

Essendon Property Ventures Ltd

**The Spinney, High Road, Essendon,
Hatfield, AL9 6HT**

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

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Approved

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Position

Director

Date

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background

1.1.1 Planning permission was granted in on 13 October 2016 for the development of two individual dwellinghouses and associated demolition of an existing dwellinghouse and outbuildings at The Spinney on the southern side of Essendon in Hertfordshire (Application No: 6/2016/1118/FULL). Planning permission was subsequently granted on 13 September 2017 (Application No: 6/2017/1319/VAR) for some minor amendments to the approved development proposals, including an amended location for the southernmost of the two dwellinghouses and an amended location for its vehicular access.

1.1.2 This residential property is in the green belt and is hereafter referred to as ‘the site’.

1.1.3 Following a review of the capacity of the site to accommodate one additional dwelling, the proposal is for the development of three individual dwellinghouses on the site.

1.1.4 Scarp Landscape Architecture Ltd was instructed in January 2018 by Essendon Property Ventures Ltd to (1) prepare landscape proposals to support a planning application for the three individual dwellinghouses and (2) undertake a landscape and visual appraisal of the development proposals.

1.1.5 This report presents the findings of the assessment of potential landscape and visual effects that would result from the development of these three individual dwellinghouses.

1.2 Report Structure

1.2.1 The report is set out under the following headings:

- (1) Introduction
- (2) Landscape Context
- (3) Landscape Planning Policy and Guidance
- (4) Landscape Character
- (5) Site Appraisal

- (6) Site Visibility
- (7) The Proposed Development
- (8) Visual Appraisal
- (9) Landscape Appraisal
- (10) Summary and Conclusions

2.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

2.1.1 The site lies in the countryside approximately 250m south of the village of Essendon and approximately 4km east of Hatfield, Hertfordshire. The B158 (High Road) abuts the western site boundary, the grounds of the Essendon Golf Course abut the south-eastern site boundary and an area of mature woodland abuts the north-eastern site boundary (**Figure 2: Local Landscape Aerial Photograph**).

Local Topography

2.1.2 The site forms part of a local landscape that is very undulating with minor valleys (**Figure 1: Site Context Plan**).

Local Soils and Geology

2.1.3 The local landscape includes slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged clay soils over Tertiary Clay.

Local Land Use

2.1.4 Local land use is dominated by wooded farmland and parkland and by golf courses at Essendon Country Club on the eastern side of the site. The farmland consists mainly of pastoral fields, many used for horse grazing, with some arable. It is a settled landscape with scattered villages, individual houses and farmsteads. The village of Essendon lies to the north (in the centre of **Photograph H**) and sections of High Road in the vicinity of the site are lined by other dwellings (**Photographs H and I**).

Local Vegetation

2.1.5 Woodland cover is extensive and often linked, particularly in the case of woodland belts around parkland. Field boundaries are prominent and range from low trimmed hedges to unmanaged hedges with occasional individual trees, typically either oak or ash. The golf courses to north, east and south of Essendon include extensive tree/shrub belts, including both deciduous and ornamental species.

Access and Movement

- 2.1.6 A network of narrow rural lanes, including High Road, cross-crosses the local countryside. A network of public footpaths provides connections between the small rural settlements. It includes the Hertfordshire Way long distance recreational footpath, which passes 1km east of the site and 600m northeast of the site.

3.0 LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

3.1.1 The overarching objective of national planning policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework¹ (NPPF), is to help achieve sustainable development.

3.1.2 Section 11 of the NPPF sets out guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Relevant policies are summarised below.

3.1.3 NPPF Para. 109 states:

“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.....”*

3.1.4 NPPF Para. 114 states that *‘Local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.....’*

3.2 District Planning Policies

3.2.1 The Welwyn Hatfield District Plan was adopted by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in April 2005. The majority of the policies were saved in April 2008. The following policies are of relevance to the proposed development:

- *Policy R17: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows*
- *Policy D1: Quality of Design*
- *Policy D2: Character and Context*
- *Policy D8: Landscaping*

3.2.2 Details of these policies are provided in **Appendix A**.

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012)
March 2018

4.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The objective of the landscape baseline is to describe the existing landscape resources in the study area, considering both the character of the local area and the physical features that give the area its 'sense of place' and make it different from neighbouring areas.

4.1.2 The landscape surrounding the site has been appraised below at various levels, from national down to local level with reference to published landscape character assessments, where available.

4.2 National Level Character Assessment

4.2.1 The site lies in the northern part of the Northern Thames Basin National Character Area (NCA 111), as identified by Natural England's Character Map of England. The key characteristics of this NCA, as identified by this document, include:

- *“The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the ‘Bagshot Hills’ are notable to the northwest and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.”*
- *“Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.”*
- *“The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.”*
- *“Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.”*
- *“The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex.”*

- *“Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17th century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls.”*

4.3 District Level Landscape Character Assessment

4.3.1 The site lies in the West End to Brickendon Wooded Slopes Landscape Character Area (LCA), as defined by the "Welwyn Hatfield Landscape Character Assessment" (April 2005). Existing landscape character is described as:

“Steeply undulating wooded slopes, clearly differentiated by topography, woodland and age of settlement from both the arable slope to the north and the small plateau to the south. Very articulated and complex topography, with parkland and ancient settlements strung out along winding undulating lanes. An 'old' landscape pattern, remote and enclosed, with a small, domestic scale. Densely wooded and treed, with a clear pattern of irregular fields with tall treed boundaries and good views across the Lea valley. Here arable conversion does not appear to have had a negative impact on hedges.”

4.3.2 Key characteristics of this LCA are described as:-

- *small ancient settlements*
- *intricate road system*
- *extensive broadleaf woodland*
- *strongly undulating north-facing landform*
- *small woodland blocks and tall dense hedges*
- *very private area, with discreetly concealed parkland*

4.4 Local Level Landscape Character Assessment

4.4.1 Scarp has carried out its own project-specific landscape character assessment of the site and its surrounding areas and concurs with the findings of the district level landscape character assessment. The landscape on the southern side of Essendon is dominated by belts of woodland, parkland and numerous residential properties alongside High Road. It is a settled, well-treed landscape.

5.0 SITE APPRAISAL

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The appraisal of existing site conditions set out below makes reference to various photographs (**Appendices B1 and B2**), the locations of which are identified on **Figure 3: Site Landscape Aerial Photograph** and **Figure 4: Site Context Photographic Viewpoint Location Plan**. Winter photographs (**Appendix B1**) were taken in March 2016 and summer photographs (**Appendix B2**) were taken in June 2017. The site appraisal and wider landscape context photography was verified in January 2018 and it is considered that these March 2016 'winter' photographs are valid for illustrating existing visual conditions.

5.2 Site Topography

5.2.1 The site comprises flat to gently sloping land, with gradients falling from north to south.

5.3 Site Features

5.3.1 The site supports an existing dwellinghouse, a garage and two outbuildings, which are set in grounds that include an extensive area of lawn, robust peripheral tree/shrub planting and a scattered array of trees. These trees define various grassy glades in the garden (**Photographs A to D**) and include both tree groups and individual specimen trees, all with varying degrees of maturity. Many existing trees on the site are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (Ref: TPO 717(2017)W1).

5.3.2 The existing dwellinghouse is located in the northern part of the site and an access drive (**Photographs K and L**) lies on the western side of the dwellinghouse (**Figure 3: Site Landscape Aerial Photograph**). The western site boundary is defined by a timber fence and by peripheral tree/shrub planting.

5.4 Site Access

5.4.1 The public has no access to the site.

5.5 Site Character

- 5.5.1 The existing site comprises a well-vegetated residential property. It abuts High Road and is located on the southern side of Essendon in the context of other residential properties that are in comparison more prominent in views from High Road (**Photograph H**). The site has strong residential characteristics, i.e. dwellinghouse, amenity planting, amenity lawns and peripheral native and ornamental tree/shrub planting.

5.6 Approved Development

- 5.6.1 The site has planning permission for the construction of two new dwellinghouses following demolition of existing buildings (Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR). The locations of these two approved dwellinghouses are illustrated on the plan in **Appendix C1**. This dwellinghouses are assessed as existing development for the purposes of this LVA.

6.0 SITE VISIBILITY

Introduction

6.1.1 This section provides descriptions of (a) the extent of visibility of the site, (b) the type and sensitivity of visual receptors, and (c) the components and character of representative views available to them. Reference is made below to sets of photographs that have been taken to illustrate typical views of the site from representative viewpoints in the surrounding landscape (**Appendices B1 and B2**). The locations of the photographic viewpoints are illustrated on **Figure 3: Site Landscape Aerial Photograph** and **Figure 4: Site Context Photographic Viewpoint Location Plan**. Winter and summer photographs are provided for all viewpoints except in the case of **Photograph N** where only a winter view is provided.

6.1.2 Field survey work was carried out in March 2016, June 2017 and January 2018, and was restricted to publicly accessible places (roads, public rights of way, etc).

6.2 Extent of Site Visibility

6.2.1 The extent of site visibility is highly restricted on account of enclosure provided by woodland to the north and south, trees and buildings along High Road to the west and layers of vegetation in Essendon Golf Course to the east.

6.2.2 The locations of these landscape features are illustrated on **Figure 2: Local Landscape Aerial Photograph** and **Figure 3: Site Landscape Aerial Photograph**.

6.3 Visually Sensitive Receptors

6.3.1 The sensitivity of receptors varies according to the degree of interest and attention they would be paying to the views around them and the length of time or frequency with which they would have to view it. The sensitivity of visual receptors is identified as follows:

- **High sensitivity:** Recreational users or tourists whose attention is focussed on the landscape (e.g. visitors to Registered Parks and Gardens and other landscape/heritage destinations, beauty spots, picnic areas or locations for viewing important landscape features, users of

the promoted route/long distance paths/PRoW). Designated, locally designated or protected/advertised views. Users of Public Rights of Way, cycle routes, canal network or access land that involves appreciation of views of the landscape. People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which involves appreciation of views of the landscape (e.g. golf).

- **Medium sensitivity:** People travelling along rural roads and adjacent footpaths/lanes/cycleways/scenic routes through the landscape where their attention is likely to be focussed to a degree on their surroundings. People staying in hotels and healthcare institutions. People walking along residential streets.
- **Low sensitivity:** Users of commuter trains, motorways, main roads and adjacent footpaths/cycleways where their attention is proportionately less focussed on their surroundings. People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape (e.g. football or rugby). People at their place of work where views of the surrounding landscape may have some importance (e.g. occupants of offices). People at work and in educational institutions (although users of residential educational institutions will have a higher sensitivity). People walking through urban areas (for example commuters)
- **Very Low sensitivity:** People at their place of work or other locations where views of the wider landscape have little or no importance (e.g. occupants of some industrial sites or commercial developments). View affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.

6.4 Existing Views

Views from the West and Northwest

- 6.4.1 With the exception of glimpsed views through or near the site entrance (**Photographs K and L**), views of the site from High Road are well enclosed by a belt of mature trees and understorey shrubs along the western site boundary (**Photographs J and M**). This vegetation includes both deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs (Yew, Holly, Laurel and Holm Oak) and visual enclosure is reinforced by close-board timber fencing along most of the boundary. The northernmost of the approved dwellinghouses (Application No: 6/2017/1319/VAR) would be seen in approximately the same position as the existing dwellinghouse in the above photographs.

Views from the North and Northeast

- 6.4.2 Views from the north and northeast are substantially enclosed by mature woodland (**Figure 2: Local Landscape Aerial Photograph**) with views of the site and the approved development limited to the tree/shrub vegetation along the western site boundary (**Photograph J**).

Views from the East, Southeast and South

- 6.4.3 In terms of views from Essendon Golf Course, some glimpsed views of the site may be obtained from an adjacent green and sections of footpath adjacent to the site. These views include a filtered winter view of The Spinney, seen in the centre of **Photograph F**, on the left-hand side of the belt of conifer trees. The south-facing façade of the southernmost of the approved dwellinghouses (Application No: 6/2017/1319/VAR) would be located approximately 37m further to the south than the south-facing façade of the existing dwellinghouse seen in this view. Winter views would be filtered (**Appendix B1**) and summer views enclosed (**Appendix B2**) in a similar manner to the existing dwellinghouse. Most views towards the site are enclosed by on-site and off-site vegetation alongside the southern site boundary, including a line of evergreen trees (**Photographs B and C**). The site is difficult to discern in views from other parts of the golf course on account of enclosure provided by site boundary vegetation, the earth mounds associated with the fairways and by layers of mature tree/shrub planting within the golf course (**Photograph G**), including tree/shrub groups adjacent to the site (**Photograph F**).
- 6.4.4 Elevated views towards the site may also be obtained from the Hertfordshire Way long distance footpath near Danes Farm to the northwest of Little Berkhamsted. However, the site is difficult to discern in these views on account of the visual mass of trees in the golf course (**Photograph N**). The approved dwellinghouses (Application No: 6/2017/1319/VAR) would be equally difficult to discern in these views.

Views from the Southwest

- 6.4.5 Views are substantially enclosed by mature tree/shrub vegetation along the western site boundary (**Photograph M**). Views of the approved dwellinghouses (Application No: 6/2017/1319/VAR) would be also be substantially enclosed by mature tree/shrub vegetation along the western site boundary.

7.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

7.1 The Proposed Buildings

7.1.1 The proposal is for the development of three dwellinghouses on the site instead of two dwellinghouses. This would be achieved by making more efficient use of the long, narrow garden associated with Plot 2, as identified in the September 2017 planning approval (Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR). The western end of this garden is likely to be relatively unused on account of the distance from the approved Plot 2 dwellinghouse in the September 2017 scheme. The proposed layout for the three proposed dwellinghouses is illustrated on the Proposed Site Layout Plan in **Appendix C2**. There would be no change to the approved vehicular access locations (Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR) from High Road.

7.1.2 The architectural design of the three proposed dwellinghouses are illustrated in **Appendix D**. The walls at ground floor level would be in brick. The roof and the walls at first floor would be clad in standing seam zinc, pre-patinated in a grey colour. Portions of the roof will be fitted with photovoltaics cells, very close in colour to the grey of the zinc.

7.1.3 The heights of all three proposed dwellinghouses would match the heights of the approved dwellinghouses (Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR) and would be marginally lower than the height of the existing dwellinghouse. The overall footprint, floorspace and volume of the proposed three dwellinghouse scheme would also all be lower than that of the approved two dwellinghouse scheme.

7.2 The Landscape Proposals

7.2.1 The Landscape Masterplan for the proposed development is provided in **Appendix E**. These landscape proposals include reinforcement of the existing shrub vegetation along the southern and western site boundaries. The establishment of new individual trees is also proposed in lawn areas. A full species list for this peripheral tree and shrub planting is provided in the Planting Schedule that forms part of the planning application.

7.2.2 The primary objective of the landscape strategy for the proposed development is to conserve local landscape character. This has been achieved by substantial conservation of existing on-

site trees, sensitive location of the proposed dwellinghouses within the site and strengthening the well-vegetated character of the site by the enhancement of the peripheral tree/shrub framework.

7.2.3 The following design principles for both the hard and soft landscape have been identified:

Soft Landscape Design Principles

- The selection of plants has considered the local context, the form and eventual scale of the species in relation to the spacing and elevations of buildings.
- The selection of tree and shrub planting has enhanced the design of the buildings to articulate spaces by framing views and by defining pedestrian routes and connections and vehicle movements.
- The selection of species is appropriate in terms of setting and should not pose a threat or nuisance (for example through the specification of clear-stem trees adjacent to pedestrian routes) nor include invasive species.
- The selection of plant species is appropriate to soil type, microclimate and future maintenance and management requirements.
- Plant species selected will increase the biodiversity potential of the site through the use of both ornamental (emphasis on flowering shrubs) and locally indigenous species.

7.2.4 All new services would be located underground and would be restricted to specific margins, either under the footway, or in shared surfaces in a defined linear strip. The technical principles provided by NHBC (National House Building Council) requirements will be adopted when planting trees in the vicinity of services and buildings.

7.2.5 The proposed tree and shrub planting is likely to be established in the first planting season after commencement of the construction works.

Hard Landscape Design Principles

- The design and placement of all the elements has responded to the architecture of the development through sympathetic, appropriate and consistent selection of materials, textures and scales.

- The combined suite of hard landscape materials will assist in creating an attractive, high quality residential environment.
- All hard landscape elements will provide a sufficient level of comfort and amenity while minimising clutter and visual confusion.
- High quality paving materials have been used to help define spaces and functions.
- A limited variety of surface materials has been selected to help define functions and spaces.
- The materials have been selected from a structured palette and coordinated to create visual unity and integrity.

8.0 VISUAL APPRAISAL

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This section provides an assessment of the effects of the proposed development on existing views and visual amenity, as identified as part of the baseline study. This baseline includes the two approved dwellinghouses (Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR), the northernmost of which would be seen in approximately the same position as the existing dwellinghouse. The assessment of effects has been based on the Architectural Design Proposals at **Appendix D** and the Landscape Master Plan at **Appendix E**. Reference is made in this assessment of visual effects to the site context photographs in **Appendices B1 and B2**. The assessment is carried out on the basis of winter views as the 'worst case scenario', although summer views are described in some cases. The methodology adopted for assessing potential visual effects is set out in **Appendix F**.

8.2 Views from the West and Northwest

8.2.1 With the exception of glimpsed views through the site entrance (**Photograph L**), views of the proposed dwellinghouses from High Road would be substantially enclosed by a belt of mature trees and understorey shrubs along the western site boundary (**Photographs J and M**) even in winter views. This vegetation includes both deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs, including Yew, Holly, Laurel and Holm Oak. Visual enclosure is reinforced by close-board timber fencing along most of the boundary.

8.2.2 The northernmost of the three proposed dwellinghouses and its associated garage would not result in any visual change to either day-time or night-time views, when compared to views of the approved dwellinghouse (Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR), on account of the similar height, scale, massing and location of the northernmost building (see visualisation for Proposed House on Plot 1 in **Appendix G**).

8.3 Views from the North and Northeast

8.3.1 Views from the north are substantially enclosed by mature woodland with views limited to the tree/shrub vegetation along the western site boundary (**Photograph J**). The three proposed

dwellinghouses and their associated garages would not result in any visual change to either day-time or night-time views, when compared to views of the approved dwellinghouses (Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR).

8.4 Views from the East, Southeast and South

- 8.4.1 A glimpsed view of the proposed Plot 2 dwellinghouse would be available at Year 1 from one of the greens that lies close to the site boundary in the far western part of Essendon Golf Course. This approved dwellinghouse would be seen through the same narrow gap in the vegetation belt along the southern site boundary as the existing dwellinghouse (**Photograph F**). The proposed Plot 2 dwellinghouse would be seen in an almost identical position as the approved Plot 2 dwellinghouse. Views towards the proposed Plot 1 dwellinghouse would be almost entirely enclosed by the proposed Plot 2 dwellinghouse. The proposed Plot 3 dwellinghouse would be difficult to discern in either winter or summer views from the golf course on account of the robustness of intervening vegetation, cumulatively provided by the trees and shrubs along the southern site boundary and by the tree/shrub vegetation in the adjacent northern part of the golf course (**Figure 3: Site Landscape Aerial Photograph**). The magnitude of visual change would be negligible.
- 8.4.2 The proposed tree/shrub planting along the southern site boundary would, by Year 5, almost entirely enclose all winter and summer views of the proposed on-site built form with a resultant net enhancement in the vegetated character of views from the golf course. The proposed housing would be difficult to discern in views from other parts of the golf course on account of the visual mass of vegetation, both within the site and within the golf course (**Photographs F and G**).
- 8.4.3 Overall, there would be negligible changes to existing day-time and night-time views at Year 1 and Year 5 for these high sensitivity users of the golf course. There would be negligible changes to existing night-time views.
- 8.4.4 In terms of elevated views from the Hertfordshire Way long distance footpath near Danes Farm (**Photograph N**), the proposed housing would not be visible on account of the visual mass of trees both on the site and in the golf course.

Views from the Southwest

- 8.4.5 Views of the proposed dwellinghouses would be substantially enclosed by mature tree/shrub vegetation along the western site boundary (**Photograph M**) and within the golf course. The Plot 2 dwellinghouse and garage would be in a very similar position as the approved proposal and there would be no changes to their visibility from the road. The Plot 3 dwellinghouse would be set back further from High Road compared to the existing dwellinghouse (**Photographs J, K and L**) or the approved replacement Plot 1 dwellinghouse and would be located in a part of the site where the peripheral vegetation belt is both taller and deeper (**Photograph M** and **Figure 3: Site Landscape Aerial Photograph**). The introduction of one additional dwellinghouse into the southwestern part of the site would result in only a low level of visual change to winter views from High Road. Visibility would be restricted to a glimpsed, oblique view of the proposed Plot 3 dwellinghouse, set amongst a robust structure of existing and proposed tree/shrub vegetation and seen through the entrance off High Road, as approved under Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR (see visualisation for Proposed House on Plot 3 in **Appendix G**). The proposed reinforcement tree/shrub planting along the western site boundary would, with partial maturity, enclose all winter views of on-site built form with a resultant net enhancement in the vegetated character of views from High Road.
- 8.4.6 Overall, there would be low level adverse changes to existing day-time views at Year 1. The magnitude of visual change would remain low at Year 5 in spite of the growth of the proposed trees and peripheral shrub planting on account of the glimpsed view of the Plot 3 house through the site entrance. There would be negligible changes to existing night-time views. These day-time changes would be of slight significance for these low sensitivity users of High Road. These night-time changes would be of negligible significance.

9.0 LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This section provides an assessment of the effects of the proposed development on the physical landscape and landscape character, as identified as part of the baseline study. The assessment of effects has been based on the Architectural Design Proposals at **Appendix D** and the Landscape Master Plan at **Appendix E**. Reference is made in this assessment to the photographs in **Appendices B1 and B2**. The methodology adopted for assessing potential landscape effects is set out in **Appendix F**.

9.2 Effects on the Physical Landscape

9.2.1 The proposed development takes account of the Tree Protection Plan that has been prepared on the basis of the BS5837 Pre-Development Tree Condition Survey. The three proposed dwellinghouses have been carefully located within existing glades such that existing tree/shrub vegetation would be substantially retained. There would be a substantial number of new native trees established on the site as a result of the proposed development, including the establishment of new individual trees in lawn areas. These include a new beech tree to mitigate against the removal of Tree T9, as identified in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, and a new oak tree to mitigate against the removal of Tree T2, as approved under Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR.

9.2.2 Peripheral site vegetation would be supplemented with new tree and shrub planting. A full species list for this tall shrub planting is provided in the Planting Schedule that forms part of the planning application. This vegetation would include evergreen species such as holly and laurel, specimens of which are already present on the site.

9.2.3 All retained and proposed vegetation would be managed to maximise its biodiversity value and to help ensure its healthy growth and contribution to the character of the site and surrounding landscape.

9.3 Effects on Landscape Character

National Level Landscape Character

- 9.3.1 The proposed development would be in accordance with the key characteristics of the Northern Thames Basin National Character Area as there would be no effect on the pattern of woodlands, arable land or grasslands in the local landscape. There would also be negligible effect on the pattern of small villages in the local landscape.

District Level Landscape Character Assessment

- 9.3.2 The proposed development would be in accordance with the character of the West End to Brickendon Wooded Slopes Landscape Character Area (LCA) as there would be no effect on any steeply undulating wooded slopes, parkland and ancient settlements strung out along winding undulating lanes or the small, domestic scale of the 'old' landscape pattern. The landscape would remain well-treed, with a clear pattern of irregular fields with tall treed boundaries.

Local Level Landscape Character Assessment

- 9.3.3 The existing site comprises a well-vegetated residential property. It abuts High Road and is located on the southern side of Essendon in the context of other residential properties that are more prominent in views from High Road (**Photograph H**). There would be an increase in the amount of on-site tree/shrub vegetation with a resultant net enhancement in the well-vegetated character of both the site and High Road. The residential characteristics of the site, i.e. dwellinghouse, amenity planting, amenity lawns and peripheral native and ornamental tree/shrub planting would remain unchanged.
- 9.3.4 There would be no or negligible change to landscape character at national, district or local level as a result of the proposed development compared to the approved development.

10.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Landscape Considerations

- 10.1.1 The development master plan has been led by landscape considerations. Careful attention has been given to the location and design of the proposed buildings and to the landscape proposals with regard to countryside protection, landscape character, visual amenity and arboriculture.
- 10.1.2 The primary objective of the landscape strategy for the proposed development is to conserve local landscape character. This has been achieved by substantial conservation of existing on-site trees, sensitive location of the proposed dwellinghouses within the site and strengthening the well-vegetated character of the site by the enhancement of the peripheral tree/shrub framework.

10.2 Landscape Effects

- 10.2.1 The proposed development takes into account the Tree Protection Plan that has been prepared on the basis of the BS5837 Pre-Development Tree Condition Survey. The three proposed dwellings have been carefully located within existing glades such that existing tree/shrub vegetation would be substantially retained.
- 10.2.2 There would be a notable increase in the number of native trees on the site as a result of the proposed development, including the establishment of new individual trees in lawn areas. These include a new beech tree to mitigate against the removal of Tree T9, as identified in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, and a new oak tree to mitigate against the removal of Tree T2, as approved under Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR.
- 10.2.3 There would be no change or negligible change to landscape character at national, district or local level as a result of the proposed development compared to the approved development. The existing site comprises a well-vegetated residential property. It abuts High Road and is located on the southern side of Essendon in the context of other residential properties that are more prominent in views from High Road (**Photograph H**). There would be an increase in the amount of on-site tree/shrub vegetation with a resultant net enhancement in the well-vegetated

character of both the site and High Road. The residential characteristics of the site, i.e. a dwelling, amenity planting, amenity lawns and peripheral native and ornamental tree/shrub planting would remain unchanged.

10.3 Visual Effects

Views from the West and Northwest

- 10.3.1 Potential views of the proposed development are restricted to adjacent sections of High Road and to adjacent parts of Essendon Golf Course. With the exception of glimpsed views through the site entrances, views of the proposed housing from High Road would be substantially enclosed by a belt of mature trees and understorey shrubs along the western site boundary, even in winter views.
- 10.3.2 The northernmost of the three proposed dwellinghouses and its associated garage would not result in any visual change to either day-time or night-time views, when compared to views of the approved dwellinghouse (Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR), on account of the similar height, scale, massing and location of the northernmost building.

Views from the North and Northeast

- 10.3.3 Views from the north are substantially enclosed by mature woodland with views limited to the tree/shrub vegetation along the western site boundary (**Photograph J**). The three proposed dwellinghouses and their associated garages would not result in any visual change to either day-time or night-time views, when compared to views of the approved dwellinghouses (Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR).

Views from the East, Southeast and South

- 10.3.4 A glimpsed view of the proposed Plot 2 dwellinghouse would be available at Year 1 from one of the greens that lies close to the site boundary in the far western part of Essendon Golf Course. This approved dwellinghouse would be seen through the same narrow gap in the vegetation belt along the southern site boundary as the existing dwellinghouse (**Photograph F**). The proposed Plot 2 dwellinghouse would be seen in an almost identical position as the

approved Plot 2 dwellinghouse. Views towards the proposed Plot 1 dwellinghouse would be almost entirely enclosed by the proposed Plot 2 dwellinghouse. The proposed Plot 3 dwellinghouse would be difficult to discern in either winter or summer views from the golf course on account of the robustness of intervening vegetation, cumulatively provided by the trees and shrubs along the southern site boundary and by the tree/shrub vegetation in the adjacent northern part of the golf course (**Figure 3: Site Landscape Aerial Photograph**). The magnitude of visual change would be negligible.

- 10.3.5 The proposed tree/shrub planting along the southern site boundary would, by Year 5, almost entirely enclose all winter and summer views of the proposed on-site built form with a resultant net enhancement in the vegetated character of views from the golf course. The proposed housing would be difficult to discern in views from other parts of the golf course on account of the visual mass of vegetation, both within the site and within the golf course (**Photographs F and G**).
- 10.3.6 Overall, there would be negligible changes to existing day-time and night-time views at Year 1 and Year 5 for these high sensitivity users of the golf course. There would be negligible changes to existing night-time views.

Views from Hertfordshire Way long distance footpath

- 10.3.7 In terms of elevated views from the Hertfordshire Way long distance footpath near Danes Farm (**Photograph N**), the proposed housing would not be visible on account of the visual mass of trees both on the site and in the golf course.

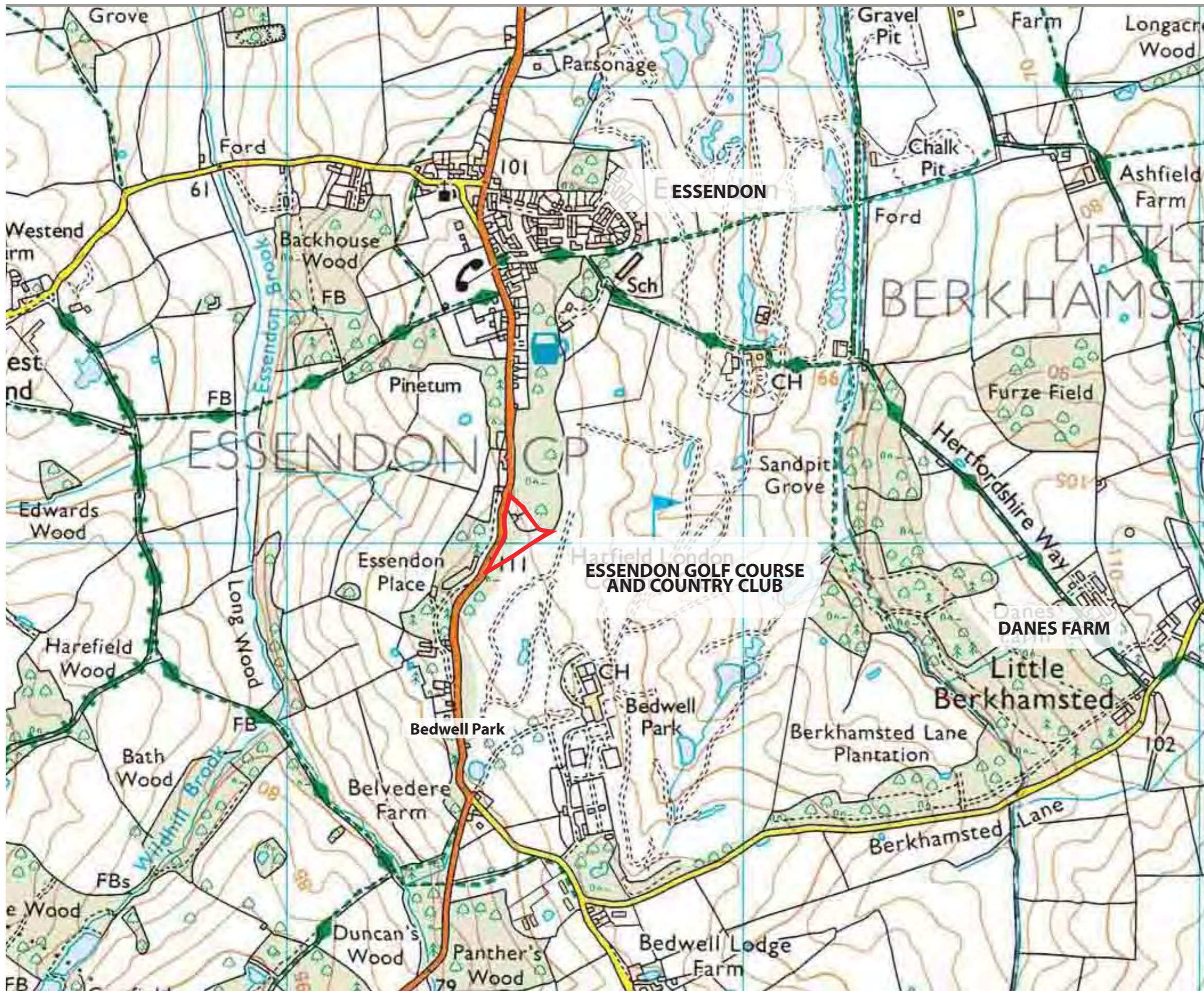
Views from the Southwest

- 10.3.8 The Plot 2 dwellinghouse and garage would be in a very similar position as the approved proposal and there would be no changes to their visibility from the road. The Plot 3 dwellinghouse would be set back further from High Road compared to the approved replacement Plot 1 dwellinghouse and would be located in a part of the site where the peripheral vegetation belt is both taller and deeper. Visibility would be restricted to a glimpsed, oblique view of the proposed Plot 3 dwellinghouse, set amongst a robust structure of existing and proposed tree/shrub vegetation, and seen though the entrance off High Road, as approved under Application No. 6/2017/1319/VAR. The proposed reinforcement tree/shrub

planting along the western site boundary would, with partial maturity, enclose all winter views of on-site built form with a resultant net enhancement in the vegetated character of views from High Road.

- 10.3.9 Overall, there would be low level adverse changes to existing day-time views at Year 1. The magnitude of visual change would remain low at Year 5 in spite of the growth of the proposed trees and peripheral shrub planting on account of the glimpsed view of the Plot 3 house through the site entrance. There would be negligible changes to existing night-time views. These day-time changes would be of slight significance for these low sensitivity users of High Road. These night-time changes would be of negligible significance.

Figures



- Key**
- Site Boundary
 - ■ ■ ■ ■ Public Footpaths
 - ◆ Long Distance Recreational Footpath

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Scarp landscape architecture
 environmental planning

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 45 Station Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon. RG9 1AT

Client
 Essendon Property Ventures Ltd

Project
 The Spinney, Essendon

Dwg Title
 Figure 1: Site Context Plan

Dwg No	Scale	Date
	NTS	Jun. 2017

THE SPINNEY, ESSENDON



Key

 Site Boundary

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Dwg Title
 Figure 2: Local Landscape Aerial Photograph

Dwg No	Scale	Date
	NTS	Jun. 2017

THE SPINNEY, ESSENDON



Key

 Site Boundary

 Site Appraisal Photographic Viewpoint Locations
 A

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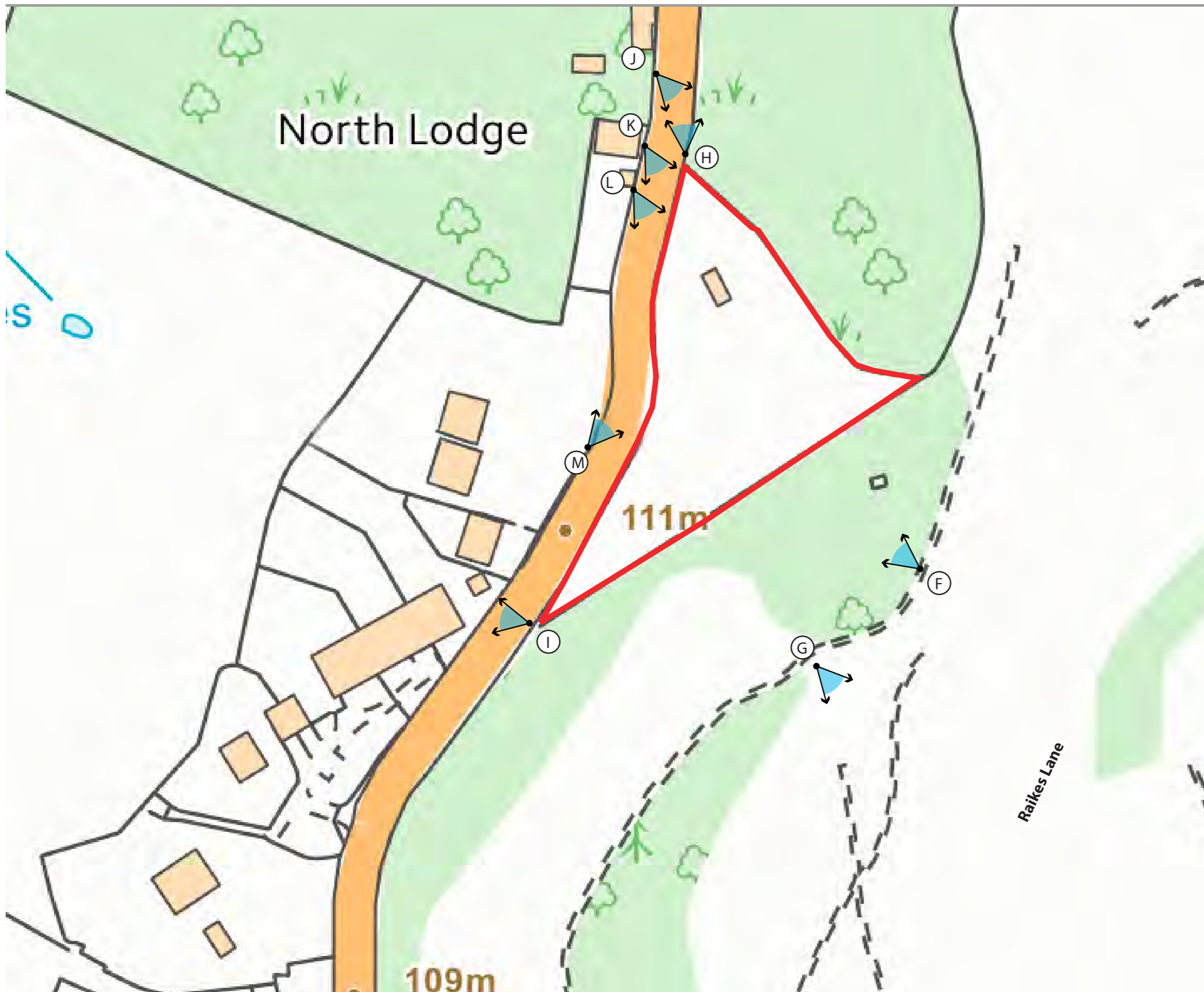
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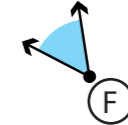
Dwg Title
 Figure 3: Site Landscape Aerial Photograph

Dwg No	Scale	Date
	NTS	Jun. 2017



Key

 Site Boundary

 Site Context Photographic Viewpoint Location (Photographs F-M)

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Project
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Dwg Title
Site context Photographic Viewpoint Location Plan

Dwg No. Scale Date
NTS Jun. 2017

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