

Landscape & Visual Technical Note

Project: Abbeymill Homes – Land East of Heyford Road, Kirtlington
(7669)

August 2023

1 Introduction

- 1.1. Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd has been commissioned by Abbeymill Homes to provide high level landscape and visual input in relation to the proposed residential development on Land off Heyford Road, Kirtlington. This includes a review of potential landscape and visual matters and provides an overview of any likely landscape effects, with specific regard to the Grade II Registered Park and Garden associated with Kirtlington House and Kirtlington Conservation Area within which the Site is located. A desktop study and site visit have been undertaken alongside a high level review of the landscape and visual situation in order to briefly assess the impact of development on the Site and identify any necessary landscape mitigation that may be required.
- 1.2. This technical note provides an overview of the baseline landscape and visual situation and potential landscape and visual effects providing further information to support the submitted application information. This note does not provide a full assessment of the landscape and visual impacts associated with the proposals; however given the scale and nature of the site and Proposed Scheme, it is considered this will provide sufficient level of landscape advice for the Site.
- 1.3. The Site lies within the administrative area of Cherwell District Council (CDC).
- 1.4. The proposal is for the erection of 14 new detached and semi-detached two storey dwellings with associated garaging and parking, landscaping and enabling works. The site visit, photographs, and landscape and visual technical note have been undertaken by a Landscape Architects and in line with relevant guidance including GLVIA3.

2 Baseline Assessment

- 2.1. The Site is located in Kirtlington, a large village approximately 10km to the east of Bicester and 14km to the north of Oxford, in Cherwell District, North Oxfordshire. The Site is at the northern end of the village of Kirtlington, to the east of Heyford Road which is the main road running through the village. The Site covers approximately 2.1ha in size and consists of an irregular-shaped field used for grazing, part of a smaller field used for grazing to the east and a small established woodland block to the south which extends in a strip along the road frontage to the west of the Site. Within the north-west corner of the Site are a group of generic 20th century brick houses set around a short lane, which is proposed as the access into the Proposed Development. These buildings currently have a variety of boundary treatments of poor quality and condition which create a low quality approach into the Site and detracts from the wider village scene.

Kirtlington Park and Garden

- 2.2. The Site is situated within the north-western corner of the Grade II Registered Park and Garden which covers approximately 305 hectares and is associated with the Grade I listed Kirtlington House (1746). The central part of the Park surrounding the House was designed by 'Capability' Brown in the 1750s. The Site is specifically part a series of small pastoral fields located along the western edge of the Park; to the west of the Grade II listed Home Farm House, north of the Grade II lodge and attached gates to Kirtlington Park (early/ mid-19th century) and to the east of Heyford Road where there are five Grade II listed properties opposite the Site's boundaries. The Site, Park and these listed properties also fall within the Kirtlington Conservation Area (CA) (see **ASP3** Designation Plan).
- 2.3. The Site was historically part of a large ten acre common grazing land known as Town Green. The Green is shown in the St John's map of Kirtlington from 1750 which shows that Home Farm House fronted onto Town Green. Town Green was enclosed in 1811-15 leaving Heyford Road as a strip, and was allotted to Kirtlington House effectively bringing it into the Park's boundaries although not part of the original parkland. The current landscape pattern of small pastoral fields can be dated to the 19th century when Town Green was subsumed into the Park, a new driveway to the house was constructed marked by a lodge house, and screening tree belts and dry stone wall were laid out to separate the enlarged Park from the village. A map from 1884 shows the current field boundaries.
- 2.4. The Site can therefore be considered to be a later addition to the Park and not part of the historic landscape and as such has a markedly different character to the adjoining parkland. Due to the screening provided by tree belts it is considered that it does not play a significant role in the setting of Kirtlington House and it does not associate with the designed features of the Park which include wide vistas, parkland trees in clumps and belts, large ponds and pleasure grounds around the House.

Site Description

- 2.5. Heyford Road (A4095) forms the western boundary to the Site. A 1.3m high dry stone wall, some parts in poor condition, runs along the road with a narrow verge up to the highway edge. The dry stone wall defines the edge of the Grade II listed Park and Garden and extends north and south through the village and along Akeman Street to the north of the village. However, as noted the edge of the designed parkland lies to the east of the Site. Within the Site, along the western boundary is a 10-13m wide strip of tree planting which includes a number of early

- mature and mature category A to C trees including ash and oak (see the Aspect Arboricultural Tree Schedule). This vegetation structure provides a good degree of physical and visual separation from the road corridor and the internal components of the Site are filtered in views from the road (see **Viewpoint 2**).
- 2.6. To the west of Heyford Road a number of recent cul-de-sacs with low-density detached and semi-detached houses extend at depth, including Akeman Spinney which was developed in 2018 and forms the northern extent of Kirtlington Village. Beyond the settlement edge to the west are pastoral fields, a lane to Northbrook and the Cherwell River Valley.
 - 2.7. To the north-west the Site wraps around a small post-war cul-de-sac of four dwellings named 'Jersey Cottages', which are served by an access lane running off Heyford Road. These are generic 20th century brick buildings with poor quality boundary treatments which make an adverse contribution to the approach to the village from the north, to the streetscene within the village and the setting to the historic Park. This group of cottages forms the northern edge of Kirtlington village on the eastern side of Heyford Road and were built in the corner of the field that makes up the Site. Access to the Proposed Development is proposed via the existing lane to Jersey Cottages. The boundaries with the Site are formed by the garden curtilages of these cottages which are open post and wire fences to the south and a close board wooden fence to the north and exert a domestic character on this part of the field (see **Viewpoint 'A'**).
 - 2.8. The northern boundary to the Site is formed by a linear strip of self-set scrub including hawthorn, blackthorn and damson associated with a small historic pond, and a wooden fence and gates which separate the Site from a pastoral field to the north. This field extends approximately 130m between the Site and Akeman Street, a Roman Road which runs east-west to a junction with Heyford Road to the north of the village. Beyond Akeman Street the landscape is characterised by large arable fields.
 - 2.9. The eastern boundary is varied. To the north-east the Site takes in a portion of the field to the north of Home Farm and therefore the boundary is undefined on the ground. This field is separated from the rest of the Site by a wooden fence. The Site boundary then skirts around the curtilage of Home Farm which includes the Grade II listed house, modern agricultural outbuildings and hardstanding. The curtilage is defined by a post and wire fence overgrown by semi-mature ornamental planting and self-set scrub including hazel, ash, hawthorn, bramble and Norway spruce in average condition. To the south of Home Farm the Site boundary is formed by the access gate from the drive, a stone wall covered in ivy and self-set scrub and to the south is formed by the established woodland belt. Further to the east of Home Farm is an area of established deciduous woodland and the Park beyond. Kirtlington House is located approximately 700m from the Site to the south-west.
 - 2.10. The south of the Site is formed by a woodland belt which is 32m-62m wide, and extends between Heyford Road and the drive to Home Farm. Part of this woodland has been assessed by the Arboricultural Tree Schedule and includes a group of below average/average mature trees including oak, ash, sycamore and horse chestnut as well as a number of Category B and C trees including ash, aspen, elm and hawthorn. The vegetation structure provides physical and visual separation from areas to the south, including the listed lodge and driveway into the Park. A view of the approach to Kirtlington House from Heyford Road is identified as one of the six important views in the Neighbourhood Plan (**Viewpoint 2**). Further south there are areas of established woodland planting associated with the Park, some of which are protected with a Woodland Tree Preservation Order, as well as a drive to Portway House, a Grade II listed house.

Settlement Pattern

- 2.11. Kirtlington village grew up around the junction of several Roman roads running north-south and east-west. The village is essentially linear in form and follows a north-south ridgeline east of the River Cherwell along which the A4095 runs. The village has two village greens and the historic settlement was concentrated between and around the greens and around the Church of St Mary to the south. Development within the village is focussed to the west of the A4095 as a result of Kirtlington Park, which was laid out in the 1750s and extends along the eastern edge of the village. Recent 20th and 21st development has been located to the south of the church and west of the A4095 and tends to be set within cul-de-sacs. It is noted that some modern developments have encroached into the pastoral fields along the boundary of the Park to the east of the A4095 such as Jersey Cottages, the Chestnuts, as well as individual buildings including the Village Hall. Historic housing in the village is constructed with limestone, is two storeys and along the A4095 is set close to the road.
- 2.12. A number of Public Rights of Way (PROWs) exist within the localised setting although there are none which traverse or abut the Site. The Site is on the western edge of Kirtlington Park through which two PROWs run. A section of the Oxfordshire Way Long Distance Path runs through Kirtlington village to Weston-on-the-Green and crosses Kirtlington Park east-west. It is 307m south of the Site at the nearest point. Crossing this within the Park and traversing north-east to Akeman Street is footpath 270/14/10, which is around 450m to the south-east of the Site at the nearest point. To the west, Bridleway 270/4/40, which also forms the Claude Duval Long Distance Path, follows Crowcastle Lane which runs north-west to Northbrook, and is parallel to the route of the River Cherwell. This Bridleway is 230m west of the Site at the nearest point. Further footpaths extend across the wider landscape to the north, south and west of Kirtlington including the Oxford Canal Walk Long Distance Path but are visually and physically separated from the Site by lower lying topography, vegetation structure and the main built up part of the village to the south and west of the Site.
- 2.13. In terms of topography, the village of Kirtlington is located on the eastern side of the Cherwell Valley. This is a narrow valley which dissects a wider area of undulating landform on a north-south axis, which falls from localised high points of around 131m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) 7km to the north of Kirtlington towards a small north-south running ridgeline. Kirtlington developed on the ridgeline which sits at approximately 100 - 104m AOD. The landform falls gently to the east, south and west of the village. The Site itself is set on the higher ground of the ridgeline between 104m and 106m AOD. The landscape falls away within the rest of the Park to the east with Kirtlington House located on a localised high point.
- 2.14. There is very limited intervisibility with the Site from publicly accessible locations due to a combination of landform, built form within the village and the mature vegetation structure around the Site and in the localised setting.
- 2.15. The location and context of the application site is illustrated on **ASP1** Site Location Plan and **ASP2** Site and Setting Plan.

Landscape Related Policy

- 2.16. The Site is covered by the policies of the CDC adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) 2015, the 'saved' policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan (1996) and the Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance (SPDs and SPGs), including the Cherwell Design Guide SPD

- 2017 and Countryside Design Summary SPG 1998. The Local Plan is currently being reviewed and will replace the current Plan and saved policies.
- 2.17. Policies of landscape relevance identified within the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 include; Policy ESD10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and Natural Environment; Policy ESD11: Conservation Target Areas; Policy ESD13: Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement; Policy ESD15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment and Policy ESD17: Green Infrastructure.
 - 2.18. Policies of landscape relevance in the 'saved' policies in the Cherwell Local Plan (1996) include; Policy H18: New dwellings in the countryside; Policy C7: Landscape conservation; Policy C8: Sporadic development in the open countryside; Policy C10: Historic landscapes, parks and gardens and historic battlefields, Policy C23: Retention of features contributing to the character or appearance of a conservation area; Policy C27: Development in villages to respect historic settlement pattern. It is noted that these policies date from 1996 and will be replaced by the Local Plan Review.
 - 2.19. Kirtlington and Bletchingdon Parks and Woods are designated as a Conservation Target Area (CTA 12) under **Policy ESD11**. Consideration should be given to ensuring that any development within a CTA increases connectivity of wildlife habitats and delivers net gains for biodiversity.
 - 2.20. CDC commissioned a Village Analysis of Category A Villages (2016) for the adopted Local Plan. The Analysis describes the village and states that land to the east of the village has a higher sensitivity due to the presence of Kirtlington Park which it also identifies as a Potential Local Wildlife Site (pLWS)..
 - 2.21. The Village Analysis map associated with this report (16-1C) differentiates between the Registered Park and Garden extents which are washed over in green and the character of the 'Parkland with large clumps of trees and isolated trees' shown in a hatch. The Parkland is shown as running up to the boundaries of Home Farm (see **Appendix 1**). It also identifies as significant the linear woodland feature along the western boundary and identifies short, medium and long distance views from the village. None of these views affect the Site.
 - 2.22. The Cherwell Design Guide SPD (2017) summarises the character areas within the Countryside Design Summary (1998). It gives advice on masterplanning which should be referred to.
 - 2.23. Kirtlington village is partially covered by a large CA which encompasses the 305 hectares of Kirtlington Park and the historic centre of the village. The Site falls within the CA Boundary which skirts around Jersey Cottages following the Registered Park boundary. The CA Appraisal (2011) identifies the Site as falling within the Kirtlington Park Character Area, although being located at the edges it does not associate with the key features of the Character Area.
 - 2.24. The CA Appraisal highlights six important views which frame and characterise the character and appearance of the CA. These include a view into Kirtlington Park from Heyford Road along the driveway to the south of the Site. **Viewpoint 2** is taken just to the south of this viewpoint and demonstrates the intervening belt of woodland which helps screen the internal part of the Site in this view.
 - 2.25. The CA Management Plan requires the retention of important trees, hedgerows and encourages the planting of appropriate species.

2.26. Kirtlington is covered by the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 (MCNP) which was adopted in May 2019 and forms part of the Development Plan for Cherwell District. **Policy PD1: Development at Category A Villages** lists criteria for residential development in Category A villages of Kirtlington, Fritwell and Steeple Aston outside of the Settlement Area. This states that:

- a) *The site should be immediately adjacent to the settlement area*
- b) *The site should preferably be previously developed land and not land of best and most versatile agricultural value*
- c) *The development should avoid creating significant adverse landscape impact.*
- d) *The development should avoid creating adverse impacts on the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation areas and the significance of other heritage assets (see Appendix K: Heritage and Character Assessment).*

2.27. **Policy PD4: Protection of Important Views and Vistas** states that development proposals must demonstrate sensitivity to the important views and vistas which are identified in Table 4 on page 34. In Kirtlington this includes the six views identified in the CA Appraisal as well as views of all church towers in the MCNP area and a protected skyline is identified. In addition the AECOM Heritage and Character Assessment (2017) identifies views west from within Kirtlington Park towards the church which is a landmark feature. Development on the Site would not impact on these views and there are no reverse views from the Site towards the Church.

2.28. **Policy PD5 Building and Site Design** states that full regard should be given to the Heritage and Character Assessment in Appendix K.

Site Planning History

2.29. The Site has been subject to applications in 2015 and 2017. Under Planning Application 15/01128/OUT in 2015 34 dwellings were proposed. As part of this development 1-4 Jersey Cottages were to be demolished and up to 11 affordable homes provided. This application was withdrawn. In 2016 Pre-Application advice was sought under 16/00329/PREAPP, however at that stage the scheme was not considered acceptable in the proposed form and scale due to impacts on the rural character of the village and the impact on the traditional settlement pattern. In 2017 under Planning Application 17/00011/SO it was decided that there was no requirement for submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

2.30. In 2017 Planning Application 17/00539/OUT was withdrawn. In the same year Application 17/01688/OUT was submitted. In 2017 Application 17/01688/OUT was submitted. This proposed 20 dwellings, 7 of which were to be affordable, with an altered red line boundary which retained 1-4 Jersey Cottages. It also included a linear area of open space to the west of the Grade II listed Home Farm House. This application was supported in principle by Kirtlington Parish Council due in part to the high level of support within the village. This application was refused for the reasons summarised below:

- *The proposal failed to respect the traditional linear settlement of Kirtlington, was an inappropriate form of a cul-de-sac, and was contrary to Policies H18, C8, C27, C28, C30 (saved policies from the Cherwell Local Plan 1996) and ESD13 and ESD15.*
- *The proposed development would cause considerable harm to the heritage assets of the Conservation Area and the Grade II Registered Park and settings of listed buildings and therefore contrary to Policies ESD13 and ESD15.*

- *The Council had a up to date 5 year housing land supply and was contrary to the Policy Villages 2 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031.*
- *The LPA was not convinced that the infrastructure required would be delivered and so would be contrary to Policies BSC3 (Affordable Housing) and INF1 (Infrastructure) of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031.*

2.31. It is considered that much of the housing surrounding the Site is recent and not historic and set within cul-de-sacs, including Jersey Cottages, which has resulted in a more irregular pattern of development in this part of the village. Development on this Site would reflect this modern pattern. The scheme has been reduced to the smaller number of 14 dwellings, which will have a corresponding smaller impact on the Registered Park and Garden and Listed buildings. The design of the Proposed Development has avoided extending any further north than the rear boundaries of Jersey Cottages and sought to wrap around these existing properties to minimise the impact of the Development. The Proposals also aim to repair a long section of the dry stone wall along Heyford Road and would upgrade the entrance to Jersey Cottages, as well as enhancing the existing boundary vegetation and safeguarding its longevity. This will make a positive contribution to the streetscene within the CA and the setting of the heritage assets.

