

LAND AT TOLLGATE ROAD
COLNEY HEATH

DESIGN
AND ACCESS
STATEMENT

JUNE 2022

Vistry Group



Prepared by:



Office Address:

CSA Environmental

Dixie's Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire, SG7 5NT

Office Telephone Number:

01462 743 647

On behalf of:

Vistry Group

Disclaimer

This document is for illustrative purposes only and should not be used for any construction or estimation purposes. Do not scale drawings. No liability or responsibility is accepted arising from reliance upon the information contained in this drawing/document.

Copyright

All OS plans are Crown Copyright 2012. All rights reserved.
Licence number 100020449

Issue:	Date:	Prepared	Authorised by	File reference:
First Issue	27.06.2022	HG/KP	JC	3925_08_DAS_DRAFT
Second Issue	29.06.2022	KP	JC	3925_08_DAS_A



CONTENTS

01 INTRODUCTION

- Introduction Page 1
- The Planning Application Page 1
- Purpose of the Design and Access Statement Page 2
- The Vision Page 2

02 VISTRY GROUP

- Who We Are Page 3
- What We Do Page 5
- A Partner you can Trust Page 6
- Track Record and Delivery Page 7

03 SUSTAINABILITY

- Sustainability Strategy Page 8
- Our Operations Page 8
- Waste and Resources Page 8
- Our Homes and Communities Page 9
- Affordable homes and planning obligations Page 10

04 PLANNING CONTEXT AND DESIGN GUIDANCE

- Planning Policy Context Page 11
- Local Planning Policy Page 13

05 SITE ASSESSMENT

- Site Location and Context Page 15
- Access, Movement and Facilities Page 17
- Surrounding Designations Page 19
- Historical Development of Local Area Page 21
- Architectural Context Page 23
- Site Description Page 25
- Landscape and Visual Character Page 26
- Topography Page 27
- Ecology Page 27
- Arboriculture Page 29
- Drainage and Hydrology Page 30
- Built Heritage Page 31
- Acoustics Page 31
- Utilities and Services Page 32

06 EVALUATION

- Opportunities and Influences Page 33
- Public Consultation Page 35

07 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- Development Framework Plan Page 37
- Illustrative Masterplan Page 39
- Access Page 41
- Use and Amount Page 43
- Layout Page 45
- Character Areas Page 47
- Car and Cycle Parking Page 49
- Creating a Safe and Secure Environment Page 50
- Scale Page 51
- External Appearance Page 52
- Green Infrastructure and Design Page 53
- Sustainability Page 55

08 CONCLUSION

01. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by CSA Environmental Ltd on behalf of Vistry Group (Vistry) for a proposed residential development on Land at Tollgate Road, Colney Heath (the Site).

The Site lies within the administrative area of St Albans City and District Council. The application Site measures approximately 7.82 hectares (ha) and comprises an irregular shaped agricultural field located on the south eastern edge of Colney Heath, adjacent to Tollgate Road. The existing settlement edge is located to the north east, with the route of the River Colne running to the south west, agricultural land extending to the south east, with a horse paddock to the north west. The Site lies within the Green Belt. This application seeks to release Land at Tollgate Road from the Green Belt, creating a logical and suitable extension to Colney Heath, and in doing so, redefining the Green Belt Boundary. The Site and its context are identified within Figure 1.1 opposite.

1.2 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

The submitted planning application seeks permission (all matters are reserved except for access) for a high quality, sustainable development comprising the following:

- **A development for up to 150 new homes (including 35% affordable and up to 10 custom built homes);**
- **New public open space (including a children's play area, a new picnic/seating area, recreational footways, with 'Play on the Way' stations, and a potential new pedestrian link connecting the Site to Public Footpath 033);**
- **Retention and enhancement of Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site; and**
- **Demolition of No. 42 Tollgate Road, to provide vehicular access off Tollgate Road.**

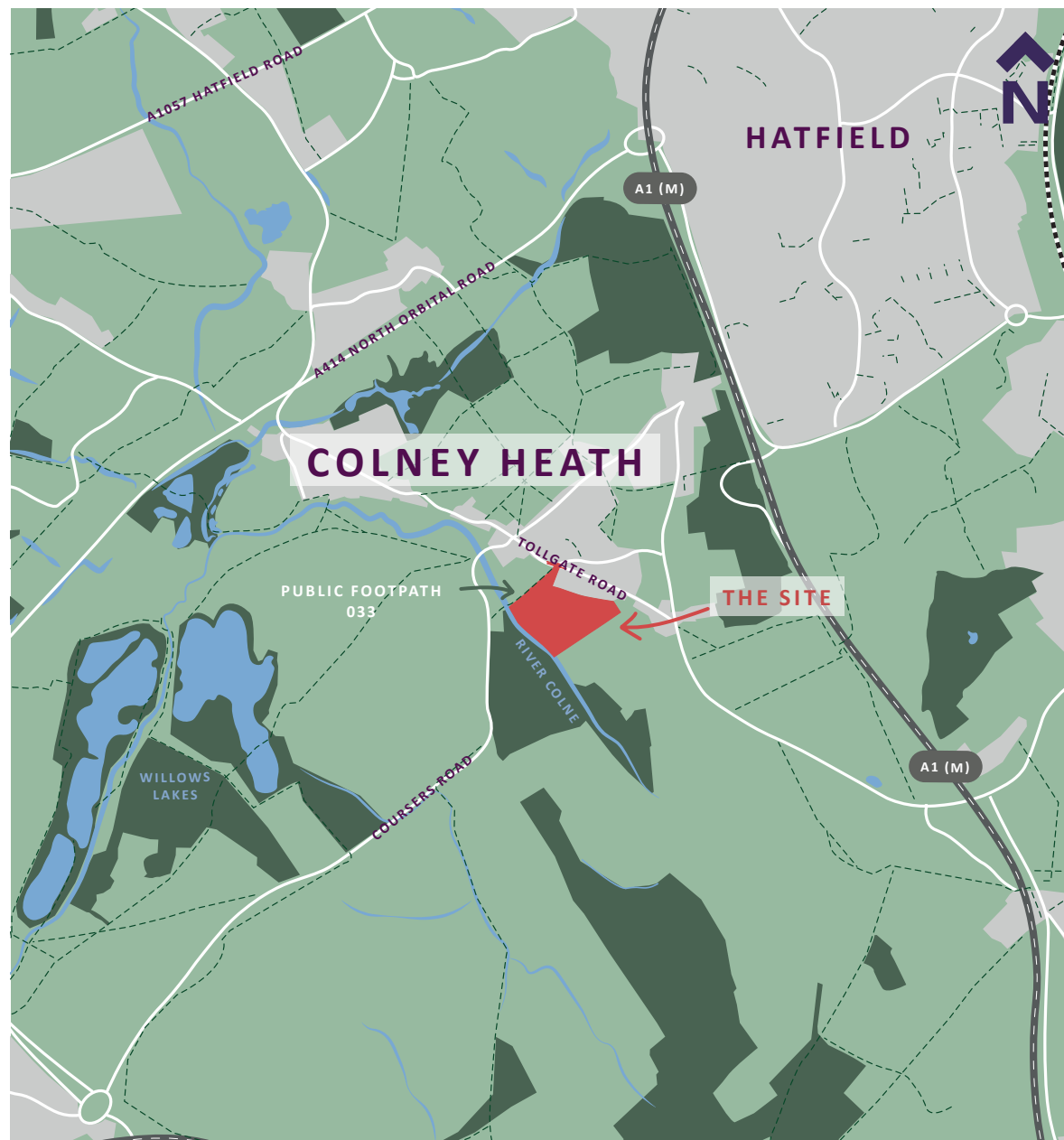


Figure 1.1: The Site and its Context.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

The DAS explains the design rationale for the scheme and how the applicant has fully considered the proposals and understands what is appropriate and feasible within the context of the Site and its surroundings.

Good quality design is an integral part of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that design quality matters and that planning should drive up standards across all forms of development. Achieving good design is about creating places, buildings, or spaces that work well for everyone, look good, last well, and will adapt to the needs of future generations.

This Design and Access Statement is comprised of the following sections:

01. Introduction: This section introduces the development proposals and sets out the vision and purpose of the Design and Access Statement.

02. Planning Context and Design Guidance: This section sets out the relevant planning policy and design guidance that applies to the development of the Site.

03. Site Assessment: This section demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the Site and its surroundings.

04. Evaluation: This section identifies the influences and opportunities of the Site and its surrounding, as well as a summary of the Public Consultation process.

05. Development Proposals: This section describes and illustrates the design proposals and demonstrates how they respond to the influences and opportunities identified in Section 4.0 and in response to the preceding sections.

06. Conclusion: This section evaluates the proposals against NPPF sustainability and design criteria.

1.4 THE VISION

The vision for the Site is to create a sensitively designed and high quality place which complements the character of Colney Heath and responds to the Site's assessed constraints, as follows:

- Deliver appropriate housing growth for Colney Heath and the wider authority.
- Provide up to 150 new homes, offering a range of dwelling types, sizes and tenures to meet the housing needs of the area (including a proportion of affordable housing and up to 10 custom built homes).
- Create a logical, carefully considered extension to Colney Heath, which will ensure an appropriate transition between the existing built edge of Colney Heath and countryside beyond, and redefine the Green Belt Boundary.
- Respect and enhance the Site and the surrounding landscape, heritage and environmental assets by setting the new homes within an attractive green infrastructure network. New tree planting will mitigate against the loss of existing vegetation to facilitate the access points, and will include new woodland and thicket planting along the western and northern boundary, redefining the Green Belt.
- The proposed green infrastructure framework will allow for ecological enhancements, have a beneficial effect on local wildlife, and will help address the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features, in the form of two attenuation basins and swales coinciding with the low points of the Site, designed to retain surface water and provide new habitat for wildlife.
- Promote a development that integrates into its surroundings, with a focus on maximising connectivity of pedestrian and cycle routes, to both the existing settlement edge and the countryside beyond.
- Create a 'place' that is accessible to everyone, which makes everyone feel comfortable, safe and secure, and a place where people want to live.

02. VISTRY GROUP

2.1 WHO WE ARE

Vistry Group was formed in January 2020 following the successful acquisition of Linden Homes and the Galliford Try Partnerships & Regeneration businesses by Bovis Homes Group PLC.

With developments from Northumberland to Cornwall and Cheshire to Norfolk, Vistry is one of the top five housebuilders in the UK by volume. As one of the country's leading housebuilders, Vistry has an established reputation for quality that runs through their homes' design, build, specification and customer service.



DREW SMITH



Meridian Water, Enfield



Winchester Village, Winchester



Public open space



White Rock, Paignton

This page has been left blank intentionally.

2.2 WHAT WE DO

DEVELOPING
SUSTAINABLE
NEW HOMES AND
COMMUNITIES
ACROSS ALL
SECTORS OF THE UK
HOUSING MARKET



2.3 A PARTNER YOU CAN TRUST



2.4 TRACK RECORD AND DELIVERY



The Gateway, Bexhill, East Sussex (1,050 homes)



Steadings, Essington



Stanton Cross, Wellingborough (3,500 homes)



Fletcher's Rise, Wombourne



The Pavillions, Kenilworth

03. SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Vistry Group’s purpose is to deliver sustainable homes and communities across all sectors of the UK housing market.

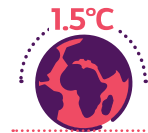
Key to this purpose is a successful and ambitious sustainability strategy.

Our strategy launched in 2021 and is focussed on three priority areas of People, Operations and Homes & Communities.

It includes a commitment to setting carbon reduction targets consistent with reduction required to keep warming at 1.5°C and the development of a roadmap to deliver net zero carbon homes.

We recognise that key to success in meeting the sustainability challenges we face as a society and industry is collaboration, and to facilitate this we have become members of the UK Green Building Council, as well as corporate members of the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment.

We continue to be gold members Supply Chain Sustainability School of the and members of the Future Homes Task Force.



3.2 OUR OPERATIONS

Climate Change

The targets covering greenhouse gas emissions from company operations are consistent with reduction required to keep warming at 1.5°C.

100% of electricity used in our offices and sites is from renewable sources.

Responsibility for climate related issues resides with Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and our COO is the executive sponsor and chairs the quarterly Group’s Sustainability Forum.

3.3 WASTE & RESOURCES

We identify, manage and mitigate all environmental impacts through our ISO 14001 certified management system.

Waste Recycling data for 2020 resulted in an annual total of 95% recycling rate.

Procurement of only FSC/PEFC certified timber, and supporting schemes such as the National Community Wood Recycling Project, where in 2020, 686 tonnes of our timber waste was re-used.

Our ultimate priority for 2021 is to achieve a 5% reduction in waste intensity tonnes/unit whilst retaining recycling rate of over 95%.

3.4 OUR HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

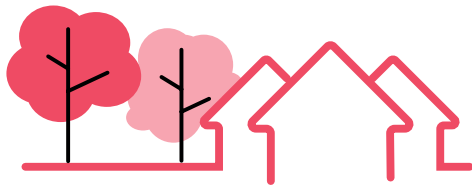
Placemaking

Our approach to placemaking is designed to improve people’s quality of life and support our customers health and wellbeing.

Providing our customers with access to high quality amenities that support local economies is a key consideration when selecting and designing our sites and in addition to section 106 and community infrastructure contributions.



Twigworth Green, Twigworth



Netherhall Park, Great Barr

Our master planning approach aims to provide a clear hierarchy of public, private, and semi-private spaces that encourage neighbours to interact with each other and build strong communities.



The Green, Winchester Village

Nature

Our approach to development design focusses on the principles of Green Infrastructure (GI)- networks of multifunctional green space which includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage systems and soils

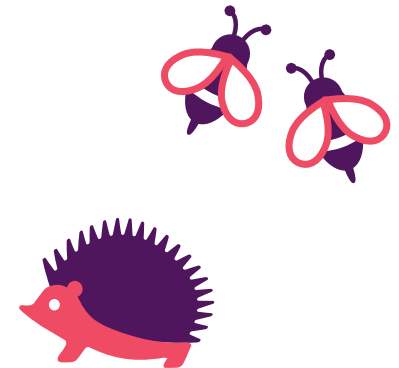
Ahead of a 10% biodiversity net gain being mandated by the emerging Environment Bill, we are seeking to assess and future-proof our schemes.



We are in partnership with the British Hedgehog Preservation Society and have formed a new partnership with the Bat Conservation Trust, to help protect these important species



Vistry Partnerships are now business supporters of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT). The aim of this sponsorship is to ensure our sites across the country are helping to support bumblebees and other wildlife with our planting.



Future Homes Standard

We are currently developing the 2025 housetype range to meet the new Part L and Future Homes Standard (FHS).

We are piloting the construction of zero carbon homes on a site with Vistry Partnerships West Midlands (Europa Way Triangle, Warwick).

We are conducting extensive reviews of renewable technologies and products to ensure we offer the most technically robust solution which is right for our customers.

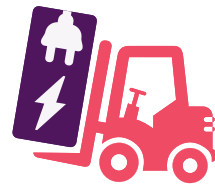


Unwrapped home, Emmbrook Place



Building upon its fabric-first approach, Vistry currently aims to: make its entire build process as efficient as possible;

- reduce energy demand within its homes;
- decarbonise the heating of homes;
- facilitate the use of electric vehicles;
- and provide green infrastructure at the forefront of its developments.



3.5 AFFORDABLE HOUSING & PLANNING OBLIGATIONS



We work collaboratively with local authorities and registered providers (RPs) to provide affordable housing across a range of different tenure types.

Planning obligation spend in 2020 was £50.5m which contributes to the needs of the communities we build in.



Vistry Partnerships is the leading private sector provider of affordable housing creating 1,306 affordable homes during 2020, our product range includes one-bedroom apartments through to larger five-bedroom family homes.



04. PLANNING CONTEXT AND DESIGN GUIDANCE

4.1 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

A detailed assessment of the planning policy framework is set out in the Planning Statement which accompanies this planning application. This section focuses on the local planning policies most relevant to the design and access proposals for the development.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

At the national level, the relevant policy guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021). The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and is a material consideration in the making of planning decisions, setting out the parameters by which planning applications are to be assessed in relation to:

- **The presumption in favour of sustainable development.**
- **Decision-making.**
- **Delivering a sufficient supply of homes.**
- **Promoting healthy and safe communities.**
- **Promoting sustainable transport.**
- **Making effective use of land.**
- **Achieving well-designed places.**
- **Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.**

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that *“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”*.

Paragraph 130 provides a set of design criteria which new development should seek to achieve:

- **Function well and add to the overall quality of the area over the lifetime of the development.**
- **Be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.**
- **Be sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging innovation.**
- **Establish or maintain a strong sense of place to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.**
- **Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space).**
- **Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.**

National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

The Planning Practice Guidance explains how the NPPF policy should be implemented and should be read alongside the National Design Guide. Paragraph 001 (ID 26-001-20191001) of the PPG provides further information on design in the planning process. It states:

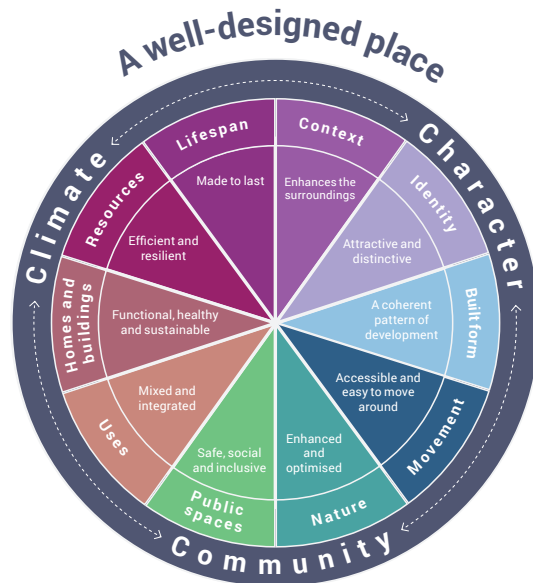
“...development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to: a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.”

National Design Guidance

In October 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published the National Design Guide (NDG). The NDG has been put in place to advise local authorities and their officers when assessing planning applications, councillors when making planning decisions, applicants and their design teams when preparing a planning application and local communities and their representatives.

Whilst it seeks to inform development proposals and guide the assessment of them, it also supports paragraph 130 of the NPPF which states *“planning permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.”*

Part 2 of the NDG sets out the ten characteristics which help to nurture and sustain a sense of community. They work to positively address environmental issues affecting climate. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the NPPF.



Building For a Healthy Life (BHL)

‘A Design Toolkit for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces’

BHL is one of the most widely used design tools in England for creating places that are better for people and nature. It was written in partnership with Homes England, NHS England and NHS Improvement and is structured to set clear expectations for new developments. By following BHL’s structure, the following Statement offers a clear set of design qualities and ‘testable’ principles for the application at Land at Gaddesden Lane.

By following BHL, a critical aspect of the proposals for the Site is to design for active travel and access to green space. The ability to be able to walk and cycle within the new neighbourhood and further afield to essential services and work is key in order to minimise traffic and mitigating climate change. Equally, and as BHL sets out, the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of designing for active travel. This is in recognition that design choices that help people feel disposed to walk or ride a bicycle in their neighbourhood are critical to supporting a sense of well-being from outdoor exercise.

The development of the Site will also respond positively to climate change. The principles embedded in BHL as a whole creates the basis for a sustainable development, including in relation to designing for active travel, maximising access to green space, working with the existing landscape and securing biodiversity enhancements.



4.2 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

The extant Local Plan comprises the St. Albans District Local Plan Review 1994. The following (Saved 2009) local policies are of most relevance to this DAS and the proposals at hand:

Policies of relevance to the Site and the landscape include:

- **Policy 1: Metropolitan Green Belt;**
- **Policy 39: Parking Standards, General Requirements**
- **Policy 40: Residential Development Parking Standards**
- **Policy 69: General Design and Layout;**
- **Policy 70: Design and Layout of New Housing;**
- **Policy 74: Landscaping and Tree Preservation;**
- **Policy 93: New Areas of Public Open Space;**
- **Policy 97: Existing Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways;**
- **Policy 102: Loss of Agricultural Land;**
- **Policy 104: Landscape Conservation; and**
- **Policy 106: Nature Conservation.**

Policy 1 states that the whole of St. Albans District lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt except for: towns and specified settlements listed in Policy 2; land North of Buncefield, Hemel Hempstead; Colney Street Industrial/Warehousing Estate and North-East Hemel Hempstead. New development within the Green Belt shall integrate with the existing landscape.

Policies 39 and 40 point out the importance of off-street parking provision and set out the relevant general requirements for parking as well as the residential development parking standards.

Policies 69, 70 and 74 deal with detailed design matters that have been specifically reserved for later approval as part of this Outline Application. The submission of the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Masterplan, supported with principal plans provide appropriate evidence and comfort that the requirements of these detailed design and landscape related policies can be reasonably met at the reserved matters stage.

Policy 93 outlines the sites which have been allocated as public open spaces on the Proposals Map.

Policy 97 aims to protect the amenity value of the rights of way network.

Policy 102 sets out the criteria against which Development which would result in the loss of agricultural land will be assessed.

Policy 104 seeks to ensure that landscape conservation areas are preserved or enhanced.

Policy 106 this policy sets out the objective of conserving and enhancing the ecological assets of the District's settlements.

Emerging Local Plan

Following the withdrawal of the most recent Draft Local Plan (in late 2020) upon the recommendation of the Local Plan Examination Inspector, the Council have embarked upon a new draft Local Plan (2020-2038) which will affect what can be built and where up to 2038 in the District. A new Call for Sites exercise was held between January 2021 and March 2021 to which Vistry responded with the submission of site details for Land at Tollgate Road, which form part of this application.

At the time of writing (June 2022) the new Draft Plan remains at the Sites review stage, as part of its Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment. Furthermore, a wide range of other technical work is currently underway including: a comprehensive investigation of Urban Capacity; a new Green Belt Review; Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment; and an Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

St Albans City and District Council – Building Futures: Sustainable Design Toolkit (web-based guide)

This document is a web-based guide designed to provide practical guidance for applicants on how to include measures to improve sustainability in their designs. It focuses on making development in Hertfordshire more sustainable and of higher quality in design terms. The guide provides a technical module on Landscape and Biodiversity, which provides a step-by-step checklist on how to properly consider landscape issues as part of the design process. The guidance platform offers no specific guidance relating to the landscape character areas outlined within the other landscape studies within.

This page has been left blank intentionally.

05. SITE ASSESSMENT

5.1 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Site is located within the south of Colney Heath, to the south of Tollgate Road and comprises two fields of horse grazing, as well as the on-site Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site (LWS), running adjacent to the River Colne. A stable block and manège are located in the north of the Site. The Site also includes the house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road, indented into the Site's north eastern corner. The Site is accessed off Tollgate Road just to the north of No. 42.

The existing settlement edge is located to the north east, with the route of the River Colne running to the south west, agricultural land extending to the south east, with a horse paddock to the north west. The Site is currently located within the Metropolitan Green Belt, relevant Saved Policy of the St Albans District Local Plan Review is Policy 1.

Regional Context

Colney Heath is located at the south easterly most extent of the District, bordering Hertsmere. This large Hertfordshire village, sits within a triangular parcel of agricultural and wooded land, defined to the east by the A1M; to the north by the North Orbital Road, which connects the A1M at Hatfield to the M1 at Hemel Hempstead to the west; and to the south by the A1081 and a section of the M25.

The village itself is divided into two areas, with the northern part located around the High Street in the west and the other located around Tollgate Road, to the south east of the village. Together, these two roads connect and form the main thoroughfare through the village.

The University town of Hatfield is located approximately 2.2 miles (3.5km) to the east of Colney Heath, with the centre of St Albans located approximately 3 miles (4.9km) to the north west. The larger towns of Hemel Hempstead, Watford and Welwyn Garden City are all within 10 miles (16km) of Colney Heath, offering opportunities for employment, travel and education. The nearest train stations are located at Hatfield and Welham Green which provide services to London Kings Cross, Cambridge and beyond.

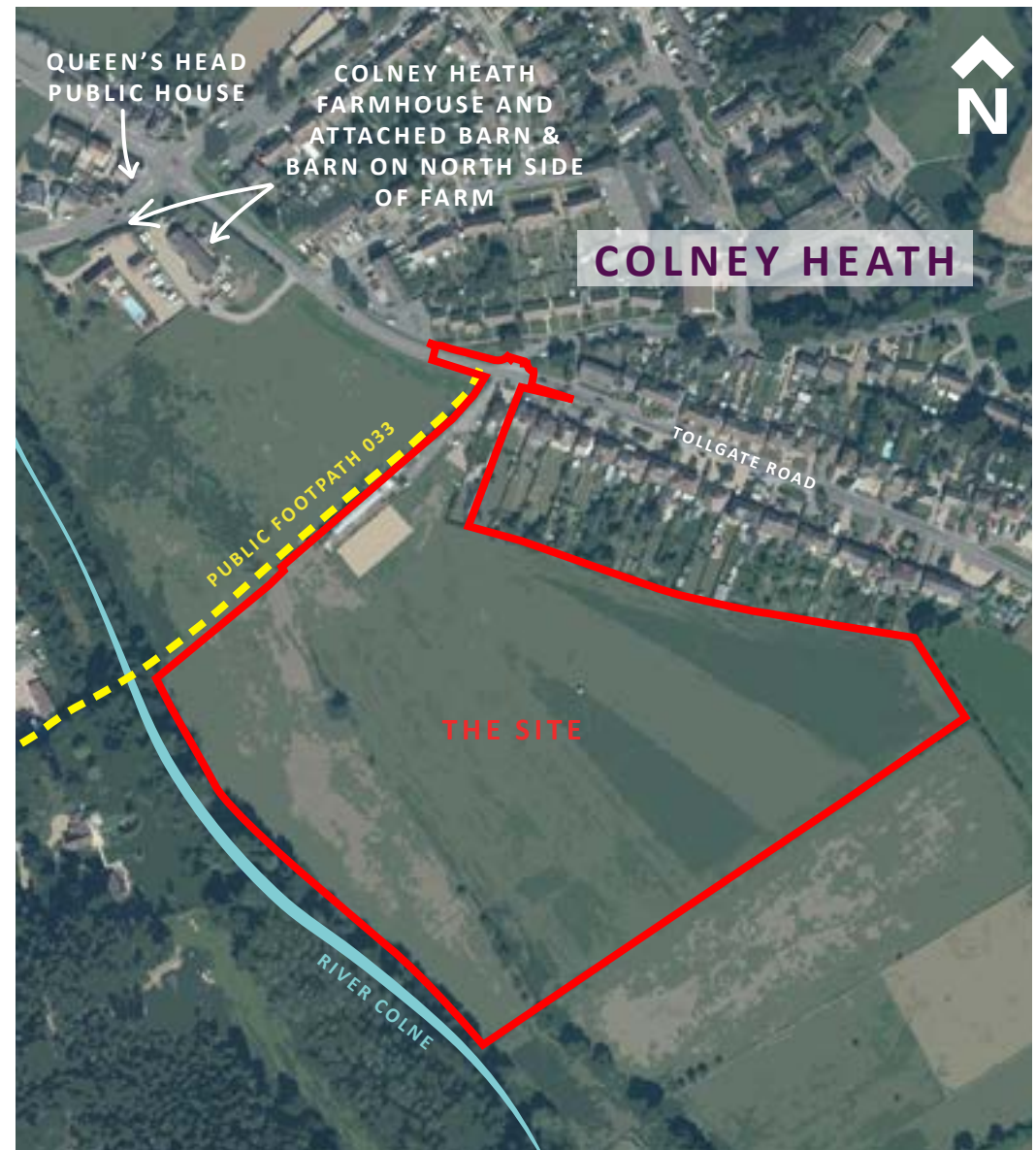


Figure 5.1: Site Location Plan.



Figure 5.2: Wide Context Plan.

5.2 ACCESS, MOVEMENT AND FACILITIES

Colney Heath is a village which enjoys a good level of local provision in terms of local shops, services and facilities, which are all easily accessible from the Site via non-car modes. Colney Heath is also accessible to St Albans, the largest town in the district, which provides a wider retail offer and a range of employment opportunities, leisure, and other facilities. Besides, Colney Heath offers easy access to travel to further nearby towns or onwards to London. This gives flexibility to a number of businesses within the job market in and surrounding the village.

Within a short walking distance of the Site is Colney Heath Common, a 60-acre area of open green space and Heritage site which borders the River Colne, as well as Frederick's Wood Local Wildlife Site, both providing significant recreational opportunities in close proximity to the Site. There are many local amenities including two nurseries, salons, pubs, a football club, St Mark's Church, the Village Hall, eateries and retail, located along the High Street in the village centre.

Public Footpath Colney Heath 033 runs alongside the north western Site boundary. This path turns from Coursers Road at north of Fredericks Wood, thence north east to Tollgate Road opposite its junction with Fellowes Lane.



The Site benefits from five bus services, all within walking distance. The nearest bus stops are located to the south east of the proposed site access on Tollgate Road (Fellows Lane). These bus stops are accessible via the footway provision on either side of Tollgate Road. The bus stops are located within an approximate 400m from the centre of the site. Bus stops are also located on Hall Gardens within approximately 390m of the site and provided access to bus service 200. Bus stops located on Roestock Lane are within approximately 480m of the site and provide access to the 305 service that runs between Sandridge and Potters Bar.

Routes 230 and 312 provide connections to Welham Green train station on a Wednesday, while bus route 355 will provide a useful connection to the Nicholas Breakspear secondary school from the Site.

