

LAND NORTH OF CHISWELL GREEN LANE,
CHISWELL GREEN, ST ALBANS,
HERTFORDSHIRE.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

JULY 2021

FINAL REPORT_REV A

CONTENTS	
1. PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT	3
Methodology	3
Site visit and equipment	3
Landscape	3
Visual Amenity	3
Photography	3
Description of study area	3
Site location	4
Development description	4
Legislation, policy and guidance	4
2. BASELINE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT	5
Landscape, ecological and historic designations	5
Topography	5
National landscape character	5
Local landscape character	5
Site landscape character	7
Landscape condition	7
Landscape value	7
3. BASELINE VISUAL ASSESSMENT	8
Visual receptors and representative viewpoints	8
Viewpoint descriptions	8
4. IMPACT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY	11
Landscape Effects	11
Landscape receptors	11
Landscape sensitivity	11
Visual impact	13
Sensitivity of receptors and magnitude of effects	13
5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS	14
Landscape effects assessment	14
Landscape effects - local adopted policy	14
Visual impact assessment	15
6. MITIGATION	17
7. CONCLUSION	17
8. REFERENCES	27
9. FIGURES	18
10. VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHS	30
11. APPENDICES	42

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1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Document

1.1 Ubu Design Landscape Architects were commissioned by Virginia Properties, to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment of an area of land identified for residential development at Land north of Chiswell Green Lane and west of The Croft, Chiswell Green, St Albans, Herts.

Aims of the Assessment

1.2 This assessment seeks to assess the effects on the landscape character and visual amenity that may arise from the impact of a residential development on the existing St. Albans Polo Club site. The assessment investigates the landscape and visual issues relating to the site and its setting through a combination of desktop research and field survey work.

1.3 The assessment aims to:

- Establish a clear understanding of the site and its setting in respect of landscape character and visual amenity;
- Establish an understanding of the proposed development in terms of its relation to landscape character and visual amenity;
- Identify potential direct and indirect effects of the proposed development upon the landscape;
- Identify potential effects on visual receptors;
- Determine mitigation measures where necessary to reduce/eliminate any potential adverse effect on the landscape or visual amenity arising as a result of the proposed development;
- Identify opportunities for enhancement measures; and
- Establish the likely residual effects of the proposed development.

Methodology

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Guidance Documents

1.4 The methodology used to carry out the landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development is primarily based upon that set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment – 3rd edition 2013).

1.5 The process follows a standard approach, namely establishing:

- The baseline conditions, i.e. the character, quality, value

and relative sensitivity of the landscape;

- The type and relative sensitivity of visual receptors;
- The sensitivity to change of the landscape in relation to the proposed development;
- The predicted magnitude of impact that the proposed development would bring, allowing for mitigation measures, upon the landscape and upon visual receptors; and
- Assessing the significance of effect that would occur, by aggregating the predicted magnitude of change with the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptors respectively.

Site Visit and Equipment

1.6 A site visit was carried out on 28 June 2021, to undertake the assessment of the visual and landscape impacts of the proposed site. The conditions were slightly overcast, misty and drizzly.

1.7 The visit was preceded by a desk top study of landscape designations and analysis of the Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). Field work focussed on the site and surrounding roads and footpaths.

1.8 The assessment was carried out during summer when the deciduous trees surrounding the site were in full leaf. This represents the best-case scenario in relation to the screening effects of vegetation. The screening effect of the deciduous trees, hedgerows and under-storey shrubs will decrease during the winter. However the extensive surrounding vegetation also contains a large mix of evergreen species which will therefore retain some of the screening effects during the winter months.

Landscape

1.9 During the visits the site and local area were assessed through observation, recording of observations and through photographs. The assessment reviewed the site and local landscape features, character and condition, and the key views into the site.

Visual Amenity

- 1.10 The viewpoints used in the assessment were selected in order to:
- Determine the extent of visibility of existing built structures;
 - Determine the visibility of the proposed development, utilising the results from the ZTV to guide field work;
 - Gain further understanding of the components which

create the landscape character; and

- Carry out the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

1.11 The following types of viewpoints were investigated:

- Representative viewpoints (for example representing views of users of a particular receptor, such as a public footpath);
- Specific viewpoints (for example a key view from a specific residential dwelling or community asset);
- Illustrative viewpoints (chosen to demonstrate a particular effect/specific issue); and
- Any important sequential views (for example along key transport routes).

1.12 The potential visual receptors that would be affected at the chosen viewpoints include:

- Public footpath and cycle route users including pedestrians;
- People living in, working in, or visiting the settlement and the neighbouring properties and farmsteads; and
- People using roads.

Photography

1.13 Photographs were recorded using a Canon RF 50mm fixed focal length lens on a full frame Canon EOS RP 26mp digital camera.

1.14 Panoramic views were created by taking a series of overlapping photographs (overlapping by 15-30% as recommended in the Landscape Institute guidelines). These have been stitched together using Photoshop, employing the 'Realignment' method.

Description of study area

1.15 The study area for the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development is shown in the Figures and generally cover an area extending up to approximately 3km from the centre of the site. This is considered to be the maximum extent within which significant landscape and visual effects could occur for the type of development proposed.

Site location

- 1.16 Grid Reference: TL 12863 04678 (the approximate centre of the site). The site is located at Land north of Chiswell Green Lane and west of The Croft, Chiswell Green. It is currently utilised by the St. Albans Polo Club primarily for grazing and the occasional polo match.
- 1.17 The site lies to the west of Chiswell Green which is south of St Albans, Hertfordshire.

Development Description

- 1.18 The proposals are for a landscape led residential development that will provide a range of different types of accommodation to meet the local housing needs.
- 1.19 The development will sit within an existing robust landscape framework and the majority of boundary trees and vegetation will be retained providing a sense of maturity to the development. The proposals will introduce street trees, areas of public open space, hedgerows and boundary treatments which will increase the biodiversity levels and connect and enhance existing green infrastructure networks and wildlife corridors.

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

- 1.20 The landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken within the context of relevant legislation, planning policies and guidance documents.

Legislation

- 1.21 The site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt and therefore is subject to the legislation relating to the spatial designation. The implications of this are covered in Policy 1: Metropolitan Green Belt under Local Policy below.

National Policy

- 1.22 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides guidance relating to planning and new development in England and was revised in June 2019.
- 1.23 The planning principles of relevance to landscape and visual

amenity have been considered throughout the assessment.

Local Policy

- 1.24 The site falls within St. Albans City and District Council and within the parish council of St Stephens. St Stephen Parish neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036 is currently out for consultation and has not been adopted during the preparation of this report.
- 1.25 A new Local Plan 2020 - 2036 was published by SADC but was withdrawn in November 2020 following examination. A revised plan is being prepared, therefore the saved policies from the Local Plan 1994 have been reviewed as part of the is assessment.
- 1.26 The following are key policies that relate to the landscape and visual issues. The accompanying Planning Statement identifies key planning policy that are of relevance to the application.

Relevant Policies

- 1.27 Although the Draft Policies were withdrawn in 2020, it is reasonable to consider that they represent the direction of future policies in relation to the forthcoming Local Plan.
- 1.28 Draft policies:
- Policy S3 - Metropolitan Green Belt
 - L23 - Urban Design and Layout of New Development
 - Policy L24 - Development Amenity Standards
 - L29 - Green and Blue Infrastructure, Countryside, Landscape and Trees
- 1.29 Adopted Policies:
- Policy 1: Metropolitan Green Belt
 - Policy 69: General Design and Layout
 - Policy 70: Design and Layout of New Housing
 - Policy 74: Landscaping and Tree Preservation

- Policy 75: Green Space within Settlements

- 1.30 The LVIA has taken account of these policies when considering the sensitivity of the site and surrounding area within the baseline study. It has also made reference to the policies within the landscape and visual effects section.

2. BASELINE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Site description

- 2.1 The site location, Appendix A, illustrate that the application site is located at the St Alban Polo Club at land north of Chiswell Green Lane and west of The Croft, Chiswell Green.
- 2.2 There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the application boundary, although there is a network of nearby footpaths, bridleways and cycleways that run to the west, south east and north of the site.
- 2.3 These are demonstrated in Figure 1A-C. These will remain open throughout the construction and operational periods.
- 2.4 Access to the site is currently taken from Chiswell Green Lane.
- 2.5 The northern boundary is heavily vegetated and PRoW FP St Stephens 080 runs its perimeter. St Stephens FP 021 runs along the western boundary and Chiswell Green Lane runs along the southern boundary both of which are densely vegetated.
- 2.6 The settlement edge of Chiswell Green runs along the eastern boundary on the site.
- 2.7 There is little vegetation within the site with the majority of mature trees and hedgerows along the boundaries. The site currently is used by St Albans Polo Club for grazing and the occasional polo match, therefore the site is mainly laid to the grass with a track running the internal perimeter. There is a large agricultural shed style building located in the south of the site by the access point

Topography and Soils

- 2.8 The site is relatively level and Figure 6 demonstrates the topography within the study area.
- 2.9 Reference to the CSAI Soilscape Viewer identifies the site as being Soilscape 6: Freely draining slightly acid loamy soils.

Landscape, ecological and historic designations

- 2.10 The site doesn't fall within any local or national landscape or environmental designated areas, but is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The site is on the boundary of the Green Belt and the settlement edge of Chiswell Green.

- 2.11 There are no statutory or non-statutory heritage designations within the site boundary or immediately adjacent to the site. This is demonstrated in Figure 4 - Landscape Designations.

- 2.12 There are no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations within the site boundary. Figure 5 - Environmental Designations demonstrates the location of any designations within the study area.

National Landscape Character

- 2.13 The site lies within the National Landscape Area (LCA): 111 Northern Thames Basin (see Figure 2), as defined by Natural England, published in 2014 and superceding the previous Countryside Agency Character Area profile. In the following, key characteristics of the LCA are described.

LCA 111 Northern Thames Basin

- 2.14 Key characteristics of this NCA pertinent to the site context are defined as:
- *The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the 'Bagshot Hills' are notable to the northwest and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.*
 - *Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.*
 - *Areas capped by glacial sands and gravels have resulted in nutrient-poor, free-draining soils which support remnant lowland heathlands, although these are now small. Areas that have alluvial deposits present are well drained and fertile.*
 - *The water bearing underlying Chalk beds are a main source of recharge for the principal London Basin Chalk aquifer.*
 - *A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area.*
 - *The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.*
 - *The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting*

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

- *Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.*
- *The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.*
- *Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London. Landscape parklands surrounding 16th- and 17th-century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.*
- *The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.*
- *Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17th century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls.*

Local Landscape Character

- 2.15 Hertfordshire County Council in its 2000/2005 publication prepared as part of the part of the "Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment" identifies the site as part of the Landscape Character Area (LCA) 10: St Stephens Plateau as demonstrated in Figure 3.

LCA 10: St Stephens Plateau

Landscape Character

2.16 A working farmed landscape of predominantly open arable fields which slopes from north-west to south-east. To the north several large mixed woodlands create a local sense of enclosure. Elsewhere hedgerows are sparse with few individual field trees. The settlement pattern is dispersed, connected by a series of narrow winding lanes. The historic land-use pattern is overlaid by a strong network of motorways and junctions. Wooded horizons are common to the north, west and south, whilst to the east the built edge of St Albans and Chiswell Green is prominent.

Key Characteristics

- 2.17 The key characteristics are:
- undulating plateau to north, gently sloping to south east
 - medium/large open arable fields throughout
 - visually interlocking mixed woodlands to north
 - significant extent of motorways and interchanges with associated earthworks, lights and traffic
 - narrow winding lanes with sparse clipped hedgerows
 - built edge of urban settlements to east
 - dispersed settlement with scattered farmsteads.
- 2.18 Distinctive features
- Gardens of the Rose - Bone Hill
 - recycling plant at Longfield Spring

Visual and Sensory Perception

2.19 The area is widely visible from outside, including open views from the urban areas to the east. The scale of the landscape is medium to large. From within the area there are extensive views from the motorways, particularly the M1 and M10 (which is now the A414), but also from some of the narrow lanes on the arable landscape to the south. To the north the woodland provides a stronger sense of enclosure. The noise of the motorways is relentless and discordant.

Rarity and distinctiveness

2.20 This landscape type is relatively common in the county. The most distinctive feature is the wooded farmland to the north on the plateau.

Physical Influences

- 2.21 Land cover and land use. The pattern of land cover is the prominent feature of the landscape. This is characterised by extensive areas of arable cropping, particularly to the south, with few low or relic hedges. The proportion of arable reduces on the plateau areas to the north where historically it has been more heavily wooded. There is a good mix of deciduous and conifer plantations defining the open arable fields. Small areas of pasture are located either around farmsteads, e.g. Potters Crouch, or on urban edges, e.g. Chiswell Green, where other suburban uses are present, including recreation grounds and allotments.
- 2.22 Vegetation and wildlife. Woodlands are a combination of ancient woodlands, e.g. Birch Wood and Park Wood, and plantations, e.g. Potters Crouch Plantation. The main indigenous woodland community is acidic oak/hornbeam.
- 2.23 Many woods were replanted in the 20th century with a high proportion of softwoods, including pine and larch, in the core, while the historic deciduous edges comprising birch, ash, oak and holly are generally retained. Old pollard beech and hornbeam are found at Park Wood and on other historic hedgebank boundaries. Hedgerow species comprise a wide mix including field maple, beech, hazel, holly, hawthorn and dog rose. Hedges are generally in a state of decline with some only relic. The visual effect of boundary loss is less marked to the north due to the presence of the woodland blocks. Hedgerow trees are mainly oak with occasional ash, but many are mature and over-mature. A number of isolated oak tree rows within fields ghost the line of removed hedgerows.
- 2.24 Field pattern. The network of lanes, settlement and field patterns exhibits an organic pattern with pre-18th century origins. However, this pattern has been subject to considerable field amalgamation with the removal of hedgerows creating some large featureless prairie fields.
- 2.25 Transport pattern. There is a dual pattern of roads in the area. The historic lanes, which are relatively intact, are narrow and winding. Overlying, but distinct, are the major network of motorways including the M1, M10 (which is now the A414) and M25 and a large interchange.
- 2.26 Settlements and built form. The settlement pattern comprises a number of dispersed farmsteads throughout the area. There is one cluster of dwellings at Potters Crouch, but otherwise the area is sparsely settled up to the welldefined urban areas to the eastern and north-western boundaries. Most farmsteads are modest in scale and are of typical vernacular materials including brick, white render, weatherboard and claytile. A few examples of thatching are to be found near Park Wood. Holt

Farm is a medieval timber-framed and moated farm.

Visual Impact

2.27 The motorways present a strong built element in the landscape. The M1 is generally poorly integrated with little in the way of screen planting and a locally dominant influence of vehicles and lighting gantries. The M25 and the interchange with the M1 are better integrated. Despite their size, considerable earthworks and new planting reduce the scale of the feature and its visual impact. There has been some localised movement towards new recreational uses, such as the golf course at Potters Crouch west of the M1, although steep perimeter bunding to the M1 has done little to integrate the change of land use. The raw built edges of Chiswell Green and How Wood represent significant suburban impact.

