



2.0 THE SITE

2.1 SITE INFORMATION

2.1.1 SITE LOCATION

2.1.1.1 SITE ADDRESS

Smallford Works
Smallford Lane,
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL4 0SA

2.1.1.2 SITE AREA

Approx. 3.5ha (8.65 acres)

2.1.1.3 SITE BOUNDARIES

The site is bound to the east by Smallford Lane, a route connecting the A414 in the south to the A1057 in the north via Sleepshyde and Smallford.

Open land, known as Smallford Pit, lies adjacent to the west, south and north of the site, screened with mature landscape. Butterwick Brook runs close to the northern part of the western boundary of the site.

The Alban Way - a trail of approximately 6.5 miles for cyclists and walkers along the former railway line between St Albans and Hatfield - runs to the north of the site, approximately 200m away, separated from the study site by a large fishing pond, remnant of a former quarry pit.

Smallford village centre, and associated amenities are located c. 0.5 of a mile to the north of the site.

2.1.1.4 OWNERSHIP

Stackbounne Ltd. have owned the development land for nearly 40 years.



aerial photo showing the immediate site context

2.1.2 CURRENT LAND USE

The subject site, which is sub divided into various plots, comprises primarily of industrial uses with open storage, storage of cars and machinery and small-scale office space associated with the storage uses on site.

There are various structures on site including a number of buildings some of which are in permanent buildings whereas some are in temporary portacabins.

The site is relatively enclosed and inward looking, there are a number of viewpoints where the existing industrial structures are visible from the surrounding area. The consented entrance road into the site has been largely constructed and once completed this will result in the closure of the existing access road in the south eastern corner of the site to vehicles.

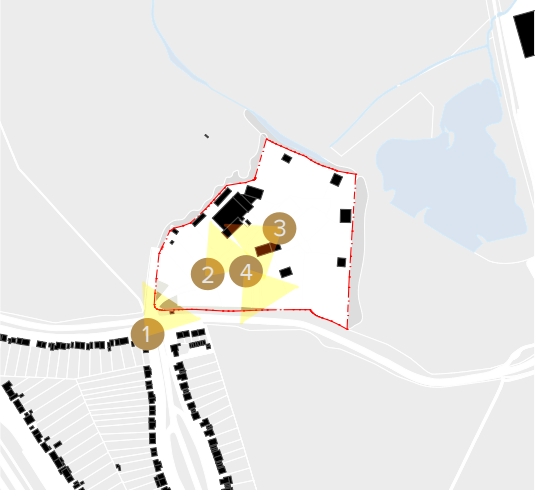


Aerial view of the site

2.1.3 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



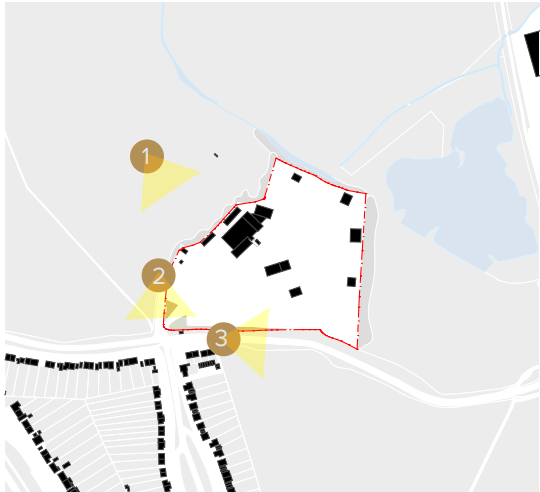
- 1. View towards site entrance off Smallford Lane
- 2. View within Smallford works facing North
- 3. View within site facing site entrance (south)
- 4. View facing site access new road (east)



2.1.3 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



- 1. View of site from Smallford Pit to the west
- 2. View of site boundary via footpath to the south
- 3. View of site from Smallford Lane (east)

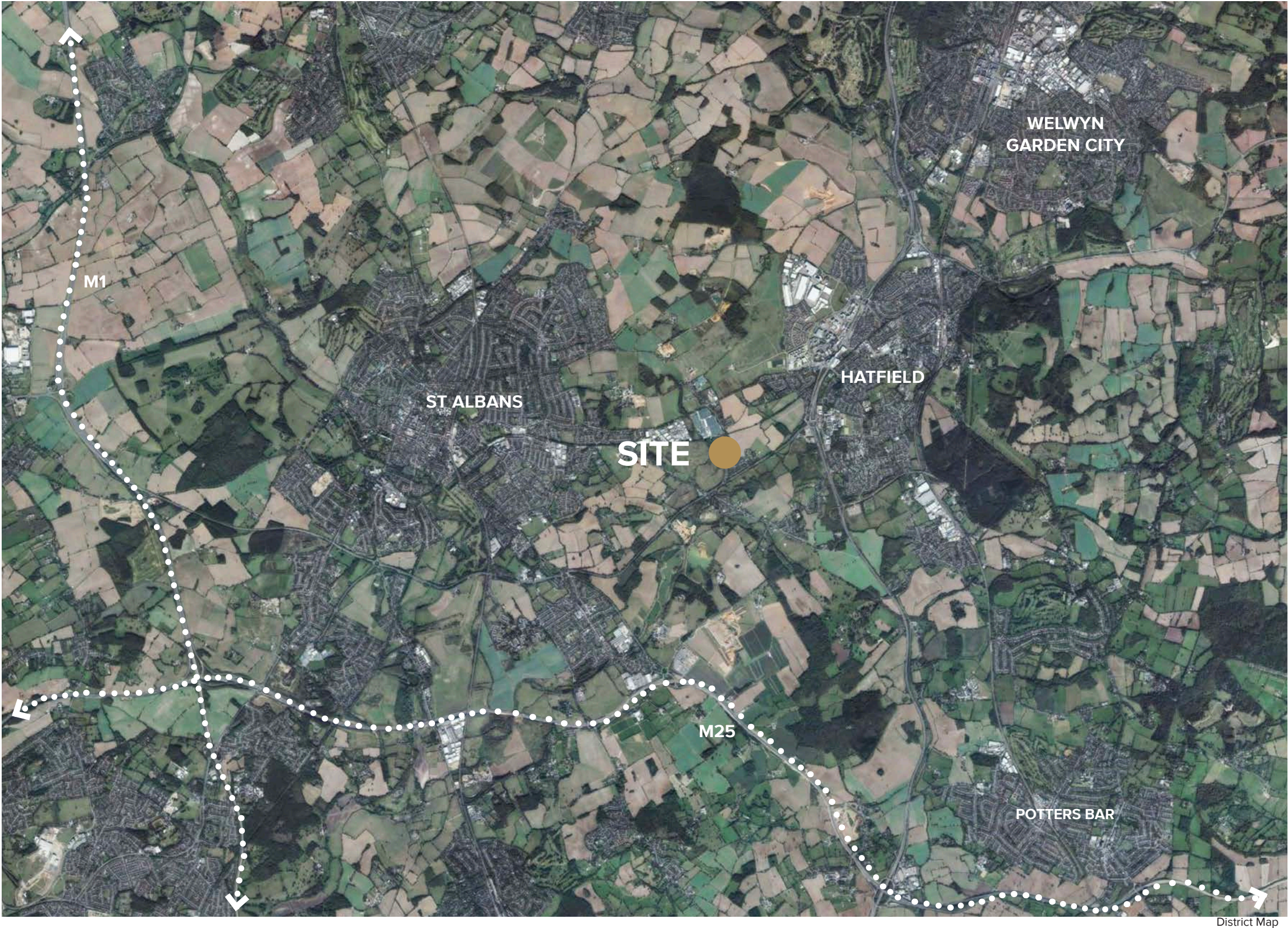


2.2 SITE CONTEXT

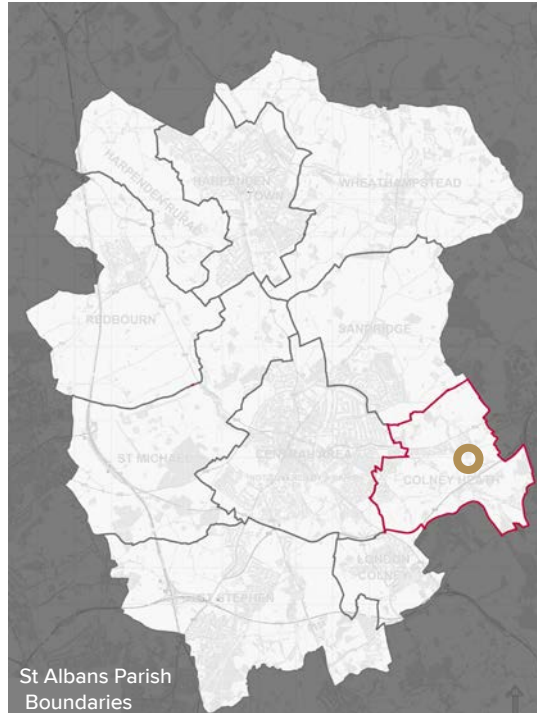
2.2.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT



The Smallford Works site is located in Hertfordshire and sits in the St Albans District council, between St Albans City and Hatfield within close proximity of both the M1 and M25.

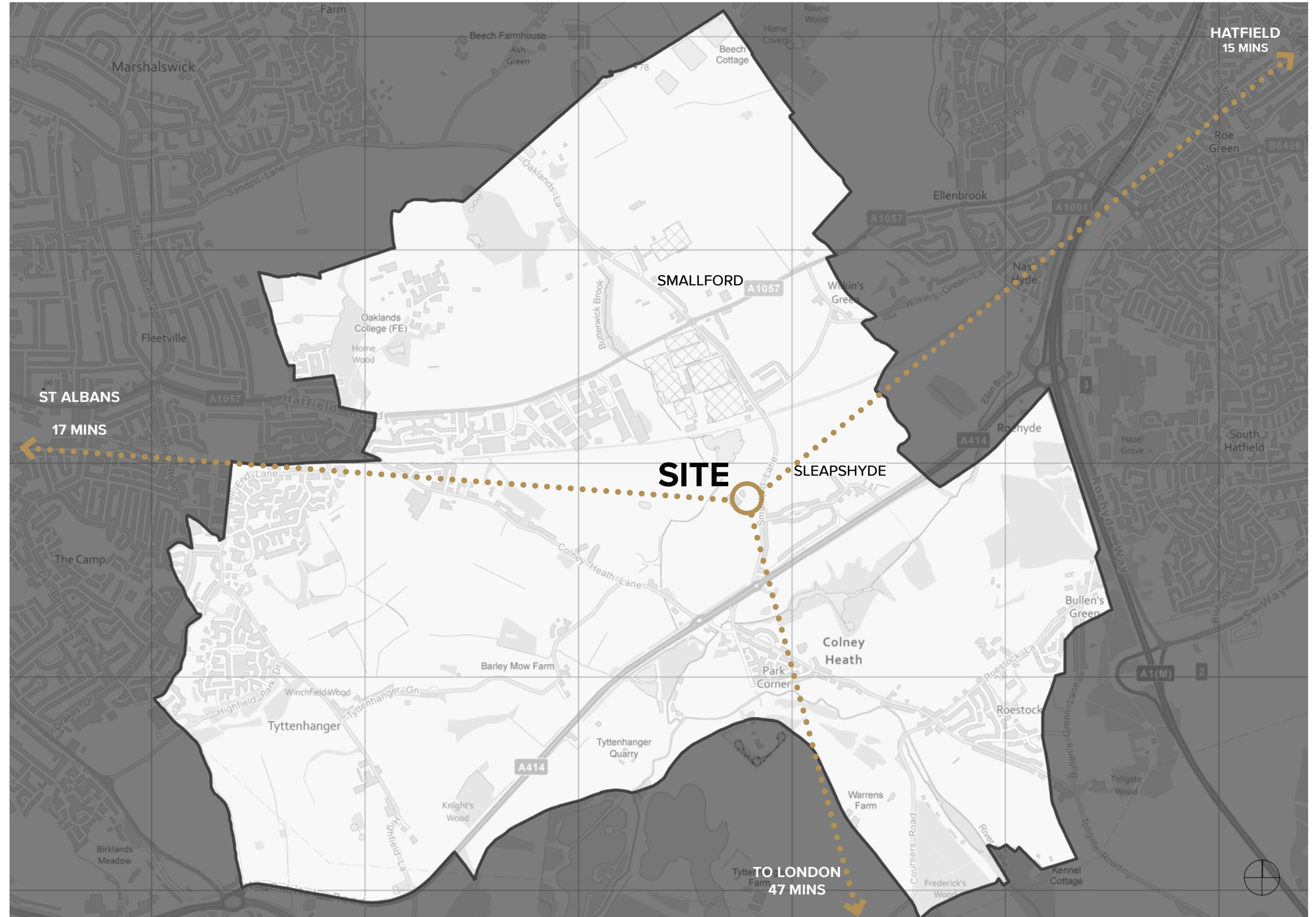


2.2.2 COLNEY HEATH CIVIL PARISH CONTEXT



Situated in the village of Sleepshyde, Smallford Works is located within the county of Hertfordshire which is in the Eastern region of the UK. 18.4 miles North West from the centre of London, 3.09 miles East from the centre of St Albans, 11.08 miles South East from the centre of Luton and 23.84 miles East from the centre of Aylesbury.

The local council responsible for Smallford Works is St. Albans District Council which is a District Council and the local parish council is Colney Heath Civil Parish.



Travel Distance (Public Transport) ●●●●●➔

Colney Heath Parish Map

2.2.2 COLNEY HEATH CIVIL PARISH CONTEXT

2.2.2.1 MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

The routes surrounding the site follow a clear hierarchy.

The dominant route from the site is Smallford Lane, running from Smallford and the A1057 in the north to the North Orbital Road (A414) in the south. Smallford Lane has a local character, and provides access to the residential dwellings on Sleepshyde Lane and Sleepcross Gardens.

In terms of a wider connectivity network, the A1057 provides access to both St Albans in the west and Hatfield in the east. The A414 is a more strategic connection, linking east to junction 3 of the M1.

The local footpath network, including The Alban Way, provide local access, and bus route north to the A1057 provides connectivity to wider destinations via further bus routes.

St Albans station is located approximately 3 miles away and provides fast services to London St Pancras in 18 minutes.

The existing vehicular access is from Smallford Lane, Opposite the junction with Sleepshyde Lane, this serving the whole of the site by an internal roadway.



Aerial map of area showing movement and connectivity

2.2.2 COLNEY HEATH CIVIL PARISH CONTEXT

2.2.2.2 LANDSCAPE

The site is located within the existing landscape of Smallford and environs, with open space to the north, south and west of the site boundary.

The site is part of the metropolitan green belt and Watling Chase Community Forest. A belt of sand and gravel deposits stretches across the vale, so this landscape is historically dominated by aggregate extraction and, usually, subsequent landfill waste disposal sites as is the case around Smallford Pit.

The boundaries of the site are well demarcated with mature trees. Beyond the site in the surrounding area, the character varies from open space to hedgerows and tree lines.

Perhaps the most significant of these tree lines runs along the route of the former Hatfield and St Albans Railway to the north of the site

A pond, from the former Smallford gravel and sand workings, lies to the north of the site and is surrounded by mature landscape.

The site is excellently placed to benefit from connections to local landscape as well as movement routes.



Aerial map of area showing landscape

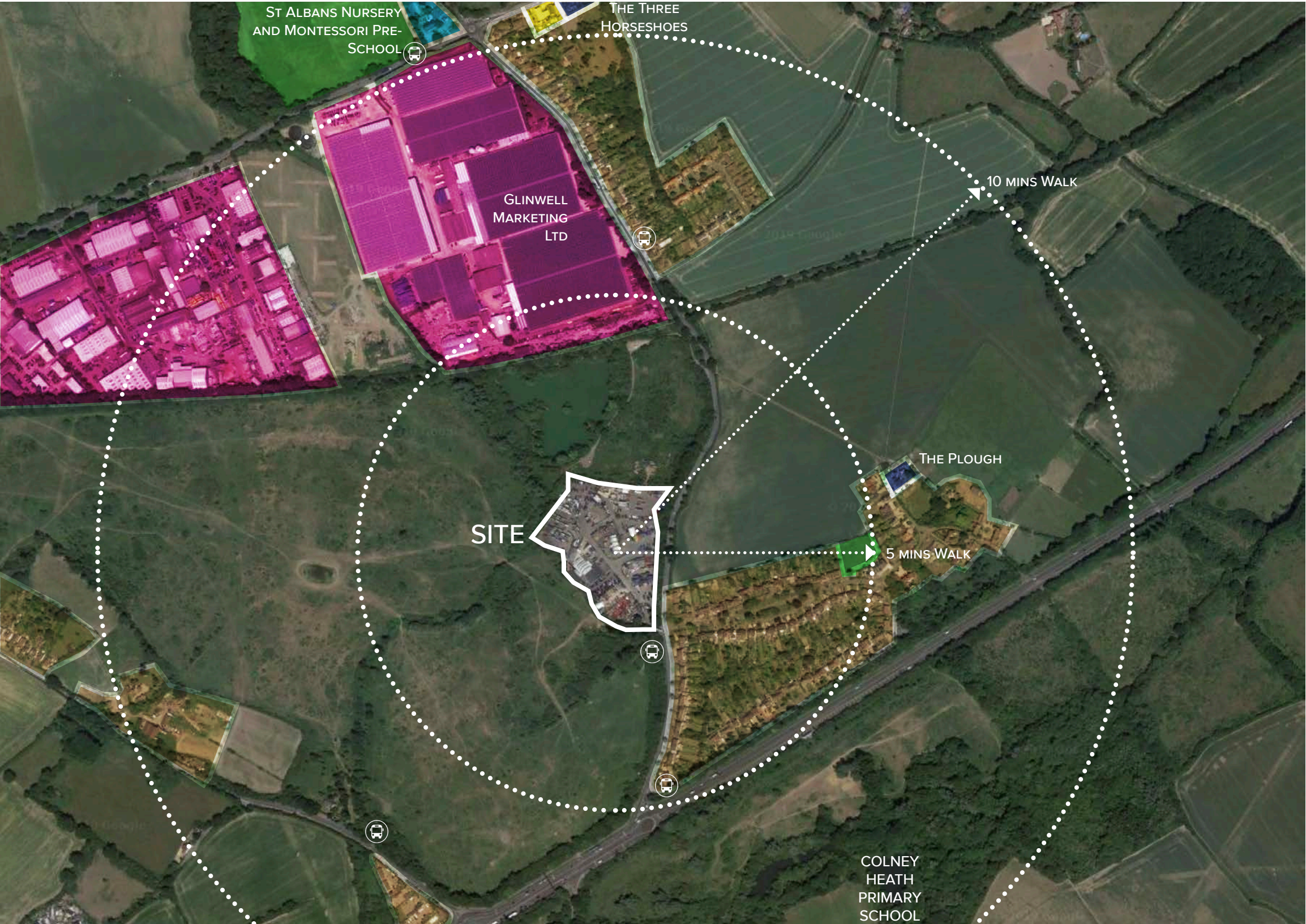
2.2.2 COLNEY HEATH CIVIL PARISH CONTEXT

2.2.2.3 LOCAL AMENITIES

The site is located to the east of St Albans town centre, with numerous amenities surrounding the site and easily reached by public transport.

The closest are those associated with the settlement of Smallford to the north of the site, just over ten minutes walk away, including a shop, nursery and The Three Horsehoes public house.

Numerous educational institutions are located close to the site, with Colney Heath School (Nursery, infant and junior), Nicholas Breakspear R C School (Secondary) and Oaklands College (further education) providing for all ages.



Aerial map of area showing local amenities

2.2.3 AREA CONTEXT

The site comprises Smallford Works, a complex of industrial units and storage yards. The site is entirely covered in hardstanding with no apparent areas of soft landscaping.

It is proposed to provide a new access road from Smallford Lane at a point 117m north of that existing. The new road will be 6.5m wide, and its construction would involve the removal of a length of about 18m of the hedgerow along the highway frontage. Planning approval has been granted for the proposed works (ref: 5/02/2122).



Aerial map showing character areas

2.2.4 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

2.2.4.1 MATERIALITY

Mixed external material palette



2.2.4.2 FORM + MASSING

Variety in height but predominantly 2-storey semi-detached buildings with a number of detached and single storey houses. There is also a sense of symmetry between the building forms and related adjacent buildings.



2.2.4.3 FRONTAGE (BUFFER AREA)

Façades separated from street edge at various depths but mostly with defensible/buffer spaces



2.2.4 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

2.2.4.4 ROOFSCAPE

Varied form and materials. Undulating form and variety makes for interesting roofscape presentation



2.2.4.5 PROPORTION

A deliberate horizontal emphasis using contrasting materials to delineate facade. There is also an apparent aspiration for the roofing materials to appear to integrate with the side walls.



2.2.4.6 PARKING

Primarily within demise with allowance for street parking.



2.3 SITE HISTORY

2.3 SITE HISTORY

The site most likely comprised agricultural land during the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods, potentially falling within the estate of Butterwick Farm.

Between 1924 and 1937, much of the Smallford Area had been taken over for gravel quarrying and a substantial gravel pit bound the site to the west. A brickworks had been constructed on the site by this date with associated landscaping and infrastructure.

By the early 1960s quarry pits extended to the north and south as well as the west of the site. Within the site itself additional works buildings had been constructed along with single track lines leading from the works buildings to the quarry pits.

By the mid 1970s the site had been completely redeveloped with works buildings and infrastructure). By this date Battleswick Farm had been demolished due to quarrying.



Gravel pits near Smallford Lane, Sleepshyde, 1939

2.3 SITE HISTORY

More recently the works buildings have been demolished and replaced with industrial units and storage yards.

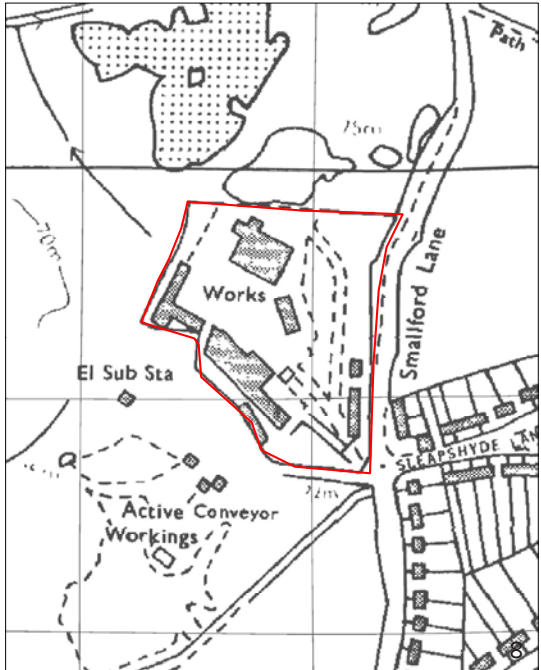
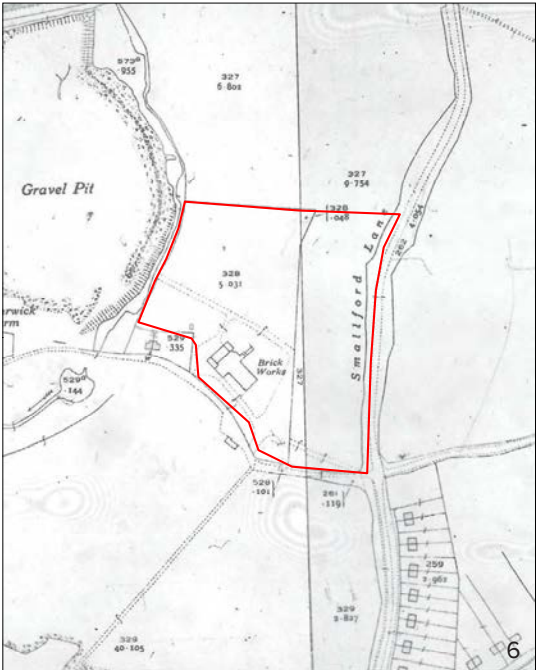
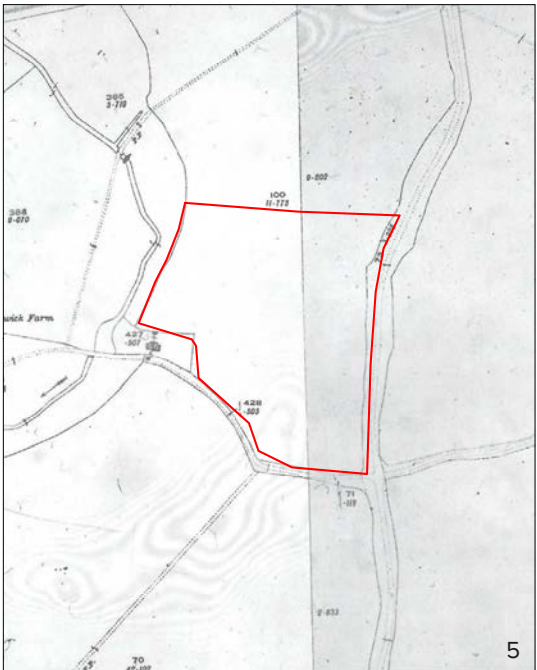
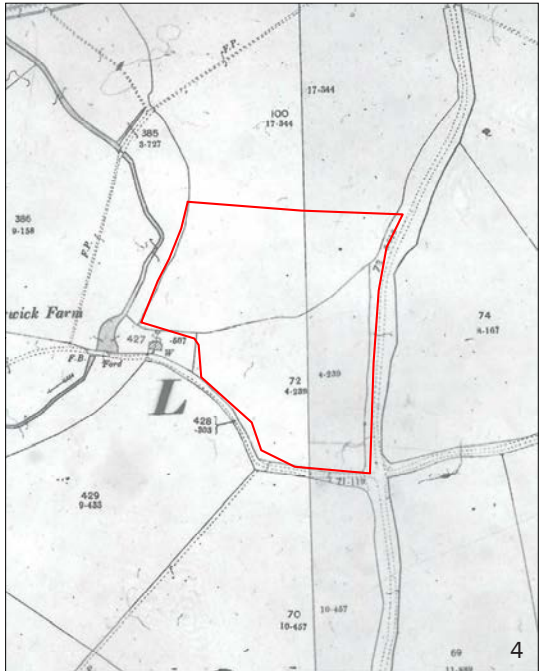
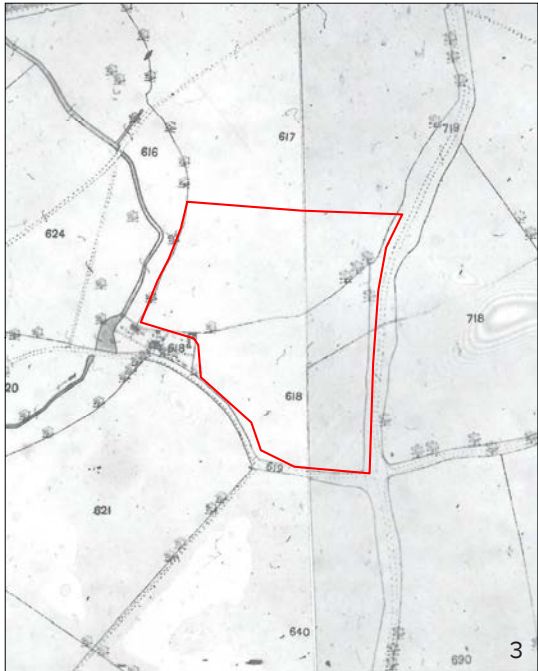
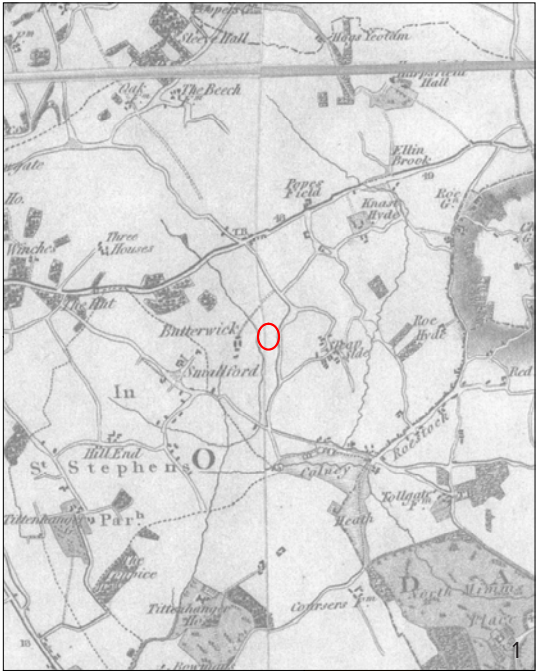
The archaeological potential for evidence of Post Medieval settlement evidence is considered to be low/nil. Buried remains of the former 20th century brickworks may be present but are considered to have little heritage interest.

The closest listed building lies approximately 100m east of the study site (Ye Olde House).

No Scheduled Monuments lie on or close to the site.

The site is considered to have a low to moderate archaeological potential however due to past ground disturbance any archaeological remains, if they occur, will be of no more than a local significance.

Kindly refer to the associated archeological assessment report for further information.



1. 1822 Bryant
2. 1840 St Peter's Tithe Map
3. 1877 Ordnance Survey
4. 1898 Ordnance Survey
5. 1924 Ordnance Survey
6. 1937 Ordnance Survey
7. 1960 Ordnance Survey
8. 1976 Ordnance Survey



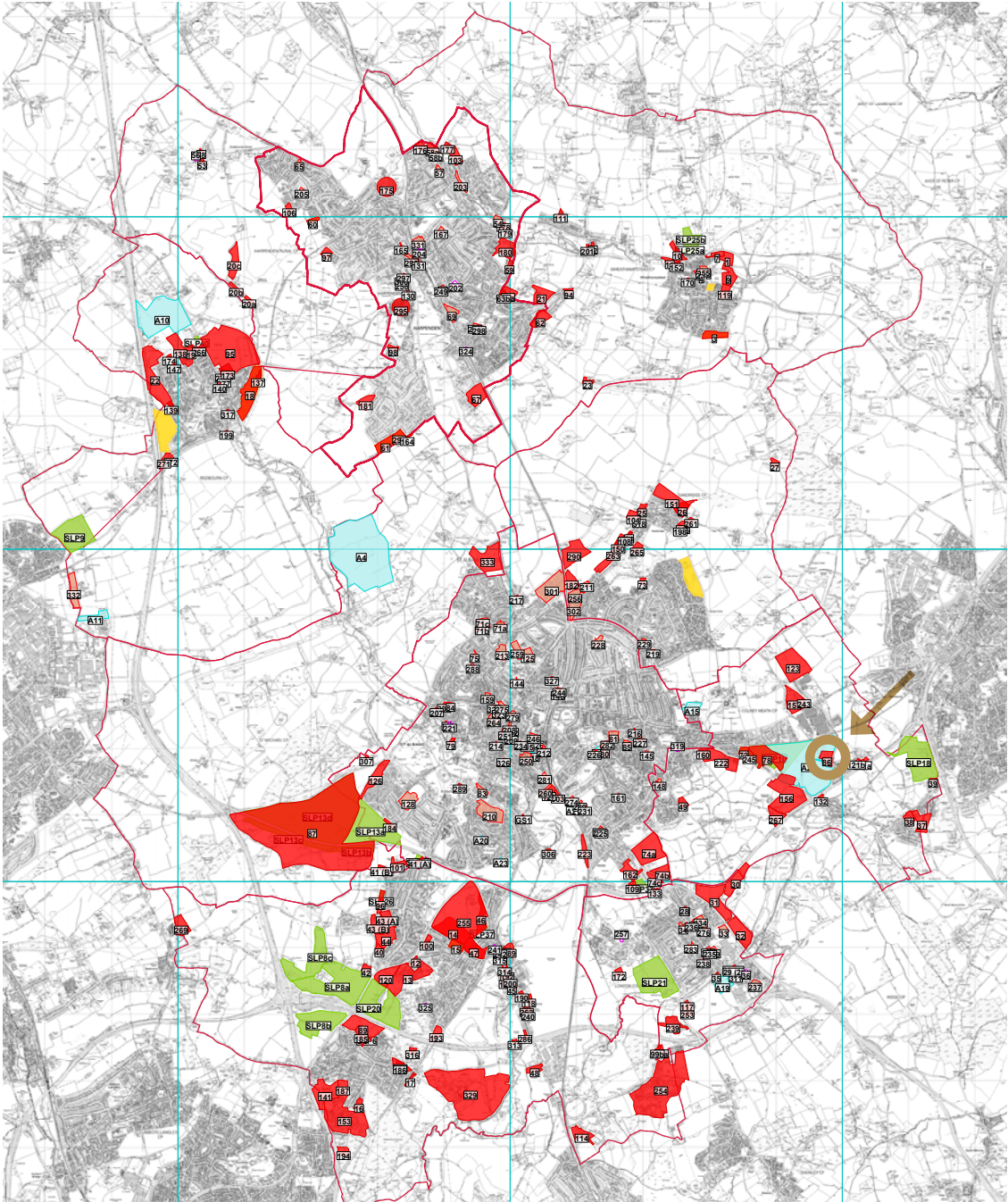
2.4 POLICY CONTEXT

2.4.1 KEY POLICY ISSUES & CONSTRAINTS

National Planning Policy Framework:
Paragraph 17: Core Planning Principles
Section 1: Building a strong, competitive economy
Section 3: Supporting a prosperous rural economy
Section 4: Promoting Sustainable Transport
Section 7: Requiring Good Design
Section 8: Promoting healthy communities
Section 9: Protecting Green Belt land
Section 10: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and costal change
Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

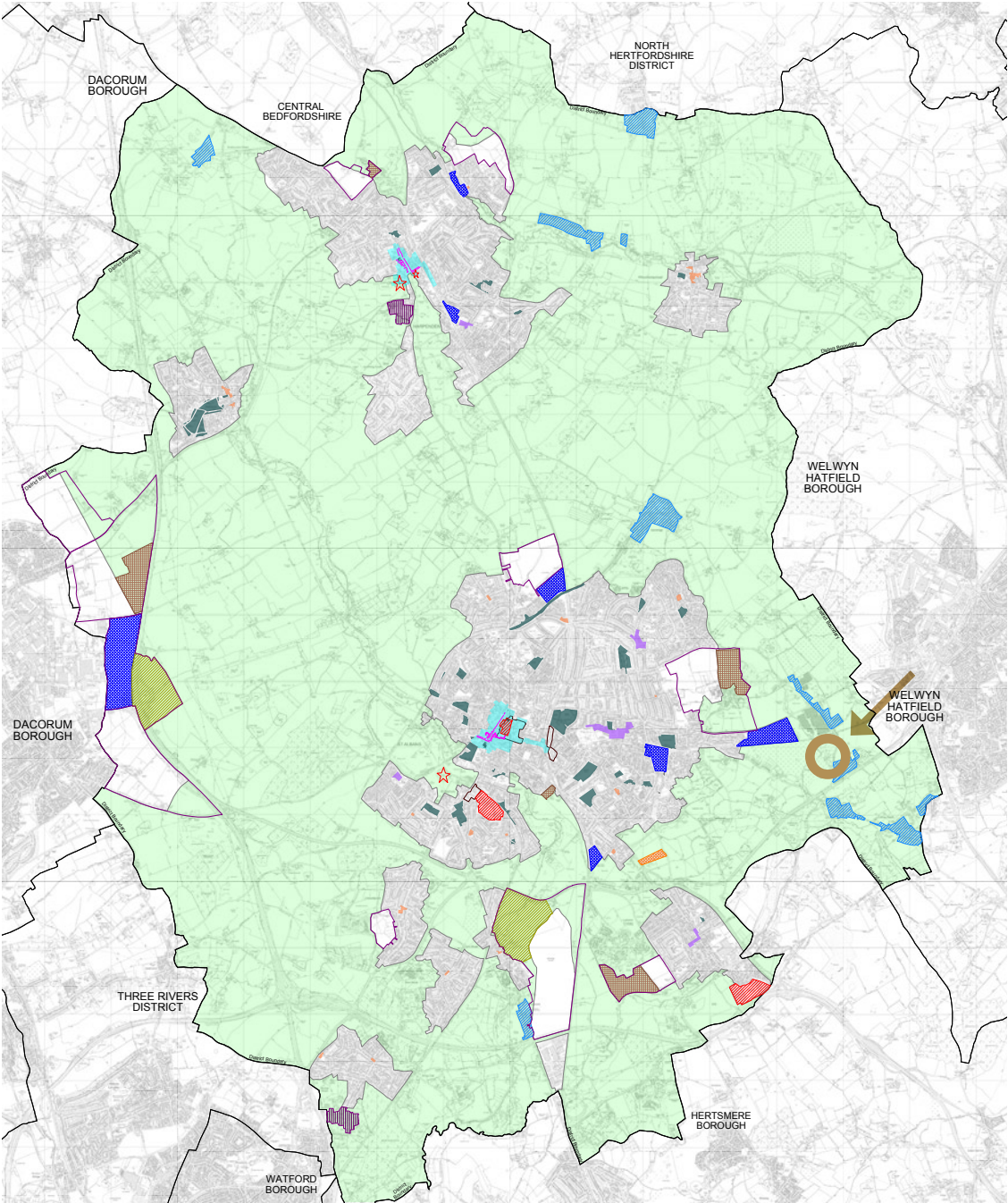
National Planning Practice Guidance:
Para. 23: Design: How Should Buildings and the Spaces Between Them Be Considered?
St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994:
Policy 1: Metropolitan Green Belt
Policy 5: New Housing Development in Specified Settlements
Policy 8: Affordable Housing in the Metropolitan Green Belt
Policy 19: Overall Employment Strategy
Policy 23: Business Use Development
Policy 24: Unallocated Employment Sites
Policy 34: Highways Considerations in Development Control
Policy 35: Highway Improvements in Association with Development
Policy 37; Commercial Servicing
Policy 39: Parking Standards, General Requirements
Policy 40: Residential Development Parking Standards
Policy 44: Business Use, Industrial, and Storage and Distribution Parking Standards
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
Policy 84A: Drainage Infrastructure
Policy 143B: Implementation

Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Revised Parking Policies and Standards, January 2002
Design Note 1 – Residential Layout and Design



Key
SHLAA Green Belt Site
SHLAA Urban Site
SKM Green Belt Review Site
2014 Draft SLP Consultation Submission Site
Calls for Sites
Completed SHLAA Sites

Background Neighbourhood Small Scale Residential Development: Parish/Town Councils



Key
S3 Metropolitan Green Belt
S6 Broad Locations for Development (wider boundaries including retained Green Belt)*
L5 Small Scale Development in Green Belt Settlements
L8 Primarily Residential Areas
L9 Primarily Business Use Areas
L10 Strategic Office Locations
L11 Special Employment Locations in the Green Belt
L12 (Town Centres)
L12 (District Centres)
L12 (Local Centres)
L12 (Key Shopping Areas)
L16 Mixed Use Opportunity Areas
L18 Transport Strategy (improvements in Green Belt)
L21 Education (in Green Belt)*
L22 Community Leisure and Sports Facilities (London Road Cemetery Extension)
L22 Community Leisure and Sports Facilities (Leisure Facilities Enhancement Opportunity)
L26 Local Green Space

St Albans Local Plan Policies Maps

*NB: the extent of the school sites shown are only indicative areas of search and are mostly much larger than the areas that will ultimately be needed

2.4.1 KEY POLICY ISSUES & CONSTRAINTS

The proposed development lies in the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Colney Heath Farmland Landscape Character Area.

The site also lies within the Watling Chase Community Forest and the surrounding land is a Key Biodiversity area and County Wildlife Site.

The site falls within the definition of Previously Developed Land (PDL) in the glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), given the established industrial activities onsite.

Paragraph 89 of the Framework states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt with a number of exceptions, which includes at bullet point 6:

“limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development”.

In view of paragraph 89 (6) and given that the site is PDL it is considered that the proposals have the potential to be considered as an exception and not therefore deemed to be inappropriate development, subject to the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it.

LEGEND

- Metropolitan Green Belt
- Small Scale Development in Green Belt Settlements
- Conservation Area
- Primarily Business Use Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Historic Buildings