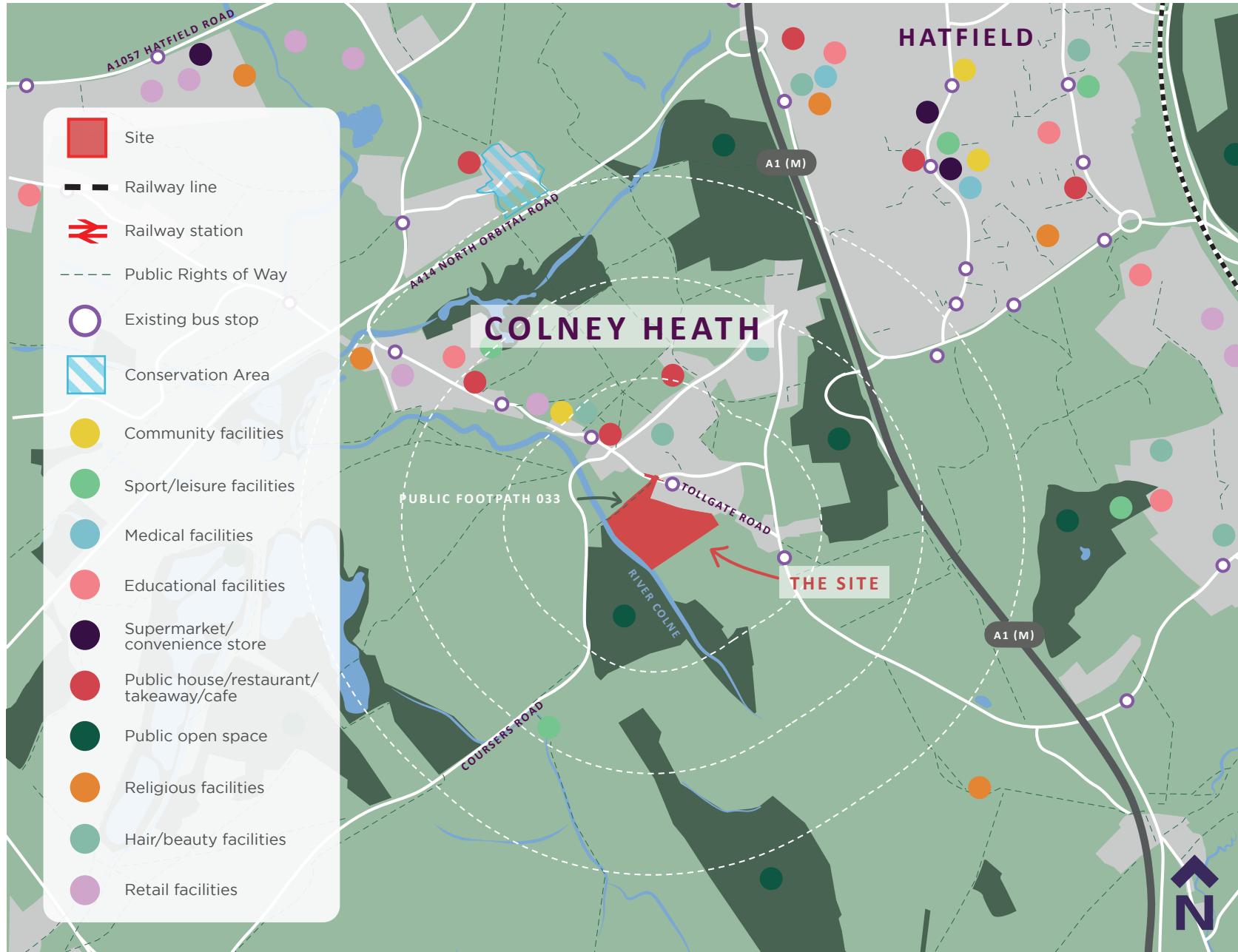


Figure 5.3: Facilities Plan.

5.3 SURROUNDING DESIGNATIONS

Landscape

The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside Map ('MAGIC') and the Local Adopted Policies Maps indicate that the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality.

The Site contains no trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders.

The farmhouse and barn to the north at Colney Heath Farm, are both Grade II Listed, as is the Queen's Head Public House and two London Coal Duty markers to the north of the farm.

Green Belt

The site is within the Green Belt. The Council's 2013 Green Belt Review identified the site as within Green Belt Parcel 'GB34 – Green Belt Land between Hatfield and London Colney'. The parcel of land is bounded to the north by the north Orbital A414 and to the south follows Coursers Road. The parcel is 419ha in size, so considerably larger than the application site itself.

The assessment found that parcel GB34 makes a 'limited or no' contribution to purpose 1 (checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas); a 'partial' contribution to purpose 2 (preventing neighbouring towns from merging) and also purpose 4 (preserving the setting and special character of historic towns); and a 'significant' contribution to purpose 3 (assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment). The assessment notes that the parcel contains some built development, including ribbon development. It also notes that a minor reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1st tier settlements. It notes that the level of openness is generally high, especially in the south, but with linear built development at Colney Heath, and the A1(M) forming a major urban influence. The Councils Green Belt study is however an overview, and does not take into consideration the specific Green Belt functions of smaller sites.

The proposed development will be very well contained, and would immediately adjoin the existing settlement. The proposed development could be delivered without significant impact to the functions of the Green Belt.

Public Rights of Way

No Public Rights of Way cross the Site, and it has no public access.

Public Footpath Colney Heath 033 bounds the Site to the north west, and is separated from the Site by a broken hedgerow and fence.

Tree Preservation Orders

There are no trees on the Site covered by a Tree Preservation Order ('TPO'). This is confirmed by the examination of the online mapping service on the Council's website on the 17th of May 2022.



Heritage

No designated heritage assets are located within the Site. Designated heritage assets in the vicinity mainly comprise a number of Grade II Listed Buildings. Particularly, Grade II Listed Colney Heath Farmhouse and associated Grade II listed 'Barn on North Side of Farmyard' are located c. 190m to the north west of the Site. The Grade II Queen's Head Public House, now a private dwelling, is located c. 220m to the north west of the Site; Two London Coal Duty Markers are located c. 200m and 270m to the north west of the Site respectively; The Grade II Listed Mill at Mill House, is located c. 190m to the west of the Site; The Grade II listed 68 Roestock Lane, located c. 430m to the north east of the Site; A Grade II Listed Coal Duty Marker, c. 460m to the south west of the Site; Three Grade II Listed Buildings at the High Street c. 690m to the north west of the Site: The Crooked Billet Public House; Apsley Cottage and a late 17th to early 18th century house at 94 High Street; A Grade II Listed barn, c. 720m to the south west of the Site; A Grade II Listed London Coal Duty Marker, c. 900m to the north west of the Site; Listed buildings within North Mymms Park between c.1.4km and 1.5km to the south-east of the Site, including the Grade I listed North Mymms Park house, the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary the Virgin, and the Grade II listed main gates and lodges.

Ecology

There are no statutory designations covering any part of the Site. A single international statutory designation, Wormley Hoddesdon park Woods SAC, was identified within 10km of the Site; two national statutory designations, Water End Swallow Holes SSSI and Redwell Wood SSSI within 3km and; three local statutory designations, Colney Heath LNR, Oxleys Wood LNR, Howe Dell LNR were identified within 3km of the Site.

Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is a non-statutory designation located within the Site. Furthermore, a total of 12 non-statutory designations, 11 of which are Local Wildlife Sites and North Mymms Park, were identified within 1km of the Site. The ones nearest to the Site are Frederick's Wood LWS, c. 100m west of the Site, and Colney Heath Common LWS, c.200m north west of the Site.

-  Site Boundary
 -  District boundary
 -  Green Belt
 -  Local Nature Reserve
 -  Sleafshyde Conservation Area
 -  Ancient Woodland
 -  Ancient Replanted Woodland
-
-  Grade I Listed Buildings & Structures within 1.5km
 1. Tyttenhanger House
 -  Grade II Listed Buildings & Structures within 1.5km (Outside Conservation Areas)
 2. Ye Old House
 3. Church of St Mark
 4. London Coal Duty Marker
 5. Group of 3; The Crooked Billet Public House, Apsley Cottage & 94 High Street
 6. Group of 5; London Coal Duty Maker on Colney Heath, Queens Head Public House, London Coal Duty Maker adjoining south corner of garden to Queens Head Public House, Barn at Colney Heath Farm & Colney Heath Farmhouse
 7. 68 Roestock Lane
 8. The Grove
 9. Group of 2; Roehyde Farmhouse & adjoining Barn and Stable
 10. Mill at Mill House
 11. London Coal Duty Marker at Southern Boundary of Parish
 12. Barn 60 metres north west of Coursers Farm House
 13. Ice House At North Mymms Park

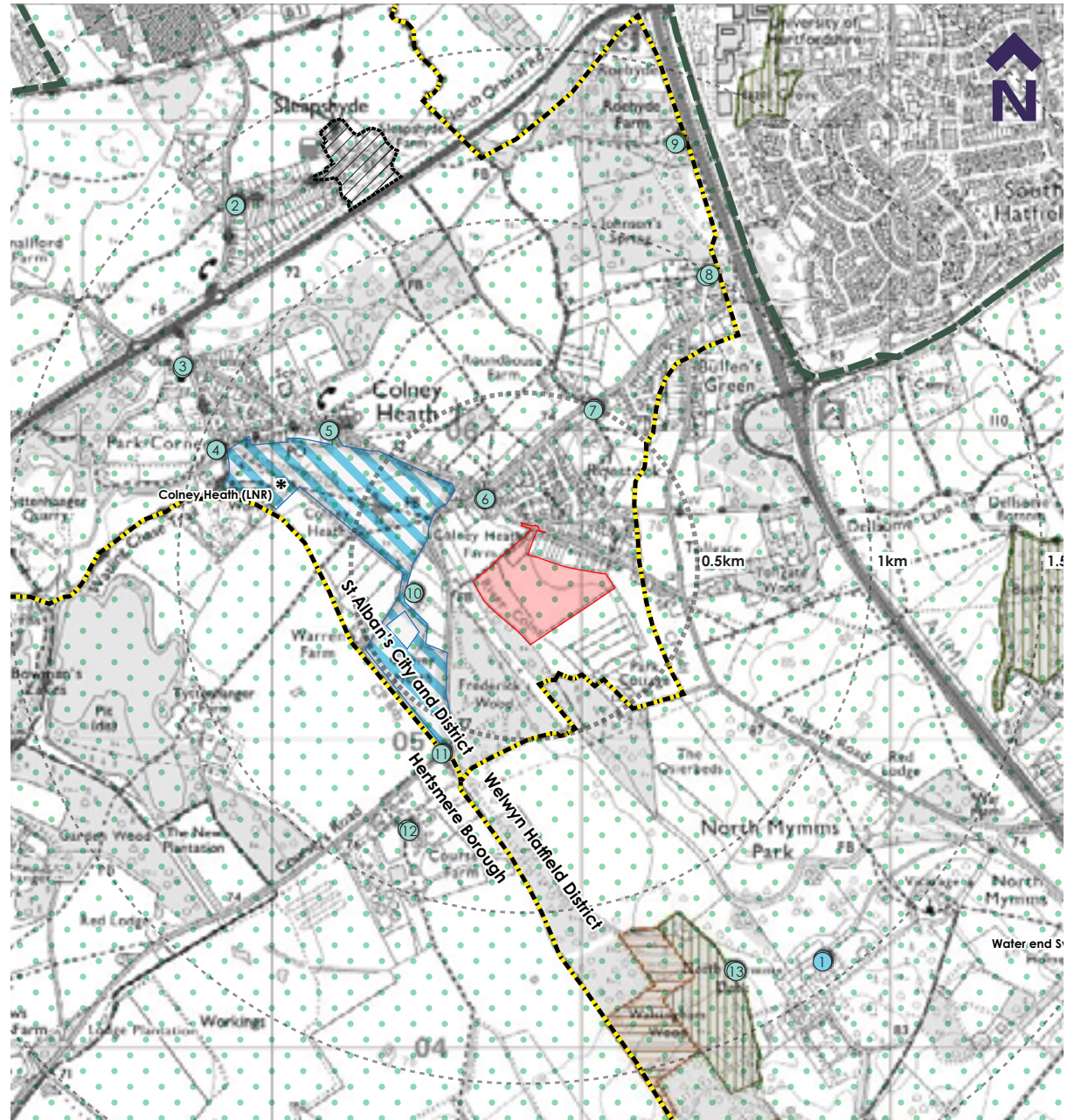


Figure 5.4: Surrounding Designations Plan.

5.4 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL AREA

Colney Heath is a large village which became a civil parish in 1947 when the St. Peter Rural Parish was split to form Colney Heath and London Colney. The Civil Parish also includes the settlements of Smallford and Sleafshyde.

Figure 5.5 opposite illustrates the settlement growth in Colney Heath from the late 1800's up to the present day (as interpreted from historical and current Ordnance Survey information). It is apparent that Colney Heath has developed slightly over the last few centuries, with development pushing further north east and west.

Particularly, the 1899 map illustrates how the urban form of Colney Heath was mainly concentrated along the High Street, which partially runs parallel to the River Colne, and Roestock Lane.

The 1938 map shows a similar settlement form with some new development expanding towards Tollgate Road. However, the critical addition of the North Orbital Road can be identified on this map which, despite changing the physical fabric of the village, did not lead to any further development due to the fact that this road would serve as a purely transitional axis and not as a focal part of the settlement.

The 1960 map shows the growth of the settlement around Roestock Park, mainly along Roestock Lane and Bullen's Green Lane, as well as some slight expansion along the North Orbital Road.

Finally the Modern Day map shows a similar but denser pattern of urban fabric, with development focusing on the three aforementioned areas: along High Street and Tollgate Road, in Roestock area and along North Orbital Road.



St. Mark's Church



Village Gateway feature



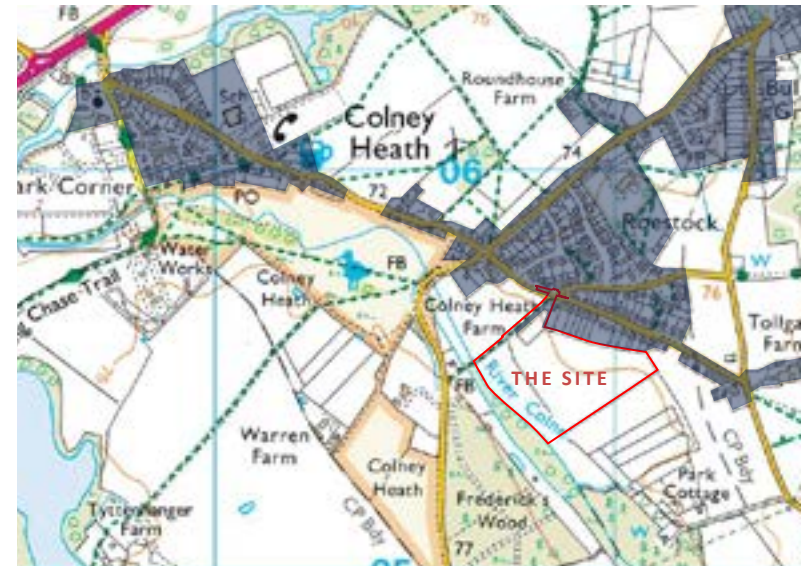
1899



1938



1960



Present Day

Figure 5.5: Historic Maps showing Development of Colney Heath.



5.5 ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The village of Colney Heath has a mixed variety of building forms and styles representing different periods of architecture. The High Street area as well as Fellowes Lane and Tollgate Road can be considered as the main clusters reflecting distinct elements of the local architectural character and vernacular of Colney Heath.

There is a high number of Listed Buildings in Colney Heath, most of them located along the High Street and Coursers Road, dating between late 17th to early 20th Century. More recent development dating between 1950's and 1980's can be found mainly in the eastern part of the village.

The organic unplanned growth of the village, which is a common characteristic of settlements that have evolved over hundreds of years, is also reflected in a wide range of building styles and street forms. However, there are some features and broad characteristics that can be observed with a degree of regularity contributing to the architectural identity of the settlement, being as follows:

- **Elevations of buildings generally in brick, some of them half or completely rendered or weatherboarded with timber frame.**
- **Timber frames with roughcast walls.**
- **Simple rectangular forms with ridge lines and the long axis predominantly parallel to the street.**
- **Tiled or slated roof slopes.**
- **Predominantly 2 and 2.5 storey dwellings with evidence of 3-storey properties along the High Street and bungalows along Park Lane.**
- **Mainly red brickwork with evidence of brick or detailing such as flat gauge arches, brick banding/corbelling.**
- **Properties are set back from the roads behind vegetated front gardens, with parking provided on-plot.**



High Street



Fellowes Lane



Tollgate Road



Brick and half-rendered elevations



Slatted roof and roughcast elevation



Building ridge lines and long axis parallel to the street



Timber weatherboarding

5.6 SITE DESCRIPTION

The Site comprises two fields of horse paddocks, comprising a smaller western and a larger eastern field, as well as the house and garden at No. 42 Tollgate Road. Within the north of the Site in the eastern field is a linear stable block and a manège, with associated storage containers and trailers. The stables are accessed via a concrete track off Tollgate Road, just to the north of the northernmost property along the west of the road, which bounds the Site. There is a small private children's play area, as well as a timber shed, located just south of the access track, within the Site.

The property at No. 42 comprises a detached, 2 storey house, with a detached single garage and several outbuildings, with a deep rear garden located west of the house.

The north western Site boundary is formed by a post and wire fence with a remnant managed, a broken hedgerow occurring in the north, 1.5-2m high. The route of the public footpath lies beyond to the north.

Managed hedgerows, around 2m in height, occur along the southern side of the access track into the Site, along the northern boundary of No. 42 Tollgate Road. There is also a mature hawthorn tree located within the west of this boundary hedge.

The north eastern Site boundary is formed by the rear garden boundaries of the adjoining houses, with trees and hedgerows occurring within many of these gardens. A Category A oak tree lies just outside the Site, in the far east of this boundary between the houses and the Site.

In the east, the Site is bound by an outgrown hedgerow around 7m high.

The northern part of the south eastern Site boundary is formed by a remnant, broken hedgerow, managed at around 1.5m in height. The southern part of this boundary is formed by a post and wire fence.

The western Site boundary is formed by a post and wire fence, with the River Colne located beyond. The river is lined by mature trees, with a dense area of woodland occurring beyond to the west.

The internal field boundary which separates the Site into a smaller western and larger eastern field, is formed by a post and wire fence with a small section of remnant hedgerow and scattered trees along it.



View eastwards across the Site



View south from the southern Site boundary

5.7 LANDSCAPE & VISUAL CHARACTER

The Outline Planning Application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The assessment describes the existing landscape character and quality of the Site and the surrounding area. The report also discusses the suitability of the Site to accommodate the development proposals, and the potential landscape and visual effects on the wider area. The report includes a commentary on how the Site currently performs against the Green Belt purposes as defined within the NPPF.

- **The Site does not carry any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape or heritage value or quality. It comprises horse paddocks, which are ordinary in character. The stables and barn within the Site are similarly ordinary in character, and not of any architectural or historic value or interest. The house and garden at No. 42 date from the early 20th Century, and are not of particular architecture value or interest. There are no structural landscape features on the Site of value, with only small lengths of remnant hedgerow remaining. The Site is assessed as being of medium to low landscape quality, and it has an edge-of-settlement character due to the stables and paddocks, as well as the clearly evident residential development adjacent and in the near vicinity of the Site.**
- **The houses which back onto the Site to the north east are also ordinary in character, with most separated from the Site by their long rear gardens. The adjoining paddocks to the north and south of the Site are not of particular landscape quality, with the character of the paddock to the north similar to that at the Site, and the landscape south of the Site is of higher quality than that to the north. The woodland and river west of the Site are attractive landscape features, with the floodplain, including that within the Site, designated as a Local Wildlife Site.**
- **The Site has been assessed as being of medium to low landscape quality, and it is not of particular scenic value. There is no public access to the Site, although there are some views of it from the adjoining public footpath to the north west. The Site is not a rare landscape type, nor can it be described as wild or tranquil. No elements on the Site have been identified as being particularly important examples of landscape features or characteristics. The western part of the Site lies within the Local Wildlife Site. There are no known associations with the Site which would elevate its value. The Site is generally well contained, with views limited to the adjoining properties and public footpath to the north west. Overall, the Site is assessed as being of medium landscape value.**
- **The Site is capable of accommodating housing development, with limited structural vegetation or important landscape features which would be affected. Being located adjacent to existing houses, and considering the edge-of-settlement character evident at the Site, the Site is assessed as having a good ability to accommodate development.**



View south towards the River Colne along the Public Footpath 033

5.8 TOPOGRAPHY

The Site is relatively level, sloping down gently from around 75-76 metres Above Ordnance Datum ('AOD') in the west, to around 70-71m in the west.

The land in the vicinity of the Site and the settlement is similarly very gently undulating.

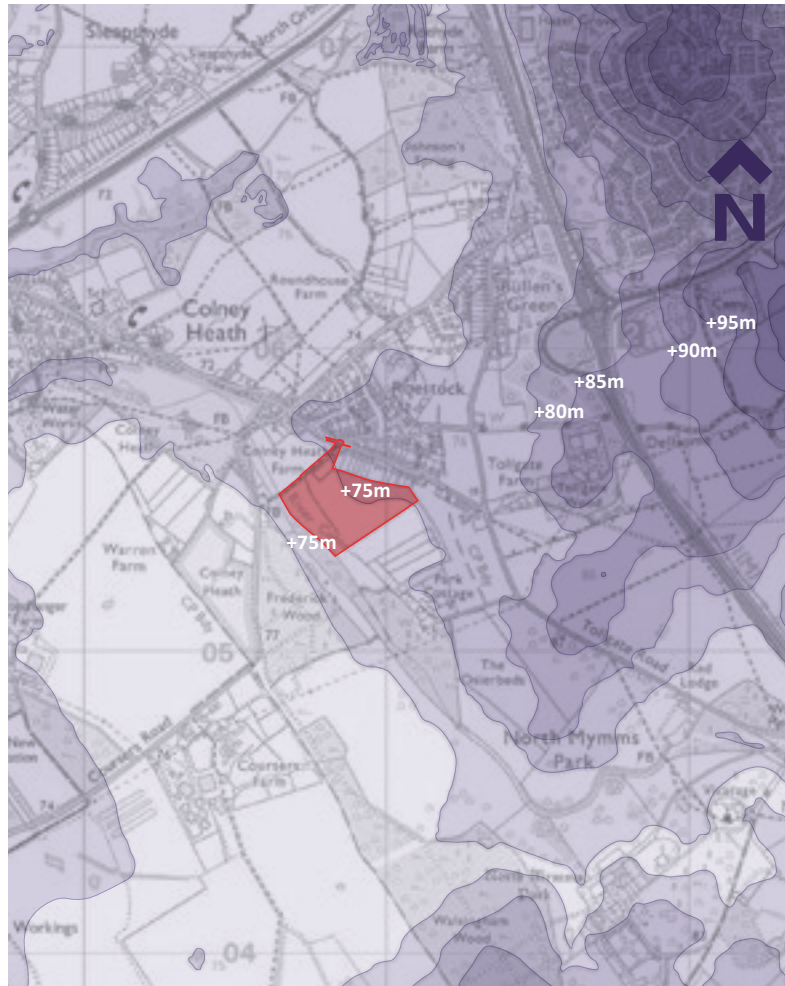


Figure 5.6: Topography Plan.

5.9 ECOLOGY

The Site comprises hedgerows and grassland habitats including the on-site Colney Heath Farm Meadows LWS alongside areas of buildings and hardstanding associated within a residential development and horse stables. The scheme seeks to retain and enhance both the LWS and on-site hedgerows, wherever practicable.

Measures have been set out to safeguard and seek betterment of habitats associated with the on-site LWS including habitat management and education of new residents.

Habitats on-site have been found to support populations of bats and grass snake. Robust safeguards and mitigation measures are proposed to avoid potential impacts to these protected species and ensure construction works are lawful. Measures have also been proposed in respect of safeguarding badgers, riparian mammals, nesting birds and amphibians. A sensitive external lighting scheme is proposed in order to minimise adverse effects on nocturnal animals making use of the Site and surrounding habitats.

This EclA addresses effects with regard to important ecological features. The proposed development, which is the subject of this planning application, has been comprehensively planned. The strategy in terms of biodiversity net gain comprises maximising the retention and enhancement of habitats on-site, with the delivery of off-site biodiversity enhancements to ensure an overall net gain in biodiversity. The latter element will be secured through the provision of an appropriate mechanism/financial contribution, subject to agreement.

Based on successful implementation of the proposed avoidance, mitigation and enhancement, the development is not anticipated to result in any significant residual negative effects on important ecological features.

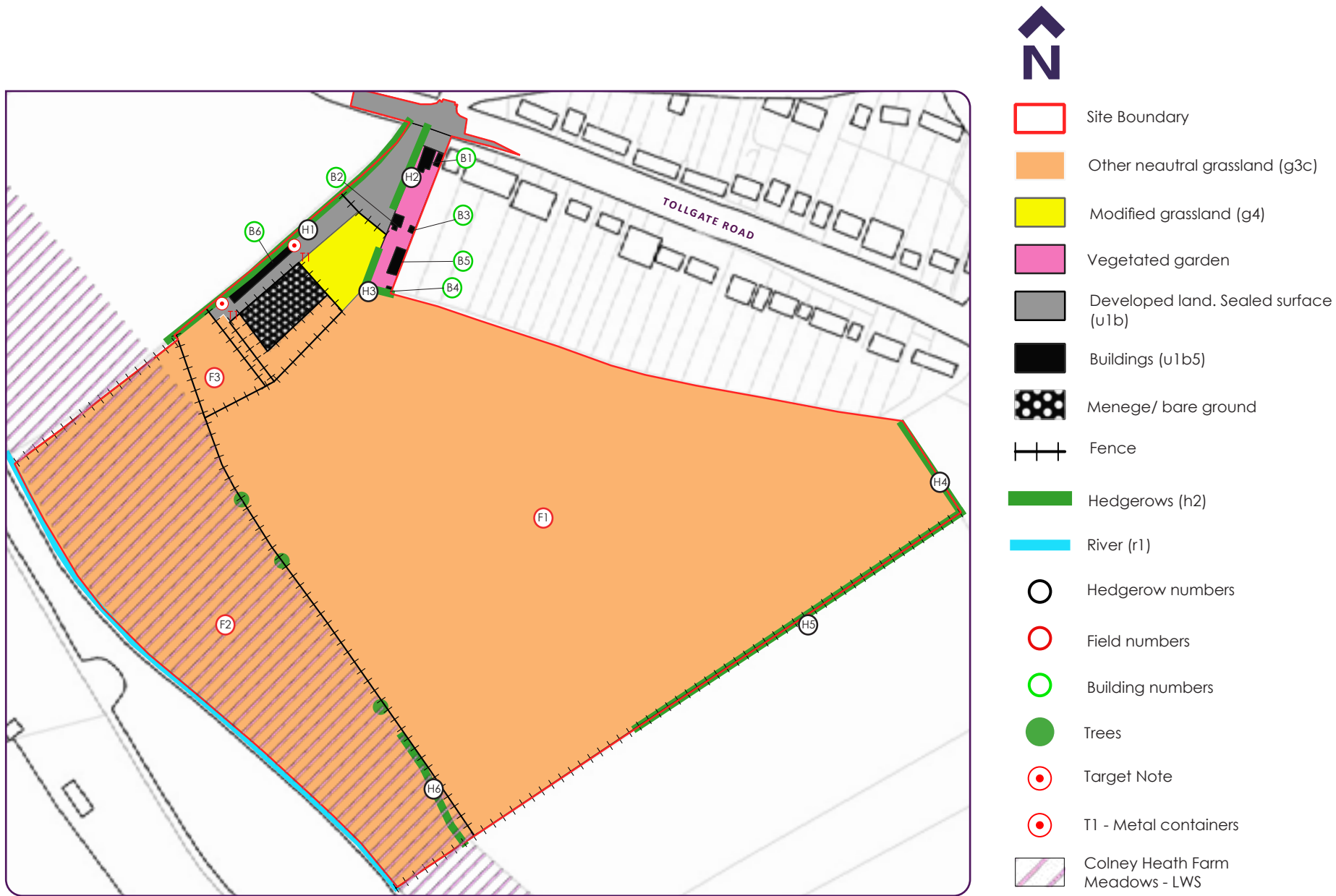


Figure 5.7: Habitats Plan.

5.10 ARBORICULTURE

A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been prepared to support this application. There are no trees covered by TPOs within the Site and no ancient or veteran trees were identified. The findings of the AIA are summarised below:

- **As many of the tree, hedges and groups detailed in the survey are found to the periphery and off-site there seems to be little in the way of arboricultural constraints to potential development. The River Colne also acts as a natural barrier to G13 to the west although the utmost care must be taken to avoid leaching of substances toxic to plants along this water course.**
- **H12 may need to be partially removed to the north to allow for large vehicles to enter the Site. Other than this, all hedges are of high enough value to be desirable in the development when it is completed. They also offer partial screening during the development process and help break up the urban landscape when development is complete. They also play an important role as wildlife corridors and in mitigating the harmful effect of pollutants on human health.**
- **T4 and G2 are category B blackthorn trees with particularly large trunk diameters for the species, although these trees may not have the highest long life expectancy's they should be retained for their uniqueness and attractive blossom at the beginning of spring.**
- **T28 has been given a U categorisation (unsuitable for retention); this is only referring to the branches overhanging the site. These should be removed to stop the risk of them failing and injuring someone or damaging the fence line underneath it. The rest of the fallen tree can be left in situ.**

In conclusion, subject to the implementation of the advice contained within the AIA the proposed development is acceptable from an arboricultural perspective. The loss of trees and hedgerow can be readily mitigated and the retained trees can be adequately protected during construction activities to sustain their health and longevity. New tree and hedgerow planting would deliver a significant net gain in tree and shrub species diversity and canopy cover at the Site. An Arboricultural Method Statement and finalised Tree Protection Plan will need to be produced. Where the feasibility of a scheme has been agreed upon by the Local Planning Authority, this detail can be agreed and submitted later as part of a reserved matters application or pre-commencement planning condition (by agreement with the applicant).

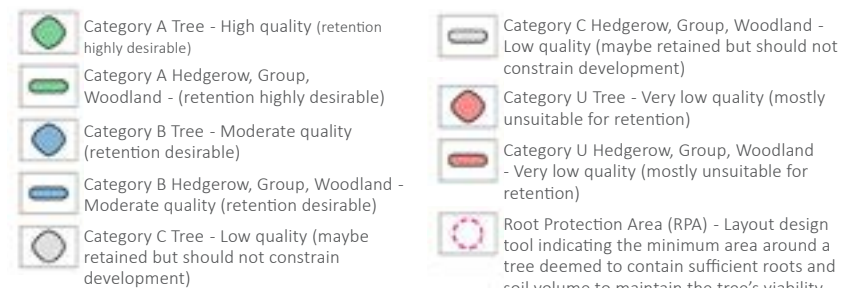


Figure 5.8: Tree Survey.

5.11 DRAINAGE & HYDROLOGY

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared by Stantec UK Ltd to accompany an outline planning application. The FRA demonstrates that the development is safe; the development does not increase flood risk; and, the development does not detrimentally affect third parties.

The Environment Agency (EA) data confirms that the majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1; however, the western part of the site located adjacent to River Colne lies within Flood Zone 3, with minor areas located within Flood Zone 2.

The majority of the site is predicted to be at a 'Very Low' risk of surface water flooding; however, the area to the west of the site, adjacent to the River Colne is identified to be at 'Low' to High' susceptibility to surface water flooding. Additionally, there is a flowpath of 'Low' to 'High' susceptibility to surface water flooding running along the eastern boundary of the site. These 'High' and 'Medium' areas of surface water flooding result from localised low spots and, therefore, it is considered that the risk of surface water flooding is 'Low'.

The proposed drainage strategy consists of two lined attenuation basins to the north and south of the site. It is then proposed that two surface water pipes will channel water towards two conveyance swales towards the River Colne. The swales will cross the oil pipeline, which runs through the site, and surface water will be discharged from the swales to the River Colne via two surface water pipes.

In summary, the FRA demonstrates that the proposed development is safe and in accordance with the requirements of national and local planning policy.

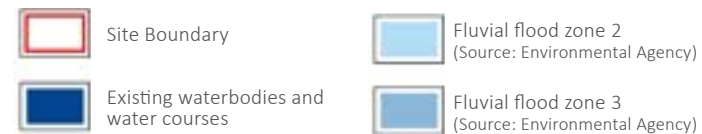
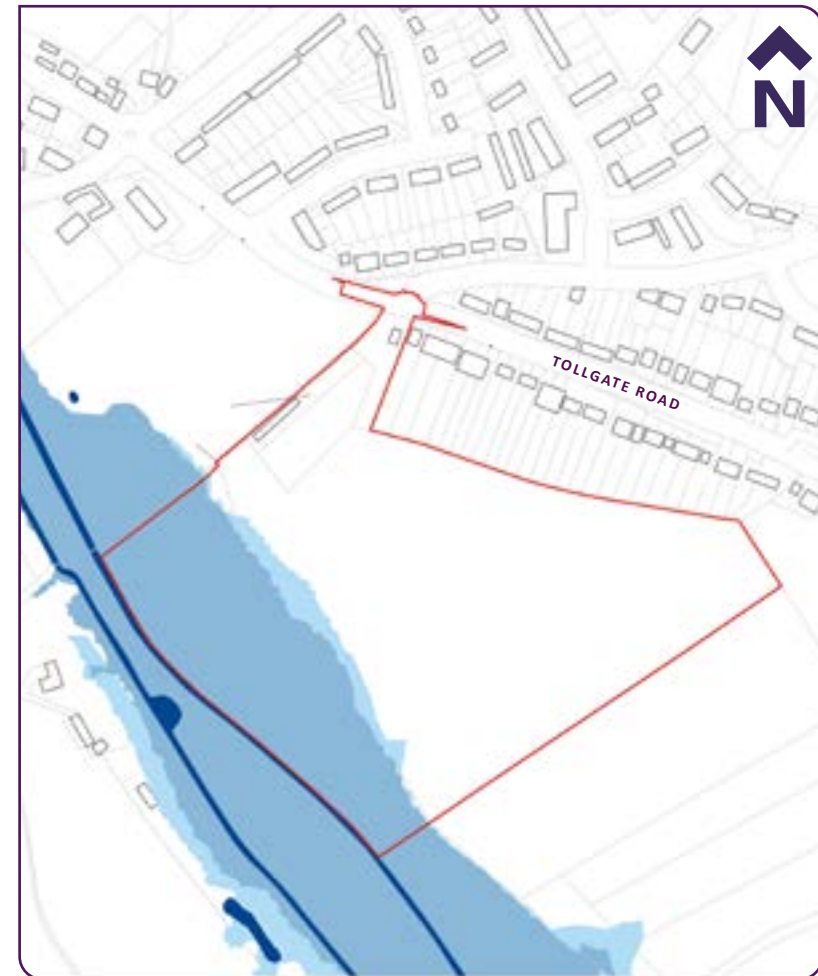


Figure 5.9: Flood Plan.

5.12 ARCHAEOLOGY & BUILT HERITAGE

A desk-based assessment, including consideration of archaeology, built heritage and historic landscape, has been prepared to inform the application. The report gathered baseline information from sources including the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record, Historic England data sets, Hertfordshire Archives and a Site walkover survey.

No designated heritage assets lie within the boundary of the Site. The Site is part of the wider agricultural setting to the Grade II listed Colney Heath Farmhouse, located to the north west of the Site, and also the Grade I listed North Mymms Park House, to the south east. It is anticipated that any harm to these designated heritage assets will be negligible at most, which is to say less than substantial harm at the very lowermost end of this harm spectrum.

There is limited evidence of prehistoric and Roman period activity in the study area. The possible route of a Roman road crosses to the north of the Site. The HER records cropmarks potentially associated with a Roman building c. 100m south east of the Site, although the presence/nature of any below-ground remains is not proven. The Site was likely in agricultural use from the medieval period. Geophysical survey has been commissioned to further assess the archaeological potential, the results of which are forthcoming.

A geophysical survey was successfully carried out on the Site. No anomalies suggestive of significant archaeological features were identified; however, anomalies were detected that are of undetermined classification. Agricultural activity within the area has been identified as former ploughing trends. Anomalies resulting from natural processes have been identified as related to changes in underlying geology and soil, as well as possible extraction of chalk bedrock and gravel deposits. The impact of modern activity on the results was limited and corresponds with magnetic disturbance along field edges and along the route of a buried surface.

5.13 ACOUSTICS

An environmental sound survey has been prepared to establish the existing environmental sound levels at the Site. The study found that:

- **Standard internal ambient noise levels are likely to fall below the guideline levels of BS 8233:2014. This should be confirmed by a detailed assessment once detailed information of the development is available.**
- **External night-time sound levels are anticipated to be below 53 dB LAeq,8hours and typically below 68 dB LAMax,f across the development and therefore additional overheating acoustic mitigation is unlikely to be necessary.**
- **Calculations indicate that noise levels within external amenity area are likely to fall between 50– 55 dB, and should be considered acceptable.**

The study concludes that the site should be considered suitable for residential development.



View of Colney Heath Farmhouse from adjacent road.



View to Colney Heath Farmhouse and barn from the north-western Site boundary.

5.14 UTILITIES & SERVICES

A Utility Appraisal Report has been prepared to support this planning application and has been undertaken to identify the constraints imposed by the existing utility apparatus. The appraisal also identifies the need for new utility infrastructure, potential utility upgrade/reinforcement works, or the need for further investigation/modelling where required.

- **There is an existing BPA oil pipeline within the Site, parallel to the south western boundary. This pipeline is protected by a 6m easement (centred on the pipeline), in which no tree planting can take place. Any works within the easement need to be supervised and approved by BPA.**
- **A 33kV cable enters the Site boundary in the north west from Tollgate Road for 17m and then is pot ended as it enters the adjoining field to the west. Required easement as per UKPN is 2.5m either side. This cable can either be diverted to accommodate the proposed masterplan or left in situ with the associated easement adhered to.**
- **There is a 4in Low Pressure (LP) gas main in the south side of Tollgate Road for 17m which terminates outside of 42 Tollgate Road, which may require diversion or protection if affected by the Site access design.**

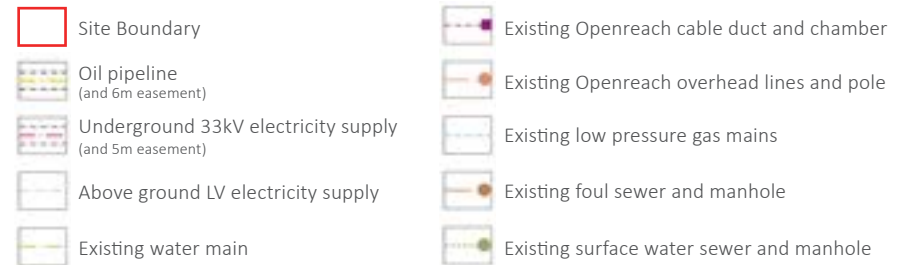


Figure 5.10: Utilities & Services Plan.

06. EVALUATION

6.1 OPPORTUNITIES & INFLUENCES

The Opportunities and Influences associated with the proposed development have been identified following the assessment of the Site and its surroundings, as detailed in Sections 2 and 3. These are listed below and shown on the Opportunities and Influences Plan at Figure 6.1. This assessment of the Site and its surroundings have informed the design proposals.

Opportunities

- To provide high quality, sustainable and sensitively designed new market and affordable homes, to support the services and facilities of Colney Heath and the surrounding area.
- Creation of a distinctive development which draws upon the local vernacular.
- The Site represents a logical extension to Colney Heath being well contained between the existing areas of housing along Tollgate Road, the River Colne and landscape features
- Provision of a new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access point from Tollgate Road, utilising the demolition of No. 42 Tollgate Road.
- Potential pedestrian link to the existing Public Footpath which abuts the Site, to maximise integration with both Colney Heath and the local sustainable transport network.
- Opportunity for Colney Heath Farm Meadows LWS to be retained and protected and bound by a new, reinstated native hedgerow, with controlled access for local residents, providing a generous setback of the new homes from River Colne.
- Opportunity to provide new thicket and tree planting to significantly increase tree cover within the Site and its boundaries and set the entire development within a strong green framework. In particular, the Site's south eastern boundary will be planted with dense thicket and tree planting to define the new Green Belt Boundary.
- Opportunity to provide a range of ecological enhancement measures to maximise the Site's biodiversity value. Enhanced green corridors around the boundaries of the Site to improve wildlife connectivity.

- New homes proposed along the Site's northern boundary will be set within deeper gardens, backing onto the rear gardens of properties adjacent to Tollgate Road, to help respect their setting.
- To provide a children's play area located within the north western part of the Site, with connections to the public footpath, maximising its accessibility for existing and new residents alike.
- To provide two SuDS in the lower parts of the Site, which can form an integral part of the development's green infrastructure, providing ecological benefits and habitat creation.

Influences

- The proximity of the Site to the Listed Buildings at Colney Heath Farm and the public footpath which abuts this boundary means dwellings should be set back from this boundary within a large area of open space, enhanced with new tree and thicket planting to filter views, mitigating the impact the proposed development could have on these assets.
- A part of the Site lies within Colney Heath LWS so the development proposals will need to respect these areas and retain them within areas of open space. Ecological enhancement measures will also be considered to mitigate impacts of increased footfall at the nearby LNR at Colney Heath.
- Parts of the Site fall within Flood Zone 2 and 3, necessitating consideration of sustainable drainage features and the location of residential development to avoid these areas.
- Existing properties along Tollgate Road back onto the Site. The proposed new homes should be set back sufficiently to respect the amenity of the existing properties.

























-  Site Boundary: **7.82ha**
-  Potential area for residential development and contours: **3.75ha**
-  Potential location for a children's play area (5m buffer required)
-  Potential open space to serve the new development
-  Potential structural landscape to define Site boundaries
-  Potential seating/picnic area
-  Potential location for SuDS
-  Dwelling frontages
-  Potential vehicular access points
-  Potential indicative vehicular route through development
-  Potential recreational routes through the development
-  Pump Station (15m cordon sanitaire)
-  Existing Public Footpaths
-  Existing vegetation
-  Green Belt
-  Existing waterbodies and water courses
-  Listed Buildings
-  Colney Heath Local Nature Reserve
-  Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site
-  Existing bus route and bus stops
-  Fluvial flood Zone 2 (Source: Environment Agency)
-  Fluvial flood Zone 3 (Source: Environment Agency)
-  Oil pipeline (6m easement)
-  Underground 33kv electricity supply (5m easement)



Figure 6.1: Opportunities and Influences Plan.

6.2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Vistry Group has engaged in a process of community consultation, which has informed the development of the proposals for the Site.

A leaflet covering the application proposals was delivered to local residents living in close proximity to the Site and interested parties for their information. In addition, a website containing information on the proposed development was available to view by the public since May 2022

(<https://colneyheath.consultationonline.co.uk/your-feedback/>).

Full details of the consultation and information presented is set out in the Statement of Community Involvement accompanying the Planning Application.

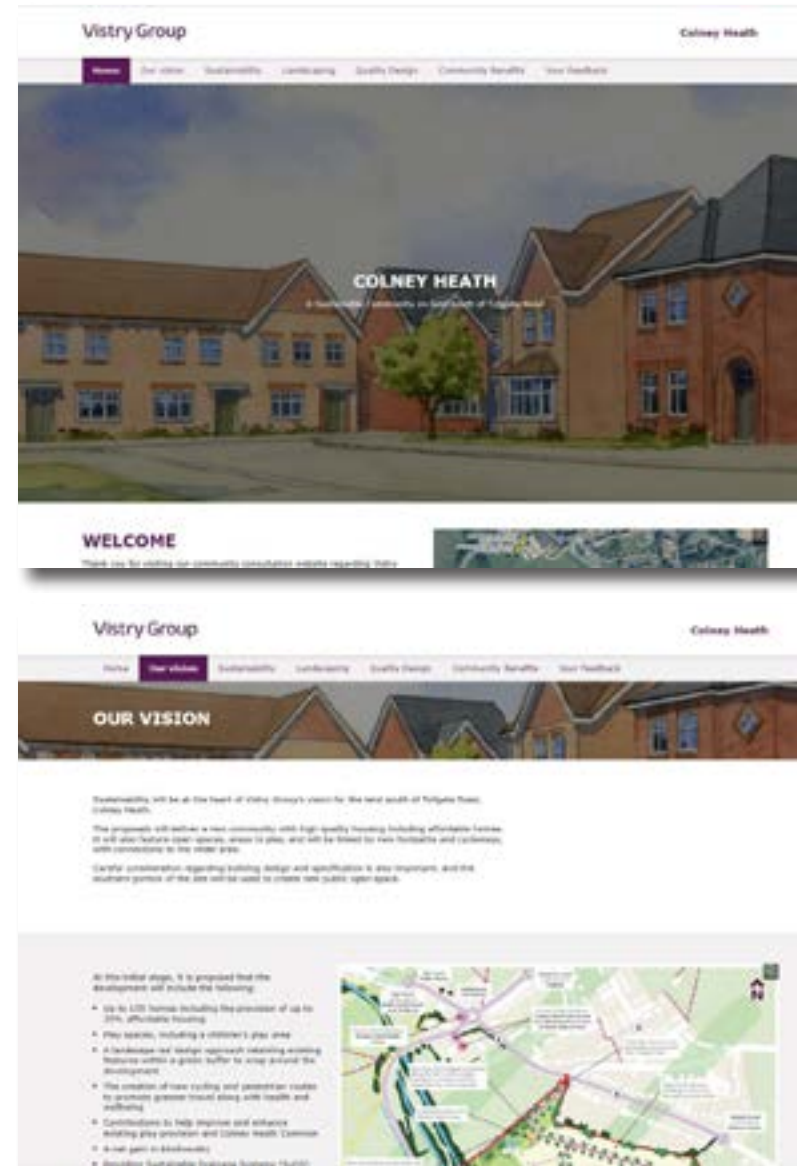


Figure 6.2: Accompanying boards supporting the online consultation.

Vistry Group Colony Health

Home Our vision Sustainability Landscaping Quality Design Community Benefits Your Feedback

SUSTAINABILITY

Vistry Group's goal is to deliver sustainable new homes and communities, and this will apply to the land south of College Road in Colony Health.

The site has great access to existing local facilities and there will be the opportunity to provide new infrastructure.

Our approach will feature a network of blue cycle and footpaths both through streets and green spaces to create a local trail network and promote green transport.

The site also benefits from access to bus services and Vistry Group is keen to explore if there can be improved, and further, local routes within a mile 0.5 miles of the proposed site.



Vistry Group Colony Health


Home Our vision Sustainability Landscaping Quality Design Community Benefits Your Feedback

QUALITY DESIGN

Our vision is being shaped by a thorough and robust design process including an analysis of the site's landscape, ecology, solar and drainage, and local heritage.

The approach will also address the excellent new community's relationship with the rest of Colony Health and the surrounding area.


Our aim is that the sustainable new community should provide a pleasant addition to the rest of Colony Health, with a host of community benefits, and much-needed local housing.



Vistry Group believes in delivering high quality design across its schemes.

MUCH-NEEDED LOCAL HOUSING


The new community will provide up to 200 homes, including much-needed affordable housing with associated infrastructure, gardens, and parking.



Vistry Group Colony Health

Home Our vision Sustainability Landscaping Quality Design Community Benefits Your Feedback

COMMUNITY BENEFITS



Vistry Group is seeking to deliver a host of community benefits with its vision for land south of College Road in Colony Health.

As part of Vistry Group's vision, the project team intend to provide a host of local benefits which will be felt not just by the new residents, but the whole community of Colony Health.

Vistry Group Colony Health

Home Our vision Sustainability Landscaping Quality Design Community Benefits Your Feedback

YOUR FEEDBACK

PROJECT'S SUCCESS

By completing this form, you are helping our vision for Colony Health to become a reality. We will use your feedback to help us to deliver a high quality residential development. Your feedback will not be used in relation to the current, made-in-principle planning application (MIP). Please contact your feedback by email at feedback@vistry.co.uk. Your feedback, personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent.

More about the MIP: [see our factsheet](#)

Read the website about the project: [see our website](#) or visit our contact details.

A residential planning application (if submitted) will be submitted along the completion form and be subject to their requirements (subject to their consent). We will be unable to include your comments in the consultation process. If you would like to see your comments, we will contact you to see your views on the comments you have made. MIP is being in order of priority for the consultation process.

ABOUT YOU

Name *

Telephone/mobile:

Email home or work:

Residence:

Other address:

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

We will use these details to contact you and update you on the progress. This does not have to be in this section. If you would rather not be contacted:

Address:

Postcode:

Home/Cell: Home:

Work:

Mobile:

07. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

7.1 THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN

The design proposals for the Site have evolved through an iterative design process informed by environmental and technical work, an understanding of the development's relationship with Colney Heath and the surrounding context, and an assessment of planning and design policy, including building upon the Objectives contained within the St Albans City and District Council Local Plan. This has resulted in the Development Plan (Figure 7.1) which seeks to minimise environmental impacts whilst maximising social, economic, biodiversity and sustainability benefits.

The Development Framework Plan shows the Site boundary, the means of access into the Site, the areas of retained and new landscaping and the location and extent of the proposed land uses, including the amount of built development.

The Vision

- **Provide up to 150 new dwellings, offering a range of dwelling types, sizes and tenures, including 35% affordable homes, with up to 10 custom built homes.**
- **Creation of a high quality, sustainable new neighbourhood that integrates successfully within the existing settlement fabric of Colney Heath and the wider countryside.**
- **Provision of 2.02 hectares (25%) of publicly accessible green infrastructure, to promote active lifestyle and a sense of well-being through the provision of new public open space, seating/ picnic area, and recreational routes.**
- **Colney Heath Farm Meadows (1.19ha/ 15%) will be retained as a Local Wildlife Site with public access limited to only one mown footway. The LWS will be managed to further promote habitat creation and its biodiversity offer to the local environment.**
- **Ecological enhancements will be at the forefront of the green infrastructure provision, conserving, protecting and enhancing local wildlife and habitats, to help achieve Biodiversity Net Gain. Proposed SuDS basins will be designed to create new and varied habitats to create attractive and beneficial assets for the area.**
- **The provision of a high-quality new children's play area and 'Play on the Way' stations, along the new recreation routes will promote an active and integrated community for the local area.**
- **Creation of a place that is accessible to everyone, which makes everyone feel comfortable, safe and secure, and a place where people want to live.**
- **Create an area of Colney Heath which reflects the local vernacular and local built heritage, to build a sense of place and identity.**
- **Redefine the Green Belt Boundary with a new woodland belt along the western and northern boundaries.**

Site Boundary: 7.82ha

Developable Area

Proposed residential area: **3.75ha (Up to 150 homes @40 dph)**

Movement & Circulation

- Proposed primary vehicular access point
- Proposed spine street through the development
- Proposed secondary streets
- Proposed lanes and private drives
- Recreational routes and Trim-Trail Stations
- Mown paths
- Potential pedestrian links
- Public Rights of Way

Green & Blue Infrastructure

- Public open space to serve the new development
- Avenue street tree planting
- Proposed new boundary hedgerow planting
- Proposed play provision for children and young people
- Proposed sustainable drainage basins and swales (SuDS)
- Existing vegetation
- Potential seating/picnic area
- Proposed location for pumping station and 15m cordon sanitaire

Surrounding Context

- Existing waterbodies and water courses
- Listed Buildings
- Colney Heath Local Nature Reserve
- Existing bus route and bus stops



Figure 7.1: Development Framework Plan.

7.2 THE ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The Illustrative Masterplan (Figure 7.2), which is based upon the Development Framework Plan, has been prepared to demonstrate in more detail the general design principles that will be adopted through the development of the new community.

It is important to note that the layout of the development is a Reserved Matter. However, the Illustrative Masterplan, together with this Design and Access Statement, communicate the key design principles that a subsequent Reserved Matters application should reflect in order to respect the in-depth analysis of the Site and its surrounding context.

The Illustrative Masterplan indicates the principles of the development's urban structure; the proposed patterns of streets and spaces, and the urban grain; the location, arrangement and design of the principal development blocks and the green infrastructure that the new neighbourhood will sit within.

The Illustrative Masterplan provides for up to 150 dwellings (including 35% affordable and up to 10 custom built homes). The new homes are set within a strong green infrastructure framework. The attractively landscaped areas will create opportunities for formal and informal play for new and existing residents of Colney Heath. A new pedestrian access could be provided, linking into the existing Public Footpath 033, with the new vehicular access providing a cycle and pedestrian connections to Tollgate Road, connecting the neighbourhood into the existing Public Rights of Way and footway network, and to the countryside beyond.

Furthermore, the existing ecological value will be enhanced with the proposed woodland, thicket and tree planting along the Site's north western and south eastern boundaries, and the creation of wildflower meadows, SuDs features, and strengthening of ecological corridors, with the retention of the majority of the existing trees and hedgerows.

Colney Heath Farm Meadows LWS is to be retained and enhanced as part of the proposals. A new reinstated hedgerow will define the boundary of the area and help reduce public access. An informal mown footway will meander through the LWS, but would be limited to ensure the protection of the habitats. Interpretation boards will educate residents about the Fauna and Floral, which can be identified in and around the local area.



Figure 7.2: Illustrative Masterplan.



Proposed vehicular and pedestrian access point from Tollgate Road.

Opportunity for new recreational routes within the Site could potentially connect with the existing public footpath adjacent to the Site's north western boundary.

Potential location for a children's play area.

New dwellings to stitch into the existing urban fabric.

New tree and hedgerow planting along the Site's north western boundary to filter views from the north and east.

Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site

In-fill hedgerow and tree planting will strengthen the existing hedgerow and define the Site's south eastern boundary.

Reinstatement and strengthening of previous hedgerow will improve the landscape and ecological value of the Site while enhancing definition and enclosure of Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site.

New dwellings should be orientated to provide overlooking and attractive aspects.

Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site will be retained and protected, with controlled access for local residents to include interpretation boards/signage. The retention of the LWS also sets the new dwellings back suitably from the River.

Native species-rich grassland seeding will provide an ecotone edge to the hedgerow and will create landscaped backdrop to the new homes.

1

2

3

4

4

4

6

3

6

7

4

4

6

6

8



TOLLGATE ROAD

RIVER COLNE

7.3 USE & AMOUNT

The development accommodates a development area measuring **3.75 hectares**, providing for **up to 150 dwellings**. The average net density for the residential development area is **40 dwellings per hectare** (dph).

The housing mix will be determined at the Reserved Matters stage, but it is expected to include a broad range of types, sizes and tenures. **35%** of the homes will be **affordable** and will be fully integrated within the market housing and be of a type and size that meets local need. The proposals also provide the opportunity for **up to 10** custom build homes.

Green Infrastructure – 3.93 hectares

Policy 70 (Design and Layout of New Housing) of the City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 and the Saved and Deleted Policies Version (July 2020) requires that developments of 100 or more new dwellings should be provided with appropriate public open space including children’s playground(s) on the basis of 1.2 hectares per 1,000 persons, with an average household occupancy of 2.5 per dwelling.

As shown on the Land Use Plan (Figure 7.3), the proposals for the development include 2.02 hectares (25%) of publicly accessible green infrastructure and 1.91 hectares (15%) forming the extent of the retained Colney Heath Farm Meadows Local Wildlife Site. The green infrastructure will have a range of functions and provide a range of benefits:

- **Public Open Space:** Retention and enhancement of the existing landscape framework, and the provision of new public open space, will help integrate the new homes into the landscape fabric of Colney Heath and reflect the well-treed character in the immediate vicinity of the development. Green corridors will be enhanced along the boundaries, which are informed by landscape features such as existing trees and hedgerows. In addition to this, a portion of the development to the north west will be retained as an area of open space to filter views of the new homes, as well as to respect the setting of the Listed Buildings at Colney Heath Farm.
- **Recreation and Play:** New recreational routes and a potential pedestrian link connecting to the adjacent Public Footpath to create an integrated neighbourhood. The Site also presents the opportunity to provide a new children’s play area in the north western part of the open space, in close proximity to the Public Footpath and network of recreational paths, allowing convenient access for new and existing residents. Opportunities for informal play along these routes, will encourage ‘Play on the Way’ and further promote healthy and active lifestyles. The proposals also provide a new picnic and seating area overlooked by the new homes and nicely surrounded by new tree planting and wildflower meadow which will be accessible for new and existing residents via the recreational routes and from the proposed street layout within the development.
- **Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace:** New tree and thicket planting, grass margins and wildflower meadows will be incorporated within the areas of public open space. New woodland, thicket and tree planting along the north eastern boundary will filter views of the new homes, and along the south eastern boundary which will form the definition of the Green Belt, creating a soft vegetative transition from the new homes and the countryside beyond.
- **Sustainable Drainage Systems Features (SuDS):** SuDS basins and swales will be located within the lower parts of the Site to manage excess surface water run-off during periods of heavy or persistent rainfall. The basins and swales will also be designed to create new habitats for wildlife, contributing to the setting of the new homes.
- **Ecology:** The vast majority of existing trees and hedgerows will be retained and strengthened, which will maintain wildlife connectivity across the Site. New street tree, native tree and thicket planting will enhance the habitat value of the Site to ensure a net gain in biodiversity can be achieved through the development. Furthermore, the Colney Heath Farm Meadows LWS will be retained, strengthened and enhanced with ecological enhancements, bringing both social and environmental benefits to the area.



- Site Boundary: **7.82ha**
- Residential: **3.75ha**
- Green Infrastructure (Publicly accessible): **2.02ha**
- Children's Play Area: **270sqm.**
Local Area for Play (LAP)
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) **0.41/410sqm**
- Colney Heath Farm Meadows (Local Wildlife Site (LWS)): **1.91ha**
- Pump Station: **0.01ha**
- Remaining Infrastructure: **0.13ha**

Figure 7.3: Land Use Plan.

7.4 ACCESS

Vehicular Access

Vehicular access into the Site is proposed to take the form of a priority junction from Tollgate Road, replacing and enhancing the existing access serving the stables. The demolition of No. 42 Tollgate Road has allowed for a better access arrangements to be proposed, which will also provide the necessary visibility splays and pedestrian and cycle connections too.

Pedestrian & Cycle Access

Pedestrian and cycle access to the Site will be available via the new vehicular access point, in the form of a new two-metre-wide footway to either side of the carriageway, which will accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.

Furthermore, given the Site's relationship with the existing Public Footpath 033 along the north western boundary, a new pedestrian access link could be provided, linking into this path. This will encourage new residents to walk to nearby destinations within Colney Heath, thus maximizing the integration of the new homes with the existing village.

Public Transport

The proposed new footways at the entrance to the development, will create a safe and easy access to the two bus stops which are located to the west and east of the access point along Tollgate Road.

The new neighbourhood benefits from good access to public transport, including the bus routes which serve the village. The closest bus stop to the Site is located approximately 40m north of the proposed frontage.

Street Hierarchy & Legibility

The Development Framework Plan and the Illustrative Masterplan have been designed to show how a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces should be created, so that it will be clear for residents and visitors alike to know where the principal routes are and how to navigate their way around the development. The design proposals provide for a layout where each street and route within the hierarchy will be an identifiable type. Character Areas with different layout and subtly differences in detailing will aid in ensuring a legible layout.

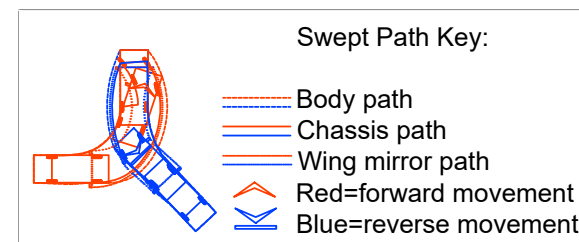
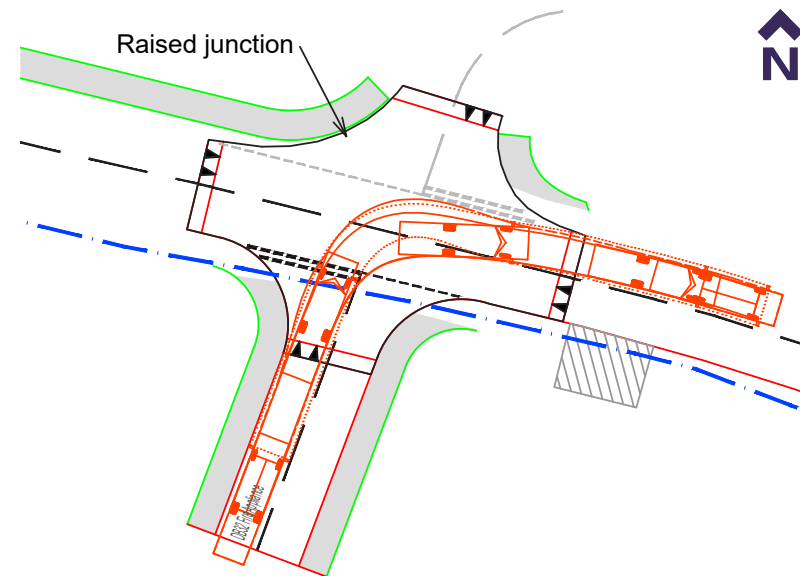


Figure 7.4: Access Arrangement Plan .

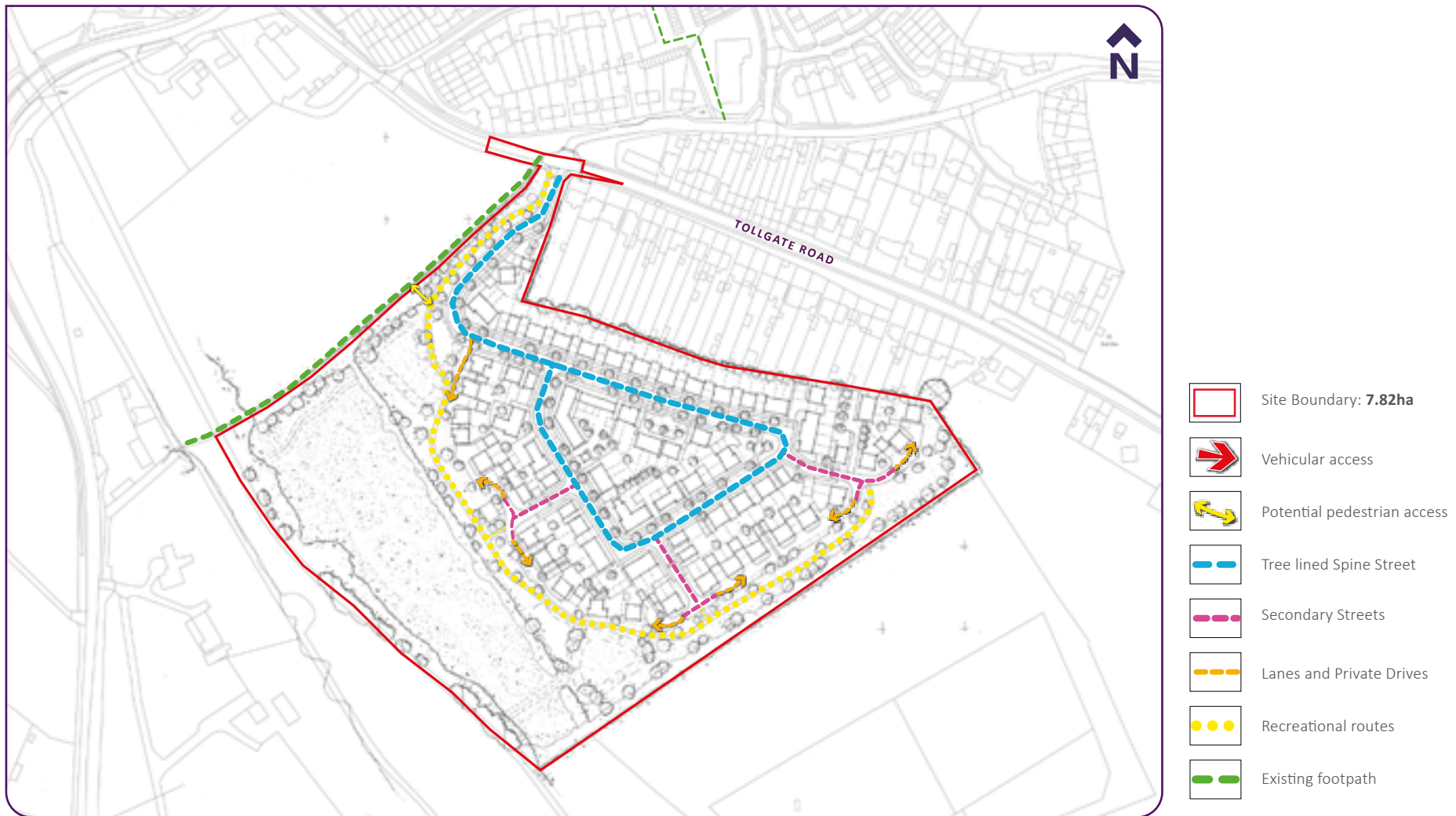


Figure 7.5: Access and Movement Plan.

7.5 LAYOUT

It is important to note that the layout of the development is a Reserved Matter. However, the key principles need to be communicated within the Design and Access Statement to ensure the subsequent detailed design reflects the initial aspirations and development structure.

The disposition of the proposed uses and the structural layout elements established by the Development Framework Plan and the Illustrative Masterplan have been designed to adhere to the design strategy established in the preceding sections.

1	Landscape Framework	The new homes will be set within an attractive landscape framework, which sees the vast majority of existing landscape features retained.
2	Connectivity	A new 2m wide cycleway and pedestrian footway to either side of the new Spine Street, as well as opportunity for a potential new pedestrian link connecting to the surrounding Public Rights of Way network, will ensure a comprehensive masterplan is achieved, strengthening the sense of place created by the new development.
3	Green Corridors	Informed by existing landscape features along the Site boundaries, green corridors will be incorporated to create a permeable layout which focuses on creating an integrated network of open spaces within the Site, as well as redefining the Green Belt Boundary and respecting the setting of Colney Heath Farmhouse and North Mymms Park House.
4	Public Open Space	The development will be encompassed to the north, south and west by new areas of public open space, which will include recreational routes, a children's play area, a picnic/seating area, and further ecological enhancements.
5	Children's Play Facilities	New Local Area for Play (LAP) which will be located adjacent to the proposed recreational routes and proposed link to the Public Footpath, maximising accessibility.
6	Recreational Routes	New recreational footways will be provided within the Site which meander through the areas of public open space. They will be sensitively lit where necessary to respect wildlife corridors and will connect into the existing Public Footpath and Tollgate Road.
7	Respecting Privacy & Amenity	The retention and enhancement of the Local Wildlife Site, redefined by a new native hedgerow, and two green corridors along the north western and south eastern boundary will encompass the new homes within a large areas of open space, in turn respecting the setting of the Grade II Colney Heath Farmhouse and North Mymms Park House, as well as the Local Wildlife Site itself. The open space combined with new tree and thicker planting contribute to a strong green framework, with a key function of redefining the Green Belt Boundary and creating a soft transition from the new homes to the countryside beyond.
8	Access & Spine Street	Vehicular access will be provided from Tollgate Road accommodating 2m wide cycleway/footway to either side of the carriageway. The Spine Street will be lined with native street trees set within 3m grass verges, creating a verdant character, when travelling through the new homes.
9	Storey Heights	The new homes will consist of predominately 2 storeys, with limited use of 2½ storeys, which will include building styles and materials to reflect the local vernacular of Colney Heath.

10	Sustainable Drainage	New drainage features located within the lower parts of the Site and outside the Flood Zones, will store water during periods of persistent or heavy rainfall in order to maintain run-off from the Site to present day conditions. These will be designed to maximise their wildlife value and will form an integral part of the Site's green infrastructure. Swale corridors will also be provided within the central parts of the Site, which will further add to the interest of the street scene, bringing blue and green infrastructure through the built development.
11	Ecological enhancements	New thicket, hedgerow, tree and species rich wildflower meadow planting will be planted across all areas of the development. Street tree planting, bat and bird boxes and log piles are also to be proposed, to the further enhance habitat creation, allowing wildlife to continue to flourish. The principal aim of these enhancements is to ensure the proposals are working towards achieving the required Net Gain.



Figure 7.6: Layout Principles Plan.

7.6 CHARACTER AREAS

To ensure a comprehensive and successful neighbourhood is achieved, the character of the surrounding settlement should be considered. The Character Areas, together with the design strategy will ensure that a holistic, coherent and well-designed place is established.

Throughout this section, words such as *'informal'* and *'formal'* will be used to describe certain character areas. A formal character area will be defined by a more uniform style, such as wider streets with grass verges and street tree planting with regular and stronger building frontages, and consistent set back distances defining the edges. Informal areas will appear more intimate and relaxed, with narrower streets and varying set back distances complemented by a wider range of different styles of buildings.

The Spine Street

The Spine Street provides the required connection between Tollgate Road and the new homes. It will provide a sensible and logical route through the core of the neighbourhood. The Spine Street will be tree lined and the principal street running through the new homes, suitable for all types of predicted traffic movement. The key characteristics of the Spine Street are as follows:

- **Defined by a more formal arrangement of buildings with occasional varied building line (up to 2½ storeys).**
- **Along sections of the Spine Street, strong and consistent building frontages should front the street to mark its importance as the principal route serving the community and to aid legibility.**
- **A considered mix of parallel and gable frontages will help to break up the roofscape and add character.**
- **Will accommodate safe movement for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Differing surface materials will, therefore, help to passively control traffic speeds at key locations along the street.**
- **Incidental green spaces and street tree planting along the Spine Street will frame views out towards the public open space and countryside beyond.**

Secondary Streets

The Secondary Streets will provide important connections from the Spine Street to the peripheral areas. The key characteristics of the Secondary Streets will be as follows:

- **Defined by more informal arrangement of buildings with a more varied building line and differing set back distances.**
- **In limited and central areas, dwellings up to 2½ may be proposed to aid legibility and define key buildings and spaces.**
- **Will accommodate safe movement for pedestrian, cyclists and vehicles. Differing surface materials will help to passively control vehicle speeds.**



Spine Street



Secondary Street

Lane & Private Drives

The Lanes and Private Drives will play an important role in the character of the neighbourhood, marking the peripheral parts of the development parcels overlooking the new open spaces. The key characteristics of the Lanes and Private Drives are as follows:

- **Predominantly detached, 2 storey dwellings to create lower densities, with varied set back distances and building orientations.**
- **Good sized front gardens will assist in creating softer building lines that appropriately mark the transition between the built environment and the development's open spaces.**
- **Generally, will take the form of shared surface spaces.**

Recreational Routes

The Recreational Routes will run through the areas of public open space within the development, providing important connections between the new homes, the development's proposed green infrastructure, the existing public footpath and recreational routes and Tollgate Road. The key characteristics are as follows:

- **The routes will pass through attractively landscaped areas, which will be overlooked by the new homes to ensure they are safe and secure to use.**
- **The routes will be clearly visible and sensitively signposted, providing clutter-free paths.**
- **Sensitive lighting; where necessary, especially those routes closest to the LWS and south eastern boundary will avoid light pollution and potential conflicts with ecological objectives, but will allow for safe and convenient routes at all times of the day and year.**
- **The routes will be more than just paths for non-vehicular movement. For example, benches will be placed alongside them to coincide with key points of interest, such as the play area, and potential views across the development.**



Lanes & Private Drives



Recreational Routes

7.7 CAR & CYCLE PARKING

The car parking and cycle standards for new developments are set out in **Policy 40** (Residential Development Parking Standards) of the City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 as well as in the Saved and Deleted Policies Version (July 2020). The recommended levels of car and cycle provision are set out below:

House Type	No. Spaces per Unit	Form	Cycle Parking Standards
1 bedroom dwelling (incl. Studio)	1.5	Either 1.5 unallocated, or 1 allocated and 0.5 unallocated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 l/t space per unit if no garage or shed provided. • 1 s/t space per 3 units plus • 1 l/t space per 5 units.
2 bedroom dwellings	Either 2 spaces or 2.5 spaces	Either 1 allocated and 1 unallocated, or 2 allocated and 0.5 unallocated	
3 bedroom dwellings	2.5 spaces	2 allocated and 0.5 unallocated	
4 bedroom dwellings	3.5 spaces	3 allocated and 0.5 unallocated	

The vehicle and cycle parking standards above will be applied and determined at the Reserved Matters stage. At the Reserved Matters stage, the car parking will be designed so that vehicles do not dominate the street scene or cause inconvenience to pedestrians and cyclists. The level of car parking provision includes any garages and car ports, provided as an integral part of the dwelling or within its curtilage, and/or driveways provided within the curtilage.

Cycle parking provision should normally be provided within the curtilage of the residential dwelling. Where a garage is provided, it should be of a suitable size to accommodate the required cycle parking provision. Parking provision should be provided as a secure communal facility where a suitable alternative is not available.

It is also important to note that with rapidly advancing electric car technology a number of the new homes will be fitted with Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) points. Determination of these would be a Reserved Matter and would be decided on a plot-by-plot basis.



7.8 CREATING A SAFE & SECURE ENVIRONMENT

The Development Framework Plan and the Illustrative Masterplan propose a framework for development where the public realm will be overlooked, be open in aspect and well-used in order to reduce opportunities for and the fear of crime. The Illustrative Masterplan has been designed to adhere to the following principles of good design:

1. Permeability: a choice of well-defined routes within the layout will encourage walking and cycling, therefore reducing car dependency and maximising the presence of 'eyes on the street'. New recreational routes will be sensitively lit to allow for safe and convenient access in and around the Site at all times of day and year.

2. Natural surveillance: dwellings will front onto streets and public spaces with entrances and windows fronting onto the public realm to maximise overlooking.

3. Animated street scenes: building frontages will be as 'active' as possible, particularly at ground floor level. Windows to active rooms, such as living room and kitchen windows, will face the public realm.

4. Car parking: the majority of cars will be accommodated within the curtilage of the dwellings to provide optimum surveillance. Where used, parking courts are limited in size, well overlooked and will be enclosed by walls and new landscaping.

5. Non-vehicular routes: new housing will front onto open spaces containing pedestrian routes to maximise natural surveillance.

6. Management: the ownership and responsibility for external space will be clearly identified and the proposals will facilitate ease of maintenance and management.



Figure 7.7: Designing Out Crime.

7.9 SCALE

Density

The development proposals achieve an overall average density of up to 40dph, which achieves an efficient use of the Site, whilst providing a balanced approach to the provision of green infrastructure that allows for the provision of 2.02ha of public open space.

In general terms, the density of development will graduate from higher densities in the more central parts of the residential development area to lower densities towards the development's peripheral areas, responding to areas which are more sensitive in terms of landscape and setting. However, within this overall density framework, a range of densities will be established throughout the Site. When combined with landscape and building form, this will assist in providing different areas of recognisable character.

The following density principles have been established by the proposals for the Site:

- **Higher densities along the Spine Street will create stronger building frontages to assist in enclosing and framing the key movement route through the development.**
- **Lower density development fronting the areas of open space that enclose the residential development area to create an appropriate transition from the residential environment to the attractive areas of green infrastructure and countryside beyond.**

Building Heights

The new homes will generally be 2 storeys in order to reflect the height of the existing residential development in the nearby residential areas, as well as respecting the edge of settlement location. However, the considered use of 2½ storey dwellings within limited areas of the central and northern parts of the development, will assist in creating the basis for a varied and interesting roofscape. 2 and 2½ storey dwellings will, therefore, be used to achieve a number of different townscape functions, including:

- **To create key groupings overlooking important areas of open space including incidental greenspaces located within the central parts of the development.**
- **These groupings will aid legibility in the streetscene along the main residential streets.**
- **To create variety and interest.**

The height of the new dwellings overlooking the Site's boundaries, and those of higher, more visually sensitive areas, in particular the southern and western area of the development, will be limited to 2 storeys for the following reasons:

- **To respect the scale of the existing dwellings and Listed Buildings in the surrounding area.**
- **To assist in creating an appropriate transition from the residential environment to the surrounding farmland and countryside beyond.**

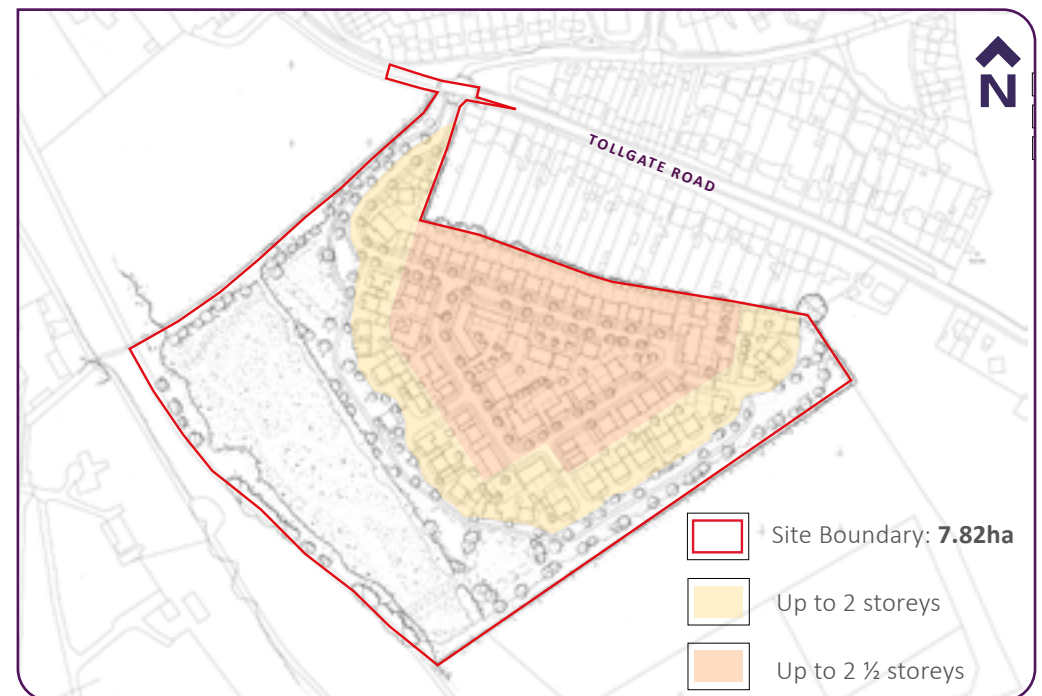


Figure 7.8: Building Heights Plan.

7.10 EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

The appearance of the development is a Reserved Matter, although the principles need to be communicated within the DAS to provide a design framework for the new homes at the detailed design stage and to respond to the Policies set out earlier in this document.

The external appearance of the new homes will respect the local vernacular of Colney Heath and the surrounding settlements. An overview of Colney Heath's character and context has been provided in Section 5, which highlights a number of design influences for the detailed design of the development.

- **Simple Built Form:** Buildings will be designed with a simple built form and an appropriate level of detailing that complements the local vernacular.
- **Unity:** New homes will convey an impression of unity relieved by minor points of detail, materials and grouping, producing variety with harmonious identity.
- **Key Buildings:** Key buildings using special details, raised building heights and/or increased massing will be used in key locations.
- **Building Groups:** Buildings will be the principal visual elements that characterise the development. With the exception of key buildings, individual dwellings will be subservient to the building group.
- **Corners:** Houses on corners should have dual frontages and use features such as bay windows to emphasise their pivotal position.

Palette of Materials

A restrained palette of materials should be used, although there will be subtle changes in composition of materials to strengthen the identity of individual areas. The choice of materials will reflect the more traditional characteristics of Colney Heath and the local area.

- **Roof finish:** Mix of plain tiles and pantiles characteristic of the area, in red/brown tones. Limited use of high-quality artificial slate tiles with thin profile to provide further variety to the roofscape.
- **Facing brickwork:** Mainly red/brown brick with decorative finishes including half-timber.
- **Render:** Render to highlight key buildings or important structural elements of buildings. Predominantly painted in white or pastel shades to reflect the local character.
- **Timber cladding:** White weatherboard timber cladding may be appropriate for lesser structures e.g. Garages.
- **Boundary treatments:** Considered mix of timber picket fencing, brick walls and planted vegetation.



7.11 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & DESIGN

Landscape Design

The landscape proposals have evolved through an analysis of the Site and its setting, as well as best practice design guidance. As set out earlier in the DAS, the development comprises approximately 3.93 hectares of green infrastructure. Therefore, approximately 50% of the Site will comprise new and retained areas of green infrastructure and wildlife habitat. These areas will retain the important wildlife connections and habitats through the Site, and include additional areas for ecological mitigation and enhancement, such as strengthening existing vegetation along the Site boundaries, with a network of SuDS features. Together, these green infrastructure features will deliver an exciting new asset for Colney Heath, for the benefit the community.

To address the need for a new robust Green Belt Boundary the Site's south eastern boundary will be planted with dense thicket and tree planting which will significantly increase the level of hedgerows and improve the landscape quality of the Site, promoting wildlife connectivity. The proposals provide vast new areas of thicket, hedgerow, tree and species rich wildflower meadow planting, as well as a new picnic/seating area, and street tree planting, forming a strong verdant landscape framework and network of open spaces.

The future maintenance and management will be secured for the long-term via a planning obligation using an appropriate public body or private management company.



Recreation

The areas of open space and new landscaping shown on the Illustrative Masterplan will provide a new community asset for informal recreational activities, including walking, picnicking and informal play.

The new homes will be encircled by areas of open space forming a new community focus. A new Local Area for Play (LAP) will be included within the open space to the north western area of the neighbourhood. This space will have a 'rural' style and will incorporate timber elements of natural play, befitting the settlement edge location of the Site. It will also be aimed at younger children (up to 8 years) and will provide a range of play experiences and opportunities. Quality landscaping and furniture will create an attractive destination for the wider community, as well as the new residents.

Wildflower meadows will provide a community focus and improve the habitat diversity of the neighbourhood and will be easily accessible for both the whole community, by sustainable methods of transport.

A network of formal recreational routes and informal mown footways will enhance connectivity across the Site, promoting a healthy and active neighbourhood.

Colney Heath Farm Meadows LWS is to be retained and enhanced as part of the proposals. An informal mown footway will meander through the LWS, but will be limited to ensure the protection of the habitats. Interpretation boards will educate residents about the Fauna and Floral, which can be identified in and around the local area.



Sustainable Drainage Systems

The detailed drainage strategy for the development will be determined in accordance with the standards set out by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

To replicate pre-development conditions, the use of attenuation basins are proposed. These basins have been designed to accommodate runoff from all storm events up to and including a 1 in 100 year + 40% climate change.

The proposed basins have been designed to discharge to the ground with an assumed infiltration rate and or to discharge to the watercourse, in line with current policy.

The SuDS basin will condition the quality of the water and provide landscape, amenity and ecological benefits. They will be landscaped with native emergent and marginal vegetation, with opportunity for some permanently wet areas to further enhance habitat creation.



Ecological Enhancements

A number of ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed across the Site as part of the landscape proposals, as well as the retention of the Colney Heath Farm Meadows LWS. These will enhance opportunities at the Site for wildlife such as bats, birds and hedgehogs, as well as benefiting the wider habitats and helping to achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain. These include:

- **Creation of open grassland and species rich wildflower meadows, which will be managed specifically for the benefit of pollinating insects. These habitats will comprise of plant species of local provenance, including those found at Colney Heath Common LWS and Frederick's Wood LWS or local calcareous grasslands, aiming to increase the overall extent of these habitats locally.**
- **Improved connectivity of green infrastructure will be provided with infill planting of existing boundary vegetation. This will provide habitat for nesting birds.**
- **Overseeding of wildflower mixes within the drainage features. This will serve to enhance opportunities for foraging bats and wildlife in general. The SuDS basins will condition the quality of the water and provide landscape, amenity and ecological benefits. They will be landscaped with native emergent and marginal vegetation.**
- **Holes will be included at the base of garden fence panels to enable hedgehogs to roam.**
- **Timber and brash from any trees cut down will be reused to create log piles for the benefit of wildlife, such as hedgehogs.**
- **Further measures include; reduction of artificial light spill on boundary habitats, installation of bird and bat boxes and ecologist supervised clearance of nesting bird habitat.**
- **Additionally, the habitats created across the Site will provide opportunities for protected and notable species, including foraging bats, badgers, amphibians and nesting birds.**

7.12 SUSTAINABILITY

The NPPF sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development: Economic, Social and Environmental. It establishes that decisions on planning applications should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

The Economic Role

- The development would contribute to the economic role of the area by generating employment and tax receipts during construction.
- To provide homes that are energy efficient and minimise environmental impact.
- In the longer term the local economy would benefit from the provision of housing for workers, investment in local infrastructure and services through additional s106 payments and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to support local infrastructure, additional expenditure on goods and services, from the New Homes Bonus and from additional Council Tax receipts.

The Social Role

- The development would contribute to providing new housing and addressing the current shortfall in supply within the St Albans City and District area.
- Up to 35% or 52 of the new homes will be affordable, providing new housing opportunities for existing residents in the area. In addition, up to 10 homes would be offered as custom build.
- The areas of public open space will include a new children's play area, a picnic/seating area, connection with the existing Public Footpath network, and recreational routes facilitating also Play On the Way which will help to support community health and well-being and promote active modes of transport.
- The vehicular access point off Tollgate Road will incorporate 2 metre-wide footways to either side of the carriageway, and will link into the existing footway network and provide an easy connection to the bus stops along Tollgate Road.

The Environmental Role

- The proposals maximise the retention of the Colney Heath Farm Meadows LWS, existing trees and hedgerows on the Site's boundaries. The Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Masterplan show how existing vegetation can be strengthened with a new high-quality landscape framework, that has the potential to greatly diversify the existing range of on-Site habitats and secure net-biodiversity gains
- A range of connected open spaces comprising existing Site features and new landscaping, attenuation basins, and opportunities for ecological enhancements, will ensure all new homes are within easy reach of a range of high-quality open space.
- Opportunities for semi-natural habitat creation will be maximised through the naturalistic landscaping of the open spaces and retention of existing features.
- Attenuation basins and infiltration network will be used to avoid any adverse impacts in terms of flood risk.
- The green infrastructure will enhance the character and quality of the development.
- At the detailed design stage, the new homes will be designed to meet national and local targets in respect of reducing energy demand, carbon emissions and energy efficiency.



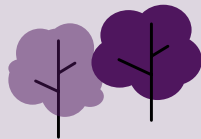
08. CONCLUSION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Vistry in support of the Outline Planning Application for up to 150 dwellings, including the retention and enhancement of the Colney Heath Farm Meadows LWS, a vehicular access point off Tollgate Road, public open space, including children's play area, 'play on the Way' stations, seating/picnicking area, new recreational routes, children's play areas, landscaping, drainage and associated works.

Key Benefits:



The provision of up to 150 much-needed high-quality new homes.



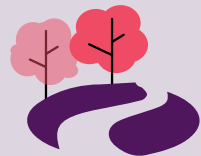
Creating new public open green spaces for all to enjoy.



Investing in the local economy, aiding the recovery from the pandemic.



The delivery of around 35% affordable and up to 10 custom built homes



Protecting existing habitats and creating new ones, including the retention of the Colney Heath Farm Meadows LWS and extensive enhancement of the existing trees and hedgerows on the Site boundaries.



Financial contributions towards the improvement infrastructure.







Helping St Alban's City and District Council to meet its housing targets







Creating local jobs during the construction phase.





The Tollgate Road Masterplan sets out the importance of the Building for a Healthy Life publication for achieving best practice design. Therefore, to conclude the DAS, the following pages provide an assessment of this planning application against the principles of good design contained within Building for a Healthy Life.

INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS		SCORE
Natural Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The planning application allows for 'edge to edge connectivity' facilitated by street tree planting where possible, running through the length of the development and a number of traffic-free routes which pass through the development's connected network of green spaces. ✓ A connected street network is achieved. ✓ The principles of 'filtered permeability' are achieved whereby the private drives and lanes, create pleasant low traffic environments with pedestrian connections still allow pedestrian movement to the Public Footpath along the Site's north western boundary. ✓ A connected network of green spaces compliment existing and new habitats, supports wildlife corridors, and creates new movement corridors for nature. ✓ Majority of the existing vegetation is retained within the public realm, safeguarding their future retention, management and improvement. 	
Walking, cycling and public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The spine street is designed to accommodate a pedestrian and cycle footway. ✓ Many of the lanes and secondary streets are to form shared surface street spaces. ✓ A network of traffic-free routes will provide direct connections to Tollgate Road and the Public Footpath along the north western boundary of the Site. ✓ All of the homes are located within easy reach of the existing bus stop along Tollgate Road. 	
Facilities and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The new children's play area and 'Play on the Way' stations will inherently create a further focal point of community activity, enhanced with a new picnic/seating area. 	
Homes for everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At the detailed design stage, the homes and streets will be designed so it is difficult to determine the tenure of properties through architectural, landscape or other differences. ✓ A range of house types, sizes and tenures are to be provided to meet local needs and create a broad-based community. ✓ Affordable homes are to be distributed across the Site. 	

DISTINCTIVE PLACES

<p>Making the most of what's there</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A thorough understanding of the Site has been gained by Site visits and desktop research in order to understand the local area and to understand how the Site's existing features can be incorporated into the design proposals. ✓ Existing features, such as the utilities, Public Rights of Way, Local Wildlife Site, and flooding extents, are used as 'anchor features' to inform and shape the design proposals. ✓ The SuDs features are to form a key and integral part of the communities green infrastructure, delivering both landscape and ecological enhancements. ✓ Existing habitats are to be protected and enhanced. New habitats are to be created. 	
<p>A memorable character</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At the detailed design stage, inspiration will be drawn from local vernacular. ✓ New green spaces and the existing and new landscaping within them will create places with a memorable character. ✓ The masterplan proposals create a design framework within which memorable spaces and building groupings will be created at the detailed design stage. ✓ At the street naming stage, the opportunity exists to have names that have a connection to the locality. 	
<p>Well defined streets and spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All streets will benefit from having active frontages. ✓ The streets and spaces are to be well-defined using buildings and landscaping to enclose and define spaces. ✓ At the detailed design stage, front doors will face streets and public spaces. Dual-aspect homes on street corners will have windows serving habitable rooms. ✓ The design proposals are based upon well-defined perimeter blocks. 	
<p>Easy to find your way around</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Legibility has been a key consideration from the outset of the design process. The streets have been designed to connect with one another and to be as direct as possible. ✓ The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates how streets are to be used as the main way to help people find their way around a place. For instance, the spine street will be tree lined and distinguishable from the more minor streets through the use of different spatial characteristics, building typologies, building to street relationships, landscape strategies and boundary treatments. 	

STREETS FOR ALL

<p>Healthy streets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The design speed for the spine streets and secondary streets will be 20mph and 15mph for the lane and private drives. ✓ The spine street will be tree lined where possible. ✓ The shared surface nature and low design speeds of the lanes and private drives will create streets that encourage more social interaction and street life, bringing wider social benefits. ✓ The masterplan proposals show how the street layout can be designed to anticipate and respond to pedestrian and cycle ‘desire lines’ (the most direct routes between the places people will want to travel between). ✓ At the detailed design stage, new and existing landscape will provide layers that add sensory richness to a place – visual, scent and sound. ✓ The new dwellings will front the streets with active edges that will provide natural surveillance to create the basis for a safe new neighbourhood. 	
<p>Cycle and car parking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The DAS sets out both the car and cycle parking provision, which is to be provided in accordance with St Alban’s City and District Design Guidance. The emphasis is on incorporating adequate, safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles in a discreet and sensitive manner. ✓ Cycle parking is to be secure and overlooked. ✓ Where used, parking courtyards will have properties within courtyard spaces with habitable rooms providing natural surveillance. 	
<p>Green and blue infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The connected network of green spaces will maintain movement and feeding corridors for wildlife. ✓ The network of connected recreational routes running through the green spaces will encourage physical activity and social interaction. ✓ The SuDS features will capture and manage water close to where it falls. These features will form an integral part of the green spaces to deliver a range of landscape, recreational and ecological benefits. ✓ The masterplan proposals create a habitat network providing the community with opportunities to interact with nature on a day-to-day basis. ✓ Natural surveillance opportunities are maximised from the adjacent dwellings and buildings and from the connected network of traffic-free routes. 	
<p>Back of pavement, front of home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At the detailed design stage, defensible space and strong boundary treatments will be used, with an emphasis on boundary treatments that add ecological value and/or reinforce distinctive local characteristics. ✓ At the detailed design stage, waste storage and utility boxes will be well-integrated. ✓ In places, such as the lanes, deeper front garden spaces will create opportunities for social interaction. ✓ Where used and wherever possible, ground floor apartments with their own front doors and semi-private amenity spaces will be used to help to enliven the street whilst also reducing the amount of people using communal areas. 	

Vistry Group

Vistry Group Strategic Land
June 2022