Accessibility

2.28 There are limited opportunities for recreation within the area. Rights of way often pass through large arable fields. Open views to the motorways and the associated noise detract. Specific features of interest are the Gardens of the Rose at Bone Hill, the new golf course at Potters Green, Chiswell Green equestrian centre and public access to Blackwater Wood.

Community Views

2.29 An area of some contrast. The landscape near the M1/M25 interchange seems to be of little regard, whereas the distinctive conifer plantations around Potterscrouch and West Furzefield are valued by the community

2.30 Condition

- Land cover change: widespread
- Age structure of tree cover: mature
- Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: fragmented
- Management of semi-natural habitat: variable
- Survival of cultural pattern: declining
- Impact of built development: high
- Impact of land-use change: moderate

2.31 Robustness

- Impact of landform: apparent
- Impact of land cover: apparent
- Impact of historic pattern: relic
- Visibility from outside: widely visible

- *Sense of enclosure: open*
- *Visual unity: coherent*
- *Distinctiveness/rarity: frequent*

2.32 Strategy and guidelines for managing change: improve and reinforce

- *support the Watling Chase Community Forest in the realisation of its objectives for the area*
- *promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries where possible*
- *promote the creation of a network of new woodlands in the open arable landscape, particularly with a view to visually integrating the intrusive motorways and existing urban fringe development. Develop a mix of medium to large woods near the motorways and urban areas (developing the existing pattern to the north) and also smaller copses linking with hedgerow restoration on the open arable areas, emphasising topographical variation*
- *promote appropriate woodland management for existing plantation woodlands, including encouraging the replacement of softwoods with indigenous native deciduous communities, hedgebank management and re-establishing a rich ground flora*
- *improve public access arrangements to woodlands with attention to car park design and safety*
- *promote crop diversification and the restoration of mixed livestock/arable farming where possible. Include equestrian uses where feasible*
- *broaden the range of recreational opportunities*
- *ensure all existing and proposed recreational land uses include appropriate measures to manage and enhance the existing landscape setting and historical and ecological value. Particular attention should be given to ensure earthwork proposals complement natural landform patterns.*

2.33 The above key characteristics demonstrate that the overall character area contains a range of landscape features that are of varying value from rural elements to settlements. The sensitivity to change for the type of proposed development within the landscape character area is deemed to be **Medium**.

Site Landscape Character

2.34 The landscape character of the site's setting and context generally accords with the national and local landscape character assessments.

Landscape Value

2.35 The site lies on the edge of the Green Belt however it doesn't lie within or adjacent to any environmental or heritage designations. The site setting and boundaries are characterised by a flat topography with existing dense vegetated boundary that contains the site well.

2.36 The fabric of landscape within the site represents a polo club field with low ecological value as it is utilised for grazing with the occasional polo match, there are also no distinct landscape features within the site. The boundary vegetation is proposed to be retained.

2.37 The landscape value is **medium/low** to account for its location within the Green Belt and it is used as a grazing land and for the occasional polo match.

Landscape Condition

2.38 The current condition of the landscape elements within the site ownership boundary can be described as **low**. The total land cover is field used as part of the polo club activities with a track around the perimeter and associated out buildings. The site is bound by dense hedges and mature trees to the majority of the perimeter. There are no distinct landscape features within the site, only the dense vegetation along the boundaries.

Susceptibility to Change

2.39 The condition and value of the landscape generally accords the descriptions of the key characteristics of the national, regional and local landscape character assessments. There are no features or artefacts within the site that are of local distinctiveness, it contains no public rights of way and is not within a historic or a National Park or AONB therefore the lack of the determining features will result in a **medium** susceptibility to change. This accounts for its location within the Green Belt and the dense boundary vegetation which will be retained as part of any development.

Landscape Sensitivity

2.40 The sensitivity of the site to accommodate the change of use from grazing land and an occasional polo match to a residential complex with public open space is deemed to be **medium**. This is due to the description of the landscape condition and landscape value as described above combined with the susceptibility to change.

3. BASELINE VISUAL ASSESSMENT

Potential visual receptors

- 3.1 From a review of the ZTV in Figure 7 and a desktop study, a series of representative viewpoints were chosen to provide coverage of potential views of the proposed development from a range of directions. The potential viewpoints were then tested through field study and those where no visibility of the development could be achieved were discounted. The selected viewpoints are representative of a range of receptors including residential, recreational, cultural and transport.
- 3.2 A number of potential visual receptors were identified to provide a detailed assessment of the visual effects of the proposed development.

Recreational receptors

- 3.3 Potential recreational receptors identified included the following public routes, which run in the vicinity of the site:
- Public Footpaths and Bridleways surrounding the site including: Footpaths St Stephens 21, 80, 81, 82, 28, 39 and 12.
 - National Cycle Route 6.
- 3.4 There are a number of other promoted routes within the study area as illustrated on Figure 1C. However, the field survey demonstrated that there were no views of the site from these routes due to existing vegetation and landform or the distance was too great to distinguish the site. These potential receptors are therefore scoped out of the assessment.
- 3.5 The Gardens of the Rose is located to the south of the site and while it's currently closed it has been considered as part of the assessment.

Residential receptors

- 3.6 Residential properties and other buildings in view of the site have been considered including those on the western settlement edge of Chiswell Green.
- 3.7 The nearest dwellings to the proposed development are located on Cherry Hill and The Croft directly to the east of the site.
- 3.8 There are also a number of properties and farmsteads to the south, east and north of the site. Due to landform and the presence of hedgerows and/or trees on the field boundaries, it is anticipated that any potential views would be negligible. Site investigations revealed that views from these dwellings are virtually screened by intervening layers of vegetation.

Transport Receptors

- 3.9 Travelling receptors include those using major and minor roads in close to the site. In this case the only roads in close proximity to the site are Chiswell Green Lane, Cherry Hill, The Croft, Ragged Hall Lane and Furzebushes Lane.
- 3.10 Major routes such as the M1, M25 and North Orbital Road were also considered however due to roadside embankments and intervening vegetation it is unlikely that the site will be visible. It will also viewed in context of the existing settlement edge and views will be fleeting, filtered and therefore negligible.
- 3.11 Travelling receptors are considered to be low in terms of sensitivity to development.

Cultural receptors

- 3.12 There are a number of listed buildings and scheduled monuments within the study area, these are demonstrated in Figure 4. The field survey demonstrated that due to landform, vegetation and the surrounding built environment, the proposed development will not be visible to the majority of the cultural receptors.

Viewpoint Descriptions

- 3.13 Figure 10 identifies the locations of all the recorded viewpoints and Figure 12 demonstrates the viewpoint photographs.

Viewpoint 01

- 3.14 Viewpoint 1 is located on Chiswell Green Lane at the junction with PRoW St. Stephen FP082 and is looking in a north westerly direction towards the south eastern corner of the site.
- 3.15 The established hedgerow running along the southern boundary of the site at Chiswell Green Lane obscures views of much of the site.
- 3.16 Timber fencing which runs alongside the PRoW separates the site from this route and limits visibility, dependant on the location of the built form it may be possible to see roof lines above the timber fence when walking along the footpath.

Viewpoint 02

- 3.17 Viewpoint 2 is located at The Croft at start of PRoW St. Stephen 082. From this location the evergreen hedgerow which runs along the internal track around the polo field and much of the eastern boundary limits visibility into most of the site and separates it from the adjacent paddock land located off The Croft and Cherry Hill, which is seen within the foreground of the view.
- 3.18 Dependant on the proposed layout, it is likely that from this location, rooflines may be seen behind the evergreen hedgerow. Any built form within the paddock will be visible but there is an opportunity to introduce a landscape buffer or area of POS to soften views although it would be seen in the context of the existing settlement edge.
- 3.19 Seen along the skyline to the left of the view are trees and shrubs located along Chiswell Green Road at the southern boundary of the site, restricting views into the wider landscape.

Viewpoint 03

- 3.20 Taken from Cherry Hill looking in a westerly direction towards the eastern boundary of the site. From this location the evergreen hedgerow which runs along much of the eastern boundary limits visibility of the site and separates it from the adjacent paddock land located off The Croft and Cherry Hill Road, which can be seen within the foreground of the view.
- 3.21 It is likely that from this location, rooflines may be seen behind the evergreen hedgerow. Due to vegetation and landform views into the wider landscape are restricted.

Viewpoint 04

- 3.22 Viewpoint 4 is located on Cherry Hill opposite the start of PRoW St. Stephen 080 looking in a westerly direction towards the eastern boundary of the site. The footpath runs along the northern boundary of the site. There is a paddock in the foreground separating the Cherry hill from the site.
- 3.23 From this location the evergreen hedgerow which runs along much of the eastern boundary of the site limits visibility across the site. Dependent on the proposed layout, rooflines of the built form maybe visible above the hedge line. The vegetated nature of the public footpath that runs along the northern boundary of the site can be seen within this view.

Viewpoint 05

- 3.24 Viewpoint 5 is located at the playground to the north east of the site off Cherry Hill.
- 3.25 PRoW St. Stephen FP 080 runs along the southern boundary of the playground and is separated from the paddock by a timber and wire fence, occasional trees and gappy hedgerow.
- 3.26 The hedgerow demarcating the eastern boundary can be seen beyond this, in the middle of the photograph. In the backdrop of the photograph, planting along the southern boundary can be seen along the skyline.
- 3.27 It is likely that occasional rooflines will be seen from this location above the hedge boundary.

Viewpoint 06

- 3.28 Viewpoint 6 is located on PRoW St. Stephen FP 080 at the north east corner of the site. From this PRoW, the evergreen hedgerow at the eastern boundary limits visibility and screens views across the site.
- 3.29 Internal native tree planting can be seen rising above the evergreen hedge adjacent to the PRoW.
- 3.30 It may be possible to see rooflines of the proposed development from this location above the hedge boundary.

Viewpoint 07

- 3.31 Located on PRoW St. Stephen FP 080 along the northern boundary of the site, Viewpoint 7 looks in a slightly south easterly direction towards the existing settlement edge of Chiswell Green and the properties along Cherry Hill.
- 3.32 Hedging which flanks this PRoW route limits visibility for much of this route. However there maybe slight gaps in the hedgerow which allow glimpsed views of the site, however there is the opportunity as part of the proposals to infill any gaps.

Viewpoint 08

- 3.33 Located at the junction of PRoW St. Stephen FP 080 and PRoW St. Stephen FP 021 at the north western corner of the site, Viewpoint 8 looks in a southerly direction along the western site boundary.

- 3.34 The presence of a mature hedgerow and tree planting limits visibility for users of these PRoW and the there is no visual connection with the site. This viewpoint has therefore been discounted from further assessment.

Viewpoint 09

- 3.35 Located on PRoW St. Stephen FP 021 that runs along the the western boundary of the site, Viewpoint 9 looks in a westerly direction towards the site. The presence of mature hedging and tree planting limits visibility for users of these PRoW, although there are occasional glimpsed views across into the site in gaps in vegetation. There is the opportunity to infill any gaps as part of the proposals.

Viewpoint 10

- 3.36 Viewpoint 10 is located on PRoW St. Stephen FP 021 at the South western corner of the site at a field boundary gate and a gap in the hedgerow.
- 3.37 From this location glimpsed views across the site can be seen and the existing agricultural barn located at the site access point from Chiswell Green Lane on the southern boundary is visible.
- 3.38 Vegetation along the boundaries screen views into the wider landscape. Dependant on the proposed layout the southern portion of the site may be visible from this location, however there is the opportunity to infill the gaps of the hedgerow and screen any views.

Viewpoint 11

- 3.39 Located on Chiswell Green Lane Viewpoint 11 is located to the south west of the site. Views of the site are obscured due to the presence of dense vegetation found along Chiswell Green Lane separating the site from users of this route.
- 3.40 Therefore this location has been discounted from further assessment.

Viewpoint 12

- 3.41 Located on Chiswell Green Lane on the southern boundary, Viewpoint 12 is looking in a northerly direction towards the existing access point into the site. From this location, the existing agricultural style barn within the site can be seen behind an existing timber gate and fence boundary. Hedgerow and trees found alongside Chiswell Green Lane limits visibility for users of this route.

- 3.42 It is therefore unlikely that any proposals will be visible from Chiswell Green Lane.

Viewpoint 13

- 3.43 Located further along Chiswell Green Lane adjacent to residential properties opposite the southern boundary of the site, Viewpoint 13 looks in a slightly north westerly direction. Hedgerow and trees found alongside Chiswell Green Lane limits visibility for users of this route.

Viewpoint 14

- 3.44 Viewpoint 14 is located at the junction of Ragged Hall Lane and PRoW St. Stephen FP 020 and looks in a south westerly direction towards the to the northern boundary of the site.
- 3.45 Views of the site are obscured by the presence of residential development and planting within the landscape. This viewpoint has therefore been discounted from further assessment.

Viewpoint 15

- 3.46 Located on Ragged Hall Lane at the junction with PRoW St. Stephen FP 081, north of the site this viewpoint looks in a southerly direction.
- 3.47 Hedgerow and trees found along Ragged Hall Lane and within the landscape screen views of the site.

Viewpoint 16

- 3.48 Viewpoint 16 is located at the junction with PRoW St. Stephen FP028 and St. Stephen FP 044 to the west of the Gardens of the Rose. Vegetation within the landscape and along the PRoW routes limits visibility towards the site and this location has been discounted from further assessment.

Viewpoint 17

- 3.49 Located at the junction of Furzebushes Lane and PRoW St. Stephen FP 080, Viewpoint 17 looks in a easterly direction towards the site. Vegetation running along the PRoW and along Furzebushes lane limits visibility for users of this route. This location has therefore been discounted from further assessment.

Viewpoint 18

- 3.50 Viewpoint 18 is located on PRoW St. Michael Rural FP 012 adjacent to Square Wood. From this slightly elevated location to the west of the site, glimpsed views can be seen of the

site in the centre of the photograph. The evergreen hedgerow found along the eastern boundary with settlement edge of Chiswell Green can be seen in the background to the left of the view.

- 3.51 The barn found within the site can be seen from this location in the centre of the view, with vegetation found along the western boundary of the site.
- 3.52 The site is seen amongst a well vegetated landscape and most of the site is obscured from view by the presence of tree planting found to field boundaries in the landscape beyond the site boundaries.

Viewpoint 19

- 3.53 Located on Blunts Lane at the start of PRow St. Michaels Rural FP 012, Viewpoint 19 looks in a westerly direction towards the site.
- 3.54 Similarly to the previous viewpoint, the elevated location always glimpsed views of the site amongst the vegetation within the landscape.
- 3.55 It is likely that there will be glimpsed views of the proposed development from this location however views of the built form will be softened with the existing and proposed planting and it will be viewed in the context of the existing settlement edge of Chiswell Green.

