

Proposed Development on Land at 52 Harris Lane,
Shenley, Hertfordshire

Proof of Evidence
on
Landscape Matters

Louise Hooper Landscape Architect
representing
Shenley Parish Council

Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Site Context and Landscape Setting
- 3 Shenley as a Countryside Gateway
- 4 Landscape Fabric and Effects
- 5 Visual Receptors and Effects
- 6 Areas of Disagreement with Appellant's LVIA
- 7 Conclusions
- 8 Expert Declaration

Appendices

- A1 Site Context
- A2 Countryside Gateway
- A3 Landscape Fabric & Effects
- A4 Visual Effects
- A5 Louise Hooper Professional Experience

1 Introduction

1.1 Louise Hooper Landscape Architect (LHLA) has been appointed by Shenley Parish Council (Rule 6 Party) to prepare a Proof of Evidence on Landscape Matters with reference to Appeal APP/N1920/W/22/331119 against planning decision P22/0971/OUT by Hertsmere Borough Council to refuse an outline planning application for 37 houses on Land Adjacent to 52 Harris Lane, Shenley.

1.2 LHLA has not addressed matters concerning the Green Belt and its openness as these matters are addressed by the evidence of Brigid Taylor on behalf of Shenley Parish Council.

2 Site Context and Landscape Setting

Overview

2.1 The site is a field on the edge of the village; its boundaries are historic field boundaries shown on the 1843 Tithe Map for Shenley and as such they have a time depth reflecting the rural past of the village and the historic field pattern of small fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands. The ancient hedgerows and hedgerow trees make an important contribution to the local biodiversity.

Farmland Setting

2.2 The site forms the westernmost tip of a swathe of rural farmland which reaches right to the built edge of Shenley village and the Harris Lane Playing Fields. The proximity of farmland to the village centre contributes strongly to the local character, and the views out from the village to the surrounding farmland are integral to its sense of place and reflect its connection to its rural past. See Figure 1.

Topography

2.3 The undulating ridges and valleys which make up the High Canons Ridges and Valleys Landscape Character Area 21 are illustrated in Figure 2. The LHLA drawing shows Shenley village sitting on a plateau with the site sloping down towards Catherine Bourne, a stream flowing to the northeast between Pursley Farm and Crossoaks Farm towards St Catherine's Farm.

Harris Lane Playing Fields

2.4 The Harris Lane Playing Fields are the heart of the village, acting as a village green or village common. They are the venue for many outdoor community activities such as fetes, picnics and matches that take place in Shenley as well as a variety of informal uses such as children's play, dog walking, sport and recreation. They are used by all age groups seeking safe and accessible outdoor space. See Figures 3-12. Views from the playing fields are described in 2.5 and 2.6 below and illustrated in Figures 1, 3, 7, 8, 11 and 14.

Views to the Countryside

2.5 To the north, there are views towards Combe Wood and Shenley Hill. To the southeast, there is a significant long view over Harris Lane and across open farmland towards Ridge and High Canons. This view is framed by the woodland edge of Gristwood & Toms to the north and by 46-52 Harris Lane to the south and looks directly across the site. The site provides an important green link between the village and the surrounding countryside. See Figures 1, 3, 7, 8, 11, 13 and 14.

Green Links

2.6 The Playing Fields provide the hub for interconnecting green links both within the village and beyond the village boundaries. These links include accessible open spaces within the village centre such as those at Mead Road and Cage Pond Road, and also rural lanes such as Rectory Lane, Mimms Lane and Harris Lane which lead directly out of the village into the surrounding countryside. The green links are also visual links, providing glimpses of and views into the wider countryside beyond the village boundary which are a component of the village's rural character. See Figure 14.

2 Site Context and Landscape Setting (contd)

Shenley's Rural Character

2.7 The Shenley Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2021; Policy SH1 Rural Character identifies the distinctiveness of the rural character of Shenley, and how its special and valued features are unique to the locality, and how its heritage assets and architectural features contribute to that local character. It provides that the design of new development should relate positively to its surroundings and enhance the existing distinctiveness of the rural character. Whilst the design of the development is a reserved matter this policy does highlight the importance of the rural character of the village.

2.8 The Neighbourhood Plan was a finalist in the National Urban Design Awards 2021. The vision for Shenley is supported by well-illustrated objectives, policies and design codes. Policy SH1 covers Rural Character.

2.9 The Harris Lane Playing Fields have retained the integrity of three interconnecting fields by keeping most of the historic hedgerows and hedgerow trees as boundary features, with pedestrian gates as necessary. The Playing Fields are overlooked by houses from the south, east and west but retain their links to the countryside to the north and southeast.

2.10 The Shenley Conservation Area Appraisal notes how the close proximity of farmland to the village centre, and the views into the countryside from the village are important features of its rural character.

2.11 Houses currently forming the village edge such as those in Harris Lane and Anderson Road backing onto the Appeal Site tend to have long back gardens with generous spaces between adjacent properties, contributing to a rural character in keeping with that of the village.

2.12 Shenley has retained its rural character, tranquility, unspoilt landscape, glimpsed long views and intricate network of footpaths and lanes enabling walking, running, cycling and riding.

Harris Lane Historic Routeway

2.13 Harris Lane follows the northwestern site boundary. It is a historic routeway, marked on the 1843 Tithe Map for Shenley, and leads from London Road, in the village centre to the village edge, by which time it has transitioned into a rural lane with grass verges; it passes the Harris Lane Playing Fields and the site towards Shenley Hill, Rectory Lane and Mimms Lane and a network of circular walks and cycle routes around the village and into the wider countryside. It begins in the village as a quiet residential road, changing to country lane with a strong rural character once it has passed 52 Harris Lane. Beyond the last house there is no street lighting, grass verges, little vehicular traffic and a strong sense of tranquility. See Figures 15-18.

Gristwood and Toms

2.14 This is a long-established arboricultural consultancy and tree nursery based at the junction of Harris Lane and Mimms Lane and sharing the northeastern site boundary. The company works across the country for major public and private sector clients. The site contains barns, working yards, machinery, tree-growing areas, parking and office buildings but is completely surrounded by woodland and discreetly screened from public view.

History

2.15 The 1843 Tithe Map of Shenley shows the site as a rectangular field when it was part of the Wilde Estate created in the 1700's. The estate covered around 300 acres and extended from Bell Lane (next to the M25 west of Junction 22) to the bridleway near Catherine Bourne. Shenley Hill House was the main house for the estate and has survived, but most of the estate was sold in the 1980's. The 1892-1914 and 1935

2 Site Context and Landscape Setting (contd)

Ordnance Survey maps both show the site as an intact rectangular field; the 1935 map shows the newly constructed houses of Anderson Road (named after Coral Wilde's mother, Mrs Anderson) backing onto the southwest boundary of the site. 46-52 Harris Lane were built by the Wilde family for staff and estate workers, probably in the 1950's. They were sold in the 1980's with the rest of the estate. See Figure 19.

Sense of Community and Pride

2.16 The spirit of the local community can be seen in the recently adopted Shenley Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2036) which represents the culmination of several years of effort by residents, steering groups and local councillors.

2.17 Regular litter picking by local volunteers shows the pride that local residents have in their village and surroundings.

Vulnerability

2.18 Villages close to Shenley such as Radlett and Borehamwood have expanded greatly in recent times; Borehamwood is cited in the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment as having a prominent built edge which dilutes the rural character. The population of Shenley was increased by 80% with the development of Shenley Park in the 1990's. Shenley's location within the M25 corridor, close to London and other employment centres and the demand for local housing has put increasing pressure on Shenley and the Green Belt. There are three current planning applications in the pipeline relating to local sites at:

- Shenley Grange (177 houses, 22/1826/OUT),
- Shenley Hill/Theobald Street, on the border of Shenley and Radlett (195 houses, Borehamwood Times)
- Organ Hall Farm, on the border of Shenley and Borehamwood (121 houses, 22/2149/OUT)

2.19 The rural character of Shenley remains vulnerable to further pressures for change.

3 Shenley as a Countryside Gateway

Watling Chase Community Forest

3.1 Shenley was set up in 1991 and is located in the centre of Watling Chase Community Forest, one of 12 Community Forests around England. It covers approximately 72 square miles of predominantly rural land from the northern fringe of London to Hertfordshire. It is intended to be *'a rich mosaic of landscape, within which land uses include farmland, woodland, villages, leisure enterprises, nature areas and public open space'*.

Forest Gateway

3.2 Shenley Park has been designated as one of four Gateway sites within Watling Chase Community Forest. A network of long distance and shorter walks, cycle routes and bridleways are promoted throughout the Forest. The Watling Chase Timberland Trail is 10.5 miles long passing through Shenley Park and the Hertfordshire Way is a 195-mile long distance path, with Leg 9 (11.5 miles) starting in Shenley, crossing Rectory Lane less than half a mile from the site See Figure 22

Shenley Park

3.3 Shenley Park is located less than a mile from Harris Lane, has free car parking, tea rooms and children's play and is a popular base to explore not only the park itself but also Shenley village and surrounding countryside. Historic buildings, walled garden, orchard, meadow, woodland and a programme of events throughout the year make it an attractive and well-used destination. The Shenley Circular Walks map and flier show a number of circular walks of varied length and difficulty around the local area, see Figures 20 and 21.

Potential Catchment Area

3.4 Several towns such as St Albans, Watford, Barnet, Potters Bar, Hatfield and a number of larger villages such as Borehamwood and Radlett lie within 5 miles of Shenley, so the village is within easy reach of a significant population base for day trips, cycling and walking, see Figure 23.

3.5 North London lies just within this 5 mile radius, and the site is just 7.1 miles from Edgware Tube Station (via Barnet Way/Barnet By-pass) which is the northern point of the Northern Line.

Trains from London St Pancras to Radlett take around 30 minutes and Radlett Station is just 2.5 miles from the site.

3.6 Shenley lies close to the M25, just 3.3 miles from junction 22, and within easy reach of the M1 and the A1 (M).

Local Residents and Access to the Countryside

3.7 As well as day visitors from the surrounding area, many individuals and local walking groups use the footpaths, cycle routes and bridlepaths. In addition to local Public Rights of Way (PRoWs), there are a number of well-used 'unofficial' paths such as those marked up on Figure 24.

4 Landscape Fabric and Landscape Effects

4.1 The following landscape fabric (also known as landscape receptors) have been identified, described and assessed within the site, forming the site boundaries, lying immediately outside the site and the areas forming the local landscape and village character:

A Within the site

- 1 Grassland

B Site Boundaries

- 1 Northeast
- 2 Southeast
- 3 Southwest (east)
- 4 Southwest (west)
- 5 Northwest (south)
- 6 Northwest (north)

C Outside the site boundary

- 1 Woodland edge to Gristwood & Toms
- 2 Young tree growing area Gristwood & Toms
- 3 Farmland
- 4 Back gardens to properties in Anderson Road and Harris Lane
- 5 Harris Lane
- 6 Harris Lane Playing Fields

D Landscape and Village Character

- 1 Appeal site
- 2 Shenley Conservation Area
- 3 Neighbouring village housing
- 4 Landscape Character Area 21c Shenley Fringe (Sub area of LCA 21)
- 5 Hertsmere Landscape Character Area 21 High Canons Valley and Ridges

4.2 The landscape fabric is mapped in Figure 25, and tabulated in Table 1.

Site Boundaries

4.3 The northwest boundary follows Harris Lane, a historic routeway visible on the 1843 Tithe Map for Shenley. The remaining hedgerow is an ancient hedge with a field gate onto Harris Lane; 44% of the boundary is formed by the back gardens of the semi-detached houses, 46-52 Harris Lane with a mix of closeboard fencing, beech hedge and outbuildings.

4.4 The northeast boundary follows Gristwood and Toms Arboricultural Services, set behind an ancient hedgeline (shown on the 1843 Tithe Map for Shenley) with mature hedgerow oaks; the business is screened from view behind a linear woodland edge.

4.5 The southeast boundary is also shown on the 1843 Tithe Map for Shenley; it remains a field boundary with mature hedgerow oak and ash trees and pastoral farmland beyond.

4 Landscape Fabric and Landscape Effects (contd)

4.6 The southwest boundary follows a historic field boundary (shown on the 1843 Tithe Map for Shenley) for most of its length, shared with the back gardens to properties in Anderson Road and a disused filter bed (shown on the 1935 OS map), now a small woodland. There are some fine mature hedgerow oaks (18m high) with 53% of the ancient hedgerow remaining; it has been replaced by closeboard fencing in some back gardens. The back garden of the semi-detached house, 52 Harris Lane is bounded by closeboard fencing and outbuildings.

4.7 The sensitivity of the landscape fabric and the likely magnitude of change are assessed in Table 1 and the likely landscape effects of the proposed development are described at year 1 and year 15 after construction.

4.8 The landscape effects would be **major adverse** for the site itself, for the small woodland copse on the southwest boundary, for the historic routeway and hedgerow along Harris Lane and for the Harris Lane Playing Fields. The landscape effects would be **moderately or moderately/major adverse** for two of the site boundaries B3 and B6. The landscape effects on the village and landscape character would be **major adverse** on the rural setting of the site D1, on the rural setting of the village D2 and **moderately adverse** on D3 Neighbouring Houses and D4 the Shenley Fringe sub-area 21C.

Table 1 Landscape Fabric & Landscape Effects

Ref	Name	Description	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Landscape effects Year 1	Landscape effects Year 15
A Landscape Fabric within the site						
A1	Field	Semi-improved grassland sloping to southeast, good condition	Moderate to high	Proposed 37 houses, high magnitude of change over whole area	Major adverse	Major adverse
A2	Overhead cable route	Follows southwest boundary	Low	Re-routed underground	Moderate beneficial	Moderate beneficial
B Landscape Fabric forming the site boundaries						
B1	Northeast boundary	Historic hedgerow with mature hedgerow oak trees, contributes to rural character	High	Negligible change	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
B2	Southeast boundary	Historic hedgerow with mature hedgerow oak and ash trees, contributes to rural character, allows views out across open farmland	High	Negligible change	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
B3	Southwest boundary (east)	Small native woodland block around disused filter bed (shown on 1935 OS map), important local landscape feature	High	Moderate magnitude of change, woodland backing onto housing would be under pressure from changes to water table, pets, children, dumping	Moderate/major adverse	Moderate/major adverse
B4	Southwest boundary (west)	Varied fencing/boundary treatment, some retained historic hedgerow & mature hedgerow oaks, some closeboard fencing	Low to high	Negligible change	Negligible to minor adverse	Negligible to minor adverse
B5	Northwest boundary (south)	Varied fencing/boundary treatment, including closeboard fencing, beech hedge and garden trees	Low	Negligible change	Negligible	Negligible
B6	Northwest boundary (north)	Historic hedgerow along Harris Lane, contributes to rural character of Harris Lane & village	High	Significant section of hedgerow removed to facilitate site access, moderate magnitude of change	Moderate/major adverse	Moderate/major adverse
C Landscape Fabric outside the site boundaries						
C1	Gristwood & Toms (north)	Woodland edge screening views of works area & strong green edge to open countryside	Moderate	Low magnitude of change	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
C2	Gristwood & Toms (south)	Growing area for young trees	Moderate	Low magnitude of change	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
C3	Farmland to south east	Grassland, provides setting & rural outlook to village, playing fields, close neighbours & Harris Lane	Moderate	Low to moderate magnitude of change, farmland backing onto housing under pressure from changes to surface water drainage, pets, children, etc	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
C4	Woodland	Small woodland block (see B3)	High	Moderate magnitude of change, woodland backing onto housing under pressure from changes to water table, household pets, children, etc	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
C5	Back gardens	Varied private gardens	Low	Moderate magnitude of change, rural outlook and proximity of farmland to be replaced by new housing, loss of views and rural setting	Minor adverse	Minor adverse

Table 1 Landscape Fabric and Landscape Effects (contd)

Ref	Name	Description	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Landscape effects Year 1	Landscape effects Year 15
C Landscape Fabric outside the site boundaries (contd)						
C6	Harris Lane	Historic routeway and rural lane leading out of the village from London Road towards Shenley Hill, important connector to local footpaths & cycle routes	High	Moderate to high magnitude of change, rural character likely to be replaced by suburban character with street lighting, pavements etc	Major adverse	Major adverse
C7	Harris Lane Playing Fields	Historic field boundaries, hedgerows and hedgerow trees retained, village open space & sports area well-used for community & club events, informal play and recreation	High	Moderate magnitude of change, rural outlook and proximity of farmland to be replaced by new housing, loss of views and rural setting	Major adverse	Major adverse
D Landscape and Village Character						
D1	The site	A single field on village boundary with intact hedgerows and hedgerow trees on 2 boundaries and part of other boundaries, back gardens to semi detached houses on remaining boundaries; important rural element on village boundary, allows views out to surrounding countryside	Moderate to high	High magnitude of change, loss of this field would remove rural element on village boundary, would block views out of village to surrounding countryside, would prevent rural character reaching into village centre	Major adverse	Major adverse
D2	Shenley Conservation Area	Designated area including historic medieval core of village with later additions such as C19 New Road housing, Porters Park and the Harris Lane Playing Fields	High	High magnitude of change, would remove important component of rural setting of the Conservation Area ¹ ,	Major adverse	Major adverse
D3	Neighbouring houses	Semi-detached C20 properties in Harris Lane and Anderson Road backing onto the site, 3-storey properties in Birchwood have oblique view of site, properties in Hillcrest Road, Mead Road, King Edward Road and Cage Pond Road look across the playing fields towards the site	Moderate	Low to moderate magnitude of change, most of these properties would lose the benefit of their rural outlook and setting, proposed development would be in character with local built form but increased density would introduce a suburban element unsympathetic to local rural character	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
D4	Landscape Character Area 21c, Shenley Fringe (sub-area of LCA 21)	Meadows, intact hedgerows/mature trees, slopes falling away from the village and Shenley Conservation Area all found within/adjacent to the site and cited in LUC 2020 report as sensitive features	Moderate to high	Notable changes in a limited part of the sub area giving rise to a medium magnitude of change	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
D5	Landscape Character Area 21 High Canons Valleys and Ridges	A series of narrow, undulating ridges and valleys with strong tree cover, an arable and pastoral landscape and small settlements, farms and houses on the fingers of higher land	Moderate	Notable changes in a limited part of the landscape character area giving rise to a medium magnitude of change	Minor adverse	Minor adverse

1 Shenley Conservation Area Appraisal para 5.5

5 Visual Impact

5.1 Visual impact considers two types of effect:

- changes to specific views and the effects of those changes on the people experiencing them (the visual receptors)
- changes to the visual amenity of close neighbours, local residents and visitors

5.2 'Visual amenity' is described in GLVIA3 as:

'the overall pleasantness of the views' (that people have and) 'they enjoy of their surroundings'

5.3 LHLA has numbered and described the views listed in Appendix J of the the LVIA prepared by CSA, and added an additional viewpoint from the bridlepath passing through Crossoaks Farm. The Viewpoints are as follows:

- VP1 Harris Lane looking south
- VP2 Harris Lane looking north
- VP3 Harris Lane Playing Fields
- VP4 Anderson Road
- VP5 Anderson Road Play Area
- VP6 PRow Shenley 019
- VP7 PRow Shenley 018
- VP8 PRow Shenley 017

5.4 The location of the numbered viewpoints is shown in Figure 322.7. The sensitivity of the visual receptors is described in Table 2, together with the magnitude of change and likely visual effects. The close neighbours are described in Table 3.

5.5 The visual effects would be **major adverse** on the visual receptors at Viewpoint 2 Harris Lane looking north, at Viewpoint 3, Harris Lane Playing Fields and at Viewpoint 6, PRow Shenley 019. The visual effects would be **moderately adverse** for the visual receptors at Viewpoint 1 Harris Lane looking south and at Viewpoint 7, PRow Shenley 018.

5.6 The visual effects would be **major adverse** on close neighbours living in 46-52 Harris Lane and Anderson Road (north side), and **moderately adverse** on close neighbours living in the northern apartment block at Birchwood.

Table 2 Visual Receptors and Likely Visual Effects

Ref	Name	Sensitivity	Description of Visual Receptors	View of the site	Magnitude of change	Visual effects Year 1	Visual effects Year 15
VP1	Harris Lane (looking south)	High	Local residents, visitors & users of Playing Fields; in vehicles travelling slowly, on foot, on bicycles and horseback	Looking towards the village, the site is partially screened by woodland of Gristwood and Toms; the site entrance and houses fronting Harris Lane would be visible but would not appreciably affect the character of the lane, seen against the backdrop of the village.	Low to medium	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
VP2	Harris Lane (looking north)	High	Local residents, visitors & users of Playing Fields; in vehicles travelling slowly, on foot, on bicycles and horseback	Travelling out of the village, the site is partially screened by existing properties in Harris Lane but the site entrance and houses fronting Harris Lane would be clearly visible and would change the character of the lane seen against the backdrop of woodland and Shenley Hill.	Medium	Major adverse	Major adverse
VP3	Harris Lane Playing Fields	High	Well used by local residents, visitors & teams for formal and informal play, sports, recreation & community events	The site itself is screened by intervening hedges but new development fronting Harris Lane would be visible and would significantly change the character of the playing fields; people using this open space would lose the benefit of the rural outlook and countryside setting, affecting their visual amenity	Medium	Major adverse	Major adverse
VP4	Anderson Road (street view)	Medium	Local residents & visitors	The site is screened from view by houses and garden vegetation but it may be possible to glimpse the roofs of the new properties	Low	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
VP5	Anderson Road Play Area	Medium	Local residents	The site is screened from view	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
VP6	PRoW Shenley 019 (Foot-path)	High	Local residents & visitors on foot	The site can be seen from +/-250m length of this PRoW, at a distance of +/-300 m from the site boundary. As the site slopes towards this VP there would be a clear view of the proposed development which would affect the character of the view	Medium	Major adverse	Moderate adverse
VP7	PRoW Shenley 018 (Foot-path)	High	Local residents & visitors on foot	The site can be seen from +/-300m length of this PRoW, at a distance of +/-500 m from the site boundary. As the site slopes towards this VP there would be a clear view of the proposed development which would be noticeable in the view but not appreciably affect its character	Low to medium	Moderate adverse	Moderate to minor adverse
VP8	PRoW Shenley 017 (Bridle-path)	High	Local residents & visitors on foot & on horseback	The site can be seen from +/-380m length of this PRoW, at a distance of +/-1.27km from the site boundary. The site slopes towards this VP and there would be a clear but distant view of the proposed development; this would only be a minor element of the overall view	Low	Moderate to minor adverse	Minor adverse

Land at 52 Harris Lane Shenley

Table 3 Close Neighbours and Likely Visual Effects

Name	Sensitivity	Description	View of the site	Magnitude of change	Visual effects Year 1	Visual effects Year 15
Harris Lane 46-52	High	Four semi-detached C20 properties backing onto the site	Principal views from these properties look directly across the site and the farmland beyond; residents would lose the benefit of the rural outlook and countryside setting, affecting their visual amenity	High	Major adverse	Major adverse
Anderson Road (north side)	High	C20 semi-detached properties backing onto the site	Principal views from these properties look directly across the site and the woodland beyond; residents would lose the benefit of the rural outlook and countryside setting, affecting their visual amenity	High	Major adverse	Major adverse
Birchwood (north block)	Medium	C20 3-storey flats with filtered views	Filtered views from the north facing block look towards the southeast of the site from a distance of +/-150m;	Medium	Moderate adverse	Minor adverse
Hillcrest Road	Low	C20 semi-detached properties backing onto the Harris Lane Playing Fields	Views across playing fields from rear of properties towards the site from +/-170m distance	Medium	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
Mead Road	Low	C20 terrace & semi-detached properties facing Harris Lane Playing Fields and site	Views across playing fields from front of properties towards the site from +/-240m distance	Low to medium	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
Cage Pond Road	Low	C20 terrace facing south but gable end faces east	Views across playing fields from gable end of southern property towards the site from +/-140m distance	Medium	Minor adverse	Minor adverse
King Edward Road	Low	C20 private road of detached & semi-detached properties backing onto Harris Lane Playing Fields	Oblique views across playing fields from rear of properties at northern end of road towards the site from +/-295m distance	Low	Negligible	Negligible

6 Areas of disagreement with Appellant's LVIA

6.1 Having undertaken my own landscape and visual assessment, I consider that some of the assessments in Appendix J of the Appellant's LVIA have been underestimated, such as the sensitivity of landscape fabric and visual receptors, the magnitude of change and the likely landscape and visual effects at year 1 and year 15.

6.2 Factors that contribute to the sensitivity of the landscape fabric include the historic field pattern, ancient hedgerows and veteran trees that border the site, the historic routeway that forms the northwest site boundary and the important green links that weave from the site into the village and back into the surrounding countryside.

6.3 The sensitivity of the site should be medium/high rather than medium. I disagree with para 3.10 of the CSA LVIA - the proximity of existing housing to the southwest and northwest of the site makes the site's openness and rural character particularly valuable. I do not consider that it should be assessed to have a lower sensitivity than that of the wider Shenley Fringe, sub area LCA21C, within which it is located.

6.4 The sensitivity of the trees and hedges forming the site boundaries should be high rather than medium to low. The hedgerows are historic hedgerows, visible on the 1843 Shenley Tithe Map and the trees are veteran oak and ash hedgerow trees.

6.5 The magnitude of change for the trees and hedgerows along the southwest boundary and the northwest boundary (Harris Lane) should be moderate/major adverse rather than slight.

6.6 The **landscape effects** on the site should be **major adverse** at year 1 and also at year 15 rather than moderate adverse. The **landscape effects** on the trees and hedgerows should be **moderate/major adverse** at year 1 and at year 15 for the northwest hedge along Harris Lane (B6) and for the small woodland on the southwest boundary (B3) rather than slight adverse and slight beneficial at year 1 and year 15 respectively.

6.7 The magnitude of change and landscape effects on the wider landscape character of the High Canons Valley and Ridges should be moderate and minor adverse at year 1 and year 15 rather than negligible and negligible adverse.

6.8 The sensitivity of the visual receptors (VRs) in Harris Lane should be high rather than medium; these would be local residents, users of the playing fields and visitors generally travelling slowly if in vehicles, or on foot, on cycles or on horseback.

6.9 The magnitude of change for VRs in Anderson Road would be low rather than negligible, as the roofs of the new houses would be visible. The visual effects at year 1 and year 15 would be minor adverse rather than negligible.

6.10 The **visual effects** on VRs using Shenley footpath 019 would be **major adverse and moderate adverse** at year 1 and year 15 rather than moderate adverse and slight adverse. This footpath is only +/-250m from the site boundary and the site slopes towards the footpath so there would be a clear view of the development. I consider that this would adversely affect the character of the view.

7 Summary & Conclusions

7.1 I visited the site on 19th February 2023, have undertaken my own landscape and visual assessment of the site and have reviewed the LVIA undertaken by CSA for the Appellant.

7.2 For a village located so close to the M25, the M1 and the A1(M) I was genuinely surprised to discover Shenley to be such an unspoilt, tranquil and rural place; there are no detracting views of highrise on the skyline, no traffic noise from the motorway, but a much loved and fully functioning village surrounded by farmland and well used country lanes and footpaths with cyclists, walkers and riders enjoying the beautiful landscape. Many community events such as the Jubilee Picnic take place on the Harris Lane Playing Fields, right next to the Appeal Site.

7.3 The site context and its landscape setting are essential components of this rural character and I have described these in some detail in Section 2 of this Proof of Evidence.

7.4 The site forms the westernmost tip of a swathe of rural farmland which reaches right to the built edge of Shenley village and the Harris Lane Playing Fields. The proximity of farmland to the village centre contributes strongly to the local character, and the views out from the village to the surrounding farmland are integral to its sense of place and reflect its connection to its rural past.

7.4 The history and time depth of the medieval villlage centre, the historic routeways, ancient hedgerows, field pattern and veteran hedgerow trees all contribute to the strong sense of place and identity, and a village and landscape highly valued by residents and visitors.

7.5 Community spirit can be seen in the recently adopted Shenley Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2036) which represents the culmination of several years of effort by residents, steering groups and local councillors. A vision for Shenley is supported by well-illustrated objectives, policies and design codes. Policy SH1 covers Rural Character.

7.6 Shenley is used by large numbers of visitors as a convenient gateway to the countryside. Shenley Park provides free parking, playground and Tea Room; maps and signs encourage a range of circular walks for all abilities. The catchment area within a 5 mile radius of Shenley includes St Albans, Potters Bar, Barnet, the northern edge of Edgware, Bushey, and the edge of Watford, as well as the A1(M), the M1 and the M25, Borehamwood and Radlett.

7.7 The landscape fabric (or landscape receptors) makes up the site, the site boundaries, its immediate surroundings and the landscape and village character of the surrounding area. This landscape fabric has been mapped, tabulated and assessed for its sensitivity to change, the magnitude of the proposed change and the likely landscape effects at year 1 and year 15. These assessments are compared with those of Appendix J in the Appellant's LVIA.

7.8 The landscape effects would be **major adverse** for the site itself, for the small woodland copse on the southwest boundary, for the historic routeway and hedgerow along Harris Lane and for the Harris Lane Playing Fields. The landscape effects would be **moderately or moderately/major adverse** for two of the site boundaries B3 and B6. The landscape effects on the village and landscape character would be **major adverse** on the rural setting of the site D1, on the rural setting of Shenley village D2 and **moderately adverse** on neighbouring houses D3 and on D4, the Shenley Fringe sub-area LCA21C.

7.9 Eight representative viewpoints for the site have been mapped and tabulated, assessed for the sensitivity of the visual receptors (the people who would see the site from these viewpoints), the magnitude

7 Summary and Conclusions (contd)

of change to their views and the likely visual effects after 1 year and after 15 years. Close neighbours and their views of the site are also considered and assessed. These assessments are compared with those of Appendix J in the Appellant's LVIA.

7.10 The visual effects would be **major adverse** on the visual receptors at Viewpoint 2 Harris Lane looking north, at Viewpoint 3, Harris Lane Playing Fields and at Viewpoint 6, PRoW Shenley 019. The visual effects would be **moderately adverse** for the visual receptors at Viewpoint 1 Harris Lane looking south and at Viewpoint 7, PRoW Shenley 018.

7.11 The visual effects would be **major adverse** on close neighbours living in 46-52 Harris Lane and Anderson Road (north side), and **moderately adverse** on close neighbours living in the northern apartment block at Birchwood.

7.12 Having undertaken my own landscape and visual assessment of the site and the proposed development, I consider that some of the assessments in Appendix J of the Appellant's LVIA have been underestimated, as have the sensitivity, the magnitude of change and the likely effects at year 1 and year 15.

7.13 The **landscape effects** on the site should be **major adverse** at year 1 and also at year 15 rather than moderate adverse. The **landscape effects** on the trees and hedgerows should be **moderate/major adverse** at year 1 and at year 15 for the northwest hedge along Harris Lane (B6) and for the small woodland on the southwest boundary (B3) rather than slight adverse and slight beneficial at year 1 and year 15 respectively.

7.14 The **visual effects** on VRs using Shenley footpath 019 would be **major adverse and moderate adverse** at year 1 and year 15 rather than moderate adverse and slight adverse. This footpath is only +/- 250m from the site boundary and the site slopes towards the footpath so there would be a clear view of the development. I consider that this would adversely affect the character of the view.

7.15 The site provides the green link between the village and open farmland which is so important in retaining the **rural character** that is highlighted in Policy SH1 Rural Character of the adopted Shenley Neighbourhood Plan.

7.16 I consider that the proposed development would have a **significant adverse impact** on both the **landscape character and the visual amenity** of Shenley and its residents.

8 Expert Declaration

Personal Details

8.1 I am the Principal of Louise Hooper Landscape Architect (LHLA).

8.2 I hold a BA (Honours) in Landscape Architecture from Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh and the Edinburgh College of Art.

8.3 I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute, the British organisation for landscape professionals including landscape architects and landscape planners; it was founded in 1929 and was granted a Royal Charter in 1997. I received my Chartered Membership of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) in 1984. My professional membership number is 12077. LHLA is registered practice number 23442.

8.4 I have been in professional practice for 39 years.

8.5 LHLA was appointed by Shenley Parish Council in February 2023 to prepare a Proof of Evidence on Landscape Matters associated with Planning Appeal ref APP/N1920/w/22/3311193 for the refusal of a planning application for 37 houses by Hertsmere Borough Council on Land adjacent to 52 Harris Lane, Shenley, Hertfordshire ref 22/0971/OUT.

8.6 I have provided my expert opinion for the purpose of these proceedings and I am aware of the role required by an expert in these proceedings.

Scope of Expert Report

8.7 My report has been prepared following my appointment as an independent expert by Shenley Parish Council.

8.8 My instruction was received by email on 17th February 2023 from Shenley Parish Council as a signed Letter of Appointment.

8.9 I made a site visit on Sunday 19th February 2023 when I met representatives of Shenley Parish Council and some local residents.

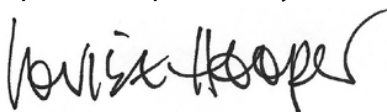
Declaration and Statement of Truth

8.10 I understand that my duty is to the Planning Inspector, and I have complied with that and will continue to do so. I am aware of the requirements and the Guidance for Instruction of Experts to give Evidence.

8.11 I understand that the CPR requires me to help the Planning Inspector by providing objective, unbiased opinion on matters which are within my expertise. I understand that this duty overrides any obligation to the person from whom I have received my instruction or who will pay my charges.

8.12 I am not aware of any potential conflict of interest.

8.13 I confirm that I have made clear which facts and matters referred to in this report are within my own knowledge and which are not. Those within my own knowledge I confirm to be true. The opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinions on the matters to which they refer.



Louise Hooper BA (Hons) CMLI
Chartered Landscape Architect
Principal, Louise Hooper Landscape Architect

Proposed Development on Land at 52 Harris Lane,
Shenley, Hertfordshire

Proof of Evidence
on
Landscape Matters

Appendices

Louise Hooper Landscape Architect
representing
Shenley Parish Council

Appendices

A1 Site Context page 3

Figure 1	Site Context
Figure 2	Topography
Figure 3-12	Harris Lane Playing Fields
Figure 13	Site from Harris Lane
Figure 14	Green Links
Figure 15-18	Harris Lane
Figure 19	Historic Maps

A2 Countryside Gateway page 13

Figure 20	Shenley Park
Figure 21	Shenley Circular Walks
Figure 22	Watling Chase Walks
Figure 23	Shenley Catchment
Figure 24	Shenley Local Paths

A3 Landscape Fabric & Effects page 17

Figure 25	Landscape Fabric
Figure 26-30	Site Boundaries & Landscape Fabric
Figure 31	High Canons

A4 Visual Effects page 19

Figure 32	Viewpoints
Figure 33	View 8

A5 Louise Hooper Professional Experience

Notice:

All photographs, drawings and text in this report have been produced by, and are the copyright of LHLA unless otherwise stated.

Appendix 1 Site Context

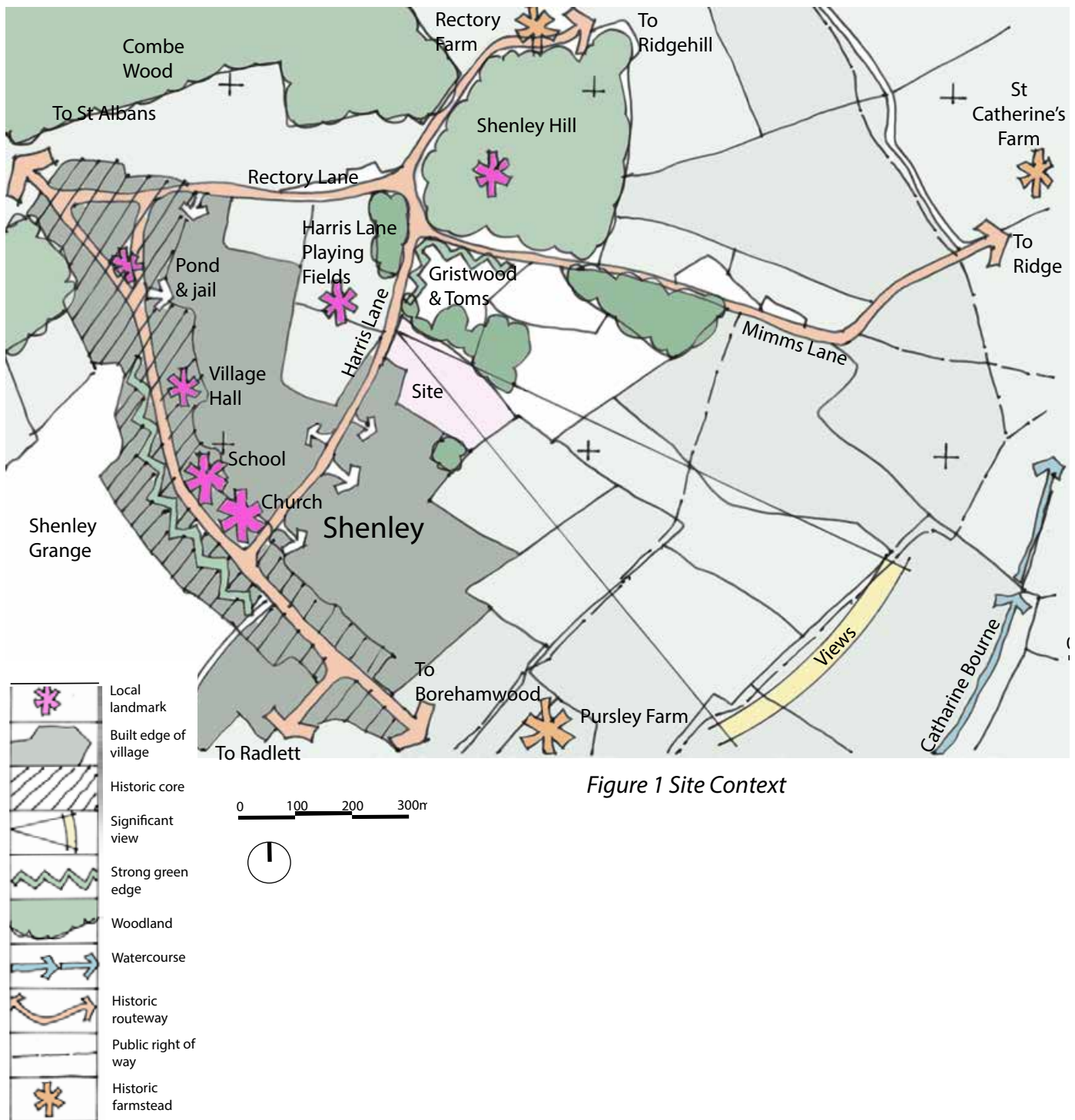


Figure 1 Site Context

Appendix 1 Site Context

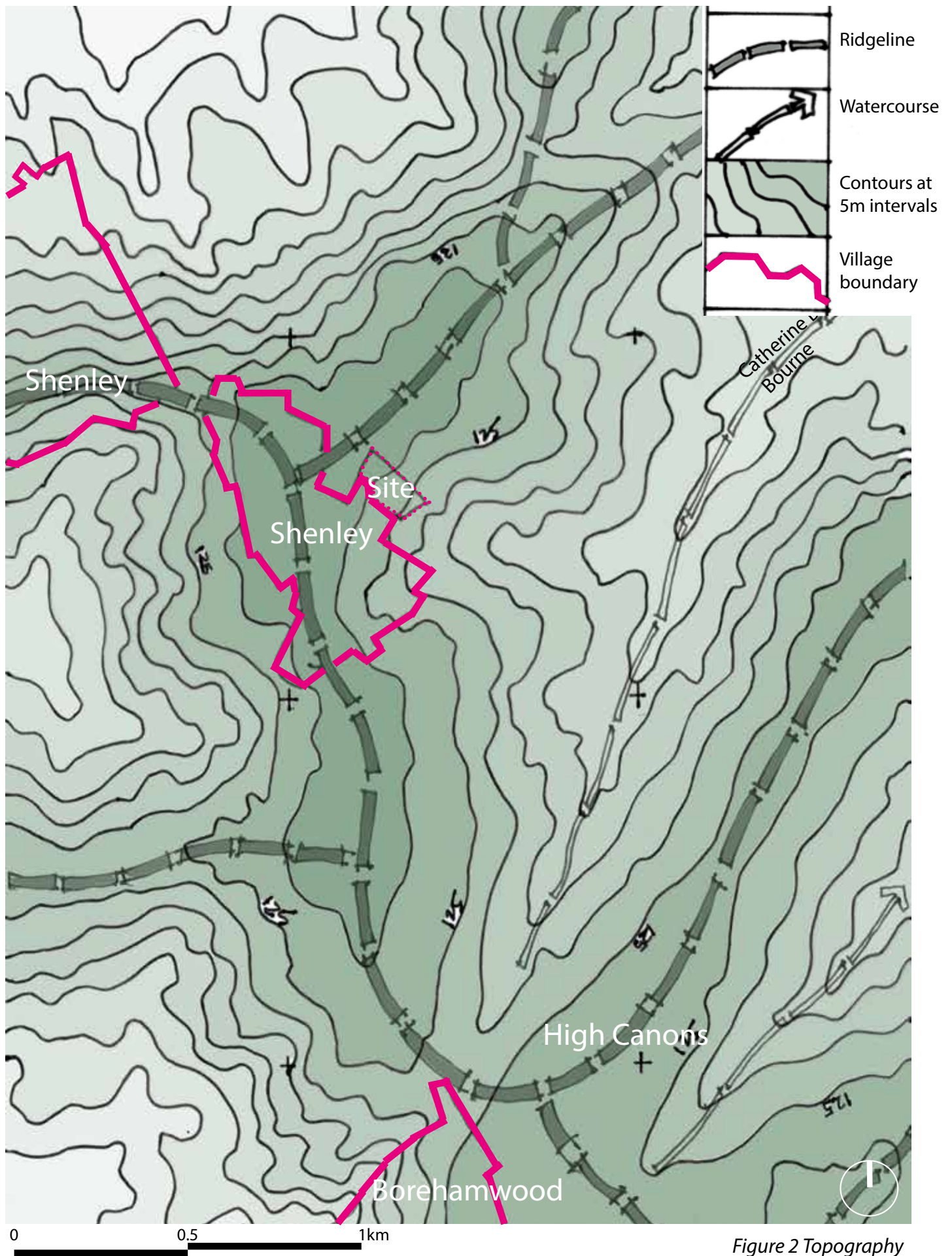


Figure 2 Topography

Appendix 1 Site Context



Figure 3 Harris Lane Playing Fields looking across Harris Lane towards the site



Figure 4 Harris Lane Playing Fields summer picnic (Source: Shenley Parish Council)

Appendix 1 Site Context



Figure 5 Jubilee Picnic (Source: Shenley Parish Council)



Figure 6 Jubilee Picnic (Source: Shenley Parish Council)

Appendix 1 Site Context



Figure 7 View to High Canons from the playing fields



Figure 8 Harris Lane Playing Fields

Appendix 1 Site Context



Figure 9 Entrance to Harris Lane Playing Fields from Rectory Lane



Figure 10 Rectory Lane immediately to the north of Harris Lane Playing Fields



Figure 11 Sunny benches in Harris Lane Playing Fields



Figure 12 Harris Lane Playing Fields

Appendix 1 Site Context



Figure 13 Site from Harris Lane

Appendix 1 Site Context

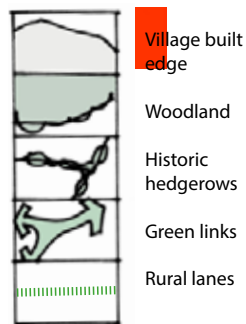
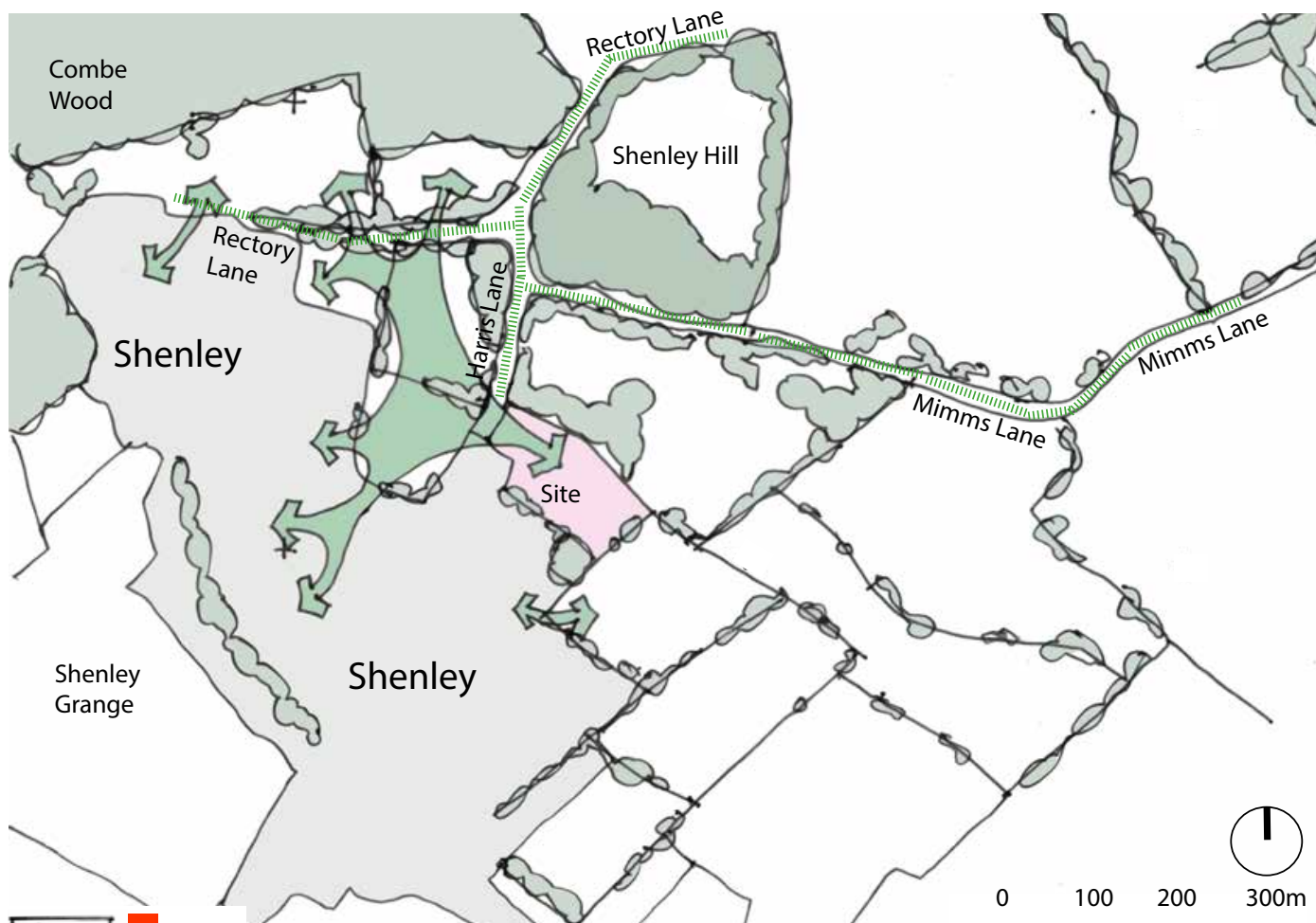


Figure 14 Green Links



Figure 15 Cyclists on Harris Lane with site on left (Source: Shenley resident) This part of Harris Lane has very little vehicular traffic and is well used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders

Appendix 1 Site Context



Figure 16 Harris Lane looking south past site from Harris Lane



Figure 17 Harris Lane site entrance



Figure 18 Entrance to playing fields from Harris Lane

Appendix 1 Site Context



OS 26 inch 1892-1914 (Source: National Library of Scotland maps.nls.uk)



OS 1935 (Source: Hertsmere.gov.uk)

Figure 19 Historic Maps

Appendix 2 Countryside Gateway



Figure 20 Shenley Park

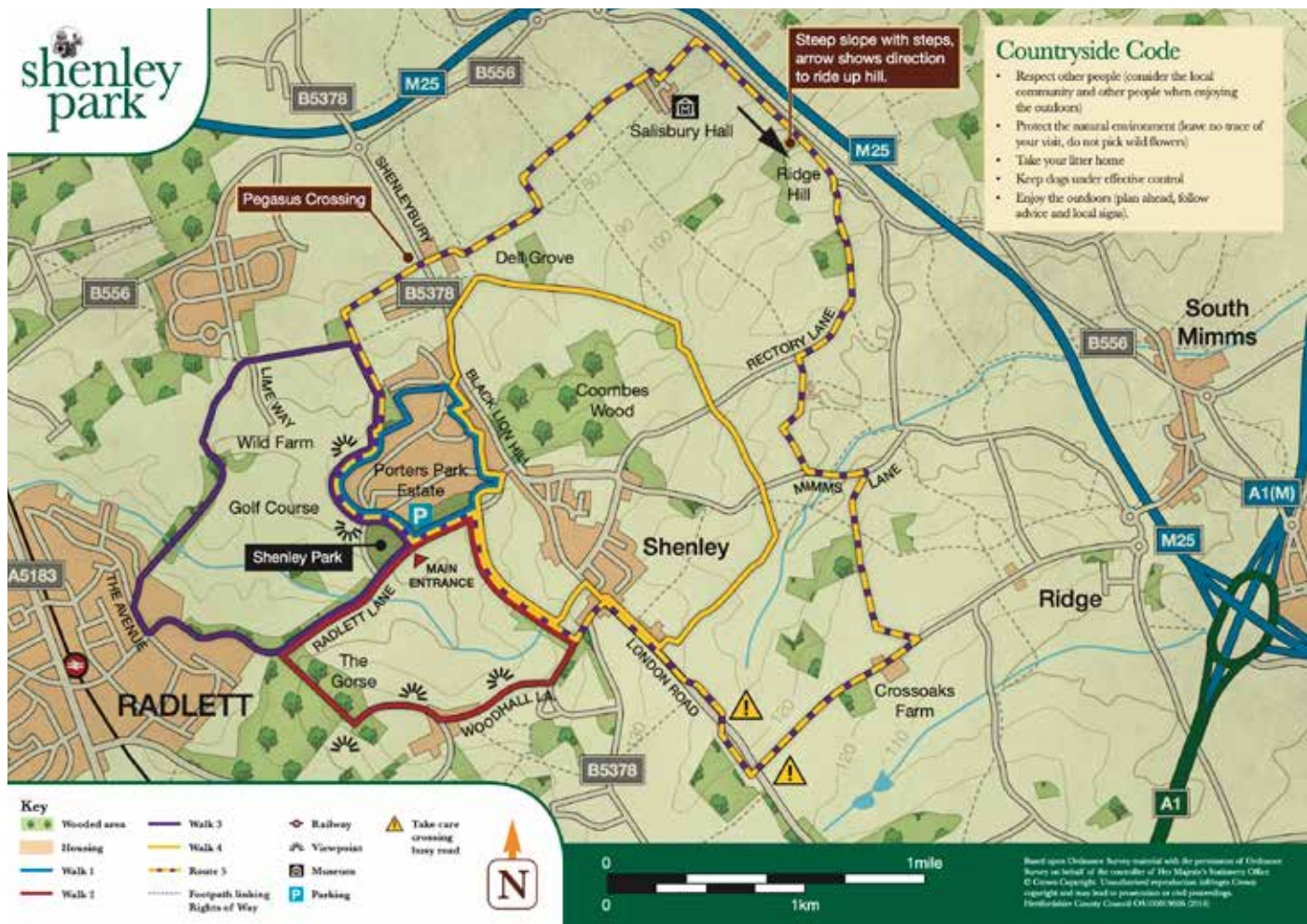
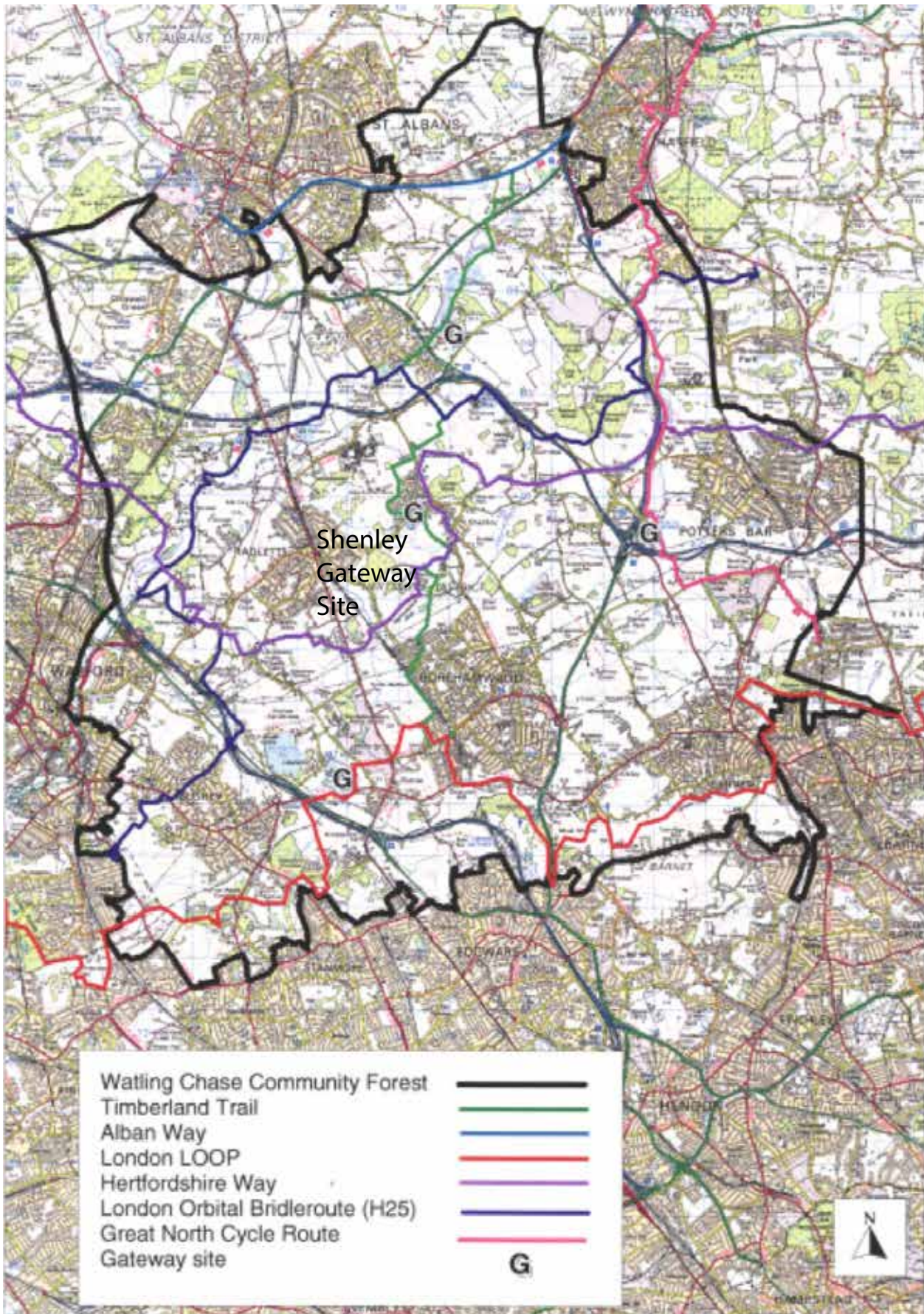


Figure 21 Shenley Circular Walks

Appendix 2 Countryside Gateway



Based upon Ordnance Survey Mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence No:LA078239 HERTSMERE. 2003.

Figure 22 Long distance walks and cycle routes in Watling Chase Community Forest

Appendix 2 Countryside Gateway

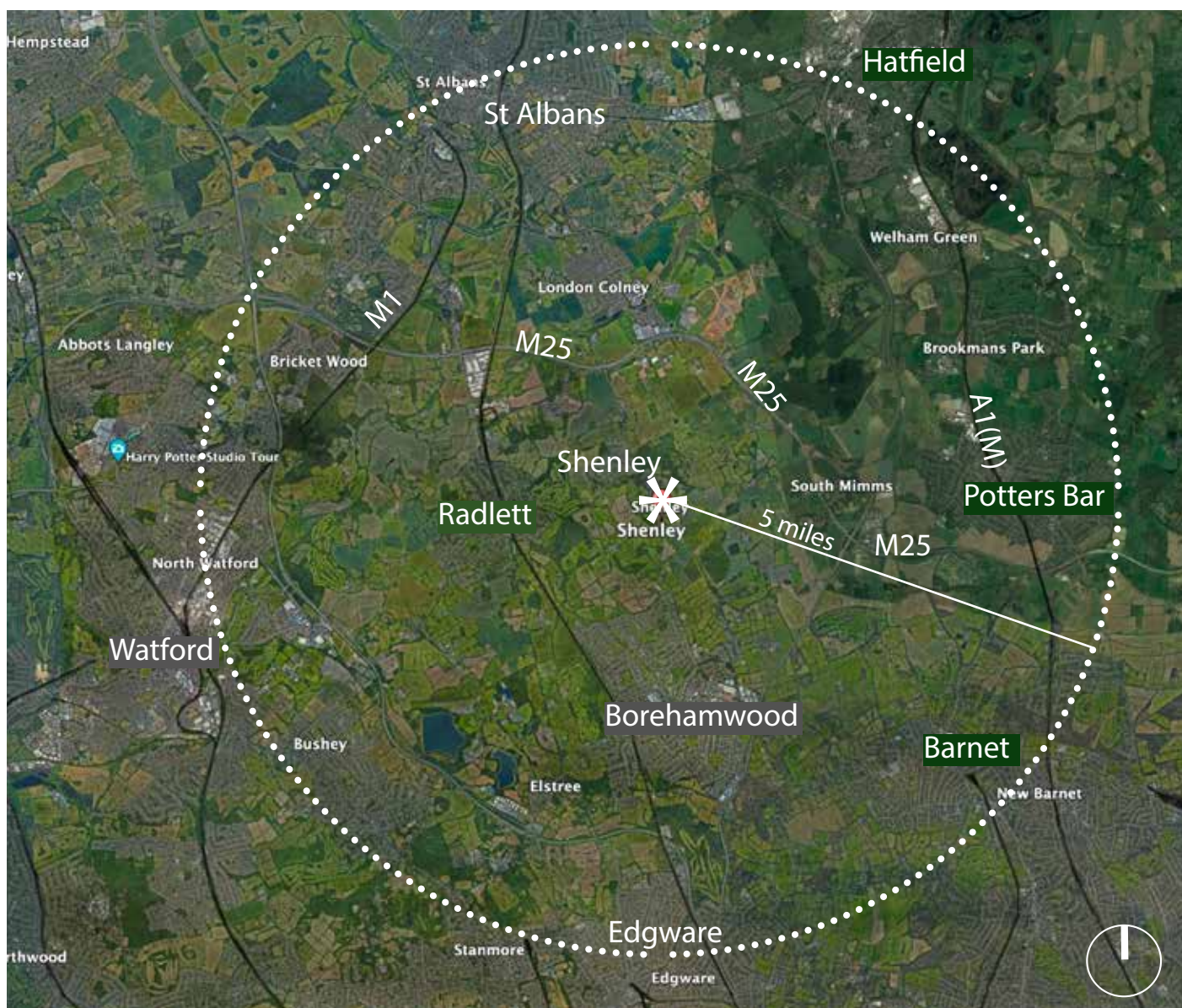
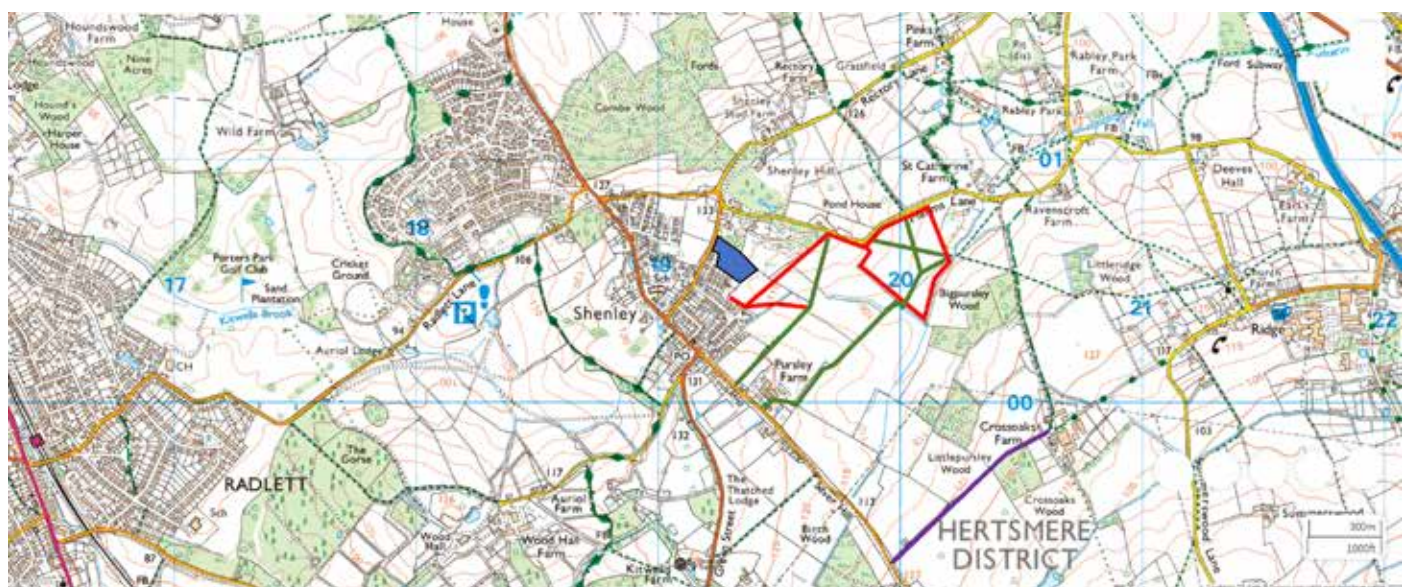


Figure 23 5-mile catchment area around Shenley



- Field in question
- Alternative paths (not Public Footpaths) used by locals to connect to Public Footpaths
- Public Footpaths
- Bridleway

Figure 24 Local PRoWs and paths with views of the site (Source: Shenley resident)

Appendix 3 Landscape Fabric



Figure 25 Landscape Fabric

A Within the site

- 1 Grassland

B Site Boundaries

- 1 Northeast
- 2 Southeast
- 3 Southwest (east)
- 4 Southwest (west)
- 5 Northwest (south)
- 6 Northwest (north)

C Outside the site boundary

- 1 Woodland edge to Gristwood & Toms
- 2 Young tree growing area Gristwood & Toms
- 3 Farmland
- 4 Back gardens to properties in Anderson Road and Harris Lane
- 5 Harris Lane
- 6 Harris Lane Playing Fields

D Landscape and Village Character

- 1 Appeal site
- 2 Shenley Conservation Area
- 3 Neighbouring village housing
- 4 Landscape Character Area 21c Shenley Fringe (Sub area of LCA 21)
- 5 Hertsmere Landscape Character Area 21 High Canons Valley and Ridges

Appendix 3 Landscape Fabric



Figure 26 Landscape Fabric B5 Hedge and fencing to back gardens on northwest boundary



Figure 27 Landscape Fabric B3 & B4 showing historic hedgerow, hedgerow trees and fencing on southwest boundary



Figure 28 Landscape Fabric B2 showing historic hedgerow and hedgerow trees on southeast boundary with C3 Farmland beyond, and D4 and D5 High Canons Valleys and Ridges Landscape Character Area 21 and sub area 21C

Appendix 3 Landscape Fabric



Figure 29 Landscape Fabric B1 showing historic hedgerow, hedgerow trees & woodland on northeast boundary with C2 Gristwood & Toms tree growing polytunnel beyond the hedge



Figure 30 Back gardens (Landscape Fabric C4) on northwest boundary with distant view of Canada Life Tower in Potters Bar on skyline



Figure 31 High Canons which has given its name to the High Canons Valleys and Ridges Landscape Character Area 21 Landscape Fabric D5

Appendix 4 Viewpoints



Figure 32 Location of Viewpoints 1 to 8

- VP1 Harris Lane looking south
- VP2 Harris Lane looking north
- VP3 Harris Lane Playing Fields
- VP4 Anderson Road
- VP5 Anderson Road Play Area
- VP6 PRoW Shenley 019
- VP7 PRoW Shenley 018
- VP8 PRoW Shenley 017

Appendix 4 Viewpoints



Figure 33 View 8 from bridlepath near Crossoaks Farm

Appendix 5 Louise Hooper Professional Experience

Louise Hooper

CMLI, BA(Hons) L Arch

Profession

Landscape Architect, Landscape Planner

Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI)

Specialisation and Experience

- * Strategic planning and design
- * Expert witness; public enquiries
- * Environmental impact assessment
- * Masterplanning; landscape planning
- * Landscape architecture
- * Townscape and landscape assessment

Qualifications

BA(Hons) Landscape Architecture
Heriot Watt University/Edinburgh
College of Art 1981

Chartered Membership, the Landscape Institute 1984

Nationality

British

Chartered landscape architect with over 30 years of experience gained in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and Singapore on projects of significant size, scale and complexity.

Considerable responsibility for strategic and large scale planning work, with multi disciplinary teams often on major projects. Judge for Kent Design Awards.

Have worked in strong design-led practices, planning consultancies, government organisations and local authorities; running my own practice has given me a track record of varied projects of many different types and scales.

Key Skills

- * Proven track record working as landscape architect and landscape planner with multi disciplinary teams, working as consultant and client
- * Strong portfolio of planning and design work demonstrating excellent creative and technical capabilities with focus on high quality public realm and private development such as Paragraph 79 houses
- * Successful delivery from project inception through to completion, maintaining project schedule and budget control
- * Development control, development briefs and design briefs
- * Proficient with MS Word, Excel, InDesign, Photoshop, Outlook
- * Fluent freehand drawing, sketching and graphics
- * Excellent interpersonal skills including relationship building and communication at all levels; able to work independently and collaboratively across teams and with clients
- * Strong report writing and communication skills, technical and professional correspondence, stakeholders and general public
- * Conference speaking, workshops and seminars
- * Competition judge

Key Achievements

- * Holborough Cement Works Public Inquiry, Kent
- * Metroplan Landscape Strategy, Hong Kong
- * Medway Landscape and Urban Design Framework, Kent
- * Haymerle Special Needs School, Peckham, London
- * Green Corridor for AQMA, Stone, Dartford, Kent
- * Walleys Court paragraph 79 house, Dover, Kent

Employment History

2001 to date	Louise Hooper Landscape Architect (LHLA), Kent
2007-2012	Judith Norris Rural Planning, Sussex
2000-2001	Robert Rummey Associates, Sevenoaks, Kent
1998-2000	Medway Unitary Authority, Kent
1993-1998	Aspinwall Clouston/Brian Clouston, Singapore
1991-1993	Freelance Landscape Architect, Hong Kong and UK
1988-1990	Hong Kong Government Planning Department
1984-1987	Urbis, Hong Kong
1981-1984	Michael Laird and Partners, Edinburgh
1979-1980	Department of Transport, Midlands Construction Unit

Appendix 5 Louise Hooper Professional Experience

Detailed Experience

Louise Hooper Landscape Architect
Principal
2001 to date

LHLA is a small, successful design and planning practice; clients include local authorities, housing associations, architects, planners, developers, private individuals, and community organisations. Significant projects include expert witness for Medway Unitary Authority, a Green Corridor for an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Stone, Dartford, Kent, Haymerle Special Needs School, Peckham, London, working with pupils and artists, and Walleys Court, an LVIA and landscape design for a modest, paragraph 79 house set within a Conservation Area, the Kent Downs AONB and adjacent to two Grade I listed buildings; won on Appeal.

Judith Norris Rural Planning, Sussex
Senior Landscape Architect
(Part time)
2007-2012

Prepared landscape statements, design and access statements and LVIAs to support planning applications for predominantly private clients. Significant projects included the landscape restoration of the British Gypsum landholding in East Sussex, and infrastructure development for the Forestry Commission at Bedgebury, Kent.

Robert Rummey Associates, Kent
Senior Landscape Architect
2000-2001

The culmination of two years at Medway was the assessment, summary and presentation of data collected by Medway officers as field work for a Medway-wide Townscape and Landscape Character Study. Other projects included a conservation study for a seventeenth century moated house near the Lee Valley, and Betteshanger Colliery Masterplan and Country Park, working closely with stakeholders and local communities affected by the closure of this coal mine in East Kent.

Medway Unitary Authority, Kent
Senior Landscape Architect
1998-2000
Independent Consultant
2001- present day

As a newly established Unitary Authority, Medway required a Landscape and Urban Design Framework. I co-led the project, made funding bids, organised resources, training, staff management and project work. Other significant projects included expert witness at a public inquiry for a cement works, the management of a large public works budget for schools and playgrounds and response to planning applications, including EIAs for major infrastructure projects such as the Channel Tunnel Railway and windfarms. Ongoing landscape advice on major planning applications and currently working on a LVIA for a major works depot overlooking the Kent Downs AONB.

Aspinwall Clouston/Brian Clouston
& Partners, Hong Kong, Singapore
Senior/Associate Landscape Architect
1993-1998

A leading international landscape practice working throughout the region, progressing to Senior, then Associate. Significant projects included Gunung Salak Environmental Capacity Study, Indonesia, Zanzibar Urban Landscape Study, Tanzania and Apple Computer, Singapore.

Freelance Landscape Architect, Hong
Kong and United Kingdom
1991-1993

Worked on the Hinterland Study for the new Hong Kong Airport, the EIA for the A27 South Coast Trunk Road, UK and various projects in Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and China.

Hong Kong Government Planning
Department
Senior Landscape Architect
1988-1990

Seconded to the Strategic Planning Unit, an elite team of planners, urban designers and architects working on Metroplan, an ambitious 30 year landuse and transport plan for the urban areas of Hong Kong and Kowloon. Prepared Metroplan Landscape Strategy, project briefs and consultant selection for studies including quarry restoration and urban fringe parks.

Urbis, Hong Kong
Landscape architect
1984 to 1987

Well-established landscape and planning practice; worked on several projects in Tai Po New Town, route assessment for underground high voltage cable routes and various infrastructure projects.

Michael Laird & Partners, Edinburgh
Year out student and graduate
1980 & 1981 to 1984

A respected firm of architects with a small landscape team; worked on urban and new town projects, including Royal Bank of Scotland and Gortex head offices, business parks, roof gardens and brown field restoration

Department of Transport, Midlands
Road Construction Unit
Year out student 1979-1980

Part of landscape team within a large transport/engineering department. Worked on the M40 route assessment, covering a 50 x 10 mile corridor between Oxford and Warwick. Attended public inquiry for A50 Blythe Bridge to Uttoxeter By-pass.