove is a brick block constructed in 1720 and altered by Sir Robert Taylor in 1756. Within the park is an elegant stucco bridge over the canal and also an attractive grouping at Grove Mill.
- The Grand Union Canal brought the Industrial Revolution to west Hertfordshire, however this part of the course has remained unaffected by industry

OTHER SOURCES OF AREA-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

English Nature SSSI notification.

English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens*.

Pevsner, N., rev. Cherry, B., *Hertfordshire*, Penguin (2000).

area 11

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The landscape is generally well contained from surrounding areas, with limited views from the edge of roads encircling the parks, the adjacent plateau and built-up areas. Within the area the landscape is compartmentalised, with a sense of containment in the parklands and confinement within Whippendell Woods. The M25 Watford spur severs the area north of The Grove. There is a good level of tranquillity to the south, particularly along the canal from The Grove to Cassiobury, while to the north the M25 and Euston railway line create notable noise intrusion.

Rarity and distinctiveness. A unique combination of parklands, formal canal and woodland complex close to a large population.

VISUAL IMPACT

The M25 and A41 and the attendant structures and garages degrade the northern section of the area, particularly where they cross the River Gade. The buildings of the area are generally appropriate to its character, whether canal-side cottages or large country houses.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is extensive public access over the south of the area. There are two car parks in Whippendell Wood, but one is via a narrow and intimidating cul-de-sac. Towpath access along the canal is a major feature, with long-distance routes between Watford and Hemel Hempstead. Cassiobury Park is a well-known urban-fringe recreation facility and provides an important 'green lung' to the west of Watford. The two parklands to the north are much more private, with access only along the canal.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Cassiobury Park is one of the county's most valued landscapes (A). Other areas, including the Whippendell Woods, are valued as distinctive (C).

Re. Cassiobury: *'the soil is stony, churlish and uneven exceedingly addicted to wood [the grounds] adorned with walks, ponds and other rural elegances very handsome avenues of [black cherry trees]...'* (John Evelyn's diary, 1680)

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

SSSI: Whippendell Woods.

Landscape Conservation Area (Whippendell Woods area).

English Heritage Grade II listing: Cassiobury Park.

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	mature
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	widespread
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	variable
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	intact
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	low
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	moderate

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	continuous
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	concealed
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	contained
<i>Visual unity:</i>	coherent
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unique

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

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING**CHANGE: CONSERVE AND RESTORE**

- prepare and implement restoration and management plans for historic parklands in conjunction with existing uses, including Jacotts Hill, Cassiobury Park and Grove Park. Schemes should fully address landscape, historic and ecological issues
- restore historically appropriate and high-quality boundaries to parklands
- promote recording and management of veteran trees for biodiversity value and visual amenity
- promote further tree planting to minimise the visual impact of the A41 and M1
- promote appropriate woodland management for distinct habitats, including high forest, coppice, coppice-with-standards and woodpasture. Re-establish a species-rich ground flora
- review public access arrangements to woodlands, including safety and car parks
- improve recreational opportunities and direct public access from adjacent settlements
- maintain local patterns of species diversity within woodlands
- promote education in the community about the historic and ecological importance and appropriate management of woodland
- seek to resolve conflicts arising from competing uses and activities in woodland
- protect river valley habitats of significant nature conservation interest and support initiatives for management for nature conservation, e.g. Cassiobury Park
- promote the use of low-density stock grazing as a management technique for valleys
- maintain and improve access along and to the Grand Union Canal
- promote crop diversification and the retention/restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming
- ensure all existing and proposed recreational land uses include appropriate measures to manage and enhance the existing landscape setting and historical and ecological value



Grove Park •
(J. Billingsley)

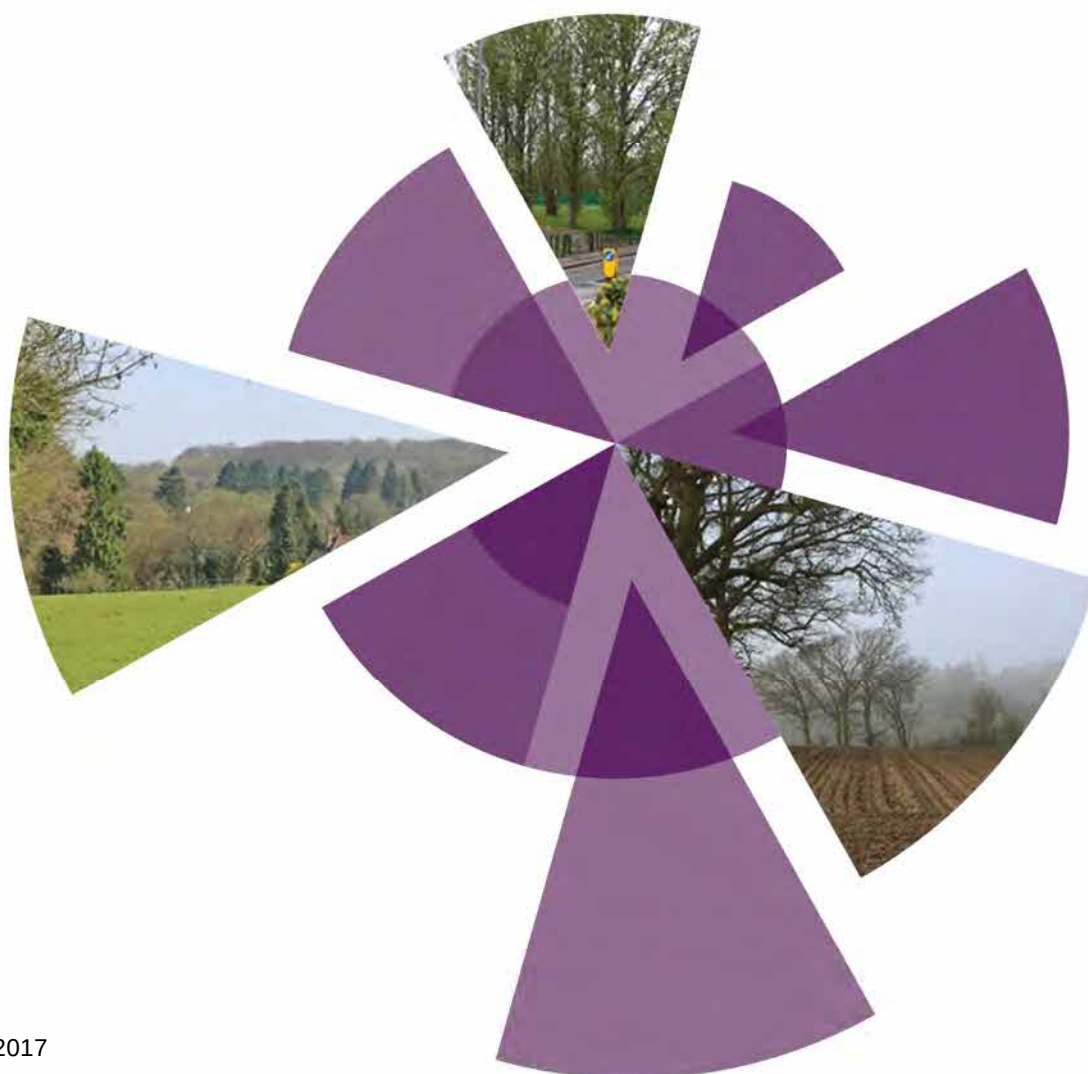
**A8. EXTRACT FROM THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL &
WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL, GREEN BELT REVIEW:
STRATEGIC ANALYSIS (2017)**