Viewpoint 20

- 3.56 Viewpoint 20 is located on Blunts Lane at start of PRow St. Stephen FP 043 and looks in a north easterly direction towards the site. Views of the site are obscured for users of this PRow due to the locally undulating topography and presence of vegetation found within the landscape.

Viewpoint 21

- 3.57 Located on PRow St. Stephen Rural FP 036A - however the footpath route was directed around the edge of field due to crops at time of survey. Viewpoint 21 is looking in a easterly direction towards the western boundary of the site.
- 3.58 Views of the site are obscured due to the locally undulating topography and presence of vegetation found to field boundaries. This location has therefore been discounted from further assessment.

Viewpoint 22

- 3.59 Viewpoint 22 is taken from Noke Lane at start of PRow St. Stephen FP 028 and looks in a northerly direction towards the site. Views are obscured due to the presence of buildings at Noke Farm and vegetation found in wider landscape.
- 3.60 It is unlikely that the site will be visible from this location but will be seen within the context of the existing settlement edge.

Viewpoint 23

- 3.61 Viewpoint 23 is located on PRow Bridleway St. Stephens 001 and looks in a north easterly direction towards the site. Views of the site are obscured due to the presence of mature vegetation found along field boundaries and around Holt Farm, Little Daneswick and within the landscape to the south of the site.
- 3.62 It is unlikely that the proposed development will be visible from this location.

Viewpoint 24

- 3.63 Located on PRow St. Stephen FP 084 (Ver-Colne Valley Walk), Viewpoint 24 looks in a westerly direction towards the site. Views of the site are obscured due to the falling topography and presence of mature vegetation and built form found in the intervening landscape.

4. IMPACT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Landscape Effects

- 4.1 The landscape impact assessment considers the potential effects of the proposed development on the landscape as an environmental resource.
- 4.2 The sensitivity to change and magnitude of impacts on landscape receptors are classified and aggregated to determine the significance of effect. Table 4 indicates the assessment matrix used to determine the significance of the proposals impact on landscape receptors.

Landscape Receptors

- 4.3 The landscape receptors comprise the physical elements and combinations of those elements that are affected within the site boundary and by the setting of the proposed development.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.4 The sensitivity to change of a landscape receptor is reflected in the degree to which that area is able to accommodate change resulting from a proposed development without adverse effects on its character. This may be influenced by a number of factors including the physical quality and perceived value of the landscape in question, general visibility (influenced by topography and vegetation etc), scale (of both the landscape and of the development), and robustness of the characteristic landscape elements.
- 4.5 Landscape receptors are assessed in terms of their sensitivity by combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of development proposed and the value attached to the landscape.
- 4.6 Susceptibility factors are particular to the specific landscape and nature of the proposed development, and as such do not lend themselves to generic classification. However, Table 2 is shown opposite as an example of the type of assessment criteria employed. Judgements about susceptibility are tailored to the project and graded on an incremental scale from high to low.
- 4.7 Landscape quality refers to the physical condition and state of repair of the landscape, and its intactness. Landscape

Assessment of significance of effects

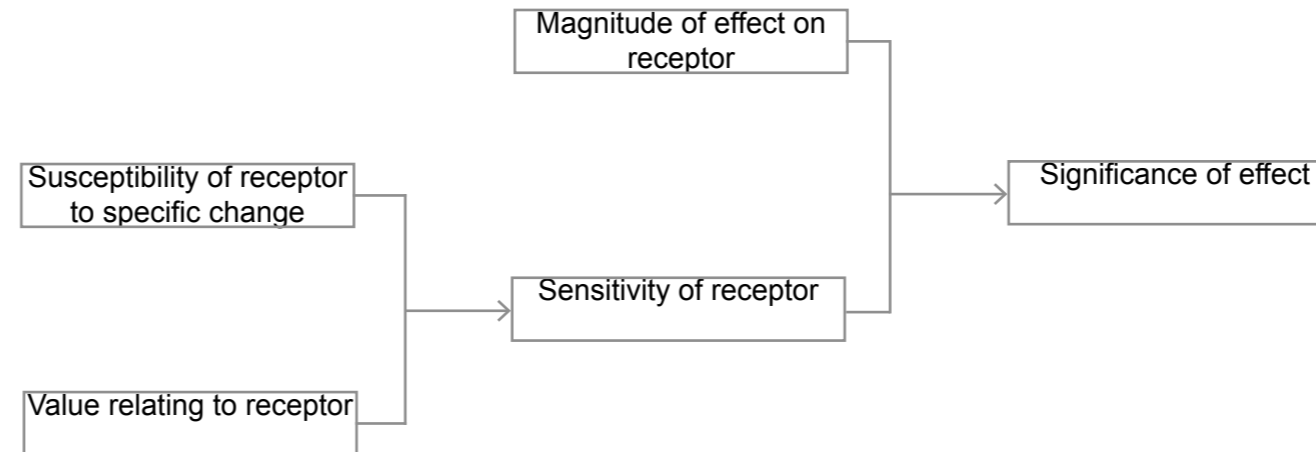


Table 1 - Landscape Receptor Quality/Value

Landscape receptor type	Quality/value
Areas of very strong positive character that are highly valued by virtue of their scenic beauty, cultural value. The quality and value of such landscapes is often recognised through statutory designation as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).	Exceptional/ Very high
Areas that exhibit a positive character with valued features that combine to give an experience of unity, richness and harmony. These landscapes may be considered particularly worthy of conservation and which may be particularly sensitive to change if dealt with inappropriately.	High
Areas that exhibit positive character but which may exhibit evidence of alteration, degradation and erosion of features. Also applicable to areas with degraded features but which remain well used/highly valued.	Medium
Areas that are relatively bland or neutral in character with few notable or valued features and/or evidence of alteration, degradation and erosion of features, resulting in areas of variable character.	Low
Areas that have been subject to substantial alteration, degradation, or erosion of features resulting in generally negative character with ample scope for improvement.	Poor/ Very low

Table 2 - Landscape Receptor Susceptibility

Landscape receptor	Susceptibility to change
Unique or nationally scarce features or elements having particularly distinctive characteristics; or mature vegetation with provenance, i.e. features within an AONB or other statutory designated area, ancient woodland or feature parkland trees, national trails or cycle routes.	Very high
Features or artefacts (e.g. dry stone walls) that are scarce at regional level; or are locally distinctive; or mature vegetation that is in good condition; or regionally important footpaths or rights of way.	High
Features or artefacts that are locally distinctive but commonplace; or mature vegetation that is in moderate or poor condition or is readily replicated; or locally important footpaths etc.	Medium
Features or artefacts that are regionally or nationally ubiquitous and do not contribute to local distinctiveness; or poorly maintained vegetation (e.g. gappy hedgerows).	Low
Features or artefacts that detract from landscape character such as obtrusive man-made artefacts (e.g. power lines, large areas of hard-standing etc).	Very low

value refers to the importance of the landscape to society, which may be due to a range of factors including its scenic beauty, cultural associations and tranquil or wild feel. Both are assessed on a five level scale as per Table 1.

- 4.8 The magnitude of impact of the development proposals on landscape receptors are assessed as per Table 3. The criteria take into account whether the change is temporary or permanent and also any contemplated mitigation measures.
- 4.9 For residual effects, planting mitigation measures are assessed at 15 years' post completion.
- 4.10 A significant effect is a Very Severe, Severe, Substantial, Major Effect and is highlighted in red on the significance tables. In EIA terms the Moderate effect is also considered to be significant but for this assessment we have highlighted it as amber to indicate it being on the lower threshold of significance. Minor, Slight and Neutral effects are not considered significant and are highlighted in green in the significance tables.

Table 3 - Landscape Receptor Magnitude of change

Impact on landscape receptor	Magnitude
Permanent removal of, or a significant change to, the characteristics of the landscape element in question that cannot be suitably replaced, reinstated or otherwise mitigated against.	Very large
Permanent removal of, or a significant change to, the characteristics of the landscape element in question. Limited scope for replacement, reinstatement or other mitigation.	Large
Partial removal of, or moderate changes to the characteristics of the landscape element in question. Also applies to complete removal that can be suitably mitigated against.	Medium
Small scale changes to a landscape element or loss of/change to a small proportion of an extensive feature. Larger scale losses that can be fully mitigated against through provision of equivalent replacement features.	Small
Very small scale changes to a landscape element or loss of/change to a small proportion of an extensive feature. The changes can be fully mitigated against through provision of equivalent replacement features.	Very small

Table 4 - Landscape Effect Significance Assessment Matrix

Landscape effect significance matrix		Sensitivity to change of landscape receptor				
		Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low
Magnitude of change	Very large	Very severe	Severe	Substantial	Major	Moderate
	Large	Severe	Substantial	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Substantial	Major	Moderate	Minor	Slight
	Small	Major	Moderate	Minor	Slight	Neutral
	Very small	Moderate	Minor	Slight	Neutral	Neutral

Visual impact

4.11 A visual impact assessment analyses the potential effects resulting from a proposed development upon the population likely to be affected. It assesses the change in visual amenity undergone by specific receptors that would arise from any change in the nature of views experienced.

Sensitivity of receptors and magnitude of effects

4.12 The relative sensitivity of each visual receptor as per Table 5 is determined by the combination of the susceptibility of the receptor to change and the value or nature of the view experienced from that receptor.

4.13 The magnitude of visual effects are also considered and quantified as per Table 6. Factors considered may include the potential for weather conditions to restrict views, the principle aspect of the viewpoint/viewer, the proportion of any particular view affected, the potential for the development to attract the eye or to become a focal point in the view to the detriment/benefit of competing visual elements.

4.14 Where appropriate a commentary is provided to justify the reasoning for the magnitude and sensitivity criteria selected.

4.15 Once sensitivity to change and magnitude of impact have been classified, the two are aggregated as per the matrix shown in Table 7, to determine the significance of the impact experienced by each receptor.

4.16 Visual impacts may also either be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive), or neutral (of no material effect). This is a subjective judgment based on the individual perceptions of the assessor and is not directly related to significance of effect. For residual effects, planting mitigation measures are assessed at 15 years' post completion.

4.17 A significant effect is considered to be a very severe, severe, substantial, major or moderate effect.

Table 5 - Receptor Visual Sensitivity

Receptor	Sensitivity
Public viewpoint of important cultural or aesthetic significance.	Very high
Public viewpoint in a recreational context with the expectation of a rural outlook. A valued community view or a development which changes the setting of a community.	High
Public view of less significance or a number of private views from principal living spaces.	Medium
Small number of private views visible from principal living spaces.	Low
Views from transport corridors, views from places of work.	Very low

Table 6 - Magnitude Of Visual Impact

Visual impact	Magnitude
A total loss or major alteration to the existing visual elements, features or characteristics of the view. The introduction of prominent elements of a scale, form and colour uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape.	Very large
Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the view. The introduction of prominent elements of a scale, form and colour distinct from the surrounding landscape.	Large
Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the view. Introduction of prominent elements that are not wholly uncharacteristic of the existing landscape.	Medium
Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the view. Introduction of minor features not uncharacteristic of the existing landscape.	Small
Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the view. Introduction of elements of a form, scale and colour characteristic of the existing landscape.	Very small

Table 7 - Visual Effect Significance Assessment Matrix

Visual effect significance matrix		Sensitivity to change				
		Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low
Magnitude of change	Very large	Very severe	Severe	Substantial	Major	Moderate
	Large	Severe	Substantial	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Substantial	Major	Moderate	Minor	Slight
	Small	Major	Moderate	Minor	Slight	Neutral
	Very small	Moderate	Minor	Slight	Neutral	Neutral

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Landscape effects assessment

LOCAL CHARACTER AREA

Landscape Type: St Stephens Plateau

- 5.1 At a local level, the application site lies within the landscape character type St. Stephens Plateau.
- 5.2 The sensitivity of the overall landscape character is deemed to be **medium** due to the balance of landscape value and susceptibility to change as described in Section 2 above and its location on the edge of the Green Belt.
- 5.3 Overall, the wider Local Character Area will remain intact with the general characteristics remaining un-altered as a result of the introduced development. The site is located adjacent to the existing settlement edge and the only landscape features which are along the boundaries will be retained therefore the magnitude of change is considered to be **small**.
- 5.4 The significance of effects at the post construction stage will therefore be **minor neutral** and not deemed to be significant.
- 5.5 The boundary vegetation will be retained and the planting that will be introduced as part of the proposals will mature over time contributing to the overall quality of the scheme and increase the biodiversity value of the site, connecting to the wider green infrastructure and wildlife networks. This will lead to a reduced magnitude of change from small to **very small** and leading to residual effects of **slight** beneficial.

Site features

- 5.6 There are no major landscape elements and features within the site as it is primarily a field and track around a polo field. The boundaries of the site are in general heavily vegetated and the proposals will seek for the retention of these. Therefore the sensitivity to change is deemed to be **medium**.
- 5.7 The characteristics within the development will undergo a **large** magnitude of change with the transformation of the current field to a residential development, however the landscape features along the boundaries are to be retained. This will lead to a **major** significance of effects which can also be deemed to be beneficial due to the increased quality of the landscape within the development.

Table 8 - Landscape Effects Assessment

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Post construction		Residual	
		Magnitude	Significance	Magnitude	Significance
Landscape Type St Stephens Plateau	Medium	Small	Minor	Very small	Slight, beneficial
Site features	Medium	Large	Major	Medium	Moderate, beneficial
Setting of the site	Medium	Small	Minor	Very Small	Slight

- 5.8 The planting that will be introduced as part of the development will mature over time contributing to the overall quality of the scheme. This will lead to a reduced magnitude of change from large to **medium** and leading to residual effects of **moderate** beneficial.

Setting of The Site

- 5.9 In general all of the existing boundaries are well vegetated with trees and evergreen hedges, with the exception of the paddock in the south the site is well contained. The boundary effectively encloses features within the site boundary and therefore the sensitivity to change is deemed to be **medium** which accounts for its location in the Green Belt.
- 5.10 The proposals seek to retain and enhance as much of the existing perimeter vegetation as possible with the exception of where the proposed access route may necessitate the removal of a portion of roadside vegetation to account for the carriageway and visibility splays.
- 5.11 The setting of the site will remain mostly unaltered apart from the access and therefore the magnitude of change is deemed to be **small**. This will lead to a **minor** significance of effects which can be deemed to be beneficial due to the introduction of native species within the development which will improve the general landscape condition.
- 5.12 The planting that will be introduced as part of the development will mature over time to provide an attractive setting to the development and contributing to the overall quality of the scheme. This will lead to a reduced magnitude of change from small to very small and leading to residual effects of **slight**.

Landscape effects - Local Draft and Adopted Policy

Local Plan Policies

- 5.13 The proposals forming this planning application will not have a significant detrimental impact to the local character of the landscape within the St. Albans City and District Council area.
- 5.14 The following is a summary to demonstrate that there will be no likely significant effects on the policies of St. Albans City and District Council.

