

# Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Land at Former Friends'  
School Fields, Saffron  
Walden

Prepared by  
CSA Environmental

On behalf of:  
Chase New Homes

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 CSA Environmental has been appointed by Chase New Homes to undertake a townscape and visual assessment of the school fields at the former Friends' School, Saffron Walden (the 'Site'). The assessment has been prepared as part of the technical information which has informed a full planning application for a new development on the former school playing field. The proposals are for the erection of 91no. dwellings with associated infrastructure and landscaping, and provision of playing fields and associated clubhouse.
- 1.2 Site lies within the administrative area of Uttlesford District Council. It occupies a central location within the built-up area of Saffron Walden, immediately south of Mount Pleasant Road. The former school and its associated school fields lie within the Saffron Walden Conservation Area, which extends to the north of Mount Pleasant Road. The location and extent of the Site are shown on the Location Plan at **Appendix A** and on the Aerial Photograph at **Appendix B**.
- 1.3 The majority of the Site was the subject of a previous hybrid planning application for a development of 100 homes, leisure facilities and playing pitches, open space and associated infrastructure (Planning Ref: UTT/19/1744/OP). The scheme was refused planning permission on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Reason for Refusal 1 stated the following:
- 'The scheme of development conflicts with ULP Policies S1, ENV1, ENV3, GEN1, GEN2, GEN8 Essex Design Guide and the NPPF, as the design, layout, scale and appearance of the development is considered inappropriate in terms of the character of the site and surrounding area. In addition, the development would erode a distinctive protected open space of significant importance to the character of this area of Saffron Walden, as well as the conservation area and the locally listed school buildings.'*
- 1.4 The current proposals have been much revised since refusal of the previous application. Planning approval has also been granted at Appeal (Application Ref: S62A/22/0000002, decision dated 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022) for the conversion of the existing school buildings and demolition of buildings to allow redevelopment to provide 96 dwellings at the former Friends School located to the west of the Site. At the time of the Site visit, construction work was underway on this site.
- 1.5 This assessment provides a description of the context of the Site; the character and quality of the surrounding townscape; key views and visibility of the Site; and an appraisal of the suitability of the development proposals in relation to townscape character and views.



## Methodology

- 1.6 This appraisal is based on a site visit undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced Landscape Architect in June 2024. The weather conditions at the time were sunny and visibility was very good.
- 1.7 In townscape and visual appraisals, a distinction is drawn between townscape effects (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the townscape irrespective of whether there are any views of the townscape, or viewers to see them) and visual effects (i.e. effects on people's views of the townscape from public vantage points, including public rights of way and other areas with general public access, as well as effects from any residential properties). This report therefore considers the potential impact of the development on both townscape character and visibility. The methodology utilised in this report is contained in **Appendix G**.
- 1.8 Photographs contained within this document (**Appendix C**) were taken using a digital camera with a lens focal length approximating to 50mm, to give a similar depth of vision to the human eye. In some instances images have been combined to create a panorama.

## 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)

- 2.1 National policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and those parts relevant to this appraisal are summarised below.
- 2.2 Paragraph 10 and 11 of the NPPF state that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be applied in relation to both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 2.3 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for, among other elements, the '*(d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.*'
- 2.4 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the creation of high-quality buildings and places.
- 2.5 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions, should ensure that developments, amongst others:
- 'will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and effective landscaping;*
- are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change...'*
- 2.6 Section 15 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 180 of the document states that the planning system should contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural and local environment through, among other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, '*... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*'.
- 2.7 Section 16 of the NPPF concerns conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 196 states:

*'Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.'*

### **Planning Practice Guidance**

- 2.8 The Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') as relevant to this assessment covers landscape and the natural environment, and the design of new developments. The PPG may be out of date in its reference to NPPF paragraph numbers, and where this is the case, the latest paragraph number has been included in the text in square brackets.
- 2.9 Paragraph 001 (ID 26-001-20191001) of the Design: process and tools section sets out the purpose of the guidance, which aims to explain the process and tools that can be employed to achieve well-designed places. The guidance refers to paragraph 134 [139] of the NPPF which relates to ensuring good design, and states that the section should be read in conjunction with the National Design Guide (published Oct 2019), which it notes should be used in both plan-making and decision making. Ten good design characteristics are identified in the National Design Guide, and these are set out as follows in the PPG:

- Context
- Identity
- Built form
- Movement
- Nature
- Public places
- Uses
- Homes and buildings
- Resources
- Lifespan.

## Local Policy Context

- 2.10 Planning policy for Uttlesford District Council ('UDC') is set out in the Adopted Local Plan 2005. This is formed of the Uttlesford Local Plan Adopted 2005 and the Local Plan 2005 maps.
- 2.11 UDC withdrew the draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2019 and have started work on a new Local Plan. This is at an early stage and the Council completed consultation on the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) in December 2023.
- 2.12 Those parts of the adopted policy documents relevant to the Site and this appraisal are summarised below.

### Uttlesford Local Plan – Adopted January 2005

- 2.13 **Policy GEN2 - Design** states that development will not be permitted unless certain criteria are met. The criteria outlined in the policy relevant to landscape/townscape and visual issues include:
- compatibility with the scale, layout, appearance and materials of surrounding buildings;
  - safeguard important environmental features in its setting and considers the visual impact of new built form;
  - provides an environment suitable to the needs of its users;
  - minimises impacts on the amenity of nearby residents; and
  - have regard to supplementary planning guidance on design.
- 2.14 **Policy GEN7 – Nature Conservation** states that proposed development needs to have due regard to features of important nature conservation. Enhancement of biodiversity within development will also be sought, through the creation of appropriate new habitats.
- 2.15 **Policy ENV1 – Design of Development within Conservation Areas** states that development will be permitted where it preserves the character and appearance of the essential features of the Conservation Area, including plan form, relationship between buildings, the arrangement of open areas and their enclosure, grain or significant natural or heritage features.
- 2.16 **Policy ENV2 – Development affecting Listed Buildings** states that development should be in keeping with its scale, character and surroundings. Development proposals which adversely affect the setting of a Listed Building will not be permitted.

- 2.17 **Policy ENV3 – Open Spaces and Trees** states that the loss of traditional open spaces, groups of trees and particularly good quality individual trees through development proposals will not be permitted unless the development benefits outweigh their amenity value.
- 2.18 **Policy ENV8 – Other Landscape Elements of Importance for Nature Conservation** states that development that may adversely affect the listed landscape elements will not be permitted unless the need for the development outweighs the need to retain them and where features are lost as a result of development, mitigation measures that compensate for the harm must be provided. The features listed include: hedgerows, linear tree belts, semi-natural and Ancient Woodland, semi-natural grasslands, plantations, ponds, linear wetland features and the network or pattern of other locally important habitats.

Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2036 (Made Oct 2022)

- 2.19 The Saffron Walden Neighbourhood Plan was ‘made’ in October 2022. The following policies are relevant to this assessment.
- 2.20 **Policy SW3 Design** states that all development in Saffron Walden must contribute positively to the parish’s sense of place through a positive design-led approach.
- 2.21 **Policy SW18 Public Rights of Way** states that development which is clearly visible from a public right of way should consider the appearance of the development and incorporate substantial landscaping to reduce visual impacts.

## 3.0 SITE CONTEXT

### Site Context

- 3.1 The Site occupies land within the former Friends' School and comprises the former school playing fields. The Site is bound to the north by Mount Pleasant Road. To the north west are the main school buildings, ball courts and ancillary buildings and open spaces associated with the former school, which is in the process of being converted / redeveloped for residential development. To the south west is the contemporary housing area located off The Avenue. To the south and east is estate development from the late twentieth century. The Site location and its surrounding context are shown on the Location Plan and Aerial Photograph in **Appendices A and B**.
- 3.2 The Site is located on higher ground within the Saffron Walden Conservation Area and is surrounded by residential development within the built-up area of Saffron Walden. The surrounding area has a varied townscape character and contains a number of distinct character areas which are described below.

#### *Mount Pleasant Road*

- 3.3 The former Friends' School is the dominant feature to the south of Mount Pleasant Road. The main school building dates from the Victorian period. It is a 2.5 and 3 storey structure with tiled roof, tall chimney stacks and a prominent tower which marks the main entrance to the building. The main school building is in the process of being converted into residential accommodation. In addition, several of the more recent extensions to the school building have been demolished including the gym building which will be replaced by new homes on the Mount Pleasant frontage. In addition, further development is being constructed across the school site which will provide 96 new dwellings in total. The proposals retain key features of the Site including the lime avenue, the grass tennis courts and the basketball court / MUGA and these have been incorporated into the layout.
- 3.4 The school buildings are set back from the public highway behind a semi-circular green, which contains numerous large mature trees. The school frontage is defined by a red brick wall with coping and regular piers. This wall extends as far as the school fields at which point it is replaced by a mound and dense band of trees. The presence of established trees along the length of the school boundary contributes to the well vegetated character of the southern edge of Mount Pleasant Road.

- 3.5 The northern edge of the road is characterised by a series of large Victorian villas, and a number of more recent detached dwellings further east. The Victorian properties have an eclectic vernacular including red brick, render, stone and timber detailing and tile hanging. Building heights range from 2 – 2.5 storey and properties are set back from the road on sloping ground which falls away to the north. Boundary details typically comprise low, red brick walls and hedging with some examples of more ornate stonework. Due to the set back from the main carriageway and the presence of mature shrubs, hedging and trees, these properties contribute to the vegetated character of the street.

#### *Debden Road*

- 3.6 Debden Road is one of the principal approaches to Saffron Walden from the south. In the vicinity of the Site, the Grade II Listed water tower is a dominant presence in views from the public highway. Development is characterised by a series of Victorian semi-detached properties, interspersed with more recent development. To the east, the carriageway is overlooked by the gable ends of the new development at Water Tower Place.

#### *The Avenue*

- 3.7 The Avenue is a modern development which lies alongside the western Site boundary. It is focused on the avenue of Lime trees which extends south from the rear of the former Friends' School. A series of courtyard developments are located adjacent to the boundary with the Site. The new housing has a contemporary character but references the Essex vernacular employing a diverse palette of materials, including brick and render, weather boarding and timber shingles.

#### *Late Twentieth Century Estate Development*

- 3.8 To the south and east of the Site the townscape is characterised by late twentieth century estate development grouped in cul-de-sacs or along estate roads. This development is separated from the Site by the established tree lines and woodland to the perimeter of the Site.

### **Published Townscape Guidance**

#### Saffron Walden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals (Approved January 2018)

- 3.9 Officers at Uttlesford District Council have undertaken the character appraisal to assess the current condition and boundaries of the Conservation Area. The Site lies within Zone 6 of the Conservation Area. This area includes the former Friends' School and sections of Mount Pleasant Road and West Road to the north. This appraisal suggested

altering the boundary of the Conservation Area to include the Lime tree avenue to the rear of the school building and the remainder of the school fields to the south of the key open space on the frontage of Mount Pleasant Road. The reasoned justification for this alteration was that, *'The proposed boundary would be more clearly definable along the rear boundary line, and taken across the playing fields to the eastern boundary to aid interpretation on the ground.'*

- 3.10 The description of Zone 6 notes that today this part of the Conservation Area is principally residential. Retaining much of its 19<sup>th</sup> century character and dominated by the former Friends' School complex. The appraisal identifies that whilst there are only two Listed Buildings, there is a large concentration of high quality late 19<sup>th</sup> / early 20<sup>th</sup> century non Listed houses which are generally unspoilt. It states that more recent infill development varies in quality.
- 3.11 The appraisal identifies the semi-circular green at the front of the former Friends' School and the associated school fields as important open spaces in an area otherwise characterised by tight urban form. It also notes that the trees within the curtilage of the former Friends' School make the most significant contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 3.12 The appraisal identifies a number of important views of the former Friends' School frontage and the Listed water tower from Mount Pleasant Road and West Road. Fig. 14 Management Plan Zone 6 shows the location of the important open space, important views and important trees / hedgerows (extract contained in **Appendix E**).

Historic Settlement Character Assessment – Saffron Walden (June 2007)

- 3.13 Uttlesford District Council has produced a series of Historic Settlement Character Assessments for a number of settlements in the District. The assessment considers the quality and function of a number of identified areas within Saffron Walden and the approaches to the settlement, and provides a broad statement on the effect of development in these locations. Amongst the identified locations are the playing fields at the former Friends' School (identified as Sector 10g).
- 3.14 The assessment describes the quality of the playing fields and states that it is a large, flat open sports field visually enclosed by boundary trees. Where it fronts onto Mount Pleasant Road it states that it adds to the quality of the Conservation Area in this location. It notes that the trees to the south and east form a common boundary to the adjoining residential areas.
- 3.15 In terms of the function of this area, the assessment notes that the playing fields act as a 'green lung' in this part of the town, the majority



of which lies beyond the historic core. The assessment notes that development in this location would have little detriment on the historic core, which for the most part lies beyond the playing fields, however development on the Mount Pleasant frontage would have a detrimental impact on the historic core nearby.

#### Draft Uttlesford Design Code (May 2023)

- 3.16 Uttlesford Council has produced the draft Design Code to set a design standard for new development in the district. The Code outlines strategic principles, design guidelines and parameters to inform designers and decision makers.

#### Essex Design Guide

- 3.17 The Essex Design Guide is an online resource which provides guidance on the design and layout of new developments in the County.

### **Conservation Area and Listed Buildings**

- 3.18 The Site forms part of the Saffron Walden Conservation Area, which includes the built area to the north on Mount Pleasant Road and West Road (Please refer to the plan in **Appendix D**). There are two Listed buildings located within this part of the Conservation Area. To the north west of the Site is 9 – 10 Mount Pleasant which is a Grade II Listed pair of semi-detached Victorian villas. To the west of the Site the Grade II Listed water tower is a prominent feature within the local townscape.
- 3.19 In addition, the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies a high number of *'other buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution'* to the Conservation Area. These include several of the buildings within the former Friends' School to the west and the majority of properties which occupy the northern side of Mount Pleasant Road.

### **Public Rights of Way / Public Access**

- 3.20 The former Friends' School and the associated school fields are not publicly accessible. There are footpaths along either side of Mount Pleasant Road to the north.

### **Protected Trees**

- 3.21 The majority of the trees at the Site boundaries and at the Site access are covered by Tree Preservation Order ('TPO') 7/07/38 (a copy of the TPO is contained within the Tree Survey and Impact Assessment, 1047-KC\_XX-YTREE prepared by Keen Consultants). Owing to the Site's location within a Conservation Area, any works to trees not covered by a TPO will require permission from the Local Planning Authority.

## 4.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND VISIBILITY

- 4.1 The Site comprises the school fields associated with the former Friends' School. The majority of the Site comprises relatively flat, un-mowed grassland, however it is bordered by mature trees, and a block of woodland occupies the south eastern corner. There has been some disturbance in the northern part of the Site, due to the stock piling of some materials from the neighbouring construction work which is underway on the main school site. The Site and its immediate context are shown on the Aerial Photograph in **Appendix B** and on the photographs contained within **Appendix C**.
- 4.2 The majority of the Site comprises the former grass sports pitches. At the north west corner a series of terraced dwellings are under construction on the footprint of the former school gym building. The Site boundary includes the existing access road leading to the frontage with Mount Pleasant Road, as well as second strip of land to the north of the new terrace of dwellings.
- 4.3 The northern Site boundary alongside Mount Pleasant Road is defined by a mature line of Lime trees which are growing on a low mound. A hedgerow extends along the base of the tree line. This dense vegetative band forms an effective screen to the Site, filtering views, particularly when the deciduous vegetation is in leaf.
- 4.4 The northern and central parts of the eastern boundary are defined by a dense mixed hedgerow / shrubs approximately 6 – 7m in height and a line of mature trees, predominately Lime. At the south east corner of the Site is a block of established woodland. A band of mature trees line the western edge of the woodland, with the interior of the woodland comprising a mix of mature and semi-mature tree species and sparse understorey. Two tree lines extend westward from this woodland block into the Site. The northern tree line includes a couple of attractive purple beech trees. The southern band includes silver birch and is considered less valuable in landscape terms.
- 4.5 To the south, the boundary is formed by a mature double line of Lime trees. A weldmesh fence and band of native shrubs define the edge with the adjacent housing areas and open space at Greenways.
- 4.6 The western boundary is overlooked by several properties located within the residential development off The Avenue. The boundary is defined by close board fencing with the side elevation and gable ends of several properties allowing views into the Site. Further north the boundary is marked by the fenced ball courts and site hoarding which separate the Site from the adjacent construction site. Construction work is

underway to the south of the main school building to provide several more dwellings within the grounds of the former school. The school buildings and the treed area of open space at the school frontage occupy the north of the school Site. Both the tower associated with the main school building and the listed water tower to the west of the school, are visible from vantage points within the Site. There is a relatively clear east – west view of the water tower which is seen to the rear of the school buildings from the northern part of the Site.

### **Views of the Site**

- 4.7 The former Friends' School is set within the built-up area of Saffron Walden and is surrounded by residential development. As a result, the key views of the Site are from along Mount Pleasant Road, and from a limited number of vantage points on local streets which adjoin the Site boundary. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies two important views of the school buildings from along Mount Pleasant Road, however it should be noted that these are mainly focused on the main school building and not the school fields which form the Site. The viewpoints referred to below are illustrated on the Aerial Photograph contained in **Appendix B** and on the photographs in **Appendix C**.
- 4.8 Views of the Site frontage are available from the section of Mount Pleasant Road which extends alongside the northern edge of the school site. **Photograph 18** illustrates the views from the approach to the Site from the west. In this view the red brick walling which marks the frontage of the main school site, and the mature, heavily treed frontage to the school form an important component of the existing character of the view. The interior of the Site however is entirely screened from view.
- 4.9 **Photographs 19** illustrates the view from the existing access off Mount Pleasant Road. This view looks towards the new buildings which are being constructed to the east of the access, on the footprint of the now demolished gym building. From this section of the road there are views through the Site access of the existing parking areas and filtered views of the school buildings. The Site is largely screened from view behind the new terrace of buildings.
- 4.10 Views from the approach along Mount Pleasant Road from the east are screened by the existing tree line alongside the northern edge of the Site (**Photographs 10 and 11**). Again, the mature vegetation makes an important contribution to the verdant character of the adjacent street scene. In winter, when the deciduous vegetation is out of leaf, there will be filtered views into the Site from this section of the road.

- 4.11 There are views from several properties on Mount Pleasant Road which face the northern Site boundary. From the front curtilage of these properties there will be views of the Site boundary vegetation, although these will be restricted in places by vegetation within the front gardens. Similarly, views from ground floor windows will be relatively limited, although there will be more open views from upper floor windows. Again, these will be limited when the existing Site boundary vegetation is in leaf, with filtered views of the Site available in winter.
- 4.12 In views from Debden Road, the Site is screened by existing built form in the developed part of the school site and housing at Water Tower Place (**Photograph 17**).
- 4.13 There are some views available from the adjacent development off The Avenue to the west. There are views from the public realm at Pavilion Way (**Photograph 16**). In this view the Site is screened by the existing fence, however the vegetation and dwellings at, and adjacent to, the Site's eastern boundary are visible above the fence as are views of the ongoing construction work in the school site. Views from within Linden Square and Tilia Court are prevented by existing development alongside the Site boundary (**Photograph 15**). There are open views from the side elevation and gable end of several properties located alongside the western edge of the Site (reciprocal view in **Photograph 05**). There will also be some oblique views from upper floor windows of several properties located within these courtyards.
- 4.14 There are views of the vegetation at the southern Site boundary from the open space at Greenways (**Photograph 14**). There will be some oblique views from properties on Greenways, however again these will be of the dense boundary vegetation. Views from the rear of properties to the south west are of the woodland in the south east corner of the Site. There are framed views of the eastern boundary vegetation from Chichester Road and Old Mill Road (**Photographs 12 and 13**).

### **Townscape Quality, Value and Sensitivity**

- 4.15 The Site lies within a predominately residential area and is surrounded by built development of varying townscape quality and sensitivity. The Site itself, owing to its former use as school playing fields has a different character to the surrounding housing. The following section considers the townscape quality, value and sensitivity to residential development of both the former Friends' School and the different character areas which enclose it.

### Former Friends' School and School Fields

- 4.16 The western part of the former Friends' School is dominated by the large-scale Victorian School building which forms the main part of the school. A planning application for conversion of the school building to apartments, the demolition of several ancillary school buildings and the construction of a number of residential dwellings in the school grounds has been granted planning consent. The main school building is set back from the road behind a circular green which contains numerous established trees which filter views of the school buildings from Mount Pleasant Road. Despite the filtering effect of vegetation, the principal school façade is an imposing presence on Mount Pleasant Road. In addition, the brick walls and piers (now in need of some refurbishment) and the mature vegetation, which mark the school frontage, make an important contribution to the verdant character of the adjacent Conservation Area at this point. To the rear of the main buildings the existing Lime avenue is an important local feature, which continues beyond the school curtilage within the recent development at The Avenue.
- 4.17 To the east of the school building the former gym building has been demolished and is being redeveloped for two terraces of houses. To the south of the school construction work is also underway to provide several more dwellings within the school grounds.
- 4.18 The school fields are located to the east of the main building and comprise the Site. They provide an undeveloped break within what is otherwise a largely built-up residential area. This openness can largely be perceived from Mount Pleasant Road in heavily filtered views through the existing Lime trees at the boundary, although the pitches are effectively screened by the embankment and hedging at the edge of the Site. The school fields are bordered by mature tree lines and an area of woodland which serve to provide separation between the school and the surrounding urban area and add to the generally vegetated character of this part of Saffron Walden.
- 4.19 The school lies entirely within the Saffron Walden Conservation Area. It is in private ownership and is not publicly accessible. The main school buildings and the open space and vegetation at the frontage with Mount Pleasant Road make an important contribution to the character and setting of the road and the Conservation Area. Similarly, the established vegetation at the boundaries of the school is an important component of the wider townscape. These parts of the school are considered to be of **high** townscape quality, value and sensitivity. The remainder of the school site, including the buildings and land to the rear of the main school building and the school fields have less inherent

townscape quality (although the Lime avenue to the rear of the school is a highly valuable and sensitive feature) and make a lower contribution to the character of the wider area. Whilst these areas are located within the Conservation Area they are considered less sensitive to a well-conceived residential development which would be closely related to the neighbouring residential areas which border the Site. The Site is assessed as being of **medium** townscape quality, value and sensitivity.

#### Mount Pleasant Road

- 4.20 Beyond the former school site, Mount Pleasant Road is characterised by a series of Victorian villas and some modern detached properties. It has an eclectic vernacular, which adds to the interest and character of the route. Properties are generally located in large plots, set back from the road in mature gardens which add to the vegetated character of the street. This area lies within the Conservation Area and is assessed as **high** townscape quality, value and sensitivity.

#### Debden Road

- 4.21 Debden Road is a principal approach into the town. It is a busy distributor road and is characterised by predominately two storey detached and semi-detached development. Age tenure is varied with some Victorian properties interspersed with more recent development. The Listed water tower is a dominant feature to the east of the road, with the gable ends of the contemporary development at Water Tower Place visible above the hedgerow which marks the eastern edge of the carriageway. This area is considered to be of **medium** townscape quality, value and sensitivity.

#### The Avenue

- 4.22 The Avenue is a high quality, modern development which lies alongside the western Site boundary. It is set around a mature avenue of Lime trees which lead from the rear of the former Friends' School, and lend the development an established, leafy character despite its recent construction. In townscape terms this area is considered to be of **medium to high** quality and value, and **medium** sensitivity to other residential development of a similar scale and density.

#### Late Twentieth Century Estate Development

To the south and east of the Site the townscape is characterised by late twentieth century estate development. This area is generally pleasant in townscape terms however not particularly distinguished. It is considered to be of **medium** townscape quality and value, and to have a **medium to low** sensitivity to residential development of a similar scale.

## 5.0 ABILITY OF THE SITE TO ACCOMMODATE THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 The following section assesses the ability of the Site to accommodate the proposed development with associated infrastructure, and then considers potential effects on the character of the Site and the neighbouring townscape and visual amenity.
- 5.2 The proposals form part of a full planning application for 91 new dwellings with associated infrastructure and public open space and a sports facility.
- 5.3 A Site Layout Plan which shows how the new development will be delivered at the Site is contained in **Appendix F**. The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement ('DAS') which describes the character and quality of the proposals. Elevational drawings have also been prepared for the buildings which form part of the application documentation.
- 5.4 The proposals have been informed by a suite of technical surveys and assessments. A Heritage and Archaeology Statement (ACD Environmental) has been prepared which considers the impact of the proposals on the conservation area and the listed and locally listed buildings which lie in proximity to the Site.

### Development Proposals

- 5.5 The following townscape and layout principles have been adopted by the proposed development:

Vehicular access will be from the existing access point on Mount Pleasant Road;

The existing vegetation at the Site boundaries and the vast majority of trees located within the Site will be retained and protected. A Landscape Management Plan could form a condition of a planning consent and this would provide prescriptions and objectives for the management of the onsite vegetation for the benefit of health, longevity, bio-diversity and visual amenity;

The proposed development will occupy the northern and central part of the Site;

A sports facility will be provided in the southern part of the Site. This will include a single storey clubhouse building and associated parking and grassed cricket and football pitches;

A native hedgerow will be planted alongside the western Site boundary with dwellings on The Avenue;

Housing in the western part of the Site will overlook an area of open space and the existing basketball court and MUGA in the adjacent school site. The open space is proposed to be planted with fruiting trees;

The new homes will be typically 2 stories in height, with some 2.5 storey dwellings with additional accommodation in the roof space;

The proposed development will have a contemporary aesthetic which references vernacular features, similar to housing consented on the neighbouring school site and within The Avenue. It will include red multi-brick, timber boarding, timber shingles and cladding;

The single story clubhouse building will have a green roof;

The existing woodland in the south east corner will be retained and can be enhanced through improved management. Public access to the woodland can be created to provide a resource for the new and neighbouring residents.

- 5.6 The key townscape and visual effects are summarised in the tables in **Appendix G** and described in the relevant section below.

### **Scale and Layout**

- 5.7 The proposals are for a medium density residential development, predominately 2 stories in height with occasional 2.5 storey elements. The new buildings will be located in the northern and central part of the Site, with the southern part of the Site laid out as playing fields.
- 5.8 The housing in the northern part of the Site will be located to the rear of the adjacent 2 storey terraces in the school site which are currently under construction. The new homes will be similar in scale and will be subservient to the much larger Friends' School building to the west. Housing at the northern edge of the Site will be set back from the mature boundary frontage vegetation which will largely screen the new dwellings from Mount Pleasant Road and retain the treed character of this section of highway.



- 5.9 The proposed scale of the development will be consistent with the domestic character of the neighbouring residential area, including The Avenue, the recent homes on the former school site to the west and neighbouring housing on Mount Pleasant Road.
- 5.10 The proposed new homes will be accessed off the existing access drive which leads from the frontage to the school. The proposal will form an extension to the residential development on the former school site, which in turn connects to the housing area on The Avenue to the south west along the retained Lime avenue. Housing in the western part of the Site will overlook an area of open space which connects to the retained basketball court / MUGA within the school site.
- 5.11 The new housing will be orientated to address the landscape features on the perimeter of the Site. To the south of the development a crescent of new homes will overlook the proposed playing fields and cricket pitch.

### **Architectural Character**

- 5.12 The proposals are for a high-quality development. It will be contemporary in style with simple detailing which references local vernacular materials. It will be complementary in style to the already approved homes on the school site and on The Avenue.
- 5.13 The detailed proposals indicate that the scheme will be predominately red multi-brick, with timber boarding, timber shingles and cladding. The proposed club house will be single storey with a green roof.

### **Landscape Features**

- 5.14 A tree survey has been undertaken as part of the supporting technical information for the planning application (Ref: 1047-KC-XX-YTREE, Keen Consultants). The report and the associated plan describe the health and quality of the onsite trees and map the extent of the root protection areas for individual and groups of trees. The tree survey identifies that a high percentage of the onsite trees are Category B and therefore of moderate quality. There are a smaller number of Category C (low quality) trees and no Grade A (high quality) trees. The existing trees form mature landscape features at the periphery of the Site and collectively make a high contribution to the character and quality of the adjacent residential areas, particularly the Site frontage with Mount Pleasant Road.
- 5.15 The proposed development will retain and protect all of the significant trees and groups of trees on the Site. A small number of low-quality trees will be removed to accommodate the playing pitches. However, these are not visually important specimens and their removal can be

compensated for by new tree planting within areas of open space, the playing fields and the proposed built environment. Overall, there will be an increase in tree cover and species composition across the Site.

- 5.16 A landscape management plan can be conditioned as part of a future planning consent. This document would set out the objectives and management prescriptions for the existing and proposed on-site vegetation. There is an opportunity to improve the management of the existing woodland area in the south east corner of the Site, in order to enhance the landscape and bio-diversity value of the woodland and to provide public access and a recreational resource for the local community.

### **Public Access**

- 5.17 The former school fields are in private ownership and there is currently no public access on to the Site. The proposed residential development will provide an area of formal playing fields pitches in the southern part of the Site which will be available for community and public use. A new clubhouse building is proposed to serve the playing field and could provide a focus for local clubs. In addition, development will facilitate public access to the open spaces within the Site.

### **Visual effects**

- 5.18 The proposals will be visible to varying degrees from the section of Mount Pleasant Road in proximity to the Site boundary. From the approach from the west the existing treed frontage to the Site contributes to the leafy character which is a feature of the Conservation Area. Traveling eastward there are filtered views of the main school frontage, particularly where there are breaks in the vegetation at the access points to the school.
- 5.19 The proposed access to the Site will be visible from a section of Mount Pleasant Road, however it occupies the footprint of the existing access and there will be little change in the character of the view. To the left of the access point are the terrace of houses which occupy the former gym building and these effectively screen views to the Site in views along the Site access.
- 5.20 There will be filtered views of development at the Site from the section of Mount Pleasant Road which borders the Site. In summer, views of the new housing will be effectively screened by the density of tree cover and understorey at the Site boundary. However, in winter the filtering effect of vegetation will be reduced and there will be some intervisibility with housing at the northern edge of the Site. Whilst there will be a

change in the character of this view as the filtered views of housing replaces filtered views of the former school fields, given the residential context of the Site housing will not appear incongruous. The new homes will be well designed and set back from the highway behind an access road and front garden landscaping. There will be similar views available from several properties which sit opposite the northern Site boundary although these will be further screened / filtered by existing garden vegetation.

- 5.21 Development at the Site will not be visible from the approach along Debden Road to the west. Similarly, the majority of views from The Avenue are screened by intervening housing. Housing at the Site will be visible in a framed view along Pavilion Way over the existing fence at the end of the private driveway. The proposed housing will be set back from this boundary beyond the proposed carpark to serve the playing fields. The new homes will be of similar design and detailing to those in The Avenue, and while there will be some loss in the openness of the existing view the new homes will appear as a continuation of the surrounding residential area.
- 5.22 The new playing fields will be visible from the side elevation and gable ends of several properties which border the Site at Linden Square and Tilia Court. There will also be some oblique views towards the proposed clubhouse and new homes in the central part of the Site.
- 5.23 The proposed new homes will be set back from the southern edge of the Site and will be screened in views from the open space at Greenways and from several properties which front onto it by the dense boundary vegetation. There may be some intervisibility with the proposed playing fields and the edge of housing in winter months, but these will be limited and heavily filtered.
- 5.24 There are framed views of the boundary vegetation available from Old Mill Road and Chichester Road to the east of the Site and there will be some intervisibility with the upper parts of dwellings on the eastern edge of the Site. These will be heavily filtered in summer months by the existing tree cover, but there will be greater intervisibility when the vegetation is out of leaf.

### **Townscape Effects**

- 5.1 The former Friends' School and its associated school fields lie within the Saffron Walden Conservation Area. As described in the preceding sections, the school buildings and the vegetated nature of the school boundaries do contribute to the character of the adjoining townscape of the conservation area. The open space at the frontage of the school

and the school fields also make some contribution to the setting of the main school building, although the redevelopment of the former gym building means that the Site is separated from the school buildings by more recent residential housing. Due to the dense vegetation on the northern edge of the Site, the openness of the Site is not readily discernible from the neighbouring Mount Pleasant Road.

- 5.2 A separate Heritage and Archaeology Statement (ACD Heritage) considers the impact of the proposed development on the value and heritage setting of the conservation area, the locally listed school buildings and locally listed and Grade II listed heritage assets on Mount Pleasant Road. This assessment concluded as follows:

*'It is assessed that the site has no intrinsic heritage interest and, given screening vegetation on its boundary, does not enhance the residential parts of the conservation area to the north.'*

*'The site's openness does provide limited enhancement to the former school to the west, albeit this area is in the process of changing due to its redevelopment. Very limited, less than substantial harm to the appearance and character of the conservation area is consequently assessed.'*

*'Although development of the site may cause very limited harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area, a small number of listed buildings which lie nearby would not be affected by the proposals. The same is true of almost all nearby locally listed buildings, including most facing towards the site north of Mount Pleasant Road. Very limited harm to the locally listed former school to the west, a non-designated heritage asset, would result from the proposed change.'*

- 5.3 The proposals will result in the partial development of the former school fields. The following section considers the impact of development on the character and setting of the surrounding townscape.
- 5.4 The proposed access to the new development will be from the existing access point on Mount Pleasant Road and will be unaffected by the proposals. Existing vegetation either side of the entrance will be unaffected. The new homes will be set to the rear of the redeveloped gym building and the repurposed swimming pool which now form part of the residential development on the school site. The buildings will not intrude on views to the locally listed school frontage along the Site access.
- 5.5 The proposals will retain the existing band of mature trees at the Site frontage with Mount Pleasant Road. These features will benefit from

improved management, enhancing the health and visual amenity of this feature. The new homes will be set back from the Mount Pleasant Road frontage and orientated to positively address the frontage tree line. Due to the density of the vegetation on the Mount Pleasant Road boundary there will be very limited intervisibility with the new homes, with filtered views only in winter when the vegetation is out of leaf. The elevations of the new development frontage show that the new homes will be detached, 2 storey and of attractive design.

- 5.6 The new dwellings will occupy an area identified as Important Open Space in the Conservation Area Appraisal. However, as set out in the accompanying Heritage Statement the Site in its current form has no intrinsic heritage interest and is not characteristic of the conservation area which comprises late 19<sup>th</sup> century and later houses and the Friends' School. Its open character does play some role in providing a setting to the adjacent school building. However, this area is undergoing change to provide a residential development, with the conversion of several buildings including the gym building which lies between the Site and the main school building. Due to the visual containment of the Site, its openness makes a much more limited contribution to the setting of Mount Pleasant Road. Where filtered views of the new homes are available in winter, the proposals will present an attractive and well considered frontage which will be consistent with the scale and pattern of residential development in the local area.
- 5.7 The existing mature vegetation at the Site frontage does contribute to the character of the adjacent highway and the conservation area. However, this will remain and the verdant setting of this section of the Conservation Area will be unaffected.
- 5.8 In terms of the wider townscape, the Site is well contained from the adjoining residential area to the south and east, with existing housing bordering much of the Site boundaries. The well vegetated boundaries contribute to the overall tree cover within the area and can be appreciated from a small number of public vantage points within the adjacent residential area. The proposed development will not impact on this key characteristic and the character of these residential areas will remain largely unaffected.
- 5.9 The existing housing area at The Avenue overlooks the south western edge of the Site. This area has a high quality modern vernacular, however much of the development adjacent to the Site is contained within courtyards, with the built form orientated so that views of the Site from the public realm are limited. Very little development is proposed adjacent to the boundary with The Avenue, with housing set back to the rear of the proposed playing pitches and the single storey clubhouse.

Accordingly, there will be little impact on the neighbouring townscape to the west and the proposed new houses will form part of a wider development which is complementary in style and appearance to housing on The Avenue, which is generally considered a good example of a contemporary housing development.

### **Compliance with Townscape Design Policy**

- 5.10 The proposals are for residential development on the school fields at the former Friends' School, Saffron Walden. As set out above, the proposed development will respect the key features and characteristics of the Saffron Walden Conservation Area and the neighbouring townscape. In design terms, the proposals are compatible with the neighbouring townscape in the following ways:

Development will be consistent with the scale and grain of the neighbouring residential areas;

The proposals will utilise high quality materials;

The proposals will maintain the existing vegetated character along Mount Pleasant Road;

The proposals will respect the setting of the adjacent school buildings and the wider conservation area;

The proposals safeguard the existing environmental features, including mature trees and woodland;

The proposals provide open spaces and community facilities which will be a benefit to existing and new residents; and

The proposals respect the amenity of neighbouring properties.

- 5.11 The impact of the development on the adjacent conservation area and Listed Building is considered in a separate Heritage Statement, however in townscape terms the proposals will respect the existing character along Mount Pleasant Road. The proposals will impact on an area identified as Important Open Space. However, as noted above this area makes limited contribution to the openness of the adjacent conservation area due to the boundary tree cover. The proposals are for a well-considered scheme which will be screened from Mount Pleasant Road when the vegetation is in leaf. When filtered views are available the new buildings will not appear incongruous or out of place in this location. The proposals will not impact on the important views identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal which are focused on the main school building.

5.12 Accordingly, development can be delivered at the Site which is compatible with the townscape and design policies as set out in Section 2.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Site occupies land within the former Friends' School and comprises the former school fields. The Site is bound to the north by Mount Pleasant Road. To the north west are the main school buildings, ball courts and ancillary buildings and open spaces associated with the former school, which is in the process of being converted / redeveloped for residential development. To the south west is the contemporary housing area located off The Avenue. To the south and east is estate development from the late twentieth century.
- 6.2 The proposals form part of a full planning application for 91 new dwellings with associated infrastructure and public open space and a sports facility.
- 6.3 Uttlesford District Council has prepared the Saffron Walden Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals. The appraisal identifies the semi-circular green at the front of the former Friends' School and the northern part of the school fields as Important Open Space in an area otherwise characterised by tight urban form. It also notes that the trees within the curtilage of the former Friends' School make the most significant contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 6.4 The former Friends' School is set within the built-up area of Saffron Walden and is surrounded by residential development. The visual appraisal set out in Section 4 identified that the key views of the Site are from along Mount Pleasant Road, and from a limited number of vantage points on local streets which adjoin the Site boundary. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies two important views of the school buildings from along Mount Pleasant Road, however these are mainly focused on the main school building and not the former school fields which form the Site.
- 6.5 The Site lies within a predominately residential area and is surrounded by built development of varying townscape quality and sensitivity. The Site itself, owing to its former use as playing fields has a different character to the surrounding housing. The former Friends' School and Mount Pleasant Road lie entirely within the Saffron Walden Conservation Area. This appraisal assessed the main school buildings and the open space and vegetation at the frontage with Mount Pleasant Road as making an important contribution to the character and setting of the road and the Conservation Area. Similarly, the established vegetation at the Site boundaries is an important component of the wider townscape. These parts of the school are assessed as being of high townscape quality, value and sensitivity. The remainder of the school site, including the

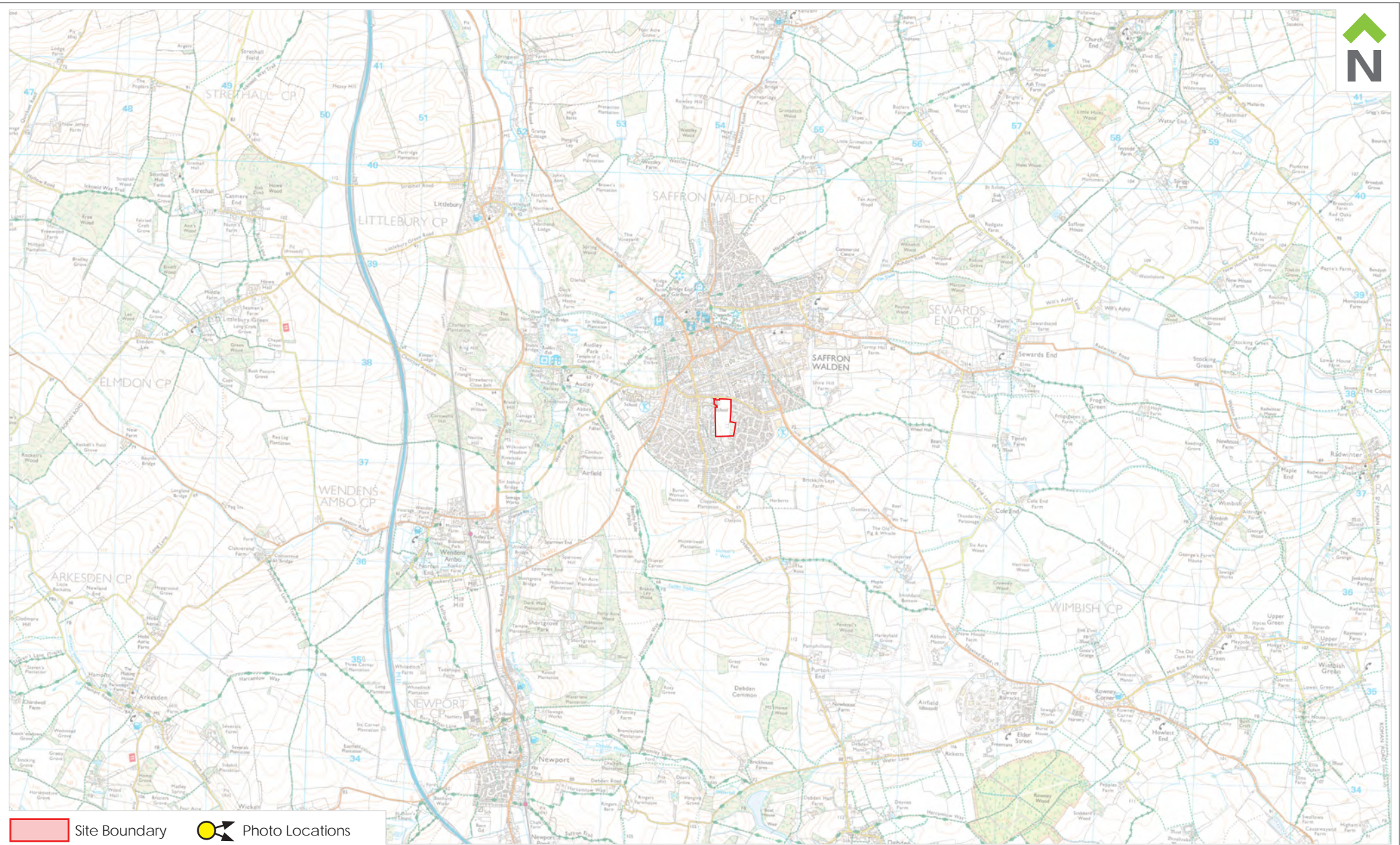


buildings and land to the rear of the main school building and the school fields have less inherent townscape quality (although the Lime avenue to the rear of the school is a highly valuable and sensitive feature) and make a lower contribution to the character of the wider area. Whilst these areas are located within the Conservation Area they are considered less sensitive to a well-conceived residential development which would be closely related to the neighbouring residential areas which border the Site.

- 6.6 The proposals are for a high-quality development. It will be contemporary in style with simple detailing which references local vernacular materials. It will be complementary in style to the approved homes on the school site and on The Avenue.
- 6.7 The proposals will retain the existing band of mature trees at the Site frontage with Mount Pleasant Road. The new homes will be set back from the Mount Pleasant frontage and orientated to positively address the frontage tree line. Due to the density of the vegetation on the Mount Pleasant boundary there will be very limited intervisibility with the new homes, with filtered views in winter when the vegetation is out of leaf. The elevations of the new development frontage shows that the new homes will be detached, 2 storey and of attractive design.
- 6.8 The new dwellings will occupy an area identified as Important Open Space in the Conservation Area Appraisal. However, as set out in the accompanying Heritage Statement the Site in its current form has no intrinsic heritage interest and is not characteristic of the conservation area which comprises late 19th century and later houses and the Friends' School. Its open character does play some role in providing a setting to the adjacent school building. However, this area is undergoing change to provide a residential development, with the conversion of several buildings and redevelopment of the former gym building which lies between the Site and the main school building. Due to the visual containment of the Site, its openness makes a much more limited contribution to the setting of Mount Pleasant Road. Where filtered views of the new homes are available in winter, the proposals will present an attractive and well considered frontage which will be consistent with the scale and pattern of residential development in the local area.
- 6.9 In terms of the wider townscape this is generally less sensitive to residential development at the Site, which will be well contained in the majority of cases. Accordingly, the proposals will have limited impact on the character of the townscape and views from the residential areas to the west, south or east of the Site.

## **Appendix A**

Location Plan



Dixies Barns, High Street,  
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647  
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk  
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

<b>Project</b>	Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden
<b>Drawing Title</b>	Site Location Plan
<b>Client</b>	Chase New Homes

<b>Date</b>	June 2024	<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/4017/102
<b>Scale @ A4</b>	NTS	<b>Rev</b>	A
<b>Drawn</b>	JP	<b>Checked</b>	CA

## **Appendix B**

Aerial Photograph  
(Showing photo locations)





 Site Boundary       Photo Locations



Dixies Barns, High Street,  
Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT

t 01462 743647  
e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk  
w csaenvironmental.co.uk

Project	Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden
Drawing Title	Aerial Photograph
Client	Chase New Homes

Date June 2024

Drawing No. CSA/4017/103

Scale @ A4 NTS

Rev A

Drawn JP

Checked CA

## **Appendix C**

Photosheets



Dwellings off Peaselands Road



Contextual Photograph 1 View within Site to north east of former school buildings looking east

Former school buildings

New dwellings under construction



Contextual Photograph 2 View within Site to north east of former school buildings looking west

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/4017/107	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> June 2024		
<b>Client</b> Chase New Homes	<b>Drawn</b> JP	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> -	



New dwellings under construction

Former school buildings



Contextual Photograph 3 View within Site to south-east of former school buildings looking west

Dwellings on Linden Square

New dwellings under construction



Contextual Photograph 4 View within Site to south-east of former school buildings looking south

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
Project	Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	Drawing No. CSA/4017/107		
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date June 2024		
Client	Chase New Homes	Drawn JP	Checked CA	Rev -





**Contextual Photograph 5** View from south-eastern part of Site looking west



Dwellings on Linden Square

**Contextual Photograph 6** View within Site to east of Pavilion Way looking south

	Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
	<b>Project</b> Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/4017/107	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets	<b>Date</b> June 2024		
<b>Client</b> Chase New Homes	<b>Drawn</b> JP	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> -





**Contextual Photograph 7** View within Site to east of Pavilion Way looking north



**Contextual Photograph 8** View from southern end of entrance drive within Site looking east

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/4017/107	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> June 2024		
<b>Client</b> Chase New Homes	<b>Drawn</b> JP	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> -	



New dwellings under construction

Former school buildings



Photograph 9 View from northern end of entrance drive

Visualisation Type 1  
 Cylindrical projection  
 48% @ A3, 96% @ A1  
 04.06.2024, 08:26  
 Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 HfoV 80°  
 Looking direction: SE

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk	
Project	Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	Drawing No.	CSA/4017/107
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	June 2024
Client	Chase New Homes	Drawn	JP
		Checked	CA
		Rev	-





**Photograph 10**

View from Mount Pleasant Road north of Site

Visualisation Type 1  
 Planar projection  
 75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
 04.06.2024, 08:33  
 Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 HfoV 40°  
 Looking direction: W

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/4017/107	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> June 2024		
<b>Client</b> Chase New Homes	<b>Drawn</b> JP	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> -	





**Photograph 11**

View from Mount Pleasant Road north east of Site

Visualisation Type 1  
 Planar projection  
 75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
 04.06.2024, 08:35  
 Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 HfoV 40°  
 Looking direction: W

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/4017/107	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> June 2024		
<b>Client</b> Chase New Homes	<b>Drawn</b> JP	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> -	





**Photograph 12**

View from Old Mill Road

Visualisation Type 1  
 Planar projection  
 75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
 04.06.2024, 09:06  
 Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 HfoV 40°  
 Looking direction: W

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/4017/107	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> June 2024		
<b>Client</b> Chase New Homes	<b>Drawn</b> JP	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> -	





### Photograph 13

View from Chichester Road

Visualisation Type 1  
 Planar projection  
 75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
 04.06.2024, 09:09  
 Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 HfoV 40°  
 Looking direction: W



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 Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT  
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Project	Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	Drawing No.	CSA/4017/107		
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	June 2024		
Client	Chase New Homes	Drawn	JP	Checked	CA
		Rev	-		



Site extends full width of view



Panorama 14 For context only



Photograph 14

View from Greenways

Visualisation Type 1  
Planar projection  
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
04.06.2024, 09:14  
Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
HfoV 40°  
Looking direction: N

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
Project	Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	Drawing No.	CSA/4017/107	
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	June 2024	
Client	Chase New Homes	Drawn	JP	Checked CA Rev -





**Photograph 15**

View from Linden Square at junction with Tilia Court

Visualisation Type 1  
 Planar projection  
 75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
 04.06.2024, 08:53  
 Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 HfoV 40°  
 Looking direction: E

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/4017/107	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> June 2024		
<b>Client</b> Chase New Homes	<b>Drawn</b> JP	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> -	



Site extends full width of view



Panorama 16 For context only



Photograph 16

View from Linden Square at junction with Pavilion Way

Visualisation Type 1  
 Planar projection  
 75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
 04.06.2024, 08:50  
 Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 HfoV 40°  
 Looking direction: E



Dixies Barns, High Street,  
 Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT  
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Project	Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	Drawing No.	CSA/4017/107		
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	June 2024		
Client	Chase New Homes	Drawn	JP	Checked	CA
		Rev	-		



← Site extends full width of view →



Panorama 17 For context only



### Photograph 17

View from Debden Road at junction with Crawley Hobbs Close

Visualisation Type 1  
Planar projection  
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
04.06.2024, 08:44  
Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
HfoV 40°  
Looking direction: E



Dixies Barns, High Street,  
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Project	Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	Drawing No.	CSA/4017/107		
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	June 2024		
Client	Chase New Homes	Drawn	JP	Checked	CA
		Rev	-		





**Photograph 18**

View from Mount Pleasant Road west of Site

Visualisation Type 1  
 Planar projection  
 75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
 04.06.2024, 08:41  
 Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 HfoV 40°  
 Looking direction: E

		Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk		
		<b>Project</b> Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	<b>Drawing No.</b> CSA/4017/107	
<b>Drawing Title</b> Photosheets		<b>Date</b> June 2024		
<b>Client</b> Chase New Homes	<b>Drawn</b> JP	<b>Checked</b> CA	<b>Rev</b> -	



← Site extends full width of view →



Panorama 19 For context only



Photograph 19

View from Mount Pleasant Road immediately north west of Site

Visualisation Type 1  
 Planar projection  
 75% @ A3, 150% @ A1  
 04.06.2024, 08:41  
 Canon 2000D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm  
 HfoV 40°  
 Looking direction: SE



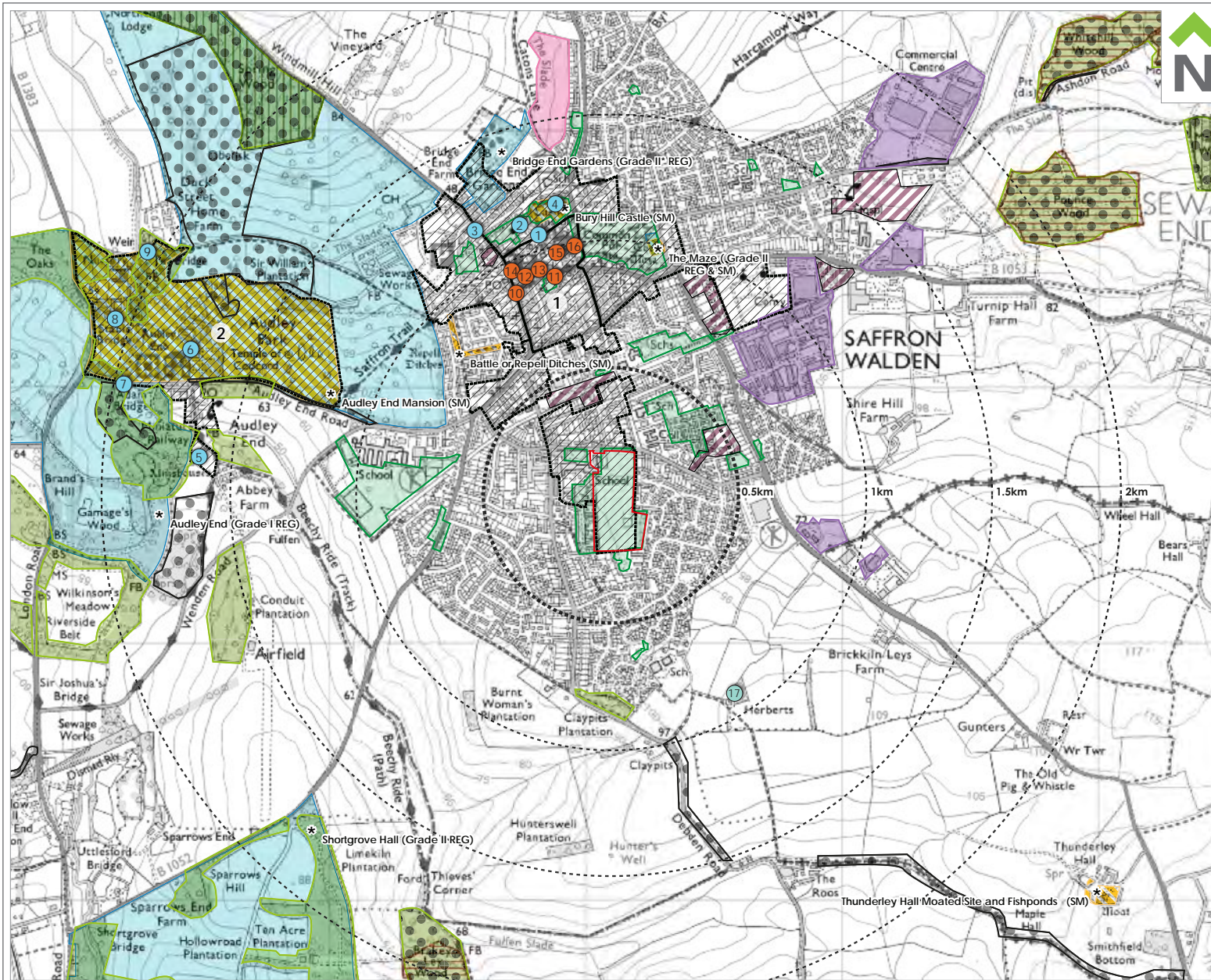
Dixies Barns, High Street,  
 Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT  
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 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk  
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Project	Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden	Drawing No.	CSA/4017/107
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	June 2024
Client	Chase New Homes	Drawn	JP
		Checked	CA
		Rev	-



## **Appendix D**

MAGIC map and Heritage Information



- Site Boundary
- Registered Parks and Gardens (REG)
- Scheduled Monuments (SM)
- Ancient Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland
- Conservation Areas
  1. Saffron Walden
  2. Audley End
- Protected Open Space - playing fields, recreation grounds, environmental value (LC1, ENV3)
- Important Woodland (ENV7/ENV8)
- Safeguarded Employment Land (SW6)
- Proposed Residential Land (SW3)
- Land West of Little Walden Road (SW7)
- County Wildlife Sites (ENV7)
- X Grade I Listed Buildings & Structures within extent
  1. Group of 3: 17, Market Hill; Nos. 29 & 31, Church Street; Nos. 25 & 27, Church Street.
  2. Church of St Mary the Virgin
  3. Youth Hostel
  4. Walden Castle
  5. Saint Mark's College
  6. Audley End House
  7. Bridge over the River Cam
  8. Audley End Stables
  9. Tea House and Bridge
- X Grade II\* Listed Buildings & Structures within 1km
  10. No. 53 and attached walls
  11. Jubilee House
  12. 17, 19 & 21, King Street
  13. 13A and 15, King Street
  14. Cross Keys Hotel
  15. Barclays Bank
  16. The Priory
- X Grade II Listed Buildings & Structures within 1km (Outside Conservation Areas)
  17. Barn at Herberts Farm



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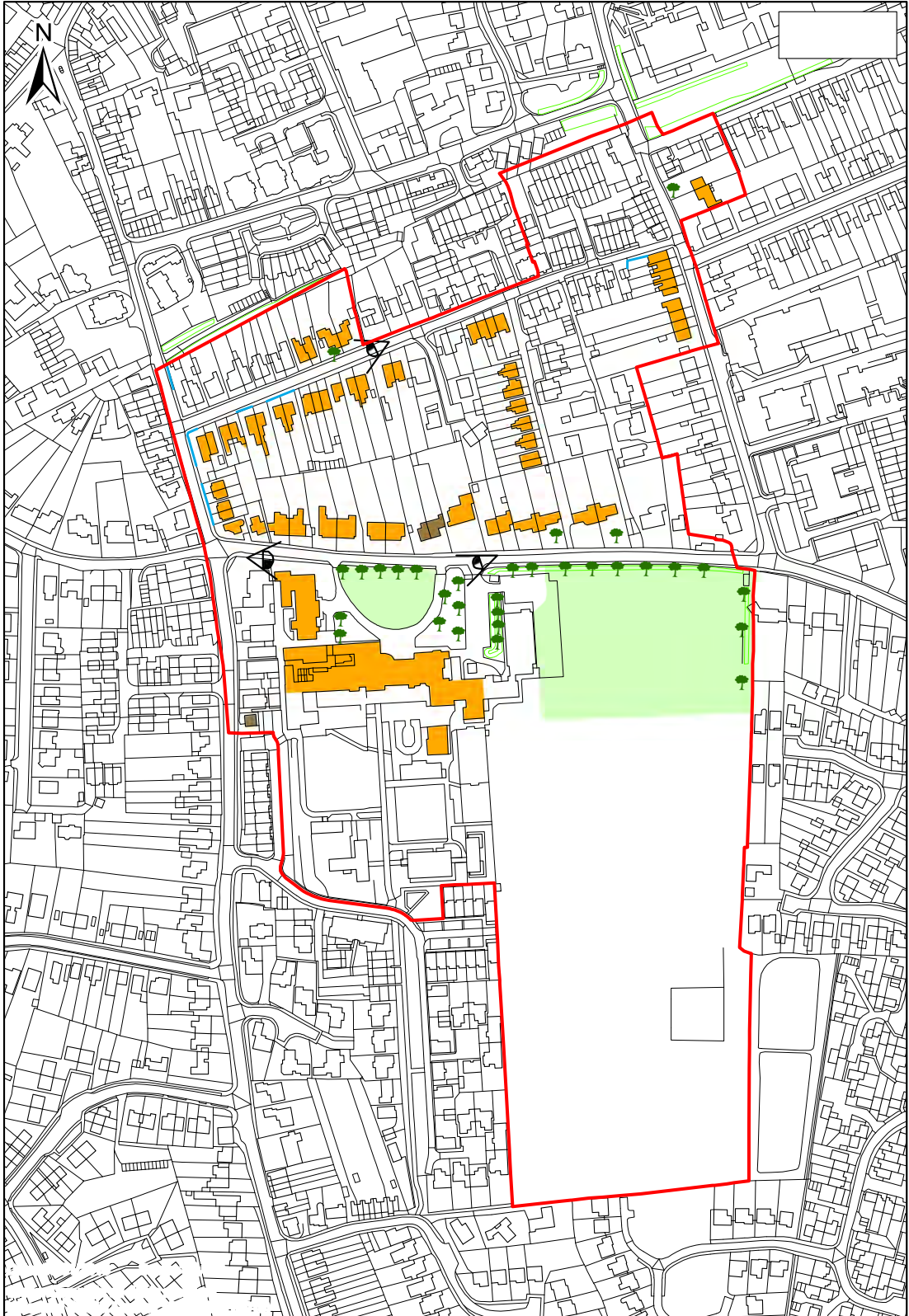
<b>Project</b>	Land at the Former Friends' School Fields, Saffron Walden
<b>Drawing Title</b>	MAGIC Map Extract & Heritage Plan
<b>Client</b>	Chase New Homes

<b>Date</b>	June 2024	<b>Drawing No.</b>	CSA/4017/105
<b>Scale @ A4</b>	NTS	<b>Rev</b>	A
<b>Drawn</b>	JP	<b>Checked</b>	CA

## Appendix E

Extract from the Saffron Walden Conservation Area Appraisal,  
Fig. 14 Management Plan Zone 6



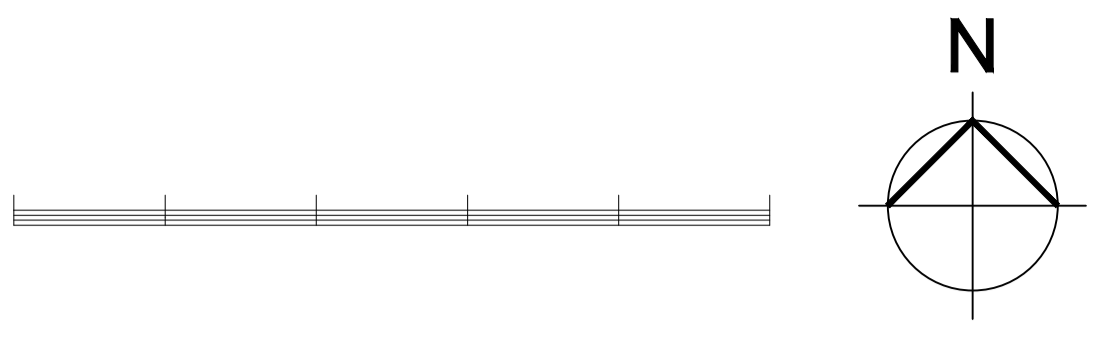




## **Appendix F**

Proposed Site Plan







## **Appendix G**

Methodology and Summary Townscape and Visual Effects

## METHODOLOGY FOR LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- M1 In landscape and visual impact assessment, a distinction is normally drawn between *landscape/townscape effects* (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape (or townscape), irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and *visual effects* (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape, principally from public rights of way and areas with public access, but also private views from residential properties). Thus, a development may have extensive landscape effects but few visual effects if, for example, there are no properties or public viewpoints nearby. Or alternatively, few landscape effects but substantial visual effects if, for example, the landscape is already degraded or the development is not out of character with it, but can clearly be seen from many residential properties and/or public areas.
- M2 The assessment of landscape & visual effects is less amenable to scientific or statistical analysis than some environmental topics and inherently contains an element of subjectivity. However, the assessment should still be undertaken in a logical, consistent and rigorous manner, based on experience and judgement, and any conclusions should be able to demonstrate a clear rationale. To this end, various guidelines have been published, the most relevant of which, for assessments of the effects of a development, rather than of the character or quality of the landscape itself, form the basis of the assessment and are as follows:

'Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment', produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Institute (GLVIA 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2013); and

'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', October 2014 (Christine Tudor, Natural England) to which reference is also made. This stresses the need for a holistic assessment of landscape character, including physical, biological and social factors.

'Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations', Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21

### LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

- M3 Landscape/townscape quality is a subjective judgement based on the condition and characteristics of a landscape/townscape. It will often be informed by national, regional or local designations made upon it in respect of its quality e.g. National Landscapes (formerly AONBs). Sensitivity relates to the inherent value placed on a landscape / townscape and the ability of that landscape/townscape to accommodate change.

Landscape sensitivity can vary with:

- (i) *existing land uses;*
- (ii) *the pattern and scale of the landscape;*
- (iii) *visual enclosure/openness of views, and distribution of visual receptors;*
- (iv) *susceptibility to change;*
- (v) *the scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape; and*
- (vi) *the condition and value placed on the landscape.*

- M4 The concept of landscape/townscape value is considered in order to avoid consideration only of how scenically attractive an area may be, and thus to avoid undervaluing areas of strong character but little scenic beauty. In the process of making this assessment, the following factors, among others, are considered with relevance to the site in question: landscape quality (condition), scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreation value, perceptual aspects and associations.
- M5 Nationally valued landscapes are recognised by designation, such as National Parks and National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) which have particular planning policies applied to them. Nationally valued townscapes are typically those covered by a Conservation Area or similar designation. Paragraph 174 of the current NPPF outlines that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes '*...in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*'.
- M6 There is a strong inter-relationship between landscape/townscape quality, value and sensitivity as high quality/value landscapes/townscapes usually have a low ability to accommodate change.
- M7 For the purpose of our assessment, landscape/townscape quality, value and sensitivity is assessed using the criteria in Tables LE1 and LE2. Typically, landscapes/townscapes which carry a quality designation and which are otherwise attractive or unspoilt will in general be more sensitive, while those which are less attractive or already affected by significant visual detractors and disturbance will be generally less sensitive.
- M8 The magnitude of change is the scale, extent and duration of change to a landscape arising from the proposed development and was assessed using the criteria in Table LE3.
- M9 Landscape/townscape effects were assessed in terms of the interaction between the magnitude of the change brought about by the development and the quality, value & sensitivity of the landscape resource affected. The landscape/townscape effects can be either beneficial, adverse or neutral. Landscape effects can be direct (i.e. impact on physical features, e.g. landform, vegetation, watercourses etc.), or indirect (i.e. impact on landscape character as a result of the introduction of new elements within the landscape). Direct visual effects result from changes to existing views.
- M10 In this way, landscapes/townscapes of the highest sensitivity, when subjected to a high magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to give rise to 'substantial' landscape/townscape effects which can be either adverse or beneficial. Conversely, landscapes of low sensitivity, when subjected to a low magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to give rise to only 'slight' or neutral landscape effects. Beneficial landscape effects may arise from such things as the creation of new landscape features, changes to management practices and improved public access. For the purpose of this assessment the landscape/townscape effects have been judged at completion of the development and in year 15. This approach acknowledges that landscape/townscape effects can reduce as new planting/mitigation measures become established and achieve their intended objectives.

#### **VISUAL EFFECTS**

- M11 Visual effects are concerned with people's views of the landscape/townscape and the change that will occur. Like landscape effects, viewers or receptors are categorised by their sensitivity. For example, views from private dwellings are generally of a higher sensitivity than those from places of work.

- M12 In describing the content of a view the following terms are used:
- No view - no views of the development;
  - Glimpse - a fleeting or distant view of the development, often in the context of wider views of the landscape;
  - Partial - a clear view of part of the development only;
  - Filtered - views to the development which are partially screened, usually by intervening vegetation - the degree of filtering may change with the seasons;
  - Open - a clear view to the development.
- M13 The sensitivity of the receptor varies according to its susceptibility to a particular type of change, or the value placed on it (e.g. views from a recognised beauty spot will have a greater sensitivity). Visual sensitivity was assessed using the criteria in Table VE1.
- M14 The magnitude of change is the degree in which the view(s) may be altered as a result of the proposed development and will generally decrease with distance from its source, until a point is reached where there is no discernible change. The magnitude of change in regard to the views was assessed using the criteria in Table VE2.
- M15 Visual effects were then assessed in terms of the interaction between the magnitude of the change brought about by the development and also the sensitivity of the visual receptor affected.
- M16 As with landscape effects, a high sensitivity receptor, when subjected to a high magnitude of change from the proposed development, is likely to experience 'substantial' visual effects which can be either adverse or beneficial. Conversely, receptors of low sensitivity, when subjected to a slight magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to experience only 'slight' or neutral visual effects, which can be either beneficial or adverse.
- M17 Unless specific slab levels of buildings have been specified, the assessment has assumed that slab levels will be within 750mm of existing ground level.

#### **MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS**

- M18 Mitigation measures are described as those measures, including any process or activity, designed to avoid, reduce and compensate for adverse landscape and/or visual effects resulting from the proposed development.
- M19 In situations where proposed mitigation measures are likely to change over time, as with planting to screen a development, it is important to make a distinction between any likely effects that will arise in the short-term and those that will occur in the long-term or 'residual effects' once mitigation measures have established. In this assessment, the visual effects of the development have been considered at completion of the entire project and at 15 years thereafter.
- M20 Mitigation measures can have a residual, positive impact on the effects arising from a development, whereas the short-term impact may be adverse.

#### **ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS**

- M21 The assessment concisely considers and describes the main landscape/townscape and visual effects resulting from the proposed development. The narrative text demonstrates the reasoning behind judgements concerning the landscape and visual effects of the proposals. Where appropriate, the text is supported by tables which summarise the sensitivity of the views/landscape/townscape, the magnitude of change and describe any resulting effects.



## **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

- M22 Cumulative effects are *'the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together.'*
- M23 In carrying out landscape assessment it is for the author to form a judgement on whether or not it is necessary to consider any planned developments and to form a judgement on how these could potentially affect a project.

## **ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)**

- M24 A ZTV map can help to determine the potential visibility of the site and identify those locations where development at the site is likely to be most visible from the surrounding area. Where a ZTV is considered appropriate for a proposed development the following methodology is used.
- M25 The process is in two stages, and for each, a digital terrain model ('DTM') using Key TERRA-FIRMA computer software is produced and mapped onto an OS map. The DTM is based on Ordnance Survey Landform Profile tiles, providing a digital record of existing landform across the UK, based on a 10 metre grid. There is the potential for minor discrepancies between the DTM and the actual landform where there are topographic features that are too small to be picked up by the 10 metre grid. A judgement will be made to determine the extent of the study area based on the specific site and the nature of the proposed change, and the reasons for the choice will be set out in the report. The study area will be determined by local topography but is typically set at 7.5km.
- M26 Different heights are then assigned to significant features, primarily buildings and woodland, thus producing the first stage of an 'existing' ZTV illustrating the current situation of the site and surrounding area. This data is derived from OS Open Map Data, and verified during the fieldwork, with any significant discrepancies in the data being noted and the map adjusted accordingly. Fieldwork is confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, the highway network and other publicly accessible areas.
- M27 The second stage is to produce a 'proposed' ZTV with the same base as the 'existing' ZTV. The proposed development is introduced into the model as either a representative spot height, or a series of heights, and a viewer height of 1.7m is used. Illustrating the visual envelope of the proposed development within the specific site.
- M28 The model is based on available data and fieldwork and therefore may not take into account all development or woodland throughout the study area, nor the effect of smaller scale planting or hedgerows. It also does not take into account areas of recent or continuous topographic change from, for instance, mining operations.

## **VISUALISATION TYPE METHODOLOGY**

- M29 The photographs and visualisations within this report have been prepared in general conformance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19. The 'types', as set out within the Guidance, comprise the following:
- Type 1 - annotated viewpoint photographs;
  - Type 2 - 3D wireline / model;
  - Type 3 - photomontage / photowire;
  - Type 4 - photomontage / photowire (survey / scale verifiable).
- M30 Photographs were taken with a digital camera with a lens that approximates to 50mm, to give a similar depth of view to the human eye. In some cases images have been

joined together to form a panorama. The prevailing weather and atmospheric conditions, and any effects on visibility are noted. Images are displayed at the most appropriate size, taking into account the published guidance, legibility at A3 paper size, and context (which is often shown for illustrative purposes only), and allows for enlarged scale printing if required.

- M31 The Guidance Note advocates a proportionate and reasonable approach, which includes professional judgement, in order to aid informed decision making.
- M32 The determination of the suitable Visualisation Type to aid in illustrating the effects of the scheme, has been determined by a range of factors as set out below, including the timing of the project, the technical expertise, and costs involved.
- M33 Where it is deemed suitable or necessary to utilise the Visualisation Types set out within the Guidance Note, the table below has been used to determine which Visualisation Type is most appropriate to the project, unless otherwise specified within the report.
- M34 The table below (based on Table 1 within the Guidance Note) sets out the intended purpose and user of the report, and the Likely Level of Effect. The Likely Level of Effect is based on Tables LE4 and VE3 in this methodology, and takes into consideration the type and nature of the proposed development, as well as the sensitivity of the host environment and key visual receptors. The Likely Level of Effect is based on an initial consideration of the landscape and visual effects of the project as a whole, and the subsequent assessment may conclude a lesser or higher level of overall effect, once completed. Table VMT also provides an indication as to the appropriate Visualisation Type, noting that it is not a fixed interpretation and that professional judgement should always be applied.
- M35 Additional photographs (which do not conform to any Type) may be included to illustrate the character of the landscape/townscape, or to illustrate relevant characteristics, for example the degree and nature of intervening vegetation, or reciprocal views from residential properties.

Table VTM		VISUALISATION TYPE METHODOLOGY				
		Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	
<b>User, Purpose, and Likely Level of Effect</b>	<b>A</b>	Evidence submitted to most Public Inquiries, most planning applications for EIA development accompanied by Landscape and Visual ES Chapters.				
		Neutral	Negligible	Slight	Moderate	Substantial
	<b>B</b>	Planning applications for most non-EIA development accompanied by LVIA/LVA, where there are concerns about landscape and visual effects and effective mitigation may be required. Some Landscape and Visual ES Chapters.				
		Neutral	Negligible	Slight	Moderate	Substantial
<b>C</b>	Planning applications where the character and appearance of the development is a material consideration, but where a LVIA/LVA may not be required.					
	Neutral/Negligible/Slight		Moderate	Substantial		
<b>D</b>	To inform the iterative process of assessment and design with client, and/or pre-application consultations with the competent authority.					
	Neutral/Negligible/Slight/Moderate			Substantial		

Table LE 1

LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE QUALITY AND VALUE

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Description of Landscape/Townscape Quality and Value	<p><b>Landscape Quality:</b> Intact and very attractive landscape which may be nationally recognised/designated for its scenic beauty. e.g. National Park, National Landscapes or World Heritage Site.</p> <p><b>Townscape Quality:</b> A townscape of very high quality which is unique in its character, and recognised nationally/internationally, e.g. World Heritage Site</p> <p><b>Value:</b> Very high quality landscape or townscape with Statutory Designation for landscape/townscape quality/ value, e.g. National Park, World Heritage Site, Registered Park or Garden. Contains rare elements or significant cultural/historical associations.</p>	<p><b>Landscape Quality:</b> A landscape, usually combining varied topography, historic features and few visual detractors. A landscape known and cherished by many people from across the region. e.g. County Landscape Site such as a Special Landscape Area.</p> <p><b>Townscape Quality:</b> A well designed townscape of high quality with a locally recognised and distinctive character e.g. Conservation Area</p> <p><b>Value:</b> High quality landscape/townscape or lower quality landscape with un-fettered public access, (e.g. commons, public park) or with strong cultural associations. May have important views out to landmarks/designated landscapes and few detracting features. May possess perceptual qualities of tranquility or wildness.</p>	<p><b>Landscape Quality:</b> Non-designated landscape area, generally pleasant but with no distinctive features, often displaying relatively ordinary characteristics. May have detracting features.</p> <p><b>Townscape Quality:</b> A typical, pleasant townscape with a coherent urban form but with no distinguishing features or designation for quality.</p> <p><b>Value:</b> An ordinary landscape/townscape of local value which may have some detracting features. No recognised statutory designations for landscape/townscape quality. A landscape which may have limited public access and/ or have pleasant views out, or be visible in public views.</p>	<p><b>Landscape / Townscape Quality:</b> Unattractive or degraded landscape/townscape, affected by numerous detracting elements e.g. industrial areas, infrastructure routes and un-restored mineral extractions.</p> <p><b>Value:</b> Landscape/townscape generally of lower quality. A landscape with limited public access, no designations or recognised cultural significance. Limited public views.</p>

Table LE 2

LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE SENSITIVITY

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Description of Sensitivity	<p>A landscape/townscape with a very low ability to accommodate change such as a nationally designated landscape.</p> <p>A landscape/townscape with limited ability to accommodate change because such change may lead to some loss of valuable features or elements. Development of the type proposed could potentially be discordant with the character of the landscape/townscape.</p> <p>A landscape/townscape with reasonable ability to accommodate change. Change may lead to a limited loss of some features or characteristics. Development of the type proposed would not be discordant with the character of the landscape/townscape.</p> <p>A landscape/townscape with good ability to accommodate change. Change would not lead to a significant loss of features or characteristics, and there would be no significant loss of character or quality. Development of the type proposed would not be discordant with the landscape/townscape in which it is set and may result in a beneficial change.</p>			

**Table LE 3 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE**

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
<b>Description of the Change predicted</b>	Total loss of or significant impact on key characteristics, features or elements				
	Partial loss of or impact on key characteristics, features or elements				
	Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements				
	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements				
	No loss or alteration of key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements				

**Table LE 4 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS**

	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
<b>Description of the Effect</b>	The proposals will alter the landscape/ townscape in that they: will result in substantial change in the character, landform, scale and pattern of the landscape/ townscape; are visually intrusive and would disrupt important views; are likely to impact on the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting; will impact a high quality or highly vulnerable landscape; cannot be adequately mitigated.				
	The proposals: • noticeably change the character, scale and pattern of the landscape/ townscape; • may have some impacts on a landscape/ townscape of recognised quality or on vulnerable and important characteristic features or elements. • are a noticeable element in key views; • not possible to fully mitigate.				
	The proposals: • do not quite fit the landform and scale of the landscape/ townscape and will result in relatively minor changes to existing landscape character; • will impact on certain views into and across the area; • mitigation will reduce the impact of the proposals but some minor residual effects will remain.				
	The proposals: • complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape/ townscape; • development may occupy only a relatively small part of the Site; • maintain the majority of landscape features; • incorporates measures for mitigation to ensure the scheme will blend in well with the landscape/ townscape and mitigates any loss of vegetation.				
	The proposals: • maintain existing landscape/ townscape character; • has no impact on landscape features, such as trees, hedgerows, watercourses, etc.; • utilises a highly degraded landscape or brownfield site.				

**Footnote:**

1. Each level (other than neutral) of change identified can be either regarded as 'beneficial' or 'adverse'. The above table relates to adverse landscape effects, however where proposals complement or enhance landscape character, these will have a comparable range of beneficial landscape effects.

Table VE 1

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

	High	Medium	Low
Description of the Receptor	<p>Residential properties with predominantly open views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from ground and first floors and from two or more windows of rooms mainly in use during the day.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way in sensitive or generally unspoilt areas.</p> <p>Predominantly non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside.</p> <p>Views from within an National Landscape, National Park, World Heritage Site or Conservation Area and views for visitors to recognised viewpoints or beauty spots.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside - e.g. Country Parks, National Trust or other access land etc.</p>	<p>Residential properties with partial views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from first floor windows only, or an oblique view from one ground floor window, or may be partially obscured by garden or other intervening vegetation.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views or where the purpose of that recreation is incidental to the view e.g. sports fields.</p> <p>Schools and other institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas.</p> <p>Users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside, whether motorised or not.</p>	<p>People in their place of work.</p> <p>Users of main roads or passengers in public transport on main routes.</p> <p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views and where the purpose of that recreation is unrelated to the view e.g. go-karting track.</p>



Table VE 2		VISUAL MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE				
		Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
Description of the Change predicted	Large and dominating changes which affect a substantial part of the view.					
	Clearly perceptible and noticeable changes within a significant proportion of the view.					
	Small changes to existing views, either as a minor component of a wider view, or smaller changes over a larger proportion of the view(s).					
	Very minor changes over a small proportion of the view(s).					
	No discernible change to the view(s).					

Table VE 3		VISUAL EFFECTS				
		Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
Description of the Effects	The proposals would have a significant impact on a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, or less damage (or improvement) to a view from a highly sensitive receptor, and would be an obvious or dominant element in the view.					
	The proposals would impact on a view from a medium sensitive receptor, or less harm (or improvement) to a view from a more sensitive receptor, and would be a readily discernible element in the view.					
	The proposals would have a limited effect on a view from a medium sensitive receptor, but would still be a visible element within the view, or a greater effect on a view from a receptor of lower sensitivity.					
	The proposals would result in a negligible change to the view but would still be discernible.					
	No change in the view.					

**Footnote:**

1. Each level (other than neutral) of change identified can be either regarded as 'beneficial' or 'adverse'.

**Table SLE 1 LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS**

Direct effects on landscape features	Quality & Sensitivity	Existing Conditions	Impact and Mitigation	Magnitude of Change	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 15
<b>Trees</b>	High	The Site is bounded to the north and east by a mature line of trees, predominately Lime. To the south east is a block of established deciduous woodland, containing mature and semi-mature tree species and a sparse native understorey. A double line of mature Lime trees defines the southern edge of the Site. A tree survey has been undertaken and this grades the majority of the onsite trees as Category B, and therefore of moderate quality. In townscape terms these features make an important contribution to the character of the neighbouring area and are therefore assessed as high quality and sensitivity.	The proposed development will retain and protect all of the significant trees and groups of trees on the Site. A small number of low-quality trees will be removed to provide the playing pitches, however these are not visually important specimens and their removal can be compensated for by new tree planting within areas of open space, the playing fields and the proposed built environment. Overall there will be an increase in tree cover and species composition across the Site.	Low	Neutral	Slight beneficial as the proposed tree planting matures.
<b>Public Access</b>	N/A	The Site is not currently publically accessible.	The proposals will open up access to the open space areas across the Site.	Low	Slight Beneficial	Slight Beneficial



<b>Land Use i.e. Former School Fields</b>	Medium	The Site comprises the former school fields associated with the former Friends' School.	The existing school fields will be developed to provide a new development, associated open space and a sport facility. There will be a permanent partial loss of school fields on the Site although these are not currently in use.	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
<b>Indirect effects on landscape / townscape character</b>		<b>Existing Conditions</b>	<b>Impact and Mitigation</b>	<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<b>Effect Year 1</b>	<b>Effect Year 15</b>
<b>Townscape character of the Site</b>	Medium	The Site comprises the school fields associated with the former Friends' School. The majority of the Site comprises relatively flat, un-mowed grassland, however it is bordered by mature trees, and a block of woodland occupies the south eastern corner. There has been some disturbance in the northern part of the Site, due to the stock piling of some materials from the neighbouring construction work which is underway on the main school Site. The Site lies within the Conservation Area but has a very different character to the surrounding 19 <sup>th</sup> century and later housing and the buildings at the former Friends School.	The Site will undergo a significant change in character as the former school fields are partially replaced by residential development, open space and infrastructure, although the southern part of the Site will remain as playing pitches.  The Site is located within the urban area of Saffron Walden and bordered by residential development. The proposals will form an extension to the existing residential development currently being constructed on the adjacent school site. The new homes will be well designed and are compatible with surrounding residential area in terms of scale and character. The dense belt of vegetation on Mount Pleasant Road means that there would only be limited intervisibility between the road and the new dwellings. Where filtered views of the new homes are	Substantial - Moderate	Moderate Adverse	Moderate – Slight Adverse

			available in winter, the proposals will present an attractive and well considered frontage which will be consistent with the scale and pattern of residential development in the local area.			
<b>Townscape character of the Former Friends' School</b>	High	<p>The former school lies entirely within the Saffron Walden Conservation Area. It is in private ownership and is not publically accessible. A planning application for conversion of the school building to apartments, the demolition of several ancillary school buildings and the construction of a number of residential dwellings in the school grounds has been granted planning consent and is under construction.</p> <p>The main school buildings and the open space and vegetation at the frontage with Mount Pleasant Road contribute to the character and setting of the road and the Conservation Area. Similarly, the established vegetation at the school boundary is an important component of the wider townscape. None of the school</p>	<p>The character of the neighbouring school site is undergoing change to provide a residential development, with the conversion of several buildings including the gym building which lies between the Site and the main school building.</p> <p>The proposals will result in an extension to the planned residential development on the school site. The existing mature boundary trees and woodland will all remain. New open space will be provided at the north western edge of the new development where the new homes will look towards the new homes and amenity areas to the rear of the school building.</p> <p>The new homes will be designed to have a similar architectural style to the new homes on the school site and the neighbouring The Avenue.</p>	Negligible	Slight - Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse



		buildings are listed however several are identified as being of local value.				
<b>Townscape Character Mount Pleasant Road</b>	High	<p>Mount Pleasant Road is dominated by the former Friends' School, with the main school buildings and the mature boundary vegetation contributing in part to the character of the street.</p> <p>Beyond the former school site, Mount Pleasant Road is characterised by a series of Victorian villas and some modern detached properties. It has an eclectic vernacular, which adds to the interest and character of the route. Properties are generally located in large plots, set back from the road in mature gardens which add to the vegetated character of the street.</p>	<p>The proposals will retain the existing band of mature trees at the Site frontage with Mount Pleasant Road. The new homes will be set back from the Mount Pleasant Road frontage and orientated to positively address the frontage tree line. Due to the density of the vegetation on the Mount Pleasant Road boundary there will be very limited intervisibility with the new homes, with filtered views only in winter when the vegetation is out of leaf. The elevations of the new development frontage show that the new homes will be detached, 2 storey and of attractive design.</p> <p>The new dwellings will occupy an area identified as Important Open Space in the Conservation Area Appraisal. However, due to the visual containment of the school fields, their openness makes a much more limited contribution to the setting of Mount Pleasant Road. Where filtered views of the new homes are available in winter, the proposals will present an attractive and well considered frontage which</p>	Negligible	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse

			will be consistent with the scale and pattern of residential development in the local area.			
<b>Townscape of the wider Residential Area</b>	<p><u>The Avenue</u> Medium High (Quality) and Medium (Sensitivity)</p> <p><u>Late Twentieth Century Estate Development</u> Medium (Quality) and Medium-Low (Sensitivity)</p>	<p>The Avenue is a modern development which lies alongside the western Site boundary. It is focused on the avenue of Lime trees which extend south from the rear of the former Friends' School. A series of courtyard developments are located adjacent to the boundary with the Site. The new housing has a contemporary character but references the Essex vernacular employing a diverse palette of materials, including brick and render, weather boarding and timber shingles.</p> <p>To the south and east of the Site the townscape is characterised by late twentieth century estate development grouped in cul-de-sacs or along estate roads. This development is separated from the school fields by the established tree lines and woodland to the perimeter of the Site. The townscape is pleasant but undistinguished.</p>	<p>The existing housing area at The Avenue overlooks the south western edge of the Site. Much of the development adjacent to the Site is contained within courtyards, with the built form orientated so that views of the Site from the public realm are limited. Setting back housing from this boundary behind an area of open space and landscape will ensure effects on the adjacent townscape character to the west are very limited.</p> <p>The Site is well contained from the adjoining residential area to the south and east, with existing housing bordering much of the Site boundaries. The well vegetated boundaries contribute to the overall tree cover within the area and can be appreciated from a small number of public vantage points within the adjacent residential area. The proposed development will not impact on this key characteristic and the character of these residential areas will remain largely unaffected.</p>	Neutral / Negligible	Neutral / Negligible Adverse	Neutral / Negligible Adverse



<b>Other Effects</b>						
<b>Cumulative impacts</b>	We are not aware of any other significant developments that are approved or allocated within the vicinity of the Site, which would affect this assessment. The redevelopment of the former Friends' School buildings to the west is ongoing and forms part of the baseline considered in this report					
<b>Lighting</b>	<p>The school fields are unlit. However, there will be light sources in the neighbouring school site which is undergoing redevelopment for residential dwellings. The Site is enclosed by residential development and there is street lighting and background lighting from properties.</p> <p>The proposal is for a medium density residential development with associated lighting. The development is not anticipated to give rise to any abnormal night-time effects and will result in a small increase in background lighting levels which will be seen in the context of existing lighting within the neighbouring residential area.</p>					
<b>Construction Phase</b>	There will be temporary landscape and visual effects arising from the construction phase of the scheme. These will include, amongst other things, stock piling of materials, temporary hoardings/fencing and vehicle and plant movements, both on the Site and on the surrounding road network. It is not anticipated that the scheme will give rise to any abnormal landscape or visual effects above those that would be expected from a development of this nature. It is anticipated that the extent and timing of these effects will be controlled through a Construction Management Plan.					

**Table SVE 1 VISUAL EFFECTS**

Views	Sensitivity	Existing Conditions	Proposals and mitigation	Magnitude of Change	Visual Effect Year 1	Visual Effect Year 15
Views from Mount Pleasant Road (Photographs 10, 11, 18 and 19)	High	Views of the Site frontage are available from the section of Mount Pleasant Road which extends alongside the northern edge of the school fields. In views from the approach from the west, the red-brick walling which marks the frontage of the main school site, and the mature, heavily treed frontage to the school form an important component of the existing character of the view. The interior of the Site however is entirely screened from view.	The proposed access to the Site will be visible from a section of Mount Pleasant Road, however it occupies the footprint of the existing access and there will be little change in the character of the view. To the left of the access point are the terrace of houses which occupy the former gym building and these effectively screen views to the Site in views along the Site access.	Neutral (views from the west)	Neutral (west)	Neutral (west)
		Views when adjacent to the existing access look towards the new buildings which are being constructed to the east of the access. From this section of the road there are views through the Site access of the existing parking areas and filtered views of the school buildings. The school fields are largely screened from view behind the new terrace of buildings.	There will be filtered views of development at the Site from the section of Mount Pleasant Road which borders the Site. In summer, views of the new housing will be effectively screened by the density of tree cover and understorey at the Site boundary. However, in winter the filtering effect of vegetation will be reduced and there will be some intervisibility with housing at the northern edge of the Site. Whilst there will be a change in the character of this view as the filtered views of housing replaces filtered views of the former school fields, given the residential context of the Site housing will not appear incongruous. The new homes will be well designed and set back from the highway behind an access road and front garden landscaping.	Negligible / Neutral (Summer views when adjacent to the northern Site boundary)	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse
		Views from the approach along Mount Pleasant Road from the east are screened by the existing tree line alongside the northern edge of the Site. In winter, when the deciduous vegetation is out of leaf, there will be filtered views into the Site from this section of the road.		Moderate – Slight (winter views when adjacent to the northern Site boundary)	Moderate - Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse (As new landscaping matures)



<b>Views from Debden Road (Photograph 17)</b>	Low	The Site is not visible from Debden Road.	Development would not be visible from Debden Road.	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
<b>Views from The Avenue (photographs 15 and 16)</b>	Medium	There are a small number of opportunities for glimpsed views towards the Site from within The Avenue, although the majority of views are screened by intervening development. There are views from the public realm at Pavilion Way. In this view the school fields are screened by the existing fence, however the vegetation and dwellings at, and adjacent to, the Site's eastern boundary are visible above the fence as are views of the ongoing construction work in the school site. Views from within Linden Square and Tilia Court are prevented by existing development alongside the Site boundary.	The majority of views from The Avenue are screened by intervening housing. Housing at the Site will be visible in a framed view along Pavilion Way over the existing fence at the end of the private driveway. The proposed housing will be set back from this boundary beyond the proposed carpark to serve the playing fields. The new homes will be of similar design and detailing to those in The Avenue, and while there will be some loss in openness of the existing view the new homes will appear as a continuation of the surrounding residential area.	Negligible	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse
<b>Views from Greenways (photograph 14)</b>	Medium	In summer views Site is screened by vegetation at the Site boundary. The filtering effect of the vegetation will reduce in winter months, although the school fields will remain well contained.	The proposed new homes will be set back from the southern edge of the Site and will be screened in views from the open space at Greenways by the dense boundary vegetation. There may be some intervisibility with the proposed playing fields and the edge of housing in winter months, but these will be limited and heavily filtered.	Negligible	Neutral (Summer views) Negligible Adverse (Winter views)	Neutral (Summer views) Negligible Adverse (Winter views)
<b>Views from Chichester Road and Old Mill Road</b>	Medium	There are framed views of the eastern boundary vegetation from Chichester Road and Old Mill Road.	There are framed views of the boundary vegetation available from Old Mill Road and Chichester Road to the east of the Site and there will be some	Slight	Slight Adverse	Slight Adverse

(photographs 12 and 13)			intervisibility with the upper parts of dwellings on the eastern edge of the Site. These will be heavily filtered in summer months by the existing tree cover, but there will be greater intervisibility when the vegetation is out of leaf.			
<b>Residential Views</b>						
<b>Views from residential properties on Mount Pleasant Road (photographs 10, 11 and 19)</b>	Medium	There are filtered views from the front curtilage and upper floor windows of several properties opposite the northern Site boundary. These views will be screened when vegetation is in leaf.	The new development will be screened when vegetation is in leaf. There will be filtered winter views of housing in the northern part of the Site. Development in this location will be well designed and will not be discordant or at odds with the prevailing residential character of the area.	Negligible / Neutral (Summer views)  Slight (Winter views)	Negligible / Neutral Adverse  Slight Adverse	Negligible / Neutral Adverse  Slight Adverse
<b>Views from residential properties Pavilion Way, Linden Square and Tilia Court (reciprocal views in photograph 05)</b>	High	There are views from windows in the side elevations and gable ends of several properties which overlook the Site.	The new playing fields will be visible from the side elevation and gable ends of several properties which border the Site. There will also be some oblique views towards the proposed clubhouse and new homes in the central part of the Site.	Moderate	Moderate Adverse	Moderate – Slight Adverse
<b>Views from residential properties on Greenways (Photograph 19)</b>	Medium	There are limited, oblique, heavily filtered views from several properties on Greenways.	There may be some intervisibility with the proposed playing fields and the edge of housing in winter months, but these will be limited and heavily filtered.	Negligible	Neutral (Summer views)  Negligible adverse (Winter views)	Neutral (Summer views)  Negligible adverse (Winter views)
<b>Views from residential properties within the built up area east of the Site</b>	Medium	Majority of views are of the woodland in the south eastern corner of the Site. Some filtered views from rear gardens of properties	Occasional filtered views of upper floors of housing from a small number properties at the north eastern edge of Site.	Neutral / Negligible	Neutral / Negligible adverse	Neutral / Negligible adverse

<b>(Photographs 12 and 13)</b>		alongside the north eastern Site boundary.				
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**Seasonal Variation**

The above assessment is based upon an appraisal of summer views. In winter, the filtering effect of vegetation will reduce. This will affect a small number of views from locations on Mount Pleasant Road, Greenways and Chichester Road and Old Mill Road and have been considered in the above assessment.



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