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1.0 introduction

Introduction

This report has been prepared on behalf of the landowners of the Land south of U2 Ecchinswell Road at Ecchinswell, referred to as site EX in the Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan (ESBG).

The land is being considered for allocation in the ESBG and the purpose of this report is to provide information for the ESBG Steering Group (SG) to help inform the Regulation 16 consultation, examination and referendum, and explain how the site could be developed to meet the aspirations of the neighbourhood plan, be sympathetic to the setting and character of the village and be in conformity with Local Plan policies.

The report provides an analysis of the site and its setting to establish the key constraints that will need to be considered for any development proposals. The constraints have then been used to inform a development framework and a set of design principles for the site. Finally, a sketch layout illustrates how the site could be developed in line with the design principles and the neighbourhood plan policies. The sketch layout is not a fixed proposal. The detailed proposals for the scheme will be developed in consultation with the ESBG Steering Group and the community as part of a the planning process that will follow after the Neighbourhood Plan is made.

The Ecchinswell, Sydmonton and Bishops Green Neighbourhood Plan

The land has been put forward following a Call for Sites by the SG and a formal site selection process. The SG is seeking to allocate a site for approximately 5 new homes to reflect the local need identified through consultation with the community for smaller homes.

The scheme outlined in this report will help deliver the neighbourhood plan vision by providing a small scheme designed to be suitable as starter and downsizer homes. The SG believes a development at this scale and in this location will be a sympathetic to the character and setting of the village.

NPPF and the Local Plan

As well as being in compliance with the Neighbourhood Plan policies, the development of this site will also have to be in conformity with the latest version of the NPPF and BDBC development plan policies. The Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011 – 2029 is the currently adopted Local Plan. The relevant policies likely to apply in bringing forward development in Bishops Green include policy CN1 Affordable Housing, CN3 Housing Mix for Market Housing, CN9 Transport, EM1 Landscape, EM4 Biodiversity/Nature Conservation, EM5 Green Infrastructure and EM10 Delivering High Quality Development. A Local Plan update is in the early stages of preparation but its policies remain at a formative stage.

North Wessex Downs AONB

The site lies on the edge of, but within, the North Wessex Downs AONB. The scale of development proposed is not considered 'major development' for the purpose of NPPF paragraph 177 footnote 60. The scheme design will also have regard to the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan and guidance.

2.0 context

Ecchinswell (**fig. 1**) is a linear settlement that has developed along the southern part of Ecchinswell Road. It has a contained, compact form with different character areas on either side of Ecchinswell Road.

On the western side of Ecchinswell Road the development is predominantly mid C20th and suburban in character, laid out in linear blocks with garage courts and on street bay parking. Materials are generally brick and tile hanging with low pitch concrete tiled roofs.

The eastern side is more irregular and a lower density with older properties on large plots, with a rural character and a wider variety of architectural styles and materials including render, stone and timber boarding. Roof pitches are steeper pitches and predominantly clay tile and thatch. The eastern side is also greener with two blocks of trees along the Ecchinswell Stream that is a central feature of the village.

Village amenities include the Village Hall and recreation centre which is well equipped with modern facilities capable of hosting a wide range of events and user groups and also has a playpark and sports pitches, the Ecchinswell and Sydmonton primary school, St Lawrence Church, and the Royal Oak pub.

Ecchinswell Road splits into two at the Royal Oak pub with the eastern arm crossing the millstream and continuing on to Kingsclere. The site is located off the eastern arm of Ecchinswell Road on the developed fringe of the village in a rural character area. It forms part of the eastern entrance into the village from Kingsclere. Its development would need to be sensitive to this function and setting, and to the impacts of the rural character along this part of Ecchinswell Road.

The site is in a sustainable and accessible location relative to the village amenities being approximately 4 minutes' walk or a 1 minute cycle to the Royal Oak pub, and 7 minutes' walk or a 2 minute cycle to the Village Hall and its facilities.



village hall

Royal Oak

site EX

Ecchinswell Road

Ecchinswell Road



Fig. 1 the context

3.0 the site

The site (**fig. 2**) of around 0.12 hectares is relatively level, with a south to north slope down to Ecchinswell Road, approximately 50m x 24m and on a north-south axis, and currently in agricultural use.

The site forms the northern part of a wider site that is used as a stables and covered training area. This wider site has two distinct parcels. The southern parcel (**1**) with the covered training area and stable buildings has been quarried and sits within an embanked bowl enclosed by a continuous mature tree belt (**2**).

The northern parcel (**3**) which is the site, has the access onto Ecchinswell Road (**4**) and follows the natural ground line sloping up to the south. It has an open aspect to the east across a post and rail fenceline with views across a paddock (**5**) onto a landscape belt that encloses a group of cottages.

A track (**6**) runs alongside the eastern boundary giving access to the stables and covered training area to the south (**Fig 3**).

The site's western boundary (**7**) is a continuation of the tree belt and adjoins a residential property, Burnbrae House (**8**) at its northern end. A retaining wall along the southern boundary defines a change in level up to the southern parcel.

There are two existing buildings, a two storey barn structure at the entrance, and a single storey shed structure (**Fig 4**) abutting the southern boundary. Both of these buildings are dilapidated and not needed for the operation of the stables. On the eastern side of the shed is an area of hardstanding and a base from previous structures.

These two buildings are set around a yard area (**Fig 5**) which has a concrete ramp up to the stables on the higher northern parcel.

The proposals are for a development of around 5 dwellings on the northern parcel while retaining the access to the stables and covered training area which will remain in use. Existing trees and hedges will be retained and managed, and the buildings and layout will be designed to incorporate features to provide wildlife habitat and improve biodiversity.

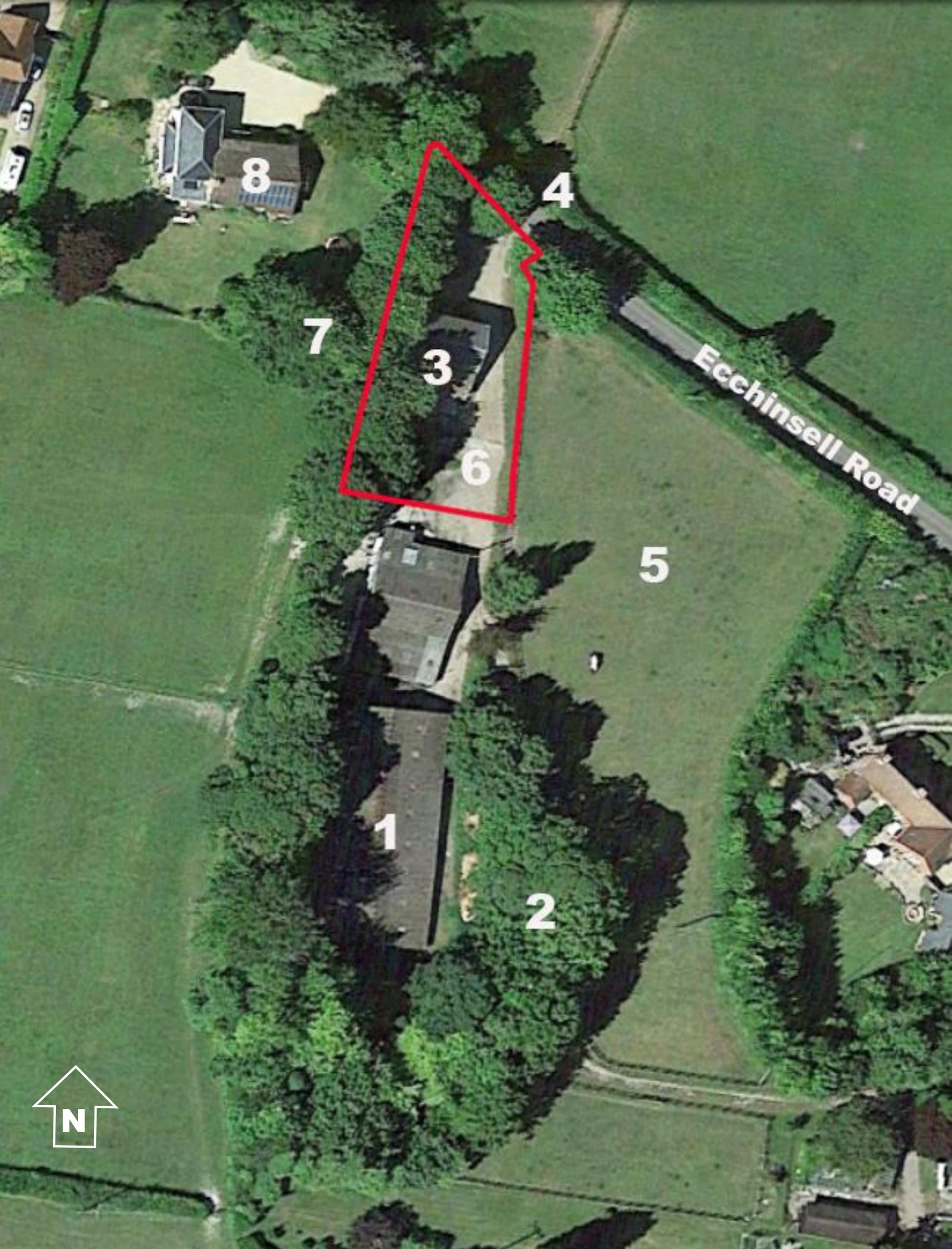


Fig. 2 the site



Fig. 3
Access track and
fence to eastern
boundary



Fig. 4
Existing buildings



Fig. 5
Yard Area

Passive design

The site has an open solar aspect to the south and east but is screened to the west by the tree belt which will limit the potential for a passive design approach to the layout and the design of the buildings.

Access

Ecchinswell Road is within an unrestricted zone along the frontage of the site, although the 30mph restricted zone starts 15m to the west of the site entrance. The site has an established use generating a base level traffic capacity for a transport assessment.

Visibility to the east along the unrestricted section of the road is unobstructed. To the west there is a bend but this is within the 30mph zone where visibility splays will be reduced.

There are verges and established hedgelines along both sides of Ecchinswell Road including the site frontage. There is no street lighting, footpaths or signage (apart from the speed restriction signs) which reinforces the rural character of the setting. Options for improving the pedestrian environment that do not impact on the rural character will be assessed as part of any planning application proposals.

There is a Public Right of Way Footpath approximately 140m west of the site and another approximately 70m to the east.

Character of the setting

In terms of the settlement and the immediate setting of the site, there are few precedents to inform the character of the scheme. The key considerations for design will be protection of the rural character, minimising visual impacts and on the local setting, and creating an appropriate gateway to the village.



Fig. 6
Gateway view
looking west along
Ecchinswell Road



Fig. 7
Change in level and
retaining wall to
stables



Fig. 8
Yard and ramp

4.0 constraints

The constraints plan (**fig. 9**) summarises the key constraints for the development of the site based on this analysis and the requirements of Policy ESG4: Housing In Ecchinswell Village.

The access (**1**) will need to remain in the existing location with account taken of the 30mph zone (**2**) and designed to minimise the loss of the existing northern boundary trees (**3**) and hedgerows (**4**).

Measures for improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the village centre will be considered alongside the development of these proposals.

The 'gateway' view (**5**) from the east along Ecchinswell Road of the existing buildings acts as a marker to the entrance to the village. The established tree belt on the western boundary (**6**) will need to protect the privacy and amenity of the adjacent Burnbrae House (**7**). The eastern boundary is an open fenceline (**8**) with views across a paddock (**9**). The northern boundary (**10**) is a low retaining wall that takes up the change in level across the site to the existing stable building (**11**) beyond.

A track (**12**) which runs up the eastern side of the site, giving access to the stables and covered training area to the south will need to be maintained in shared use.

Built development should be planned within the footprints of the existing building structures; the barn (**13**), the shed (**14**), and the hardstanding areas (**15**).

The yard (**16**) is also a hardstanding area and has a concrete ramp (**17**) up to the stables.

Arboricultural and ecological surveys will be carried out to inform the detailed design and a planning application.

A sustainable drainage strategy (SUDs) will be required. There are no known services running across the site that would constrain development and it is understood that foul drainage, water and electricity capacity and connections available.

The site lies just within the North Wessex Downs AONB and the setting of the Ecchinswell Conservation Area. There are no heritage, archaeological, habitat, species or TPO designations that will constrain the development of the site.

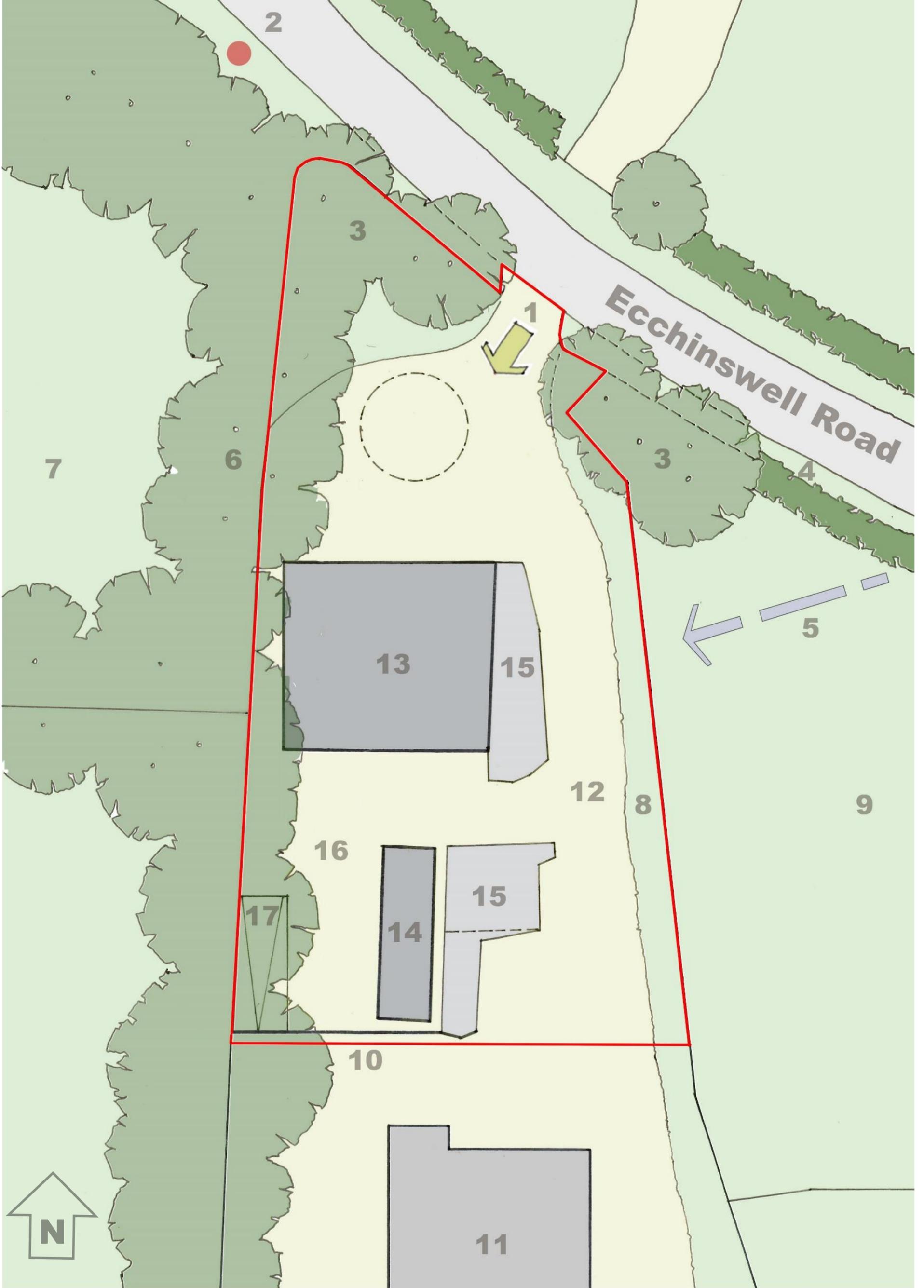


Fig. 9 constraints plan

5.0 sketch layout

The sketch layout has a capacity for 4 to 5 dwellings depending on the size and mix and illustrates how the site's constraints will be addressed to meet the ambitions and policy requirements of the ESBGNP and create a positive addition to the village.

The access (1) will remain in the existing location with a new gated entrance to the stables at the top of the track (2). The building footprint of the front barn building (3) will be redeveloped with entrances on the northern side facing Ecchinswell Road. The footprint of the existing shed structure will be redeveloped but moved a few metres to the east onto the adjacent hardstanding area (4) to create a larger yard space.

The concrete ramp will be removed from the enlarged yard space to create a shared courtyard between the two buildings (5). Private patios (6) will be provided to each dwelling off the living spaces, overlapping onto the shared courtyard. Parking spaces (7) will be provided in separate pockets to reduce the impact of cars at the 2018 SPD for rural provision @ 2 spaces for 2 bed dwellings with 50% unallocated.

The southern boundary along the line of the existing retaining wall (8) will be reinforced with a planted buffer to provide visual separation and to screen the courtyard. The existing tree belt (9) along the western boundary will be protected and managed and the entrance space (10) will have the same bound gravel finish as the track and any lighting will be low level bollard downlighters to minimise light pollution.

Options to improve pedestrian and cycle connections into the village will be considered at the detailed design stage as part of the transport assessment.

KEY

1. Access
2. Gated access to the stables
3. 2 bed Barn houses
4. 1 or 2 bed Long House
5. Shared courtyard
6. Private patios
7. Parking
8. Buffer planting
9. Managed tree belt
10. Entrance space



Fig. 10 sketch layout

6.0 sketch ideas

The following ideas informed the Sketch Layout and will be a starting point for agreeing a design brief with the Parish Council.

Built form

The dwellings will be designed to work as starter or downsizer homes with flexible ground floor layouts that can be adapted for age or infirmity and living spaces opening onto patios and a shared courtyard.

Both buildings use existing building forms which have an agricultural character. The 'barn' building form with its asymmetric roof form creates simple, architecturally interesting homes with a form appropriate to the gateway function. The 'shed' building becomes a 'long house' that uses the roof space and encloses the courtyard. This approach avoids the urbanising effect of a generic housing forms and is in keeping with the setting of the Conservation Area, the North Wessex Down AONB Management Plan and the Design Code.

Amenity space

The combination of private patios and a shared courtyard is suited to a scheme of this size and can help create a stronger sense of community.

Sustainable design

The buildings will be designed to maximise thermal performance and minimise energy use. The development is too small for a retention pond, but on-site rainwater retention as part of the SUDS strategy, probably using storage crates beneath the parking will be considered for controlling run off and water conservation.

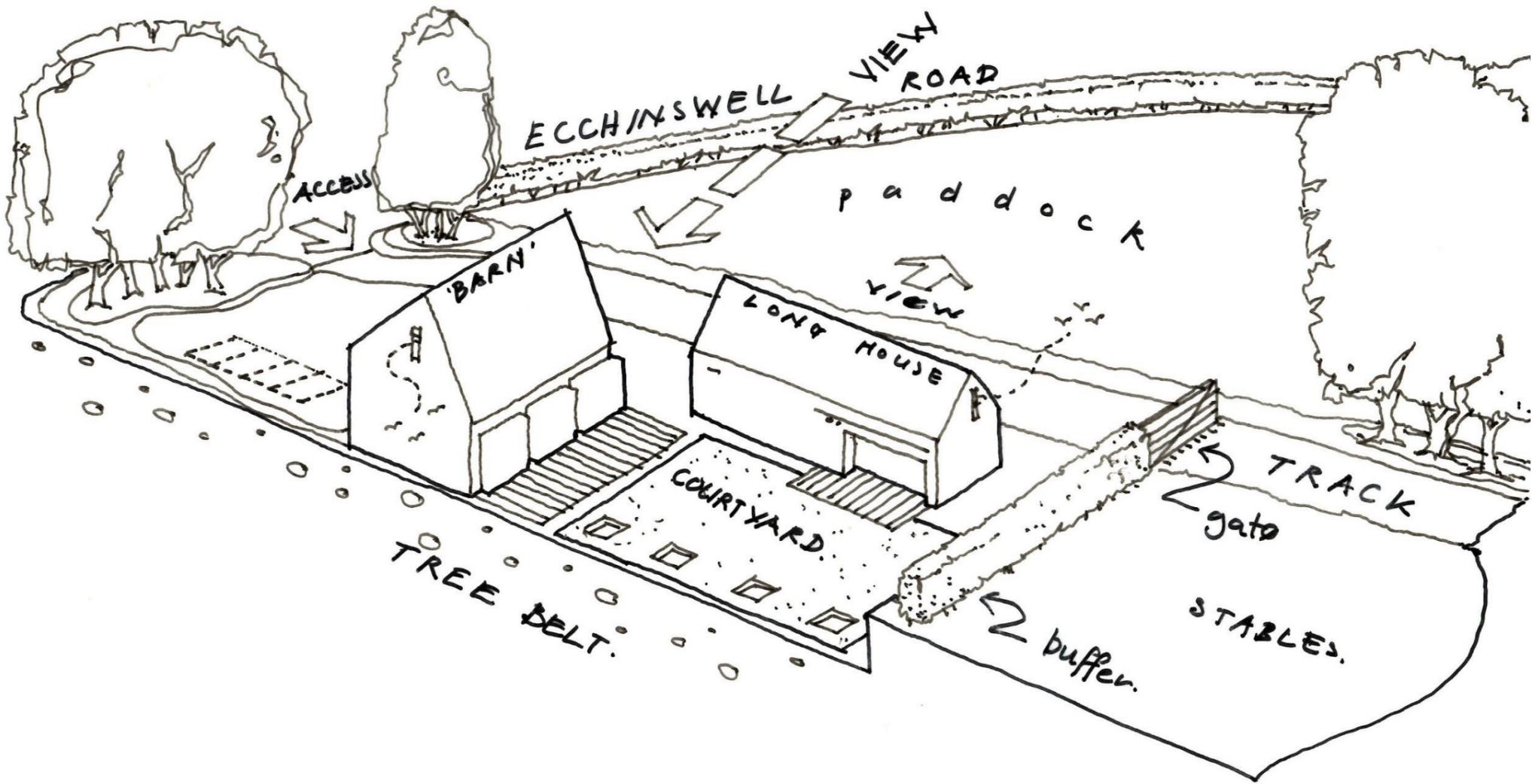
Nature

The site footprint is predominantly buildings and hardstanding and apart from the trees will have little ecological value. A biodiversity net gain will be created through the courtyard design including understorey planting to the tree belt, and the incorporation of habitats in the construction of the buildings.

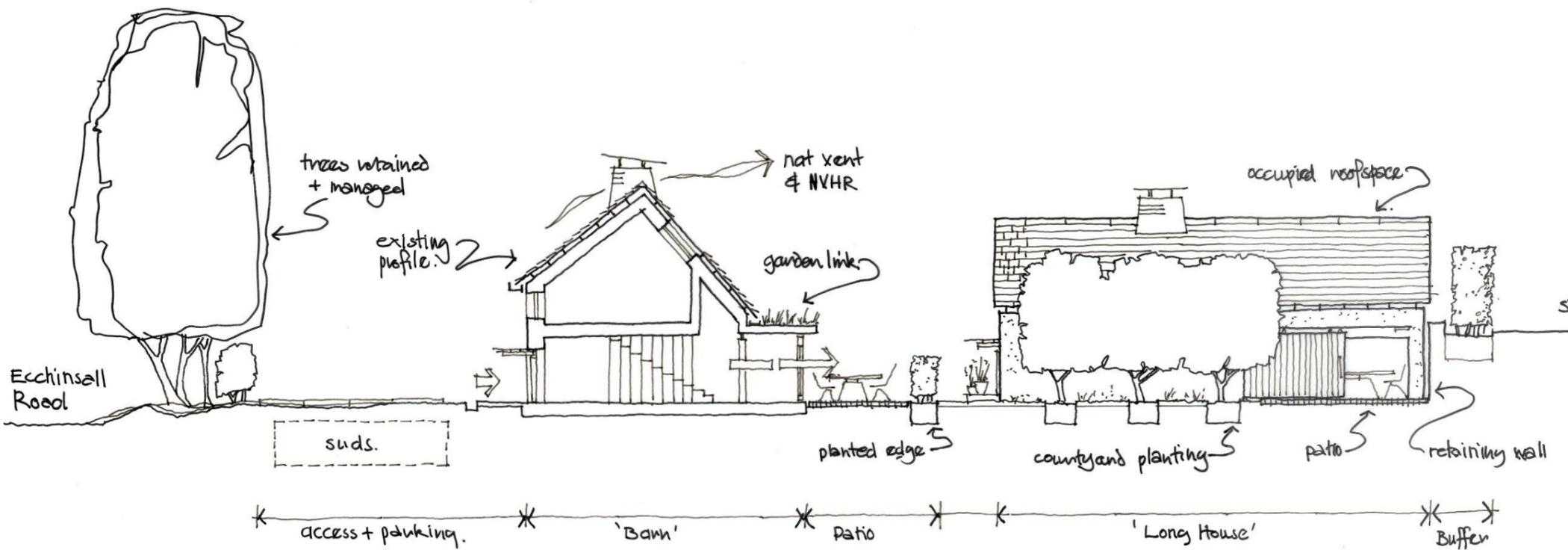
References

The sketch ideas (**fig. 11**) and reference images (**fig. 12**) are intended to illustrate initial ideas for the character and materials of the scheme.

Fig. 11 sketch ideas



development concept



section through courtyard

Fig. 12 reference images



7.0 summary

The proposals outlined in this report will contribute to the community's vision and objectives by delivering an environmentally responsive development that provides a modest level of housing as starter homes and for downsizer residents.

This report sets out a concept for site EX as a basis for agreeing and developing a scheme that meets the aspirations of the neighbourhood plan and would be a sympathetic addition to the village. It is not a fixed proposal, but a development framework that can be used to agree a set of design principles for the site, including the dwelling number and types, and inform the neighbourhood plan policy to ensure the quality of the detailed design.

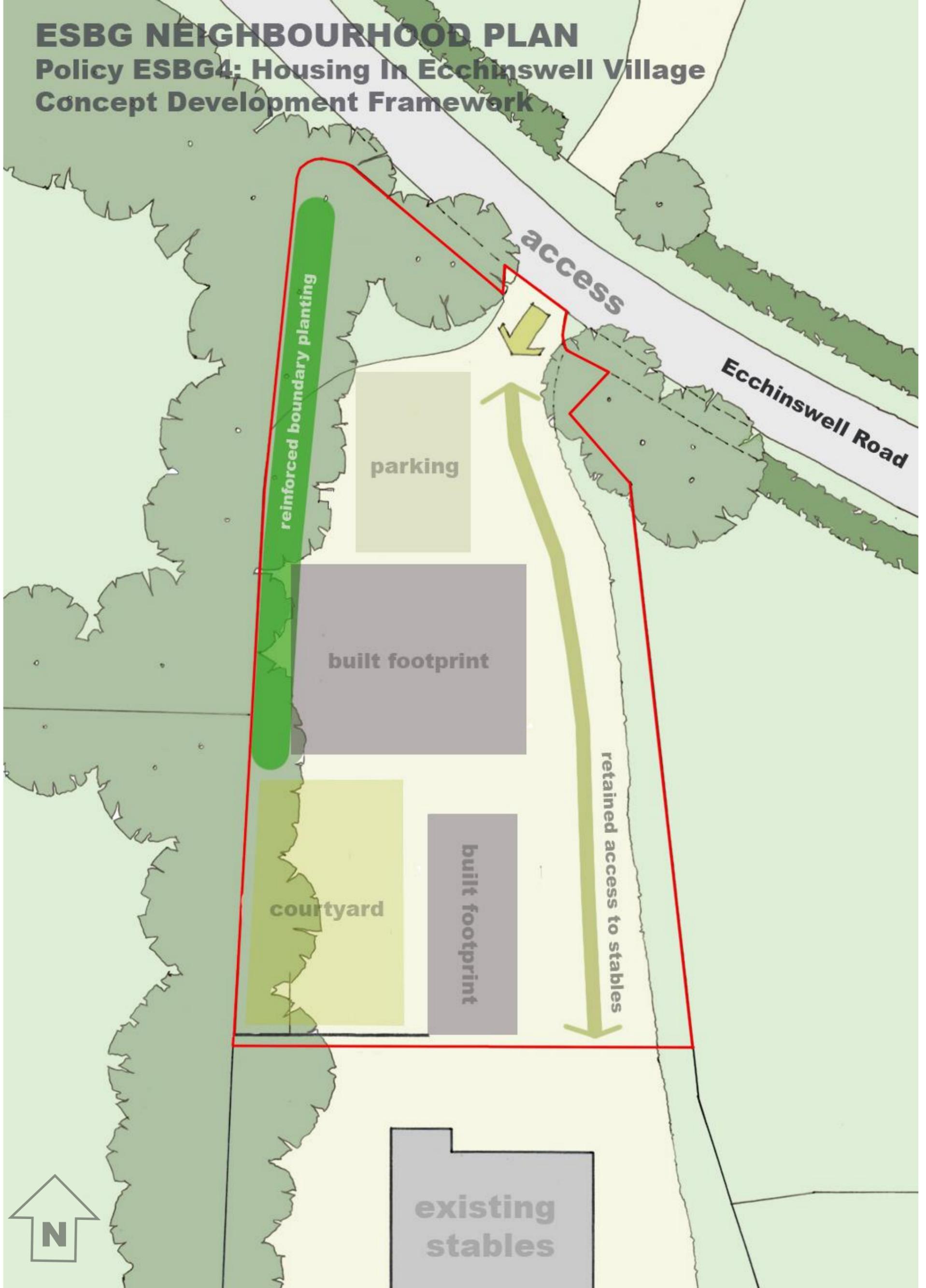
The concept described in this report would provide the following:

- A scheme that is in keeping with the rural setting
- A design approach that avoids the urbanising effects of generic housing types and layout
- Building forms and character that will work well in the village gateway location
- Flexibility to accommodate starter and downsizer dwelling types
- A layout that minimises impacts on the views and amenities of existing dwellings
- The ongoing operation of the stables and covered training area

Further information will be provided as required for the Examination of the ESBG. If the site is allocated, following a successful referendum, the detailed design proposals will be developed in consultation with the ESBG and the community.

The Concept Development Framework plan in Appendix A on page 18 sets out a series of development parameters for policy ESBG4 of the neighbourhood plan based on the proposals in this report.

ESBG NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
Policy ESBG4: Housing In Ecchinswell Village
Concept Development Framework



APPENDIX A: concept development framework

