

LAND SOUTH OF PAMPISFORD ROAD,  
GREAT ABINGTON

Landscape capacity

Hill Residential Ltd  
January 2026

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This document has prepared on behalf of Hill Residential Ltd (Hill) and provides an assessment of the landscape sensitivity and residential capacity of Land South of Pampisford Road, Great Abington.. It is intended to substantiate representations made by Hill to the Reg. 18 consultation of the Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (draft GCLP).
- 1.2 The document makes specific reference to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 2025 and any conclusions drawn where relevant to the capacity of the site in landscape and visual terms.
- 1.3 Hill has promoted a site in Great Abington (Call for sites reference 115140) for residential development. The overarching Vision for Greater Cambridge in the Reg.18 Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (draft GCLP) refers to increasing quality of life for communities, minimising carbon emissions, reducing car use, providing housing, supporting infrastructure and increasing green spaces.

### **The site**

- 1.4 The site covers a total area of approximately 3.4ha and lies immediately south of Pampisford Road, Great Abington. The site is currently in agricultural use under crops and is bounded to the immediate south by a dismantled railway line, to the east by New House Farm and its ancillary agricultural buildings and private gardens, and to the west by Old Elm House and a recent residential development at Maple Rise.
- 1.5 The site is not situated within the Cambridge Greenbelt or subject to any national or local landscape, ecological or heritage designations (figure 1). The centre of the village, including the meadows around the church and part of the Granta Park site including Abington Hall, are a designated conservation area. The site is not considered to contribute to the setting of the conservation area. There are no Tree Preservation Orders within the site.

### **Landscape context**

- 1.6 Great Abington lies immediately to the south of Little Abington and together form a conglomeration of scattered residential and commercial development (at Granta Park) and open spaces including Abington Recreation Ground. This grouping is located within the Granta Valley. It is contained to the north by Cambridge Road and to the south by Pampisford Road.
- 1.7 The area including the Abingtons and Granta Park has seen considerable change since the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, while the villages retain their historic cores, are perceived as highly mixed and thriving semi-rural settlements with strong spatial integration.
- 1.8 Beyond this, further containment to the villages is provided by major road corridors including the heavily used A11 to the west of the village (with links to the A505 and A1307) and the A1307 (with sections of dual carriageway) which skirts the village to the north and north-east. This road infrastructure has a significant negative aural influence on the area.
- 1.9

- 1.10 The landscape around the proposed development site is a gently defined river valley set within the chalkland landscape of South Cambridgeshire. There is a high level of local enclosure within the valley, provided by woodland, hedgerows, other mature trees and vegetation, gently undulating landform and local settlement.
- 1.11 Great Abington and neighbouring Little Abington are located within the Granta River valley and the landscape has a variety of components and characteristics that differ with the open, rolling, simple landscape typically associated with the 'Cambridge chalkland'. The site is located at the edge of the Great Abington settlement and within the Granta valley. More broadly, the Abingtons lie in a transitional section of the river corridor, where a discernible valley opens out to become a much less distinctive landscape of gentle 'hills and hollows'.
- 1.12 The valley landscape includes many mature trees, including some large blocks of woodland. There are a variety of tall hedges, shelterbelts and mature trees associated with gardens and parkland. This vegetation combined with settlement and undulating landform variety creates a high degree of visual enclosure along the valley but particularly in the villages.
- 1.13 The settlement of Great Abington is varied in age and architectural style including its historic core with dwellings dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century but the majority of the village was constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The settlements have also seen considerable growth during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries including small pockets of recent development at Larkfield, Moorefield Close and Maple Close, the last of which lies adjacent to the site.
- 1.14 The site itself is relatively commonplace and indistinct. While its vegetation is generally intact, its condition is moderate and it makes limited contribution to the quality or value of the wider landscape.

### **Visual amenity**

- 1.15 The site is very well contained on all boundaries, particularly to the south by the dismantled railway line and the dense vegetation along its length. The wider pattern of landscape structure (including substantial parkland and hedgerow trees, hedgerows as well as the scattered distribution of built development) further reduces inter-visibility with the surrounding landscape.
- 1.16 There are limited public rights of way within the area (figure 2). Inter-visibility is equally limited, with most of the potential views located within the immediate setting of the site, the adjoining highway network or the nearby residential streets (figure 3). Longer distance views from elevated land to the north and south are possible beyond 1km of the site from agricultural fields where public accessibility is very limited. Furthermore, from these locations, any visibility of built development on site would be limited to the tops of the roof profiles only above intervening vegetation and viewed in the immediate context of an existing settled landscape.

### **Landscape and visual sensitivity**

- 1.17 The site lies entirely within a strongly contained settlement grouping and is most strongly associated with the settlements to the north and is therefore distinct and separated from the surrounding open countryside to the south.

- 1.18 Furthermore, visual interactions between the site and surrounding open landscapes are also very limited due to the spread and density of the underlying landscape structure.
- 1.19 Due to the limited features on site, development could be accommodated with only minimal loss of boundary vegetation adjacent to Pampisford Road to accommodate access, maintaining its containment and contiguity with the existing settlement.
- 1.20 The sensitivity of the landscape setting for the proposed development is therefore considered to be low due to the likely limited landscape and visual effects that would result and the high potential for landscape mitigation and enhancement. The site's capacity for residential development at an appropriate density is high.

### **Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 2025**

- 1.21 The site is referred to in the HELAA as site 200808. A review of the categorisation and assessment of the site is discussed below.
- 1.22 GCLP's HELAA assessment considers a number of environmental and policy factors when assessing the suitability of a site for potential development. The site scores either amber or green against all criteria with the exception of landscape and suitability, where it is scored red for the following reasons;
 

*'The proposed site forms a part of the Great Abington former Land Settlement Association Estate Neighbourhood Plan, which restricts development on former land allocations to a single dwelling on or next to holding piggeries. The policy is in place to protect the character of the area. Any development should be limited to protect the character and setting of the rural landscape.'*

*'Development of the site has some potential policy constraints, but these could be overcome through the planning application process.'*
- 1.23 Both assessments relate to the Neighbourhood Plan for the former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington 2018 to 2031, adopted February 2019 which sets a framework for future development of the Land Settlement. The intention of the Neighbourhood Plan is to remove the uncertainty that had arisen in relation to development proposals on the Land Settlement, and to provide clear, consistent and transparent policies to control development.
- 1.24 The Neighbourhood Plan aims to provide policies for housing whilst preserving the special nature of the estate where, historically, smallholdings had outbuildings located to the side of the dwellings. Originally each had a piggery and a small green house, other outbuildings or large glasshouses.
- 1.25 While there is no intention to challenge the validity of the neighbourhood plan or its aims, there appears to have been some misinterpretation or misrepresentation of its policies. It is clear that development is achievable within the plan area without compromising these historic buildings and their ancillary smallholdings.
- 1.26 The neighbourhood plan area (figure 4) covers a large area to the south of Great Abington and incorporates the entire estate, including small areas to the

north of the railway line, the site and the neighbouring parcel of land to immediate east (Maple Drive development). Within this neighbourhood plan, all historic buildings within the estate which were developed with smallholdings and outbuildings attached have been identified (figure 5). Large areas of undeveloped agricultural land are also included in the neighbourhood plan area, including the site but outside of the zone within which the policy applies.

1.27 The aims and objectives of the neighbourhood plan are defined as follows:

- *'To keep the historic pattern of building on the land settlement, comprising a house with outbuildings (which may include a new dwelling as defined below) surrounded by open land separating each holding;*
- *To retain the existing single track roads with passing places, currently paid for and maintained through Abington Estate Management Limited (set up specifically to manage the roads);*
- *To meet the needs of a wide demographic mix on the Land Settlement by allowing for the building of smaller dwellings suitable to both young and elderly;*
- *To support the construction of smaller high quality dwellings as many original smaller houses have been extended;*
- *To ensure that new development responds positively to local character and history; and*
- *To retain the agricultural and paddock land outside the areas defined by the original houses and their outbuildings.'*

1.28 Specifically, policy GAL/1 applies to all development proposals affecting the original dwellings on the Land Settlement or, where these have been rebuilt, the newer properties on the site of the original dwelling.

1.29 While policy GAL/1 also seeks to retain the open character of the estate, this is intended to prevent *'extensions or rebuilds are allowed that overwhelm or dominate their setting'*.

1.30 It is evident that the policy relates to the preservation and development control of those areas denoted by the dashed purple line only (figure 5) and therefore not the wider landscape. While there is some subsequent and indirect justification to ensure that any change in the surrounding landscape does not undermine the contribution of these historic buildings to the character of the estate and local landscape, it is not within the scope of the neighbourhood plan or policy GAL/1.

1.31 Recent precedent can be found at the Maple Drive development which lies within the neighbourhood plan area but has been developed without undue harm to the adjoining historic building, its smallholding or outbuildings (Old Elm Bungalow).

1.32 For this reason, the site cannot be found to be in fundamental conflict with an *'adopted Development Plan policy or allocation'* and so should not be categorised as red in the HELAA assessment. It is acknowledged that any development proposals should seek to adequately mitigate any potential landscape or visual effects but, for the reasons explained above, the site is entirely favourable in this regard.

## Conclusion

1.33 The preliminary landscape and visual sensitivity study has concluded that the site has a very high capacity for residential development for the following reasons:

- The site has a strong association with the existing settlement of Great Abington and a weak association with the wider open landscape. Any development would be contiguous with the existing settlement edge and consistent with the wider of pattern of development and containment at Little Abington and Great Abington.
- The site is open, containing few landscape features which are limited to the site boundaries. Built development could be accommodated with very minimal impact on this existing vegetation.
- Any visual effects would be limited to the site and its immediate surroundings only with longer distance elevated views being constrained to private land.
- Any remnant negative effects could be further mitigated by a sensitive masterplan, architectural detailing and materials as well as supplementary structural vegetation on site.
- The site could be developed without impacting the former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington and is not in conflict with policy GAL/1.

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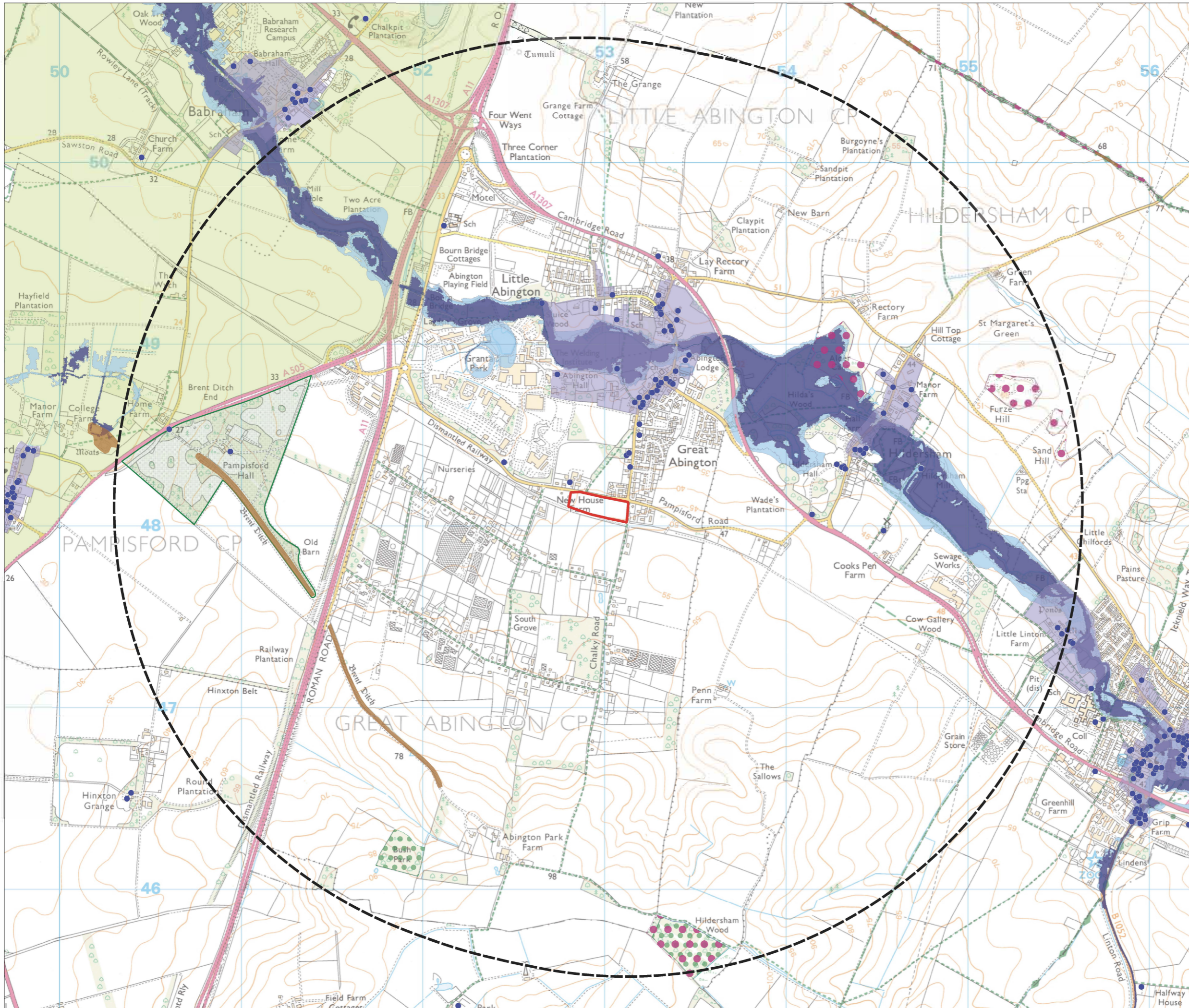
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- Site boundary
- 2.5km study area
- Listed buildings
- Conservation areas
- Scheduled monuments
- Registered parks and gardens
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
- Green belt
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3

Notes/Revision

Land South of Pampisford  
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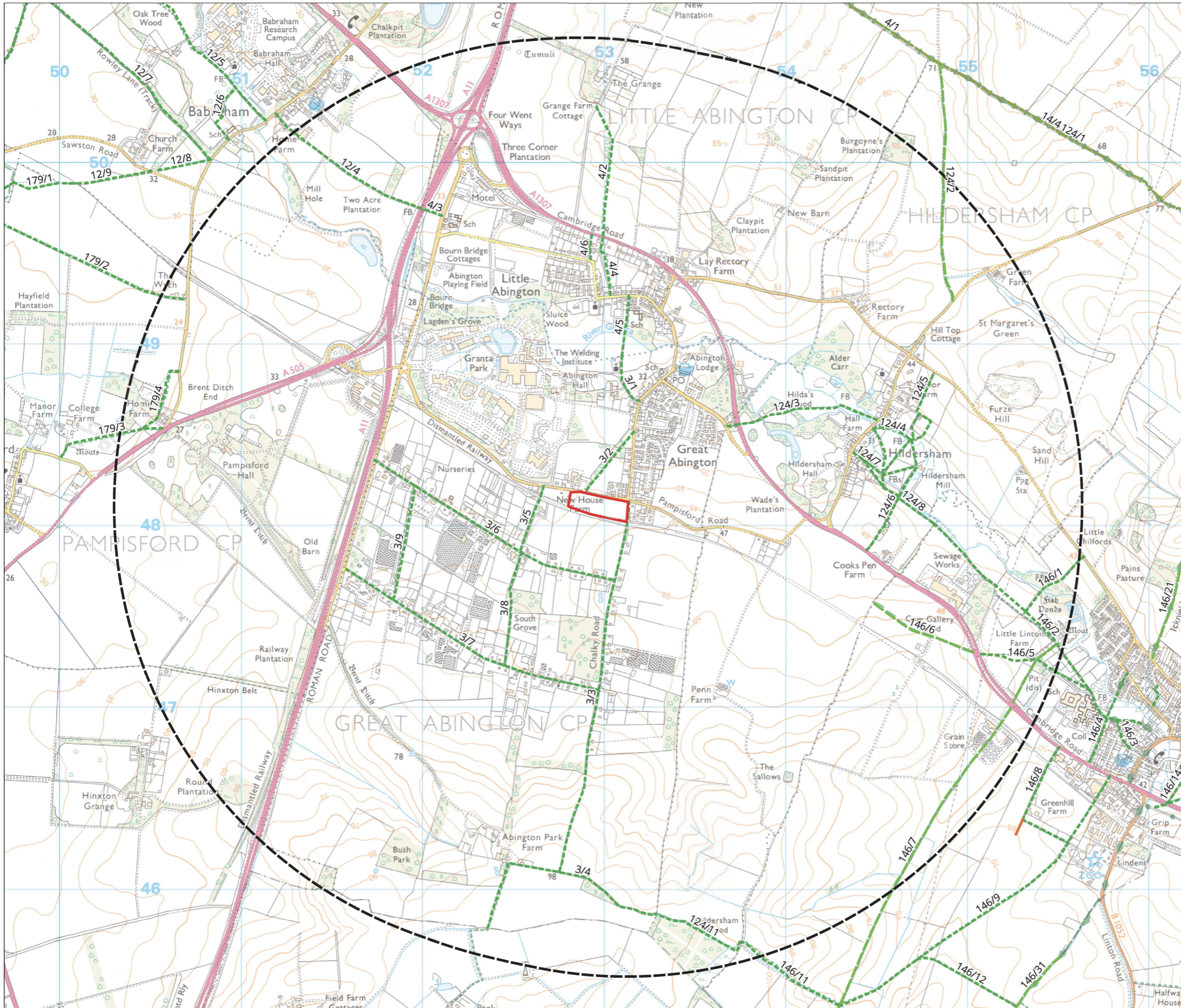
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Status:	Drawn by: JC	Checked by: TF
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Drawing number: <b>Figure 1</b>	Revision: -	

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- Site boundary
- 2.5km study area
- Bridleway
- Byway
- Footpath
- Restricted Byway

Notes/Revision

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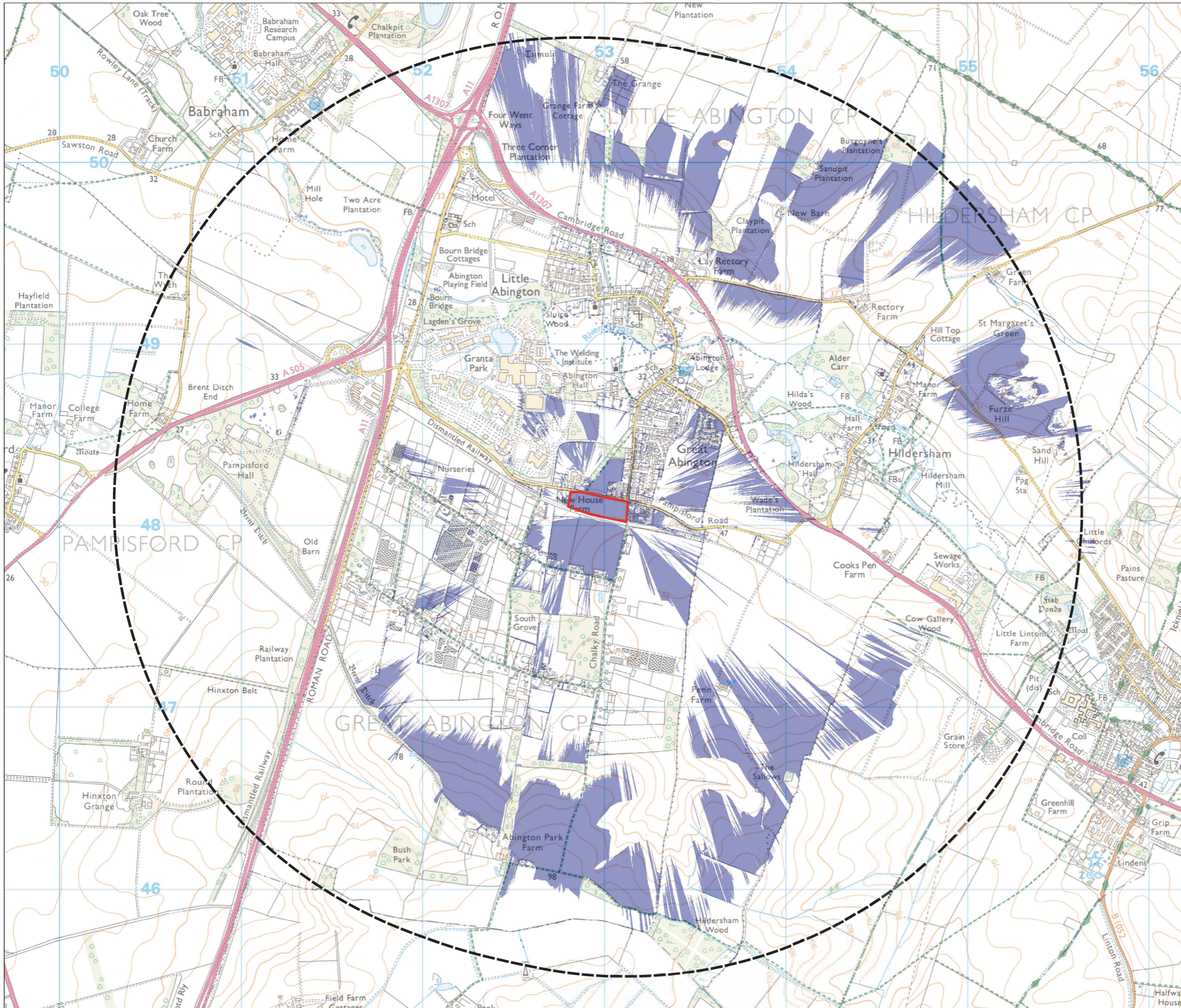
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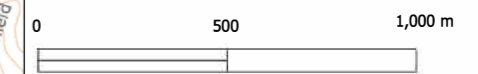


- Site boundary
- 2.5km study area
- ZTV

Notes/Revision

Land South of Pampisford

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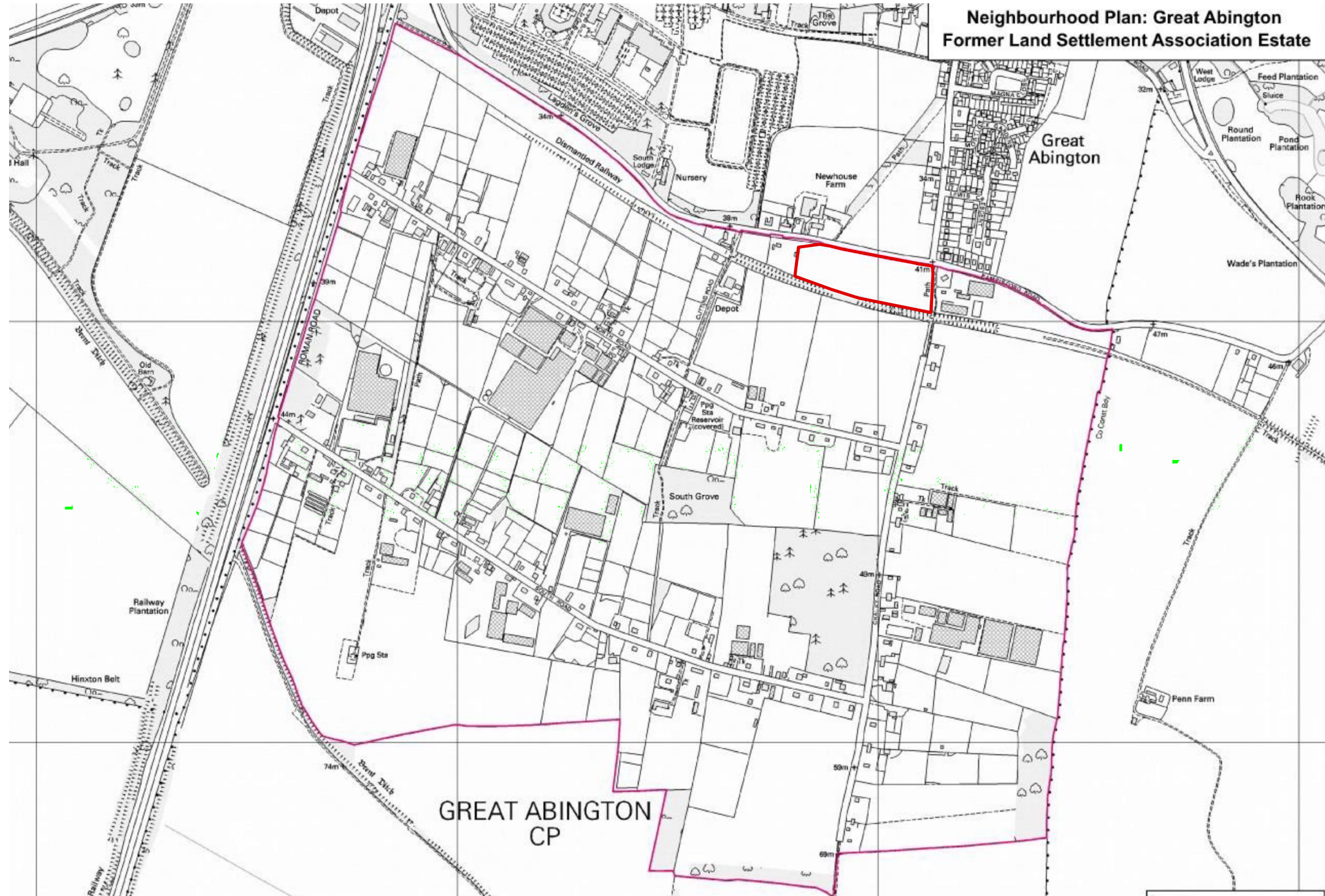
Zone of theoretical visibility

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Key

- Site Boundary
- Neighbourhood Plan Area

Notes/Revisions

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The Neighbourhood Plan Area

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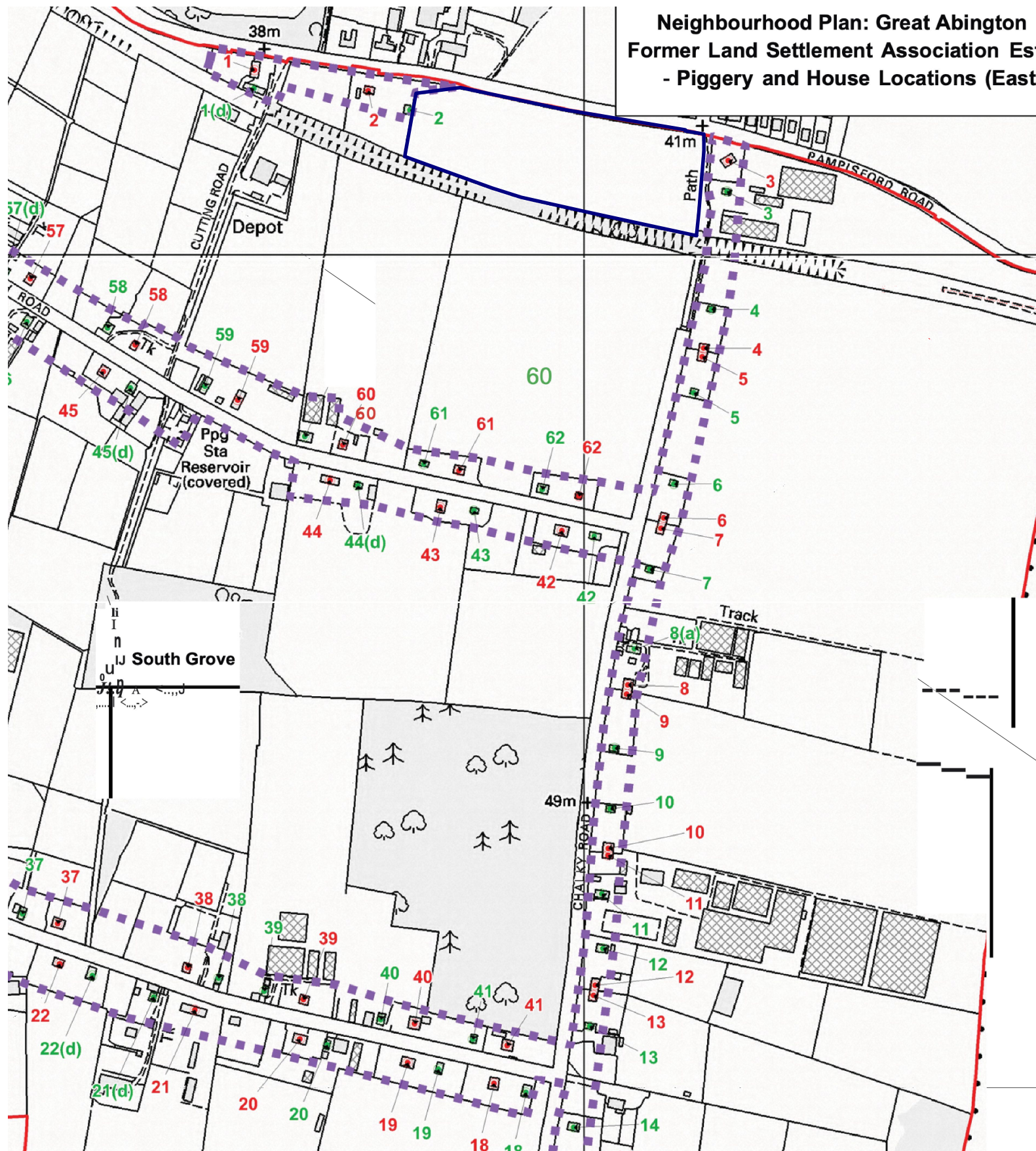
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Extract from the Neighbourhood Plan for the former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington 2018 to 2031



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**Neighbourhood Plan: Great Abington  
Former Land Settlement Association Estate  
- Piggery and House Locations (East)**

**Key**

- Site Boundary
- Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Build Line Boundary

Notes/Revisions

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**Piggeries and house locations**

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