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Site Analysis

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Image obtained from Google Maps



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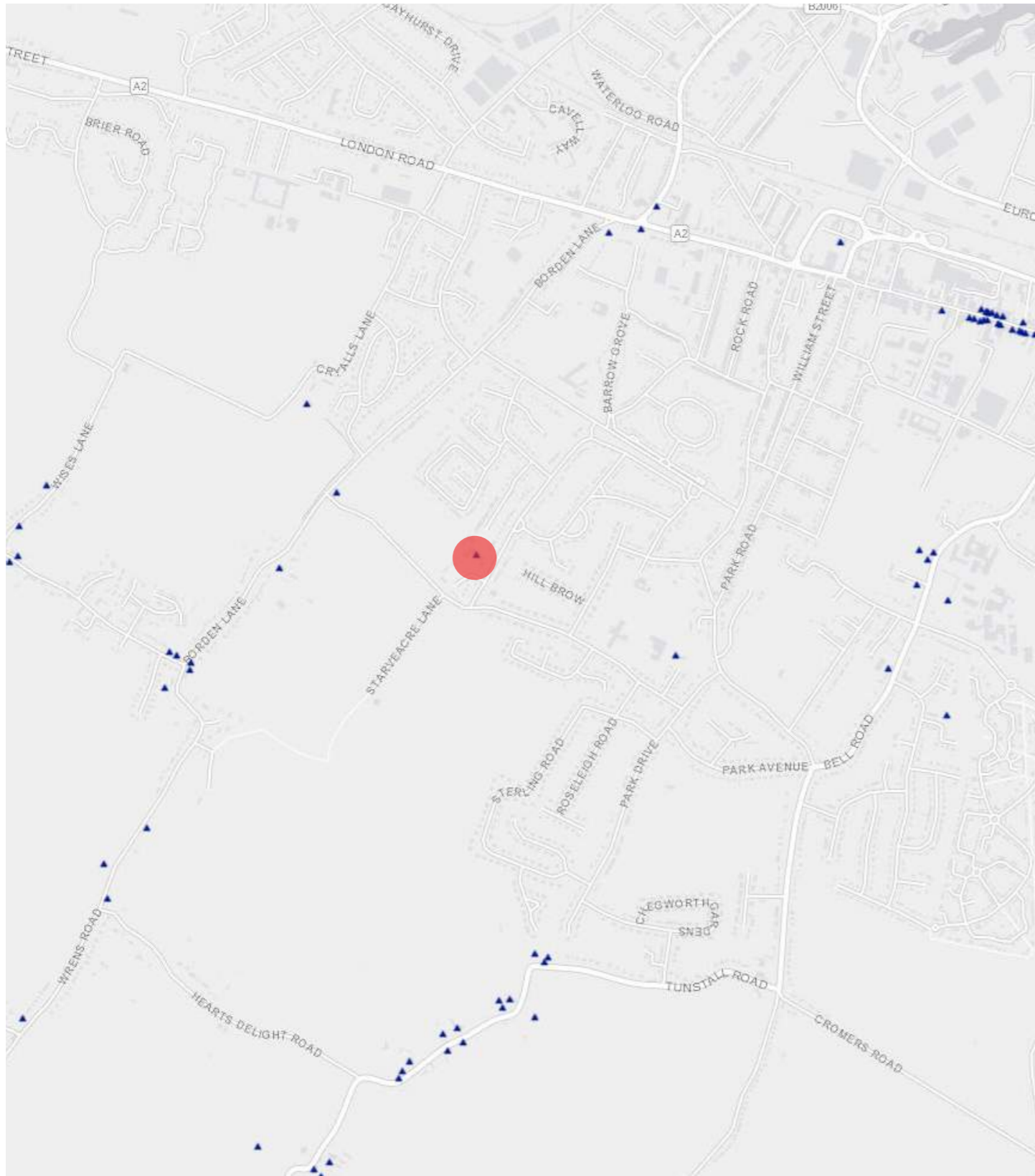


Red line indicates the site location



Blue line indicates adjacent land under the ownership of the applicant

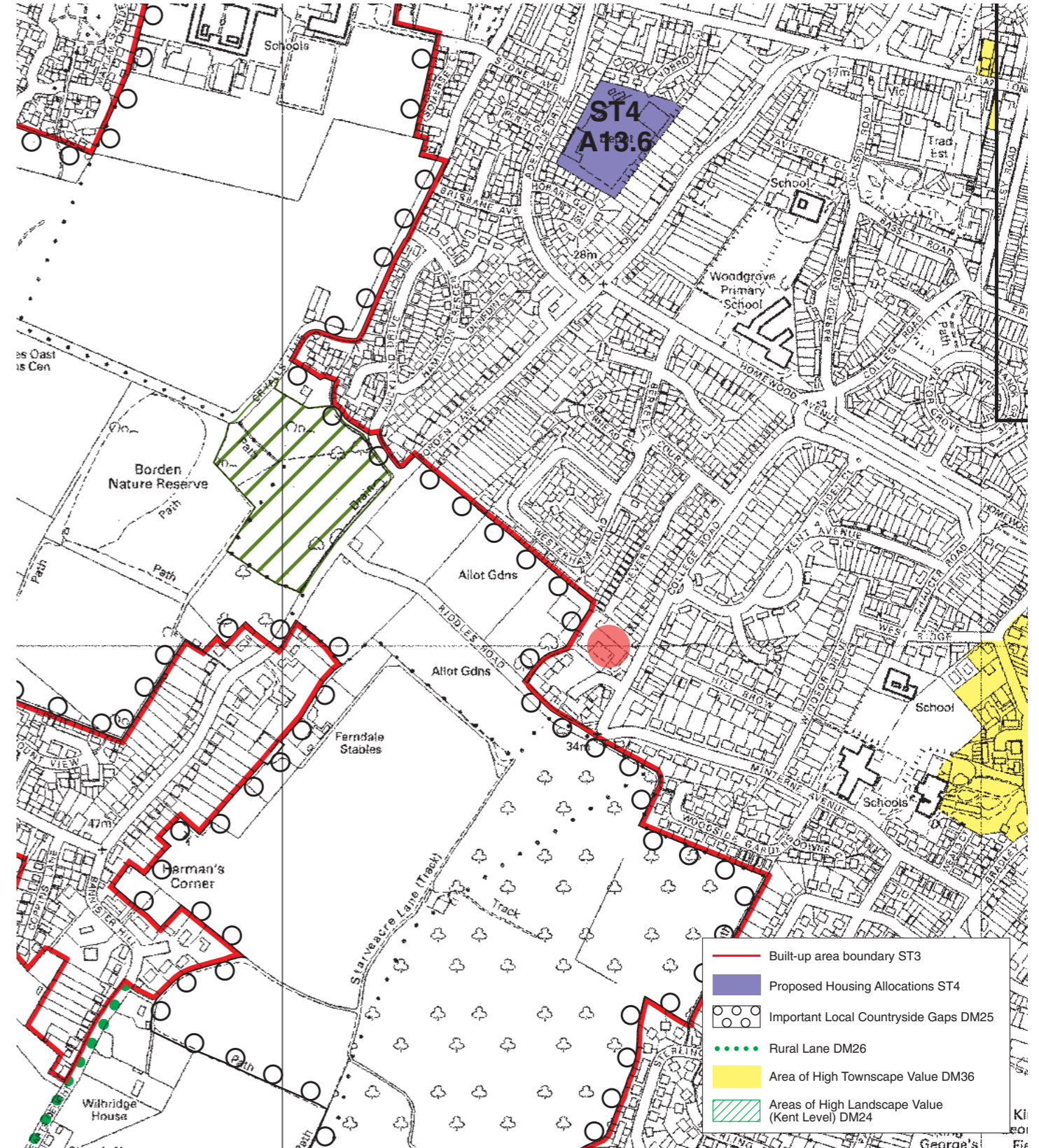
2.1 Site location



▲ The purple triangle indicates Listed Building

● Red dot indicates site location

Image obtained from Historic England



The above map shows an extract of the Swale Local Plan map

● Red dot indicates site location

Image obtained from Swale Borough Council

The site has one listed building but is not located within a conservation zone. The site is located adjacent to an important local country side gap.

2.2 Relevant Policies

Tree Survey & Arboricultural Report

Important trees:

The key trees on this site are those located along the boundary lines, most notably the mature trees around the edge of the western half of the site.

Trees along the site frontage with College Road are of lesser merit but form a landscape feature that provides privacy to the site and have greater public visibility. Root protection areas will pose less of a constraint in this location due to the presence of hard standing and the existing access road; however, construction should be kept at a suitable distance from the trees.

The group of beech trees (G37) that formerly enclosed the tennis court form a significant landscape feature that ideally will be retained within the design. Due to the size, position and shape of this group of trees this may prove impractical; in which case suitable replanting as mitigation for the removal of the trees will be required within the landscape scheme.

The large mature western red cedar tree (T40) forms an integral site feature that may be considered important to retain. As the existing car parking area is hard surfaced use for access may be continued, however we recommend that, if this tree is retained, the grassed area around the tree is kept free from construction and excavation works. Any surfacing of the grassed area will require minimal construction with porous materials / surfacing.

Loss of trees:

The site has lacked management for some time and the development provides a good opportunity to remove some of the lower quality trees, shrubs and scrub growth to replant within a more formal landscaping scheme.

Existing & proposed levels:

The constraints represented by trees can have a significant effect on proposed levels, and this should not be underestimated within the design proposals. If the development requires any level changes within the root protection areas of retained trees, the impact on tree roots should be considered at an early stage. However, due to the generally flat nature of the site, this may not be a significant issue.

Opportunities to enhance the site:

The site has lacked management and contains several areas that would benefit from selective felling, clearance and re-planting.

The south-western boundary contains dense areas of elm and scrub vegetation which could be cut back, selectively thinned to promote better quality specimens and replanted with hedging species to thicken and define the boundary line.

The north-western and eastern boundaries contain very little in the way of significant vegetation to define the boundary and provide shelter / privacy to the site. There is substantial opportunity to replant these areas to both enhance the amenity of the site and provide separation between the site and the adjacent houses.

The south-eastern boundary with college road contains vegetation that lacks management and may be enhanced with ivy clearance, selective removal and additional planting.

Information: *Edward Cleverdon, Senior Arboricultural Consultant (tma-consultants)*

Ecological Report

Phase 1 Habitat Assessment

An extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment and Bat scoping Assessment was carried out by Tim Moya Associates in January 2018. Key points can be seen below:

- The row of mature trees and scrub surrounding the western part of the site should be retained within the proposed development in order to preserve its function as a significant ecological corridor.
- To avoid an impact on reptiles, precautionary working methods and timing are recommended for removal of small areas of scrub. If removal of large areas of scrub are required, it is recommended that reptile surveys are undertaken. To prevent colonisation of the field by reptiles, grassland vegetation should be mown regularly. Storage of rubble, spoil and other materials close to the periphery of the site should be avoided.
- Features suitable for bats are present within the buildings on site. To confirm whether bat roosts are present, further emergence/re-entry surveys should be undertaken on three occasions between May and September (inclusive).
- An internal bat inspection must be undertaken of the 'Small shed', 'Ivycovered shed', 'Garage' and Main Building Basement. If inspection of the basement is not feasible (due to asbestos), an automated bat detector survey should be undertaken instead.
- Some of the trees within the site include features suitable for roosting bats.
- In order to avoid an impact on commuting and foraging bats, it is recommended that lighting is restricted to minimise illumination of suitable habitats.
- Care should be taken when removing scrub/shrub vegetation to avoid harm to hedgehogs.
- Dead wood should be retained within the development where possible for the benefit of invertebrates.
- To avoid destroying active bird nests, suitable vegetation and buildings should be removed outside the nesting season, which runs from March to August inclusive. Vegetation and buildings may only be removed during the nesting season if it has been checked by an ecologist and no nests are present.
- Two invasive plant species were recorded within the site – *Cotoneaster horizontalis* and snowberry. To avoid spreading these plants, they should be disposed of responsibly.
- Recommendations are included at the end of this report for measures to enhance the site for local biodiversity.