DRAFT POLICY:

Policy S3 - Metropolitan Green Belt

- 5.15 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of the Green Belt are its openness and permanence. The proposed development site is on an area of land currently used as for grazing and the occasional polo match, which has a low landscape condition. The replacement with a residential development could provide an improvement and benefit in terms of the enhanced landscape and ecological treatments that will also be introduced into the scheme.
- 5.16 The site is on the boundary of the Green Belt where it meets the settlement edge of Chiswell Green. There is the opportunity to enhance the current hard settlement edge of Chiswell Green by creating a softer transition between the rural edge and built form.

Policy L23 - Urban Design and Layout of New Development

5.17 The proposals for the new development are to be well designed and of an appropriate and human scale that will respond positively to its environmental context and is efficient in use of land.

Policy L24 - Development Amenity Standards

5.18 The proposed development should achieve a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of both the new development and neighbouring buildings. The design will give high regard to privacy, outlook, aspect, sunlight / daylight and landscape quality.

Policy L29 - Green and Blue Infrastructure, Countryside, Landscape and Trees

5.19 The proposed development will provide an opportunity to enhance the existing green infrastructure as well as introducing trees and landscape into an area that is currently bereft of any valuable vegetation.

ADOPTED POLICY:

POLICY 1 - Metropolitan Green Belt

5.20 The proposed development site is on a area of land currently used as land currently used as for grazing and the occasional polo match, which has a low landscape condition. The replacement with a residential development could provide an improvement and benefit in terms of the enhanced landscape and ecological treatments that will also be introduced into the scheme.

5.21 The site is on the boundary of the Green Belt where it meets the settlement edge of Chiswell Green. There is the opportunity to enhance the current hard settlement edge of Chiswell Green by creating a softer transition between the rural edge and built form

POLICY 69 - General Design and Layout

5.22 The proposed development will consider appropriate materials and settlement pattern which will be policy compliant.

POLICY 70 - Design and Layout of New Housing

5.23 The massing and siting of the proposed development will be designed to provide safe and attractive spaces at a human scale.

POLICY 74 - Landscaping and Tree Preservation

5.24 The proposed development will retain the majority of the existing perimeter trees and hedges and furthermore will enhance these with supplementary planting to the boundary and within the site.

POLICY 75 - Green Space within Settlements

5.25 The proposals will introduce a number of linked green spaces within the development as well as links to the surrounding countryside.

Visual impact assessment

PRoW St Stephen Footpath 080 and 021

5.26 The site is bound by a PRoW network to the north and west that extends throughout the study area. St Stephen FP 080 runs the northern perimeter and St Stephen 021 runs the western perimeter and are represented in Viewpoints 6 -10.

5.27 As the photographs demonstrate even with the close proximity to the site the dense vegetation that bound the footpaths screen the site and there is little visual connection. Slight gaps along the route may offer filtered views of any proposed development however this can be mitigated by infilling any gaps.

5.28 Due to the dense screening along the route the sensitivity of the view is considered to be **low** due to the hedgerow restricting views into the wider landscape.

5.29 The proposed development intends to retain all the boundary vegetation in its entirety and infill in any gaps. The magnitude of change is deemed to be **small** as it is unlikely that a development would be visible from the footpaths surrounding the site.

5.30 The overall significance of effects is **slight**.

5.31 The residual effects will **neutral** as the full effects of the infill and any additional planting within the development mature.

PRoW Footpath St Michaels Rural 012

5.32 Viewpoints 18 and 19 represent recreational receptors along PRoW St Michaels Rural 012. This footpath is located to the west of the site. Due to the rural countryside location and location within the green belt the sensitivity is deemed to be **high**.

5.33 The magnitude of change from this footpath will be mostly **small** due to the distance from the site and that any development will be viewed in context of the existing harsh settlement edge .

5.34 The boundary and intervening vegetation within the landscape soften views towards the site and screen portions of field.

5.35 Therefore the overall significance of effects is **moderate**.

Table 9 - Visual Impact Assessment

5.36 The residual effects will **minor** as the full effects of the proposed planting within the proposed development has matured alongside further growth of the boundary infill planting.

Medium and Long Range Visual Receptors from PRow

5.37 The footpath network further afield has been considered as part of the assessment and have been tested through field survey and generally, little to no views of the development are achievable and therefore it will have no significant effects on these receptors.

Transport Routes

Chiswell Green Lane / Ragged Hall Lane

5.38 Chiswell Green Lane runs along the southern boundary of the site and is represented in Viewpoints 11-13. As they demonstrate the dense vegetation along the boundary restricts views into the site and the wider landscape beyond. Access into the site from Chiswell Green Lane may allow for a fleeting glimpse into the site and dependent on the proposed layout some rooflines may be visible above the vegetation in the south east of the site.

5.39 However transport receptors are deemed to have **low** sensitivity.

5.40 The magnitude of change is therefore likely to be **Small**.

5.41 The overall significance of effects will be **slight**.

5.42 The residual effects will be **neutral** on account of infill planting along the boundary and planting within the development maturing ensuring any proposed development is integrated into the street scene and overall landscape.

5.43 The surrounding transport receptors along Ragged Hall Lane (Viewpoints 14 and 15) and Furzebushes Lane (Viewpoint 17) have been discounted due to the lack of visual connection with the site.

Residential Amenity

5.44 Dwellings on The Croft and Cherry Hill that face the eastern site boundary are represented in Viewpoint 2 - 4. There are small number of properties that face onto the paddock in the south east corner of the site. Dependent on the proposed layout, they will experience a change of view in the paddock

Receptor description	Sensitivity	Post construction		Embedded mitigation	Residual	
		Magnitude	Significance		Magnitude	Significance
Footpath St Stephen 080	Low	Very Small	Neutral	Any gaps within the hedgerow will be infilled where necessary to reinforce the screening.	Very Small	Neutral
Footpath St Stephen 021	Low	Very Small	Neutral	Any gaps within the hedgerow will be infilled where necessary to reinforce the screening.	Very Small	Neutral
Footpath St Michaels Rural 012	High	Small	Moderate	Planting within the development and areas of POS and infill boundary planting to help set the development within the landscape	Very small	Minor
Medium and Long Range PRow's	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Transport Routes	Low	Small	Slight	Infill any gaps along the boundary and set any development into the site	Very small	Neutral
Residential Amenity	High	Medium	Major	Landscape buffer, street tree and boundary planting and areas of POS within the Paddock area.	Small	Moderate

immediately adjacent to the road, views into the wider site and landscape are screened by the evergreen hedgerow that makes up part of the eastern boundary and runs the perimeter of the internal track. There is an opportunity to introduce an area of POS or landscape buffer that would soften any views towards the proposed built form.

5.45 It may be possible that occasional rooftops will be visible from properties along Cherry Hill.

5.46 The sensitivity of the residential amenity is considered to be **high** to account for principal rooms facing the site.

5.47 The magnitude of change is likely to be **medium** as the larger changes occur will occur beyond the evergreen hedgerow and there are currently no views extended into the wider landscape due to the intervening boundary vegetation.

5.48 The overall significance of effects is likely to be **major** beneficial leading to **moderate** residual effects as the new planting matures and integrates the scheme into the setting.

5.49 It is unlikely that the site will be visible from any of the other surrounding residential amenity only those that lie adjacent to the eastern boundary. Therefore they have been discounted from the assessment.

6. EMBEDDED MITIGATION

- 6.1 There will be multiple opportunities to introduce appropriate mitigation measures that will reduce and offset identified landscape and visual impacts as described in the assessment in Section 5.
- 6.2 These will include retaining the existing boundary vegetation and infilling any gaps in the vegetation, providing a high quality landscape scheme that responds to the local character and enhances the ecological value of the site as well as increasing the aesthetic and recreational quality of the site. Setting the built form into the site around landscape buffers and areas of POS will also help to mitigate any visual impact.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application site is located at Land north of Chiswell Green Lane and west of The Croft, Chiswell Green, St Albans, Herts. The site is not within any environmental or a Conservation Area and does not contain any historic designations. there are no public rights of way that cross the site.
- 7.2 The site falls within the boundary edge of the Green Belt and the western settlement edge of Chiswell Green
- 7.3 The application site broadly consists of an field utilised for grazing and an occasional polo match, track around the perimeter, agricultural shed and heavily vegetated boundaries.
- 7.4 The development will therefore sit within an existing robust landscape boundary framework where the majority will be retained apart from where it is necessary to provide access into the site. There are no landscape features within the site as it is a field utilised for grazing and the occasional polo match.
- 7.5 The findings of the landscape and visual impact assessment concludes that there will be no long term significant adverse effects arising as a result of a proposed residential development and it can be considered as being beneficial due to the landscape enhancements that will be brought into a site which, apart from its retained boundaries, is currently bereft of any vegetation or ecological diversity.

Landscape and Visual Effects

- 7.6 The landscape and visual effects of the proposed development have been assessed and it has been found that they will result in a combination of minor, moderate and major beneficial and adverse effects at the Post Construction stage and these are reduced to moderate, minor, slight beneficial and neutral residual effects with the maturing of the planting introduced as mitigation measures.
- 7.7 Therefore, the overall conclusion is that the proposed development can be accommodated within the landscape character and visual amenity and is acceptable in terms of landscape and visual impact.

Landscape Effects Summary

- 7.8 The residual landscape effects will be slight neutral to the Landscape Type: St. Stephens Plateau.
- 7.9 The post construction stage will lead to moderate beneficial effects on the site and its setting due to the introduction of proposed vegetation and ecological enhancements.
- 7.10 Following 15 years growth of the introduced mitigation measures to the development the residual landscape effects on the site features and the setting of the site will be slight and beneficial.

Visual Effects Summary

- 7.11 The main receptors that will experience major significant visual effects at the post construction stage are those residential receptors in the immediate proximity of the site. However the layout and landscape buffers introduced as part of the proposals lead to moderate significance of effects as the planting matures.
- 7.12 Post construction, the visual effects on the recreational and transport amenity will comprise of a moderate to slight significance of effects.
- 7.13 Following 15 years growth of the mitigation provided by additional infill planting along the perimeter and within the development, views towards the site will become increasingly screened and any possible views will be filtered and softened.

- 7.14 Therefore there are no significant visual effects on the nearby recreational, transport routes and other long range footpaths.

Local Policy

- 7.15 The development proposals are in accordance with St. Albans City and District Council's Local Plan policies regarding landscape and the Countryside. A proposed development will not have a significant detrimental impact to the character of the landscape as the layout, materials and planting will be designed to recognise and protect the local landscape and settlement within the context of the site.
- 7.16 Landscape mitigation features such as infill planting around the perimeter and within the site will enable the residential development to integrate into the local landscape character area, improve the immediate landscape condition and provide visual benefits to the visual amenity.

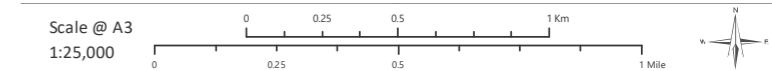
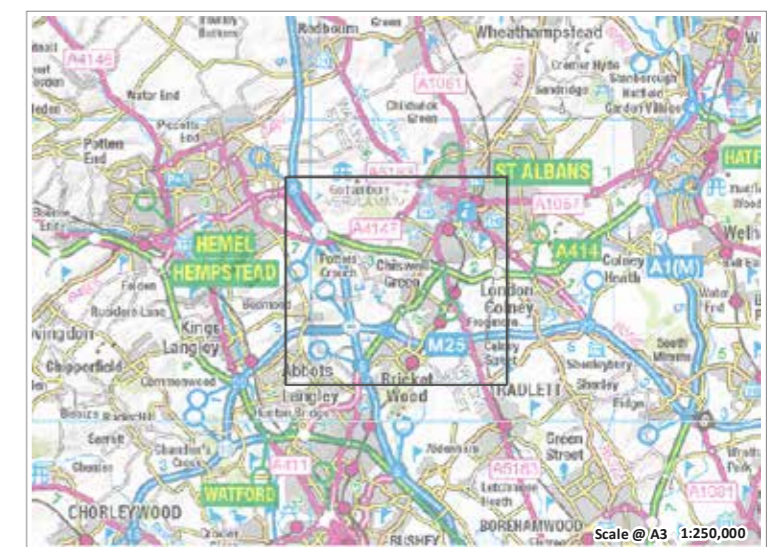
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- 8.4 Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/04 as Amended (August 2008): Use of Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Assessment. The Landscape Institute, 2008.
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Figure 1A: Access and Circulation -
 Public Rights of Way and Promoted Routes
 Scale 1:25,000 @A3

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Public Right of Way**
- Byway Open to All Traffic
- Bridleway
- Footpath
- Restricted Byway
- County Road