Landscape Character

2.32. Natural England have produced a countrywide landscape character assessment resulting in the National Character Areas (NCAs). The site sits within the eastern part of NCA 107 Cotswolds. The dominant pattern of the Cotswolds is a steep scarp crowned by a high, open wold and the beginning of a long rolling dip slope cut by a series of increasingly wooded valleys. At this scale the NCA provides a high level of context only as it covers a significant geographical area.

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

2.33. Cascading down in detail, the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) 2004 is the current landscape character assessment for Oxfordshire which should be used in conjunction with landscape character assessments available at a district level. The assessment identifies the Site and localised area to be located within the 'Wooded Estatelands' Landscape Type (LT) which includes areas to the north of Kirtlington including Northbrook. This LT is described as; ***"A wooded estate landscape characterised by arable farming and small villages with a strong vernacular character."***

2.34. The key characteristics relevant to the Site are identified as;

- ***Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes.***
- ***Large parklands and mansion houses.***
- ***A regularly-shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.***
- ***Small villages with strong vernacular character.***

2.35. The Site falls within the smaller Local Character Area (LCA) of Middleton Stoney (CW59) described as being; ***"dominated by large arable fields and localised improved grassland. There are smaller grass fields around villages, particularly Bletchington and Kirtlington. Woodland is a strong landscape element, and large woodland blocks are associated with the parklands and estates. It is mainly ancient semi-natural woodland, with species such as ash, oak, hazel, and field maple, as well as mixed plantations. Throughout the landscape, there***

are belts of young mixed and coniferous plantations next to roadside hedges and they often function as field boundaries. Hedgerow trees such as ash, sycamore and occasionally oak are found in some roadside hedges, but they are sparser to the north where there is more intensive arable cropping. In parts there are dense corridors of willow and ash, belts of semi-natural woodland and poplar plantations bordering watercourses. Hedgerows vary from tall, thick species-rich hedges with shrubs such as wayfaring tree, dogwood, hazel, field maple, spindle and wild privet through to low, gappy internal field hedges. Parklands are a prominent feature throughout and they include Middleton, Bignell and Tusmore Parks in the north and Kirtlington and Bletchington Parks in the south.”

- 2.36. The Landscape Strategy is identified as ***“Safeguard and enhance the characteristic landscape of parklands, estates, woodlands, hedgerows and unspoilt villages.”***
- 2.37. A number of landscape and biodiversity guidelines are also included within OWLS, predominantly relating to the retention and enhancement of field patterns, hedgerows and woodlands, conserving parklands as well as maintaining the nucleated pattern of settlements, promoting local materials and appropriate scale of development to the landscape type.

CDC Level Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.38. At a district level, CDC produced a Countryside Design Summary in 1998 which is an SPG. This describes the character of the countryside, settlements and buildings within the district.
- 2.39. The Countryside Design Summary places Kirtlington within the western edge of the Ploughley Limestone Plateau LCA, adjacent to the Cherwell Valley LCA. Key characteristics of this area relevant to the Site are:
- ***Extensive remains of 18th century parkland and estate farmland characterise the area. Six parklands survive containing woodland and pasture with fine specimens of single trees such as beech, oak, lime and horse chestnut, enclosed by limestone walls and groups of Corsican and Scots Pine. Adjacent to the parklands, farmland displays estate farm characteristics such as railings and avenues of trees.***
 - ***Woodland cover is comparatively extensive in some parts of this area, either as long plantation belts bordering streams or roads adjacent to arable farmland, or in association with historic parkland.***
- 2.40. Recommendations for development include: ***‘Development in historic parklands or within their setting must maintain or enhance the specific character, which defines this part of the District.’***
- 2.41. The character of villages in the district is identified as:
- ***Most villages are small and are not prominent in the landscape over large distances due to landform and woodland cover.***
 - ***Villages are mainly linear in form, even where they occur at the intersection of roads.***
 - ***Village edges are open in places and in others enclosed by woodland and limestone walls associated with the parkland which fringes the settlements. Individual trees are important features within many villages.***

- 2.42. Recommendations include: *“In most locations it would be appropriate for small-scale development to be interspersed with public open space and woodland planting to integrate it into the landscape.”*
- 2.43. A more recent Landscape Character Assessment for Kirtlington can be found in the MCNP: the Heritage and Character Assessment 2017 (Appendix K). The key characteristics identified which are relevant to the Site are:
- **Linear settlement following the A4095 along the ridgeline;**
 - **Strong tree cover and enclosure to the east of the village;**
 - **Leafy character;**
 - **Large number of surviving heritage assets, both designated and non-designated.**
- 2.44. The Assessment identifies the following relevant sensitivities to change relating to heritage and the rural character of the village:
- **Kirtlington Conservation Area;**
 - **Heritage assets and their landscape settings;**
 - **The linear character of the village along the A4095.**
- 2.45. The Site itself is adjacent to built form to the west and screened by established woodland belts to the east, south and west. It is therefore not readily seen from much of the localised context of the Park or village, apart from intervisibility with existing dwellings of Home Farm House and Jersey Cottages on the boundaries and a short section of Akeman Street to the north. It is considered that it therefore makes a limited contribution in terms of open land on the settlement edge and a limited contribution to the character of the wider designed Park.
- 2.46. The Site’s openness, tranquillity or rural qualities are diminished due to the presence of Jersey Cottages to the west which exert a domestic character on the field due to the open garden boundaries as well as the land uses at Home Farm to the east which include modern outbuildings and areas of hardstanding. Beyond the historic vegetation structure situated on the Site’s boundaries, the internal components of the Site offer more limited value in terms of landscape. The Site does not associate with its historic use as common grazing ground within the Town Green and being a later addition to Kirtlington Park does not associate with the characteristics of the wider Park, as acknowledged in the Map shown in **Appendix 1** which illustrates a differentiation between the Registered Parkland and the Parkland Character of large clumps of trees and isolated trees.
- 2.47. With reference to the updated box 5.1 of GLVIA3, the recreational nature of the Site is considered to be **Low** as it is not publicly accessible although the wider landscape setting has PRoW routes through it. The natural heritage, landscape condition, associations, distinctiveness, perceptual, and functional qualities are considered to be **Medium** due to the known history of the Site and the established tree belts which are associated with the development of the Park. The cultural heritage can be considered to be **High** due to its location within a Registered Park and Garden and location adjacent to a designed landscape.
- 2.48. Overall, it is concluded that the Site and its immediate context are of **Medium** landscape susceptibility and **Medium** landscape value. On balance, the Site and its immediate context is judged to be of **Medium sensitivity** to the Proposed Development. The wider landscape of both the Middleton Stoney LCA (OWLS) and the Ploughley Limestone Plateau LCA (CDC

Countryside Design Summary) are judged to be **Medium/ High sensitivity**. The wider Kirtlington Park is judged to be of **High sensitivity** in the areas which make up the original extents of the designed parkland.

- 2.49. As such it is clear that the Site has capacity to support small scale, appropriate residential development that reflects the current pattern and scale of development within this part of the village. Recent residential development along the west of Heyford Road and the unattractive four existing dwellings at the Site entrance demonstrates the changing character of this part of the village which utilises small cul-de-sacs as a development pattern.

The Visual Environment

- 2.50. In order to assess the visibility of the Site, a number of photographs have been taken from publicly accessible viewpoints, to illustrate the visual environment within which the Site is set. Whilst the assessment is not exhaustive, it is considered that the views provide a fair representation of the Site's visibility within the localised and wider visual environment. Specific regard has been given to the PRoWs which traverse the localised landscape within the Registered Park and Garden to the east of the Site (footpath 270/14/20 and the Oxfordshire Way Long Distance Path).
- 2.51. The photographs were taken in January 2023 by a Landscape Architect and illustrate the visual environment in which the Site is set and represent winter views before vegetation was in full leaf. The day was clear affording good visibility at middle and longer distances. The photographs were taken using a 35mm equivalent digital SLR camera at a focal length of 50mm in line with current Landscape Institute guidelines. See Aspect Plan **VLP**.
- 2.52. Overall, views of the Site are not readily available from the localised or wider landscape setting and largely restricted to a short section of Akeman Street to the north, a short section of Heyford Road and from houses bordering the Site, as a result of the undulating topography, robust vegetation structure and intervening built form within the village. **Viewpoints A, 1 and 2** demonstrate how the vegetation structure surrounding the Site screen views from the south and east and help filter views from Heyford Road to the west, even in winter.
- 2.53. Views of the Site from Heyford Road are limited to glimpsed winter views from close-range locations as demonstrated in **Viewpoint 2** which shows the extent of vegetation along the Site's boundaries. A glimpse of the south of the Proposed Development may be afforded in a small gap to the north of the lodge, but this would be in winter only. Further west existing built form and intervening vegetation prevents middle and longer distance views, as shown by a view across the fields in **Viewpoint 3**.
- 2.54. To the south and south-west of the Site views are not possible due to intervening built form in the village, vegetation structures along the network of roads and falling topography. This is illustrated in **Viewpoint 4** and **5** which are both on the Oxfordshire Way Long Distance Path. Further south-west along Mill Lane the landform falls towards the Cherwell River, hiding the village from view.
- 2.55. A series of viewpoints are included from the public footpaths within the Registered Park and Garden to the south-east and east of the Site (**Viewpoints 6-9**). **Viewpoints 6** and **7** taken from the Oxfordshire Way Long Distance Path and **Viewpoint 9** from footpath 270/14/10 and show the character of the Park of groups and individual parkland trees and undulating landform. These act to separate the Park from the village and also restrict any views of the Site.

- Viewpoint 8** is taken from footpath 270/14/10 where it traverses to the rear of Kirtlington House. The viewpoint is looking north-west and is 460m from the Site. The lodge house at the entrance along Heyford Road is barely discernible, and the woodland belts associated with the Site and visible to the north but partly hidden by the rising landform and interrupted by stands of mature specimen trees. Views of the Site are not possible from this location which is close to the Grade I listed House.
- 2.56. Akeman Street forms the northern boundary to the Park. Views into the Park are afforded for motorists under the canopy of mature trees along the boundary. The Site is not visible until the receptor is immediately north of the Site near the junction with Heyford Road. This is shown in **Viewpoint 10** which illustrates the close range view across the intervening field. The wooden fence which delineates part of the northern boundary of the Site is visible as well as Jersey Cottages and new dwellings at Akeman Spinney, which are clearly visible above the Park boundary wall. There are similar glimpsed views of the Site along part of the approach into the village. Mature trees in the corner of the field at the junction of Akeman Street and Heyford Road and dense hedgerows along the roads mean that the visual envelope to the north is limited as shown in **Viewpoint 11** which is taken from the northern approach into Kirtlington along the A4095.
- 2.57. Overall, the Site is a small parcel that suffers from negative visual influences arising from the surrounding baseline of the poor quality and condition of the built form and enclosing elements associated with Jersey Cottages and modern outbuildings to the north of Home Farm House. It is located within an established settlement context and is visually well enclosed from the village to the south and west and wider parkland setting to the east. The robust and established vegetation structure, topography and intervening built components limit visibility of the Site from all locations apart from partial or glimpsed views from the immediate north along a short section of Akeman Street, and from locations along Heyford Road to the immediate west and north on the approach into the village. Where it is seen from these locations the Site is seen in the context of existing built form including Jersey Cottages and Akeman Spinney. The village and the Site are not evident in any longer distance views.

3 Landscape and Visual Review

- 3.1. With a development of this type there is a risk of adverse landscape and visual effects if the proposals are not carefully and sympathetically designed. The published OWLS, Cherwell Countryside Design Summary and the MCNP set out guidelines and recommendations for new development in order to ensure they can be successfully integrated within their context.
- 3.2. It is envisaged that the development of the Site will adopt a high quality, landscape-led approach ensuring that the proposals can be integrated without significant adverse effects upon the receiving landscape character or visual environment. This is illustrated on the Landscape Strategy Plan **ASP5**. Any development within the Site should incorporate the following elements:
- A comprehensive scheme of landscaping utilising locally native species and species which are found within the adjacent parkland to reflect the location and create a sense of place, including:
 - Introduction of additional tree planting along and within the boundaries to reinforce the existing tree belts and mitigate for trees in poor condition or at risk of ash dieback. This will also help to mitigate for glimpsed close-range winter views from Heyford Road.
 - Creation of a robust mixed native landscape buffer to the northern boundary which will help to filter views of the Proposed Development from Akeman street and the approach into the village, as well as creating green infrastructure links across the Site. This will increase biodiversity and meet targets as required by the CTA.
 - Inclusion of semi-mature standard trees of species found within the wider Park which could include beech, horse chestnut or lime.
 - Inclusion of species rich wildflower areas within areas of Public Open Space (POS) and around SuDS features, in particular to the south of the Proposed Development.
 - Inclusion of wildlife friendly ornamental species in close proximity to new dwellings where the use of native species is not appropriate.
 - Offsets to be established along the boundaries to ensure the retention of the existing vegetation structure and to provide an appropriate landscape buffer. This should include some replacement tree planting for trees that are in poor condition or at risk within the historic woodland belts to the south and west.
 - The setting of the listed Home Farm House to be respected with an area of open space to the west of the building. Additional planting around the eastern boundary will reinforce separation between the Proposed Development and Home Farm.
 - Properties of two storeys in height and of a comparable design, scale, size, form and density, to reflect the existing development within the immediate setting of the village which takes into account guidance in the MCNP.

- Incorporate a simple palette of materials and architectural detailing that reflect the local vernacular.
 - The design of the Proposed Development has avoided extending any further north than the rear boundaries of Jersey Cottages and sought to wrap around these existing properties to minimise the impact of the Development.
- 3.3. The development of the scheme has considered these elements as part of the design rationale and progression of the layout and as illustrated on the Landscape Strategy Plan (refer to Plan **ASP5**) can be incorporated. This will ensure that a sympathetic scheme is created that respects its landscape and visual context.

Landscape Character Review

- 3.4. As outlined in section 2, the assessment concludes that the Site and its immediate context are of **Medium** landscape susceptibility and **Medium** landscape value. On balance, the Site and its immediate context is judged to be of **Medium sensitivity** to the Proposed Development. The Middleton Stoney LCA (OWLS), the Ploughley Limestone Plateau LCA (Cherwell) and Kirtlington MCNP Character Assessment are judged to be **Medium/High sensitivity**.
- 3.5. It is considered that the wider landscape of the Grade II listed Park and CA is of **High Sensitivity**. As has been shown the Site is well visually and physically separated from adjacent areas within the wider Park and CA and it is considered that the Proposed Development will not impact adversely on the characteristics of its setting.
- 3.6. In terms of effects upon the published Character Assessments, the Site makes a small but positive contribution to the character of the Middleton Stoney LCA (OWLS), the Ploughley Limestone Plateau LCA (Cherwell) and Character of Kirtlington as described in the MCNP, as such, the degree of change to its key characteristics will be limited. The impact on landscape character will largely be associated with the change from the existing grassed paddocks located adjacent to the settlement edge of Kirtlington to that of small-scale residential development that sits within the existing field pattern.
- 3.7. Although it is acknowledged that the settlement edge will be drawn further east, the Site will not extend the village any further north and the Proposed Development will be contained by the existing established tree belts to the east, south and west. The settlement to the west of the Site is mainly characterised by modern residential development of similar age, layout and density. The Proposed Development reflects this pattern of development and, as such, is generally consistent.
- 3.8. The judgement on the magnitude of effect on the CDC LCA and OWLS LCA takes into account the small scale of development in combination with additional landscape strategy and mitigation measures and on balance it is considered to be a **Low adverse** magnitude of effect. The combination of the **Medium** landscape sensitivity attributed to the LCA and the **Medium** adverse landscape magnitude of effect predicted, results in a **Moderate/Minor adverse** significance of effect. This will not result in significant harm to the published Character Assessments.
- 3.9. In terms of magnitude of effect on the character of the Site and its immediate context it is judged to be **Medium adverse**. The combination of the **Medium** landscape sensitivity attributed to the site and the **Medium** adverse landscape magnitude of effect predicted, also

results in a **Moderate adverse** significance of effect. This will not result in significant harm to the landscape character of the site and its immediate context.

