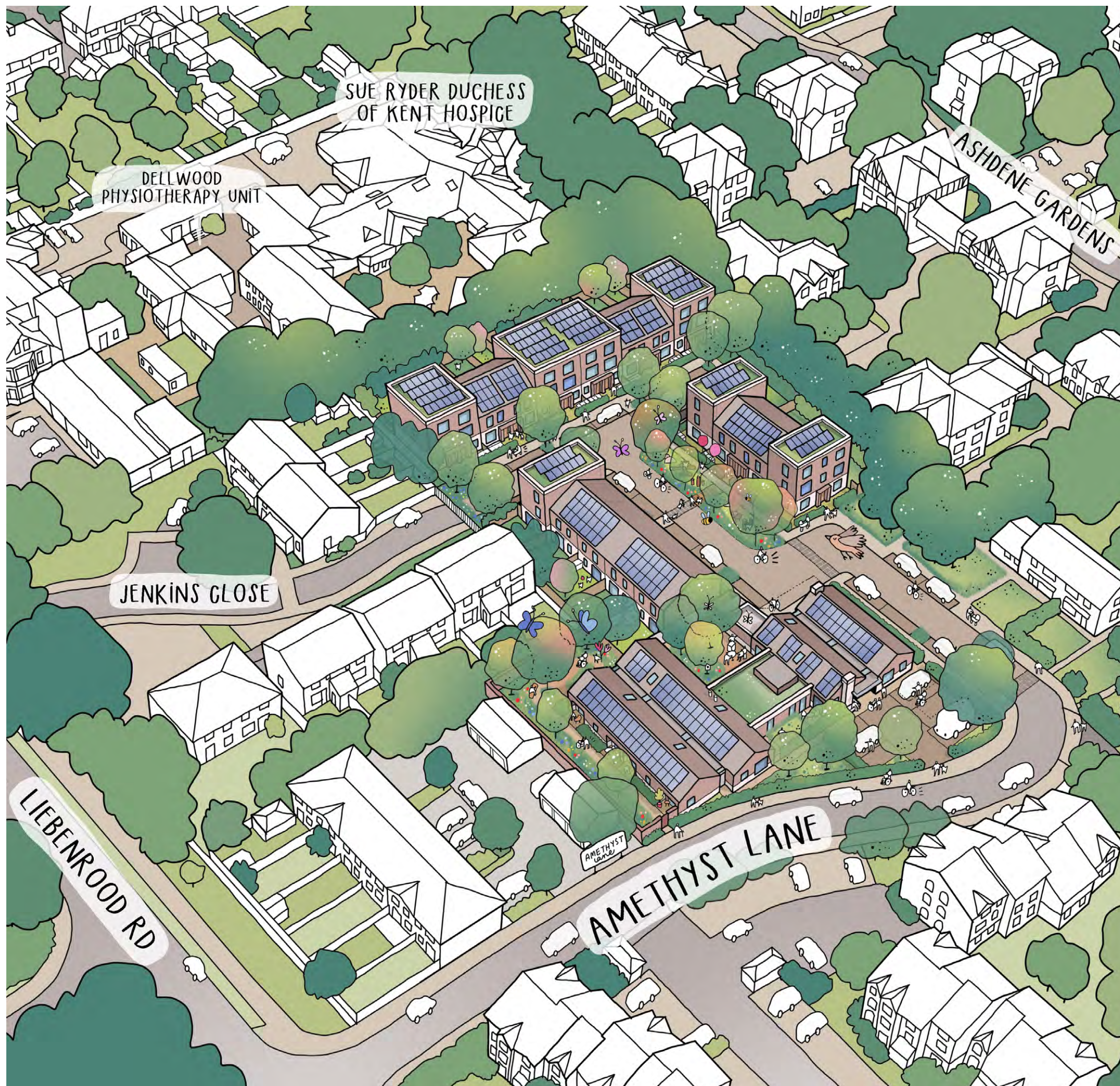




## Amethyst Lane, Reading Design & Access Statement

May 2023



Report presented by **HTA Design LLP**  
In association with **Reading Borough Council**

Status **FINAL**

Issue -

Issue Date **05.05.23**

File name **RBC-ALR-HTA-A\_RP010**

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Approved by **PCM**

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Contents

|            |                            |           |            |                                           |           |
|------------|----------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Introduction</b>        | <b>4</b>  | <b>5.0</b> | <b>Landscape</b>                          | <b>65</b> |
| 1.1        | Executive Summary          |           | 5.1        | Landscape Strategy                        |           |
| 1.2        | Introduction               |           | 5.2        | Tree Retention and Removal                |           |
| 1.3        | Brief                      |           | 5.3        | Proposed Trees                            |           |
|            |                            |           | 5.4        | Landscape Character                       |           |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>The Site</b>            | <b>8</b>  | 5.5        | Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain         |           |
| 2.1        | Reading Context            |           |            |                                           |           |
| 2.2        | Site Location              |           | <b>6.0</b> | <b>Sustainability</b>                     | <b>84</b> |
| 2.3        | Site Context               |           | 6.1        | Energy Strategy Summary                   |           |
| 2.4        | Existing Site Photographs  |           | 6.2        | Thermal Bridging                          |           |
| 2.5        | Site History               |           | 6.3        | Water Consumption                         |           |
| 2.6        | Site Analysis              |           | 6.4        | Energy Strategy Summary (4 Bed + Homes)   |           |
| 2.7        | Constraints Plan           |           | 6.5        | Energy Strategy Summary (1 & 3 Bed Homes) |           |
| 2.8        | Opportunities Plan         |           | 6.7        | Photovoltaics                             |           |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Design Development</b>  | <b>31</b> | <b>7.0</b> | <b>Site Strategies</b>                    | <b>89</b> |
| 3.1        | Pre-Application Feedback   |           | 7.1        | Emergency Access                          |           |
| 3.2        | Engagement                 |           | 7.2        | Refuse Access & Collection                |           |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>The Proposal</b>        | <b>35</b> | 7.3        | Car and Cycle Parking                     |           |
| 4.1        | Concept                    |           | 7.4        | Daylight/Sunlight Impact Studies          |           |
| 4.2        | Layout                     |           | 7.5        | Accessibility Statement                   |           |
| 4.3        | Townscape, Scale & Massing |           | 7.6        | Designing Out Crime                       |           |
| 4.4        | Use                        |           | 7.7        | Building Services & Maintenance           |           |
| 4.5        | Types of Affordable Homes  |           | 7.8        | Building for Life                         |           |
| 4.6        | Respite Care Facility      |           | <b>8.0</b> | <b>Conclusion</b>                         | <b>97</b> |
| 4.6        | Appearance                 |           |            |                                           |           |



# INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 Executive Summary

**HTA Design LLP have prepared this report in support of the full planning application for Amethyst Lane, on behalf of Reading Borough Council.**

The proposals comprise the residential redevelopment of a former Day Care centre, located to the west of Reading town centre. Allocated under 'Site Allocation WR3n Amethyst Lane' the scheme provides 21 affordable tenure homes and a 6 bedroom respite care facility on the 0.59 hectare site,

A mixture of family houses alongside a respite care facility caters to the range of housing and care needs within Reading, and seeks to embed a specialist care facility within a new residential environment. The houses and respite facility are designed to maximise the potential of the site, unlocking the site and integrating new homes into the existing street network..

Informed by Passivhaus design principles, the homes will be highly sustainable and target Net Zero Carbon in operation; with renewable energy sources, PVs, high fabric performance and low water consumption. Homes are designed to maximise daylight and sunlight throughout the year, while adopting measures for tackling overheating and reducing CO2 emissions.

Public green spaces, alongside private gardens maximise the potential for external amenity for residents. The design of the new street is landscape led, with integral green infrastructure of a planted swale and street trees providing opportunity for biodiverse habitat features and incidental play. With the addition of offsite tree planting proposals in the local area, the scheme will mitigate tree canopy loss and achieve a biodiversity net gain on site.

The local community has been engaged throughout the design process; the council have hosted consultation information online, posted newsletters and held a community exhibition and feedback session. Subsequent feedback received through the design development period has been integrated in the final proposals. Reading Design Review Panel has also been consulted in support of pre-planning dialogue with Reading Borough Council Planning Officers and council members.