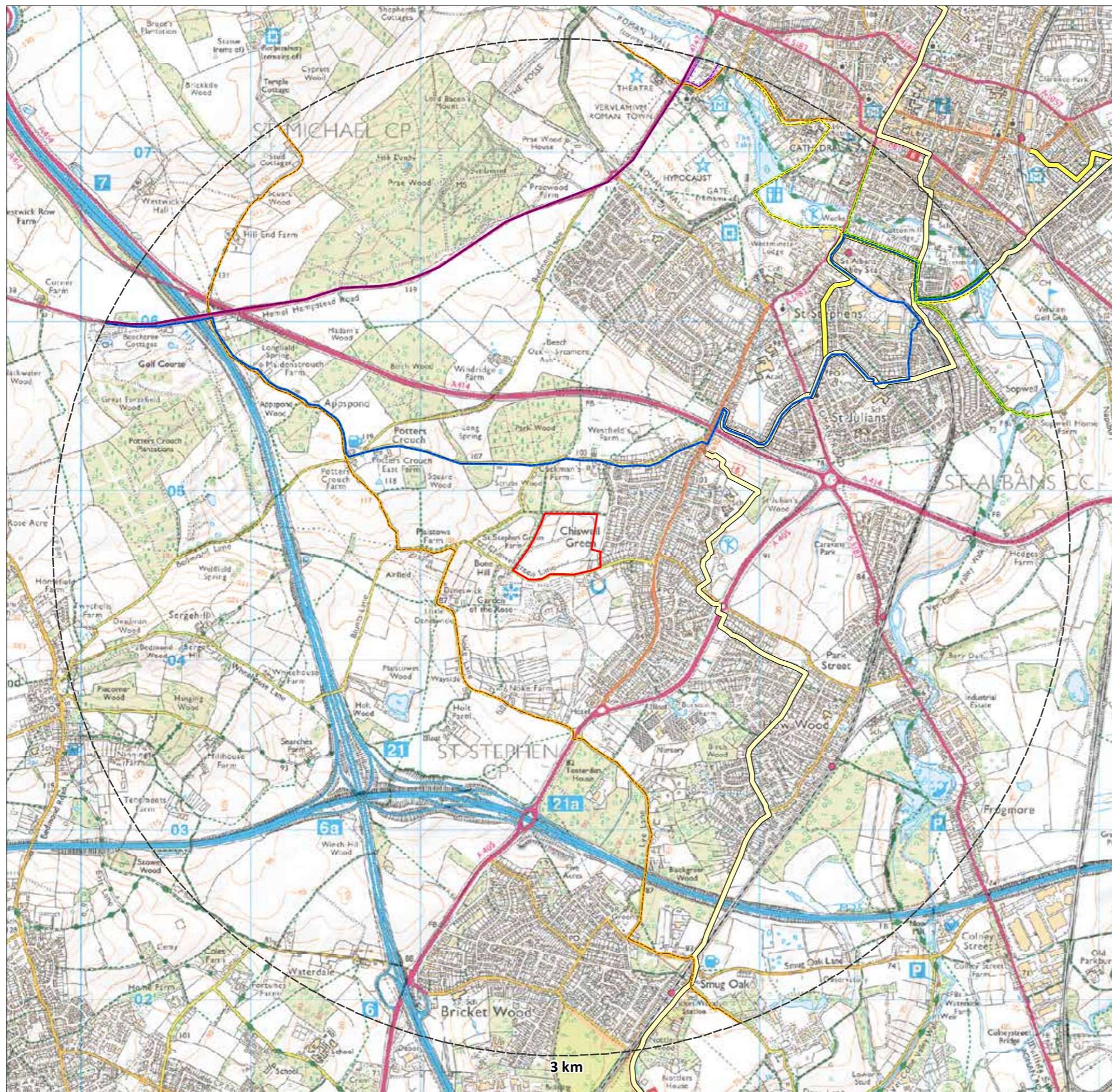


Figure 1B: Access and Circulation -
Cycle Routes

Scale 1:25,000 @ A3

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Local Cycle Route**
 - Smallford Trail
 - St. Abans Wheathamsstead - Harpenden Loop
 - St. Abans Circular
 - Circular via Harpenden & Welwyn Garden City
 - St. Abans to Ayots Circular
 - St. Abans to Fingest Oxon
 - Whetstone to St. Abans Loop
- National Cycle Network**
 - Routes 6 & 61
 - NCN Link Routes (6 & 61)

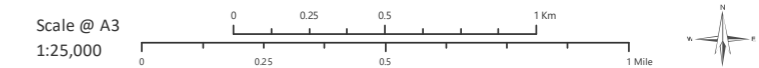
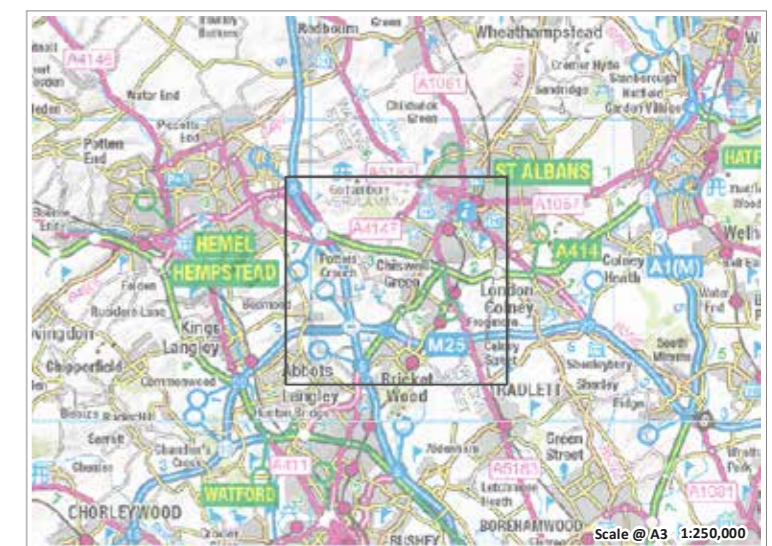




Figure 1C: Access and Circulation -
Regional Routes

Scale 1:25,000@A3

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Promoted Walking & Cycling Route**
- Abbey Line Trail
- Hertfordshire Way
- Hertsmere Way
- London Country Way
- London Green Belt Way
- London to St. Albans
- Queen Eleanor Crosses Way Walk
- River Ver Trail
- St. Albans Way
- St. Bernard's Way
- Ver Colne Valley Walk

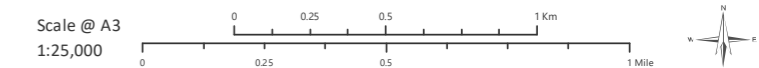
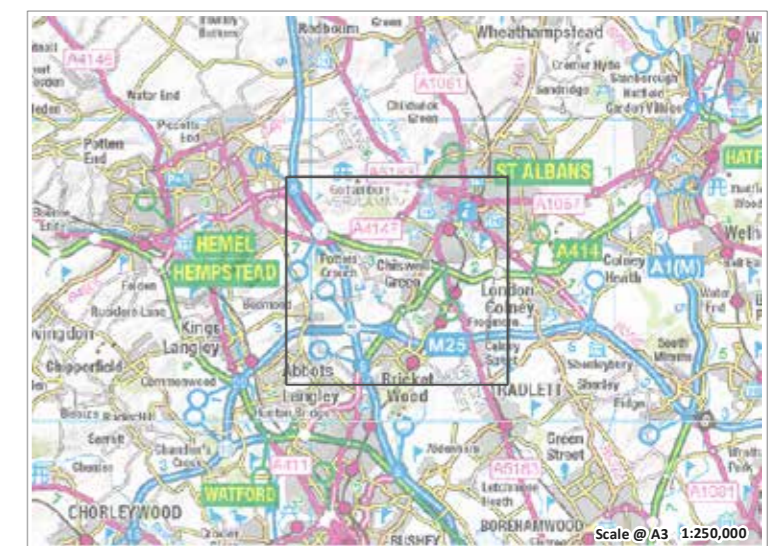
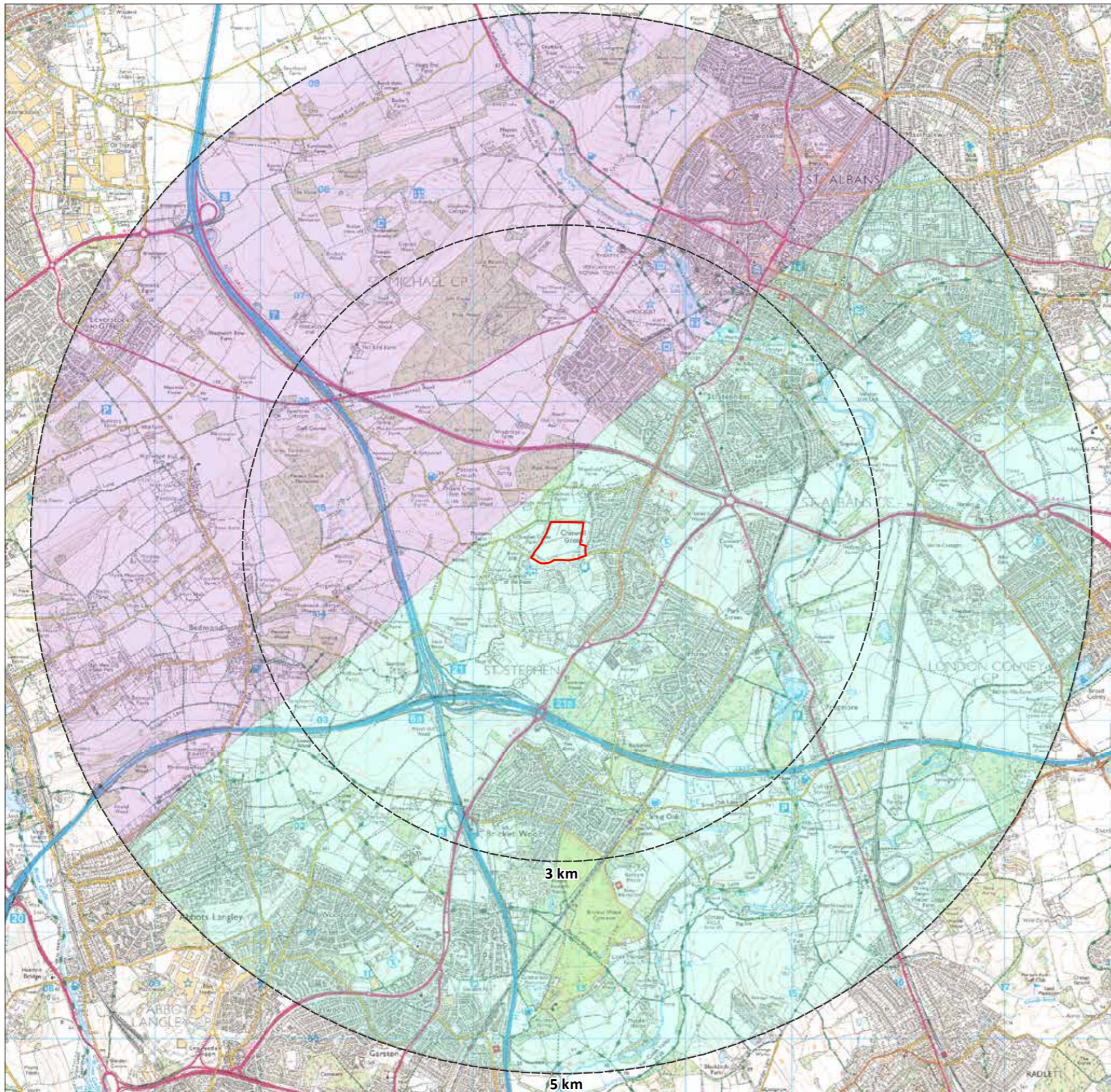
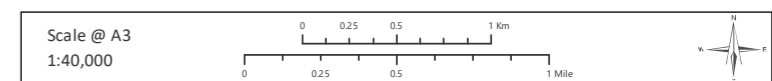
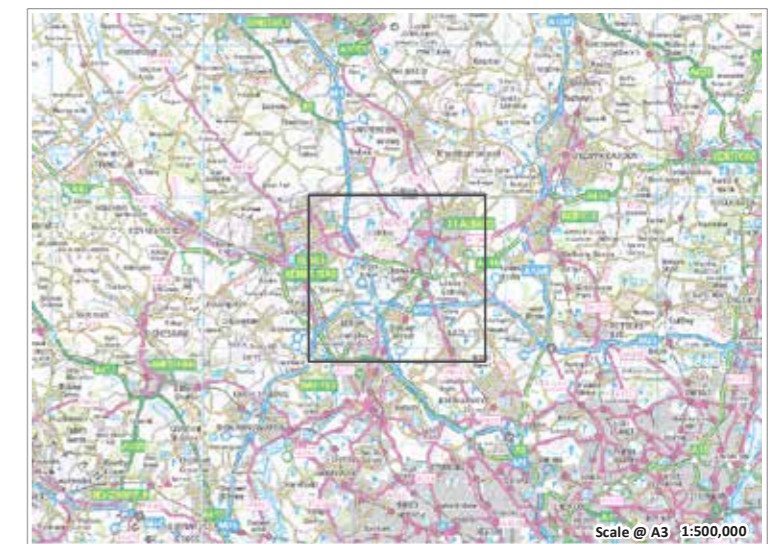


Figure 2: National Landscape Character

Scale 1:40,000 @ A3



- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- National Character Area**
- Chilterns
- Northern Thames Basin



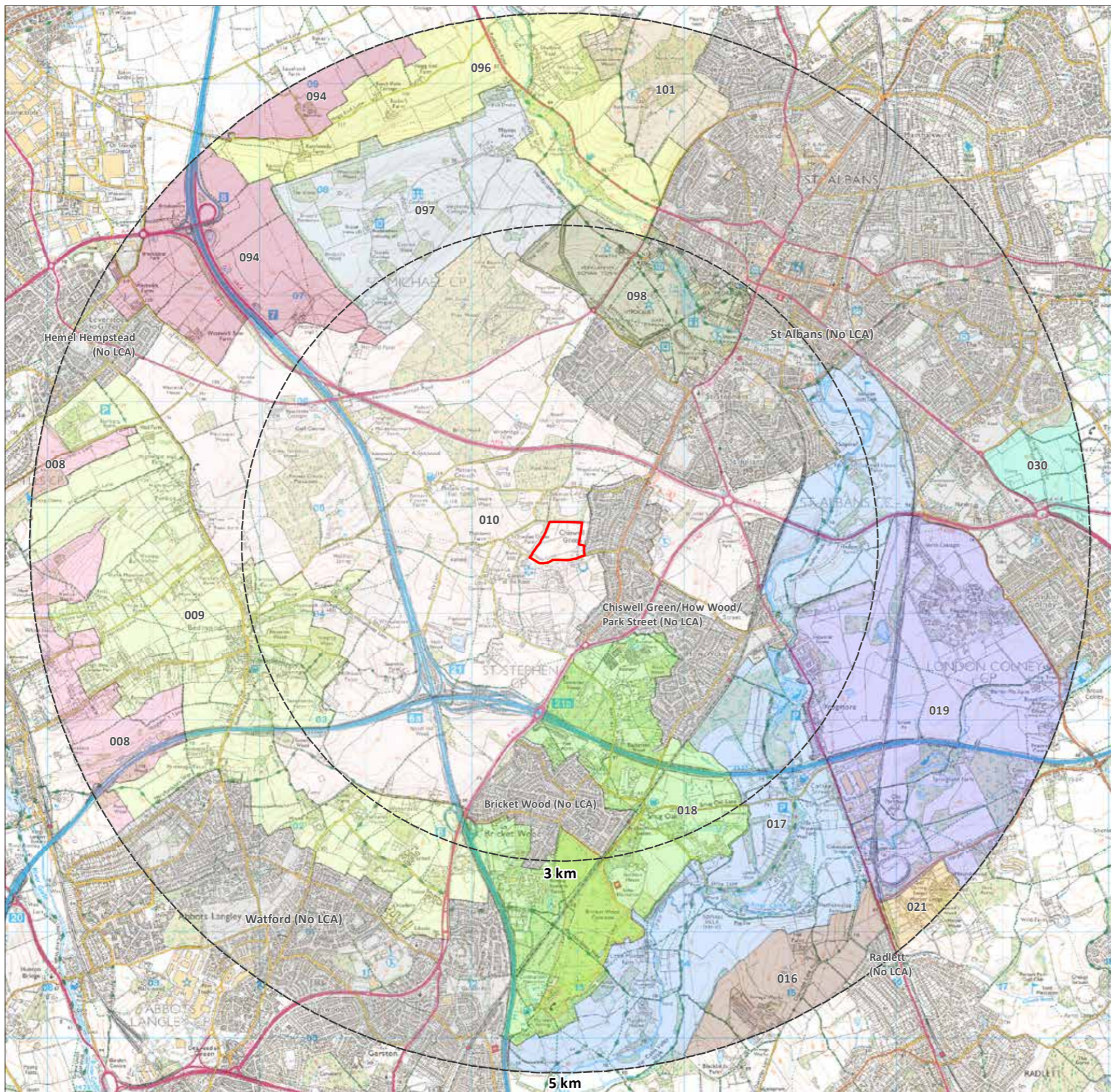
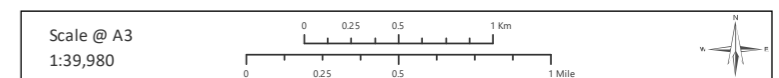


Figure 3: Local Landscape Character

Scale 1:40,000 @ A3

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Local Landscape Character Area**
- Aldenham Plateau (016)
- Bedmond Plateau (009)
- Bricket Wood (018)
- Bunfield Plateau (094)
- Childwick Plateau (101)
- Colney Heath Farmland (030)
- Gorhambury Estate (097)
- High Canons Valleys and Ridges (021)
- Urban Area (as labelled)
- St Stephens Plateau (010)
- Upper Gade Valley (008)
- Upper Vea Valley (096)
- Vale of St Albans (019)
- Ver / Colne River Valley (017)
- Verulamium (098)



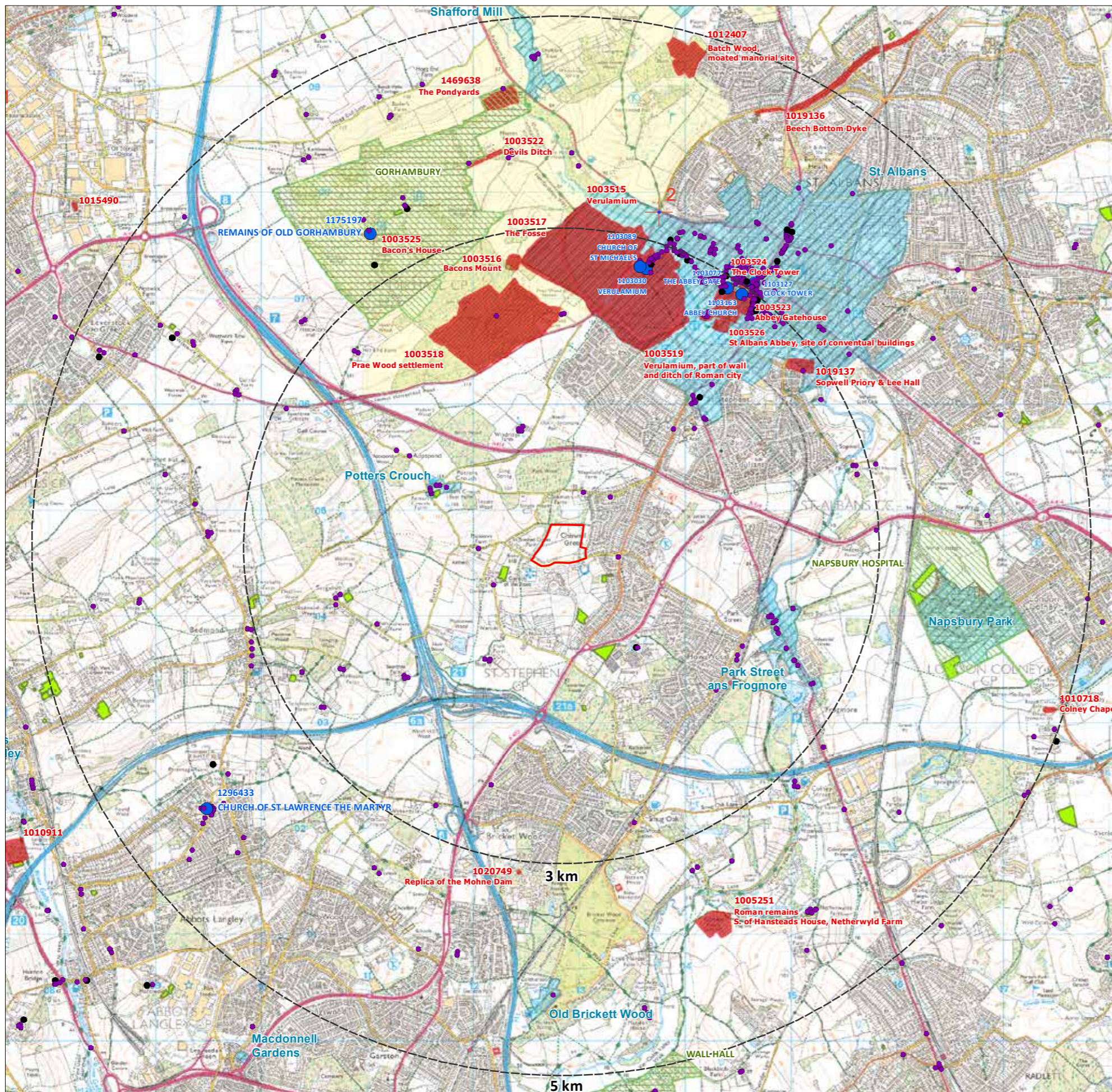
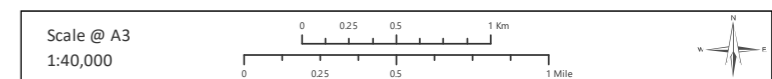


Figure 4: Landscape and Heritage Designations

Designations

Scale 1:40,000 @ A3

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Conservation Area
- Landscape Conservation Area
- Registered Park & Garden
- Scheduled Monument
- Traditional Orchard
- Woodpasture and Parkland



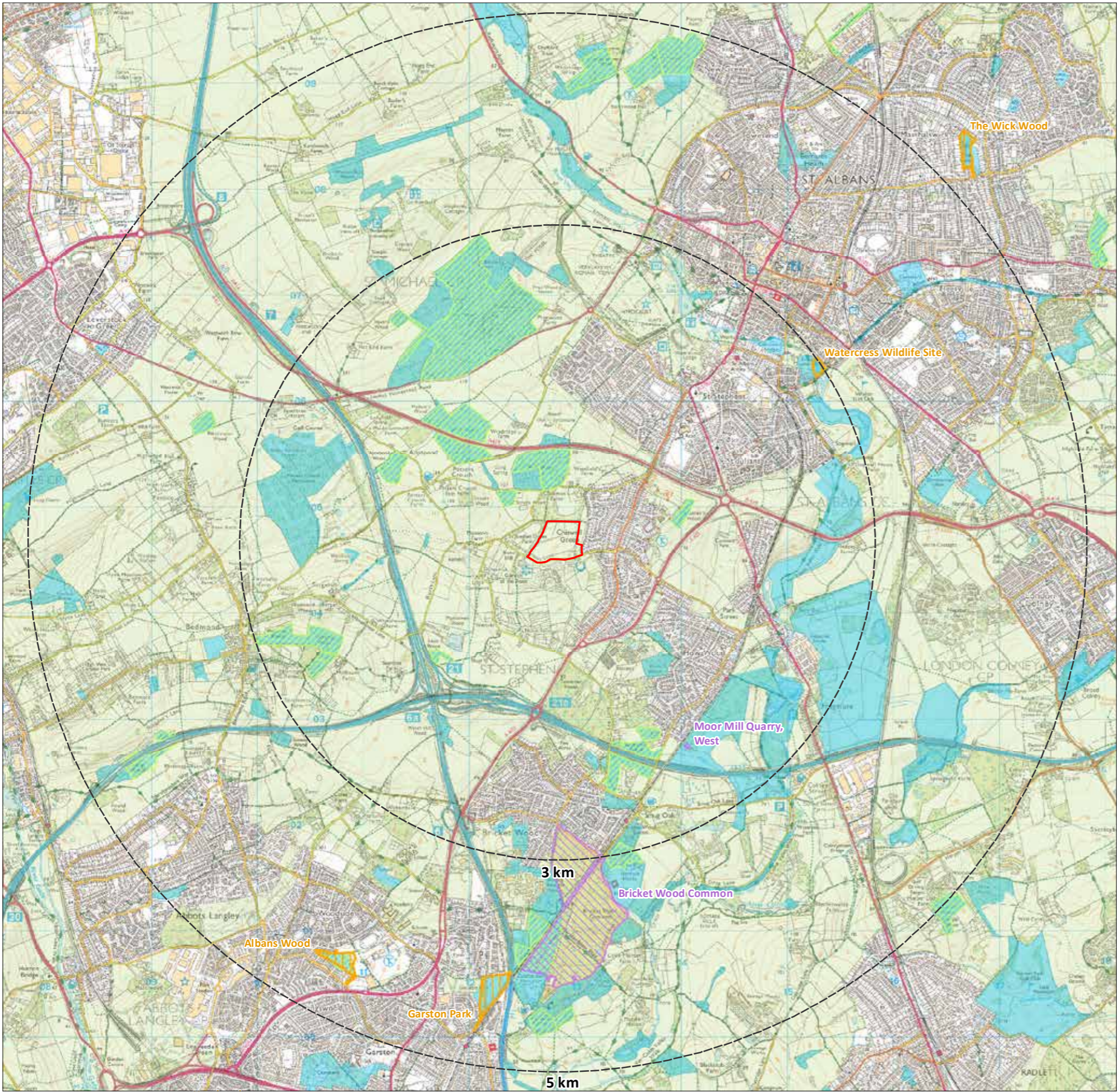


Figure 5: Environmental Designations

Scale 1:40,000 @ A3

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- London Area Green Belt
- Site of Special Scientific Interest



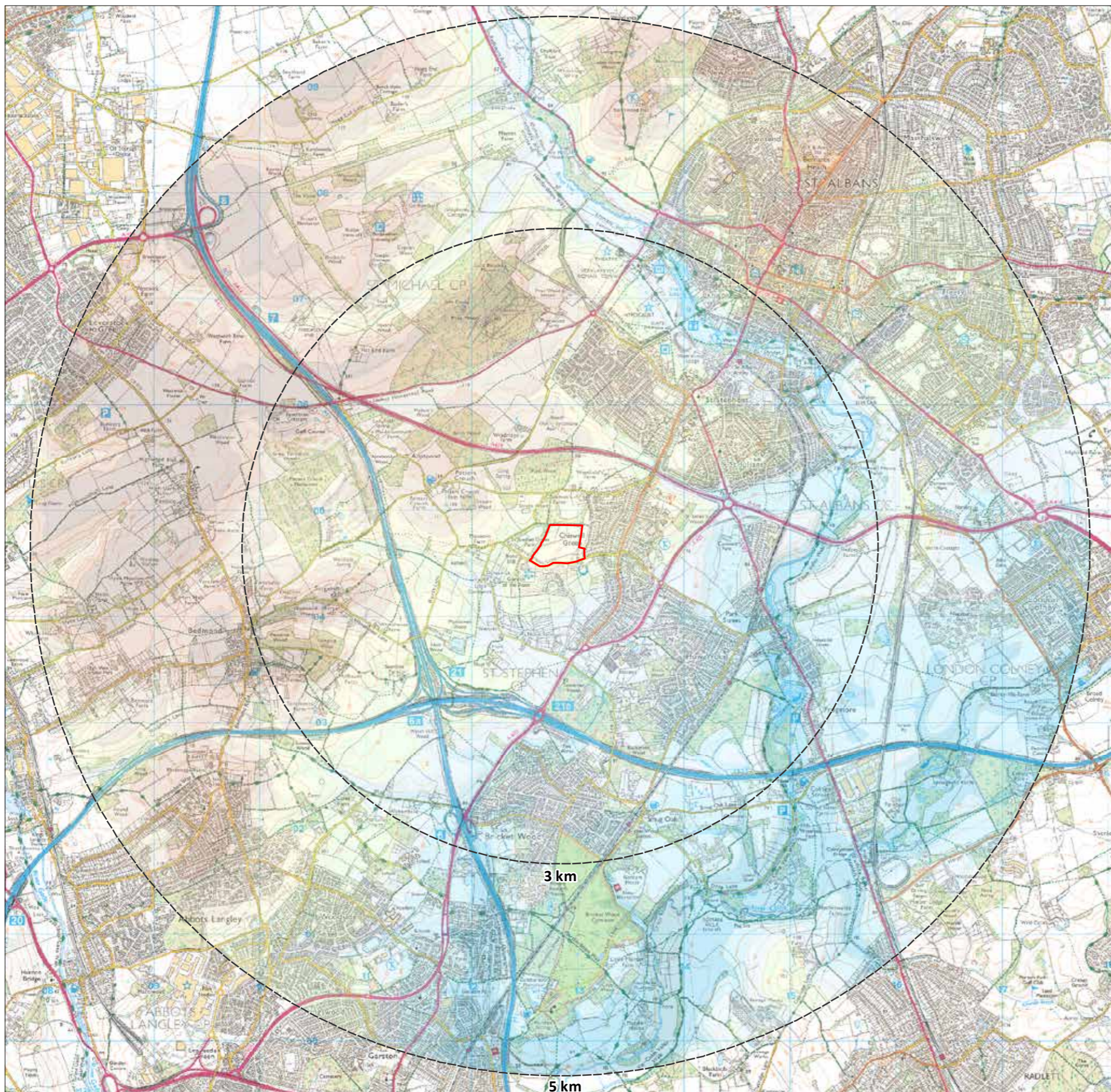
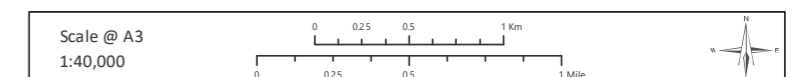
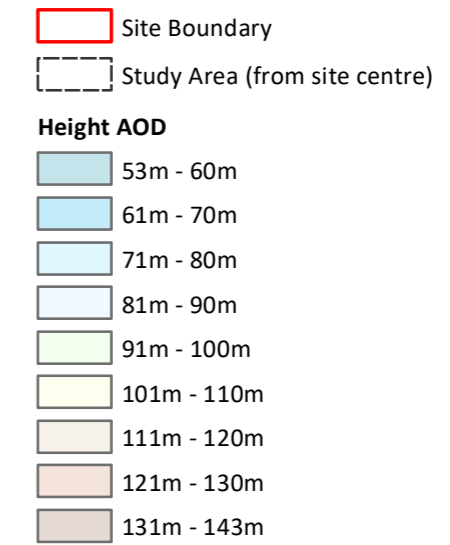


Figure 6: Topography

Scale 1:40,000 @ A3



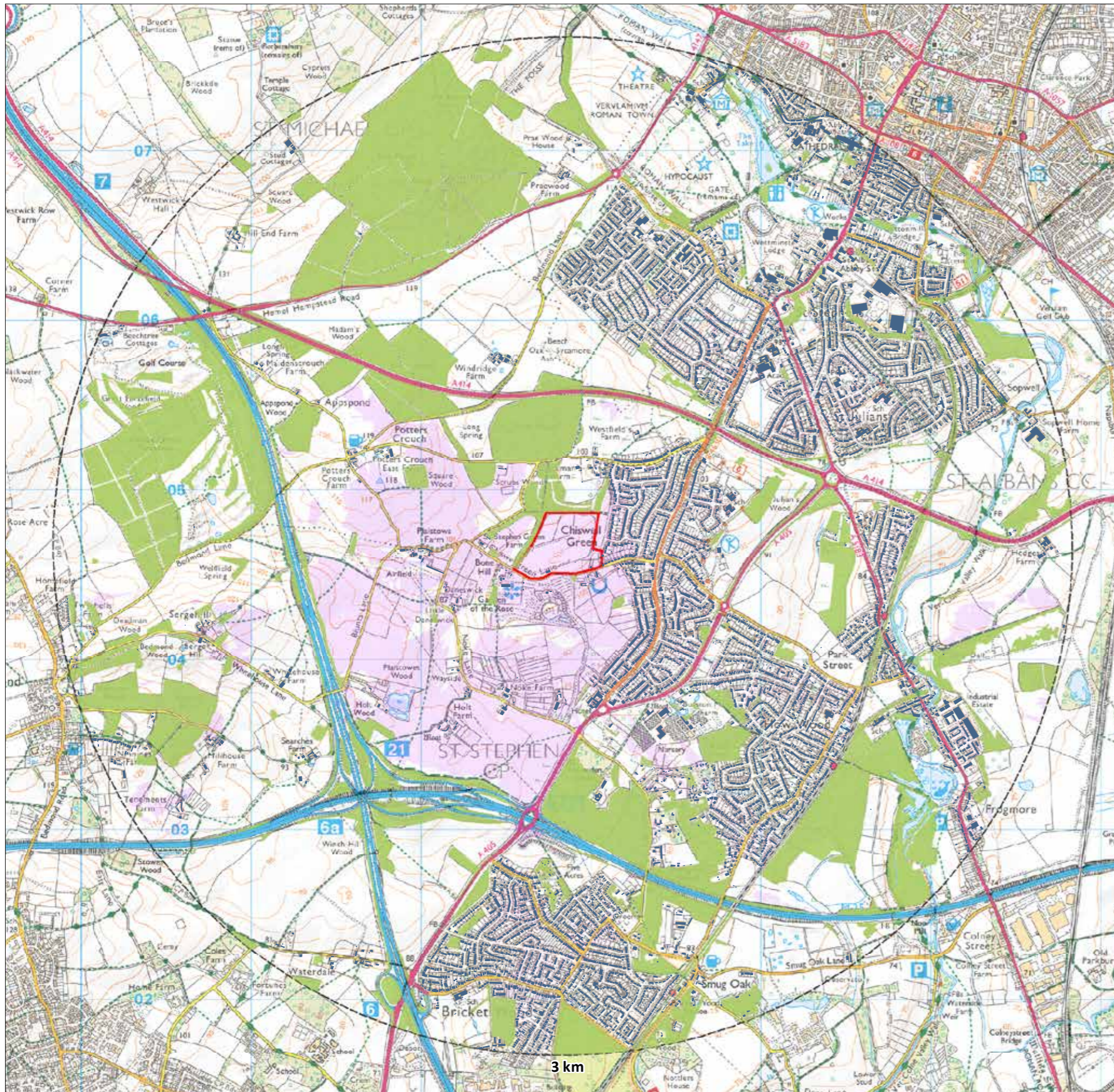


Figure 7: Zone of Theoretical Visibility 3 km Study Area with Settlements and Woodland

Scale 1:25,000 @ A3

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (from site centre)
- Building
- Woodland
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility**
- Area where Development may be visible

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility is calculated using an Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 digital terrain model (DTM).

The development height is a maximum of 10 m from ground level, and observer height assumed to be 1.8 m. Visibility is calculated from the site boundary.

OS Terrain 5 is a 'bare-earth' terrain dataset, and therefore does not account for the screening effect of any surrounding buildings or vegetation.

Buildings and woodland areas from the OS OpenMap Local™ dataset have been added to the DTM to indicate the potential screening effect of buildings and vegetation. Indicative heights used are 9m (approximately 2 storeys) for buildings and 15m for woodland.

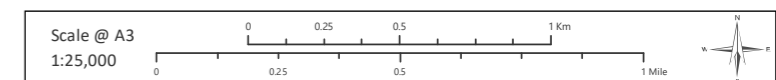
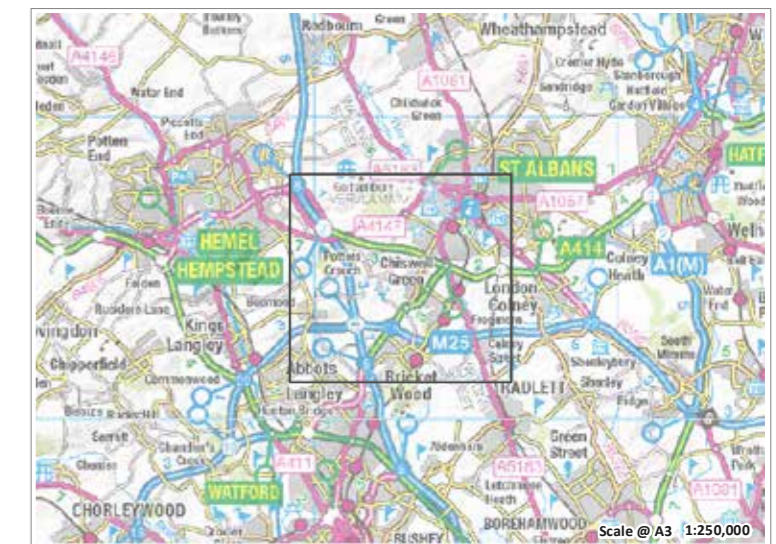
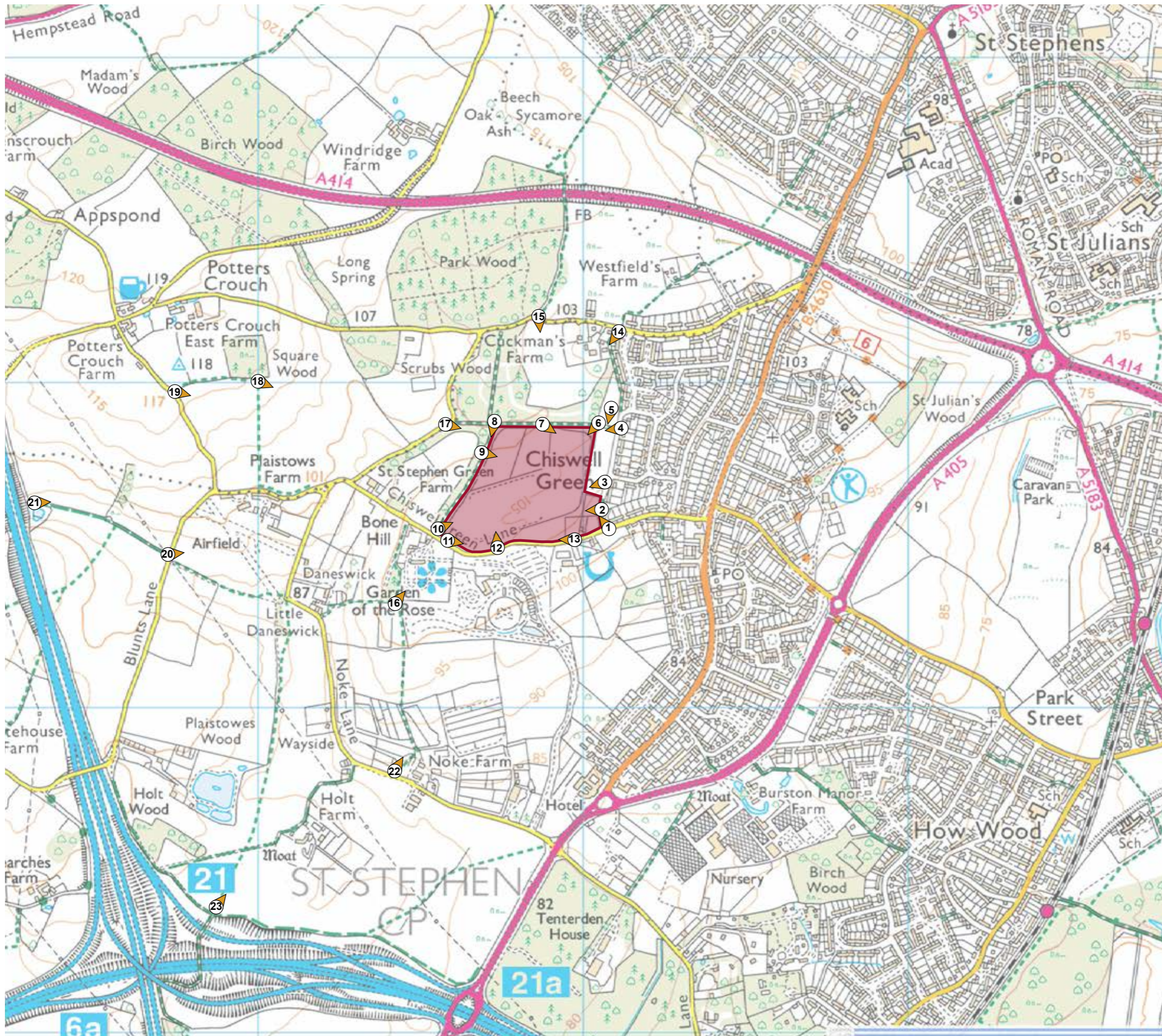


Figure 8: Viewpoint location map
Not to Scale - Indicative Locations Only



Chiswell Green Lane

Site screened behind vegetation and timber fenced site boundary

St Stephen FP 082

48 Chiswell Green Lane



VIEWPOINT 01	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Chiswell Green Lane at junction with PRoW FP082
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational, Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 13068 04550
ELEVATION IN METRES	103 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	5m



Viewpoint 01

PRoW St Stephen FP 082

Hedgerow screening the polo field

Site



VIEWPOINT 02	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on The Croft with junction with PRoW FR St Stephen 082
RECEPTOR TYPE	Transport, Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 13070 04648
ELEVATION IN METRES	105 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0km



Viewpoint 02

Site beyond line of vegetation

Cherry Hill



VIEWPOINT 03	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Cherry Hill
RECEPTOR TYPE	Residential
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 13094 04714
ELEVATION IN METRES	
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0.07km



Viewpoint 03

Cherry Hill

Site beyond line of vegetation

PRoW St Stephen FP 080



VIEWPOINT 04	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Cherry Hill
RECEPTOR TYPE	Residential
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 13116 04856
ELEVATION IN METRES	105 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0.07km



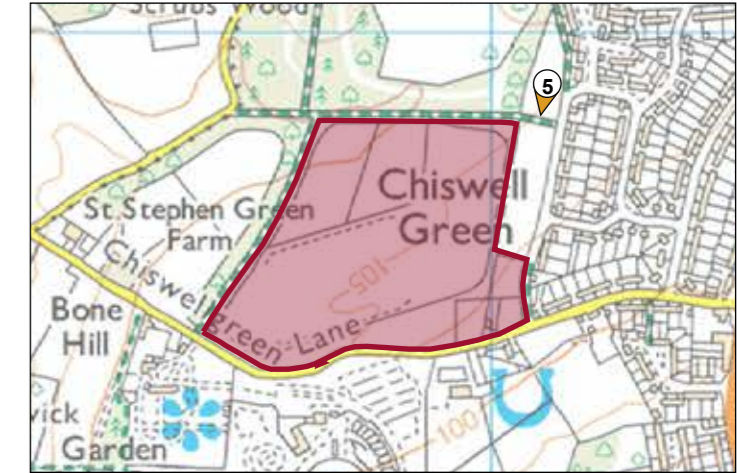
Viewpoint 04

Play area off Cherry Hill

Site beyond line of vegetation



VIEWPOINT 05	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located at the play ground on Cheery Hill
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 13102 04895
ELEVATION IN METRES	105 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0.05km



Viewpoint 05

Site beyond line of vegetation

PRoW St Stephen FP 080



VIEWPOINT 06	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on PRoW St Stephen FP 080
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 13103 04857
ELEVATION IN METRES	105 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0.05km



Viewpoint 06

PRoW St Stephen
FP 080

Site beyond hedgerow



VIEWPOINT 07	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on PRoW FP 080
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12894 04873
ELEVATION IN METRES	101 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0km



Viewpoint 07

Site behind
vegetation

PRoW St Stephen
FP 021



VIEWPOINT 08	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on PRoW St Stephen FP021
RECEPTOR TYPE	Residential
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12742 04877
ELEVATION IN METRES	99 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0km



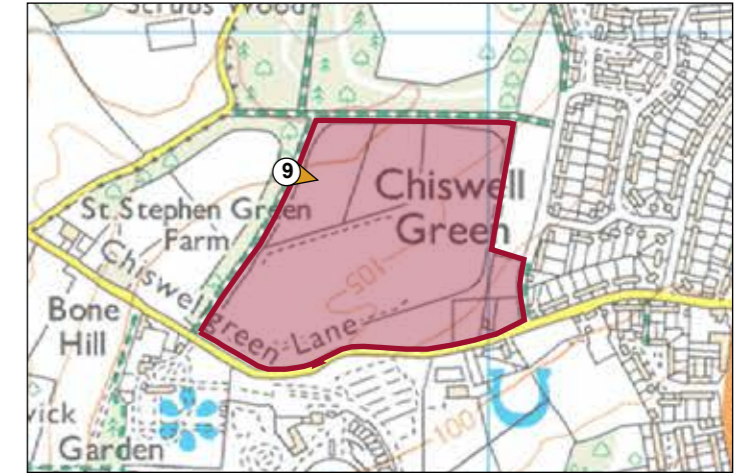
Viewpoint 08

Site behind boundary vegetation



Viewpoint 09

VIEWPOINT 09	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on PRow FP St Stephen 021
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12711 04854
ELEVATION IN METRES	100
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0 km



PRow St Stephen FP 021

Agricultural building associated with the Polo Club

Site



Viewpoint 10

VIEWPOINT 10	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on PRow FP St Stephen 021
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12539 04540
ELEVATION IN METRES	105 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	0 km



Site behind boundary vegetation

Chiswell Green Lane



VIEWPOINT 11	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Chiswell Green Lane
RECEPTOR TYPE	Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12541 04519
ELEVATION IN METRES	95 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	3 m



Viewpoint 11

Existing site entrance

Chiswell Green Lane

Agricultural barn on site for associated Polo Club activities



VIEWPOINT 12	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Chiswell Green Lane at the existing site entrance
RECEPTOR TYPE	Transport
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12748 04494
ELEVATION IN METRES	105 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	3m



Viewpoint 12

Chiswell Green Lane

Site behind vegetation

Entrance to 73
Chiswell Green Lane



VIEWPOINT 13	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Chiswell Green lane opposite property no 73
RECEPTOR TYPE	Transport / Residential
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12973 04521
ELEVATION IN METRES	104 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	3m