- 3.10. It is acknowledged that the introduction of residential built form will result in degree of change to the Site itself, however it will be located on a site which is influenced by existing residential built form. The geographical extent of adverse effects arising from this will be largely restricted to the Site and its immediate context by the strong pattern of vegetation in the surrounding area and the built form of Kirtlington village. Furthermore, the Proposed Development is generally consistent with the character of this part of the village in terms of its form and density.

Visual Amenity Review

- 3.11. As noted in section 3 and illustrated on the Photographic Record, direct views into the fields that make up the Site are limited and as such have no effect on the important views identified with the MCNP/ CA Appraisal. The Proposed Development will be evident in **Viewpoint 10** to the immediate north of the Site for Medium Sensitivity receptors and from close proximity along Heyford Road, which will be mostly apparent in winter views. In these views the Proposed Development will be seen in the context of the existing settlement and will also be set within a landscape framework which will soften and filter views from these locations. The magnitude of change upon close range views from the road is considered to **Low adverse**, upon a **Medium sensitivity receptor** resulting in **Moderate adverse** significance of effect. This will not result in significant harm to the visual amenities from these locations.
- 3.12. Residents at Jersey Cottages and Home Farm House which are immediately adjacent to the field and not screened by vegetation will have direct views of the Proposed Development.
- 3.13. In terms of views from the localised landscape setting, specific regard has been given to the PRoWs within the rest of Kirtlington Park which extends to the east and south of the Site. It is considered that the Proposed Development will not be visible from any of the publicly accessible locations within the park as shown in **Viewpoints 6-9**. The Proposed Development will also be hidden from view in views from the village to the south and west. This will result in **No Change** and will not harm the visual amenity of the localised landscape setting in these areas.
- 3.14. There will be limited change to the streetscene along Heyford Road as the existing vehicular access to Jersey Cottages will be used to access the Proposed Development. The dry stone wall will need to be set further back to allow for visibility splays, however as part of the scheme the wall will be repaired along the extent of the Site boundaries. The magnitude of change upon close-range views from the road is considered to **Low adverse**, upon a **Medium sensitivity receptor** resulting in **Moderate/Minor adverse** significance of effect. This will not result in significant harm to the visual amenities of the localised streetscene.
- 3.15. Clearly, existing built form to the west of Heyford Road already exists as well as the small cul-de-sac at Jersey Cottages. The Site is also located adjacent to the existing developed settlement edge. The introduction of 14 new dwellings on this Site will not result in any adverse effects in views from the rest of the Registered Park and Garden to the east, nor on the approach into the village from the north. Where it is glimpsed from locations along Heyford Road immediately adjacent to the Site or from Akeman Street to the immediate north it will be seen in the context of existing built form and so will not appear jarring or out of context.

4 Summary

- 4.1. As set out above, the Site is located adjacent to the existing settlement boundary and is influenced by residential built form as well as a number of built elements to the north of Home Farm House. Although the Site is within the Grade II listed Kirtlington Park it is well enclosed by the surrounding tree belts and built components in the village and internally is of **Medium** landscape value as it is historically a later addition to the Park and not part of the original designed landscape. As such it is considered that the Site has capacity to support small scale, appropriate residential development in keeping with other recent development.
- 4.2. In addition, the adoption of a sensitive approach to the design development of the Proposals ensures that the Proposed Development can be successfully integrated in this location without significant adverse landscape or visual effects. The landscape strategy incorporates the necessary recommendations and guidelines set out within the published documents including the MCNP, Countryside Design Summary and OWLS.
- 4.3. The scale, form, pattern and urban grain of the Proposed Scheme will be comparable to recent developments to the west of Heyford Road including Akeman Spinney as well as within the immediate localised context and as such would not be out of character. It is therefore considered that the design, scale, form and layout of the proposal would form a logical complement to the existing scale, pattern and character of development within Kirtlington and would not be out of context.
- 4.4. As with any development of this nature, there will inevitably initially be a degree of landscape harm, however this harm is restricted to the Site and its immediate setting only, will not be significant and can be adequately mitigated for. The site is physically and visually well contained, it has some influence from existing built form and as such the introduction of 14 properties would not be out of character. The Proposed Development would not be out of context to that which exists within the locality and presents opportunities to make use of a small parcel of land which is screened from the majority of localised and wider viewpoints. It is considered that the Proposed Development will not give rise to any significant adverse landscape or visual effects in the longer term, or that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme.
- 4.5. It is considered that development on the Site can be accommodated in this location without detriment to the localised or wider visual amenity and that the integrity of the receiving landscape character will be preserved. Development on this Site will not be readily perceived from the localised or wider setting to the village nor will it adversely impact the existing character of Heyford Road.
- 4.6. In conclusion, it is considered the proposals would result in a logical development that can be integrated without significant harm to the character or appearance of the area. It is concluded that the proposals are supportable from a landscape and visual perspective.

Aspect Landscape Planning Ltd

August 2023

ASPECT PLANS

Plan ASP1 Site Location Plan

Plan ASP2 Site Setting Plan

Plan ASP3 Designation Plan

Plan ASP4 Topography Plan

Plan ASP5 Landscape Strategy Plan

VLP Photo viewpoint location and photosheets

Appendix 1 Village Analysis Map



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0 250 500 m

Key:

- Application Site Boundary
- Public Right Of Way
- Road
- Watercourse Link
- Woodland
- Railway Track
- Building
- Contour Line

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D

aspect landscape planning

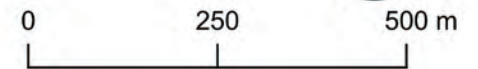
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Land off Heyford Road, Kirtlington
Site Location Plan

CLIENT
Abbeymill Homes

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DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION		
7669/ASP1/SLP			



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- Key:
- Application Site Boundary
 - Public Right Of Way
 - Road
 - Watercourse Link
 - Woodland
 - Railway Track
 - Building
 - Contour Line

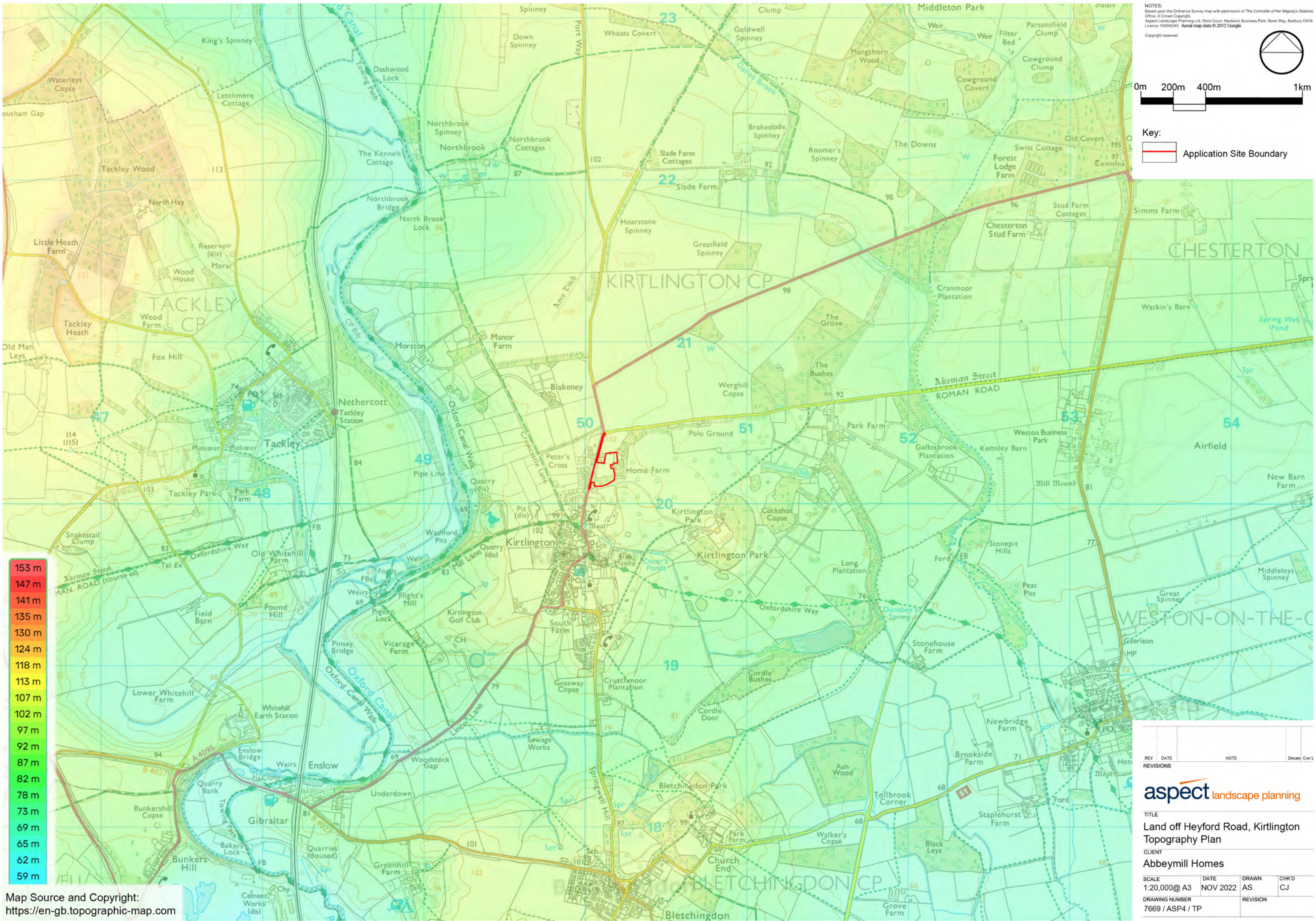
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REVISIONS				

aspect landscape planning

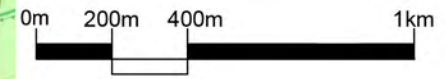
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 Site and Setting

CLIENT
 Abbeymill Homes

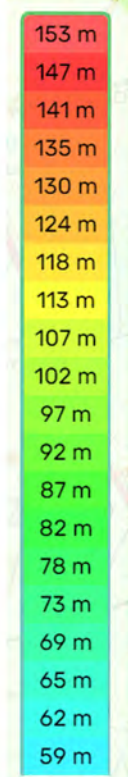
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8089/ASP2/SS			



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Key:
 Application Site Boundary



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<https://en-gb.topographic-map.com>

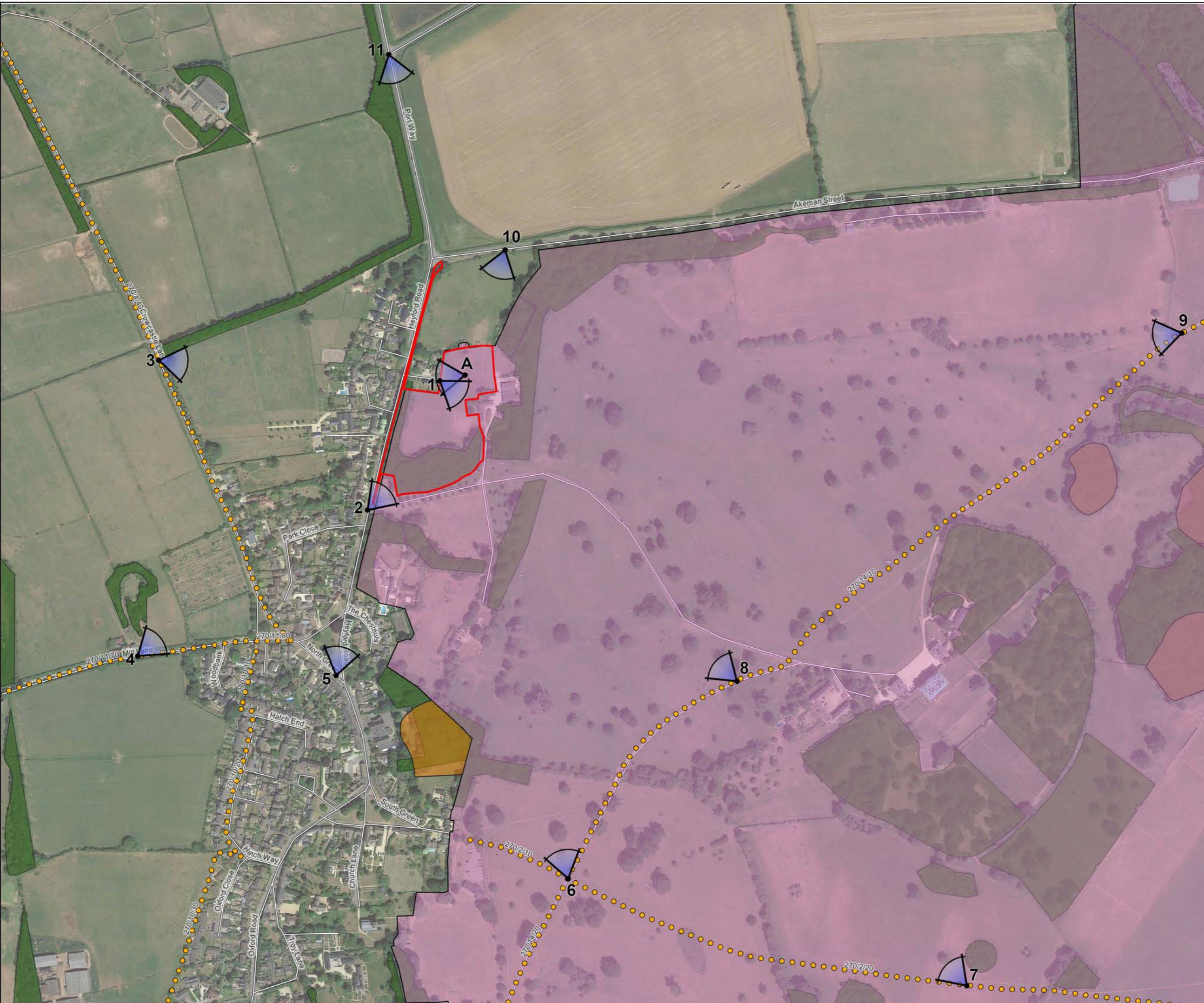
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REVISIONS				

aspect landscape planning

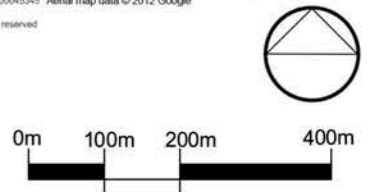
TITLE
 Land off Heyford Road, Kirtlington
 Topography Plan

CLIENT
 Abbeymill Homes

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHK'D
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DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION		
7669 / ASP4 / TP			



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- Key:
- Application Site Boundary
 - Public Right of Way
 - Scheduled Monuments
 - Parks And Gardens
 - Ancient Woodland
 - Woodland
 - Roads
 - Viewpoint Location

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN	CHK'D
REVISIONS				

aspect landscape planning

TITLE
 Land off Heyford Road, Kirtlington
 Viewpoint Location Plan

CLIENT
 Abbeymill Homes

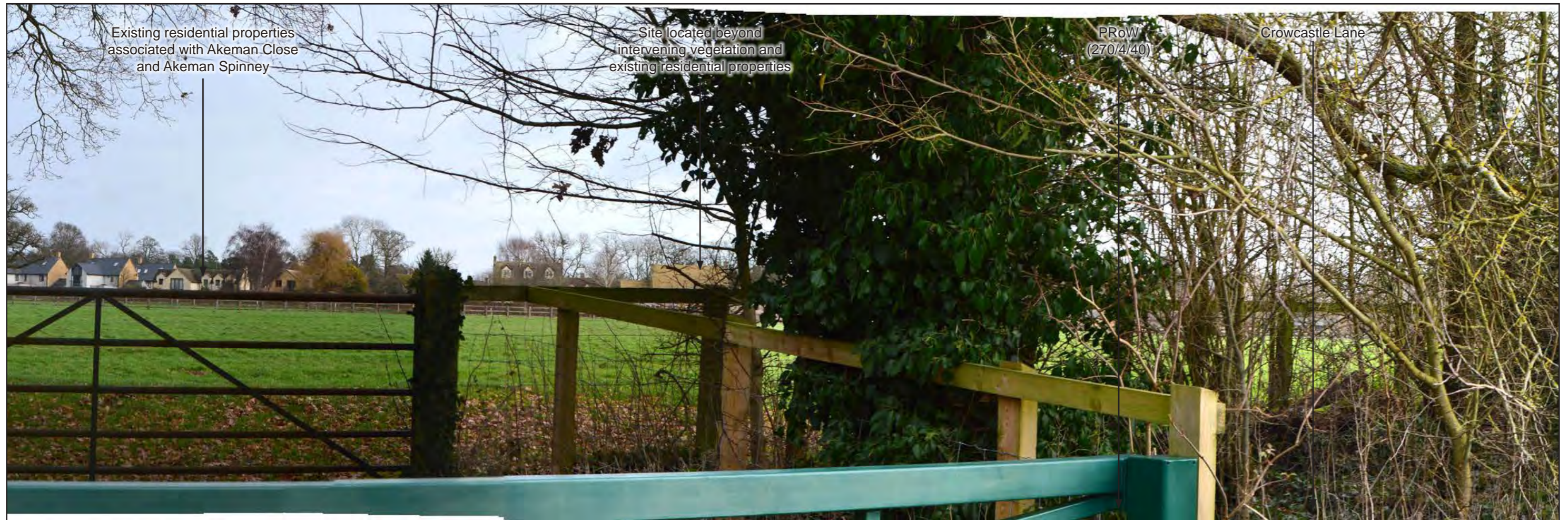
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DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION		
7669/VLP			



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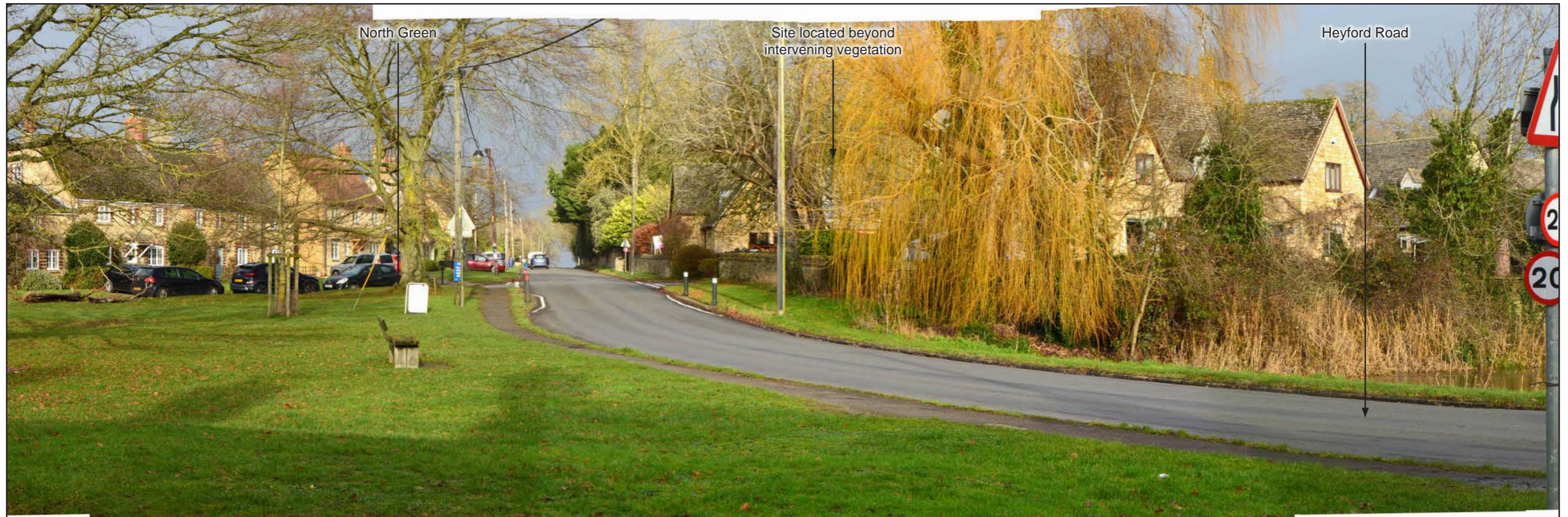
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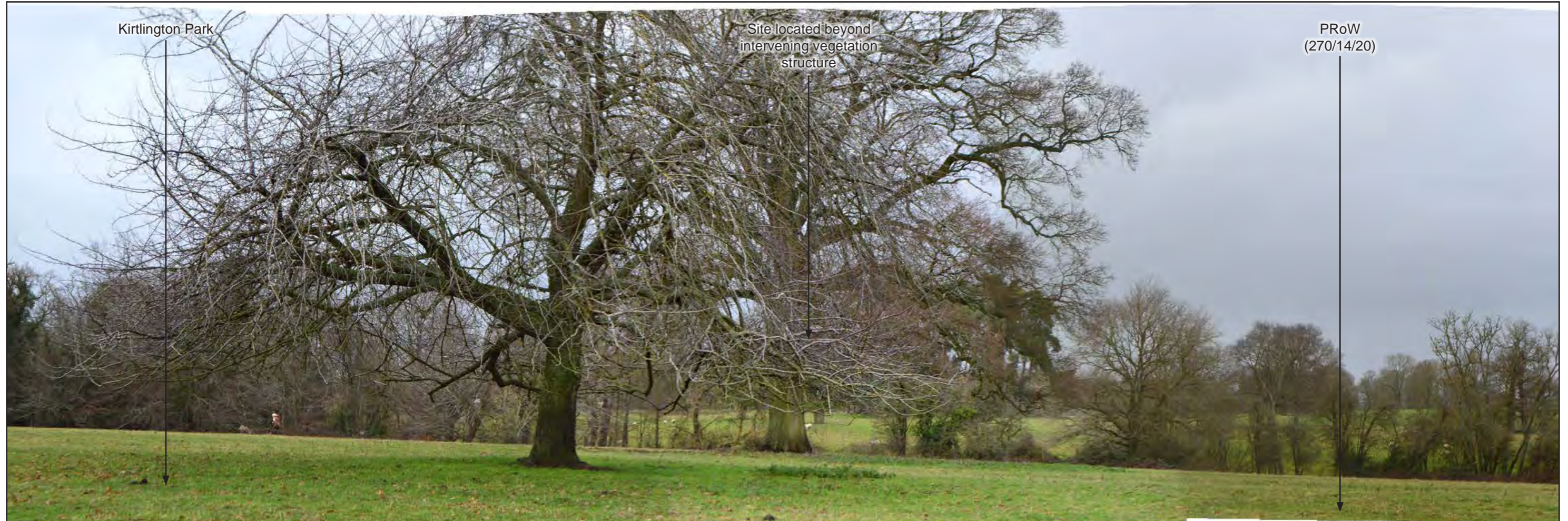
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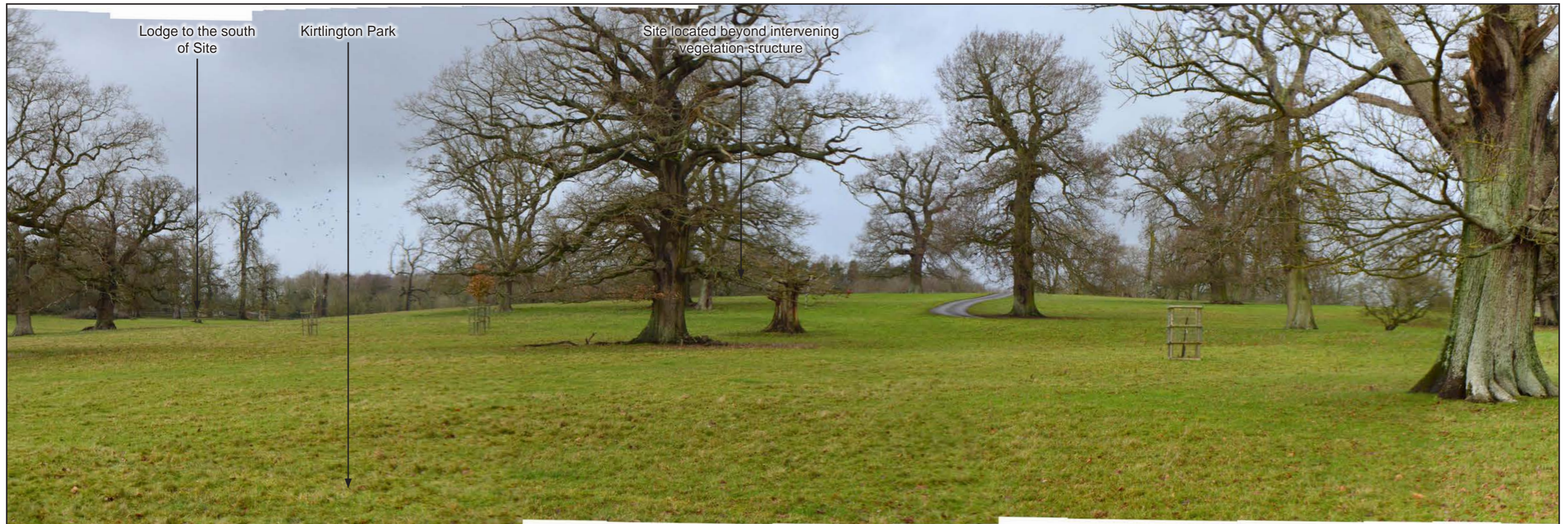
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Viewpoint Coordinates: E 450305, N 219569 Date & time of photograph: 04/01/2023 12:36 AOD & Viewing height: c. 97.6m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. Viewpoint 6 (Annotated Panorama Image for Context Only)



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 450626, N 219247 Date & time of photograph: 04/01/2023 12:26 AOD & Viewing height: c. 88.3m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. Viewpoint 7 (Annotated Panorama Image for Context Only)



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 450541, N 219840 Date & time of photograph: 04/01/2023 12:42 AOD & Viewing height: c. 97m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. Viewpoint 8 (Annotated Panorama Image for Context Only)



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 451184, N 220338 Date & time of photograph: 04/01/2023 12:57 AOD & Viewing height: c. 87.2m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. Viewpoint 9 (Annotated Panorama Image for Context Only)



Viewpoint Coordinates: E 450215, N 220453 Date & time of photograph: 04/01/2023 13:24 AOD & Viewing height: c. 102.1m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. Viewpoint 10 (Annotated Panorama Image for Context Only)



A4095

Portway

Site located beyond intervening vegetation structure

Northern boundary of site

Viewpoint Coordinates: E 450050, N 220730 Date & time of photograph: 04/01/2023 15:14 AOD & Viewing height: c. 105m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. Viewpoint 11 (Annotated Panorama Image for Context Only)



Site's western boundary

Existing residential properties associated with Heyford Road

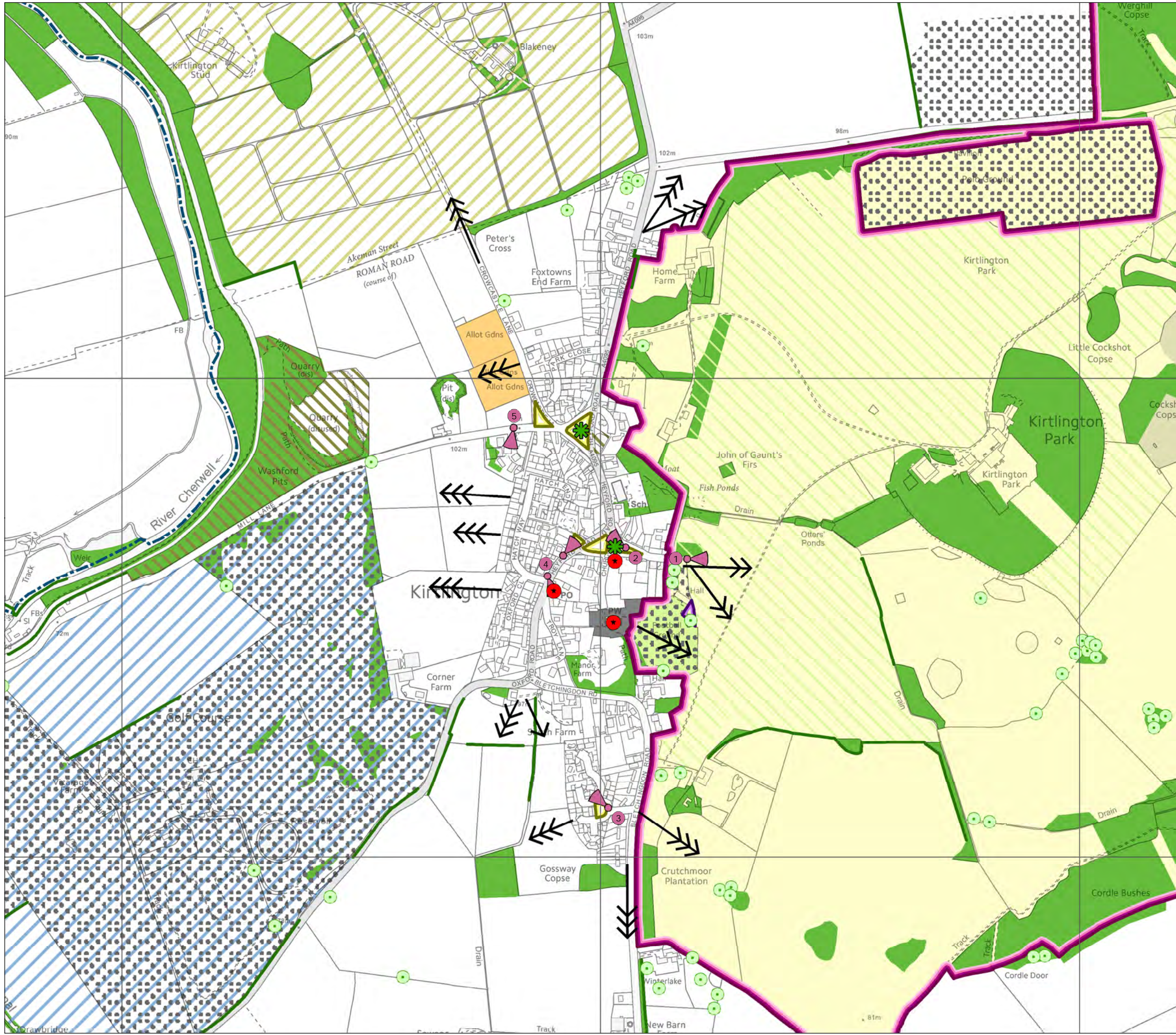
Internal view of site

Jersey Cottages

Viewpoint Coordinates: E 450164, N 220279 Date & time of photograph: 04/01/2023 15:45 AOD & Viewing height: c. 104.7m AOD 1.6m Weather conditions: Clear, good visibility. Viewpoint A (Annotated Panorama Image for Context Only)

APPENDIX 1

Kirtlington Village Analysis



Key

- District boundaries
- 'Kirtlington Park' Registered Park And Garden
- Village elements :
- Photograph locations
- Focal Building
- Landscape Features
- Short distance views
- Middle distance views
- Long distance views
- Green space provision
- Notable individual trees
- Notable linear woodland features / hedgerows
- Woodland parcels
- Ancient woodland
- Field pattern associated with Stud Farm
- Golf course
- Parkland with large clumps of trees and isolated trees
- Open Space Update 2011 :
- Allotments
- Amenity Green Space
- Cemeteries and Churchyards
- Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace
- Outdoor Sports Facilities
- Private Parks and Gardens and Restricted Access
- Provision for Children and Young People



Scale @ A3 - 1:7,500

A088250-2 Figure 1C
Village Analysis.mxd

29 June 2017

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