

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared by the Savills Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) project team (see Section 1.5) on behalf of Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd (“Crest Nicholson” / “Crest” / “the Applicant”) to support a planning application for the development of the Former Arborfield Studios (Parcels W, Y and Z), Arborfield Green, hereafter referred to as “Arborfield Studios” or “the Site”. Arborfield Studios is located within the Arborfield Garrison allocation (Ref. O/2014/2280), and is subject to a temporary consent for film studios.
- 1.1.2 The Applicant has submitted a hybrid planning application to Wokingham Borough Council (the Council), which is the local planning authority (LPA) for the location, seeking hybrid planning consent for 295 new homes (with 293 homes in full and two homes (associated with the subdivision of Langley Common Farmhouse) in outline). The description of development for the planning application is as follows:

Hybrid planning application comprising:

Full planning application for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of new homes, together with creation of accesses, parking, green infrastructure (including landscaping, public open space, play areas), associated drainage, roads, substations, plant, bin and cycle storage and other related infrastructure works.

Outline planning application (all matters reserved except for access) for the construction of up to 2 new homes including through the retention (of whole or part) and conversion of the existing Langley Common Farmhouse. An extract of the location plan is shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Location Plan (LP.01 Rev A)

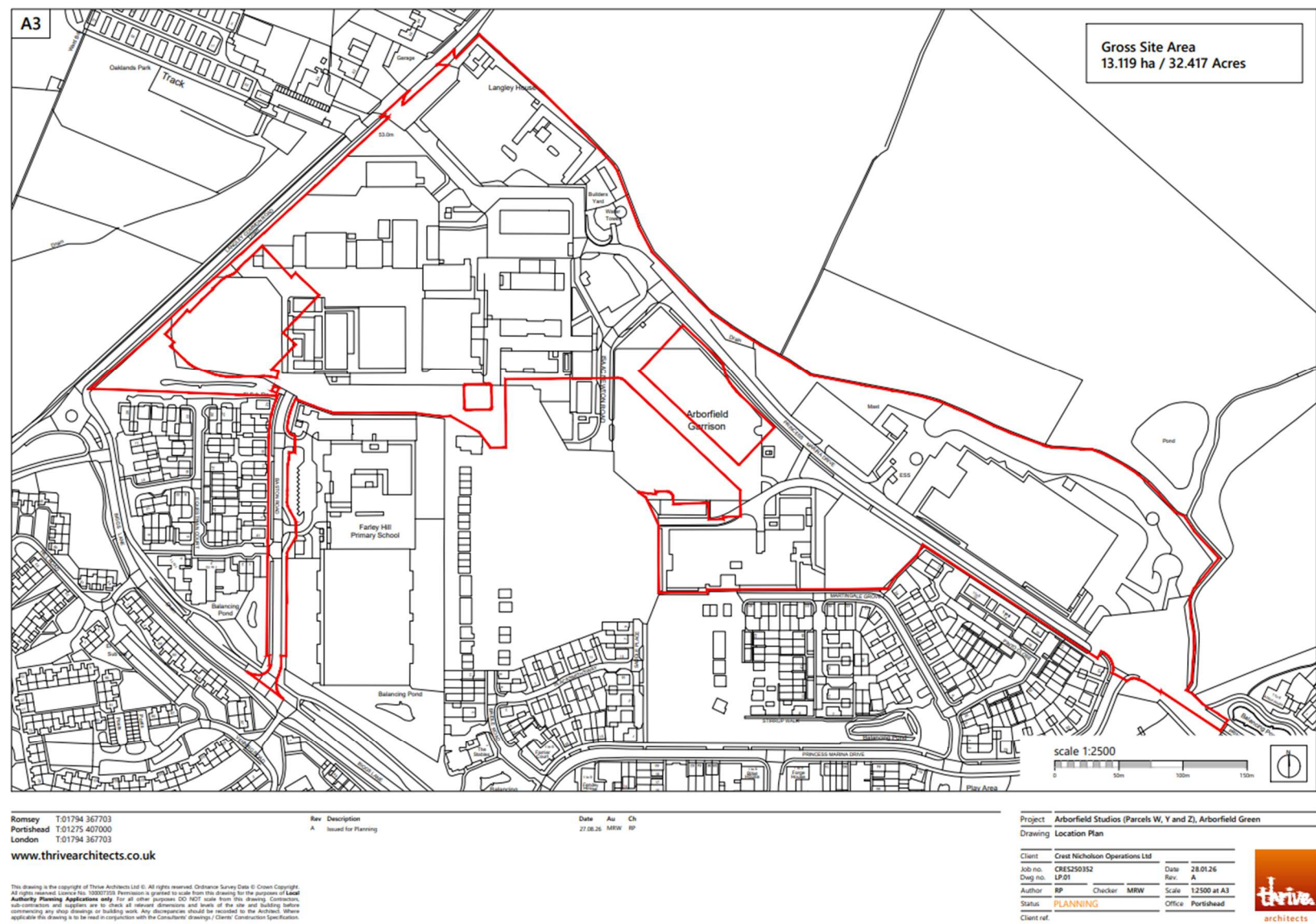
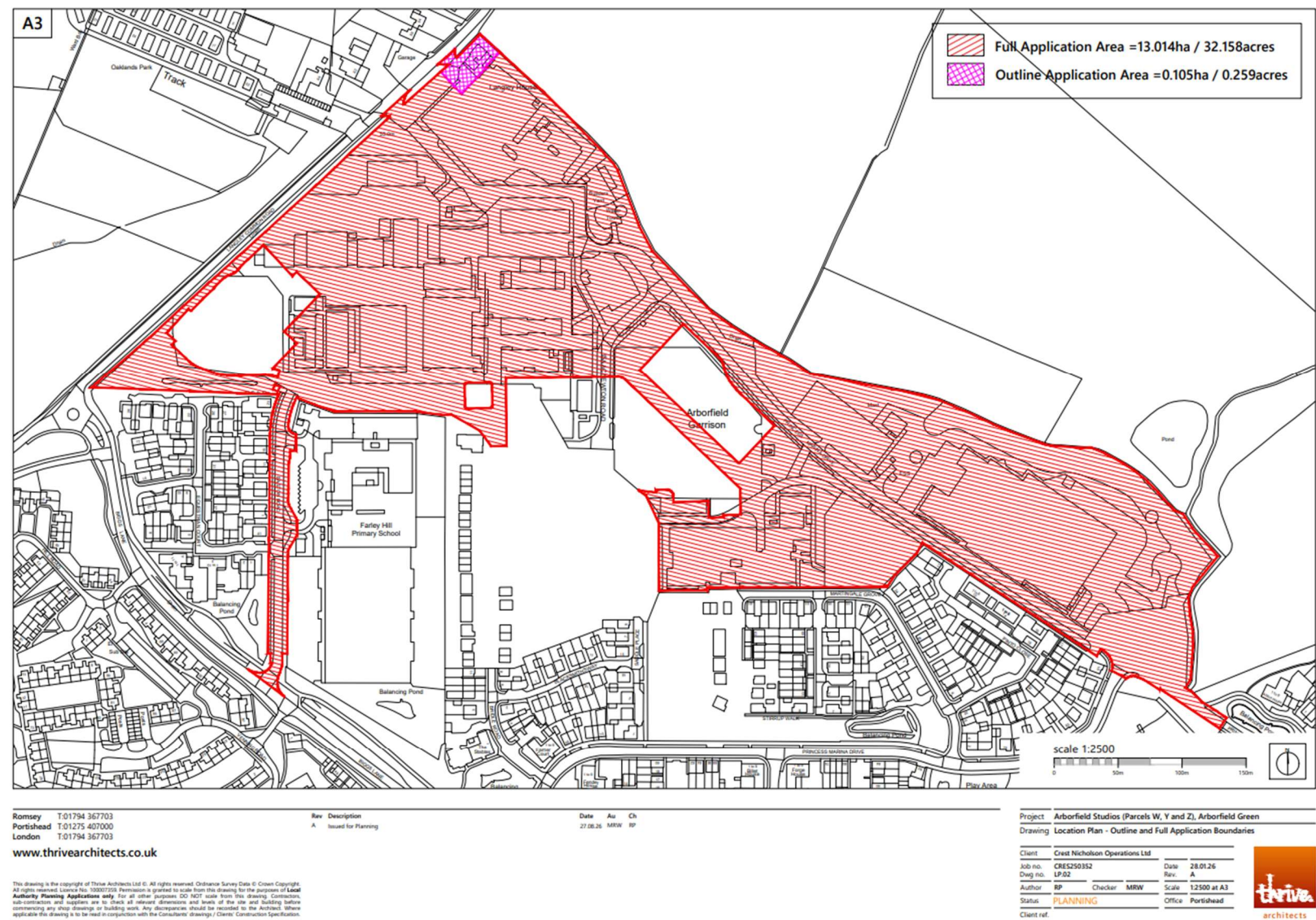


Figure 1.2 Location Plan – Outline and Full Application Boundaries (LP.02 Rev A)



1.2 Background and Planning Context

- 1.2.1 The Site is brownfield land comprising multiple large industrial buildings and hardstanding which extend to approximately 13.119ha (Full area: 13.014ha; Outline area: 0.105ha). The Site is located approximately 4.3km southwest of Wokingham Town Centre and 8.8km southeast of Reading Town Centre.
- 1.2.2 The Site is bordered by the existing Arborfield Green development on its southern and eastern boundaries. Langley Common Road (B3349) borders the Site to the northwest with pasture land to the northeast, an area which is currently designated as 'Countryside'.
- 1.2.3 The Site falls within the adopted Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location (SDL) (*Policy CP18 – Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location* of the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2010)) which sought to deliver 3,500 dwellings and associated infrastructure. Some of this development has now been delivered.
- 1.2.4 Since February 2017, the application Site parcel has been subject to a temporary permission (ref. 162881) for a change of use to operate as land for filming, known as 'Arborfield Studios'. This temporary permission will cease on or before 1 February 2028 (ref. 251004). This existing planning consent does not preclude residential development on this Site.
- 1.2.5 The allocation has been taken forward as part of the emerging Arborfield Green SDL allocation in the Wokingham Local Plan update 2023-2040 (2024) for a total of 3,047 dwellings. This comprises: 2,137 dwellings through completions, extant planning permissions and resolutions to grant; 300 dwellings at Arborfield Studios (the Site) by optimising development density; an additional 600 dwellings on the adjacent Barkham Square site (to the northeast); and 10 dwellings at Westwood Yard, Sheerlands Road.
- 1.2.6 Arborfield Studios (the Site) is identified at 3(ii) in Policy SS11 for '300 dwellings by optimising development density at land currently occupied by Arborfield Studios'. In the spirit of Policy SS11, and following further site capacity testing, this will be five dwellings less than the allocation.
- 1.2.7 Additionally, the area of land to the northeast of the Site (currently identified as countryside) is identified as '*Barkham Square*' at 3(iii) in Policy SS11 for '600 dwellings on land to the north of Arborfield Studios, known as Barkham Square'.
- 1.2.8 As Crest are the Applicant for both Arborfield Studios and Barkham Square, the Project Team are aware that Barkham Square intends to deliver an additional 60 dwellings, resulting in 660 dwellings, and a 50-bed elderly care facility, in total. Therefore, this Environmental Statement will consider the impacts from Barkham Square separately as part of the Cumulative Assessment.
- 1.2.9 A planning application has been submitted for Barkham Square in 2026 (Ref. 261059). As the Environmental Statement was being prepared in at the same time as Barkham Square, to ensure the effects of both sites were considered appropriately, Barkham Square was sensitivity tested as part of the Environmental Statement. As such, each chapter contains the below assessment scenarios:

- Baseline/Future Baseline;
- Baseline/Future Baseline + The Proposed Development;
- Baseline/Future Baseline + The Proposed Development + Barkham Square;
- Baseline/Future Baseline + The Proposed Development + Barkham Square + Other Committed Development.

