

Stonebond.

Design and Access Statement
**Land off Hatfield Road and South of Jove Gardens,
Smallford, St Albans**



On Behalf of Stonebond Properties (St Albans) Limited

Stonebond.

Residential Developer



Architects


BIDWELLS

Planning Consultant



Highways and Transport Consultant


DAVID JARVIS ASSOCIATES

Landscape Architects



Ecology and BNG Consultant

structa

Civil Engineer



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Sustainability Consultants

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Document	Design and Access Statement
Project Address	Land off Hatfield Road and South of Jove Gardens Smallford, St Albans
Project Number	2776
Revision	C
Prepared by	JG

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document has been prepared to accompany the detailed planning application to the local planning authority, St Albans City and District Council.
- 1.2 This document will detail the proposed development for 52 new homes by Stonebond Properties, and provide an analysis of the site context, accessibility features, opportunities and influences, and provides details of the schemes design and design development, and final proposal.
- 1.3 The scheme has been developed through a pre-application and public consultations with designs prepared for highways and drainage including a detailed Site Layout. The proposal will be presented with this Design and Access Statement (DAS) and accompanied by a full detailed planning application pack.
- 1.4 The Land off Hatfield Road and South of Jove Gardens, Smallford, St Albans, edged in red on the adjoining image, being referred to as "The Site" constitutes a deliverable development that is sustainable, of high quality design and should be considered for future development.
- 1.5 The site is located adjacent to homes in Smallford to the North and West, the Notcutts Gardens Centre to the East and Hatfield Road to the South. The location of the site is very sustainable with great connections into St Albans and Hatfield both within 2km of The Site.
- 1.6 The existing site is owned by the Garden Centre, and is a mixture of a disused former nursery and plant wholesale land, a camping retail outlet, a telecommunications mast and unmanaged trees and green land.
- 1.7 This plan has been informed by a robust team of specialists as illustrated on the preceding page.



Satellite Image of Site

Key

 Site Location

2.0 Stonebond

- 2.1 Stonebond is a privately owned SME residential developer based locally with offices in St Albans city centre and is focused on the delivery of high quality, mixed-tenure developments across Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and the South-East.
- 2.2 Stonebond has developed an enviable reputation for quality with a string of successful small scale local housing developments, pictured below. Stonebond works in partnership with Landowners, Local Authorities, Registered Providers and Homes England on a wide range of housing projects, whilst also delivering private sale housing schemes.
- 2.3 The business was established over 40 years ago and is privately funded by the Cherry family, who were the founders of Countryside Properties.
- 2.4 Stonebond has a commitment to delivering these quality housing schemes with a focus on placemaking and designing premium homes. Their experienced and knowledgeable team pay attention to detail throughout every stage of a development from inception to handover to their customers

2.5 Example Developments



Radio Place
Oaklands Lane, Smallford, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 0HS

- Completed in 2023
- 27 new homes (24 private sale and 3 affordable)
- A mix of 3, 4 and 5 bedroom detached and semi-detached homes ranging from 800 to 1,900 square feet
- Traditional detailing with various external façade enhancements



The Crescent
Newgatestreet Road, Goffs oak, Hertfordshire, EN7 5RJ

- completed in 2023
- 28 new homes (15 private sale and 23 affordable)
- A mix of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments and 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses ranging from 500 to 2,000 square feet
- Contemporary elevational detailing of traditional house styles

Stonebond.

2.0 Stonebond

2.6 Example developments



The Appleyard
Greenfield Road, Flitton, Bedfordshire, MK45 5DR

- Under construction and due to complete in 2025
- 34 new homes (24 private sale and 12 affordable)
- A mix of 1 and 2 bedroom maisonettes and 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses ranging from 500 to 2,100 square feet
- Contemporary rural detailing to elevations of traditional house styles for an edge of village location



Saxon Meadow
Storford Road, Standon, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG11 1LX

- Completed in 2022
- 23 new homes (14 private sale and 9 affordable)
- A mix of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments and 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses ranging from 570 to 1,600 square feet
- Contemporary rural detailing to elevations of bespoke housing types



Meadow Gardens
Hunsdon road, Widford, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 8SE

- Completed in 2021
- 8 new homes (11 private sale and 7 affordable)
- A mix of 1 bedroom maisonettes and 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom houses ranging from 500 to 1,900 square feet
- Traditional, rural elevation detailing of bespoke house styles

3.0 Site Context

3.1 Wider Context

- 3.1.1 Smallford lies in the county of Hertfordshire with Hatfield to the East and St Albans to the West.
- 3.1.2 Smallford is within the boundary of St Albans City and District Council authority.
- 3.1.3 There is easy access to the A1(m) within a 5 minute drive, the M25 within an 8 minute drive, and the M1 in 13 minutes.
- 3.1.4 Hatfield Road, provides vehicle, and bus routes into Hatfield and St Albans. The Alban Way cycle path (3 minute cycle distance from The Site) provides a cycle route between St Albans and Hatfield.
- 3.1.5 To the south of Smallford lies other villages Sleapshyde, Colney Heath and Roestock which also lie between Hatfield and St Albans.

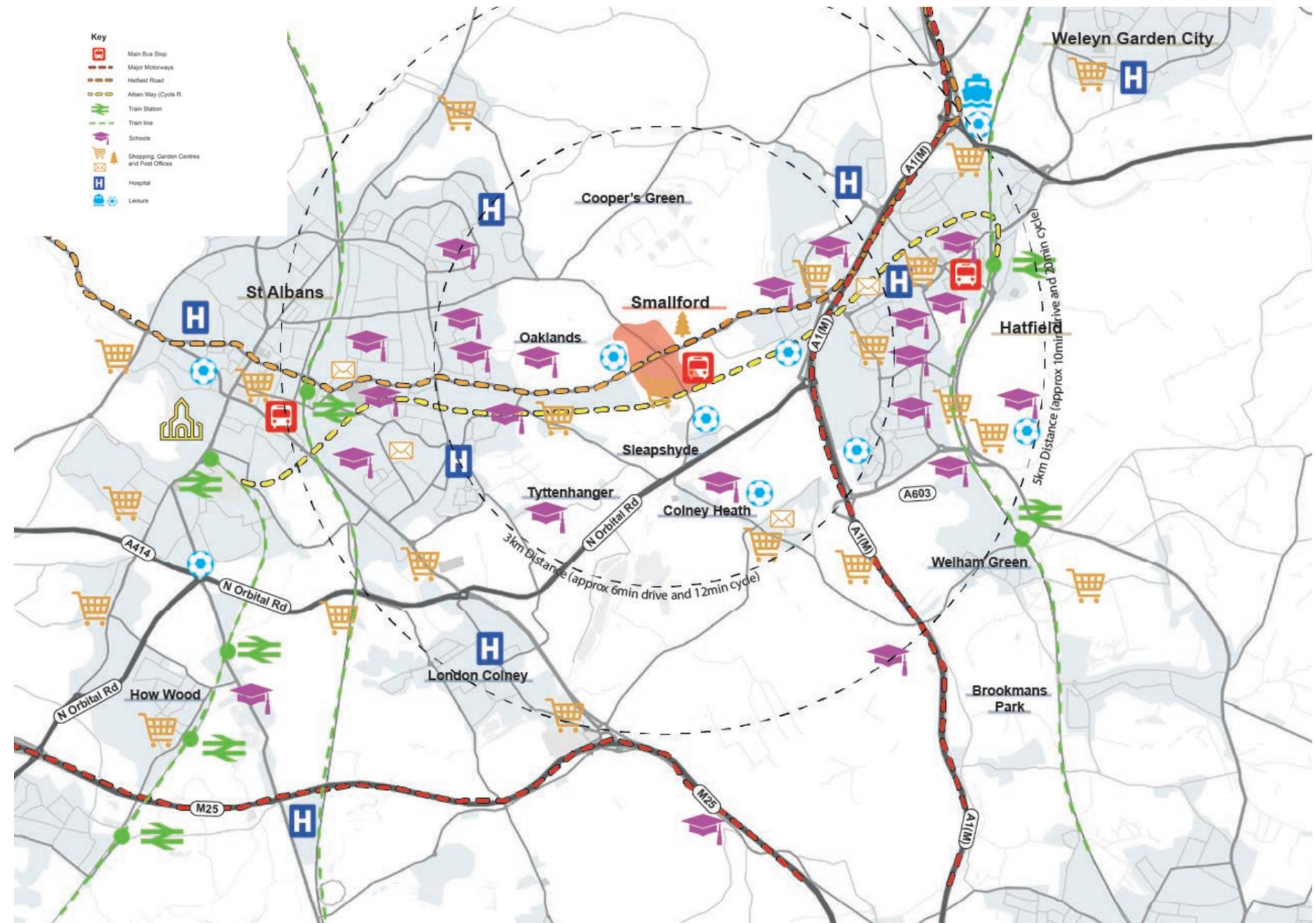


Wider Context Map

3.0 Site Context

3.2 Travel Context

- 3.2.1 The site is located at Land off Hatfield Road and to the south of Jove Gardens, Smallford, St Albans, AL4 0HN. It is located to the west of Notcutts Garden Centre, north of the A1057 Hatfield Road between St Albans and Hatfield. The travel context map shows amenities and travel connections.
- 3.2.2 The nearest bus stops to the site are located directly to the south on the A1057 Hatfield Road. Bus services run frequently directly outside of the site to St Albans, Hatfield, Hemel Hempstead, Welwyn Garden City, Borehamwood, Stevenage, Radlett, Watford and New Greens. On average there are eight to nine bus services an hour (every 7-8 minutes on average) in each direction on weekdays. To key local destinations such as St Albans and Welwyn Garden City (via Hatfield) there are eight services an hour on a weekday in each direction.
- 3.2.3 St Albans City and Hatfield railway stations are located circa 2.7 miles west and 2.9 miles east of the site respectively. Although not within reasonable walking distance, these railway stations can be suitably accessed by cycle and by bus with an approximately 15-minute frequency.
- 3.2.4 Bus services 301, 302 and 602, provide a combined high 10-minute frequency to St Albans City railway station, whilst bus service 602 provides a 30-minute frequency to Hatfield railway station.
- 3.2.5 St Albans City railway station provides direct Thameslink services to London St Pancras, Brighton (via Gatwick Airport), Luton and Bedford. Hatfield railway station provides services to London King's Cross, Welwyn Garden City, Letchworth Garden City and Cambridge. The journey times to the London railway stations is 20-35 minutes.

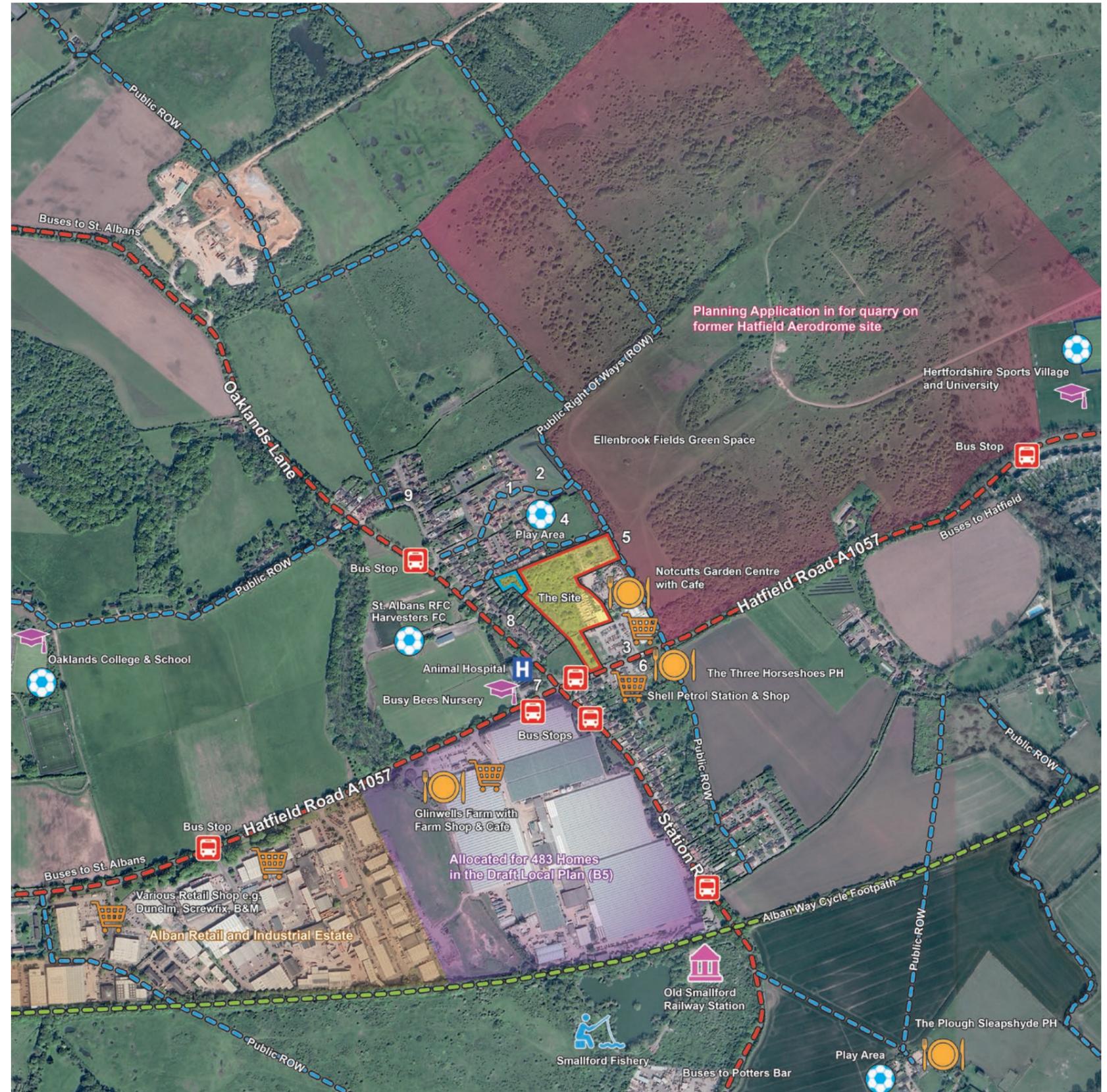


Travel Context Map

3.0 Site Context

3.3 Local Context

- 3.3.1 The travel distance and time to walk and cycle from the site to key local facilities is listed in Markides Associates Transport Statement in Table 3.1. The main walking and cycling routes are the A1057 Hatfield Road and the traffic-free Alban Way.
- 3.3.2 This demonstrates the site already has good accessibility to a variety of everyday necessities, reducing future residents' reliance on private vehicles and encouraging active travel. However, consideration should also be given to the allocations for development at Glinwells and Oakland College, which will further increase the availability of social infrastructure near the site, including the provision of a secondary school.
- 3.3.3 There are a number of local amenities within the built-up area surrounding The Site. This includes a garden centre, veterinary hospital, nursery, farm shops, a Shell petrol station and various play areas. The local amenities along with local walk/cycle infrastructure are shown on the amenities Local Context Map.
- 3.3.4 Also illustrated on the plan is some planning context. The Glinwells site is allocated in the draft local plan for 483 homes. The Alban Retail and Industrial Estate is designated for retail and business use. There is also a planning application on the former Hatfield Aerodrome site for a quarry, which was refused but currently in for an appeal.



Local Context Map

3.0 Site Context

3.4 Photographs



3.0 Site Context

3.5 The Site

- 3.5.1 The site is bounded to the north by the recent Jove Gardens Housing development, to the west by a number of detached dwellings on Oaklands Lane, to the south by Hatfield road, and to the east by Notcutts Garden Centre and a publicly accessible green space.
- 3.5.2 Photographs 1 - 3 the existing 4 mature ash trees on the sites entrance.
- 3.5.3 The site is occupied by areas of the Garden Centre, and is a mixture is disused garden centre, a camping retail outlet, a radio mast and unmanaged trees and green land.
- 3.5.4 Photograph 4 shows a view from inside the existing camping shop.
- 3.5.5 A belt of trees adjoins the northern boundary which can be seen in photograph 6.



The Site Photograph Key

3.0 Site Context

3.6 Photographs



4.0 Opportunities and Influences



4.1 Trees

Existing trees and hedgerows run along the Western, Northern and Eastern boundary. There are 4 high quality trees close to Hatfield Road and there are existing hedges along the western boundary. This scheme has been designed with the input from an arboriculturist who has prepared a Tree Survey Plan and undertaken an Arboricultural Impact Assessment.



4.2 Existing Footpaths

A public right of way runs South-North adjacent to the far eastern boundary and provides access to a large public open green space, new residential housing scheme north of our site, known as Jove Gardens and Radio Place.

4.0 Opportunities and Influences



4.3 Infrastructure Easement

There is a LHP gas main pipe running North-South adjacent to our far Eastern Boundary. This infrastructure has a 24m Easement and a 100m Easement in which we cannot propose new houses.



4.4 Ground Levels

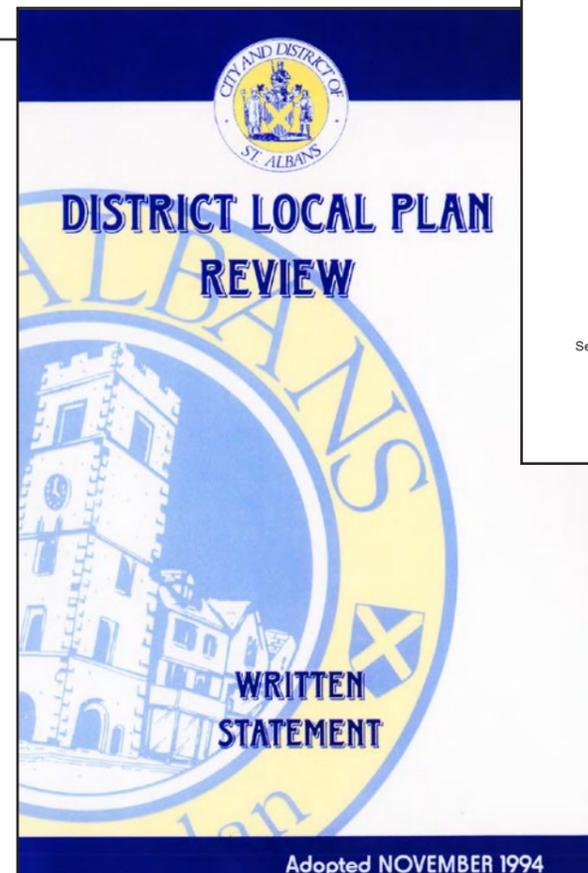
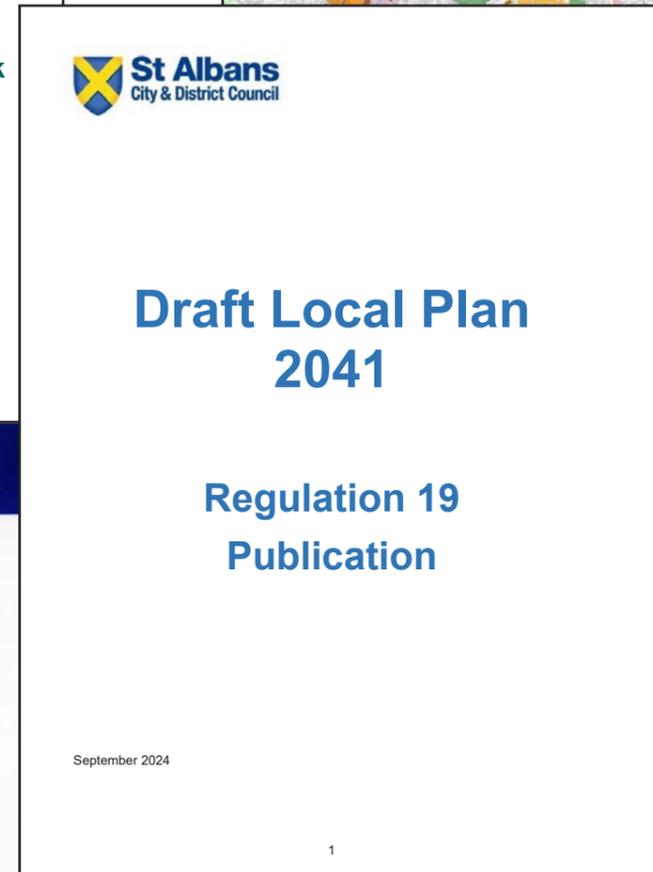
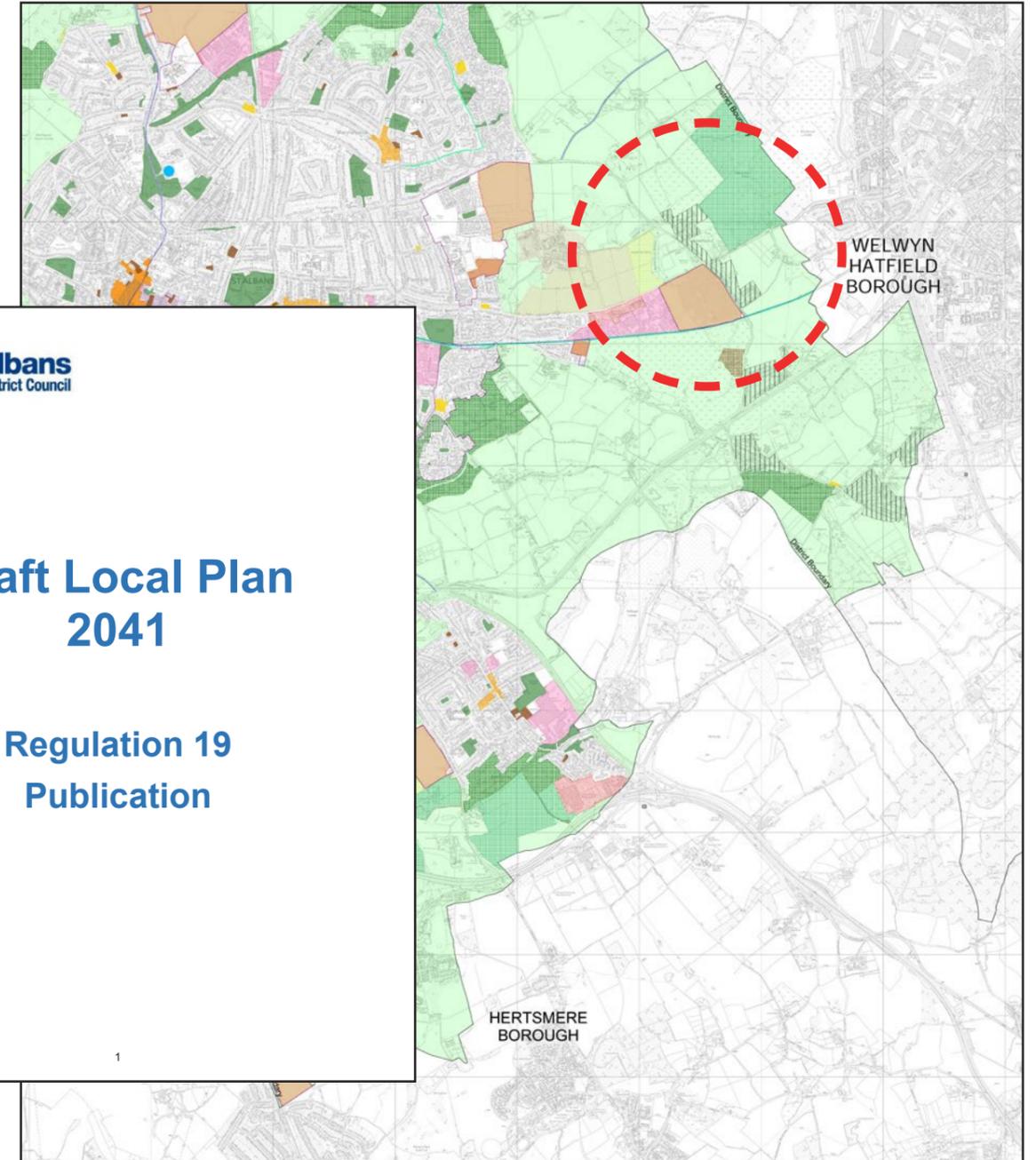
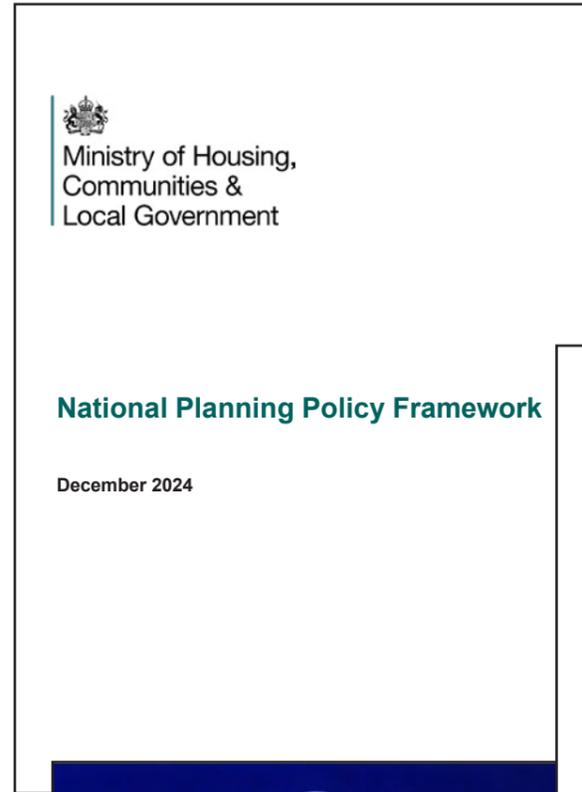
A full topographic survey has been completed. The Site is relatively flat there is a slight grade of less than 1m across the entire site.

The drainage engineers Structa have considered levels in the proposed drainage scheme.

4.0 Opportunities and Influences

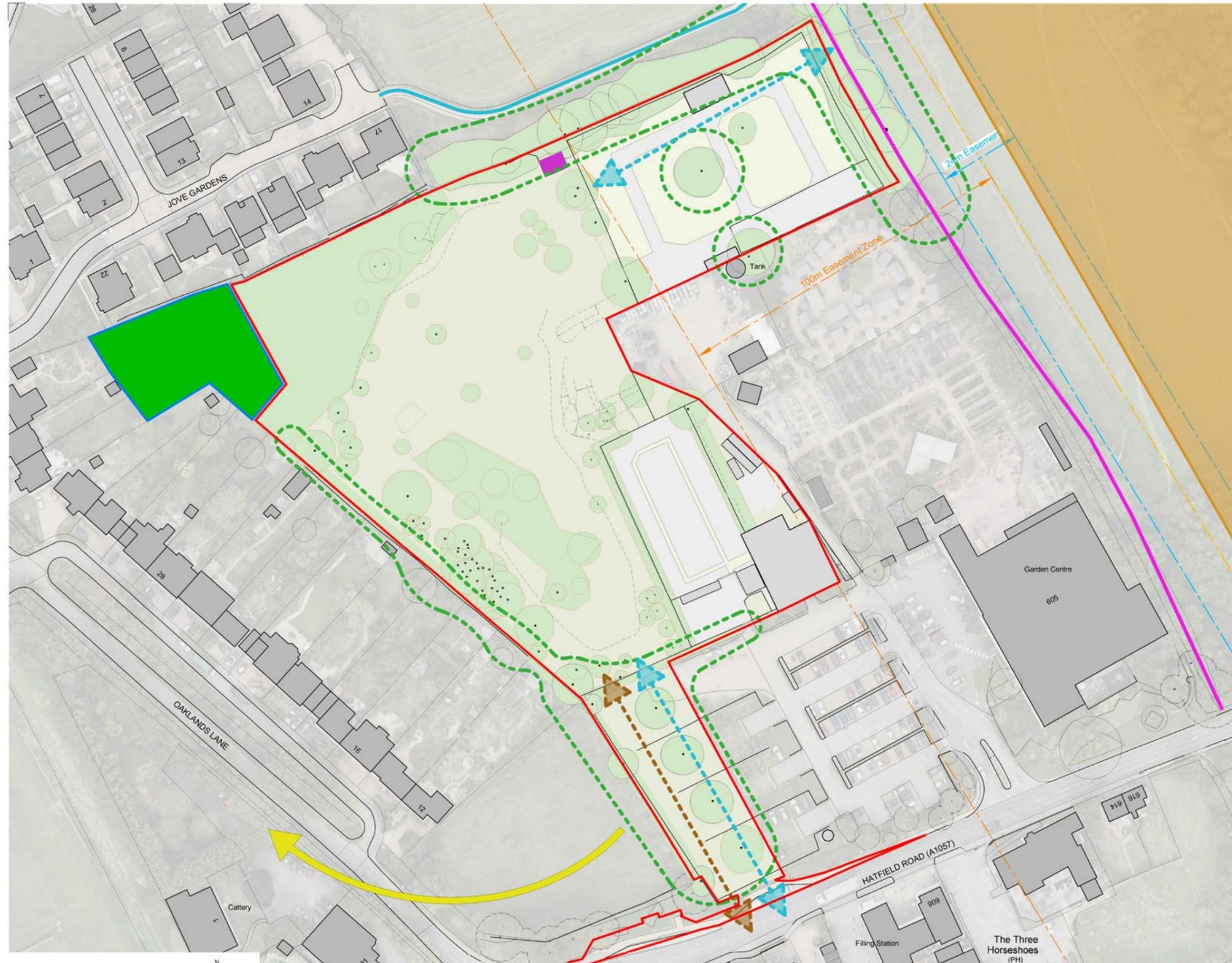
4.5 Planning Influences

- 4.5.1 St Albans current adopted local plan dates from 1994, they have an emerging Local Plan which has been reference in the pre-application advice. as a principle we have adhered to guidance set out in St Albans Draft Local Plan dated September 2024 as this document was referenced in our pre-application response.
- 4.5.2 The Site is within the village of Smallford. The site lies outside the village boundary as does the garden centre. Smallford sits in the Green belt and is designated in the Draft Local Plan as a green belt settlement.
- 4.5.3 Due to the substantial housing shortage central government released the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Within this document is a classification for Grey Belt sites. Our site is being put forward through this mechanism. Bidwells' planning statement illustrates compliance with grey belt policy in the NPPF.
- 4.5.4 There are 2 Grade II listed buildings in Smallford. One being the Three Horseshoes Public House and the second being a mile marker 700m East of the Three Horseshoes on Hatfield Road.
- 4.5.5 The emerging Local plan including policies such as; minimum back garden sizes and areas, requirements for minimum densities, requirements for M4(3) and M4(2) accessible homes, minimum parking standards and requirements.

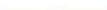


4.0 Opportunities and Influences

4.6 Opportunities and Influences Plan



Legend

- Red Line 
- Blue Line 
- Communication Tower Site 
- LHP Gas Mains Line
 - 24m Easement 
 - 100m Easement 
- Existing Woodland to be retained 
- Existing Trees
 - To Be Retained 
 - To Be Removed 
- Good Quality Feature Trees and Hedges Being Retained 
- Public Right of Way 
- Existing Pedestrian Connections 
- Public Green Space 
- Potential Pedestrian Connection 
- Sun Path 

5.0 Scheme Development

5.1 Initial Sketch Layout - July 2024

- 5.1.1 Early sketches for a site layout were produced in July 2024.
- 5.1.2 This scheme provided 50 homes, including 30 private homes and 20 affordable homes with a mixture of 1-2 bedroom flats and 2-4 bedroom houses, ranging in size from 512 sq.ft to 1,760 sq.ft
- 5.1.3 Like all schemes, the development was proposed in the central area of the site. A public open space was provided in the north east corner, echoing the green spaces on Radio Place and Jove Gardens, this area is also within the utility infrastructure easement, prohibiting new houses in this area. The north-west corner remains undeveloped to retain an area of ecology-rich woodland. The southern access area includes only a road and landscape, where there is insufficient space for houses.
- 5.1.4 The principles were well designed on this layout, although it did not account for suds drainage solution or include good design coordination with specialists.



Sketch layout - July 2024

5.0 Scheme Development

5.2 Revised Layout and Pre-application - March 2025

- 5.2.1 Boast Architects was instructed as architects in January 2025 to work towards a detailed planning application for Stonebond. We redesigned the layout with preliminary design from a civil engineer.
- 5.2.2 This scheme provided 50 homes including 25 private homes and 25 affordable homes with a mixture of 1-2 bedroom flats and 2-5 bedroom houses, ranging in size from 512 sq.ft to 1,886 sq.ft
- 5.2.3 We followed similar principles of the previous scheme, including constraints such as the easement line to the East and the Woodland to the North- West.
- 5.2.4 The main entrance road feeds off Hatfield road to the south, runs through the site servicing houses, passes the retained woodland in the North West corner and leads onto the public open space servicing further development. A mews style cul-de-sac area was designed in the South-East corner servicing smaller units, whilst the main access road gave deeper front gardens.
- 5.2.5 This scheme was then submitted for pre-application. Below is a summary of the comments made by St Albans planning department.
 - The three green spaces (Public open space, woodland and entrance) are disconnected from each other. Also they are not useful for residents because two are being used for drainage.
 - Our attention was drawn to the amenity standards in the Adopted and emerging Local plan for minimum garden areas and distance, which differ between the two local plans.
 - The Emerging Local Plan includes a requirement for densities of 40 dwelling per Hectare or over for all new housing schemes. It was suggested that we utilise smaller units to increase our density.
 - The cul-de-sac area appeared car dominated and required improvement from a place-making aspect.



Proposed Layout - March 2025

5.0 Scheme Development

5.3 Sketch Iterations - July 2025

5.3.1 Boast Architects and Stonebond are design focused and were committed to addressing all the comments raised in the pre-application process. Boast architects prepared some sketch design and took part in a design workshop with Stonebond to improve the schemes design.

5.3.2 Our goals for this process were:

- Improve the density of the scheme through measures such as; reviewing house types used, removing the telecommunications mast to increase our developable area, reviewing the layout to increase efficiencies.
- Providing a green infrastructure along the access road to provide a green link between the 3 main green areas,
- Review back garden sizes and areas to insure compliance with the new emerging Local Plan.
- Improve the Cul-de-sac area, by removing much of the parking from in front of houses

5.3.3 As part of the process we reviewed many principles on the scheme testing if variations in the layout created better feel or density on the scheme.



5.0 Scheme Development

5.4 Detailed Layout - October 2025

- 5.4.1 We continued developing the site layout with input from the entire consultant team including landscape architects, arborist, civil and highway engineers, and ecologists.
- 5.4.2 The scheme now incorporates a tree lined verge along the main access road, providing a green link between the large green areas of the site.
- 5.4.3 There are 4 existing B category ash trees at the site entrance, following a design workshop between ourselves, the civil engineer, the arborist and the landscape architect we are now retaining 3 of them by re-designing our drainage strategy.
- 5.4.4 The cul-de-sac mews area has been redesigned, moving parking areas to the side of and behind units to create a better, less car dominant feel.
- 5.4.5 This scheme provided 52 homes including 26 private homes and 26 affordable homes with a mixture of 2 bedroom flats and 1-4 bedroom houses, ranging in size from 512 sq.ft to 1,512 sq.ft



Proposed Layout - October 2025

5.0 Scheme Development

5.5 Public Consultation

- 5.5.1 On 13 November 2025, Stonebond hosted a public consultation event for the local residents at Colney Heath Football Club for which Stonebond are sponsors.
- 5.5.2 Stonebond with Boast Architects, Bidwells planning consultants, Markides Associates Transport Consultants and The Community Communications Partnership, presented the scheme to local residents, answered any questions and listened to any concerns.
- 5.5.3 A summary of the feedback received and the Applicant's response is provided in the separate Statement of Community Involvement.
- 5.5.4 At the public consultation, residents along Oaklands Lane raised concerns of visual impact and existing trees/ hedges. Following this we prioritised retaining existing hedgerows along the West boundary shared with Oaklands Lane residents.



Land off Hatfield Road, Smallford, St Albans
Public Engagement Event

Introduction

Good evening, and thank you for attending.

We believe this site presents an exciting opportunity to create a high-quality residential development on this under utilized parcel of land. We welcome the chance to collaborate with the residents of Smallford with our primary objective to deliver a bespoke welcoming development that is recognised as an asset to the village.

Your input is valued! This evening's event provides background on the site's history, local context, key constraints, design principles, opportunities, and potential benefits.

We invite you to explore the information, ask questions, share your thoughts, and comment on our emerging ideas to help shape a development that truly meets the needs of the community.

LAND OFF HATFIELD ROAD, SMALLFORD - PRESENT DAY

Stonebond

Land off Hatfield Road, Smallford, St Albans
Public Engagement Event

Architecture

Inspired by the traditional character of St Albans, where Arts and Crafts is a key feature. The homes reflect this vernacular through considered proportions, detailing, and materials.

A palette of red and brown facing brick is complemented by contrasting brick details and window surrounds. Feature materials, including light render, red tile hanging, and black timber cladding, add variety while maintaining a consistent character.

Windows are designed to echo the Arts and Crafts style, coloured for a modern appearance. Red or dark grey roof tiles are chosen to complement the materials and form of each home.

PRELIMINARY ELEVATION DESIGNS

Stonebond

Land off Hatfield Road, Smallford, St Albans
Public Engagement Event

The Housing Crisis

The UK faces a serious housing crisis characterised by a shortage of affordable homes, rising rents, and increasing homelessness. This crisis is impacting a significant portion of the population, leading to overcrowding, increased stress, and difficulty affording basic needs.

How Can New Housing Developments Help?

- Addressing the Root Cause**

Homelessness is often linked to lack of housing. Particularly affordable and social housing. This can significantly reduce reliance on temporary accommodation by increasing the overall housing supply and addressing the underlying demand for stable, suitable homes
- Improving Lives & Employment**

New housing is a foundation for improving peoples lives. New housing initiatives can help people access employment, education and healthcare
- Increasing Housing Supply**

More homes on the market can help balance supply and demand, reduce competition and, in turn, lower prices. New housing can provide opportunities for existing residents of the settlement to upsize or downsize, and thus remain in the village when their needs change

Stonebond

5.0 Scheme Development

5.6 Elevation Development

- 5.6.1 Following the public consultation Boast Architects and Stonebond developed the elevation of the scheme:
- 5.6.2 We reviewed the format of windows and roof details including pitch and eaves detail.
- 5.6.3 During the process we considered the materials and details from the local context whilst aiming to deliver a contemporary scheme.

