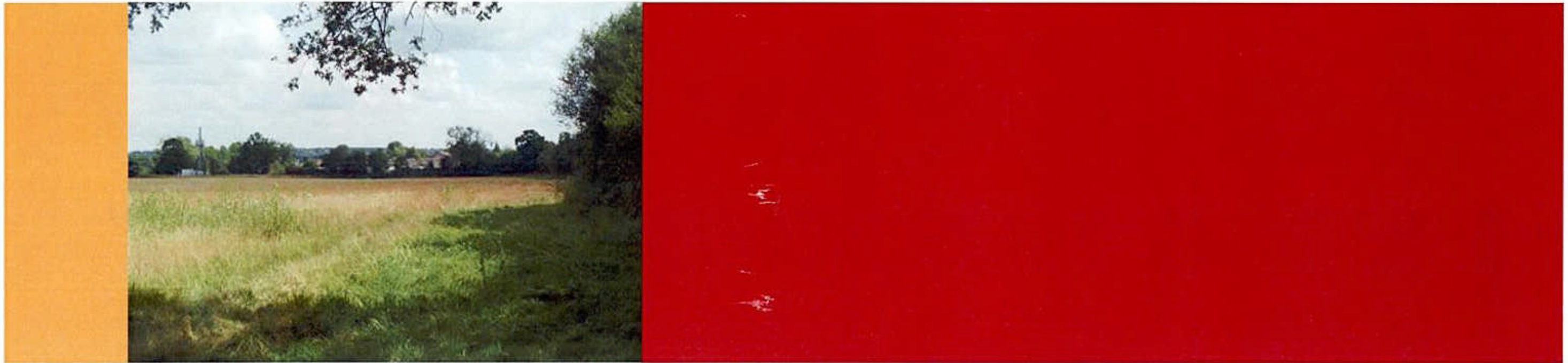


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 Stride Treglown



PROPOSED NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT SACOMBE ROAD, BENGEO, HERTFORD
BOVIS HOMES
VISUAL ASSESSMENT

DRAFT - 18.10.12

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CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	p1
2.0	Baseline Information	
3.1	Site Location	
3.2	Site Description	p2
3.3	Topography	p6
3.4	Existing Vegetation	p7
3.0	Description of Proposals	p12
4.0	Visual Assessment	p13
5.0	Site Opportunities	p19
6.0	Conclusions	p20

FIGURES

Figure 1	Site Location Plan	p1
Figure 2	Existing Land Use and Context Photograph Locations	p2
Figure 3	Topography	p6
Figure 4	Existing Site Vegetation	p7
Figure 5	Site Photo Locations	p8
Figure 6	Initial Site Proposals	p12
Figure 7	Viewpoints Locations	p13
Figure 8	Site Opportunities	p19

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIEWPOINTS

Photograph 1 Photograph 2 Photograph 3	p3
Photograph 4 Photograph 5	p4
Photograph 6 Photograph 7	p5
Photograph 8 Photograph 9 Photograph 10	p9
Photograph 11 Photograph 12 Photograph 13	p10
Photograph 14 Photograph 15 Photograph 16 Photograph 17	p11
Viewpoint 1 Viewpoint 2	p14
Viewpoint 3	p15
Viewpoint 4	p16
Viewpoint 5	p17
Viewpoint 6	p18

1.0

Introduction

- 1.1 This Visual Assessment has been carried out by Stride Treglown Landscape Architects on behalf of Bovis Homes in order to identify potential visual impacts of the proposed development and to inform the design of the development of site.
- 1.2 This report is a visual assessment only and therefore does not provide a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- 1.3 The visual impacts have been evaluated by identifying the following:
 - The existing landscape and visual features of the site and the opportunities and constraints that they present;
 - The visibility of the existing site from public viewpoints in the surrounding area as identified in Section 4.
 - A brief summary of how the proposals will affect each of these viewpoints.

2.0

Baseline information

2.1 SITE LOCATION

The site is located on the outskirts of Hertford in an area called Bengoe approximately 2km to the north of the town centre. It is situated on Sacombe Road at the road junction with the B158 where Bengoe Street joins Wadesmill Road.

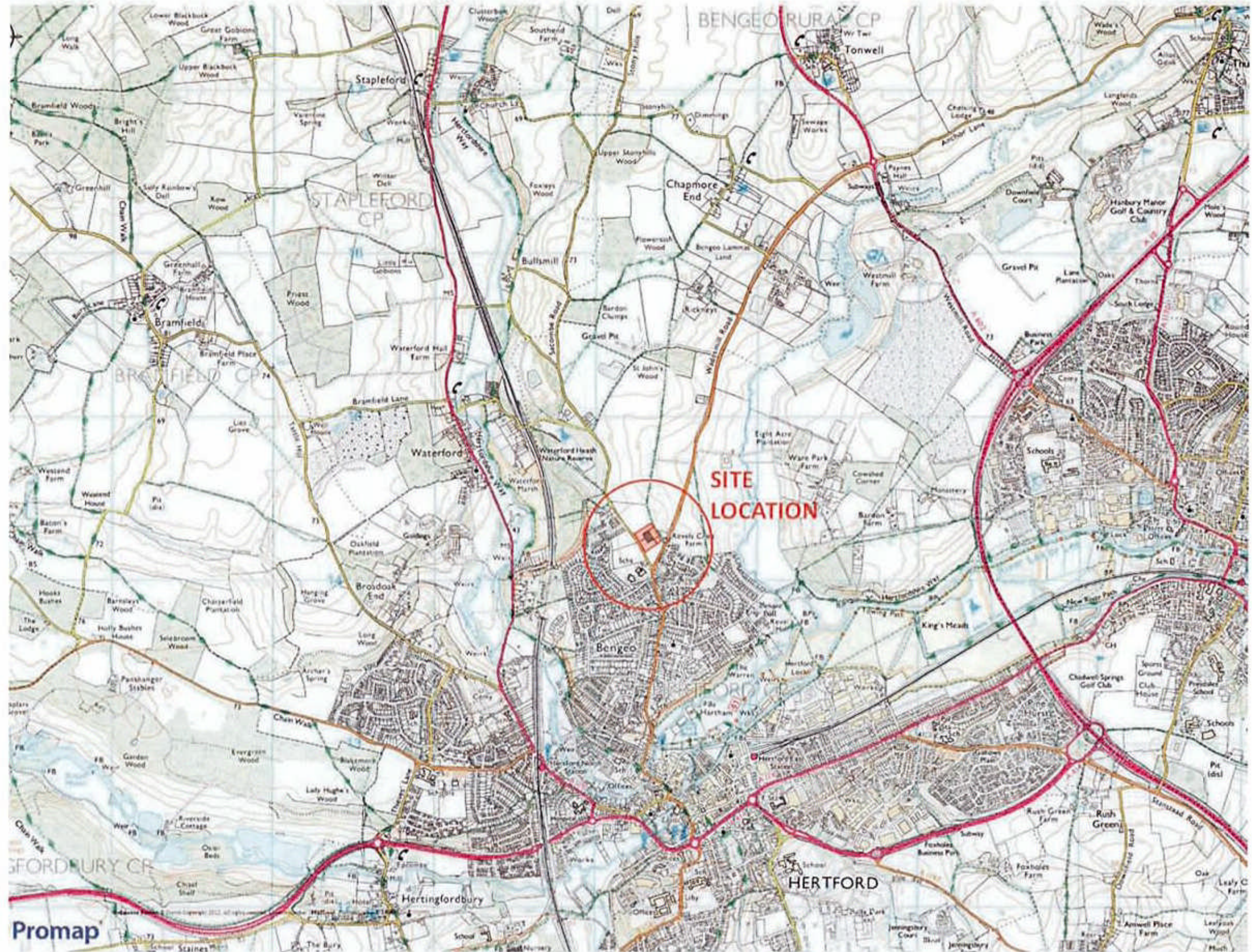


Fig. 1 Site Location Plan

2.0

Baseline information

2.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is currently a working plant nursery situated between areas of new and old housing, allotment gardens and farmland to the north. To the west is an area of public open space including a children's play area. Bengoe Primary School is located to the south of the site.

The site comprises a car park area, a large central greenhouse structure and external areas of plant stalls with a soft scrub land area to the north of the buildings.

The site boundaries include mature vegetation on all sides. To the north is a telecom mast beyond which lies open farmland.

Sacombe Road defines the western boundary which includes the current site entry/exit point. The new housing area of Fairview is situated opposite the site entrance with Bengoe Primary School to the south and public open space to the north.

The southern edge of the site sits against allotment gardens, followed by residential areas and the eastern boundary sits against a Public Restricted Byway footpath which continues north past the site through the farmland towards St John's Wood.

The following pages show some of the site surroundings and local context.



Fig. 2 Existing Land Use and Context Photograph Locations

Site Context



Photograph 1 - Looking south towards site entrance along Sacombe Road with recreational land to the right



Photograph 2 - View towards Fairview new homes across recreational land including play area



Photograph 3 - Bengo Nursery entrance looking north along Sacombe Road

Site Context



Photograph 4 - Looking north from corner of Fairview new homes towards nursery site entrance on Sacombe Road



Photograph 5 - Looking north from Bengoe Primary School gates towards nursery site entrance on Sacombe Road

Site Context



Photograph 6 - Looking north from Allotment gates towards nursery site southern boundary fence



Photograph 7 - Looking north from north east corner of site towards St Johns Wood

2.0

Baseline information

2.3 TOPOGRAPHY

The town of Hertford sits between +60-70m AOD to the north of the River Beane. The land on the southern banks rise gradually to a high point to the south east at Rush Green and Amwell Place Farm sits at 90m AOD. The surrounding landform also rises gradually to the north and north-west to high points of 70-80m AOD.

The site itself sits in line with this at 66.04m on the southern corner, 67.51m to the west, 65.68m to the north and 63.92m to the east. The level difference across the site itself is steepest across the east to west corners with a level change of around 3.5m, where as from north to south the site is almost flat.

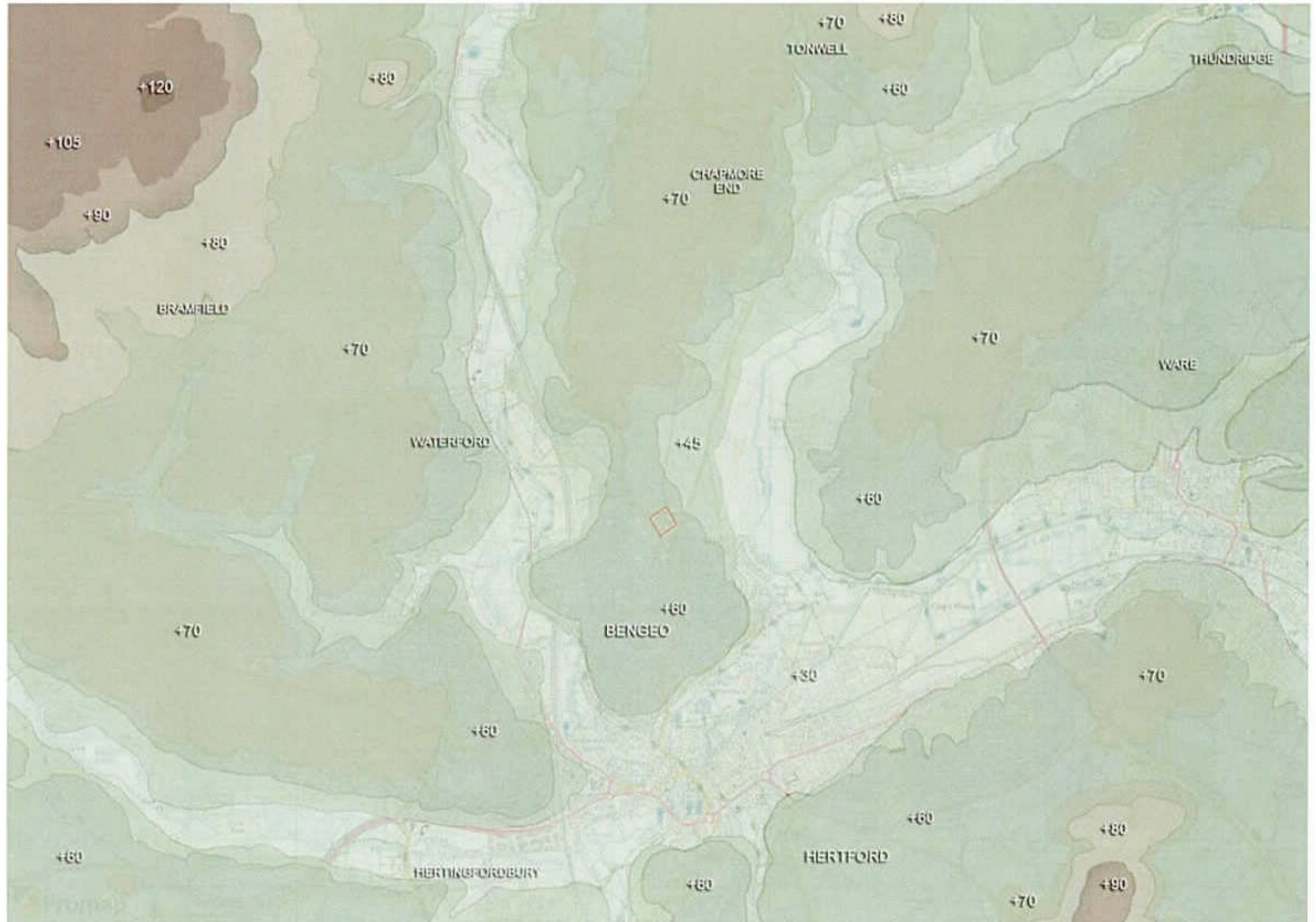


Fig. 3 Topography

2.0

Baseline information

2.4 The site is relatively square in shape and all four sides include substantial vegetation boundaries.

Sacombe Road includes the site entrance and is the most densely covered of all the aspects including a mature hedgerow of native species such as field maple, hawthorn and blackthorn. The boundary also includes some large specimen trees, such as Pin Oak, lime and native cherry species. This vegetation forms a dense screen against the road boundary.

The southern boundary consists of a 1.8m featherboard timber fence line with some smaller specimen trees along the site side of the fence, including mountain ash. The fence line sits against a plot of allotment gardens but there seems to be no vegetation growing on the southern side of the fence.

The eastern boundary is along a restricted byway and is defined by feather board fence and an adjacent mature hedgerow with mature specimen trees such as lime giving the site a dense green edge.

The northern boundary sits against open farmland and includes a large number of mature trees directly to the north of the feather board fence boundary. These are taller than other site boundary trees but are spread out along the boundary length.

The car parking area includes ornamental laurel hedgerows to divide the parking bays.

There is a stand of pine trees at the eastern end of the car park against a fenced area containing a grass and scrub land area which appears to be unused.

To the north of the car park is a larger area of scrubland which seems to be used for nursery back of house composting, etc.



SITE VEGETATION AREAS:

1. Native trees and hedgerow boundary to Sacombe Road.
2. Intermittent small specimen trees against boundary fence line.
3. Native trees and hedgerow boundary to restricted byway footpath.
4. Native trees intermittent along northern fence line field boundary.
5. Hardstanding car park with ornamental laurel hedges.
6. Pine trees and small scrubland area.
7. Large open scrubland area at back of house to nursery glasshouses.

Fig. 4 Existing Site Vegetation

2.0

Existing Site Features



Fig. 5 Existing Site Photograph Locations

Existing Site Features



Photograph 8 - View towards site water tank and unused external hard standing to the east of the glass houses



Photograph 9 - View over gate into scrub area on the south eastern corner of the site adjacent to car parking area



Photograph 10 - View over car park looking north west towards glass houses and site entrance

Existing Site Features



Photograph 11 - View over existing gate looking north to boundary over scrub land and back of house nursery area



Photograph 12 - View from western boundary car park corner looking towards southern boundary



Photograph 13 - View from site entrance across car park

Existing Site Features



Photograph 14 - View from car park towards site entrance and western boundary to Sacombe Road



Photograph 15 - View of nursery entrance



Photograph 16 - View of nursery stalls - external



Photograph 17 - View of nursery stalls - internal

4.0

Visual Assessment

4.5 Viewpoint 1:

View of the site from residences along the B158 close to the Sacombe Road junction. It is clear that these dwellings have a direct view of the site over the allotments from their first floor windows. The site topography rises to the northern boundary giving views to the open fields to the north.

The southern boundary vegetation provides the least coverage in terms of screening so views of the development proposals would be fairly open from these dwellings.

The proposed development would retain the existing vegetation and strengthen the boundary with new tree planting to increase the screening of views from the south.

Also the plot arrangement allows for rear gardens along this boundary so that the buildings are set back into the site from this viewpoint.

It will be possible to see the rooflines of the proposed dwellings within the site due to topography, but this will be softened by the inclusion of street tree planting throughout the site and by retaining the existing vegetation to northern and eastern boundaries. The dwelling's views to the wider landscape beyond will be unaltered.

4.6 Viewpoint 2:

Views into site from Public Byway footpath adjacent to existing dwellings. From ground level it is not possible to see into the site although first floor windows will have an elevated view into the site of the nursery glass houses.

The site proposals include rear gardens against this boundary with some garages and a pumping station is proposed to the south east corner of the site.

This will need screening to the east to protect views from the adjacent property and Public Byway. A connection through to the Public Byway is also proposed at this corner.

The existing trees along this boundary are to be retained as a part of the development.

A footpath link to join the byway will also be provided to the northern end of this boundary.



Viewpoint 1 Insert A: View along Wadesmill Road to show location of residential dwellings with 1st floor views over the site



Viewpoint 1: Taken from Wadesmill Road looking north towards the site with allotment gardens in the foreground.



Viewpoint 2: Looking into the site from Public Restricted Byway



Viewpoint 2 Insert A: Looking across Wadesmill Road at Public Restricted Byway entrance with adjacent residential dwelling

4.0

Visual Assessment

4.7 Viewpoint 3:

View from high point on public byway to the north of site. Due to the elevated location this view point allows for views of the existing nursery glass houses and adjacent hard standing areas.

The proposals to this boundary include larger dwellings with rear gardens against the boundary.

The proposals provide for existing mature trees to be retained and some further planting to increase the screening of views from the north.

Although it will be possible to see further in to the site at some points along the boundary, the proposals will include street tree planting which will soften the appearance of the development.

The site is located on the urban fringes of northern Hertford and will therefore sit within the adjacent context of the built form boundary.



Viewpoint 3: Looking south at site from high point along Public Restricted Byway



Viewpoint 3 Insert A: The site prominence diminishes further along the Public Restricted Byway towards St John's Wood



Viewpoint 3 Insert B: From the edge of St John's Wood the view towards the site forms part of the wider view of the northern edge of

4.0

Visual Assessment

4.8 Viewpoint 4:

View across open fields from public footpath north of site and at private dwelling boundary.

Due to the elevated location this footpath view point provides views into the site and the roofline of the glass house structure can be seen. Therefore the development proposals will also be visible but will not form such a central part of the view as in viewpoint 3.

The residential dwelling does not have windows which look out directly over this area and only include high velux types so no private views would be affected by the development.

Again the site is located within the context of the existing urban edge and the development proposals will sit in the context of the town in this view.



Viewpoint 4: Looking south at site from Public Footpath



Viewpoint 4 Insert A: View towards site from residential boundary along public footpath

4.0

Visual Assessment

4.9 Viewpoint 5:

View from the existing dwellings along Chapmore End joining the B 158 road junction.

The location of these dwellings along the valley ridge gives them views across the fields towards the northern site boundary where the roof line of the existing glass houses can be seen.

Due to the distance from site the view is a wider scope of Hertford town than previous views where the site itself sits within the context of the urban fringe.



Viewpoint 5 Insert A: Looking east along Chapmore End towards the B158 with the residential dwellings to the left



Viewpoint 5 Insert B: Looking west along Chapmore End towards the village with the residential dwellings to the right



Viewpoint 5: Looking south at site from Chapmore End residential dwellings

4.0

Visual Assessment

4.10 Viewpoint 6:

The public footpath along the river valley on the southern banks at 'The Meads' water meadow is a busy connection from residential areas to the east with the town. It also provides connections to Ware and is a well used route for dog walkers in the area.

Once the path has cleared the urban expansion to the north of the river it is possible to identify the adjacent arable fields in the view. However the existing vegetation and built form in the foreground obscures direct views of the site and existing buildings.

As the development proposals retain the mature tree planting to the site boundaries, it is therefore not expected that the development would be clearly visible from this viewpoint.



Viewpoint 6: Looking north west from 'The Meads' public footpath adjacent to private dwelling boundaries adjacent to the railway line along the river valley

5.0

Site opportunities

- 5.1 Following the visual analysis of the site the following opportunities and constraints were identified to inform the design of the site layout with regards to landscape:
- 5.2 The retention of existing site vegetation where possible to all site boundaries.
- 5.3 Increased vegetation by way of tree planting to the northern and southern boundaries. This will help integrate the development with the surrounding landscape by screening views into the site.
- 5.4 Providing street trees within the development to public areas and to private frontages to increase tree canopy cover within the scheme proposals.
- 5.5 Provide pedestrian linkages from the proposals to the adjacent footpaths and giving access to the wider landscape.



Fig. 8 Site Opportunities

6.0

Conclusions

- 6.1 On completion of this visual assessment the following points summarise the findings:
- 6.2 The site forms part of the development boundary line on the northern fringe of Hertford in the area of Bengoe and its boundaries are defined by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- 6.3 Distant and mid-distant views of the site are limited to the west, south and east due to land form, built form and vegetation.
- 6.4 Key views of the site are seen from residential properties to the south and the Public Restricted Byway adjacent to the site, particularly the north east.
- 6.5 Views of the site are also possible but more limited from residential dwellings to the north at Chapmore End and are very limited from the public footpath to the south east at 'The Meads' water meadows.
- 6.6 The site location lends itself to the urban fringe and therefore sits within the visual context of its surroundings when viewed from the north.
- 6.7 The established vegetation to the site boundaries are an asset to the development which provide both existing character and screening for the development.
- 6.8 With the visually vulnerable boundaries to the north and south additional tree and native shrub planting will help blend the development into its surroundings.
- 6.9 New and considered landscape proposals within the scheme of street tree and ornamental planting will provide further visual amenity to the area.