Viewpoint 13

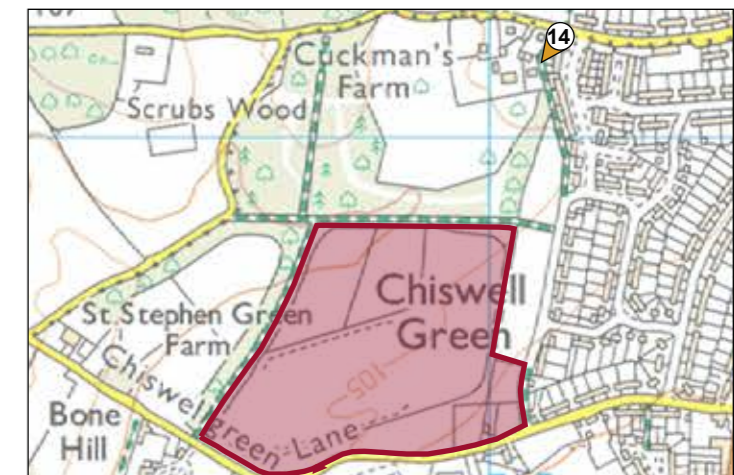
2 Hawthorn Way

PRoW St Stephen FP 020

61 Ragged
Hall Lane



VIEWPOINT 14	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located
RECEPTOR TYPE	Transport / Recreational / Residential
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 13118 05165
ELEVATION IN METRES	109 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	310m

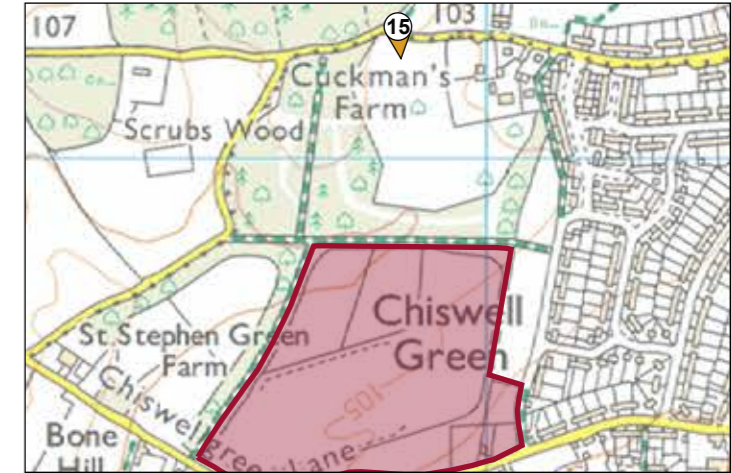


Viewpoint 14

Ragged Hall Lane



VIEWPOINT 15	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Ragged Hall Lane and junction of St Michaels Rural 008
RECEPTOR TYPE	Transport / Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12845 05197
ELEVATION IN METRES	106 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	320m

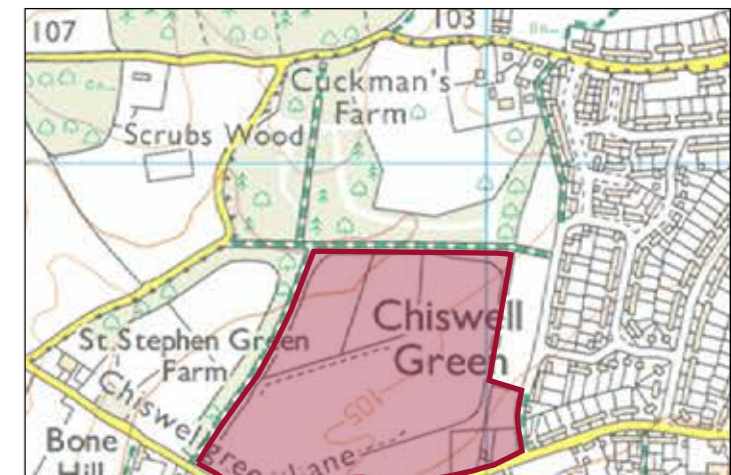


Viewpoint 15

PRoW Stephen FP 28



VIEWPOINT 16	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located at junction of PRoW St Stephen FP 28 and FP 44
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12378 04327
ELEVATION IN METRES	102 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	280km

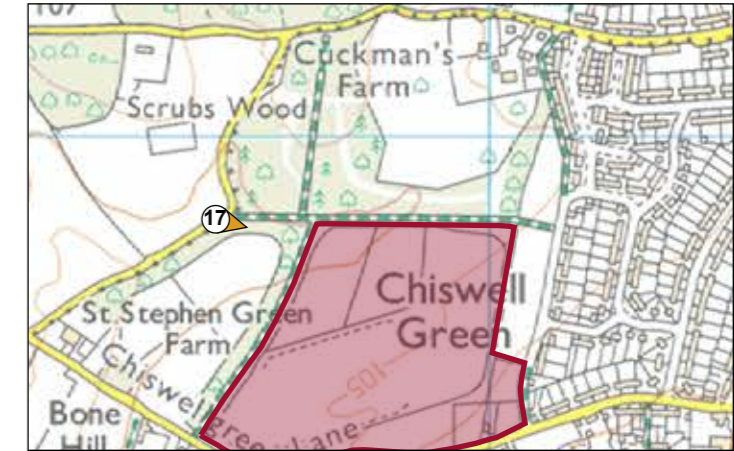


Viewpoint 16

PRoW St Stephen FP 080



VIEWPOINT 17	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on PRoW St Stephen FP080 at junction with Furzebushes Lane
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12596 04877
ELEVATION IN METRES	98 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	140m



Viewpoint 17

Approximate Site Location

Plaistows Farm
Chiswell Green Lane



VIEWPOINT 18	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on PRoW St Michael Rural FP 012
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12047 05012
ELEVATION IN METRES	113 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	400m



Viewpoint 18

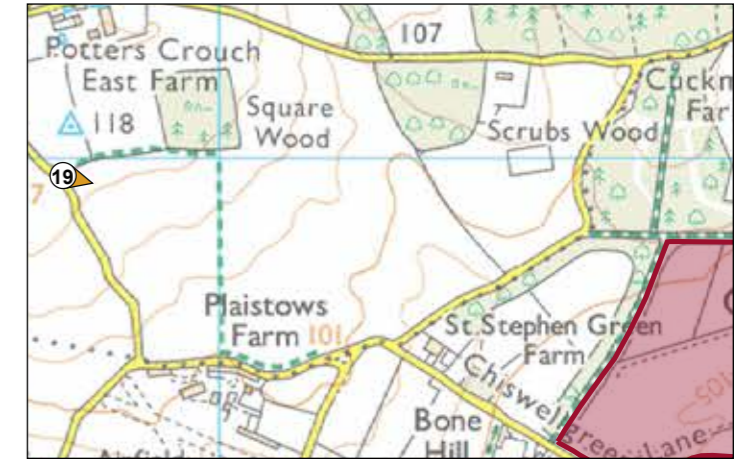
PRoW St Michaels Rural FP 012

Approx. Site location



Viewpoint 19

VIEWPOINT 19	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Blunts Lane and junction with PRoW St Michaels Rural 012
RECEPTOR TYPE	Transport / Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 11762 04972
ELEVATION IN METRES	116 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	920 m



Approx site location beyond land-form and vegetation

PRoW St Stephen FP 043



Viewpoint 20

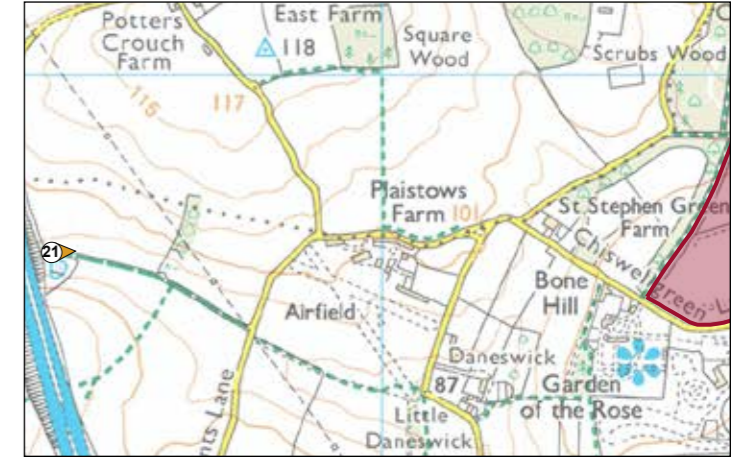
VIEWPOINT 20	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on Blunts lane and junction with St Stephen FP 043
RECEPTOR TYPE	
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 11723 04461
ELEVATION IN METRES	
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	





Viewpoint 21

VIEWPOINT 21	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located St Stephen FP 0496
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 11397 04613
ELEVATION IN METRES	91 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	1.17km

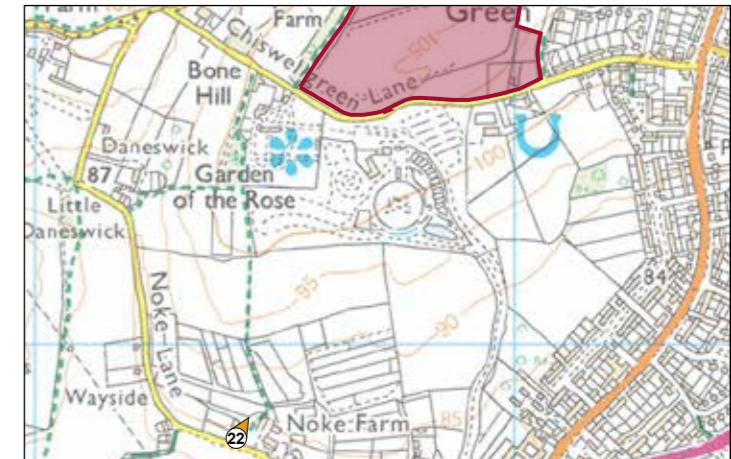


Noke Farm



Viewpoint 22

VIEWPOINT 22	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on PRoW St Stephen FP 082
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 12408 03797
ELEVATION IN METRES	83m
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	730m



PRoW Bridleway St
Stephen 001



Viewpoint 23

VIEWPOINT 23	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on PRoW Bridleway St. Stephen 001
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 11877 03382
ELEVATION IN METRES	89 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	1.37km



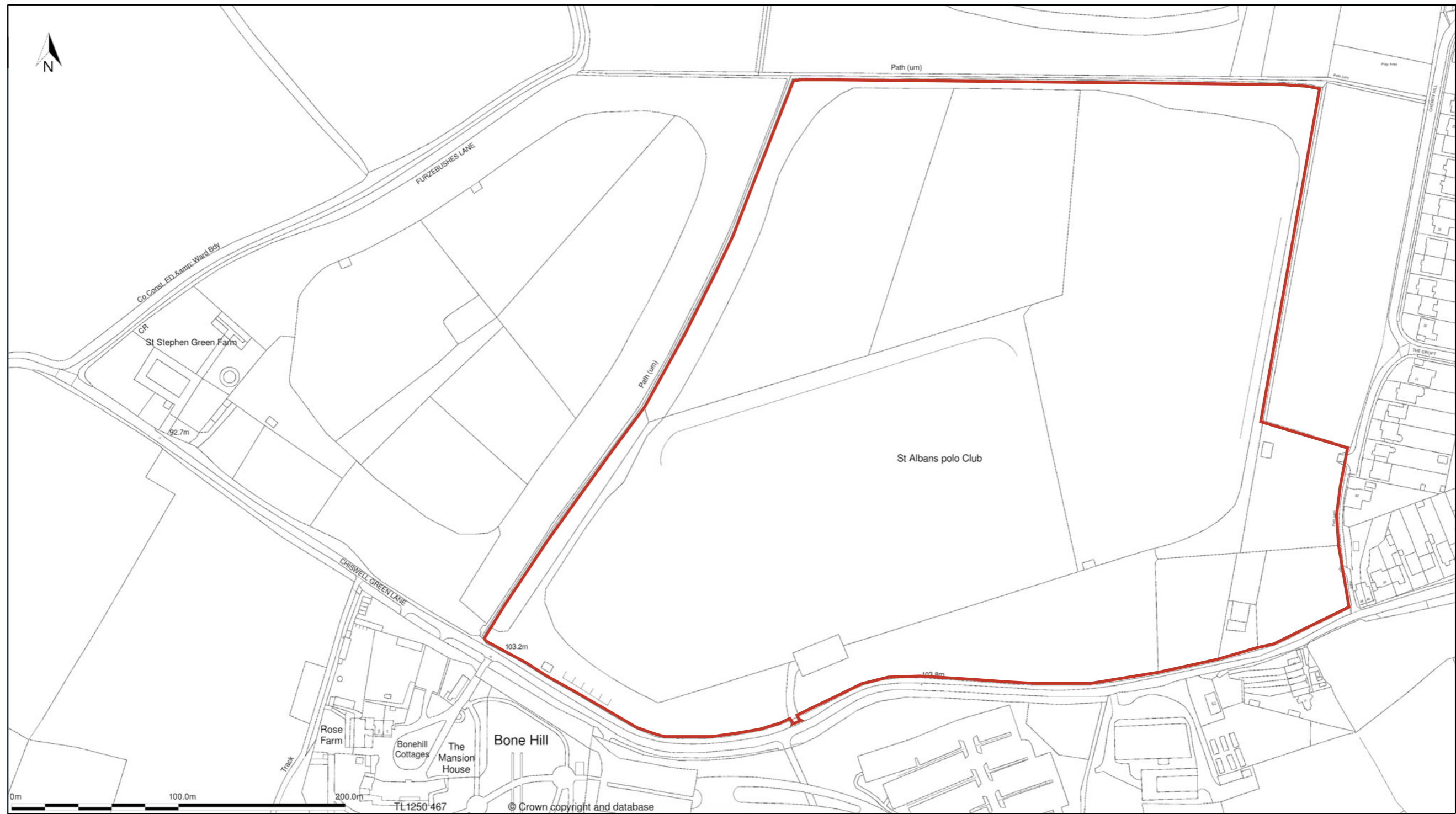
Vegetation along River Ver Corridor




Viewpoint 24

VIEWPOINT 24	
DESCRIPTION OF RECEPTOR	Located on RoW St. S/084 (Ver-Colne Valley Walk)
RECEPTOR TYPE	Recreational
LOCATION OS GRID	TL 14953 04318
ELEVATION IN METRES	70 AOD
APPROXIMATE DISTANCE FROM SITE	2km





Land north of Chiswell Green Lane and east of The Croft, Chiswell Green

Client: Virginia Properties		Project: SADC Call For Sites, 2021		 McPartland Planning Limited 10 Orient Close, St Albans, Herts AL1 1AJ E. brian.mpp@outlook.com
Scale: 1:2500 (A3 original)		Drawing: Location Plan		
Ref: VP/CFS/lp	Revision:	Date: 23.04.21	By: B Parker	

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