

A Vision for
h p f

HALL PLACE FARM

A NEW SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

PREFACE

This document has been prepared on behalf of the Sulham Estate to accompany representations to the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2020-2037 Regulation 18 Consultation (December 2020). The purpose of this document is to support the potential for Land at Hall Place Farm, Tilehurst, to be included as an allocation within the updated Local Plan.

The site provides the opportunity to deliver a unique development centred around a strong community exceptionally well located and connected to the Reading Urban Area.

This document demonstrates the development of the Illustrative Layout for the site as well as a summary of background and technical work undertaken to inform the emerging proposal. The document also provides background in terms of the landowner of the site, the Sulham Estate.

THE SULHAM ESTATE

The landowner and promotor of the Site at Hall Place Farm, Tilehurst is the Sulham Estate. The Sulham Estate has been in continuous family ownership since 1497. After which the original extent of the Estate has expanded to include neighbouring farms and the current extent is approximately 560ha of contiguous land running from the Great Western Railway in the north to the M4 junction 12 in the south.

In common with many similar landholdings, the Estate is not run along purely commercial lines. The owner, Henry Scutt, regards the role of landownership as conferring obligations: towards the land; the local community; and beyond that the wider environment and society as a whole.

The Estate's farming enterprise comprises 300ha of arable land together with a 100-head suckler beef herd. A long-standing commitment to animal welfare and the environment are evidenced by the use of low-input grazing practices, and the farm's status as one of the few to have been accepted onto the Higher Tier of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

The Estate incorporates 26 dwellings which predate the 20th Century, of which 14 are listed. As a result, the Estate has considerable expertise in the sensitive and appropriate management of historic buildings.

For the Land at Hall Place Farm, the Sulham Estate is committed to a design-led approach to achieving a high-quality standard of development, and the Estate will be fully involved in the delivery of the Site.



THE SULHAM ESTATE
IS COMMITTED TO A
DESIGN-LED APPROACH
TO ACHIEVING A HIGH-
QUALITY STANDARD OF
DEVELOPMENT

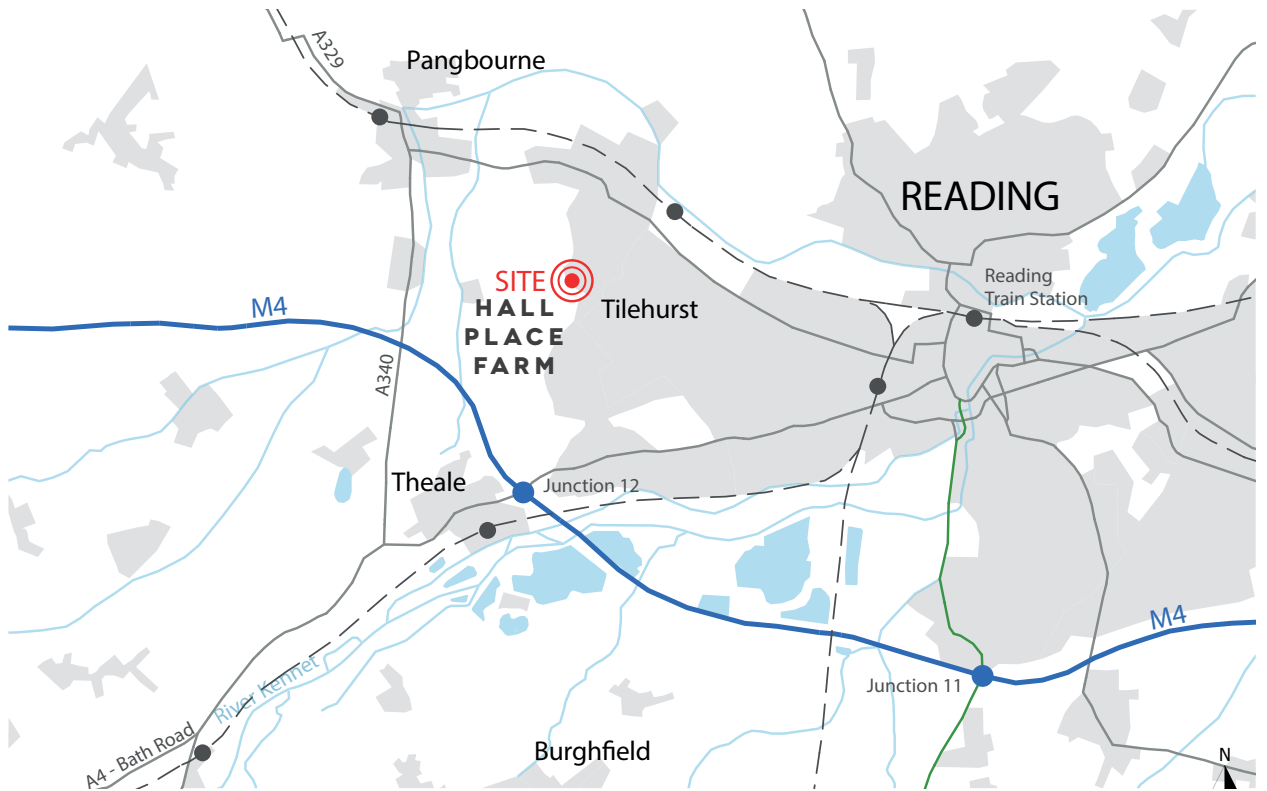




The Estate's current holdings include a group of properties at Sulham, at the foot of Sulham Hill between Tilehurst and Tidmarsh. The uses on site include: the Estate office; a number of rental properties; a large, walled allotment; and, the listed Sulham House, sitting within extensive communal grounds. The allotment is divided into plots which are available to non-residents. Those occupying the allotments are required to tend to them actively or surrender their plot, which results in an extremely well-maintained and attractive, yet functional area. The layout of the properties, gardens and allotment is such that there are many shared spaces, and areas which people walk through for different reasons, fostering interaction and a community atmosphere.

The Estate considers that creating a sense of community is particularly important in the case of rental homes, into which tenants often move with the intention, initially at least, of staying only a limited time. This can result in a reluctance to invest significant time gardening or maintaining private amenity space. The configuration of outdoor space at Sulham House is extremely successful in this regard, providing tenants with abundant outdoor space, the opportunity to garden, and a welcoming community of neighbours.

The intention for the Land at Hall Place Farm is to draw on the successful features and experience at Sulham and build on them to create a development which promotes positive social interaction amongst its residents and other users from the wider neighbourhood. A network of communal and public open spaces and allotments, to be managed by the Estate, will compliment comparatively limited private gardens. There is also an expectation to utilise the existing historic farm buildings by developing these into a farm shop and office/workshop spaces, providing employment services to the wider community and acting as a focal point for this part of Tilehurst.



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1

VISION AND PHILOSOPHY

THE PROPOSALS OUTLINED IN THIS DOCUMENT ARE FOUNDED ON THE LANDOWNER'S DEEPLY-HELD BELIEF IN THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY, IN THE MOST GENERAL SENSE OF THE WORD. TRUE SUSTAINABILITY IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST OUR IMPACT ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, ALTHOUGH THIS IS OF VITAL AND GROWING IMPORTANCE. A GENUINELY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY IS ONE IN WHICH PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO FLOURISH, ONE IN WHICH THEY CAN LEAD HAPPY, HEALTHY AND FULFILLED LIVES FROM BIRTH THROUGH TO OLD AGE.

THE SULHAM ESTATE BELIEVES THAT THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR CAN OFFER A GENUINE, LONG-TERM ALTERNATIVE TO HOMEOWNERSHIP, AS BORNE OUT BY ITS TRACK RECORD OF PROVIDING QUALITY ACCOMMODATION TO SOME VERY LONGSTANDING TENANTS. THIS PROPOSAL IS FOR A LARGELY OR ENTIRELY BUILD-TO-RENT DEVELOPMENT, AS A COMPLEMENTARY AND POTENTIALLY MORE SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PREVALENT HOMEOWNERSHIP MODEL.

THE FOLLOWING
PAGES SETS OUT
EACH OF THE KEY
BENEFITS FOR
THE PROPOSED
DEVELOPMENT

RESPECT FOR THE
HISTORIC BUILT
ENVIRONMENT

ALLOTMENT AND
COMMUNITY
ORCHARD

LANDSCAPE

LONG TERM
APPROACH

ZERO
CARBON

KEY
BENEFITS

RENT

IMPROVING
PEDESTRIAN
CONNECTIONS

A THRIVING
COMMUNITY

IMPROVED
BIODIVERSITY

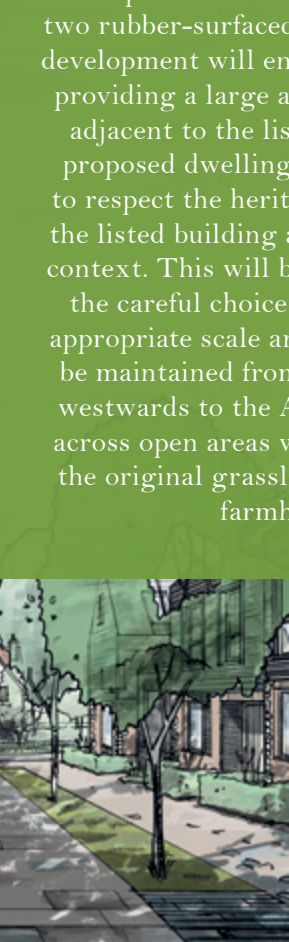
FARM SHOP





RESPECT FOR THE HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Hall Place Farm House, a Grade II listed building, is currently located within private amenity space adjacent to two rubber-surfaced riding arenas. The development will enhance its setting by providing a large area of green space adjacent to the listed building. The proposed dwellings will be designed to respect the heritage significance of the listed building and related historic context. This will be achieved through the careful choice of materials, and appropriate scale and mass. Views will be maintained from the house north-westwards to the Ancient Woodland, across open areas which will replicate the original grassland setting for the farmhouse.





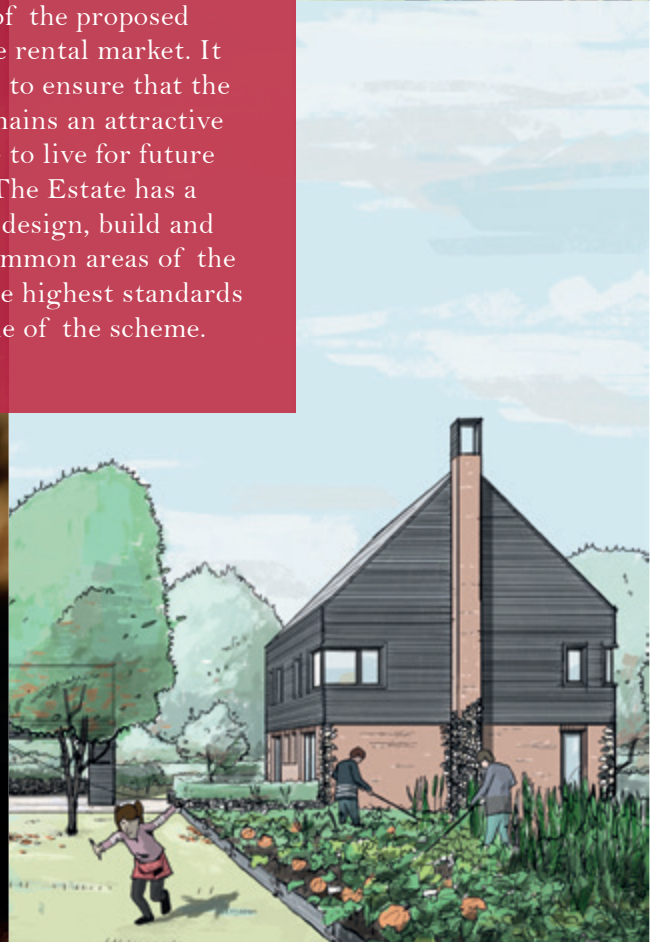
ALLOTMENT AND COMMUNITY ORCHARD

To encourage healthy outdoor living and social interaction, the development will include an area of allotments and community orchard, closely related to the proposed development, which will be available for all new residents and non-residents alike. These will be fully managed by the Sulham Estate to ensure high standards of upkeep, in a similar manner to the allotments at Sulham House.



LONG TERM APPROACH

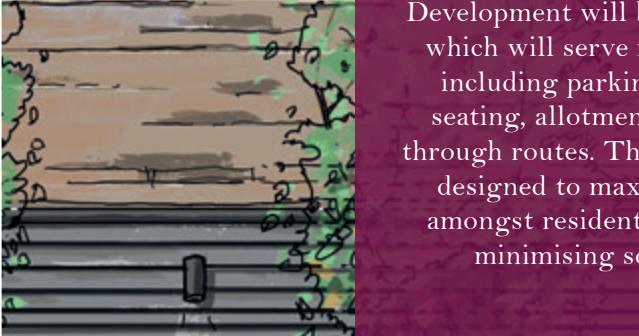
The Sulham Estate will retain the majority of the proposed dwellings for the rental market. It therefore intends to ensure that the development remains an attractive and happy place to live for future generations. The Estate has a commitment to design, build and manage all the common areas of the development to the highest standards over the lifetime of the scheme.





A THRIVING COMMUNITY

Development will be set in courtyards which will serve multiple functions including parking areas, outdoor seating, allotments and pedestrian through routes. These will be carefully designed to maximise interaction amongst residents and other users, minimising social isolation.





LANDSCAPE

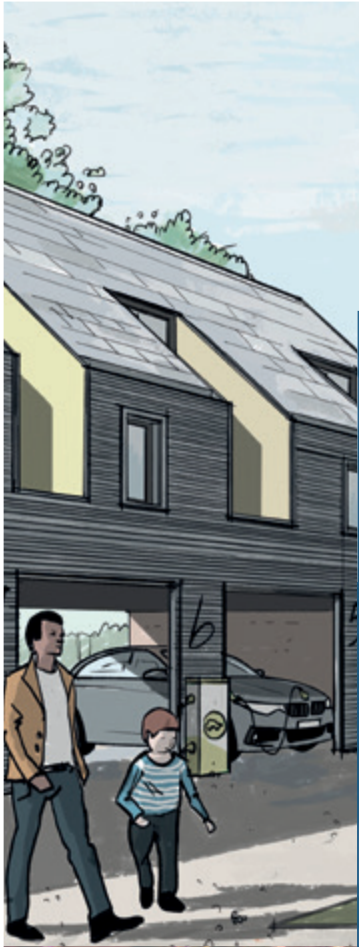
The development will respond sensitively to its landscape context through careful design, choice of materials and by planting site-appropriate native species throughout. The impact of the scheme on the wider landscape will be limited due to the natural containment provided by the ancient woodland to the north and existing hedgerow to the west of the site.





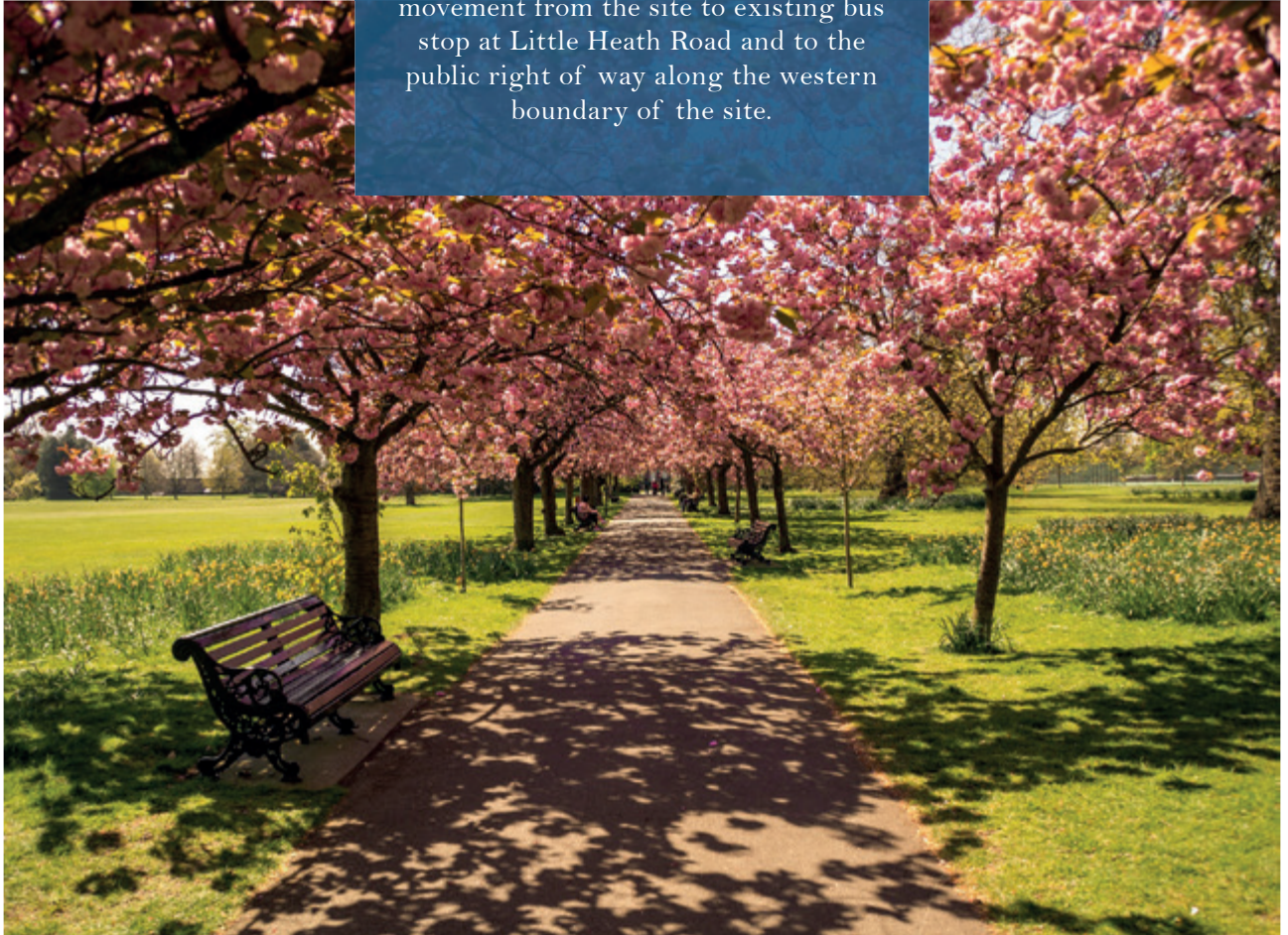
IMPROVED BIODIVERSITY

The proposed development will maintain and improve ecological connectivity around the site, introducing new habitat types with a community orchard and wetland features in the form of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs). Given the current use of the site for grazing, the proposal presents the opportunity to deliver several ecological enhancements including semi-natural grassland as well as new nesting and roosting opportunities for birds and bats.



IMPROVING PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

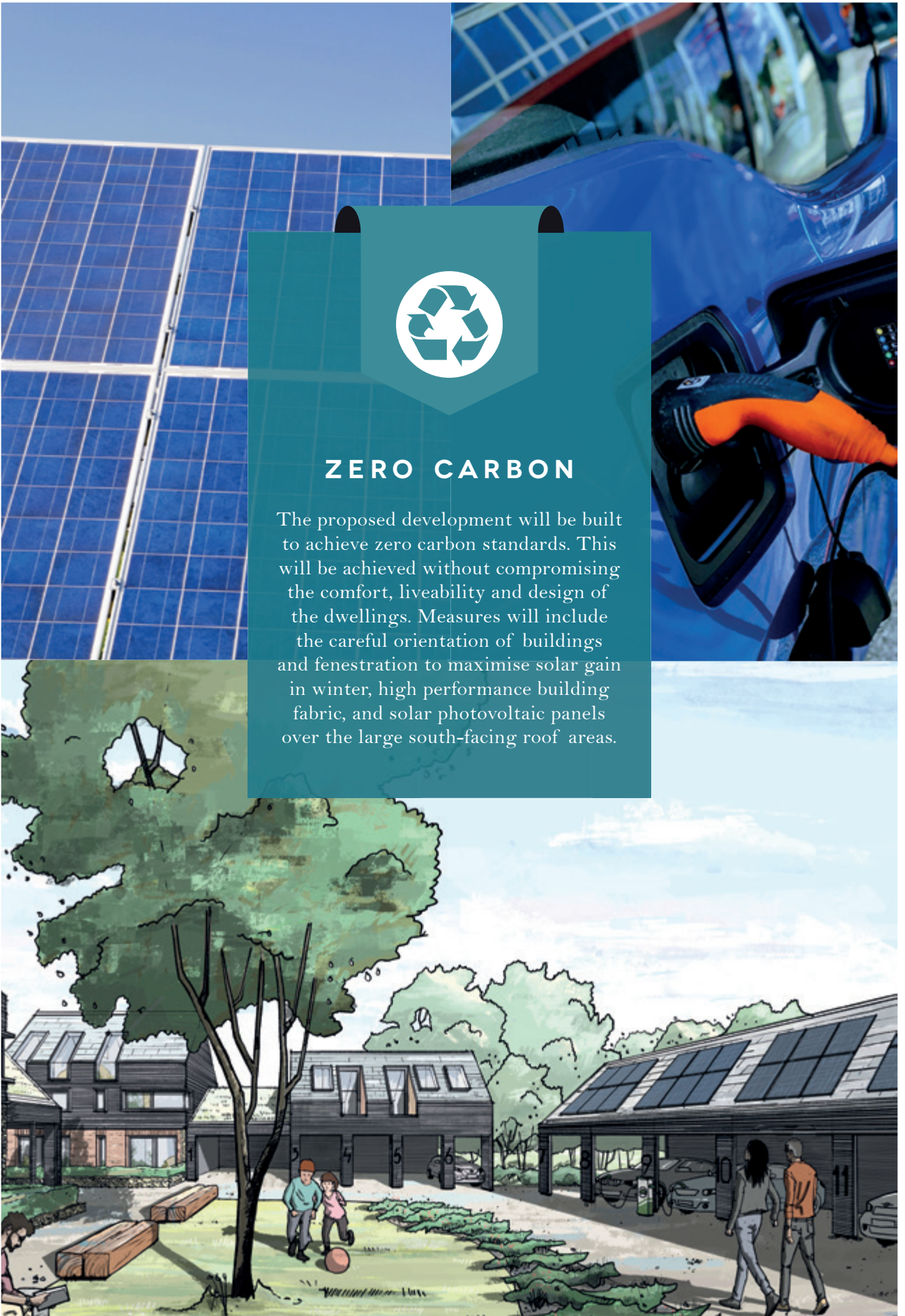
The proposal will be designed with permeability for pedestrians in mind with east-west connectivity throughout the site. This will facilitate pedestrian movement from the site to existing bus stop at Little Heath Road and to the public right of way along the western boundary of the site.

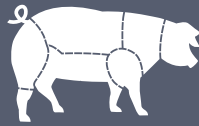




ZERO CARBON

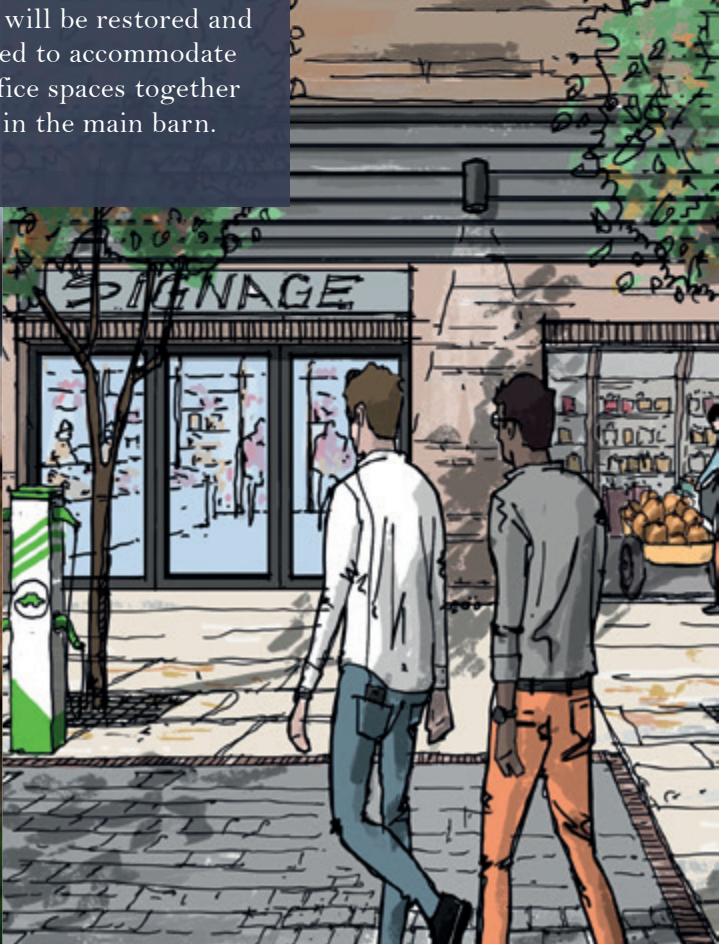
The proposed development will be built to achieve zero carbon standards. This will be achieved without compromising the comfort, liveability and design of the dwellings. Measures will include the careful orientation of buildings and fenestration to maximise solar gain in winter, high performance building fabric, and solar photovoltaic panels over the large south-facing roof areas.





FARM SHOP

The existing brick-built barn located next to Sulham Hill will be restored and sensitively converted to accommodate small workshop/office spaces together with a farm shop in the main barn.







2

SITE CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS SUMMARY

THE FOLLOWING SECTION PROVIDES A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE CONTEXT OF THE SITE IN TERMS OF PROXIMITY TO USES AND SERVICES AND PRESENTS THE ANALYSIS OF THE INITIAL TECHNICAL CONSIDERATION. FIGURE 1 AND 2 SUMMARISES THE MAIN CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE SITE. A MORE COMPREHENSIVE SITE ANALYSIS CAN BE FOUND IN SECTION 4 OF THIS DOCUMENT.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

The site is located to the west of Tilehurst, a western suburb of Reading which is contiguous with Reading in terms of built form. The site is directly adjacent to the settlement limits of the Eastern Urban Area (as identified within existing planning policy) which lies to the north east and south east of the site.

In terms of topography, the site is slightly elevated from Sulham Hill sloping towards its lowest point in the north, towards the Ancient Woodland.

The site comprises a number of existing buildings which are located towards the east of the site. The remainder of the site comprises a ménage, fields and car parking separated by post and rail fencing.

The site is currently used as an equestrian centre with the fields used for grazing and the majority of the existing buildings used as stables or other purposes ancillary to the equestrian business. It is envisaged that the equestrian centre will be relocated in the local vicinity with upgraded facilities.

In addition to the equestrian business, the site also contains Hall Place Farm, a Grade II Listed late 16th century farmhouse. This house benefits from a separate access and curtilage which would be excluded from the proposal. The site falls within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

The north-eastern boundary of the site is formed by Sulham Hill, beyond which is the recent residential development of The Ridings. The development is absent from aerial photography and, as such, the implemented layout of this development has been placed on plans for ease of reference. To the south east of the site is Little Heath Road, beyond which are existing residential dwellings with front driveway access onto Littleheath Road itself. To the south west of the site are open fields which are separated from the site by an existing hedgerow. To the north-west of the site is Ancient Woodland.

PROXIMITY TO LOCAL FACILITIES

The site is within a highly sustainable location. It is:

- Adjacent to the settlement boundary of the Eastern Urban Area (as established in existing planning policy).
- Within walking distance (900m) of Birch Copse Primary School
- Within walking distance (600m) of Little Heath Secondary School.
- Well located in terms of sustainable transport links with the 33 bus stopping within proximity with regular bus services into central Reading.
- Approximately a 15 min walk from Tilehurst Village centre which has a number of local services including Co-Operative supermarket.



Site with detailed
planning consent Ref.
17/01807/RESMAJ

Sulham Hill

Little Heath Road

FIGURE 1. SITE BOUNDARY ON AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

SITE CONSTRAINTS

HIGHWAYS

The existing stables complex is accessed from Sulham Hill, as is a new residential development on the eastern side of the road.

The site is bound by two major routes; to the east Sulham Hill, a 60mph route which connects Tilehurst with Sulham. To the south, Little Heath Road, a 30mph residential distributor road provides frontage access to numerous dwellings along its southern side.

LANDSCAPE

The site is located within the North Wessex Downs AONB. Accordingly, these representations are accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Assessment which concludes that the site has the potential to accommodate residential development due to the influence of existing suburban fringe characteristics including the built form within the site and the existing settlement edge which is adjacent.

Landscape sensitivity was assessed as low overall due to the ability to mitigate potential views from more sensitive visual receptors to the west and the nature of the site which comprises modern and historic built development.

HERITAGE

Hall Place Farmhouse, contained within the site, is Grade II listed. In addition, Kiln Cottage which lies to the south of the site is also Grade II listed. Heritage advice has been sought in relation to the site which highlighted the need for sensitive design in the area immediately surrounding the farmhouse.

ANCIENT WOODLAND

To the north of the site is an area of Ancient Woodland. The proposed layout incorporates a 15m buffer from this area in line with Natural England guidance.

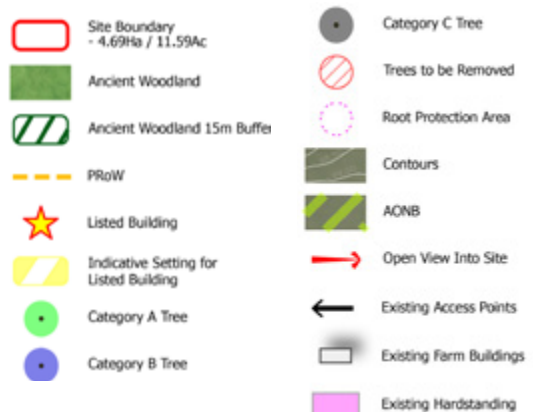




FIGURE 2. SITE CONSTRAINTS PLAN

SITE OPPORTUNITIES

The following opportunities demonstrate that the site can deliver a range of benefits to the area:

- The Grade II Listed Farm House to be considered at the core of the proposals where its setting can be respected.
- Site access is taken from Little Heath Road whilst also noting that access from Sulham Hill can also be maintained.
- The site topography allows for a sustainable drainage system with water attenuation areas located to the north, adjacent to the ancient woodland, providing visual amenity space and also a buffer to the woodland.
- The main site access arrangement from Little Heath Road complies with design standards in terms of the form of the junction, the carriageway and footway widths and the provision of visibility splays.
- The proposed layout should respond to its AONB context, limiting development on areas of high visibility.





	Site Boundary - 4.69Ha / 11.59Ac		Direction of Slope
	Planting Enhancement Opportunities		Proposed SWALE
	Building to be Retained		Existing Wall to be Retained
	Buildings to be Demolished		Listed Building
	Potential Development Parcels		Public Right of Way
	Existing Access Points		Opportunities to Link to Public Right of Way
	Potential Location for Main Access Point		Opportunities for Green Links
	Proposed Attenuation Basin		Contours



FIGURE 3. SITE OPPORTUNITIES PLAN



3

OUR PROPOSALS

THE FOLLOWING PLANS AND DIAGRAMS
HAVE EVOLVED IN RESPONSE TO AN
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF
THE SITE AND ITS CONTEXT. THE
ILLUSTRATIONS DO NOT PRECLUDE
ALTERNATIVE LAYOUTS COMING
FORWARD AT FUTURE DESIGN STAGES.

SITE LAYOUT

The layout proposals for Land at Hall Place Farm have been informed by a detailed understanding of the local context and landscape character.

The Grade II Listed Farmhouse and brick-built farm buildings, the site topography and the site's relationship to the Ancient Woodland have all influenced the proposed concept. It is the intention of the Sulham Estate to use best practice design to create an attractive, safe and sustainable bespoke proposal.

The proposed illustrative layout (Figure 4) accommodates approximately 80 dwellings arranged in a series of courtyard blocks. The interior of the blocks are communal and include public open space, allotments and an orchard. The courtyards incorporate pedestrian through routes to encourage social interaction and create a network of safe, overlooked spaces in which children can play.

At the centre of this group of blocks a new park is proposed that will contain meeting places and a play area as well as enhancing the setting of the Listed building.

The setting and geometry of the listed farmhouse and historic farm complex has provided the inspiration for the site layout.

- 1 Lower density frontage to ancient woodland
- 2 Development set back from Sulham Hill to maintain rural character
- 3 Existing buildings to be retained
- 4 Access to farm shop/workshops only
- 5 Connectivity between the two parcels of land. This could be kept as emergency access and pedestrian only if needed
- 6 Community orchard
- 7 Allotments provision with access track and parking
- 8 Pedestrian connectivity between courtyards
- 9 Proposed footpath running parallel to Little Heath Rd
- 10 Courtyard arrangement
- 11 Main Access
- 12 Development parcel to accommodate farm shop and workshop units and parking



-  Site Boundary - 4.69Ha / 11.59Ac
-  Parking
-  Farm Shop/ Workshop Units
-  Community orchard

-  Attenuation Pond
-  Allotments
-  Existing bus stop/ proposed bus shelter
-  Listed Building



FIGURE 4. ILLUSTRATIVE SITE LAYOUT

The following plans in Figures 5 and Figure 6 have been produced to further explain the Illustrative Site Layout (Figure 4). Figure 5 demonstrates how the parking provision can be delivered within the Site in accordance with West Berkshire Parking Standards set out in "Housing Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options West Berkshire Council July 2014" as follows:

- For 1 Bedroom flats: is 1 allocated space/units plus 1 space for every 5 flats.
- For 2 Bedroom flats: is 1.5 allocated space/units plus 1 space for every 5 flats.
- For 2, 3 & 4 bedroom houses: 2 parking spaces/dwelling.

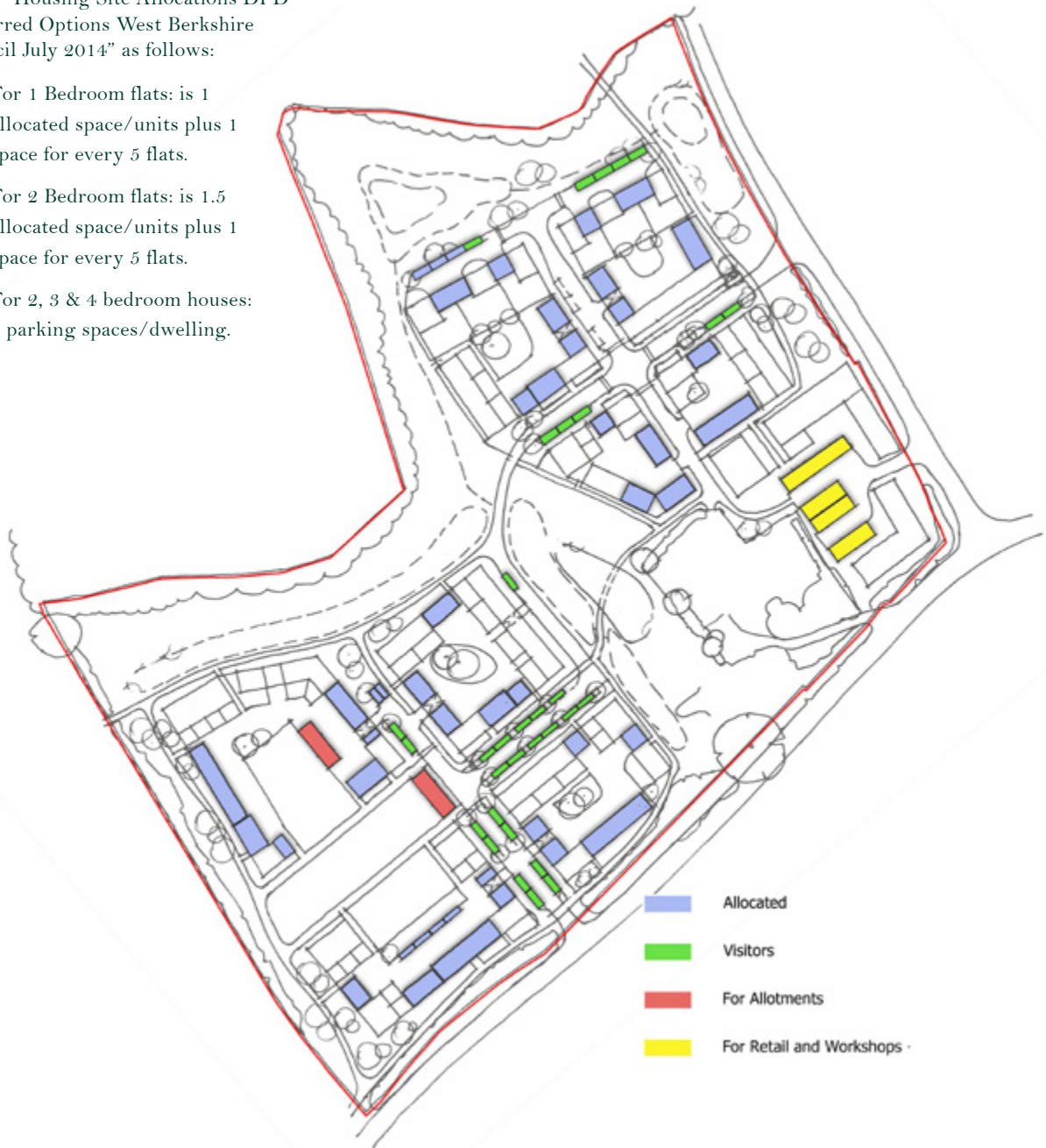


FIGURE 5. INDICATIVE PARKING LOCATION

Figure 6 illustrates how the proposed building heights have been configured to maximise solar gain and reduce shading in key areas. For example, into the north facing garden dwellings and communal areas.



FIGURE 6. INDICATIVE BUILDING HEIGHTS AND HOUSING MIX

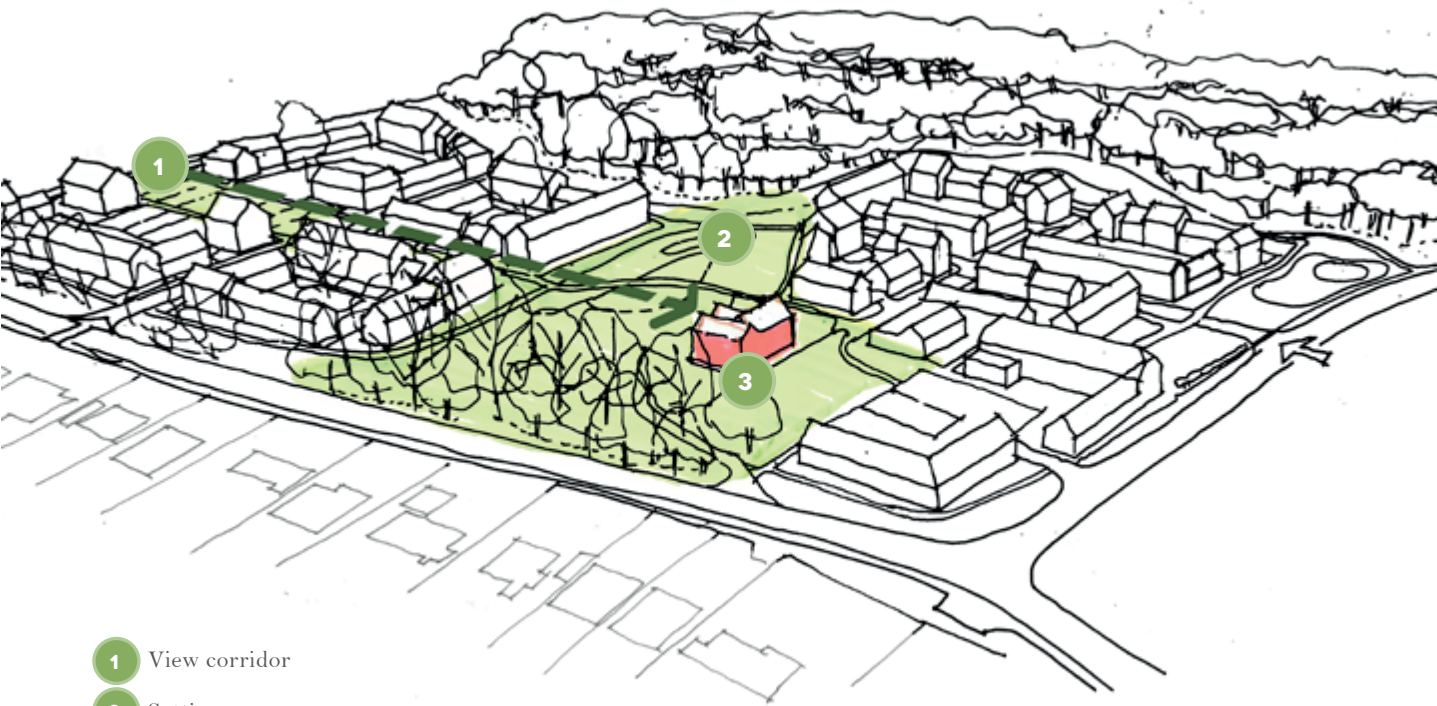
CONCEPT PRINCIPLES

THE FOLLOWING DIAGRAMS
AND TEXT PROVIDES
A SUMMARY OF THE
UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES
AND RATIONALE FOR
THE MASTERPLAN.
THESE HAVE ARISEN
FROM SITE ANALYSIS,
DESIGN EVOLUTION AND
INVOLVEMENT STAGES.



RESPECTING THE LISTED BUILDING

A sympathetic backdrop to the listed building is provided by way of a proposed central green corridor which links the ancient woodland to the north west of the site to the treeline adjacent to Little Heath Road. The absence of built development in this area will ensure that the listed building can be viewed in the context of an open area of public open space. The retention and refurbishment of the existing brick-built barn structures on the site in proximity to the listed building will also ensure that the farmhouse continues to be understood in relation to its historical farm context.



- 1 View corridor
- 2 Setting
- 3 Grade II listed building



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Green Infrastructure within the proposal would be composed of green linkages and corridors throughout the site. The landscaping associated with the proposal has the potential to provide a range of habitats which will offer improvements to the biodiversity of the site as well as a network of usable spaces which will be available for both the new residents and the existing community.

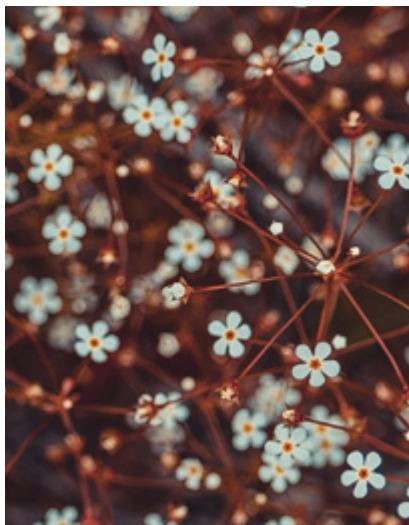
The retention of the existing hedgerows and trees will form part of a landscape strategy which aims to reinforce the existing screening, which is of wider visual amenity value, whilst not attempting to hide the presence of the new buildings which will be in an appropriate location and of a high-quality design.

The form and nature of the rainwater attenuation basins will offer further separation between the new buildings and the Ancient Woodland, as there will be a 15 m buffer zone beyond the attenuation features themselves. Embedding the new buildings within the existing and proposed landscape is at the heart of this proposed concept.



- 1 Allotment & Community Orchard
- 2 Ancient Woodland
- 3 Pedestrian Connections

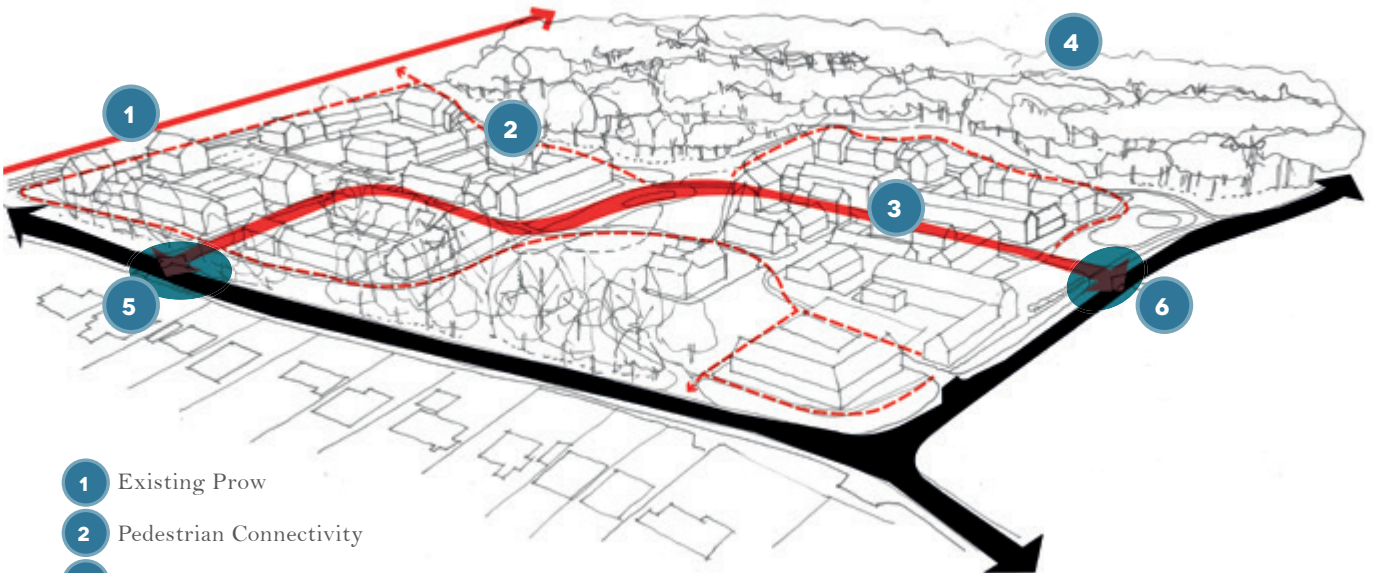






ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

The main access to the site is proposed from Little Heath Road with a secondary access provided utilising the existing access from Sulham Hill. Pedestrian and cyclist routes throughout the site and within the internal courtyards are proposed. Improvement of existing footpath connections will also form part of the proposal. Further details on transport strategy can be found in Section 4 of this document.



- 1 Existing Prow
- 2 Pedestrian Connectivity
- 3 Main Street
- 4 Ancient Woodland
- 5 Secondary Access
- 6 Main Access



MASSING & SOLAR DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The development will follow two key principles in its solar design strategy;

1 – SOLAR ACCESS AT SITE LEVEL

The concept masterplan has been developed to minimise the risk of creating daylight 'black-spots' (i.e. areas of a development that rarely receives direct sunlight) by:

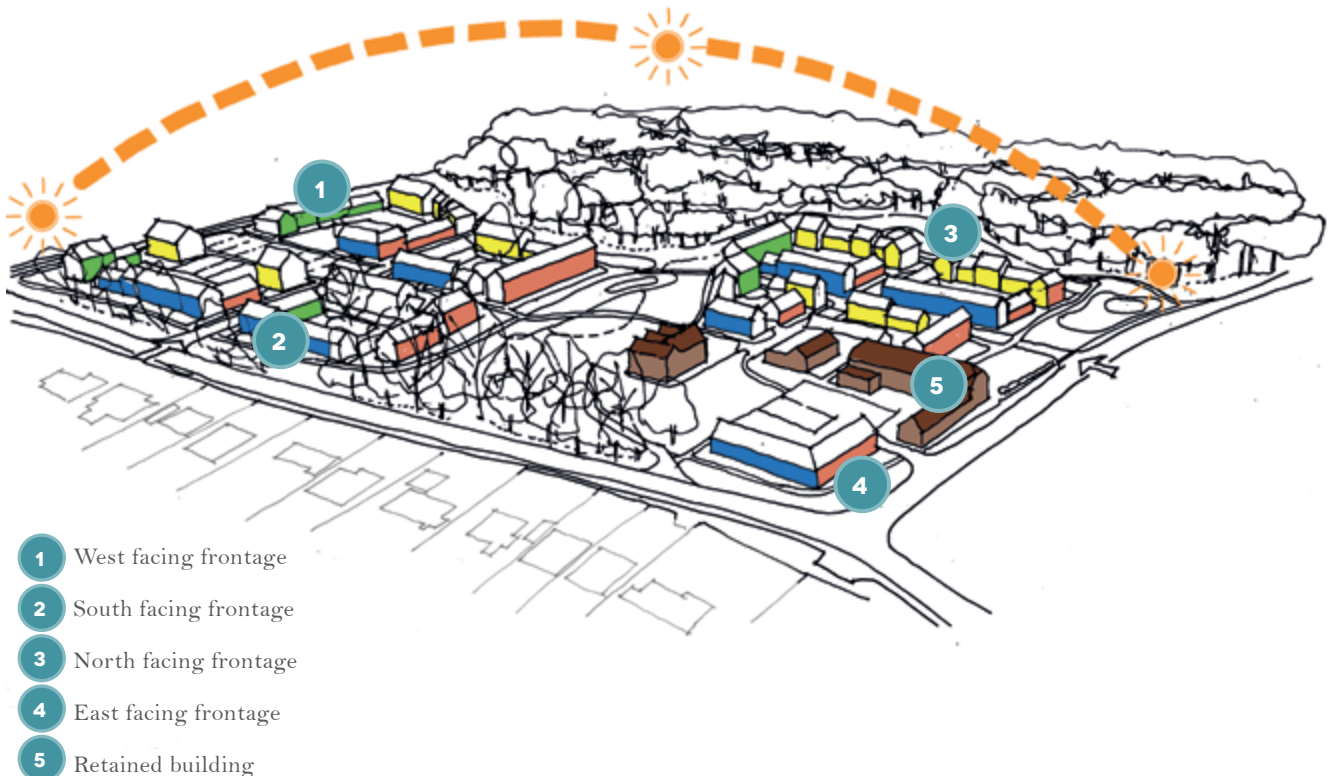
Spacing the building layout to ensure sufficient light to individual dwellings; and

Effective use of the natural topography of the site to minimise overshadowing.

2 – SOLAR ACCESS TO DWELLINGS

Wherever possible, each dwelling will adhere to the following principles to reduce overheating in summer months, increase passive solar gain in winter months and increase natural light all year round:

- House layout to be orientated in east-west axis to maximise south facing façade;
- The majority of habitable rooms will be to the south with bedrooms facing east and evening family rooms to the west; and
- External shading will be designed and/or located to minimise heat gain from the sun whilst it is high in the summer, and angled to maximise direct sunlight from the lower winter sun.



- 1 West facing frontage
- 2 South facing frontage
- 3 North facing frontage
- 4 East facing frontage
- 5 Retained building

ALLOTMENT AND
COMMUNITY
ORCHARD



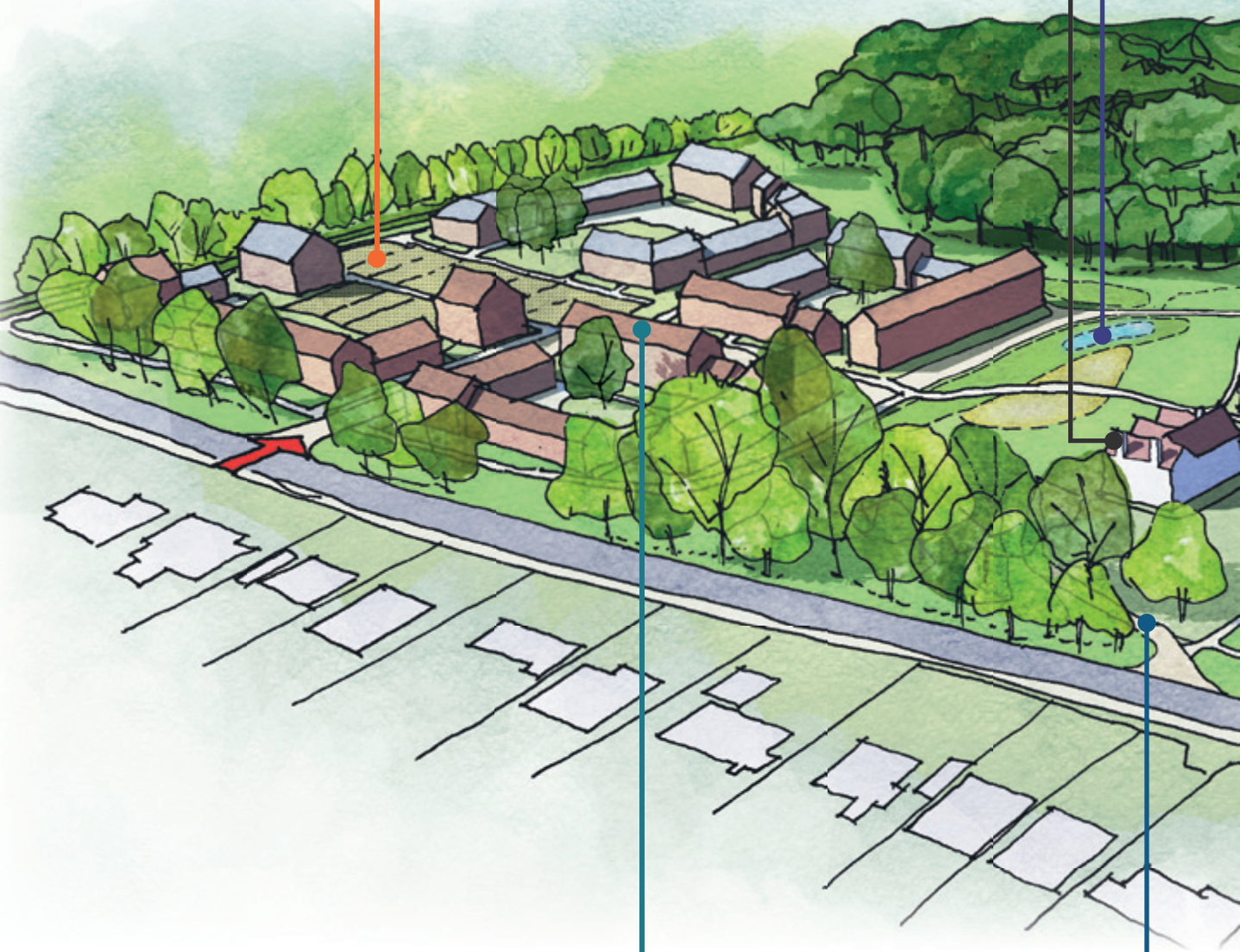
FARM HOUSE-
GRADE II LISTED
BUILDING



NEW DWELLINGS
TO HAVE SOLAR
PANELS ON
ROOF WHENEVER
POSSIBLE



IMPROVING
PEDESTRIAN
CONNECTIONS
ALONG LITTLE
HEATH ROAD



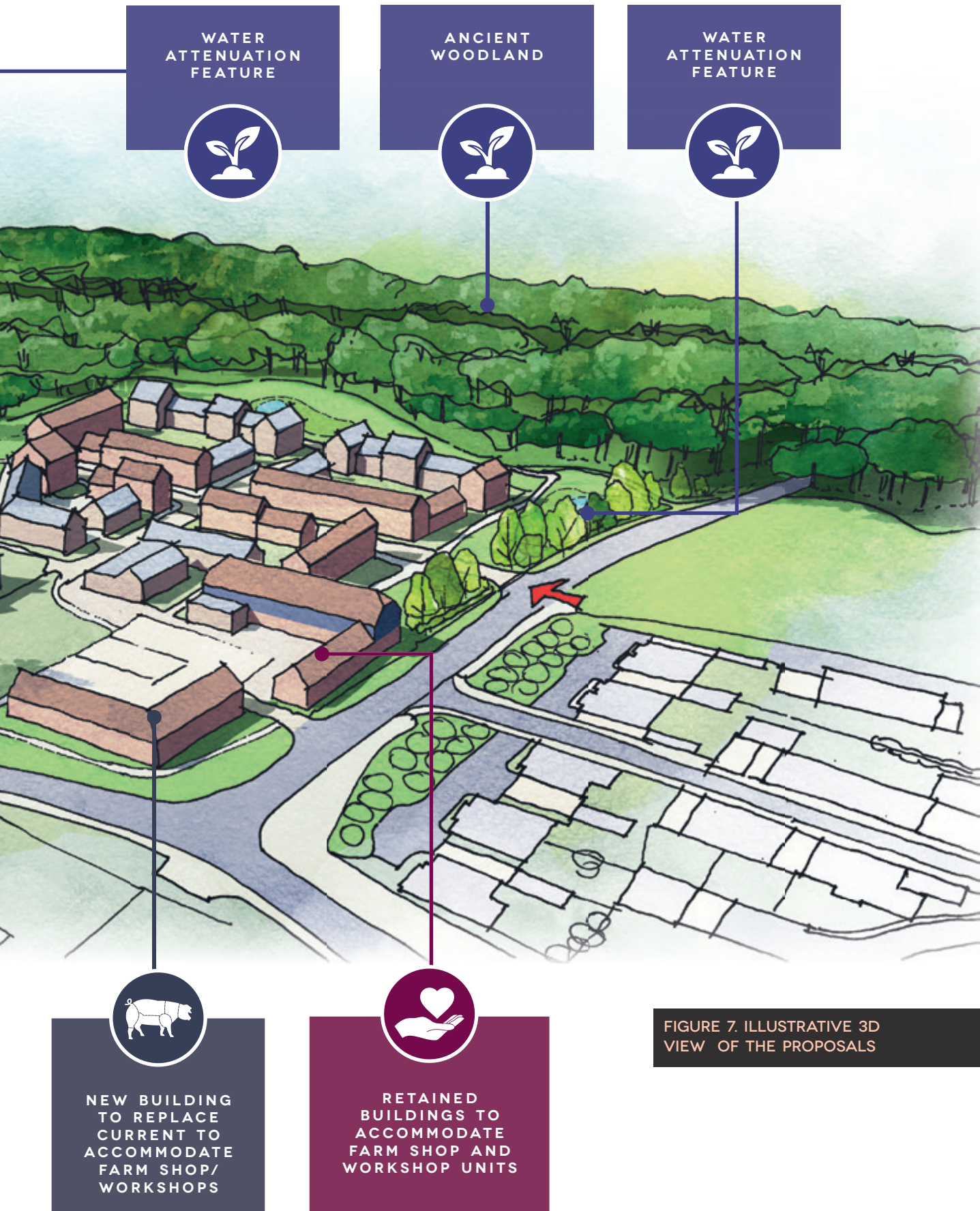


FIGURE 7. ILLUSTRATIVE 3D VIEW OF THE PROPOSALS





4

SPECIALIST CONSULTANTS SUMMARY

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN THE
SUMMARIES OF THE TECHNICAL WORK
UNDERTAKEN TO DATE THAT HAS HELPED
TO SHAPE THE PROPOSALS.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The allocation of Land at Hall Place Farm within the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2036 would support the Council in meeting the national policy requirement to boost significantly the supply of housing. The delivery of housing on the site would represent a sustainable development in relation to economic, social and environmental considerations. In particular, the site is in an accessible location and well related to local schools and existing public transport connections.

PLANNING HISTORY

There have not been any previous applications for the comprehensive development of the site, residential or otherwise. As such, there is not considered to be any relevant planning history.

HOUSING NEED

It is the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of homes. This is reflected in national policy which places importance on a sufficient amount and variety of land for housing coming forward. Based on existing policy (Core Strategy (2012) and Housing Site Allocations DPD(2017)) West Berkshire assess their housing land supply position to 2036 (including windfall allowance) to be 8,358-8,413 dwellings across the District. Based on the Local Housing Needs assessment, the council consider their total housing need to 2036 is between 9,918-11,358. On this basis, through the Local Plan Review, West Berkshire is intending to identify sites and broad locations for an additional 1,560-2,945 dwellings. As the site directly adjoins the Eastern Urban Area which is contiguous with Reading, it is considered that the allocation of Land at Hall Place Farm would be well placed to assist the council in meeting this additional requirement.

In accordance with National Policy, as part of the Local Plan Review, West Berkshire should ensure that allocations reflect need in terms of a variety of housing sizes, types and tenures including providing family housing and for those who rent their home. Land at Hall Place Farm would provide high quality family homes in an accessible location which would be available to rent.

In addition, national policy recognises that small and medium sized sites make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area as these can often be built out relatively quickly. This site is of a medium size as it could accommodate approximately 80 dwellings following allocation, it is expected that the site would be built out within 5 years of the adoption of the plan.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

National planning policy (the NPPF and PPG) state that plans and decision should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of plan-making local authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs in their area. An assessment of the three dimensions of sustainability is provided below as a basis for the Site's sustainability credentials to be assessed.

ECONOMIC

Sustainable development approaches encourage locations where existing service and employment opportunities can bring immediate benefit to future residents. The Site is located in an accessible location with a number of local day-to-day facilities and employment opportunities at Tilehurst Village Centre within acceptable walking distance (approximately 15 min walk). A bus service with frequent services to and from Reading stops immediately outside the site. Reading offers extensive employment opportunities as well as a mainline station with national services including to London, Oxford and Southampton. In addition, employment opportunities by way of the Farm Shop and Workshop Spaces will be created on the site itself.

National Policy supports the creation of policies to promote economic growth and productivity. The proposed Farm Shop and Workshop Spaces would foster economic growth in this area. The provision of small areas of workshop space would allow businesses to rent space in this sustainable location which is well served by public transport.

An additional benefit in providing new homes close to the above services and employment opportunities is the added economic support new residents will provide to Tilehurst Village Centre as well as other businesses such as public houses in the surrounding area. The NPPF recognises the importance of social, recreational and cultural facilities and services to the community and this development would bring economic benefit to and increase the vitality and viability of surrounding businesses and centres.

SOCIAL

The provision of new homes for rent, including affordable homes, will respond to the social aspect of sustainable development. National policy encourages the delivery of healthy, inclusive and safe places where social interaction is promoted through a mix of uses and layouts which allow easy pedestrian and cycle connections (NPPF paragraph 91). This is one of the defining principles of the proposed development of this site which would lead to interaction between future residents, those who rent allotments areas (from both the existing community and future residents), those who rent business workshop space, those who run and use the farm shop, those using the new open space within the site and those passing through the site to access the public right of way into the AONB. The inclusion of allotments would also promote healthy lifestyles which is also encouraged by National Policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Utilising opportunities from existing transport infrastructure is emphasised at paragraph 102 of the NPPF. The site is directly adjacent to existing bus stops which benefits from regular services to/from Central Reading with 4 services an hour at peak times. In addition, Birch Copse Primary School and Little Heath Secondary School are within close walking distance of the site (circa 800m).

Planning policies and decisions are required to make effective use of land in meeting homes and other uses whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions (paragraph 117). It is considered that this development proposal is entirely consistent with making an effective use of a site adjacent to the settlement limits of the eastern area and well-placed to benefit from existing public transport connections as well as existing schools.

In terms of the environment, sustainability is at the heart of this proposal with a commitment to a zero carbon development as well as allotments provided. The site will also be able to offer enhancements in terms of biodiversity. In terms of the landscape and visual impacts of the proposal, these will be limited due to the screening offered by the ancient woodland to the north of the site.

The site is within the North Wessex Downs AONB where national policy attaches great weight to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty and 'major development' should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances. Whether a proposal is a 'major development' is determined on the basis of its nature, scale and setting and whether there would be a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated. It is not considered that this proposal constitutes a 'major development'. This is on the basis that, when viewed in the context of the wider conurbation of the Eastern Urban Area which is contiguous with Reading, the development is of a very small scale. In terms of the nature of the proposed uses on the site, these are considered to be in keeping with the existing uses in the locality. Finally, in terms of setting and impact on the AONB, the landscape and visual appraisal which supports this submission demonstrates that the site is well screened from the wider AONB and would be viewed in the context of the existing urban area directly to the south. On this basis, the proposal would not result in significant adverse impacts on the AONB.

In relation to the Grade II listed Farmhouse on the site, the proposal has been designed to respect the building itself and enhance its setting. This is in accordance with national policy.

CONCLUSION

To summarise, in relation to sustainability the site will offer economic benefits including new small-scale workshop space for businesses and a farm shop as well as new residents living in the new homes to support local services.

It will offer social benefits through the provision of new housing and social housing in an area with high housing need. Environmentally, the site is in an accessible location and provides the opportunity to create new habitats and improve the biodiversity of the site. In addition, the site directly abuts the edge of settlement and is well screened from the wider AONB by reason of the woodland to the north west of the site. As such, it is considered that the development would constitute sustainable development as required by the NPPF.

LANDSCAPE

The Site is located on the western edge of Tilehurst, directly to the north of Little Heath Road and to the west of Sulham Hill, outwith but adjoining the settlement boundary of Reading. The Site is set to the immediate north of Little Heath residential area, and to the immediate west of The Ridings residential area. The wider settlement of Reading lies to the east and south of the Site and the residential development characterises the settled fringe context that encompasses the Site and the surrounding area.

The Site relates strongly to, and is set within, the settlement edge of Tilehurst and is therefore heavily influenced by the existing surrounding development which lies to the north east, east, south east, south, and south west of the Site. The Site and its immediate surroundings are, therefore, settled in character.

The site is on the very eastern edge of the North Wessex Downs AONB, and the North Wessex Downs landscape which extends to the north and west of the Site, has a well wooded context with a diverse range of settlements linked

by narrow rural lanes, set within an undulating valley side landscape. There are large areas of woodland, linear vegetation and copses which enclose the landscape and contain and obscure views.

Clay Copse woodland to the north and north west of the Site is a substantial area of woodland which physically and visually contains the Site, and the settlement edge of Tilehurst, and provides separation between the settled residential area and the wider North Wessex Downs AONB to the north west.

From the limited number of locations, generally in close proximity to the Site, views towards, and of, the Site are set within the context of, and already influenced by, the existing surrounding development that forms the northern and western extents of Tilehurst.

The combination of the generally flat topography of the Little Heath Gravel Plateau, and the existing vegetation that immediately surrounds the site and that is present in the surrounding area within the wooded slopes, means that the entirety of the Site is only seen from the section of PROW TILE/8/1 to the west of the Site, where there is a gap in the boundary vegetation of the Site.



The proposed development would retain and enhance the strong framework of boundary vegetation, and Hall Place Farmhouse which will be retained within the proposed development. Several existing red brick barns will also be retained and incorporated into the development and would wet the residential development within the centre of the Site within the context of the existing boundary planting.

The proposed development would restore and create a positive landscape character and sense of place to the Site through additional planting which would strengthen to Site boundaries, increase the amount of woodland and hedgerow present, and improve and enhance connectivity with the existing vegetative framework.

The landscape strategy for the development of the Site is to create a stronger landscape structure within the edge of Tilehurst, and to respect the character of the local landscape, through the restoration of hedgerows and field boundaries to help the existing and proposed development at the edge of Tilehurst integrate into the landscape, and to retain and enhance the wooded horizons.

The character of the North Wessex Downs to the west of the Site would be respected by enhancing the strong western boundary of the Site to form a robust edge to the settlement of Tilehurst, and increase the physical and visual enclosure, and thus separation between the North Wessex Downs landscape to the west, and the settled developed edge of Reading to the east.

The proposed development would be successfully accommodated within the Site, being set within a strong landscape framework, based on the existing retained boundary vegetation, and supplemented and enhanced with reference to the guidance in the relevant landscape character assessments.



HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY

Hall Place Farm includes a historic farmstead consisting of a Grade II farmhouse and a series of barns and outbuildings which are non-designated heritage assets and reflect traditional vernacular agricultural architecture in brick and timber cladding.

The farmstead occupies a corner plot with the historic roads of Little Heath Lane and Sulham Hill to the south-east and north-east, while pasture lies to the south-west and north-west. Ancient woodland borders the pasture to the north-west.

Nothing of archaeological significance has been identified within the site, but within the general area a dispersed scatter of prehistoric artefacts, and a series of funerary monuments beyond the Ancient woodland to the west, are recorded. Documentary sources suggest tile and brick making has been important in the area since medieval times, but there is no specific evidence for this industry within the site.

The concept design has undergone an iterative process which has allowed the development of the scheme to evolve with due consideration of the listed building at Hall Place Farm, retaining much of its existing setting with the adjoining farmyard. The layout of the new build has been located away from listed building, leaving a large open area and green space to the west so that the existing views towards the ancient woodland across grassed areas is maintained.





HALL PLACE FARM HOUSE, A GRADE II LISTED BUILDING IS CURRENTLY WITHIN PRIVATE AMENITY SPACE AND ADJACENT TO TWO RUBBER SURFACED RIDING AREAS.



ECOLOGY

A desktop study and Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site was undertaken in June 2018, which included external assessments of buildings and trees for their potential to support bats, a badger survey, and a habitat suitability assessment of waterbodies to support Great Crested Newts. The key findings are:

There are no statutory designations relevant to the site. A single non-statutory designation – Clay Copse and Tidmarsh Copse Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is adjacent to the northern boundary of the site.

Habitats of elevated value include hedgerows and trees. Ancient woodland lies adjacent to the northern site boundary.

The site has the potential for roosting bats to be present in several existing buildings and trees. In addition, the site boundaries, and in particular the woodland edge, are likely to be used by commuting and foraging bats. There is limited potential within the site for Dormouse, amphibians and reptiles, and no evidence of Badger was recorded. There are suitable habitats present for nesting birds in buildings, trees, hedgerows and scrub.

The Illustrative Layout has maintained and improved ecological connectivity around the site, retained habitats of elevated value and has buffered the ancient woodland and LWS by at least 15m. In addition, new habitat types are introduced including wetland features in the form of SuDS and a community orchard. Development of the site also presents the opportunity to deliver several ecological enhancements such as new nesting/roosting opportunities for birds and bats.



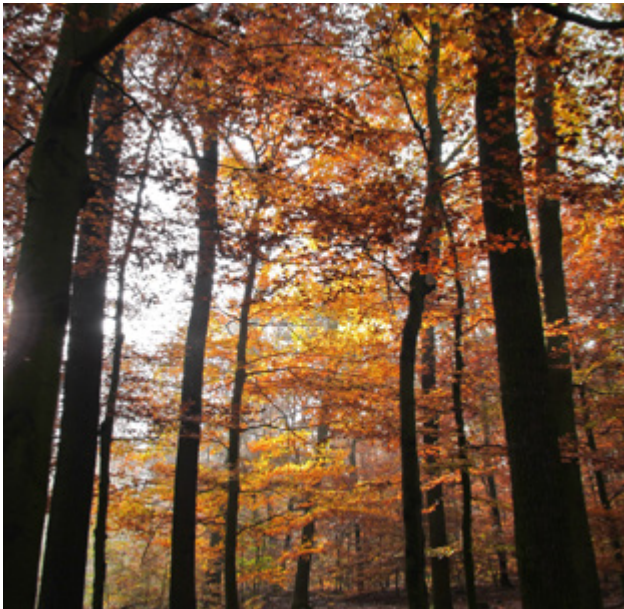
TREES

To the north of the site is an area of woodland called Clay Copse which is designated as Ancient and Semi-Natural and Ancient Re-Planted Woodland. This woodland forms the entire northern boundary of the site.

The western boundary comprises of a vegetated area of blackthorn shrubs with occasional trees within the group. The southern boundary aligns Little Heath road and comprises of a dense belt of vegetation comprising typical native tree and shrub species. This encloses the southern edge of the site. The eastern boundary of the site is generally absent of vegetation, except for a small length of conifers adjacent the farm buildings, and a small section of vegetation that wraps around the south-eastern corner of the site.

Vegetation is generally confined to the field boundaries, however, some scattered individual trees and tree groups within the gardens of Hall Place Farm house and its grounds. There are no internal trees within any of the 3 agricultural fields that comprise the site. Species throughout the site include Cypress, Oak, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Ash, Apple, Elm. A full tree survey was carried out across the site. In total 21 items were surveyed. 1 surveyed item was considered to be high quality (Category A), 9 surveyed items were considered to be moderate quality (Category B), and 11 surveyed items were considered to be low quality (Category C).

The site layout has incorporated a 15m+ buffer to Clay Copse and included the retention of the vast majority of existing vegetation across the site. The proposed access on the southern boundary will require minor loss of some low-quality vegetation, which will be mitigated for across the site with extensive tree and shrub planting. The proposals will provide a net gain in vegetation across the site.



HIGHWAYS/TRANSPORT

The main access to the site is proposed from Little Heath Road, and will be in the form of a simple priority junction, with a 5.5m wide carriageway and 2m footway / service margins on either side. Visibility splays in accordance with measured speeds can be adequately accommodated.

ACCESS

As part of the proposal, a secondary access will also be provided utilising the existing access from Sulham Hill to the north. The existing access will be improved to provide a simple priority junction with a 5.5m wide carriageway and 2.0m footway / service margin on either side. Visibility splays in accordance with measured speeds can be accommodated with some amendments to the existing banks either side of the access.

There is currently a secondary access point into the site which provides access to the saddlery, from Sulham Hill to the south. This access is to be retained, with some improvements to provide a 4.8m wide access, which would provide a dedicated access to the farm shop/workshop units proposed. No vehicular through route will be available to the residential development via this access.

All points of access have been considered in the context of the residential development which is coming forward on the eastern side of Sulham Hill. All points of access will be subject to a thorough and independent Road Safety Audit.

A further pedestrian/cycle connection will be provided via the existing shared use access to the existing farmhouse building. An uncontrolled crossing will be provided with dropped kerbs and tactile paving to provide safe connection to the existing footway connection on Little Heath Road.

WALKING AND CYCLING

There is well established network of footways within the vicinity of the site and Little Heath Road has street lit footways on the southern side of the carriageway along the site frontage.

A 2.0m wide footway will be provided on both sides of the proposed site access to provide pedestrian access into the site. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving will be provided on the proposed site access across Little Heath Road to enable pedestrians to connect to the existing footway network safely.

The adjacent site (east of Sulham Hill) which is currently being constructed is to provide a footway connection opposite the farm shop/workshop units access tying into the existing footway network on Chapel Hill.

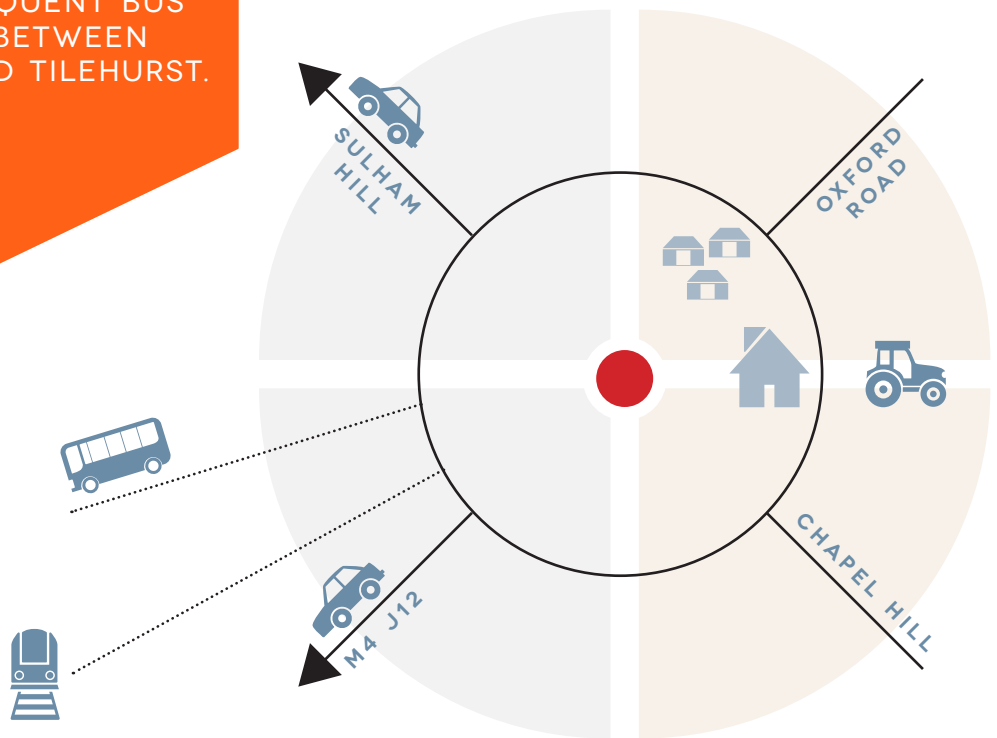
Little Heath Road is suitable for use by cyclists within the carriageway, which connects to Tilehurst village centre and onwards to the centre of Reading.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The site is well located with existing bus stops located on Little Heath Road, which are served by the frequent bus service between Reading and Tilehurst. These provide a link form the site to major employment and retail opportunities – the bus service provides a viable and realistic alternative to travelling by car. Bus service 33 runs from the site via Reading town centre, which is a short walk (circa 120m) from Reading Rail Station.

Reading Rail Station, is major transport hub providing access to key destinations such as London Paddington, Basingstoke, Swindon, Bracknell, Slough and Guildford.

THE SITE IS WELL LOCATED WITH EXISTING BUS STOPS LOCATED ON LITTLE HEATH ROAD WHICH ARE SERVED BY THE FREQUENT BUS SERVICE BETWEEN READING AND TILEHURST.



ACCESSIBILITY

There is a wide range of day to day facilities and services within Tilehurst including healthcare, leisure, retail and local schools, which offer the opportunity for a number of trips from the site to be made locally using walking and cycling as well as public transport.

TRAFFIC IMPACT

Using empirical data of similar sites in similar location, the proposed development of up to 80 dwellings is estimated to generate circa 45 two-way vehicle movements in both the morning and evening peak hours, which is equivalent to less than one vehicle each minute.

Over a typical 12-hour day (0700 to 1900) the development proposal is likely to generate approximately 390 two-way vehicle movements.

The proposed farm shop/workshop is estimated to generate circa 10 two-way vehicle movements in both the morning and evening peak hours.

Initial capacity testing shows that the access arrangement will have ample capacity to serve the development without any notable queuing and delay, however the impacts will be fully assessed within any Transport Assessment which accompanies a planning application(s). The TA, which will test the highway network in a future year, with all planned and committed development will be fully scoped with the local highway authority to ensure it is produced on the basis of agreed parameters.

UTILITIES PROVISION

A review of the existing utility services has been undertaken, confirming the services located in the road infrastructure around the site. The site itself appears to be clear of any buried services.

Whilst detailed capacity investigations will need to be carried out, it is considered likely that the electrical supply to site will require one/two substations to be installed to provide the electricity demand. The concept design has taken this into account, and will be developed further.

A new water mains will also be required for the site, likely to be connected back to the Trunk Main in either Little Heath Road or Sulham Hill. Drainage from the site would need to be discharged in to the local foul sewer network by direct connection. Based on the information available, there is potential that new drainage infrastructure off site will be necessary.

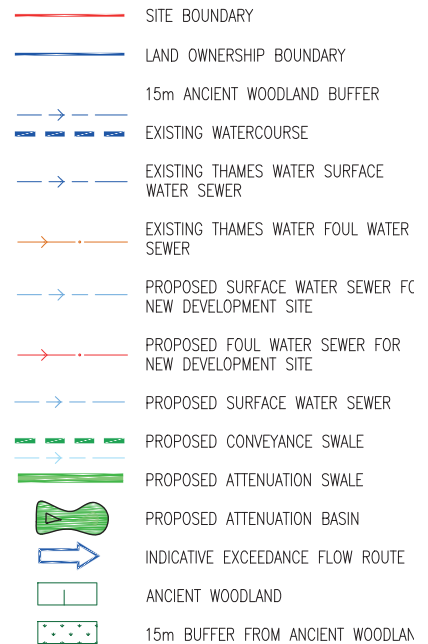
FLOODING & DRAINAGE

Hall Place Farm lies wholly within Flood Zone 1, outside the maximum flood extent of nearby main rivers in both the 1 in 100 year and 1 in 1,000 year storm event. In addition to this the site is identified to be at very low risk from surface water flooding.

Surface water will be managed in a number of above ground SuDS features, which may include attenuation basins and swales, to ensure sustainable management of surface water. These features will enhance water quality, provide biodiversity and amenity value and manage surface water on site to mimic existing greenfield conditions.

Additional small-scale features (such as permeable paving and bioretention) may be integrated into the streetscape at a later design stage and may also be used to enhance a multi-tiered approach to surface water drainage and enhance health and well-being of residents. The proposed attenuation basins are to be shallow features, up to 1m deep, located outside of the extent of the Ancient Woodland, with use of the existing surface flow paths through this area to connect the onsite features to the nearby watercourse.

Through consultation with Thames Water, connection of foul water into the existing Thames Water sewers east of the site is considered to be acceptable.





SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY

Strong sustainable principles are at the heart of this vision for Hall Place Farm. The proposed concept masterplan has been developed to provide a positive response to sustainability appraisal objectives, adopting best practice principles of sustainable masterplanning, focused on:

- MEETING IDENTIFIED LOCAL NEED
- CREATING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY
- PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING
- SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY
- PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT
- MAXIMISING OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE BIODIVERSITY
- MINIMISING NATURAL RESOURCE USE AND REDUCING WASTE
- MINIMISING IMPACT ON AND ADAPTING TO FUTURE CLIMATES

A set of key performance indicators (KPIs) and aspirational targets are being developed, to ensure the opportunities to deliver a sustainable development are realised. Key to this is the aspirational target to deliver a Net Zero Carbon development.

From the outset, the focus for the development has been to reduce the CO₂ emissions of the proposed new development. As laid out in the Energy Design Principles document, a range of low carbon strategies have already been considered, with each option presenting progressively reduced CO₂ emissions. Based on this optioneering exercise, it has been confirmed that the development will target a Net Zero Carbon target by offsetting all CO₂ on-site through the use of renewable energy, resulting in Hall Place Farm being an exemplar in the UK for zero carbon residential development. (Note – the reference to zero carbon is related to regulated carbon emissions associated with energy use within the dwellings)

Each new dwelling on-site will be designed and constructed to reduce the demand for energy and resultant CO₂, specifically;

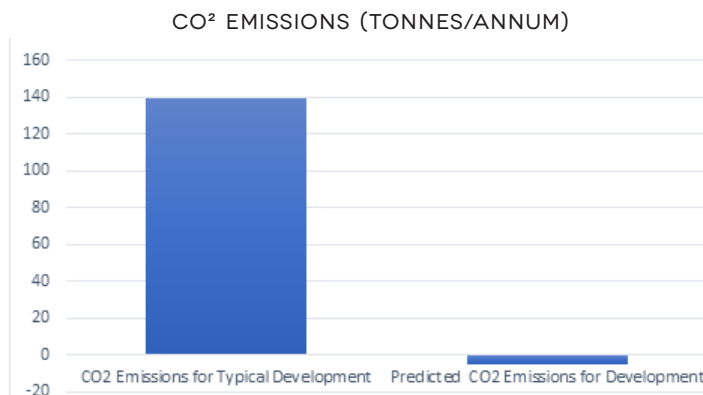
- Considered location of openings to maximise passive solar gain;
- High performance building fabric;
- Efficient heating and hot water through the use of heat pumps;
- Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels across all roofs to generate enough electricity to offset all CO₂ on-site, making the site zero carbon.

An initial appraisal of PV requirements has been undertaken for the development with the following quantum of PV proposed;

UNIT	TOTAL PV AREA (M ²)	TOTAL PV ELECTRICAL GENERATION (KWH/ANNUM)
1 BED FLATS	236	35,569
2 BED FLATS	246	37,051
2 BED HOUSES	295	44,461
3 BED HOUSES	469	70,643
4 BED HOUSES	84	12,597
TOTAL	1,330 M²	200,321 KWH

During the development timeline of this project, there will be expected updates to Building Regulations, specifically Part L and the carbon factors used to assess energy use in new buildings. Currently Part L uses an outdated carbon factor which is not reflective of the current energy mix of the grid. The progressive ‘decarbonisation’ of the grid means there is now much more renewable and clean energy online much less coal being burned. The decarbonisation of the credit and these expected changes have influenced the proposed energy strategy, focusing on future low carbon electricity use.

As seen in the chart below, a typical development of this size and nature, based on standard design and current Part L compliance, would be expected to emit 140 Tonnes of CO₂ in 1 year. Owing to the proposed energy strategy for Hall Place Farm, the development will be able to reduce its CO₂ emissions to 0, owing to the significant on-site PV generation.





5

CONCLUSION

LAND AT HALL PLACE FARM PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER NEW HOMES AVAILABLE TO RENT IN A SUSTAINABLE LOCATION WHICH IS EXTREMELY WELL RELATED TO THE EXISTING EASTERN URBAN AREA ALONG WITH NEW ALLOTMENT SPACE, SMALL WORKSHOP UNITS, A FARM SHOP AND NEW AREAS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE.

THE PROPOSAL HAS BEEN SENSITIVELY DESIGNED IN TERMS OF THE NORTH WESSEX DOWN AONB AND GRADE II LISTED FARMHOUSE WITHIN THE SITE AND WOULD OFFER IMPROVEMENTS IN TERMS OF THE BIODIVERSITY OF THE SITE.

THE SULHAM ESTATE IS COMMITTED TO DELIVERING AN INNOVATIVE VISION ON THIS SITE AND CREATING A COMMUNITY ATMOSPHERE THROUGH A NETWORK OF SHARED SPACES. SUSTAINABLE AND HIGH-QUALITY DESIGN HAVE BEEN A DEFINING AMBITION WITH A COMMITMENT TO A ZERO CARBON DEVELOPMENT FOR THIS PROJECT.

THE DELIVERY OF APPROXIMATELY 80 NEW HOMES WILL CONTRIBUTE TO MEETING AN IDENTIFIED NEED WITHIN WEST BERKSHIRE IN A HIGHLY SUSTAINABLE LOCATION WHICH IS WELL PLACED TO BENEFIT FROM AND SUPPORT EXISTING SERVICES AND FACILITIES.

HALL PLACE FARM

A NEW SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY