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LANDSCAPE & VISUAL APPRAISAL

Client

Bloor Homes Limited & The University of Reading

Project

**Land east and west of Hyde End Road,
Shinfield**

Date

July 2025

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Rev	Issue Status	Prepared/Date	Approved/Date
-	Final	TW/11/02/25	DH/04/03/25
A	Final	TW/02/05/25	DH/02/05/25
B	Final	TW/15/07/25	MGH/21/07/25

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been carried out for Land East and West of Hyde End Road, Shinfield by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. The purpose of this LVA study is to provide an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The landscape and visual effects have been considered in relation to the proposals detailed in the planning application drawings 0288 Detailed Site Layout and FPCR's Landscape Strategy.
- 1.2 FPCR is a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy established over 60 years, with expertise in architecture, landscape, ecology, arboriculture, urban design, masterplanning and environmental impact assessment. The practice is a member of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and is frequently called upon to provide expert evidence on landscape and visual issues at Public and Local Plan Inquiries.

Site Location

- 1.3 The Site comprises two land parcels located east and west of Hyde End Road in Shinfield, just south of recent residential developments at Langley Mead and Shinfield Meadows. To the north, older properties line Hyde End Road, while the Langley Mead Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) wraps around the eastern parcel to the south and east. The landscape includes existing woodland at the western edge of the western parcel and Tanners Copse to the east of the eastern parcel.
- 1.4 The western parcel is partially bordered by Appleton Way, which provides access to Langley Mead and Shinfield Meadows. The eastern parcel adjoins homes along Hyde End Road. To the north of this parcel are allotments and Millworth Lane Recreation Ground.

Proposed Development

- 1.5 The proposed development includes residential buildings and green infrastructure. The proposal consists of the following elements:
- 184 residential dwellings;
 - The Site covers a total area of 10.7 ha. Gross development area is 5.28 ha;
 - Highway access from Hyde End Road;
 - Pedestrian access linking the Site to the existing Public Right of Way network and informal SANG footpaths;
 - Retention of existing landscape features; such as boundary hedgerow, trees and veteran trees;
 - Green Infrastructure running through the centre of the Sites on a north-east south-west axis with soft landscaping and ecological areas;

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 This LVA has been prepared based upon the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, in 2013. The assessment of Landscape Value also takes account of guidance in Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02-21 “Assessing landscape value outside national designations”.

2.2 In summary, the GLVIA3 states:

“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 landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity.” (GLVIA3 paragraph 1.1.)

2.3 There are two components of LVIA:

- “Assessment of landscape effects; assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;
- Assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.” (GLVIA3 paragraph 2.21.)

2.4 The GLVIA3 states:

“LVIA can be carried out either as part of a broader EIA, or as a standalone ‘appraisal’ of the likely landscape and visual effects of a proposed development...”

- As a standalone ‘appraisal’ the process is informal and there is more flexibility, but the essence of the approach – specifying the nature of the proposed change or development; describing the existing landscape and the views and visual amenity of the area that may be affected; predicting the effects, although not their likely significance; and considering how those effects might be mitigated – still applies”. (GLVIA paragraph 3.2)

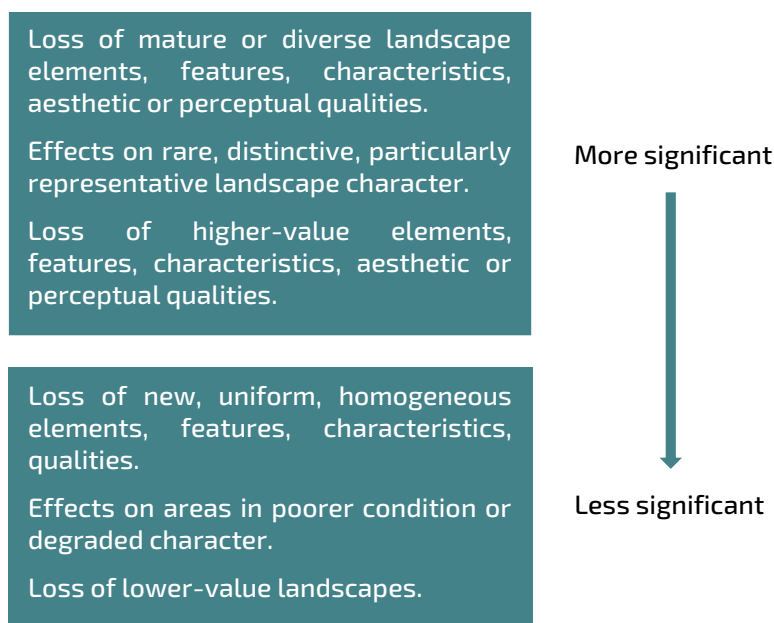
2.5 The components of this report include baseline studies; description and details of the landscape proposals and mitigation measures to be adopted as part of the scheme; and identification and description of likely effects arising from the proposed development. In terms of baseline studies, the assessment provides an understanding of the landscape that may be affected, its constituent elements, character, condition and value. For the visual baseline, this includes an understanding of the area in which the development may be visible, the people who may experience views, and the nature of views.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

2.6 GLVIA3 states that *“An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource”* (GLVIA3 paragraph 5.1). The baseline landscape is described by reference to existing published Landscape Character Assessments and by a description of the Site and its context. A range of landscape effects can arise through development. These can include:

- Change or loss of elements, features, aesthetic or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;

- Addition of new elements that influence character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
 - Combined effects of these changes.
- 2.7 The characteristics of the existing landscape resource are considered in respect of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to the change arising from this development. The value of the existing landscape is also considered.
- 2.8 Each effect on landscape receptors is assessed in terms of size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. In terms of size or scale of change, the judgement takes account of the extent of the existing landscape elements that will be lost or changed, and the degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects or key characteristics of the landscape will be altered by removal or addition of new elements. Geographical extent is considered by reference to the extent of the area over which there will be a change. Duration is considered for the landscape effects, with short term effects being defined as those lasting less than 5 years, medium term effects lasting between 5 and 10 years and long-term effects being defined as anything over 10 years in duration.
- 2.9 The level of effect is determined by considering the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of effect on the landscape. Final conclusions on the overall landscape effects are drawn from the assessment components described. This appraisal describes the nature of the landscape effects, and whether these are adverse or beneficial, at the following stages of development; construction, completion (year 1) and longer term (year 15).
- 2.10 GLVIA3 sets out some guidance on the underlying principles, which are used in this appraisal. This includes Figure 5.10, Scale of significance. Whilst this scheme is not EIA development, and judgements on significance are not therefore required, the Figure does provide useful guidance on reaching an overall judgement on the level of effects. This is repeated below (note this includes the correction of a typo, from the published document).



- 2.11 The criteria used in the appraisal are set out in Appendix A.

Assessment of Visual Effects

- 2.12 The assessment of visual effects evaluates changes to views and visual amenity at three stages: construction, completion (Year 1 Winter), and longer term (Year 15 Summer). It describes the nature of effects and whether they are adverse or beneficial.
- 2.13 Approximate visibility is identified through Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping or manual methods using maps and fieldwork. Viewpoints represent views towards the Site from various receptors, distances, and experiences. The assessment considers each viewpoint's susceptibility to change, and the value attached to views, recognising that visual receptors are all people.

"The visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include:

- Residents at home;
- People, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views;
- Visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;
- Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area;
- Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of moderate susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes awareness of views is likely to be particularly high." (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.33.)

"Visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change include:

- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape;
- People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life (although there may on occasion be cases where views are an important contributor to the setting and to the quality of working life)." (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.34.)

- 2.14 Each of the visual effects is evaluated in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration or reversibility. In terms of size or scale, the magnitude of visual effects takes account of:
- "The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;
 - The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line height, colour and texture;
 - The nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses" (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.39).

- 2.15 The geographical extent of the visual effect in each viewpoint is likely to reflect:
- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
 - The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;
 - The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.
- 2.16 As with landscape effects, the duration of the effect could be short to long term or permanent and the same definitions apply. GLVIA3 states that there are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and context and with the type of proposal, but the following points should be noted;
- Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant
 - Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant
 - Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view. (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.44)
- 2.17 The criteria used in this appraisal are set out in Appendix A.

Overall Landscape and Visual Effects

- 2.18 The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement is formed from a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the assessment criteria. GLVIA3 notes, at paragraphs 5.56 and 6.44, that there are no hard and fast rules with regard to the level of effects, therefore the following terms have been used for this appraisal:
- Major
 - Moderate
 - Minor
 - Negligible
- 2.19 Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement may be described as, for example, Major/ Moderate or Moderate/ Minor. This indicates that the effect is assessed to lie between the respective definitions or to encompass aspects of both.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)

- 3.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policy and in combination these policies give the Government's vision of sustainable development. The NPPF emphasises the need for well-designed places, promoting healthy and safe communities and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 3.2 Regarding landscape and green infrastructure, the Natural Environment section of the NPPF provides a policy context for the countryside and green infrastructure. The key objectives include protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- 3.3 Paragraph 187 states at part a) that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes and goes on to clarify that this should be in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. Part b) states that planning policies and decisions should recognise *"the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside"*.
- 3.4 Paragraph 188 advises that:
"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated Sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries".
- 3.5 Paragraph 189 goes on to add:
"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues". And
"The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."
- 3.6 The Site is within an undesignated landscape with no special protected status and is not in the setting of a nationally designated landscape. The character of the Site and its immediate context is assessed within this report to help inform decisions regarding *"the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside"*. The potential to enhance green infrastructure networks is also considered.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 3.7 The PPG was first published on 6th March 2014 and is a regularly updated online planning resource which provides guidance on the NPPF and the planning system. The NPPF continues to be the primary document for decision making.

Local Planning Policy

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Adopted February 2014)

- 3.8 The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) provides detailed policies to support the Core Strategy, guiding development in the Borough until 2026. The plan ensures housing quality, diversity, and the provision of necessary infrastructure such as schools, shops, and parks.

Policy: CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees, and Landscaping

- *“Promote accessibility, linkages and permeability between and within existing green corridors including public rights of way such as footpaths, cycleways and bridleways*
- *Protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features*
- *Incorporate high quality, ideally, native planting and landscaping as an integral part of the scheme.”*

Policy: TB21 – Landscape Character

- *“Proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirements of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, including the landscape quality; landscape strategy; landscape sensitivity and key issues.*
- *Proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.”*

Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040 Proposed Submission Plan

- 3.9 The Local Plan Update, replacing the current Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery plans, will establish a new planning strategy to 2040. It outlines a vision, objectives, and development strategy for housing, employment, infrastructure, and community facilities, aiming to create sustainable and desirable places to live, work, and do business.

Policy: NE4: Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows

- *“Development proposals should protect and incorporate existing trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows and ensure they are well integrated within the public realm, in a suitably landscaped setting.*
- *Development proposals should ensure the existing pattern of fields, hedges and hedgerows, woodland, trees, watercourses, water bodies, underlying topography and other landscape features are retained and that the design of the scheme is integrated into the landscape.*

The design and layout of new development should:

- *Provide sufficient space to enable existing trees to thrive by maintaining adequate root protection areas and space for the trunk and branches to grow;*
- *Provide appropriate buffer zones around woodlands, including semi-natural ancient woodlands, planted ancient woodland sites, orchards, hedgerows and individual trees;*
- *Provide enhanced and additional tree and hedgerow planting wherever possible, but particularly where there are opportunities to restore or develop habitat and landscape*

links between woodlands and hedgerows and between these features and other landscape or habitat features such as river corridors."

Policy NE5: Landscape and design

- *"Development proposals will be supported where they adopt a landscape led approach which protects and enhances the character and distinctiveness of landscapes using the most up-to date landscape studies (including the Landscape Character Assessment and Design Guide and any successor document).*
- *Development proposals should be demonstrably informed by, and respond to, the distinctive characters set out in the Landscape Character Assessment and other relevant assessments, which provide an understanding of the valued characteristics, features and quality of local landscape character areas.*
- *Development proposals should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment. The level of information provided should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and should be sufficient to allow an informed assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development."*

Policy DH1: Place making and quality design

- *"All new development must be of high-quality design to endure over the lifetime of the development and create a strong sense of place. A development proposal will be considered of high-quality design where it achieves the following design principles:*
- *Reinforces or creates a positive sense of place and local distinctiveness through design that reflects and enhances the local natural, cultural and historic character of the area."*

Other Relevant Strategies, Guidelines or Documents

Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (February 2017)

Policy 2 – General Design Principles

- *"New residential developments should offer a mix of sizes, designs, and garden spaces that respect local distinctiveness and promote safe, sustainable environments.*
- *Use of quality materials that complement the established built environment around the development site;*
- *Compatibility with the scale and features of existing buildings in the locality;*
- *Design of road and service layouts to ensure the sustainable retention, where appropriate, of existing landscape features, including trees and historic landscape features, and to allow space for new sustainable landscape works without the need for maintenance and upgrades to services damaging landscape works, as they mature."*

4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Landscape Character

National Character

- 4.1 National Character Area (NCA) profiles have been prepared by Natural England for the 159 NCA's defined across England and were updated in May 2024.
- 4.2 These NCA profiles describe the key characteristics, the landscape today and how it has changed over time, key facts and data, natural capital and key ecosystem services and landscape change, and they set out statements of environmental opportunity, landscape attributes and opportunities for each NCA. Figure 3 illustrates the NCAs and other defined character areas within the context of the Site.
- 4.3 At this very broad landscape scale, the Site lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) "129 Thames Basin Heaths". This NCA extends from Weybridge in Surrey to Newbury in Berkshire, with the London Green Belt incorporating Chobham and the rivers Wey and Mole. Beyond this, 20th-century development has created large conurbations like Camberley and Bracknell. Gardens provide significant greenspace. Major roads, including the M25 and M3, connect the area, but high population density contributes to pollution and rapid surface water run-off. The Key Characteristics for the NCA 129 are:
- *"Plateaux of Tertiary sands and gravels in the London Basin, with intervening river valleys floored by London Clay. In the far west, Chalk forms the Hampshire Downs escarpment and the river beds of the Kennet and Pang.*
 - *High woodland cover, offering an array of colour in the autumn. Conifers and large plantations on former heathland are dominant features in the east, while the west is scattered with small, semi-natural woodlands on ancient sites.*
 - *Acid, leached soils mean that farming on the plateaux is limited to rough pasture, and that alternative land uses (such as forestry, golf courses and horse paddocks) have emerged. Heather, gorse, oak and birch all thrive here. Arable land and improved pasture are found in the valleys, on alluvium.*
 - *Beyond the large areas of heathland and woodland, there is a patchwork of small to medium-sized fields with woods. The legacy of historic hunting forests includes veteran trees, ancient woods, ancient hedgerows and parklands. Historic meadows remain as fragments along watercourses.*
 - *River between lush green fields*
 - *The River Kennet flowing through green fields with trees~Rob Appleby/BBOWT*
 - *Prehistoric earthworks such as barrows and hill forts mark promontories on the plateaux. Archaeology is well preserved on historic heathland. Mosaics of open heathland and grassland with scrub, secondary woodland and plantation. Valley bogs, ponds and streams enhance diversity. Large, continuous mosaics are found in the east: they include Thursley, Ash, Pirbright and Chobham Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and Chobham Common National Nature Reserve (NNR).*

- *Historic commons offer tranquillity and unenclosed views, while other rights of access are enjoyed across farmland, canals and downland. Ministry of Defence ownership restricts (but does not entirely prevent) public enjoyment.*
- *'Churring' nightjars, dragonflies and purple heather are all readily identified with heathland. The Thames Basin Heaths SPA protects internationally important populations of woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.*
- *Valley floors are wet with ditches, numerous watercourses, ponds, waterfilled gravel pits, reedbeds and carr. Historic features include mills, relict water meadows, and canals such as the River Wey Navigations.*
- *20th-century conurbations, including Camberley, sprawl along the Blackwater Valley, with associated roads (including the M3) dissecting heathland and woodland into blocks. Elsewhere, there are winding lanes and historic dispersed villages and farmsteads of traditional, locally made brick and tile."*

4.4 The NCA profile includes Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) to guide sustainable growth. Relevant SEOs for this site are:

- SEO 3 - Protect and enhance historic habitats like heathland, ancient woodland, and meadows.
- SEO 4 - Enhance green infrastructure to support recreation, wildlife, water quality, flood management, and climate resilience, particularly near major settlements like Reading.

Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment prepared by LUC for Wokingham Borough Council (2019)

4.5 Within the Landscape character assessment 2019, the two parcels that make up the site lie within different landscape character areas as shown on Figure 3. The western parcel falls within J3 - Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay and the majority of the eastern parcel falls within A2: Loddon River Valley. A small part of the western edge of the eastern parcel falls within J3 Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay LCA.

J3 - Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay

4.6 Land to the west of Hyde End Road lies within area "J3 - Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay". The key characteristics are described below;

- *"Rolling clay ridge, rising to a flat sandy plateau at 66m AOD.*
- *Small scattered mixed deciduous woodland blocks and copses.*
- *Fragmented unimproved meadow habitats.*
- *Large arable fields with some pasture, with an intact hedgerow network and hedgerow oaks.*
- *Remnant parkland.*
- *The GHQ Stop Line and associated Second World War features.*
- *Densely settled landscape, with new large-scale residential estate development.*

- *To the south of the area, settlement is more scattered with traditional farmsteads many with a strong vernacular.*
- *Network of rural lanes.*
- *Sense of elevation from the ridgeline and good views over surrounding lowlands."*

4.7 The valuable Landscape attributes are listed,

- *"Remnant historic parklands.*
- *Pattern of arable and pastoral fields.*
- *Small-scale woodlands.*
- *Strong hedgerow network with standard oaks.*
- *Network of rural lanes.*
- *Views to the surrounding lowlands.*
- *Undeveloped slopes.*
- *The GHQ Stop Line.*
- *Open area of former common land.*
- *Beaumys Castle.*
- *Isolated traditional farmsteads."*

4.8 In terms of Landscape Condition; The assessment notes that *"former field patterns, historic parklands, woodland blocks, and the hedgerow network are in good condition."* However, development, including the South of the M4 SDL and Reading's urban edge, fragments the rural character, while major transport corridors introduce *"noise and movement, except where well screened."*

Key issues include:

- *"Lack of recruitment of young trees" threatens parkland and hedgerow structure.*
- *"Pressure for large-scale residential development" risks eroding landscape character and merging settlements.*

The strategy seeks to *"conserve and enhance the rural character"* by managing hedgerows, parkland, trees, and key views while integrating roads and urban edges with woodland planting. Development should maintain *"the rural character and gaps between settlements"* to preserve identity.

A2: Loddon River Valley

4.9 Land to the east of Hyde End Road lies within area "A2: Loddon River Valley". The key characteristics are described;

- *"A broad, flat alluvial floodplain*
- *The River Loddon*
- *A wooded backdrop*
- *Pasture and arable farmland in medium and large irregular geometric fields,*

- *Wetland character,*
 - *Important historic riverside features*
 - *Extensive designed parkland landscape at Swallowfield Park*
 - *The GHQ Stop Line*
 - *Low-density scattered settlement pattern of villages and farmsteads*
 - *Tranquil and rural character away from river crossings and visual influence of large-scale settlement in adjacent areas.*
 - *Little public access to the floodplain*
 - *Pylons, residential and commercial development"*
- 4.10 Under the heading "*Perceptual Landscape*" the study notes; The Loddon Valley floor remains "*tranquil and remote*" with limited development, though views of Reading's outskirts affect local tranquillity. Pylons are prominent detracting features, while development is visible from the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road and A327.
- 4.11 Valuable Landscape Attributes:
- "*Natural meandering course of the River Loddon*" and its floodplain
 - "*Wooded backdrop*" and riparian corridors
 - "*Important wetland habitats*" and historic riverside features
 - "*Sparse settlement pattern*" and "*strong sense of tranquillity*"
- 4.12 The landscape remains "*intact*" with characteristic riverside features and wetland habitats, though views of large-scale development and infrastructure weaken its rural character. Opportunities exist to enhance "*habitat interconnectivity*."
- 4.13 Key Issues:
- "*Pressure for residential and commercial development*" threatens rurality and tranquillity, particularly with potential expansion at Shinfield (South of M4 SDL).
 - "*Increasing demand for large-scale buildings*" risks visual intrusion, including at the Science and Innovation Park.
- 4.14 Strategy:
- 4.15 The aim is to "*conserve and enhance the rural character*" by protecting wetland habitats, reinstating hedgerows with native species, and restoring permanent pasture. Development should respect the "*sparse settlement pattern*" and limit external influences.
- 4.16 The strategy focuses on conserving and enhancing the scenic quality, rural character, and biodiversity of the Loddon River Valley. Key actions include:
- "*Conserve the scenic quality*" and "*naturalistic character*" of the river corridor.
 - *Expand native deciduous woodland and reinstate native hedgerows.*
 - *Enhance wildlife interest in agricultural fields and maintain the mixed pasture and arable landscape.*

- *Conserve, enhance, and manage wetland habitats while protecting hydrology to preserve archaeological sites.*
- *Ensure restoration plans for gravel extraction sites and protect Swallowfield's scenic value.*
- *Maintain sparse settlement patterns, resist intrusive development, and integrate roads with tree planting.*
- *Strengthen sense of place through careful design while protecting tranquillity and remoteness."*

Designations

- 4.17 There are no landscape designations within the Site boundary.
- 4.18 The study area includes three ancient woodlands: Tanners Copse on the eastern boundary of the eastern Site, and two other Ancient Woodlands—one on the western boundary of the western Site and another 30m south of the western parcel.
- 4.19 Nearby listed buildings include:
- The School, Hyde End Road, Grade II (260m north)
 - Hyde End Farmhouse, Hyde End Road, Grade II (440m south)
 - Sussex Lodge, 203 Hyde End Road (800m south)
- 4.20 Registered Park and Garden: Swallowfield Park, Grade II (1km south)
- 4.21 Scheduled Monument: Moated Site at Kenney's Farm (1.5km southeast)
- 4.22 Potential impacts on these ecological and heritage features will be addressed in the accompanying ecology and heritage reports.

Topography

- 4.23 The following should be read in conjunction with Figure 5.

Context – Landform

- 4.24 The Site is positioned approximately 230m east of the Loddon River Valley. The topographical levels within the study area exhibit a range from approximately 34 to 60 meters Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).
- 4.25 The River Loddon represents the lowest point in the study area, with land gently rising on both the eastern and western sides. To the east, the elevation increases towards Farley Hill, while to the west, a ridge supports the settlements of Spencer's Wood and Shinfield. In the broader landscape, higher elevations include Nores Hill (75m AOD) to the north and Farley Hill (85m AOD) to the southeast.

Site – Landform

- 4.26 At a more localised level, the Site occupies a relatively low position situated to the south of Shinfield and east of Spencer's Wood.
- 4.27 Eastern parcel- The general aspect of the Site is flat. The Sites highest point is 44m AOD to the west and 41m AOD to the east.

- 4.28 Western parcel – The general aspect of the Site is flat. The Sites highest point is 45 AOD to the west and 43 AOD to the east.

Site and Immediate Context

- 4.29 A detailed assessment of the Site and its immediate context has been undertaken, providing a finer level of analysis than existing published studies. The Site comprises two land parcels located to the east and west of Hyde End Road, Shinfield, just south of the recent residential developments at Langley Mead and Shinfield Meadows (as shown in Figure 1).
- 4.30 The combined area of the two parcels extends to approximately 10.7ha, consisting primarily of two large, irregularly shaped agricultural fields on the southern edge of Shinfield. While the Site is currently farmland, it is influenced by adjacent development and the evolving green infrastructure network, including the Langley Mead Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

Eastern Parcel

- 4.31 The eastern parcel is accessed via Hyde End Road and consists of an arable field bordered by existing green infrastructure. To the south, the Langley Mead SANG runs along the boundary, incorporating a recreational footpath on an east-west axis.
- 4.32 To the north, the Site is enclosed by mature native trees, including veteran specimens and older development off Hyde End Road, with allotments and Millworth Lane Recreation Ground located north east, beyond this lies Public Right of Way (PRoW) SHIN 15 which runs along the northern edge of the recreation ground, passing through a well treed boundary. The north eastern boundary is defined by hedgerows and native tree belts, directly east a substantial portion of the Site adjoins Tanners Copse existing woodland. The Site extends south east around this woodland before meeting another mature hedgerow containing veteran trees. To the south, a recently planted hedgerow separates the Site from the Langley Mead SANG. The western boundary is defined by a native hedgerow and hedgerow trees, beyond which Hyde End Road and the western parcel are situated.

Western Parcel

- 4.33 The western parcel is accessed via Appleton Way, which serves the recent developments at Langley Mead and Shinfield Meadows. This access road crosses the northern boundary of the western parcel. Beyond Appleton Way, PRoW SHIN 14 runs parallel to the Site, bordered by mature trees, with the adjacent new residential development lying further north. To the west, the boundary is defined by a low, fragmented hedgerow dominated by bramble, offering limited landscape value. Beyond this, Hyde End Road and the eastern parcel are located. The southern boundary is marked by a strong native hedgerow, with a recreational footpath running on an east-west alignment beyond it. The western boundary is defined by existing woodland, providing visual enclosure and defining this edge.

Overall

- 4.34 The character of both parcels is influenced by the adjacent settlement edge, particularly in the north, where residential development is visually prominent. The Sites are well-contained by existing woodland and the emerging green infrastructure of the Langley Mead SANG. While the River Loddon is a key landscape feature in the wider area, the Sites have no direct relationship

with the river or its associated landscape. The western parcel, in particular, falls outside the designated Loddon River Valley character area.

- 4.35 Although the Sites remain in agricultural use, they do not exhibit strong rural or tranquil characteristics. Their proximity to the existing urban edge, alongside established tree cover and green infrastructure, results in a setting that is more closely aligned with the adjacent residential development than with the open countryside or river valley. The existing woodland provides a significant degree of physical and visual separation between the Sites and the wider Loddon Valley.
- 4.36 The Sites are positioned at the southern edge of Shinfield, with a gap of open land remaining between Shinfield and Spencers Wood. However, much of this land is designated or being developed as managed green space within the Langley Mead SANG. This will ensure the long-term separation between Shinfield and Spencer's Wood.
- 4.37 Overall, the two parcels that form the Site present a mix of rural and residential characteristics, influenced by its position south of Shinfield and the adjacent recent housing developments. The landscape comprises woodland, hedgerows, veteran trees, and managed green spaces, all of which contribute to its sense of enclosure. The existing built form, combined with established and emerging green infrastructure, effectively screens or filters the Site from wider views, reinforcing its visual containment within the settlement edge of Shinfield.

Site Features

- 4.38 The eastern parcel of the Site is predominantly characterised by its arable use. However, there are several exceptions that contribute to its landscape character. These include well-defined and robust field boundaries, which are primarily delineated by mature hedgerows and trees, providing a strong sense of enclosure and visual containment. A particularly significant feature of the eastern parcel is the presence of a series of veteran trees located within the southern portion of the Site and in the field boundaries contributing to the Site's character.
- 4.39 Additionally, an existing access track traverses the Site along an east-west axis, serving as a direct connection between the Site and the Langley Mead SANG. Within the Site itself a rundown farm and outbuildings are found to the east of the Site.
- 4.40 The western parcel similarly exhibits a landscape dominated by arable farmland, though it lacks many of the features present in the eastern portion. Appleton Way runs along the northern part of this parcel, forming a prominent linear feature within the Site and acting as a key connection to the Site and newly constructed housing to the north. Two drainage features are present within the Site boundary, adding some diversity to the otherwise simplified landscape. The first is a formal drainage basin located in the northeastern section, while the second, more swale-like in form, runs along the western boundary of the parcel. Aside from these drainage features and the presence of Appleton Way, the western parcel is largely devoid of distinctive landscape features.

Landscape Value

- 4.41 In terms of "landscape value" it is appropriate to examine the role of the Site and its immediate context in terms of the range of local factors set out in Landscape Institute (LI) Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02-21 and summarised in the methodology. This considers the landscape in terms of a range of factors as set out below. As a starting point, landscape designations have been considered.
- 4.42 **Landscape Designations:** There are no landscape designations within the Site boundary.
- 4.43 **Natural Heritage:** Both Sites comprise of arable farmland, which in itself is of relatively low conservation value. The adjacent existing woodlands are of high biodiversity value, and the adjacent SANG area is increasing in conservation value through its development as a SANG, but the Sites themselves appear to have little biodiversity value.
- 4.44 **Cultural Heritage:** No features of particular cultural heritage value have been identified in the vicinity of the Sites.
- 4.45 **Landscape Condition:** The Sites are managed farmland, and appear to be managed responsibly. The area around the Site serves as part of a SANG and is being well managed.
- 4.46 **Associations:** The Sites themselves have no particular known association with writers or artists or other cultural figures. The Landscape character assessment does identify some cultural associations with the River Loddon Valley, but the river is separate to the Sites, with woodland between.
- 4.47 **Distinctiveness:** Although the broader Loddon Valley exhibits a distinctive character, the Sites and their immediate surroundings are more influenced by the adjacent settlement. Recent developments at Langley Mead and Shinfield Meadows have notably influenced the local context.
- 4.48 **Recreational Value:** The Sites themselves have no recreational value. However, in close proximity footpath SHIN:14 runs alongside the northern part of the Site west of Hyde End Road, linking the existing housing and the SANG, permissive routes in the SANG run south of the land and east of Hyde End Road. There are also public footpaths located to the south of the western parcel and within it.
- 4.49 **Perceptual (Scenic):** The Sites themselves are influenced by the existing housing adjacent and do not contain features of particular scenic value. The woodlands beyond the Sites are of greater value.
- 4.50 **Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity):** The Sites are not wild or tranquil, being influenced by the existing modern settlement edge and road that runs between the two Sites. The Loddon valley further east has a more naturalistic character, which is being developed as part of the SANG management.
- 4.51 **Functional aspects**
- 4.52 The SANG serves as recreational greenspace for nearby housing, but the Sites themselves are not included within this. The Sites and their immediate surroundings are well-contained, with a "Medium" landscape value, and do not meet the criteria as a "Valued Landscape." In contrast, the land to the south east holds high landscape value, particularly for recreation and conservation, and can be considered a "Valued Landscape." This is referenced in the emerging

Local Plan. The parcels of arable land that form the Site, are more closely linked to the settlement than to the wider Loddon Valley.

Visual Baseline

- 4.53 A visual appraisal has been undertaken for the Site. This has explored the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and sought to establish the approximate visibility of the Site from surrounding locations and receptors. A series of photo viewpoints have been selected which support this analysis.
- 4.54 Photographs have been taken to illustrate a view from a specific vantage point, or to demonstrate a representative view for those receptors that are moving through the landscape, e.g. rights of way users. The photographs may demonstrate varying degrees of visibility and include both short- and long-range views. The photographs were taken on the 26/08/24 and seasonal differences have been taken into account when determining the visual effects on these receptors.
- 4.55 'Photo Viewpoints', as referred to in this report are 'Type 1 Visualisations' or 'Annotated Viewpoint Photographs', as referred to in the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note on 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals' (TGN 06/19).

Photo Viewpoints

- 4.56 An assessment of the likely visual effects of the proposed development upon surrounding receptors is detailed in the subsequent section. Figure 6 details the location of the Photo Viewpoints and Figures 7 to 14 illustrates the photo viewpoints. They are briefly described below.

Photo Viewpoint 1: View north from SANG footpath

- 4.57 This viewpoint is located along a footpath running east to west through Langley Mead SANG, approximately 8m south of the eastern parcel. The view is dominated by the footpath and boundary vegetation, including a semi mature hedgerow. Urban features, such as the Langley Mead car park off Hyde End Road, are visible. Gaps in the hedgerow provide occasional glimpses into the Site, while a house to the north of the eastern parcel (off Hyde End Road) is partially obscured and filtered by intervening vegetation.

Photo Viewpoint 2: View west from Langley Mead SANG footpath

- 4.58 This viewpoint is taken from a footpath within Langley Mead SANG, approximately 70m east of the Site. The foreground features maintained grassland and fencing. The view is largely dominated and enclosed by natural elements, including Tanners Copse, mature native trees, and hedgerows that run along the eastern boundary of the Site. The Site and Millworth Lane Recreation Ground are not visible due to the woodland and mature tree belt, which create a natural barrier and a sense of enclosure.

Photo Viewpoint 3: View south west from Millworth Lane Recreation Ground beside PRow SHIN 15

- 4.59 Photo Viewpoint 3, taken approximately 180m north of the Site, captures a transitional landscape blending open recreational spaces, urban elements, and natural features. The foreground includes a cricket ground and tennis court and residential properties off Hyde End

Road, which contribute to an urban fringe character. Beyond, the view transitions to more enclosed natural elements, including a strong field boundary along the Site's northern edge and the woodland of Tanners Copse, which provides a sense of separation between this location and the Site. Views into the Site are limited, with mature vegetation and housing along Hyde End Road effectively screening most of the Site from this location.

Photo Viewpoint 4: View east from Hyde End Road

- 4.60 This Photo Viewpoint was taken along Hyde End Road approximately 35m from the Site, it is representative of the view when looking east. It presents a predominantly urban view, with the road serving as a key visual corridor. The character is defined by road infrastructure, residential properties, signage, and fencing. The Site itself is largely obscured by housing, vegetation, and trees, which screen views towards the eastern parcel.

Photo Viewpoint 5: View west from Hyde End Road

- 4.61 This viewpoint illustrates the experience of users on Hyde End Road approx. 5m from the Site boundary when facing west and looking toward the western parcel. This view encompasses a mix of urban and natural elements. Hyde End Road is a significant linear feature, with the Western Parcel southern edge visible beyond intervening vegetation, further north the field boundary that divides the Site from Hyde End Road becomes thicker albeit scrubby and dominated by brambles. The presence of trees and open fields contributes to the landscape's semi-rural character.

Photo Viewpoint 6: View north west from footpath that runs along the western parcels eastern boundary.

- 4.62 This Photo Viewpoint represents the view from a footpath running along the eastern boundary of the western parcel. The view is open, with the footpath as a prominent foreground feature, reflecting a managed area that facilitates public access and connectivity. Crop planting within the western parcel forms a key visual element, while existing woodland to the west provides a natural backdrop. A couple of recently built houses off Appleton Way are also visible, adding an urban element to the view.

Photo Viewpoint 7: View south west from PRow SHIN 14

- 4.63 Photo Viewpoint 7 illustrates the view from PRow Shin 14, approximately 16m north of the western Site's boundary. The immediate foreground features the surfaced section of the footpath and a well maintained and mown grass verge along the recently developed Appleton Way. A row of small, well-maintained avenue trees transitions the view from urban elements to the farmland character further south. Views toward the Site are open, with the landscape comprising roads, signs and flag posts, trees, arable fields, and fencing, creating a semi-rural character overall.

Photo Viewpoint 8: View east from SANG car park

- 4.64 Photo Viewpoint 8 illustrates the view from the SANG car park, located approximately 3 metres west of the eastern Site. In the immediate foreground, a post and rail fence marks the boundary between the car park and the Site. The immediate and mid-range view is characterised by an agricultural field that makes up the majority of the site, while the backdrop to the east features well-vegetated areas, including Tanners Copse and mature field boundaries. To the south, a recently planted hedge and the wider SANG landscape are visible beyond. Overall the view is predominantly rural in nature.

5.0 LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

Introduction

- 5.1 The development proposals are described in the Design and Access Statement and other information accompanying the planning application. The existing landscape resource and the visual receptors and amenity of the Site have been considered by the planning and design process and have informed the resultant scheme. This approach has entailed collaboration between landscape, urban design, ecological and other professionals. The landscape components of the scheme are an important integral part of the proposals.

Landscape Design and GI Objectives

- 5.2 The proposed development aligns with the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014), the Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update (2023-2024), and the Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2017) by protecting, enhancing, and integrating landscape features, promoting biodiversity, and improving connectivity within green infrastructure. For further details on policy, refer to section 3.0 of this appraisal. Key policies and the scheme's alignment with them are outlined below:
- The proposal retains existing trees, hedgerows, and other landscape features, aligning with Policy CC03, which emphasises protecting and retaining these elements. It integrates high-quality native planting, enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure, and promotes educational awareness through interpretive boards on veteran trees. The design also links to existing public rights of way, such as footpaths, supporting the policy's goal of improving connectivity within green corridors.
 - The proposal provides adequate space and protection for trees, especially veteran trees, in line with Policy NE4. It enhances the local landscape through additional tree and hedgerow planting and restores habitat links, ensuring integration with development.
 - The development retains and enhances key landscape features including respecting and protecting existing woodland, veteran trees and the Langley Mead SANG that runs to the east to support Policy TB21, contributing to local character and integrating with the surrounding landscape.
 - The proposal aligns with Policy NE5, adopting a landscape-led approach. It includes meadows, swales, and drainage basins, enhancing local distinctiveness and addressing the Landscape Character Assessment.

Landscape and Green Infrastructure (GI) Proposals

5.3 The landscape and GI proposals for the scheme are detailed in the drawings accompanying the planning application. In summary these proposals include:

- Retention and protection of existing trees, hedgerows, and veteran trees with appropriate offsets to root protection areas.
- Provision of new tree and hedgerow planting to enhance biodiversity and create habitat links.
- Creation of accessible green spaces, including meadows, swales, and drainage basins, using native, locally occurring species to support ecological function and sustainability.
- Strategic buffer zones around existing landscape features, including SANG boundaries and woodlands, with mature boundary trees retained and managed.
- Integration of new footpaths throughout the GI areas, linking with existing routes to improve connectivity within green corridors.
- New street tree planting and landscape planting at the edges of the development, including hedgerows, specimen trees, and native tree groups, to provide an appropriate transition between built areas and surrounding public open spaces.
- Design that respects local character, with interpretive boards explaining the significance of veteran trees and landscape features.
- Along the southern boundaries, tree planting is incorporated within the hedgerow, particularly in key locations such as alongside the SANG footpath, to create a structured green edge. Where views towards built form are anticipated, additional tree planting is introduced, including on the northern side of the swales, to provide visual depth and layered filtering. The intention is to find a balance between softening-built form and allowing for intentional openings that frame views across the site's green infrastructure, resulting in a considered visual experience.
- The proposed development responds positively to the landscape guidelines set out for both the A2 Loddon Valley and J3 Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay character areas. Along the eastern and southern edges, a more informal and softened settlement edge is achieved through the introduction of native hedgerow planting, pockets of trees, and areas of flowering meadow grassland, reflecting local landscape patterns. Existing hedgerows are retained and reinforced with additional native species to strengthen visual containment, biodiversity, and boundary definition. The layout draws on the historic field pattern, with green corridors and areas of GI open spaces. Sustainable drainage features and wetland planting, support the conservation and enhancement of wetland habitats. Together, these measures contribute to a landscape approach that integrates the development into its setting, supports biodiversity, and respects the character and sensitivities of the surrounding landscape.

Landscape Management

- 5.4 All of the landscape areas and public open space features will be managed and maintained. This would be achieved through the implementation of a Landscape Management Plan (LMP), to ensure the successful establishment and continued thriving of the landscape proposals.

6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 6.1 The following section outlines the likely landscape and visual effects that would arise from proposed development on the Site. Schedules detailing these likely landscape and visual effects for the receptors are included in Appendices B and C respectively. Please refer to these in conjunction with the following descriptions.

Landscape Effects

Construction

- 6.2 The construction of the proposed development will prioritise minimising unnecessary effects on the environment and surrounding receptors. Measures such as the careful location and design of temporary Site compounds, associated lighting, signage, and screen fencing will be implemented to address potential impacts effectively.
- 6.3 The landscape character of the Site will inevitably change during construction due to the active presence of plant, machinery, and ongoing works to construct residential dwellings and associated infrastructure.
- 6.4 During the construction period, short-term adverse effects on the landscape will result from visually intrusive activities, including the use of heavy-duty machinery. These impacts will be most pronounced within the Site and its immediate surroundings, where effects on landscape character are assessed as Moderate Adverse. At the national scale, these effects are considered Negligible.

Operation (following Completion)

National Level

- 6.5 The Site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 129, "Thames Basin Heaths," characterised by heathland, woodland, small to medium-sized fields, ancient woods, hedgerows, and historic parklands. Historic features such as veteran trees and ancient woods reflect the legacy of hunting forests. The rural character is enhanced by winding lanes, historic villages, and farmsteads.
- 6.6 The SEOs for NCA 129 emphasise protecting historic habitats like heathland, ancient woodland, and meadows, and enhancing green infrastructure for recreation, wildlife, and climate resilience, particularly near settlements like Reading.
- 6.7 The proposed development replaces two parcels of semi-rural land with an agricultural character on the edge of a settlement. The design retains key landscape features, including hedgerows, field boundaries, and veteran trees, aligning with SEO objectives. The proposal also reflects the scale, appearance, and layout of surrounding context to the north of the parcels, namely the recent development off Appleton Way, minimising contrasts with the wider landscape or bringing any uncharacteristic elements into the receiving landscape.
- 6.8 While there will be some loss of openness, the limited scale of the development within the broader NCA context is assessed as having a Negligible overall effect.

District Level – J3 Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay

- 6.9 This LCA is characterised by large arable fields, pasture, intact hedgerow networks, hedgerow oaks, scattered woodlands, and historic parklands. This landscape is in good condition but faces pressures from urbanisation, transport corridors, and residential development, which threaten its rural character and may cause settlement coalescence.
- 6.10 The proposed development will transform two farmland parcels into residential use, complementing the adjacent residential area to the north. The design conserves key landscape features, including hedgerows, mature and veteran trees, and woodlands, while integrating with the Langley Mead SANG to the south and east. This SANG helps contain urban expansion and mitigates coalescence with Spencer's Wood.
- 6.11 Boundary vegetation will be retained and supplemented with new planting to soften views and integrate the development into the local character. The scale, density, and appearance of the dwellings reflect the nearby Appleton Way development, ensuring consistency with the surrounding context. The Site is well-contained by existing woodlands, residential areas, and green infrastructure, and the proposal is expected to have minimal impact on the LCA's key characteristics.
- 6.12 The proposals are anticipated to result in a Minor Adverse effect on the landscape at completion. As no major mitigation is proposed, the effect is expected to remain at Minor Adverse by Year 15.

District Level – A2 Loddon River Valley

- 6.13 The eastern parcel of the Site falls within the "A2 – Loddon River Valley" LCA, which is characterised by a wide floodplain, mature broadleaved woodlands, riparian corridors, important wetland habitats, historic riverside features, and a sparse settlement pattern. It is a tranquil, rural landscape with views generally limited by vegetation.
- 6.14 The proposed development respects the value of the Loddon River Valley by incorporating a landscape buffer to the east of the eastern parcel. This buffer strengthens the planting along the already mature, well-treed edge of the Site. Both parcels are more closely associated with the urban area to the north than the Loddon River Valley. The farmland lacks a strong rural character and does not reflect many of the LCA's key features. The Site is physically and visually separated from the Loddon River Valley by existing woodlands.
- 6.15 Located on the southern edge of Shinfield, the Site maintains a gap of open land between Shinfield and Spencer's Wood. This area is largely managed greenspace or part of the Langley Mead SANG, ensuring long-term separation between the settlements.
- 6.16 The proposals are anticipated to result in a Minor Adverse effect on the landscape at completion. As no major mitigation is proposed, the effect is expected to remain at Minor Adverse by Year 15.

Site and Immediate Context

- 6.17 The Site is not subject to formal designations like National Parks or AONBs. It consists of farmland with mature vegetation, hedgerows, and veteran trees, particularly in the southern part of the eastern parcel. Surrounding woodlands, Langley Mead SANG, footpaths, and drainage features contribute to its character, urban elements like Hyde End Road and nearby residential development reduce its tranquillity.

- 6.18 The proposed residential development can be accommodated without significant harm to the landscape. It mirrors the scale and character of Shinfield, with dwellings set back to respect key features such as veteran trees, woodland, and the Langley Mead SANG. The development reduces openness between Shinfield and the SANG, but this impact is minimal. The Site forms a logical extension to the settlement.
- 6.19 Vegetation and veteran trees will be retained and enhanced with native planting. Additional street trees and landscaping will integrate the development into its surroundings.
- 6.20 The proposals are anticipated to result in a Moderate/Minor Adverse effect on the landscape at completion. As no major mitigation is proposed, the effect is expected to remain at Moderate/Minor Adverse by Year 15.

Visual Effects

Visual Envelope (VE)

- 6.21 The VE (Figure 6) of the proposed development identifies the surrounding land from within which views towards any part of the proposed development are likely to be possible. The VE is not however, an indicator of the effect of the proposed development on the view but simply, its visible extent in the surrounding landscape.
- 6.22 A VE for the proposed development was initially prepared based upon the local topography context and proposed building heights. This has then been reviewed on Site and refined to take account of the visual 'screening' provided by buildings, trees and other features. The VE of the proposed development is contained by vegetation, mature tree belts, existing woodlands such as Tanners Copse, and built features such as the southern edge of Shinfield. It extends slightly to the south, but is generally limited to areas just outside the Site's boundaries. To the north, the VE is confined by the southern edge of Shinfield and mature field boundaries, it does however extend north toward PRoW SHIN 15, views from this location are glimpsed at best; to the east, it is restricted by Tanners Copse. To the south, the VE extends into the Langley Mead SANG directly south of the eastern parcel. To the west, it is screened by existing woodland and field boundaries.
- 6.23 There could be some limited locations (beyond the extent of the VE shown) that could have a potential distant or very limited view to a part of the development. Equally, there could be some locations shown within the VE that would not experience any views to the resultant development.

Construction

- 6.24 All construction works will be carried out in accordance with best practice procedures to minimise, as far as practicable, adverse effects on visual amenity. However, it is likely that there will be some short-term adverse visual effects on receptors due to construction activities, including the anticipated use of machinery, plant and activities that are visually intrusive. During the construction period, fencing will be in place around the perimeter of the Site, materials will be stored on Site, Site cabins will be present, and the development will be in various stages of completion. The effects on visual amenity range depending on the sensitivity of the receptor, and the magnitude of change in the view. Effects on visual amenity during construction range from Major/Moderate Adverse to Minor Adverse/Negligible/None for identified visual receptors.

Operation (following Completion)

- 6.25 The following provides a summary of the visual effects assessment included at Appendix C.

Residential Properties and Settlement

- 6.26 Receptor A is represented by Photo Viewpoint 4 illustrates the connection between the Site and receptors along Hyde End Road. While it does not fully capture this relationship, it provides important contextual information. Desk-based study and on-Site analysis further supplement this and confirm that some properties along Hyde End Road that back onto the eastern parcel of the Site, have full views of the arable land beyond their rear gardens and fenced boundaries. Others experience partially filtered views due to existing mature tree cover; tree locations are detailed in the Arboricultural Survey. These trees currently soften and filter views of the Site from some of the dwellings along Hyde End Road.
- 6.27 The new dwellings will replace open agricultural land with built structures, creating a high magnitude of visual change for residents without tree cover. Proposed buildings will range in proximity, with the closest approximately 28 metres from existing dwellings, while others are 40–50 metres or more away. Despite large rear gardens (approximately 30 metres), the new dwellings will remain visible, particularly where no existing vegetation provides softening and filtering of the view.
- 6.28 By Year 15, native tree and hedgerow planting along the rear boundaries of existing properties will help mitigate visual impacts. These will soften and filter views of the lower parts of the new dwellings and filter views of upper parts once established, reducing the visual effects over time. Proposed and existing tree cover will help mitigate visual impact over time and will act in a similar manner to the existing trees along this boundary, the effect on visual amenity at completion is expected to be Major/ Moderate Adverse reducing at 15 years to Moderate Adverse as a result of the proposed tree canopy filtering views toward Site.

Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Other Footpaths etc

- 6.29 Receptor B - From this location, views are dominated by a recently planted hedgerow running east to west along the southern edge of the eastern parcel, which will partially filter lower-level views of the proposed development.
- 6.30 Mitigation measures include pulling the built form back from this boundary and planting groups of native trees along the southern edge. A green infrastructure (GI) corridor, featuring planted drainage features with numerous proposed trees within, will further enhance visual amenity and add character. As the existing hedgerow and proposed GI matures, it will improve its ability to filter and soften views along the southern boundary. For users of the SANG footpath, views of the development will likely be partial, focusing on the southern portion of the eastern parcel. Existing and proposed boundary planting will help filter and soften these views and reduce the overall effect from construction to 15 years post completion.
- 6.31 Proposed tree planting along with the existing hedgerow will help mitigate visual impact over time. The effect on visual amenity at completion is expected to be Moderate/Minor Adverse reducing at 15 years to Minor Adverse as a result of the proposed tree canopy filtering views toward Site.

- 6.32 Receptor C illustrates the view beyond the immediate Langley Mead SANG, where this Photo Viewpoint was taken, is dominated by a dense hedgerow with mature trees and Tanners Copse, which runs along the eastern boundary of the development. This vegetation effectively prevents views into the Site from this location, providing comprehensive screening. Overall, the Site is not seen in the view. Upon completion, the effects are assessed as None, which is anticipated to remain the case at Year 15.
- 6.33 Receptor D - From this viewpoint, southward views toward the eastern parcel are visible via glimpsed views at best; as the northern boundary tree belts and Tanners Copse largely obstruct views of the Site. Views toward the western parcel are entirely screened by vegetation and the houses along Hyde End Road. As such, only glimpsed views of the development may be experienced from this footpath toward the eastern parcel.
- 6.34 The susceptibility to change is considered medium, as this PRoW passes through Millworth Lane Recreation Ground, where users' attention is not primarily focused on the landscape or specific views. As no significant mitigation is proposed along this edge, the effects are assessed as Negligible at completion and are anticipated to remain Negligible at Year 15.
- 6.35 Receptor E's visual connection to Site is best illustrated in Photo Viewpoint 6. The footpath along the eastern edge of the western parcel will be retained and integrated into the development, allowing continued access to the landscape south of the Site. However, the context will shift from a settlement edge/countryside interface to a more urbanised environment with housing, infrastructure, and soft landscaping.
- 6.36 Susceptibility to change is considered medium, as the footpath is near Hyde End Road, where users' attention is not primarily focused on the landscape. The footpath and its associated vegetation will form part of the green infrastructure within the western parcel, with additional planting along the route and within an accessible SuDS system enhancing the walking experience. As no significant mitigation, such as bunds with structural planting, is proposed along this edge, the level of visual effect is expected to remain consistent from completion to Year 15. With no significant proposed mitigation, the effects on visual amenity are assessed as Moderate Adverse at completion and are anticipated to remain so by Year 15.
- 6.37 Receptor F is represented by Photo Viewpoint 7. The footpath runs near the northern edge of the western parcel, slightly further north than Appleton Way. The setting will transition from a settlement edge/countryside interface to a more urbanised environment with housing, infrastructure, and soft landscaping.
- 6.38 Susceptibility to change is considered medium, as the footpath lies close to Hyde End Road and recent housing near Appleton Way, creating an urban character where the focus is not primarily on the landscape or specific views. The PRoW will have open views toward the northern edge of the western parcel, though these are not immediate. A proposed green infrastructure corridor, including planting, will help soften views of the built form. However, as no significant mitigation, such as bunding or structural planting, is planned along this edge, the level of visual effect is anticipated to remain consistent from completion to Year 15. With no significant proposed mitigation, the effects on visual amenity are assessed as Moderate Adverse at completion and are anticipated to remain so by Year 15.

Roads & Transport Users

- 6.39 Receptor G's visual connection to Site is shown in Photo Viewpoint 5, and was taken along Hyde End Road, which separates the parcels, road users will experience transient, filtered glimpses of the development, with clear views limited by retained vegetation. This is especially true for the eastern parcel, but to a lesser extent from the western.
- 6.40 During construction, transient views of construction activity, including plant, hoarding, materials, and dwellings at various stages, will be visible. Upon completion, dwellings closest to the road will be partially visible through intervening vegetation, with lower levels screened by retained planting. These will be seen in the context of existing dwellings along Hyde End Road. By Year 15, proposed hedgerow and tree planting along the road frontage will help soften the development's-built form, but is unlikely to significantly reduce the overall visual effect.
- 6.41 With no significant proposed mitigation, the effects on visual amenity are assessed as Minor Adverse at completion and are anticipated to remain so by Year 15.
- 6.42 Receptor H: Viewpoint 8 is located in the SANG car park, approximately 3 metres west of the eastern site boundary. Users will experience views toward the development from the SANG car park, with an existing post and rail fence and proposed hedgerow marking the boundary. The viewpoint is of medium sensitivity due to its location, where users are primarily focused on arrival and wayfinding. During construction, close-range views of activity including plant, materials, and dwellings under construction will be prominent. Upon completion, the nearest dwellings will remain visible. However, the proposed hedgerow and individual trees along the western boundary will provide some visual filtering and integration of built form into the wider green infrastructure setting. These measures moderately reduce visual impact but do not fully screen the development.
- 6.43 The level of visual effect is expected to remain consistent from completion to Year 15. The effects on visual amenity are assessed as Moderate Adverse at completion and are anticipated to remain so by Year 15.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The Site comprises two land parcels located east and west of Hyde End Road, Shinfield, just south of recent residential developments at Langley Mead and Shinfield Meadows.
- 7.2 The Site has a mixed rural and residential character, with recent housing developments to the north and the Langley Mead SANG forming a natural boundary to the south. Existing landscape features, including existing woodland, hedgerows, and woodland belts, help contain views and integrate the Site into its surroundings.
- 7.3 The character of both parcels is influenced by the adjacent settlement edge, particularly in the north, where residential development is found. The Sites are well-contained by existing woodland and the emerging green infrastructure of the Langley Mead SANG. While the Loddon River Valley LCA is a key landscape feature in the wider area, the Sites have no direct relationship with the LCA or its associated landscape.
- 7.4 Although the Sites are of agricultural use, they do not exhibit strong rural or tranquil characteristics. Their proximity to the existing urban edge, alongside established tree cover and green infrastructure, results in a setting that is more closely aligned with the adjacent residential development than with the open countryside or river valley to the east.
- 7.5 The Visual Envelope for the proposed development was initially based on local topography and building heights, then refined through site review to account for visual screening by buildings, trees, and other features. The VE is contained by vegetation, mature tree belts, Tanners Copse, and the southern edge of Shinfield. It extends slightly south into Langley Mead SANG but is generally limited to areas near the Site's boundaries. To the north, the VE reaches PRoW SHIN 15, though views are glimpsed. To the east, it is restricted by Tanners Copse, and to the west, by woodland and field boundaries.

Landscape Summary

- 7.6 The Site lies within the "Thames Basin Heaths" National Character Area 129, characterised by heathland, woodland, and historic parklands, with a rural landscape influenced by residential development. The proposed development replaces agricultural land with residential use, retaining key landscape features such as hedgerows and veteran trees. This aligns with SEO objectives for conserving historic habitats and enhancing green infrastructure. The scale of the development results in a Negligible effect within the broader NCA context.
- 7.7 The western Site is located within the "Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay" Landscape Character Area, defined by large arable fields, hedgerows, and scattered woodlands. The proposed development does not bring any uncharacteristic elements into this landscape. It is conserving hedgerows, mature trees, and woodlands, and using the Langley Mead SANG to mitigate urban coalescence. Boundary vegetation will be retained and supplemented, helping soften views and integrate the development into the local landscape. The overall effect is Minor Adverse at completion, remaining Minor Adverse by Year 15.
- 7.8 The eastern parcel of the Site is located within the "Loddon River Valley" LCA, a tranquil, rural landscape characterised by broadleaved woodlands and riparian corridors. The development respects this landscape by incorporating a buffer along the eastern boundary to strengthen existing vegetation. The Site is physically and visually separated from the Loddon River Valley by woodland, and the proposed development will not impact the river valley's key characteristics. The effect is Minor Adverse at completion, remaining Minor Adverse by Year 15.

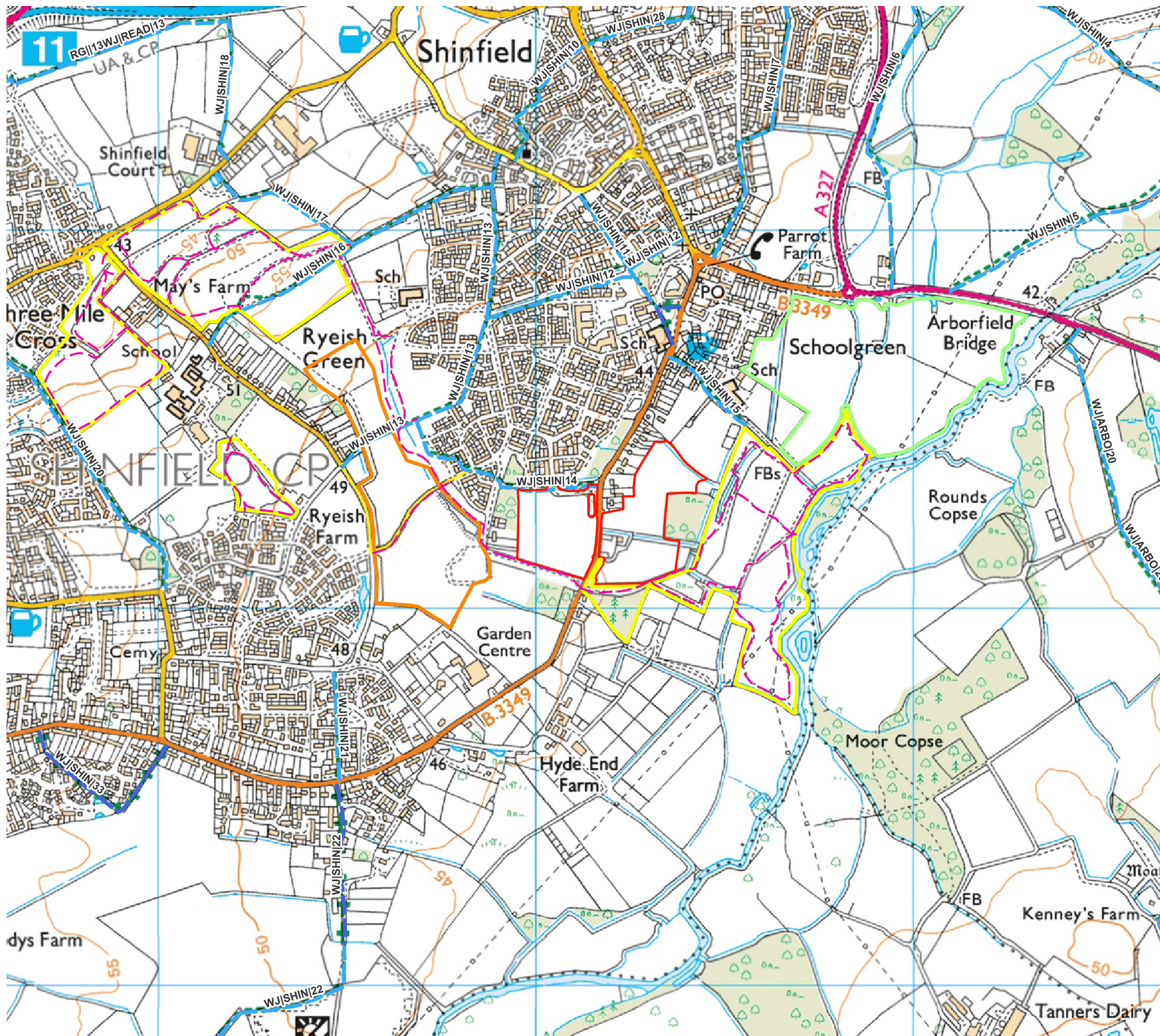
- 7.9 The Site is not subject to formal landscape designations, and its agricultural character is influenced by nearby urban elements, such as Hyde End Road and neighbouring residential development. The proposed residential development aligns with the scale and character found within Shinfield, retaining key landscape features like veteran trees and woodland. New planting and street trees will integrate the development, ensuring minimal impact on the surrounding landscape. The effect is Moderate/Minor Adverse at completion, remaining Moderate/Minor Adverse by Year 15.

Visual Summary

- 7.10 During construction, there would be short-term adverse effects on visual amenity due to the use of intrusive machinery and plant. These activities are considered detrimental to visual amenity, with effects anticipated to be no greater than Major/Moderate Adverse. However, as construction is temporary and short-lived, no long-term harm is expected.
- 7.11 The immediate visual envelope of the Site (i.e. areas from which a view of the Site can be experienced) is restricted by screening elements, such as the settlement edge, other built development, hedgerows, woodland, and trees.
- 7.12 The residents to experience notable changes to views as a result of the built development are those adjacent to the eastern parcel along Hyde End Road, as some receptors along this edge currently experience open, primary views into the Site. These residents may experience a Major / Moderate Adverse effect on visual amenity at completion reducing to Moderate Adverse at 15 years.
- 7.13 Public footpaths within the local area will experience varying degrees of effect on visual amenity. The PRoW and footpaths most affected by the development will be users of footpath that runs along the western parcels eastern boundary and users of PRoW SHIN 14 where Moderate Adverse effects are anticipated.
- 7.14 Road users generally would experience minor change to views, as the proposed development is screened by intervening built development and vegetation. Road users of Hyde End Road would experience transient glimpses of the Site, but this would not result in any significant adverse effect on visual amenity.

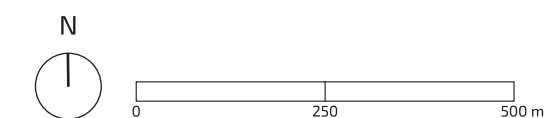
Conclusion

- 7.15 In conclusion, the Sites are situated adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Shinfield and is well contained by surrounding development and vegetation. The LVA identifies a relatively limited number of visual receptors, and the proposals have considered the Site's context, including the retention of existing vegetation and the proposal of new hedgerow planting. It is anticipated that the proposed development can be successfully integrated into the local surroundings, minimising adverse effects.



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- Site Boundary
- SANG Boundary
- SANG
- High Copse Common (Detailed Approval)
- Proposed Langley Mead SANG Extension
- Informal Footpaths with SANG
- Public Rights of Way
- Byway Open to All Traffic
- Footpath

date 15/07/25 drwn/chkd TIK / GH

client Bloor Homes project Hyde End Road, Shinfield

title SITE LOCATION scale 1:10,000 @ A3

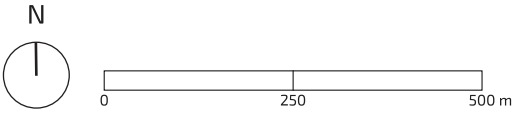
number FIGURE 1 rev A

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- Site Boundary
- SANG Boundary
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- Informal Footpaths with SANG
- Public Rights of Way
- Byway Open to All Traffic
- Footpath

date 15/07/25 drwn/chkd TIK / GH

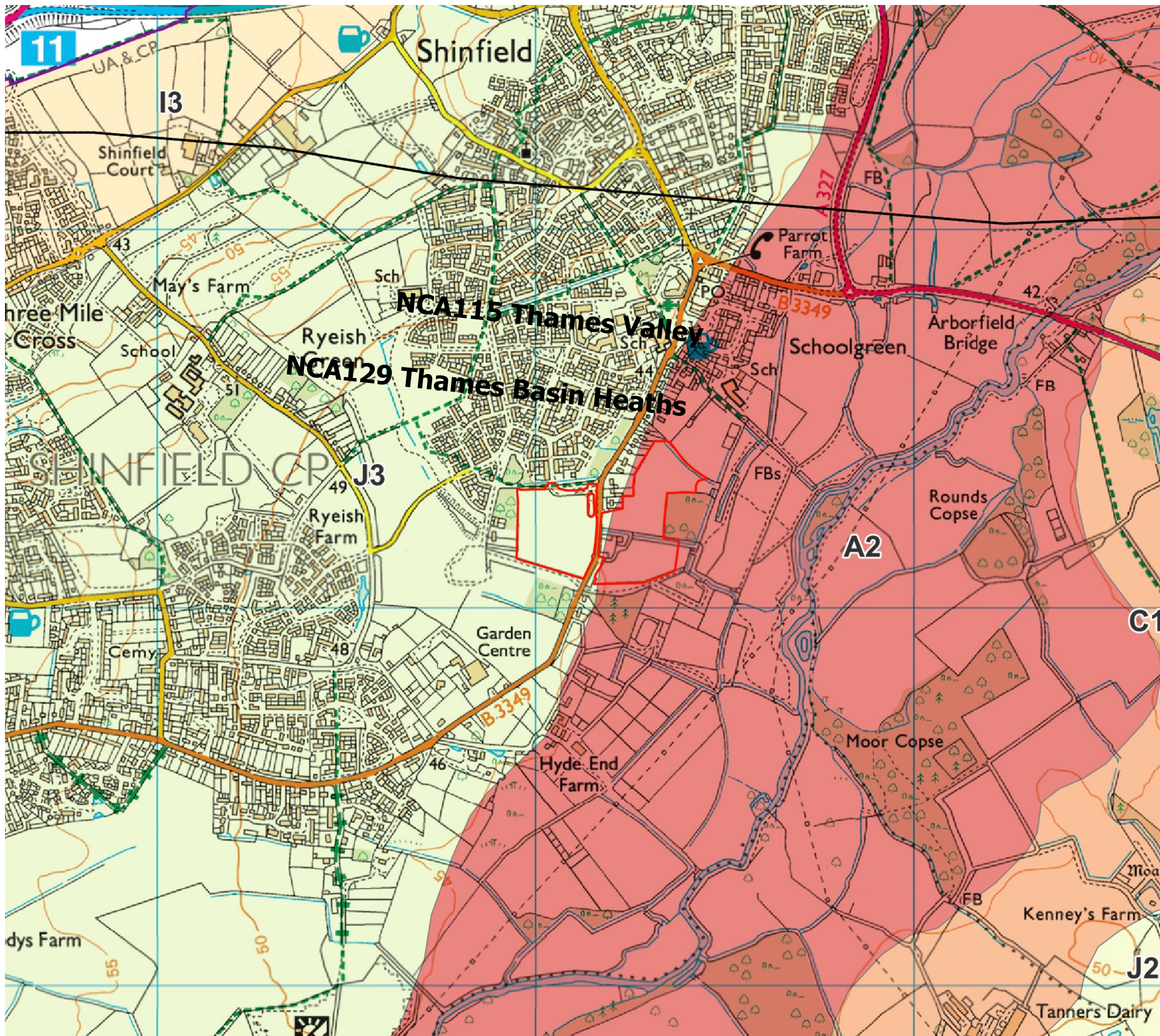
client Bloor Homes
project

Hyde End Road, Shinfield

title AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH scale 1:10,000 @ A3

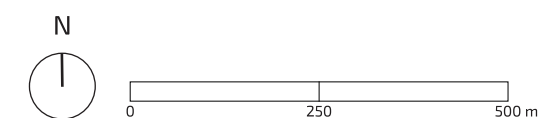
number FIGURE 2 rev A

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- Site Boundary
- Local Planning Authority Boundaries

Landscape Character Areas (Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment, March 2004)

- A2 - Loddon River Valley
- C1 - Arborfield River Terrace
- I3 - Grazeley Farmed Clay Lowland
- J2 - Arborfield and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay
- J3 - Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay

date 15/07/25 drwn/chkd TIK / GH

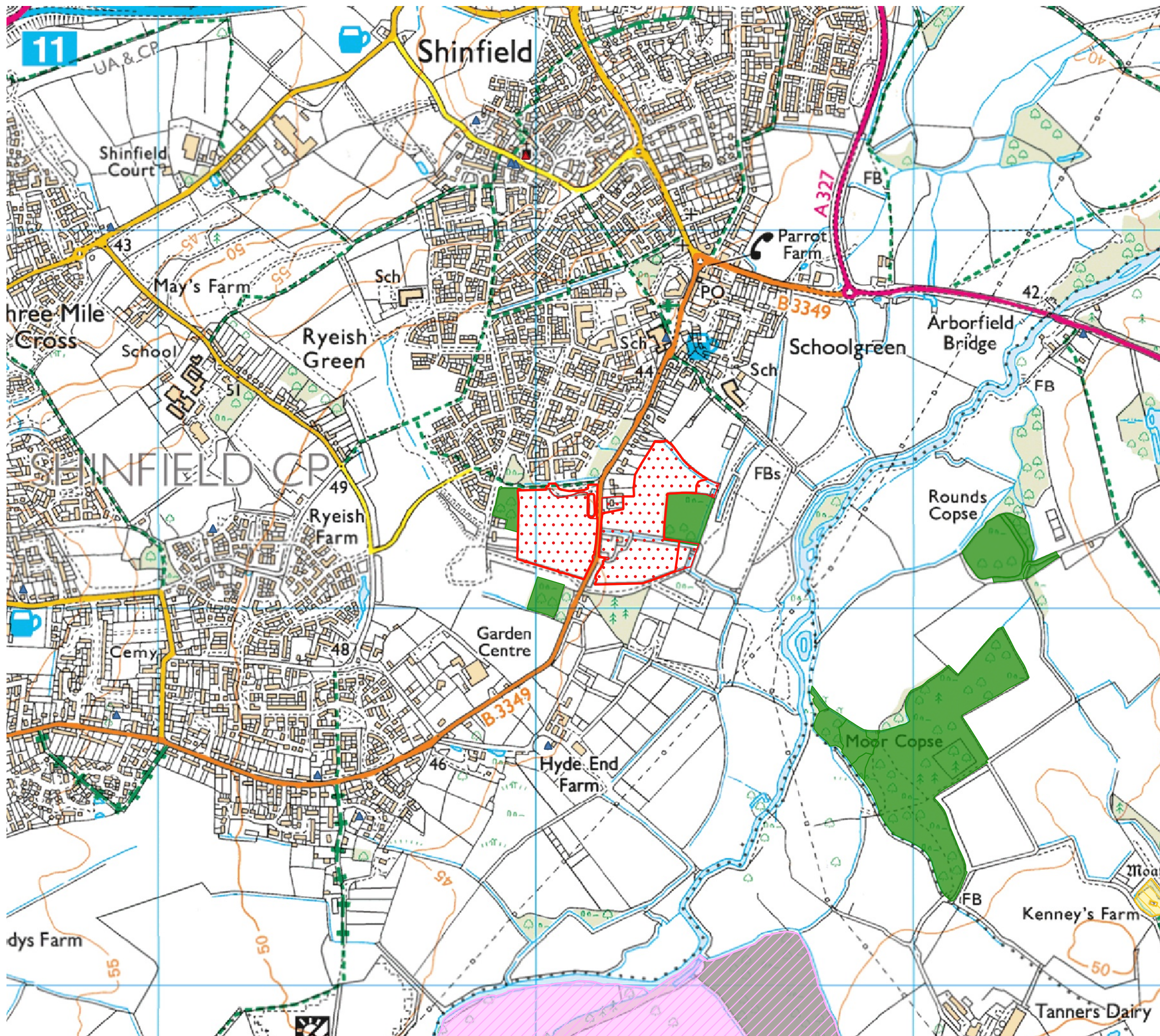
client Bloor Homes
project

Hyde End Road, Shinfield

title LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA scale 1:10,000 @ A3

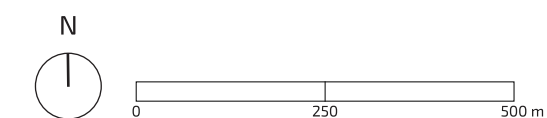
number FIGURE 3 rev A

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Site Boundary

Designated Sites

Listed Buildings

▲ I

▲ II

Scheduled Monuments

Ancient Woodland

Parks and Gardens

Proposed Allocations
 "SS14.12 Land east and west of Hyde End Road, Shinfield (Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update: Proposed Submission Plan 2023-2040)"

date
15/07/25

drwn/chkd
TIK / GH

client
Bloor Homes
project

Hyde End Road, Shinfield

title
DESIGNATIONS

scale
1:10,000 @ A3

number
FIGURE 4

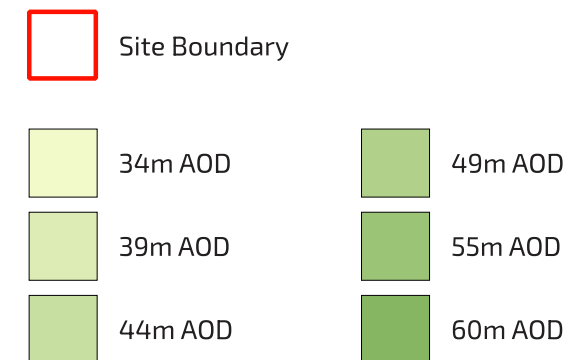
rev
A

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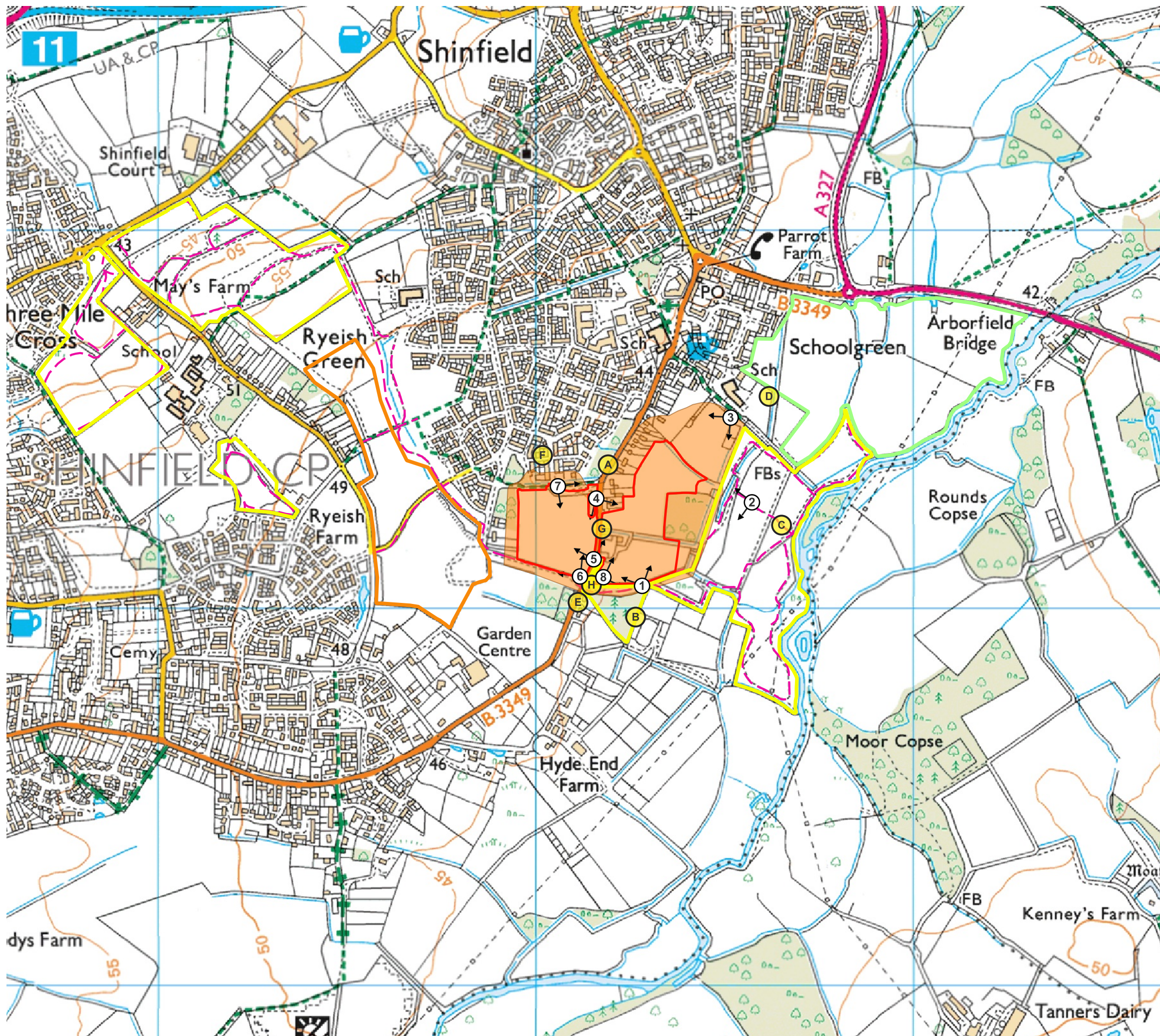
date	drwn/chkd
15/07/25	TIK / GH

client	
Bloor Homes	
project	

Hyde End Road, Shinfield	
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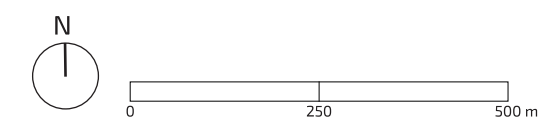
title	scale
TOPOGRAPHY	1:10,000 @ A3

number	rev
FIGURE 5	A



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- Site Boundary
- SANG Boundary
- SANG
- High Copse Common (Detailed Approval)
- Proposed Langley Mead SANG Extension
- Viewpoint Locations
- Visual Envelope
- Public Rights of Way
- Byway Open to All Traffic
- Footpath
- Informal Footpaths with SANG

date 15/07/25 drwn/chkd TIK / GH

client Bloor Homes

project Hyde End Road, Shinfield

title VISUAL APPRAISAL scale 1:10,000 @ A3

number FIGURE 6 rev A

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Photo Viewpoint 1: View north from SANG footpath



Photo Viewpoint 1: Continued



Photo Viewpoint 1

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Projection: 'cylindrical'
Enlargement factor: 100% (when printed at A1)
Date: 26/08/24
Time: 09:56
Camera make & model, sensor format & lens: Canon EOS 6D FFS, Canon 50mm Lens
Horizontal Field of View: 131°
Direction of View: 350° (bearing from North)
Viewing distance: To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

date
26/08/24

drwn/chkd
TW / MGH

client
Bloor Homes

project
**Land At Hyde End Road,
Shinfield**

title
PHOTOVIEWPOINT 1

number

rev
A

FIGURE 7

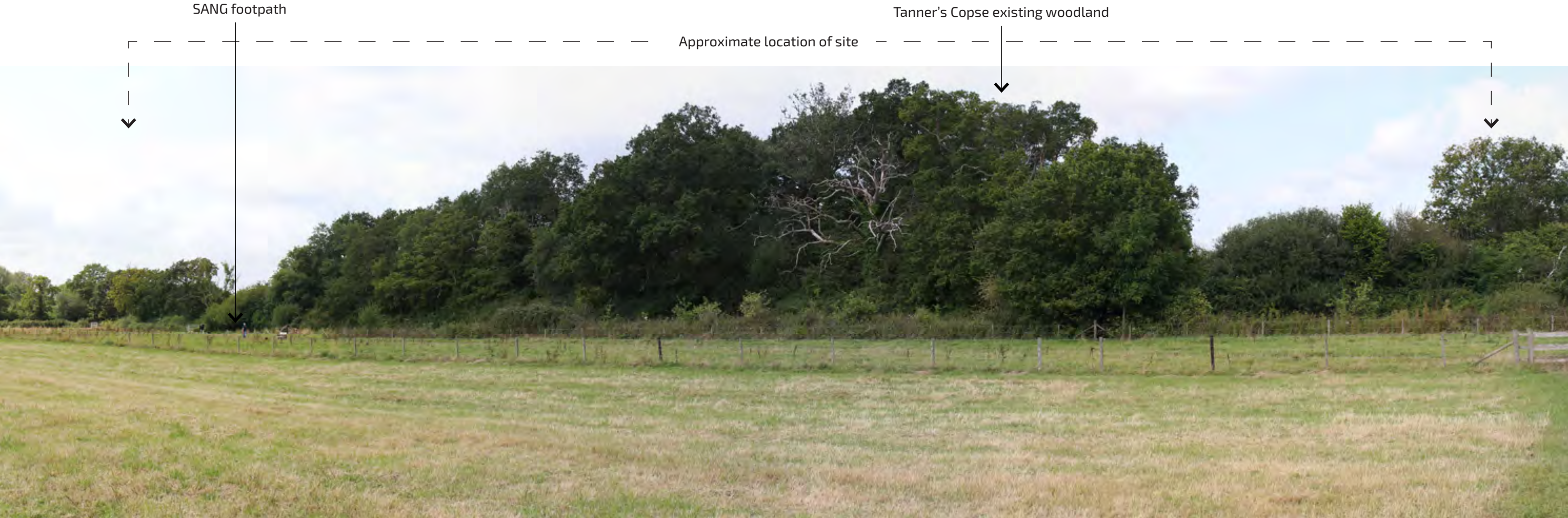


Photo Viewpoint 2: View west from Langley Mead SANG footpath



Photo Viewpoint 2: Continued



Photo Viewpoint 2

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Projection: 'cylindrical'
Enlargement factor: 100% (when printed at A1)
Date: 26/08/24
Time: 10:11
Camera make & model, sensor format & lens: Canon EOS 6D FFS, Canon 50mm Lens
Horizontal Field of View: 133°
Direction of View: 275° (bearing from North)
Viewing distance: To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

date 26/08/24 drwn/chkd TW / MGH

client **Bloor Homes**
project **Land At Hyde End Road, Shinfield**

title **PHOTOVIEWPOINT 2**
number rev

FIGURE 8 **A**

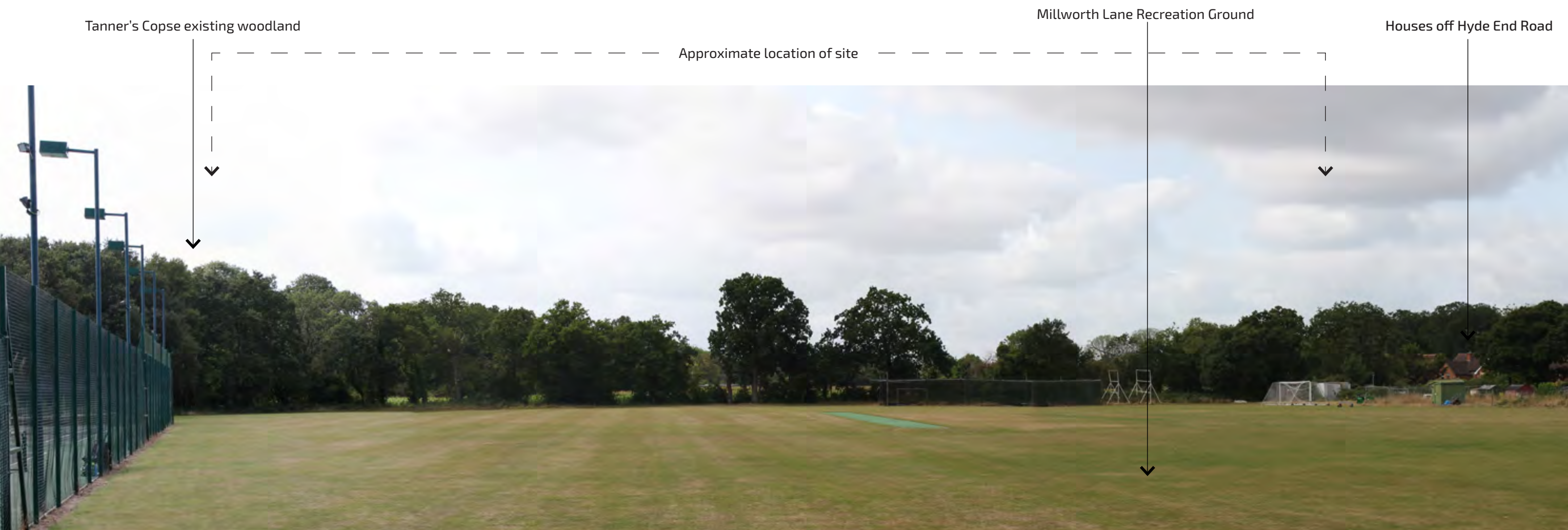


Photo Viewpoint 3: View south west from Millworth Lane Recreation Ground beside PRow SHIN 15



Photo Viewpoint 3

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Projection: 'cylindrical'
Enlargement factor: 100% (when printed at A1)
Date: 26/08/24
Time: 10:19
Camera make & model, sensor format & lens:
Canon EOS 6D FFS, Canon 50mm Lens
Horizontal Field of View: 83°
Direction of View: 230° (bearing from North)
Viewing distance: To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

date	26/08/24	drwn/chkd	TW / MGH
client	Bloor Homes		
project	Land At Hyde End Road, Shinfield		
title	PHOTOVIEWPOINT 3		
number		rev	A

FIGURE 9

Approximate location of site

A photograph of a road junction. A dashed line runs vertically across the image, with a label 'Approximate location of site' pointing to it. An arrow points from the text 'Hyde End Road' to a road that branches off to the right. The road has white lane markings and a speed limit sign of 40. There are trees and bushes on the left side of the road.

A map of a residential area with a red boundary line and a blue arrow pointing to a specific location. The map shows houses, streets, and a river. The red boundary line is irregular and follows the edge of the residential area. The blue arrow points to a location on a street within the boundary.

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Projection: 'cylindrical'
Enlargement factor: 100% (when printed at A1)
Date: 26/08/24
Time: 10:34
Camera make & model, sensor format & lens:
 Canon EOS 6D FFS, Canon 50mm Lens
Horizontal Field of View: 132°
Direction of View: 95° (bearing from North)
Viewing distance: To be viewed at comfortable
 arm's length

title			
PHOTOVIEWPOINT 4			
number		rev	

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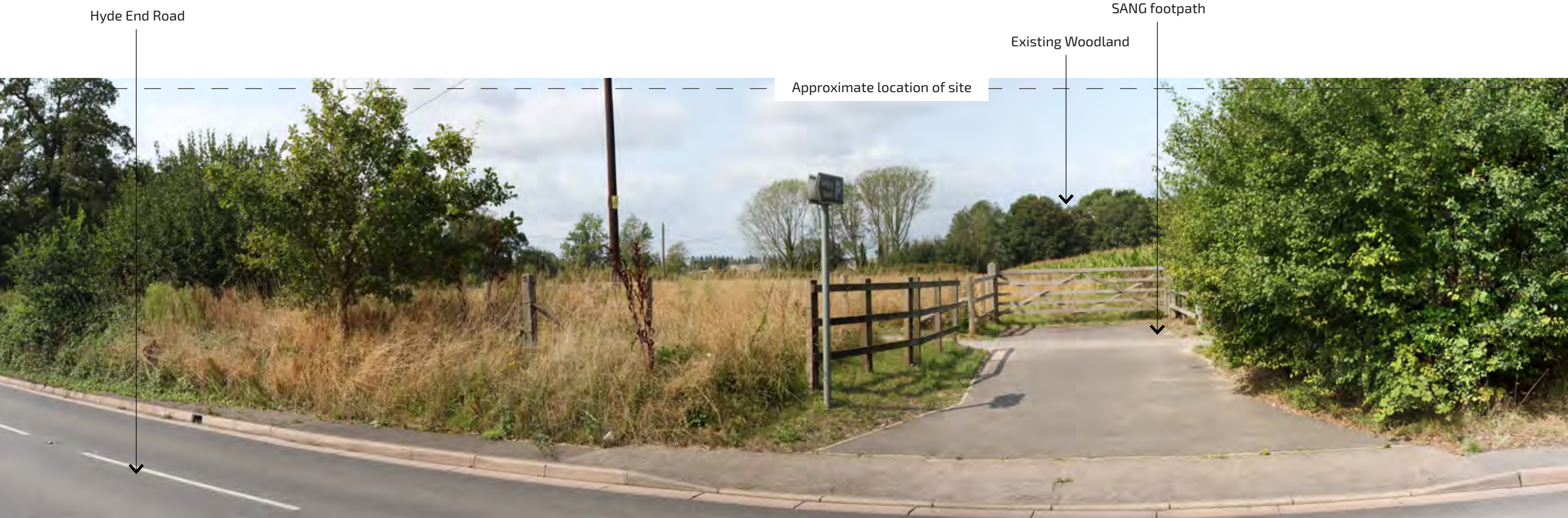


Photo Viewpoint 5: View west from Hyde End Road



Photo Viewpoint 5: Continued



Photo Viewpoint 5

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Projection: 'cylindrical'
Enlargement factor: 100% (when printed at A1)
Date: 26/08/24
Time: 10:39
Camera make & model, sensor format & lens:
Canon EOS 6D FFS, Canon 50mm Lens
Horizontal Field of View: 131°
Direction of View: 275° (bearing from North)
Viewing distance: To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

date 26/08/24 drwn/chkd TW / MGH

client
Bloor Homes
project
**Land At Hyde End Road,
Shinfield**

title
PHOTOVIEWPOINT 5

number
FIGURE 11 rev **A**

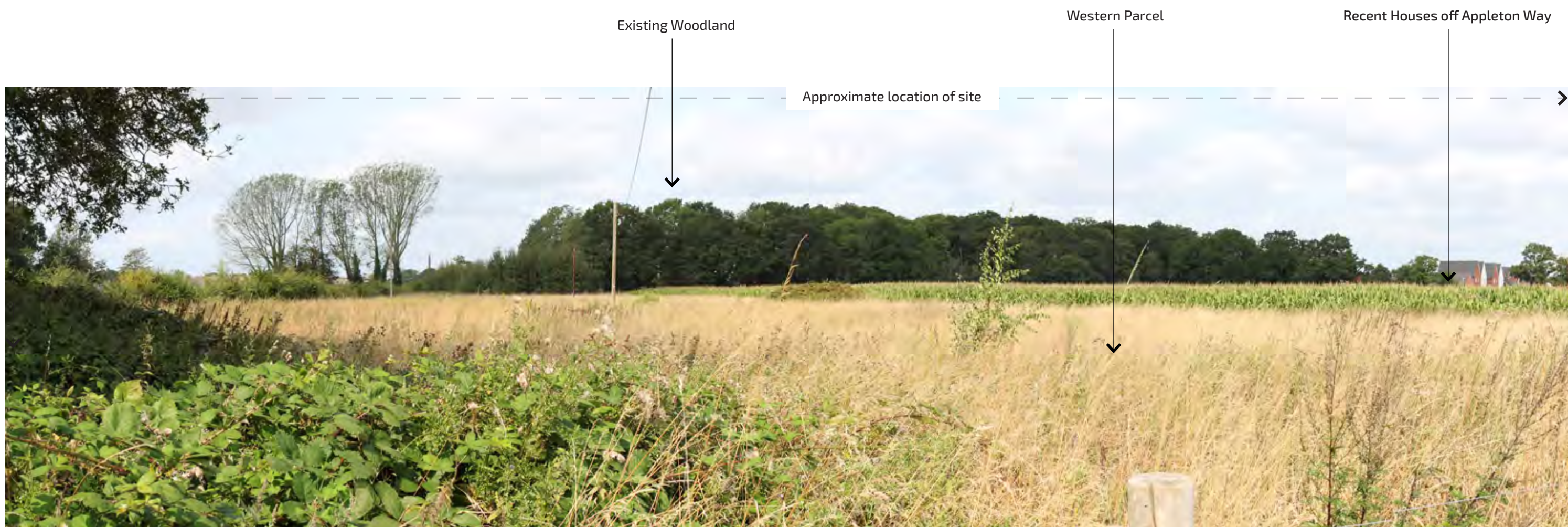


Photo Viewpoint 6: View north west from footpath that runs along the western parcels eastern boundary.



Photo Viewpoint 6: Continued

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t: 01509 672772 e: mail@fpcr.co.uk w: www.fpcr.co.uk



Photo Viewpoint 6

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Projection: 'cylindrical'
Enlargement factor: 100% (when printed at A1)
Date: 26/08/24
Time: 10:43
Camera make & model, sensor format & lens:
Canon EOS 6D FFS, Canon 50mm Lens
Horizontal Field of View: 128°
Direction of View: 315° (bearing from North)
Viewing distance: To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

date	26/08/24	drwn/chkd	TW / MGH
client	Bloor Homes		
project	Land At Hyde End Road, Shinfield		
title	PHOTOVIEWPOINT 6		
number		rev	A

FIGURE 12



Photo Viewpoint 7: View south west from PRoW SHIN 14

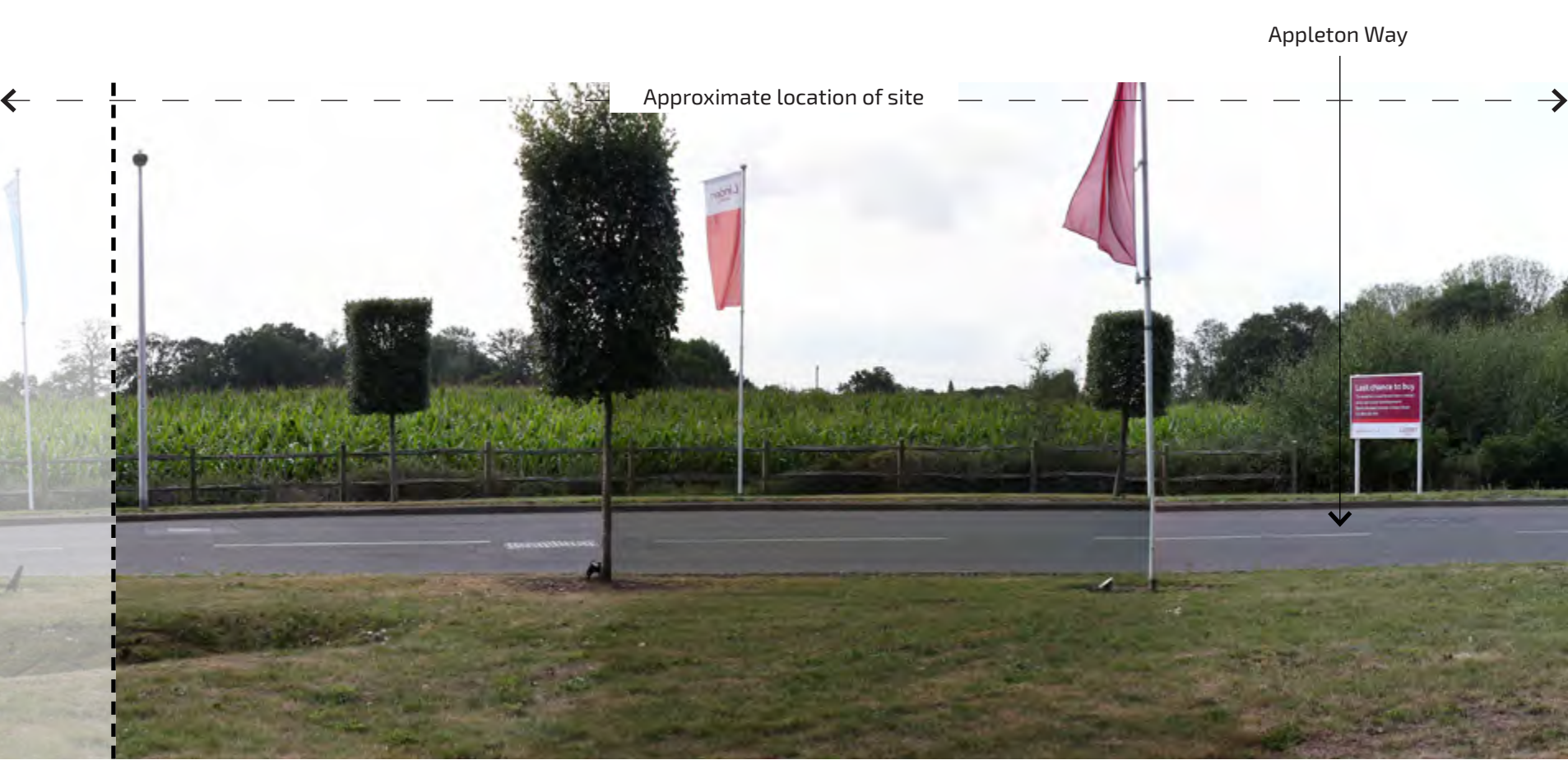


Photo Viewpoint 7: Continued



Photo Viewpoint 7

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Projection: 'cylindrical'
Enlargement factor: 100% (when printed at A1)
Date: 26/08/24
Time: 11:16
Camera make & model, sensor format & lens:
Canon EOS 6D FFS, Canon 50mm Lens
Horizontal Field of View: 132°
Direction of View: 135° (bearing from North)
Viewing distance: To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

date
26/08/24

drwn/chkd
TW / MGH

client
Bloor Homes

project
**Land At Hyde End Road,
Shinfield**

title
PHOTOVIEWPOINT 7

number
FIGURE 13

rev
A

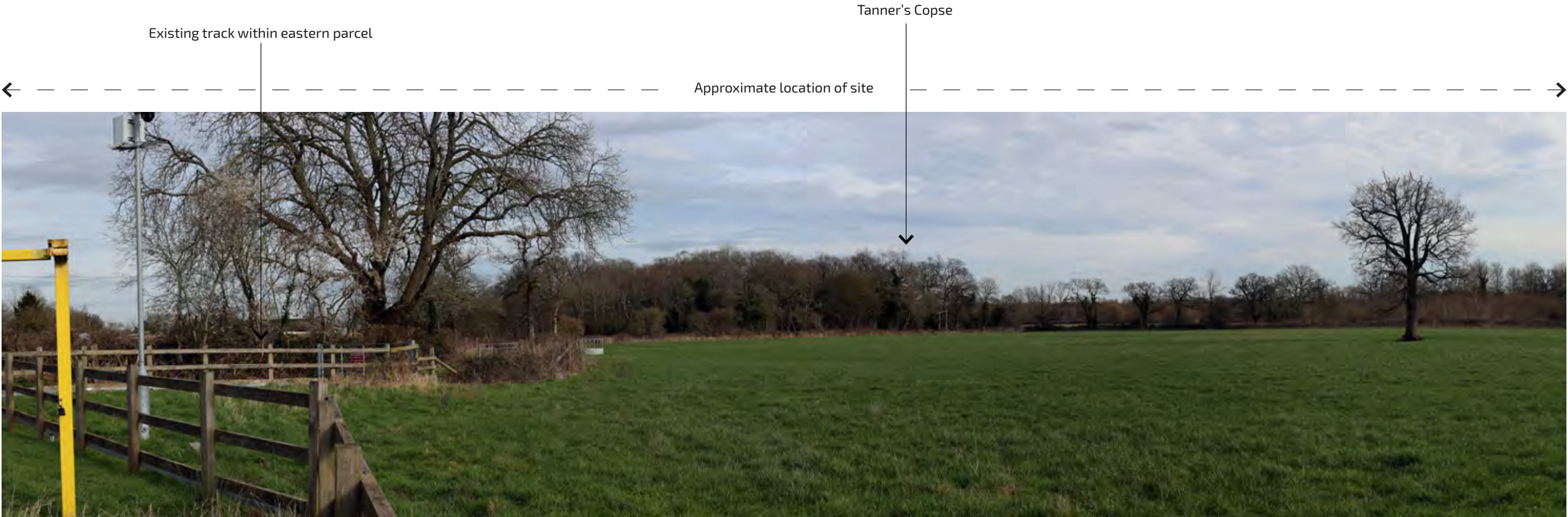


Photo Viewpoint 8: View east from SANG car park



Photo Viewpoint 8: Continued



Photo Viewpoint 8

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Projection: 'cylindrical'
Enlargement factor: 100% (when printed at A1)
Date: 27/02/24
Time: 14:16
Camera make & model, sensor format & lens:
Canon EOS 6D FFS, Canon 50mm Lens
Horizontal Field of View: 94°
Direction of View: 135° (bearing from North)
Viewing distance: To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

date
26/08/24

drwn/chkd
TW / MGH

client
Bloor Homes

project
**Land At Hyde End Road,
Shinfield**

title
PHOTOVIEWPOINT 8

number

FIGURE 14

rev
A

Appendix A

Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Methodology and Assessment Criteria

Introduction

- 1.1 The methodology for the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) undertaken for the proposed development is detailed in the LVA report. The following information should be read in conjunction with this methodology.
- 1.2 As advised in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) (GLVIA3), the judgements made in respect of both landscape and visual effects are a combination of an assessment of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the landscape or visual effect. The following details the definitions and criteria used in assessing sensitivity and magnitude for landscape and visual receptors.
- 1.3 Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement may be described as High/ Medium or Moderate/ Minor etc. This indicates that the assessment lies between the respective definitions or encompasses aspects of both.

Landscape

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.4 Landscape receptors are assessed in terms of their 'Landscape Sensitivity'. This combines judgements on the value to be attached to the landscape and the susceptibility to change of the landscape from the type of change or development proposed. The definition and criteria adopted for these contributory factors is detailed below.
- 1.5 There can be complex relationships between the value attached to landscape receptors and their susceptibility to change which can be especially important when considering change within or close to designated landscapes. For example, an internationally, nationally or locally valued landscape does not automatically or by definition have a high susceptibility to all types of change. The type of change or development proposed may not compromise the specific basis for the value attached to the landscape.

Landscape Value

- 1.6 Value can apply to a landscape area as a whole, or to the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. The following criteria have been used to categorise landscape value. Where there is no clear existing evidence on landscape value, an assessment is made based on the criteria/ factors identified below (based on the guidance in the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 "Assessing landscape value outside national designations", (which provides more up to date guidance than Box 5.1 of GLVIA3)).
 - Natural Heritage
 - Cultural Heritage
 - Landscape Condition
 - Associations
 - Distinctiveness
 - Recreational
 - Perceptual (scenic)
 - Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity)
 - Functional

Landscape Value	Definition
High	Landscape receptors of high importance based upon factors of natural and cultural heritage, condition, associations, distinctiveness, recreational value, perceptual qualities and functional aspects.
Medium	Landscape receptors of medium importance based upon factors of natural and cultural heritage, condition, associations, distinctiveness, recreational value, perceptual qualities and functional aspects.
Low	Landscape receptors of low importance based upon factors of natural and cultural heritage, condition, associations, distinctiveness, recreational value, perceptual qualities and functional aspects.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

- 1.7 This means the ability of the landscape receptor (overall character type/ area or individual element/ feature) to accommodate the change (i.e. the proposed development) without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline position and/ or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies. The definition and criteria for the assessment of Landscape Susceptibility to Change is as follows:

Landscape Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	A highly distinctive and cohesive landscape receptor, with positive characteristics and features with no or very few detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features intact and in very good condition and/ or rare. Limited capacity to accept the type of change/ development proposed.
Medium	Distinctive and more commonplace landscape receptor, with some positive characteristics/ features and some detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features in moderate condition. Capacity to accept well planned and designed change/ development of the type proposed.
Low	Landscape receptor of mixed character with a lack of coherence and including detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features that may be in poor or improving condition and few that could not be replaced. Greater capacity to accept the type of change/ development proposed.

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

- 1.8 The magnitude of landscape effects is the degree of change to the landscape receptor in terms of its size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The table below sets out the categories and criteria adopted in respect of the separate considerations of Scale or Size of the Degree of Change, Reversibility the geographical extent and duration of change are described where relevant in the appraisal.

Scale or Size of the Degree of Landscape Change

Scale or Size of the Degree of Landscape Change	Definition
High	Total loss of or substantial alteration to key characteristics / features and the introduction of new elements totally uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be fundamentally changed.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key characteristics / features and the introduction of new elements that would be evident but not necessarily uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be obviously changed.
Low	Limited loss of, or alteration to one or more key characteristics/ features and the introduction of new elements evident and/ or characteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be perceptibly changed.
Negligible	Very minor alteration to one or more key characteristics/ features and the introduction of new elements characteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be minimally changed.
None	No loss or alteration to the key characteristics/ features, representing 'no change'.

Geographical Extent

Geographical extent	Definition
Extensive	Notable change to an extensive proportion of the geographic area.
Moderate	Notable change to part of the geographic area.
Minimal	Change over a limited part of the geographic area.
Negligible	Change over a very limited part of the geographical area.

Duration

Duration	Definition
Short term	The change will occur for up to 5 years.
Medium Term	The change will occur for between 5 and 10 years.
Long term	The change will occur for over 10 years

Reversibility

Reversibility	Definition
Irreversible	The development would be permanent and the assessment site could not be returned to its current/ former use.
Reversible	The development could be deconstructed/ demolished and the assessment site could be returned to broadly its current/ historic use (although that may be subject to qualification depending on the nature of the development).

Visual

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 1.9 Visual sensitivity assesses each visual receptor in terms of their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views. The definition and criteria adopted for these contributory factors is detailed below.

Visual Susceptibility to Change

- 1.10 The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of; firstly, the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and secondly, the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and visual amenity they experience.

Visual Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	Residents at home with primary views from ground floor/garden and upper floors. Public rights of way/ footways where attention is primarily focussed on the landscape and on particular views. Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and/ or on particular views. Communities where views make an important contribution to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents. Travellers on recognised scenic routes.
Medium	Residents at home with secondary views (primarily from first floor level). Public rights of way/ footways where attention is not primarily focussed on the landscape and/ or particular views. Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes.
Low	Users of outdoor recreational facilities where the view is less important to the activities (e.g. sports pitches). Travellers on road, rail or other transport where views are primarily focussed on the transport route. People at their place of work where views of the landscape are not important to the quality of the working life.

Value of Views

- 1.11 The value attached to a view takes account of any recognition attached to a particular view and/ or any indicators of the value attached to views, for example through guidebooks or defined viewpoints or references in literature or art.

Value of Views	Definition
High	A unique or identified view (e.g. shown as such on Ordnance Survey map, guidebook or tourist map) or one noted in literature or art. A view where a heritage asset makes an important contribution to the view.
Medium	A typical and/ or representative view from a particular receptor.
Low	An undistinguished or unremarkable view from a particular receptor.

Magnitude of Visual Effects

- 1.12 Magnitude of Visual Effects evaluates each of the visual effects in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The table below sets out the categories and criteria adopted in respect of the Scale or Size (including the degree of contrast) of Visual Change. The distance and nature of the view and whether the receptor's view will be stationary or moving are also detailed in the Visual Effects Table.

Scale or Size of the Degree of Visual Change	Definition
High	The proposal will result in a large and immediately apparent change in the view, being a dominant and new and/ or incongruous feature in the landscape.
Medium	The proposal will result in an obvious and recognisable change in the view and will be readily noticed by the viewer.
Low	The proposal will constitute a minor component of the wider view or a more recognisable component that reflects those apparent in the existing view. Awareness of the proposals will not have a marked effect on the overall nature of the view.
Negligible/ None	Only a very small part of the proposal will be discernible and it will have very little or no effect on the nature of the view.

Level of Effect

- 1.13 The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement is formed from a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the assessment criteria.
- 1.14 GLVIA3 notes, at paragraphs 5.56 and 6.44, that there are no hard and fast rules with regard to the level of effects, therefore the following descriptive thresholds have been used for this appraisal:
- **Major**
 - **Moderate**
 - **Minor**
 - **Negligible**
- 1.15 Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement may be described as, for example, Major/ Moderate or Moderate/ Minor. This indicates that the effect is assessed to lie between the respective definitions or to encompass aspects of both.

APPENDIX B: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
National Level									
National Character Area (NCA) 129, Thames Basin Heaths	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>The Site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 129, "Thames Basin Heaths," characterised by heathland, woodland, small to medium-sized fields, ancient woods, hedgerows, and historic parklands. Historic features such as veteran trees and ancient woods reflect the legacy of hunting forests. The rural character is enhanced by winding lanes, historic villages, and farmsteads.</p> <p>The SEOs for NCA 129 emphasise protecting historic habitats like heathland, ancient woodland, and meadows, and enhancing green infrastructure for recreation, wildlife, and climate resilience, particularly near settlements like Reading.</p> <p>The proposed development replaces two parcels of semi-rural and urban land with an agricultural character. The design retains key landscape features, including hedgerows, field boundaries, and veteran trees, aligning with SEO objectives. The proposal also reflects the scale, appearance, and layout of surrounding context to the north of the parcels, namely the recent development off Appleton Way, minimising contrasts with the wider landscape or bringing any uncharacteristic elements into the receiving landscape</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
District Level									
Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment (LUC, 2019). J3 - Spencers Wood Settled and Farmed Clay	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: Medium / Low Completion: Low Year 15: Low	No	<p>This LCA is characterised by large arable fields, pasture, intact hedgerow networks, hedgerow oaks, scattered woodlands, and historic parklands. This landscape is in good condition but faces pressures from urbanisation, transport corridors, and residential development, which threaten its rural character and may cause settlement coalescence.</p> <p>The proposed development will transform two farmland parcels into residential use, complementing the adjacent residential area to the north. The design conserves key landscape features, including hedgerows, mature and veteran trees, and woodlands, while integrating with the Langley Mead SANG to the south and east. This SANG helps contain urban expansion and mitigates coalescence with Spencer's Wood.</p> <p>Boundary vegetation will be retained and supplemented with new planting to soften views and integrate the development into the local character. The scale, density, and appearance of the dwellings reflect the nearby Appleton Way development, ensuring consistency with the surrounding context. The Site is well-contained by existing woodlands, residential areas, and green infrastructure, and the proposal is expected to have minimal impact on the LCA's key characteristics.</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse

APPENDIX B: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment (LUC, 2019). A2 - Loddon River Valley	High / Medium	High / Medium	High / Medium	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 15: Low	No	<p>The eastern parcel of the Site falls within the "A2 - Loddon River Valley" LCA, which is characterised by a wide floodplain, mature broadleaved woodlands, riparian corridors, important wetland habitats, historic riverside features, and a sparse settlement pattern. It is a tranquil, rural landscape with views generally limited by vegetation.</p> <p>The proposed development respects the value of the Loddon River Valley by incorporating a landscape buffer to the east of the eastern parcel. This buffer strengthens the planting along the already mature, well-treed edge of the Site.</p> <p>Both parcels are more closely associated with the urban area to the north than the Loddon River Valley. The farmland lacks a strong rural character and does not reflect many of the LCA's key features. The Site is physically and visually separated from the Loddon River Valley by existing woodlands.</p> <p>Located on the southern edge of Shinfield, the Site maintains a gap of open land between Shinfield and Spencer's Wood. This area is largely managed greenspace or part of the Langley Mead SANG, ensuring long-term separation between the settlements.</p>	Moderate/Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Site and Immediate Context									
Site and Immediate Context	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium / Low Year 15: Medium / Low	No	<p>The Site is not subject to formal designations like National Parks or AONBs. It consists of farmland with mature vegetation, hedgerows, and veteran trees, particularly in the southern part of the eastern parcel. Surrounding woodlands, Langley Mead SANG, footpaths, and drainage features contribute to its character, urban elements like Hyde End Road and nearby residential development reduce its tranquillity.</p> <p>The proposed residential development can be accommodated without significant harm to the landscape. It mirrors the scale and character of Shinfield, with dwellings set back to respect key features such as veteran trees, woodland, and the Langley Mead SANG. The development reduces openness between Shinfield and the SANG, but this impact is minimal. The Site forms a logical extension to the settlement.</p> <p>Vegetation and veteran trees will be retained and enhanced with native planting. Additional street trees and landscaping will integrate the development into its surroundings.</p>	Moderate Adverse	Moderate/ Minor Adverse	Moderate/ Minor Adverse

APPENDIX C: VISUAL EFFECTS TABLE (VET)												
Ref	Receptor Type, Location and photographs (including approx no. of dwellings where applicable)	Judged Sensitivity of Visual Receptor			Judged Magnitude of Visual Effects				Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
		Susceptibility to Change	Value	Overall Sensitivity	Distance from Site Boundary (or Built Development where stated) (approx. m/km)	Nature of View	Is the View Temporary or permanent?	Size/Scale of Visual Effect (including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
A	Residents of Hyde End Road (approx. 12 dwellings) (VP4)	High	Medium	High/ Medium	Adjacent to eastern parcels boundary	Full / Partial	Permanent	Construction: High Completion: High /Medium Year 15: Medium	Photo Viewpoint 4 illustrates the connection between the Site and receptors along Hyde End Road. While it does not fully capture this relationship, it provides important contextual information. Desk-based study and on-Site analysis further supplement this and confirm that some properties along Hyde End Road that back onto the eastern parcel of the Site, have full views of the arable land beyond their rear gardens and fenced boundaries. Others experience partially filtered views due to existing mature tree cover; tree locations are detailed in the Arboricultural Survey. These trees currently soften and filter views of the Site from some of the dwellings along Hyde End Road. The new dwellings will replace open agricultural land with built structures, creating a high magnitude of visual change for residents without tree cover. Proposed buildings will range in proximity, with the closest approximately 28 metres from existing dwellings, while others are 40–50 metres or more away. Despite large rear gardens (approximately 30 metres), the new dwellings will remain visible, particularly where no existing vegetation provides softening and filtering of the view. By Year 15, native tree and hedgerow planting along the rear boundaries of existing properties will help mitigate visual impacts. These will soften and filter views of the lower parts of the new dwellings and filter views of upper parts once established, reducing the visual effects over time.	Major/ Moderate Adverse	Major/ Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
B	Users of SANG footpath (south of the eastern parcel) (VP 1)	High	Medium	High/ Medium	8m	Partial	Temporary	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium / Low Year 15: Low	From this location, views are dominated by a recently planted hedgerow running east to west along the southern edge of the eastern parcel, which will partially filter lower-level views of the proposed development. Mitigation measures include pulling the built form back from this boundary and planting groups of native trees along the southern edge. A green infrastructure (GI) corridor, featuring planted drainage features with numerous proposed trees within, will further enhance visual amenity and add character. As the existing hedgerow and proposed GI matures, it will improve its ability to filter and soften views along the southern boundary. For users of the SANG footpath, views of the development will likely be partial, focusing on the southern portion of the eastern parcel. Existing and proposed boundary planting will help filter and soften these views and reduce the overall effect from construction to 15 years post completion.	Moderate Adverse	Moderate/Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse

C	Users of SANG footpath (east of the eastern parcel) (VP 2)	High	Medium	High/ Medium	70m	None	Temporary	Construction: None Completion: None Year 15: None	The view beyond the immediate Langley Mead SANG, where this Photo Viewpoint was taken, is dominated by a dense hedgerow with mature trees and Tanners Copse, which runs along the eastern boundary of the development. This vegetation effectively prevents views into the Site from this location, providing comprehensive screening. Overall, the Site is not seen in the view.	None	None	None
D	Users of PRow SHIN 15 (VP 3)	Medium	Medium	Medium	180m	Glimpsed	Temporary	Construction: Low Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	From this viewpoint, southward views toward the eastern parcel are visible via glimpsed views at best; as the northern boundary tree belts and Tanners Copse largely obstruct views of the Site. Views toward the western parcel are entirely screened by vegetation and the houses along Hyde End Road. As such, only glimpsed views of the development may be experienced from this footpath toward the eastern parcel. The susceptibility to change is considered medium, as this PRow passes through Millworth Lane Recreation Ground, where users' attention is not primarily focused on the landscape or specific views. As no significant mitigation is proposed along this edge, there is anticipated to be no change in the overall level of effect from completion to 15 years.	Minor Adverse	Negligible	Negligible
E	Users of footpath that runs along the western parcels eastern boundary. (VP 6)	Medium	Medium	Medium	Adjacent to western parcels boundary	Full	Temporary	Construction: High Completion: High/Medium Year 15: High /Medium	The footpath along the eastern edge of the western parcel will be retained and integrated into the development, allowing continued access to the landscape south of the Site. However, the context will shift from a settlement edge/countryside interface to a more urbanised environment with housing, infrastructure, and soft landscaping. Susceptibility to change is considered medium, as the footpath is near Hyde End Road, where users' attention is not primarily focused on the landscape. The footpath and its associated vegetation will form part of the green infrastructure within the western parcel, with additional planting along the route and within an accessible SuDS system enhancing the walking experience. As no significant mitigation, such as bunds with structural planting, is proposed along this edge, the level of visual effect is expected to remain consistent from completion to Year 15.	Major/ Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
F	Users of PRow SHIN 14 (VP 7)	Medium	Medium	Medium	16m	Full	Temporary	Construction: High Completion: High /Medium Year 15: High /Medium	The footpath runs near the northern edge of the western parcel, slightly further north than Appleton Way. The setting will transition from a settlement edge/countryside interface to a more urbanised environment with housing, infrastructure, and soft landscaping. Susceptibility to change is considered medium, as the footpath lies close to Hyde End Road and recent housing near Appleton Way, creating an urban character where the focus is not primarily on the landscape or specific views. The PRow will have open views toward the northern edge of the western parcel, though these are not immediate. A proposed green infrastructure corridor, including planting, will help soften views of the built form. However, as no significant mitigation, such as bunding or structural planting, is planned along this edge, the level of visual effect is anticipated to remain consistent from completion to Year 15.	Major/ Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
G	Users of Hyde End Road (VP 5)	Low	Medium	Medium / Low	5m	Partial / Glimpsed	Temporary	Construction: Medium Completion: Low Year 15: Low	From Hyde End Road, which separates the parcels, road users will experience transient, filtered glimpses of the development, with clear views limited by retained vegetation. During construction, transient views of construction activity, including plant, hoarding, materials, and dwellings at various stages, will be visible. Upon completion, dwellings closest to the road will be partially visible through intervening vegetation, with lower levels screened by retained planting. These will be seen in the context of existing dwellings along Hyde End Road. By Year 15, proposed hedgerow and tree planting along the road frontage will help soften the development's appearance but is unlikely to significantly reduce the overall visual effect.	Moderate/Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse

H	Users of SANG car park (VP 8)	Medium	Medium	Medium	3m	Full	Temporary	Construction: High Completion: Medium Year 15: Medium	<p>Users will experience views toward the development from the SANG car park, with an existing post and rail fence and proposed hedgerow marking the boundary. The viewpoint is of medium sensitivity due to its location, where users are primarily focused on arrival and wayfinding.</p> <p>During construction, close-range views of activity including plant, materials, and dwellings under construction will be prominent.</p> <p>Upon completion, the nearest dwellings will remain visible. However, the proposed hedgerow and individual trees along the western boundary will provide some visual filtering and integration of built form into the wider green infrastructure setting. These measures moderately reduce visual impact but do not fully screen the development.</p>	Major / Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
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