1.2.10 Further details of the site allocations are included in Chapter 2 of this Statement.

1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment

- 1.3.1 EIA is a process that formally considers the construction and operational aspects of a proposal that may have significant effects on the environment. The findings of an EIA are described in a written report known as an Environmental Statement (ES). An ES provides environmental information about the scheme, including a description of the development, its predicted environmental effects and the measures proposed to mitigate adverse effects; information that is taken into account in the planning decision.
- 1.3.2 This document is the ES submitted with the planning application for the Proposed Development and sets out the results of the EIA undertaken. This ES is prepared in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations'). A separate Non-Technical Summary (NTS) provides a summary of the main findings of the ES.
- 1.3.3 Prior to the preparation of this Environmental Statement, the Applicant forwent the submission of a request for a Screening Opinion and, rather than requesting the formal EIA Scoping Opinion of Wokingham Borough Council, a pre-application request was submitted in August 2025. The Applicant outlined the proposed scope for the Environmental Statement. Further to this, on the 10 September 2025, a pre-application meeting was held between the Project Team and WBC, which agreed the scope of the Environmental Statement (see Section 1.4 below). As such, the EIA has been undertaken on this basis.
- 1.3.4 An EIA has been undertaken for the Proposed Development described in Chapter 3. A list of tables, figures and appendices is listed above in the contents page. Subsequently, when the Council is deciding whether to grant planning permission, it can do so in the full knowledge of any significant effects predicted, and take this into account in the decision-making process.

1.4 Environmental Statement Structure

1.4.1 This ES comprises the Main Report, Figures, supporting Appendices and a separate NTS. Following this introduction and description of the Site, the ES Main Report is organised as follows:

2. Site and Local Context
3. Proposed Development
4. Consultation, Alternatives and Design Evolution
5. Approach to Assessment
6. Air Quality
7. Climate Change & Greenhouse Gases
8. Ecology
9. Ground Conditions and Contamination
10. Noise & Vibration
11. Transport & Access
12. Hydrology (including Flood Risk & Drainage)
13. Summary of Mitigation, Residual Effects and Interaction Effects

1.4.2 Chapter 2 provides a description of the Site and its surroundings, and Chapter 3 explains each element of the Proposed Development and defines the physical and operational aspects assessed by the EIA. The alternative options considered during the site selection and environmental influences on the design process are explained in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 sets out the approach taken to the assessment.

1.4.3 Environmental issues assessed in the EIA process are then reported in Chapters 6 to 12, with the majority of associated figures provided as separate files (PDF), although some are set within the text of the Chapters. Chapter 13 provides a summary of the proposed mitigation, residual and interaction effects.

1.5 The Project Team

1.5.1 Those working on the EIA of the Proposed Development are as follows:

Table 1.1 Project Team

Chapter	Title	Responsibility
1	Introduction	Savills
2	Site Description	
3	Proposed Development	
4	Consultation, Alternative and Design Evolution	
5	Approach to Assessment	
6	Air Quality	Aether
7	Climate Change & Greenhouse Gases	AES
8	Ecology	ATV Contract Services
9	Ground Conditions and Contamination	Wilson Bailey
10	Noise & Vibration	Noise.co.uk
11	Transport & Access	i-Transport
12	Hydrology (including Flood Risk & Drainage)	JPP
13	Summary of Mitigation, Residual Effects and Interaction Effects	Savills

1.5.2 The EIA has been coordinated by Savills with the technical assessments and input undertaken by the Project Team. An outline of the qualifications / experience of the assessors to demonstrate competency in accordance with the EIA Regulations is provided in Appendix 1.1. Furthermore, a glossary of terms is provided in Appendix 1.2.

1.6 Availability of Environmental Information

1.6.1 The Environmental Statement (including its figures and technical appendices) and other planning application documents can be viewed on the Council's planning applications website:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/existing-planning-applications>

1.6.2 A copy of the ES on USB Flash Drive can be obtained for a charge of £25 from: *SouthamptonPlanning@savills.com*, Telephone 02380 713 900. A printed copy of the NTS can also be obtained free of charge from Savills.

1.7 Consultation

- 1.7.1 Should interested parties wish to make representations on the content of this ES, they should be made in writing by post or by email at:

planning.enquiries@wokingham.gov.uk

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Shute End

Wokingham, Berkshire

RG40 1BN

0118 974 6000

- 1.7.2 Alternatively, representations can be made online by following instructions at:

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/existing-planning-applications/comment-planning-application>