Three Rivers District Council & Watford Borough Council

Green Belt Review

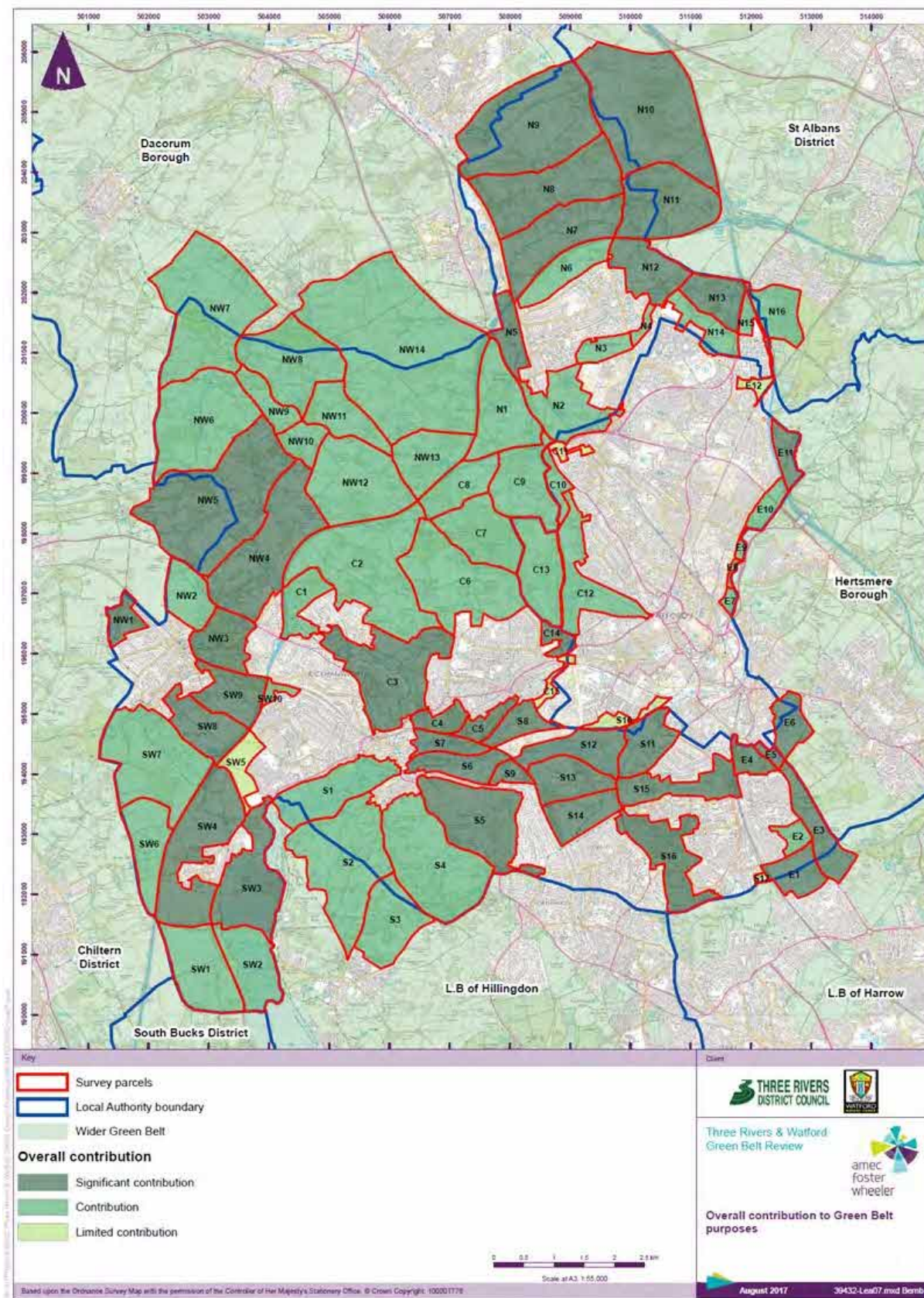
Strategic Analysis



August 2017

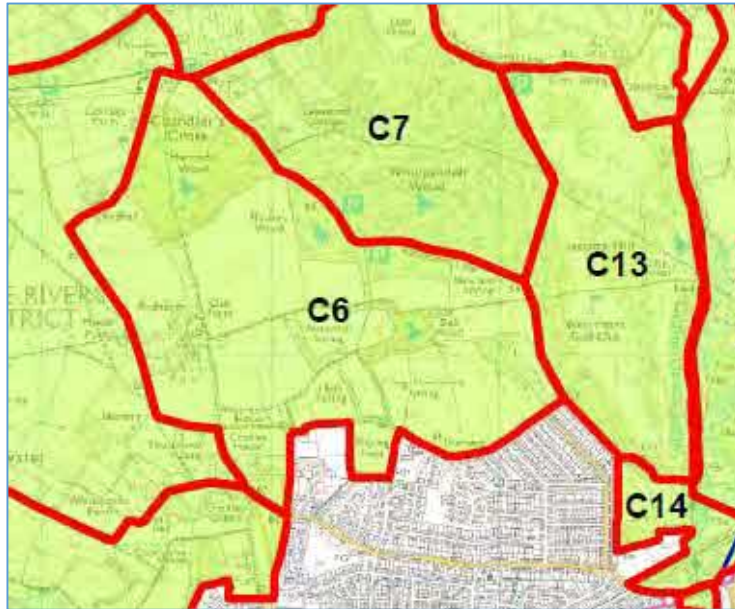
Amec Foster Wheeler Environment
& Infrastructure UK Limited

Figure 2 Overall Contribution to Green Belt Purposes



Parcel C6 – Harrock's Wood Lane, Red Hill Lane, Dunsburn Lane and The Green/Built Edge of Croxley Green

School and playing fields to the east, pasture to the west with some isolated dwellings, mixed medium scale arable, pasture and dense woodland to the north (Harrock's Wood), with a large school to the west and some isolated dwellings on the periphery. The land has a relatively remote rural character (notwithstanding proximity to Croxley Green to the south east) and there are some extensive views across flat arable fields, although these are interrupted by blocks of woodland. Despite the proximity to the built edge of Croxley Green, generally the land has a relatively remote rural character.



Appendix B3: Parcels C1 – C15

Topic	Criteria	Assessment
NPPF Purposes of the Green Belt		
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	Prevent the sprawl of a built-up area into open land where development would not otherwise be restricted by a permanent boundary. What is the role of the parcel in preventing the extension of an existing development into open land beyond established limits, in light of the presence of significant boundaries?	CONTRIBUTION Contains the northern edge of Rickmansworth.
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	Prevent development which would result in the merger or erosion of a gap (physically or visually) between settlements. What is the role of the parcel in preventing the merger of settlements which might occur through a reduction in the distance between them?	LIMITED CONTRIBUTION No role in this location.
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Protect the openness of the countryside and its perceived rurality. What is the role of the parcel in maintaining a sense of openness, particularly in light of proximity to a settlement edge?	CONTRIBUTION Generally, helps to maintain the openness of the countryside in this location. Development is limited to isolated farmsteads and some residential properties.
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Preserve the setting and character of historic town. What is the role of the parcel in respect of the proximity to, and degree of intervisibility with, the core (such as a Conservation Area) of an historic town or settlement?	LIMITED CONTRIBUTION No role in this location.
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	Does the parcel act in concert with adjacent parcels to encourage urban regeneration, either generally or more specifically?	LIMITED CONTRIBUTION No role in this location.
Overall Assessment of Contribution to Green Belt Purposes	In light of the assessment of individual purposes, what is the overall contribution of the parcel to the Green Belt, both individually and in a wider context?	CONTRIBUTION

**A9. EXTRACT FROM STAGE 2 GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT FOR
THREE RIVERS DISTRICT AND WATFORD BOROUGH (2019)**

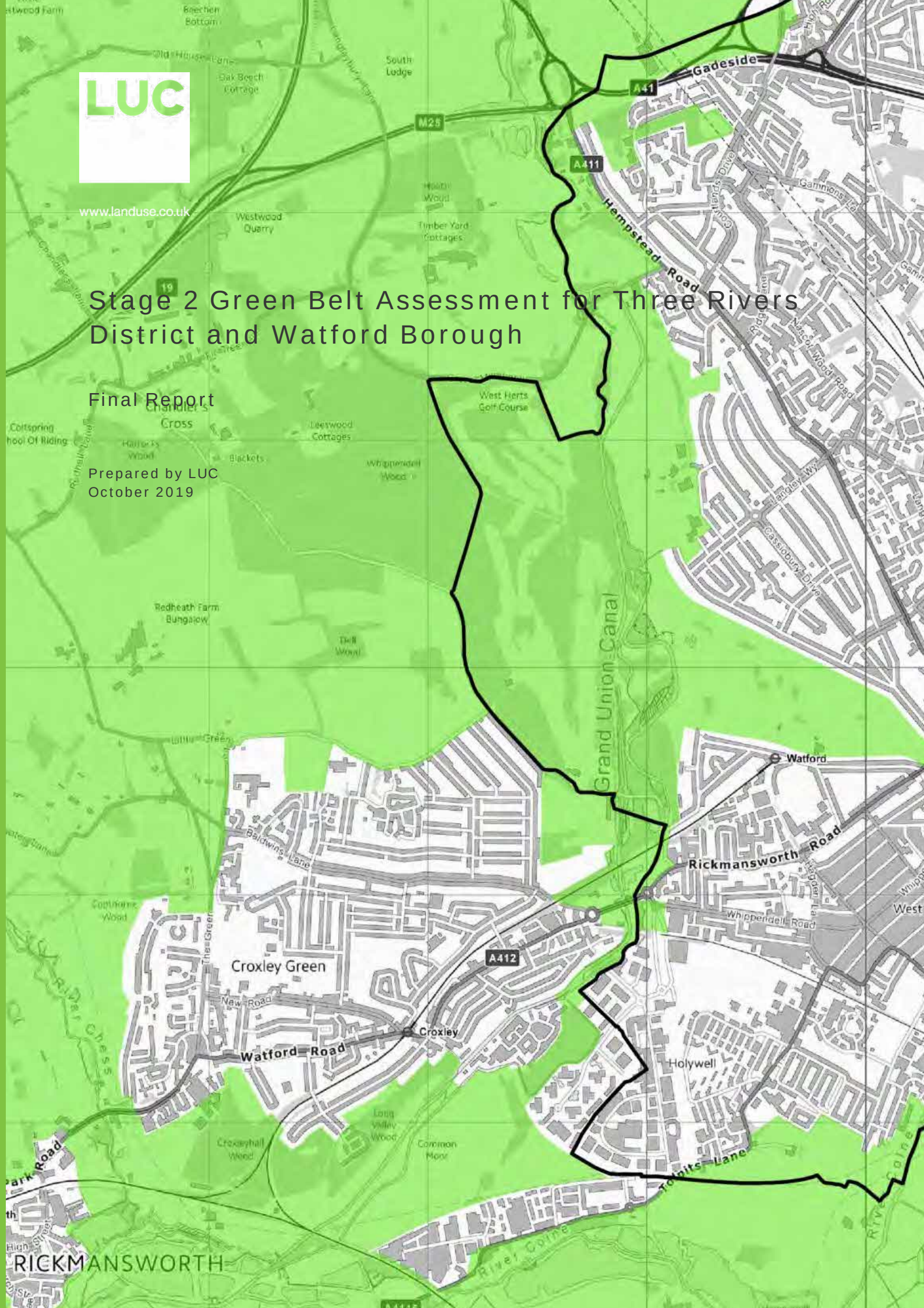


www.landuse.co.uk

Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment for Three Rivers District and Watford Borough

Final Report

Prepared by LUC
October 2019



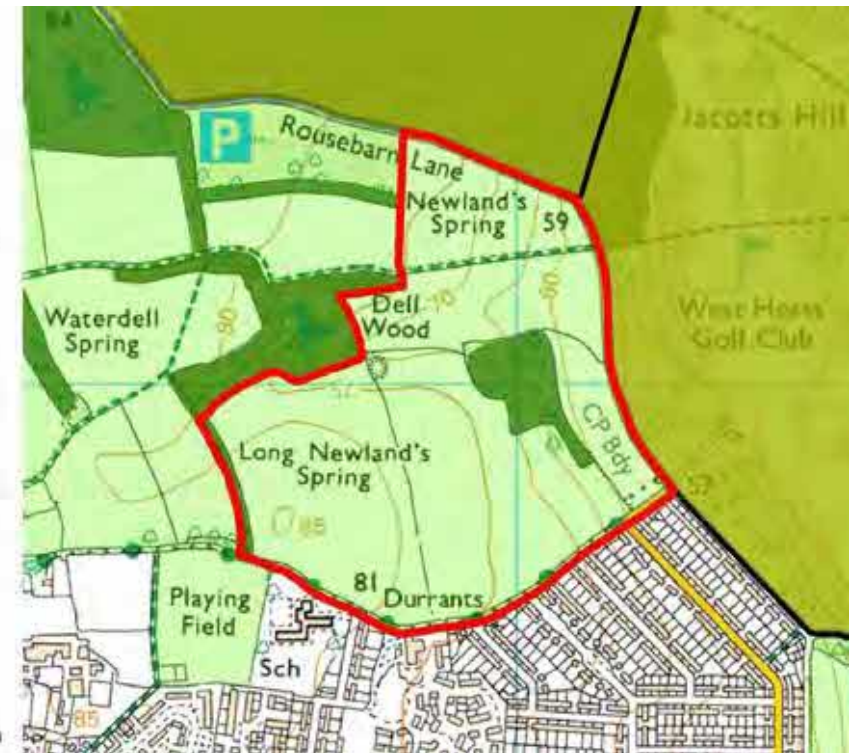
Croxley Green Parcel CG8



- Parcel
- Green Belt
- District Boundary
- Flood Zone 3b
- Local Nature Reserve
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Scheduled Monument
- Ancient Woodland
- National Nature Reserve
- SSSI
- Common Land



0 0.35 0.7 km



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Left image
View from Little Green Lane north through the parcel



Right image
View from Little Green Lane north through the parcel



Croxley Green

Parcel CG8

Description

Arable farmland and a woodland block on the northern edge of the inset settlement of Croxley Green. The parcel is bound to the east and north by a woodland belt within Cassiobury Registered Park and Garden, and to the west by a thick tree belt which is designated ancient woodland. To the south, the residential Little Green Lane, forms the boundary with the inset settlement edge of Croxley Green.

Impact on contribution

Purpose 1 Contribution - Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Significant

The parcel is adjacent to the edge of Croxley Green which is contiguous with the large built up area of Greater London. The boundary with the urban edge (along Little Green Lane) provides some distinction from urbanising uses, giving the parcel a significant role in preventing urban sprawl.

Purpose 2 Contribution - Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Limited – No contribution

The parcel does not lie in the gap between neighbouring towns.

Purpose 3 Contribution - Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Significant

The parcel has no urbanising influences and is uncontained countryside, giving it strong sense of openness. Little Green Lane creates some distinction from the inset edge but only to a minor extent.

Impact on adjacent Green Belt

No/Negligible

Releasing this land would have negligible impact on adjacent Green Belt land because the surrounding registered parkland and ancient woodland constraints mean there would be no significant increase in the containment of adjacent Green Belt land, nor any weakening of the boundary with the urban edge.

Overall harm to Green Belt purposes from release of land

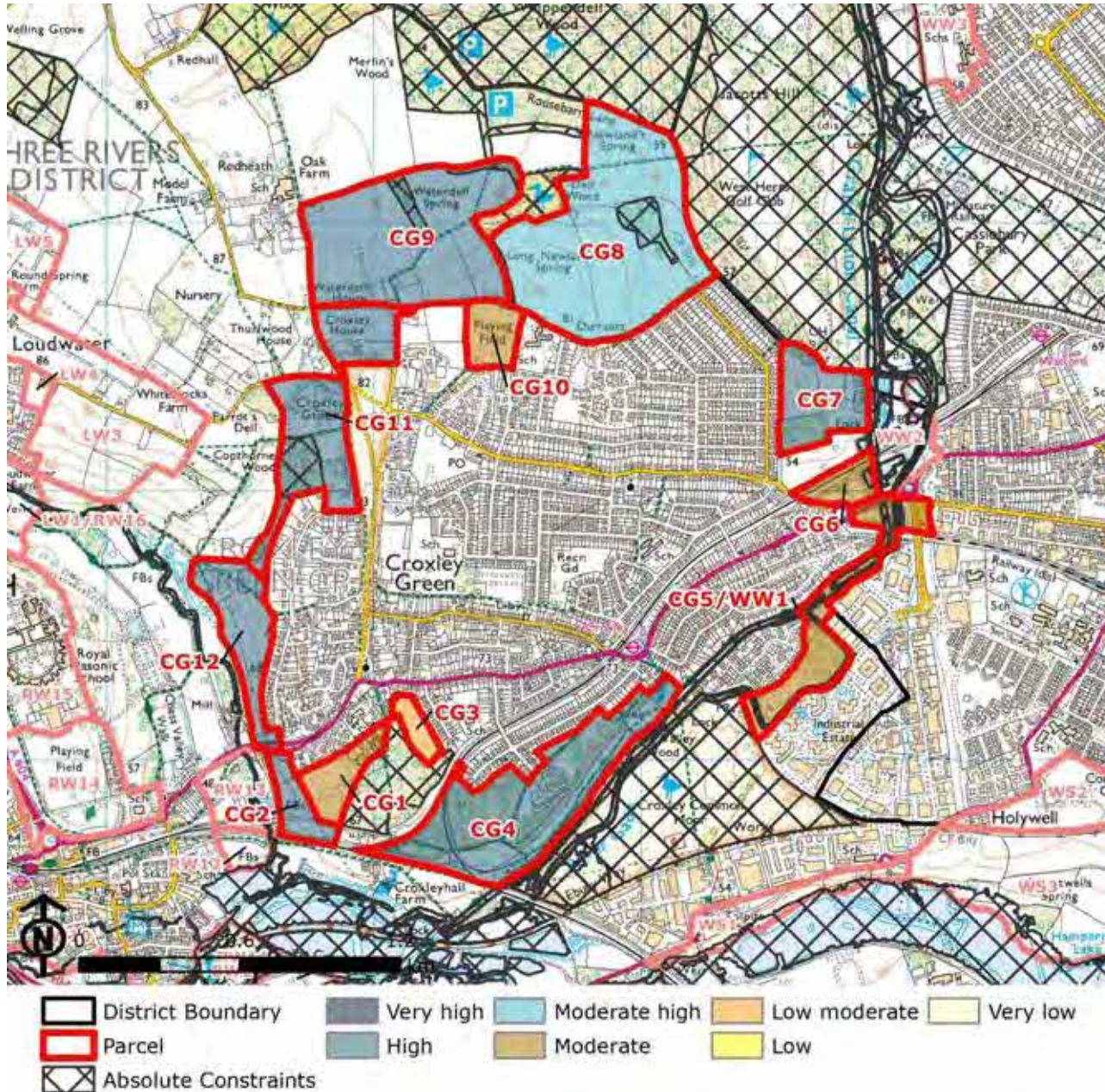
Moderate high

Release of the parcel would have a significant impact on preventing urban sprawl and encroachment on the countryside. However its release would have only a negligible impact on the adjacent Green Belt due to its containment by Cassiobury Registered Park and Garden and ancient woodland. It is therefore concluded that the harm to the Green Belt of releasing this parcel would be moderate-high.

Potential to limit harm

There are no notable variations in harm within the parcel.

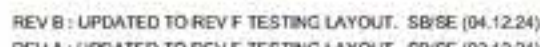
Croxley Green



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Parcel	Harm Score
CG1	Moderate
CG2	High
CG3	Low moderate
CG4	High
CG5/WW1	Moderate
CG6	Moderate
CG7	High
CG8	Moderate high
CG9	High
CG10	Moderate
CG11	High
CG12	High

A10. ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN



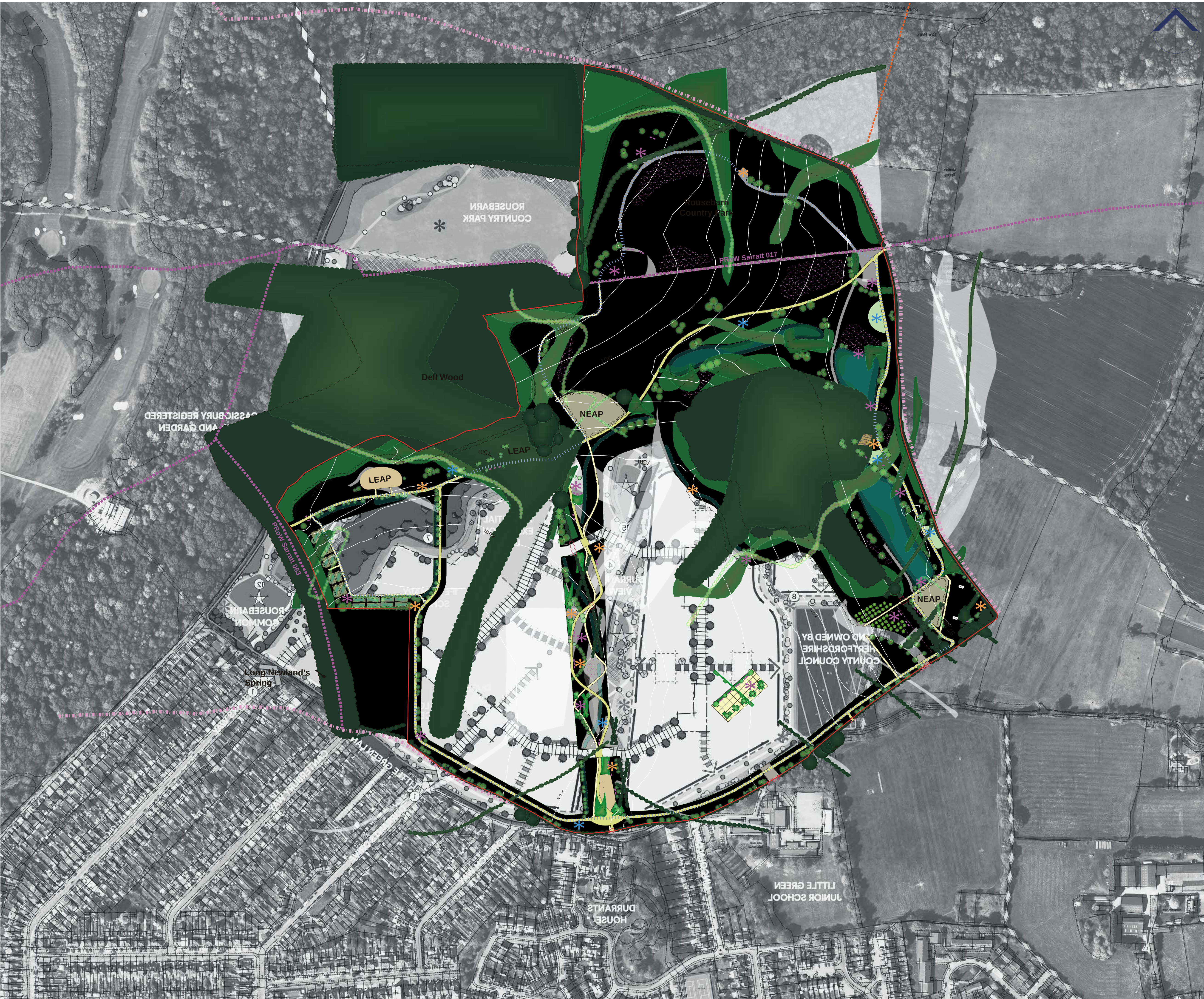
LAND & PROPERTY | PLANNING | TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

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PEGASUSGROUP.CO.UK | TEAM/DRAWN BY: SB/SE | APPROVED BY: JW | DATE: 18.09.24 | SCALE: 1:1250 @ A0 | DRWG: P24-1200_DE_021_01B | CLIENT: RICHBOROUGH |

PEGASUS
GROUP

A11. ILLUSTRATIVE LANDSCAPE STRATEGY PLAN



- Site boundary
- Existing vegetation
- Existing vegetation to be removed
- Proposed native trees
- Proposed native thicket planting
- Proposed ornamental shrubs
- Proposed hedgerow
- Wildflower/long grass
- 3m wide cycleway
- 2m wide footway
- Hoggin path
- Mown path
- Paved square
- Drainage basins and swales
- Marginal and aquatic planting
- Decking area
- Locally Equipped Area for Play
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play
- Community orchard
- Community allotments
- Bandstand/pavilion
- Focal feature e.g. public art or sociable seating
- Local Area for Play
- Trim trail station
- Seating area
- 2.5km circular route
- Public footpath
- Bridleway
- Lanes
- Informal kickabout area

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CLIENT			Richborough
PROJECT			Land north of Little Green Lane, Croxley Green
TITLE			Illustrative Landscape Strategy
DRAWN BY	KL	CHECKED BY	RH
SCALE @ A1	1:2,000	DATE	DECEMBER_2024
PROJECT NO.	I000010	DRAWING NO.	DL02
		REV.	E

A12. GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

M1. GREEN BELT IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

- M1.1 Section 13 of the NPPF concerns the protection of Green Belt land. Paragraph 142 highlights that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, adding that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- M1.2 Paragraph 143 defines the five purposes of the Green Belt, which are:
*'a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.'*
- M1.3 Paragraph 145 states that once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of plans. It notes that strategic policies should have regard for the intended permanence in the long term of Green Belt boundaries.
- M1.4 Paragraph 146 goes on to state that exceptional circumstances in this context include, but are not limited to, instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means. If that is the case, authorities should review Green Belt boundaries in accordance with the policies in the NPPF and propose alterations to meet these needs in full, unless the review provides clear evidence that doing so would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt, when considered across the area of the plan.
- M1.5 Paragraph 148 sets out that *'Where it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land, then consider grey belt which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations. However, when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should determine whether a site's location is appropriate with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework.'*
- M1.6 Paragraph 151 continues, stating that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land. Where Green Belt land is

released for development through plan preparation or review, the 'Golden Rules' in paragraph 156 apply.

M1.7 Paragraph 154 highlights that there are certain forms of development that are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. These include:

'buildings for agriculture and forestry;

the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use, including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

limited infilling in villages;

limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and

limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

i. mineral extraction;

ii. engineering operations;

iii. local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;

iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;

v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and

vi. development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.'

M1.8 Paragraph 155 notes that in addition to the above, housing, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where:

'The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;

The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and

Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below'.

M1.9 Paragraph 156 goes on to state that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made:

'affordable housing which reflects either: (i) development plan policies produced in accordance with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework; or (ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157 below;

necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and

the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.'

M1.10 Paragraph 158 states that development which complies with the Golden Rules should be given significant weight in favour of the grant of permission.

M1.11 Paragraph 159 notes that the improvements to green spaces required as part of the Golden Rules should *"contribute positively to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery and meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan. Where no locally specific standards exist, development proposals should meet national standards relevant to the development (these include Natural England standards on accessible green space and urban greening factor and Green Flag criteria). Where land has been identified as having*

particular potential for habitat creation or nature recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies, proposals should contribute towards these outcomes.”

National Planning Practice Guidance

M1.12 The Planning Practice Guidance, in the Green Belt section under paragraph 001 notes that judging the openness of Green Belt land depends upon the circumstances of the case. The guidance notes that there are a number of factors to consider, and sets out three examples which include, but are not limited to:

openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;

the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and

the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

Inappropriate Development within the Green Belt

M1.13 Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 154 states that development is inappropriate in the Green Belt. Before setting out a series of circumstances where development would not be inappropriate, with some provisos. Paragraph 155 sets out further circumstances where development would not be inappropriate, with some provisos.

M1.14 This Green Belt Assessment therefore considers whether development is inappropriate, or whether it falls within one of the exceptions.

Openness of the Green Belt

M1.15 Paragraph 153 refers to ‘any other harm resulting from the proposal’, and it is considered that the effect on the openness of the Green Belt is one such factor which falls within the ‘any other harm’ category. Therefore, the effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt is considered where development is inappropriate, in order to consider the weight to be given to ‘any other harm’.

M1.16 Some of the exceptions to inappropriate development set out within paragraphs 154 or 155, includes a proviso relating to the effect of development on the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, the effect on the openness of the Green Belt is also considered within the Green Belt Assessment, in the instance where development is considered to fall within one of the potential exceptions to inappropriate development.

M1.17 ‘Openness’ is not defined within the Planning Policy, however, it is often assessed by considering the physical/spatial impact of development, such as the mass, the height, floor area etc.

- M1.18 Visual openness is also a factor which is taken into consideration, including the visibility of the development (i.e. the Green Belt will visually appear less or more open (undeveloped) as a result of development). Visual openness can also be affected by development blocking a view towards the open land within the Green Belt.
- M1.19 Openness is, however, an open concept, and other elements such as the spread of development within the site, the duration of the development, and the degree of activity and movement also play a role. The various elements which affect the openness will therefore be informed by this Methodology, however, it will also be informed by the specific characteristics of a site and its surroundings.
- M1.20 Table 0.1 aids in assessing the effect of development on the openness of the Green Belt.

Table 0.1 Effect on Openness	
High	The site is open and undeveloped, and the proposals would clearly lead to the site appearing as developed. Development will be clearly visible as a large proportion of the site, or a large increase in visible development. The openness of the wider Green Belt will be substantially affected.
Moderate	The site contains some development, and there will be a large increase in the amount of development on the site. The development will be visible, although views may be partial. Development may be seen within the context of existing development on the site or in the immediate surroundings. The openness of the wider Green Belt is partially affected.
Limited	The site contains much development, and there will be a smaller increase in the amount of development on site, or the site contains some development and there will be a proportionally smaller addition of further development. The development may be discernible, but will not fundamentally change the visual character. There will be limited effects on the wider Green Belt.
None	There will be no increase in physical built development. Less development will be visible in views than currently, or no additional visual impact will result from the development. There will be no effect on the wider Green Belt.

Purposes of the Green Belt

- M1.21 The NPPF does not attach a hierarchy to the Green Belt purposes and it is assumed that each purpose is of equal importance. In addition, neither the NPPF nor the National Planning Policy Guidance provides direction on how to assess the performance of Green Belt land.
- M1.22 The most relevant non-policy guidance in relation to Green Belt Assessment is published by the Planning Advisory Service ('PAS'), Planning on the Doorstep: the Big Issues – Green Belt (February 2015). This methodology has therefore been informed by the PAS guidance, as well as through considering other evidence base reports which have been examined in public as part of Local Plan Examinations, and found acceptable.

- M1.23 There are, however, two components to consider in relation to Green Belts: the value (contribution) of the land to the Green Belt in relation to the five purposes; and the potential harm to the purposes of the Green Belt of development of that land. In considering both the value and potential harm, we have taken other paragraphs within the NPPF into account, which, while not strictly policy, aid in expanding the concept of the value of the Green Belt. These include paragraph 148 which refers to previously developed land and land that is well-served by public transport. Paragraph 149 refers to the requirement to not include land within the Green Belt which is not necessary to be kept open permanently, and sets out that Green Belt boundaries should be clearly defined, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Paragraph 151 includes commentary about positive enhancements to the beneficial use of Green Belts, such as providing access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.
- M1.24 Harm to the purposes of the Green Belt as a result of inappropriate development should be considered within the 'any other harms' category as set out within NPPF paragraph 153. It must also be considered when assessing whether development complies with the exceptions listed in paragraph 154(b and h) and 155(a).
- M1.25 The PAS advice note states that some of the five Green Belt purposes will be more relevant, or important, than others. Below, we consider the five purposes in more detail.

Purpose a: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

- M1.26 It may be argued that all Green Belt prevents the unrestricted sprawl of large built up urban areas, because that is its principal purpose as a strategic planning designation. The PAS advice notes that the terminology of 'sprawl' comes from the 1930s when Green Belt was conceived, and it poses the question of whether development that is planned positively through a Local Plan, and well designed with good masterplanning, constitutes sprawl. The early Green Belt helped prevent ribbon development which was prevalent at the time (i.e. single plot depth development to one of either side of existing or new roads, often extending out of the settlement into the countryside). Therefore, ribbon development is one way in which sprawl can be defined. Sporadic or dispersed development on the edge of a settlement could also be seen as sprawl, as can development which extends beyond a clear settlement boundary following a physical element, such as a river or main road.
- M1.27 However, sprawl can similarly be contained, or the appearance of sprawl can be mitigated by, amongst others, maintaining a clear separation between the settlement and the countryside beyond. In this regard, the NPPF notes in paragraph 149(f), that Local Plans should define Green Belt boundaries 'clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.' Potential Green Belt boundaries are considered in Section M1.55.

- M1.28 We also note that the purpose refers to ‘large built up areas’, and this therefore excludes settlements such as most villages or hamlets, or washed-over settlements (noting, however, that sprawl anywhere is an undesirable characteristic). Large built up areas are therefore considered to mostly comprise towns or cities.
- M1.29 Criteria to consider in relation to the contribution of the land to purpose a:
- The land’s relationship to a large built-up area, including its degree of containment by built form;
 - Degree of openness, and how much built development already occurs;
 - The current character of the settlement or Green Belt edge, and whether it follows a clearly identifiable and defensible boundary; and
 - The occurrence of other potential defensible boundaries, and whether they are clearly identifiable, permanent, regular, amongst others.
- M1.30 The contribution and value of the land to the purpose of the Green Belt is judged in accordance with table 1.1. The harm to the purpose as a result of development of the land is judged in accordance with table 1.2.

Table 1.1 Contribution to Purpose a	
Strong	Existing very strong boundary. Clearly outside of settlement. No physical features to form new settlement edge. No to little containment. No or limited sprawl evident nearby. Very open landscape.
Average	Existing clearly identifiable boundary, but other potential boundaries also exist. Some sprawl evident near settlement, but not connected to it. Mostly open, with some containment.
Limited	Weak existing boundary. Some sprawl occurs within study parcel. Strong potential new boundaries exist. Well contained.
None	Not near a large built up area. No clear distinction between development within Green Belt and that outside of it. Sprawl is adjoined to the settlement. No clearly identifiable existing boundary, but strong potential boundaries. Very well contained.

Table 1.2 Harm to Purpose a	
High	Development would be perceived as sprawl without clear boundaries, and not well related to settlement. Includes ribbon development and scattered development. No edge to settlement would be identifiable.
Moderate	Development would constitute sprawl, but the extent would be minor, and some containment would occur. Development might be well related to existing sprawl, and therefore have a limited additional impact. Development could be planned but there are no clearly identifiable boundaries.
Limited	Development would be planned and would form an extension to the existing settlement, and a clearly identifiable new settlement boundary would be identifiable.
None	Development is infill and well contained to all sides. Development would consolidate existing sprawl and create identifiable settlement edge.

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

- M1.31 This purpose specifically refers to towns, but it should be noted that the separation of all types of settlements from each other, and the maintenance of separate identities to the settlements, is of importance in relation to other matters outside of Green Belt policy.
- M1.32 The nature and size of the separation are important considerations in determining the role that a land parcel plays in maintaining separation between settlements. The PAS guidance states that when assessing this purpose, ‘a ‘scale rule’ approach should be avoided. The identity of a settlement is not really determined just by the distance to another settlement; the character of the place and of the land between must be taken into account.’
- M1.33 In cases where coalescence has already occurred elsewhere between the settlements, it is necessary to consider the importance or value of maintaining the remaining separation. If the settlements are already indistinguishable from each other, then there is little value in maintaining a ‘token’ area of separation, if it would either not be meaningful or functional, or if it is considered that there is no need to retain separation for the sake of it.
- M1.34 Criteria to consider in relation to the contribution of the land to purpose b:
- The distance between settlements;
 - Intervisibility;
 - The role of landform or landcover in ensuring separation;
 - The individual characters of the settlements;
 - The desirability or need to retain separation;
 - Identifiable settlement boundaries or separating features, such as motorways for example; and
 - The effect of development on the transition between settlements, i.e. would you clearly leave one settlement and enter the next if the land were to be developed.

- M1.35 The contribution and value of the land to the purpose of the Green Belt is judged in accordance with table 2.1. The harm to the purpose as a result of development of the land is judged in accordance with table 2.2.

Table 2.1 Contribution to Purpose b	
Strong	The land occupies the whole or majority of the physical gap between settlements which are currently separate, and where it is necessary to maintain separation. The land forms the last area of separation between settlements which have already merged elsewhere, and where the land perceptually functions as a separating feature, where judged necessary.
Average	The land forms part of a wider gap between settlements. Some boundaries occur which would ensure separation. Settlements have clear boundaries at the moment, but potentially new clear boundaries also exist. Limited coalescence has already taken place, and the land prevents the perception of further coalescence.
Limited	There is a substantial gap between the settlements. Settlements are clearly separate. Several clearly separating features occur between the settlements. Much coalescence has already occurred, and additional low levels of coalescence would not change the overall separate identities of the settlements.
None	The distance between the settlements is significant. The settlements are clearly identifiable. The land occupies a gap which is judged to provide no meaningful or functional separation between settlements which have largely merged.

Table 2.2 Harm to Purpose b	
High	Development would cause settlements which are currently separate, to coalesce. Development would occupy the final identifiable area of separation between settlements which have already coalesced.
Moderate	Development would bring settlements closer to each other, but clear boundaries or clearly identifiable intervening undeveloped land will ensure their separation and separate identities are maintained. Development will increase coalescence where it already occurs, and substantially reduce the clear perception of separation.
Limited	Development would bring settlements closer to each other, but clear boundaries and clearly identifiable, large areas of intervening undeveloped land will ensure their separation and separate identities are maintained. Development would lead to coalescence where settlements are already not separately identifiable.
None	Development will not lead to any perception of coalescence.

Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- M1.36 The PAS advice considers that, presumably, all Green Belt does assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, making the purpose difficult to use to distinguish the contribution of different areas. PAS notes that the most useful approach is to look at the difference between urban fringe – land under the influence of the urban area; and open countryside, and to favour the latter in determining which land to try and keep open, taking into account the types of edges and boundaries that can be achieved.

- M1.37 Countryside is not defined within the NPPF, and in planning policy terms it most often refers to land outside of the settlement boundary. If the fundamental aim of Green Belts is to prevent urban sprawl and keep land permanently open, then it follows that countryside is undeveloped, and open.
- M1.38 This purpose therefore relates to the character and function of the landscape, to an extent, and the extent to which it displays a 'countryside' character. For the purposes of this assessment, land that is clearly countryside is considered to be rural, with an absence of built development and characterised by rural land uses and landscapes, including agricultural land, forestry, woodland, shrubland/scrubland and open fields. On the other side of the land use and openness scale are urban areas, and clearly identifiable settlements. However, the use and character of land often falls between these two sides, and is often described as having a semi-rural/urban, urban fringe, or settlement edge character.
- M1.39 The second main consideration relates to the extent of encroachment, and whether any containment exists which would limit the actual or perceptible encroachment. Encroachment into a landscape with no clearly defined boundary features to curtail further development or encroachment, will have a larger impact on this purpose than encroachment into a landscape which is separated from the wider adjoining countryside by clearly identifiable features. A planned urban extension on the periphery of a settlement is likely to encroach on the wider countryside, and consideration of this purpose should assess the ability of the land parcel to accommodate change and its impact on the wider countryside.
- M1.40 Criteria to consider in relation to the contribution of the land to purpose c:
Land use on site;
Character of site;
Effect on character of site from adjoining land uses;
Connection to adjoining settlement, and connection to adjoining countryside;
Occurrence of clear boundaries between the settlement and the countryside.
- M1.41 The contribution and value of the land to the purpose of the Green Belt is judged in accordance with table 3.1. The harm to the purpose as a result of development of the land is judged in accordance with table 3.2.

Table 3.1 Contribution to Purpose c	
Strong	The land is clearly rural and undeveloped. The existing settlement edge is very strong and no other equally strong potential boundary exists in the area.
Average	The land is predominantly rural and undeveloped. The existing settlement edge is clearly identifiable, but other potential clearly identifiable boundaries occur in the area.
Limited	The land is mostly developed, and is not characteristic of rural countryside. The settlement edge is either well defined or not well defined, however, clearly identifiable potential boundaries occur within the area.
None	The land is clearly developed. Strong boundaries exist which would form a new settlement edge and Green Belt boundary.

Table 3.2 Harm to Purpose c	
High	Development would occur on open undeveloped land. Development would not be clearly adjoined to the settlement, and would not be clearly separated from the countryside. There would be no clear boundary between the settlement and the countryside, and the wider Green Belt would be vulnerable to further development. The development would affect the rural character of the wider Green Belt.
Moderate	Development would occur on mostly undeveloped land, but would be adjoined to the existing settlement. Some extension of the settlement into the countryside would occur, but clearly identifiable boundaries will create a firm boundary between the settlement and the wider countryside. There will be no significant effect on the wider Green Belt, which will remain countryside.
Limited	Development would occur on land which contains much existing development, and which cannot be described as rural. Development will form an extension to the settlement, and will be well contained from the wider Green Belt by clearly identifiable boundaries.
None	Development would be located on land which is mostly developed and which does not reflect rural or countryside characteristics. Development will clearly form part of the settlement, and will not extend the settlement into the adjoining open countryside.

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

- M1.42 The PAS advice notes that this purpose is generally accepted as relating to very few settlements in practice. In most towns there already are more recent developments between the historic core, and the countryside between the edge of the town.
- M1.43 We also note that the purpose refers to historic towns, so this excludes modern towns, and also smaller settlements such as villages. That does not mean that the character or openness of land around a historic village should not be preserved, but simply that it is not the purpose of the Green Belt to do that.
- M1.44 Criteria to consider in relation to the contribution of the land to purpose d:

Is the settlement a historic town;

Does the land contribute to the setting or character of the historic town;

Is there modern development between the land and the historic town (i.e. usually the historic core), which affects the role of the land within the Green Belt;

Conservation Area Appraisals and guidance;

Visual relationship between historic core and wider countryside;

Views to landmark buildings in historic core.

M1.45 The contribution and value of the land to the purpose of the Green Belt is judged in accordance with table 4.1. The harm to the purpose as a result of development of the land is judged in accordance with table 4.2.

Table 4.1 Contribution to Purpose d	
Strong	The settlement is a historic town and the land comprises the whole or principle part of the visual or physical setting. The land is located adjacent to the historical parts of the town.
Average	The settlement is a historic town and the land comprises a part of the setting. There is very limited intervening modern development, and there is a direct relationship between the land and the historic elements of the town.
Limited	The settlement is an historic town. There may be views of historical elements from the land, which may contribute to the wider setting. There is no direct association between the historical town and the land.
None	The settlement is not a historic town. The historic core is separated from the land by much intervening modern development. There is no visual connection of importance (i.e. beyond incidental) between the land and the historic core of the town.

Table 4.2 Harm to Purpose d	
High	Development would sever the connection between a historic town and its setting, or would significantly affect the special character of the historic town due to the loss of the open land.
Moderate	Development would intrude on the connection between the historic town and its setting, but the setting and special character would be maintained.
Limited	Development will would result in a very minor incursion into the setting of a historic town. Development would result in a minor alteration to an element which contributes to the special character of the historic town.
None	Development is not near a historic town. There is no or very limited intervisibility between the development and the historic town. The development maintains all elements which contribute to the setting or special character of the historic town.

Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

- M1.46 The PAS advice sets out that when Council's decide to release Green Belt land, it must be the case that the amount of land within urban areas that could be developed will already have been factored in before identifying Green Belt land for development. If Green Belt achieves this purpose, then all Green Belt does so to the same extent and hence the value of various land parcels is unlikely to be distinguished by the application of this purpose.
- M1.47 Previously developed land within the Green Belt, especially where the openness is affected, is, however, considered to perform less of a Green Belt function than greenfield sites.
- M1.48 Criteria to consider in assessing harm caused by development within the Green Belt in relation to purpose e:
- Is the land already developed;
 - Does the development affect its openness;
 - Can the land be considered derelict.
- M1.49 The harm to the purpose as a result of development of the land is judged in accordance with table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Harm to Purpose e	
High	Development is on undeveloped, open land. Evidence shows that there is sufficient derelict land or land within the settlement to accommodate the Council's required growth.
Moderate	Development is on partially developed land, but may extend beyond the existing built area. Evidence shows that there is sufficient derelict land or land within the settlement to accommodate the Council's required growth.
Limited	Evidence shows that there is insufficient derelict land or land within the settlement to accommodate the Council's required growth. Development is on open and undeveloped land.
None	Evidence shows that there is insufficient derelict land or land within the settlement to accommodate the Council's required growth. Development is on land which is already developed and not open, or on derelict land within the Green Belt.

Conclusion

- M1.50 PAS notes that the types of areas of land that might seem to make a relatively limited contribution to the overall Green Belt, or which might be considered for development through a review of the Green Belt according to the five Green Belt purposes, would be where:

it would effectively be 'infill', with the land partially enclosed by development;
the development would be well contained by the landscape, e.g. with rising land;

there would be little harm to the qualities that contributed to the distinct identity of separate settlements in reality;

a strong boundary could be created with a clear distinction between 'town' and 'country'.

Grey Belt

M1.51 The NPPF glossary notes that *'For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.'*

M1.52 Our methodology for assessing the contribution of the land to the purposes of the Green Belt is set out earlier. Land which makes a 'strong' contribution to a purpose is considered to 'strongly contribute' against that purpose. Land which makes an 'average', 'limited', or 'no' contribution to the purpose is not considered to 'strongly contribute' against that purpose.

Green Belt Boundaries

M1.53 The consideration of the effectiveness of the existing Green Belt boundaries is also taken into consideration in the assessment of the land. The NPPF states that boundaries should be defined *'clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent'*.

M1.54 Where Green Belt boundaries follow the rear of existing housing on the edge of a settlement, these can lack visual containment and result in a poor relationship between the edge of settlement and the adjoining land parcel. Where the boundary along the rear gardens on a settlement edge is more irregular or complicated, or where it crosses rear gardens, it is likely the case that the Green Belt boundary is not well defined along clearly identifiable features. In such cases, consideration should be given to whether an improved boundary could be provided through planned expansion.

M1.55 Clearly identifiable physical, recognisable, and likely permanent features include:

Major transport infrastructure, roads, and railways;

Landscape features including woodland blocks or belts, and watercourses;

Topography, such as ridgelines;

Public rights of way.

M1.56 Hedgerows, dependant on their character, would usually form a less clearly identifiable boundary, and private roads would form a less permanent feature for a boundary, however, these elements could also be used to align Green Belt boundaries.

- M1.57 When considering the performance of land against the Green Belt purposes, the presence of alternative, durable boundaries can help reduce the perception of sprawl, countryside encroachment and loss of separation. In addition, release of land will typically form part of a planned extension, and consideration should be given to whether new appropriate Green Belt boundaries can be created.

A13. LVIA METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY EFFECTS TABLES

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken with reference to best practice, as outlined in the following published guidance:

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition, 2013) - Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment;

Assessing landscape value outside national designations (2021) – Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21;

Visual representation of development proposals (2019) - Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19;

Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002) - Countryside Agency/Scottish Natural Heritage; and

An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014) - Natural England.

