



Swallowfield

Land East of Trowes Lane

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

SEPTEMBER 2025

CITY &
COUNTRY

Project Team

Client:



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Designer



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1. Introduction

1. Introduction

Introduction

This document has been produced by JCN Design and Planning on behalf of City & Country Group Executive Pension Scheme in support of an outline planning application at the Land East of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield.

The description of the development is as follows:

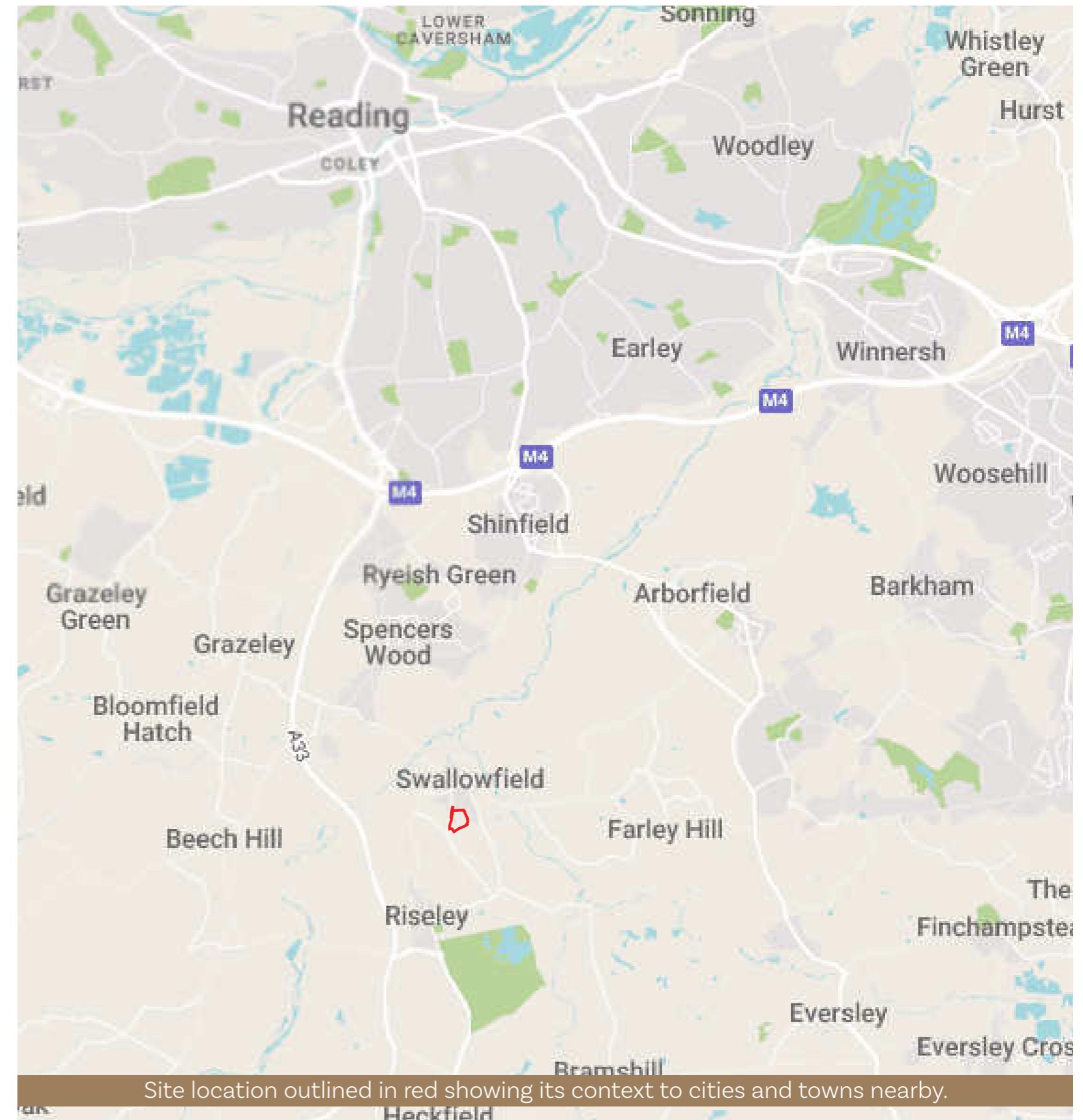
Up to 79 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), together with access, landscaping and associated infrastructure, with all matters reserved except access.

The initial chapter sets out the contextual analysis, as well as guidance for the direction of the design, following through to the indicative masterplan, and potential appearance matters.

The outline application has been informed by extensive site analysis, including considering the existing site conditions, its ecology, topography, flood risk and utilities, as well wider assessments such as landscape and visual impact, heritage and transport.

Information included within this design and access statement, has been produced by specialist consultants, and the design team.

The proposals seek to provide a high quality, landscaped environment which takes advantage of the existing dense woodland to its southern portion, offering a diverse mix of housing typology and a traditional, rural approach to the layout, prepared with guidance sought from the Swallowfield Village Design Statement.



1. Introduction

About City & Country

City & Country is a family-run property developer established in the 1960s that has grown to become the UK's leading heritage developer with a track record of bringing forward award-winning developments across the country. The company is passionate about quality placemaking and design, with a background in the regeneration and re-purpose of important historic buildings including nationally recognised heritage assets. In recent years, C&C has brought forward a number of successful heritage-led developments that focus on storing Britain's rich architectural character and strive to make new places for communities to live and enjoy.

C&C's larger new build schemes to date have been in Essex although the company has a long-standing interest in land in other parts of the country including land to the east of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield, which C&C has been pro-actively promoting as a genuine opportunity for residential development and intends to submit an Outline Planning Application for at the end of this summer.

C&C's new build homes are designed with the utmost care and precision, taking into account the local area design and ensuring that every aspect meets the highest of standards and quality. The company's commitment to excellence guarantees that every home not only meets but exceeds expectations, providing a living space that is both beautiful and functional. Embracing the best of the present, through exceptional design and build standards, C&C sensitively adds value to create very special places; to be enjoyed today and cherished by future generations.



2. Context



2. Context

Site Location

The Site is located on the southern edge of Swallowfield, east of Trowes Lane. It measures 4.8 hectares and is generally flat. The northern section is currently in agricultural use, the southern section comprises 1.52 hectares of poor quality woodland.

It is bounded to the north by the rear gardens of Foxborough. To the east, the site is bounded by dense, mature trees and hedgerow, a watercourse and the rear gardens of houses on Part Lane. It is bounded by fields to the south. To The west it is bounded by hedgerow and trees and Trowes Lane. Vehicular access for agricultural vehicles is currently taken from Trowes Lane.

Immediately to the west of Trowes Lane is the Croudace site, which has planning permission for the erection of 81 dwellings. Once this development is constructed the Site will be enclosed on 3 sides with the woodland to the south of the Site, which is proposed to be retained and enhanced, acting as a buffer to the countryside to the south.



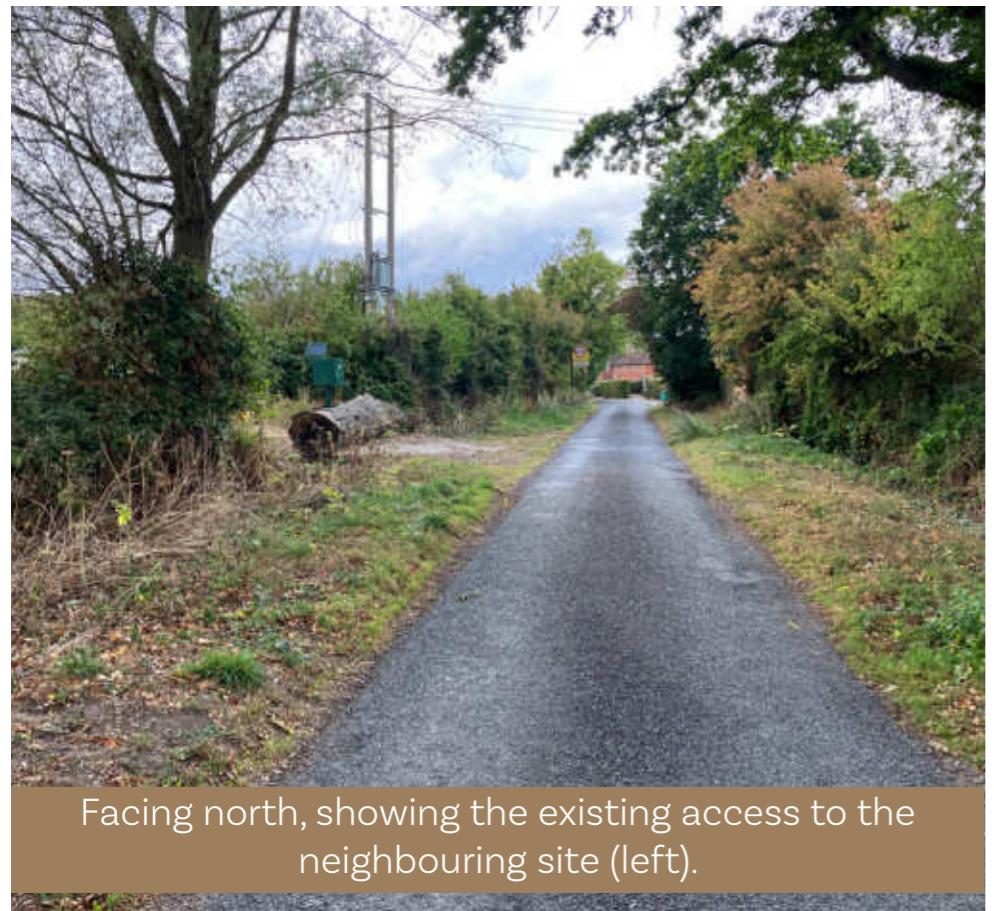
Facing south-west, looking onto Trowes Lane.



Site location in context to the surrounding village of Swallowfield.

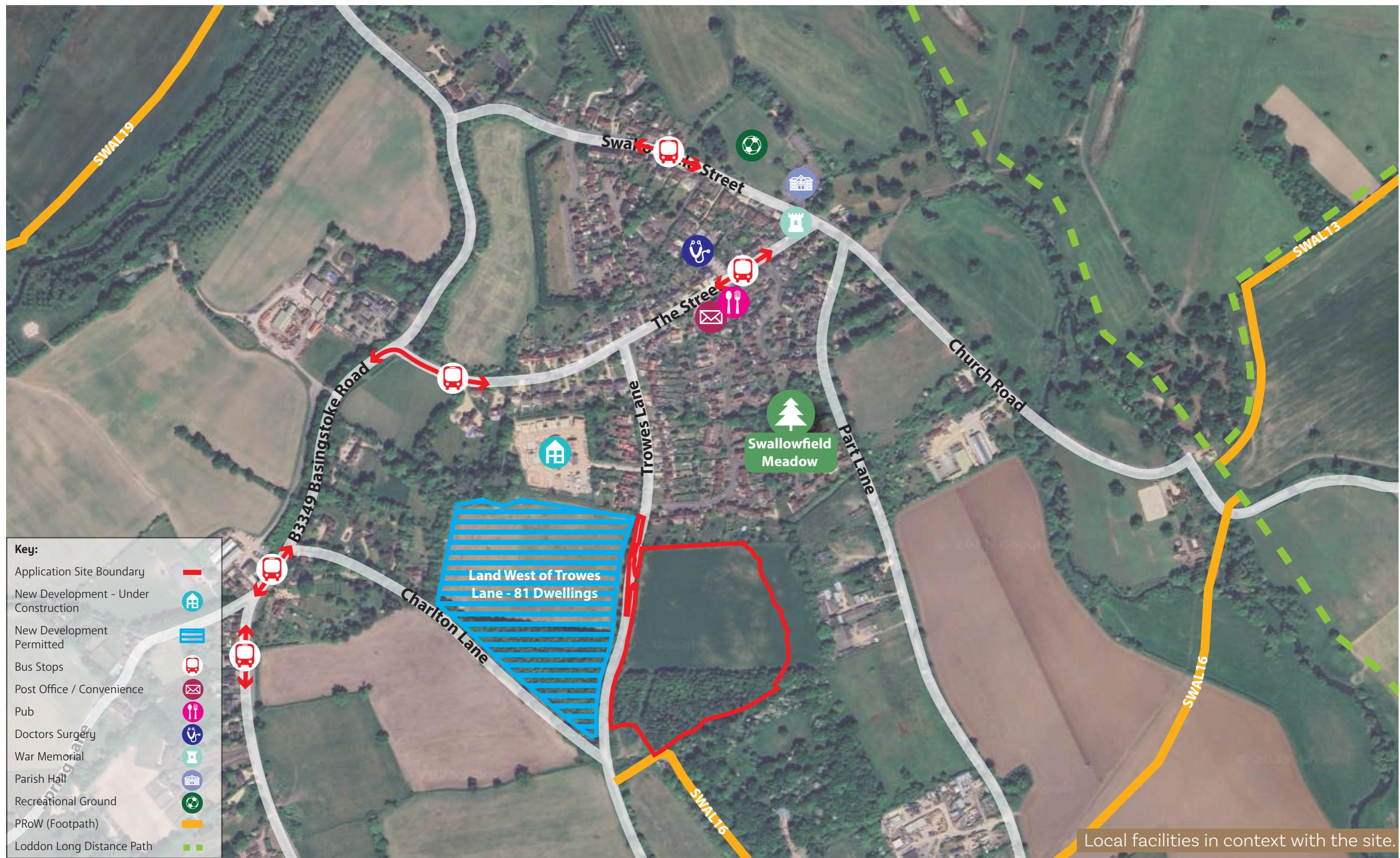
2. Context

Site Photographs



2. Context

Local Facilities



2. Context

Movement - The Greenways Project

The Greenways Project includes the strategic network of multi-user paths that connects the Strategic Development Locations to the existing settlements as well as linking sites of historic interest and recreational value and provide continuous traffic free routes in the Borough.

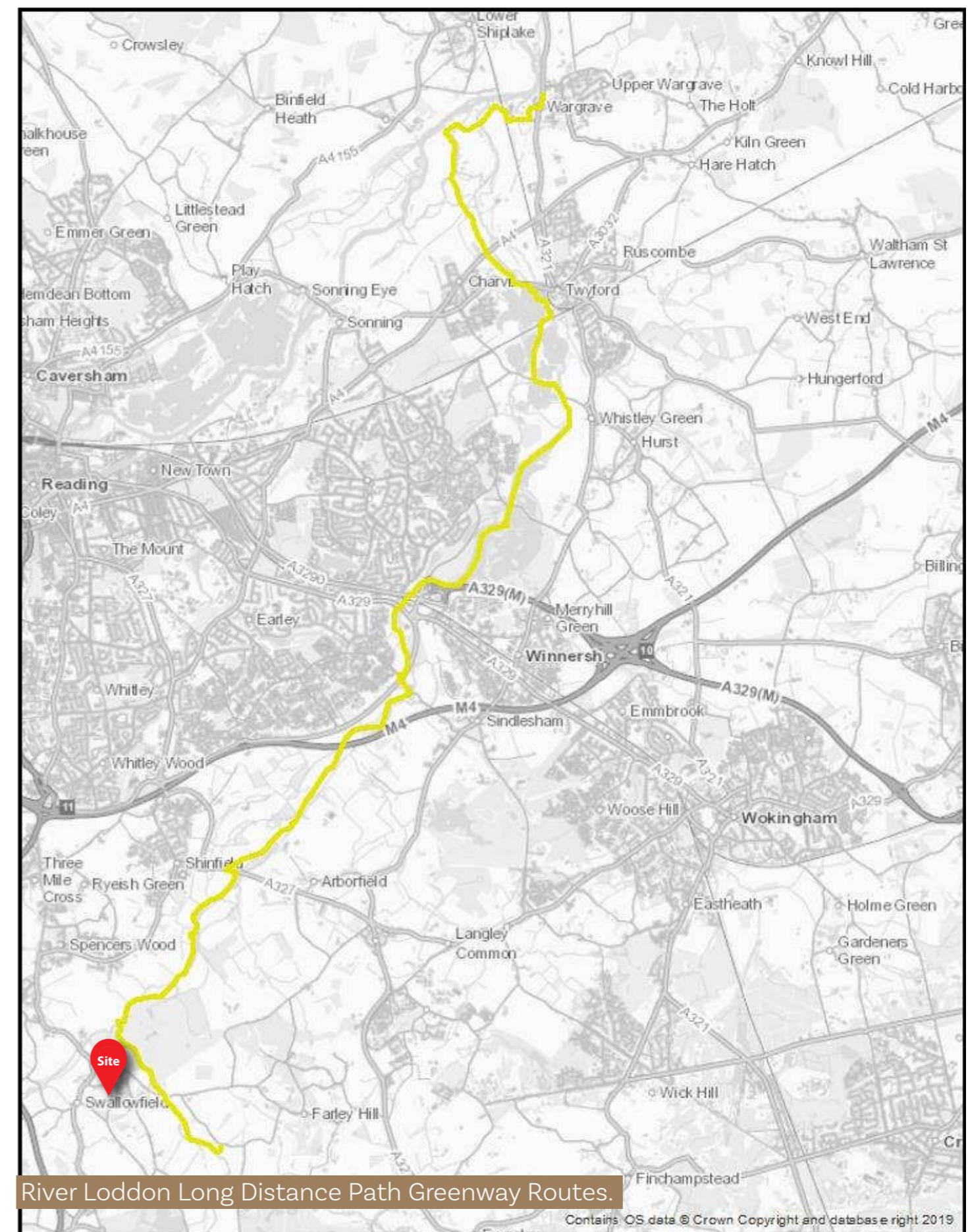
The Greenways Project also includes River Loddon Long Distance Path (LLDP) that links the Thames Valley Path in the north of the borough in Wargrave to the Blackwater Valley Path in the South of the borough in Swallowfield.

The LLDP is within close proximity of the application site, and is accessible via the PRoW footpath 'SWAL16' that can be accessed from the southern corner. It is also worth noting that 'SWAL16' is connected to 'SWAL15'.

The LLDP is currently proposed, and not yet consented, therefore, if this did not go ahead, the site still benefits from a wealth of public footpaths outside of the site.

The LLDP is split into four sections titled 'A, B, C and D', which all vary in lengths. The LLDP appropriate to the site is Section A, which is 6.8km.

To the right, the River Loddon Long Distance Path Greenway Routes map shows the site in context to the LLDP, which was sourced from the Wokingham Borough Councils Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020-2030 document.



2. Context

Movement - Pedestrian

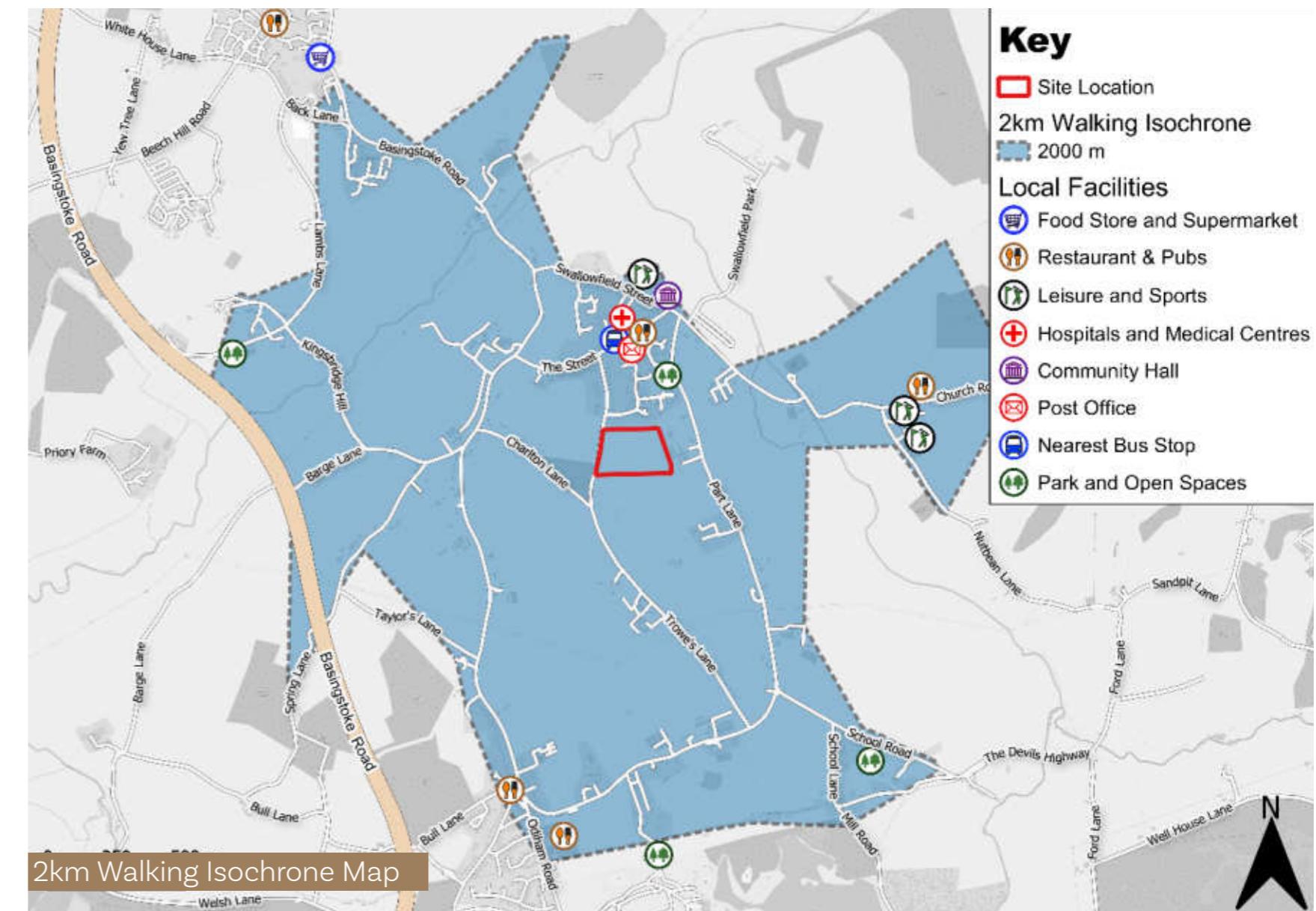
The site is well connected to local services for pedestrians as the village centre is within a 600m walking distance, equivalent of a 5 - 10-minute walk.

The primary desire line from the site is northbound towards the village centre. Although there are no pedestrian footways provided along Trowes Lane in the direct vicinity of the site, the nature of the road and its narrow width is such that would elicit slower speeds from drivers and ultimately functions as a quiet lane. There are also ample opportunities provided along the road for pedestrians and motorised traffic to avoid conflict with each other in the form of passing places and field accesses.

Beyond the Trowes Lane / Foxborough junction, footways are provided on one side of the Trowes Lane carriageway en-route the village centre, with the section subject to a posted speed limit of 30mph. In the wider area, footpath provision on both sides of the road is provided along The Street and Swallowfield Street.

The route towards the village centre benefits from natural surveillance from adjoining buildings and mirrors pedestrian desire lines following the shortest routes possible especially at junctions. Footway links are continuous, providing direct access to some local facilities along the route including:

- **Swallowfield Post Office** (400m);
- **A local pub (The Crown)** (450m);
- **Swallowfield Medical Practice** (450m);
- **Swallowfield Parish Hall** (750m); and
- **Swallowfield Recreation Ground** (750m).



2. Context

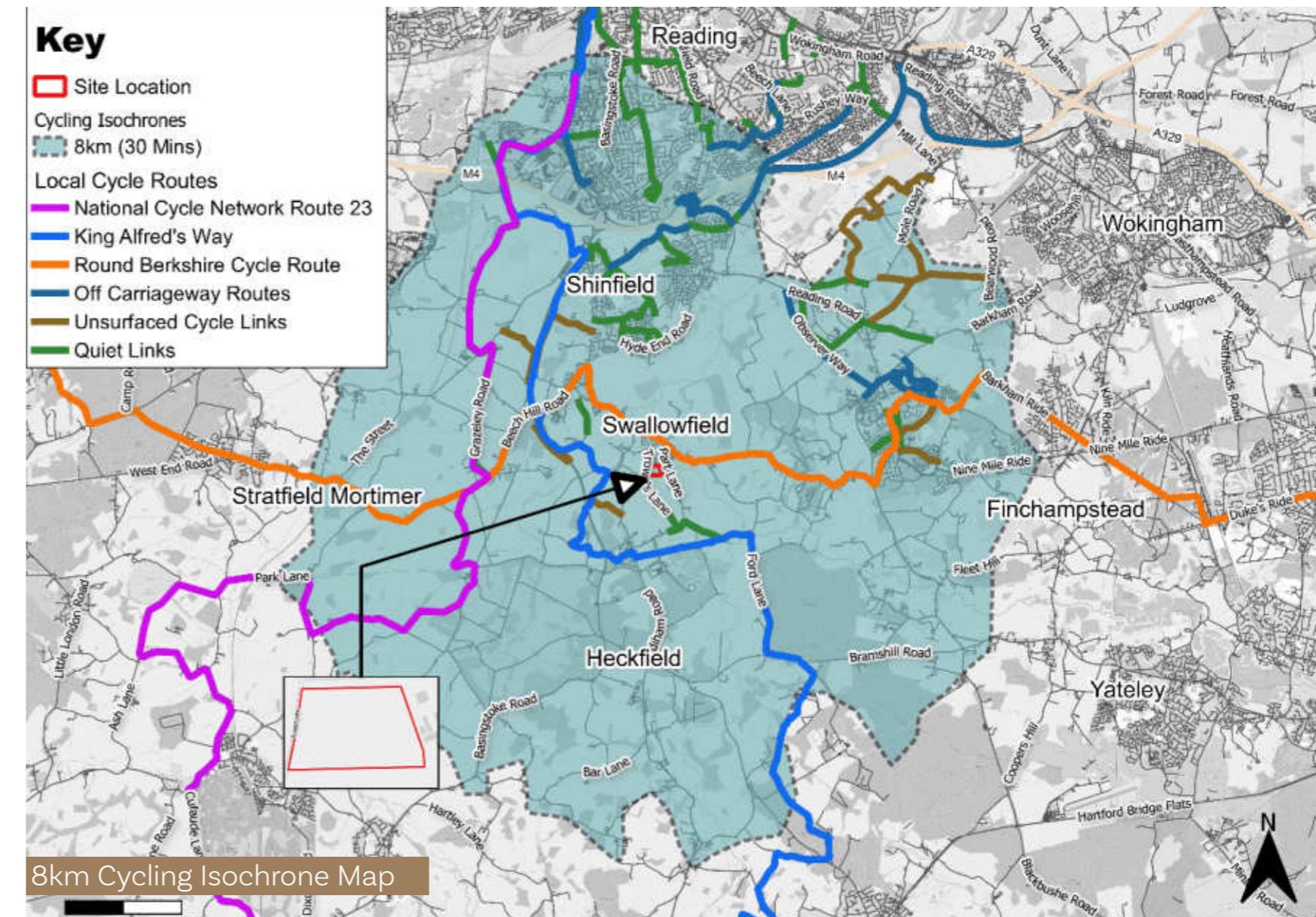
Movement - Cycle

There is a good potential for future residents of the site to undertake journeys by cycle.

As stated within the Transport Assessment, Trowes Lane functions as a Quiet Lane. As such it is a suitable and safe route for mixed traffic use, including cycling.

In the wide area, high quality cycle routes can be accessed including the Round Berkshire Cycle Route and the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 23. The Round Berkshire Cycle Route can be joined along Church Road approximately 600m from the site providing east to west connections to Bracknell and Hungerford respectively. The NCN Route 23 on the other hand traverses the western fringes of Swallowfield providing north-south connections between Reading and Basingstoke.

The National Travel Attitudes Study (NTAS) Wave 9: Cycling Study published by DfT in 2024 puts the average cycling trip distance at 4 miles per trip (approximately 6km) with an upper limit of 5 miles (approximately 8km) for confident cyclists. Although in reality, cycle distances often exceed this. A Cycling Isochrone Map was produced and shows the destinations that can be accessed within an 8km cycle from the site.



2. Context

Movement - Public Transport

Bus Services:

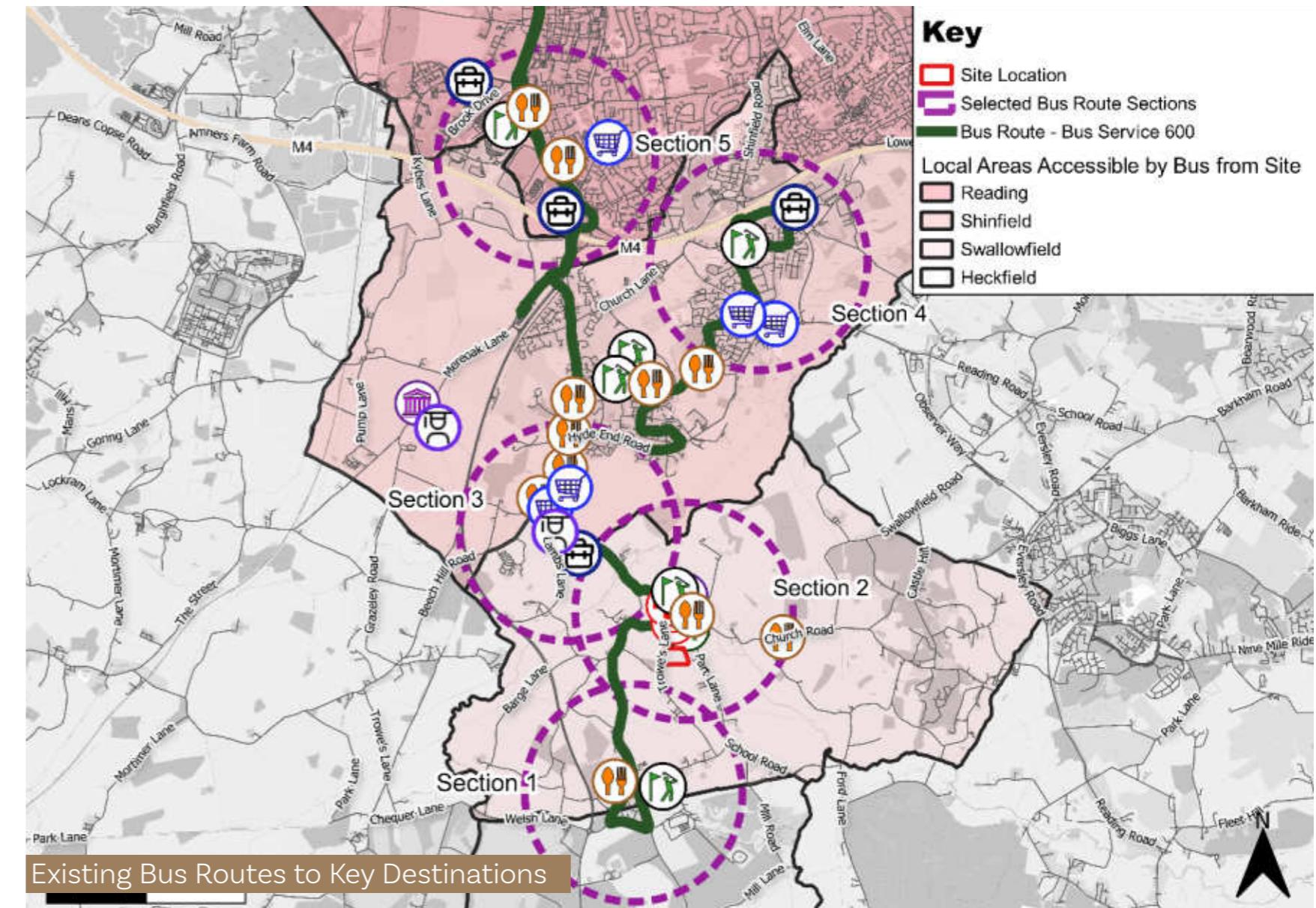
The site is very accessible by bus. The closest bus stops to the site are The Crown bus stops located along The Street approximately 400m from the site, equivalent to a 5-minute walk. The Crown bus stops are accessible directly from existing footway along the route to the village centre. The westbound stop features a shelter, flag, pole marker and road markings whereas the eastbound stop features only the road marking, flag and pole marker.

