

Relationship to Existing Settlement

- 5.5 The Site is bound to the south by existing development on the northern edge of Sissinghurst. To the west, the Site is bound by a number of detached dwellings with large gardens, including the property of Collingwood. There is also a single dwelling to the north and semi-detached dwellings to the east. There is a large Consented Development, 17/00451/REM, opposite the Site on the east of Common Road, which has extended the northern extent of Sissinghurst up to Frittenden Road. As such the development at the Site will be surrounded on all sides by existing built development and associated curtilages. The proposals would be very well related to surrounding built form and would be in line with the planned northern extension to Sissinghurst, extending no further north than the consented development and existing built form on Frittenden Road.
- 5.6 Future growth of Sissinghurst is constrained to the south by the AONB and Conservation Area. Development of the Site therefore represents a relatively unconstrained and logical extension of the settlement, which is well related to the existing settlement pattern.

Impact on Landscape Features

- 5.7 The landscape features of the Site are located along its boundaries, with the exception of the hedgerow and trees along the internal field boundary and vegetation within the south-eastern area. The Site is capable of being developed while retaining the majority of existing boundary hedgerow and trees and the internal field boundary. A short section of the eastern Site boundary hedgerow and a short section of the internal field boundary hedgerow, will require removal in order to facilitate the proposed vehicular access road through the Site. Two small sections of the northern Site boundary hedgerow will also require removal to facilitate pedestrian access into the Site. The mature trees within the Site will be protected in the proposals as shown on Root3's Arboricultural Impact Assessment Plan.
- 5.8 All proposed built form has been proposed outside of the veteran tree buffers zones (shown on the landscape strategy plan **Appendix E**) and all landscape proposals within the buffer zones will complement and enhance semi-natural habitats including a mix of grassland, scrub and wetland planting. This is compliant with national guidance and arboricultural advice.
- 5.9 As illustrated in the Landscape Strategy Plan (**Appendix E**), new landscaping, including trees and hedgerows are proposed, to reinforce the Site boundaries and enclose the ecological areas. There will

therefore be an overall net increase in tree cover and habitats as a result of the new landscape features on the Site.

Public Rights of Way

- 5.10 The Site is capable of being developed while retaining the alignment of the existing public footpath which passes through the Site. The route will however be crossed by the proposed access road. There will be some visual effects to the route as discussed in the Visual Impact and Effects section below.

Visual Impact and Effects

- 5.11 The visual appraisal in Section 4 identifies that the Site is well contained by existing vegetation, built form and by virtue of the localised undulating landform, although there are some views of the Site from neighbouring properties. A summary of the impact of the proposals on the key views of the Site is contained in **Appendix F** and these are discussed briefly below.
- 5.12 Views from public footpath 0067/WC75/1 while within the Site will change from views across a pastoral field to views of the new housing. New hedgerow planting to the west and east of the footpath's route will help to soften the impact of these views and contribute to a sense of enclosure, which will reflect the local landscape character. Views looking east from this route will be similar to that of the existing situation, looking across the retained open space and new landscaping. As such the views from this footpath while within the Site will become slightly more urbanised in character.
- 5.13 There will be first floor views and filtered ground floor views towards the proposed housing from The Crossways (the dwelling located immediately northeast of the Site at the road junction). The setting back of housing from the northern and eastern Site boundaries and the proposed planting in the north-east of the Site, will soften the impact on these views. The proposed houses have been situated so that they are not located directly opposite the house's façade in order to retain views along Common Road from upper storey windows. Additionally, the proposed vegetation will screen the ground floor views and filter the first floor views as the planting matures.
- 5.14 There will be filtered views from Carpenter's Cottages (immediately northeast of the Site) towards the proposed housing in the east of the Site. The existing mature vegetation will filter direct views and the setting back of the housing from the eastern Site boundary will further limit their impact. Views into the Site from the highway at the proposed access

and oblique views across the Site will be softened by the proposed hedgerow planting which will increasingly filter views as the planting matures. Proposed planting in the north-east corner of the Site will filter views from the first floor side window of number 1 (Carpenter's Cottages) as it matures.

