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Heritage Technical Note:

Land at Little London Road, Silchester

February 2025

1.0 Introduction and Scope

- 1.1 This Technical Note has been prepared for Shorewood Homes by Sarah Watt, MCIfA, Director of Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd. Its purpose is to provide an initial assessment of the potential impact on heritage assets of the proposed residential development of a site comprising paddocks east of Little London Road, Silchester.
- 1.2 Policy SIL8 of the November 2024 Pre-Submission version of the Silchester Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2040 allocates the c.2.4ha site for development with up to 25 dwellings. The policy requires the development to be provided on the c.1.35ha southern part of the site and the northern part to provide public open space, with the layout to include a single self-build plot in the south-eastern corner of the site. The policy also requires that the layout and landscape scheme '*delivers a buffer to the Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Conservation Area and the setting of Culham's Farmhouse.*'
- 1.3 In order to confirm the appropriateness of the draft allocation, the Parish Council wishes to understand whether there would be any greater impact on heritage assets of developing the site with c.25 dwellings than there would be if developing it with c.15. This Note therefore considers the heritage assets and their respective

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significance and settings, followed by an appraisal of the relative merits of a 15- and 25-dwelling scheme (each additionally including one self-build dwelling) based on the layouts attached at **Appendix 1**, in respect of any impact on those assets.

2.0 The site

2.1 The site lies within a large field that has been divided into four 'quadrants' comprising paddocks on the east side of Little London Road, on the approach into Silchester from the south. Opposite, on the west side of the road, is the late 20th-century Hydes Platt residential development.

2.2 The western boundary of the site to Little London Road is set behind a ditch and is fenced and lined with mature hedgerow trees, native hedgerow, scrub and other vegetation. The northern boundary comprises a dense woodland belt, with a narrower belt of trees to the southern boundary against fields. The eastern boundary does not follow any existing boundary and is not marked on the ground. The site includes the whole of the south-western paddock; an 'L'-shaped area comprising about a third of the south-eastern paddock; and most of the north-western paddock. The remaining area of paddocks will be retained in that use by the landowner.

2.3 Access to the site is via a recessed gated entrance off Little London Road on the dividing line between the north-western and south-western paddocks. Just south of the entrance is a small group of timber sheds/stables serving the paddocks.

2.4 As per policy SIL8, the developable area in both the 15- and 25-dwelling schemes encompasses the south-western paddock and the 'L'-shaped element of the south-eastern paddock only. The north-western paddock will be left undeveloped as public open space.

3.0 The Silchester Conservation Area

3.1 The Silchester Conservation Area was designated in 1992 and reviewed by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in 2003. Part of the north-western paddock lies within the conservation area. The south-western paddock is almost entirely outside the designated boundary, although its northern edge may encroach slightly into it. This seemingly arbitrary part of the conservation area

boundary appears to follow the boundaries of a parcel of land shown on the late 19th-century OS mapping, created following the demolition of a farmstead shown in this location on the 1839 tithe map. As this parcel of land no longer exists as a separate entity, having been subsumed into the north-western paddock, the conservation area boundary is no longer demarcated on the ground here.

3.2 In 2004, following its review of the conservation area, the Council produced a Conservation Area Appraisal ('the CAA'), which describes the historical development and the character and appearance of the designated area. This is particularly defined by the following:

- an irregular layout with focal points around the junctions of Little London Road and Holly Lane (where there is a small triangular green) and Little London Road and Pamber Road, with Silchester Common extending to the north;
- its historic built form, including a number of statutorily listed buildings mainly dating from the 17th to 19th centuries, often located in prominent positions, and many later unlisted buildings which have group value in reinforcing the character of the area. Particularly important is the group of Grade II listed brick cottages in the village centre on Holly Lane;
- a varied but consistent use of materials, including red and brown brick, timber framing, render, a mix of slate, clay tile and thatch, defines the architectural vernacular;
- important open spaces including the expansive common and long views across it, and surviving remnants of heathland, as well as the two greens;
- roadside hedges, particularly in the south and east of the village, and mature trees in private gardens and on boundaries. Hedges link the informally arranged buildings, provide enclosure and contribute to rural character; and
- important archaeological remains. Most of the village is classified as an Area of High Archaeological Potential. This relates mostly to the Iron Age and Roman periods, the former best exemplified by the Flex Ditch Scheduled Monument ('SM') and the latter by the presence of the route of the Portway Roman road connecting to the Roman town (former Iron Age oppidum) of *Calleva Atrebatum* (also a SM) outside the conservation area to the north-east.

- 3.3 The setting of the conservation area is suburban to north and west; to the west in particular there is a large area of late 20th-century residential development, with woodland and heathland beyond, between Silchester and Pamber Heath. To south and east is an area of more open countryside, including some woodland parcels and small and medium-sized field enclosures. To the north-east is *Calleva Atrebatum*, which is important to an understanding of both the historic place and the modern village.

The contribution of the site

- 3.4 The site contains no historic structures and does not contribute to any of the key elements making up the character and appearance of the conservation area in terms of the historic built environment. The Silchester Townscape Appraisal Map of the conservation area ('the STAP'; **Appendix 2**) does not identify any part of the site as an 'Open Area of Townscape Significance.'
- 3.5 The STAP identifies a belt of trees extending north-east along the road from the north-western corner of the site as 'Trees of Townscape Significance'). These trees and the well-vegetated western boundary of the site contribute to the semi-rural approach into the village from the south (both within and just outside the conservation area). It should, however, be noted that rural character is diluted by the presence of late 20th-century housing on the western side of the road.
- 3.6 The STAP identifies a Viewpoint 'to an important building or group of buildings' looking north along Little London Road from just south of the eastern end of the Flex Ditch SM (where the ditch forms a pond). As the only buildings evident in this view are late 20th-century houses outside the conservation area on Firth Close, it is assumed that the focus of this Viewpoint is the double bend in the road, lined with vegetation (including the 'Trees of Townscape Significance' mentioned above), and Flex Ditch in the foreground.
- 3.7 The site's contribution to this Viewpoint derives from the Trees of Townscape Significance lining its north-western corner, which enclose the view north on the double bend when entering the conservation area from the south (**Plate 1**).
- 3.8 The STAP also identifies a Vista ('important general view especially of the wider landscape setting') from a similar position on Little London Road looking east

towards the site. When the STAP was drawn up in March 2000, it is probable that the break in vegetation at this point was much more substantial than it is now, enabling a more open view across the north-western paddock; Google Streetview imagery from May 2009 (the earliest available) shows much less vegetation along this part of the boundary than was present by August 2021, and today (even in winter) these views are heavily filtered by vegetation, especially in respect of the south-easterly aspect towards the developable area of the site (**Plates 2-5**).

- 3.9 Similar views from a little further north-east along the road are similarly filtered, with glimpses across the north-western paddock possible, but with little meaningful visibility of the south-western paddock – the fenced northern boundary of the south-western paddock can be glimpsed if one is looking for it (**Plates 6 & 7**).
- 3.10 While these views are limited, the north-western paddock within the site can, along with its vegetated western boundary and the trees at the north-western corner, be considered to make a minor contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area by contributing to the latter's semi-rural character on the approach into the historic core of the village from the south.
- 3.11 The south-western paddock lies outside the conservation area, within its immediate physical setting. Its densely vegetated boundary frames views along the road (**Plate 8**) and continues the semi-rural character into the conservation area's setting (semi-rural because of the late 20th-century suburban-style development on the western side of the road) before giving way to a country lane of more fully rural character further south, flanked by the fields of Silchester Farm to the east and fields and woodland to the west; in my view, it is this landscape which more fully and legibly represents the open countryside setting south of the conservation area.
- 3.12 The heavily filtered views through the roadside vegetation into the south-western paddock from Little London Road are available after having passed the entrance to the village marked by road signage, which clearly signals, along with the residential development to the west, that the built-up area of the village has been reached.

3.13 The Planning Inspector at appeal in 2021 (ref: APP/H1705/W/21/3272407) in respect of a previous application for permission in principle for a development of 5-9 dwellings focused along the western edge of the south-western paddock and encroaching into the north-western paddock, noted that the site *'possesses a strongly rural prevailing character and appearance, which aside from some inconsequential ancillary structures is generally free of built form. Hence, the site forms part of the wider landscape setting of a vista identified as an important general view from the CA. It also makes a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the CA, with the northern tip of the site comprising part of the CA, and the remainder of the site being part of the surroundings in which the CA is experienced.'*

3.14 While I don't disagree that the site (particularly the north-western paddock) makes some contribution to the conservation area, it is my view that this is a relatively minor contribution in the context of what is key to the character and appearance of the area, and that the contribution of the south-western paddock is more limited.

The Flex Ditch SM

3.15 The Flex Ditch Scheduled Monument ('SM') lies just outside the north-western corner of the site, west of Little London Road. It forms part of an extensive complex of earthworks lying to the south and west of *Calleva*, thought to be associated with the Roman town's Iron Age precursor. The ditch is of such a size (up to 25m wide with a maximum depth of 6m) that it remains well-preserved despite the loss of the bank at its northern side during the construction of the late 20th-century residential development which now surrounds it.

3.16 The SM extends eastwards up to the western edge of Little London Road, which was cut across the ditch, and lies opposite the north-western corner of the north-western paddock within the site. The ditch is currently filled with water, appearing as a pond against the road. The south-western end of the ditch was remodelled and a bank at its northern side was levelled during construction of the adjoining housing estate (**Plates 9-11**).

3.17 The significance of the SM principally derives from the archaeological and environmental information it contains relating to its construction and use, as well

as for its historic interest. Its obvious visual presence also assists in an understanding of how the man-made landscape in the vicinity may have appeared in Iron Age and Roman times, contributing to an understanding of the ancient history of the modern settlement.

- 3.18 The setting of a heritage asset, as described in the Glossary to the NPPF, comprises *'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'*
- 3.19 The elements of the wider setting of Flex Ditch that are important to an understanding of the SM (the Roman town of *Calleva Atrebatum* and other probably contemporary earthworks in the area) are not experienced in direct conjunction with it and so cannot be considered elements of the physical setting from which it is experienced.
- 3.20 The actual physical setting from which the SM is experienced largely comprises detracting elements and/or elements that have no direct relationship with the SM. For instance, the SM is primarily experienced from Little London Road (the construction of which has no relationship to the historic setting of the monument and caused physical damage to it) and from the footpaths alongside it (part of the late 20th-century residential estate which also caused damage to the monument and which today provides a visually unsympathetic context for it).
- 3.21 Although the fields east of the SM (including the site) form part of its physical surroundings, these are modern landscape elements separated from the SM by the road and do not reflect its historic setting. The site comprises paddocks of modern agricultural character and not enclosures indicative of a prehistoric or Romano-British farming landscape. There are no visible earthworks within the site and no prehistoric or Roman remains have been recorded within it, and there are no important views towards the SM from the site, or vice versa, that contribute to an understanding of the monument and its significance.

Listed buildings

- 3.22 The only listed building which has any intervisibility with the site is the Grade II listed Culham's Farmhouse c.140m to the north, which is separated from the site by the late 20th-century Hydes Platt housing development.
- 3.23 Other listed buildings in the village are too distant and beyond intervening vegetation to have any intervisibility or other meaningful relationship with the site. The Grade II listed Silchester House is c.300m north-east of the site and separated from it by a belt of woodland, while the Grade II listed Silchester Farmhouse and Granary are well over 300m to the south, separated by a tree belt and fields. There is no evidence of any historical association between either of these buildings and the site (which was instead historically associated with a homestead at the north-western corner of the site that was demolished in the mid-late 19th century).
- 3.24 Culham's Farmhouse is a two-storey house of symmetrical appearance and Georgian character, built in c.1840 by the Duke of Wellington to replace an earlier dilapidated timber-framed farmhouse. It is constructed of red brick with blue headers and has a gabled porch and prominent end stacks with massive shafted chimneys. It changed use from a farm to a coal merchant's yard in 1932 but remained part of the Wellington estate until 1969 when it was bought by Basingstoke Council, which wanted to demolish it to make way for new housing. However, it was saved by listing in 1972 and sold to private owners in 1977.
- 3.25 The significance of the building primarily derives from its historic and architectural interest as a former farmhouse, and from its good-quality construction and largely unaltered appearance. The house and barn survive as a reminder of the historic rural character of the area prior to its large-scale residential development.
- 3.26 The housing estate was developed around both it and an associated brick-built barn that also survived demolition, such that these buildings now form a small 'island' among late 20th-century housing. The immediate setting of the building comprises its garden, well-enclosed by fencing and trees, which gives the house and barn some 'breathing space', but beyond that the historical setting has been transformed by the construction of the residential estate, which is not of a sympathetic character (**Plates 12-14**).

- 3.27 The chimney stacks and steep slate roof of the house can be glimpsed from Little London Road and from parts of the site, from where the upper storey of the façade is also visible. However, there is no direct historical connection between the site and the listed building, and the significance of the latter does not rely in any way on the ability to see parts of it from the site.

4.0 Assessment of proposals

Previous scheme

- 4.1 The 2020 scheme dismissed on appeal in 2021 was in relation to a smaller area (c.0.44ha) of land within the present site, comprising a strip of land fronting onto Little London Road, with the northern boundary of development set further north than the current developable area.
- 4.2 In respect of heritage matters, the Planning Inspector at appeal concluded that the 2020 scheme would result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area; no harm to the significance of any listed building; and no harm to the setting of the Flex Ditch SM, dependent on detailed design.

Current proposals

- 4.3 Under both the 15- and 25-dwelling schemes, the proposed development is, compliant with draft Neighbourhood Plan policy SIL8, contained within the south-western paddock, with a single self-build plot contained in the south-western corner of the south-eastern paddock, divided from the rest of the development by a belt of landscaping and planting.
- 4.4 Both the alternative schemes are developed on the same fundamental layout and contained within the same developable area, with the access road coming in from the existing access off Little London Road and curving into the site to form a 'U' shape with houses fronting onto both sides. This layout ensures a low density of development along the northern boundary, behind new planting, so that there is a soft transition between development and the north-western paddock, and avoiding any solid wall of development along this sensitive edge.

- 4.5 Thus, while there will be some visibility of built form in the periphery of the identified Vista in its south-easterly aspect, the angle of this view, the heavy filtering with vegetation, and the low density of building on the northern edge (under either scheme), will reduce visual impact.
- 4.6 Both schemes show the existing peripheral vegetation along the western and southern boundaries of the site to be retained and substantially reinforced with new planting. This will preserve the contribution of these vegetated boundaries to rural character and provide additional and effective screening of the development. In addition, gardens will back onto both the western and southern boundaries, providing an additional buffer between the road and built development.
- 4.7 It will nevertheless still be possible to obtain filtered glimpses to the open land north of the development from the Vista identified on the STAP because the north-western paddock will remain undeveloped as public open space, allowing this part of the site to continue to make its current minor contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 4.8 The purpose of this Note is to assess the relative impact on heritage assets of the 25-dwelling scheme against that of the 15-house scheme. I cannot identify any reason why the 25-dwelling scheme should have any greater visual impact on the conservation area or its setting than the 15-dwelling scheme; both schemes are developed on the same fundamental plan, with dwellings in the same general locations and alignments and, importantly, provide the same form and degree of mitigation through planting in respect of the filtered views towards the developable area from Little London Road.
- 4.9 The edges of the development that are most sensitive to visual change within the settings of heritage assets (the northern edge in respect of the character and appearance of the conservation area, and the western edge in respect of its setting) are treated in the same way in terms of the positioning and visibility of built form and the reinforcement of screening.
- 4.10 The additional dwellings in the larger scheme are found by replacing single detached dwellings with two or three attached dwellings on the same plot (including in the south-west corner of the site) and by redesigning larger detached dwellings under the 15-unit scheme to have integrated rather than detached

garages, thereby creating space for an additional dwelling (including in the north-western corner, southern edge and centre of the site). The overall result of this achieves a similar perception of density and maintains a similar pattern of built form in each area.

- 4.11 In summary, if there is found to be any harm arising to the conservation area from the proposals, this must in my view be considered at the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm, and would be of equal degree in respect of either scheme.
- 4.12 Despite the lack of contribution made by the site to either the Flex Ditch SM or the Grade II listed Culham's Farmhouse, the retention of open space in the north-western paddock will continue to allow views towards the upper part of the façade of the listed building and preserve open land beyond the road east of the SM (avoiding further encirclement with modern housing which would reduce its legibility further).
- 4.13 The lack of impact on Flex Ditch and Culham's Farmhouse was confirmed by the Inspector on the 2021 appeal, who noted in respect of listed buildings that, '*Given the considerable separation distance from the appeal site and absence of evidence to show a specific historic association, the proposal would not be harmful to the significance of these designated heritage assets.*' In respect of Flex Ditch, the appeal decision concluded that, although the development then proposed would be within the physical setting of the SM, the County Archaeologist had concluded that this '*need not preclude the principle of development.*'
- 4.14 While the scheme then under consideration was smaller than that now proposed, I do not see any reason for those conclusions to be any different in respect of either the 15- or 25-dwelling schemes now presented.

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Plate 1: View identified in the STAP looking north along Little London Road (Flex Ditch SM to left and boundary of north-western paddock within site to right)



Plate 2: May 2009, from vicinity of Vista identified in STAP looking east across site (Google Streetview)



Plate 3: August 2021, from vicinity of Vista identified in STAP looking east across site (Google Streetview)



Plate 4: Looking east across site from vicinity of Vista identified in the STAP



Plate 5: South-easterly view from vicinity of Vista identified in the STAP



Plate 6: View east into north-western paddock from further north-east along Little London Road



Plate 7: View south-east into site from further north-east along Little London Road



Plate 8: Looking south-west along Little London Road from access into site (left)



Plate 9: Looking north-west across eastern end of Flex Ditch SM



Plate 10: Looking south-west past Flex Ditch with site boundary to left



Plate 11: Looking north across Flex Ditch to Hydes Platt development



Plate 12: Culham's Farmhouse in the context of its surrounding late 20th-century residential development



Plate 13: Culham's Farmhouse in the context of its surrounding late 20th-century residential development



Plate 14: The roof and chimneys of Culham's Farmhouse seen in views across Flex Ditch from Little London Road

Appendix 1:

Draft Development Proposals



PRIVATE				
House Type	No of Bedrooms	Sqft	No	Total Sqft
388	3	2000	1	2000
381	3	2000	3	6000
481	4	2500	2	5000
581	5	3000	3	9000
TOTALS			9	22000

Private housing plot areas (sqft)	22000
Net developable area (acres)	2.302
Coverage sqft/acre	9557

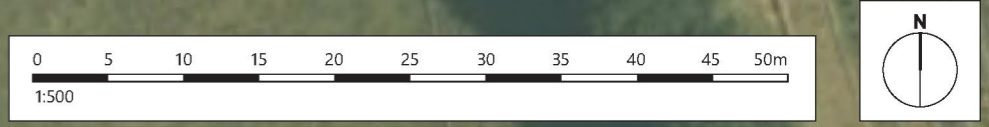
AFFORDABLE				
House Type	No of Bedrooms	Sqft	No	Total Sqft
288	2	753	1	753
28	2	885	3	2655
38	3	1050	2	2100
TOTALS			6	5508

Affordable Rent Housing plot areas (sqft)	5508
Net developable area (acres)	0.544
Coverage sqft/acre	10125

SITE TOTALS	15	27508
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Total Housing plot areas (sqft)	27508
Total Net developable area (acres)	2.846
Total Coverage sqft/acre	9665

- Site Boundary
- 14 Plot Number
- 382 House Type
- * Affordable Housing



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Rev	Description	Date	Au	Ch
P1	Preliminary Issue	14.02.25	CI/HT	--/--

Project Land east of Little London Road, Silchester
 Drawing Sketch Layout - 03

Client	SHOREWOOD HOMES		
Job no.	SHOR240927	Date	14.02.25
Dwg no.	SKL-03	Rev.	P1
Author	GR/SWD	Checked	-/-
Status	PRELIMINARY	Scale	1:500@A1
Client ref.	-	Office	Romsey





PRIVATE				
House Type	No of Bedrooms	SqFt	No	Total SqFt
2B1	2	950	3	2850
3B1	3	1100	2	2200
3B2	3	1800	5	9000
3B3	3	1800	2	3600
5B1	5	2500	1	2500
5B2	5	2500	2	5000
TOTALS			15	25150

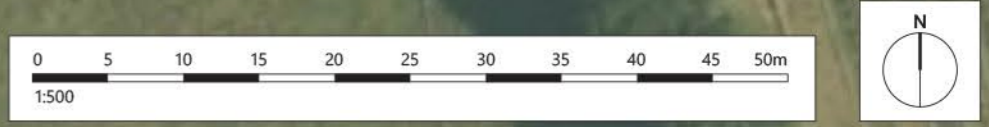
Private housing plot areas (sqft)	25150
Net developable area (acres)	2.189
Coverage sqft/acre	11489

AFFORDABLE				
House Type	No of Bedrooms	Sqft	No	Total SqFt
1BFOG	1	793	2	1586
2B	2	885	5	4425
3B	3	1050	3	3150
TOTALS			10	9161

Affordable Rent Housing plot areas (sqft)	9161
Net developable area (acres)	0.887
Coverage sqft/acre	10328

SITE TOTALS	
Total Housing plot areas (sqft)	34311
Total Net developable area (acres)	3.076
Total Coverage sqft/acre	11154

- Site Boundary
- 14 Plot Number
- 3B2 House Type
- ★ Affordable Housing



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Rev	Description	Date	Au	Ch
P1	Preliminary Issue	10.10.24	GR/SWD	-/-
P2	Revised Layout	18.10.24	GR/SWD	HP/-
P3	Coloured Layout	21.10.24	GR/SWD	-/-
P4	Revised Layout	31.10.24	GR/SWD	-/-
P5	Updated Red Line	31.10.24	GR/SWD	-/-

Project	Land east of Little London Road, Silchester		
Drawing	Sketch Layout - 01 Option 1		
Client	SHOREWOOD HOMES		
Job no.	SHOR240927	Date	10.10.24
Dwg no.	SKL-01	Rev.	P5
Author	GR/SWD	Checked	-/-
Status	PRELIMINARY	Scale	1:500@A1
		Office	Romsey
Client ref.	-		

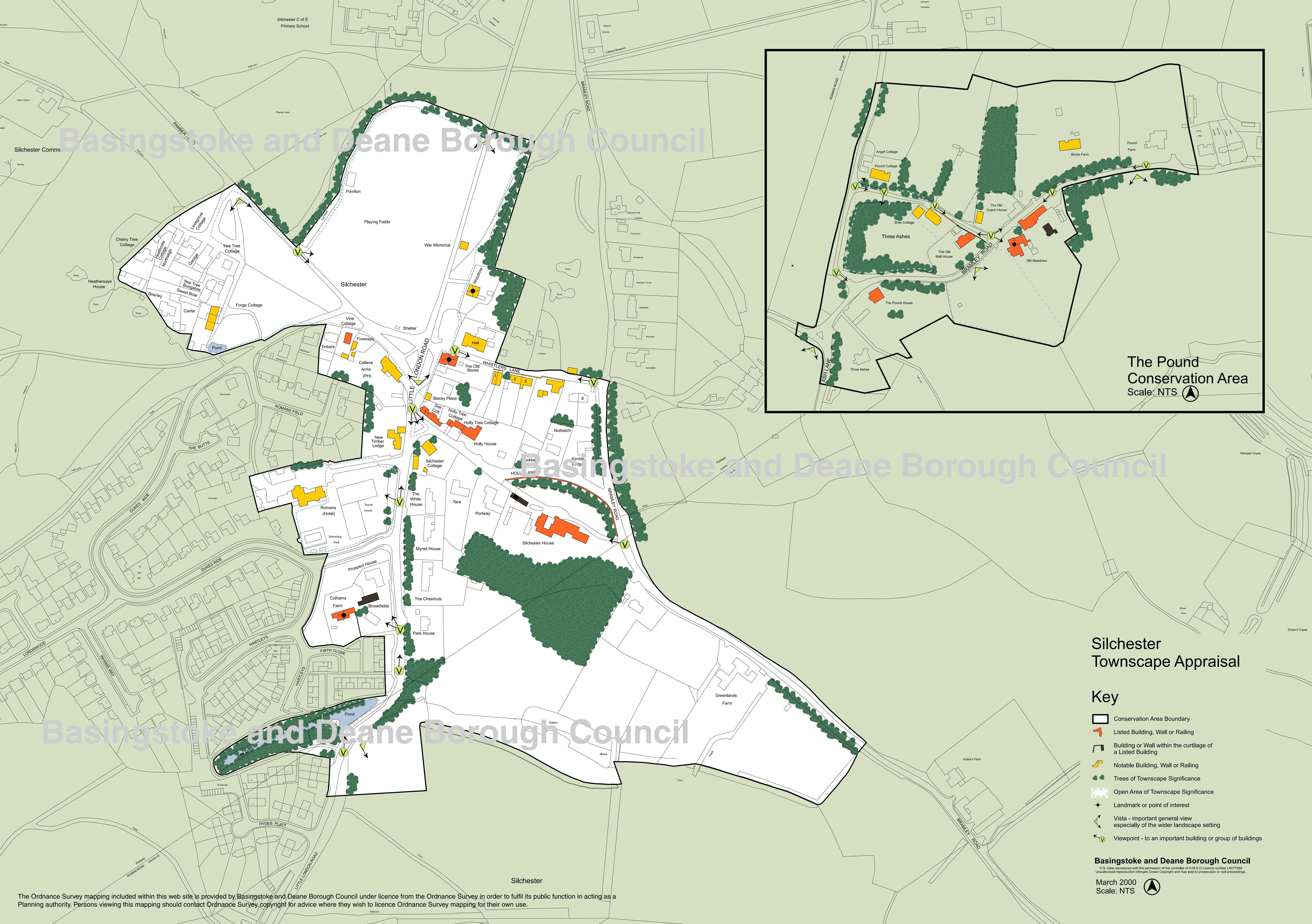


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Appendix 2:

Silchester Townscape Appraisal Map, March 2000

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council



The Pound Conservation Area
Scale: NTS

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Silchester Townscape Appraisal

- Key**
- Conservation Area Boundary
 - Listed Building, Wall or Railing
 - Building or Wall within the curtilage of a Listed Building
 - Notable Building, Wall or Railing
 - Trees of Townscape Significance
 - Open Area of Townscape Significance
 - Landmark or point of interest
 - Vista - important general view especially of the wider landscape setting
 - Viewpoint - to an important building or group of buildings

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
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 March 2000
 Scale: NTS

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