



Northstowe Phase 3A

Oakington Edge Landscape Setting & Military Lake Setting

Introduction and Purpose

This note sets out additional information and explanation about the size, location and nature of the landscape proposed between the new homes in Northstowe Phase 3A and the existing village of Oakington. In addition, the note explains the size and character of the space proposed between the retained Military Lake and the new homes around it.

Community feedback has identified a concern about the width and use of the landscaped area between Oakington and Northstowe, and the potential negative impact development may have on existing residents. Feedback has also shown a concern around the Military Lake, the space around it and how development will relate to it. In order to address these concerns and aid consideration of the outline planning application, this note brings together information already included within the application as well as new illustrative drawings that provide more detailed information.



- Phase 3A boundary
- Approximate extent of built development area

Aerial photograph taken circa May 2020



Homes
England

Masterplan Proposals

A landscaped area of strategic open space is proposed between the edge of Phase 3A and Oakington and is reflected in the submitted 3A planning application. This open space has been provided to respect the individual character and setting of Oakington, and to assist in retaining the setting to Oakington Conservation Area. The area comprises a wide linear green space with informal open space and enhanced ecological corridors, for the residents of both Northstowe and Oakington. The majority of the existing trees and woodland blocks along the Oakington edge have been retained, which provide structure to the space and ensure that the setting of the Conservation Area is respected. The adjoining sports hub contains formal sport provision and facilities.

The recreational facilities provided within the Phase 3A green spaces will serve the residents of Northstowe, Longstanton and Oakington. The Parameter Plans included within the planning application set the extent of development, and identify the Oakington edge as open space which will be a valuable asset to the new and existing communities.

The retained woodlands and extensive open space included along the eastern edge of the proposed development are reflected in the Illustrative Masterplan, which is presented in the Design and Access Statement and the Landscape Masterplan, which is presented in the Landscape Strategy. The proposals will:

- Improve the visual setting and landscape connections to Oakington,
- Locate development in a way that minimises impact. Existing tree and woodland groups are to be retained and enhanced to shield views through the green links.
- Limit building heights to 'up to 2 storeys' where development is closest to Oakington. These new homes will be located behind substantial existing tree belts.
- Land uses with activities likely to create higher levels of light spill are positioned away from Oakington (i.e. artificial surface sport pitches, car park etc.) to avoid any negative impact upon existing residents.
- Proposed allotments and community gardens ensure this multi-functional space does not become a barrier between existing and new communities.
- The landscape treatment would contribute towards effective visual separation and protect the privacy and amenity of potentially affected properties.

The strategic open space along the eastern edge of Northstowe will contain only open land, including allotments, ecology areas and attenuation ponds, which will provide a degree of 'breathing space' to the existing village whilst contributing towards effective linking between these communities with usable green space. This includes:

- Existing woodland blocks, scrub and grassland, as well as large Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) areas with existing and proposed Great Crested Newt ponds, perimeter woodland trail and links to/from surrounding existing Public Rights of Way (PROW).
- Provision of pedestrian and cycle routes. This would open up the site for public access and connect into the proposed movement network within the site, enabling existing and new communities to enjoy and learn about local historic and cultural assets such as the former windmill and enjoy the natural, ecology rich environment.
- The Oakington Edge forms part of a dark ecological corridor for bat commuting. These ensure that bats can continue to use the area for commuting and foraging. These will be designed to limit light spill into these areas and maximise continuity of these dark areas.

The Landscape Strategy sets out the Open Space Typologies proposed within the Oakington Edge greenway which includes:

- Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space
- Allotments and Community Gardens
- Formal frontages with properties set back from open space
- Opportunities for sensitive integration of imaginative and natural play zones with learning opportunities along informal footpaths
- Provision for Formal Play
- Mainly dry SuDS Zone with existing and proposed Great Crested Newt ponds potential for informal use
- Running and trim trail equipment
- Woodland educational trail and outdoor classroom opportunities
- Pocket park
- Retained pillboxes and heritage trail
- Links to existing PROW connecting with Oakington



Above: Illustration showing proposed treatment of the Oakington edge greenway (Extract from submitted Landscape Strategy, Figure 7.5)

The following images (including annotated photos, illustrative sections and plans) further explain the proposals and clarify distances between existing and new homes.



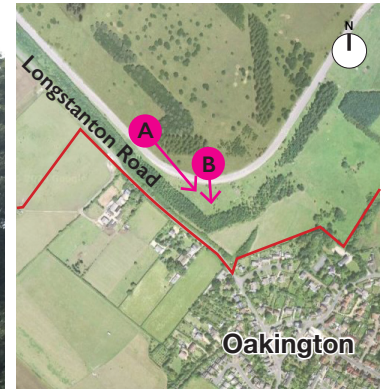
Illustrative masterplan showing connections and distances between areas of development

The landscape area between Northstowe Phase 3A and Oakington varies in width between 45m and 210m and the likely space between new and existing buildings generally exceeds 100 metres. In some locations, the separation between new and existing buildings exceeds 200m. This is sufficient to achieve valuable 'breathing space' between the settlements and maintain the identity of Oakington. Generous open space and retained trees will provide important amenity space for new and existing residents.

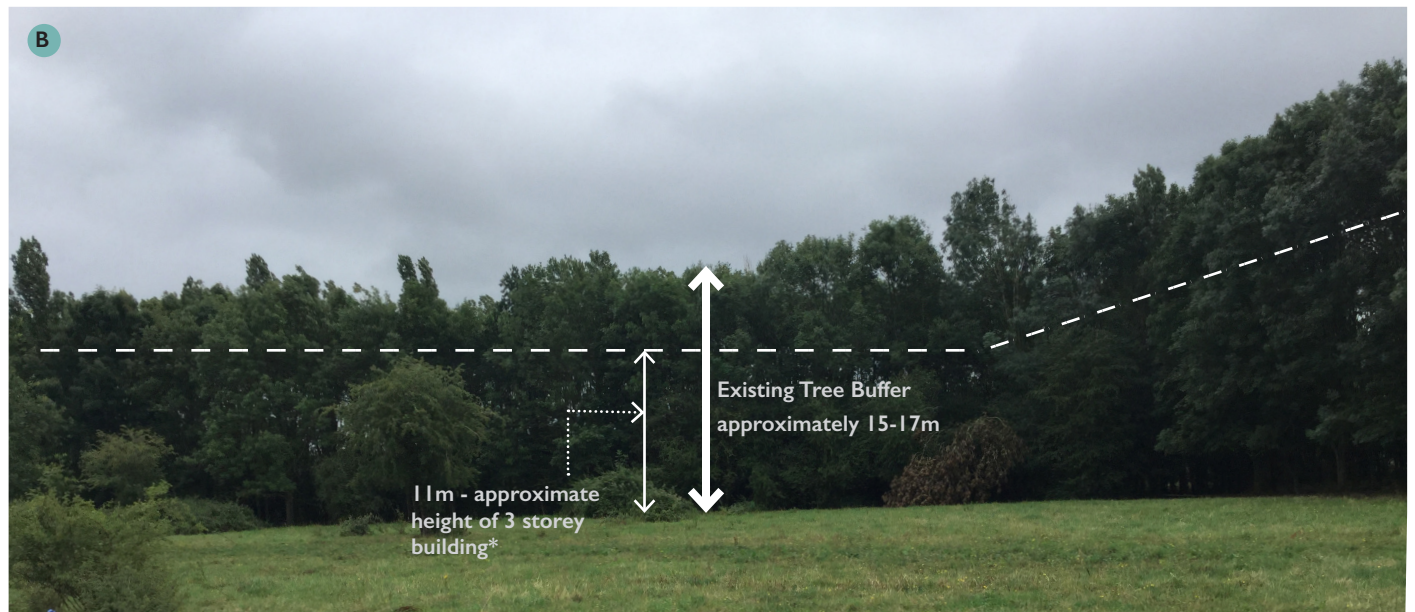
View from within the site looking towards Oakington (behind existing tree buffer)

The following two pages focus on the proposed maximum storey heights along the Oakington edge in relation to the existing tree belts. Five key view points from within the Phase 3A site have been selected for analysis, and the scale of the development can be clearly seen on the annotated photographs in comparison to the height of the existing tree belts. The view points have been selected from within the site due to the fact that the proposed dwellings will not be visible for the majority of the year if the view was to be reversed, i.e. from Oakington looking towards Northstowe (at eye level), with the exception of during the winter months where there is the potential for some glimpsed views. An aerial photograph of the existing tree belts in the winter months is included in the 'Technical References' section at the end of this note. For further information on the extent of the development parcels and the maximum heights of buildings, please refer to the Parameter Plans submitted as part of the Outline Application which include a specific Building Heights Parameter Plan that sets out the maximum heights of development across the phase. It is important to note that maximum storey heights are identified and in practice some or all buildings may be lower.

View from airfield perimeter road alongside Longstanton Road



Approximate tree heights illustrated alongside the approximate building heights of the proposed homes along this edge.



Approximate tree heights illustrated alongside the approximate building heights of the proposed homes along this edge.

Note*: Building heights include roofs

This page focusses on viewpoints looking towards Oakington Station Road from within the Phase 3A site boundary. As set out in the Building Heights Parameter Plan (Drawing No. 5709-OPA-3A-03-VI), the maximum height of development adjacent to the existing tree belt in this location is 2 storeys. These photos show the height of this development in comparison to the height of the existing tree belts.

View towards Oakington Station Road



Note*: Building heights include roofs

Landscape description of setting and existing nature of woodland

It is proposed to retain and manage the woodlands along the Oakington Edge. These woodlands are made up of the following characteristics:

- Broadleaved woodland plantation including woodland groups of varying widths (up to 55m wide) and height (between 15m – 17m).
- Species include Ash, Oak, Field Maple, Aspen, Lombardy Poplar, Hawthorn and Norway Maple.
- Open semi-improved grassland;
- Ponds; and
- Improved grassland with individual Oak trees.

The woodlands are all plantation woodlands and were planted by the military post 1970's. They are of limited tree diversity and provide limited ecological value. However, they are recognised as an important landscape feature as well as providing both physical and visual separation to the edge of Oakington. The woodlands in their existing condition allow limited glimpsed views towards the built-up edge of Oakington in winter conditions. In summer visibility is almost not existent as the trees form a solid screen.

As set out in the Environmental Statement (Appendix 7.3 Arboricultural Impact Assessment) the principal woodland groups adjoining the boundary with Oakington are identified as groups WG64, WG110 and WG71 and would be retained, protected and enhanced as part of the proposed Development.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are present within the Application Site and groups WG64 and WG110 are subject to a TPO, reference A7 and A8 which will be protected in accordance with BS5837:2012.

Summary of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

Chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement (ES) submitted with the Outline Planning Application for Phase 3A includes an assessment that has considered the visual impact of the development, with supporting information provided in Appendix 12. The assessment describes the mitigation measures for the Oakington Edge, including the maximum height limit of 2 storey development in the most sensitive locations, which will be located behind substantial natural buffers afforded by the existing tree belts found along this boundary. The assessment also describes how land uses with activities likely to create higher levels of light spill are positioned away from this edge (i.e. artificial surface sports pitches) which minimises visual light from the new development from within this space, as well as supporting the open dual function of the space as a dark ecological corridor for bat commuting. The sections illustrated later on the following pages illustrate how the existing tree belts will sit between the proposed homes in Northstowe, and the existing homes within Oakington.

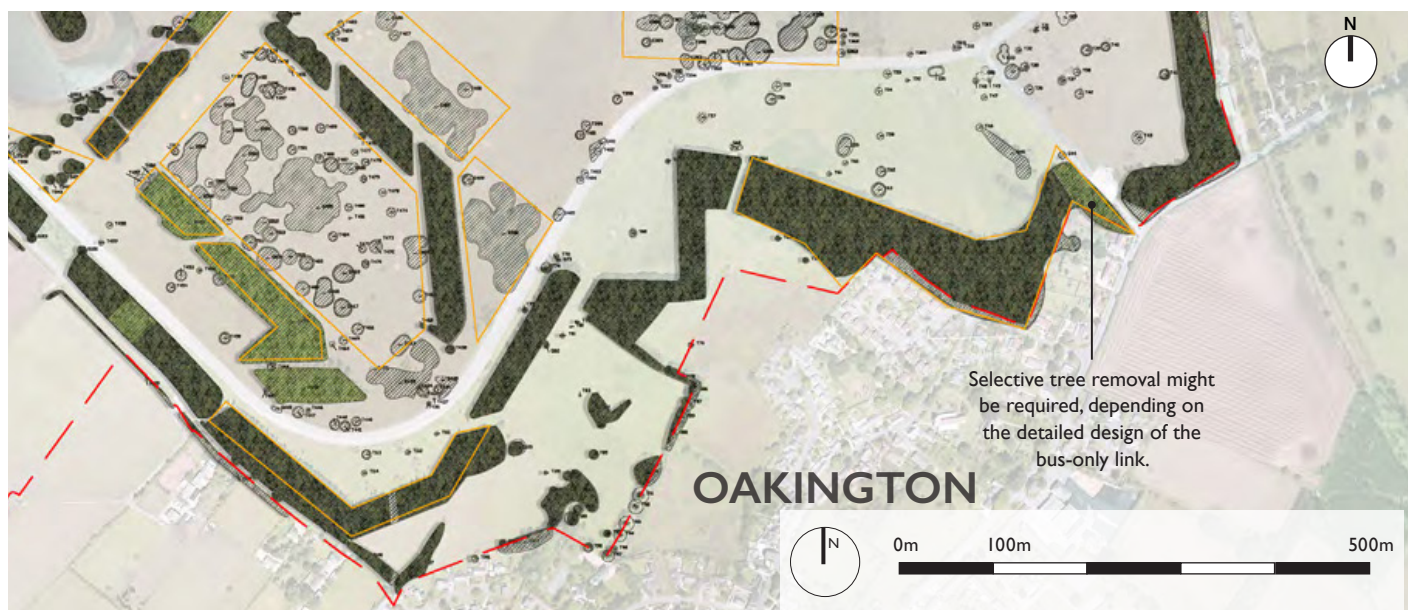
The proposed broad swathe of strategic open space along the eastern boundary of Northstowe Phase 3A would retain a significant distance between the existing and the new homes and reduce the potential to negatively influence the character and amenity of Oakington.




In the long term the maturing of any planting within the new greenway would further improve the visual separation between the proposed development and Oakington. Please refer to Chapter 12 of the ES for further information on the method and conclusions of the assessment.

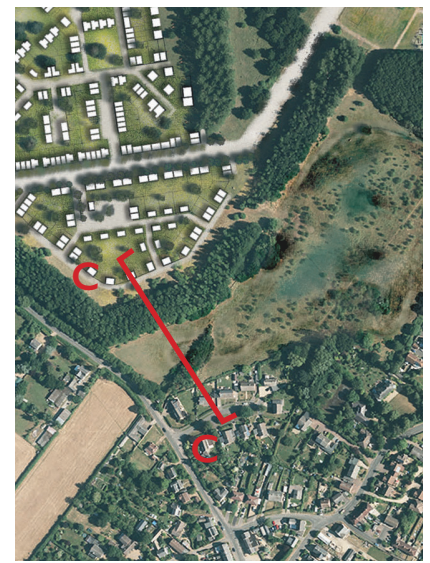
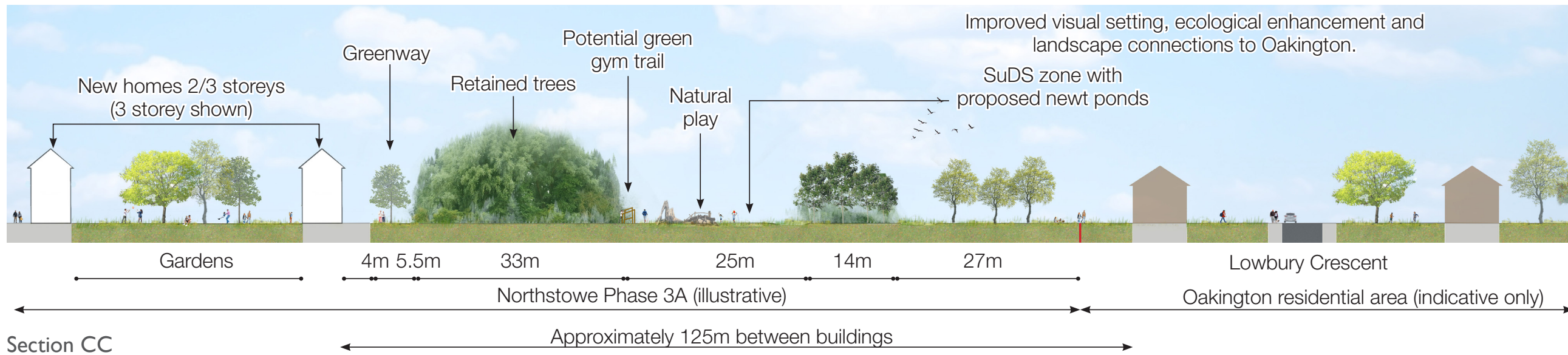
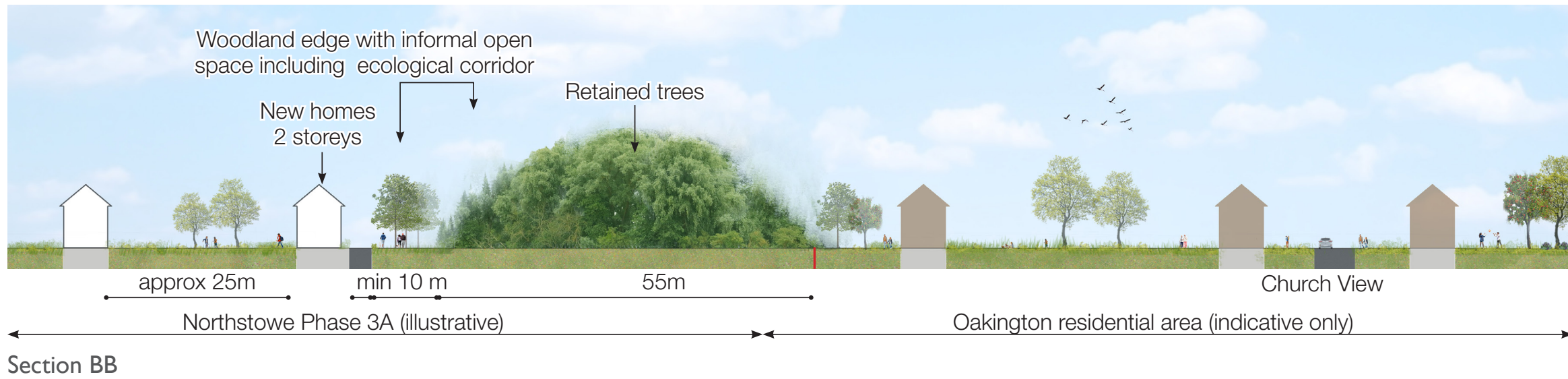
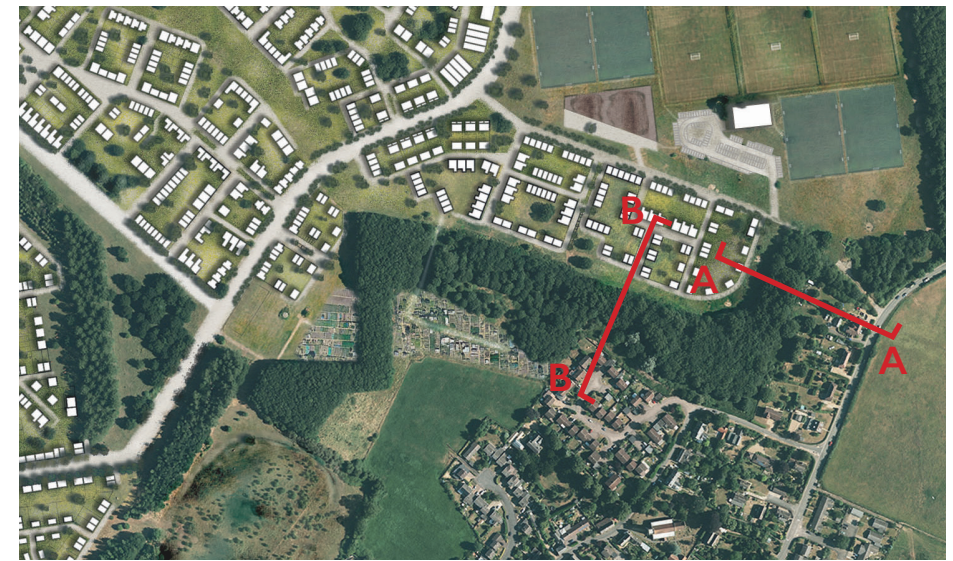
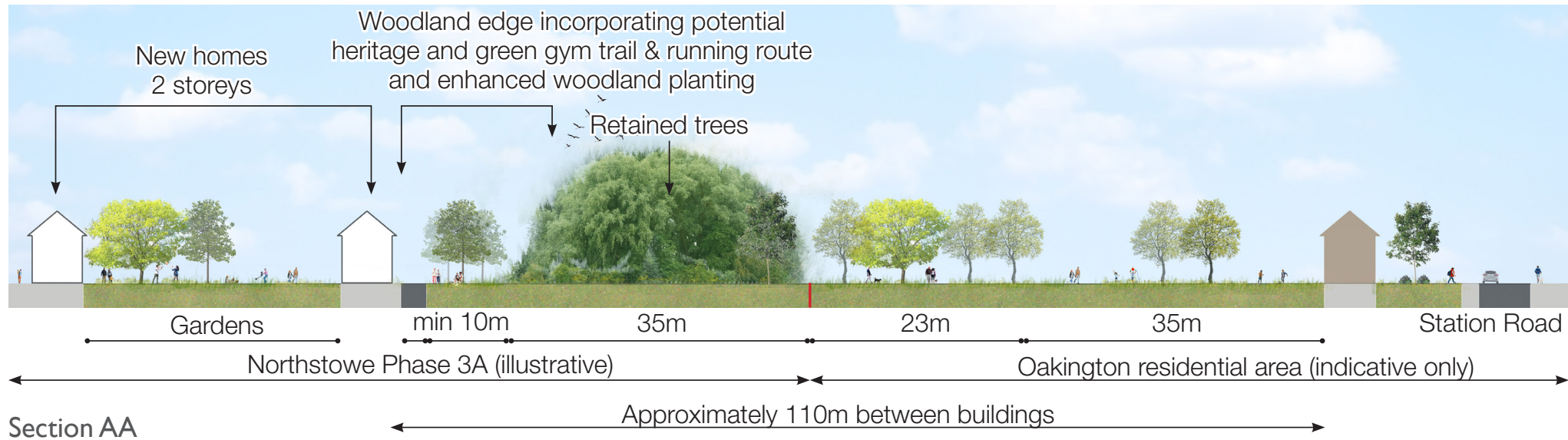
Management

South Cambridgeshire District Council is carrying out a Community Governance Review, which is separate to the planning application process. Homes England is committed to the long-term management and maintenance of open and communal spaces at Northstowe. It is intended that the green edge will be managed to a high quality as part of Northstowe, and will be retained as local green space to benefit existing and future communities, and maintain the identities of both Northstowe and Oakington.

Existing vegetation



- | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|---|---|---|--------------------------|
|  | Northstowe Phase 3A boundary |  | Existing Woodland Blocks to be Retained |  | Existing Scattered Trees |
|  | TPO Designation |  | Existing Woodland Blocks likely to be Removed | | |



Military Lake

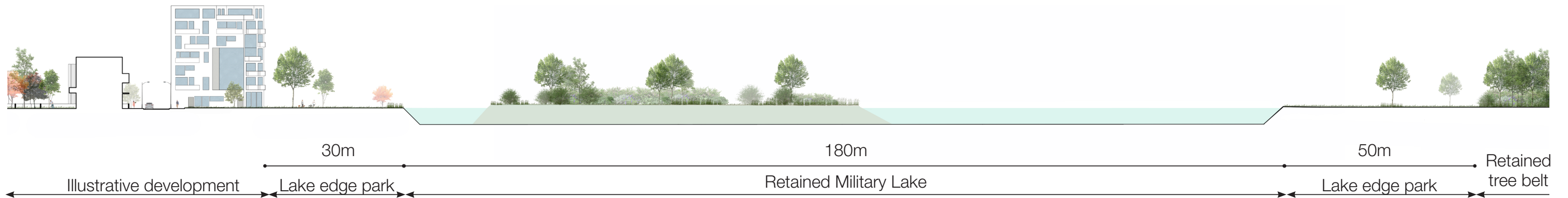
This page focusses on the retained Military Lake and the proposed open space and development around it. The lake is set within a large area of open space referred to in the Outline Application as the Military Lake Park. The diagram below illustrates the approximate size of this open space, which forms approximately 6.5ha of open space (including the Military Lake). In order to protect the ecology of the lake and allow for a habitat rich area of open space around it, development has been set back a minimum of 30m from the water's edge, with the exception the eastern corner of the lake where development sits slightly closer at around 20m. The existing lake is an ecologically rich habitat and will be retained as an important open space within Phase 3A. Walking and cycling routes will be accommodated within the Military Lake Park, however people will be unable to use the lake for recreational purposes, to ensure it retains its ecological value.



Illustrative masterplan showing size of open space around retained Military Lake.



Illustrative section location.



Section DD

Summary

We understand the concerns and comments of local residents and Oakington and Westwick Parish Council and hope that this document helps show that we have been carefully considering and addressing the concerns raised on privacy and overlooking and ensuring that the identity of Oakington remains. The green space has been designed with ecology at the core and the relationship to neighbours has been carefully considered.

Technical References

This note draws on the application material submitted for Application 20/02171/OUT. The following documents should be referred to for any further information on the topics discussed within this statement:

- Environmental Statement Volume 1 Main Report (ES Vol 1)
- Environmental Statement Volume 2 Figures (ES Vol 2)
- Environment Statement Volume 3 Appendices (ES Vol 3)
- Landscape Strategy Document

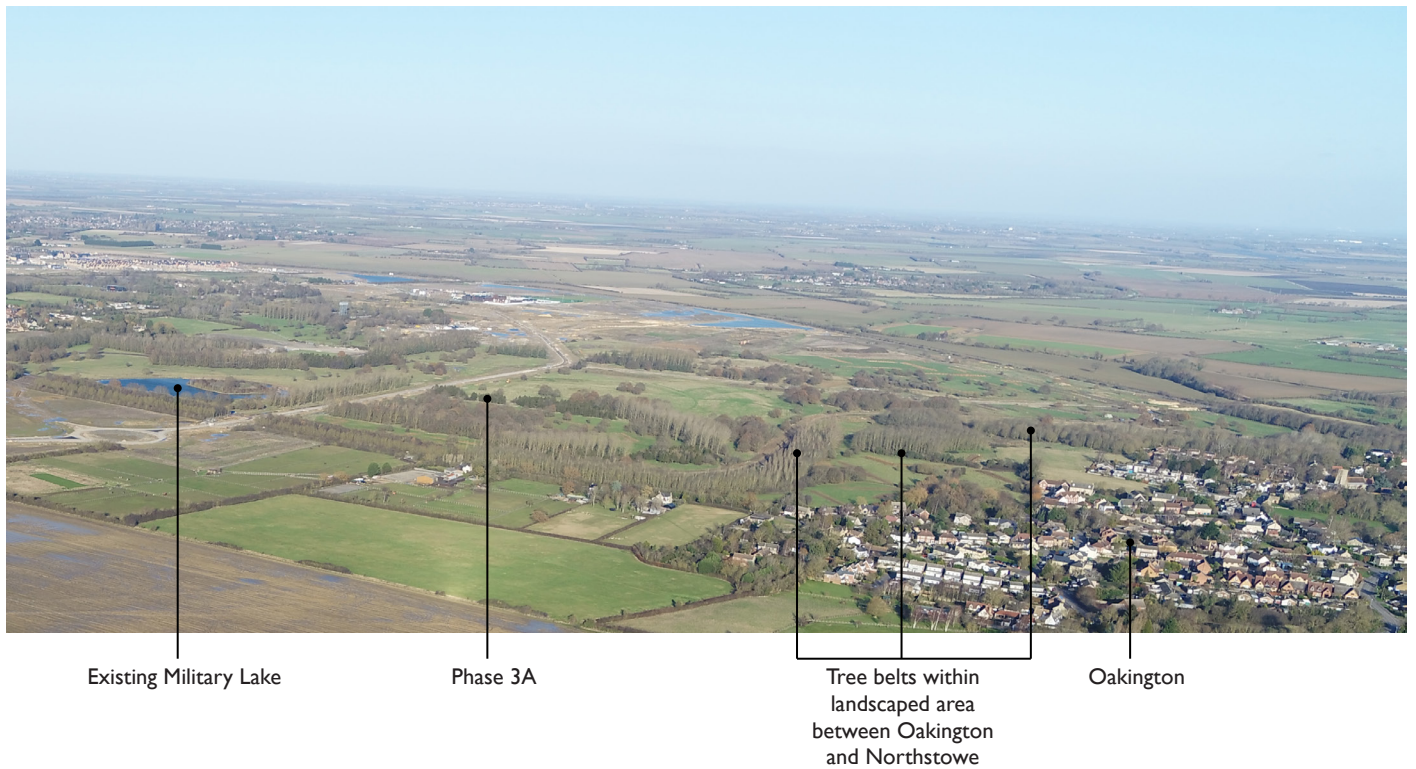


Photo above: Aerial view of site from the south east showing existing trees in Winter (December) 2019.



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