These bus stops are along the route of bus service 600, which provides regular services from Reading to Shinfield via the Mereoak Park & Ride and Swallowfield. This bus service is operated by Reading Buses and runs from Mondays to Saturdays with an average frequency of four services an hour.

Local facilities accessed along the bus route are listed in more detail, within the Transport Assessment.

Rail Services:

The closest train station to the site is the Mortimer Train Station (5.22km). However, it is expected that future residents will also make use of the Reading Green Park Train Station (6.4km from site) due to bus connectivity. These stations are within cycle distance which will enable future residents to cycle to the rail station to continue their journey via rail. Equally car parking spaces are available which would enable future residents to drive to the train station to then continue their journey by rail.



2. Context

Planning Context

In July 2024, planning permission for 81 dwellings was granted to Croudace Homes, on appeal, for land on the west of Trowes Lane, opposite the site.

The site is very similar in many regards to the land east of Trowes Lane. The Croudace site is also allocated in the emerging Local Plan, demonstrating that 81 dwellings is considered to be acceptable in a settlement like Swallowfield.

Once the Croudace development is constructed, the Site will be enclosed on three sides with the Site's retained and enhanced woodland acting as a buffer to the countryside to the south. Hence, though the Site is technically considered to be outside the settlement boundary of Swallowfield, it does form a natural extension rounding off this part of the settlement whilst being well connected to the village.



Site location plan of Croudace Homes scheme.



Landscape Masterplan (Croudace Homes)

2. Context

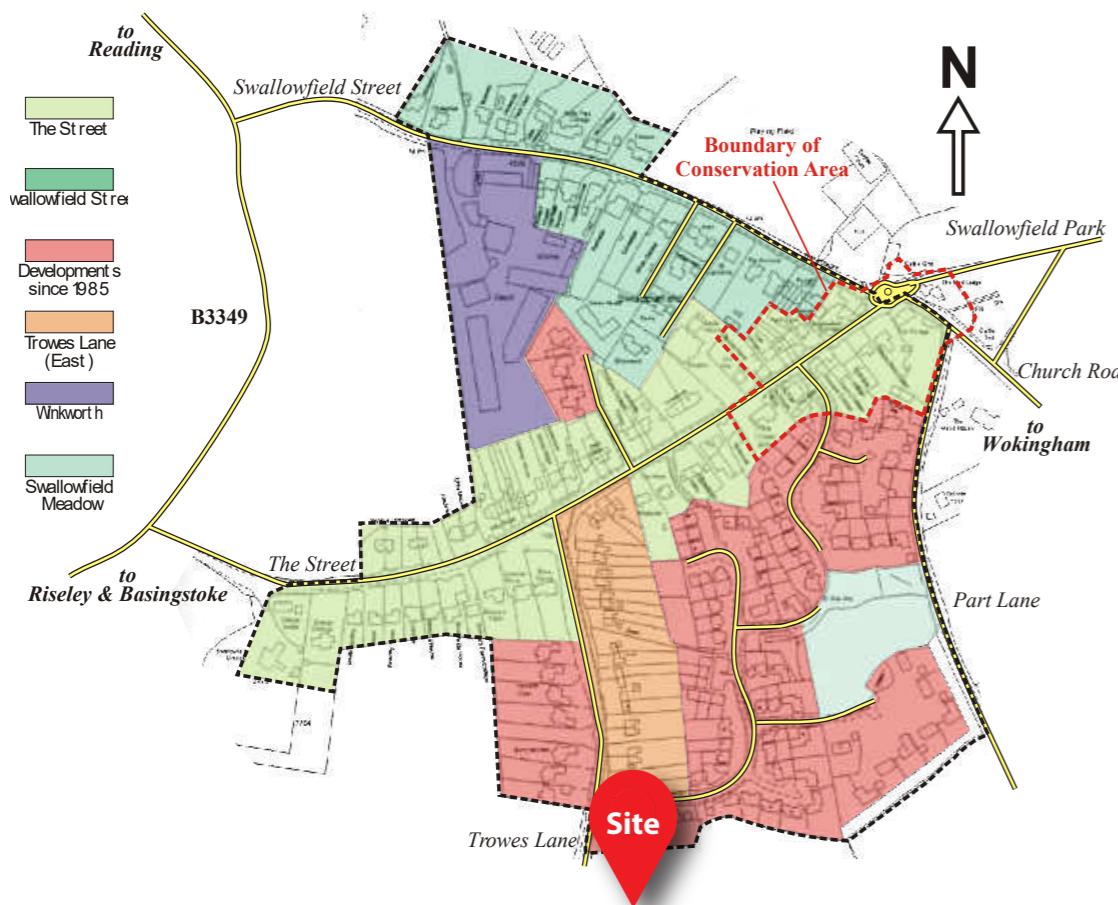
Swallowfield Village Design Guide Review

The Swallowfield Village Design Statement has been placed at the core of our initial design considerations, as this document highlights the characteristics of the village that makes it so distinctive, as well as the fact that it has been produced in consultation with the villagers of Swallowfield, professional interested bodies and statutory undertakers.

Key points considered include:

Swallowfield Village Outline:

- A map produced creates a segregation between different areas of the village, such as the main movement routes which reflect the intricate architectural history of the village, as well as developments constructed from 1985 onwards.



(Figure extracted from SVDS: site location pinned).

Swallowfield Street

Main features identified include:

- Houses are set back and many are surrounded by hedges, with occasional picket fencing.
- Rural ambience, distinguished from the built-up areas of village.
- Altered small cottages or bungalows, creating a varied look on road.
- Every dwelling is individual.

The Street (East)

Main features identified include:

- Buildings randomly set in relation to road without rigid building line.
- Brick boundary walls prevail.
- Houses predominantly Victorian.
- Hips are a common feature.
- Older buildings mainly have slated or plain tile roofs.
- All dwellings are two-storey, as well as varied in styles such as terraced, as well as detached properties.
- Majority are red brick with occasional tile cladding.

The Street (West)

Main features identified include:

- Spaced at irregular intervals.
- More rural and most set back from road.
- Attractive features such as cream or blue brickwork banding, decorative bargeboards and finials.
- All housing types present, one and two storey single houses together with short terraces.

2. Context

Swallowfield Village Design Guide Review

Recent Estate Developments

Curly's Way is a recent estate (at the time of the publish of the Swallowfield Village Design Statement), which was particularly favoured, which the proposed site anticipates to be produced in spirit of.

Key design features complimented include:

- Compliments the older parts of the village, and is the best integrated of the modern developments.
- Has an attractive mix of two-storey houses with different designs.
- A variety of building materials have been used which gives each house an individual look with picket fenced or open-plan borders.
- Attractive features include brick banding and shaped barge boards.



3 Curly's Way - Example of the architectural detailing found within development.



8 Curly's Way - Example of the architectural detailing found within development.

Good Design Features of Buildings

Another aspect which was covered within the Swallowfield Village Design Statement, were examples of good design features on buildings found within Swallowfield. It details elements such as; window details, dormer windows, bricks, tiles, notable listed buildings, brick walls, decorative features as well as footways and shingle drives.

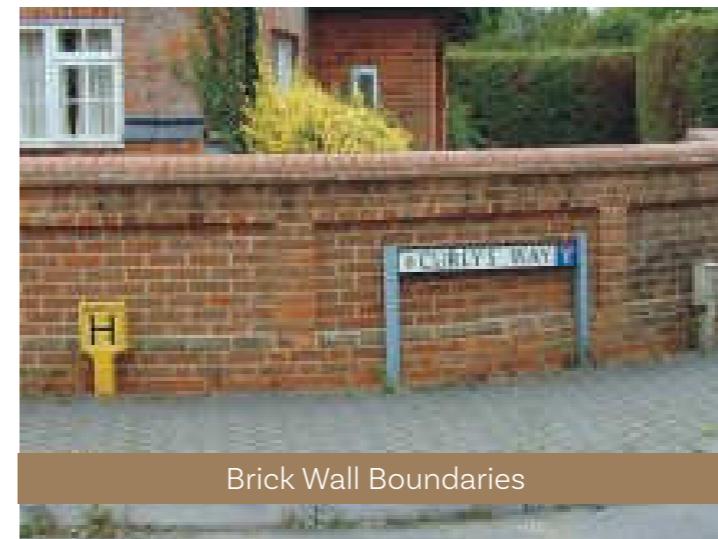
Considerations from these points will be translated at a detailed design stage, however notable illustrative examples taken from the SVDS include:



Window Detail



Dormer Windows



Brick Wall Boundaries



Brick Banding

2. Context

Local Character - Historic Context

Swallowfield is centred around The Street and Swallowfield Street, which meet at the War Memorial, giving the village a sense of unity and traditional character. There are no fewer than 19 listed buildings dating back from the 12th to the early 19th century, however, these are nestled amongst more recent development.

The older village dwellings are mostly local red brick, with clay tiled or slate covered roofs. The overall design of Swallowfield, although varies between one dwelling to another, is predominantly victorian styled.

Buildings are randomly set in relation to the road without a rigid building line, and brick boundary walls prevail.



The Old Post House & Swallowfield Cottage



Village Farmhouse



Swallowfield Park



Bowyers Farmhouse



The Girdlers

2. Context

Local Character - Swallowfield Street



Swallowfield Street (Scarlett Mews)



Swallowfield Street



Swallowfield Street (War Memorial)



Swallowfield Street

2. Context

Local Character - The Street



The Street (Curly's Way Junction)



The Street



The Street



The Street

2. Context

Arboriculture Assessment

To the south of the site there is a belt of woodland, shown on the Tree Protection Plan as G1, G58 and G61. G1 and G61 contain a mix of species including Scots pine, larch and oak, planted at close spacing and unthinned. Some trees are dead, dying or fallen and the great majority of ground flora has been shaded out. However, there are enough good quality trees - particularly oak - remaining, that if thinned these areas could produce a woodland of high amenity and ecological value. G58 is in similar condition to G1 and G61, but with a high proportion of field maple. Although there is little ground flora within the woodland, there is thorn, blackthorn, native shrubs and bramble growing along the northern boundary.

On the eastern side of Trowes Lane, there are several ash trees (ref: T6, T13 and T15 within the accompanying Tree Survey prepared by SJ Stephens Associates) which are showing extensive dieback from Ash Dieback Disease. These are therefore proposed to be felled before they become dangerous. There are also a number of mature oak growing adjacent to Trowes Lane which have high landscape and ecological value.

It is noted that the AIA refers to a 13 - 15m set back of dwellings from the southern woodland to help preserve the amenity of future residents. The residential development area on the Land Use Parameter Plan (see page 29) allows for this to be taken into account during the detailed design stage at reserved matters.

This planning application is accompanied by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment by SJ Stephens Associates which assesses the potential arboricultural impacts of the proposed development.



2. Context

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

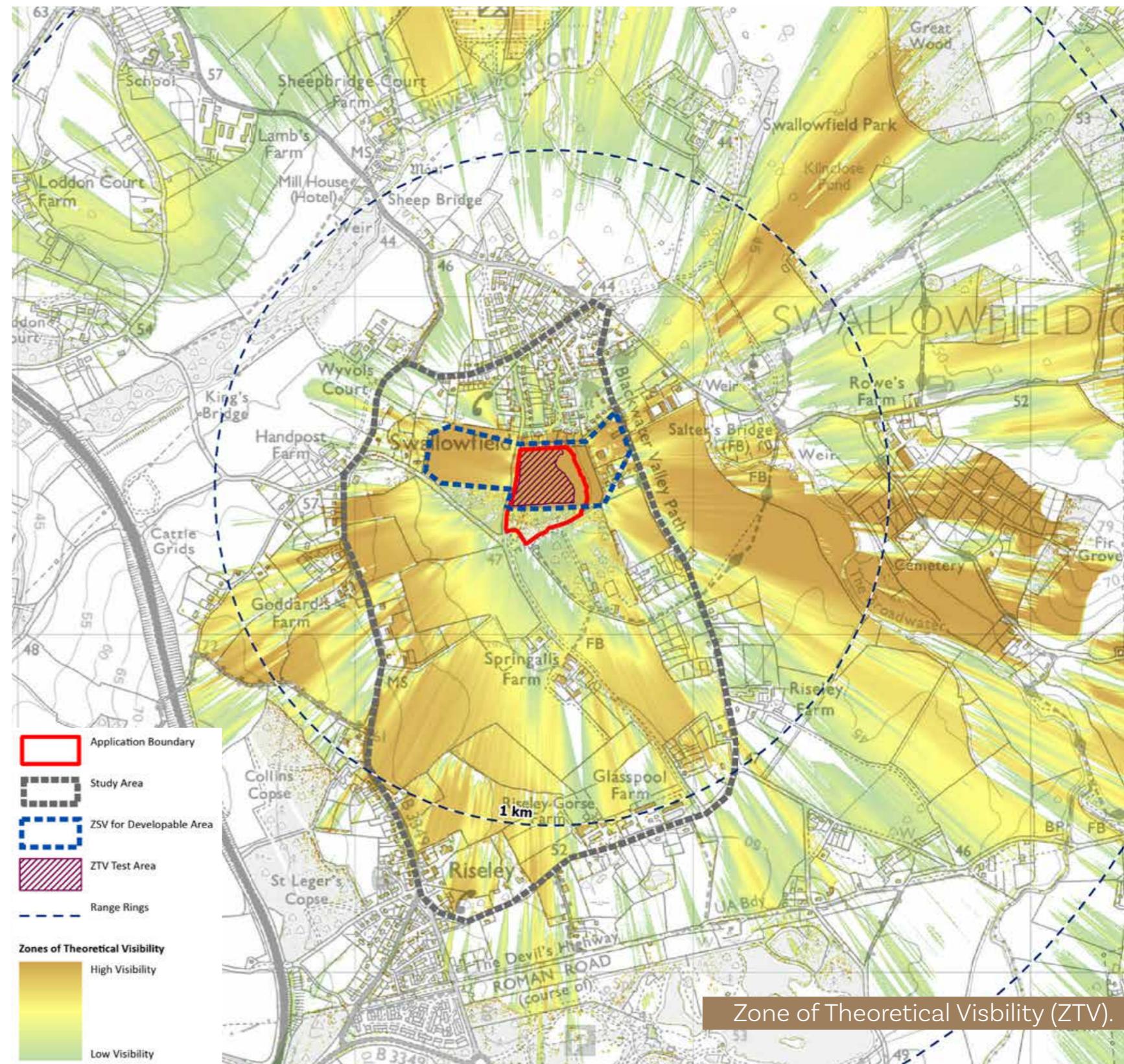
The 4.8ha site on the southern edge of Swallowfield consists mainly of rough grazing land and 1.5ha of mature woodland. It is privately owned, has no public access, and is not designated as a valued landscape. While located within the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Area I2: Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland, its features are atypical of this type.

A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) assessment shows that significant landscape change will be limited to the site itself, reflecting the shift from grassland to residential use. The only notable adverse effects are on the site's own condition and character, with no wider impacts on Wokingham's landscape character areas.

Views are highly restricted by existing vegetation and built form. The Zone of Significant Visibility (ZSV) covers roughly 10ha, with only two receptors near the boundary experiencing significant adverse effects during construction. Beyond these, visual impacts are minimal, localised, and contained.

The Croudace site on the west of Trowes Lane is almost identical to the Site in terms of its landscape character and context: both are presently medium sized, rough grazing fields with woodland to the south and modern development on the edge of Swallowfield and are highly enclosed within the landscape with limited influence on the surrounding landscape. The Appeal Inspector concluded, on the Croudace site, that the effect of the development on the landscape would be moderately adverse in terms of its local impact, and at most slightly adverse in terms of its wider impact on the landscape.

This planning application is accompanied by a Landscape, Visual Impact Assessment prepared by David Jarvis Associates, with the following page showing the key viewpoints assessed as part of the LVIAs.



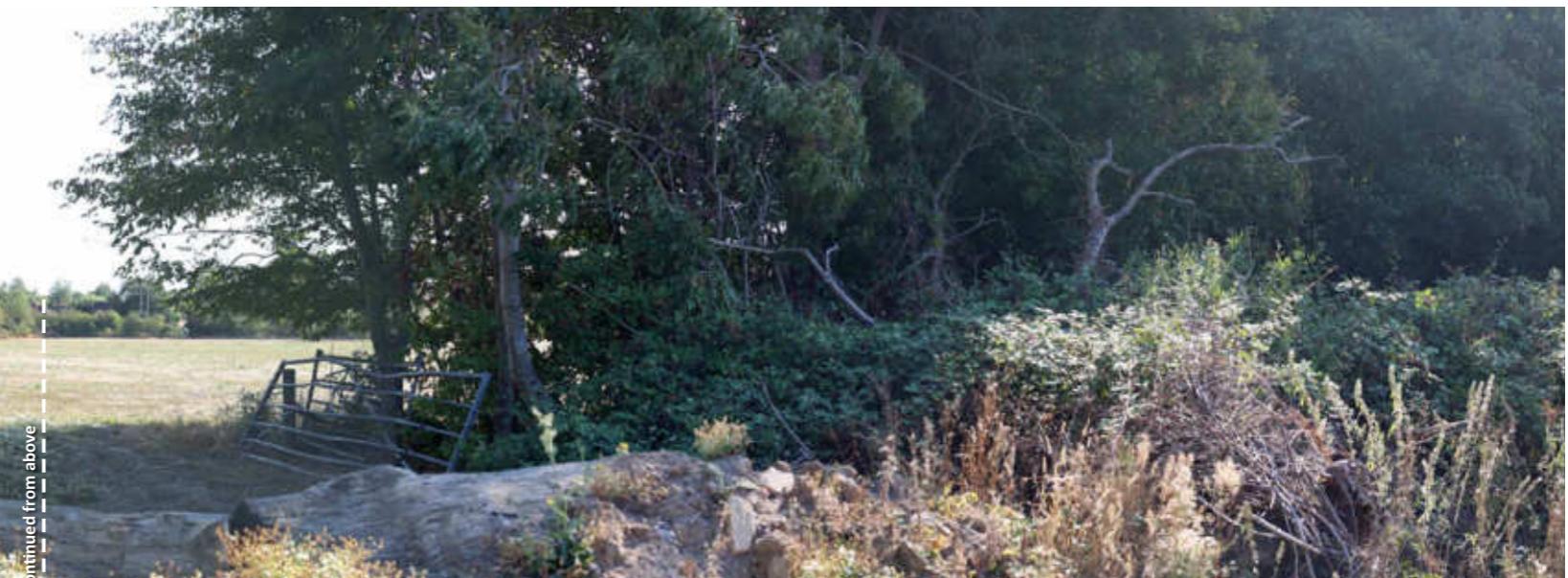
2. Context

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

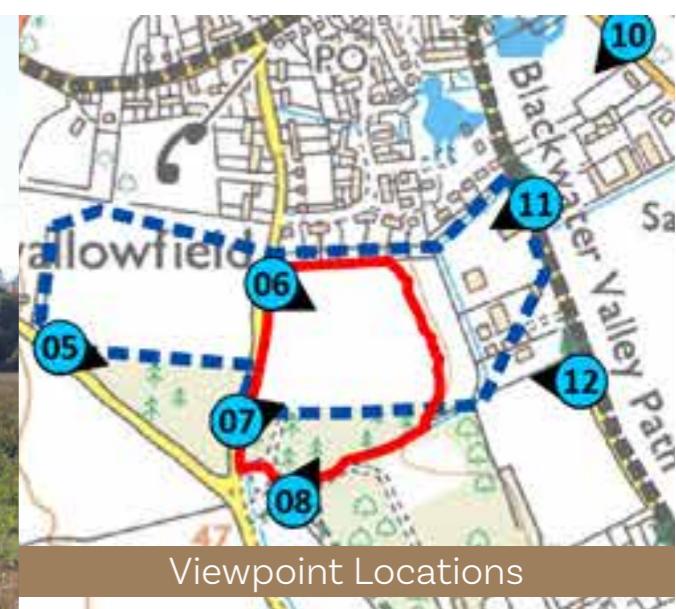
The below images have been extracted from Appendix 3 Photographic Field Survey Record, as part of the LVIA.



Viewpoint 05 - View From Charlton Lane



Viewpoint 06 - View From Trowes Lane



Viewpoint Locations



Viewpoint 10 - View From Blackwater Valley Long Distance Footpath on Chruch Road

2. Context

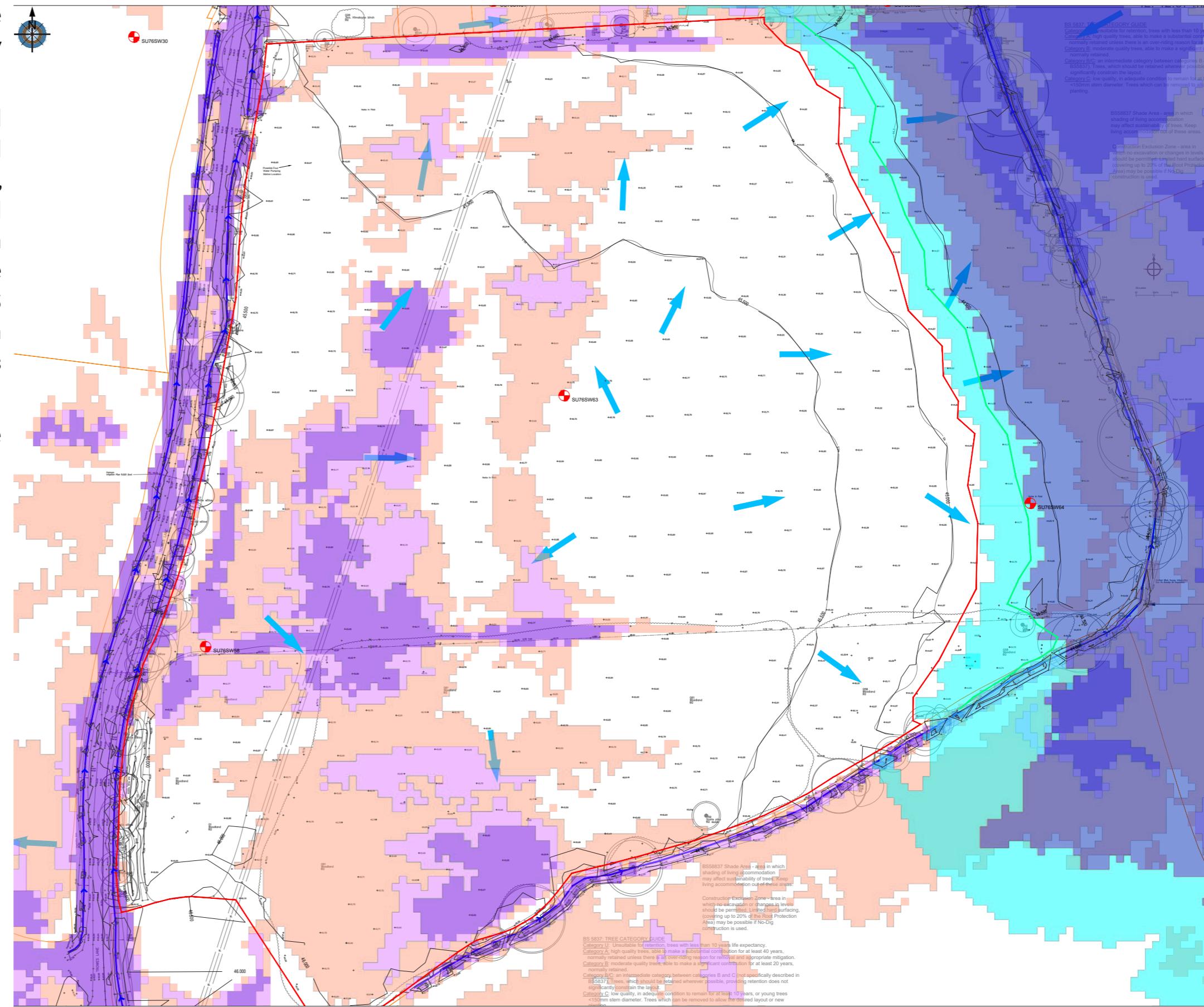
Flood Risk Assessment

The Site is in Flood Zone 1, and therefore at low risk of any risk of flooding from any source, now or in the future.

There is a small amount of localised modelled surface water “ponding” caused by small scale topographical depressions, which are very typical of agricultural land. This will be addressed along with the surface water run-off from the development itself through the SuDS strategy and levels design, as set out in the FRA by GH Bullard that accompanies the application.

The proposed surface water drainage strategy is summarised on page 40.

- Site Boundary- Area: 4.8 ha
- Inspire Boundary Polygons
- Overland Flowpath
- Existing Open Channel Watercourse
- Greenfield: Greenfield run-off rate: 2.8 l/s/ha
- Environment Agency Risk of Flooding from River and Seas Climate Change 1 - HIGH RISK
- Environment Agency Risk of Flooding from River and Seas Climate Change 1 - MEDIUM RISK
- Defra Data Services Platform Environment Agency Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Climate Change 1 - HIGH RISK (>3.3% AEP)
- Defra Data Services Platform Environment Agency Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Climate Change 1 - MEDIUM RISK (1%-3.3%)
- Defra Data Services Platform Environment Agency Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Climate Change 1 - LOW RISK (<1%AEP)
- Environment Agency Product 4 Flood Level Data:1%+20% Climate Change Defences Removed Flood Level: 44.64mAOD.
- Primary Contours (0.5m)
- BGS Borehole Log Locations



2. Context

Ecology

The Site was subject to a UKHab Classification survey and condition assessment in June 2025. The survey found that the Site consisted of two discrete areas of habitat: modified grassland (Photograph 1), which dominated the northern and central areas of the Site; and mixed woodland (Photograph 2), which formed the south of the Site.

The condition assessments concluded that both the grassland and woodland were in a poor condition. Native hedgerows (Photograph 3) bound the Site to the west, east and sections of the north. All hedges were in good condition and included mature trees to the west and east. The hedgerows appear to be largely retained under the current scheme, however small lengths will be lost to accommodate access.

Photograph 1 - Modified Grassland



Photograph 2 - Woodland



Photograph 3 - Hedgerow



2. Context

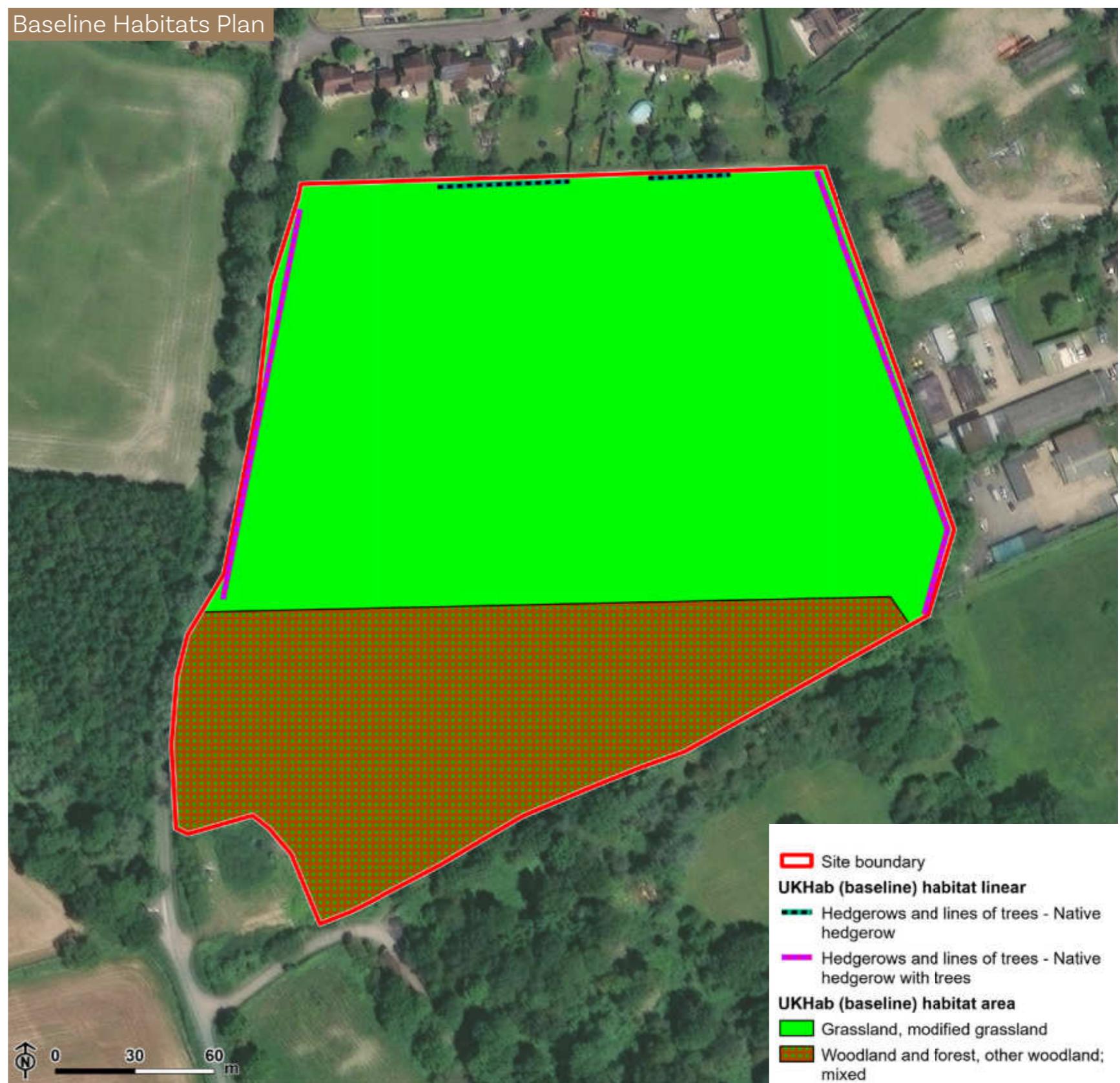
Ecology

The Site has suitable habitat to support a number of protected species. The development focuses on the open area of modified grassland and has therefore been designed to avoid impacts to habitats which support protected species.

The ecological enhancement proposals, as set out in the Ecological Appraisal, will provide a significant uplift of the habitat units at the Site as a result of:

- The retention and maintenance of existing hedgerows and trees
- the proposed enhancement of the woodland, e.g. selective thinning, coppicing, glade creation, creation of brash piles, removal of non-native species, the removal of invasive non-native plants such as Himalayan balsam and the restoration of the dry ditch to the south
- the proposed planting of higher distinctiveness habitats, namely other neutral grassland, mixed scrub and individual trees
- the provision of a Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and new wetland habitat in the east of the Site.
- grassland and tree planting
- provision of bat boxes, bird boxes, log piles and mammal gaps for species such as hedgehogs

There will be a biodiversity net gain of 20.35% from the baseline value of the Site.



2. Context

Constraints & Opportunities

Before progressing the design concept, a detailed analysis identified the following constraints and opportunities:

Considerations:

- An overhead electric cable across the western portion of the site is present, which is envisaged that the details for routing the electric cable underground will be provided at the detailed design stage under the Reserved Matters application.
- A construction exclusion zone in the existing wooded area.
- Root protection areas, as well as existing trees present.
- Site contours, water flow and flood risks.
- A landscaped buffer along the northern boundary adjoining neighbouring gardens.

Opportunities:

- Thick boundary vegetation providing strong screening attributes.
- The wooded area enables natural play spaces, walking routes, and reduced reliance on the nearby nature reserve.
- Potential for trim-trails to encourage healthier lifestyles.
- Minimal impact on neighbours, with only the northern edge affected, allowing for rear gardens and an inward-facing development that preserves the rural character of Trowes Lane.