- 1.2 GLVIA3 states within paragraph 1.1 that '*Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.*'
- 1.3 It also states that when identifying landscape and visual effects there is a '*need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of the likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional.*'
- 1.4 GLVIA3 recognises within paragraph 2.23 that professional judgement is at the core of LVIA, and that while some change can be quantified (for example the number of trees which may be lost), '*much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements*'. The Landscape Institute's Technical Committee has advised that the 2013 revision of the GLVIA '*places greater emphasis on professional judgement and less emphasis on a formulaic approach*'.

LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

- 2.1 Landscape/townscape effects are assessed by considering a combination of the landscape's sensitivity, and the magnitude of change it will experience.

Landscape/Townscape Sensitivity

- 2.2 Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape element, and the susceptibility of the landscape element to changes that would arise as a result of the proposals. The determination of sensitivity takes into account the below elements:

Landscape/Townscape Quality

- 2.2.1 A combination of desk study and field work has been undertaken to identify and record the character of the landscape, as well as its condition. The landscape character and quality of the area was established through consideration of the landscape elements, features, and aesthetic and perceptual factors. This subjective judgement is often informed by national or local designations made upon the landscape in respect of its quality, e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Landscape quality is judged with reference to Table L1. Quality feeds into the assessment of Value, as below.

Landscape/Townscape Value

- 2.2.2 Landscape value is also considered in order to avoid consideration only of how scenically attractive an area may be, and thus to avoid undervaluing areas of strong character but little scenic beauty. It is defined in the glossary of the GLVIA as: *'The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.'*
- 2.2.3 Paragraph 187 of the current NPPF outlines that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes *'...in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan'*. Valued landscapes therefore usually include nationally designated landscapes, such as National Parks or National Landscapes. Locally or regionally designated landscapes, as well as areas where documentary evidence, and/or site observation (in accordance with Box 5.1 of GLVIA3 and LI TGN 02/21) indicates as being more valued than the surrounding area, can often also be considered to be valued landscapes.
- 2.2.4 Landscape value is judged on site by an experienced assessor, with reference to Table L2.

Susceptibility

- 2.2.5 Susceptibility indicates the ability of a landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the proposed development 'without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.' (GLVIA3, para. 5.40).
- 2.2.6 Susceptibility is judged in accordance with the criteria set out in Table L3.
- 2.3 The judgement as to sensitivity combines judgements on susceptibility and value. A landscape of high sensitivity will tend be one with a low ability to accommodate change and a high value, and vice versa. Landscape sensitivity was judged according to the criteria set out in Table L4.

Magnitude of Change

- 2.4 The magnitude of change is the scale, extent and duration of change to a landscape arising from the proposed development, and was assessed using the criteria in Table L5.

Landscape/Townscape Effects

- 2.5 The landscape effect is judged by combines judgements on sensitivity and magnitude of change.
- 2.6 The landscape effects can be either beneficial, adverse or neutral. Landscape effects can be direct (i.e. impact on physical features, e.g. landform, vegetation, watercourses etc.), or indirect (i.e. impact on landscape character as a result of the introduction of new elements within the landscape).
- 2.7 Landscapes of higher sensitivity, when subjected to a higher magnitude of change, are likely to experience high landscape effects, which can be either beneficial or adverse. Similarly, landscapes of low sensitivity, when subject to a low magnitude of change, are likely to experience lower landscape effects.
- 2.8 It is also important to consider the area over which the effects may be felt, and to note that effects will generally tend to decline with distance from the development in question (as the magnitude of change is likely to reduce).
- 2.9 Changes can also be beneficial, including through the creation of new landscape features, introduction of beneficial management practices, or improving public or recreational access. Therefore, landscape effects have been considered at completion (Year 0), as well as at Year 15, as landscape effects can reduce as new planting or mitigation becomes established and effective.
- 2.10 Table L6 sets out a general description/examples of the levels of landscape effects.

3. VISUAL EFFECTS

- 3.1 Visual effects are concerned with people's views of the landscape and the change that will occur.
- 3.2 A site visit has been undertaken to ascertain and record the baseline visual condition of the site and surroundings, noting the receptors (i.e. the people who experience the view and where they area/what they are doing), and the nature of the existing views. Factors taken into consideration in considering the baseline include the activity people undertake when experiencing the view (e.g. walking in the countryside, working in the office); the nature, composition and character of the views; elements which may interrupt or otherwise influence the views; and the extent and proportion of the view.
- 3.3 GLVIA3 recognises that is not always possible to view the site during both the winter and summer months. Visibility is likely to be greatest during the winter months when vegetation is out of leaf. However, even if the site is only visited during the summer months, the assessment of visual effects is undertaken by a professional, who is experienced in considering what the visual effect will be when the intervening vegetation is out of leaf. As such, the assessment of visual effects takes into consideration both summer and winter views, and assesses the worst case scenario.
- 3.4 The following terms are often used to describe the extent, content, duration, or character of the view:
- No view – the site or development are not visible from the receptor.
 - Glimpsed view – a limited view of the site or development, or a small part of it, or a transient view when moving.
 - Partial – only a part of the site or development is clearly visible.
 - Filtered – views are partially screened by intervening vegetation, the extent of which may change with the seasons.
 - Screened – a view hidden by intervening vegetation, topography, built form or similar.
 - Open – a clear view.

Visual Sensitivity

- 3.5 The sensitivity of the visual receptor is affected by several factors, including its susceptibility to change, and the value of the view. The susceptibility to change of a visual receptor often relates to the activity they are undertaking and/or the duration of their view. Views of higher value would include those from recognised beauty spots or viewpoints, while views of lower value may include those along a main road within a town.

- 3.6 The sensitivity of the receptor is assessed with reference to Table V1.

Magnitude of Visual Change

- 3.7 A professional judgement is made to determine the magnitude of change on visual receptors, with reference to Table V2. It takes into consideration factors such as the extent of the change (in terms of character and geography), the scale of the proposal, the duration of the change, the reversibility, and the proportion of the change. The magnitude of change will generally decrease with distance from its source, until a point is reached where there is no discernible change.

Visual Effects

- 3.8 The Visual Effect is judged based on a combination of the sensitivity of the receptor, and the magnitude of change, and is judged with reference to Table V3. As with Landscape Effects, the Visual Effects are considered at completion of the project (Year 0), as well as at Year 15, acknowledging that mitigation measures such as new landscaping, may reduce visual effects over time.
- 3.9 Visual effects can either be beneficial, adverse, or neutral. Visual effect are usually expected to be higher when there is a higher magnitude of change experienced by a higher sensitivity receptor, and vice-versa.

VISUALISATION AND PHOTOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The photographs and visualisations within this report have been prepared in general conformance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19. The 'types', as set out within the Guidance, comprise the following:

Type 1 - annotated viewpoint photographs;

Type 2 - 3D wireline/model;

Type 3 - photomontage/photowire;

Type 4 - photomontage/photowire (survey/scale verifiable).

- 4.2 The baseline photographs within this report include a combination of context photographs (showing the character of the site and surroundings), as well as Type 1 photographs (which are displayed at a recognised scale and angle of view, as per the guidelines).
- 4.3 Photographs were taken with a digital camera with a lens that approximates to 50mm, to give a similar depth of view to the human eye. In some cases images have been joined together to form a panorama. The prevailing weather, and any effects on visibility are noted. Images are displayed at

the most appropriate size, taking into account the published guidance, legibility at A3 paper size, and context (which is often shown for illustrative purposes only), and allows for enlarged scale printing if required.

- 4.4 The Guidance Note advocates a proportionate and reasonable approach, which includes professional judgement, in order to aid informed decision making. While effort is made to include Type 2 or 3 visualisations, this is not always possible due to project constraints.

TABLE L1 - LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE QUALITY	
	Typical criteria
Very High	Nationally designated landscapes, such as National Landscapes, National Parks or World Heritage Sites. Generally landscapes in very good condition, with intact and distinctive features. It may be that within nationally designated areas, some parts may be of lower quality due to detractors.
High	Often locally designated landscapes, such as Special Landscape Areas or Conservation Areas. Attractive with a strong sense of character, place, and distinction. Will generally be in a good condition, with intact and distinctive features.
Medium	Pleasant, ordinary landscapes with some detractors, and with no particular distinctive qualities. Will generally be in a medium condition, with some intact features.
Low	Degraded or unattractive landscape, affected by many detractors. Will generally be in poor condition, with few intact elements.

TABLE L2 - LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE VALUE	
	Typical criteria
Very High	Nationally designated landscapes, such as National Landscapes, National Parks or World Heritage Sites. Generally landscapes in very good condition, with intact and distinctive features. May have elevated levels of tranquillity, or appear wild. May contain very rare features, and may be of particular historic or ecological interest and value. May have substantial recreational value.
High	Often locally designated landscapes, and usually with high landscape quality and in a good condition. May have higher than average recreational value, or ecological or historical interest. May be considered particularly scenic, or allow for particularly scenic public views from within the landscape. May have well-known cultural associations. May be identified as a particularly good example of a characteristic landscape, or contain particularly good examples of characteristic landscape elements.
Medium	Pleasant, ordinary landscapes. May have localised scenic qualities, with limited recreational value. May have undesignated heritage or ecological value at a local level.
Low	Degraded landscape. May have limited public accessibility or views. May have many features which detract from the scenic quality or tranquillity. May have little ecological or cultural interest.

TABLE L3 - LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY	
	Typical criteria
High	Landscapes with a poor capacity to accommodate change, owing to the interaction of the proposed development with the topography, vegetation cover, built form, etc. Landscapes with little or no ability to absorb change, as change would conflict or be out of context with the character of the surroundings. Landscapes where there is little or no screening possible, and where development would be readily visible, and out of character.
Medium	Landscapes with a good capacity to accommodate change. The change would be reflective of the scale and character of parts of the surrounding landscape. Some landscape elements may be lost due to development, but this could be mitigated.
Low	A landscape with a very good capacity to accommodate change, with proposed development comprising a small part of the wider landscape, or being in-keeping with the overarching character of the surroundings. Development may be very well screened, or may complement or enhance the local character.

TABLE L4 - LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE SENSITIVITY	
	Typical criteria
Very High	A landscape that is typically of higher value, and with a high susceptibility to change. May include nationally designated landscapes, or landscapes of very high quality or value.
High	A landscape with a limited ability to accommodate change, of higher to medium landscape value. Often landscapes of higher quality, and may be locally designated.
Medium	Landscapes with a good capacity to accommodate change, where change would not lead to major loss or damage to landscape elements or character. Often landscapes of medium value and quality.
Low	A landscape with a very good ability to accommodate change, where change would not lead to major loss of key or important elements. Often lower value or quality landscapes.

TABLE L5 - LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	
	Typical criteria
High	Total loss or major alteration to key receptors, characteristics or features of the baseline.
Medium	Partial loss or damage to key receptors, characteristics or features, or partial improvement, restoration or addition to these features.
Low	Minor loss or alteration, or minor improvement to key receptors, characteristics or features.
Negligible	Very limited loss or alteration, or limited improvement to key receptors, characteristics or features.
Neutral	No identifiable change.