Extensive engagement with the RBC Adult Care and Health team and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has informed the design development of the respite care facility, in order to ensure it will meet the needs of building users and management.

This report should be read in conjunction with the submission drawings and reports. Detailed topographic surveys, tree surveys, statutory searches, site investigations and additional desk top studies have also informed the proposed scheme at Amethyst Lane..

| The Proposals                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "Demolition and redevelopment of the Amethyst Lane to deliver a new respite care facility alongside 21 new homes, landscaping and ancillary works" |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Site Allocation                                                                                                                                    | WR3n Amethyst Lane                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Total Number of Homes                                                                                                                              | 21 homes + a 6 bedroom Respite Facility                                                                                                                                                    |
| Wheelchair Adaptable Homes                                                                                                                         | 6 bedroom wheelchair accessible Respite Care Facility                                                                                                                                      |
| Proposed Habitable Rooms                                                                                                                           | 96                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Site Area                                                                                                                                          | 0.59 ha                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Density Homes/Ha                                                                                                                                   | 35.7 Homes/Ha (not including respite care facility)                                                                                                                                        |
| Density Habitable Rooms/Ha                                                                                                                         | 163 Habitable Rooms/Ha (not including respite care facility)                                                                                                                               |
| Tenure                                                                                                                                             | 100% affordable (social rent)                                                                                                                                                              |
| Housing Mix                                                                                                                                        | 3 bed (x18); 4 Bed (x3) (not including respite care facility)                                                                                                                              |
| Building Heights                                                                                                                                   | 1, 2 and 3 storeys                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Respite Care Facility GIA                                                                                                                          | 526.4 sqm                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Respite Care Facility Amenity                                                                                                                      | 443.3 sqm                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Residents' Private Gardens (total)                                                                                                                 | 1367.7 sqm                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Public Amenity                                                                                                                                     | 213.4 sqm                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Biodiverse Green Roof                                                                                                                              | 521.4 sqm                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Car Parking Spaces                                                                                                                                 | 28 in total (21 on street for general needs housing, and 7 to service respite care facility)                                                                                               |
| Electric Vehicle Charging Points                                                                                                                   | 100% active charging spaces                                                                                                                                                                |
| Residential Cycle Parking Spaces                                                                                                                   | 42                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Respite Cycle Parking Spaces                                                                                                                       | 4                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Biodiversity Net Gain                                                                                                                              | +11.39% (including offsite measures)                                                                                                                                                       |
| Sustainability Targets                                                                                                                             | Net Zero Carbon in operation. To include;<br>Renewable Energy: Air Source Heat Pumps & Photovoltaics,<br>Air Permeability of 1m3/hm2 (@50 Pa)<br>Water Consumption <95l per person per day |

## 1.2 Project Description

Key objectives for the development were to meet and provide the following;

### Client Brief

- Target for up to 25 homes in total
- Housing mix to include predominantly 3 and 4 bedroom family homes, and bespoke respite care facility
- 100% affordable housing
- Minimum 5% Part M(4) Category 3 Wheelchair user dwellings per RBC policy
- Proposals to achieve high standards of sustainability, targeting Net Zero Carbon in operation

Adopt Passivhaus principles and a fabric first approach to minimise energy demand

- Explore opportunities for reducing potable water use
- Achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
- Integrated secure recycling / refuse stores
- Integrated secure bicycle storage
- Respite Care Facility to be designed as a single storey building
- Exemplar design quality for architecture, sustainability, landscape and public realm
- The involvement of local residents through community consultations

### Additional Target Standards

- Nationally Described Space Standards
- Minimum clear ceiling heights of 2.5m
- Building for a Healthy Life
- Secured by Design (Homes 2019) Standards
- HAPPI standards for apartment building
- Building with Nature
- Commit to RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge targets for energy efficiency, embodied carbon, water, daylight and thermal comfort



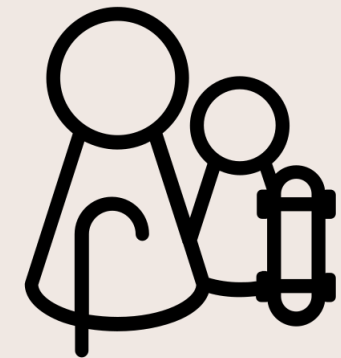
**Suburban  
21 New Homes  
36 dwellings/ha**

Housing



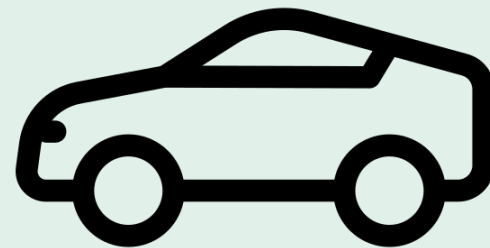
**100% Social Rent  
Council Housing**

Mix



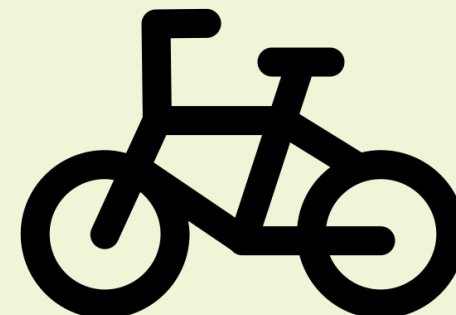
**Family Homes and Dedicated  
Respite Care Facility**

Type



**28 Car Parking Spaces  
(1.0 Ratio)**

Car Parking



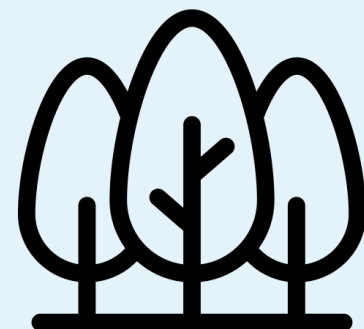
**42 Cycle Parking / Storage  
Spaces**

Cycle Parking



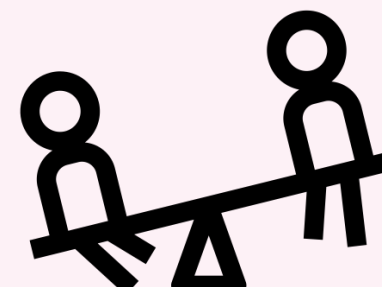
**50% Recycling  
Fortnightly Collection**

Refuse & Recycling



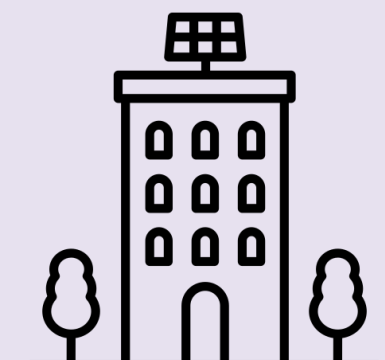
**Private & Communal Amenity  
Biodiversity Net Gain**

Landscape



**On-site play for new  
residents**

Play



**Net Zero Homes  
Water Efficiency  
19% Beyond Building Regs**

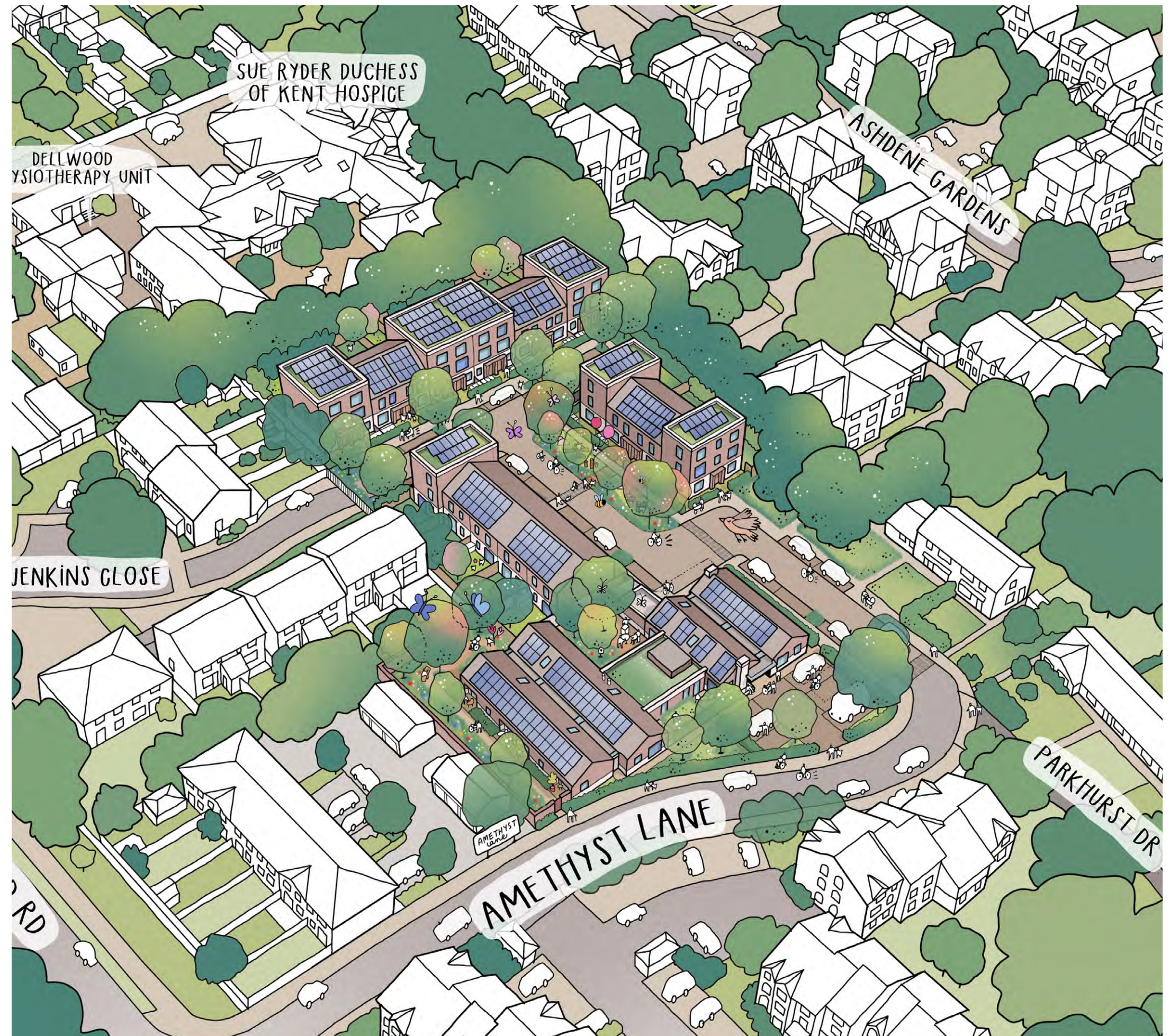
Sustainability

## 1.2 Project Description

- Follow RoSPA principles

### Overview of Proposals

- 21 affordable tenure homes designed to meet or exceed National Described Space Standards
- A bespoke respite care facility designed to provide wheelchair accessible bedrooms (x6), communal spaces and associated ancillary spaces.
- A range of individual family homes to meet housing needs, including 3 and 4 bedroom homes, with bed spaces for 5, 6 and 8 persons.
- Private amenity space for all homes provided as rear gardens for houses.
- Communal amenity space the respite facility designed as secure courtyard garden spaces.
- A planted swale, street tree planting and biodiverse planting as residential and public amenity, as well as achieving Biodiversity Net Gain (including offsite tree planting measures)
- Car parking for residents and visitors, and cycle storage for every home.
- High quality and robust materials with key details and simple brick detailing to ensure constructability.
- Storey heights and typologies design to align with local context; max. 3 storeys and a mixture of roof forms.



Aerial View Proposal Illustration



**THE SITE**

## 2

## 2.1 Reading Context

The Borough of Reading is faced with significant demand for genuinely affordable council housing. The Council is committed to delivering over 5,000 new homes in the period of 2016-2026. Approximately 500 dwellings per annum from 2016 to 2026, in accordance with the spatial strategy set out in the Core Strategy Document.

To help deliver on this commitment, the borough has taken the initiative to assess its own land assets to identify the opportunities to provide more housing with minimal disruption to existing residents.

Amethyst Lane has been identified within the Local Plan (Adopted 2019) as an Allocated Site within West Reading and Tilehurst area. The site is a council owned, suburban, brownfield site which the policy allocation identifies as having potential for residential development.



## 2

## 2.1 Site Location

The Site is in the west of the Borough in the Southcote ward, southwest of Reading Town Centre.

The site is located between Bath Road to the south and Tilehurst Road to the North. To the west is one of Reading's largest parks, Prospect Park.

The area is predominantly residential, with a number of local primary schools and community centres throughout.

There are shops and local facilities located on Bath Road.

The closest play space amenities for the local neighbourhood are the children's play area and green spaces within Prospect Park.



Site Location Plan - 1:10,000 @ A3

## 2.2 Site Context

Occupying a plot at the end of the cul-de-sac served by Amethyst Lane, the Site is not currently accessible. The previous Day Centre facility remains standing on the site, as a series of 1 storey courtyard style blocks, and 1 storey outbuildings.

To the east of the site is a relatively recent residential housing development at Ashdene Gardens, consisting of a number of 2-3 storey houses, and 3 storey flatted point blocks, clad in brick, with a series of steeply sloping hipped roofs and 'mock-tudor' detailing.

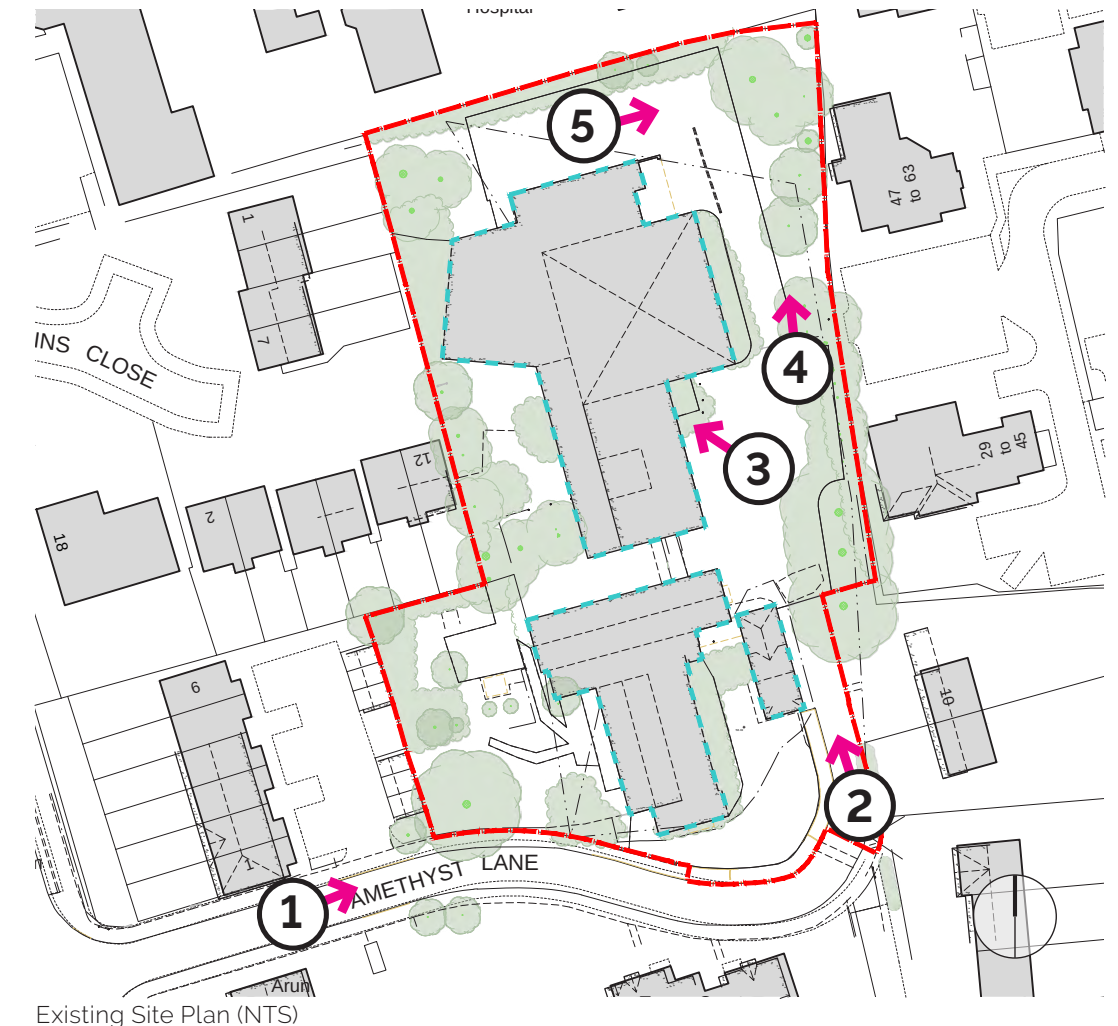
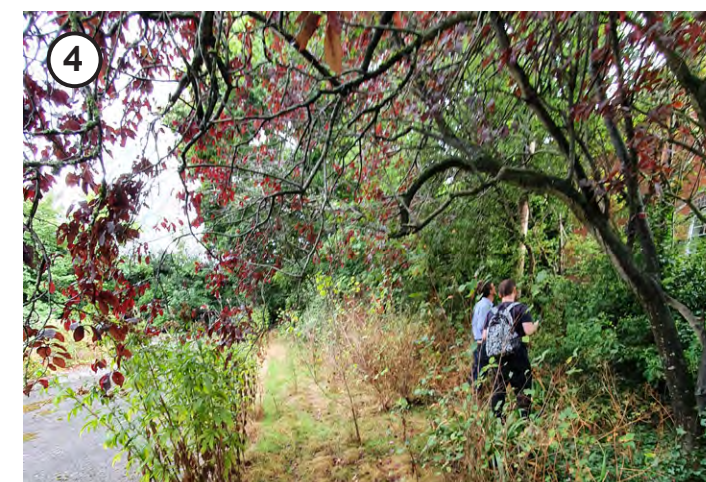
To the west is the primary access road to the site, Liebenrood Road, with Prospect Park just beyond.

The site is located within a residential zone of Reading with houses and flatted development 2-3 storeys in height.

There are a number of different building typologies, styles and road layouts within the local neighbourhood, reflecting the differing time periods of these developments.

Traditional streets accessed off Liebenrood Road tend not to provide further access to the housing to the East, instead giving way to convoluted 'back roads and cul-de-sacs, in a disjointed, almost accidental Radburn style arrangement.

To the West of Liebenrood Road is another estate arrangement of 3 storey linear flatted blocks, with large parking courts and garage plots



## 2.3 Site Photographs

The overall site area is approximately 0.587 hectares.

Previously used as a council run family support Day Centre, the services were closed in circa 2017

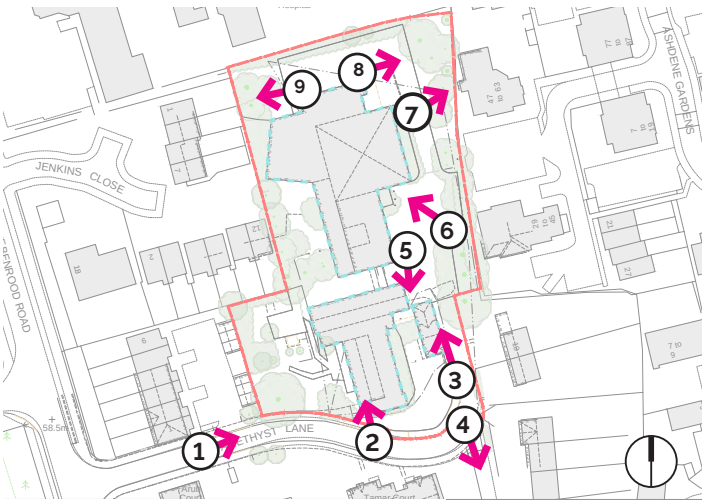
The site is now secured with no public access. Temporary fencing provides a security line to the south of the site, previously providing the entrance to the complex off Amethyst Road.

The vehicular access to the site is now locked with full height metal gates and fencing.

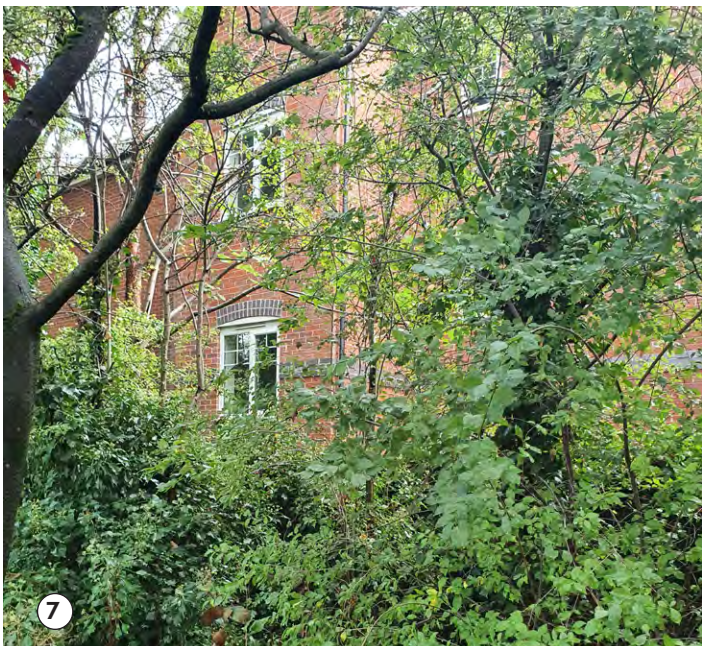
The full eastern and northern boundary are formed of approximately 2 metre high timber fencing, with dense, overgrown vegetation within the demise of the site dominating the boundary on these sides.

The western boundary is formed of the rear and side garden fences of the adjacent 2 storey housing development served by Jenkins Close.

There looks to have been a secondary pedestrian access point to the North-East of the site, which has since been closed off..



Photograph Location Key



## 2.4 Existing Buildings

### Former Phoenix Day Centre

In line with aspirations to reduce waste and energy consumption, and adhering to the principles of circular economy, the design process explored the case for the existing buildings' retention, reuse or refurbishment.

GIA = 1172sqm

#### Potential for conversion

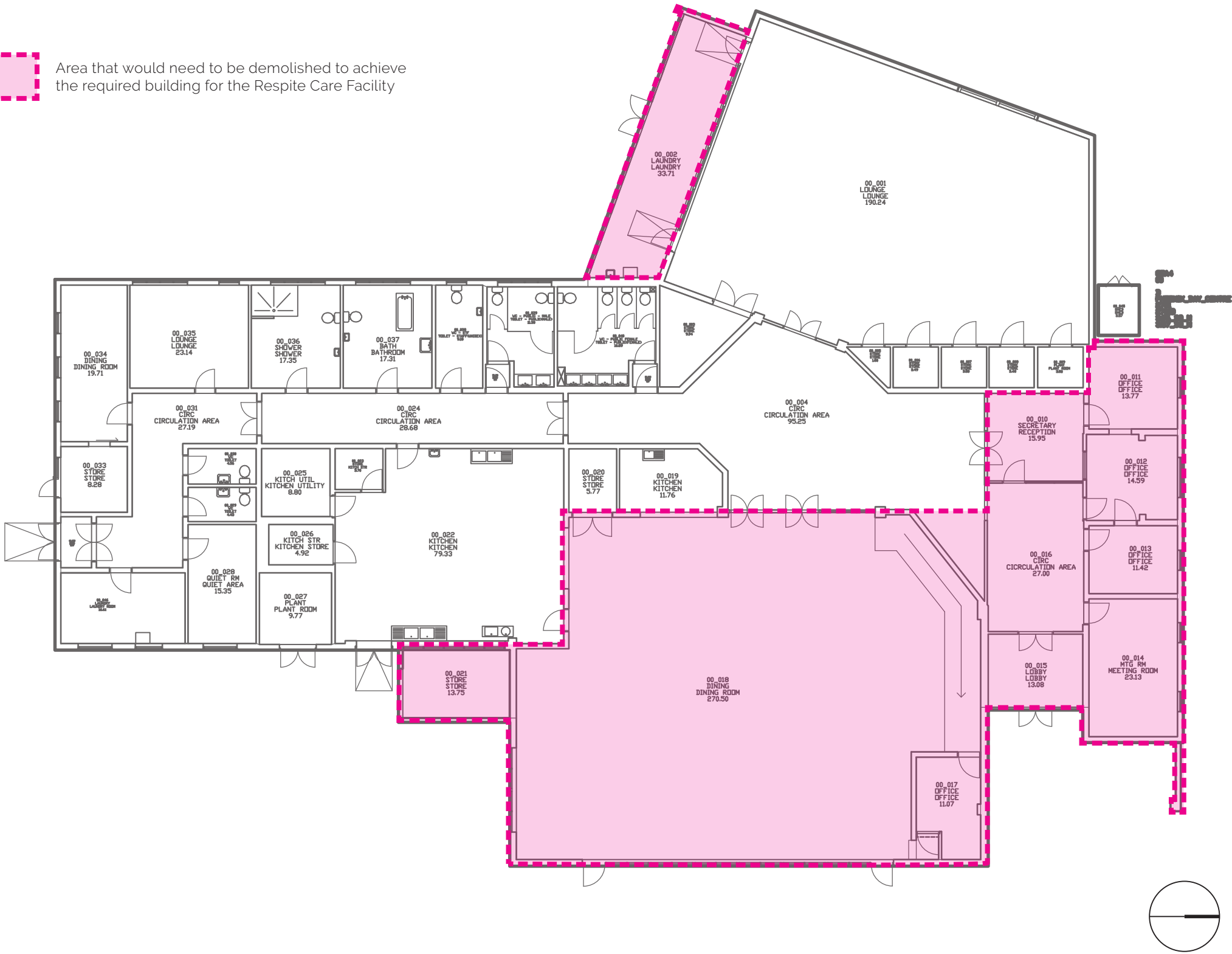
- The building size far exceeds the required area for the Respite Care Facility brief (circa 625-700sqm)
- Deep plan unlikely to be viable for residential or respite accommodation (lack of natural light)
- Cellular rooms are not likely to be suitable for the specialised brief of the Respite Care Facility. Most internal walls would need to be reconfigured, some of which are likely to be load-bearing.
- Building fabric appears in good condition for possible re-use as hard landscaping / aggregate
- If the building were retained, its location within the site would prohibit much of the size for use as residential development



Location PPlan:



Area that would need to be demolished to achieve the required building for the Respite Care Facility



Existing Former Phoenix Day Centre Plan - 1:200 @ A3

## 2.4 Existing Buildings

### Former Acorn Day Centre

**GIA**

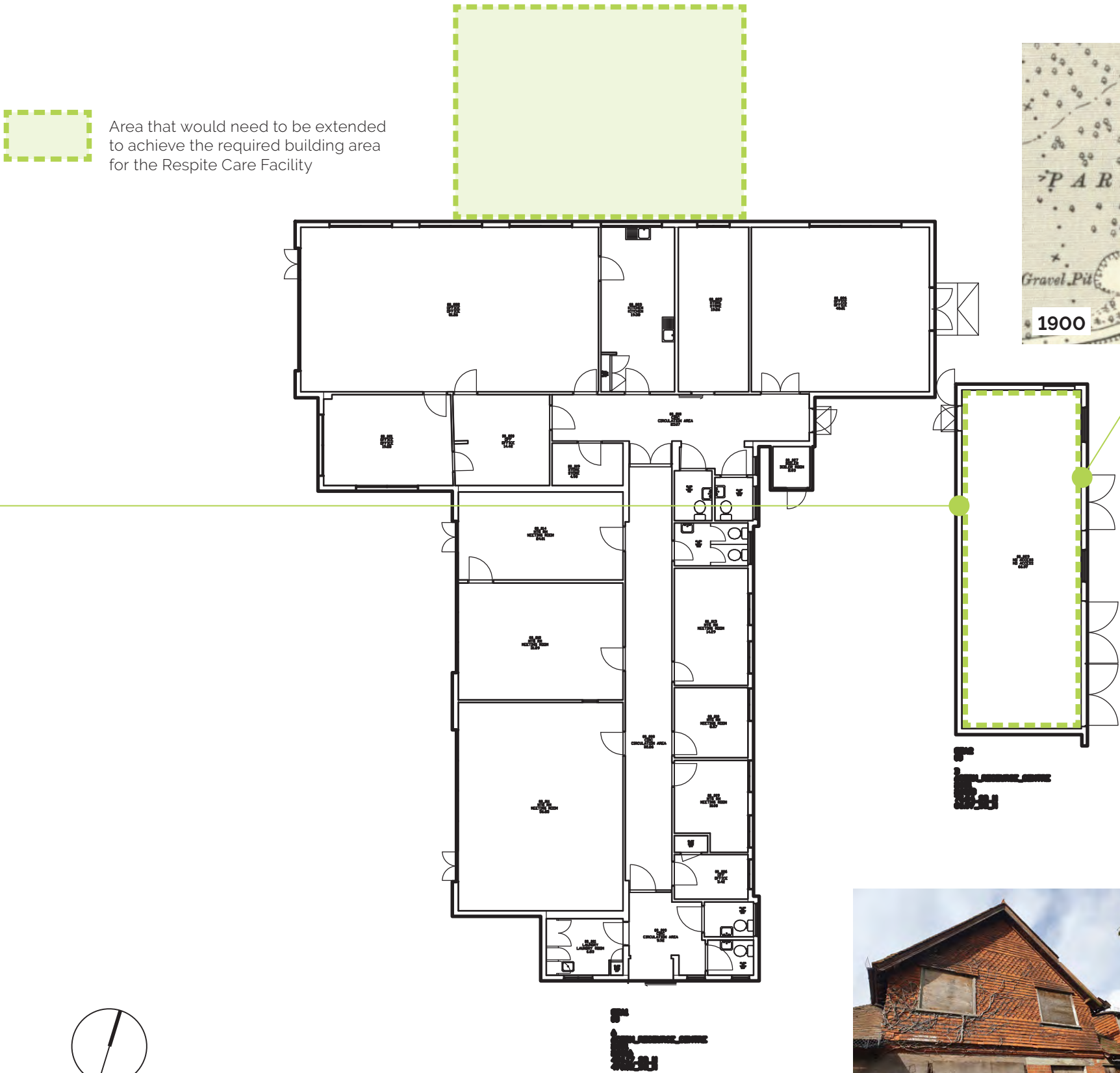
- Main Building 470sqm
- Small secondary building 67sqm

**Potential for conversion**

- The total built footprint is not sufficient for proposed respite uses (circa 625-700sqm)
- The main building would require extensive internal planning to create a suitable layout for accommodation
- Building fabric appears in good condition for possible re-use as hard landscaping / aggregate
- A secondary outhouse building is of some architectural merit and could be retained and re-purposed, but may require extensive alteration to be habitable or functional.



Location Plan:



Area that would need to be extended to achieve the required building area for the Respite Care Facility



Former Lodge Outhouse Building - current site photographs

Existing Former Acorn Day Centre Plan - 1:200 @ A3

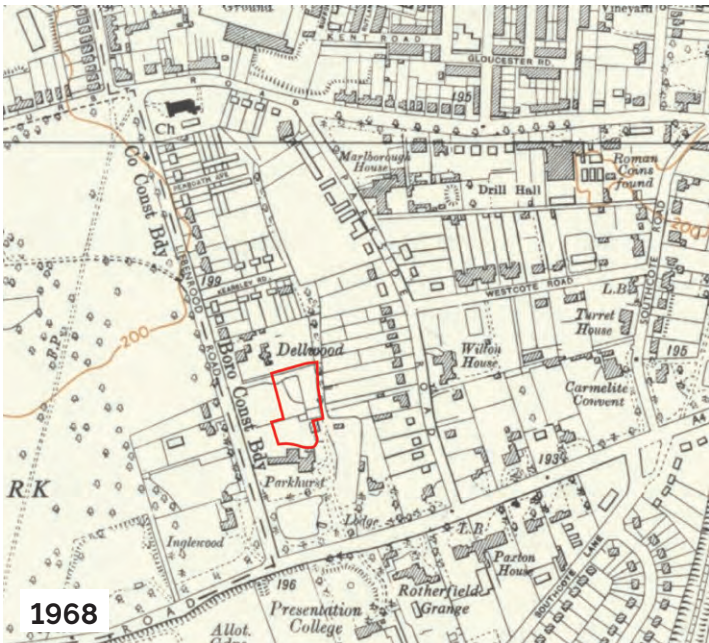
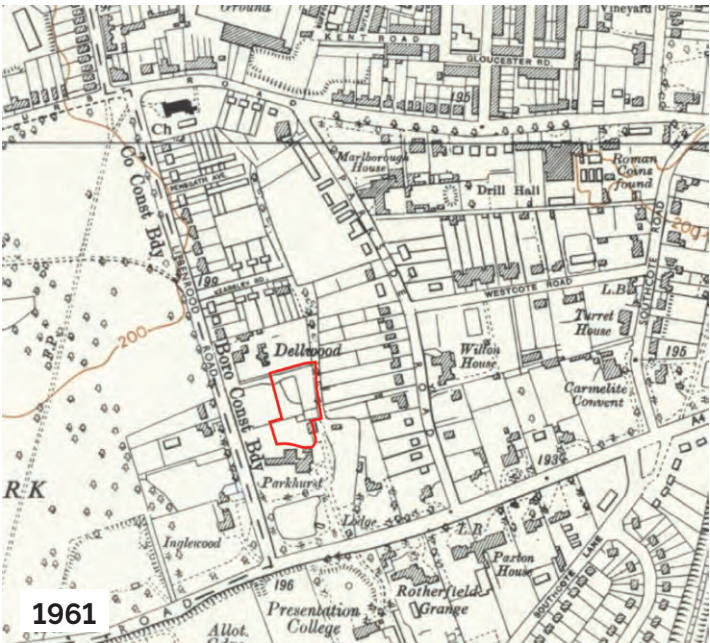
## 2.5 Site History

### Site History

- Formerly part of the demise of 'Parkhurst' a private home and grounds, accessed via Parkhurst Drive (off Bath Road) which remains today.
- The original gate lodge is still standing at the junction with Bath Road, now a private dwelling.

### Local Designations

- The site is not or within any historic designation. The closest designated asset is Prospect Park, a Historic Park and Garden which is approximately 17m to the west (Policy EN1).
- All proposals will be expected to protect and enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, including key views out from the Historic Parks and Garden.
- Given the low massing surrounding the Site to the west, views between the site and the park should be identified from the outset to test their sensitivity with the LPA.
- 76, Bath Road is a Grade II Listed located approximately 125m of the site. There are no other historic designations within 300m of the site.

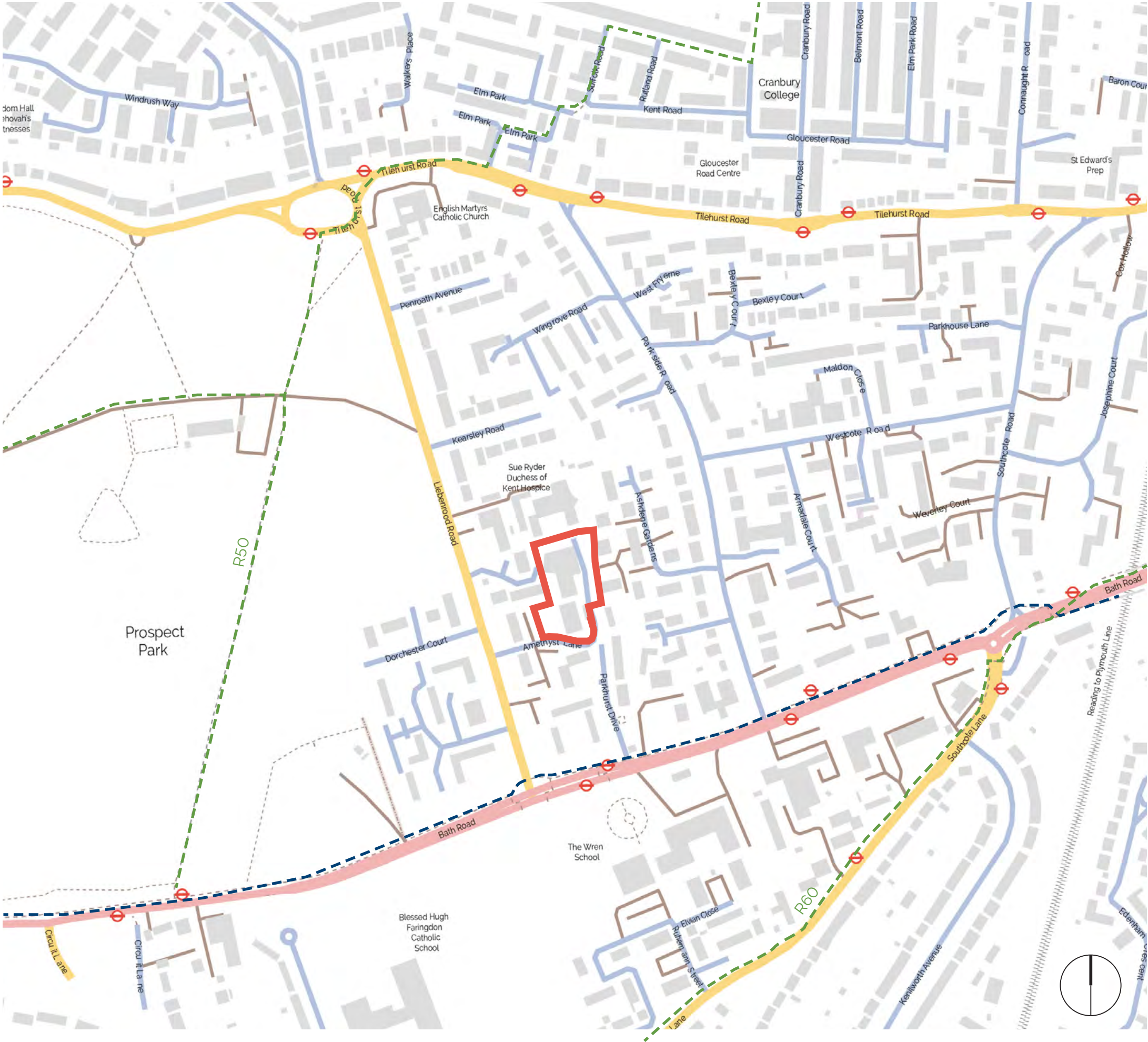


- Key:
- Grade II Listed Buildings
  - Grade II Listed Park
  - Site location

## 2.6 Site Analysis

### Transport and Access

- Bath Road to the south is identified in Policy TR2 for Major Transport Project.
- There are three cycle routes within 300m of the site.
- R50 West Reading (Tilehurst & Prospect Park) and R60 Southwest Reading (Coley Park & Southcote), and 422 a National Cycle Network.



Transport and Access Diagram

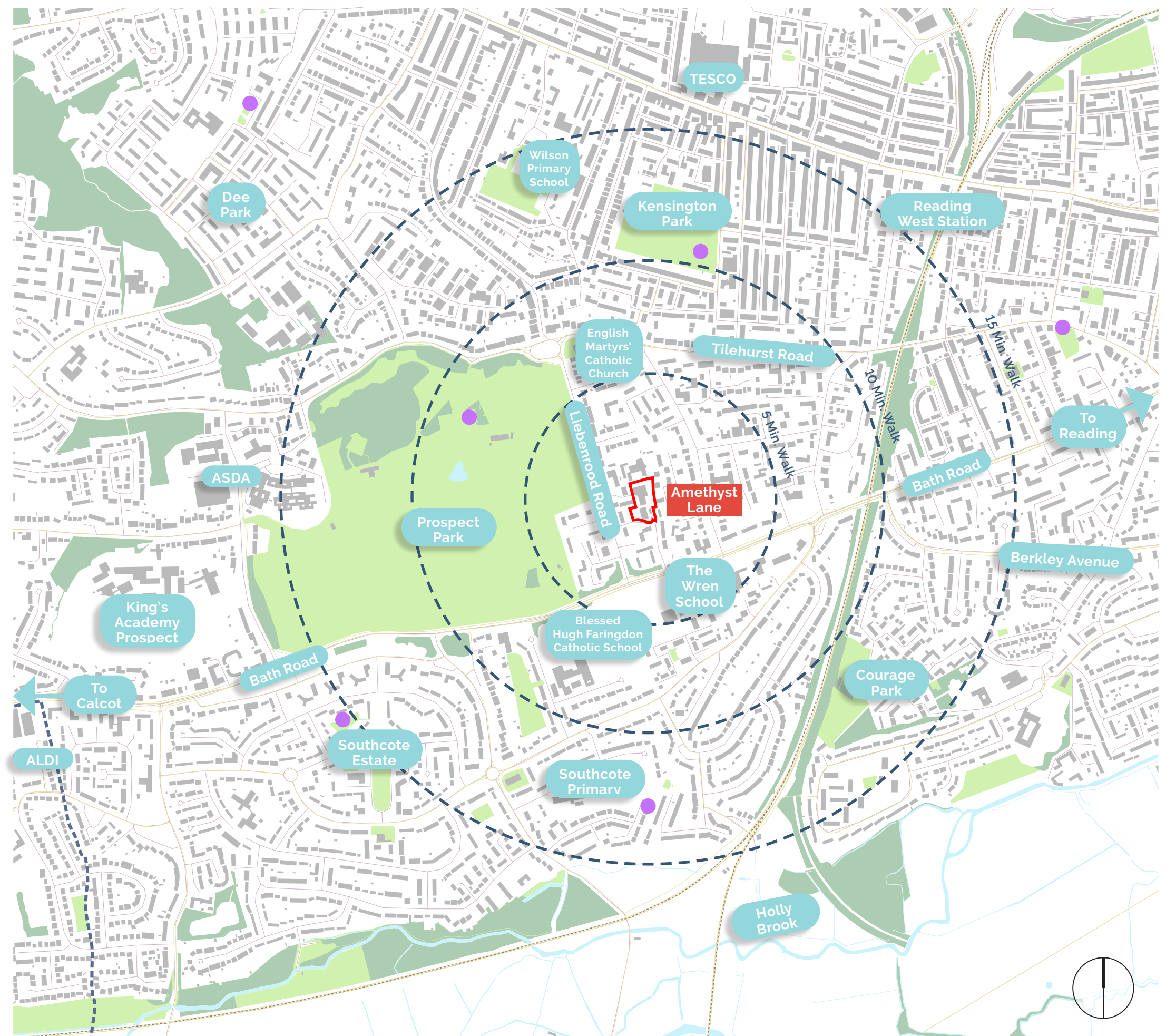
## 2.6 Site Analysis

### Land Uses and Open Spaces

- Prospect Park is an area of open green and public open space (EN7) and an area of interest for biodiversity in Reading (EN12). Landscaping and water features proposed within a new scheme are expected to demonstrate how they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to local biodiversity of the park
- The site sits within an area of residential development.
- To the south of the site, along Bath Road, there are a number of schools and nonresidential uses.

#### Key:

- Park
- Golf Course
- Retail
- Education
- Car Park
- Industrial
- Open Space
- Trees
- Play Facilities
- Site Boundary



Site Location Plan - 1:10,000 @ A3

## 2.6 Site Analysis

### Planning Designations

The Local Policies map proposals show that the Site is designated for development under policy WR3n Amethyst Lane.

The site is not designated for any other purpose nor is it within or adjacent to any historic or biodiversity designation

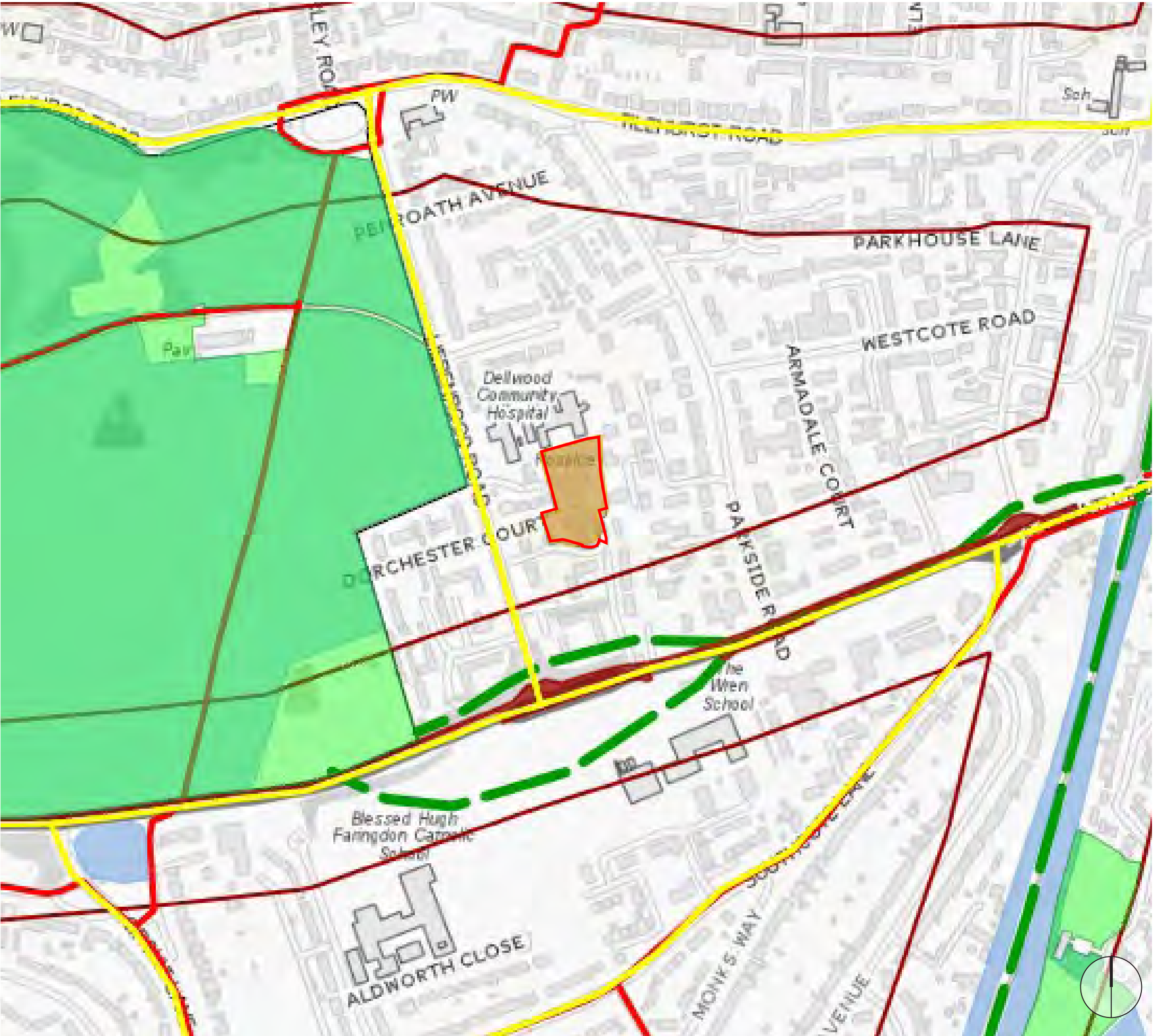
Policy WR3 lists sites for development in west Reading and Tilehurst, including the allocation WR3n,

The policy notes that the site is 0.57 ha in size and suitable for 32-48 dwellings. According to the allocation, development should:

- Include appropriate back-to-back separation from existing residential; and
- Take account of the potential impact on water infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water and make provision for upgrades where required

**Key:**

-  Site Allocation (WR3n)
-  National Cycle Network Route 422 (TR2)
-  Classified Highway Network (TR3)
-  Green Link (EN12)
-  Cycle Routes (TR4)
-  Air Quality Management Area (EN15)
-  Local Green / Public Open Space (EN7)
-  Area for Biodiversity interest (EN12)
-  Site Boundary

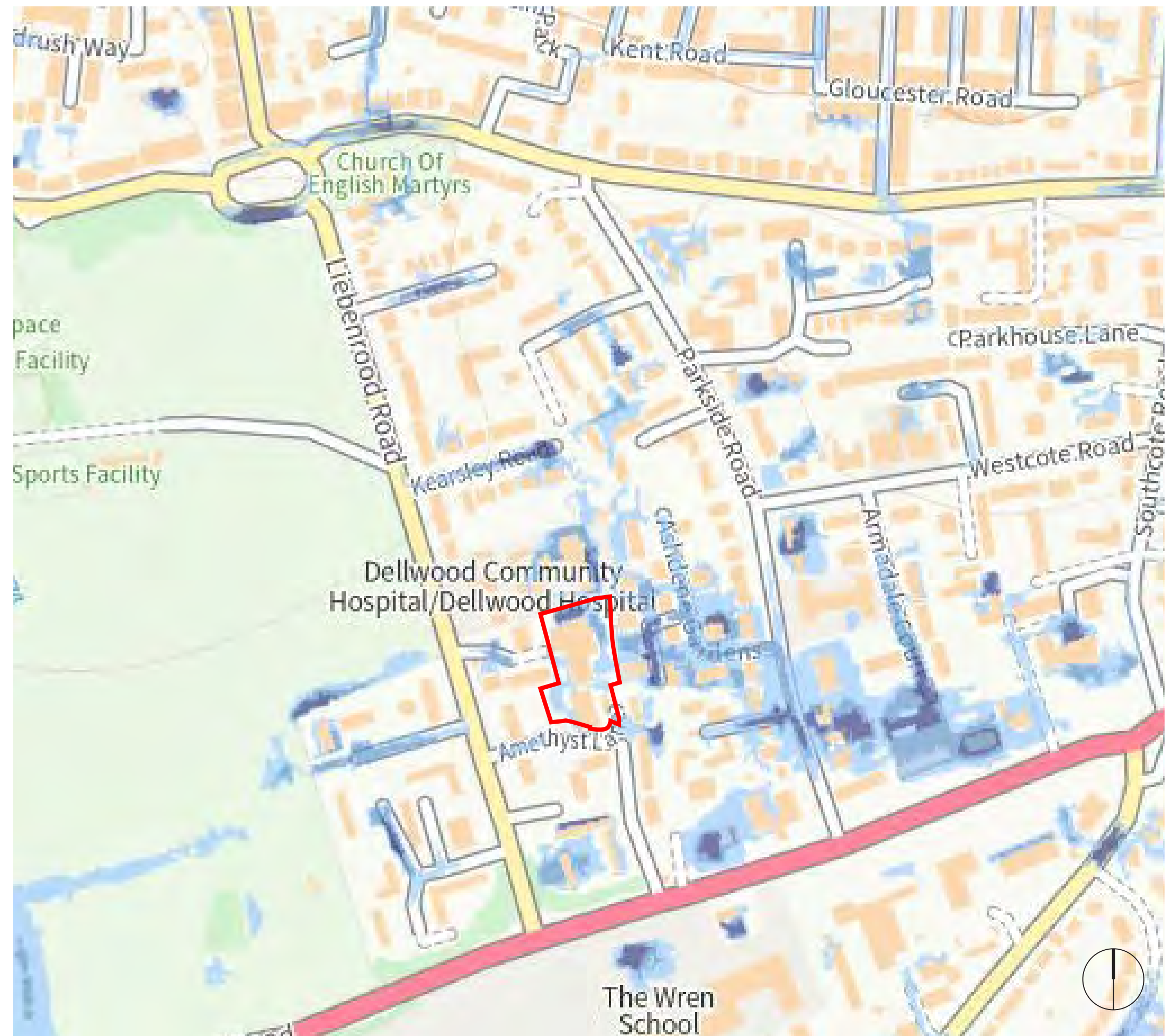


Planning Policy Map - Reading Local Plan Adopted 2019

## 2.6 Site Analysis

### Flood Risk Maps

- The site is located within Flood Risk Zone 1, however the western and northern boundaries of the Site is within an area of medium surface water risk area
- The adjacent diagram shows risk of surface water flooding.



#### Surface Water Key:

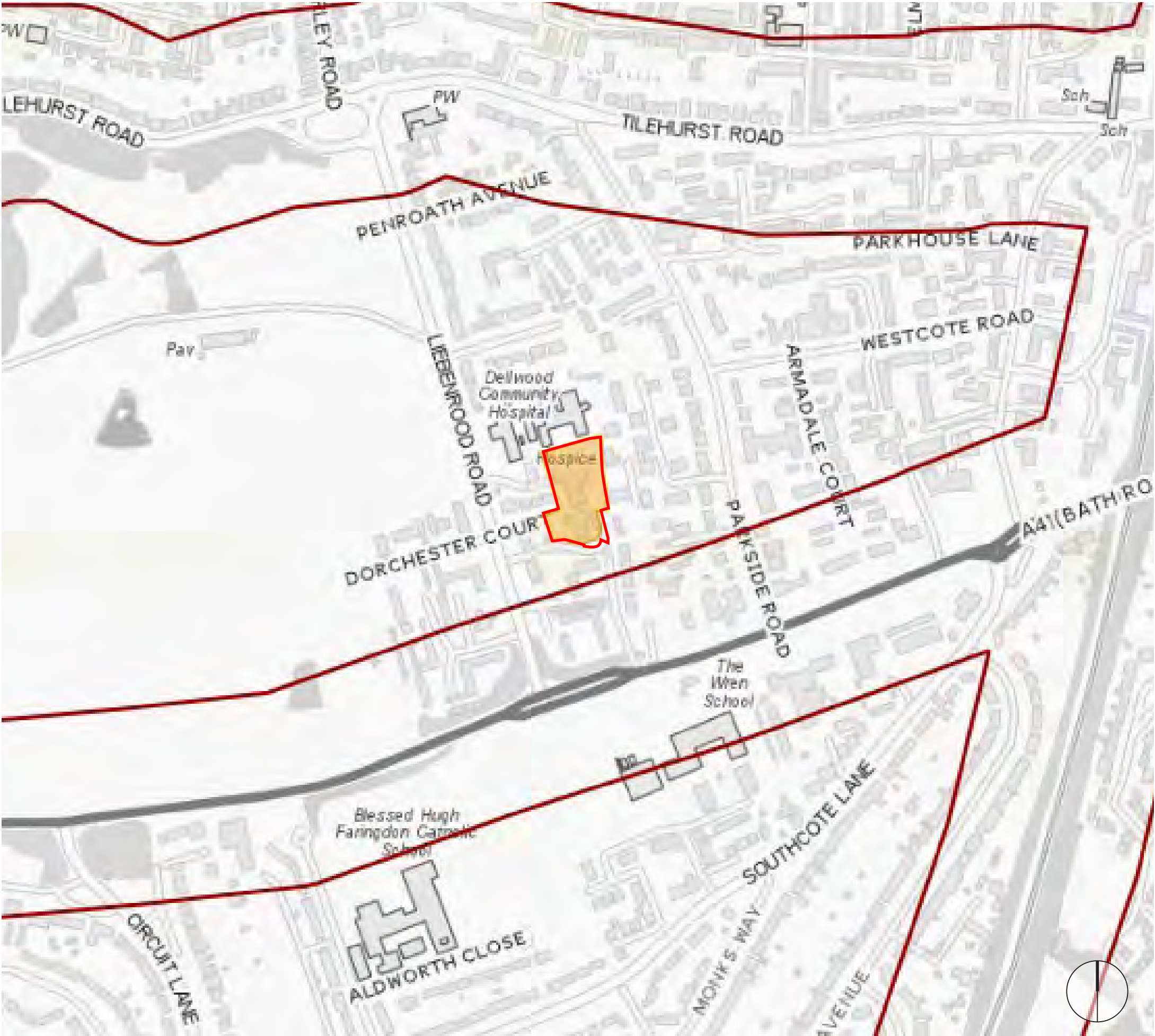
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Very Low
- Site Boundary

Flood Risk Zones Map - from Environment Agency (approximate site boundary shown in red)

## 2.6 Site Analysis

### Air Quality

- The site is outside the Air Quality Management Area, covered under Policy EN15, which seeks to prevent any development which would detrimentally affect air quality to be permitted unless the effect is to be mitigated.
- Although not required, mitigation measures should still be included in the planning application – e.g. cycle parking provision on site and improved connectivity to the park.



Key:

-  Air Quality Management Area
-  Site Boundary

Air Quality Diagram (not to scale)