

NORTH PETHERTON

PROPOSED MASTERPLAN CONCEPT RATIONALE



BARWOOD
LAND



PREPARED BY

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FOR

BARWOOD
LAND

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CONCEPT RATIONALE

INTRODUCTION

This Design Rationale Statement has been prepared by BHB Architects on behalf of Barwood Land and provides an overview of the design principles and concepts that have informed the proposed masterplan for land at Shovel Lane, North Petherton, Somerset.

North Petherton is a historic market town located within the Somerset Council area, positioned between Bridgwater and Taunton. The town benefits from strong transport links via the A38 and proximity to Junction 24 of the M5, offering excellent connectivity to the wider region. The site is located on the southern edge of the settlement, adjacent to Shovel Lane, and forms part of a transitional area between the built-up edge of North Petherton and the surrounding countryside.

The design approach responds sensitively to the site's context, including its proximity to Shovel House, a grouping of designated heritage assets located to the west of the site, and the surrounding landscape character. The masterplan has been shaped by a thorough understanding of local topography, views, and settlement pattern, ensuring that new development integrates seamlessly with its surroundings while respecting key visual and heritage considerations.

THE SITE

The proposed development site comprises approximately 17.79 hectares of land located on the western edge of North Petherton, Somerset. It is situated immediately east of Shovel Lane, with the south-eastern corner of the site meeting Taunton Road (A38). The site consists of several individual field parcels, defined by existing hedgerows, with the southern portion separated by Oak Lodge, a residential property.

Vehicular access is proposed via a new junction on Taunton Road (A38), forming the principal entrance to the development. As part of the access strategy, Shovel Lane will be realigned to connect with the new internal road network via a priority junction, improving connectivity and safety.

A network of pedestrian and cycle routes is proposed throughout the site, linking to the wider movement network. These include:

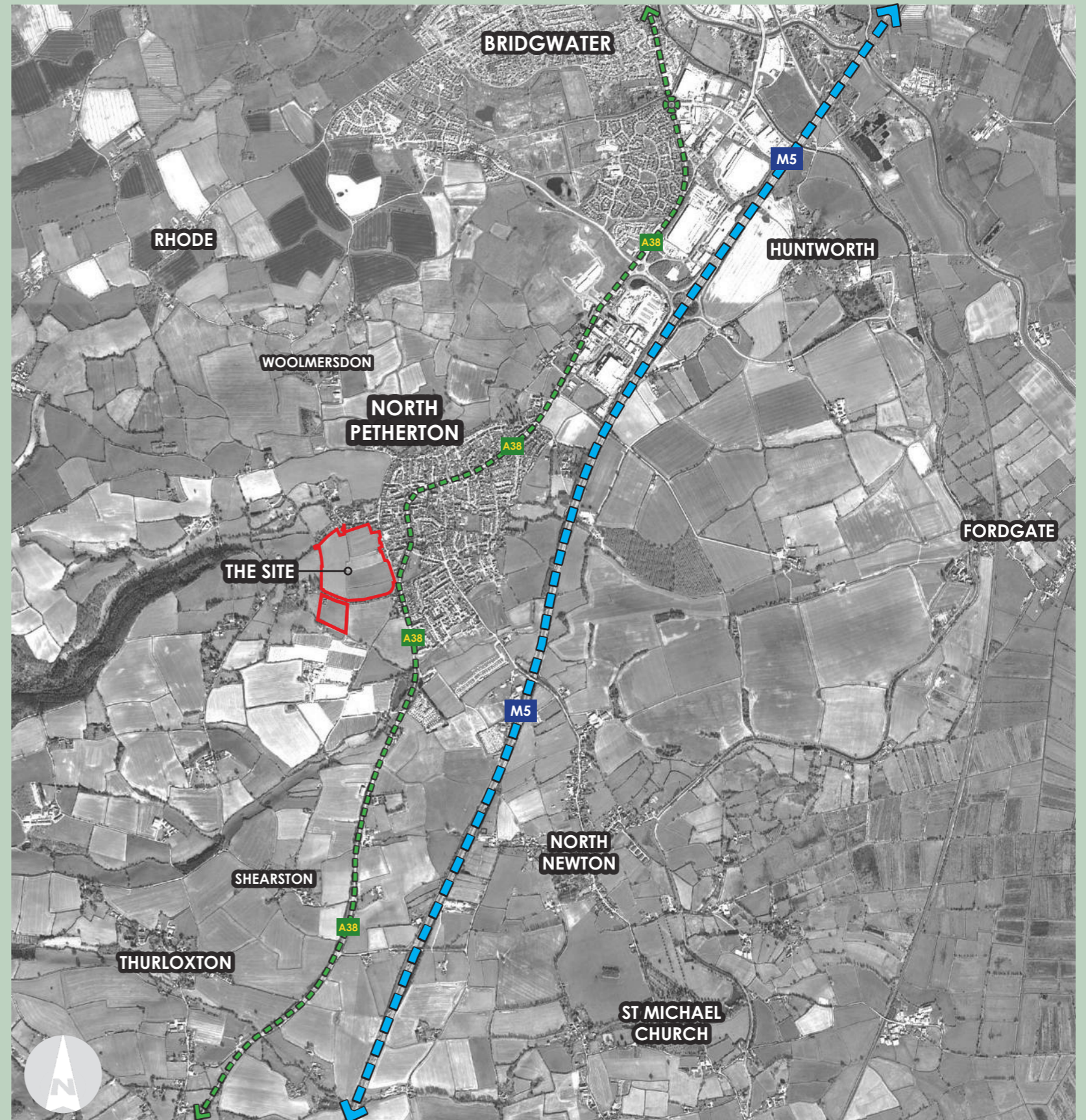
- Connections to the existing footway along Taunton Road;
- A link to Shovel Lane via the existing farm access;
- A new pedestrian/cycle connection to Cliff Road to the north.

The site benefits from proximity to North Petherton town centre, which is approximately 5 minutes by car or bicycle, and 15 minutes on foot or by bus. The town offers a wide range of amenities including St. Mary's Church, North Petherton Doctors Surgery, local shops, pubs and restaurants, sports and recreational facilities, and access to the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal, which provides scenic walking routes.

North Petherton is well-connected to nearby urban centres:

- Bridgwater lies approximately 5km to the north;
- Taunton is around 10km to the south;
- Burnham-on-Sea is approximately 17km to the north-west.

Public transport is readily available, with bus stops located to the east of the site, including the Newton Lane stop, which serves routes 21, 21A, 623, and 625, providing access to Bridgwater, Taunton, Burnham-on-Sea, and the wider local area. Both Bridgwater and Taunton offer rail connections to major cities including Bristol and London, enhancing regional accessibility.



Site Context Plan

SITE ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The technical works undertaken thus far have identified a number of key considerations for the proposed development of the site, and these have informed the emerging masterplan.

Topography and Visual Impact - avoid development on elevated and sloping land to the west and south of the site, where built form would appear incongruous with the existing settlement pattern and increase visibility from the surrounding countryside. Focus development on lower-lying areas, supported by a robust landscape strategy to reinforce local character and visual containment.

Landscape Setting and Views - protect the rural setting of the Quantock Hills National Landscape by ensuring development does not compromise key views to or from the designated area. Exclude the southern parcel (south of Oak Lodge) from development due to its visual prominence, in line with landscape sensitivity recommendations.

Nearby Heritage Assets - Maintain a clear buffer zone around Shovel House to preserve its setting and ensure a sufficient offset from new development.

Western Boundary Planting - Introduce additional planting along the western boundary to screen views of the development from Shovel House. Replace existing spaced trees with denser vegetation, which is considered more beneficial to the heritage setting than allowing partial visibility of new housing.

Ecological Connectivity - enhance the hedgerow and woodland network, particularly along the southern and western boundaries, to improve ecological connectivity and reinforce the rural edge of the settlement.

Historic Landscape Features - retain and reinforce historic field patterns, avoiding development that spans multiple fields. Reintroduce orchard planting and reinstate historic hedgerows, referencing early Ordnance Survey mapping and contributing positively to the local landscape character and the setting of Shovel House.



Site Considerations Plan

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Underpinning the masterplan for the site is a design rationale which comprises a series of interrelated concepts and principles.

Each of the following concept principles have evolved in response to the ongoing site investigation and technical assessments and an evaluation of the site and its immediate and wider context.

The concept rationale is illustrated in the following section

STAGE 1

- The key site considerations, identified as part of the ongoing technical works, are identified, informing the concept rationale.
- The optimal point of vehicular access, based on the technical works undertaken, is identified.
- The setting and of Shovel House is considered and a heritage buffer established to preserve its setting.
- Existing landscape features including field boundary hedgerows, that are to be retained are identified as a framework for development and used as the basis of the scheme proposal's emerging green infrastructure strategy.
- Existing pedestrian/cycle routes and optimal points of access are identified.
- Identify opportunities for historic hedgerow replacement.



STAGE 2

- The site topography is assessed to identify elevated and sloping areas unsuitable for development.
- Visual sensitivities, including views to and from the Quantock Hills National Landscape are considered to inform the development extents
- Existing hedgerows and field boundaries identified for retention and enhancements. These will further refine the development extents and help establish a framework for ecological connectivity through green corridors and planting
- Based on the optimal access locations and development extents, key routes are considered which make efficient use of the proposed development area.
- SUDs/attenuation features are identified in optimal positions.
- Reinstate historic hedgerows and introduce orchard planting.



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

STAGE 3

- Based on the identified retained boundary hedgerows the extent of the development area is further refined
- Additional planting along the western boundary is proposed, which will help screen views of the new development from Shovel House. This reinforces the buffer and visually contains the built form.
- Native planting along southern and western boundaries helps to contain the settlement edge.
- Enhance the hedgerow and woodland network to support biodiversity and visual screening.
- Based on the identified potential landscape visual sensitivities, the southern area of development is indicated as being limited in scale to single storey.
- As the layout further evolves work is undertaken to develop distinct character areas that respond to both urban and rural influences.





EMERGING CHARACTER

The illustrative masterplan for the proposed development at Shovel Lane, North Petherton has been shaped by a detailed understanding of the site's physical characteristics, planning policy context, and best practice in urban design. The layout responds sensitively to the site's constraints and opportunities, ensuring a well-integrated and sustainable extension to the settlement.

PLACE-MAKING AND LAYOUT PRINCIPLES

The masterplan adopts a perimeter block structure, with outward-facing homes that define the public realm and provide secure, private rear gardens. This approach promotes natural surveillance, enhances safety, and contributes to a legible and coherent urban form.

A clear hierarchy of streets supports permeability and movement throughout the site, with key junctions marked by landmark buildings, and secondary corners defined by marker buildings. Focal buildings are used to terminate vistas, aiding way-finding and reinforcing character. These elements will be distinguished through variations in materials, colour, and architectural detailing.

Homes overlooking open spaces are arranged in a more informal and varied layout, with detached dwellings and generous front gardens creating a softer edge and a gentle transition to the surrounding landscape.

KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

Key Routes - Principal movement corridors are internalised within the development, supporting higher activity levels and a more urban character. This allows the site edges to remain lower in density, with enhanced landscaping to maintain a soft rural transition.

Key Spaces - The masterplan incorporates significant area of public open spaces, with a new green gateway at the site entrance and green pockets which punctuate the principal movement corridor. These spaces will be defined by surrounding built form and high-quality landscape design.

Key Frontages - Buildings are oriented to face streets and open spaces, creating strong frontages that frame key locations and reinforce legibility. These frontages will be refined as the scheme progresses to establish a distinctive sense of place.

Distinctive Character Areas - The masterplan supports the creation of distinct character areas, informed by the site's landscape features and local context. These areas will celebrate the local identity of North Petherton, blending traditional and contemporary architectural styles in a cohesive and context-sensitive manner.

RESPONDING TO CONTEXT AND LANDSCAPE

As an edge-of-settlement site, the proposals need to balance urban and rural characteristics. The evolving masterplan has been shaped in response to the surrounding context, retaining and enhancing mature field boundaries and integrating additional native planting to support biodiversity, landscape character, and long-term ecological resilience.

The design avoids development on elevated land, preserving views and respecting the setting of Shovel House, a nearby heritage asset. A landscape buffer along the western boundary will reinforce separation and screen views, contributing positively to its setting.





- Key**
-  Proposed Site Boundary (total area 17.73ha)
 -  Principal Vehicular Routes
 -  Existing route of Shovel Lane redirected to new priority junction with proposed access road serving development
 -  Existing Public Rights of Way
 -  Potential Site Access point
 -  Potential points of pedestrian/cycle access points enhancing connectivity
 -  New residential development of (up to 250 dwellings)
 -  Existing field boundaries, trees and hedge-rows to be retained, and integrated into the green infrastructure of the proposed Master Plan
 -  New strategic/woodland planting to respond to identified landscape character
 -  Potential new tree planting
 -  Possible location of Community Orchard or other similar use
 -  Potential New Area of Play
 -  Hedgerows identified as being ecologically 'important' to be retained and enhanced as part of proposals
 -  Attenuation basin providing amenity benefits and ecological enhancement

OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR UP TO 175
NEW DWELLINGS
(Application Reference 37/25/00018)

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