TABLE L6 - LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE EFFECT	
	Typical criteria
Major	Effects are in complete variance to the baseline landscape. Proposals may have a substantial detrimental or beneficial effect on the landscape resource or character.
Moderate	Effects result in fundamental alterations to the landscape resource or character, which may not be fully mitigated. Effects may result in clearly identifiable benefits.
Minor	Effects result in slight alterations to the landscape resource or character, with mitigation being effective. There may be some beneficial effects.
Negligible	Effects would barely perceptible on the landscape resource or character, either beneficial or adverse.
Neutral	No identifiable effect.

Note: Effects may be judged to be either adverse or beneficial.

TABLE V1 - SENSITIVITY OF VISUAL RECEPTOR	
	Typical criteria
High	Users of Public Rights of Way with generally open or unspoilt views. Users of outdoor recreational facilities where the purpose of the recreation is the enjoyment of the countryside, and with open views, such as visitors to National Landscapes, National Parks, Country Parks, Heritage assets (such as National Trust properties, Conservation Areas) etc. Non-motorised users of unclassified or minor roads where there are unspoilt views/lack of intrusive features. Residential properties with predominantly open views from ground and first floor windows, or gardens.
Medium	Views with moderate scenic value within undesignated landscapes. Users of Public Rights of Way with restricted views in less sensitive areas, or where there are intrusive features. Users of outdoor recreational facilities where views are not key to the purpose of the recreation, e.g. sports pitches, golf courses. Motorised users of unclassified or minor roads, or non-motorised users where there are some intrusive features. Residential properties with partial views from windows or gardens, or oblique views, or where views are partially obstructed. Users of institutional buildings and their grounds, such as schools.
Low	Views with many detracting features. Users of outdoor recreational facilities where the view is restricted or incidental to the activity. Users of main transport routes, including roads and rail (motorised or not). People at their place of work.

TABLE V2 - MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL CHANGE	
	Typical criteria
High	A dominant change in view which would be obviously discordant and out of context. Changes would occupy the majority of the view.
Medium	An obvious visual change which may be discordant, or not discordant but clearly visible over a large proportion of the view.
Low	Small changes to views that would be noticeable. Changes may be discordant over a small proportion of the view, or not discordant over a larger proportion of the view.
Negligible	The change will be discernible, but the character of the view will not materially change, or the change may not be discordant.
Neutral	No identifiable change.

TABLE V3 - VISUAL EFFECT	
	Typical criteria
Major	The proposals would be clearly visible and dominant, and would cause a substantial deterioration or improvement to a view from a more sensitive receptor.
Moderate	The proposal would be readily identifiable/visible, and would cause some deterioration or improvement to a view from a more sensitive receptor, or a greater deterioration or improvement to a view from a less sensitive receptor.
Minor	The proposal would be noticeable, and would cause limited deterioration or improvement to a view from a more sensitive receptor, or some deterioration or improvement from a less sensitive receptor.
Negligible	The proposal would not substantially change the view, but would be discernible.
Neutral	No change in view.

Note: Effects may be judged to be either adverse or beneficial.

DIRECT EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE FEATURES		
Trees and Hedgerows		
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
High to Medium	There is an area of Ancient Woodland within the west of the Site, which is of high landscape/ecological/arboricultural value. There are also several Cat A and B trees within the Site and within the boundary hedgerows. The Site is bound by hedgerows of various quality, with a gappy hedgerow also separating the eastern and western fields of the Site. Further Ancient Woodlands bound the Site.	
	Impact and Mitigation	
	The Ancient Woodland on and around the Site will be retained, with no built development proposed within 30m of the woodlands. A management plan will be developed and agreed with the Council to ensure the continued health and quality of the woodland and structural vegetation on the Site. The vast majority of trees and hedgerows will be retained within the proposed development, although it will be necessary to remove some sections of the hedgerow along Little Green Lane in order to create the vehicular access to the development. Around 100m of hedgerow along Little Green Lane require removal to create the two vehicular access points, and a further short section is proposed to be removed to allow pedestrian access near the existing primary school. Sections of the existing field boundary hedgerow in the centre of the Site will require removal, although this hedge is relatively gappy already, and the potential exists to reinstate some of the missing sections. Much new native tree planting is proposed to be incorporated within the proposed areas of open space, as well as along the streets within the development, in order to increase the structural vegetation and diversity on the Site. A community orchard is proposed within the south of the development, which will further enhance the variety and character of the landscape features and trees in the area.	
Magnitude of Change		Effect Year 15
Low		Minor Beneficial
Land use on the Site (i.e. arable)		
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
Medium	The two fields of the Site are in use as arable land.	
	Impact and Mitigation	
	The arable land will be lost and will be replaced with a new neighbourhood, as well as new areas of public open space and a country park.	
Magnitude of Change		Effect Year 15
High		Moderate Adverse
Public Rights of Way and Access		
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
High	The Site is publicly accessible via Public Right of Way Sarratt 017 which bisects the northern part of the Site in an east-west direction.	
	Impact and Mitigation	
	The existing public footpath which crosses the north of the Site is proposed to be retained along its current alignment, although it is expected that the path will be surfaced in order to accommodate an expected increase in use. Several new paths, both catering for active travel and recreational movement, are proposed within and around the new housing areas. These will connect to the existing public footpaths on and adjoining the Site, to increase the options for walking within the surroundings. New large areas of public open space, including new children's play areas, will also increase public access and recreation within the Site and area.	
Magnitude of Change		Effect Year 15
Low		Negligible Beneficial
Heritage Assets		
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
N/A	There are no known heritage assets on the Site.	
	Impact and Mitigation	
	N/A	
Magnitude of Change		Effect Year 15
N/A		N/A

INDIRECT EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER			
Landscape/Townscape Character of Site			
Landscape/Townscape Quality	Landscape/Townscape Value	Landscape/Townscape Susceptibility	Landscape/Townscape Sensitivity
High to Medium	High to Medium	Medium	High to Medium
Existing Condition			
The Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape or heritage quality or value, however, the woodland block within the east of the Site is Ancient Woodland. The Site is also located within the Green Belt. Public access to the Site is limited to that available along the footpath within the north of the Site. The Site comprises mostly ordinary arable land, and the trees, hedgerows and woodland on it are of moderate to high landscape quality and value. It is not a rare landscape type, nor a particularly good example of a landscape type or character. There is some ecological conservation interest in the Ancient Woodland within the Site. There are open views towards the adjoining woodland and settlement from the public footpath within the Site, but the Site is not of particular scenic value. The Site overall is not wild or tranquil, being located adjacent to the settlement edge of Croxley Green, although in relative terms, the north of the Site is more tranquil. Overall, the Site itself is considered to be of medium to high landscape value, because of the open views from the public footpath, and the occurrence of the Ancient Woodland within the Site. The Site's character is influenced by the adjoining settlement in the south, although the northern and easternmost parts of the Site, as well as the indented woodland block, are more rural in character. The Site is capable of being developed for residential uses whilst retaining the majority of boundary and structural vegetation and sufficient off-set distances to these features. Housing within the Site would form a continuation of that to the south, and would not appear out of character within the wider area.			
Impact and Mitigation			
The character of the Site will change as a result of the proposed development. The open arable land will be lost and will be replaced with a new residential development, and associated open spaces and infrastructure. While the effect on the landscape character of the Site is judged as adverse (due to the loss of the open land), this does not mean that the development will be unattractive or inappropriate. In fact, as set out above, the neighbourhood will be designed to be attractive and safe, with many new areas of publicly accessible open space, as well as space to encourage wildlife through habitat creation. Areas of open space have also been incorporated within the development to respect and acknowledge the Listed Durrants House from a landscape perspective.			
Magnitude of Change	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 15	
High to Medium	Major to Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	
		As the proposed development and landscaping matures	
Landscape/Townscape Character of Immediate Surroundings			
Landscape/Townscape Quality	Landscape/Townscape Value	Landscape/Townscape Susceptibility	Landscape/Townscape Sensitivity
High to Medium	High to Medium	High to Medium	High to Medium
Existing Condition			
The landscape to the east and north of the Site is of high landscape value, being a Grade II Registered Park and Garden. The Ancient Woodlands to the north west of the Site have public access and are relatively tranquil, and are therefore of high landscape value. The landscape beyond the Site to the west comprises more ordinary farmland, with the Conservation Area located beyond. To the south, the townscape character is ordinary, although the Grade II Listed Durrants House is of higher value. Overall, the landscape value and sensitivity in the immediate vicinity of the Site ranges from medium to the south, to medium to high to the west, and high to the north and east. The landscape north and east of the Site is considered to constitute a valued landscape in line with NPPF paragraph 187a.			
Impact and Mitigation			
The effects on the immediate surroundings of the Site will be limited as a result of careful design, and due to the existing dense vegetation which bounds the Site to the north, east and west. Appropriate transitional characters are proposed within the development through the incorporation of areas of open space within the Site between the built development and the woodland beyond, and these areas and associated planting within them will further minimise effects on the immediate surrounding landscape. The clear edge to the development also limits effects on the wider landscape around the Site and north Croxley Green, with the woodlands physically and visually separating the settlement from the remainder of the open countryside beyond. The proposed design and layout of the development, in reflecting and respecting the character of the adjoining settlement, will also reduce the effects on the townscape character south of the Site.			
Magnitude of Change	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 15	
Medium	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse	
		As the proposed development and planting matures, and becomes assimilated into the surroundings	

Landscape/Townscape Character of Wider Surroundings			
Landscape/Townscape Quality	Landscape/Townscape Value	Landscape/Townscape Susceptibility	Landscape/Townscape Sensitivity
Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Existing Condition			
The wider landscape around the Site and immediate surroundings is varied, with the landscape sensitivity overall medium to low to the south and east within the highly settled landscape, and medium to the north and west where there is less development (as described in the LCA).			
Impact and Mitigation			
The proposed development will form a logical part of the existing settlement, and there will be no material effects on the wider landscape or townscape character around the Site, including on the Conservation Area and Registered Park and Garden within the wider Site context. The well-contained nature of the Site also limits effects on the wider Landscape Character Area.			
Magnitude of Change	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 15	
Low	Minor to Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse	
		As the development becomes assimilated into the surroundings	
Heritage Assets			
Landscape/Townscape Quality	Landscape/Townscape Value	Landscape/Townscape Susceptibility	Landscape/Townscape Sensitivity
High	High	High	High
Existing Condition			
The Site is bound to the east and north by Cassiobury Park, a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, notable as the landscape element for the corresponding Cassiobury House (now demolished). The woodland within the west of the park limits intervisibility between the Site and Cassiobury Park. The Site is west and north west of the Croxley Green Conservation Area, which is primarily located along a ribbon from Watford Road in the south to Little Green Lane in the north. The nearest part of the Conservation Area to lies around 400m west of the Site, however, there is no intervisibility due to the dense intervening vegetation and the gently rolling topography of the area. To the south of the Site along Little Green Lane, is Durrants House, a Grade II Listed Tudor/Jacobean revival-style country house built in the mid-nineteenth century, that was designated primarily for the quality of its design and the extensive retention of interior features.			
Impact and Mitigation			
The proposed country park will form a transition between the built development and the woodland at Cassiobury Park, with the Park already located within a predominantly urban environment. There will therefore be no material effect on the character or historical significance of the Park as a result of the proposed development. The development will remain well separated from the Conservation Area, and there will be no intervisibility between the development and the Conservation Area. The proposed development will have no material effect on the landscape character as perceived from the Conservation Area. Durrants House backs towards the Site, and its former curtilage has already been redeveloped for residential uses. The proposed layout of the development retains a visual connection between Durrants House and the woodland to the north, and also proposes an area of open space adjacent to the house, to protect views towards it. While the landscape character to the north of the house will change, it is understood that the landscape plays a limited role in the setting or significance of the building. See the submitted Heritage Impact Assessment for an assessment of effects on the significance of the heritage assets.			
Magnitude of Change	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 15	
Medium to Low	Minor to Negligible Adverse	Minor to Negligible Adverse	

OTHER EFFECTS

Cumulative impacts

Development is underway to the south west of the Site, south and east of Little Green Lane (20/1881/FUL) for 160 dwellings, including 2 storey houses and 3 storey flats. Just south west of Little Green Junior School, development is underway for 42 apartments (up to 4 storeys) on Grove Crescent (20/0467/FUL). The character of the landscape south west of the Site is therefore becoming more residential.

However, the development at Grove Crescent replaces existing residential development which was on that site, and due to the small scale of the development, alongside the fact that the site used to be in residential use, and the separation from the Site by the primary school, means that this development will not result in any significant cumulative impacts.

The development south and east of Little Green Lane lies outside of the Green Belt, but within land which was previously mostly open. As much of that site is now developed, the landscape had already changed by the time of our site visit and assessment. While building works are still ongoing, the additional changes to the character of that site and the area south east of the Site, post our site visit and assessment, will not significantly affect the character of the wider area, nor will there be a significant cumulative effect as a result of the completion of development there.

Lighting

The Site is unlit, but the adjoining settlement to the south is lit with street and residential lighting. The lighting will be designed to minimise light spill, and to maintain dark corridors where necessary for wildlife movement. The proposed development will result in an increase in lighting levels in the area, but the lighting will be similar in character to that already occurring to the south. No significant lighting effects beyond the effects normally associated with residential development on the edge of a settlement, are expected.

Construction Phase

There will be temporary effects on the landscape/townscape and visual character of the Site and surroundings during the construction of the scheme, due to things such as ground moving, heavy vehicle movements, temporary fencing, storage of materials. It is anticipated that the extent of effects will be controlled through a Construction Management Plan, and that there will be no specific landscape/visual effects above those usually associated with the development of this nature.

VISUAL EFFECTS

Views from public footpath Sarratt 017

Photographs 5, 8, 9

Sensitivity Existing Condition

High

The Site is partially visible from the public footpath which crosses the northern part of the eastern field. In these views, the existing houses south of the Site are partially visible over the intervening field and vegetation, and there are views towards the Grade II Listed Durrants House from parts of the path. The western part of the Site is mostly screened in views from the path, due to the intervening vegetation. Views from public footpath Sarratt 017 outside the Site and north of Dell Spring, are prevented by the woodland to the south and the dense treed hedgerow to the east.

Impact and Mitigation

The proposed development will be partially visible from the public footpath which crosses within the north of the Site. In these views, the northern part of the proposed development will be visible, seen behind the new country park. The built development will also be visible along the edges of the proposed green corridor, which will allow a view to be maintained from the footpath to the Listed Durrants House in the south. The existing residential settlement south of the Site is already partially visible from this footpath, but the proposed development will now be located closer to the viewer along the path, albeit still set back behind proposed and existing vegetation. The proposed vegetation will soften the built form in views from the path, and aid in assimilating it into the wider landscape. Views northwards from the public footpath will remain open, although meadows and tree planting will be evident in these views, as well as recreational elements such as seating and signage within the country park.

There will be limited views of the proposed country park from public footpath Sarratt 17 to the east of the Site, with views quickly becoming screened by the intervening vegetation. It is unlikely that the proposed built form will be evident in these views, due to the intervening vegetation and topography.

Magnitude of Change

Medium

Effect Year 1

Moderate Adverse

Effect Year 15

Moderate to Minor Adverse

As the proposed planting matures and the development becomes assimilated into the landscape

Views from Rousebarn Lane		Photographs 4, 25, 27
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
High	Views from Rousebarn Lane to the east and north of the Site are mostly prevented by the intervening hedgerow along the Site boundary, although there are limited instance where views are available over the vegetation into the Site. Winter views will be heavily filtered into the northern and eastern parts of the Site.	
	Impact and Mitigation There will be winter views of the proposed housing within the south east of the Site from Rousebarn Lane along the east of the Site, although summer views will be screened by the intervening hedgerow along the lane. The proposed houses will be seen within the context of the existing houses to the south, where visible, and will not appear out of character. The wider development beyond within the centre and west of the Site will remain screened by the woodland block within the Site. The interior of the proposed country park, including the proposed drainage basins and elements such as seating areas, may also be visible in filtered winter views through the intervening hedgerow, although summer views will remain screened.	
Magnitude of Change		Effect Year 15
Low		Effect Year 1 Minor Adverse As the proposed planting matures
Views from Public Footpath Watford Borough 031		Photograph 6
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
High	From public footpath Watford Borough 031 within the woodland at Cassiobury Park, views towards the Site are mostly prevented by the intervening woodland and trees, and it is expected that winter views will only be slightly more open. Only part of the north east of the Site is visible in these views, but views quickly become heavily screened from further east along the path.	
	Impact and Mitigation From public footpath Watford Borough 031 within the woodland at Cassiobury Park, there will be limited views of the proposed country park, seen in heavily filtered views through the intervening woodland. During the winter, there may be a small view for a short section of the path, of the new houses within the northernmost development parcels, although new planting in the country park will further filter the development.	
Magnitude of Change		Effect Year 15
Negligible		Effect Year 1 Negligible Adverse Negligible Adverse
Views from within Whippendell Wood, Dell Wood and Newland's Spring		Photographs 10, 26
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
High	Views from within Whippendell Wood are prevented by the intervening woodland. Similarly, views from the informal paths within Dell Wood and Newland's Spring are prevented by the intervening vegetation and the fact that the paths do not run very close to the edges of the woods, however, there will be very limited instances where the Site is partially visible from within these woods, during the winter months.	
	Impact and Mitigation The proposed built form will remain screened from within Whippendell Wood due to the intervening vegetation and distance between the wood and the new homes. There may be very heavily filtered, limited winter views in places, where the vegetation is less dense. From the informal paths within the woodlands north west of the Site, including Dell Wood, there may be views of the new homes during the winter months when the ground cover is less dense, from paths nearest to the edges of the woodland. Summer views will remain screened in the vast majority of instances, by the intervening vegetation.	
Magnitude of Change		Effect Year 15
Low to Negligible		Effect Year 1 Minor Adverse Negligible Adverse As the proposed planting matures

Views from the near and middle distance to the west		Photograph 11
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
High	In views from the west, from public footpath Sarratt 018, views of the Site are prevented by the dense intervening woodland at Dell Wood and Long Newland's Spring. Views from the properties further west are similarly screened.	
	Impact and Mitigation From public footpath Sarratt 018 west of the Site, and the properties in the middle distance west of the Site, the proposed development will remain screened by the intervening existing and proposed vegetation.	
Magnitude of Change		Effect Year 15
Neutral		Neutral
Views from Public Footpath Sarratt 063		
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
High	Views from public footpath Sarratt 063 which runs just west of the Site boundary, are prevented by the dense intervening vegetation along the path, although there may be heavily filtered views of the western part of the Site during the winter.	
	Impact and Mitigation The new homes within the west of the Site are likely to be visible in filtered winter views from public footpath Sarratt 063 along the west of the Site, through the intervening vegetation. As the proposed planting within the west of the Site matures, these views will become more heavily filtered. Summer views will be screened in most instances, especially as the proposed vegetation matures.	
Magnitude of Change		Effect Year 15
Low		Moderate to Minor Adverse Minor to Negligible Adverse As the proposed planting in the west of the Site matures
Views from Little Green Lane and roads to the south		Photographs 3, 15-24
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
Medium	Little Green Lane to the south west of the Site is bound by an unmanaged hedgerow to the north, preventing views into the Site, although there will be partial, filtered views of the western part of the Site during the winter. The majority of views from Little Green Lane to the south and south east of the Site are limited by the intervening hedgerow north of the lane, with the interior of the Site screened. There are limited instances where views over the vegetation are available, with the Site partially visible over the intervening vegetation, and the woodland visible in the background. There are also limited opportunities for partial views into the interior of the Site through the two field access gates. Views from the northern parts of Lincoln Drive, Norwich Way, Durrants Drive, Canterbury Way, Links Way, and Rousebarn Lane towards the Site are framed by the adjoining houses, with views into the interior of the Site prevented by the hedgerow along Little Green Lane, with the tops of the woodland to the north just visible over the intervening vegetation.	
	Impact and Mitigation The tops of the proposed built form will be visible over the intervening hedgerow in places, in views from Little Green Lane south west of the Site, and more of the built form will be visible during the winter through gaps in the hedgerows. Similarly, the proposed development will be partially visible from Little Green Lane to the south and south east of the Site, seen through the proposed new access gaps in the bounding hedgerow. The tops of the proposed buildings will also be visible over the intervening hedgerow. The new buildings and streets will be seen within the context of the existing settlement to the south, and will not appear out of character. New tree planting within the south of the Site will soften the built form in these views. The development will screen most views of the woodland to the north from the lane, although the woodland will remain visible along the green central corridor, and over the eastern parts of the Site. Views from the northern parts of the streets that lead south off Little Green Lane will be similar, albeit more focused on parts of the Site only.	
Magnitude of Change		Effect Year 15
High		Moderate Adverse

RESIDENTIAL VIEWS		
Views from houses south of Little Green Lane		Photographs 9, 15
Sensitivity	Existing Condition	
Medium	There are partial views of the interior of the Site, over the intervening boundary vegetation, from first floor windows of some of the properties nearest to the Site along Little Green Lane, Lincoln Drive, Norwich Way, Durrants Drive, Canterbury Way, Links Way, and Rousebarn Lane. Views of the Site from Durrants House are available over the intervening hedgerow, from first floor windows.	
	Impact and Mitigation The proposed development will be partially visible from the properties near to the south and south east of the Site, seen through the proposed new access gaps in the bounding hedgerow and over the hedgerow. New tree planting within the south of the Site will soften the built form in these views. The development will screen most views of the woodland to the north from the lane, although the woodland will remain visible along the green central corridor, and over the eastern parts of the Site. Views will in most cases be limited to those from first floor windows, over the intervening vegetation.	
Magnitude of Change	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 15
High	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse