

PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT

at:

Moorlands Farm

Botley Road

West End

SOUTHAMPTON

SO30 3HD

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Prepared by:

ACLA Ltd

For:

Country Homes

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to accompany a planning application for the redevelopment of Moorlands Farm, Botley Road, West End, Southampton on behalf of Country Homes. The application is detailed with landscaping to concept design level. The application site lies immediately east of the M27 motorway and just beyond the northern urban edge of Hedge End.
- 1.2 The city centre of Southampton is located at approximately 6km to the south-west and the town of Eastleigh is located at 7km to the north-west. The application site is located within a semi-enclosed rural landscape contained by the modern urban form of Hedge End immediately to the south, the small settlement of Moorgreen to the north and the M27 motorway corridor to the west, all forming part of the far eastern edge of the large urban conurbation of Southampton
- 1.3 The application site is a redundant farmstead and takes in Moorlands Farm and its immediate setting, with associated dilapidated stables, barns, outbuildings, garden areas, farmhouse and adjacent small fields to the north and east. The application site covers a total area of approximately 1.7 ha (hectares) and is accessed via a low-key track leading from Botley Road, located at approximately 200m to the south of the main application site. The application site is centred at Ordnance Survey grid reference SU 48155 14523 and the site and the surrounding areas are administered by Eastleigh Borough Council.
- 1.4 The proposed development consists of the demolition of the farmhouse and associated outbuildings and the construction of light industrial/storage units and an estate office, together with associated car parking, hardstanding, infrastructure, drainage and landscaping. The site will be accessed along the existing track from the south.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 LVIA is a tool used to identify and assess the significance and effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity. This LVIA considers the potential effects of the proposed development upon:

- Landscape elements and features such as vegetation and topography;
- Landscape character;
- Planning policies and landscape designations; and
- Visual amenity

2.2 The main objectives of the LVIA are as follows:

- To identify, evaluate and describe the current landscape character of the site and its surroundings and also any notable individual landscape elements and features within the study area;
- To determine the sensitivity of the landscape to the type of development proposed;
- To identify and describe any effects of the development in so far as they affect the landscape and/or views of it and to evaluate the potential magnitude of change due to these effects, and
- To identify potential visual receptors (i.e. people who would be able to see the development) and evaluate their sensitivity to the type of changes proposed.

2.3 This LVIA outlines a mitigation strategy to reduce any potential adverse effects on the landscape or views of the proposed development and to put forward initiatives for landscape and visual enhancement. Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the overall layout at the design stage and provide a sound basis for the proposed development. Secondary landscape mitigation measures will aim to further reduce any potential landscape and visual effects.

2.4 To seek consensus and to minimise subjectivity in the assessment of the existing landscape, wherever possible, this report refers to published landscape character assessments and other authoritative publications.

- 2.5 The cumulative impacts of other similar future developments in the area have not been considered.
- 2.6 The LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with the best practice and encompasses the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) – Third edition April 2013 - published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. For further details see the LVIA methodology outlined in Appendix 3 of this report.

3. BASELINE CONDITIONS

Description of the Existing Site & its Immediate Setting

- 3.1 Moorlands Farm is located just beyond the northern urban edge of Hedge End, within a semi-enclosed to enclosed and locally wooded landscape. A modern business and retail park (Wellington Park & Bradbeers Retail Park) are located close to the south within Hedge End, immediately east of the site access track. The M27 motorway is located close to the western site boundary, just beyond a Public Right of Way (PRoW).
- 3.2 The PRoW runs along the western and northern application site boundary beyond fencing and a native hedge with woodland areas further north. The eastern boundary contains some mature native trees and shrubs and faces onto semi-enclosed areas with woodland blocks and tree belts interspersed with heathland understorey and grassland. Tall overgrown evergreen Cypress hedges run in a double row within the western site boundary and along the access track, probably planted to form a visual barrier to the motorway several decades ago. The access track to the south is enclosed by young native woodland blocks.
- 3.3 A timber panel fence with temporary repairs and sections of walling define the western site boundary. A PRoW runs just beyond the fence in a narrow enclosed corridor with a timber security/ acoustic barrier in places along the edge of the M27 motorway embankment to the west.
- 3.4 The site currently contains a redundant farmstead, with Moorlands Farmhouse being a detached mid-20th century red brick dormer-style property, with stables and outbuildings arranged around a central yard to the north. All the structures and buildings on the site are in an advanced state of disrepair with evidence of vandalism throughout. Beyond the farm buildings are small areas of unmanaged semi-improved grassland with scrub.
- 3.5 The landscape to the north and east of the application site is more rural and semi-enclosed in character with the landscape to the south and west being strongly influenced by the urban form, busy roads and the M27 motorway. The site itself is not prominent or readily visible in the wider landscape due to the containment by the dense woodlands and trees to the north and east and along the site access track to the south. The overgrown Cypress hedge in the western part of the site also provides screening. The western edges of the M27 are contained by mature woodland blocks.

The Study Area

- 3.6 The area of search for the LVIA was determined by desk study and field observation. The study area was then established to enable a general understanding of the wider landscape context within which the site is located while limiting information to that which is most relevant and to avoid excessive analysis of elements which do not directly benefit the appraisal. As such it conforms to best-practice guidance.
- 3.7 The context of the site and its wider landscape setting is illustrated on plan ACLA BMC 01 and a visual analysis of the landscape is illustrated on plan ACLA BMC 03.
- 3.8 The extent of the study area has been drawn at up to 1.0km. In the wider landscape no longer distance views have been identified due to intervening mature hedges, understorey and trees, together with man-made structures.

Description of the Wider Area

- 3.9 The application site is located in an area of rural landscape falling gently in a north-easterly direction with pastoral fields and areas of dense woodland and mature native hedges with trees to the north and east. The landscape is heavily influenced by the close proximity of large areas of urban development and modern infrastructure, including busy road corridors, business parks and the M27 motorway to the south and west. However, where the rural landscape is enclosed by native vegetation to the east of the site, it has retained a more rural character. In localised places, the landscape to the east has a wooded heathland character, with woodland understorey and mature oak trees and pastoral fields and woodland blocks. Much of the woodland areas and small enclosed fields running in a broad sweep along the course of a narrow stream close to the north and east of the application site are designated as Moorgreen Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), noted for their populations of marsh orchids.
- 3.10 A more detailed description of the main elements forming the setting of the site is outlined below.

To the North

- 3.11 The northern boundary of Moorlands Farm is defined by a native hedge screen with a single field gate. The hedge generally provides a high degree of screening from a PRoW, which runs close to the northern boundary. A motorway balancing pond within a heavily wooded area is located at approximately 25m north of the application

boundary. The woodland area extends for approximately 300m northwards along the eastern edges of the M27 with small fields enclosed by dense and tall field hedges and native trees in the rural landscape to the east. Further north lies a larger open field which has been divided up with post and wire fencing into a series of small horse paddocks. To the north-east lies a large area of allotments with relatively open boundaries, at its closest approximately 200m north-east of the application boundary. Moorgreen Road is a straight two-lane road running west to cross the M27 motorway at 500m north of the application site boundary. Moorgreen is a small linear settlement of mainly mid to late-20th century houses and a public house along the northern edge of the Moorgreen Road. Further north the landscape becomes more rural in character, with a patchwork of irregular pastoral and arable fields, often contained by dense boundary hedges and trees.

- 3.12 Due to the woodland block and dense hedgerows close to the north of the application site, views towards the site are limited to very close distance from the footpath along the northern site boundary, in particular over the field gate and other localised gaps in the vegetation. No middle or longer distance views have been identified further north.

To the East

- 3.13 A single Oak with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is located centrally on the eastern boundary. On and adjacent the eastern site boundary are occasional trees with gorse, bramble and woodland understorey. The PRoW running along the northern site boundary runs eastwards through this area. A small watercourse is located within a few meters of the eastern application boundary. Further east, the landscape contains several small fields enclosed by native hedges and native trees and woodland understorey, forming an enclosed to semi-enclosed and wooded landscape. A larger woodland block is located at approximately 300m east of the site extending for approximately 200m. A further PRoW runs through the woodland block at approximately 420m from the site boundary. To the north-east the rural landscape is more open and formed by larger-scale pastoral fields with a linear belt of mature native trees running along a PRoW, northwards towards Moorgreen Road. Berrywood Business Village is located behind woodland belts in the open pastoral landscape at 550m east of the application site boundary.

- 3.14 To the south-east, the B3342 (Tollbar Way) marks the edge of the rural landscape with the urban form of Hedge End to the east, located at approximately 450m east of

the application boundary. The urban form includes large-scale industrial parks together with large areas of modern housing development and associated urban infrastructure.

- 3.15 Due to the intervening hedges and woodland blocks, views towards the application site tend to be limited to close distance from the PRow running eastwards from the northern application site boundary. No middle or longer distance views have been identified due to dense tree and woodland understorey cover.

To the South

- 3.16 A wide native woodland belt is located to the south-east of the main application site. Further south, Wellington Park is a large-scale modern industrial/retail development extending for approximately 400m to the south-east of the application site. The woodland belt provides screening and a green buffer between Wellington Park and the rural landscape to the north. The application site access is a narrow low key road enclosed by young woodland blocks and dense understorey, running for approximately 200m south of the main site towards Botley Road (B3045), a busy link road running over the M27 to the south-west. This links Hedge End with the large urban areas of Southampton to the west of the M27.
- 3.17 Woodland block wraps around the northern edges of a large-scale modern retail park south of Botley Road. The retail park extends for approximately 1km along the eastern edges of the M27 motorway. At 1km to the south, a large-scale junction of the M27 is located, with roundabouts, busy junctions and slip roads.
- 3.18 To the south-west, east of the M27, a large-scale golf course lies west of the M27 with the Ageas Bowl, a large ovoid cricket stadium located at 650m south-east of the application site.
- 3.19 Due to the dense vegetation on and near the site, no views have been identified into the main application site from the south, although views are possible along a short section of the site access between the woodland belts. No middle or longer distance views have been identified.

To the West

- 3.20 The western boundary of the application site is formed by close board fencing patched up with temporary repairs and small areas of dilapidated walls. The PRow is

generally enclosed by fencing to both sides running below the tall Cypress tree along a large part of the western site boundary. The M27 motorway embankment is located immediately west of the PRoW. This eastern motorway embankment has recently been planted up with native woodland species.

