

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
FOR
SIBFORD PARK
*CHANGE OF USE OF LAND WITH ASSOCIATED TREESCAPE,
ARBOREAL TRAIL AND PLAY EQUIPMENT,
TOGETHER WITH THE PROVISION OF A BOCCIE COURT
WITHIN THE RESIDENTIAL CURTILAGE*
MARCH 2023



JONATHAN LEES ARCHITECTS LLP

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1.0

INTRODUCTION

This application for planning consent seeks permission for a change of use of the remainder of the former manège, to residential amenity land at Sibford Park, Colony Road, Oxfordshire, OX15 5RY on behalf of Mr P Oksanen.

Landscaping is required to align recent development with the surrounding landscape; to soften and screen the approved formal garden and 'poolscape' to the manor house and assimilate it with the surrounding rural landscape.

Extensive tree planting will be used to create a small copse, or treescape to the area. This will provide a natural and gradual transition from the formal garden to the open rural/agricultural landscape.

Given the layout of the existing development and associated landscaping, particularly the location of the tennis court, it is suggested that this area has been dysfunctional as agricultural and/or equestrian land for a long period of time. The proposed use as amenity space associated with the house will be both appropriate and in keeping with the surrounding landscape. Furthermore, it will enhance the site from both a visual and environmental perspective.

The proposed planting will not only create an aesthetic visual screen but is also designed to provide shelter to the formal gardens from the prevailing winds on this exposed site. The tree and shrub species mix has been carefully selected to ensure that it provides enhanced value for wildlife. The grassland below the trees will be managed as infrequently cut grass to allow the establishment of a diverse ground flora. Native bulbs will be scatter planted amongst the trees to provide a resource for pollinating insects early in the year.

It is suggested that the proposed treescape and arboreal trail will also create a suitable setting to accommodate some informal play and exercise equipment, providing shelter and shade for the user whilst concealing the equipment from the wider landscape.

The applicants have young children and have expressed goals towards embracing a sustainable ethos and lifestyle with a focus on wellbeing and a connection to nature. This motivates their interpretation of Sibford Park's existence and purpose for future generations.

This application has been prepared by Jonathan Lees Architects LLP and includes the following documentation:

- Design and Access Statement, including:
 - Assessment of the Existing Environment
 - Planning History
 - Proposals
 - Visual Study
 - Arboriculture
- Associated drawings and visuals
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment

2.0

ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

Sibford Park is a newly built manor house set within the grounds of approximately 44 acres in Oxfordshire and features the main house, a coach house and five outbuildings of varying sizes.

Sibford Park comprises extensive open grassland within the rural countryside and features a limited mature treescape comprising hedgerow boundary trees around the site perimeter. Though the land borders the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the west, the site is not itself within a conservation area or AONB, nor do any of the buildings have listed building status.

The closest villages to Sibford Park are Sibford Gower, Burdrop and Sibford Ferris to the north-east (approximately 1 mile away). The closest town is Banbury, a historic market town located approximately 8 miles away.

The house and grounds are reached via a private track off Colony Road to the east of the site on lower ground. The private track is shared at the entrance with the neighbouring property, New Barn Farm. Sibford Park is partially visible from Colony Road when driving north.

Whilst the buildings at Sibford Park are heavily concentrated to the north of the site, the rest

of the site is made up of wide and extensive grassland. The rolling nature of the southern fields belonging to Sibford Park allows for unobstructed views out to the landscape beyond.

Sibford Park features a range of buildings with differing materials. The main house is built featuring local oolitic limestone with ashlar dressings and a slate roof, with the kitchen/breakfast room and service wings constructed using red multi brick. The brick also features as the principal material used on the coach house.

The agricultural barn features vertical timber cladding with aluminium edging. Vertical timber cladding is similarly used for the garden store.

Recently Sibford Park has benefited from landscaping improvements, which have included the planting of tree species and planting within close proximity to the house.



▲ MAIN HOUSE - APPROACH

MAIN HOUSE - REAR VIEW ▼





▲ SITE

The existing area of the application site (previously noted as the manège), is currently a small area of hillocks covered with grass and a small number of sapling trees.

The northern boundary of the site comprises a dense, intact mixed hedgerow with a post and wire fence. Recent planting to the south of this existing hedge has established a row of 5-6m tall native yew hedging to strengthen this natural boundary and contribute to the biodiversity enhancement that the landscape proposals will deliver.

There are no water or natural features on the hillocks, which were formed from the spoil created during the main house construction.

An estate fence line runs to the south of the area and separates it from the field to the south that is also owned by the applicant and is included in the blue line boundary on the location plan.

The western side of the site is bounded by the tennis court (including the fences to the court) and a rank of large Leyland Cypress trees. The proposals will help to assimilate the incongruous nature of the tennis court into the wider landscape and the setting of the manor house.

The eastern end of the site is bounded by the domestic curtilage of the house, including the formal gardens to the north of the house.

The only way to access the area of the site is through either the tennis court or the gardens to the house, as the area is blocked off by the estate fence and the dense hedgerow to the south and north.



▲ EX1



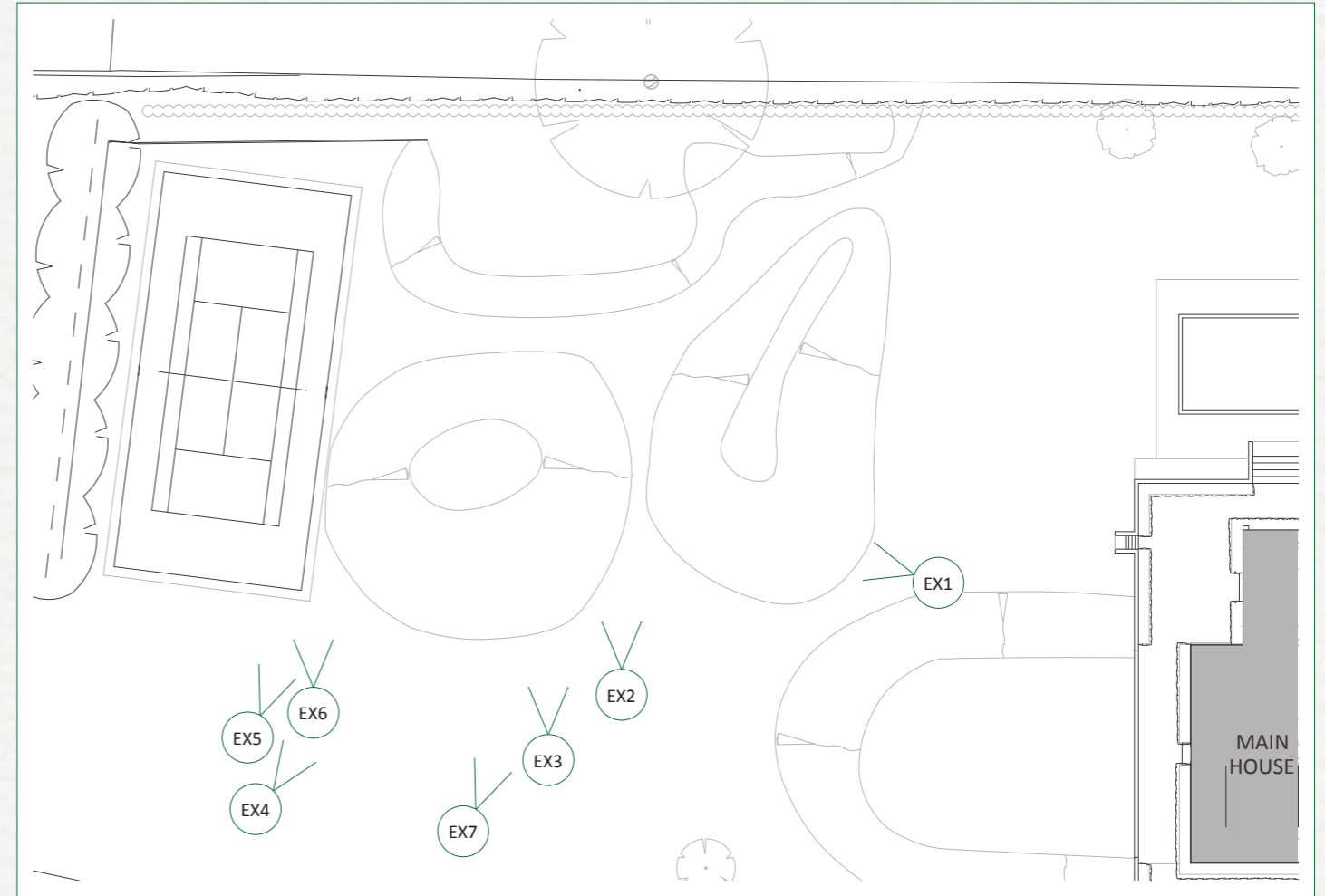
▲ EX2



▲ EX3



▲ EX4



▲ SITE PLAN (NTS)



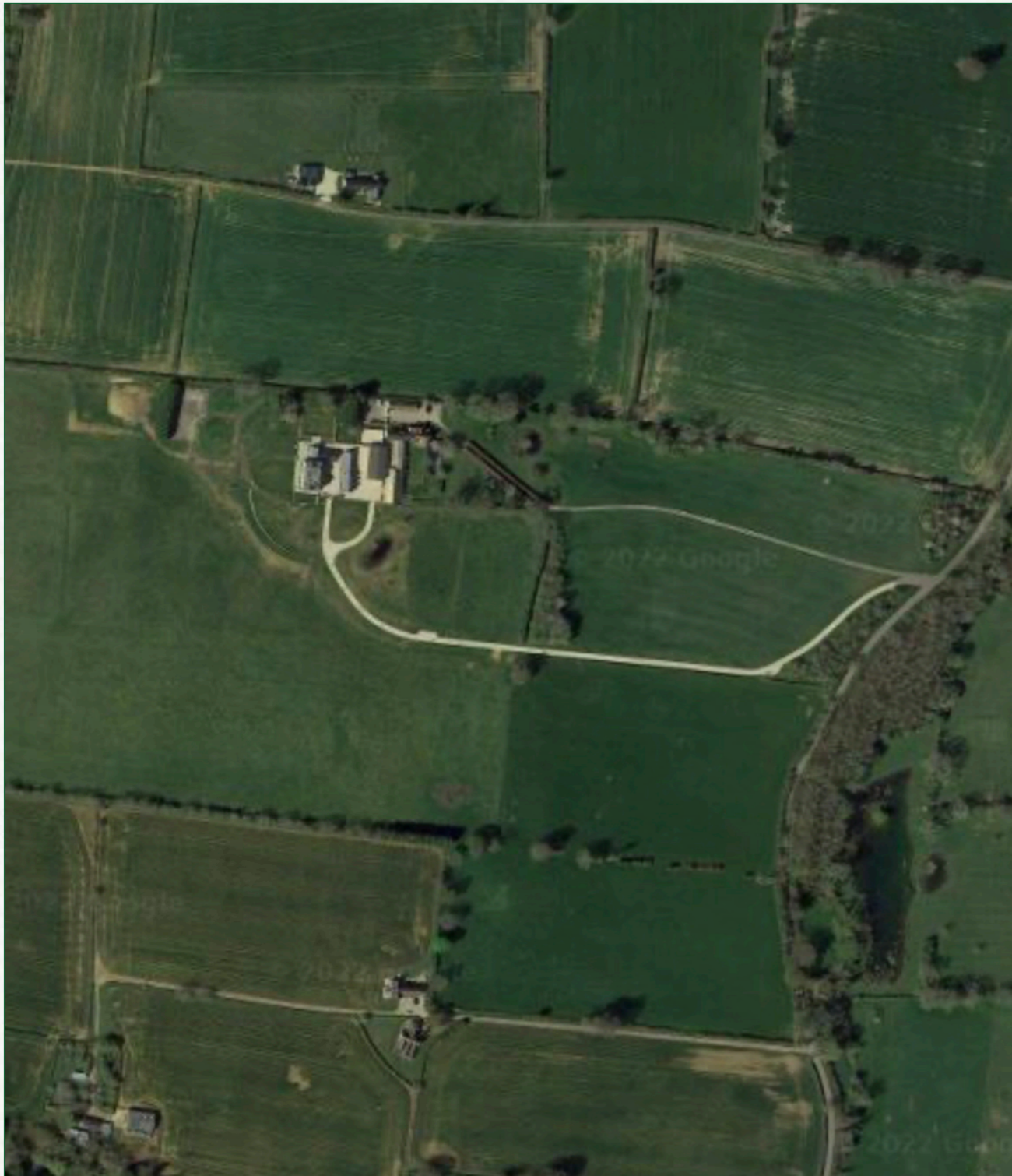
▲ EX5



▲ EX6



▲ EX7



▲ GOOGLE SATELLITE IMAGE OF SIBFORD PARK

A number of planning applications have been submitted on behalf of Sibford Park and also under its previous name, Muddle Barn Farm. These planning applications are listed below in order of most recent.

2022

Reference: 22/03135/F
 Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE - Formation of an external swimming pool and erection of two associated plant outbuildings and associated landscaping works
 Decision: Permitted
 Decision Issued Date: 14/02/2023

Reference: 22/00919/EL
 Proposal: Upgrading 4.6 kilometers of high voltage overhead line from single phase (2 wire) to three phase (3 wire)
 Decision: Observations
 Decision Issued Date: 09/05/2022

2020

Reference: 20/02176/DISC
 Proposal: Discharge of Condition 9 (tree pits) of 19/01387/F
 Decision: Permitted
 Decision Issued Date: 12/10/2020

Reference: 20/01086/F
 Proposal: Alterations and conversion of existing stable building to provide a gym and swimming pool and change of use of land to amenity land, providing tennis court associated with dwellinghouse replacing existing manège
 Decision: Permitted
 Decision Issued Date: 30/06/2020

3.0

PLANNING HISTORY OVERVIEW

2019

Reference: 19/02372/DISC
 Proposal: Discharge of Condition 8 (hard and soft landscape works) of 19/01387/F
 Decision: Permitted
 Decision Issued Date: 29/01/2020

Reference: 19/01387/F
 Proposal: Variation of Condition 2 (plans) of 16/01563/F - alterations to the design of the replacement dwelling, the erection of a replacement outbuilding, provision of a new 2m high wall and demolition of two bays of a stable building
 Decision: Permitted
 Decision Issued Date: 09/12/2019

2018

Reference: 18/00358/DISC
 Proposal: Discharge of Conditions 3 (dormers), 4 (materials), 5 (stone sample), 6 (doors and windows), 7 (FFLs), 10 (tree survey), 15 (badger check), 16 (Biodiversity enhancement) and 18 (access) of 18/00793/F
 Decision: Permitted
 Decision Issued Date: 16/11/2018

Application list continued on next page



▲ MAIN HOUSE

Reference: 18/01167/F
 Proposal: Creation of new driveway and part removal of existing driveway
 Decision: Permitted
 Decision Issued Date: 09/11/2018

Reference: 18/00793/F
 Proposal: Variation of Condition 2 (plans) of 16/01563/F (Appeal reference - APP/C3105/W/17/3173098) - minor material amendments involving alterations to the design of the replacement dwelling as well as the construction of a replacement outbuilding
 Decision: Permitted
 Decision Issued Date: 08/08/2018

Reference: 18/00037/SO
 Proposal: Variation of condition 2 (plans) of 16/01563/F (Appeal reference - APP/C3105/W/17/3173098) - minor material amendments involving alterations to the design of the replacement dwelling as well as the construction of a replacement outbuilding
 Decision: Screening Opinion Not Requesting EIA
 Decision Issued Date: 22/05/2018

Reference: 18/00616/F
 Proposal: Variation of Condition 2 (Plans) of 16/01563/F and Appeal ref: APP/C3105/W/17/3173098
 Decision: Permitted
 Decision Issued Date: 10/07/2018

2017

Reference: 17/00191/CLUP
 Proposal: Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Development for extensions and alterations to the existing dwellinghouse and new ancillary building.

Decision: Permitted
 Decision Issued Date: 22/03/2017

Reference: 17/00259/HPA
 Proposal: Single storey rear extension- height to eaves 2.4m, length 8m, overall height 3.8m
 Decision: Prior Approval Not Required
 Decision Issued Date: 03/03/2017

2016

Reference: 16/01563/F
 Proposal: Demolition of an existing dwelling and a range of large scale equestrian buildings and the erection of a replacement dwelling including associated works and landscaping (revised scheme of 15/01693/F)
 Decision: Application Refused
 Decision Issued Date: 01/11/2016

Reference: 16/00064/SO
 Proposal: Screening Opinion to Application 16/01563/F- Demolition of an existing dwelling and a range of large scale equestrian buildings and the erection of a replacement dwelling including associated works and landscaping (resubmission 15/01693/F)
 Decision: Screening Opinion Not Requesting EIA
 Decision Issued Date: 01/11/2016

2015

Reference: 15/01693/F
 Proposal: Demolition of an existing dwelling and a range of large scale equestrian buildings and the erection of a replacement dwelling including associated works and landscaping (revised scheme of 14/02157/F)
 Decision: Application Withdrawn
 Decision Issued Date: 25/02/2016

Reference: 15/00089/SO
 Proposal: Screening Opinion to 15/01693/F - Demolition of an existing dwelling and a range of large scale equestrian buildings and the erection of a replacement dwelling including associated works and landscaping (revised scheme of 14/02157/F)
 Decision: Screening Opinion Not Requesting EIA
 Decision Issued Date: 05/10/2015

2014

Reference: 14/00107/SO
 Proposal: Screening Opinion - Demolition of an existing dwelling and a range of large scale equestrian buildings and the erection of a replacement dwelling including associated works and landscaping
 Decision: Not Proceeded With
 Decision Issued Date: 12/09/2022

Reference: 14/02157/F
 Proposal: Demolition of an existing dwelling and a range of large scale equestrian buildings and the erection of a replacement dwelling including associated works and landscaping
 Decision: Application Withdrawn
 Decision Issued Date: 20/04/2015

Reference: 14/01100/CLUE
 Proposal: Certificate of Lawful Use Existing- Use of dwelling in breach of Condition 5 (Agricultural Occupancy) CHN600/85
 Decision: Application Withdrawn
 Decision Issued Date: 27/08/2014

4.0

PLANNING HISTORY
BOUNDARY

boundary was altered in accordance with this request and the application was subsequently approved.

The area of land that was asked to be removed from the application area included a proposed transitional area of informal landscape. The decision notice for this application included 'Informative Notes to the Applicant', which stated the following:

"2. Extent of residential use – The applicant is advised that this planning permission does not give any consent for the arboretum or play area, but also that the planting of trees does not require planning permission. The Site Location Plan as amended (please refer to Condition 1) defines the extent of the residential land use permitted at this site."

This application seeks planning permission for a change of use of this area of land to that of amenity space to be used in association with the use of the house. This includes the provision of a children's play area, including timber play equipment that is to be nestled into the proposed treescape and arboreal trail that will shield the equipment from view. Details of the play equipment and planting are described in the proposals statement.

Retrospective planning permission was recently sought for the formation of an external swimming pool and erection of two associated plant outbuildings and associated landscaping works (application reference: 22/03135/F). This application was approved by the Local Planning Authority on 14th February 2023.

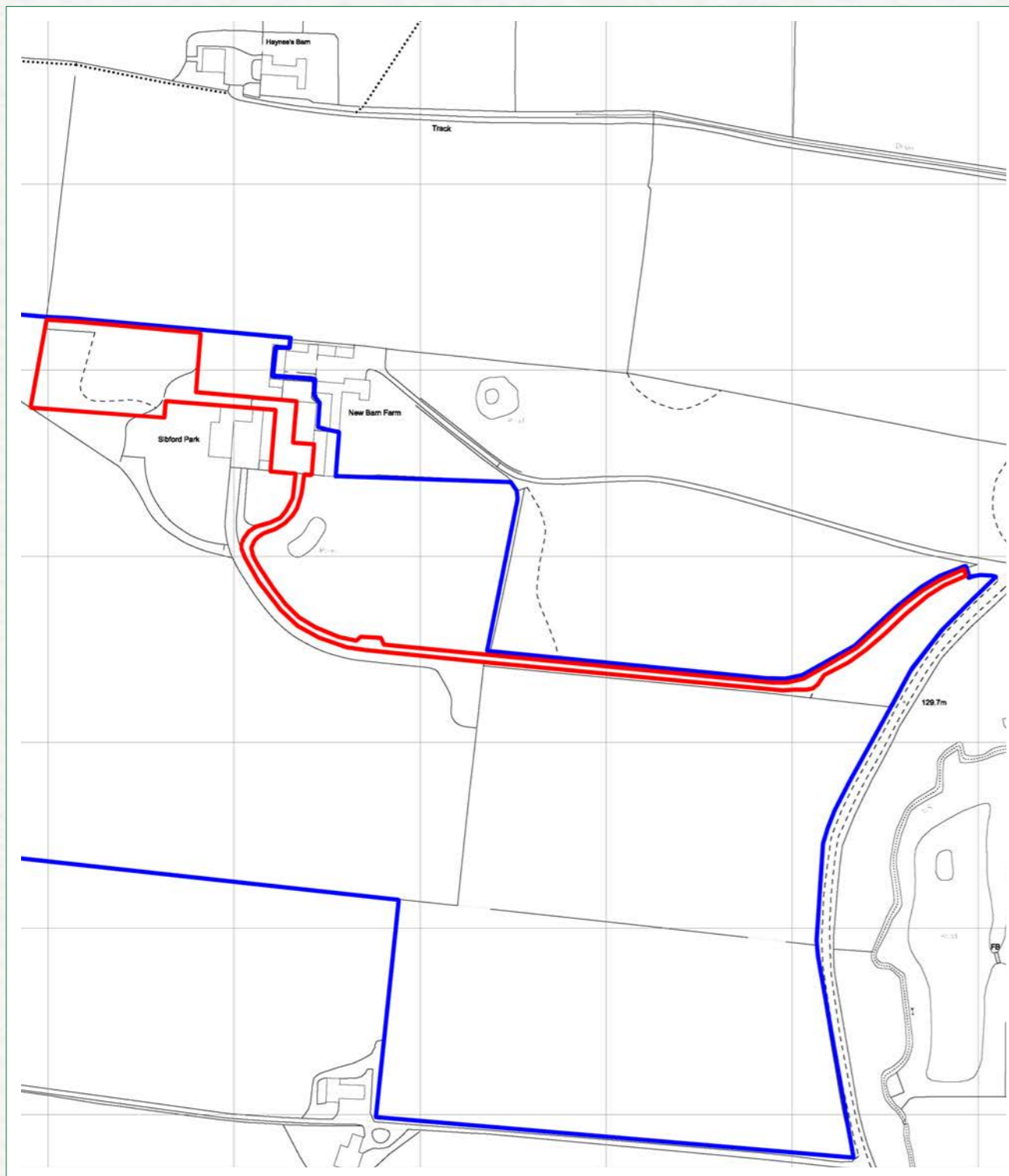
The application was registered on 17th October and included a red line boundary that enveloped an area of land between the existing house gardens and the tennis court, which was granted permission under application 20/01086/F.

The red line boundary of application 20/01086/F included the existing stable block, the conversion of which formed part of the application, together with the following:

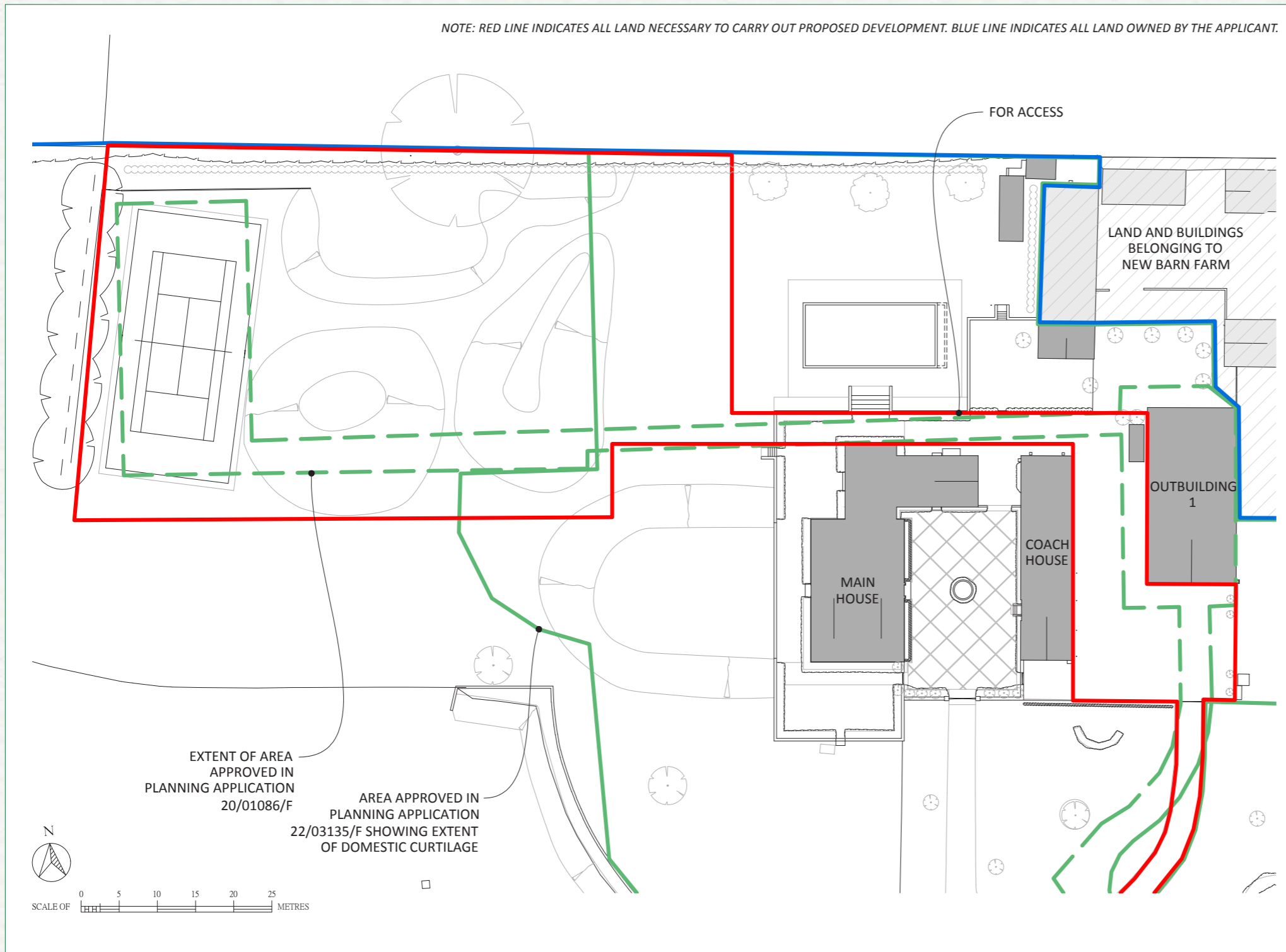
- Alterations and conversion of existing stable building to provide a gym and swimming pool
- Change of use of land to amenity land, providing a tennis court associated with dwellinghouse replacing existing manège.

A route/pathway was included in this application in order to access the area of the proposed tennis court from the homestead. This route cut through the main area of where the manège was, leaving the majority of the area of the manège free of the red line boundary.

In the recently approved application 22/03135/F, during the planning process it was requested that the red line boundary be altered in order to match the boundary that was granted permission under application 16/01563/F (for the main house). The red line



▲ LOCATION PLAN (NTS)



The proposed tree planting will enable this currently undefined area to be appropriately utilised and enjoyed by the owners whilst enhancing the positive impact on the wider landscape.

The area as outlined on the location plan as the application boundary sits in between the domestic curtilage boundary noted and approved in applications 16/01563/F for the main house and application 20/01086/F for the tennis court. The remaining island of land in between these two areas can be seen on the plan to the left.

Due to the access required to reach the tennis court from the house, the land between the house and the tennis court is regularly used as a thoroughfare. The use of the land can therefore already be associated as amenity land for use with the main house.

The previous use of the land was noted as a manège, which was used in association with the original house on the plot that was granted permission as an agricultural worker's dwelling in 1986. A subsequent certificate of lawful use application number 14/01100/CLUE approved the use of the dwelling in breach of Condition 5 (Agricultural Occupancy) CHN600/85. The red line boundary on the location plan for this application did not include the area of the manège, although the outline of the area is clearly visible on the plan.

▲ LOCATION PLAN ANALYSIS



▲ HISTORIC SATELLITE IMAGE OF MANÈGE

It can be argued that the area of the manège, including the area of the permitted tennis court and the land outlined in this application, has been used over a number of years, certainly since the approval of the original agricultural dwelling in 1986 as amenity land used in association/connection with the use of the house on the site. Therefore for 37 years, the entire area of the top of the site has been subject to this continued use.

The nature of the position of the area, in a lineal location in between two parcels of land that are defined as either the curtilage of the house (on the east) or as amenity land for the dwelling house (the tennis court to the west), has no other viable use and should be considered as being amenity land in association with the house. The land occupies an area at the northern boundary of the site. There is no access to the neighbouring field through the northern boundary, which also includes a post and wire fence in the centre of the existing hedge.

The area of the tennis court is flanked on its western side by a dense and established rank of Leyland Cypress which form a significant screen to the tennis court area and house from views from the west. This screen was planted historically, prior to the construction of the house and likely after 1986 when the manège was first created.

The existing screening to both the north and the west of the site still serve as effective natural screens to the area of the manège and therefore the area of the site that this application refers to. The eastern boundary of the application area comprises of the curtilage of the main house,

including the recently approved swimming pool and associated outbuildings. Due to the location of the existing buildings on the site, there is no public viewpoint of this area of the site and the area cannot be viewed by neighbouring properties as boundary walls prevent any overlooking or any visual impact whatsoever.

The site can be viewed from the south, where the area opens up on to the fields that are owned by the applicant. Please refer to the proposals statement and the visual study that is included with this application for further information.

The area of the application could not be described as pristine, nor as agricultural land. The lineal layout of the spaces to the northern boundary of the site and the continued use of the areas provides evidence that the areas have always been used as amenity space in association with the dwelling house on the site and this application seeks to regularise the planning record to formally include this area as amenity space in association with the use of the dwelling house.

5.0

PROPOSALS

The proposals outlined in this application for planning consent are for the change of use of the land outlined in red on the location plan to be used as amenity land associated with the use of the house. Permission is also sought for play equipment and tree planting that form a treescape and arboreal trail between the garden of the house and the tennis court area, creating an aesthetic feature in the wider landscape. The proposals also include a bocce court to the existing curtilage of the house, which is a small hard surface area integrated within the planting.

The existing tennis court is nested to the east of a rank of existing Leyland Cypress trees and is used as an amenity to the house. The treescape and arboreal trail is proposed to be for the same use and will add to the existing external swimming pool and tennis court as outdoor spaces to improve the wellbeing and facilities offered by the manor house.

The play equipment includes a selection of temporary timber structures that form various common playground equipment. The proposed play equipment includes climbing frames and ramps, including a log scramble and monkey bars, log and net bridges, a sunken trampoline, see-saw, swing set and wildlife observation and study hut.



▲ PROPOSED TREESCAPE, ARBOREAL TRAIL, BOCCE COURT & PLAY EQUIPMENT



▲ ▼ PROPOSED SCHEME TREESCAPE, ARBOREAL TRAIL, BOCCE COURT & PLAY EQUIPMENT



The play equipment will be interspersed by treescape planting that will greatly improve the existing landscape and serve as a future natural environment for the manor house. The proposed trees will be planted in and around the play equipment and across the southern boundary of the area, in order to conceal the equipment and to provide the appearance of a dense copse.

As with the rest of the planting that has been carried out by the applicant across the rest of the site, established trees will be planted, rather than saplings, in order to create an instant treescape that will conceal the play equipment.

The existing hillocks will be capped by approx. 1m in order to allow new trees to be planted across each of the crests, with a path cut between to allow passage from the external pool area to the tennis court to the west. This trail will be within the hillocks and will be concealed by them to views from the south.

Semi-mature trees are proposed to be planted including a stock of 50 mixed varieties of trees including full standards ranging from 35 to 60 wrb. Additionally, multi-stems at approximately 400 to 450 wrb will be planted.

The proposed treescape and arboreal trail is part of the play environment and is integral to the design of the space. The proposals will create a space that enhances a connection to nature whilst providing an outdoor space for the growing family of the applicant to explore, keep fit and learn from their natural surroundings.

The planting of additional trees on the site will add to the extensive planting for screening that has already been carried out by the applicant.

The introduction of additional treescape planting to the application area is part of a wider scheme to plant more trees and greatly improve the natural environment of the site. The existing poor quality amenity grassland will be planted and managed to ensure that its value for wildlife is maximised and will conceal the play area from the outset. Native bulb and shrub planting below the trees will create structural diversity.

The installation of play equipment to the application site will have no detrimental effect to the site or its surroundings. The equipment will be concealed by dense planting as can be seen on the proposed visuals. The equipment will be concealed from view from the west by the existing Leyland Cypress trees and the from the east by the house and its gardens. The existing boundary directly to the north (which is the boundary of the application site) comprises an existing mixed native hedgerow which has been reinforced with planting of 5-6m native yew hedging within the site boundary, effectively screening the site from external view.



▲ TREESCAPE, ARBOREAL TRAIL, BOCCE COURT & PLAY EQUIPMENT AS VIEWED FROM THE HOUSE
 ▼ TREESCAPE, ARBOREAL TRAIL, BOCCE COURT & PLAY EQUIPMENT AS VIEWED LOOKING NORTH

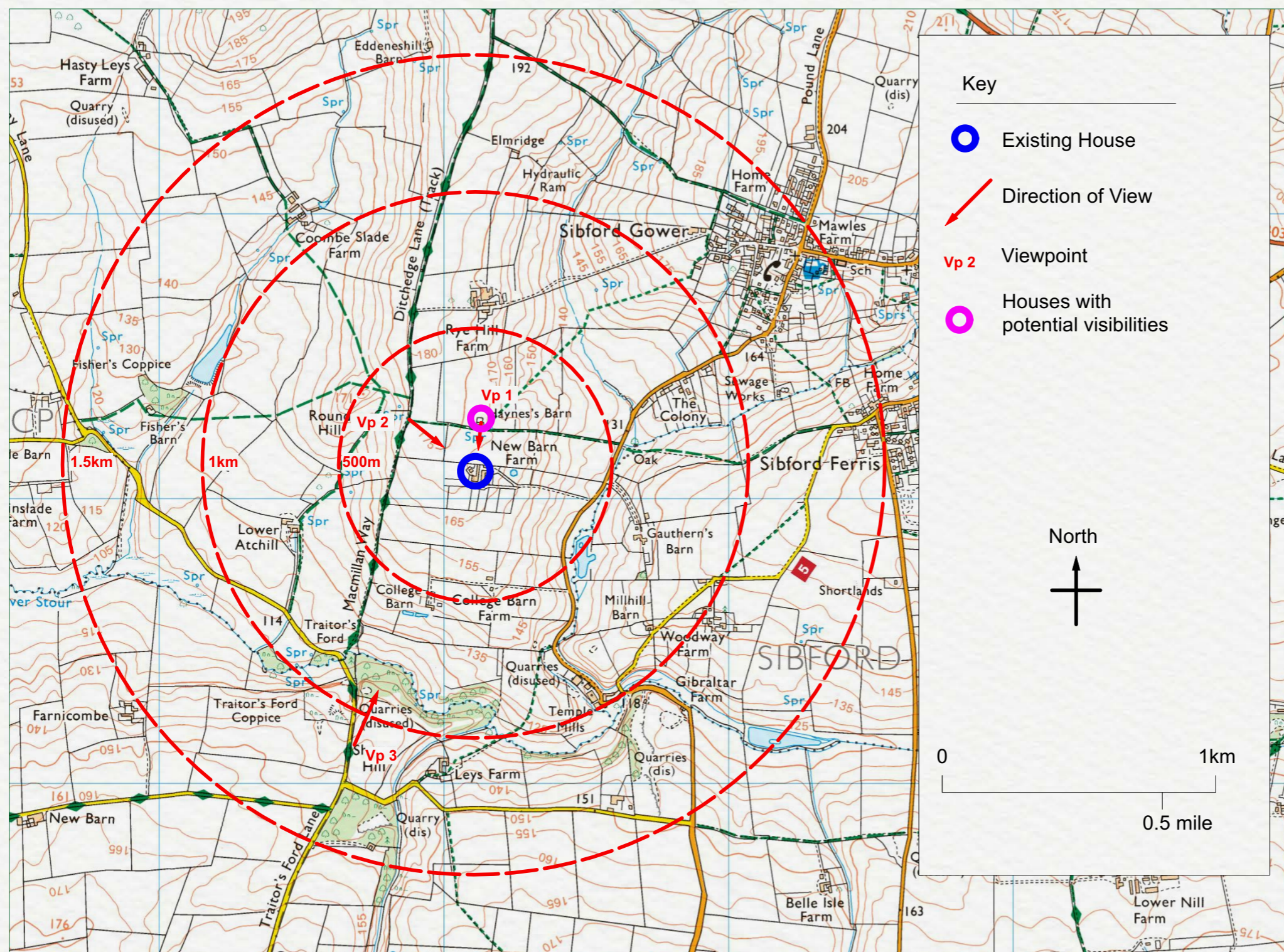


The only view of the site that is open is directly to the south. This view is distant when viewed from public or neighbouring lands and the construction/make-up of the play equipment will be concealed by the treescape planting and would not be visible as a structure from this distance without the use of binoculars or telescopes.

The proposed play equipment will be shrouded almost entirely from view within the trees and nestled within the existing hillocks. As the semi-mature trees become mature, there will be little trace of the equipment that could be deciphered from the natural structure of the tree trunks.

The proposed bocce court is a small area of natural soil or hard surface to play bocce. The proposed area of the court is within the curtilage of the existing house and is included in the red line boundary. The bocce court is surrounded by tree planting. Normally the bocce court would fall within Schedule 2, Part 1 Class F of GDPO but all Part 1 and Part 2 rights were removed when planning was granted via appeal for the demolition of an existing dwelling and erection of a replacement dwelling (ref: 17/00020/REFAPP).

6.0 VISUAL STUDY



▲ VIEWPOINT MAP

Viewpoints from the immediate neighbouring property, public pathway and Traitor's Ford Lane across the valley to the south are indicated on the map.

As can be seen from photographs of viewpoint 1, 2 and 3, the area of the site is concealed by existing planting and will not be visible from the viewpoints, including those from the public highway.



▲ VIEWPOINT 1 (VP 1)

VIEWPOINT 2 (VP 2) ▼



▲ VIEWPOINT 3 (VP 3)





▲ VIEW OF PROPOSED TREESCAPE & PLAY EQUIPMENT

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) was produced for Sibford Park by Consulting with Trees Ltd (CwT) in October 2022. The scope of the AIA included the existing treescape of the subject area and a copy of the AIA is therefore attached as a supporting document for this application. Poor quality trees identified for removal in the AIA, have subsequently been removed and the remaining mature treescape comprises a single dominant ash tree (recorded as T18 in the AIA). This tree is located within the northern boundary hedgerow, which we understand to be in the ownership of the adjoining land owner. The northern and western boundaries of the site comprise a rural mixed species hedge and a conifer hedge respectively.

Whilst the hedging provides important screening and shelter to the site, the large specimen ash tree is the only significant arboreal landscape feature in this area. Whilst the tree appeared sound and healthy at time of survey, the currently prevalent Ash Dieback Disease poses a real and significant threat to its longevity and additional tree planting proposals are therefore considered both timely and appropriate. Irrespective of this threat, the redesign project will adopt the protective measures prescribed in AIA to ensure protection of all existing trees and hedging in and around the subject site. The existing landscape of this space is currently somewhat of an anomaly in the overall context of the estate and the landscape setting of the manor house and it is suggested that the extensive tree planting in the current landscape design proposals will create the appropriate structure and form whilst building much needed enhancement and resilience of the limited existing treescape.

7.0 ARBORICULTURE

The new treescape will comprise a mix of broadleaf and conifer species, both native and non-native, to create an area of natural transition from the formal gardens around the house to the wider surrounding rural landscape.

The treescape is considered an integral element of the design which will effectively shelter and screen the proposed play equipment whilst creating a significant and appropriate aesthetic landscape feature.

Consulting with Trees

ARBORICULTURAL CONSULTANTS