

SAHAM TONEY

Masterplanning Report

AECOM



FINAL REPORT

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Quality information

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Cover image Looking south to Richmond Road from St. George's Church tower © Saham Toney Parish Council.

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St. George's Church



Introduction

01

1. Introduction

This section provides context and general information to introduce the project and its location.

1.1. Introduction

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM has been commissioned to provide masterplanning support to Saham Toney Parish Council. The support is intended to provide masterplanning assistance to the group's work in producing the Saham Toney Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan (STNP).

1.2. Objective

The objectives of this report were agreed with Saham Toney Parish Council at the outset of the project. This report provides masterplanning guidance on 6 sites selected for housing allocation in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. For each, it examines different site layout options and gives strategic recommendations on how it might best accommodate new development.

1.3. Process

Following an inception meeting and a site visit, AECOM and Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members carried out a high-level assessment of the village.

The following steps were agreed with the group to produce this report:

- Initial site visit;
- Desktop research;
- Analysis of the sites and their surroundings;
- Preparation of masterplanning options for the sites;
- Preparation of a draft report, subsequently revised in response to feedback provided by the STNP Work Group acting on the behalf of Saham Toney Parish Council; and
- Preparation of hand sketches of the preferred masterplanning options;
- Submission of a final report.

This work follows a Site Options Assessment (SOA) completed by AECOM for Saham Toney Parish Council in June 2019, and a Site Selection process (SSP) undertaken by the STNP Work Group. The detailed findings of the SOA and SSP are given in separate reports¹ and will not be the subject of this report.

1.4. Area of Study

Location

Saham Toney is a small village and civil parish in the district of Breckland in Norfolk. It borders Watton to the south and is located 30km west of Norwich, 20km north of Thetford, and 30km south-east of King's Lynn. The main settlement is set in a mostly flat landscape of open fields and wraps around a lake, Saham Mere. This geography constrained the expansion of

the settlement, which essentially follows a ring pattern around Saham Mere together with mostly linear development along roads radiating out towards neighbouring settlements.

The parish has a village hall and a school, Parkers CE Primary School. The Grade I listed St George's Church serves as the parish church. Other amenities include a pub, the Old Bell Inn, as well as Lowe's caravan park and the associated café. The village has several bus stops located along Richmond Road and Page's Lane, with services to Watton, Dereham, and Swaffham. Other services and retail offers can be found in the neighbouring town of Watton.

Some of the most prominent listed buildings and landmarks include:

- Saham Mere
- St George's Parish Church (Grade I)
- The Old Rectory (Grade II)
- The Old Bell Inn freehouse

At the 2011 census the resident population was 1,507 in the parish.

¹ Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment report, AECOM June 2019; Saham Toney Neighbourhood Development Plan Site Selection Report, August 2019.



Figure 1: Saham Toney Parish area, with parish boundary shown in red (source: Google Earth).



House in village vernacular style on Chequers Lane



Local Character Analysis

02

2. Local Character Analysis

This section outlines the broad physical, historical and contextual characteristics of Saham Toney. It analyses the pattern and layout of buildings, hierarchy of movements, topography, building heights and roofline, and parking. Images in this section have been used to portray the built form of Saham Toney.

2.1. Introduction

The array of listed buildings reflects the architectural diversity of Saham Toney. There are 11 listed buildings within the parish boundaries of Saham Toney, including the Grade I listed St Georges Parish Church.



Figure 2: Terraced houses on Richmond Road.



Figure 3: Tower of the Grade I listed St Georges Parish Church.



Figure 4: Houses with flint and red brick façades and clay pantile roofs.



Figure 5: Eastward view along Chequers Lane.



Figure 6: View of the open space in the village centre from the church tower (©Saham Toney Parish Council).



Figure 7: Saham Toney Village sign at the junction of Richmond Road and Pound Hill.

2.2. Local Character Analysis

2.2.1. Streets and Public Realm

The organic, meandering layout of the main streets is mainly informed by the presence of Saham Mere, with streets in the centre forming a loose ring around the lake with large open fields between Saham Mere and the north of the village ring. Richmond Road and Cley Lane connect the village core directly with the centre of Watton. Many residential streets built in the 20th and 21st centuries follow loop and cul-de-sac layouts. Streets in the village centre are usually narrow and framed by front hedges, ditches, and mature trees. Many roads lack pavements on one or both sides. The relatively low number of streets in Saham Toney is complemented by a partial network of pedestrian pavements.

2.2.2. Pattern and Layout of Buildings

Settlement patterns in Saham Toney can be characterised as dispersed and linear. There remains a high degree of openness to the open countryside and green spaces.

The core of the village developed in a loose ring around Saham Mere formed by Richmond Road, Pound Hill, Pages Lane, Chequer's Lane, and Bell Lane. Most buildings are one- and two-storey detached and semi-detached houses, with a small minority of terraced houses. Recesses of varying depths in the building line enable the formation of large front gardens or yards. South of Saham Mere and along Hills Road, house frontages, hedges, and mature trees form a relatively enclosed rural environment. The rest of the parish, including the ring of roads north of Saham Mere, is more sparsely settled; large gaps between small building clusters enable long views towards Saham Mere and the open countryside.

20th century cul-de-sac developments are located south of Bell Lane and west of Pound Hill. These areas are characterised by more regular plot sizes and shapes and a repetition of similar building plans, forming a more homogeneous built environment.

Outside the built-up areas, settlement patterns are characterised by dispersed farmsteads. An unbuilt ribbon of open fields and green spaces, including a golf club, prevents coalescence with the built-up area of Watton to the south.

2.2.3. Building Height and Roofline

Building heights vary between one and two storeys. Typically, the roofline is pitched and punctuated by gables, dormers, and chimneys. There is a diversity of roof and gable orientation, height, and materials - the most common traditional forms being clay pantiles, glazed pantiles, and slate.

2.2.4. Design

The Saham Toney Village Design Guide, is a material consideration in planning decisions, and provides information on the village vernacular as well as detailed guidance on acceptable design solutions.

2.2.5. Car Parking

Car parking solutions vary depending on the location. Most roads in the village are too narrow for on-street parking. Most properties have on-plot parking in the form of front yards or side garages. In most properties the presence of parked cars is partially concealed by front hedges, gardens, or low walls.

2.2.6. Open Space & Landscape

Most of the parish is composed of open fields, and the fields around Saham Mere form an attractive nucleus of open space at the heart of the village visible from Pound Hill, Pages Lane, and Chequers Lane. Due to the linear settlement pattern of large areas of the village, many properties back onto open fields with long views towards the countryside. Richmond Park Golf Club occupies a sizeable part of the green gap situated between the southern edge of the parish and the larger settlement of Watton.

The Saham Toney Parish Landscape Character Assessment, (Lucy Batchelor-Wylam, January 2019), provides a comprehensive description of landscape features and sensitivities, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.



Figure 8: The main settlement of Saham Toney, with roads in black lines and parish boundaries in red lines (source: Google Earth).



Arable farmland, looking east towards Chequers Lane



Masterplanning

03

3. Masterplanning

This section proposes masterplanning approaches for the sites, providing key points for each option.

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the main development constraints for each site, how each could be developed, and how many homes they would accommodate. The process undertaken to inform these studies was:

- Site visits to understand the spatial context;
- Urban design analysis of opportunities and constraints;
- A review of the Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment and Site Selection Reports; and
- Preparation of indicative layout plans for each site, based on urban design best practice and local context, and adhering to the policies of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

The 6 locations, comprising 4 greenfield and 2 brownfield sites, are allocated for housing and open space purposes in the emerging Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan (Policies 2G, 2I, 2J, 2K, 2L, and 2Q). Sites STNP 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are allocated for a total of 48 houses, while Site STNP 16 is allocated for a total of 17 houses in conjunction with the neighbouring site that has

already received outline planning approval for 5 houses. The allocation policies for the sites include provisions for:

- Flood risk attenuation at Site STNP 1;
- Additional footpaths to serve sites STNP 1, 7, and 16.

Different design options were created for each site with the following parameters agreed with the Neighbourhood Plan Work Group, acting on behalf of the Parish Council:

Site STNP 16

The site is to be studied in conjunction with the neighbouring site that has already received outline planning permission for 5 houses (Ref. 3PL/2018/0563/O). The two sites are to be treated as one, with design options fully compliant with Neighbourhood Plan policies. Layout options are to be left to the discretion of the designer.

Sites STNP 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7

- Base Case option: a total of 48 houses, fully compliant with Neighbourhood Plan policies, including an area of no above-ground development on Site STNP 5 and an area designated for surface water attenuation on Site STNP 1.
- Option 1: a total of 72 houses with a reconfiguration of the site boundaries for STNP 1, such that it links directly with STNP 6, and removal of the “no above-ground

development” policy constraint on STNP 5. This option was studied to address an increased capacity proposed by the landowners. It retains 10 houses on STNP 1 and a minimum of 8 houses on STNP 7, for viability reasons.

- Option 2: a total of 35 houses, with STNP 1 as the Base Case, and the remaining 25 houses on sites STNP 4 and 7. Fully compliant with Neighbourhood Plan Policies. STNP 5 and 6 removed from development. A minimum of 8 houses on STNP 7 is retained for development. This option was studied to address a consultation representation by the Local Highways Agency with respect to those sites.

The housing numbers allocated by Neighbourhood Plan policies for each site are summarised in the following table:

Site Number	Area (Ha)	Total # Houses	Min # Affordable
STNP 16*	1.13*	17*	4*
STNP 1	1.06	10 max	2
STNP 4	0.81	13 max	3
STNP 5	1.01	12 max	3
STNP 6	0.46	5 max	0
STNP 7	0.56	8 max	0

*In combination with adjacent site with outline application for 5 homes.



Figure 9: Site STNP 1 southern section © Saham Toney Parish Council.



Figure 10: Site STNP 4 looking south from Page's Lane © Saham Toney Parish Council.



Figure 11: Site STNP 5 looking south-east from northern corner of site © Saham Toney Parish Council.



Figure 12: Sites STNP 6 looking east from western corner of site © Saham Toney Parish Council.



Figure 13: Site STNP 7 looking east from farm yard © Saham Toney Parish Council.



Figure 14: Site STNP 16 entrance to Richmond Lane © Saham Toney Parish Council.

3.2. Site Analysis - Site STNP 16

The joint site that comprises STNP 16 and the neighbouring site with outline planning permission (Ref. 3PL/2018/0563/O) is a 1.13 ha greenfield site located off Richmond Road to the south-western edge of the village.

The site is located at the interface between the built-up area of Saham Toney and the open countryside to the west of the village. It contains a mix of grassland and trees, and borders a woodland area to the south. It is close to a County Wildlife Site known as the Grove. To the south-west of the site, a large area of woodland and open grassland will become publicly accessible amenity land as a condition of the site's development. The combined development site area is not affected by any tree preservation orders.

Previous site investigation showed the groundwater level to be close to the surface, and as a result conditions that apply to the existing outline planning permission to mitigate any impact of that, together with increased risk of surface water flooding on adjacent land, shall apply to the combined development site.

The site contains a greenhouse, but its boundaries exclude the existing residential property known as Richmond Hall, which is

located less than 30 metres south of the site boundaries and shares the same landowner. The site adjoins the back gardens of houses that front Richmond Road, but is well-screened from them by mature trees and hedges. The west of the site adjoins a large area of accessible open space and amenity land.

Most buildings in the vicinity are two storey detached house that front Richmond Road. Parkers C of E Primary School is within a 10-minute walking distance from the site entrance.

The site has one access located on Richmond Lane, a narrow lane contained within the section of the site with outline planning permission that connects it with Richmond Road to the east. There is currently no pavement where the site fronts the west of Richmond Road, however there is potential to improve existing pedestrian continuity and safety along the road, and provision of a pedestrian pavement in that location is a condition of the existing outline planning permission. A safe pedestrian crossing to join the footway along the east of Richmond Road would also be beneficial, subject to further studies. There are also opportunities to connect the site with the proposed open amenity land to the west of the built-up area. The nearest bus stop on Richmond Road is within a 3-minute's walking distance of the site entrance.



Key

- Site STNP 16 boundaries
- Site granted outline permission
- Ancient and/or broadleaved woodland
- Hedges and tree cover
- Water
- High surface water flood risk
- Medium surface water flood risk
- Low surface water flood risk
- Buildings
- Greenhouse to be demolished or relocated off-site, subject to agreement with owner
- Roads
- ⇄ New pedestrian footpath (condition of existing outline permission)
- ⇄ Richmond Lane to be widened and resurfaced
- ⊙ Proposed main site access
- ⊙ Proposed pedestrian access to amenity land
- ⊙ Existing vehicle access to neighbouring properties from Richmond Lane
- ➔ Potential overlooking from neighbouring properties
- Proposed amenity land
- Missing pedestrian crossing

Figure 15: Site STNP 16 analysis - combined development site and proposed amenity land (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 0100031673). Inset map: Policy Map 2Q: STNP 16 site location plan (© Saham Toney Parish Council).

3.3. Masterplanning - Site STNP 16

Four masterplan options were created for the joint area formed of Site STNP 16 and the adjacent site with outline planning permission (Ref. 3PL/2018/0563/O). The main design characteristics common to all four options are described below.

3.3.1. Design Principles and Features

Common to All Options

Housing mix

- A total of 17 new houses, including a minimum of 4 affordable units, to be distributed across the joint area of study.

Building patterns and layout

- Buildings to front the new roads with slight variations in setbacks and enclosure to extend the village's informal fabric.
- No buildings to front Richmond Hall directly to minimise privacy issues with existing residents.
- Existing greenhouse to be removed, subject to agreement with landowner.
- Architectural details and construction materials to demonstrate an intelligent understanding of the local vernacular, and to comply with Policy 3A¹ and the Village Design Guide² (n.b. to be reflected in the elevation drawings for the final option).

Landscaping and vegetation

- Retention of most existing trees and hedges to retain the wooded character of the site entrance. Any loss of trees to be offset by the planting of new native species, in accordance with Policy 7F.
- Reinforcement of hedges and vegetation at site edges to retain privacy of existing neighbouring properties.
- Green buffers to be planted at interface with open countryside to mitigate impact of development on sensitive landscape.
- Green buffers to be planted at edges visible from Richmond Hall to retain privacy.
- Buildings to be a sufficient distance from trees and hedges to allow for their future growth.
- The provision of a large area of publicly accessible amenity land to the south-west of STNP 16 is a condition of the Neighbourhood Plan site allocation policy 2Q.

Streets and public realm

- Richmond Lane to be widened and extended with an organic layout.
- Reconfiguration of site entrance to improve visibility and safety at junction with Richmond Road. Possible junction safety improvements to include vegetation trimming, new road markings, and advanced road signage.

- Creation of a footway on the western side of Richmond Road to improve pedestrian safety and connectivity, as conditioned by the existing planning permission.
- New pedestrian crossing to be introduced near the site entrance.
- New public footpath to connect the site with the public amenity land to the south-west.

Building height and roofline

- New buildings to be 2-storeys maximum and to keep with the height of neighbouring buildings.
- There should be a mix of 1 and 2-storey houses; the former will especially better suit older people.
- New roofline to show variations in pitch and orientation to extend the informal vernacular character of the village.

Car Parking

- Vehicle parking to be provided in the form of garages and front yard parking.
- Edges of front yards to be softened by landscaping in the form of hedges, trees, and low-level planting to avoid a vehicle-dominated character.

¹ Refer to Policy 3A of [Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036](#)

² Refer to [Saham Toney Village Design Guide](#)



Figure 16: View of Site STNP 16.



Figure 17: View of Richmond Road from the site entrance showing the missing western footway.

3.3.2. Masterplanning Option 1

- Outline permission site layout partially retained.
- 12 new houses proposed on Site STNP 16; 5 new houses proposed on outline permission site.
- Building line pulled away from the southern edge to mitigate effect of new buildings on sensitive landscape and existing trees.
- Retention of most existing trees and hedges; any loss to be offset by the planting of new vegetation.

Key	
	Site STNP 16 boundaries
	Site granted outline permission
	Ancient and/or broadleaved woodland
	Retained mature trees
	New or reinforced hedges and tree cover
	Water
	Existing buildings
	Existing roads
	Amenity land
	Proposed land for residential development
	Proposed play area
	Proposed roads
	Proposed footways
	Widened section of Richmond Lane
	Proposed dropped kerbs/ pedestrian crossing
	Site access with junction safety improvements
	Proposed footway on west side of Richmond Road
	Proposed footpath to amenity land
	Proposed pedestrian access to amenity land
	Existing vehicle access to neighbouring properties from Richmond Lane
	Proposed garages
Proposed 1-storey houses:	
	- 1 bedroom
	- 2 bedrooms
	- 3 bedrooms
Proposed 2-storey houses:	
	- 2 bedrooms
	- 3 bedrooms
	- 4+ bedrooms
A	Affordable housing units



Figure 18: Site STNP 16 and outline permission site Option 1 masterplan (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

3.3.3. Masterplanning Option 2

- 10 new houses proposed on Site STNP 16; 7 new houses proposed on outline permission site.
- Lower housing density on Site STNP 16 to lower impact on sensitive landscape at village edge; offset by higher housing density on outline permission site.
- Building line pulled away from southern and western edges to mitigate effect of new buildings on sensitive landscape.
- Retention of fewer existing trees and hedges; any loss to be offset by the planting of new vegetation.

Key

	Site STNP 16 boundaries		Proposed footway on west side of Richmond Road
	Site granted outline permission		Proposed footpath to amenity land
	Ancient and/or broadleaved woodland		Proposed pedestrian access to amenity land
	Retained mature trees		Existing vehicle access to neighbouring properties from Richmond Lane
	New or reinforced hedges and tree cover		Proposed garages
	Water		Proposed 1-storey houses:
	Existing buildings		- 1 bedroom
	Existing roads		- 2 bedrooms
	Amenity land		- 3 bedrooms
	Proposed land for residential development		Proposed 2-storey houses:
	Proposed play area		- 2 bedrooms
	Proposed roads		- 3 bedrooms
	Proposed footways		- 4+ bedrooms
	Widened section of Richmond Lane		Affordable housing units
	Proposed dropped kerbs/ pedestrian crossing		
	Site access with junction safety improvements		



Figure 19: Site STNP 16 and outline permission site Option 2 masterplan (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

3.3.4. Masterplanning Option 3

- 12 new houses proposed on Site STNP 16; 5 new houses proposed on outline permission site.
- Creation of a central courtyard on Site STNP 16 with trees to increase opportunities for informal socialising; limited informal parking tolerated.
- Building line pushed closer to southern edge.
- Retention of most existing trees and hedges; any loss to be offset by the planting of new vegetation.



Figure 20: Example of a courtyard arrangement in Poundbury, Dorchester. Note: front yard and garage (private) parking should be used in this instance instead of courtyard parking.

Key

	Site STNP 16 boundaries		Proposed footway on west side of Richmond Road
	Site granted outline permission		Proposed footpath to amenity land
	Ancient and/or broadleaved woodland		Proposed pedestrian access to amenity land
	Retained mature trees		Existing vehicle access to neighbouring properties from Richmond Lane
	New or reinforced hedges and tree cover		Proposed garages
	Water	Proposed 1-storey houses:	
	Existing buildings		- 1 bedroom
	Existing roads		- 2 bedrooms
	Amenity land		- 3 bedrooms
	Proposed land for residential development	Proposed 2-storey houses:	
	Proposed planted central courtyard area		- 2 bedrooms
	Proposed roads		- 3 bedrooms
	Proposed footways		- 4+ bedrooms
	Widened section of Richmond Lane	A	Affordable housing units
	Proposed dropped kerbs/ pedestrian crossing		
	Site access with junction safety improvements		



Figure 21: Site STNP 16 and outline permission site Option 3 masterplan (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

3.3.5. Masterplanning Option 4 (Preferred Option)

- Site STNP 16 boundaries amended; total area (combined with outline permission site) decreased to 1.05 ha (net loss of 0.08 ha compared to Options 1-3).
- Extent of amenity land to be amended to reflect modified boundaries for Site STNP 16 (net gain of 0.08 ha compared to Options 1-3).
- 11 new houses proposed on Site STNP 16; 6 new houses proposed on outline permission site.
- Site STNP 16 buildings to adopt a linear pattern to decrease impact of development on landscape.
- Retention of most existing trees and hedges; any loss to be offset by the planting of new vegetation.

Key			
	Site STNP 16 boundaries		Proposed footway on west side of Richmond Road
	Site granted outline permission		Proposed footpath to amenity land
	Ancient and/or broadleaved woodland		Proposed pedestrian access to amenity land
	Retained mature trees		Existing vehicle access to neighbouring properties from Richmond Lane
	New or reinforced hedges and tree cover		Proposed garages
	Water	Proposed 1-storey houses:	
	Existing buildings		- 1 bedroom
	Existing roads		- 2 bedrooms
	Amenity land		- 3 bedrooms
	Proposed land for residential development	Proposed 2-storey houses:	
	Proposed play area		- 2 bedrooms
	Proposed roads		- 3 bedrooms
	Proposed footways		- 4+ bedrooms
	Widened section of Richmond Lane	A	Affordable housing units
	Proposed dropped kerbs/ pedestrian crossing		
	Site access with junction safety improvements		



Figure 22: Site STNP 16 and outline permission site Option 4 masterplan (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 0100031673).

3.4. Site Analysis - Sites STNP 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7

Because of their proximity to one another, the 5 sites located in the north of Saham Toney are studied together to form a 3.88 ha group. The group is formed of:

- Site 1 Grange Farm, a 1.1 ha brownfield site located south of Chequers Lane;
- Site 4, a 0.8 ha greenfield site located west of the junction of Pound Hill and Page's Lane;
- Site 5, a 1 ha greenfield site located east of Pound Hill;
- Site 6, a 0.5 ha greenfield site located east of the junction of Pound Hill and Page's Lane; and
- Site 7 Page's Farm, a 0.6 ha brownfield site located north of Page's Lane.

Grassland forms the majority of the surface of the sites. Natural constraints include mature trees and hedgerows, however the sites remain highly exposed to views from neighbouring properties, the south of the village, and the open countryside. Views towards the church tower from Pound Hill and as glimpsed from the area of the Hills Road-Chequers Lane junction must be retained, as defined in Policy Map 7B. The sites located south of Pound Hill open up to the large unbuilt area within the village ring and offer long distance views towards Saham Mere and the south of the village (designated as Key View 4 in the Neighbourhood Plan). The areas along Chequers Lane, Page's Lane, and the north of Site 7 are subject to high flood risks from surface water. The sites are partially bound by drains in various states of maintenance and hedges. The area is not affected by any tree preservation orders.

Sites 1 and 7 contain agricultural buildings and structures in various conditions. The buildings on Site 1 are still in use as a pig farm, however those on Site 7 appear abandoned.

The sites adjoin or face existing residential properties on Page's Lane, Old Hall Close, Pound Hill, and Chequers Lane. Site 7 is adjacent to and visible from Page's Place, a Grade II listed house. Neighbouring buildings are detached and semi-detached houses no higher than 2-storeys. Page's Lane and Chequers Lane are dominated by small clusters of houses, whereas Site 4 adjoins a larger residential area centred around the Oval. The other boundaries adjoin open fields.

All the site entrances are located within a 10-minute walk of Parkers C of E Primary School on Pound Hill.

The sites have direct access to Pound Hill, Page's Lane, and Chequers Lane, rural roads with no designated on-street parking. The southern side of Pound Hill has a footway that connects to the village centre, however the roads lack footways on many sections. There is no direct access to off-street paths that connect to the village or the surrounding countryside. The nearest bus stops are located on Pound Hill and Page's Lane.

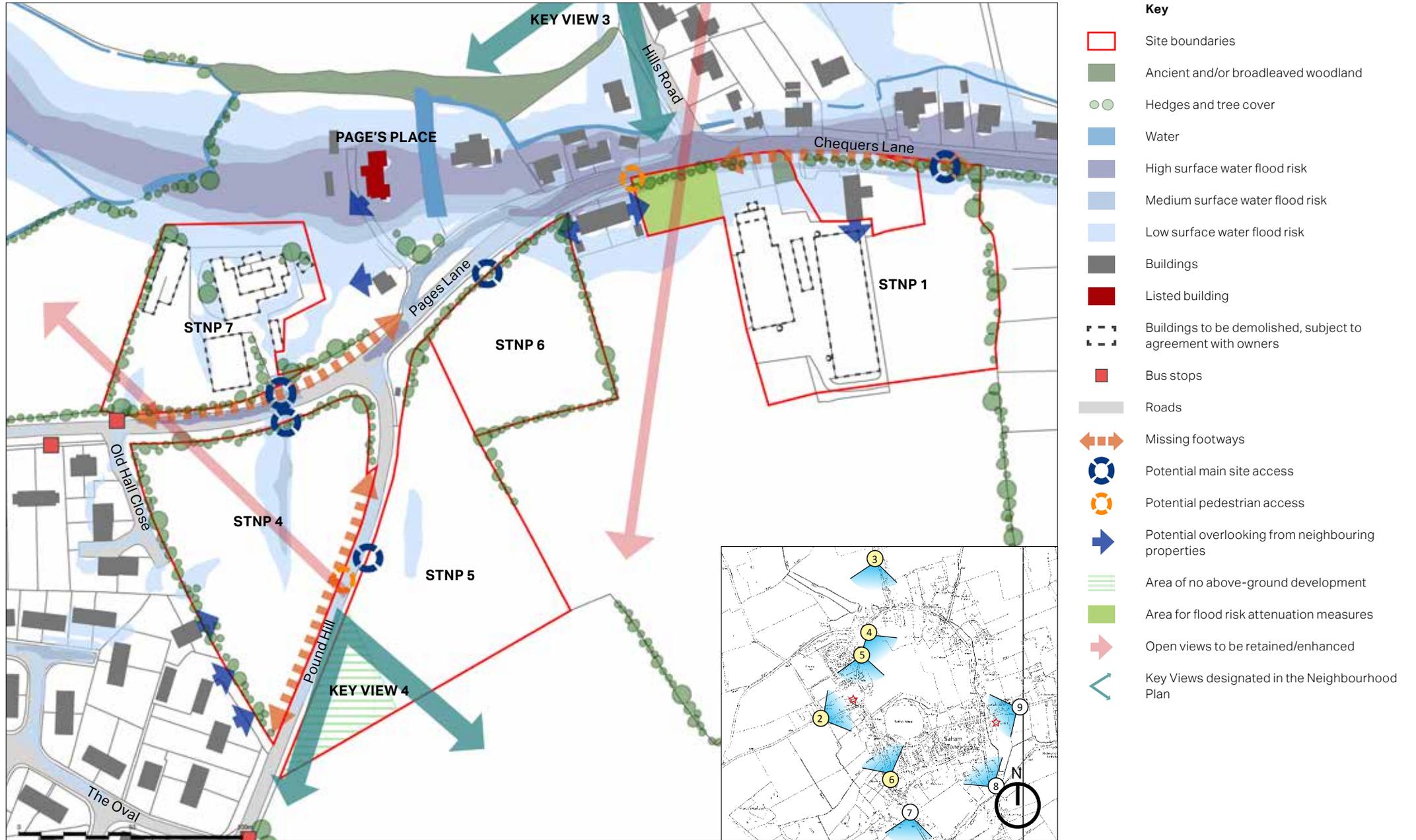


Figure 23: Sites STNP 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 analysis (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 0100031673). Inset map: Policy Map 7B: Key views (© Saham Toney Parish Council).
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3.5. Masterplanning - Sites STNP 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7

Three masterplan options were created for the joint area formed by Sites STNP 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7. The design features common to all three options are described below.

3.5.1. Design Principles and Features Common to All Options

Building patterns and layout

- No building to be sited in high surface flood risk areas. A minority of residential areas will however be sited in low surface flood risk areas due to the pressure to satisfy housing requirements for each site. Additional flood mitigation measures to be provided.
- Buildings to front the new roads with slight variations in setbacks and enclosure to extend the village's informal fabric.
- New houses sited away from Page's Place to reduce impact on historic setting.
- Building layout to avoid obstruction of protected Key Views.
- Existing farm buildings on Sites STNP 1 and 7 to be removed.
- Architectural details and construction materials to demonstrate an intelligent understanding of the local vernacular and to be sympathetic to the neighbouring listed building.

Landscaping and vegetation

- Retention of most existing trees and hedges to retain the rural character of the setting. Any loss of trees to be offset by the planting of new native species.
- Restoration of existing ditches to improve drainage and decrease flood risks.
- Reinforcement of hedges and vegetation at interfaces with existing neighbouring properties to retain privacy.
- Green buffers to be planted at interface with open countryside to mitigate impact on sensitive landscape.
- Vegetation to be reinforced at edges of Sites STNP 4, 5, 6, and 7 visible from Page's Place to mitigate impact of development on historic setting.
- Site STNP 4 to feature a landscaped "green corridor" between Page's Lane and Pound Hill that incorporates flood mitigation features and retains the long, open vista from Pound Hill north-west towards Ashill.

Streets and public realm

- New roads with footways to be built with an organic layout and to enable southward views towards Saham Mere from Page's Lane, Pound Hill, and Chequers Lane.
- Street layout to exclude possibility of extension into adjacent non-allocated land. Only Site STNP 1 should retain agricultural-only access to adjacent farmland.

- Reconfiguration of junction between Page's Lane and Pound Hill to improve safety and decrease speeding. Potential traffic calming measure could include kerb extensions, traffic islands, and additional signage, subject to more detailed engineering studies.
- Creation of new footways along site edges with Page's Lane and Pound Hill.
- New publicly accessible footpaths to offer new views towards Saham Mere to the south.
- New pedestrian accesses on Pound Hill to improve connectivity and pedestrian accessibility.

Building height and roofline

- New buildings to be 1-storey high (preferably) on Sites STNP 1 and 5, and 2-storeys maximum elsewhere to retain Key Views and preserve the setting of Page's Place.
- New roofline to show variations in pitch and orientation to extend the informal vernacular character of the village.

Car Parking

- Vehicle parking to be provided mainly in the form of garages and front yard parking.
- Edges of front yards to be softened by landscaping in the form of hedges, trees, and low-level planting to avoid an vehicle-dominated character.



Figure 24: View of Site STNP 1 from the church tower (©Saham Toney Parish Council).

3.5.2. Masterplanning Base Case

The Base Case option has been designed to fully comply with Neighbourhood Plan requirements, although additional flood risk measures would be required for residential areas located in low surface water risk areas. The main characteristics are summarised below:

- A total of 48 new houses to be distributed according to the table opposite.
- A total of 0.96 ha of new open space, including play area, to be distributed across the sites due to the inclusion of green areas for flood risk attenuation measures and the requirement to retain a Key View.
- Design to be fully compliant with Neighbourhood Plan policies.
- Creation of green spaces on Sites STNP 1 and 4 with areas for flood risk attenuation.
- Creation of an area of no above-ground development on Site STNP 5 with low-level planting.
- Additional flood attenuation measures to be provided for residential areas on Sites 4, 5, and 7 located in low surface water flood risk areas.
- Building line pulled away from Page's Place and Pound Hill to retain views towards the church tower and the historic setting of Page's Place.
- Retention of most existing trees and hedges; any loss to be offset by the planting of new vegetation. New low-level planting added in places where open views are to be retained.

Site #	STNP 1	STNP 4	STNP 5	STNP 6	STNP 7
# Houses	10	13	12	5	8

Key

-  Site boundaries
-  Ancient and/or broadleaved woodland
-  New or reinforced hedges and tree cover
-  New low-level soft landscaping
-  Water
-  Existing buildings
-  Listed building
-  Existing roads
-  Proposed land for residential development
-  Proposed open space
-  Proposed play area
-  Proposed roads
-  Proposed footways
-  Proposed junction traffic calming and safety improvements
-  Proposed dropped kerbs/ pedestrian crossing
-  Proposed Page's Lane road widening
-  Main site access
-  Proposed footway along existing roads
-  Proposed footpath with views towards Saham Mere
-  Proposed pedestrian access
-  Proposed gate agricultural vehicle-only access to field south of Site STNP 1
-  Ditches to be restored
-  Open views to be retained/enhanced
-  Key Views designated in the Neighbourhood Plan

- Proposed garages
- Proposed 1-storey houses:**
- 1 bedroom
- 2 bedrooms
- 3 bedrooms
- Proposed 2-storey houses:**
- 2 bedrooms
- 3 bedrooms
- 4+ bedrooms
- A** Affordable housing units
- A** Area of no above-ground development
- B** Area for flood risk attenuation measures

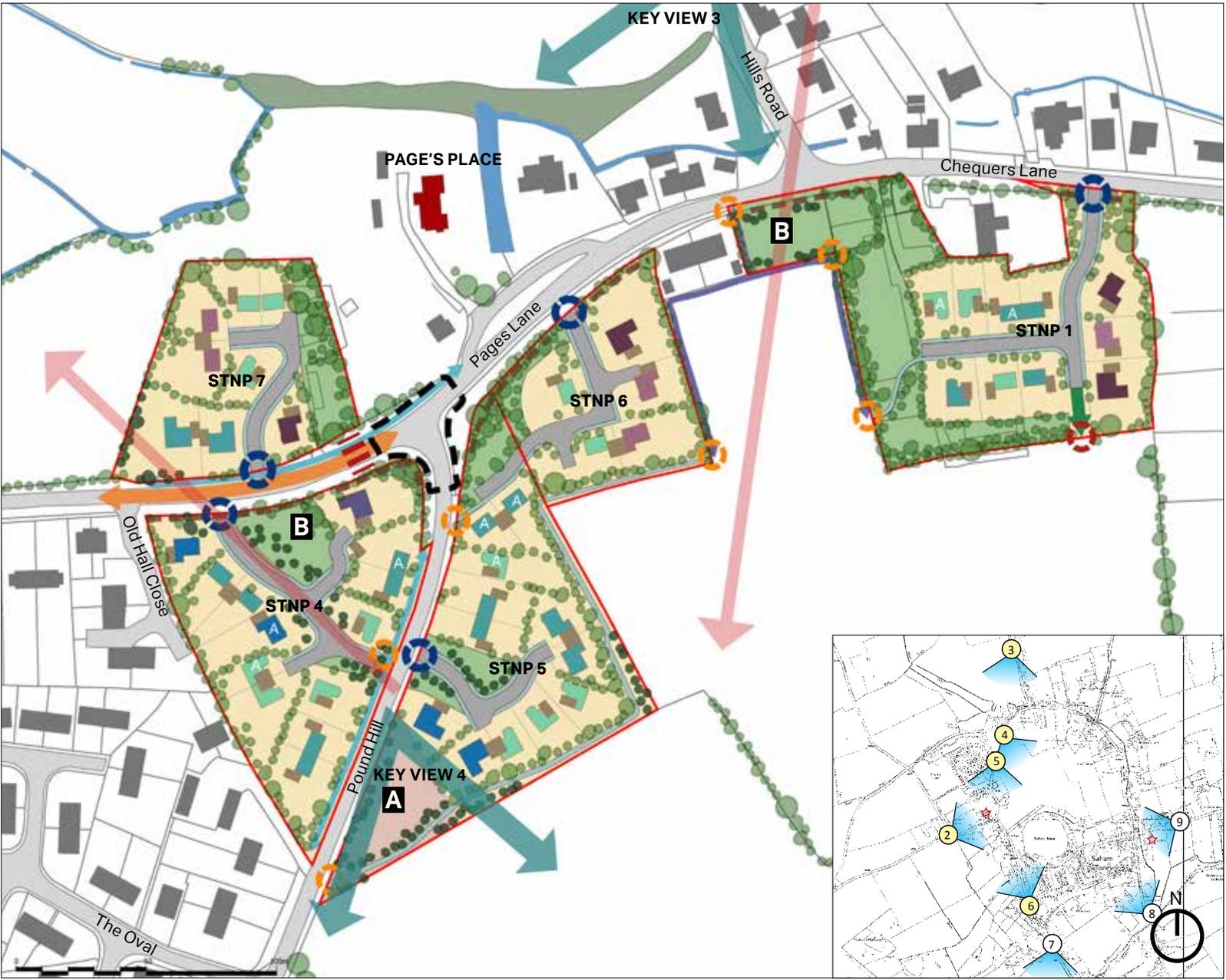


Figure 25: Sites STNP 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 Base Case masterplan (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 0100031673). Inset map: Policy Map 7B: Key views (© Saham Toney Parish Council).

3.5.3. Masterplanning Option 1

Option 1 mainly seeks to maximise the number of new houses across the sites to a total of 72. This number can be accommodated across the sites but this option involves potential drawbacks in terms of landscape and heritage sensitivity, open space provisions, and flood risks. It responds to a proposal for increased capacity put forward by the owners of sites STNP 4-7. The main characteristics are summarised below:

- A total of 72 new houses to be distributed according to the table opposite.
- A total of 0.79 ha of new open space to be distributed across the sites due to the inclusion of green areas for flood risk attenuation measures and the requirement to retain a Key View.
- Site STNP 1 to form a 1.21 ha site contiguous with Site STNP 6, with a road connecting both sites.
- Creation of a footpath connecting sites STNP 5 and 6 with views towards Saham Mere to the south.

Construction on some areas of low surface water flood risk required to meet total housing target of 72 units, assuming flood risk mitigation can be adequately provided.

- Replacement of area of no above-ground development with housing on Site STNP 5.

- Additional flood attenuation measures to be provided for residential areas on all sites located in low surface water flood risk areas.
- Building line pushed closer to Page’s Place and Pound Hill to meet total housing target of 72 units, resulting in higher impact on views, the historic setting of Page’s Place, and sensitive landscape.
- Retention of most existing trees and hedges; any loss to be offset by the planting of new vegetation. New low-level planting added in places where open views are to be retained.

Site #	STNP 1	STNP 4	STNP 5	STNP 6	STNP 7
# Houses	10	18	22	10	12

Key

-  Site boundaries
-  Ancient and/or broadleaved woodland
-  New or reinforced hedges and tree cover
-  New low-level soft landscaping
-  Water
-  Existing buildings
-  Listed building
-  Existing roads
-  Proposed land for residential development
-  Proposed open space
-  Proposed roads
-  Proposed footways
-  Proposed junction traffic calming and safety improvements
-  Proposed dropped kerbs/ pedestrian crossing
-  Proposed Page's Lane road widening
-  Main site access
-  Proposed footway along existing roads
-  Proposed footpath with views towards Saham Mere
-  Proposed pedestrian access
-  Proposed gate agricultural vehicle-only access to field south of Site STNP 1
-  Ditches to be restored
-  Open views to be retained/enhanced
-  Key Views designated in the Neighbourhood Plan

- Proposed garages
- Proposed 1-storey houses:**
- 1 bedroom
- 2 bedrooms
- 3 bedrooms
- Proposed 2-storey houses:**
- 2 bedrooms
- 3 bedrooms
- 4+ bedrooms
- A** Affordable housing units
- A** Area for flood risk attenuation measures

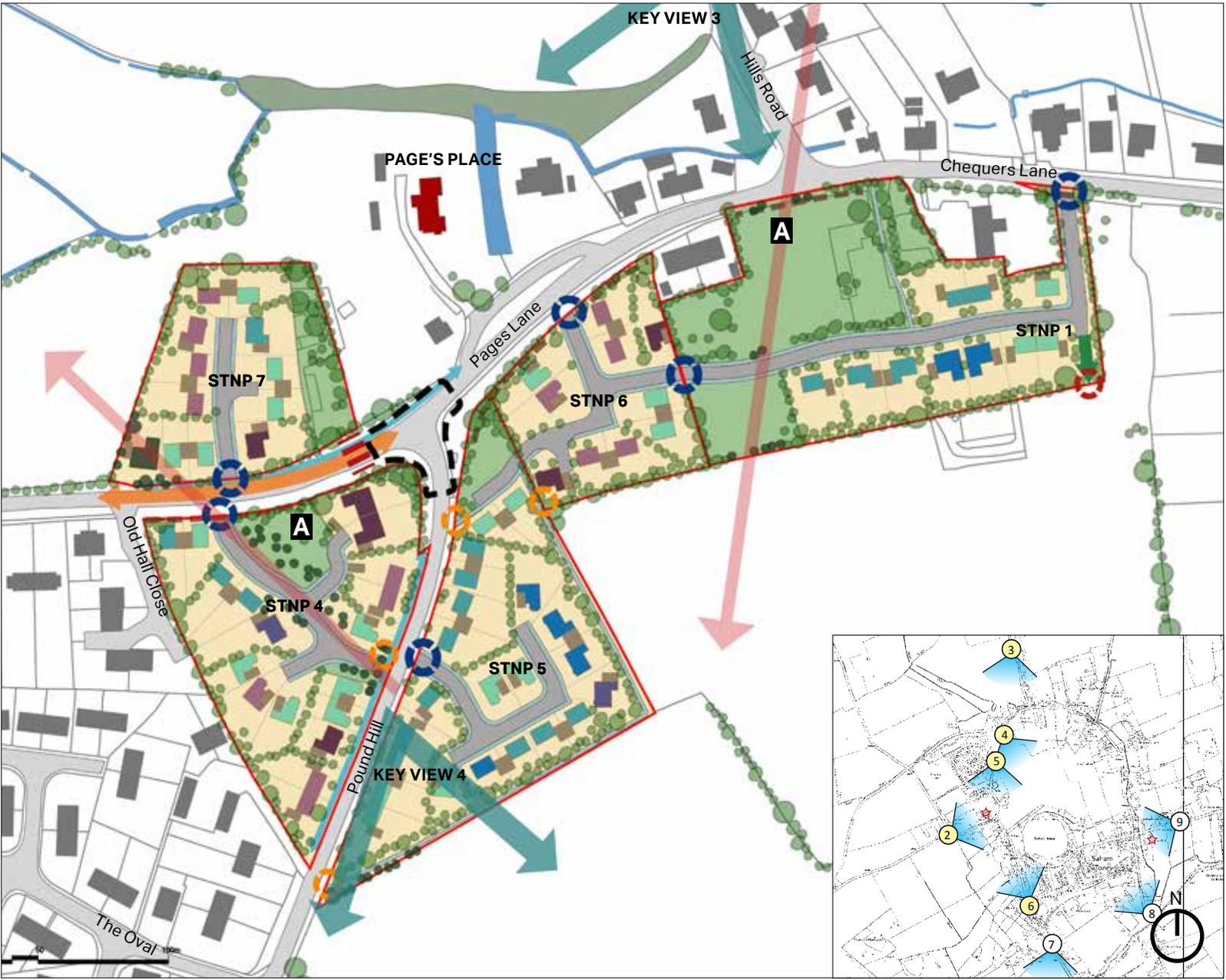


Figure 26: Sites STNP 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 Option 1 masterplan (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 0100031673). Inset map: Policy Map 7B: Key views (© Saham Toney Parish Council).

3.5.4. Masterplanning Option 2

Option 2 reduces the number of new houses across the sites to a total of 35. It seeks to address concerns raised by the Local Highways Authority in its site assessments and comments to the pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan. This lower number can be accommodated on just Sites STNP 1, 4, and 7, leaving Sites 5 and 6 undeveloped. This option presents more advantages in terms of landscape sensitivity, open space requirements, and flood risks, but provides housing numbers that are significantly below the Neighbourhood Plan targets. The main characteristics are summarised below:

- A total of 35 new houses to be distributed according to the table opposite.
- A total of 0.66 ha of new open space to be distributed across the sites due to the inclusion of green areas for flood risk attenuation measures and the requirement to retain a Key View.
- Creation of a green space on Site STNP 1 with an area for flood risk attenuation.
- Site STNP 5 and 6 to remain undeveloped.
- Building line pulled away from Page's Place and Pound Hill to retain views towards the church tower and the historic setting of Page's Place.
- Additional flood attenuation measures to be provided for residential areas on Sites 4 and 7 located in of low surface water flood risk areas.
- Retention of most existing trees and hedges; any loss to be offset by the planting of new vegetation. New low-level planting added in places where open views are to be retained.

Site #	STNP 1	STNP 4	STNP 5	STNP 6	STNP 7
# Houses	10	17	0	0	8

Key

-  Site boundaries
-  Ancient and/or broadleaved woodland
-  New or reinforced hedges and tree cover
-  New low-level soft landscaping
-  Water
-  Existing buildings
-  Listed building
-  Existing roads
-  Proposed land for residential development
-  Proposed open space
-  Proposed roads
-  Proposed footways
-  Proposed junction traffic calming and safety improvements
-  Proposed dropped kerbs/ pedestrian crossing
-  Proposed Page's Lane road widening
-  Main site access
-  Proposed footway along existing roads
-  Proposed footpath with views towards Saham Mere
-  Proposed pedestrian access
-  Proposed gate agricultural vehicle-only access to field south of Site STNP 1
-  Ditches to be restored
-  Open views to be retained/enhanced
-  Key Views designated in the Neighbourhood Plan

- Proposed garages
- Proposed 1-storey houses:**
- 1 bedroom
- 2 bedrooms
- 3 bedrooms
- Proposed 2-storey houses:**
- 2 bedrooms
- 3 bedrooms
- 4+ bedrooms
- A** Affordable housing units
- A** Area for flood risk attenuation measures

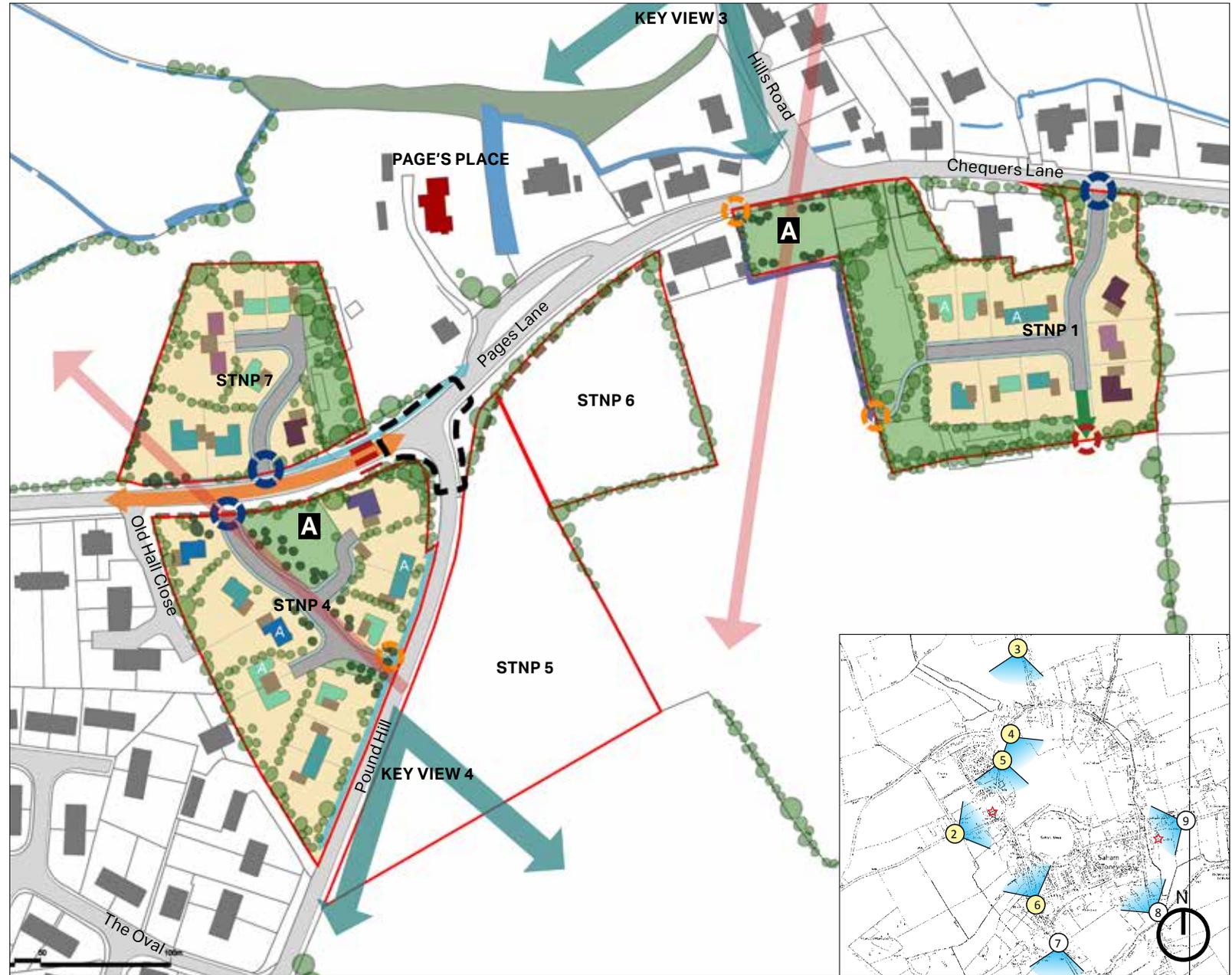


Figure 27: Sites STNP 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 Option 2 masterplan (© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 0100031673). Inset map: Policy Map 7B: Key views (© Saham Toney Parish Council).



View along Chequers Lane



**Artist's Illustrations of Sites
STNP 1 and STNP 4-7**

04

4. Artist’s Illustrations of Sites STNP 1 and STNP 4-7

This section outlines the rationale behind providing 3D hand sketches of two options for sites STNP 1 and STNP 4-7 to assist in the selection of a final option to be adopted in the Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan. Hand sketches are then presented for the masterplanning base case and option 2.

Three options have been master-planned for sites STNP 1 and STNP 4-7 as a group:

Site #	Number of Houses		
	Base Case	Option 1	Option 2
STNP 1	10	10	10
STNP 4	13	18	17
STNP 5	12	22	0
STNP 6	5	10	0
STNP 7	8	12	8
TOTALS	48	72	35

A professional landscape and visual impact review of these sites is presented in Appendix 1. Its overall conclusion with regard to these sites was:

- Option 2 is the only option that the landscape sensitivity assessment work would support; and
- The other two scenarios will have substantial negative impact.

Further evidence in support of these findings is given in the Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan Site Selection Report.

To assist the Neighbourhood Plan Work Group in making its final decisions and recommendations on site allocations, it was agreed to prepare artist’s illustrations of the group of five sites for (a) the Base Case and (b) Option 2. Two pairs of illustrations have been prepared, each pair looking at the sites from a different viewpoint:

1. To the north of Page’s Lane looking south; and
2. From Chequers Lane looking west.

These viewpoints are indicated on Figure 28, and the illustrated views are given in Figures 29-32. Full discussion of these illustrations in the context of confirming final site allocations can be found in the Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan Site Selection Report.

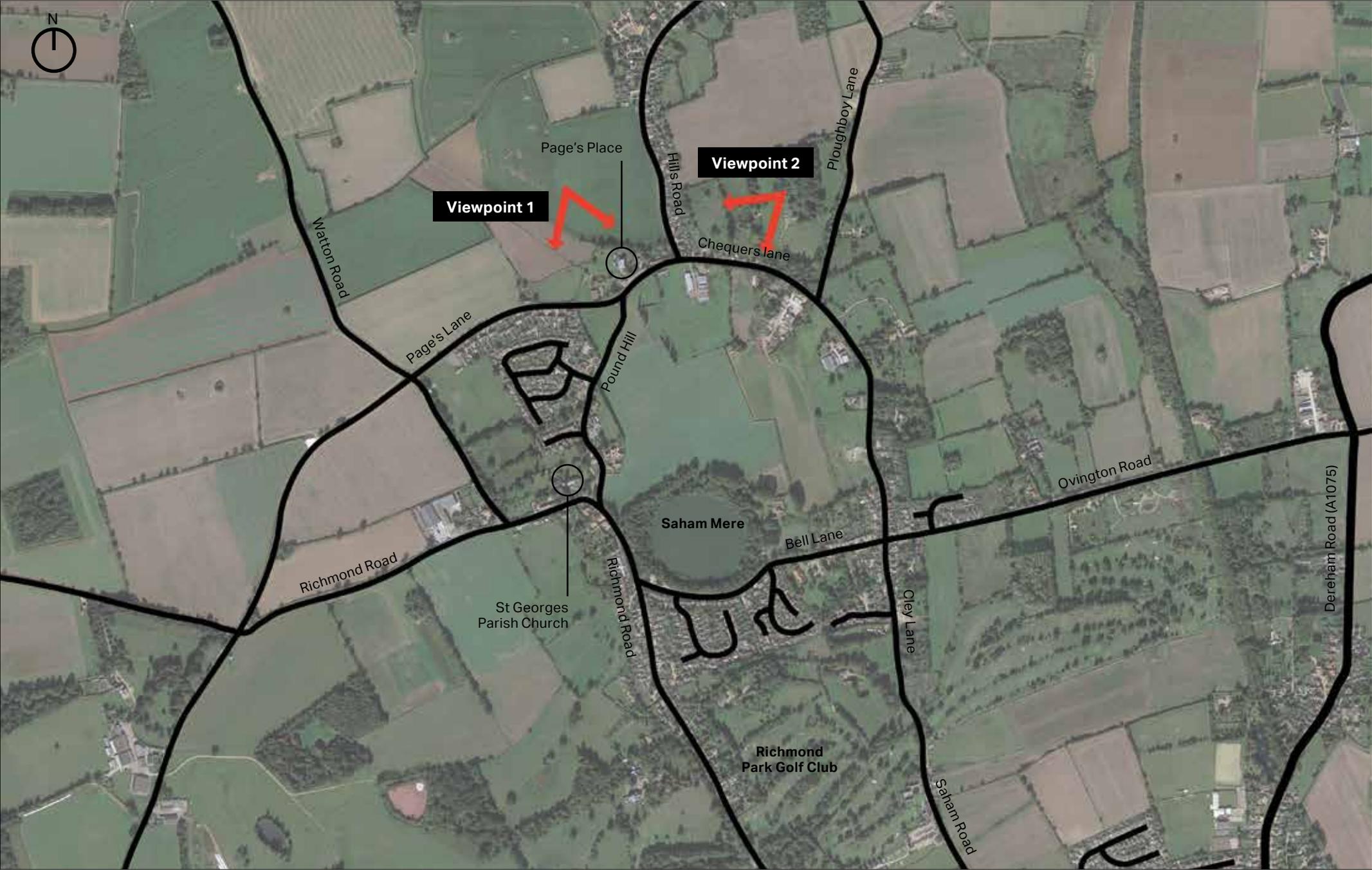


Figure 28: Viewpoints of artist's illustrations of sites STNP 1 and STNP 4-7 (source: Google Earth).



Figure 29: Illustration 1a – Sites STNP 4-7 looking south from viewpoint 1 (Masterplanning Base Case).



Figure 30: Illustration 1b – Sites STNP 4 and 7 looking south from viewpoint 1 (Masterplanning Option 2).



Figure 31: Illustration 2a – Sites STNP 1 & 4-7 looking south-south-west from viewpoint 2 (Masterplanning Base Case).



Figure 32: Illustration 2a – Sites STNP 1, 4 and 7 looking south-south-west from viewpoint 2 (Masterplanning Option 2).



The Terrace, Richmond Road

OVINGTON
CARBROOKE

Conclusion

05

BELL LANE

5. Conclusion

This section summarises the work that was undertaken for each group of sites and outlines how different actors can use this report in the delivery process.

Masterplanning studies have been completed for the larger sites / group of sites that were allocated in the Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan, pre-submission version, August 2019.

Overall design principles have been established and a number of options studied. Indicative site plans have been presented for each option.

5.1. Site STNP 16

In the case of site STNP 16, at Richmond Hall, the options address different site layouts, each with the same number of dwellings. Three options follow the site boundary given in Policy 2Q of the pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan. On review of those a fourth option, with an amended site boundary, was studied.

The consensus of the Neighbourhood Plan Work Group, the consultant who reviewed the four options for potential landscape impact, and the landowner was that option 4 (as shown in Figure 22) is the preferred site layout.

5.2. Sites STNP 1 and STNP 4-7

The options studied for this group of sites clustered around Pound Hill, Page's Lane and Chequers Lane, have considered different overall levels of housing development on the five sites to reflect:

- Base Case: Site allocations as given in the pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan;
- Option 1: A proposal for increased capacity put forward by the owners of sites STNP 4-7; and
- Option 2: A reduced capacity option to address concerns raised by the Local Highways Authority in its site assessments and comments to the pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan.

A professional review of the potential landscape impact for each option concluded that Option 2 is the only one that would be supported by the findings of the Saham Toney Parish Landscape Character Assessment.

The Neighbourhood Plan Work Group must consider a number of other factors relating to these sites before making final decisions on site allocations. Those factors are the subject of various other studies and assessments, undertaken by others, which are incomplete at publication of this report, principally:

1. A Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan, looking at potential environmental and heritage impacts;
2. A Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan, looking at potential impact on species and habitats with regard to protected European sites;
3. A transport study, looking at potential highway access, junction and network issues;
4. Further study of flood risk issues.

Pending the results of these additional studies, this report draws no final conclusions with regard to which option should be adopted in the final Neighbourhood Plan, but identifies that the landscape impact review of the three options weighs heavily against the Base Case and Option 1.

5.3. Delivery

The Masterplanning Report will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high-quality development in Saham Toney. It will be used in different ways by different parties in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table opposite.

Actors	How They Will Use the Report
Applicants, developers, and landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on layout, allowing a degree of certainty – in conjunction with all relevant policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, they will be expected to follow the masterplanning principles and be guided by the indicative layout drawings as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, supporting policy, against which to assess planning applications. The masterplanning principles should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the masterplanning principles are complied with.
Statutory and non-statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.



St Georges Parish Church



Appendix

06

Appendix 1: Landscape & Visual Impact Review of Masterplan Options

This section notes the landscape impact review conducted by Lucy Batchelor-Wylam, a chartered landscape architect, on the options studies included in a pre-publication draft of the Masterplanning study Report.

5.1. Introduction

The pre-submission version of the Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan allocates 11 sites for residential development. Of those, the sites designated STNP 1, STNP 4, STNP 5, STNP 6 and STNP 7 form a cluster in the Pound Hill / Page's Lane area comprising a total of 48 dwellings; and STNP 16, in combination with an adjacent site having outline permission, is allocated for a total of 17 dwellings.

Given the size of these sites, it was decided that masterplanning studies would be appropriate to further examine potential site layouts in advance of making the Regulation 15 submission of the Plan. Via a Locality technical support grant, AECOM were commissioned to prepare the studies. In conjunction with AECOM, it was then determined that the study options should be professionally reviewed with regard to their landscape and visual impact. The reasons for doing this were:

1. The size of the sites;
2. Objections to some of the sites (most notably STNP 5), on landscape grounds, made by villagers during the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation of the Plan;

3. Given that a combined landscape impact review of sites STNP 4, STNP 5, STNP 6 and STNP 7, prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Work Group as part of the Saham Toney Site Selection Report, August 2019, concluded the Base Case option (as allocated in the pre-submission Plan) for those sites was only borderline acceptable, while an increased capacity case proposed by the landowners (Option 1 of the masterplanning studies for those sites) was unacceptable, it was decided a professional opinion was needed;
4. An option limiting development of sites STNP 4, STNP 5, STNP 6 and STNP 7 to a total of 25 dwellings was studied to address a consultation representation by the Local Highways Agency with respect to those sites. That case had not previously been subject to a landscape and visual impact review, but because of known landscape concerns was studied on the basis of only sites STNP 4 and STNP 7 being developed.

The landscape impact review was based on option studies included in a pre-publication draft of the Masterplanning Study Report, dated 14 October 2019.

Lucy Batchelor-Wylam was commissioned to undertake the review. Lucy had earlier prepared the Saham Toney Parish Landscape Character Assessment (January 2019) and so had a thorough understanding of the potential issues involved. Her review follows.

5.2. Landscape and Visual Impact Comments: Sites STNP 1, STNP 4, STNP 5, STNP 6 and STNP 7

Overall conclusion: Review of the three study options leads to a conclusion that **Option 2¹ is the only option that the landscape sensitivity assessment work² would support.** The other two scenarios will have substantial negative impacts.

Option 2 excludes development of sites STNP 5 and STNP 6. This review supports that, but notes that it may be possible to increase the densities for sites STNP 1, STNP 4 and STNP 7 without undue landscape impact, if required to offset loss of dwellings on those two sites, and provided other constraints would allow that. If Option 2 is selected as the final case, resistance to any future speculative planning applications for STNP 5 and STNP 6 would be firmly supported by the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment² work which identifies the area in which those sites are located as visually highly sensitive, and key open land that provides the separate identity to Saham Toney's three main settlement clusters, and which falls into Key Views 3 and 4, as designated by Policy 7B of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The sites in question are part of Settlement Fringe Area FA-4 as defined and described in the Saham Toney Fringe Sensitivity Assessment (Part Two of the Parish Landscape Character Assessment). Relevant extracts from that assessment state:

¹ STNP 1: 10 dwellings; STNP 4: 17 dwellings; STNP 7: 8 dwellings (STNP 5 and 6: no development).

² Saham Toney Parish Landscape Character Assessment [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#) (Lucy Batchelor-Wylam, January 2019).

- a. *"This tract of land is **very visually prominent** and there is inter-visibility in views between Pound Hill, Chequers Lane, and Page's Lane."*
- b. *"This area is moderately sensitive in landscape terms and **highly sensitive in visual terms.**"*
- c. *"**Open space plays an important contribution to character** alongside built form in the interrelationships that result."*
- d. *"Development in open areas here would change the character of this piece of land significantly and potentially cause coalescence of different settlement clusters. Where the settlement edges are well defined, **new intakes of land for development would be visually prominent and difficult to assimilate.**"*
- e. *"There is more scope for sensitive redevelopment of existing farmsteads but any such proposals would need to be accompanied by **substantial native planting proposals...**"*

Additionally, there does not appear to be any community benefit to developing all of the land parcels put forward in the Base Case and Option 1 to counteract the loss of this important area.

Support for STNP 7 is straightforward, the justification being:

- a. The site comprises brownfield land with existing built form;

- b. It is well contained and has vegetated edges;
- c. It is not visually prominent in the landscape;
- d. It does not contribute to the character of the area so strongly that its loss would have negative effects.

Similarly, development of site STNP 1 is justified because:

- a. It comprises brownfield land with unsightly existing built form;
- b. It does not contribute to the character of the area so strongly that its loss would have negative effects;
- c. Boundary planting would fit with the existing field patterns and suitable landscape and visual mitigation is possible.

Although development of site STNP 4 can be accepted, in the context of landscape and visual impact, it would preferably not be developed as it contributes substantially to the open character of the area, and allows views across to the farm and of the dispersed settlement pattern along Page's Lane.

Generally, the design principles stated by AECOM for each study option are acceptable. Respect is given to the heritage assets, the need for plots to front outward and the desirability of retaining some openness in views. It will be important that such principles are carried forward into final layout schemes for the sites at the planning application stage.

5.2.1. Detail Review of Each Study Options

Base Case Masterplan: 48 houses across the 5 sites

The Base Case has the following landscape / visual and design issues:

- a. It would result in substantial loss of the openness of the character of this area.
- b. It would urbanise the northern end of Pound Hill leading into Page's Lane, Chequers Lane and on to Hills Road. Development in the village would become continuous from Richmond Road through to Saham Hills. Opportunities for visual or physical breaks in the built-form which currently characterise the village would be lost, with resultant joining of the three settlement clusters which are currently distinct and separate.
- c. There would be impact to Key Views 3 and 4, which benefit from protection under Policy 7B of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- d. STNP 5 and STNP 6 appear to have been considered very separately despite the opportunity to create an integrated masterplan across adjoining land parcels.
- e. A 4-bedroom house is indicated on site STNP 4 on the plot immediately at the junction of Pound Hill and Page's Lane and it appears that its rear garden adjoins the junction with the back of the property facing the junction. It would be far preferable that houses front onto Pound Hill and Page's Lane rather than turn their backs and

show blank boundary treatments (which will be difficult to control in future; for example, the garden could be closed by visually obtrusive close board fencing).

- f. STNP 5 and STNP 6 feel very separate even though they adjoin.

Option 1 Masterplan: 72 houses across the 5 sites

This option has the following landscape / visual and design issues:

- a. Issues as for the Base Case in relation to loss of the openness and character of the area.
- b. Despite the increased number of houses, STNP 5 and STNP 6 still feel quite separate.
- c. Regarding STNP 5 and STNP 6, greater thought needs to be given to a more substantial landscape structure along the southern edges of those sites. The ownership of such strips and how they are managed is important to ensure successful establishment and maintenance of the land. This must not be left to individual plot holders. One idea might be to include an enclosing woodland belt, integrated with open space and public access, to reflect the woodland around Saham Mere. The edges of the development are otherwise going to be stark without any landscape structure to assimilate into.

- d. There are some issues with the way STNP 1 and STNP 6 are linked. If these sites were a bit more intensively developed, there might be no need for STNP 5 at all.
- e. While not supported by this review, if a future scenario occurs where STNP 4, STNP 5 and STNP 6 are all developed, a new, visually notable 'node/place' should be made at the junction with perhaps high-quality built form set back from public green space connecting across the junction.

Option Two Masterplan: 35 houses across 3 of the 5 sites (STNP 1, STNP 4 and STNP 7)

This option has the following landscape / visual and design issues:

- a. There is far greater retention of the open rural character of the Pound Hill / Page's Lane area, together with continued separation of the Saham Toney and Saham Hills' settlement clusters.
- b. It retains Key Views 3 and 4 as defined in Policy 7B of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- c. There may be an opportunity for more development of STNP 1, subject to any other constraints. If required and justified by other considerations an increase in houses on this site could compensate for reductions on other sites.

5.2.2. Review of the Neighbourhood Plan Work Group's cumulative landscape impact assessment for sites STNP 4-7³

The assessment starts well and picks out salient parts from the Parish Landscape Character Assessment. The findings up to paragraph 13.13 are broadly acceptable.

The series of matrices used are overly complicated and the assessment falls into the trap of relying on the outputs of those matrices, rather than really thinking about the particular characteristics, function and sensitivities of this area. When using such matrices, changing one variable in any one matrix can often significantly affect final conclusions.

Instead of a matrix approach, attention should focus on the key characteristics, including:

- a. What makes this area distinctive / identifiable?
- b. Would these characteristics be lost or enhanced by development?
- c. What sort of development pattern would be most appropriate?

³ Included in Section 13 of the [Saham Toney Site Selection Report](#) (August 2019).

The key landscape characteristic of this area is its openness, the way it allows long views between different part of the village, its rural character and the way it functions as a gap in and separation of the landscape. If that gap is filled with development, regardless of it possibly being low rise; or low density; or bungalows: the character of the area will change.

Considering those factors it is not clear that loss of the area's key characteristics would be 'mitigatable', and certainly there is not scope for GOOD mitigation. Although the landscape is mostly flat and there is opportunity and space for screening, such as tree and hedge planting etc.; screening is not necessarily the same as 'good' mitigation. Development **plus** screening would cause a notable change to the character of the area: i.e. by a loss of openness and merging of the existing separate settlement clusters.

The magnitude of change of the Base Case option would not be 'LOW' as stated in paragraph 13.19 of the assessment. Even though dwelling heights and density would be low, the land use would be domestic, the village edge would become continuous, the planting would be ornamental rather than natural, and the driveways and the cars would be visible. In summary, regardless of height / density, the character of the area would change to become a much more urbanised scene.

Bungalows have been suggested on site STNP 6, presumably to minimise impact, but in practice, bungalows are often best tucked away rather than put in the most prominent site, since

it is not always easy to provide good-looking bungalow forms. The character of the area, on Chequers Lane for example, is more cottage scale, and dwellings of a storey and a half would seem more appropriate. Also, the layout of the cul-de-sac here does not reflect the character of the existing settlement pattern, which is generally cottages fronting on to the highway.

As a result it cannot be said that the sites in combination, or individually in the case of STNP 5 and STNP 6 have moderate capacity to absorb development without change to the character of the area.

In summary, to reiterate, *if other constraints allow*, it would be better to provide more houses in denser arrangements that use less land (i.e. allocate fewer of the five sites). This will help achieve similar housing numbers but at the same time maintain the character of the Pound Hill / Page's Lane area.

5.3. Landscape and Visual Impact Comments: Site STNP 16

Site STNP 16 lies in settlement fringe area FA-2, as set out in the Saham Toney Parish Landscape Character Assessment. Area FA-2 is only moderately sensitive in landscape and visual terms and hence assessment of that area is more supportive of development.

Whilst the recommendation would be for smaller developments, and ideally in locations closer to the road, the edge here has enough vegetation and indented form that with a thick continuous boundary tree belt, the houses proposed can be absorbed into the landscape over time.

Provision of a boundary treatment under single ownership with planting, management and maintenance tied to planning conditions will be essential to ensure its future existence.

Of the masterplanning options presented, there is a preference for Option 4, since it appears to tie in with the hedge line to the north in the best manner, and projects into the countryside the least.

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