

Strategic Green Space Network

17th October 2022

Green Space Network Criteria and Sites

The Green Space Network (GSN) is a network of sites within Cannock, Hednesford, Heath Hayes, Rugeley and Brereton and Norton Canes that connect open spaces within the 3 main settlements and to the wider countryside within Cannock Chase District. The network of sites has been identified since 1994 and has formed part of both the 1997 and 2014 Cannock Chase Local Plans.

The Green Space Network recognises the multiple benefits of green infrastructure. It provides a network of green spaces which link together and form corridors. The network was based upon utilising existing green space to form and enhance existing corridors such as river corridors and streams, rail lines, routes to town centres and other local facilities, links between local nature reserves, SSSI and SBI and to link these to the landscape beyond the urbanised and denser built-up areas and beyond the district. Fundamentally a green space network and its enhancement and safeguarding is still relevant today.

The Strategic Green Space Network (SGSN) recognises the importance of the areas which are already protected through other designations such as PROW, SSSI and the areas between and near these and the value they add through combining functions where compatible as well as the potential to address other issues.

It contains areas of open space, areas of land for sport and recreation, avenues of street trees and roadside grass verges, allotments, current and former transport corridors with established planting.

The corridors have many functions and provide access to walking and cycling, sport and recreation opportunities, provision of habitats for plants and animals and corridors and 'steppingstones' for their movement and also adds to the identity of areas by providing separation of areas within the larger built-up areas and enhancement of the distinctive quality of townscape and links to landscapes beyond the urban areas and the district. The benefits of access to green infrastructure include enhancing the quality of life for residents by improving opportunities for physical and mental well-being. By making it easy to access a network of accessible, safe, and attractive green space encourages walking and a switch to healthy lifestyles and reduces the reliance on the private car. The strategic green space network can also provide access to opportunities for food production through community gardens and allotments. The strategic green space network can assist with mitigating the risks from climate change such as the impacts of flooding and heat and assist in addressing matters such as pollution to air, water, and noise. Its effective stewardship will be managed in accordance with a range of Local Plan policies and through documents such as the Open Space Strategy.

The NPPF (Paragraph 175, 2021) states that *"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries"*.

The policy within the adopted Local Plan has been reviewed considering the changes to the NPPF and the local plan evidence base. The Local Plan policies seek to ensure that all parts of the District can benefit from the provision of accessible and high quality green infrastructure, including the more densely developed areas. To be accessible to some communities, the green infrastructure network needs to ‘reach into’ the urban areas. The Local Plan seeks to achieve this by:

- designating the ‘Strategic Green Space Network’, which identifies areas of the greatest significance in terms of existing or potential purpose, value and accessibility to urban communities, and where appropriate protection and improvement measures will be put into place.
- encouraging new development to enhance existing areas of green infrastructure, and where possible, provide new areas of green infrastructure.

The draft policy is included at Appendix A to this review.

The Green Space Network has been reviewed for the Local Plan 2022 using the information within the Open Space Assessment 2022, Network Recovery Mapping and Urban Forestry Strategy.

The open space assessment has identified more areas of open space within the district and better-defined boundaries. To align the strategic green space network to these boundaries the following criteria have been defined. The criteria set out below have been used to consider if a site should be added, removed, or altered as part of the Green Space Network.

| Green Space Network Criteria | Site Information |
|--|---|
| 1. Does the site use meet the purposes of being in the GSN through having recreational, amenity or ecological value? | e.g. sports/leisure uses or wildlife/habitats |
| 2. Is the site within the built-up area? | e.g. which settlement is it linked to |
| 3. Does the site have good links to the existing GSN and wider countryside? | e.g. disused railway, open spaces, etc. |
| 4. Is the site publicly accessible or viewable from a publicly accessible site? | e.g. accessed by footpath or viewed from a road |
| 5. Does the site add value to the surrounding area through improving the character or visual appearance? | e.g. the setting of a historic building/landscape |
| | e.g. New housing might make the GSN |

| | |
|---|---|
| 6. Has the site experienced negative changes such as redevelopment, or has it been replaced by an alternative site? | redundant on this site, but provide an alternative site locally |
| 7. Is the site covered by any known designations? | e.g. Green Belt, Nature Reserve, etc. |

Conclusion/Findings

The SGSN has been updated taking into account the above criteria and the Open Spaces study based on mapping data and local knowledge of the sites (Appendix C).

The sites which have been selected for deletion from the SGSN have experienced or are subject to proposed negative changes such as development and change of use, which will remove their criteria for being part of the SGSN (as per question 6).

The sites which have been considered as additions to the SGSN for meeting the criteria of being placed within it add value to surrounding area through improving the character or visual appearance (as per question 5). All the sites meet the purposes of being in the GSN (question 1), are within the built up area (question 2) and have good links to the existing GSN/wider countryside (question 3). In addition the majority are publicly accessible or viewable from a publicly accessible location (question 4).

This is the first update to the SGSN since 1997 to take into account land use changes over the last 25 years and to ensure the evidence base remains fit for purpose to support the Local Plan policy.

POLICY SO7.7: PROTECTING, CONSERVING AND ENHANCING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Policies of this Local Plan seek to protect, conserve and enhance existing green infrastructure in accordance with its importance to heritage, biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape beauty, and its value to facilitate movement, sport and recreation.

The sites which have been designated as part of the ‘Strategic Green Space Network’ within and adjacent to the built-up areas of the District are shown on the Policies Map and these will receive a higher degree of protection from development. Development in these areas will normally be only permitted where it enhances the value of the green space, for example through: enhancing the quality of the townscape and landscape; providing cycling and walking routes and sport and recreation opportunities; enhancing natural habitats; providing opportunities for local food production; and mitigating the risks and impacts of flooding and pollution.

Development that would result in an unacceptable conflict with the functions or characteristics of the ‘Strategic Green Space Network’ will be resisted except where:

- Where this supports the Open Spaces Strategy;
- An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the ‘Strategic Green Space Network’ no longer fulfils that purpose; or
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a suitable and accessible location.

New development proposals will set out how the development will impact or enhance the directly affected and adjacent areas of green infrastructure, including the ‘Strategic Green Space Network’. New areas of green infrastructure, with links to existing green infrastructure, should be created within the development wherever possible.

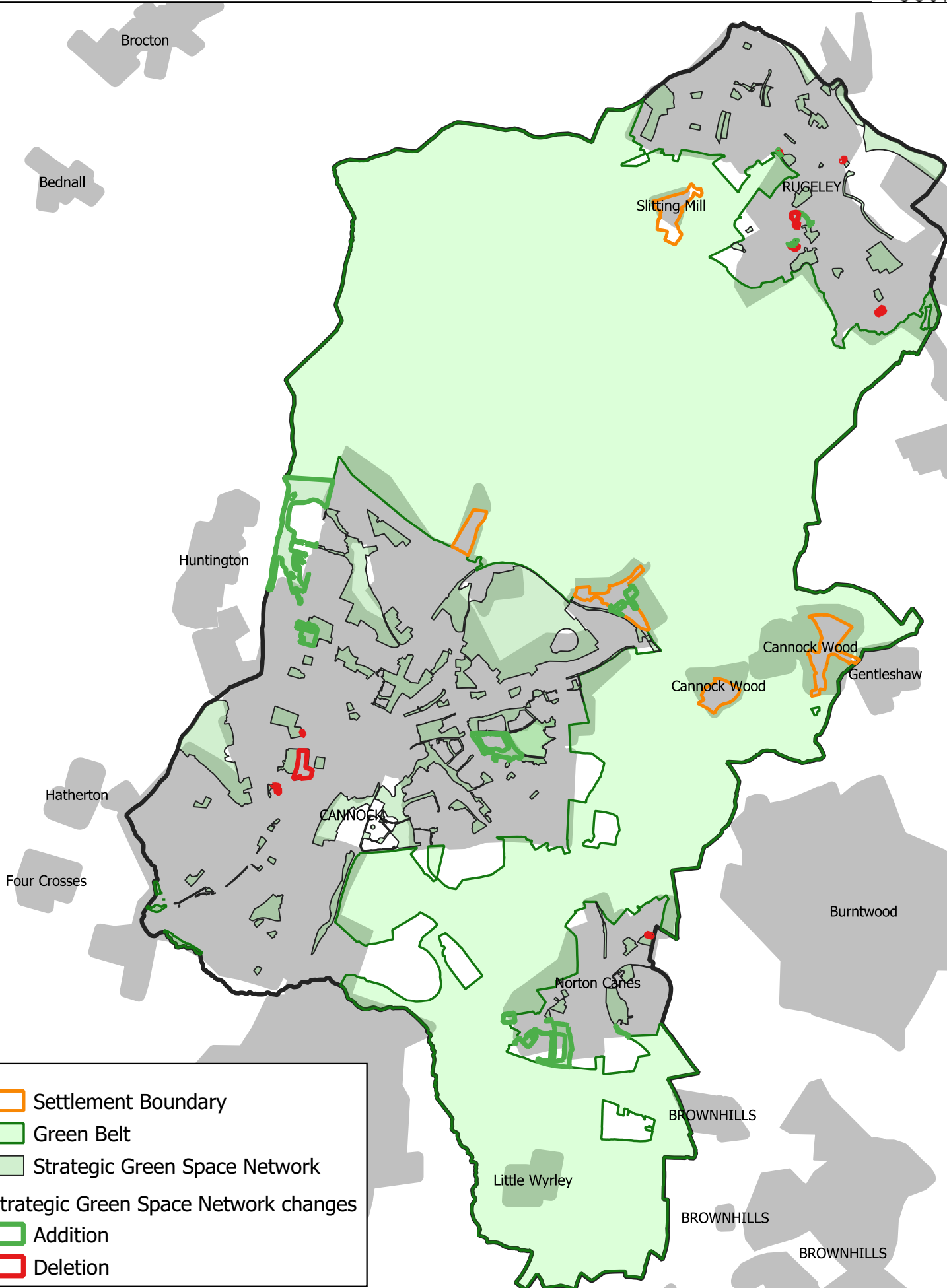
Additional areas of green space of particular importance to local communities which have been allocated in neighbourhood plans as Local Green Space will be afforded the same level of protection as the Green Belt. Neighbourhood plan proposals to allocate Local Green Space within the designated ‘Strategic Green Space Network’ will be supported.

Explanation

- 6.1 Protecting, conserving and enhancing green infrastructure will help to maintain the value of the District’s heritage, biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape assets. It can also enhance the quality of life for residents by improving physical and mental health, reducing the impact of climate change, mitigating flooding and pollution, and providing recreational

opportunities, including walking and cycling routes. The effective stewardship of the District's green infrastructure will be managed in accordance with a range of Local Plan Policies.

- 6.2 Sites designated as part of the 'Strategic Green Space Network' have been identified by taking account of how parts of the existing provision of green infrastructure can contribute to the:
- separation of individual developments and settlements, and enhancement of the distinctive quality of townscales and landscapes.
 - provision of attractive walking and cycling routes, and accessible sport and recreation opportunities.
 - provision of habitats for plants and animals, and corridors and 'steppingstones' for their movement.
 - provision of opportunities for food production, including allotments; and
 - mitigation of the risks and impacts of flooding, and air, water and noise pollution.
- 6.3 The designation of land as Local Green Space through neighbourhood plans (or future local plans) allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. Future designations of Local Green Space may, or may not, be within Local Plan designations of 'Strategic Green Space Network'. Any designations of Local Green Space will supersede 'Strategic Green Space Network' designation given the greater protection afforded by the former.