- 5.15 Where views towards the proposed housing are possible from Common Road, on the approach from the north, they will be filtered by the retained Site boundary vegetation, which will be reinforced by the new planting in the north-east corner of the Site.
- 5.16 Framed views into the Site towards the retained open space will become available from Common Road, adjacent to the Site, at the opening of the proposed access road, with the new housing seen beyond. Proposed planting within the Site, together with the retention of the majority of the existing mature vegetation, will soften the impact on these views. As the road continues southwards, views of the proposed housing will become increasingly limited. Additionally, the proposed housing will be set back from the eastern edge of the Site, further reducing its impact on views from the road. The proposed development will be seen in context with the surrounding built form along Common Road.
- 5.17 There will be limited opportunities for views of the proposed housing from Common Road, south of the Site. Where views are possible, their impact will be limited by virtue of the housing being set back from the eastern boundary edge and filtered by existing vegetation within the Site and school grounds, reinforced by proposed planting within the Site.
- 5.18 There will be filtered and partial views of the proposed housing from the residential properties (newly built) to the east of Common Road. These views are filtered by the existing hedgerows to the east and west of Common Road. The screening potential of the existing hedgerows will be supplemented by the proposed thicket, tree and hedgerow planting in the eastern open space and ecological areas. As this planting matures, the views will become softened.
- 5.19 Filtered views towards the proposed housing will be possible from within the Sissinghurst Church of England Primary School building and grounds. The existing boundary vegetation which filters these views will be reinforced by new planting along the southern Site boundary, providing further screening in due course.
- 5.20 Heavily filtered, oblique views of the proposed housing will be possible from properties on Cobnut Close and 8-11 Skinner Gardens (south of the Primary School). New planting to the southern Site boundary and within the Site will further contribute to filtering these views as it matures.

- 5.21 Views of the proposed housing will be possible from the property at Collingwood (west of Site). Ground floor views will be filtered by intervening hedgerow. Additionally, the proposed housing is set back from the western edge of the Site, which will reduce the development's impact on views from this property.
- 5.22 Partial views towards the proposed housing will be possible from the four properties on Spongs Lane at the junction with Frittenden Road. These views will be limited due to the intervening built form to the east of Common Road and filtered by intervening vegetation, which will be reinforced by new planting in the east of the Site. Once the consented development (nearly built out) adjacent to the Site is fully complete, these views will be screened entirely.
- 5.23 There will be views towards the proposed housing from the properties to the north of Sissinghurst Road (The Street), situated between Common Road and Trinity Church, they will be limited to views of first floors and roofs. The proposed housing will be seen in the context of existing development on Common Road and set back behind the eastern and southern Site boundaries, which will reduce the visual effect of the proposals.
- 5.24 Limited opportunities for views towards the roofs of the proposed housing will be possible from sections of public footpath WC76. These views will be filtered by existing vegetation, which will be reinforced by new planting.

Landscape Change and Effects

- 5.25 As set out in Section 4 the Site is not covered by any statutory designations for landscape character or quality. Overall the Site is assessed as being of medium landscape quality and sensitivity, with the veteran trees on the southern boundary assessed as high landscape quality. The Site is assessed as being of medium landscape value.
- 5.26 Development at the Site will result in the loss of a pastoral field, which will be replaced with residential development, open space and infrastructure. The retention and protection of the majority of the existing boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and their strengthening will assist in assimilating the new housing into its wider landscape context, linking it into the existing treed settlement edge. In addition, the development is located within the northern part of Sissinghurst surrounded on all sides by existing built development. Therefore the development would be seen as a modest and incremental addition to the existing settlement.

- 5.27 Furthermore, the proposed development will retain and respect the veteran trees on the southern Site boundary. It has also ensured that the proposed built development and the vast majority of proposed rear gardens have not been located within the RPAs of these trees. This will help to ensure these trees longevity.
- 5.28 Accordingly, it is considered that a residential scheme which follows the principles shown on the Landscape Strategy Plan can be accommodated at the Site without causing material harm to the adjoining countryside or townscape. A summary table detailing the anticipated Landscape Effects can be found in **Appendix F**.

Compliance with Planning Policy and Published Landscape Guidance

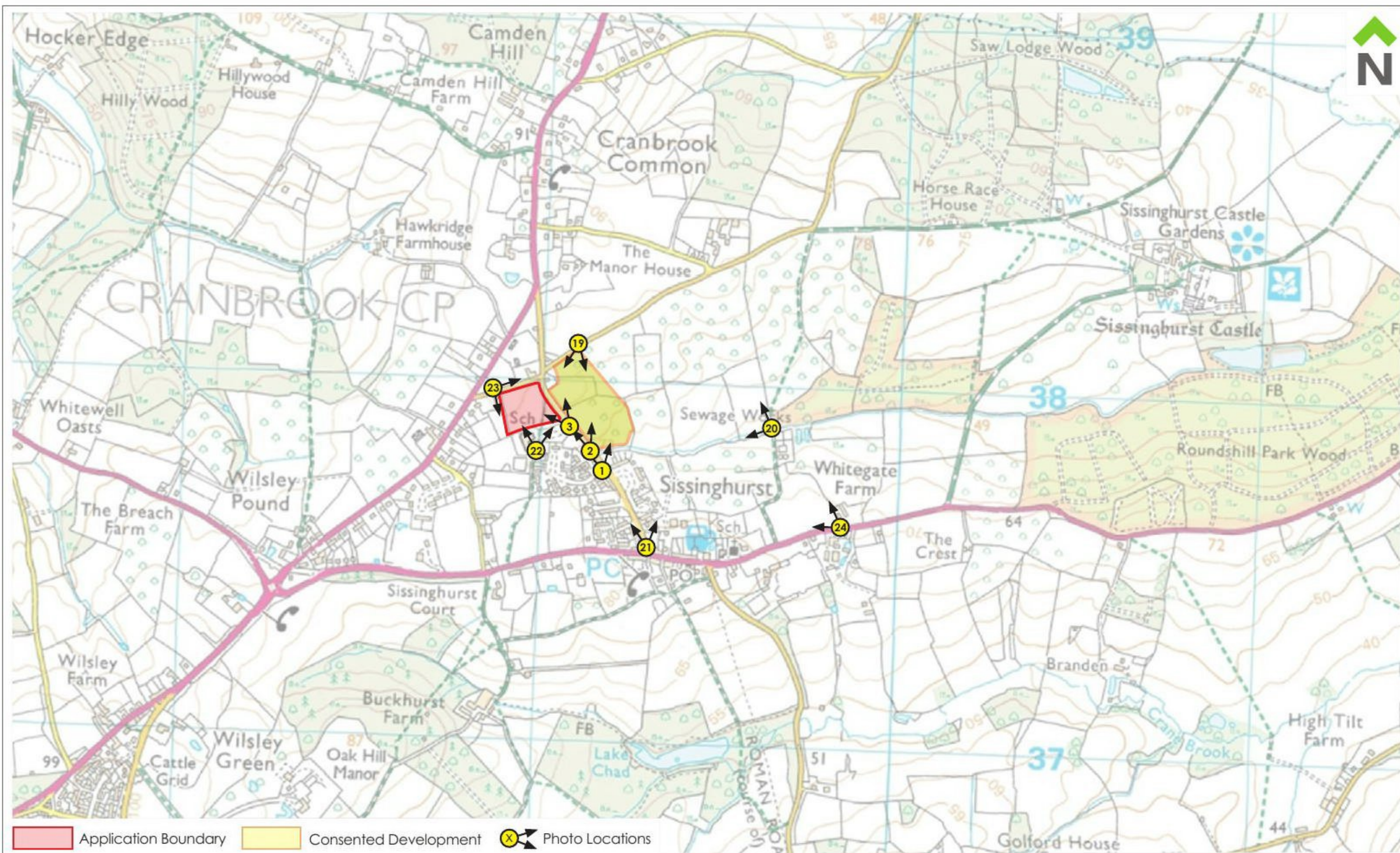
- 5.29 The Site Layout and Landscape Strategy Plan show that a residential scheme, which follows the principles set out at the beginning of Chapter 5 can be accommodated at the Site. The proposals can be accommodated without impacting on any designated or valued landscape or having material effects on the neighbouring townscape and the wider landscape. Accordingly, the proposals will not raise a material conflict with National planning policy.
- 5.30 With respect to the local planning policy, the proposals respond in the following ways:
- The development has taken account of biodiversity and aimed to enhance wildlife habitat across the Site with ecological areas and the hazel coppice planting; and
 - Through setting back the housing from Common Road, and retaining the majority of the Site's vegetation along with new tree and hedgerow planting, the distinctive character of the road will be conserved.
- 5.31 The Tunbridge Wells Character Area Assessment, identified the Site as falling into Sissinghurst Wooded Farmland LCA. This assessment provides suggested strategies for sensitive development within this Area, to which the proposals respond in the following ways:
- The retention of the majority of the existing mature landscape framework to retain a sense of intimacy and enclosure on the Site; and
 - The proposed housing has been set back from all the Site boundaries, avoiding visually prominent locations and have been integrated into the existing landscape framework, which will be augmented through extensive new planting.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The majority of the Site comprises a medium sized pastoral field, with a small piece of grassland in the south-east corner. The Site is bound by hedgerow and hedgerow trees with a public footpath running along the internal field boundary. Common Road runs alongside the eastern Site boundary and Frittenden Road runs alongside the northern Site boundary.
- 6.2 Neither the Site nor the immediate landscape is covered by statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality and it is not considered a valued landscape, as defined within paragraph 170 of the 2019 NPPF. The Site is well contained by existing boundary vegetation, which contributes to its separation from the wider countryside, assisted by the localised rolling landform. Overall the Site is assessed as being of medium landscape quality, value and sensitivity.
- 6.3 The visual assessment found that the Site is well contained in views from the north and west by the substantial existing vegetation in the surrounding area; to the south by the southern Site boundary vegetation and vegetation within the school grounds; and to the east by roadside vegetation and the localised rolling landform. To the south-east there are long-distance views from higher elevations, however, the Site is difficult to distinguish and views of it are seen in the context of the existing settlement of Sissinghurst.
- 6.4 The Illustrative Masterplan and Landscape Strategy Plan show how an appropriate development can be accommodated at the Site which respects and strengthens the Site's existing landscape features, containing the proposals within them and providing a sensitive edge to the adjoining countryside. The retention and enhancement of the existing mature landscape framework and the provision of new planting around the housing and within the ecological areas will enable the integration of the development into the character of Sissinghurst and the wider landscape. This will be further assisted by the strengthening the internal and boundary vegetation.
- 6.5 For the reasons set out in this assessment, it is considered that development in accordance with the Landscape Strategy Plan and the principles set out in Section 5, can be accommodated without giving rise to material landscape, townscape or visual effects on the local area or wider landscape.

Appendix A

Site Location Plan
(Showing middle to long distance photo locations)



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Project	Land at Common Road, Sissinghurst
Drawing Title	Site Location Plan
Client	Invicta Self and Custom Build

Date December 2019

Drawing No. CSA/3528/100

Scale @ A4 NTS

Rev A

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Appendix B

Aerial Photograph
(Showing near distance photo locations)



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Appendix C

Photosheets



View from Common Road at junction with Cleavers Road looking north **Photograph 01**



View from Common Road at junction with Cobnut Close looking north-west towards the Site **Photograph 02**



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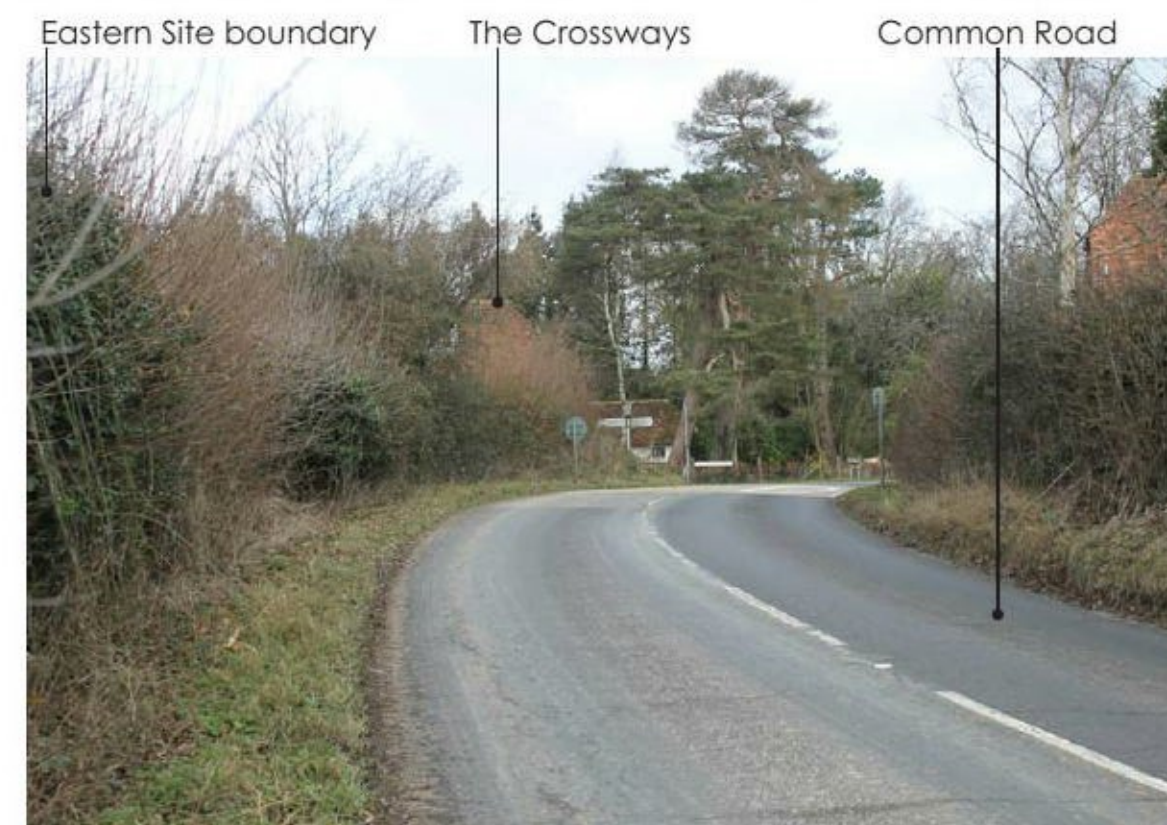
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View from Common Road looking north-west towards the Site **Photograph 03**



View from Common Road looking north **Photograph 04**



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View from Common Road looking south-east **Photograph 05**



View from entrance to public footpath WC75 looking across Site **Photograph 06**



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View from the north western corner of the Site looking south-west **Photograph 07**



View from the northern Site boundary looking east **Photograph 08**



View from the northern Site boundary looking onto Frittenden Road **Photograph 09**



View from the north western corner of the Site looking south-east **Photograph 10**



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View from within the Site looking north-west **Photograph 11**



View from the south-western corner of the Site looking north-east **Photograph 12**



View of southern Site boundary from within Site **Photograph 13**

Public footpath WC75



View from public footpath WC75 within the Site looking south into school grounds **Photograph 14**



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View from public footpath WC75 at the southern Site boundary looking north-west **Photograph 15**



View across the south-eastern part of the Site from the southern Site boundary **Photograph 16**



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View from within the Site looking south-east **Photograph 17**



View from the junction of Frittenden Road and Common Road looking south towards the Site **Photograph 18**



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View from Frittenden Road looking south-west towards the Site **Photograph 19**



View from public footpath WC76 looking north-west towards the Site **Photograph 20**



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Properties along Common Road

Common Road



View from the junction of Common Road and Sissinghurst Road looking north towards the Site **Photograph 21**

Property on Skinner Gardens



View from Recreation ground adjacent to Skinner Gardens looking north towards the Site **Photograph 22**



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View from Frittenden Road looking south-east towards the Site **Photograph 23**



View from Sissinghurst Road (The Street) looking north-west towards the Site **Photograph 24**



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