

4.2.5 ACCESS + CIRCULATION

4.2.5.9 WAYFINDING

Wayfinding is a key aspect of the urban design approach taken in masterplanning for this new neighbourhood and this has been achieved through several means. Firstly, an easily understandable network of roads that creates a logical movement pattern. These form a hierarchy from the main spine routes, through ‘residential access ways’ down to home zone groups, each of which will be of a distinct character. Memorable buildings, that close views or act as focal or pinch points, will further add to the legibility of this new environment.

All signage across the new development will be fully co-ordinated and legible. The specification of the signs, as well as the path finishes, will accord with the latest best practice guidance.

4.2.5.10 SAFETY AND SECURITY

Design and environmental factors, including concepts of defensible space, and natural surveillance, can affect the potential for crime in a housing development. The extended community will be planned around the need to deliver a high quality safe, living environment. In this respect, the new building forms will be laid out to overlook public spaces and the main activity areas associated with the development. A hierarchy of pathways will be created with strategic routes illuminated to enable year round use.

In addition, all of the “common” land which is covered by the masterplan will be the subject of Management Plans to ensure the upkeep of this important landscape. Signs will be erected to advise residents and visitors alike on responsibilities and it is considered important that the residential community has an active role to play in the future management of the site.

4.2.5.11 INCLUSIVE ACCESS

The major access points of the site and routes within the site are designed to be fully accessible to people using wheelchairs or with restricted mobility and will be compliant with current standards. Approaches to all the

buildings are clearly laid out and are designed to allow step free access and where gradients are required they are compliant with current standards.

All housing will be designed to Visitable Dwellings standards and up to 10% will be designed to be Wheelchair Adapted or Adaptable.

It is also important that shared surface areas include an alternative or clearly demarcated means for visually-impaired people to navigate by.





#### 4.2.6 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Best practice in ‘urban design’ has been adopted in the concept design, paving the way for the creation of an attractive, accessible neighbourhood which will encourage vitality. This will create a place where people will want to live, possibly the most sustainable of objectives.

Consideration has been given to how shelter will be provided from the elements by land form, trees and other buildings to reduce exposure and loss of energy from buildings. Other passive measures such as orientation will maximise solar gain to reduce energy demand and habitable rooms will, where possible, be located to the south.

Important factors considered during the design process include layout, orientation and design of the external building envelope.

By adopting good practice in design and operation, significant improvements in energy efficiency and energy consumption can be achieved and acceptable comfort levels can be achieved with considerable building life-time energy cost savings.



# 4.3 LANDSCAPE

## 4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

### 4.3.1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

Ubu Design Landscape Architects were commissioned by Stackbourne Ltd to prepare a Landscape Statement to support a planning application for an area of land identified for residential development at Smallford Works, Smallford Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire.

This statement will highlight the high quality landscape and public realm elements within the scheme and how the retained and proposed features will assist in integrating the development into its surroundings and improve the gateway to Sleepshyde and Smallford.

### 4.3.1.2 SITE LOCATION

Grid Reference: TL 19778 06851 (the approximate centre of the site).

The site is located at Smallford Works which is currently a complex of yards and small scale industrial units. It lies to the west of Smallford Lane which is to the west of the Sleepshyde village and south of Smallford village, located between St Albans and Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

### 4.3.1.3 DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is for 100 mixed-tenure residential units consisting of 1-bedroom apartments, 2, 3 and 4-bed units arranged as detached, semi detached and terraced properties.

The development will sit within an existing robust landscape framework and the majority of boundary trees and vegetation will be retained apart from where it is necessary to provide vehicular and pedestrian access points from Smallford Lane.

### 4.3.1.4 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared in conjunction with the planning application and has been used to

inform the landscape strategy.

The site lies within the National Landscape Area (NCA): 111 Northern Thames Basin, as defined by Natural England (2014). Hertfordshire County Council's publication "Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment" (2000/2005 ) identifies the site as part of the landscape area Colney Heath Farmland as demonstrated in the Figure opposite. Character descriptions and assessments can be found in the LVIA.

The LVIA concluded that the proposed development can be accommodated within the landscape character and visual amenity and is acceptable in terms of landscape and visual impact.

The following pages will demonstrate the landscape design strategy that has been developed to provide an attractive development set within a robust landscape framework of existing structure planting to enable successful integration within the setting of the site informed from the LVIA and other consultant recommendations.

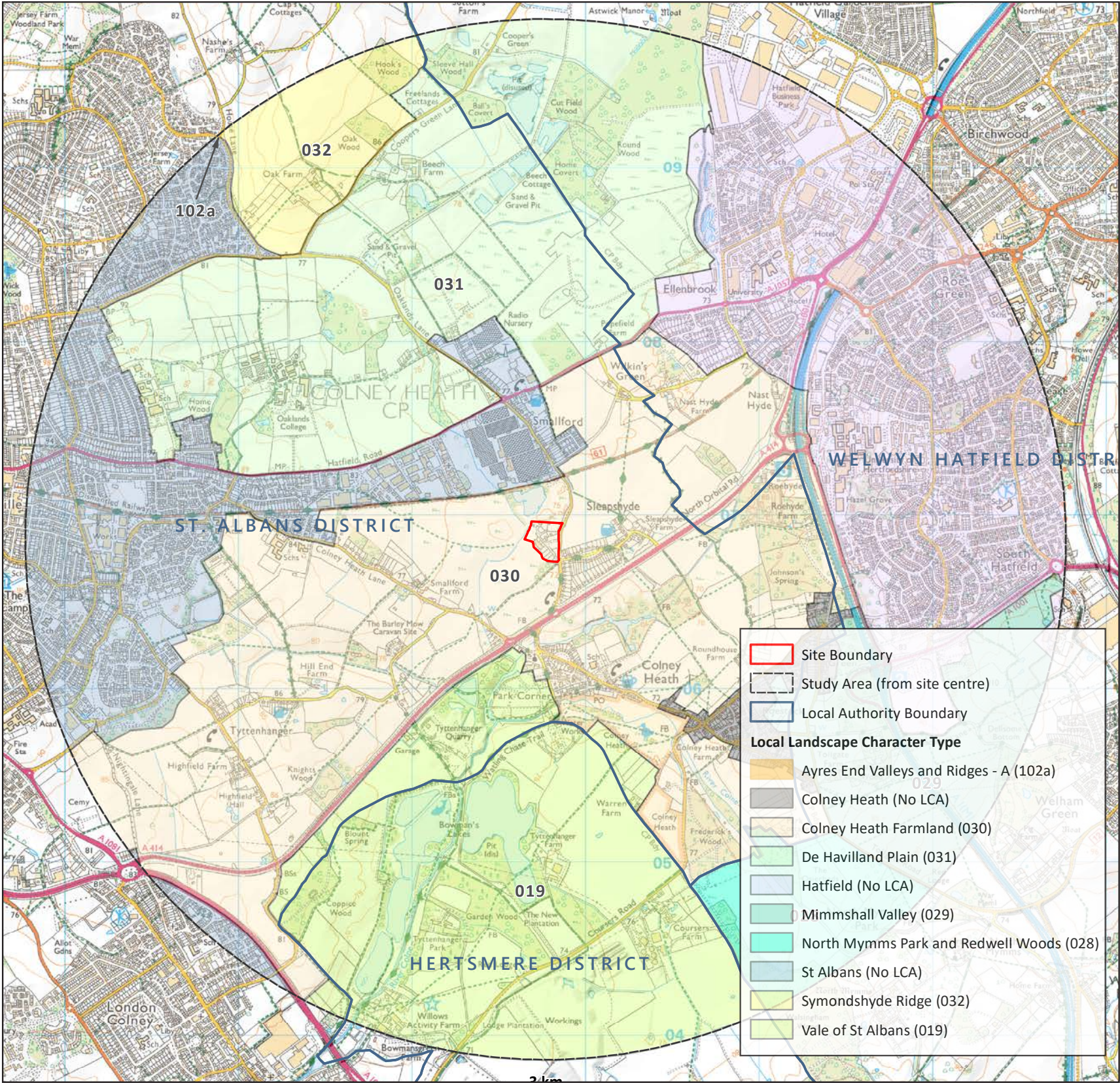


Figure 1: Local Landscape Character and site Location



### 4.3.2 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The landscape strategy has been developed by taking account of the site's constraints and by considering the current surrounding character to create a proposal which will become seamlessly integrated into its setting.

Ultimately, it is a development which works with the existing landscape form, responding fully to the site's existing features and surrounding context.

There are many opportunities to not only complement, but also enhance the existing landscape character, utilise the existing natural features, mitigate any potential visual impacts of the development and improve the gateway to Sleepshyde and Smallford. The landscape layout demonstrated in Figure 2 sets out the broad landscape and public realm strategy which include:

- **Retaining and enhancing existing landscape features** - The existing vegetation along the boundaries will be retained where possible and enhanced through infilling and maintenance. Retaining the vegetation will create a sense of maturity to the scheme and help to integrate the development into the existing landscape and countryside.
- **Enhance the local landscape character** - The existing local landscape character and local context have been analysed within the LVIA and accompanying Design and Access Statement. These have informed the landscape layout and highlighted opportunities to introduce appropriate hard and soft materiality.
- **Mitigate any potential visual impact** - The site is visually well contained but there are opportunities to enhance the aesthetic quality of the site when viewed from visual receptors along Smallford Lane and the surrounding public right of way network.
- **Enhance existing green infrastructure networks** - by introducing tree lined routes and native front boundary planting, SuDS and wildlife corridors

within the development.

- **Biodiversity gain** – This will increase with the introduction of new trees, hedges, shrubs, wildflower and wetland planting are incorporated throughout the design proposals.
- **Improved connectivity** - connecting the development to the existing pedestrian links to the adjoining villages, countryside and public right of way network.
- **Amenity Space** - the development includes high quality areas of public open space such as the Village Green and Green Lane.



Figure 2: Landscape Layout (Not to Scale)



### 4.3.3 SOFT LANDSCAPE PALETTE

The proposed planting will not only bring enhanced aesthetic qualities to the development but will mitigate any landscape and visual impacts identified in the accompanying LVIA. The landscape proposals will also increase the ecological value of the site connecting to wider green infrastructure networks and wildlife corridors.

The residential development is set within a strong landscape framework with tree lined streets, shrub and hedge planting along the front boundaries, linkages to local PRoWs and areas of public open space for recreational activities.

The existing soft landscaping features will be retained where possible, especially the boundary hedges and trees. These will also be enhanced and maintained and any gaps infilled where necessary. Retaining the existing will bring an instant sense of maturity to the scheme. Details on the existing vegetation can be found in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (September 2019) by SJA Trees.

Portions of existing vegetation along Smallford Lane will be removed to provide pedestrian links, vehicular access and associated visibility splays. Mitigation proposals include introducing new native trees along Smallford Lane, maintaining and enhancing the retained vegetation through infilling and planting an instant mixed native hedge in front of the timber fencing.

Tree species have been selected to reflect the local character and be appropriate to the their location within the proposed development as well as bringing aesthetic qualities and softening the built form.

They have also been used to define the street hierarchy and different areas within the development. These include species such as *Acer campestre* 'Elsrijk', *Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine', *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer' and *Amelanchier* × *grandiflora* 'Robin Hill'.

Shrub and hedge planting is proposed as part of the front boundary treatments. It is proposed that a mixture of robust evergreen shrub planting is considered in these areas. This will include species such as *Viburnum tinus*, *Vinca*

minor, *Skimmia japonica*, *Choisya* 'Aztec Pearl', *Hydrangea* 'Annabelle', *Euonymus* 'Emerald and Gold'.

Within the areas of public open space large native trees and areas of wildflower planting could be introduced to offer an attractive flowering mix not only with bring aesthetic benefits by increasing the plant diversity will attract insects and other invertebrates (including butterflies, bees, spiders and millipedes), birds and mammals. The flowering species add a changing palette of colour to the environment throughout the seasons.

The precedents demonstrate the quality and style of development the proposals are aiming to achieve. Alongside enhancing the aesthetic qualities of the site, a key design influence has been linking wildlife and ecological corridors through the retention of existing vegetation and the introduction of new native species.



Instant mixed hedges along Smallford Lane



*Carpinus betulus* 'Frans fontaine'



Front boundary hedging



Evergreen shrub planting in front gardens



*Hydrangea* 'Annabelle'



*Tilia cordata* 'Green Spire'



Large native trees in POS



Wildflower planting within areas of public open space



Tree and shrub planting in mews and along parking bays



*Liquidambar styraciflua*



*Acer campestre* 'Elsrijk'



### 4.3.4 HARD LANDSCAPE PALETTE

The use of high quality materials throughout the proposed development to improve the existing condition and to reflect the character of the proposed and the surrounding area.

The main streets are to be vehicular bitmac surfacing in black edged with a Marshalls conservation concrete kerb unit (or similar approved).

There will be raised tables finished with granite aggregate setts at key points on the highway which are to be used as traffic calming measures.

The areas of shared surfacing and the mews will be high quality block paving in differing colours to distinguish the areas. Tobermore Fushion (or similar approved) block paving units (200x200x80mm) in mid grey, buff, russet, silver and graphite - bonding patterns and colours to be agreed. Differing units (size and colour) will be used to distinguish parking areas.

Street parking spaces are proposed to Tobermore Fushion (or similar approved) block paving units in 200x100x80mm in Silver and delineated with graphite blocks.

Private driveways are to be block paved with Tobermore Sienna (or similar approved) Sandstone block paving units 9240x160x80mm along the avenue and the private footpaths and rear patios Tobermore Manhattan (400x164x80mm) in Mid grey.

Rear and side boundaries are to 1.8m closeboard timber fencing with the exception where the side boundary faces a junction and it is proposed to be a 1.8m brick wall. Steel railings and evergreen hedges are proposed as front and side boundary treatments on the terraced properties in the centre of the development where the pavement runs between the unit and parking space.

The pavements and footpaths throughout the development are proposed to be pedestrian bitmac surfacing in a buff colour (Tarmac ultracoloured asphalt or similar approved). Pavements through the public open space to be edged with granite aggregate setts. All surfacing materials to LPA Highways

specification.

Street furniture such as bins and seating are to be located within the areas of public open spaces. The contemporary materiality will compliment the built form.



Tobermore Fusion Sandstone



Parking spaces delineated by differing blocks within the mews



Shared space - Tobermore Fusion



Tobermore Heather Tegula Setts



Tobermore Fusion Mid Grey



Tobermore Fusion Russet



Tobermore Sienna



Tobermore Manhattan



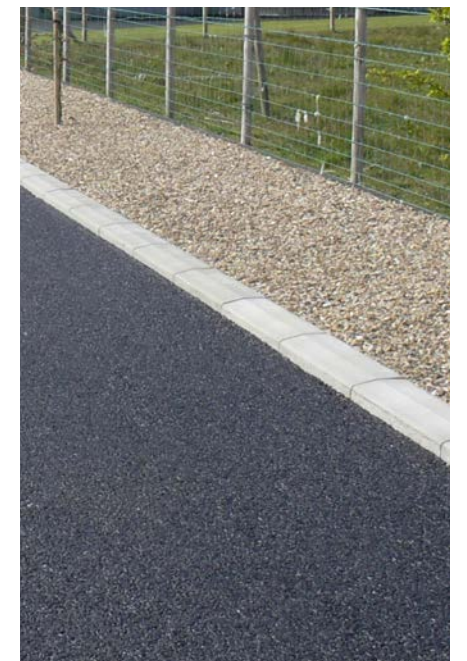
Pavement in a buff colouring such as Tarmac Ultracoloured asphalt



Sienna setts on driveway



Tobermore Manhattan as private footpaths



Bitmac paving and pavement



## 5.0 CONCLUSION

This Design + Access Statement has demonstrated our interpretation of the site and context to which the proposed residential development will seek to respond to and enhance, through considered design principles and physical treatment.

We believe the proposal would represent a highly beneficial re-use of a previously developed site.

Full consideration has been given to the context, the capacity of this landscape to accommodate the development proposed, roads and traffic matters and infrastructure to ensure that the new development form can come forward to deliver a clear vision. The new building forms will be designed to a high quality controlled by a Design Code which will apply to all elements of the development.

The premise of the scheme is that it has been sensitively designed in conjunction with input from the applicant's landscape consultant and masterplan designers to ensure there is reduced adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

The planned landscape-led development will also enhance the landscape character of the site and have a positive impact when assessed against the established industrial activities on the subject site. The interface between the new development and the rural fringe has been taken into account in the Concept Masterplan whilst the opportunity has also been taken to introduce new structure planting areas consistent with the character of this landscape which will, not only help to soften the elevation of the newly built form and provide a framework into which the development will be seen to be absorbed but also, encourage the creation of new habitats and environments.

The new planting and the creation of publicly accessible open spaces would enhance the landscape character of the site and the surrounding Green Belt.

In time this new community neighbourhood will be seen to fully integrate into this landscape setting and it will be seen as an integral part of the wider settlement pattern in Colney

Heath and beyond. The new building forms and streetscapes will be laid out to reflect the evolution of other successful historical communities in the area however, there is also a clear desire to deliver a vision for this neighbourhood which will deliver a vibrant community which will continue to thrive through the 21st Century and beyond.

In summary, the design should:

- **retain and enhance existing habitats and wildlife sites**
- **retain and extend the existing network of paths and cycleways**
- **retain, enhance and create new areas of woodland using native species**
- **utilise existing previously developed land**
- **respect the landscape character and key views of the site**
- **provide the requisite amount of affordable housing units**
- **provide a vibrant neighbourhood focus with amenity open space and a new square at the heart of this residential development**
- **ensure access to high quality open space**
- **provide recreational activities for residents and visitors alike**
- **implement SUDS to ensure adequate drainage and flood prevention**
- **ensure that noise and air quality impacts are minimised**
- **aim to improve transport links to the wider area**
- **incorporate sustainable principles during the design and construction process.**

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