



APPENDIX 4 Radley South Appraisal and Design Concept Built Form Resource

**VALE OF WHITE HORSE LOCAL PLAN 2031 PART 1.
STRATEGIC SITES AND POLICIES
PUBLICATION VERSION November 2014**

Response by Arnold White Estates Ltd

Site at Gooseacre Farm, Thrupp Lane, Radley

Appraisal and Design Concept



December 2014

Revision B



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Figure 1.1 View into the site from the existing access point, which would be the principal access for potential development.
The existing boundary (top) is well vegetated providing a solid buffer for new development. Existing outer boundaries can be reinforced to provide visual screening.

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Proposed site boundary



Figure 1.2 The situation of the site in relation to surrounding settlements

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This report sets out an appraisal and concept for possible future development of a site at Gooseacre Farm, Thrupp Lane, Radley, in Oxfordshire. The report has been prepared by Built Form Resource Ltd. on behalf of Arnold White Estates Ltd.

1.1.2 The aim of the report is to contribute relevant information for consideration in the preparation of the Vale of White Horse Development Plan.

1.2 The contents of the document

1.2.1 This document has three main parts: this introduction, an appraisal of the site to understand its development potential and a concept design to illustrate that potential.

1.2.2 The appraisal will examine the following aspects of the site, the settlement and the area of which they are a part:

- Geographic and landscape context
- The context of Radley
- Access
- Town form, townscape and heritage
- Site features and biodiversity.

1.2.3

The section setting out the concept design will seek to show how the concept responds to the specific points raised in the appraisal.

1.3 Background information

1.3.1 A number of documents have been consulted as part of this appraisal. These include the following.

- Vale of White Horse District Council Green Belt Review
- Vale of White Horse District Council Local Development Scheme, 2014-2017
- Environment Agency data on Flood Alert Zones
- English Heritage data on Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
- Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record
- Natural England National Character Areas
- Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study
- Radley Parish Council Website.

1.4 Site location

1.4.1 The site lies within the Civil Parish of Radley off Thrupp Lane, on the southern boundary of the built up area of the village. The grid reference of the centre of the site is SU 52219 98508.

1.4.2 The site is part of Gooseacre Farm and is bounded on the west by Thrupp Lane with fields and properties beyond (Conchiglia and Rettford); to the north by development on Drysdale Close, the Playing Field and Village Hall and development on Gooseacre (cul-de-sac). To the east and south the site is bounded by the other fields of Gooseacre Farm and a small copse, not in the farm holding, intervening on the eastern boundary to the north.

1.5 Basic site information

1.5.1 The area of the site is 8.93 hectares, divided into three parcels separated by fences/hedgerows. The largest of the three parcels is 6.26 hectares of arable, occupying the majority of the site to the east and south. The other two parcels include 1.63 hectares of amenity grassland used as playing fields in the north-western corner and 1.04 hectares of paddock along the western boundary.

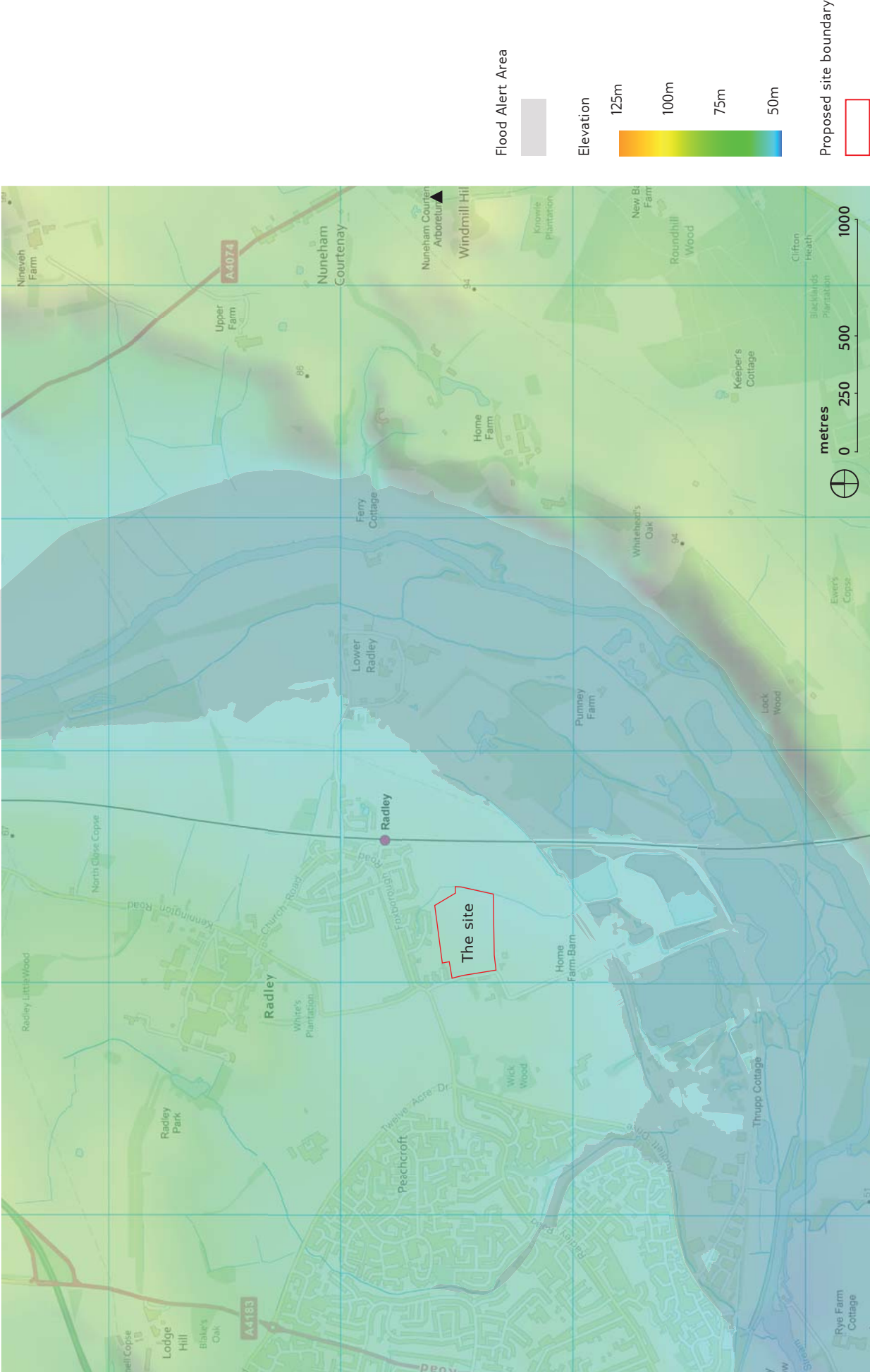


Figure 2.1 The site situated within its topographic context including the Environment Agency Flood Alert Area

2 Appraisal

2.1 Geographic and landscape context		
2.1.1	Geographically, the village of Radley lies east of Abingdon on a shallow south facing slope of the River Thames basin, which rises up to Boar's Hill six kilometres to the north-north-west. To the south-east, across the basin is a curving scarp slope cut by the river in a meander around a ridge occupied by the Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay down to Culham. The underlying geology of Gault and Kimmeridge Clay is overlain in places by terraces of river deposits. Evidence of this is found in the gravel works just to the south of the village.	
2.1.2	The site is outside of the Flood Alert Area (Flood Zones 2 and 3) and so not liable to flood. The drainage runs across the site to the south-east from the high point at the north-western corner. The low point lies at the south-eastern corner.	
Designations		
2.1.3	As indicated on the Vale of White Horse Proposals Map, the site is currently in the Green Belt but is identified in the Green Belt Study as Area 14, a site that is proposed to come out of the Green Belt. The attendant text states, <i>Area 14 is an open landscape. Particular care needs to be taken to enclose the area in substantial tree belt and woodland planting to ensure that any new</i>	
2.1.4	The site also lies within the North Vale Corallian Ridge (NVCR), subject to Policy NE7, which seeks to protect the prevailing character and appearance of the area. The site is, however, in a location within the NVCR area which has a lower sensitivity due to the fringe influence of Abingdon and Oxford.	<i>built form does not have an adverse impact on the open character of the adjacent Green Belt.</i>
2.1.5	The site lies within the Upper Thames Clay Vales National Character Area, just near the boundary with the Midvale Ridge. The surroundings of the site fit the general picture painted by the following Key Characteristics: low-lying clay-based flood plains including alluvium and gravel terraces, low woodland cover with the Vale of White Horse made distinct by large arable fields; gravel extraction has left a legacy of geological exposures and numerous water bodies.	
2.1.6	The most relevant Environmental Opportunity is, <i>Realise sustainable development that contributes positively to sense of place and built heritage. Ensure adequate greenspace in association with all development and most importantly in growing settlements.</i>	
2.1.7	The site is situated in the Terrace Farmlands character area as identified in the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS). The Key Characteristics are: • <i>Broad, flat or low lying gravel terraces</i> • <i>A large scale, regularly-shaped field pattern of predominantly arable land</i> • <i>Localised tree-lined ditches</i> • <i>Nucleated villages.</i>	Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study character areas
2.1.8	The Key Characteristics regarding biodiversity are: • <i>Low to low-medium bioscores/biobands.</i> • <i>A limited range of priority habitats including species-rich hedgerows and ditches and an area of neutral grassland.</i>	
2.1.9	With specific regard to Radley, the most relevant points raised in the assessment are that: • The field pattern is practically nonexistent but where it does occur it is characterised by fragmented hawthorn hedges although roadside hedges are generally intact. • Oak and ash hedgerow trees are also confined to roadside hedges.	

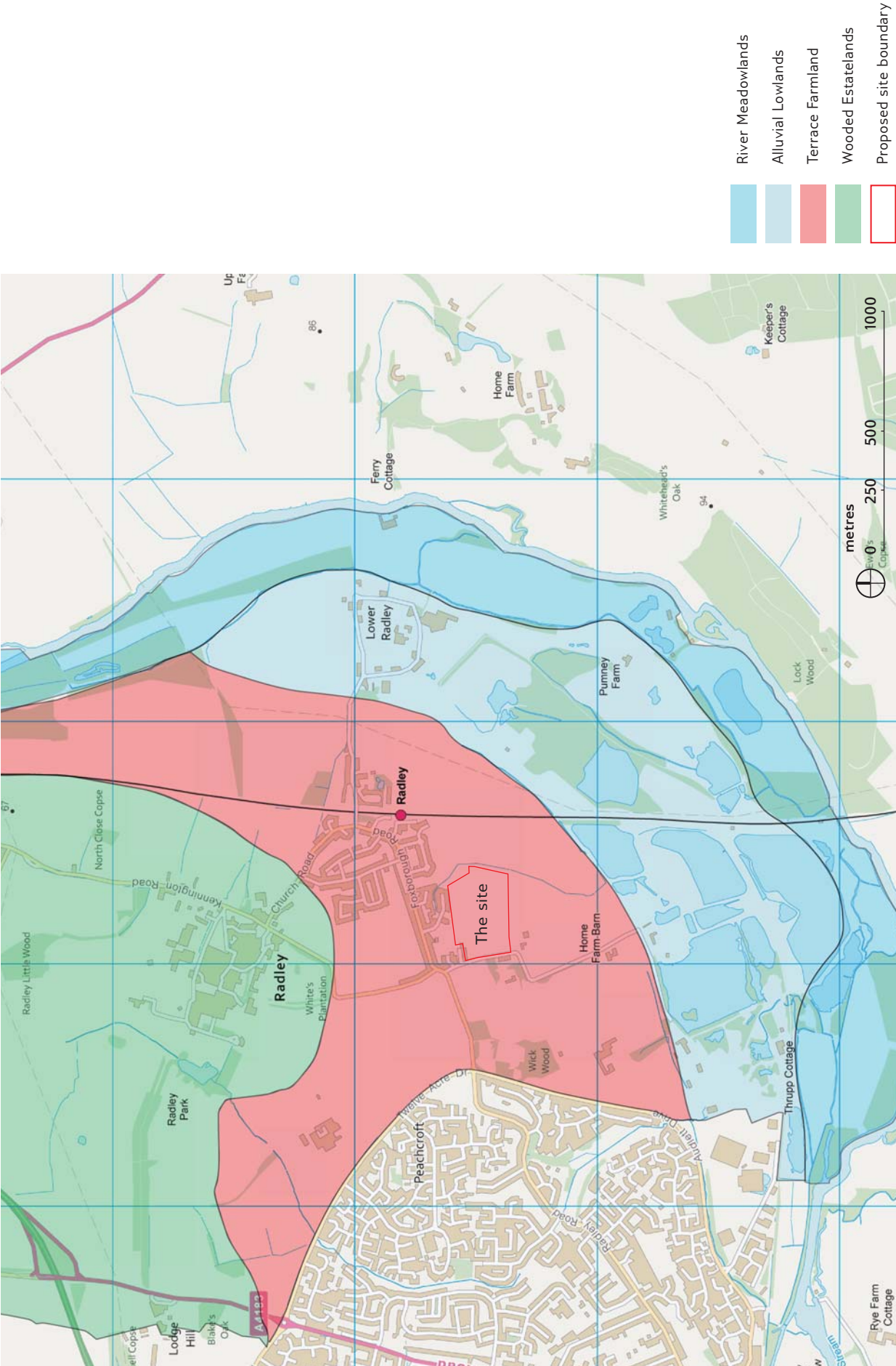


Figure 2.2 The site in relation to Landscape Character Areas for Radley Parish identified in the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study

Evaluation and strategy		Visibility	Green Belt
2.1.10	The general landscape strategy for the area is: • <i>Strengthen and enhance the pattern of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree-lined watercourses</i> • <i>Ensure that all surviving priority habitats are safeguarded.</i> Contribution of the site to character Due to its proximity to the edge of the village, the site has been transformed to include 'urban fringe' features such as the playing fields and paddock. There is also a more general fringe influence from the proximity to Abingdon.	2.1.14 The position of the site on a south facing slope oriented away from the principal adjacent settlements of Radley and Abingdon, combined with surface features such as buildings and vegetation, means visibility of the site from those locations is limited. By the same token, the orientation facing the scarp face across the river means the site is visible from Nuneham House and its Park and Gardens at a distance of about two kilometres. Any proposed development will need to take into account that visibility. Capacity for change With respect to the potential effects of development of the site on landscape character, the foregoing indicates the results would conform with draft Core Policy 44. The site has a relatively low sensitivity and a high capacity for change. In summary, that capacity is rooted in the position of the site adjacent to existing development, its relatively low visibility, the urban fringe influences in the area and the potential for retaining and enhancing the key features of the site that contribute to character. The capacity for change can be enhanced by the reinforcing and enhancing the existing boundaries, in particular the eastern boundary along the watercourse.	2.1.16 As noted in the Local Plan 2031 consultation draft at 5.42, the site, with others, falls 'within land that has been identified through the local Green Belt Review to no longer meet the purposes of the Green Belt. For this reason, the development of these sites will not harm the purposes of the Green Belt....' 2.2 The context of Radley Radley is a small, mainly commuter village with a range of actively used facilities. While that range is limited, principally due to the proximity of Abingdon and Oxford, it gives the village a vibrant core of activity. 2.2.1 Within the village there are three main 'poles' or clusters of activities that define and serve the village. • The Church of St James and the College • The Village Shop/Station/Bowyer Arms • The Village Hall and playing fields. 2.2.2 These three clusters are located along the main route through the village - Church Road/Foxborough Road - which is a loop off of the through route between Abingdon and Oxford.
2.1.11	The boundaries of the parcels making up the site are mostly simple fencing with only weak and extremely gappy hedgerows. The principal exception is the northern boundary with the village, which has a number of substantial hedgerow trees. The arable field to the east does have wide field margins. Other than the field of arable, the site makes only a minor positive contribution to the character of the area. There is, however, significant opportunity to enhance the site and achieve the aims of the landscape strategy of strengthening the pattern of hedgerows.	2.1.15 With respect to the potential effects of development of the site on landscape character, the foregoing indicates the results would conform with draft Core Policy 44. The site has a relatively low sensitivity and a high capacity for change. In summary, that capacity is rooted in the position of the site adjacent to existing development, its relatively low visibility, the urban fringe influences in the area and the potential for retaining and enhancing the key features of the site that contribute to character. The capacity for change can be enhanced by the reinforcing and enhancing the existing boundaries, in particular the eastern boundary along the watercourse.	
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Figure 2.3 The site within the village showing potential access points and pedestrian links

Services and facilities

2.2.4 The services and facilities within the three clusters include:

- St James Church
- Radley Primary School
- Radley College
- The Village Shop
- The Railway Station
- The Bowyer Arms pub
- The Village Hall
- The playing fields and sports pavilion
- Children's play area.

2.2.5 Looking at the wider surrounding area, Abingdon and Oxford offer an extensive range of opportunities for employment, education, community services, recreation, shopping and entertainment.

2.3 Access

Pedestrian access and footpaths

2.3.1 The location of the site south of Gooseacre and the playing fields offers the opportunity of establishing a pedestrian link direct from the site to the Village Hall cluster of facilities and out to Foxborough Road.

2.3.2 There is an additional opportunity to make use of land within the control of the promoters to establish a second pedestrian link to the Station/ Pub/Shop area via Bowyer Close.

2.3.3 These would put the Village Hall, children's play area, playing fields and sports pavilion as well as bus stops less than five minutes walk from the site. The pub, railway station and Village Shop would be within a ten minute walk. Bus stops are also less than a five minute walk along Thrupp Lane.

Public transport

2.3.4 There is very good access in Radley to public transport by bus to Oxford and Abingdon and by train to London and Oxford, with direct connections via Oxford on lines to Hereford, Birmingham and the North West.

2.3.5 The number 35 Bus between Abingdon and Oxford runs every fifteen minutes and trains to Oxford and London run hourly.

Cycling

2.3.6 Given the relatively flat topography, cycling is a viable option for short and medium distance travel to Abingdon and Oxford. Sustrans Route 5, connecting Reading and Holyhead via Birmingham

and Chester, runs through the village along Church Road/Foxborough Road and Thrupp Lane past the site.

The road network

2.3.7 The centre of Abingdon is a little over three kilometres by road from Radley and Carfax in the centre of Oxford is about seven and a half kilometres.

2.3.8 Access to the wider network is via the A34, south through Abingdon or north around Oxford, or via the M40 around Oxford.

Site access

2.3.9 Direct vehicular access to the site is via Thrupp Lane about 180 metres from the junction with Foxborough Road/Kennington Road. A secondary access point further south along Thrupp Lane is also possible.

2.3.10 In summary, the site is highly accessible and is well situated to take advantage of potential pedestrian links providing access to services and helping to integrate development into the village. Inclusion of the site for development would therefore help to meet Strategic Objective 8 and Core Policies 33 and 34 of the draft Local Plan, which aim to promote sustainable modes of travel.

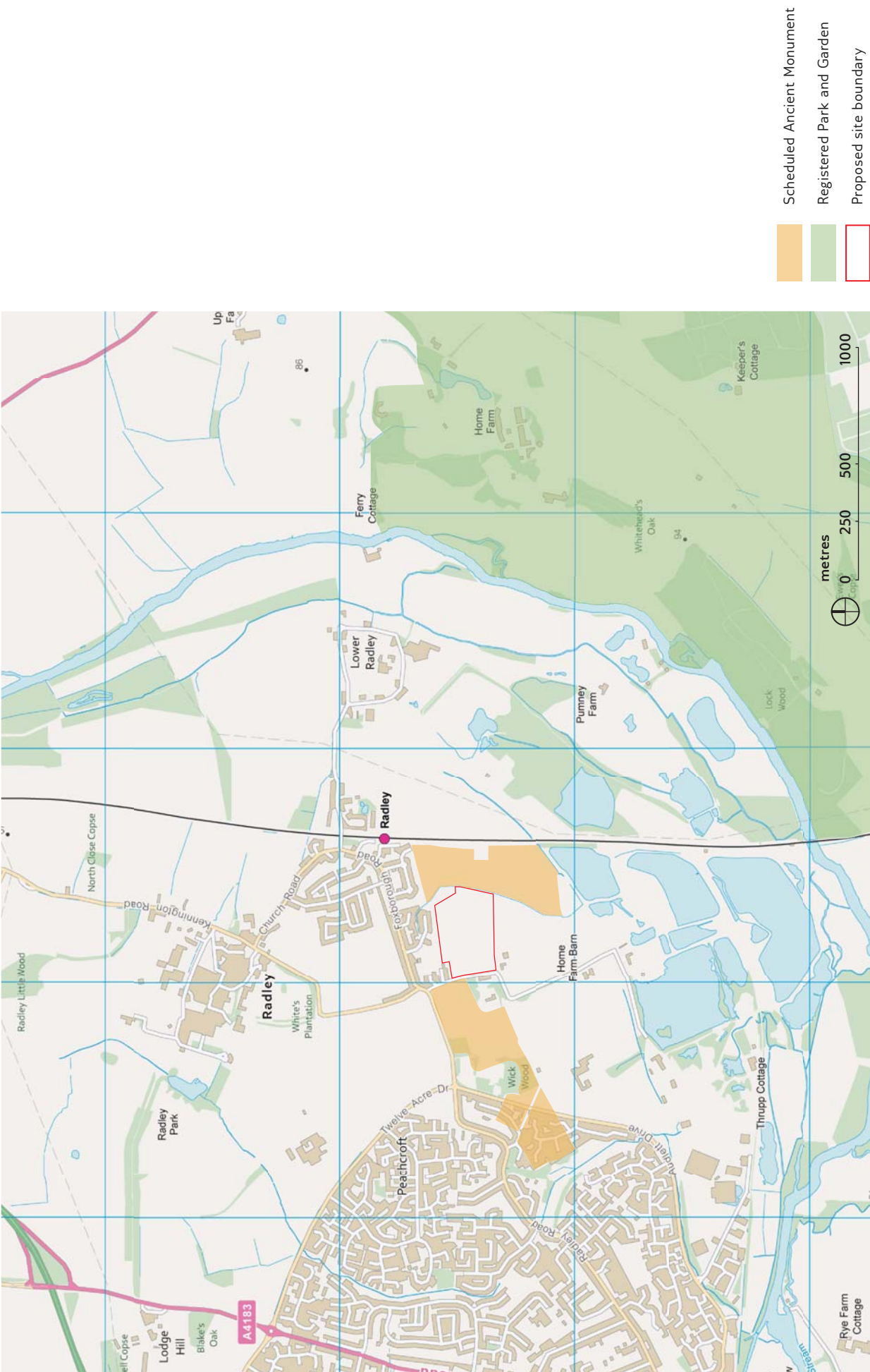


Figure 2.4 The site in relation to the nearest heritage assets

2.4 Town form, townscape and heritage

2.4.1 The village of Radley is made up predominantly of suburban, semi-detached houses, mostly from the inter-war and post-war periods. The areas around St James Church and the College along with Lower Radley form the older historical cores of the village. As already noted, the village is formed along a loop of the main Abingdon to Oxford Road, with Lower Radley forming a further loop over the rail line.

2.4.2 The main structure of the village can thus be summarised as the loop, marked by the three centres, bounded by the rail line with the end-loop of Lower Radley extending to the east.

Heritage assets

2.4.3 There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) located to the east and west of the site. Both are entirely sub-surface archaeological remains of former settlements visible only as cropmarks. The SAM to the east is known as the Settlement East of Goose Acre Farm. The entry in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record states that it is a, *cropmarked complex of ditches and enclosures... probably Bronze Age like others in the vicinity. cursory trawl of arable produced no surface material. No features but flints recovered during*

watching brief. Romano-British pottery found in large quantities... a watching brief recovered Romano-British and post medieval pottery and ceramic building material along with prehistoric worked flints. A multi-phase series of ditches and pits, apparently part of Romano-British settlement was also encountered. Condition reported in 2009 as extensive significant problems i.e. under plough, collapse and the trend declining. Principal vulnerability is arable ploughing.

2.4.4 The asset to the west is the Settlement Sites N of Wick Hall and the description is similar to that for the site East of Goose Acre Farm.

2.4.5 The other principal asset in the area is the Grade I Registered Historic Park and Garden at Nuneham Courtenay. The park occupies the scarp slope across the river from the site so has some views toward it.

2.4.6 In line with draft Core Policy 39, development of the site would conserve these assets. The form of the village is not of historical significance but provides a clear structure to which new development can relate. The SAMS are principally of archaeological value, and their settings do not contribute to any important degree to their significance. Attention needs to be paid to views from the Nuneham Courtenay Park.

2.5 Site features and biodiversity

2.5.1 The site contains no significant unique features or valuable habitat. As noted, the principal features are the trees in the boundary to the north, the copse, outside the site to the north-east and a very few small to medium stature hedgerow trees within the site.

A sustainable location for growth

2.5.2 In summary, the site has been identified as one of a number recommended to be removed from the Green Belt. It is well located both within the village and in terms of access to employment and education via public transport. There is the potential to create footpath links that would provide very short walking distances to services and facilities within the village and at the same time integrate the development into the village. Development of the site would also present the opportunity to reinforce and enhance key features within the landscape, in particular hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The eastern edge of the site would make an ideal location to create a strong, vegetated boundary that would serve a number of functions. It would achieve the main strategy of the landscape character assessment, it would provide a screen for views from Nuneham Courtenay and enhance the biodiversity value of the site.



Figure 3.1 Concept plan illustrating the potential of the site for development that is integrated with the village and the wider landscape

3 Concept

3.1 Concept statement

- 3.1.1 The concept for the site has the following central aims.
- Take advantage of the close proximity of the site to the village and the potential to create footpath links with very short walking distances to the Village Hall/playing fields and Shop/Station/pub clusters
 - Work with the structure of the village by reinforcing the Village Hall area as a cluster of activities while at the same time enhancing the character along Thrupp Lane with planting.
 - Establish a strong planted edge along the eastern and southern boundaries to reinforce the overall character of the area and the value of the watercourse as a habitat, as well as creating a visual screen for views from the east and south-east
 - Reinforce the assets within the site and views out so that they contribute as much as possible to the quality of the environment and give the development a strong sense of local identity.

3.2 Specific measures

- 3.2.1 These aims would be achieved by the following means.
- ### Landscape, biodiversity and heritage
- Create a strong planted edge using native species characteristic of the area including trees and understorey along the eastern boundary/watercourse and the southern boundary
 - Reinforce and improve planting along Thrupp Lane
 - Retain, reinforce and enhance the existing hedgerow and trees along the northern boundary.

Access

- Seek to establish footpath links through the playing fields to Gooseacre and through Bowyer Close to Church Road/Foxborough Road
- Create a looped, permeable street layout.

Uses

- Up to 250 residential dwellings
- Public open space and play areas to meet current standards
- Parking and street space to meet current standards.

Layout and urban design

- Bring existing features forward into the layout and work with the topography to give a sense of continuity and identity
- Extend the existing structure of the village by creating a strong green route between the existing playing fields and a proposed green open area to the south.
- Create clearly defined street spaces with carriageway and footways to form an integrated and proportionate extension to the village.
- Place back or side boundaries of new plots along the boundaries of existing plots to maintain privacy and security.

3.2.2 In summary, these measures would result in a high quality design with a strong sense of local distinctiveness in line with draft Core Policy 37.

3.3 Conclusions

- 3.3.1 The 8.93 hectare site could accommodate up to 250 residential dwellings at a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (net) in accordance with Core Policy 20 of the current plan and 23 of the draft plan.
- 3.3.2 As demonstrated in the transportation report, the proposed development has full vehicular access to Thrupp Lane and provides significant improvements to cycle and pedestrian routes serving Radley as a whole.
- 3.3.3 The layout as illustrated on the previous page would provide sufficient parking and street space to meet current standards.
- 3.3.4 The area within the site currently used for playing fields would be relocated to the south of the site as shown on the plan on the previous page. The area of formal open space would be sufficient to meet current standards for the development.
- 3.3.5 The appraisal has shown that the site at Gooseacre Farm has significant potential to both take advantage of and contribute to Radley as a sustainable location for proportionate growth. By responding directly to the characteristics and features of the village and the site as identified in the appraisal, the principles set out above would ensure that development maintains and reinforces the valued assets of the village and its essential identity. Development of the site provides an opportunity to achieve sustainable development and improve the character of the area.