

# **ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT VOLUME 2: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

PLOT SGR1, BICESTER

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MARCH 2018

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Ingeni Building | 17 Broadwick Street, London, W1F 0DE



**SGR (BICESTER 1) LIMITED**

**PLOT SGR1, BICESTER**

**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**March 2018**



Tel: 01793



**RTPI**

Chartered Town Planners

**URBAN  
DESIGN  
GROUP**

David Jarvis Associates Limited  
1 Tennyson Street  
Swindon  
Wiltshire  
SN1 5DT  
Email: [mail@davidjarvis.biz](mailto:mail@davidjarvis.biz)  
612173

**CLIENT** SGR (Bicester 1) Limited

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**CONTENTS:**

**1. INTRODUCTION..... 4**  
 Background and Competency..... 4  
 Scope..... 4  
 Background ..... 4  
     *Proposed Development*..... 4

**2. LEGISLATION, PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE..... 6**  
     *National Policy*..... 6  
     *Local Policy*..... 6

**3. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY..... 9**  
 Study Area ..... 9  
 Field Survey ..... 9  
 Consultation ..... 9  
 Assumptions and Limitations ..... 9

**4. BASELINE CONDITIONS..... 10**  
 Site Description..... 10  
 Published Landscape Character ..... 10  
     *National* ..... 10  
     *County Landscape Character Assessment* ..... 11  
     *Cherwell Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Study*..... 11  
     *Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment*..... 11  
     *North West Bicester Landscape Character Assessment* ..... 12  
 Evaluation of Site in Relation to Published Landscape Character ..... 13  
 Landscape Elements ..... 13  
 Landscape Value ..... 13  
 Summary of Landscape Value..... 15  
 Susceptibility to Change and Sensitivity..... 16  
 Visual Receptors ..... 16  
     *General*..... 16  
 Existing Visibility ..... 16  
 Visual Receptors ..... 17  
 Future Baseline..... 18

**5. ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT..... 19**  
 Construction..... 19  
 Completed Development ..... 19  
 Avoidance..... 19  
 Reduction ..... 19

**6. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS ..... 20**

**CONSTRUCTION..... 20**  
     Assessment of Effects ..... 20  
     Mitigation Measures..... 20

**COMPLETED DEVELOPMENT..... 21**

- Assessment of Effects ..... 21
- Effects on Landscape Elements and Fabric..... 21
- Effects on Landscape Character..... 21
  - Local Landscape Character*..... 21
  - Designations*..... 22

**7. EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY ..... 23**

- General..... 23
- Lighting Effects ..... 25
- Overall Mitigation and Residual Effects ..... 25

**8. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS..... 26**

- Cumulative Effect on Landscape Fabric ..... 26
- Cumulative Effect on Landscape Character..... 26
- Cumulative Effect on Visual Receptors ..... 26

**9. CONCLUSION..... 28**

**Figures:**

1. Site Location Plan
2. Indicative Proposed Layout
3. Landscape Context – Regional Landscape Character Areas and Types
4. Landscape Context – Local Landscape Character Areas
5. Existing Site Plan
6. Landscape Value
7. Viewpoint Location Plan
8. Visual Analysis Plan
9. Close-range Visual Analysis Plan
10. Predicted Visual Effect - Representative Viewpoint 6
11. Predicted Visual Effect - Representative Viewpoint 7
12. Predicted Visual Effect - Representative Viewpoint 10
13. Predicted Visual Effect – Representative Viewpoint 5b

**Appendices:**

1. Assessment Methodology and Glossary of Terms
2. Photographic Viewpoint Record
3. Table of Effects

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background and Competency

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) forms part of the Environmental Statement for the proposed Plot SGR1, Bicester scheme (the 'Development').
- 1.2 It has been prepared by William Brown CMLI, CMIEEM, CEnv, a Chartered Landscape Architect from David Jarvis Associates (DJA) Limited experienced in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for residential, mixed use and renewable development.
- 1.3 DJA is a firm of planners and landscape architects with extensive experience in the planning, assessment, design and implementation of residential proposals. The firm is a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute.

### Scope

- 1.4 The report assesses an outline application to construct up to 75 houses with associated open space and access provision at Plot SGR1, Bicester (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). The Site forms part of the wider North West Bicester Eco-Town development.
- 1.5 The LVIA comprises a desk study to review the status of the Site in relation to relevant national and local policy, a description of the existing baseline landscape situation and an assessment of predicted landscape and visual effects arising from the proposals, including the potential for cumulative effects in combination with the wider North West Bicester development.

### Background

#### Proposed Development

- 1.6 The proposals are subject to an outline planning application for up to 75 residential houses with all matters reserved (excluding access). The assessment has been undertaken based on the Parameter Plans produced by David Lock Associates. The Indicative Proposed Layout is illustrated in **Figure 2** and has informed this assessment, but only to the extent that it has been used as reference for one potential way in which the Development could be built out.
- 1.7 The proposals are for residential housing and associated access roads to be contained to the west of the Site adjoining the adjacent Exemplar development, which comprises the higher ground, and for open space to occupy the sloping and lower ground to the northern, southern and eastern areas. This would leave a significant buffer of open space between the new residential houses and the brook and listed properties of Home Farm (Grade II) and the Anglo-Saxon St Laurence Church (Grade II\*).
- 1.8 The main aspects of the Development are summarised below:
- Up to 75 residential houses with a range of unit sizes;
  - The majority of units would be 2 storey (up to 8m ridge height) with houses either side of the central avenue being a mixture of 2.5 to 3 storeys (up to a ridge height of 13m);
  - A developed area of 2.15ha including residential and play space;
  - Open space on the remainder of the Site forming a buffer to Home Farm and St Laurence Church, including pedestrian and cycle routes; and
  - A strip of land along the eastern boundary adjacent to Banbury Road earmarked as a community orchard, with allotments and car parking to the north.

- 1.9 The proposed landscape and open space layout is illustrative and full details would be provided as within a reserved matters application. The open space provides opportunities for incorporating Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDs) features on the lower ground to the south, planting a range of trees and shrubs and creating multifunctional new greenspaces with amenity and biodiversity benefits. In addition, the orchard and allotments would provide wider community benefits and enhance the existing level of visual screening of the Site in views from the east.



## 2. LEGISLATION, PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

2.1 A full review and discussion of the status of the Site and surrounding area in relation to national and local planning is contained within the Planning Statement accompanying this application. The section provides a summary of policy relevant to the consideration of landscape and visual matters.

2.2 The following policy documents are relevant to this assessment:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>1</sup>;
- Planning Policy Statement 1: Eco Towns<sup>2</sup>;
- Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031<sup>3</sup>;
- North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document<sup>4</sup>.

### National Policy

#### *National Planning Policy Framework*

2.3 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, described as being the 'golden thread' that should run throughout local plan and decision making.

2.4 A Core Planning Principle is that the different roles and character of different areas and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be recognised (Para 17) and balance the 'harm' with the benefits of development.

2.5 An objective of the planning system is that it should seek to conserve and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing 'valued' landscapes (Para 109). The policy states that 'great weight' should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty where planning permission for 'major developments' should be refused except in exceptional circumstances that are in the wider public interest (Para 115).

### Local Policy

#### *Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031*

2.6 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015 and the following policies are considered pertinent to a landscape appraisal of the proposed development.

- Policy ESD13 – Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement;
- Policy ESD15 – The Character of the Built and Historic Environment;
- Policy ESD17 – Green Infrastructure; and
- Policy Bicester 1 – North West Bicester Eco Town.

#### *Policy ESD13 – Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement*

2.7 The policy seeks to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features and habitats or the creation of new ones. Development should respect and enhance local landscape character.

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework. March 2012. Department for Communities and Local Government.

<sup>2</sup> Planning Policy Statement: Eco Towns. A Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1. July 2009. Department for Communities and Local Government.

<sup>3</sup> The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031. Adopted 20 July 2015. Cherwell District Council.

<sup>4</sup> North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document. February 2015. Cherwell District Council.

2.8 The policy states that proposals will not be permitted if they would:

- *Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside;*
- *Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography;*
- *Be inconsistent with local character;*
- *Impact on areas judged to have a high level of tranquillity;*
- *Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or other landmark features, or*
- *Harm the historic value of the landscape.*

*Policy ESD15 - The Character of the Built and Historic Environment*

2.9 Amongst other things, new development should:

- *Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting;*
- *Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated 'heritage assets' (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG;*
- *Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation; and*
- *Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure). Well-designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality*

*Policy ESD17 – Green Infrastructure*

2.10 The policy seeks to maintain and enhance the district's green infrastructure network according to the following objectives:

- *Pursuing opportunities for joint working to maintain and improve the green infrastructure network, whilst protecting sites of importance for nature conservation;*
- *Protecting and enhancing existing sites and features forming part of the green infrastructure network and improving sustainable connectivity between sites in accordance with policies on supporting a modal shift in transport (Policy SLE 4: Improved Transport and Connections), open space, sport and recreation (Policy BSC 10: Open Space, Outdoor Sport and Recreation Provision), adapting to climate change (Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change), SuDS (Policy ESD 7: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)), biodiversity and the natural environment (Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment), Conservation Target Areas (Policy ESD 11: Conservation Target Areas), heritage assets (Policy ESD 15) and the Oxford Canal (Policy ESD 16);*

- *Ensuring that green infrastructure network considerations are integral to the planning of new development. Proposals should maximise the opportunity to maintain and extend green infrastructure links to form a multi-functional network of open space, providing opportunities for walking and cycling, and connecting the towns to the urban fringe and the wider countryside beyond; and*
- *All strategic development sites (Section C: 'Policies for Cherwell's Places') will be required to incorporate green infrastructure provision and proposals should include details for future management and maintenance.*

#### *Policy Bicester 1 – North West Bicester Eco Town*

- 2.11 The policy sets out the council's requirements for the North West Bicester Eco Town which covers an area of 390ha and is a zero-carbon and sustainable mixed-use development for approximately 6,000 new homes.
- 2.12 The policy sets out the requirement for a green infrastructure provision of 40% of the total gross area comprised of a varied network of green spaces and corridors with links to the open countryside beyond the development.

#### *North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document, 2016*

- 2.13 The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) expands upon Policy Bicester 1 drawing together information about the Site, setting out the council's vision and objectives, development principles and requirements.
- 2.14 The SPD confirms that there are no major landscape constraints present on Site and no designations within the area. The Site contains typical agricultural countryside with a mixture of arable and pasture with the boundary hedgerows providing the landscape framework for the masterplan.
- 2.15 The SPD describes St Laurence's Church, a Grade II\* listed building at Caversfield, as being an important local landmark building whose setting is important in the landscape and would require adequate open space to be maintained as a buffer to adjacent development.

#### Guidance

- 2.16 This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)<sup>5</sup>, published guidance from the Countryside Agency<sup>6</sup>, the former Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)<sup>7</sup>. Guidance emphasises the responsibility of the landscape professional carrying out the assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted is appropriate for the particular development to be assessed. A description of the assessment methodology is provided at **Appendix 1**.

<sup>5</sup> Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Institute – 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition 2013 and Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 05/2017 'Townscape Character Assessment'.

<sup>6</sup> Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage – 'Landscape Character Assessment' 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions- 'Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice'.

### 3. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

3.1 Preparation of this assessment included the following key stages:

- Baseline survey and local landscape character assessment;
- Identification of potential effects;
- Identification of landscape and visual receptors;
- Description and quantification of changes to the baseline;
- Contribution to iterative design process;
- Identification of mitigation measures;
- Preparation of landscape strategy;
- Evaluation of predicted effects; and
- Landscape and visual assessment of the final scheme design.

#### Study Area

3.2 The Study Area for the LVIA has been determined by a two-stage process: a desk study to identify any relevant landscape designations and sensitive receptors in the landscape surrounding the Site and a field survey to assess the limit of potential significant visibility.

3.3 The Study Area defines the area within which potential significant landscape and visual effects are predicted to be confined. Around the Site, it includes the area between the Bicester to Banbury railway to the west, the minor road between Bucknell and Bainton to the north, the A4095 Bicester ring road to the south and the minor road between Bicester and Fringford to the east.

#### Field Survey

3.4 The Site and surrounding area was visited on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2018 in order to inform the LVIA and gather photography. The survey was undertaken during the winter when deciduous trees lacked leaves and therefore allowed full and 'worst case' views of the Site to be taken.

3.5 A total of 12 locations were selected and used as representative viewpoints. These were points both within the Site and surrounding landscape with potential views. They represent a range of potential visual receptors including users of public footpaths, local roads and residential properties.

#### Consultation

3.6 The location of representative viewpoints were submitted to Cherwell District Council (CDC) for informal comment within an Informal Scoping note on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018. CDC issued a response on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018 stating that a view from the Council's Landscape Team had not been sought at this stage. Due to project timescales it was not possible to obtain a formal Scoping Opinion. Both the Informal Scoping Note and CDC response are provided in Appendix 3.4 in Volume 3 of the ES.

#### Assumptions and Limitations

3.7 This landscape and visual impact assessment has been undertaken based on the parameter plans, with the illustrative material considered only for reference as appropriate. The wireline photomontages are based on the Built Form and Storey Height parameter plan (013).

## 4. BASELINE CONDITIONS

### Site Description

- 4.1 The location of the Site is shown on **Figure 1**.
- 4.2 The Site comprises a rectilinear parcel of land of c.5.33ha situated approximately 1km north from the residential edge of Bicester and the A4095 (Howes Lane) ring road. The B4100 (Banbury Road) forms the north-eastern boundary and the Site is located on the opposite side of the road from St Laurence Church and Caversfield House. The south-eastern Site boundary adjoins a cluster of light industrial and office buildings around Home Farm and a small stream (tributary of the River Bure). A mixed hedgerow runs along the north-western boundary and the emerging residential development of the Exemplar site/'Elmsbrook' adjoins the Site to the west.
- 4.3 The Site comprises uncultivated agricultural land comprised of a grass field subdivided into two compartments by an internal fence. A private access road to Home Farm separates the main body of the Site from a narrow strip along the eastern boundary fronting the B4100.
- 4.4 The Site is located on the north-east corner of North West Bicester, which forms a wider area of approximately 390ha allocated under Policy Bicester 1 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031<sup>8</sup> for residential development of up to 6,000 houses and mixed use. North West Bicester is intended to be an 'Eco Town' with sustainability embedded into its design and significant areas of green infrastructure (totalling around 40%).
- 4.5 The land immediately to the north-west and south-west of the Site is subject to planning permission for residential development which is currently under construction as part of the Exemplar site for 391 houses with associated infrastructure and community uses. The main access road into the proposed Development will enter via the northeast corner from the Exemplar development and it will share pedestrian and cycle linkages. As such, the Exemplar site proposals form an integral part of the surrounding development.

### Published Landscape Character

#### National

- 4.6 The landscape of Great Britain has been classified into a series of character areas at a national scale. These reflect broad recognisable characteristics such as geology, soils, vegetation, land use and settlement pattern. They are referred to as 'National Character Areas' (NCA).
- 4.7 As illustrated by **Figure 3**, the Site lies at the transition between two character areas, falling just inside NCA 107 'Cotswolds' but close to the boundary of NCA 108 'Upper Thames Clay Vales' which runs immediately to the east of Caversfield House.
- 4.8 The Cotswolds NCA occupies a very large area covering both plateaux and valley landforms underlain by limestone geology. Given the Site's location on the very periphery of the NCA, the surrounding landscape is not particularly representative of the key characteristics of the main Cotswolds area.
- 4.9 NCAs are too broad to allow accurate and meaningful evaluation of landscape character and change at a local scale. Therefore, it is not considered further within this assessment.

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<sup>8</sup> Policy 1 North West Bicester Eco Tow. Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031.

### County Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.10 The landscape of Oxfordshire has been classified into a series of Landscape Character Types and Areas within the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS). The study integrates both landscape and wildlife into its classification system.
- 4.11 As shown in **Figure 3**, the Site falls into the 'Wooded Estatelands' Landscape Character Type. This is a broad area lying at the transition between the Cotswolds to the west and the clay vale to the east. It is characterised by gently undulating topography with arable farmland, small villages and wooded estates. It has a planned character with a pattern of regularly shaped medium-sized fields and straight-edged plantations. Some variation is provided by the remnant ancient woodlands and small valleys with meandering brooks and sinuous belts of wet woodland. Hedgerows are predominantly post-enclosure and are dominated by hawthorn and blackthorn. Outside of the plantations, trees are generally rather sparse in the landscape.
- 4.12 The key characteristics of the Wooded Estatelands are described as:
- Rolling topography with localised steep slopes.
  - Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes.
  - Large parklands and mansion houses.
  - A regularly shaped field pattern dominated by medium to large arable fields.
  - Small estate villages and dispersed farmsteads with strong vernacular character.
- 4.13 The Wooded Estatelands surrounds the Site and includes the whole of the North West Bicester development. There are no other local landscape character types in the immediate locality.

### Cherwell Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Study<sup>9</sup>

- 4.14 As part of a district-wide assessment to inform the emerging Local Plan, a study was undertaken by Halcrow to assess the landscape capacity and sensitivity of sites around the edge of the main towns including Bicester.
- 4.15 Bicester Eco Town is covered under Sites I and J and is described as consisting of very gently sloping ground and a mixture of arable and pasture. It is mainly screened from Bicester by mature planting either side of the ring road (A4095) and hedgerows serve to break views from other directions.
- 4.16 The landscape and visual sensitivity of the proposed Eco Town is assessed as being low with few inherently valuable landscape elements and views into the Site from the surrounding area. The Site lacks scenic quality and the tranquillity is described as low due to the presence of busy roads such as the M40 and A4095 Bicester ring road.
- 4.17 Overall the Site is evaluated as having a high capacity to accommodate development.

### Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment<sup>10</sup>

- 4.18 The assessment was designed to build upon the Cherwell District Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity study with further detail about landscape capacity and sensitivity of various potential development sites around Bicester.

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<sup>9</sup> Halcrow Group Limited (September 2010). Cherwell District Council. Cherwell Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment.

<sup>10</sup> WYG Planning and Environment (September 2013)., Cherwell District Council. Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment.

- 4.19 The North West Bicester Site is referred to as 'Bicester 1'. It is bounded by the A4095 ring road to the south, Bicester Road (B4030) to the west and B4100 (Banbury Road) to the east. It is bisected through the centre by the Bicester to Banbury railway line. The landform is relatively flat, between 80m and 95m AOD, generally sloping gradually from north to south, with some variation created by several small stream valleys which run south into the River Bure.
- 4.20 The landscape is a mixture of arable and pasture with medium to large-scale regular fields. The field boundary hedgerows and the roadside planting provide a sense of visual enclosure which limit views from the surrounding area. It is described in this study as being a relatively generic landscape lacking diversity or high value elements. The landscape sensitivity is assessed as being medium and the visual sensitivity low to medium.
- 4.21 In terms of its landscape value, although the area does have cultural and ecological designations these are only of local importance and the Site itself does not contain any landscape designations. The scenic value is medium, located on the urban fringe of Bicester it has some local value as open countryside. Public access is minimal and confined to a single bridleway running through the centre of the Site adjacent to the railway. The combined landscape value is assessed as being low.
- 4.22 Bicester 1 is considered to have a high capacity for residential development being located close to the existing settlement edge with the consequence that further development would be in keeping with the adjacent residential area to the south and not significantly altering the overall landscape character of the wider area. A recommendation is made to maintain visual separation with adjacent villages such as Bucknell.

*North West Bicester Landscape Character Assessment<sup>11</sup>*

- 4.23 As part of the Site analysis process to inform the masterplanning of the North West Bicester development, a landscape character assessment was undertaken by Hyder in 2010 which classified the Site into different character areas as illustrated in **Figure 4**.
- 4.24 The eastern part of North West Bicester, including the Site, falls into the 'Caversfield Valleys and Ridges' character area which is defined by:
- Distinctive valley and ridge landform.
  - Valleys defined by tree lined watercourses, woodland blocks and relatively steep fields predominantly laid to pasture.
  - Mixed farmland on ridges, with fields bounded by established hedgerows and woodland blocks.
  - Settlement comprising the historic, stone-built village of Caversfield, including Home Farm and St Lawrence's Church (listed buildings), with the church tower forming a visible element in the local landscape.
  - Generally strong sense of enclosure due to characteristic landform, vegetation and settlement edges.

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<sup>11</sup> North West Bicester Landscape Character Assessment. North West Bicester Masterplan: Green Infrastructure and Landscape Report. March 2014.

### Evaluation of Site in Relation to Published Landscape Character

- 4.25 The Site lies within the 'Wooded Estatelands' landscape character type. It consists of a regularly-shaped and medium-sized agricultural field bounded by hedgerows with a gentle slope from north to south, which accords with several of the key characteristics of the published description.
- 4.26 It forms a small part of an area which has the character of a planned, mixed agricultural landscape with open fields and occasional woodlands (both plantation and ancient) which serve to break up views and provide some enclosure.
- 4.27 The Site has a relatively enclosed character with limited intervisibility with the surrounding landscape because of rising land to the north and mature tree cover around Caversfield House to the east. The sense of enclosure is being rapidly increased by the presence of the Exemplar development to the north, west and south.
- 4.28 Recent and future development is fundamentally altering the landscape character of the immediate area, which is undergoing a transition from rural to urban-fringe.

### Landscape Elements

- 4.29 The layout, topography and elements of the Site are illustrated in **Figure 5**. The Site consists of a single grassland field with little internal vegetation. The field is subdivided by an internal fence into two compartments, and there is a narrow strip of land along the eastern boundary separated from the main field by the access road to Home Farm.
- 4.30 The land slopes from north to south down to a small brook, a tributary of the River Bure, which runs adjacent to the southern boundary fringed by several off-site overhanging trees such as alder, aspen and crack willow.
- 4.31 The northern and eastern boundaries have mature hedgerows with occasional trees which serve to filter views into the Site. They are predominantly hawthorn but contain a mixture of species including dogwood, elder, field maple, wayfaring tree. The hedgerow has a reasonable structure and is maintained through occasional cutting/flailing.
- 4.32 Trees are largely confined to the boundaries. The majority of trees are semi-mature and have been classified as either Grade B or C. There is a single Grade A tree, a field maple along the southern boundary. Full details are contained within the Tree Survey Report (CBA Trees, January 2018), provided with the planning application.

### Landscape Value

- 4.33 Landscape value relates to the value or importance society attaches to a landscape or view, which expresses national or local consensus and because of its quality, special qualities, cultural associations or ecological status. IEMA/LI guidance identifies a number of reasons why a landscape may be valued:
- **landscape condition:** a measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements;
  - **scenic quality:** the term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the visual senses;
  - **rarity:** the presence of rare features or elements in the landscape, or the presence of a rare landscape character type;



- **representativeness:** whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples;
- **conservation interests:** the presence of features of particular wildlife, earth science or archaeological, historical and cultural interest can add to the value of a landscape as well as having value in their own right;
- **recreation value:** evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important;
- **perceptual aspects:** a landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
- **associations:** some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.

4.34 An assessment of landscape value has been based on consideration of:

- Landscape designation, i.e. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Nature conservation designation, i.e. Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Published literature relating to local cultural heritage, recreation and tourism;
- Published landscape assessment;
- The inter-relationship of the above.

4.35 As part of the assessment, a review of relevant designations adjacent to the Site was undertaken. These designations are illustrated in **Figure 6**.

#### *Designated Landscapes*

4.36 The Site does not form part of any designated landscape, and neither does it lie adjacent to any designation. It lies approximately 17km from the Cotswold AONB.

#### *Nature Conservation*

4.37 Full details of the ecological status of the Site is contained within the Ecological Assessment Report, provided with this planning application and included within this ES as Appendix 3.8. The Site and surrounding area are not designated for nature conservation. It comprises a semi-improved grassland field and boundary hedgerows and trees, which are commonplace landscape elements not considered to have wider ecological importance outside of a localised or site scale.

#### *Cultural Value*

4.38 The Site itself does not contain any designated archaeological or historical designated features but it lies in proximity to two listed buildings.

4.39 The Grade II\* listed St Laurence's Church is located within the grounds of Caversfield House around 30m from the Site's eastern boundary across the B4100. Part of the original church dates from the Saxon period but the chancel and nave have been rebuilt at several stages including in 1874 by Henry Woodyer in the Gothic Revival style. It serves as the parish church for Caversfield.

4.40 The Grade II listed building at Home Farm lies approximately 50m to the south of the southern boundary. It comprises a two storey farmhouse dating from the early/mid-17<sup>th</sup> century with later extensions. The farmhouse is surrounded by several non-listed outbuildings that are now used for commercial purposes. Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage in Volume 1 of the ES provides further information on built heritage assets.

4.41 The RAF Bicester Conservation Area is located approximately 500m to the southeast. There is very limited potential for intervisibility between the Conservation Area and the Site.

#### *Public Access and Recreation*

4.42 The Site is privately owned farmland with no public access or public right of way. There are no public rights of way immediately adjacent to the Site and the B4100 has no pavement for pedestrians. The closest public right of way is footpath 148/7 c.490m to the north.

#### *Landscape Condition*

4.43 The Site has been maintained in reasonable condition through agricultural use and the maintenance of field boundary hedgerows.

#### *Rarity*

4.44 The Site comprises a section of what was formerly open countryside on the urban fringe of Bicester. The Landscape and Sensitivity Study considered the wider area to be a relatively generic landscape lacking any higher value landscape elements.

#### *Scenic Value*

4.45 The presence of adjacent development, active construction sites, field boundary vegetation and mature trees around Caversfield House serve to enclose the Site and break views from the wider countryside. The lack of any notable landscape elements and presence of adjacent development result in a low scenic value.

#### *Perceptual Qualities*

4.46 Due to its urban edge location adjacent to the Banbury Road and near the A4095 ring road, the underlying tranquillity and remoteness of the setting is low and rapidly diminishing with the construction of adjacent development.

### **Summary of Landscape Value**

4.47 The Site is not designated for its landscape, ecological, cultural or historical importance. It comprises a small agricultural field with boundary hedges – a remnant of previously open countryside close to the settlement edge of Bicester whose landscape character is under transition from rural to urban due to the expanding adjacent development of North West Bicester, of which it forms a part.

4.48 The eastern part of the Site has some role in the landscape setting of the adjacent Grade II\* listed St Laurence Church. Separation between residential development and the church is proposed to be maintained by open space buffers.

4.49 The overall landscape value of the Site is assessed as being **low**.

### Susceptibility to Change and Sensitivity

- 4.50 Susceptibility is defined as the degree to which a defined landscape can accommodate the proposed development without causing undue adverse effects. Sensitivity is judged according to a combination of its inherent landscape value and susceptibility to change.
- 4.51 The Site has a low overall landscape value.
- 4.52 Both the Cherwell Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Study and the Bicester Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment evaluated the wider North West Bicester Site as having a high capacity to accommodate residential development.
- 4.53 Due to its small size, lack of sensitive landscape elements and proximity to expanding residential development on three sides, it is considered that the Site has a **low** susceptibility to the proposed development and therefore a **high** capacity to accommodate residential development. The proposals would sit adjacent to the Exemplar housing development and be in keeping with the evolving character of the surroundings.

### Visual Receptors

#### *General*

- 4.54 In order to assess the impact, the development may have on visual amenity, it is necessary to understand who will be subject to a change in visual circumstances and the extent to which those persons will be affected. The starting point is thus to establish the sensitivity of the viewing public to visual change.
- 4.55 LI/IEEMA guidelines currently provide examples of broad categories of inherently high, medium and low sensitivity. The guidelines stress that these are only examples and that every project will require its own set of criteria and thresholds. The examples provided relate to High, Medium and Low Sensitivity dependent upon the expectations of the viewer and broadly typified by occupiers of Residential Properties and users of Public Rights of Way (High), people engaged in certain Sporting and Recreational activities (Medium) and those occupied at their place of work or using the local road network for vehicular journeys (Low).
- 4.56 The degree by which a visual receptor is judged to be sensitive however also depends on the actual quality of the existing view. Accordingly, when the sensitivity to the change being proposed is assessed, matters such as the context and extent of the existing view as well as the proximity of the receptor to the proposed development need to be considered.
- 4.57 An example could be provided by two identical residential properties. The occupier of property A could have open views across a National Park while B may overlook heavy industrial areas on the urban fringe. Whilst both parties could be regarded as inherently highly sensitive to visual change the actual situation would be that the occupier of property A would be regarded as highly sensitive to change relative to built development in the context of the view, whilst the party at property B as of medium or low sensitivity.

### Existing Visibility

- 4.58 During the field survey, the nature and extent of the Site's existing visibility was evaluated and a total of 12 representative viewpoints selected. The locations of these viewpoints can be seen in **Figure 7** and the photographs are contained in **Appendix 2**.

- 4.59 The enclosed nature of the Site, and recent and ongoing construction of the adjacent Exemplar site serves to restrict visibility of the Site from the surrounding area.
- 4.60 Views of the Site from the north are curtailed by scattered plantation woodlands and field boundary hedgerows. Intermittent and filtered views of the Site are available from an approximate area south of the Bainton Road. This includes views from public footpath 148/7 as shown by **Viewpoint 1**.
- 4.61 Views from the north will be effectively confined to the Site boundary once the houses of the Exemplar site (currently under construction) are completed.
- 4.62 Views of the Site from the west are screened by the recently constructed houses of the Exemplar site. There are very few potential visual receptors between the Site and the railway to the west.
- 4.63 Roadside planting either side of the A4095 ring road mean that there is very limited potential for views from the south. The construction of the first phase of the Exemplar site (either side of Charlotte Avenue) largely screens views of the Site from the B4100 north of the A4095.
- 4.64 Existing visibility is restricted to residential properties on the northern edge of the Exemplar site (**Viewpoint 9**) and slot views from the B4100 adjacent to the new development (**Viewpoint 10**).
- 4.65 There are also heavily filtered views of the Site from the residential property of Home Farm and its associated commercial outbuildings filtered through scattered trees and the southern boundary hedgerow.
- 4.66 Close-range and open views from the east are only available from a short section of the B4100 (Banbury Road) immediately adjacent to the Site boundaries (**Viewpoint 5** and **Viewpoint 7**) with the potential for narrow and filtered slots views from St Laurence Church and Caversfield House.
- 4.67 Views from the wider area to the east are predominantly screened by dense and mature trees around Caversfield House and the cluster of buildings around Home Farm.

### Visual Receptors

- 4.68 Based on the existing visibility, the following principal visual receptors have been identified:
- Users of small sections of the B4100 adjacent to the eastern Site boundary,
  - Caversfield House and the Lodge;
  - St Laurence Church;
  - Residential and commercial users of the buildings around Home Farm (including from the Grade II listed farmhouse itself);
  - Residents in the new housing along the northern edge of the Exemplar site; and
  - Users of public footpath 148/7 to the north.
- 4.69 These have been categorised by their visual sensitivity according to the table below.

**Table 2 Visual Receptor Sensitivity by Category**

Category	Description	Sensitivity
A	Users of Public Rights of Way / Open Space/Heritage assets	High
B	Residential areas (community) and occupiers of individual residential properties	High
C	Users of roads	Low to Medium
D	People at work	Low

**Future Baseline**

- 4.70 In the absence of development, then it is presumed that the Site would remain largely unchanged from the current baseline and continue to be used as agricultural land.
- 4.71 However, land use change associated with residential development on the adjacent land will substantially alter the landscape and visual character of the area, resulting in the Site having a more enclosed and urban fringe character.

## 5. ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 This section details the proposals for the Development which are 'designed-in' the scheme to mitigate potential landscape and visual effects. When assessing the landscape and visual effects of the Development proposals, the measures described below have been taken into account.

### Construction

5.2 Construction will be carried out in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which is assumed will be secured by planning condition. The CEMP details the avoidance and mitigation measures of construction effects on the surrounding receptors.

### Completed Development

5.3 The landscape and visual mitigation strategy, which forms part of the principles of the Development, is designed to mitigate and minimise landscape and visual effects and follows the principles of avoidance and reduction.

### Avoidance

5.4 The footprint of the built development zone within the Site has been carefully located to avoid direct effects upon the existing boundary trees and hedgerows – all of which would be retained in the layout.

### Reduction

5.5 Proposed development includes several inherent mitigation measures designated to reduce landscape and visual effects on adjacent receptors.

5.6 The location of the residential development in the northwest corner of the Site, with a generous swathe of open space providing a buffer with the B4100 and listed buildings of St Laurence Church and Home Farm – along with the retention and enhancement of boundary vegetation – serves to reduce impacts on these receptors.

5.7 The eastern strip adjoining the B4100 is allocated for orchard and allotments, and new tree planting in combination with retained existing trees and the eastern boundary hedgerow will increase the level of visual filtering in views from the road.

5.8 The Development has been designed with a 'soft edge' along its eastern boundary with a discontinuous frontage along the residential development edge, including a reduction in building height and street and garden trees breaking up built form and providing a green edge. This will reduce the prominence of the Development in views from the south and east.

5.9 A detailed landscape strategy, including plans for both hard and soft landscape elements, and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan would be produced as part of a subsequent Reserved Matters application.

## 6. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

- 6.1 A detailed and comprehensive summary of the predicted landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed Development is contained within the Table of Effects in **Appendix 3**, which assesses construction, operational and cumulative effects. **Appendix 3** sets out the sensitivity of the receptor, magnitude of change, significance and nature of the effect.

### CONSTRUCTION

#### Assessment of Effects

- 6.2 There would be several short-term and temporary effects on the landscape and visual character of the Site during the construction period. Construction activities would include:
- Removal of ground vegetation;
  - Soil stripping;
  - Material stockpiling;
  - Installation of temporary fencing;
  - Installation of temporary lighting;
  - Increase in noise and movement associated with site traffic; and
  - Other site related activities.
- 6.3 A CEMP would be implemented during the construction phase to minimise temporary impacts associated with development such as noise, lighting, dust and traffic movement.
- 6.4 Inevitably, the transition from an agricultural field to a residential development would result in a **high** magnitude of change on the site's landscape character. Given its **low** sensitivity, this would result in a **moderate** overall effect on landscape character.
- 6.5 Any effects during construction would be short-term and temporary when compared with the completed development.

#### Mitigation Measures

- 6.6 Standard mitigation measures to reduce the short-term impacts listed above are likely to include the following:
- Screening of the Site with temporary hoarding;
  - Managed working hours;
  - Controlled access points;
  - Little or localised use of construction site lighting;
  - Considered location of stockpiles and equipment; and
  - Considered location of temporary buildings and cabins.
- 6.7 Temporary fencing would be installed to protect the retained trees and hedgerows, and their surrounding rooting zones, from direct impacts from construction activities.

- 6.8 Beyond activities on Site and an increase of heavy traffic to the Site, there are not likely to be any effects during the construction phase which affect areas or receptors not already affected by the Development itself. For this reason, no other specific mitigation measures will be required.
- 6.9 In conclusion, the predicted overall effect of the construction phase of the Development is likely to remain 'moderate adverse in terms of both landscape character and visual amenity. However, these effects would be short-term temporary and limited to the period of construction, which is estimated to be no more than 2 ½ years.

## COMPLETED DEVELOPMENT

### Assessment of Effects

- 6.10 Unless stated otherwise, the predicted effects below are adverse (in that they change the status quo) and not significant.

### Effects on Landscape Elements and Fabric

- 6.11 The most obvious impact on the landscape fabric would be the removal of the existing grassland vegetation and its change of use from an agricultural field to residential development with both formal and informal open space. The grassland is semi-improved and of relatively low ecological value.
- 6.12 The Development would not alter the existing shape of the field and the boundary features would be retained and continue to form an edge to the Site.
- 6.13 Apart from one small breach in the north-western Site boundary hedgerow to create a footpath/cycle access link with the adjacent Exemplar development, there would be no effect on the existing trees and hedgerows. It is proposed that all the existing trees would be retained.
- 6.14 The proposed development layout retains the majority of the Site as open space. This provides the potential to create new landscape areas and establish a wider range of tree and shrub species alongside proposed orchard and allotment spaces.
- 6.15 Given the relatively low value of the Site's existing landscape elements, the small footprint of the built development and the retention of a large area of greenspace within which there is potential to enhance both amenity and biodiversity, the proposed development would have a potential **minor beneficial** effect on landscape fabric.

### Effects on Landscape Character

#### Local Landscape Character

- 6.16 The proposed Development would result in a permanent change of land use from rural agricultural to urban residential with a consequent reduction in openness and tranquillity.
- 6.17 Although there would be a localised loss of openness on the developed section of the Site, it already has an enclosed visual character with residential housing associated with the Exemplar development under construction immediately adjacent to its north-western and south-western boundaries.
- 6.18 Similarly, there would be a slight reduction in tranquillity after completion although from a very low baseline considering the Site's location close to adjacent construction areas and the expanding residential edge of North West Bicester.



- 6.19 The Parameter Plan illustrates that the proposals would be contained within the existing field pattern with the retention of the boundary hedgerows thereby limiting the effect on the landscape pattern of the Site.
- 6.20 Inevitably, there would be a **high** magnitude of change on the Site's existing landscape character with a change of land use from agricultural to residential use for the western part of the Site. However, the sensitivity of its landscape character is **low** given the lack of valued landscape elements and the fact that the adjacent land is under transition from rural to urban thereby reducing its susceptibility to change. The overall effect on landscape character at a Site scale would be **moderate and significant**.
- 6.21 Given the small-scale of the Site in relation to the wider 'Wooded Estatelands' Landscape Character Area of which it forms a part, and the retention of the field boundary vegetation, the Development would have a **low** magnitude of change on wider landscape character and a **minor to negligible** overall effect.

#### Designations

- 6.22 The Site does not form part of a designated landscape. The nearest designated receptors are the listed buildings of Home Farm and St Laurence Church. The effect of the Development on the setting of these cultural heritage receptors is assessed within Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage within Volume 1 of the ES.
- 6.23 The eastern section of the Site, adjacent to the B4100, forms part of the landscape setting of the church. The retention of a large quantity of open space, and the preservation of a sightline through the residential development towards the church through the creation of a residential avenue would help to preserve the open character of its landscape setting and mitigate the overall effect.
- 6.24 The potential for landscape effects on the setting of the RAF Bicester Conservation Area is minimal because of distance (nearest point approximately 500m) and the very limited intervisibility with the Site due to intervening tree cover and built form.

## 7. EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY

### General

- 7.1 The Photographic Field Survey Record contained in **Appendix 2** illustrates the 12 representative viewpoints and the table of visual effects in **Appendix 3** provides an assessment of the predicted visual effects arising from the proposed Development.
- 7.2 A representation of the outline of the proposed housing, to provide an accurate indication of scale and height, is illustrated as a 'wireline' from **Viewpoint 5b (Figure 13)**, **Viewpoint 6 (Figure 10)**, **Viewpoint 7 (Figure 11)** and **Viewpoint 10 (Figure 12)**.
- 7.3 The wireline viewpoints were selected to capture a representation of the views from the B4100 into the Development (**Viewpoints 7 and 10**) and to 'test' the effectiveness of the proposed retained sightline through the residential area towards the Church of St Laurence (**Viewpoint 6**) and the view from the church towards the development (**Viewpoint 5b**). The wirelines were based on the Built Form and Storey Heights Parameter Plan.
- 7.4 The existing Site has an enclosed character which limits the extent of visibility from the surrounding area. As illustrated in **Figure 8**, the Zone of Significant Visibility - in which the Site forms a clear component of the view - is restricted to the area immediately adjacent to the Site boundaries.
- 7.5 The Development will provide up to 75 residential houses, along with new green infrastructure including an allotment/orchard space to the east and north of the Site. The majority of the new dwellings would be two storey with ridge heights to 8m. A small number of units either side of the central avenue could extend up to 2.5 to 3 stories with ridge heights up to 13m.
- 7.6 Following completion of the Development, the area from which the Site is visible would not notably increase, although there would be a few additional visual receptors.
- 7.7 The area immediately to the north and west of the Site is consented for residential development associated with the Exemplar site which is currently under construction. There are no visual receptors with views of the Site from the immediate area to the west. Once completed, the new dwellings brought forward by the Exemplar site would effectively screen the Development from the north (including from footpath 148/7 as illustrated by **Viewpoint 1**, and **Viewpoint 2**). As such, the effects are considered to be **negligible**.
- 7.8 The main current views into the Site are from a short section of the B4100 between Home Farm and the Lodge. After completion, there would be filtered glimpses from the road of the new houses in the north-west corner. As illustrated by **Figure 7**, the proposed houses within the Development would occupy a prominent position on the higher foreground. Their visual effect would be reduced by the intervening corridor of open space, retained trees and proposed orchard planting which would filter views. The overall visual effect on road users would be **moderate and significant**.
- 7.9 In terms of individual properties, there is the potential for views from the new properties on the northern edge of the Exemplar site, the cluster of buildings around Home Farm to the south, The Lodge to the north, and Caversfield House and the Church of St Laurence to the east.
- 7.10 Views from the main property of Caversfield House are predicted to be predominantly screened by mature tree cover, the church and an intervening cluster of buildings adjacent to the B4100. There are several buildings within the grounds of Caversfield House including a coach house directly adjacent to the B4100. The Development would be viewed in the context of the recently constructed Exemplar dwellings to the west. This would, in essence, bring forward the eastern edge of newly consented and built residential development by approximately 130m. However, a high stone wall prevents direct views of the Site at ground level but narrow views of the proposed houses, set behind

retained open space, from the upper storey windows cannot be ruled out. As such, the magnitude of change from all properties within the grounds of Caversfield House is considered to be **low to medium** and the overall effects on the receptor as a whole would be **moderate to major** and **significant**.

- 7.11 Views from within the grounds of the Church of St Laurence are represented by **Viewpoints 5b** and the wireline in **Figure 13**. Due to mature tree cover (including evergreen yews) inside the churchyard and a stone wall, open views of the Development would be restricted to a narrow slot view through the roadside gate with only upper sections of new houses (the rooflines) visible above the boundary wall. A small section of the proposed residential development would be visible in front of the existing new houses of the Elmsbrook development. Due to the restricted view, and the fact that development would be set back behind existing vegetation, retained open space and new planting, the magnitude of change would be **low** and the overall effect on views from St Laurence Church would be **moderate** and **not significant**.
- 7.12 **Viewpoint 6 (Figure 10)** is a wireline representation of the Development from the northwest corner of the Site looking towards the Church of St Laurence. It demonstrates the proposed road alignment within the residential area would be effective in preserving a sightline through the development towards the church.
- 7.13 There would be oblique views of the Development from the upper storey windows of the Lodge, a two-storey property lying adjacent to the B4100 north of Caversfield House. The ground level view is illustrated by **Viewpoint 3**, which shows that views would be heavily filtered by the roadside hedgerow, thus the magnitude of the change would be **low** and the effect **negligible**. From the upper storey window, the magnitude of change may increase to **medium** and the effects would be **major** and **significant**.
- 7.14 When viewed in combination with the recently constructed Exemplar dwellings to the north the Development would, in essence bring forward the southern edge of residential development by approximately 120m. Filtered views through the existing boundary hedgerows and trees and proposed planting are likely to be available for several buildings on the northern edge of the complex including from Home Farm itself. However, the cluster of properties around Home Farm would be set back from the proposed houses by approximately 140m of open space. The magnitude of change would not exceed **medium** and the effects **major** and **significant**.
- 7.15 The recently completed and occupied properties along the northern edge of the first phase of the Exemplar site have potential upper storey views of the Development. **Viewpoint 9** illustrates the ground level view from the row of properties off Bramley Avenue. Views of the Development would be heavily filtered by the two intervening hedgerows and the mature trees around Home Farm. The Development would be seen alongside the recently constructed houses of the Exemplar scheme within a suburban context and form a continuation of this development. Effects are not considered to exceed **moderate** and **not significant**.
- 7.16 **Viewpoints 10** and **11** from the B4100 adjacent to Exemplar site represent potential views experienced by road users heading north from the Bicester bypass. Views of the new residential houses would occupy the horizon line between the Exemplar site and Home Farm. Effects would range from **moderate** to **minor (Viewpoint 10)** to **negligible (Viewpoint 11)**.
- 7.17 The potential for views from the wider area is very low. Views from the northern residential edge of Bicester would be screened by roadside planting either side of the A4095 and the new development of the Exemplar site. Views from the residential properties in Caversfield are heavily curtailed by the tall roadside hedgerow, mature tree cover around Caversfield House and the cluster of buildings around Home Farm. **Viewpoint 12**, taken from the public footpath 153/1, illustrates the level of screening provided by tree cover around Caversfield House and lack of intervisibility with the Site.

### Lighting Effects

- 7.18 The details of any operational lighting scheme would form part of a Reserved Matters application. This assessment assumes that lighting is likely to comprise street lighting to access and secondary roads and low-level lighting along footpaths and cycleways.
- 7.19 At this stage, it is assumed that lighting from the Development would be visible during night-time from a small number of receptors within the Zone of Significant Visibility including a small section of the B4100, several residential properties (including Home Farm and The Lodge) and the residential edge of the adjacent Exemplar site. Given the presence of adjacent built form and mature trees, the effect of lighting within the Development on the wider landscape (outside the area adjacent to the Site boundaries) is expected to be minimal.
- 7.20 Given the fact that the immediate surroundings are subject to lighting from residential development, the sensitivity of Site to additional light is considered to be **medium**. Without mitigation, potential effects are predicted to range from **moderate** to **moderate/major**.

### Mitigation and Residual Effects

- 7.21 It is expected that the Lighting Strategy would include standard methods designed to minimise the amount of light spillage and throw such as fitted hoods, lower intensity bulbs, timing switches and angled fittings.
- 7.22 Taken within the context of these mitigation measures and the existing urban and urban fringe setting which already produces a high level of night time lighting and light spill, it can be concluded that there will be some encroachment of night-time lighting effects along the B4100. However, these effects will be localised and will not provide any significant change in the overall light level effects on the surrounding area. Effects on landscape character and visual amenity due to lighting are therefore to be assessed as being **minor to moderate**.

### Overall Mitigation and Residual Effects

- 7.23 Careful consideration has been given within the scheme design to various measures designed to mitigate the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed Development including:
- Positioning of built development footprint in northwest corner of Site;
  - Allocation of majority of Site as green infrastructure forming an open space buffer between the Development and adjacent visual receptors including the listed buildings of St Laurence Church and Home Farm;
  - Retention of the boundary hedgerows and trees; and
  - Allocation of open space for a new community allotment and orchard and potential space for planting a wide range of additional tree and shrub species to increase visual amenity and reduce visual impact from adjacent receptors.
- 7.24 These mitigation measures are considered as 'embedded' within the scheme design and have been assessed as such within the LVIA. Residual effects are to be regarded as being of the same level of effect and significance as those stated above. It is not anticipated that additional mitigation measures are required.

## 8. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

- 8.1 The purpose of a cumulative assessment is to consider separate schemes which, in addition to the proposed development, may have the potential for combined significant cumulative effects.
- 8.2 The Site forms a small part of the wider North West Bicester scheme, which in combination with the addition of the Site may have the potential to cause wider cumulative effects on landscape character and visual amenity.
- 8.3 The sections of the North West Bicester site with the greatest potential for in-combination cumulative effects are the adjacent Exemplar site granted permission for up to 393 houses under application reference 10/01780/Hybrid in 2012. The southernmost section of the Exemplar site has already been completed (and therefore form part of the baseline), whereas the areas adjacent to the Site's northern and western boundary are currently under construction (and form part of the future cumulative context).
- 8.4 In addition, the area to the west of the Exemplar Site ('SGR2') is subject to an application for 2600 residential houses under application reference 14/01384/OUT and has a reduced potential to cumulative effects.

### Cumulative Effect on Landscape Fabric

- 8.5 The wider North West Bicester development earmarks approximately 40% of the land as open space with a network of green infrastructure and corridors. When fully constructed, there would be a **minor cumulative beneficial** effect from the addition of the Site as part of the wider North West Bicester development. The development would contribute to the landscape setting of the adjacent Exemplar development and enhance its green infrastructure.

### Cumulative Effect on Landscape Character

- 8.6 Given the small-scale of the Site and development footprint, its addition to the wider North-West Bicester scheme would create minimal additional cumulative effects on landscape character. It would expand the development footprint by moving the residential edge further to the east but improve the setting of the Exemplar site by preserving and enhancing open space with a 'parkland' character. The cumulative effect on wider landscape character (including the key characteristics of the Wooded Estate lands) would be **minor to negligible**.

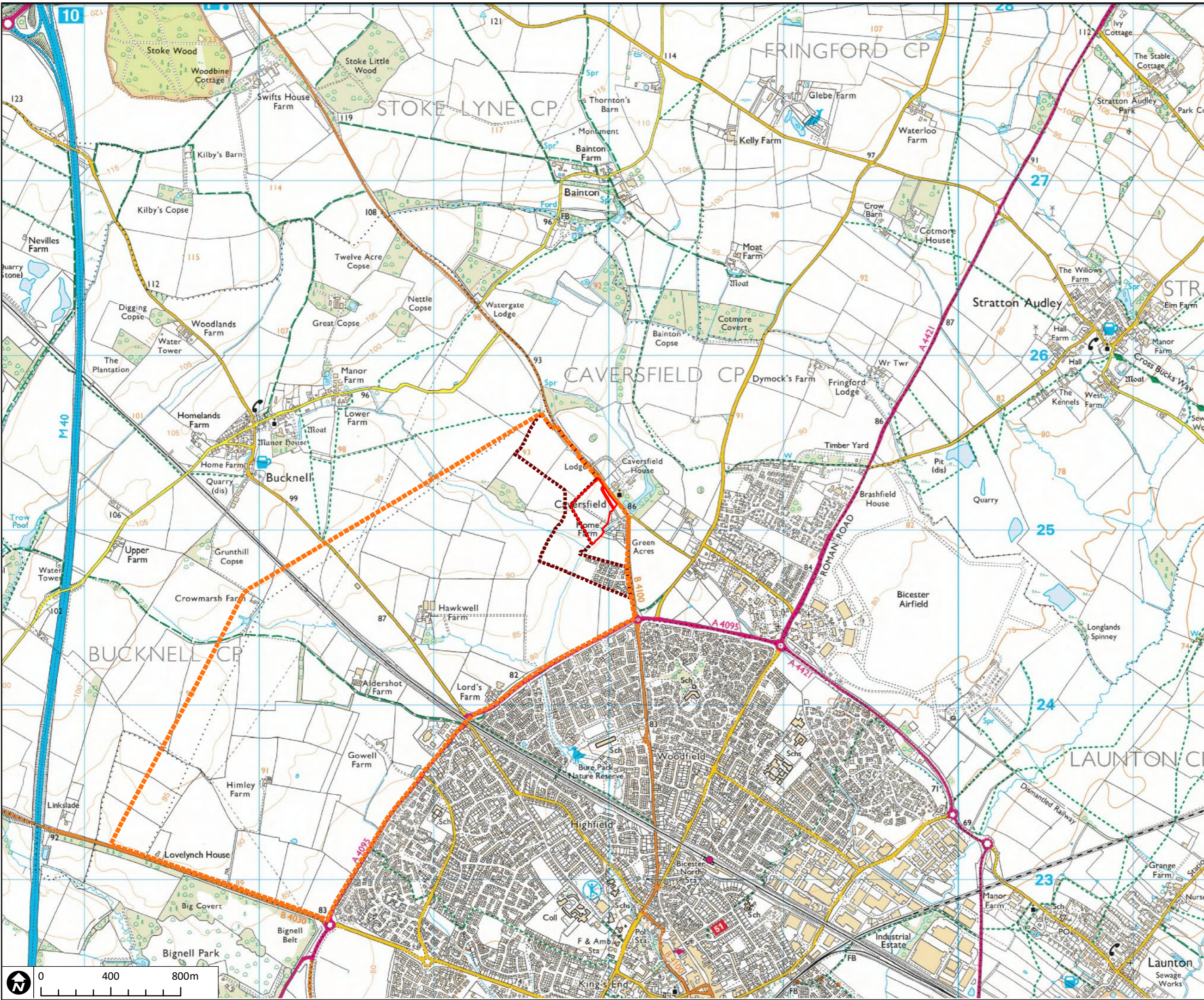
### Cumulative Effect on Visual Receptors

- 8.7 Due to the visual separation between the Site and the western section of North West Bicester (beyond the railway line), the adjacent Exemplar site is the most relevant to consideration of cumulative visual effects. The SGR2 site lies to the west of the Exemplar site and would be predominantly screened from the Site by intervening built form.
- 8.8 The addition of the Site to the consented Exemplar site would not create any additional significant in-combination visual effects.
- 8.9 The Site would effectively occupy a parcel of land which is already enclosed and screened on three sides by the Exemplar development. To the east, the Site is well screened by Home Farm and Caversfield House in views from the residential areas of Caversfield. Consequently, the development of the Site would not extend the existing area of visibility of the Exemplar Site or introduce new significant visual effects where there are currently none.
- 8.10 The Site would slightly extend the residential edge further to the south-east, but development would continue to be screened in wider views from the east.

- 
- 8.11 There would be no additional cumulative visual effects from residential areas in Bicester, or other sensitive visual receptors such as residential areas within Caversfield village or the RAF Bicester Conservation Area, due to the Site being effectively screened.
- 8.12 In all views, the residential area of the Site would be seen against the backdrop of the Exemplar houses and therefore the character of the existing views would not be altered.
- 8.13 It is considered that, given sensitive landscape treatment, the open space between the residential footprint and the eastern boundary could form an attractive 'parkland' setting to the Site and the wider Exemplar development and provide visual separation and effective mitigation which preserves the landscape setting of St Laurence church.
- 8.14 The scheme design would maintain a sightline of St Laurence church along a tree-lined avenue through the Development.

## 9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The results of this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment confirm the findings of the background studies that the Site occupies land of relatively low landscape value and sensitivity. The proposed development would result in significant effects from a limited number of visual receptors within a very localised area immediately adjacent to the Site's boundaries.
- 9.2 There would be no significant effects from the wider surrounding area due to the enclosed nature of the Site with its high level of existing screening and the retention of an open space buffer within the Development layout.
- 9.3 Due to the retention of the existing trees and hedgerows, there would be a limited effect on the Site's landscape fabric and the creation of an open space buffer within the layout, with associated additional planting, has the potential to enhance its landscape setting.
- 9.4 It is concluded that the proposals would not result in undue adverse effects on the landscape and represent an acceptable extension of the existing and consented residential area of North West Bicester and would be in accordance with local landscape policy.



**KEY**

- BOUNDARY: APPLICATION SITE
- BOUNDARY: NORTH WEST BICESTER ALLOCATION
- BOUNDARY: ELMSBROOK DEVELOPMENT (EXEMPLAR SITE)

**DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES**

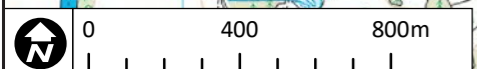
DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES LIMITED  
 3 Tennyson Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 5DT  
 t: 01793 612173  
 e: mail@davidjarvis.biz  
 w: www.davidjarvis.biz

Client  
**SGR (BICESTER 1) LIMITED**

Project  
**PLOT SGR 1, BICESTER**

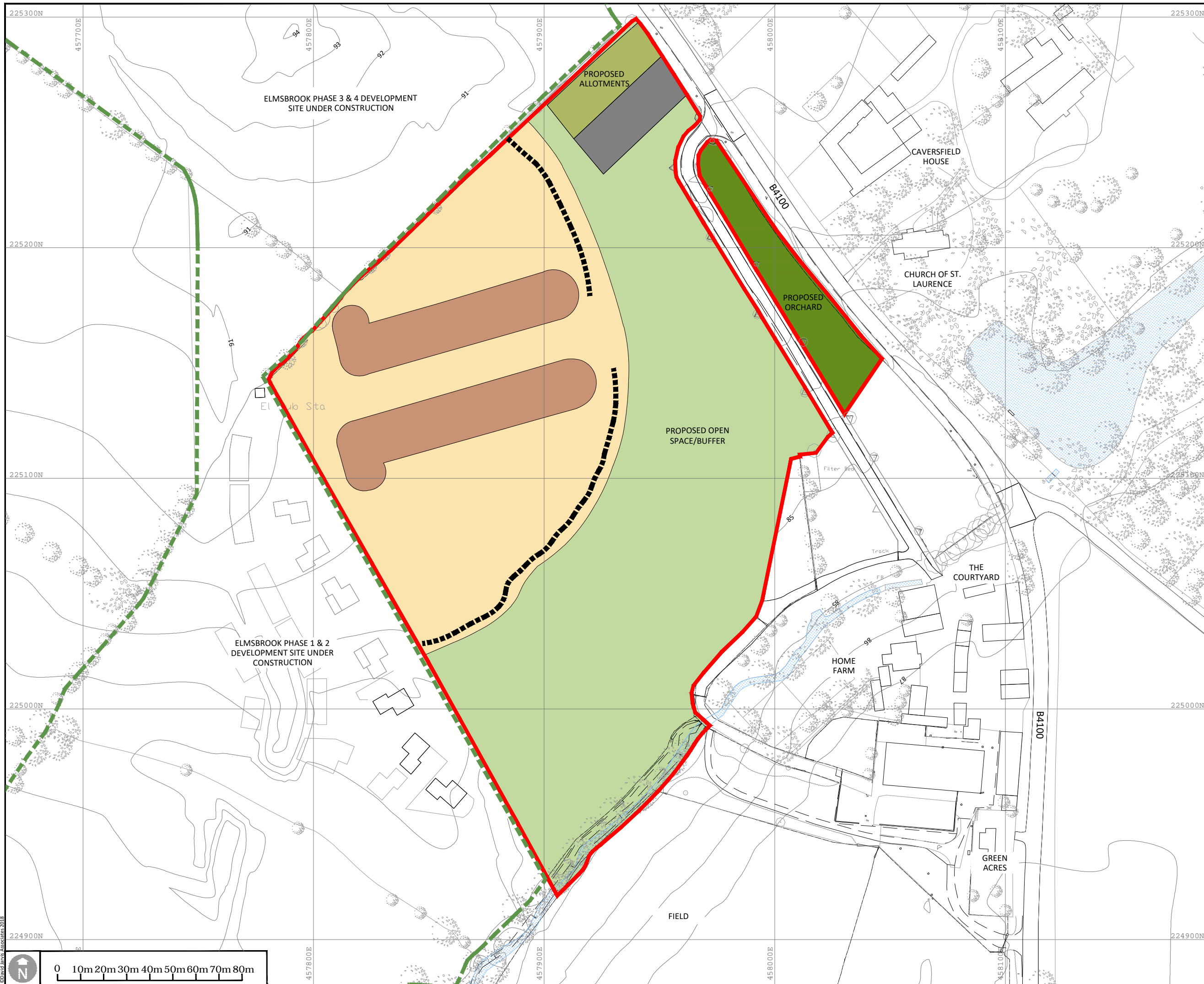
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		Status
		<b>S4-P2</b>













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**KEY**

-  BOUNDARY: APPLICATION SITE
-  BOUNDARY: CONSENTED ELMSBROOK DEVELOPMENT
-  EXISTING CONTOURS AT 1.0M INTERVAL
-  EXISTING VEGETATION (BASED ON SURVEY)
-  EXISTING VEGETATION (BASED ON AERIAL)
-  EXISTING WATERBODY
-  PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHT UP TO 8.5M TO RIDGE HEIGHT (Generally 2 storey dwellings)
-  PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHT UP TO 13.0M TO RIDGE HEIGHT (Generally 2½ - 3 storey dwellings)
-  DISCONTINUOUS FRONTAGE (indicative location of built frontage)
-  PROPOSED LOCATION OF POTENTIAL CAR PARKING FOR ALLOTMENTS AND CHURCH

**Notes**

Related Drawings: DIA Drawing based on  
 - David Lock Associates Drawing Ref: RCP001/013E Built Form and Storey Heights, dated 16.02.2018  
 - Topo Survey provided by client  
 - Open data LIDAR and aerial imagery

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Scaling: Do not scale this drawing. Use given dimensions only.

Survey: Original survey provided by the Client.

**Drawing Revision**

Rev.	Date	Description	Drawn	Checked
P1	20/02/18	First draft issued to client.	AS	WB
P2	14/03/18	Changes to layout and application boundary	AS	WB

**Status**

**DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES**

DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES LIMITED  
 1 Tennyson Street Swindon Wiltshire SN1 5DT  
 t: 01793 612173  
 e: mail@davidjarvis.biz  
 w: www.davidjarvis.biz

Client  
**SGR (BICESTER 1) LIMITED**

Project  
**PLOT SGR 1, BICESTER**

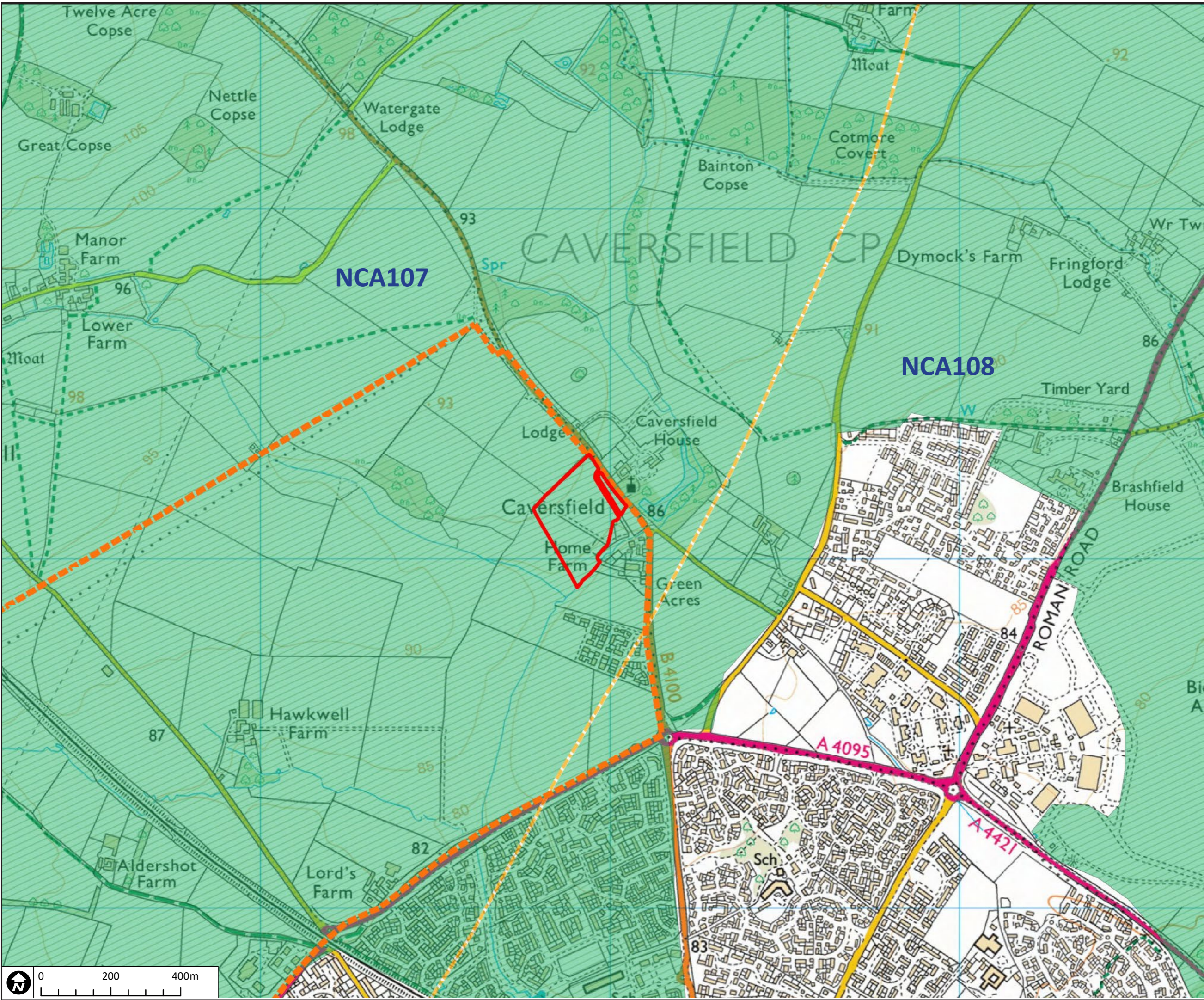
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**INDICATIVE PROPOSED LAYOUT PLAN**

Scale <b>1:1500</b>	Sheet Size <b>A3</b>	Date <b>FEB 2018</b>
Client Ref. -	Drawing Ref. <b>2652-4-4-4</b>	Drawing No. <b>FIGURE 2</b>
		Status <b>S4-P2</b>

0 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m 60m 70m 80m

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**KEY**

- BOUNDARY: APPLICATION SITE**
- BOUNDARY: NORTH WEST BICESTER ALLOCATION**
- BOUNDARY: NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA**

**NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA**

- NCA107** CHARACTER AREA 107 - COTSWOLDS
- NCA108** CHARACTER AREA 108 - UPPER THAMES CLAY VALES

**REGIONAL CHARACTER AREAS**  
Source: Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), 2004

- COTSWOLDS**
- URBAN**

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES**  
Source: Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), 2004

- URBAN AREAS**
- WOODED ESTATELANDS**

**DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES**  
DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES LIMITED  
 1 Tennyson Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 5DT  
 t: 01793 612173  
 e: mail@davidjarvis.biz  
 w: www.davidjarvis.biz

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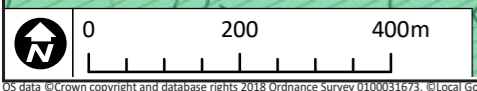
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**PLOT SGR 1, BICESTER**

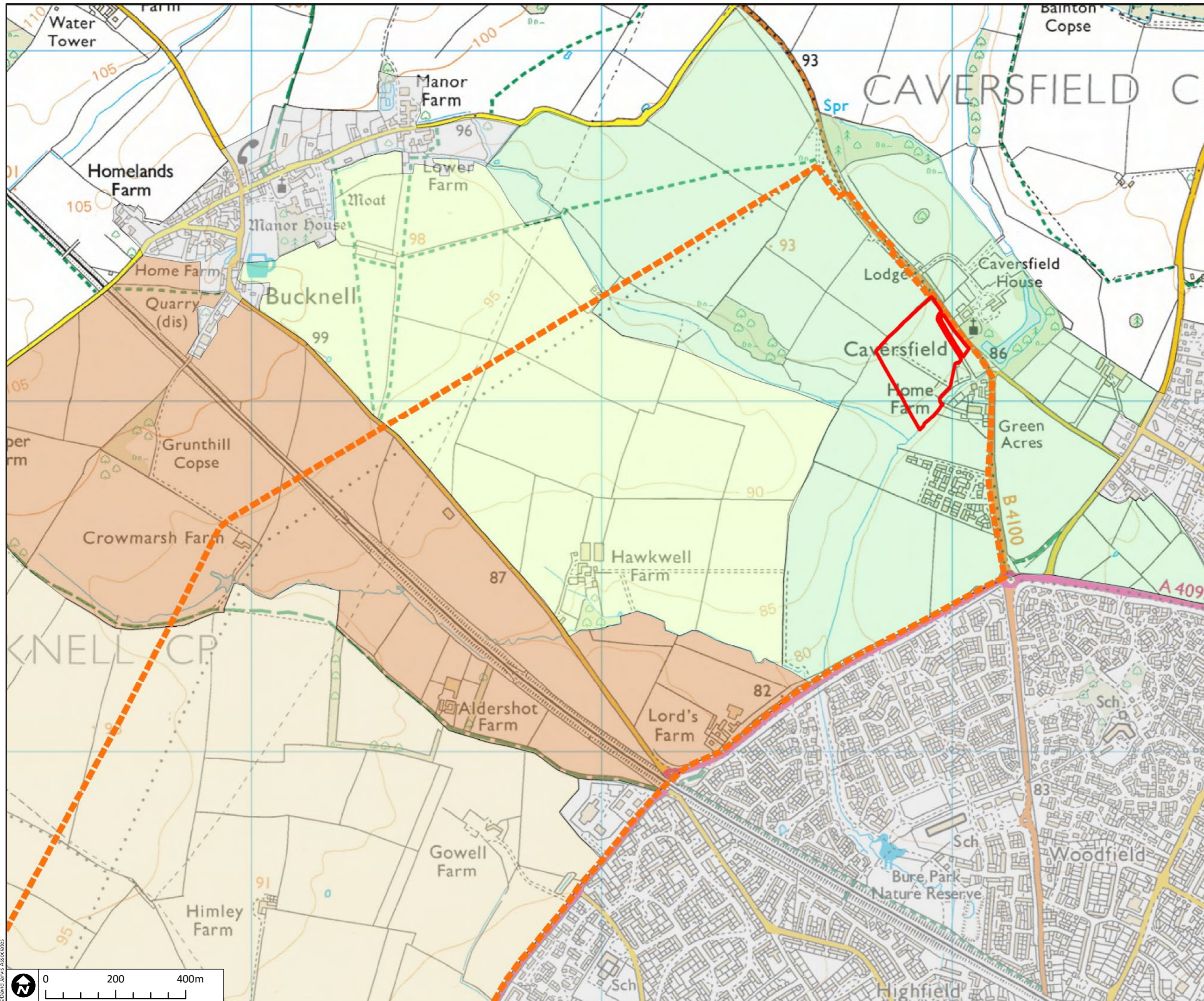
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**LANDSCAPE CONTEXT - REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS & TYPES**

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Client Ref:	Drawing Ref:	Drawing No:
-	2652-4-4-4	FIGURE 3
		Status
		S4-P2



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**KEY**

- BOUNDARY: APPLICATION SITE
- BOUNDARY: NORTH WEST BICESTER ALLOCATION

**LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS**  
Source: Hyder Drawing 'Site Landscape Character Assessment', 2010

- SETTLEMENTS
- CAVERSFIELD VALLEYS AND RIDGES
- BUCKNELL RIDGE
- BUCKNELL VALLEY CORRIDOR
- HIMLEY FARMLAND SLOPES

**DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES**

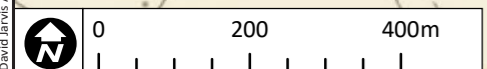
DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES LIMITED  
1 Tennyson Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 5DT  
t: 01793 612173  
e: mail@davidjarvis.biz  
w: www.davidjarvis.biz

Client  
**SGR (BICESTER 1) LIMITED**

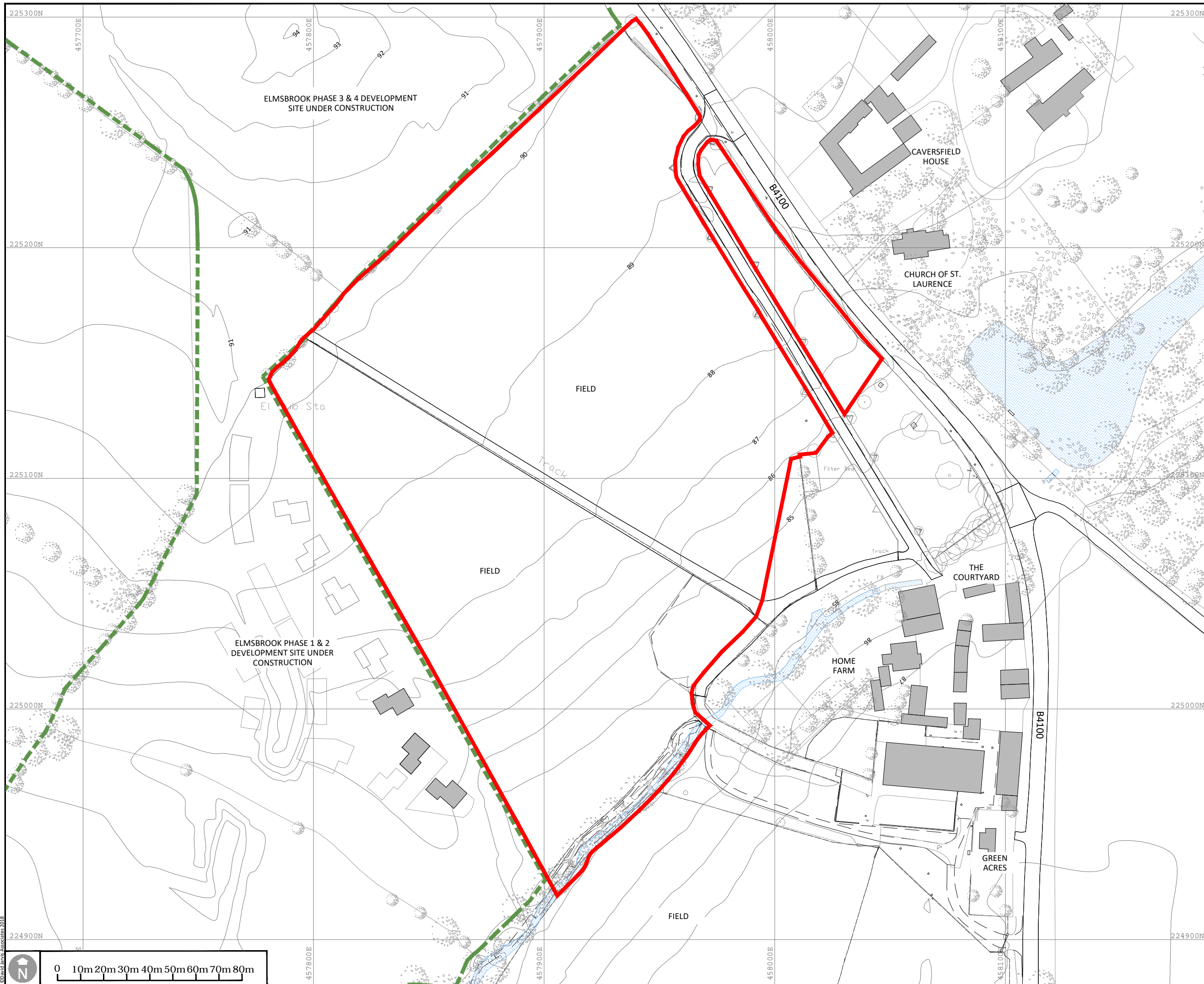
Project  
**PLOT SGR 1, BICESTER**

Drawing Title  
**LANDSCAPE CONTEXT - LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS**







Scale <b>1:10000</b>	Sheet Size <b>A3</b>	Date <b>FEB 2018</b>
Client Ref: <b>-</b>	Drawing Ref: <b>2652-4-4-4</b>	Drawing No: <b>FIGURE 4</b>
Status <b>S4-P2</b>		



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**KEY**

-  BOUNDARY: APPLICATION SITE
-  BOUNDARY: CONSENTED ELMSBROOK DEVELOPMENT
-  EXISTING CONTOURS AT 1.0M INTERVAL
-  EXISTING VEGETATION (BASED ON SURVEY)
-  EXISTING VEGETATION (BASED ON AERIAL)
-  EXISTING WATERBODY

**Notes**

Related Drawings: DIA Drawing based on  
 - Topo Survey provided by client  
 - Open data LIDAR and aerial imagery

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**Drawing Revision**

Rev.	Date	Description	Drawn	Checked
P1	20/02/18	First draft issued to client.	AS	WB
P2	14/03/18	Update on application boundary	AS	WB

**Status**

**DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES**

DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES LIMITED  
 1 Tennyson Street Swindon Wiltshire SN1 5DT  
 t: 01793 612173  
 e: mail@davidjarvis.biz  
 w: www.davidjarvis.biz

**Client**

**SGR (BICESTER 1) LIMITED**

**Project**

**PLOT SGR 1, BICESTER**

**Drawing Title**

**EXISTING SITE PLAN**

Scale <b>1:1500</b>	Sheet Size <b>A3</b>	Date <b>FEB 2018</b>
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Client Ref. -	Drawing Ref. <b>2652-4-4-4</b>	Drawing No. <b>FIGURE 5</b>	Status <b>S4-P2</b>
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