- 3.21 The western edges of the motorway are formed by dense belts of deciduous trees, providing screening and enclosure to the motorway corridor. A new housing development is currently under construction beyond a woodland belt on the western edges of the M27. Moorgreen Hospital is located beyond modern housing in grounds at approximately 450m west of the application boundary. The urban form of West End, part of the urban conurbation of Southampton, extends for several kilometres west of the hospital running towards the estuary of the River Itchen, with the city centre of Southampton located to the west of the estuary.
- 3.22 Due to the evergreen Cypress trees within the site and the double row of fencing along the site boundary, no significant views have been identified at a close distance from the west. No middle or longer distance views have been identified due to the dense woodland belts along the western edges of the motorway.

Historic Landscape

- 3.23 On the interactive map for Historic England no scheduled Monuments or Listed buildings have been identified in close proximity to the site.
- 3.24 The closest scheduled Monument is a late Neolithic to late Bronze Age bowl barrow, located to the south of Moorgreen Road at around 700m north-west of the application site. Hinkley Wood Hillfort is a late Bronze Age to early Iron Age earthworks located south-west of the Ageas Bowl stadium, at around 900m south-west of the application site.
- 3.25 The closest listed building is identified as Dowd's Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building located south of a school within the urban form of Hedge End at 650m east of the application site.
- 3.26 Due to lack of intervisibility and the close association with more prominent man-made features and distance to the site, it is unlikely that any changes on the application site have the potential to affect the wider landscape setting of Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings in the study area.

Topography, Geology & Hydrology

- 3.27 The application site is located in a low-level landscape falling gently in a north-easterly to easterly direction. The wider landscape is gently undulating to the north and rises in a series of low ridges to the south-west before falling to the River Itchen further west. The application site itself is at just over 30m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum).
- 3.28 The underlying rock on the site is identified as sedimentary sand, silt and clay on the Open Geology of Britain viewer website. The Soilsmap map identifies the soils as 'Slowly permeable, seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils'.
- 3.29 The narrow watercourse just beyond the eastern site boundary forms part of the upper tributaries to the River Hamble and runs in an easterly direction. This watercourse is identified as at risk of flooding on the government's Long Term Flood Risk map, but this does not appear to encroach into the application site.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSALS

- 4.1 For details see Plan (ACLA/BMC 04) 'Proposed Site Layout' in Appendix 1 of the report.
- 4.2 The proposals consist of the demolition of the dilapidated farmhouse and all the agricultural structures on the site. A small light industrial unit and yard are proposed in the southern sections of the site. Side entrances off the east side of the access road to serve a new light industrial unit (Unit C) in the southern parts of the main site. An open yard is proposed immediately to the north-west.
- 4.3 The continuation of the service road will form a new central courtyard within the main built area of the site. Two linear light industrial buildings split into individual units (Units A and B) located on the north and south sides of the courtyard with adjoining car parking. The units will have a number of insets along their elevations. This will reduce their bulk and massing, provide for soft planting next to their external walls and will result in the individual buildings being read as a series of smaller buildings. A small estate office with allocated parking (Unit D) will be located on the south side of the courtyard, close to the east boundary of the site.
- 4.4 The central courtyard will connect to the east boundary of the site to provide a maintenance access to the adjoining SSSI land. A pond is proposed to be set within the courtyard that will provide a circulation route for vehicles and contribute to the new SUDs facilities. A further SUDs basin is proposed in the green space in the south-eastern sections of the site, west of the proposed estate office.
- 4.5 The rearrangement of the Botley Road junction to provide an improved passing area on its east side with low-level lighting to reduce light spill.
- 4.6 The easement for the oil pipeline that crosses the site is maintained as indicated on the proposed plans. Where this is crossed by proposed planting these will be restricted to shrub species only.
- 4.7 Two of the proposed buildings will have partial green roofs to provide additional habitats contributing to the drainage strategy on the site. The buildings will be clad in a variety of materials including timber to reflect the low-key wooded setting of the site and reduce their prominence.

- 4.8 Most of the overgrown Cypress hedge trees along the western site boundary are to be removed and replaced by native field hedges, individual native trees and woodland species. As the Cypress are likely to be over-mature hedges that have fallen out of any form of informed management, they are now of little visual or landscape merit and shade out large sections of the access track and south-western parts of the site. Although they do provide some screening along the motorway, they are not likely to benefit from any form of enhanced management and most are recommended for removal.
- 4.9 Other native trees within the site will be retained and incorporated into the proposed landscaping where possible. The young native trees and understorey along the site access will be retained and brought under enhanced management to ensure their long-term viability and enhance the degree of landscape structure and screening. These may require limited cutting back to accommodate a widened access track to the east. An oak tree with a TPO on the eastern site boundary will be retained and nearby proposed hard surfacing will be constructed in a no-dig method with a permeable surface to protect the root zone.
- 4.10 The access track will be aligned to allow sufficient space for the planting of a native field hedge and individual native trees on the western boundary to provide new and more suitable landscape structure and screening from the M27. It should also be noted that the eastern motorway embankment, west of the PRoW, has recently been planted up with native trees and shrubs. Over time these will mature to provide additional screening between the motorway and the site. Together with the native hedge propose along the western site boundary and the recent motorway planting, this should provide more appropriate long-term landscape structure and screening along the western site boundary.
- 4.11 Other areas within the layout have been set aside for landscaping, including the attenuation basins. This will provide the opportunity to enhance biodiversity with the creation of wetland and emergent habitats. Other grass areas will be sown with species-rich grassland to provide foraging areas for insects and birds. The open yards to the south west and parking areas to the east will be sown with species rich grass into a reinforced mesh.
- 4.12 Elsewhere, the boundary treatments will consist of native mixed hedge planting with individual native trees, and where space allows, small woodland blocks to provide screening and wildlife habitats, as well as integrating the proposals within the locally

wooded and semi-enclosed rural landscape to the east and north. The woodland and hedge perimeters can be managed to allow a rich understory and scrub to develop to provide additional habitats.

- 4.13 The area in the northern parts of the site, which are currently rank grassland, will be utilised as an ecological buffer zone to the SSSI. This areas will be enhanced with new Native woodland blocks, species-rich grassland and a small orchard to enhance biodiversity and provide screening from nearby views on the PRow. The woodland and grassland areas will be managed in the long term to integrate within the heathland and woodland mosaic covering the SSSI immediately east of the site. This area will also incorporate a low-key path for access to benefit the users of the site.
- 4.14 Native and ornamental shrub and herbaceous planting within and adjacent to the proposed units will provide landscape structure and break up the overall mass of the building.
- 4.15 The proposed landscape scheme will aim to reduce impacts on the rural landscape beyond the site and contribute to the local character of the area by providing a high-quality landscape setting to the proposals. The large standoff and landscape and biodiversity enhancement in the northern parts of the site will contribute to the adjacent SSSI and semi-wooded setting of the site. Mitigation and enhancement will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9 of this report.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Planning History of the Site

- 5.1 A dog training facility (application F/18/84683) was approved at planning and has subsequently been renewed again and remains extant on the site.

National Planning Policy

- 5.2 National planning guidance was completely revised with the issue of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. This has been updated several times with the latest revision being issued in July 2021.

- 5.3 Section 2 '*Achieving sustainable development*' in the revised framework document has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental. The environmental objectives aim to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a '*presumption in favour of sustainable development*'.

- 5.4 Section 12 '*Achieving well-designed places*' aims to create high-quality buildings and places. In particular, planning policies and decisions should ensure developments:

a) 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;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.'

- 5.5 Section 15 '*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*' section of the revised NPPF outlines the way the planning system should '*contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment*'. The relevant key objectives protect and

enhance valued landscapes; recognise the intrinsic beauty and character of the countryside; minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains where possible and remediate and mitigate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate. Paragraph 179 aims *‘to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity’*.

5.6 In September 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government published the *‘National Design Guide- Planning Practice Guidance for Beautiful, Enduring and Successful Places’*.

5.7 The National Design Guide (updates January 2021) addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places and illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in the form of ten characteristics.

5.8 These 10 characteristics are briefly outlined below:

- Context. -This should be based on a sound understanding of the features of the site and the surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design.
- Identity - or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses. Local character makes places distinctive.
- Built Form -the interrelationship between all elements that creates an attractive place to live, work and visit, rather than their individual characteristics. Together they create the built environment and contribute to its character and sense of place.
- Movement- Patterns of movement for people are integral to well-designed places. They contribute to making high-quality places for people to enjoy.
- Nature - contributes to the quality of a place, and to people’s quality of life, and it is a critical component of well-designed places. Natural features are integrated into well-designed development. They include natural and designed landscapes, high quality public open spaces, street trees, and other trees, grass, planting and water.
- Public Spaces - The quality of the spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. The design of 20th-century space encompasses its siting and integration into the wider network of routes as well as its various elements.
- Uses - Well-designed neighbourhoods need to include an integrated mix of tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand.
- Homes & Buildings - Well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them.

- Resources - Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design responds to the impacts of climate change
- Lifespan - Well-designed places sustain their beauty over the long term. They add to the quality of life of their users and as a result, people are more likely to care for them over their lifespan. They have an emphasis on quality and simplicity.

Local Planning Policy

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)

- 5.9 The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 was adopted on 25 April 2022. It sets out the policies and plans to guide future development to 2036. It will be used to determine planning applications in the Borough and replaces the ‘saved’ policies in the Adopted Local Plan 2001-2011.
- 5.10 The relevant sections of the strategic policies relating to the landscape and environment which may have relevance to this planning application are outlined below.

Strategic policy S1- Delivering sustainable development

To be sustainable, new development in the Borough should:

- a. meet community needs without compromising the identity of the Borough or its individual settlements, or the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;*
- c. maintain and help to grow a high-performing local economy that benefits the Borough, south Hampshire and the wider economy, without adverse impact on south Hampshire’s city, town and other centres, the quality of the local environment or local transport networks;*
- f. avoid impacts on the Hamble and Itchen catchments and associated flora and fauna species by preserving water quality and flows from development and safeguarding potential yield of local water resources used for public water supplies having regard to the impacts of abstraction;*
- i. maintain local environmental quality, including avoiding damage to, and where possible enhancing, the existing valued urban and rural environments in the Borough and heritage assets;*

Strategic policy S5. New development in the countryside

In permitting new development in the countryside the Borough Council will seek to:

- a. avoid adverse impacts on the rural, woodland, riparian or coastal character, the intrinsic character of the landscape including the avoidance of adverse*

landscape impacts on areas adjoining national parks and their settings, the significance of heritage assets and on the biodiversity of the area;

b. secure long-term beneficial management practices that will enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the countryside and coast;

c. avoid sterilisation of mineral resources, in accordance with the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan;

d. safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land unless the benefit of the development clearly outweighs the loss; and

e. protect soils during construction wherever possible in line with the 'Defra code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites'.

Strategic policy S9 - Green infrastructure

1. Through new development and other initiatives the Borough Council will seek to achieve the provision, retention and/or enhancement of the following forms of multi-functional green infrastructure, including provision of:

a. landscape scale strategic links across the Borough boundary, to and between the Borough's settlements, the countryside, the coast, and the major areas of open space including the country parks (see strategic policy S12);

b. interlinked publicly accessible open space through new and existing development including for example formal sports facilities and informal amenity spaces and cemeteries (see policies DM32-DM34, Chapter 5 and detailed proposals in Chapter 6);

c. green infrastructure incorporated into all new development with multifunctional spaces connected by primary, secondary and tertiary green links;

d. interconnected urban green infrastructure within the fine grain of existing and new development including green, cycle ways, paths and linkages between community facilities and open spaces to link community facilities;

e. green stepping stones such as street trees, green roofs and walls, pocket parks and urban copses (see policy DM1, Chapter 5);

f. connected habitats linking the network of designated sites and existing priority habitats, taking account of the Hampshire ecological network map (see policy DM11, Chapter 5);

g. incorporation of historic buildings and landscapes, including historic parks and gardens within the wider Green Infrastructure to protect their setting (see policy DM12, Chapter 5); and

h. opportunities for local food growing including allotments, community orchards and farms (see

Policy DM1 - General criteria for new development

All new development should (as relevant):

- a. not have an unacceptable impact on, and where possible should enhance:
 - i. residential amenities of both new and existing residents; the character and appearance of urban areas, the countryside and the coast;
 - ii. biodiversity (avoiding significant adverse impacts); and
 - iii. the significance of heritage assets;
- b. make efficient use of the site, maximise opportunities to increase density and have regard to potential development opportunities on adjoining land;
- c. take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character, appearance and land uses of the locality or neighbourhood, and be compatible with adjoining uses and be well integrated with these in terms of mass, scale, materials, layout, density, design and siting, both in itself and in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views. Where adjoining development is poor in urban design terms, new development should contribute to improving the character of the area;
- d. not involve the loss of or damage to trees, woodlands, hedgerows, ponds, priority habitats or other landscape features of value to the character of the area, for appearance or biodiversity unless they can be replaced with features of equivalent or enhanced value, (recognising that some species and habitats may be irreplaceable);
- e. include a landscape scheme covering the design and layout of external space;
- f. protect and enhance public rights of way and National Trails and provide fully connected green infrastructure that interlaces the development and connects into the wider network;
- g. provide satisfactory management arrangements for all landscape, green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement;
- h. incorporate provision for people with disabilities and create accessible communities that cater for all;
- i. incorporate design measures to inhibit criminal and anti-social behaviour;
- j. incorporate provision for on-site waste management; and
- k. include provision for public art associated with new large scale development in accordance with the Council's adopted Public Art Strategy.

Policy DM11 - Nature Conservation

General Approach

1. The Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers, and will determine planning applications, to:
 - a. protect, conserve and enhance all:

i. international, national and local nature conservation designations; and

ii. networks of natural habitats and features, including the Local Ecological Network, Priority Biodiversity Areas and Priority Biodiversity Links, watercourses, wetland complexes, woodland trees, and trees and hedgerows important to biodiversity and local character;

and facilitate their adaptation to climate change wherever possible;

b. assist in achieving national, county and local biodiversity targets as set out in Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);

c. seek a net gain of biodiversity on all development sites (including sites for redevelopment) through the protection, enhancement and connection of existing and provision of new habitats and features of nature conservation interest compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough, having regard to local geodiversity and soils; and

d. contribute to major elements of the PfSH Green Infrastructure Strategy and other strategies for the provision and enhancement of multifunctional green infrastructure including green routes, ecological networks and biodiversity enhancements (see strategic policy S9).

International Designations

2. Development which is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to adversely affect the integrity of an international or European nature conservation site will not be permitted subject only to imperative reasons of overriding public interest and securing any necessary compensatory measures in the absence of alternative solutions. A 'project level' Habitat Regulations Assessment will be required where there are likely significant effects or uncertainty. Any mitigation measures required to ensure no adverse impact must be implemented at the appropriate time.

3. The Council will work with PfSH, Natural England, the Environment Agency and other wildlife organisations to develop and implement with developers a strategic approach to the protection and enhancement of international and European sites from the direct and indirect effects of development. Within Eastleigh Borough this will include:

a. implementing:

i. the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (requiring contributions from residential developments within 5.6 kilometres of the Solent Special Protection Area to the Strategy); and

ii. the interim and any future New Forest Recreation Mitigation Strategy if required;

or alternative agreed site specific measures to address recreational disturbance;

b. preserving the water quality and flows within the Itchen and Hamble, Southampton Water and Solent;

c. protecting the River Itchen SAC, in particular the maintenance and where appropriate restoration of habitats and qualifying species to favourable conservation status (as defined by article 1 of the Habitats Directive); and

d. seek contributions towards measures set out in the Southern Damselfly Conservation Strategy (or other strategy) specifically to deliver biodiversity net gain.

National and Local Designations

4. Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as shown on the policies map (or on a more recent plan provided by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre) unless it can be demonstrated that:

a. there are no alternative solutions;

b. the adverse effects are unavoidable;

c. measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;

d. there is an overall biodiversity net gain; and

e. if there are any residual adverse effects which cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated, the benefits of the development must clearly outweigh the adverse effects on the nature conservation value of the site and any broader impacts on national and local designations.

Priority habitats, protected and priority species and the local ecological network

5. Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on priority habitats, protected or priority species, or on the local ecological network unless it can be demonstrated that:

a. there are no alternative solutions;

b. the adverse effects are unavoidable;

c. measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;

d. there is an overall biodiversity net gain; and

e. if there are any residual adverse effects, the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the adverse effects on priority habitats, priority and protected species, and the local ecological network.

Irreplaceable habitats

6. Development will not be permitted if it results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees), unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

Buffers

7. Buffers free from development will be provided to designated sites to avoid/mitigate impacts, including recreational impact and impacts on edge habitats, and to maintain dark skies.

Surveys

8. Development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a. there have been thorough habitat and species surveys;*
- b. the great crested newt strategic survey and strategy have been considered in all developments within 500m of a great crested newt pond; and*
- c. the strategic bat trapping survey has been considered in all developments within the locality of a woodland or connected habitat networks.*

Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document -adopted April 2022

- 5.11 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been developed to outline Eastleigh Borough Council's approach to trees in relation to development. This builds upon both national and local planning policies relating to vegetation, landscape and biodiversity. The document also promotes the guidance outlined in British Standard 5837:2012 "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations" (BS 5837)
- 5.12 The general aim of this SPD is to ensure that trees are fully considered as part of the planning process and that careful consideration is given to trees on development sites. Within applications, there must be a presumption in favour of retaining existing trees. In cases where tree removals are unavoidable and considered justified, the Council will expect applicants to submit proposals for the addition of new trees. Proposals which would have adverse impacts or result in the loss of ancient or veteran trees, or trees within other ecological designated areas, will not be permitted. Landscape plans must illustrate how trees and soft landscape will enhance all public open space, streetscapes and public realm, parking areas and gardens.

Compliance with General Planning Policies

- 5.13 A presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF encourages the planning system to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.
- 5.14 At a national level, planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure developments add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive and are sympathetic to local character and landscape setting.
- 5.15 The local planning policies build upon the NPPF with policies aiming at promoting high standards of design, protect, conserve and enhance natural habitats and nature conservation areas, enhance biodiversity, protect landscape character, landscape features and the countryside. Policies also aim to ensure development takes into account the context and character of a specific area and to respond positively to the location of the site.
- 5.16 Plan ACLA/BMC 02 and plan ACLA/BMC 04, in the appendices of this report, shows the relevant site specific planning policies near the site and the general arrangement of development on the site. These will be high-quality and low-key buildings clustered within the previously developed part of the site. The proposals are not in a prominent location and screened in all but close-distance views. The mature vegetation will be retained where possible and enhanced with new native planting to provide landscape structure and additional screening in the local landscape and along the edges of the M27 to compensate for potentially opening some localised views from the motorway corridor.
- 5.17 The proposed concept landscape scheme aims to provide screening, landscape structure and respond to the semi-wooded setting adjacent to an SSSI as well as contributing to the biodiversity of the area. This will include native mixed hedges, native mixed woodland blocks, species-rich grassland, orchards, scrub and wetland habitats as part of the drainage strategy. The aim is to reduce the effects on the local landscape character, screen views and enhance habitats across the site and connect with adjacent habitats.
- 5.18 For further details see the Planning Statement prepared by Teal Planning.

Site Specific Designations

- 5.19 Under Strategic policy S8 in the previous local plan the site was located in a 'Settlement Gap' between West End, Hedge End and Southampton. Eastleigh

Borough Settlement Gap Study report was carried out on behalf of the council and published in October 2020. The report concluded that the continuing countryside designation and Moorlands Meadows SSSI protects it from unacceptable development. In the new Local Plan the gap has now been moved northwards and now covers the land north of Moorgreen Meadows SSSI, at its closest within approximately 40m north-east of the application site boundary.

5.20 The latest policy in the new adopted local plan 2016-2036 is **Strategic policy S6- 'Protection of Settlement Gaps'**

5.21 The policy states:

Development within a Settlement Gap as set out in the policies map will be permitted provided that:

a. it would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements; and

b. it would not have an urbanising effect detrimental to:

i. The character of the countryside; or

ii. The separate identity of the adjoining settlements.

Settlement gaps are defined between:

35 Adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2022

a. Eastleigh and Southampton;

b. Eastleigh and Bishopstoke;

c. Fair Oak and Horton Heath;

d. Hedge End, Botley and Boorley Green;

e. Hedge End, West End and Southampton;

f. Hedge End, Horton Heath and Boorley Green;

g. Hedge End and Bursledon;

h. Bursledon, Netley and Southampton;

i. Hamble, Netley and Bursledon.

5.22 The accompanying text further states:

'Any new development within a settlement gap should not physically and/or visually undermine the gap between settlements. Any new development including the intensification or redevelopment of existing activities within gaps should seek

opportunities to enhance the function of the gap. Consideration will be given to how the proposed siting, design, colours, materials and any storage of materials, lighting, boundary treatment, landscape features, landscape improvements and/or appropriate long term management arrangements serves to ensure the proposed development meets the criteria in policy S6.'

- 5.23 The Settlement gap is located across the rural landscape to the north, between Hedge End and Moorgreen. The application site is located within an area of dense woodland blocks and tree belts to the north. As a result, the application site is not in a prominent location and is screened by intervening vegetation in the local undeveloped landscape to the north.
- 5.24 The site is currently developed and is brownfield land. Although the proposals will increase the level of built form on the site it is unlikely to be more prominent in the wider landscape to the north. The proposed buildings will be set back from the boundaries which will allow for native woodland and hedge buffer planting and a substantial and large ecological buffer to the north planted with native woodland areas and an orchard. As a result, the proposals should not visually diminish the gap or have an urbanising effect on, or be detrimental to, the openness of the countryside gap.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)

- 5.25 A tree on the eastern application boundary of the site is covered by a TPO. This Oak tree will be retained and incorporated within the proposed landscaping along the site boundary. If hard surfaces are proposed within root zones, no-dig construction methods should be used with permeable paving.

Sites of Nature Conservation Interest

- 5.26 The closest Site of Nature Conservation Interest is Moorgreen Meadows, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located east of the watercourse in close proximity to the eastern application boundary and extending across the heathland wooded areas to the north and east of the site. The SSSI is recognised for its marsh orchid and it also supports a mosaic of woodland habitats including numerous mature oaks and a rich woodland understorey in places. At this proximity, there is the potential that the application site could have an indirect impact on the integrity of the SSSI.
- 5.27 An Ecological Assessment of the potential impacts on the SSSI and other areas of conservation interest near the site has been undertaken by Ecosupport. The report recommended ecological enhancements including native tree and shrub planting,

creation of areas of scrub, lighting mitigation, bat and bird bricks, hedgehog homes and the creation of log piles to the site boundaries, together with a substantial undeveloped and enhanced ecological buffer across the northern parts of the site.

- 5.28 A Flood Risk Assessment & Sustainable Drainage Strategy has also been prepared by Fernbrook Consulting Engineers. The drainage strategy provides attenuation storage, in addition to green roofs, permeable paving, swales, and a bio-retention forebay at the boundary of the site to benefit water quality. This will ensure that rainwater on the site is appropriately managed and ensure impacts on the watercourse and SSSI to the east are minimised. The attenuation basin and swale with the site will also provide the opportunity for wetland or emergent habitat creation and enhanced biodiversity on the site.
- 5.29 As part of the landscape mitigation strategy, the eastern site boundary will be planted with native woodland areas, individual native trees, mixed native hedges and tall areas of dense scrub to provide a green buffer between the site and the adjacent SSSI. The drainage strategy and landscape proposals should ensure that impacts on the SSSI are minimised and/or avoided.
- 5.30 A deciduous woodland priority habitat is located across trees in the southern sections of the site and the woodland belt north of Wellington Park and elsewhere across the study area. The trees have recently been removed. This will be compensated for by a net gain with additional woodlands, native hedge and native tree planting and other biodiversity enhancement within the site layout and to the site boundaries.

6. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 6.1 Landscape character assessment is a technique used to develop a consistent understanding of what gives a landscape its character to ensure future development is well situated, sensitive to its location and contributes to environmental, social and economic objectives. The assessment identifies distinctive features, recognisable and consistent patterns of elements and natural and/or human features in the landscape that make one area distinctive from another. The assessments can also include strategies and guidelines for future development and management, to retain and enhance particular aspects of the landscape.

National Character Map of England

- 6.2 The National Landscape Character is set out in Natural England's Character Map of England. The study area is located within the northern sections of NCA (National Character Area) **128 'South Hampshire Lowlands'**. Some of the relevant key characteristics of the NCA which are evident in the wider landscape of the study area, have been extracted from the published document and include:

- *Low-lying, undulating plain abutting the chalk downs to the north and the coastal plain and Southampton Water to the south. An underlying geology of open marine, estuarine and freshwater Tertiary gravels. Soils over much of the area are heavy and clayey with localised pockets of more freely draining soils on higher land.*
- *Fast-flowing chalk rivers in wide, open valleys with water meadows and riparian vegetation that provide valuable wildlife habitats for species such as breeding and overwintering birds, otter, water vole, Atlantic salmon, brown trout and the endangered, native whiteclawed crayfish.*
- *Well-wooded farmed landscape (particularly to the east of Southampton), characterised by ancient woodland such as Botley Wood and West Walk, the remnants of the Royal Hunting Forest of Bere.*
- *Mixed agricultural landscape dominated by pasture with small pockets of horticulture and arable.*
- *An intimate and enclosed field pattern with many small and irregular fields generally bounded by mixed-species hedgerows or woodland.*
- *The more rural hinterland is characterised by small, loosely clustered or dispersed settlements, intermixed with isolated farmsteads.*

- 6.3 The setting of the site displays some of the key characteristics above, however, it is also heavily influenced by larger modern urban areas and infrastructure. The application site is relatively small in scale in comparison to the larger NCA and screened. Changes are therefore not likely to alter the key landscape characteristics

or elements that contribute to the overall integrity or special characteristics of the NCA. Potential changes to landscape character are more appropriately discussed on a district and local level outlined below.

6.4 The 'Statements of Environmental Opportunity' section in the NCA SEO 1 also contains some examples of 'promoting creative and effective sustainable development'. Examples include:

- *Promoting the benefits of the natural environment for local communities and visitors in terms of quality of life, health and recreation; and contributing to the mitigation and compensation for adverse impacts on the natural environment.*
- *Ensuring that all new development is informed by an understanding of local character and distinctiveness and conserves significant historic features. Making all development permeable to wildlife through the use of greenspace and green corridors that can function as ecological networks.*
- *Preserving and improving the tranquillity of the NCA, for instance ensuring that intrusion by development is minimised, providing new greenspace and improving the tranquillity of existing greenspace, buffering major roads with hedgerows or trees and encouraging the use of low-noise surfacing on roads.*
- *Seeking to encourage a softer transition between rural and urban landscapes through the planting of native trees around new development.*

District Landscape Character

6.5 Eastleigh Borough Council produced a 'Landscape Character Assessment for Eastleigh Borough' in December 2011. In the assessment, the application site is located within the **M27 Corridor** Character Area. A description of the character area includes:

The character area is dominated by the motorway. In the northern part of the character areas, maturing but largely linear motorway planting obscures the cuttings and embankments, while to the south of Moorgreen it follows the distinctive, undulating and generally well-wooded landform.

The path of the motorway fractures the field pattern, fragmenting the land use and physically dividing the east and west sides of the character area. Land directly adjacent much of the motorway consists of heath-associated pasture and woodland. This limits the visual intrusion of the motorway. The woodland is dominated by oak and birch with frequent patches of conifers; rhododendron and laurel often form the understorey. For much of its length the area is hemmed-in by development in West End, Hedge End and substantial belts of recent woodland, often with conifers at their edges. North-west of Moorgreen the landscape is more rural and less wooded. Fields are generally small and fragmented, quite frequently with overgrown hedges, and are predominantly in pasture use. Smallholdings and allotments are frequent with the occasional unmanaged field. The boundaries of this character area are defined primarily by the built edge of the settlements that run along its length. The northern boundary of the area is defined by the boundaries of the adjacent character areas, area 3 (Lower Itchen Valley), area 9 (Horton Heath Undulating Farmland) and area 10 (Oaklands Woodland and Parkland).

The landform and white tensile architecture of the Rose Bowl cricket ground is a landmark that creates a distinctive feature on the hillside south of Moorgreen. The surrounding golf course is at odds with the general landform/pattern, however blocks of woodland serve to reduce its impact.

Despite the motorway, areas enclosed by woodland or within the small steep-sided valleys have a very rural character. Nevertheless, views of roads, urban edges and pylons tend to predominate. The motorway generates significant noise intrusion.

Ecological Features

There is a SSSI at Moorgreen Meadows which forms a priority area in the BAP, comprised of woodland and meadow. The wet grassland provides a good habitat for Marsh Orchids and other flora. A number of SINC's have been designated within this character area, mainly relating to where heathland vegetation has survived or regenerated.

The key characteristics for this area are:

- Presence of motorway*
- Proximity of urban edge and large areas of significant woodlands*
- High ground to the west of the motorway, undulating to the north and east*
- Small pasture fields often with unmanaged hedges*
- Pockets of relatively quiet rural areas shielded by woodland and landform*

Landscape Character Sensitivity

This area is a mix of rural and peri-urban character, significant because of the patchwork distribution. It contains sites of wildlife and amenity value and includes heath-associated pasture.

Visual Sensitivity

It has quite strong landforms and a varied vegetation structure of woodland and hedges. However it forms a narrow corridor between settlements and could easily be compromised by further development.

The key issues for this area are:

- The edges of Southampton and Hedge End are in close proximity in some locations. The closure of these pinch points could result in fragmentation of the character area.*
- Further development in the character area would be visually prominent due to the presence of the motorway and smaller highways that run throughout the character area.*
- Parts of the landscape is degraded due to unsympathetic development associated with the urban edge*
- Noise and visual disturbance from the motorway and smaller highway network
Pressure for some development north of Barbe Baker Avenue, West End, south of Foord Road, west of Dodwell Lane, Hedge End and land fronting Providence Hill and Oakhill as identified in the draft Local Plan.*

- 6.6 The wider M27 Corridor area has preserved some areas of its rural character, particularly where the landscape is wooded, which can ensure the detracting modern development and infrastructure nearby are less prominent. Therefore, overall the character area has preserved some areas of its rural character, but modern man-made influences dominate the landscape in areas. The sensitivity to change of the M27 corridor landscape overall is therefore judged as medium.
- 6.7 A key issue in character terms is to ensure that significant additional built form is not introduced in the remaining rural landscape between settlements to the north of the site. The overall management of this landscape should endeavour to prevent further dilution of the rural characteristics and avoid the introduction of prominent areas of new development in rural areas.

Local Landscape Character

- 6.8 This section will assess the local landscape character up to approximately 500m from the site and build upon the published character assessments. The landscape surrounding the site has been divided into four sub-character areas as part of the details assessment in this report:
- The busy M27 motorway corridor, although generally contained within woodland belts and not overly prominent in the wider surrounding areas.
 - The areas where urban development such as industrial/retail parks are prominent and has a significant detrimental effect on the landscape character.
 - The more open rural fields to the north where paddocks, allotments and pastoral fields are dominant.
 - The semi-enclosed to enclosed wooded landscape close to the north and east of the application site providing a significant buffer between Hedge End and the rural landscape to the north.
- 6.9 Although the M27 motorway is particularly evident in the western parts of the application site, the eastern part of the application site relates more strongly to the wooded landscape type which provides an attractive and more tranquil wooded heathland setting east of the site. The existing industrial units at Wellington Park, although locally prominent along the site access, tend to be relatively well screened

by the woodland buffers in places and are well screened from the rural landscape to the north.

6.10 Although the site reflects the former agricultural history of the area, the close proximity to the modern urban form and the motorway corridor are dominant elements in the setting of the site. The degree of screening to the north and east ensures the application site does not have a strong relationship with the agricultural land to the north and is physically and visually separated by the intervening woodland areas.

6.11 In summary, an element contributing to the local landscape character includes:

- The semi-enclosed wooded to semi-wooded landscape to the north and east of the site forming a rural buffer between Hedge End and the rural landscape to the north.
- The Moorgreen Meadows SSSI covering the wooded areas and watercourse is recognised for its marsh orchid population, as well as being of habitat/biodiversity value and it has a localised attractive mature wooded heathland character.
- Long established farmsteads in productive use, some of which have already been redeveloped such as Berrywood Business Village to the north-east of the application site.

6.12 Some of the negative landscape elements detracting from the local landscape character include:

- The site itself with its derelict neglected character where the nearby business park and motorway corridor detract from its setting. Although representing a residual agricultural element, it is now isolated from the rural landscape beyond the woodlands to the north and has a derelict character.
- The busy road corridors, junctions, bridges M27 corridor and other infrastructure being prominent in the landscape.
- The urban form of Hedge End, West End and elsewhere with its large-scale modern housing development and large sports/industrial/retail parks.

- 6.13 Due to the influence of man, typically demonstrated by the sometimes unsympathetic 20th-century and large-scale urban development and infrastructure, the local landscape has lost much of its traditional rural character and tranquillity. Although mature woodlands have mitigated this to a degree in localised areas.
- 6.14 The sensitivity to change of the local landscape character is, therefore, assessed as ranging from low, where development and infrastructure strongly influence the character, to medium, where the rural, wooded character is preserved. The site itself is judged as falling between these two categories, as although it is a remnant agricultural farmstead and not an urban development, it is derelict and a poor-quality built element in the landscape.
- 6.15 Although the landscape is influenced by modern development, it is considered important not to further degrade the rural landscape north of Hedge End by introducing prominent development beyond the fringe of the settlements or introducing built form which would amalgamate the identity of the separate settlements and preserve any of the remnant wooded heathland character. The sensitivity of the woodlands and the Moorgreen Meadows SSSI to change should also be recognised within any proposals.

Summary of Effects on Landscape Character

Nature of Effects

- 6.16 Landscape and character effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. The landscape effects will be considered against the landscape baseline, which includes published landscape strategies or policies where they exist. Changes involving the additional built form in the landscape are typically considered to be adverse unless otherwise stated within the assessment.

M27 Corridor Heathlands Character Area

- 6.17 The sensitivity to change in the wider character areas has been assessed as medium overall. A key issue of the wider landscape area is the prominence or influence of new development in the remaining rural areas and the dilution of the rural character.
- 6.18 The site is located in a wooded area closely associated with the urban edge of Hedge End and screened by woodlands from the wider rural landscape to the east and north. The proposals would lead to the removal of a late 20th-century farmstead

and outbuildings and replacement by light industrial units, an office and associated yards, parking and soft landscaping.

- 6.19 The proposals will therefore represent an increase in the level of built form across the site, but in close association with other nearby and similar built form to the south and elsewhere. The existing woodland areas will provide a strong buffer to the north and east and provide screening and physical separation from the more rural landscape.
- 6.20 The proposals would therefore lead to the change of use of derelict former farmstead to industrial office use over a relatively small plot of land which is not prominent and closely associated with the nearby built form to the south and elsewhere.
- 6.21 The magnitude of change on the wider landscape character is therefore assessed as potentially low in the long term, with a **slight** degree of effect on the wider character of the M27 Corridor Character Area.

Effects on the Local Landscape Character

- 6.22 The sensitivity to change of the local landscape character has been assessed as ranging from low where development and infrastructure strongly influence the character, to medium where the rural, wooded or rural character is preserved. The application site is on the transition of these landscape types.
- 6.23 The application site is not prominent in the landscape. The proposed changes on the site are contained within the former farmstead and its adjacent grass areas and character changes are unlikely to extend beyond close distance into the rural areas to the east and north.
- 6.24 The proposals should not further degrade the wider local rural landscape north of Hedge End or introduce prominent development beyond the fringe of the settlement boundary. The proposals will aim not to degrade the remnant wooded heathland character in the local landscape and recognise the sensitivity of Moorgreen Meadows SSSI by providing green buffers along the eastern site boundary, an ecological buffer to the north and biodiversity enhancements on the site.
- 6.25 The magnitude of change is therefore, assessed as ranging from medium, on the immediate rural setting of the site and ranging to low, where the proposals are contained and screened by nearby woodlands or where man-made elements are more prominent. The degree of change on the local landscape character is therefore,

assessed as ranging from **moderate** at close distance and falling to **slight** to **negligible** elsewhere in the local landscape.

6.26 With the retention of the vegetation and the provision of new structural native landscaping to reflect the wooded setting of the application site, this will provide an additional buffer and landscape screening and further reduce potential effects across the immediate setting of the application site. Specific mitigation measures will be discussed in Section 9.

6.27 **Table 2 –Effects on Landscape Character Summary** (see the Landscape & Visual Impact Methodology in Appendix 3)

Receptor	Distance from Site	Predicted Change	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Effect and Type
M27 Corridor Landscape Character Area	The wider study area	The proposals will represent an increase in the level of built form across the site, but in close association with other nearby and similar built form to the south and elsewhere. The existing woodland areas will provide a strong buffer to the north and east and provide screening and physical separation from the more rural landscape to the north. The proposals will not be prominent across the rural landscape.	Medium	Low	Slight
Local Landscape Character	Within approx. 500m of the site	The changes on the site are contained within the former farmstead and its adjacent grass areas. Character changes are unlikely to extend beyond close distance into the rural areas to the east and north. The proposals should not further degrade the wider local rural landscape north of Hedge End.	Low to Medium	Low to Medium	Negligible/ Slight to Moderate

7. VISUAL AMENITY

Introduction

- 7.1 This section examines the influence on the visual amenity of the area. The visual effects will be assessed from a series of representative viewpoints taken within the study area. Visibility and key viewpoints are illustrated on the Visual Analysis plan ACLA/BNC 03 and on photo sheets 1 to 13 within the appendices.

The Existing Zone of Visual Influence

- 7.2 Following a site survey, the potential 'zone of visual influence' of the proposed development has been set at under 1.0km to the north and east, where views could potentially be possible across the more rural countryside, although the intervening woodlands and understorey tend to screen views at middle distance, with only partial views possible into the site at a closer distance and more open views when on or close to the site boundary, although very localised. To the south and west views into the site tend to be screened by the dense vegetation associated with the western parts of the site and along the site access track.
- 7.3 Based on the desk study and field observations relating to the prominence of the site and its associated features, the distance boundaries for the assessment have been set at:
- Up to 250m Close Distance – the development and associated proposals have the potential to be recognisable although often screened by intervening vegetation, with the exception of very close distance views.
 - 250m to 500m Middle Distance – the development and associated proposals have the potential to be a recognisable but not a prominent or untypical change to an element in views. No middle distance views have been identified.
 - 500m and over Long Distance – any development may be noticed in clear conditions but without the perception of detail and increasingly less significant with distance. No longer distance views have been identified.
- 7.4 The combination of topography, vegetation and built form determines the overall potential zone of visibility of the site within the study area. The surrounding rural landscape is enclosed to semi-enclosed in close proximity to the application site. This

ensures that the application site is screened with the wider landscape and not readily perceived in the wider and more sensitive rural landscape to the north and east of the application site.

Brief Description of Key Viewpoints

- 7.5 The key viewpoints were selected from a number of locations assessed in the field and based on an initial desktop evaluation of the topography and landscape structure using aerial photography and online eye-level views. These have been selected to provide a typical range of receptors, distances and direction of views. All off-site viewpoints are from accessible locations open to the public, such as roads or public rights of way.

Selection of Representative Viewpoints

- 7.6 The selected viewpoint photographs are presented in Appendix 2. They are not intended to cover every single possible view but are intended to be representative of a range of views at a range of distances to the site to illustrate the application site and its setting in the landscape. The views have been taken in early spring and could be considered to represent the 'worst-case scenario' where deciduous vegetation is not fully in leaf.
- 7.7 The site assessment was undertaken on the 30th of March 2021. The weather on the day of the visit was bright with sunshine and sufficiently clear to allow for the assessment of the more distant views.

Viewpoint 1 – From a PRow at 125m north-east of the application boundary.

- 7.8 A close distance and partially screened view. The photograph illustrates the semi-wooded and enclosed rural character of the landscape in close proximity to the eastern site boundary. Partial views are possible through the intervening hedges and understorey to sections of the existing structures within the site, although they are not prominent.

Viewpoint 2 – From a PRow at 90m north-east of the application site boundary

- 7.9 A similar view to above from the PRow but at a closer distance. Again, partial views are possible through the intervening hedges and understorey to sections of the existing structures within the site, although they are not prominent.

Viewpoint 3 – From a PRoW at 40m to the north-east of the application boundary

- 7.10 A close distance view which is largely screened by the gorse understorey within the semi-wooded landscape east of the site. The view is towards sections of the disused polytunnels east of Moorlands Farmhouse.

Viewpoint 4 – From the PRoW on the north-eastern corner of the application site.

- 7.11 A close distance and more open and localised view into the application site. From this location more extensive view across the dilapidated agricultural buildings in the site is possible.

Viewpoint 5 – From the PRoW on the northern site boundary over a field gate.

- 7.12 A close distance and localised open view through a gap in the boundary hedge. Elsewhere along this boundary, views into the site tend to be screened. The view also illustrates the dilapidated state of the former agricultural buildings on the site, together with the backdrop of native trees forming a green buffer between the application site and Wellington Park.

Viewpoint 6 - From the PRoW running along the western site boundary viewing south.

Potential views into the site tend to be screened at a low level by the close board fencing on the western site boundary. It also illustrates the enclosed character of the footpath with tall fencing to both sides.

