

TEMPLE
DINSLEY PARK

FORMER PRINCESS HELENA COLLEGE

Preston // Hertfordshire // SG4 7RT



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TEMPLE
DINSLEY PARK
FORMER PRINCESS HELENA COLLEGE

'A truly unique opportunity to
create an exclusive residential
development located in the heart
of Hertfordshire.'



Existing site looking north west

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A unique opportunity for a residential development, combining part-conversion and part-new build, in the affluent village of Preston, Hertfordshire.

- The site expands across 68.7 acres (27.8 ha), featuring a Grade II* listed building designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens with associated gardens by Gertrude Jekyll, all set within expansive grounds and woodlands.
- The site has received listed building consent and planning permission for a partial conversion and new-build development, providing for 69 private residential dwellings comprising a mix of 24 houses and 45 apartments (24/01604/FP and 24/01605/LBC).
- The site is conveniently located just 4 miles from Hitchin Station, offering direct services to London King's Cross in just 35 minutes. It also enjoys excellent motorway access, situated only a 12-minute drive from the A1 and 20 minutes from the M1.
- Preferred offers are requested for the freehold interest, on an unconditional basis, only. The Vendor may also consider offers for the different component parts of the site.



Existing site looking north



THE OPPORTUNITY

The site extends to 68.7 acres (27.8 ha) and previously comprised of Princess Helena College, a prominent girl's boarding school, which closed in 2021. The main building, Temple Dinsley Manor, is Grade II* listed, with gardens, structures, expansive parkland grounds, and woodlands.

- Nestled in the affluent and popular village of Preston, Hertfordshire, the site boasts outstanding access to the A1 and M1 ensuring connections to major cities such as Stevenage (6.3 miles east), Luton (7.9 southwest) and greater London.
- The site has approved listed building consent and planning permission (24/01604/FP and 24/01605/LBC) for the residential development that combines the conversion of a listed building and outbuildings, along with new-build housing, providing a total of 69 private dwellings, seamlessly blending historic and modern architecture.
- In addition to preserving the site's heritage, the project will enhance the surrounding environment and green spaces through delivering a designed landscaping strategy.
- The western part of the site is known for its historic parks and gardens and is located within the Preston Conservation Area.
- The entirety of the site is situated within the Green Belt and has no Tree Protections Orders.
- The consented proposal does not require for the provision of any affordable housing within the residential development, nor are there any CIL payments due.

LOCATION

The site is located 3 miles south of Hitchin, situated on the outer eastern fringe of the affluent village of Preston, Hertfordshire. The village is surrounded by picturesque agricultural fields, woodlands and close to natural landmarks such as the Pegsdon Hills and Hoo Bit nature reserve.

Several renowned schools are just a short 10-minute drive from the area, including the highly respected Hitchin Girls' School, Hitchin Boys' School and Kingshott School, a well-regarded independent preparatory school in Hitchin. The Red Lion Pub is a short walk via a path from the property. The pub offers a selection of local ales and traditional British cuisine, making it a popular spot for both locals and visitors.

Preston Recreation Ground is again situated within a short walk of the property and is home to Preston Cricket Club. The open space is popular with residents for both organised sports and casual recreation.

The Mall Luton, is a short 7 miles away and offers a wide array of retail amenities. Furthermore, Stevenage features Westgate Shopping Centre and Roaring Meg Retail Park both within 6 miles, providing even broader retail options.

DEMOGRAPHIC

Temple Dinsley Park is situated in an affluent area where the average house price over the past 12-months was £1,170,000 – more than twice that of nearby areas (£535,247) and over three times the national average (£293,000).

Preston has a diverse demographic profile, with 22% of the population occupied with domestic responsibilities, 47% in full-time employment, and 3% are retired.

The vast majority of those in full time employment are in professional occupations such as Lawyers or Doctors, with those in Management and Senior Roles coming closely behind.

In the Daily Telegraph’s most desirable towns in the UK, 4 out of the top 10 are situated in Hertfordshire, with Harpenden being number 1 in the UK, only 5 and a half miles from Preston.

Knight Frank anticipates strong demand for the completed units, driven by the distinctive nature of the development and the affluence of the surrounding area. To date, the current vendor has received a significant number of enquiries from prospective purchasers, reflecting the market’s interest in the end product.



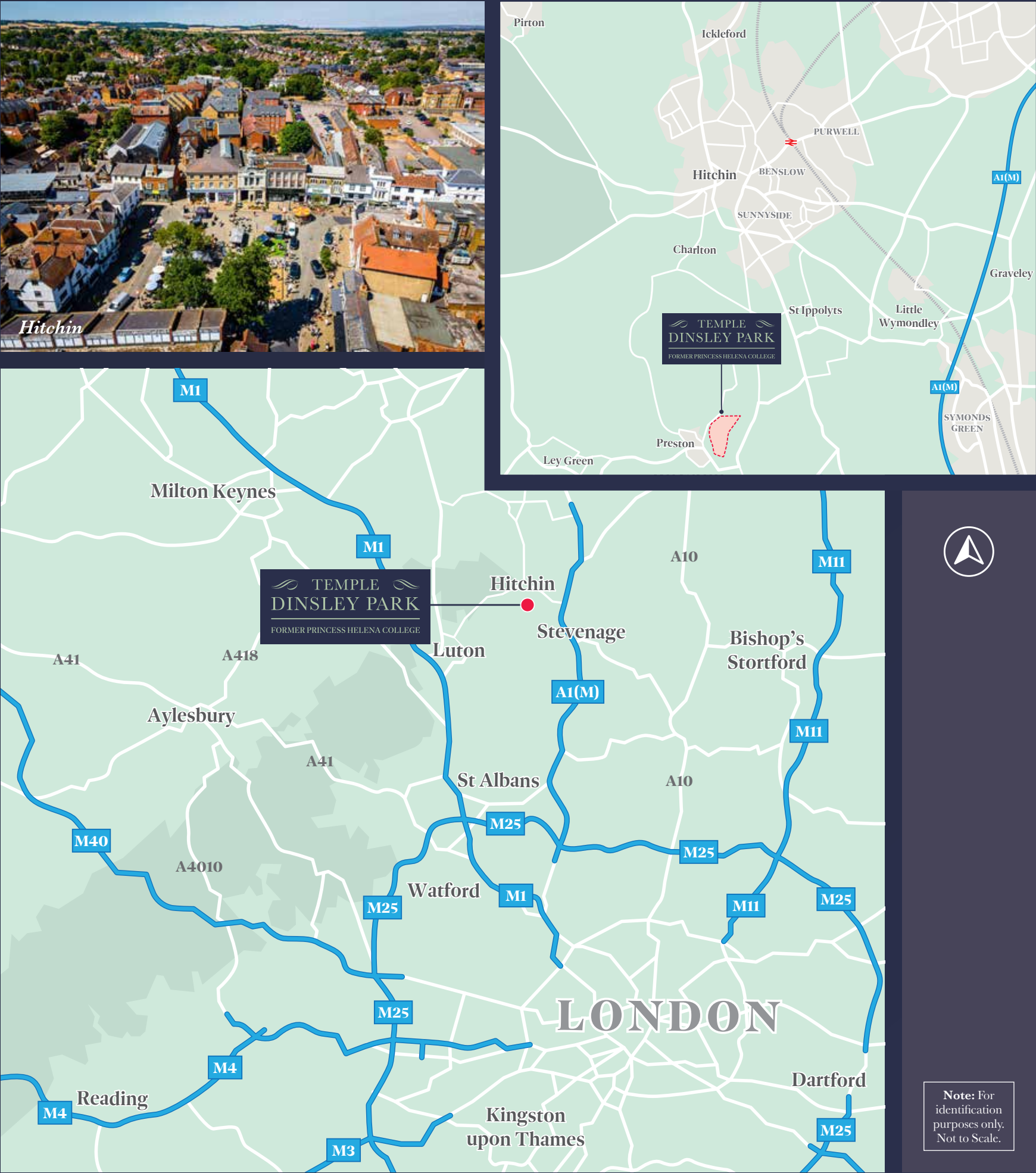
St Martins Church, Preston



Preston Recreation Ground



The Red Lion, Preston



TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

The site enjoys excellent road connectivity, with the M1 motorway located 8.6 miles southwest, accessible via the A505, providing direct links to the Midlands and Greater London. To the east the A1(M) reached via the A602, serves as a major arterial route to London.

Despite Preston being a quaint village, and not benefiting from its own train station, the sites proximity to major rail hubs such as Hitchin, Stevenage and Luton means frequent services to London and other parts of the country are easily available. The site is only a 10 minute drive (4 miles) from Hitchin railway station, serviced by the Great Northern Rail, with links to London Kings Cross and other London central stations. Additionally, the Centrebus route 88 connects Hitchin to Luton in circa 45 minutes.

BY CAR (from the site)	
Hitchin Train Station	12 minutes
Stevenage	18 minutes
Luton Airport	20 minutes
Luton	25 minutes
London West End	1hr 20 minutes
City of London	1hr 30 minutes



Hitchin Train Station



From Hitchin Train Station

London King’s Cross
35 minutes

Tottenham Court Road
50 minutes

London Liverpool Street
50 minutes

Bond Street
51 minutes

London Paddington
60 minutes

Stratford
60 minutes

London Heathrow Airport
1hr 15 minutes

London Gatwick Airport
1hr 20 minutes

London City Airport
1hr 30 minutes



London Liverpool Street



Marks & Spencer Flagship Store, Stevenage



Luton Airport

TEMPLE DINSLEY HISTORY

Temple Dinsley boasts a rich history spanning nearly 900 years, evolving through various owners and architectural transformations.

Originally granted to the Knights Templar in 1147, the estate later became home to Sir Ralph Sadleir’s family, who modernised it in the 17th century. Over the centuries, it passed through the hands of influential figures, including Benedict Ithel, Joseph Darton, and Major Henry Pryor.

In the early 20th century, Violet Fenwick appointed the renowned architect Sir Edwin Lutyens to extend the mansion, further shaping its distinguished character. The estate later became the home of Princess Helena College for Girls in 1935, serving as an educational institution for decades until its closure in 2021. In January 2025, Temple Dinsley secured listed building consent and planning permission for extensive placemaking, including landscaping enhancements and the revitalisation of recreational spaces, as part of a residential development to provide 69 residential dwellings.



Main building (interior)



Main building (interior)



Existing site looking north

1147

Dinsley was given to the Knights Templar

1542

Granted to Sir Ralph Sadleir whose family modernised the house in the 17th century

1712

The Manor was sold to Benedict Ithel who replaced the Sadleir House with a 'modest house facing the natural park land'

1737

1737 The estate was passed to one of Ithel's sisters who bequeathed it to her steward, Thomas Harwood in 1767.

1786

Estate was left by Harwood to his nephew Joseph Darton

1873

Estate was sold and purchased by Major Henry Pryor of Clifton Beds

1909

Violet Fenwick inherited wealth following her father’s passing and appointed Sir Edwin Lutyens to extend the mansion

1913

Lutyens returned to Temple Dinsley to extend the garage block

1917

Temple Dinsley was sold following the couple’s divorce

1935

The house was obtained by Princess Helena College for Girls, where Felix Lander carried out internal alterations and extensions

2021

Princess Helena College for Girls closed following financial difficulty during the COVID-19 period

January 2025

Temple Dinsley secured listed building consent and planning permission to convert the former Princess Helena College through a part new build part conversion residential development, to provide 69 dwellings





Existing site looking southeast



Existing site looking southwest



Proposed Pump House & Tank House conversion



Existing Driveway



Main building (interior)

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT & CONSENTED PLANNING PERMISSION

PLANNING

 The site benefits from full planning permission and listed building consent (24/01604/FP and 24/01605/LBC) for the change of use of the former Princess Helena College and associated land to provide 69 private residential dwellings (Use Class C3), with the S106 signed and dated 17th July 2025.

The consented scheme involves converting the main Grade II* listed house into apartments and repurposing the retained Teaching Block. It also includes demolishing the existing sports hall and science block to make way for new houses and apartments, converting the Tank House and Pump House buildings, and constructing two detached dwellings within the Summerhouse Plantation.

In addition, proposed is a covered car park, alongside domestic storage units, solar PV panels, waste storage units and the provision of new driveways.

The sports hall will be demolished by the existing vendor prior to sale to implement the planning permission. The planning conditions allow for the commencement of individual elements across the site separately, allowing for flexibility with costs and early sales programming.

MAIN BUILDING

 The main house and its associated wings and extensions will be converted into 35 new apartments, comprising of x10 one-bedroom units, x20 two-bedroom units, x4 three-bedroom units and x1 four-bedroom units. All the proposed apartments benefit from a lateral layout. The building will contain 3 entrances to access the apartments, the historic fabric is to remain unaltered, and a new lift is proposed.

TEACHING BLOCK

 The teaching block is located to the side of the main building and proposed to be converted into 8 new apartments comprising of x2 one-bedroom, x5 two-bedroom and x1 three-bedroom units.

SPORTS HALL HOUSING

 This is located to the rear of the teaching block and north-east of the main buildings. This is proposed to be demolished alongside the Science Block and replaced with five new buildings. These will provide 20 new build houses and 2 new apartments.

This is made up of Edwin x2 two-bedroom and x2 three-bedroom terraced houses, Violet x4 four-bedroom terraced houses, Sadleir x4 three-bedroom and x2 four-bedroom terraced houses, Ithel x6 three-bedroom terraced houses and Templar x2 three-bedroom split level apartments.

SUMMER HOUSE AND HARWOOD HOUSE

 Two contemporary new build detached houses nestled discreetly within the Summerhouse Plantation. Both dwellings will provide five bedrooms over 2 storeys with a GIA of 4,520 sqft (420 sqm) each. Both will have independent driveways, triple-bay garaging, ample private garden and woodland areas.

CAR PARKING

 The four individual detached houses (Tank House, Pump House, Summer House and Harwood House) will have triple-bay garaging. A large, covered car park is proposed to serve the apartments and the new houses, along with domestic storage areas, all set within a walled enclosure.



PUMP HOUSE AND TANK HOUSE



These two buildings comprise a timber barn housing the old water tanks and an associated pumping station and building located in the open parkland to the south-east of the main house.

The planning application proposes to convert these into x2 detached 3-bedroom houses. Both units will benefit from their own garden, garaging and private access.

The Tank House will be a single storey dwelling and The Pump House a 2-storey dwelling. These 2 houses are unique in their positioning in the parkland and will be provided with substantial gardens, garaging and their own private access set alongside the main site entrance.

For further information and access to planning documents please visit the dataroom.



LISTED BUILDING CONSENT &
CONSENTED PLANNING PERMISSION

The 69 dwellings range in size from one-bedroom apartments to five-bedroom houses.



CGI of the proposed new-build development

Accommodation Schedule						
	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	Total
Main Building	10	20	4	1	-	35
Teaching Block	2	5	1	-	-	8
Edwin	-	2	2	-	-	4
Violet	-	-	-	4	-	4
Sadleir	-	-	4	2	-	6
Ithel	-	-	6	-	-	6
Templar	-	-	2	-	-	2
Summer House	-	-	-	-	1	1
Harwood House	-	-	-	-	1	1
Tank House	-	-	1	-	-	1
Pump House	-	-	1	-	-	3
TOTALS	12	27	25	3	2	69



CGI of the proposed new-build development



CGI of the proposed Harwood House and Summer House

Site Area: 277,945 sp m (27.8 ha)

- 1

Main Building
- 2

Teaching Block
- 3

Edwin
- 4

Violet
- 5

Sadleir
- 6

Ithel
- 7

Templar
- 8

Summer House
- 9

Harwood House
- 10

Tank House
- 11

Pump House
- 12

Lodge Gate
- 13

Belvedere
- 14

Ice House
- 15

Piggery
- 16

Park Wall & Main Gate
Main Entrance & Occasional Exit
- 17

Paved Rose Garden
- 18

Herbaceous Garden
- 19

Small Herbaceous Garden
- 20

Rose Garden
- 21

Magnolia Steps
- 22

Cricket Pitch
- 23

North Tennis Court
- 24

Village Gate
- 25

Walled Parking Garden
- 26

Existing Parking
- 27

Visitor Parking
- 28

Summer House Plantation
- 29

East Tennis Courts
- 30

Pergola Garden, Tennis Lawn
- 31

Permissive Path (extended) & Estate Fencing
- 32

Permissive Path (new) to Dower House
- 33

Path to Schools Yard
- 34

St. Albans Road
- 35

East Avenue to Exit
- 36

Construction Traffic In and Out
Access to Cricket Pitch, Tennis Courts,
Summer House & Harwood House
- 37

Substation
- 38

New Cricket Pavilion and Equipment Store
- 39

Proposed Woodland Planting
- 40

Wildflower Meadows
- 42

Energy Centre in East Car Park
- 43

Central Bin Store in East Car Park
- 44

Cricket Pitch Parking Area
- Estate Fence
- Post & Rail
- a

Vehicle Gate
- a1

Vehicle & Pedestrian Gate
- b

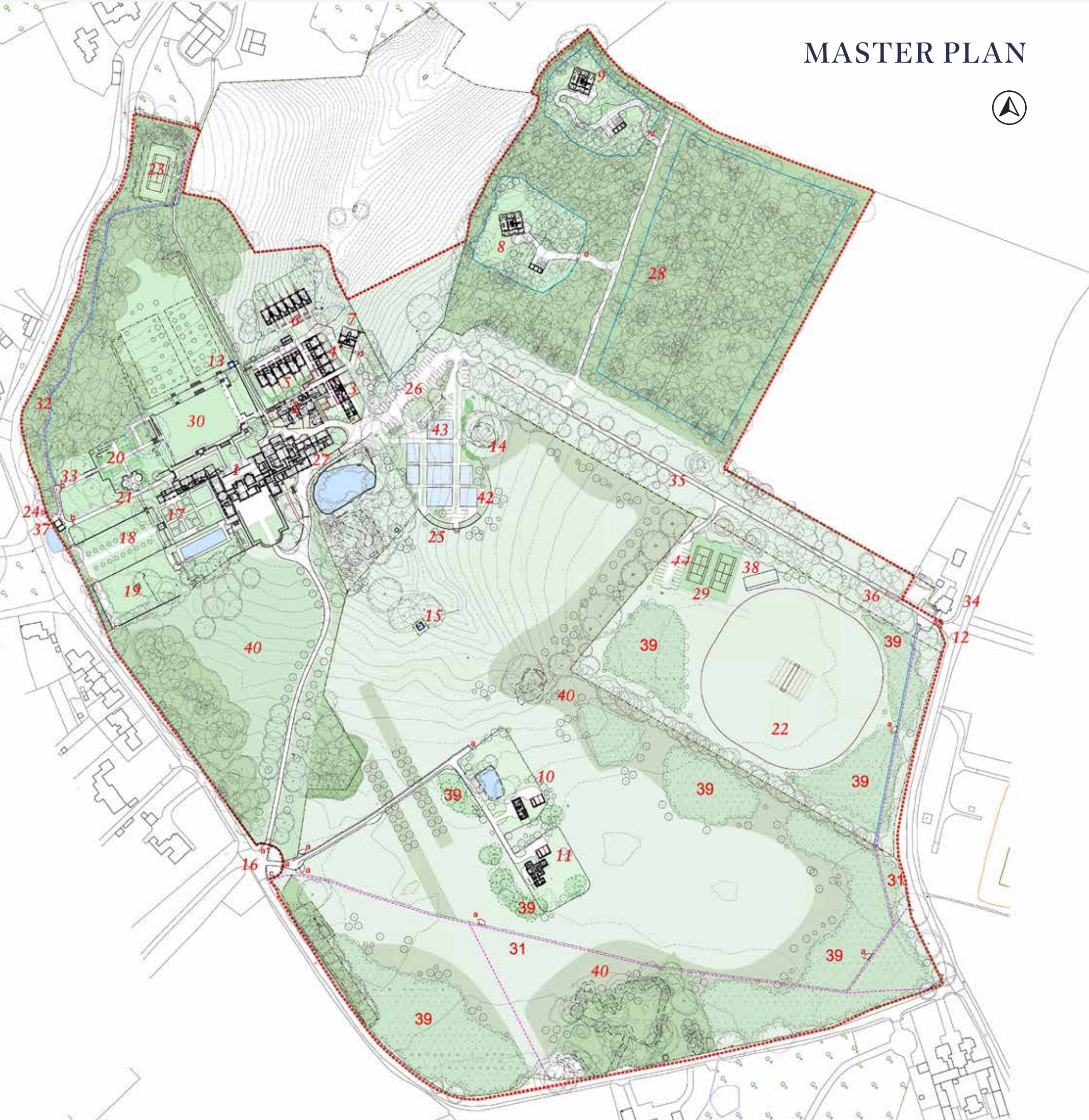
Pedestrian Gate with Keypad
- c

Pedestrian Kissing Gate
- d

Cattle Grid & Pedestrian Gate

Note: For identification purposes only. Not to Scale.

MASTER PLAN



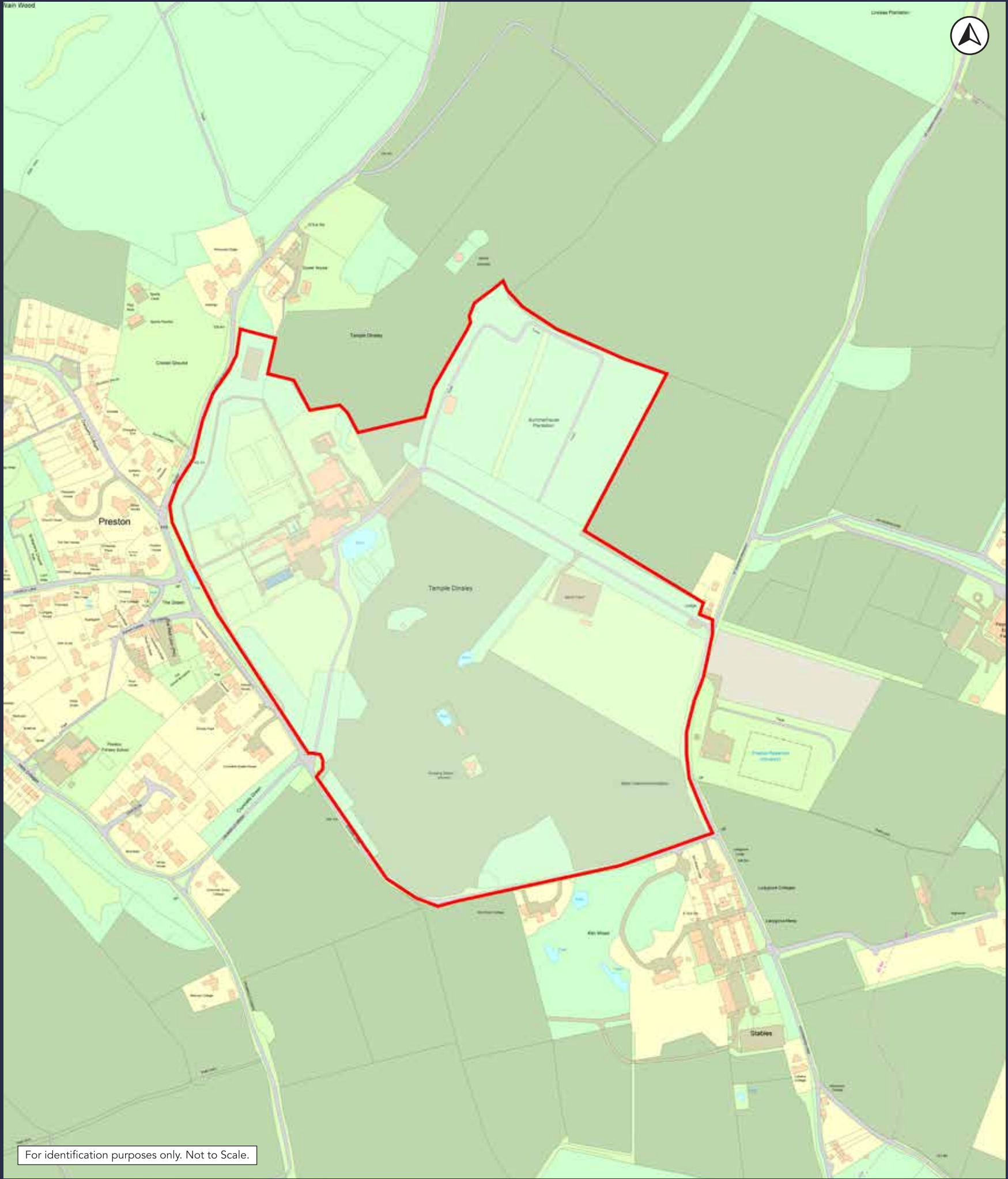
PLACEMAKING PROPOSAL

The proposal includes extensive landscaping improvements to the surrounding listed parks, gardens, and wider parkland.

The plan aims to reestablish the listed gardens, including the pergolas and pathways, and replace the existing swimming pool with a decorative ornamental pond.

As part of the vision to create a quintessential English village setting, a new cricket pitch and pavilion is proposed on the site of the current school sports field and is to be used and maintained by Preston Cricket Club, who are to be granted a 75 year lease. The existing tennis courts are to be reduced down to two courts for the use of village residents and maintained by the Parish Council, accessible only by permissive footpaths situated on the outskirts of the grounds. The intention is for the remaining fields to continue in their historic use for cattle grazing.

A disused tennis court will also be repurposed. Furthermore, new pathways are planned throughout the site, offering direct access from the new dwellings to the village, improving connectivity for residents and visitors alike.



For identification purposes only. Not to Scale.

FURTHER INFORMATION

TENURE

The property is held freehold under title number HD472266. Copies of the Land Registry documents can be found in the data room.

LOCAL AUTHORITY

North Hertfordshire Council.

INSPECTION

The property may be inspected by prior appointment through the vendor’s sole selling agents, Knight Frank LLP. Prospective purchasers should be aware that inspections are made entirely at their own risk and no liability is accepted by the vendor or their agent.

METHOD OF SALE

Preferred offers are requested for the freehold interest, on an unconditional basis. The Vendor may also consider offers for the different component parts of the site.

VAT

The property is not elected for VAT.

OTHER INFORMATION

Please see the dedicated website for the following information:

- **Bidding Guidelines**
- **Floor Plans and Accommodation Schedule**
- **Planning Documentation**
- **Site Plan**
- **Title Documentation**

DATA ROOM

Please click here to visit the Data Room.



Existing site gardens

TEMPLE
DINSLEY PARK

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Particulars dated September 2025.

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