Settlement Boundary
 Green Belt
 Strategic Green Space Network
Strategic Green Space Network changes
 Addition
 Deletion

Appendix C - Green Space Network review (2022) Assessment and Maps

| | | | | Assessment Criteria | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------|-------|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Name of Site | Map Reference | Change | Area | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Notes |
| Car Dealership at Sheep Fair/ Western Springs Road | 9 | Removal | 0.13 | n | y | y | n | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Western Springs & Sheep Fair junction | 31 | Addition | 0.04 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Open Space Assessment |
| Lorraine Croft | 32 | Removal | 0.41 | n | y | y | n | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Lorraine Croft adj Good Shepherd Church | 33 | Addition | 0.04 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| Lorraine Croft Play Area | 34 | Addition | 0.09 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| Hislop Road opposite Lorraine Croft | 35 | Addition | 0.05 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| Ashleigh Road footpath link | 36 | Addition | 0.05 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| Ashleigh Road | 37 | Removal | 0.1 | n | y | y | n | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Ashleigh Road | 38 | Removal | 0.12 | n | y | y | n | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Former Pear Tree School | 41 | Removal | 0.75 | n | y | y | n | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Hardie Avenue & Rugeley Town Station footpath links | 15 | Addition | 0.27 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| Former Abatoir Love Lane Rugeley | 23 | Removal | 0.17 | n | y | y | n | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Nursery Road, Brereton | 29 | Removal | 0.52 | n | y | n | n | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Bentley Brook Hazelslade | 19 | Addition | 1.22 | y | y | y | y | y | n | y | Open Space Assessment |
| Hazelslade Nature Reserve south of car park | 21 | Addition | 0.32 | y | y | y | y | y | n | y | Open Space Assessment |
| Hazelslade Nature reserve north of car park and school field | 22 | Addition | 1.48 | y | y | y | n | y | n | y | Open Space Assessment |
| Land West of Pye Green Road | 5 | Addition | 0.92 | y | y | y | n | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure within new development |
| Land West of Pye Green Road | 12 | Addition | 0.6 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| Land West of Pye Green Road | 13 | Addition | 30.22 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |

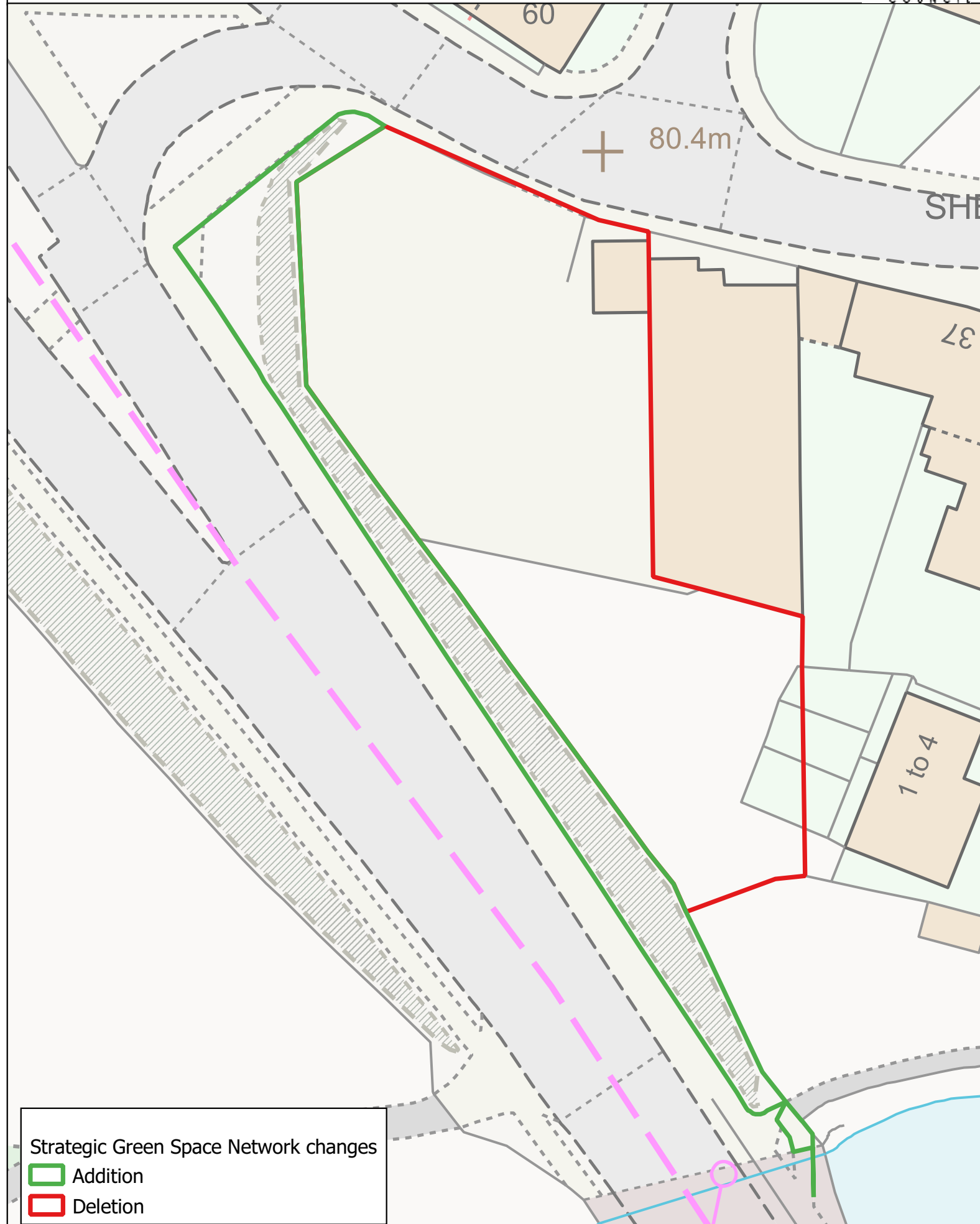
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|--|----|----------|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Land West of Pye Green Road | 16 | Addition | 0.44 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| Hednesford Stadium site | 20 | Addition | 3.99 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Open Space Assessment |
| Land adj Hednesford Football Club | 39 | Addition | 6.1 | y | y | y | y | y | n | y | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| 1st Blackfords Sea Scouts | 1 | Removal | 0.11 | n | y | y | y | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Cannock Chase High School | 40 | Removal | 4.28 | n | y | y | n | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Cannock Chase Council Office Car Park Extension | 8 | Removal | 0.15 | n | y | y | y | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Cannock Chase Council Bungalow & Members Car Park | 43 | Removal | 0.23 | n | y | y | y | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| 153 Norton East Road curtilage, Norton Canes | 2 | Removal | 0.25 | n | y | y | n | n | y | n | Change in land use |
| Norton Canes Churchyard, Church Road, Norton Canes | 6 | Addition | 1.38 | y | y | y | y | y | n | y | Open Space Assessment |
| Bettys Lane former railway alignment | 7 | Addition | 0.25 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Open Space Assessment |
| Land south of Norton Canes | 14 | Addition | 0.1 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| Land south of Norton Canes | 17 | Addition | 1.18 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| Land south of Norton Canes | 18 | Addition | 0.06 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |
| Land south of Norton Canes | 42 | Addition | 8.28 | y | y | y | y | y | n | n | Green Infrastructure enhancement associated with new development |

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Strategic Green Space Network changes

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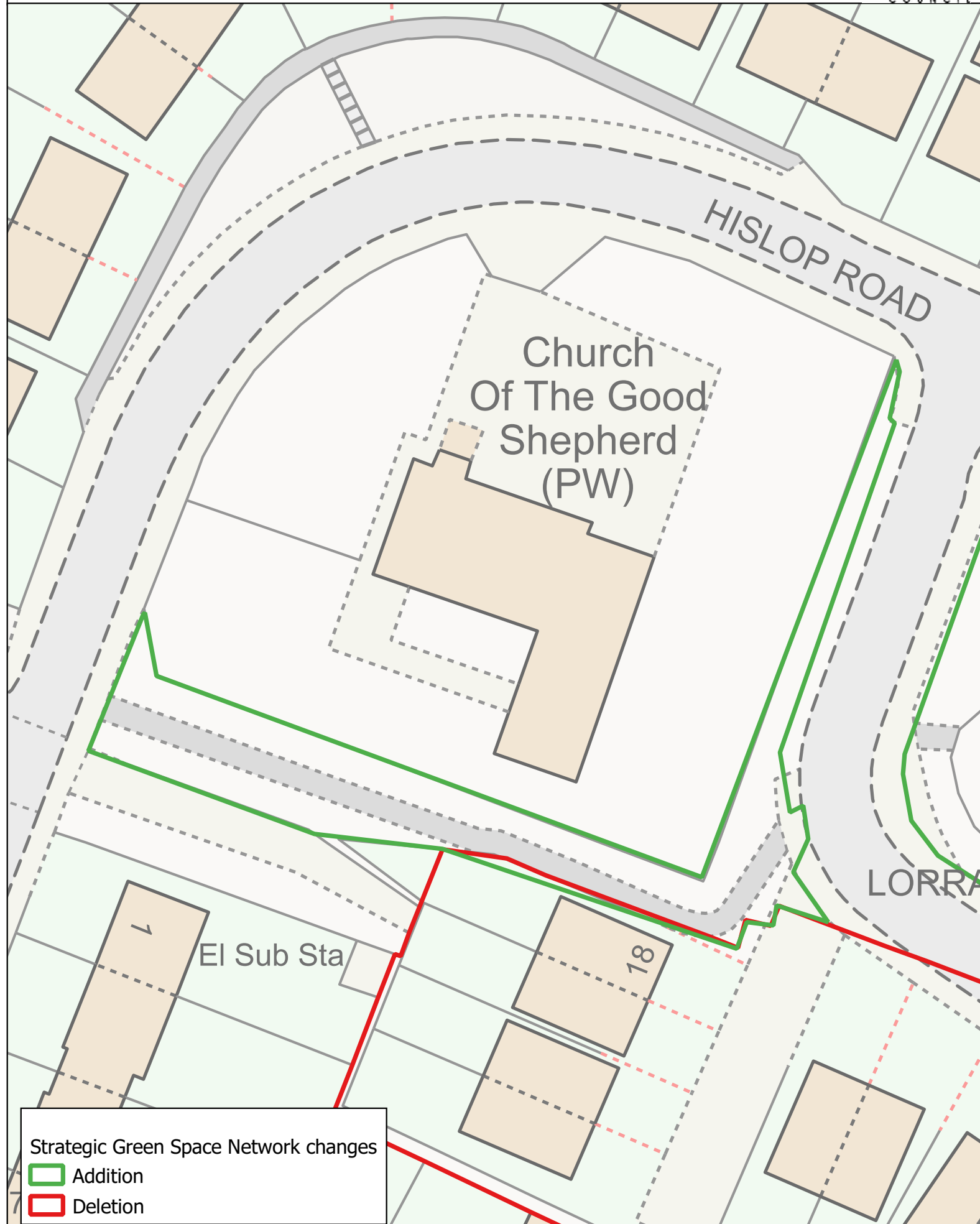
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Strategic Green Space Network changes

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Balancing Pond

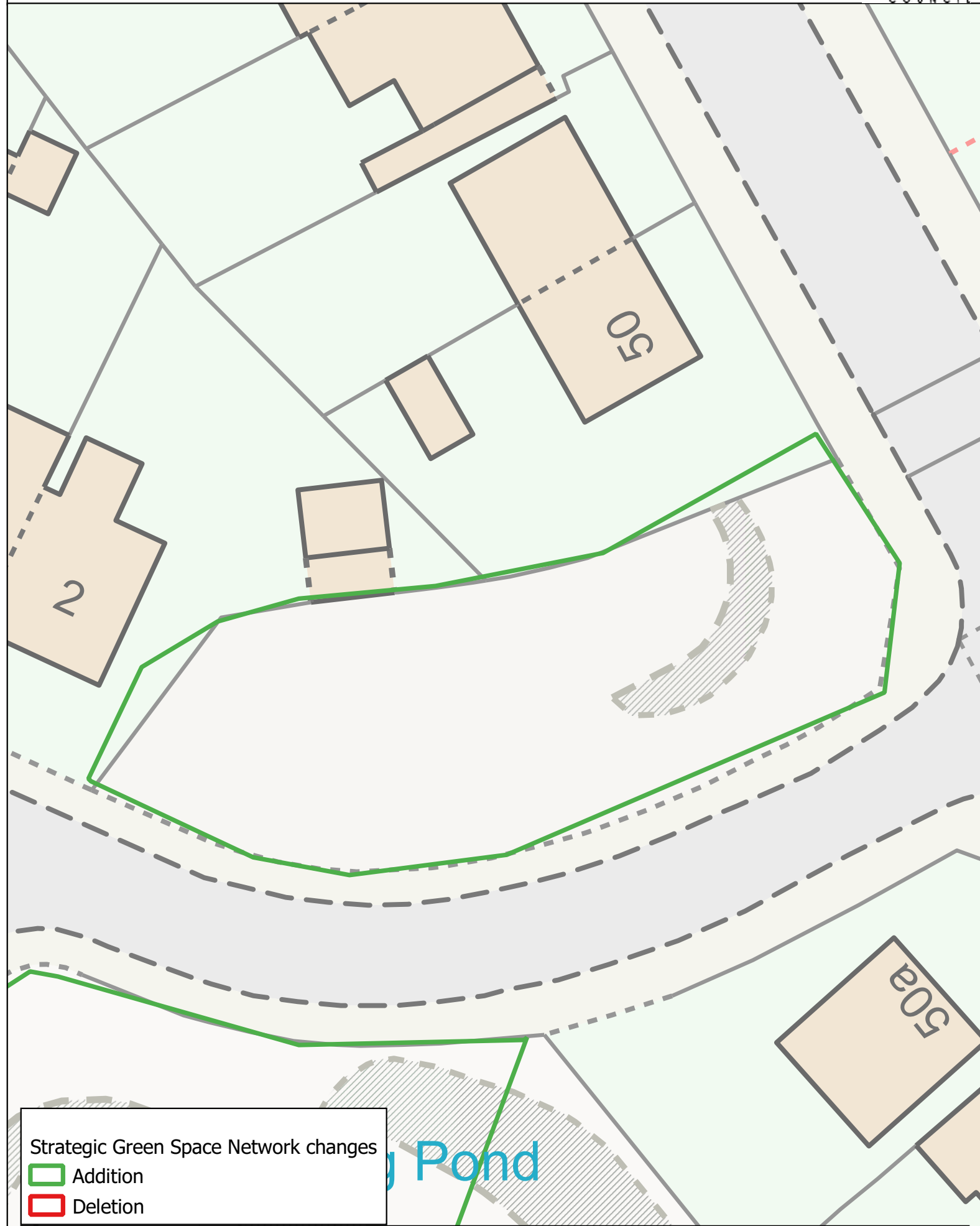
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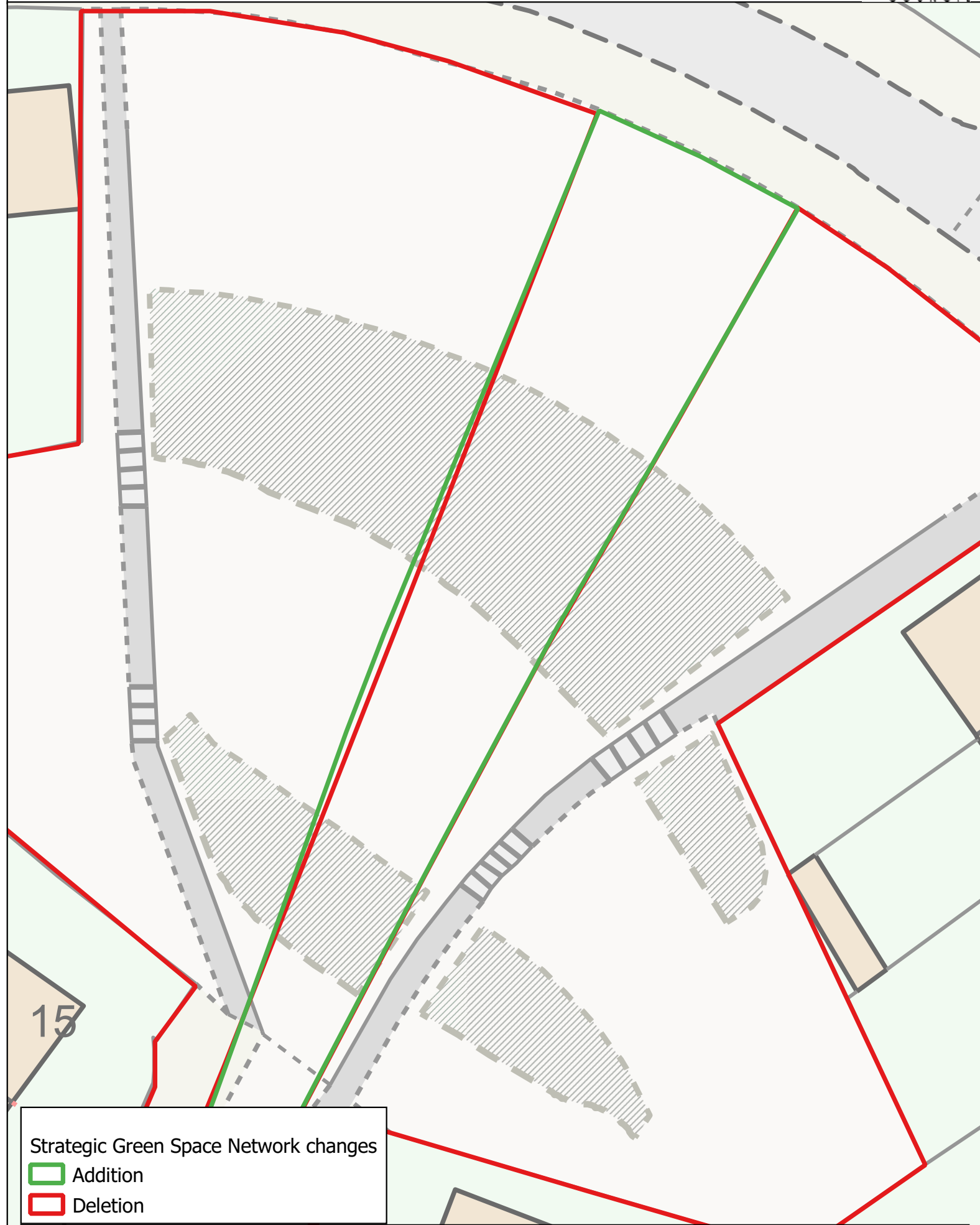
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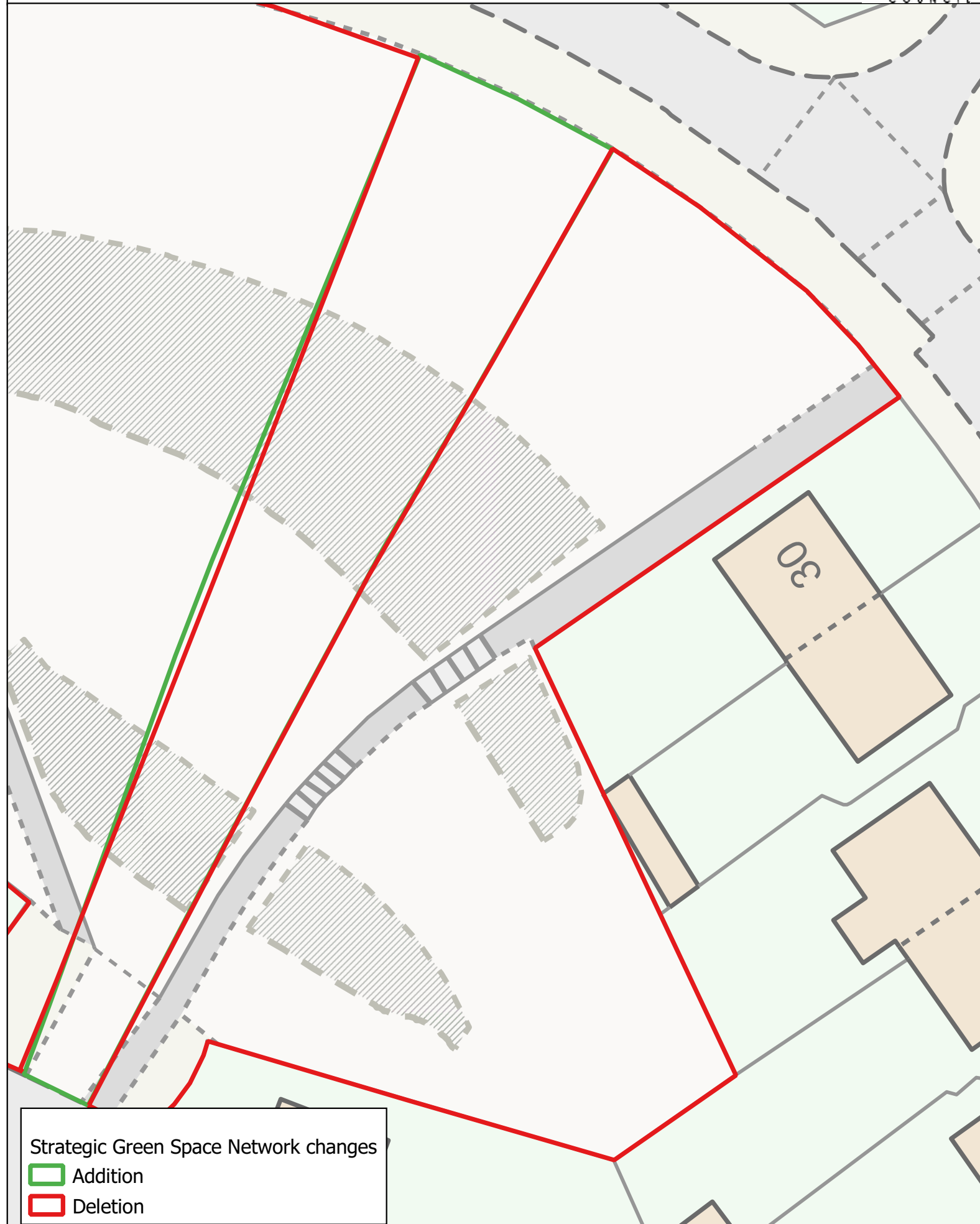




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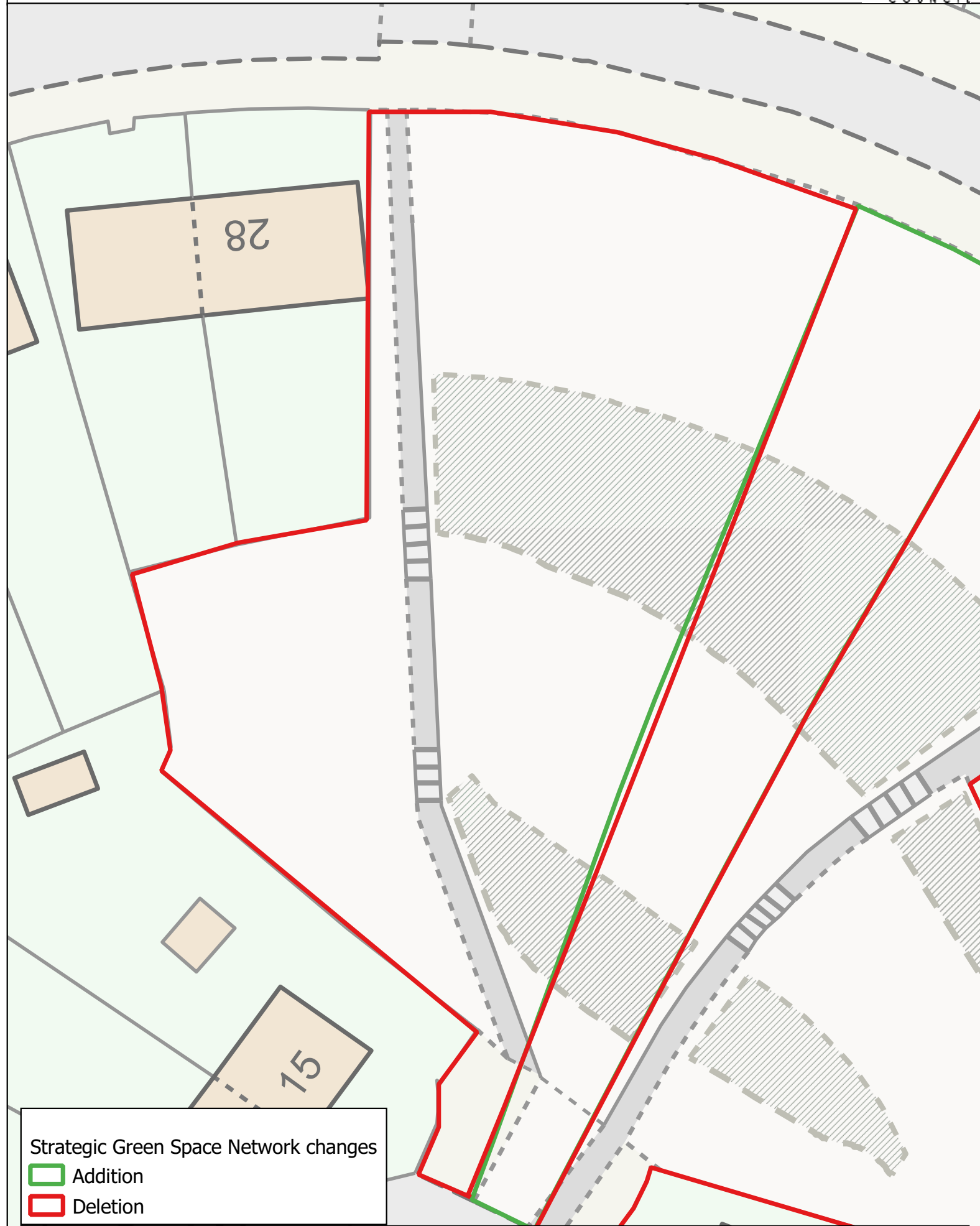
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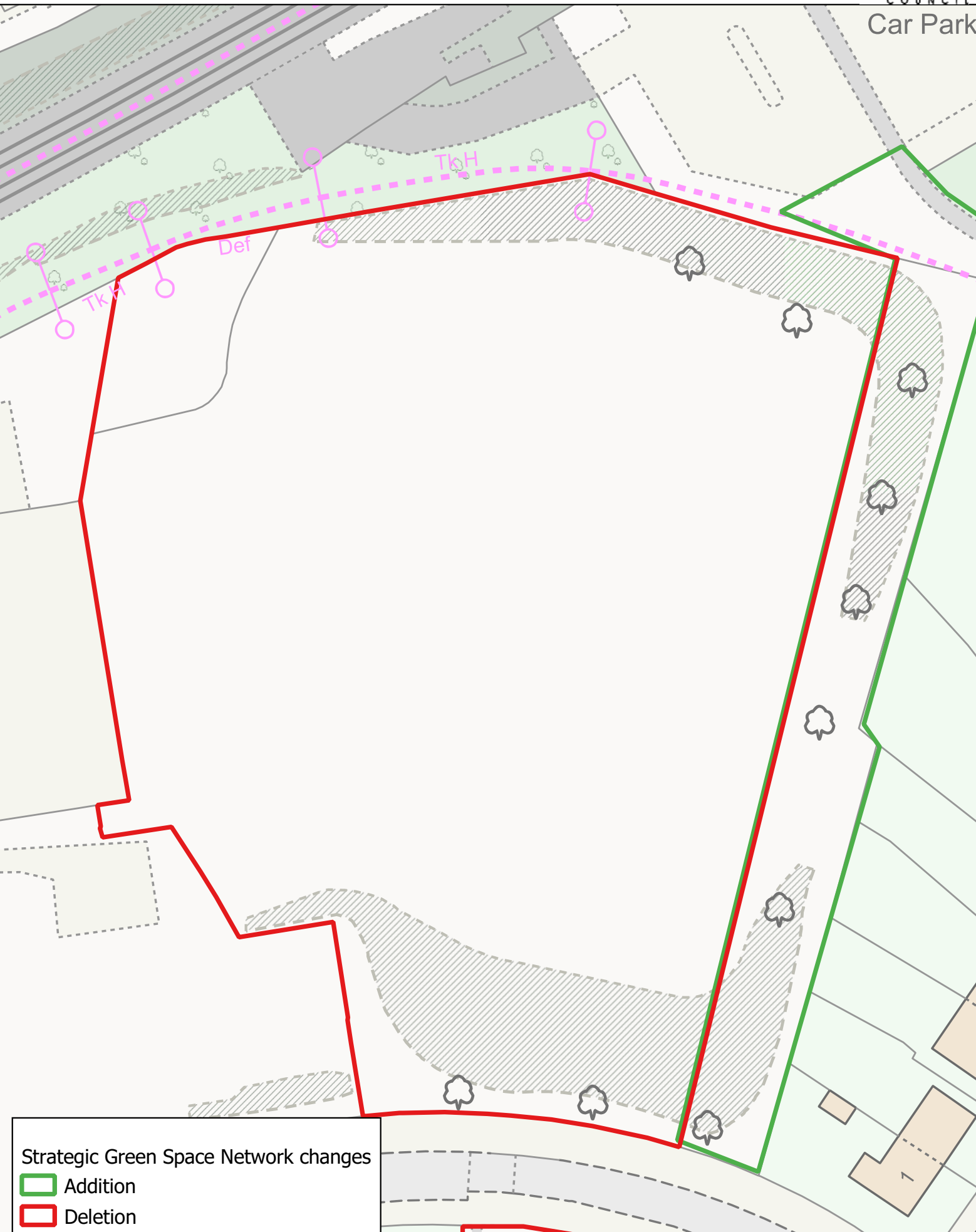
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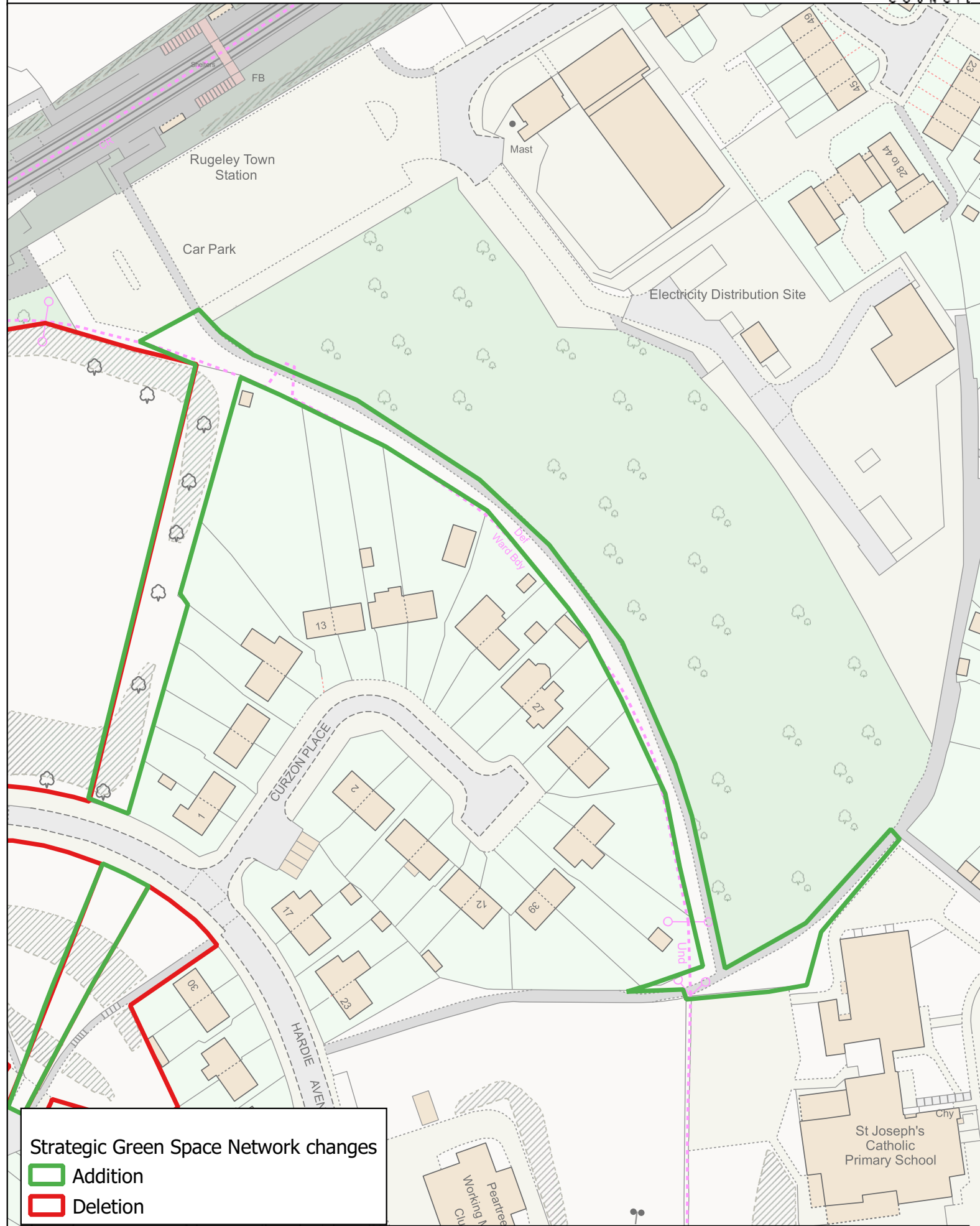
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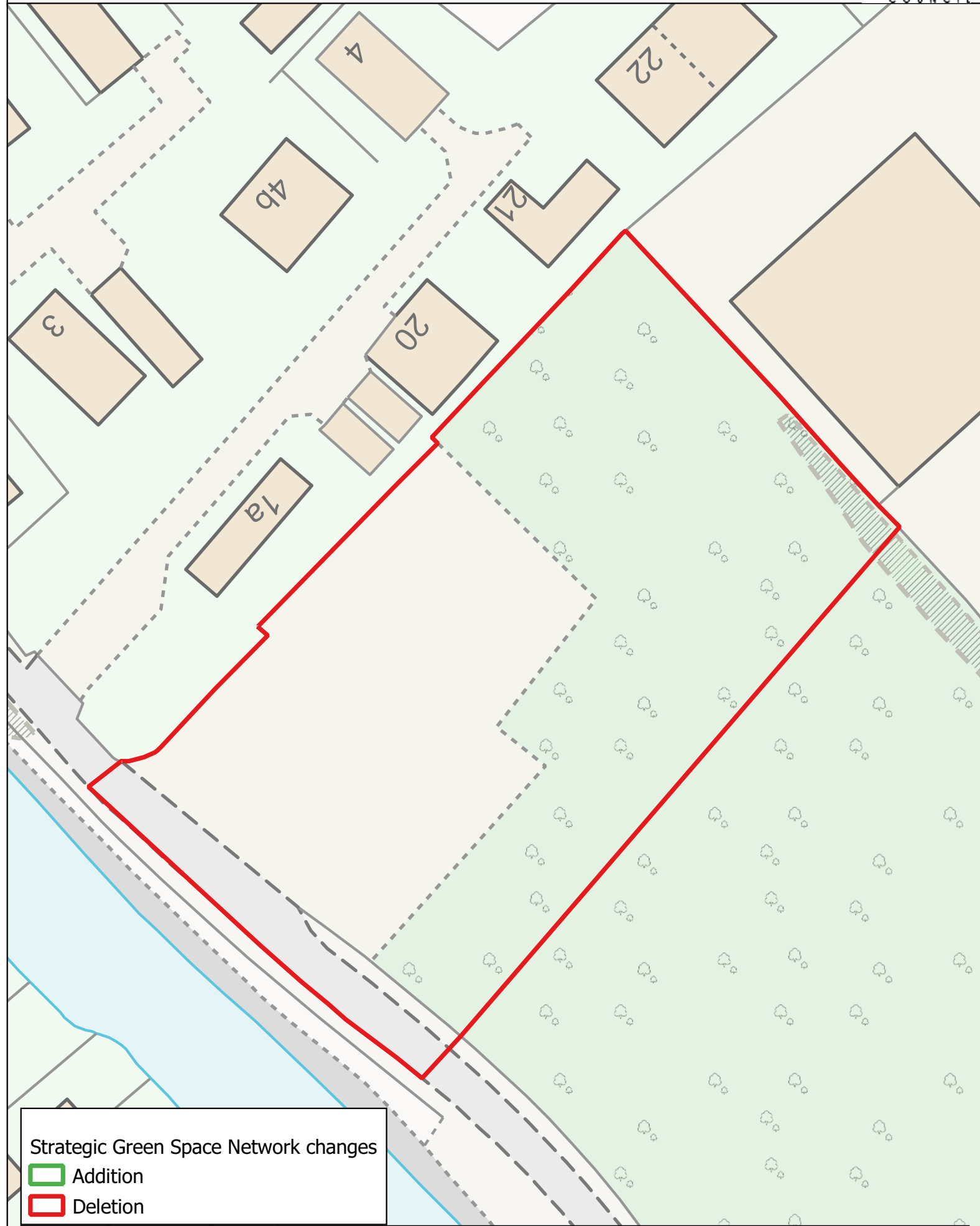


Strategic Green Space Network changes

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Car Park

Spreads

Drain

Path (um)

Hazelslade

32a

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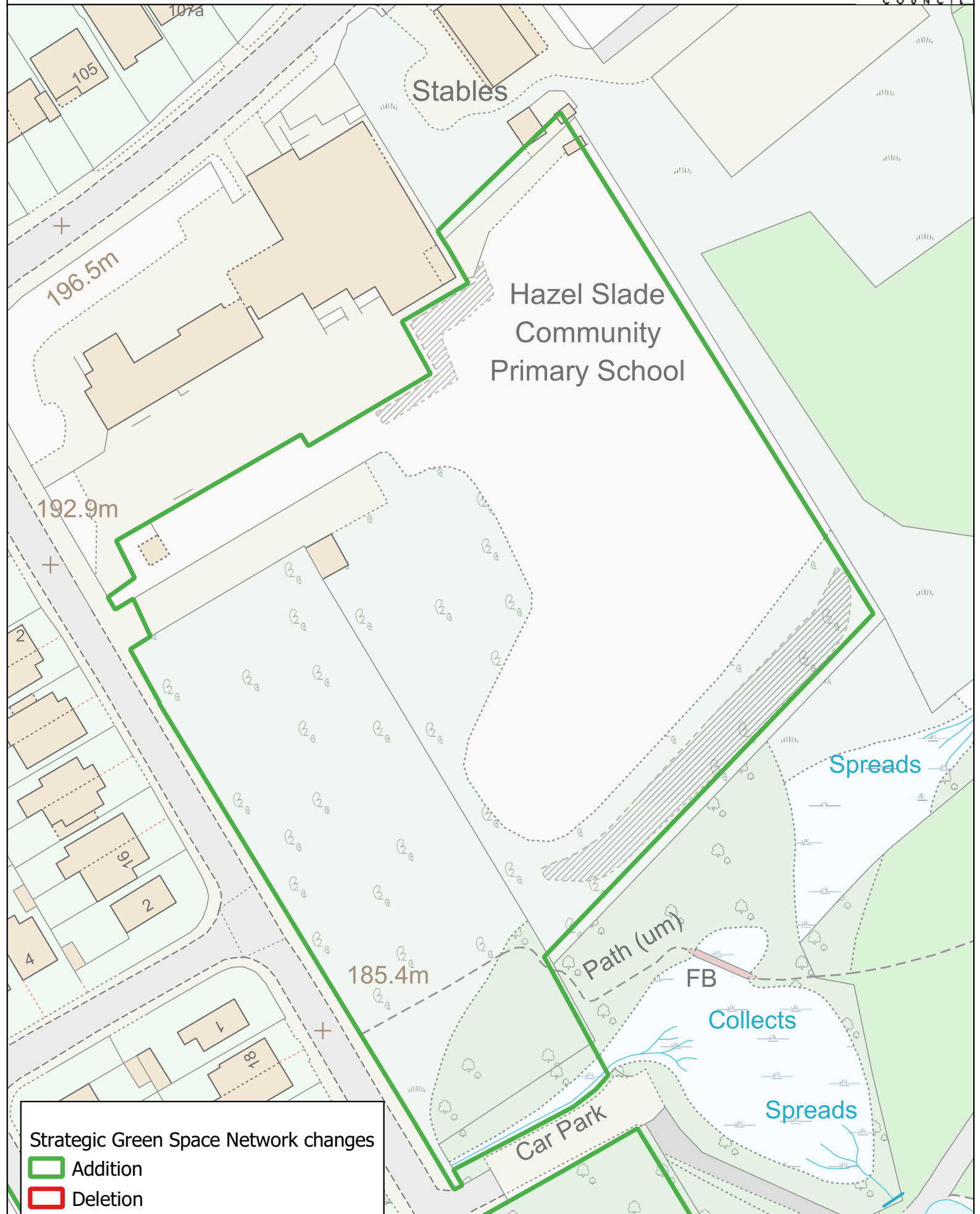
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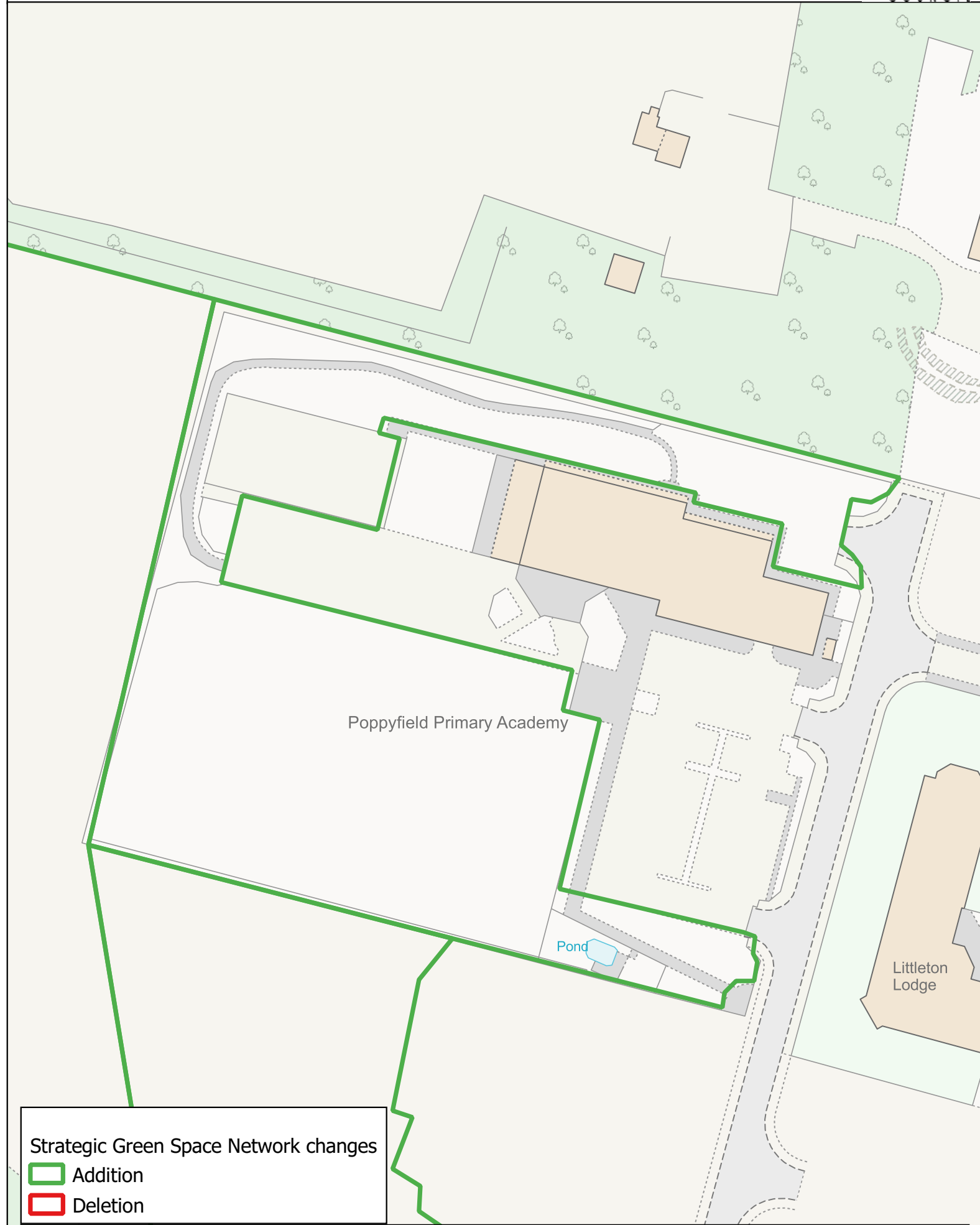
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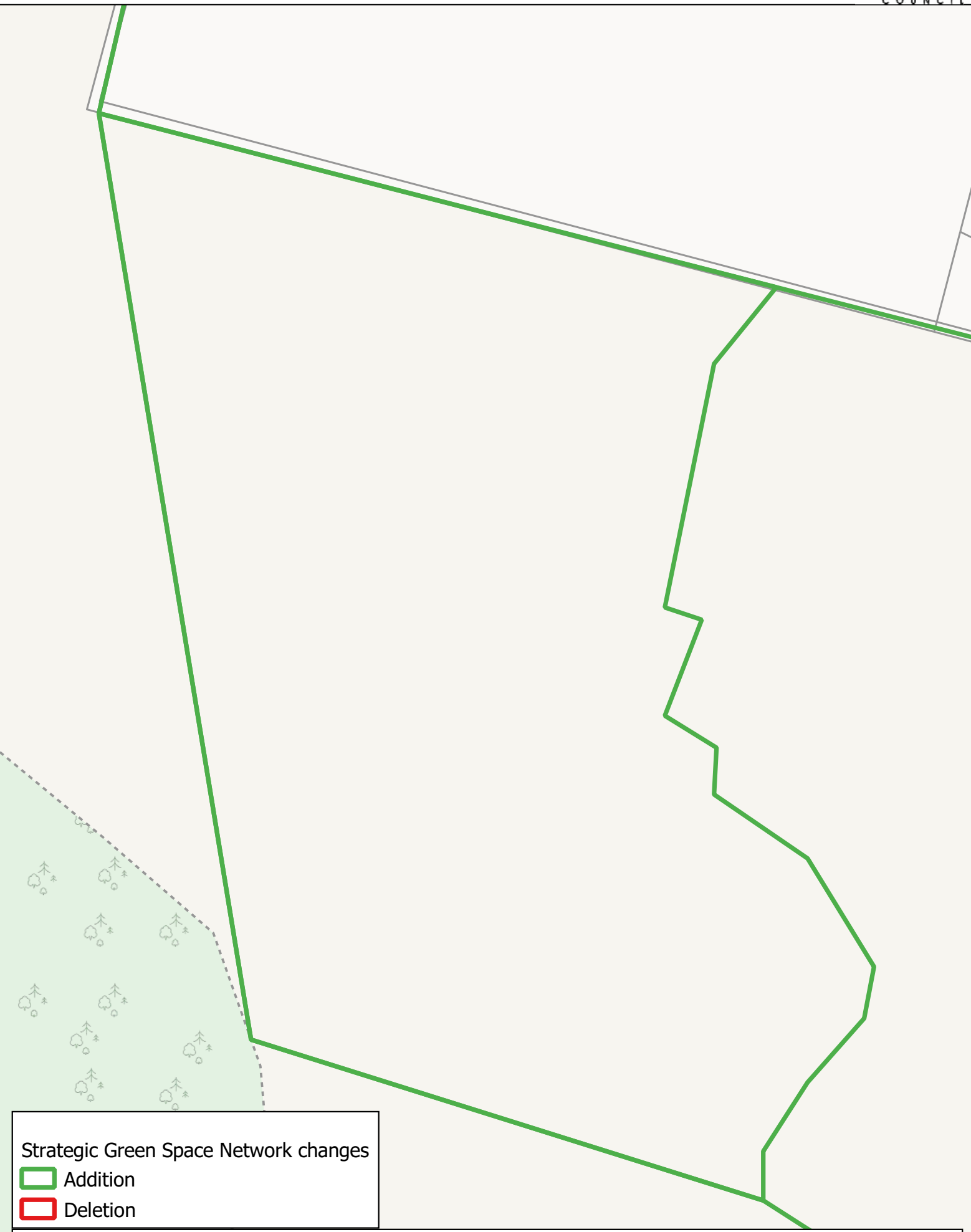
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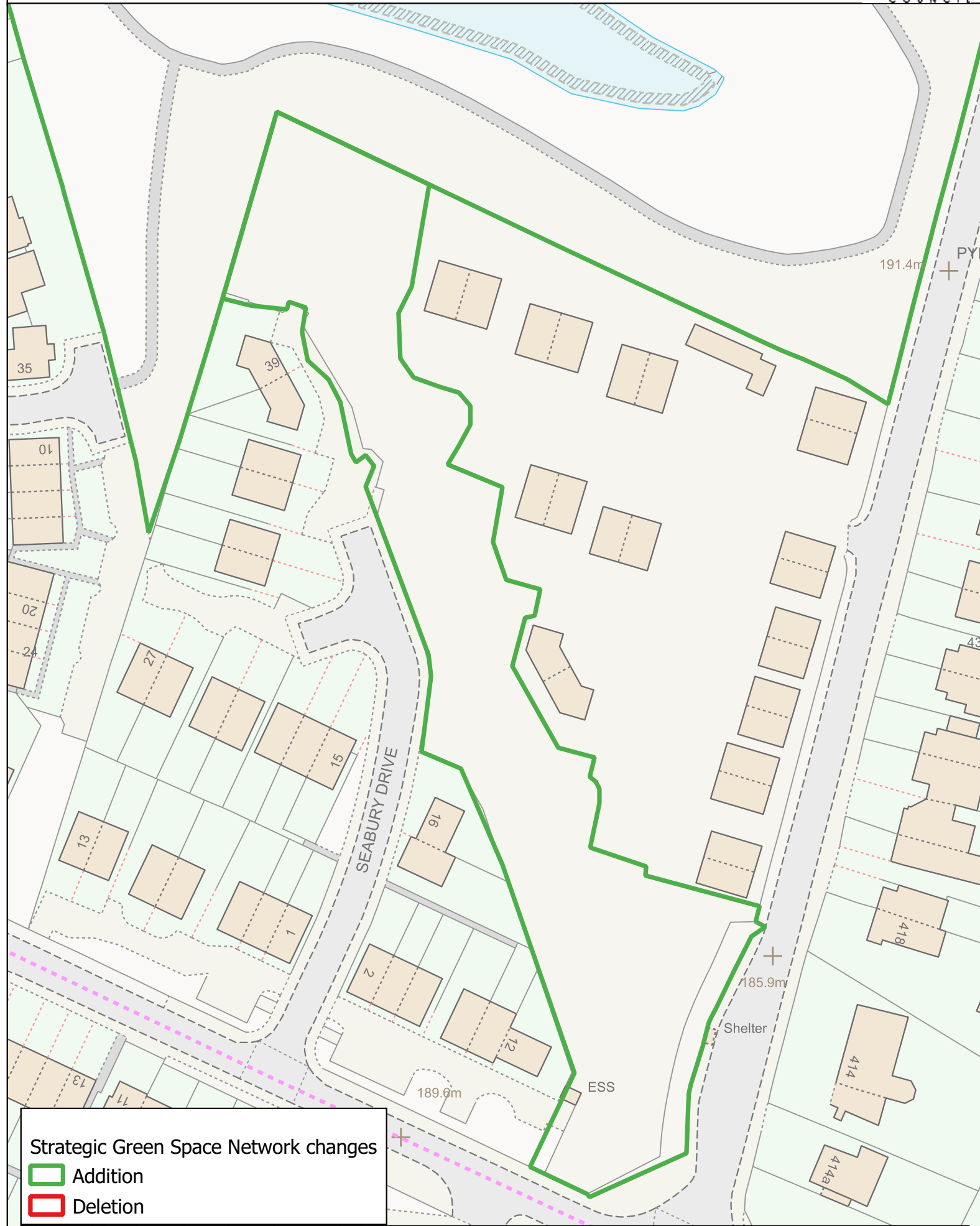
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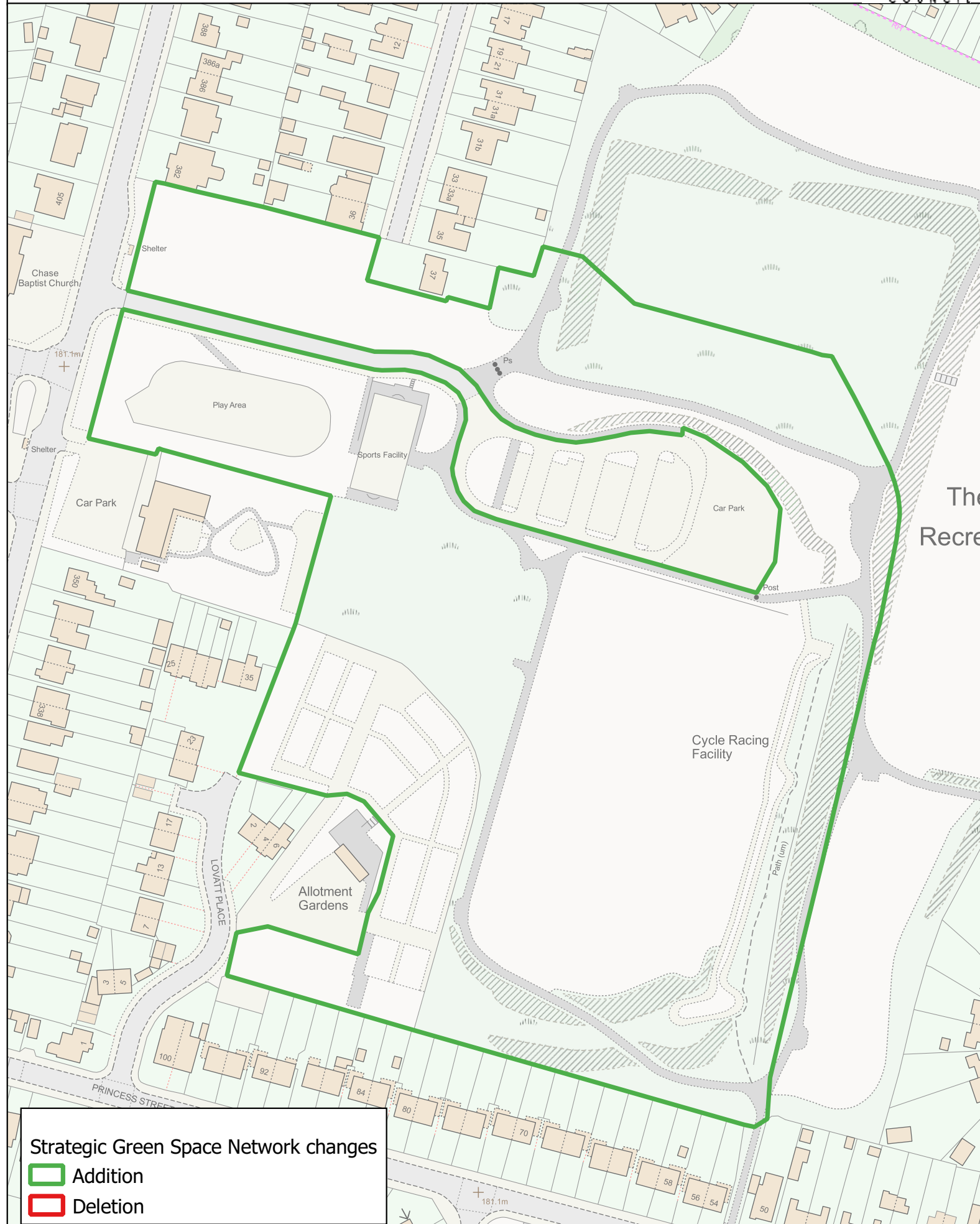
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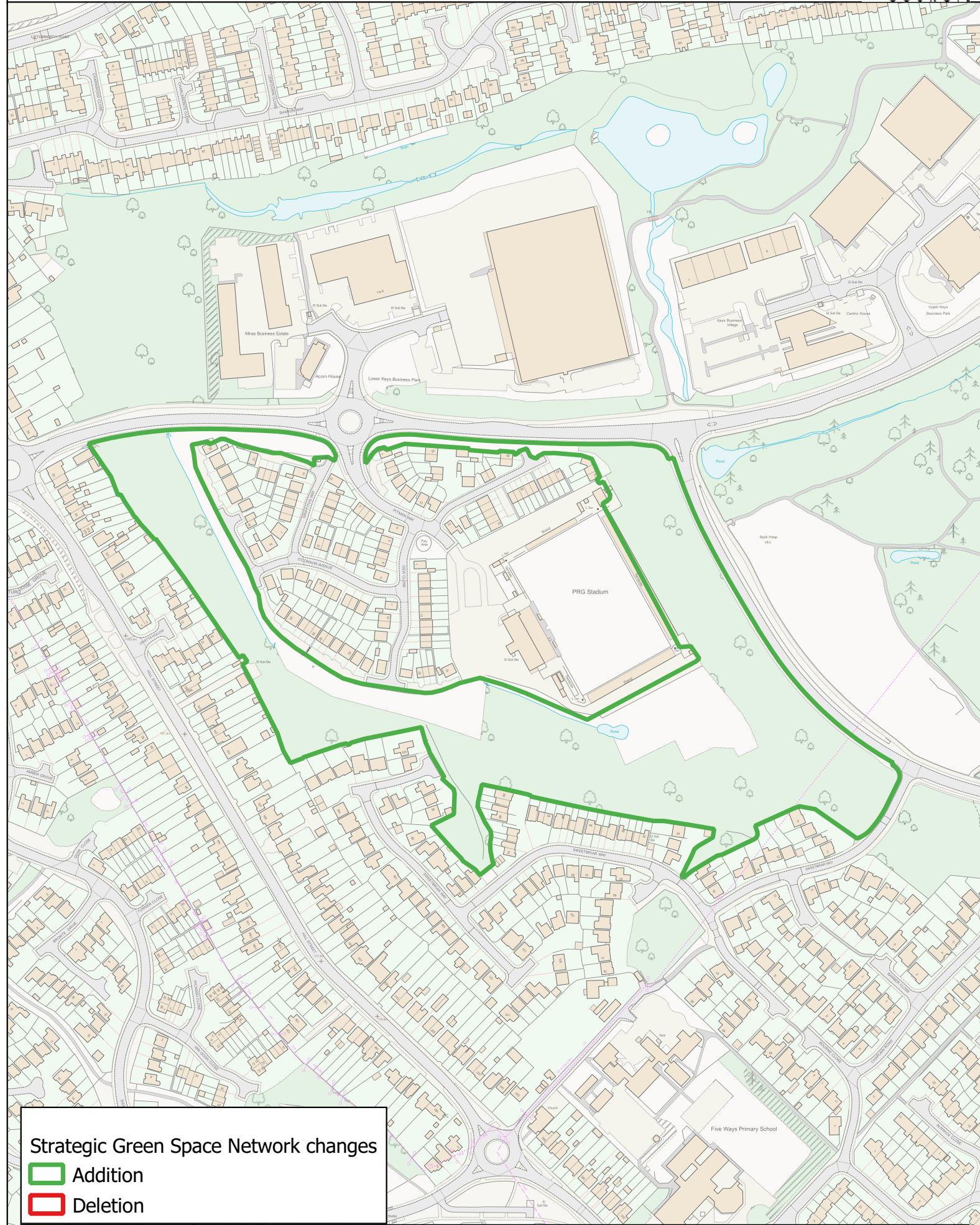
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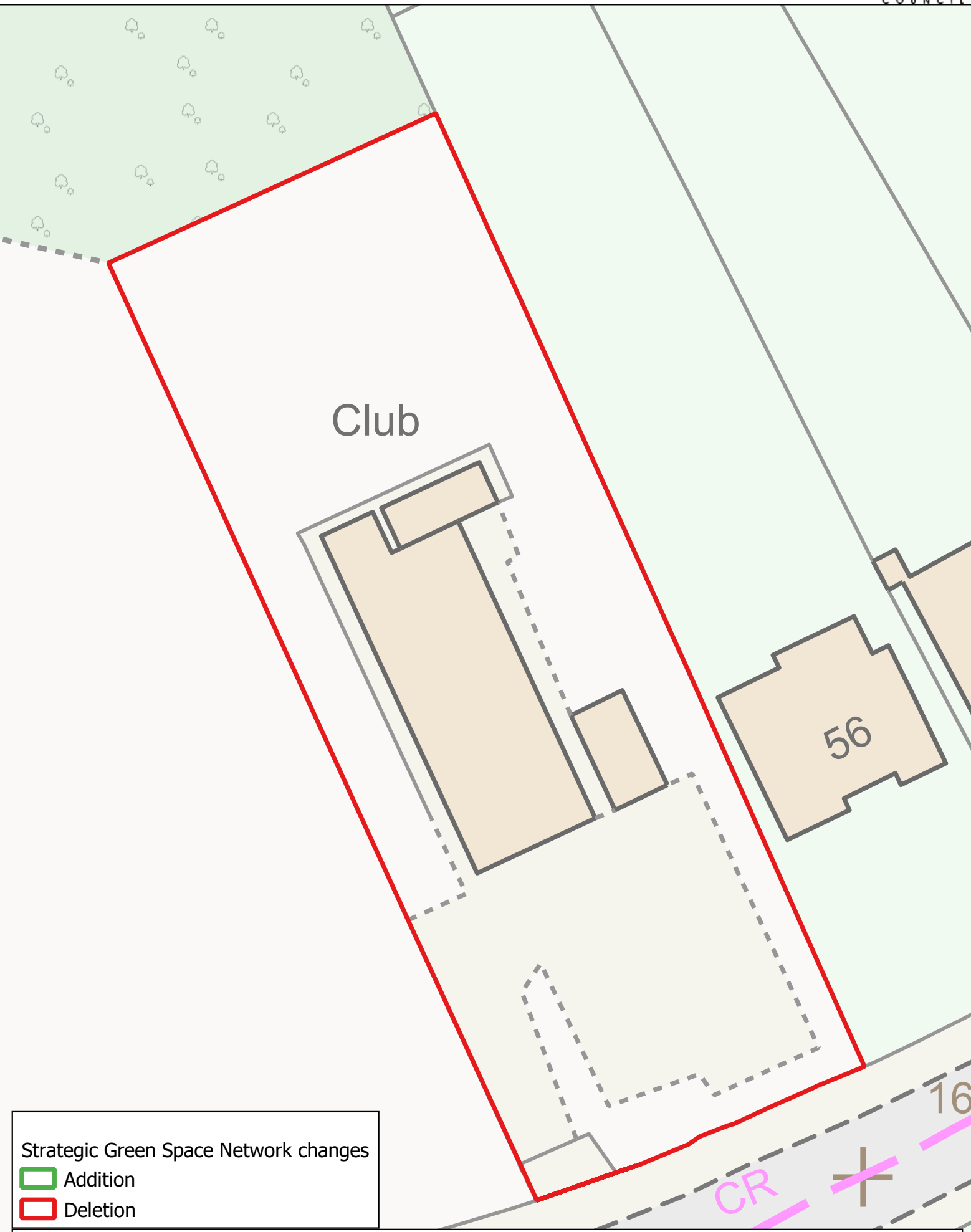
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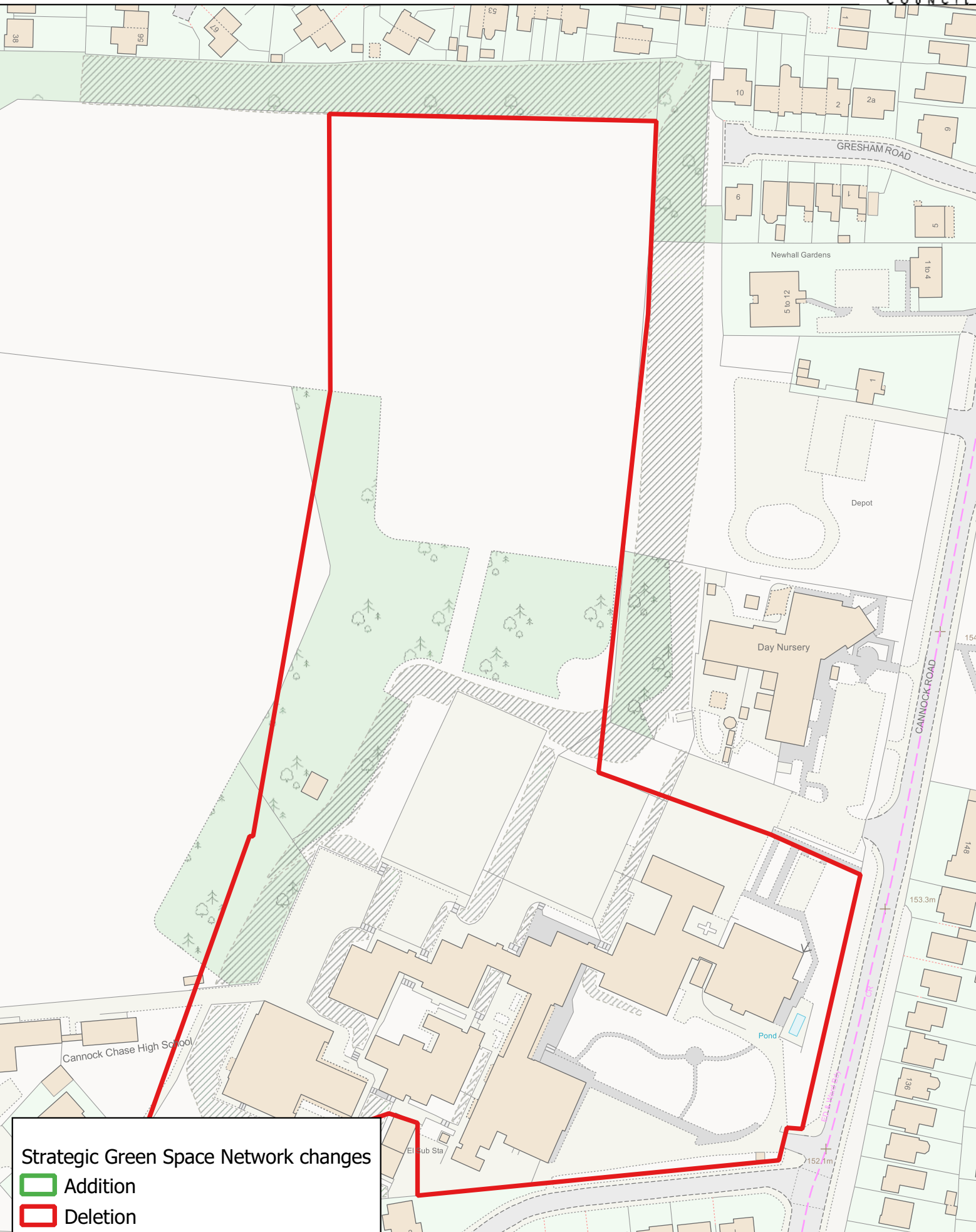
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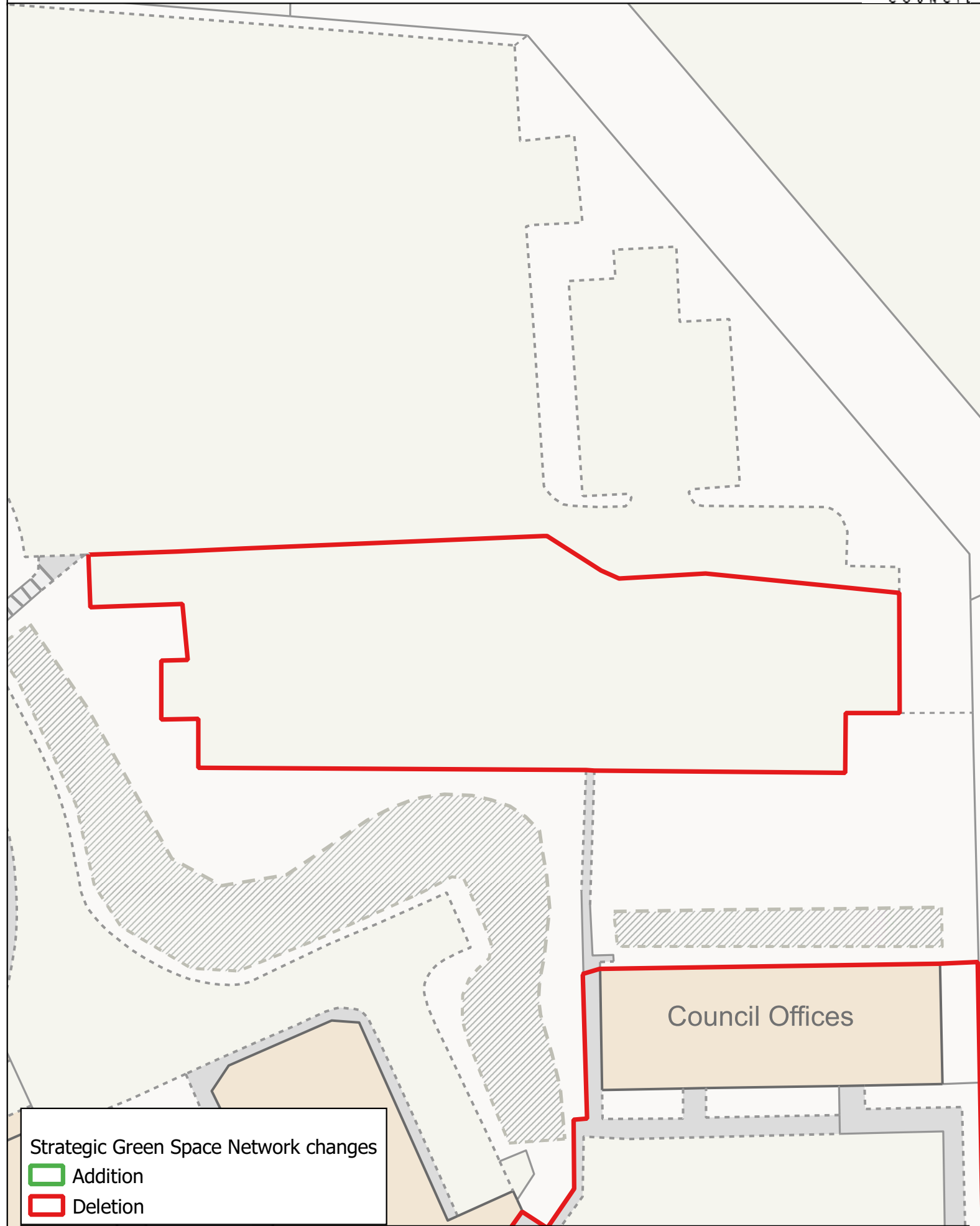


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Strategic Green Space Network changes
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Strategic Green Space Network changes

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Council Offices

Strategic Green Space Network changes

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Strategic Green Space Network changes

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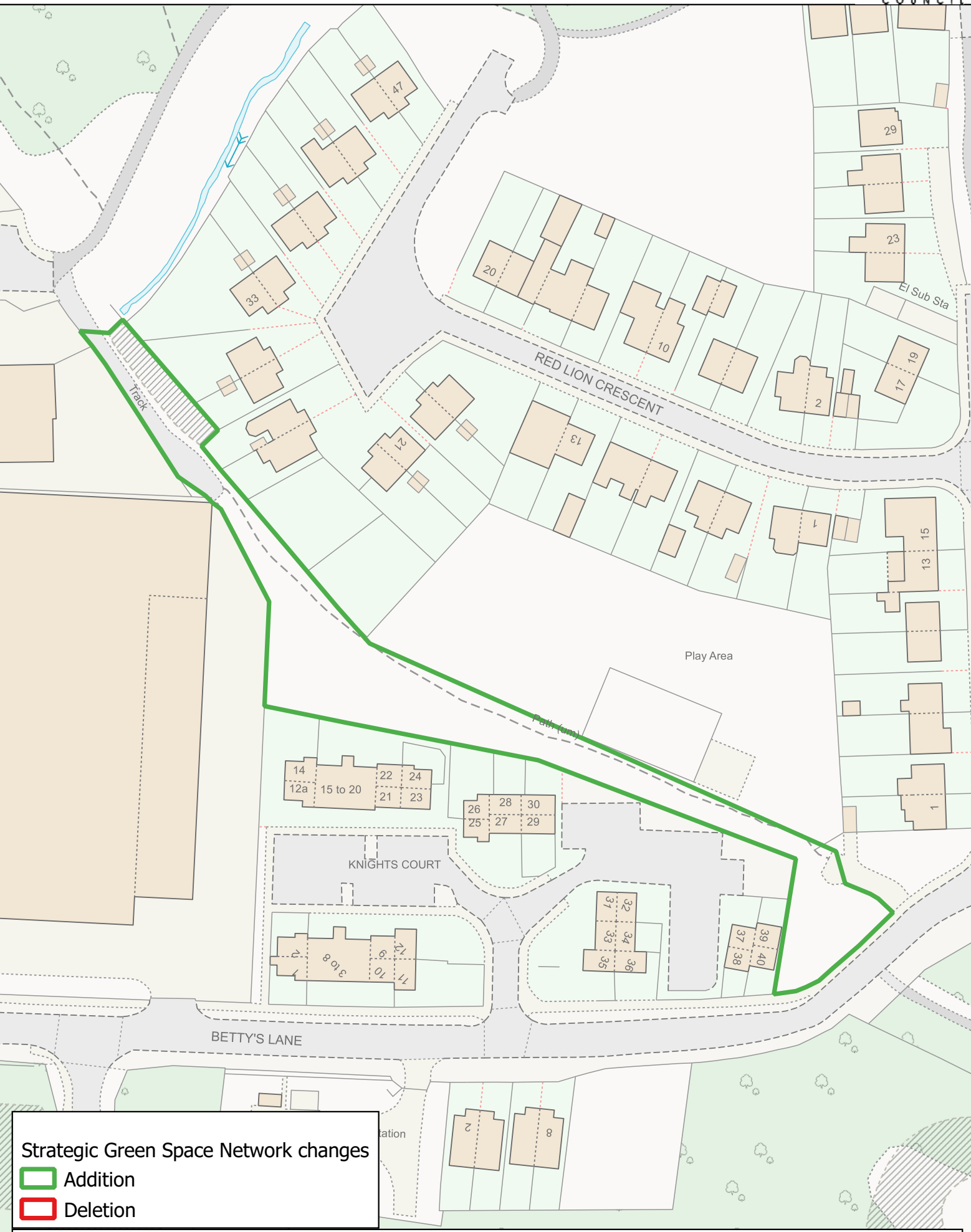
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St James's Church

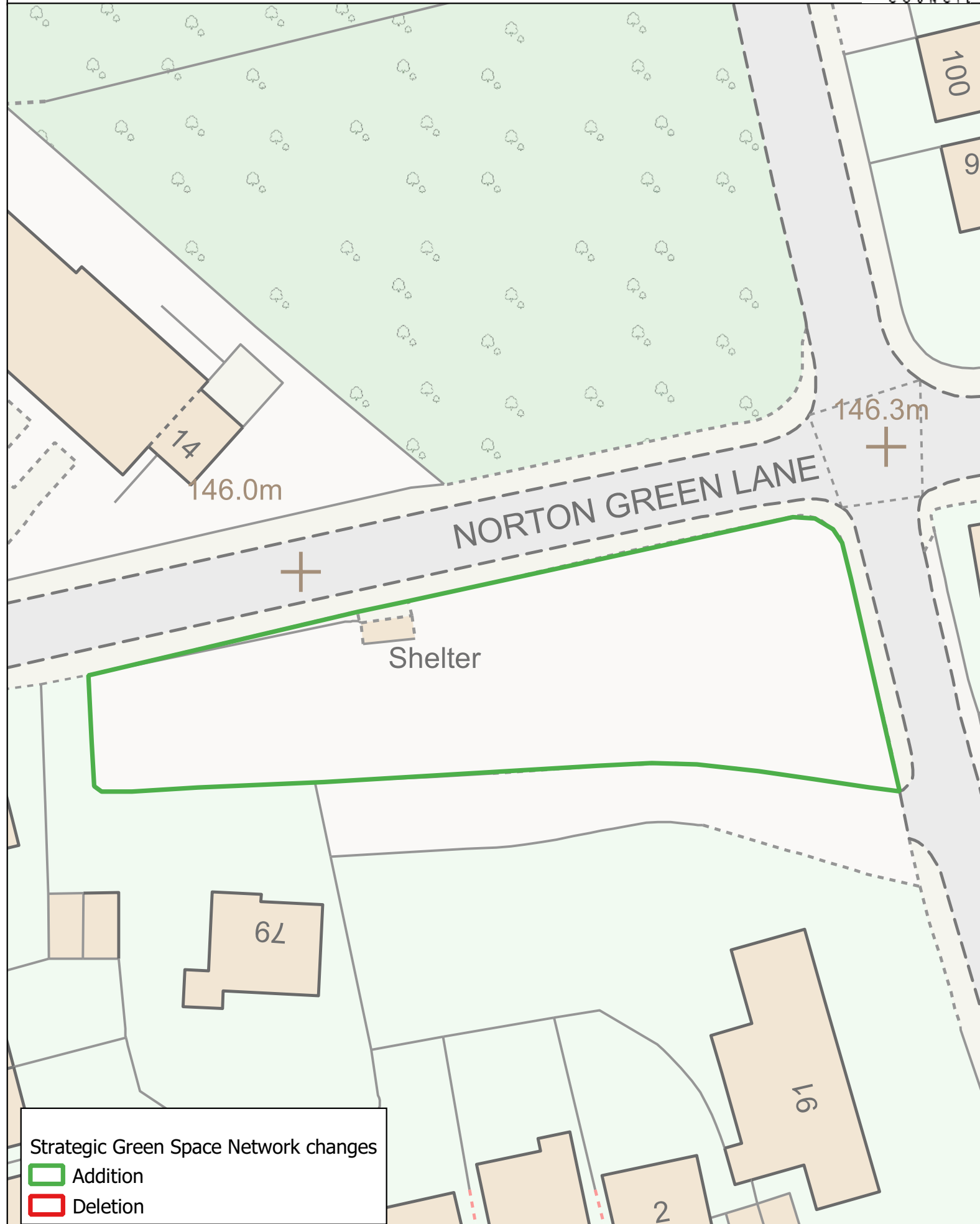
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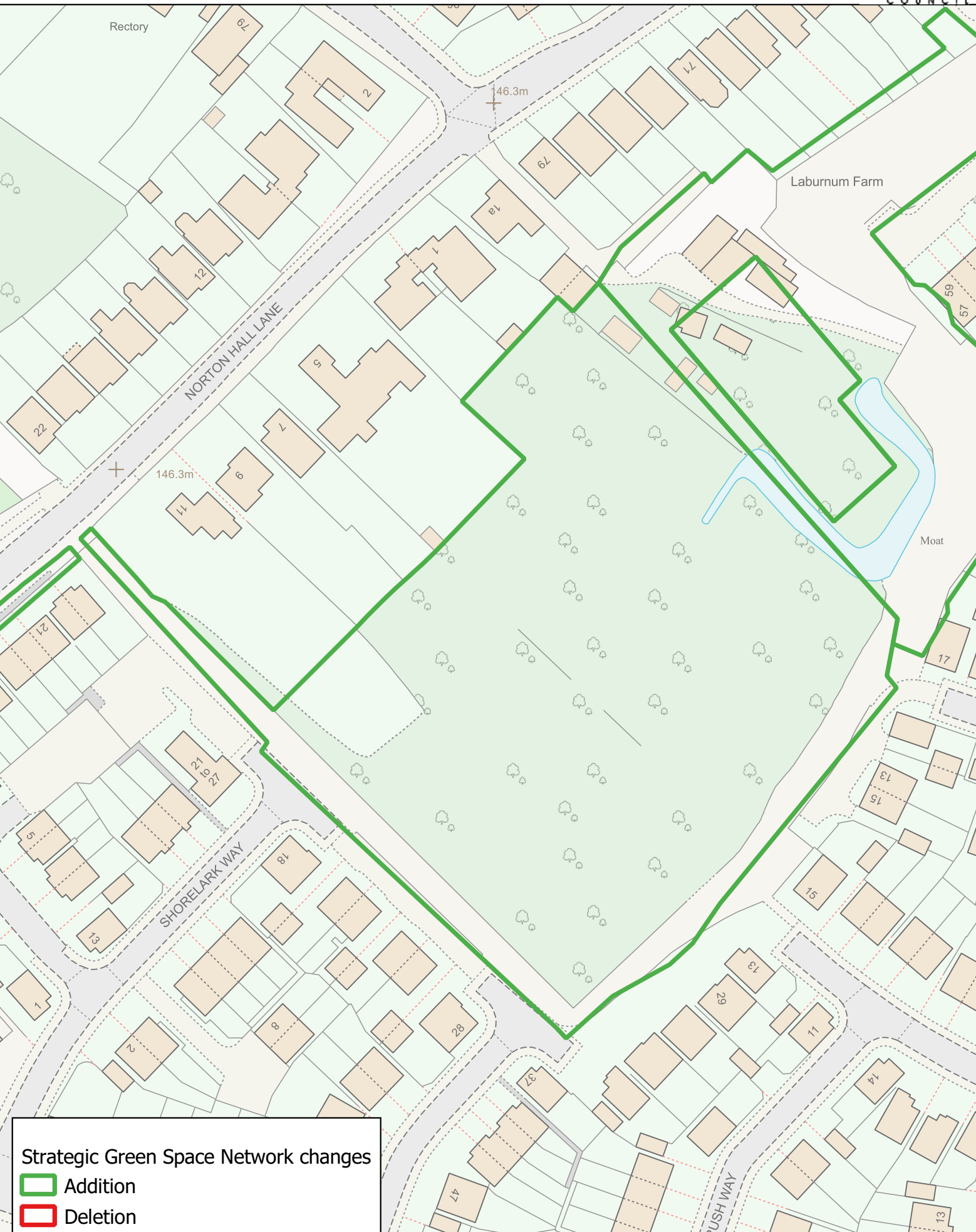
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NORTON HALL LANE

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Strategic Green Space Network changes

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