MILL LANE

• PROPOSED HOUSING SITE • HENLEY-ON-THAMES •

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PRE-CONSULTATION • OCTOBER 2013



BroadwayMalyan BM
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Inland homes

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Inland Homes has been asked to submit this document as part of Henley and Harpsden Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan preparation process.

The Neighbourhood Plan is required to allocate some 400 homes in Henley (as confirmed by Core Strategy Policy CSHEN1), Henley is a town which is constrained by the river and by extensive AONB. Meeting this requirement will therefore be a challenge. Building outside the urban area and impacts on AONB should be minimised, whilst opportunities on previously developed land should be maximised. Policy CSHEN1 specifies that housing should be allowed on suitable infill and redevelopment sites.

The site acquired by Inland Homes represents an exciting opportunity to make a significant contribution to the housing requirement for Henley, importantly, through the redevelopment of a previously developed, infill site within the urban area.

The latest Housing Needs Assessment (2012 update) confirms that around half of new housing should be for smaller households. Our site provides a key opportunity to respond to this, providing predominantly smaller units at relatively high density in a sustainable location.

This document provides the information requested by the Town Council, and sets out two possible design options to illustrate the site's overall suitability, availability and deliverability.

THE SITE AND LOCATION

The site of 0.54 Ha (1.34 acres) is located at the junction of Reading Road and Mill Lane, at the southern edge of Henley, within the existing built up area. The site is currently partly in use as a Jet petrol filling station and a tyre and service bay. Part of the site is a now vacant body repair shop, the occupier having recently relocated to alternative premises within the local area. The remainder of the site is overgrown commercial storage areas. The site is therefore predominantly vacant at the present time.

The site is situated in a mixed use area comprising retail, employment,community, sports and housing. The neighbouring Tesco Supermarket store is to the east of the site. To the immediate south east of the site are single storey sports club houses, a large hair salon and further south Henley Town playing fields. Directly to the south of the site is a relatively new development of flats that are 2–2.5 storeys in height. To the north of the site is the Newton Business Park and to the west across the Reading Road is an existing relatively low density residential area.

CAPACITY

In considering the site's overall capacity we have taken account of the following:

- That this is a brownfield, infill site in a sustainable location within the urban area close to existing transport, retail and other facilities;
- The identified need for smaller dwellings;
- Our knowledge that at least some of Henley's new homes will need to be provided outside the urban area. However, the starting point should be to maximise opportunities within the urban area (such as our site), with any land required outside the urban area being more suitable for lower density, family houses.

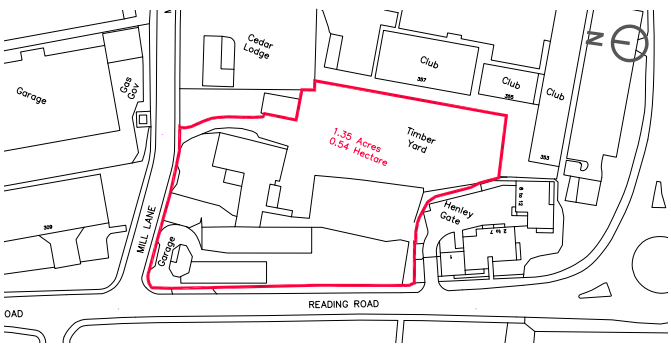
We consider that the site has the capacity to deliver around 50–60 dwellings with a preponderance of smaller units for the reasons outlined above, along with space for amenity areas, parking and other ancillary requirements such as bin storage.

AVAILABILITY

The site has been acquired for development by Inland Homes and is therefore available immediately. The existing tenants on the site are only on short term leases. It is envisaged that these uses could relocate within the town if required. Inland Homes is capable of delivering development on the site very quickly, subject to obtaining the necessary planning permissions. It is therefore a site that could make a valuable early contribution to meeting the housing target for Henley.

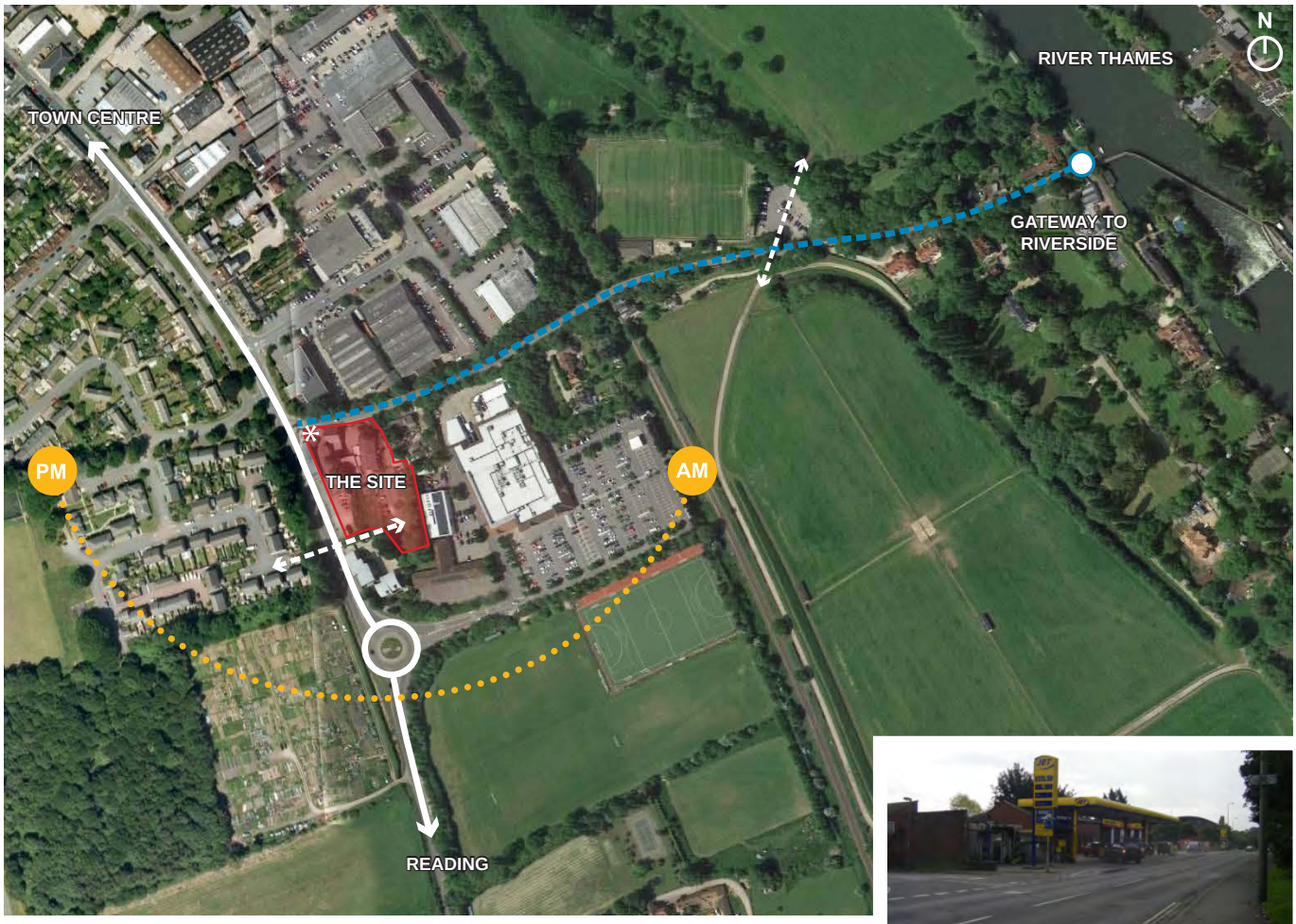
DESIGN APPROACH

The following sections outline the potential of this site to support alternative approaches to residential development. We illustrate two option studies each taking a different approach to the realisation of high quality place making designed to capture the charm and local distinctiveness of Henley on Thames.



OS SITE LOCATION PLAN (REFER TO APPENDIX A)

SITE ANALYSIS







EXISTING SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

As described earlier, the site is situated in a mixed-use area comprising retail, employment and housing.

Mill Lane is a road leading to the water's edge at Pool House where a wooden river walk leads across the Thames to Marsh Lock and the wider waterside environment. Mid way along Mill Lane is a public car park servicing Henley Town FC and Marsh Meadows. Along its Reading Road frontage there is access to bus stops and a pedestrian crossing leading into the residential estate to the west.

Henley Station and the town centre are 10–15 minutes walk from the site.

Refer to Appendix D for further site photographs.

DESIGN APPROACH: OPTION 1

This approach draws from the heritage and splendour of the larger buildings and houses around the outskirts of the town typified by “collegiate” squares and formally defined gardens. Reference is made for example to Shiplake College and the recently converted Perpetual House which use vernacular design and detailing to reflect the town’s historical stature.

In this option, low scale street frontage buildings connect to slightly larger scale behind, taking advantage of the levels change which combine to define three smaller formal spaces: along Reading Road, at the corner of Mill Lane and a small enclosed galleried space within the scheme.

The option as presented will offer between 50–60 units, in a mix of predominantly 1 bed and 2 bed apartments, with appropriate levels of amenity space and parking provision included.



PROPOSED VIEW FROM THE JUNCTION OF MILL LANE AND READING ROAD







PRECEDENT IMAGES



PROPOSED SITE PLAN – OPTION 1



BASEMENT PARKING PLAN – OPTION 1



PROPOSED MASSING – OPTION 1







PRECEDENT IMAGES

DESIGN APPROACH: OPTION 2

Henley has a history of prosperity due, in the 17th and 18th century to trade in glass, malt, brewing, timber, wool and grain. A number of historic buildings and structures in the town reflect this heritage and characteristic of the urban grain is larger built footprints set within courtyards behind smaller scale street front buildings.

This design approach draws upon that tradition and exploits site levels to accommodate a 3½ storey "Mill" building behind individual smaller scale street front buildings defining a useable and explorable sequence of gardens, mews and courtyard spaces.

Henley is also renowned for rowing and in particular the annual Royal Regatta which is a colourful and competitive celebration of the river. This creates an opportunity to capture in a unique contemporary manner the delight and beauty of the gabled architecture which typifies the town both alongside and at access points to the river.

The option as presented will offer between 50–60 units, in a mix of predominantly 1 bed and 2 bed apartments, with appropriate levels of amenity space and parking provision included.



PROPOSED VIEW FROM THE JUNCTION OF MILL LANE AND READING ROAD







EXISTING HENLEY-ON-THAMES RIVERSIDE BUILDINGS



PROPOSED SITE PLAN – OPTION 2



BASEMENT PARKING PLAN – OPTION 2



PROPOSED MASSING – OPTION 2







PRECEDENT IMAGES

LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT

The site lies alongside a key arterial route into Henley from Reading. Beyond the site within the AONB and further along the Reading Road are a combination of open green spaces, waterside meadows, structure and amenity planting within the residential neighbourhoods and avenue tree planting. A notable gap in this mature greenery exists along the site frontage where highly unattractive and partially obsolete industrial buildings sit.

Redevelopment of this land to provide residential accommodation will bring forward a key opportunity to enhance the landscape of this important setting. Our proposals anticipate measures including:

– Reading Road frontage set back to allow space for an avenue of semi mature tree planting within generous green borders.
– Building masses arranged around well designed garden spaces along the Reading Road frontage to invite attractive open views into and across the site.
– Introduction of useable garden and amenity spaces within the site both for private use and potentially accessible to the public within a potential extended site area.
– LAP situated to the southerly part of the site within a well defined and overlooked space.
– Private pocket gardens to a number of the ground floor units.
– Retention of several existing trees lying along the boundaries.





PRECEDENT IMAGES

SUSTAINABILITY

As illustrated earlier in this document, the site is in a sustainable location, within the built up area of Henley and on previously developed land. It is close to public transport links including 2 bus stops on Reading Road (within 100m of the site) and Henley train station which is about a 15 minute walk from the site, as is Henley town centre.

The development of this sustainable site for housing should therefore be encouraged. As highlighted earlier in the document, Henley is constrained in terms of the location of its housing development due to the Thames flood plain and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). AONB should be protected, being one of the highest landscape and scenic designations in the UK, and this is confirmed by the National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore it is particularly important that opportunities on previously developed land such as this are maximised.

Whilst it may be that some greenfield land is required overall, bringing forward sites within the built up area where possible should mean that further encroachment onto the Thames floodplain and onto areas of AONB could be minimised. This is the most sustainable approach to meeting the identified need for housing in Henley. We also consider that the potential traffic impacts arising from the redevelopment of this site, located on the Reading Road, would be far less than from the development of greenfield sites, fringing existing residential areas with narrow residential roads, therefore focussing development on site such as this represents the most sustainable approach from a transportation perspective.

The development would aim to meet policy requirements in respect of:

– The Code for Sustainable Homes, with the current Policy CSQ2 requiring at least Code Level 4;
– Securing energy demand from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources, insofar as this is suitable and viable for this particular site.

TRAFFIC, TRANSPORT & ACCESS

Our Transport Planning Consultants have carried out a scoping assessment of the site and have concluded that it is a good location with good access to the existing highway network. Guidance has been provided in respect of on-site parking provision and this has been taken into account in considering the overall capacity of the site.

The site is accessible to public transport in the form of local buses and its proximity to Henley Railway Station and this contributes to the overall sustainability of this location for residential development. The development of the site also offers a potential opportunity to improve pedestrian and cycling connections in the immediate area.

Our highways consultants have undertaken an initial scoping assessment of the site and are confident that an acceptable vehicular access can be provided and that residential development can be accommodated without generating unacceptable highway impacts that could not be appropriately mitigated.

FURTHER BENEFITS

Bringing forward this site for residential development carries with it a whole host of benefits, many of which are already highlighted in this document. We would emphasise that the immediate availability, deliverability and suitability of this site for residential development would pro-actively drive forward delivery of the homes the area needs, and in particular the provision of smaller 1 and 2 bedroom accommodation for which there is an identified need. The site would also make a contribution to affordable housing.

The site is under-used at present and makes only a small contribution to the economy of Henley and does not contribute to the visual amenity of the area. With development, the physical appearance of the site would be much improved, with benefits for the amenity of those living close by. A new housing development would be able to provide adequate communal and private amenity space as well as on site car parking and cycle parking spaces. The new residential properties would be designed to a high standard and to have no privacy, sunlight or daylight impact for future resident or neighbouring properties. Any redevelopment of the site for residential usage would take into consideration the guidelines available in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008.

As explained earlier, the redevelopment of this site would help to minimise the requirement to build on greenfield land outside of the existing built up area, and as such should be encouraged in principle.

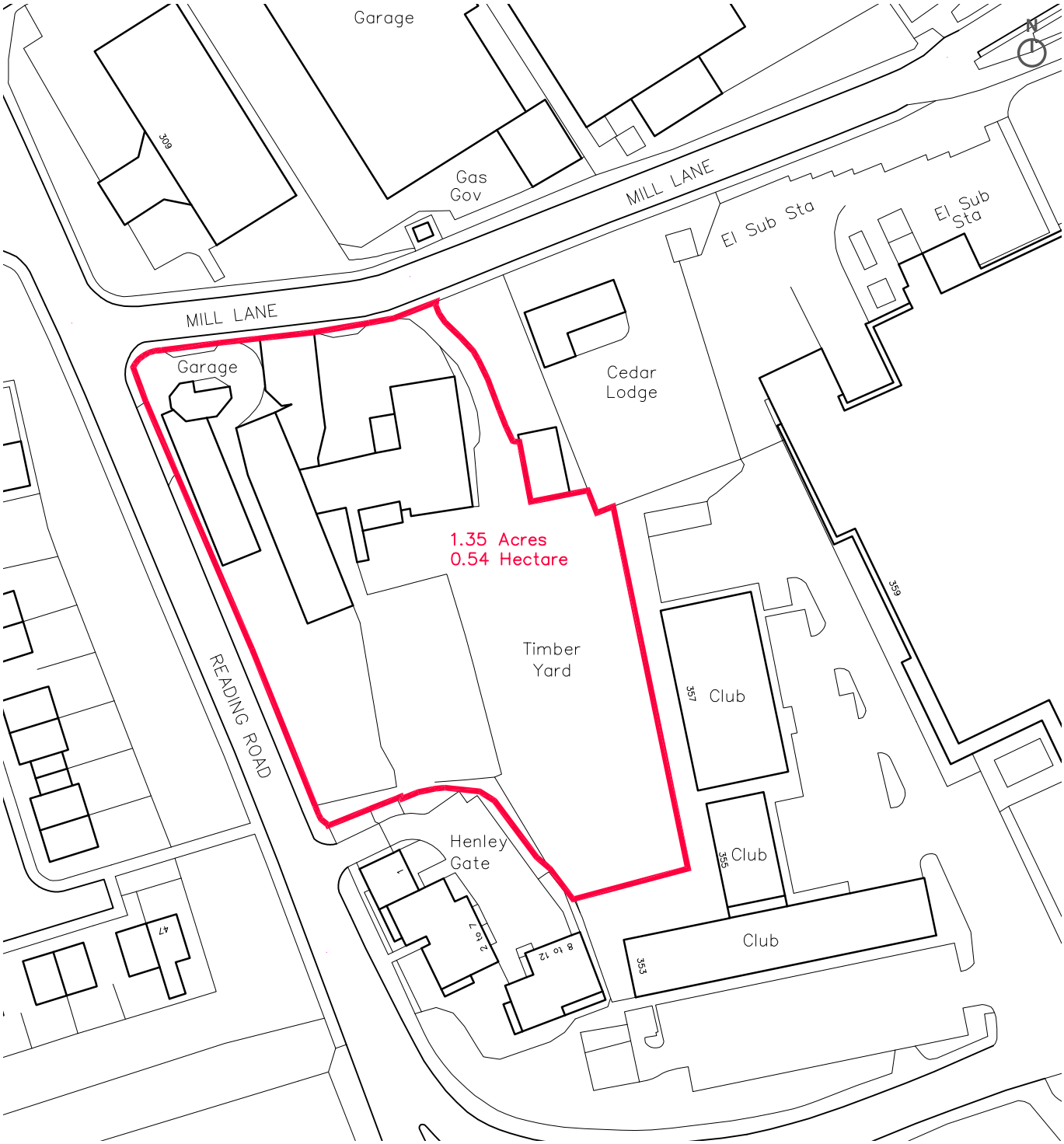
ADJACENT LAND

Further consideration has been given to wider development opportunities that may exist by bringing forward the development of this site for residential purposes. It is understood that the Town Council is exploring the possibility of relocating its sports facilities directly to the east of the site on to the sports pitches themselves. This would improve the way these facilities are used and avoid having to cross the road between the changing facilities and the sports pitches, something which is particularly undesirable for children.

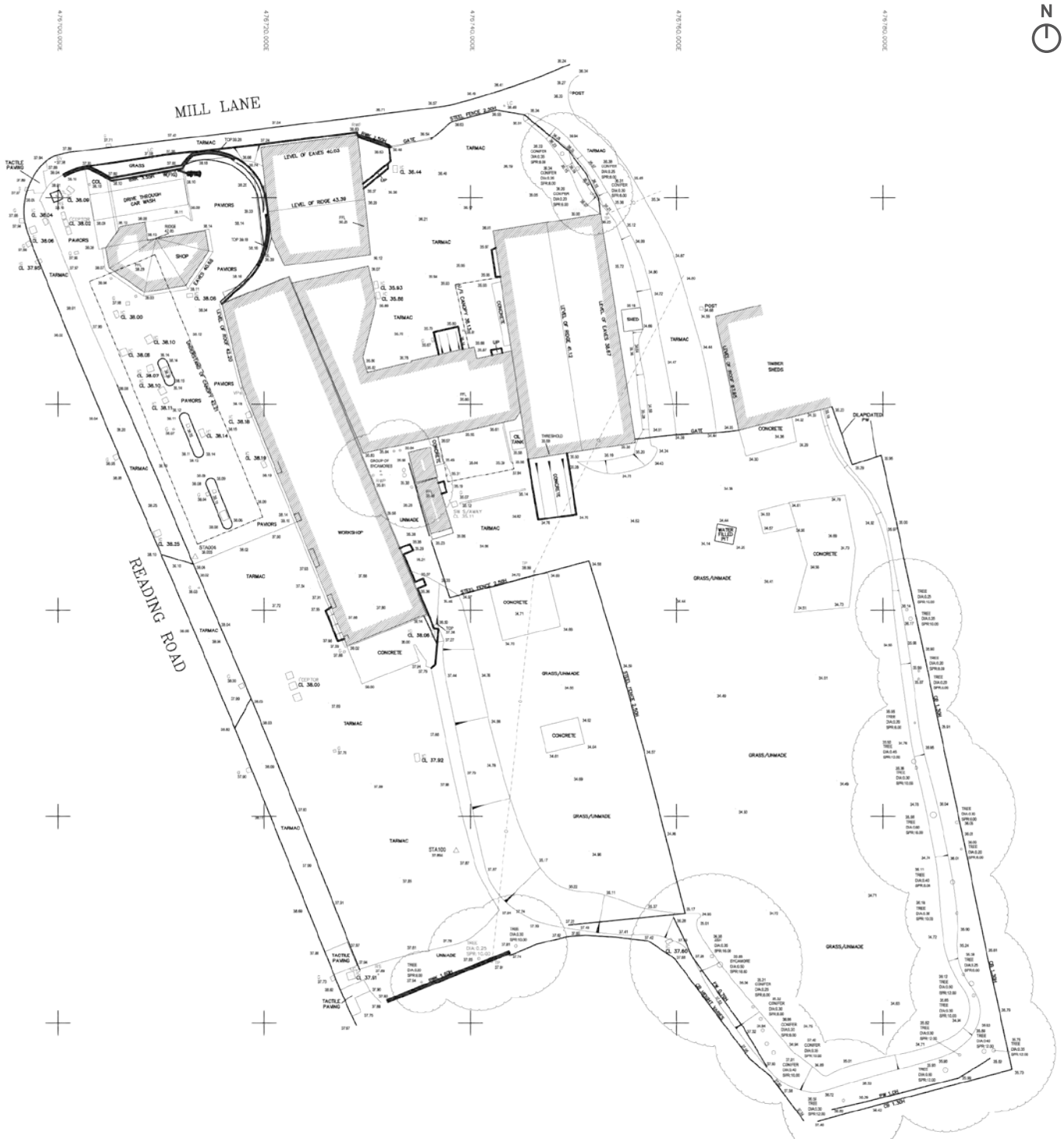
Subject to such land becoming available, these adjacent underdeveloped sites could be brought forward to enable the delivery of further residential units. Inland Homes confirms that it is happy to discuss the relationship between its site and the site of the sports pitches to ensure an appropriate development of the entire area can come forward in due course. A plan showing the potential extended site area is appended (Appendix C).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – OS SITE LOCATION PLAN (1:1000 @ A4)



APPENDIX B – SITE SURVEY PLAN (NOT TO SCALE)



APPENDIX C – POTENTIAL EXTENDED SITE AREA



OPTION 1



OPTION 2

APPENDIX D – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS






BRAKES
SUSPENSION
EXHAUSTS


JET
JET
Car wash
JetCard

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Architecture Urbanism Design

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