Viewpoint 7 – A similar view from the PRoW on the western boundary but viewing north.

The view is generally screened at a low level by the fencing along the western site boundary. It also illustrates the close proximity between the application site and the M27 motorway and the enclosure and shade created by the overgrown evergreen hedge.

Viewpoint 8 – From Botley Road as it crosses the M27 motorway at 95m west of the application site

A close distance elevated view along the western application boundary. From here, views into the site tend to be screened by the mature vegetation within the western

sections of the application site. The view also illustrates the close relationship between the application site and the M27 corridor. Note: Areas of native planting have recently been carried out over time which will provide additional screening over time.

Viewpoint 9 – From 10m south of the application site entrance on Botley Road.

- 7.13 A close distance view along the application site entrance. Due to young woodland blocks and the bend in the track, views into the main application site are screened from this location.

Viewpoint 10- From Moorgreen Road at 490m north of the application site

- 7.14 A middle distance and screened view due to the intervening woodland areas and understorey in the rural landscape north of the application site. The view also illustrates the character of the landscape north of the application site which is part of the settlement gap.

Viewpoint 11- From Moorlands Road at 480m north of the application site.

- 7.15 A similar middle distance view to above, where the application site is screened by the vegetation in the rural landscape north of the application site.

Viewpoint 12 – From a PRoW at 390m north-east of the application boundary.

- 7.16 A view across the rural pastoral landscape east of the site. The screening by the semi-wooded landscape east of the site is evident.

Viewpoint 13- From a PRoW at 365m north-east of the application site.

- 7.17 A similar middle distance view to above. Again, from this location views into the site tend to be screened by the woodland areas and understorey close to the eastern site boundary. It also illustrates how the woodland areas provide a significant green buffer to the large-scale urban form and infrastructure associated with Hedge End and the M27 motorway.

Effects on Visual Receptors

- 7.18 Visual receptors with potential views to the development site have been assessed in terms of their sensitivity and the magnitude of change. A conclusion on the overall

significance of the visual effect brought about by the proposals is then assessed in line with the methodology in Appendix 3.

- 7.19 The visual effects have been assessed without taking into account specific/detailed landscape mitigation planting measures.
- 7.20 The viewpoints are representative and have been selected by professional judgement during site work and the desk study. The aim is to present a reasoned evaluation of the whole study area, whilst keeping the amount of information at a reasonable and accessible level.

Nature of Effects

- 7.21 Effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. Visual effects are subjective as the human perception of development can vary considerably from negative, neutral and positive attitudes. In the assessment of visual effects, the assessor will exercise objective professional judgement in assessing the level of effects. Unless otherwise stated, this will assume that all visual effects involving additional built form will be adverse and long term unless otherwise stated in the text, thus representing the worst-case scenario.

Summary of Visual Effects

- 7.22 The highest degree of potential visual effects are all at close distance on or near the site boundary from the more sensitive rural landscape to the east and north. For viewpoints 3, 4 and 5 the degree of visual effect has been assessed as potentially **moderate/substantial** where the views towards the new industrial units and other proposed buildings are likely to be at a close distance. However, these views are localised and only possible where the boundary vegetation is weakest and do not extend into the wider rural landscape. The ecological standoff in the northern sections of the also provide the opportunity to introduce additional woodland planting to screen views.
- 7.23 **Moderate** degrees of visual effect have been assessed for viewpoints 1 and 2 at close distance to the north-east from a PRoW running through the semi-wooded landscape. From these locations, the views are more heavily screened by the woodland understorey and the changes are likely to be partial but visible and recognisable in a predominately rural view.

- 7.24 For views from the PRoW on the western boundary (views 6 and 7) the degree of visual effect has been assessed as **negligible**. This is both due to the low sensitivity of an enclosed route adjacent to a busy motorway and the temporary nature of the changes. Although over time boundary planting will grow to screen views in line with the existing situation. As discussed earlier, if headlight glare is considered an issue on the motorway in the short term with traffic travelling along the access road into the site, a temporary fence could be erected in in key location on the boundary until vegetation established. However, the current screen/acoustic fence along the western edge of the footpath currently provides screening.
- 7.25 To the south and south-west, the degree of effect for views 8 and 9 has been assessed as **negligible**. Although views from the motorway bridge or motorway corridor whilst passing the site could potentially be opened up with the removal of some boundary vegetation, this is an urban location in context with a busy motorway in the foreground and other industrial buildings.
- 7.26 Recent native planting on the eastern edge of the motorway will also provide screening over time. If headlight glare is considered an issue on the motorway in the short term with traffic travelling along the access road into the site, a temporary fence could be erected in in key location on the boundary until vegetation established. However, the current screen/acoustic fence along the western edge of the footpath currently provides screening.
- 7.27 For views in the wider and more rural landscape at middle distance to the north and north-east (viewpoints 10 to 13) the degree of visual effect has been assessed as ranging from **negligible** to **no change**. This is primarily due to the screening by the intervening woodland understory and trees where any changes on the site are likely to be barely perceivable, if visible at all.
- 7.28 As a result of the visual assessment, landscape mitigation measures will focus primarily at providing landscape screening and green buffers along the northern and western site boundaries. This will take the form of native boundary hedge mixes and individual native tree planting, together with informal native woodland block mixes where space allows and areas of tall dense scrub. The species selected should reference the local native planting in the more wooded rural areas to the north and east. A substantial green ecological buffer in the norther sections of the site will further be planted with small woodland areas and an orchard, which will provide a low-key screening to the identified close distance views from the footpath running

along and past the norther site boundary to screen the proposed new buildings and infrastructure on the site.

- 7.29 The aim of the landscape mitigation will to reduce any moderate/substantial to moderate negative degrees of effect to at most slight. Once the vegetation matures, this should provide screening into the site to address the visual impacts on the close distance views as well as providing additional native landscape structure, wildlife corridors and further ensuring the effects on the rural landscape near the site are minimised and appropriately mitigated.

- 7.30 **Table 3 – Visual Effects Summary** (for details see the Landscape & Visual Impact Methodology in Appendix 3)

Receptor	Distance from Site	Predicted Change	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Degree of Effect
Viewpoint 1 Users of the PRoW	125m north-east	The removal of the agricultural buildings and the introduction of light industrial units. The views are partially screened by the intervening vegetation. The changes will be visible and recognisable but localised.	Medium	Medium	Moderate
Viewpoints 2 Users of PRoW	90m north-east	The removal of the agricultural buildings and the replacement by larger scale light industrial units, although largely screened by the intervening vegetation. The changes will be visible and recognisable but localised.	Medium	Medium	Moderate
Viewpoint 3 Users of the PRoW	40m north-east	The removal of the dilapidated agricultural structures and the replacement by slightly more prominent light industrial units and the estate office to the left of the view	Medium	High	Moderate /Substantial

Receptor	Distance from Site	Predicted Change	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Degree of Effect
		A localised and partially screened view where the proposals could form a recognisable to immediately apparent new elements in the view at close distance.			
Viewpoint 4 Users of the PRow	On the north–eastern site boundary	The introduction of a new industrial building a close distance. The changes to the view will be immediately apparent and prominent at close distance without landscape mitigation.	Medium	High	Moderate/ Substantial
Viewpoint 5 Users of a PRow	No the northern site boundary	Similar to above, the introduction of new light industrial buildings at close distance.	Medium	High	Moderate/ Substantial
Viewpoint 6 PRoW users	On the western site boundary	Potential views to western sections of the site opened up until vegetation establishes although in context with the adjacent motorway. The proposals are likely to constitute a temporary readily noticeable component in the view but over time will be screened by a new boundary hedge.	Low	Low	Negligible
Viewpoint 7 PRoW users	On the western site boundary	Similar to above, the proposals are likely to constitute a temporary readily noticeable component in the view and screened over time.	Low	Low	Negligible
Viewpoint 8 Urban road	95m west	The views into the site are currently screened by the evergreen trees. With the	Low	Low	Negligible

Receptor	Distance from Site	Predicted Change	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Degree of Effect
users		removal of the majority of the evergreen trees views may be opened up into the site .All views are in context with the busy motorway corridor in the foreground.			
Viewpoint 9 Urban road users	10m south	The views into the main site are currently screened by the woodland blocks. With the retention of the existing vegetation the views are likely to remain screened. Potential minor visual changes to the access road with upgrading.	Low	Negligible	Negligible
Viewpoint 10 Road users	490m north	A heavily screened view through the intervening woodland blocks. Any changes on the site are likely to remain screened and should not be casually perceptible, if visible at all.	Low	Negligible to no Change	Negligible to No chnge
Viewpoint 11 Road users	480m north	As above, a heavily screened view through the intervening woodland blocks. Any changes on the site are likely to remain screened and should not be casually perceptible, if visible at all.	Low	Negligible to No change	Negligible to no-change
Viewpoint 12 Road users	390m north-east	Heavily filtered views by the intervening woodlands where any changes on the site are likely to be barely perceivable through the dense vegetation.	Medium	Negligible	Negligible
Viewpoint 13 PRoW users	230m west	Similar to above, heavily filtered views by the intervening woodlands where any changes	Medium	Negligible	Negligible

Receptor	Distance from Site	Predicted Change	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Degree of Effect
		on the site are likely to be barely perceivable through the dense vegetation.			

8. EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE FEATURES

- 8.1 An arboricultural assessment has been prepared by Technical Arboricultural Limited. This has recommended the removal of internal vegetation associated with the new access and layout together with the removal of other trees in poor condition or for other sound arboricultural reasons. The overgrown evergreen hedges on the western boundary are likewise recommended for removal for sound arboricultural and landscape reasons. Retained trees will be incorporated within the site layout and will be located within the soft landscaping areas where possible with appropriate stand-offs and root protection zones.
- 8.2 The access track is to be widened which will may require the trimming back of vegetation along the eastern edge
- 8.3 The aim of proposed mitigation will be to enhance the range of habitats on the site and benefit wildlife as well as providing a green buffer for the more rural landscape to the north and east and enhance the landscape structure in the local landscape.

MITIGATION STRATEGY

- 8.4 Plan ACLA/BMC 04 in the appendices of this report shows the general arrangement of development on the site which will be high-quality buildings clustered within and around the developed part of the site. The larger buildings will have green roofs and the cladding will be low-key including timber to respect the woodland setting. The mature vegetation will be retained where possible and enhanced with new native planting to provide landscape structure and screening.
- 8.5 The site layout includes generous areas of green space associated with the proposed estate office and amenity areas to the west, together with wide roadside verges which will allow space for planting native trees and hedges to soften the built form and provide additional habitats within the site. Most of the northern parts of the site will be set aside as green space and an ecological buffer to the adjacent SSSI.
- 8.6 Other areas of hardstanding will be set back into the site, away from the screened access road and well away from the PRow. These will be sown with species rich grassland on a reinforced grid.
- 8.7 The majority of the Cypress hedge trees along the western site boundary are to be removed. A further similar row of Cypress within the site will also be removed to the east of the access and elsewhere to accommodate the new layout. They are likely to be former hedges to screen the motorway but have now grown into dense belts of trees and therefore, are no longer functioning as originally intended. They cannot now be brought back into any kind of improved management.
- 8.8 The removed trees on the western boundary will be replaced with a native mixed hedge and small woodland blocks and individual native trees. Other native trees within the site will be retained and incorporated into the proposed landscaping where possible. The young native trees and understorey along the site access will be retained and brought under enhanced management to ensure their long-term viability and enhance the degree of landscape structure and screening. These may require limited cutting back to accommodate a widened access track to the east.
- 8.9 A standoff to the boundaries and ecological buffer to the north will allow for the planting of native mixed hedges with individual native trees and where space allows

small woodland blocks and areas of dense tall scrub to provide screening and wildlife habitats, particularly to the north and east, where the site adjoins more sensitive rural areas. Informal woodland blocks, a small orchard and species-rich grassland is also proposed within the buffer to the north.

- 8.10 Within the site, more formal hedge will define the boundaries and where space allows native and ornamental trees will be planted to provide landscape structure.
- 8.11 The SUDs basin will also provide the opportunity for emergent and aquatic habits for further biodiversity gains.
- 8.12 The proposed landscape scheme will aim to reduce impacts on the rural landscape beyond the site and contribute to the local character of the area by providing a high-quality landscape setting to the proposals, screening from the rural areas nearby and biodiversity enhancements.
- 8.13 The measures will also aim to introduce additional new planting and habitats to assist in enhancing the internal character of the proposals. Retained and proposed boundary trees will provide additional structure and will screen and filter local views. Overall the substantial areas of green infrastructure and habitat creation should prevent the site from becoming unduly urban in character and respond to the rural semi-enclosed and wooded setting of the application site.
- 8.14 A long-term management plan should also be agreed to ensure the landscape infrastructure is established successfully.

Construction Phase Mitigation

- 8.15 The boundary planting can be carried out at an early stage and protected from construction works. This will also provide an additional buffer to reduce construction stage impacts on the more rural landscape to the north and east and the nearby SSSI.
- 8.16 During construction, specific measures should be in place to protect retained vegetation and habitats and minimise the impact on local areas. These should include protecting existing vegetation in accordance with BS5837: 2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations'. Measures

should also be introduced to agree access, the location for site compounds, hoarding and working hours to prevent undue disturbance to neighbouring areas. Parking for vehicles should ideally take place on-site to avoid congestion of the nearby areas.

9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to accompany a detailed planning application with a proposed landscape concept plan for approval for the redevelopment of Moorlands Farm, Botley Road, West End, Southampton. The application site lies immediately east of the M27 motorway and just beyond the northern urban edge of Hedge End, an eastern suburb of Southampton.
- 9.2 The application site is a redundant farmstead and takes in Moorlands Farm and its immediate setting, with associated dilapidated stables, barns, outbuildings, gardens areas, farmhouse and adjacent small fields to the north and east. The application site is accessed via a low-key track leading from Botley Road, located at approximately 200m to the south of the main application site.
- 9.3 The proposed development consists of the demolition of the farmhouse and arm outbuildings and the construction of light industrial/storage units and an estate office, together with associated car parking, hardstanding, infrastructure and landscaping. The site will be accessed along the existing track from the south.
- 9.4 In the Local Plan, a settlement gap is located to the north of the application site and the rural landscape to the north, between Hedge End and Moorgreen. The application site is located within an area of dense woodland blocks and tree belts to the north, east and along the corridor of the M27 to the west. As a result, the application site is not in a prominent location and is screened by intervening vegetation in the local landscape.
- 9.5 The site is currently developed although the proposals will increase the level of built form on the site it is unlikely to be more prominent in the wider landscape. The proposed buildings will be set back from the boundaries which will allow for native woodland and hedge buffer planting. A large ecological buffer is proposed in the northern sections of the site which can be planted up with native woodland blocks and an orchard. As a result, the proposals should not visual diminish the gap or have an urbanising effect on or be detrimental to the openness of the countryside gap.

- 9.6 The closest site of nature conservation interest is Moorgreen Meadows a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located east of the watercourse in close proximity to the eastern application boundary and extending across the heathland wooded areas to the north and east of the site.
- 9.7 An Ecological Assessment of the potential impacts on the SSSI and other areas of conservation interest near the site has been undertaken by Ecosupport. The report recommended ecological enhancements including native tree and shrub planting, lighting mitigation, bat and bird bricks, hedgehog homes and the creation of log piles to the site boundaries.
- 9.8 A Flood Risk Assessment & Sustainable Drainage Strategy has also been prepared by Fernbrook Consulting Engineers. The drainage strategy provides attenuation storage, in addition to green roofs, swales, basins and permeable paving to benefit water quality. This will ensure that rainwater on the site is appropriately managed and the potential impacts on the watercourse and SSSI to the east are minimised. The attenuation basin and swale with the site will also provide the opportunity for wetland habit creation and enhanced biodiversity on the site.
- 9.9 The sensitivity to change in the wider character areas has been assessed as medium overall. A key issue of the wider landscape area is the prominence or influence of new development in the remaining rural areas and the dilution of the rural character.
- 9.10 The proposals will therefore represent an increase in the level of built form across the site, but in close association with other nearby and similar built form to the south and elsewhere. The existing woodland areas will provide a strong buffer to the north and east and provide screening and physical separation from the more rural landscape to the north.
- 9.11 The proposals would therefore lead to the change of derelict former farmstead to industrial/office use over a relatively small plot of land which is not prominent and closely associated with the nearby built form to the south and elsewhere.
- 9.12 The magnitude of change on the wider landscape character is therefore assessed as potentially low in the long term, with a slight degree of effect on the wider character of the M27 Corridor Character Area.

- 9.13 The magnitude of change on the local landscape is assessed as ranging from medium, on the immediate rural setting of the site and ranging to low, where the proposals are contained and screened by nearby woodlands or where man-made elements are more prominent. The degree of change on the local landscape character is therefore, assessed as ranging from moderate at close distance and falling to slight to negligible elsewhere in the local landscape.
- 9.14 The highest degree of potential visual effects are all at close distance on or near the site boundary from the more sensitive rural landscape to the east and north. For viewpoints 3, 4 and 5 the degree of visual effect has been assessed as moderate/substantial where the views towards the new industrial units and other proposed buildings are at a close distance. However, these views are localised and only possible where the boundary vegetation is weakest and do not extend into the wider rural landscape.
- 9.15 Moderate degrees of visual effect have been assessed for viewpoints 1 and 2 at close distance to the north-east from a PRoW running through the semi-wooded landscape. From these locations, the view are more heavily screened by the woodland understorey and the changes are likely to be partial but visible and recognisable in a predominately rural view.
- 9.16 For views from the PRoW on the western boundary (views 6 and 7) the degree of visual effect has been assessed as negligible. This is both due to the low sensitivity of an enclosed route adjacent to a busy motorway and the temporary nature of the changes. Although over time boundary planting will grow to screen views in line with the existing situation. If headlight glare is considered an issue on the motorway in the short term with traffic travelling along the access road into the site, a temporary fence could be erected in in key location on the boundary until vegetation established. However, the current screen/acoustic fence along the western edge of the footpath currently provides screening.
- 9.17 To the south and south-west the degree of effect for views 8 and 9 has been assessed as negligible with the retention of the existing vegetation associated with the site boundaries and access providing significant screening. Although with the removal of the evergreen trees some views may be opened up in context with the motorway corridor and industrial units.

- 9.18 For views in the wider and more rural landscape at middle distance to the north and north-east (viewpoints 10 to 13) the degree of visual effect has been assessed as ranging from negligible to no change. This is primarily due to the screening by the intervening woodland understory and trees where any changes on the site are likely to be barely perceivable, if visible at all.
- 9.19 The majority of the significant vegetation on the site will be retained and brought under more appropriate long-term management to ensure the long-term viability of the landscape structure and reduce the visual effects on nearby areas.
- 9.20 The development on the site will consist of high-quality buildings clustered within and around the screened and developed part of the site. The larger buildings will have green roofs and will be clad in timber. The mature vegetation will be retained where possible and enhanced with new native planting to provide landscape structure and screening.
- 9.21 The site layout includes generous areas of green space associated with the proposed estate office and garden/amenity areas to the west, together with wide roadside verges which will allow space for planting native trees and hedges to soften the built form and provide additional habitats within the site.
- 9.22 The majority of the Cypress hedge trees along and near the western site boundary are to be removed and replaced with native tree, hedge and shrub planting. Other native trees within the site will be retained and incorporated into the proposed landscaping where possible. The young native trees and understory along the site access will be retained and brought under enhanced management to ensure their long term viability and enhance the degree of landscape structure and screening. These may require limited cutting back to accommodate a widened access track to the east.
- 9.23 A large ecological buffer is proposed in the northern sections of the site which will be planted with woodland blocks and an orchard to enhance biodiversity, reduce potential impacts on the adjacent SSSI and provide additional screening. In other areas a standoff to the boundaries will allow for the planting of native mixed hedges with individual native trees and where space allows small woodland blocks and areas

of scrub to provide screening and wildlife habitats, particularly to the north and east, where the site adjoins more sensitive rural areas.

- 9.24 Within the site hedge will define the boundaries and where space allows native and ornamental trees will be planted to provide landscape structure. Amenity planting with specimen shrubs and small blocks on native shrubs will be planted adjacent to the larger units. This will aim to soften and break up the overall mass of the buildings.
- 9.25 Other biodiversity enhancements will be the establishment of species-rich grassland within the green spaces on the site and wetland or emergent planting of the SUDs basins. Areas of parking and hardstanding will be seeded with species rich grass into a reinforced grid.
- 9.26 The proposed landscape scheme will aim to reduce impacts on the rural landscape beyond the site and contribute to the local character of the area by providing a high-quality landscape setting to the proposals as well as screening from the rural areas nearby.
- 9.27 The measures will also aim to introduce additional new planting and habitats to assist in enhancing the internal character of the proposals. Overall the substantial areas of green infrastructure and habitat creation should prevent the site from becoming unduly urban in character, respond to the rural wooded setting of the application site and provide biodiversity enhancements.
- 9.28 The proposals have the potential to be in line with national and local planning guidelines and policies relating to the protection of the rural landscape and ensuring that the development respects and enhances the environment in its scale, location and design.

APPENDIX 1

Plans

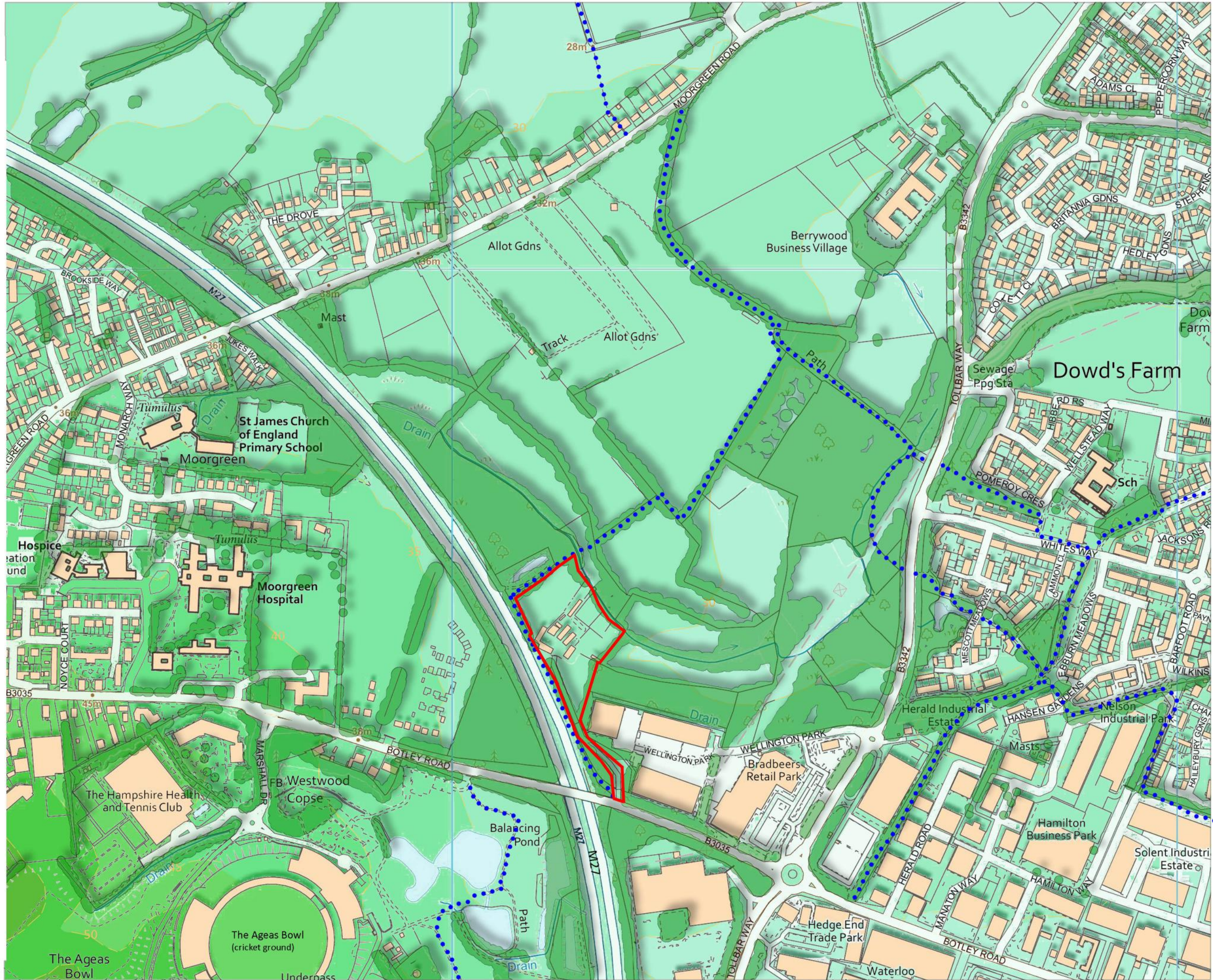
APPENDIX 1 - PLANS

ACLA/BMC 01 Site Context

ACLA/BMC-02 Planning Context & Landscape Character

ACLA/BMC 03 Visual Analysis

ACLA/BMC-04 Proposed Site Layout- Landscape Mitigation & Enhancement



- Application Boundary
- Public Rights of way (PRoW)
- Significant Vegetation

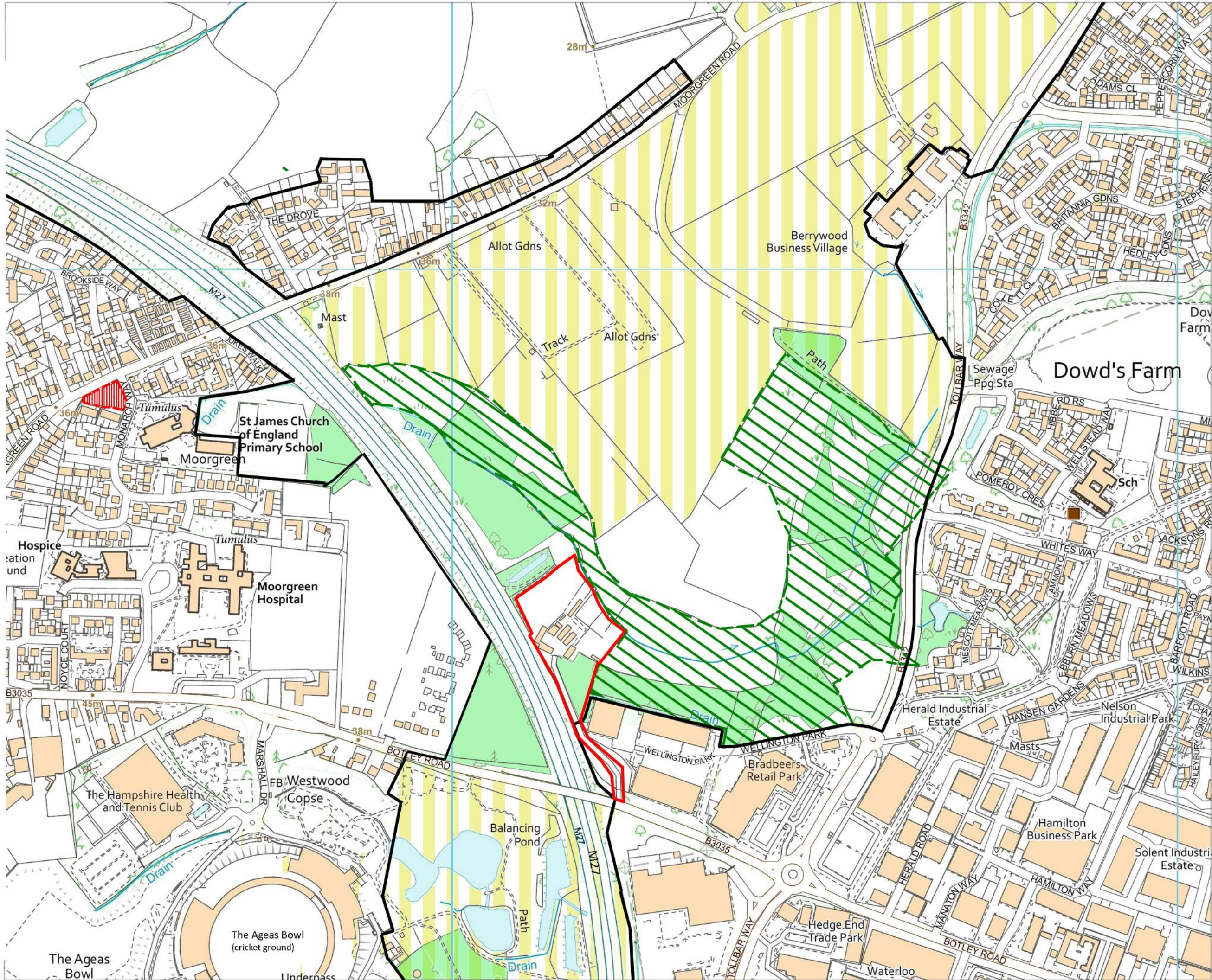
NOTES:
The location of significant vegetation beyond the application boundary has been identified from a combination of on site observations and online mapping (Google Earth).

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) have been identified from HCC definitive footpaths map online.



Client:
Country Homes
Site:
Moorlands Farm, Hedge End
Drawing:
Site Context
Dwg No:
ACLA/BMC 01
Scale: NTS Date: June 2021





- Application Boundary
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (Moorgreen Meadows SSSI)
- Scheduled Monument (Hickley Wood hillfort)
- Listed Buildings (Dowd's Farmhouse Grade II)
- Priority Habitat - Deciduous Woodland
- Urban Edge
- Settlement Gaps (Strategic Policy S6)

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
In the 'Landscape Character Assessment for Easteigh Borough' (December 2011) the application site and areas beyond the urban edge are located in Area 11: 'M27 Corridor'.



Client:
Country Homes
Site:
Moorlands Farm, Hedge End
Drawing:
Planning Context & Character
Dwg No:
ACLA/BMC 02a
Scale: NTS Date: June 2022





- Application Boundary
- Potential Zone of Visual Influence
- Screening by Vegetation
- Close Distance Open View
- Close Distance Partial Views
- Screened Views



Client:
Country Homes

Site:
Moorlands Farm, Hedge End

Drawing:
Visual Analysis

Dwg No:
ACLA/BMC 03

Scale: NTS Date: June 2021





Application boundary

Retained Vegetation

Proposed Trees (generally native standards to extra heavy standards)

Native Hedge Mix (or tall dense scrub)

Native Woodland Mix

Proposed Species Rich Grassland

Emergent/Aquatic Seeding/Planting

Amenity Planting

Feature shrubs (to break up the mass of the units)

Removed Trees

Reinforced Grass Grid (Species Rich Seeding)

NOTES:
Off-site planting is indicative and assessed though in the ground observations and aerial maps and street views.

ACLA Ltd

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Client:
Country Homes

Project:
Moorlands Farm, Hedge End

Dwg Title:
Proposed Site Layout - Landscape Mitigation & Enhancement

Scale:
1:500@ A1

Date:
08/22

DB:
AC

Dwg No:
ACLA/BMC 04

Rev: