LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

LAND OFF RUSSLEY GREEN, BAYDON, WILTSHIRE

CHARTERED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS mhp

Document Control	Author	Checked
Status: V4	AP	
Date: October 2023		

Land Off Russley Green, Baydon – Landscape and Visual Appraisal

1. Introduction and Scope of Report:

MHP Design Ltd Chartered Landscape Architects have been instructed by Hannick Homes & Developments Ltd to produce a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) to consider residential development on Land Off Russley Green, Baydon, Wiltshire.

The assessment has been undertaken in two stages. The baseline section of the report describes the study site and its features which combine to form the landscape character and the sites visual relationship with its surroundings. The initial assessment is intended to identify baseline landscape and visual conditions and identify opportunities and constraints to inform the design for landscape and visual mitigation as part of the wider design process for development of the site.

An initial desktop assessment was undertaken to identify local designations and other potentially sensitive landscape and visual receptors which was supported by the production of a ZTV. A survey of the study area was then undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect in good weather conditions during August 2023. The visual survey confirmed the potential visual envelope and area that might be influenced in landscape and visual terms and this is referred to as the study area in this report.

This assessment recognises the landscape and visual sensitivities of the site and its context within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

This landscape and visual appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' 3rd Edition and current guidance provided by the Landscape Institute and undertaken by Chartered Landscape Architects.

2. Site location and description

The site is located to the north west of the village of Baydon, Wiltshire. The village lies just south of the M4 motorway corridor and is accessed by Baydon Road which follows the line of the Roman Road Ermin Street. Russley Green is a modern residential development with access directly off Baydon Road.

The site consists of a single, generally level, agricultural field, laid to grass and used for equestrian purposes. The site is contained by established field hedges along its western, southern and northern boundaries. These hedges appear gappy in numerous places so are considered to be in a poor condition. A weaker domesticated fence forms the boundary between the established settlement edge at Russley Green and the site. Garden hedges and vegetation generally create separation between the gardens and the site. Access via a double field gate is from Russley Green.

In the wider context, the site is located on ascending land which peaks at a locally high point of 231m AOD just north west of the site. However, containment by established residential properties along the eastern and southern boundaries creates a strong sense of containment in conjunction with the established field hedges to the west and north. Baydon is the second highest village in Wiltshire. The village lies on high ground which is

locally constrained by deep combes to the west and to the south east of Baydon Road. The village is further constrained by a steep combe to the north east which is dissected by the M4 corridor. However, when within the village, the character of the immediate landscape is hidden by the contained and well vegetated character of the settlement itself.

The site location in relation to the village is illustrated below:



Please refer to Figure 1 Appendix C for the site location, context and designations.

3. Site context

The site adjoins open and rolling countryside off its western boundary and established residential to the east and south. A short lane lies to the north (off 'The Green') that terminates open public access on reaching the western boundary of the site. The wider landscape to the west and north comprises open agricultural land some of which is in use for equestrian purposes.

The M4 motorway corridor lies two fields separated from the site to the north. The motorway corridor cannot be seen but influences local tranquillity as it is quite audible at the edge of the settlement. The main village lies to the immediate south and south east of the site. The village now has a loose nucleated settlement pattern evolved from a historic crossroads with Ermin Street but historically was rurally dispersed.

The wider site context is illustrated in the aerial photograph extract below:



Although site and contextual features appear generally unremarkable, they form part of the broad AONB national designation of the North Wessex Downs.

3. Development Proposals being assessed:

The proposal is to accommodate up to 9 new dwellings on the site with access from Russley Green. This appraisal considers the potential landscape and visual sensitivities of the location (within the AONB) and is intended to inform on a strategy to conserve landscape character and visual amenity so inform the design of a layout that is sympathetic to this location. The development would form a practical and logical extension to the existing pattern of settlement at Russley Green. A sketch layout is provided below:



4. Context & Designations:

Greenbelt	No
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Yes – North Wessex Downs AONB
Listed buildings	No – See Figure 1 for nearest listed building
Registered Park and Garden	No
Conservation Area	No
Tree Preservation Orders	None

Open access land/public rights of way	None on site
5. Landscape legislation context	
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	
NPPF Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	Section 15 of The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) relates to landscape specific policies focused on conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 174 states that policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland. Paragraph 176 is concerned with the protection of designated landscapes include Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The application site is located within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The Framework does not stipulate planning permission is refused for applications within the AONB provided that landscape character and scenic beauty are conserved and enhanced.
Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015-2026):	
Policy 50: Biodiversity and geodiversity	Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of

	the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term.
Policy 51: Landscape:	Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies. In particular, proposals will need to demonstrate that the following aspects of landscape character have been conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures: i. The locally distinctive pattern and species composition of natural features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and waterbodies. ii. The locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings. iii. The separate identity of settlements and the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe. iv. Visually sensitive skylines, soils, geographical and topological features. v. Landscape features of cultural, historic and heritage value. vi. Important views and visual amenity. vii. Tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise and motion. viii. Landscape functions including places to live, work, relax and recreate. ix. Special qualities of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the New Forest National Park, where great weight will be afforded to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty.

	Proposals for development within or affecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty(AONBs), New Forest National Park (NFNP) or Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) shall demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas. Proposals for development outside of an AONB that is sufficiently prominent (in terms of its siting or scale) to have an impact on the area's special qualities (as set out in the relevant management plan), must also demonstrate that it would not adversely affect its setting.
Policy 52: Green Infrastructure:	Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire's green infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained. Where development is permitted developers will be required to: i. Retain and enhance existing on site green infrastructure ii. Make provision for accessible open spaces in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Wiltshire Open Space Standards. iii. Put measures in place to ensure appropriate long-term management of any green infrastructure directly related to the development. iv. Provide appropriate contributions towards the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy v. Identify and provide opportunities to enhance and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of Wiltshire
Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping:	A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality. Applications for new development must be accompanied by appropriate information to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire
The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan:	

As the study site is situated within the North Wessex Downs AONB potential landscape and visual impacts on the AONB landscape have therefore been considered within the scope of this assessment.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is 'conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area', and as such the North Wessex Downs AONB Board offer guidance and policy to guide development, outlined in the AONB Management Plan dated 2019-2024.

AONB Strategic Objectives for 2019-2024:	
Landscape	S.01 Maintain and enhance the tranquillity and distinctive landscape character of the North Wessex Downs and its setting with a focus on the contribution from agriculture and forestry, development and infrastructure. S.02 Promote understanding, appreciation, and participation in the AONB by local communities, visitors and those making decisions affecting its distinctive character.
Development	S.17 Ensure that the formulation and implementation of planning policies across the North Wessex Downs takes full account of the purposes for AONB designation, the character and the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs and its setting. S.18 Advise on appropriate sustainable development that in itself conserves and enhances the environment through the planning system in the context of this nationally protected landscape.
Biodiversity	S.07 Identify and promote action to safeguard and to enhance habitats and species which are characteristic of the North Wessex Downs and are not at a favourable conservation status, in particular chalk downland, chalk rivers and streams, broadleaved woodlands, and populations of farmland birds and plants. S.08 Explore opportunities to promote the 'net gain to biodiversity' principles as elaborated in the revised NPPF and Defra's 25 Year Environment Plan across the AONB and its setting, taking account of lessons learned from the benefits arising from the Biodiversity 2020 strategy in the local area.

The Landscape: Key Issues

Key Issues with the potential to have significant influence on the AONB's Landscape Special Qualities relevant to the study site:

a) The potential for development beyond the AONB boundary to visually damage or undermine the scale and critical qualities of landscape character areas.
b) Managing the Ridgeway National Trail and other rights of way to maximise enjoyment by responsible users, protect wildlife and cultural heritage, and minimise conflicts.
c) The need to maintain and, where possible, extend chalk grassland habitat.
d) The need to conserve and enhance the remoteness and expansive open scale of the downland landscape.
e) The need for viable agriculture and forestry to continue to contribute to AONB purposes.
f) Availability of sufficient resources for management and understanding of archaeological sites.
g) The need to conserve and enhance the remote, secluded and relatively undeveloped character of more enclosed and intimate landscapes, including the character of the lanes.
h) The need for appropriate woodland management, including the viable use of timber products, particularly for fuel.
i) Encouraging restoration of wood pasture landscapes, husbandry and ecology and ensuring future veteran tree succession.
j) The dominance of roads, in particular the impact of traffic noise, external lighting, road signs, insensitive materials and clutter on landscape character and people's experience of the landscape as they travel through it.
k) The need to maintain the pattern of discrete villages set within a quiet rural landscape, ensuring that the views to the surrounding dramatic scarps are undamaged.
l) The need to ensure continued improvement of water quality and water resources in rivers, supporting river managers and riparian landowners in river restoration and enhancement projects for fisheries and wildlife.
m) The need to maintain and enhance adjacent seasonal flood meadows, grazed pastures, fen, damp woodlands and historic parkland.
n) The need to conserve and enhance the small-scale, secluded and rural character of the lowland mosaic, including the fragile lowland heaths.
o) Intense pressure for development throughout the AONB and its setting that threatens the character and quality of its landscape and risks merging of small settlements, encroachment by larger settlements and changes to the scale and nature of development boundaries.
p) The need to protect and enhance historic sites, buildings and landscapes and their setting.
q) The significant impact on the characteristic habitats in the AONB resulting from climate change, including increased extreme weather events and a potential increase in pests and diseases

AONB Policies: The Landscape	
LA 01	Encourage all partners and other stakeholders to have regard for AONB purposes across all relevant policies, programmes and activities.
LA 02	Seek to identify and address the main factors that threaten the special qualities of the AONB landscape, e.g. water abstraction, agricultural practices including diffuse pollution of watercourses, lack of woodland management, damage to historic sites, and built development.
LA 03	Use the North Wessex Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment to inform policy and decision making across the AONB and its setting.
LA 04	Support and promote good practice across all sectors that conserves and enhances the character and qualities of the North Wessex Downs landscape.
LA 05	Support and encourage efforts to conserve and explain the rich heritage of the North Wessex Downs, including archaeological sites.
LA 06	Ensure that all development in or affecting the setting of the AONB conserves and enhances the character, qualities and heritage of the North Wessex Downs landscape.
LA 07	Raise the policy profile of the North Wessex Downs locally, regionally and nationally to secure the co-ordination and resourcing of policies and programmes for the benefit of the AONB.
AONB Policies: Development	
DE 01	Encourage all proposals for new development, redevelopment and re-use to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs. Oppose forms of development that fail to conserve

	and enhance the character and quality of the AONB and its setting and to make reference to the AONB's published guidance.
DE 02	Encourage high standards of design, comprehensive landscaping where required, traditional building styles, energy conservation and innovation that respect historic settlement patterns and the distinctive character of the North Wessex Downs.
DE 05	Encourage the consideration of landscape, including historic landscape, impacts at the earliest opportunity in the planning process through preparation of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Environmental Impact Assessment reports as appropriate to the location.
DE 8	Avoid and reduce light pollution, including control of lighting schemes or other developments that threaten the integrity of dark night skies over the North Wessex Downs.
DE 09	Encourage, support and promote good practice in the design and management of roads in the AONB and its setting that conserves and enhances the character of the landscape and settlements
DE 12	Encourage the retention of existing and provision of new 'Green Infrastructure'. Ensure that Green Infrastructure (including new or enhanced biodiversity assets) is incorporated within the area of all 'major developments', both within and in the setting of the AONB
Other Legislative factors	
Countryside and Rights of Way Act:	There are no public rights of way within the study site. **Figure 2** identifies the nearest Public Rights of Way.

6. Summary of landscape planning policy context

In summary, the AONB landscape designation has significant weight and is restrictive to development in that it requires development to conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic beauty. This is the bedrock of national and local landscape policies.

There is a statutory requirement for the local planning authority to 'have regard' to the policies within the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan. These set out a finer policy detail that must be considered at local level to achieve the conservation and enhancement of the AONB required at national level.

Chapter 7 of the AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 is relevant to new development and sets out the '*key Issues, AONB Strategic Objectives and Policies'.* Specific policies of the AONB Management Plan are set out above and need to be addressed within the design process to ensure compliance with landscape policy at both local and national level.

7. National Landscape Character Context	
National Character Area	NCA Area 116: Berkshire and Marlborough Downs

The national character areas are of assistance in understanding the broader characteristics and issues of the wider landscape, but the district and local character assessments provide greater detail of relevance to the study area.

The key characteristics of the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs national character area are summarised as follows:

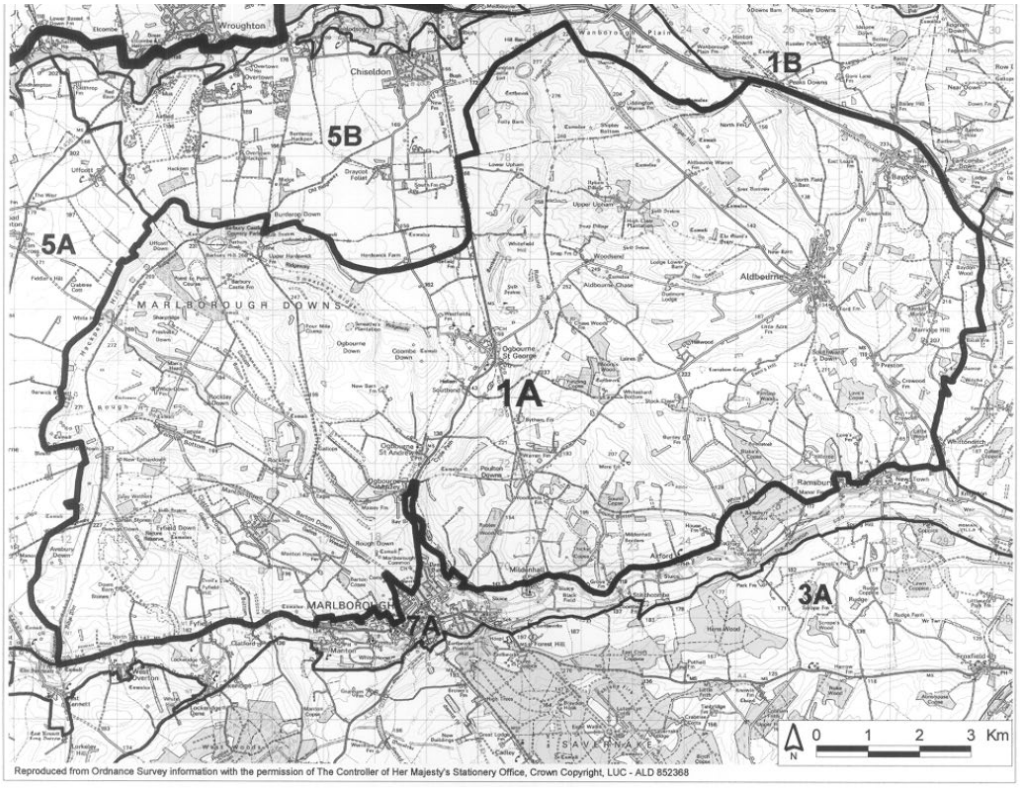
- Uplifted mass of Chalk dipping south-east into the London Basin and edged by an extensive, complex escarpment. Rolling hills of the dipslope defined by the River Kennet valley and its tributaries, many of which are dry 'combes'.
- Sarsen stones are prominent in prehistoric monuments, in historical buildings and in the countryside.
- Chalk rivers, wet woodland, reedbed and wet grassland in the major chalk valleys, supported by groundwater. River Lambourn displays exemplary chalk river ecology.
- Woodland and hedgerows concentrated on clay-with-flint soils of the lower dip slope where Savernake Forest is the nucleus of ancient woodland. Isolated beech clumps and shelterbelts stand out on the hills.
- Huge arable fields managed in very large holdings stretch across the chalk soils of the uplands, bounded by post-and-wire fencing and grass baulks. In the valleys and around
- Savernake, agriculture is more mixed and boundaries are irregular and hedged, often with oak trees. Savernake farmsteads are small scale.
- Gallops and stables of large horse-racing establishments, with a nucleus in the Lambourn Valley.
- Small areas of species-rich chalk grassland scattered on the scarps and steep slopes of dry valleys display colourful and rare plants such as early gentian.
- Mosaic of farmland habitats supports established populations of farmland birds, arable plants, harvest mouse and brown hare.
- High density of monuments, many being prominent landmarks across the arable uplands including stone circles, hill forts, barrows, chalk-cut horse figures and historic routeways.
- Avebury World Heritage Site is internationally significant.
- Traditional building materials include thatch, red brick, flint and sarsens.
- Settlement is sparse on the high Downs, offering experiences of tranquillity, dark skies and far-reaching views. Villages cluster in valley bottoms and near springs, often associated with historical mills, watercress beds and watermeadows, and farmsteads at low

densities.

- Recreation focused on limited areas of open access land, well-known heritage features including Avebury and historic routeways, including the Ridgeway National Trail and
- Kennet and Avon Canal. Private fishing interests dominate access to chalk streams.
- The Vale of Pewsey is a low-lying corridor of Upper Greensand enclosed by chalk escarpments. Villages are densely scattered across high-grade agricultural land supporting mixed agriculture.

8. Local Landscape Character Type/Area – North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2002)

Landscape Character Type:	Open Downland Character Area 1A MarlboroughDowns



Characteristics:

- an elevated plateau formed by the hard Middle and Upper Chalks. Soils are predominantly thin light, free draining calcareous and nutrient poor black or brown soils;
- open, smoothly rolling downland, dissected by a network of dry valleys and long sinuous steep scarps. Strong sweeping skylines;
- a landscape largely devoid of water due to the porosity of the chalk bedrock;

- dominated by intensively managed arable farmland with a few hedgerows and occasional wooded areas. Woodlands are virtually absent apart from the occasional linear shelterbelt and distinctive beech clumps crowning the summits;
- varied field patterns including 'ladder' fields and large rectangular fields;
- fragmented and isolated blocks of chalk grassland survive along the steep scarp slopes and dry valley sides and together these form an important component of the chalk grassland resource of the AONB;
- very sparsely populated - generally restricted to scattered farms and equestrian establishments - contributing to strong sense of isolation;
- varied built character including traditional knapped flint and brick, timber framed weather boarded aisled barns and large scale modern farm buildings;
- recreational opportunities are characterised by the numerous tracks, byways, green lanes and footpaths plus open access associated with archaeological sites and nature reserves;
- closely associated with the race horse industry, with horse gallops being a distinctive feature;
- strong cultural resonance – visible features from many periods of history, but with particularly strong associations with the prehistoric in the form dramatic visible field monuments;
- remote, isolated settlements characterised by low service levels, resulting in a reliance upon access to the private car with consequent impact on traffic. Population levels increasing slightly;
- overall a very strong sense of remoteness and solitude.

This character type is subdivided into the character area of: 1A Marlborough Downs the key characteristics are as follows:

- Dominated by the hard rocks of Upper Chalk, with the Middle Chalk in the north west of the forming the escarpment west of Ogbourne St. George. Clay-with-Flint overlies the Upper Chalk on some high summits;
- Strongly articulated landform dissected by steep scarps, dry valleys plus valleys of the Og and Aldbourne with the land rising to gently rounded summits. The landform creates a very distinct and dramatic skyline;
- An open expansive landscape dominated by arable farmland and absence of field boundaries allowing extensive views - a more enclosed landscape with woodland occurs to the east;
- Notable for the concentration of sarsen stones plus numerous Bronze Age round barrows, many of which survive as highly visible earthworks. Prominent Iron Age hill forts such as Barbury Castle and Liddington Castle are strategically located along the northern scarp and Ridgeway;
- Permanent pasture survives in small fragmented sites mainly concentrated along the scarp slopes to the north and west of the area, with some sections beginning to be covered by regenerating scrub;

- Fyfield Down on the western edge of the Marlborough Downs represent a significant intact area of chalk grassland. It is also an important geomorphological site and displays the best assemblages of sarsen stones in Britain, with classic examples of sarsen trains. The rock exposures also support a nationally important lichen flora;
- Attractive small village settlements concentrated along the valleys of the Og and Aldbourne - elsewhere settlement is very sparse;
- Traditional buildings materials include brick, flint and clunch with walls of thatch or clay tile. A particular feature of the built vernacular is the use of the distinctive blue-grey sarsen stone;
- Extensive network of public rights of way, including the Ridgeway National Trail and the Chiseldon and Marlborough Railway Path;
- Horse gallops and other features associated with the racehorse industry are a distinctive feature of the area;
- Distinctive beech clumps crown the open summits as well as shelterbelt plantations such as that at Mans Head. To the east scattered woodland blocks occur on slopes that dip down towards the River Kennet.

9. Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005)	
Landscape Character type:	**Open Downland**

Characteristics:

- Elevated plateau formed by the hard Middle and Upper Chalks. Soils are predominantly thin light, free draining calcareous and nutrient poor black or brown soils.
- Open, smoothly rolling downland, dissected by a network of dry valleys and long sinuous steep scarps.
- Sarsen stones are a locally distinctive feature.
- An expansive and simple rural landscape, with strong sweeping skylines with a strong sense of exposure and remoteness.
- A landscape largely devoid of water due to the porosity of the chalk bedrock.
- Dominated by intensively managed arable farmland with a few hedgerows and occasional wooded areas. Woodlands are virtually absent apart from the occasional linear shelterbelt and distinctive beech clumps crowning the summits.
- Varied field patterns including 'ladder' fields and large rectangular fields.
- Extensive, isolated blocks of chalk grassland survive along the steep scarp slopes and dry valley sides.
- Very sparsely populated, generally restricted to scattered farms and equestrian establishments contributing to strong sense of isolation.
- Varied built character including traditional knapped flint and brick, timber framed weather-boarded aisled barns and large scale modern farm buildings.
- Numerous tracks, byways, green lanes and drove roads.
- Strong cultural resonance with visible features from many periods of history, but with particularly strong associations with the prehistoric in the form of dramatic visible field monuments.

This character type is subdivided into the character area of: 1B Marlborough Downs the key characteristics are as follows:

- expansive landscape of smoothly rolling downland, mostly under arable cultivation.
- Internally, the landform is topographically complex and includes the dramatic long sinuous scarps interlocking gently rounded summits with the intersecting valleys.
- This is a very open landscape with long views, revealing the subtle curves and undulations of the underlying landform.
- The absence of field boundaries and woodland, combined with the elevation, creates a remote character.

- To the east of the Og valley land cover is more diverse with scattered woodland blocks within arable farmland.
- The Marlborough Downs have strong cultural resonance visibly expressed by the sarsen stones, round barrows and hill forts.
- The Ridgeway, an important prehistoric route runs along the top of the northern escarpment.
- The downs are very sparsely settled with Baydon on a scarp edge in the north-east part of the Downs and the tiny clustered hamlets of Rockley and Upper Upham sheltering in dry valleys.
- The larger nucleated settlement of Aldbourne is isolated, nestled at the head of a winterbourne valley. Elsewhere settlement is limited to occasional isolated farms, with a concentration of equestrian establishments and gallops on the western part of the downs.
- Traditional building materials include brick, flint, sarsen and clunch with roofs of thatch or clay tile.

Forces for change of the Open Downland include:

- Further reduction in livestock, so that there is no longer the means to maintain existing areas of pasture. Some marginal areas are regenerating with scrub.
- Requirements for new large scale farm buildings plus other farm units becoming redundant with potential for conversion.
- Small scale incremental development (signage, fencing, road improvements) that would impinge on the simple, open character.

Inherent Landscape Sensitivities of the Open Downland

- The sense of remoteness and isolation.
- Areas rich in arable biodiversity, unimproved chalk and neutral grassland found on the steeper slopes which are an important ecological and landscape resource.
- Clumps of trees crowning the hilltops forming prominent landscape features.
- Surviving historic monuments are sensitive to intensive agricultural practices
- The openness of the downland plateau and long views have a high visual sensitivity to change
- Strong skylines and scarp tops are also particularly visually sensitive

Condition is perceived to be moderate and Strength of Character strong. The overall strategy Open Downland Landscape Type is to conserve the inherent remoteness, isolation and simplicity of the downland landscape and its important ecological, historic and geological features.
Broad Management Objectives for the Open Downland include:

- Conserve the sense of remoteness and isolation, with sparse settlement and road network and limited visible development.
- Conserve the areas of chalk grassland and pasture, encourage management to improve species diversity and prevent scrub encroachment. Consider opportunities for extending and linking chalk

grassland along the scarps and dry valley sides, and creating mosaics of chalk grassland and ecologically rich arable land.

- Minimise small scale incremental change such as signage, fencing or improvements to the road network which could change the simple open character of the landscape.

10. Local Landscape Character

At local level the character of the study site and its immediate context is formed by the following influences.

Baydon Village

The village either side of the Baydon Road which follows the route of the Roman origin Ermin Street. Although on elevated downland, the village is predominately contained by hedges and trees with limited sense of approach. The settlement has a hidden and discrete quality, small in scale with a broad variety of buildings of varying age. Cottages with thatched roofs are found adjoining more modern brick dwellings united by well vegetated gardens and a verdant character overall. Traditional flint and brick with red tile roofs reflect the vernacular building materials. Flint panels in red brick walls with hanging tiles and red tile roofs are an attractive feature on many buildings both older and new. Brick walls are also a regular feature to gardens.

The modern village south and north of Baydon Road have a tight and clustered settlement pattern with hierarchy of roads which feed eventually back to Baydon Road. To the north the settlement pattern becomes more dispersed and farmsteads and found set within small fields or paddocks. Equestrian land use on the fringe of the village is characteristic.

The M4 motorway corridor is located to the north and east of the village creating separation of the immediate landscape setting of the village from the broad open landscape to the north. The motorway is generally well hidden and not a prominent landscape feature within the setting of the village. The church tower of St Nicholas is a prominent feature seen within the village landscape where gaps and breaks in the settlement allow.

The settlement has a mixture of old and new buildings, in a variety of styles and material finishes. This mix of ages and materials suggests that there is capacity to accommodate new contemporary dwellings within the the character of the settlement. Overall, the settlement has a medium to low susceptibility to change and an overall medium sensitivity to development.

Simple, Open, Undulating Farmed Landscape

The wider setting to the village is formed by the downland agricultural and equestrian landscape, comprising large scale and open fields with gallops and rides but also broad open fields in arable crop production. Woodland is scarce in the immediate vicinity but increases to the south east. Settlement is generally dispersed and infrequent and contained to distinct villages such as Baydon, Aldbourne and Lambourne. The openness of the landscape suggests a higher susceptibility to facilitate change.	
11. Site features	
Natural Elements:	
Landform	Gently sloping (north west to south east) land in use as a paddock
Vegetation	
Trees	Limited to hedgerow but generally poor quality and smaller in size.
Hedges and hedgerows	There is a strong sense of enclosure from hedgerow to the north and west but a more open orientation with the settlement adjoining on the southern and eastern boundaries. Overall hedges appear gappy and lower quality.
Landcover	Pasture, grassland paddock
Hydrology	No hydrological features
Cultural Elements:	
Land Use	The site is currently in use as part of a grass paddock in equestrian use.
Boundaries and enclosure pattern	Open chainmesh fencing to bordering residential properties to the east. Fenced and hedges to south. Traditional field hedge to west and north in poor condition.
Time depth / Historic landscape	Low level of time depth due to prominence of adjoining modern settlement features.
Relationship to built form/ settlement	Bounded by settlement on two sides with very prominent settlement features a detractor in the landscape character of the site.
Amenity / Recreational use	No public access or amenity/recreation use.
Perceptual qualities	Strong sense of association with settlement edge due to visual prominence of settlement features. Limited sense of being part of a wider and open agricultural landscape.

12. Summary of Landscape Character

The character of the site is strongly influenced by the immediately adjoining and visually prominent settlement and as such has a greater correlation with the village than with the wider downland landscape. The settlement has a contained and verdant character which unifies the wide variety of building ages and building materials. The immediate landscape adjoining the village comprises of smaller scale fields mostly in equestrian land use that are distinctively smaller and more contained than the large open fields of the wider agricultural downland. Overall, the village has a discrete quality which contributes to the character of the AONB by ensuring that its does not detract from prominent ridges and downland of the wider landscape.

The immediate landscape of the site is damaged and has limited features that make a limited contribution to the published landscape character type and the setting of the village.

13. Landscape Sensitivity

The North Wessex Downs AONB is acknowledged to have a high value for its landscape character and scenic beauty, but the study site is well contained and makes only a limited contribution to these published desirable characteristics. The site adjoins residential development on two sides to which it is prominently exposed. As such the study site and its features are assessed to have a low susceptibility to change.

The site landscape is therefore assessed to have an overall **medium** sensitivity with opportunities to bring some enhancement through the development proposals.

14. Landscape receptors

Landscape receptors are assessed to be:

- NCA Area 116: Berkshire and Marlborough Downs – Susceptibility: High, Value: High, Sensitivity: High
- North Wessex Downs AONB - Susceptibility: High, Value: High, Sensitivity: High
- Open Downland – 1B Marlborough Downs LCA – Susceptibility: High, Value: High, Sensitivity: High
- Settlement of Baydon - Susceptibility: Medium, Value: High, Sensitivity: Medium High
- Site and immediate landscape context- Susceptibility: Low, Value: High, Sensitivity Medium
- Site features (Trees and hedges) - Susceptibility: Medium, Value: High, Sensitivity: Medium High

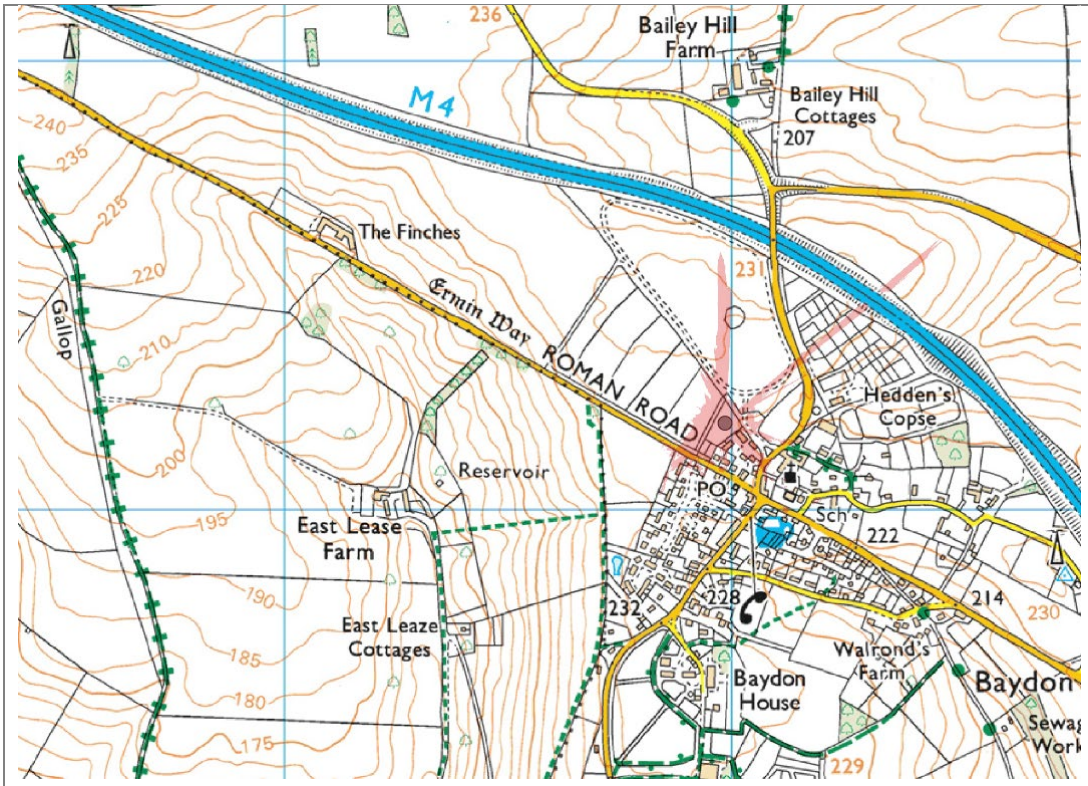
15. Visual context

The scope of this assessment was informed by landscape assessment desktop study, production of a ZTV (based on 8.5m high built form over a 3km area) and site survey work. Potential visual receptors identified during the desktop assessment appear limited to residents of immediately adjoining properties, road users entering the village from the west on the Baydon Road. Local views from the pedestrian footpath to the immediate north of the site and within Russley Green were also identified along with a potential view from the road bridge over the M4 immediately north of the village. Overall, potential visual receptors were identified to be quite limited and focused on an area close to the site.

The following Ordnance Survey extract shows the location of potential public rights of way.



The digital ZTV exercise indicated a very limited potential visual envelope almost completely restricted to the site and its immediate context. An extract of the ZTV is provided below:



16. Key Visual Receptors:

The field survey confirmed the identified visual receptors which were found to be very limited due to landform and landcover. Very local views were confirmed from Russley Green looking into the site through the double steel field gate. No views were identified from Baydon Road at the turning into Russley Green. Local views from immediately adjoining the northern boundary were obtained through the established hedgerow and predominately through an existing field gate. No other views were identified locally.

A number of longer distance views were identified from Baydon Road approaching the village from the west. A long distance view from high ground allowed a limited but direct view towards the site available for a very short length of the road before landform obscured the view. A closer view towards the site was identified on approaching the village on Baydon Road where an indirect and brief view (mostly obscured by foreground hedgerow) identified the western boundary vegetation of the site and glimpsed part view of dwellings in the vicinity of Russley Green. No further visual receptors were confirmed.

Confirmed visual receptors are set out below:

Road users at Russley Green (Viewpoint photograph VP1)	Road users of the cul de sac at Russley Green are likely to be residents. Not all road users will go as far as the field gate to

	the site so generally only those living immediately adjacent will get a view directly into the site. The view is immediate and framed between existing dwellings. The view extends only into part of the site. There are no views into the wider countryside from the road. Road users are assessed to have medium susceptibility and to experience medium value views. Overall, they are assessed to have medium sensitivity to changes in the view.
Residents at Russley Green and Baydon Road (Viewpoint not represented as private property)	Residents of Russley Green and Baydon Road may have views into the site from ground floor windows where garden vegetation does not obscure. Views are more likely from first floor bedroom windows which look to the west. Views may extend into the countryside to the west and north west but are more likely to experience large skies over the western boundary hedgerow and between boundary trees. Residents are assessed to have high susceptibility and to experience medium value views. Overall, they are assessed to have medium high sensitivity to changes in these views.
Residents north of Russley Green (Viewpoint not represented as private property)	Residents of properties off the lane to the north of Russley Green are generally orientated to the north with only limited opportunity for direct views into the site. Residents are assessed to have high susceptibility and to experience medium value views. Overall, they are assessed to have medium high sensitivity to changes in these views.
Walkers on track north of site (Viewpoint VP3 to VP6)	Walkers are unlikely to be using the track north of the site as there is no through access west of the site and the land quickly becomes private. Views are generally limited by the hedgerow boundary of the site other than adjacent the existing field gate. The focus of views is generally along the well vegetated corridor of the track. Walkers are assessed to have high susceptibility and to experience medium value views. Overall, they are assessed to have medium high sensitivity to changes in these views.

Road users Baydon Road west of village (Long distance) (Viewpoint VP7)	Road users obtain limited opportunities for views to the east when high ground facilitates an opportunity to see over local landcover. A single long distance view is glimpsed from an elevated section of the road, lasting a short distance before the road drops away and views are lost. The site is indistinct due to vegetation along the foreground boundary but built form of the adjoining settlement can be identified although not clearly. Road users are assessed to have medium high susceptibility and to experience medium high value views in this location due to the scenic landscape. Overall, they are assessed to have medium high sensitivity to changes in the view.
Road users Baydon Road west of village (Shorter distance) (Viewpoint VP9)	On approaching Baydon on Baydon Road from the west, a glimpsed but indirect view of the site is possible seen over the foreground hedge and any tall crops within the immediate field. Road users are already approaching the village and have passed the change in speed limit sign as well as having connectivity with the dwellings located immediately onto Baydon Road. Road users are assessed to have medium high susceptibility and to experience medium high value views in this location due to the scenic landscape. Overall, they are assessed to have medium high sensitivity to changes in the view.

17. Summary of Visual Baseline Analysis

Overall, the visual prominence of the site is very limited due to its containment by existing two storey settlement and established hedgerow and hedgerow trees. Views are limited to immediate views from the residential edge including Russley Green and glimpsed, longer distance views from Baydon Road.

The site is not seen from any public rights of way of locations where walkers are likely to be experiencing scenic views or landscape or settlement features.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

The landscape receptors identified in the landscape baseline, are assessed for their sensitivity by consideration of their susceptibility to change as a result of the proposal (high, medium, low) and the value of the landscape receptor. The overall sensitivity of the landscape receptor is assessed using the criteria set out in the methodology in Appendix A.

Note: It is not considered necessary to assess effects on additional published landscape character areas at district level as these will be represented through the assessment of the Marlborough Downs Landscape Character Area.

NCA Area 116: Berkshire and Marlborough Downs	The development proposals are situated immediately adjoining the existing modern settlement. Existing site features do not make a significant contribution to the character of the wider area. The degree of change is limited by the existing influence of the settlement features on the site and immediate area. The size, scale and geographical extent of the proposal and nature of the proposed land use is not considered to be incongruous to the wider national landscape character area within which it is contained and overall the development will not create any perceptible change to the broader character area at this scale. Therefore, the character area is assessed to have **low** susceptibility to the proposed change. This character area is almost entirely situated within the North Wessex Downs AONB and therefore has **high** value Overall sensitivity of the national character area is assessed to be **medium** where built form is present. Magnitude of change to the national character area is assessed to be **negligible** resulting in a **negligible** landscape effect.
North Wessex Downs AONB	A broad area of landscape that includes both farmed landscape and settlements within distinctive landscape characteristics and qualities recognised to have high value due to national designation. Not all areas within the AONB have the same sensitivity as susceptibility will vary according to quality and character of the landscape. The landscape of the site and its immediate settlement edge can be assessed to have a medium susceptibility due to detractor features and the limited extent to which the site contributes to the desirable characteristics of the wider AONB landscape. Overall a medium high sensitivity is assessed but at AONB scale the sensitivity of the landscape will be high. The overall magnitude of change arising from the development of the site is assessed to be **negligible** resulting in a **negligible** landscape effect.
District Character Area: 1A Marlborough Downs	The agricultural landscape that forms the setting to Baydon and the site is gently rolling and rural. The mosaic of fields, pasture and

	downland all contribute to a distinctive landscape in which the undulating, large scale landform also makes a contribution to sense of place. The characteristics of the site do not readily reflect the characteristics of the published character area other than comprising a hedge field laid to grass. Overall, the susceptibility of this landscape to the proposed change is assessed to be **medium high.** The landscape contributes to the character and scenic beauty of the AONB so is assessed to have a **high** value. Overall, the Marlborough Downs Character Area is assessed to have a **medium high** sensitivity. The overall magnitude of effect of the development on this large-scale rural landscape character area is assessed to be **negligible** resulting in a negligible landscape effect.
Settlement of Baydon and its immediate setting	The settlement of Baydon is small in scale and distinctive in its sense of containment and mix of properties of different ages and building materials. These are unified by the distribution of established hedges and trees which create a verdant overall character deceptive of the general elevation of the village on the Marlborough downland. The site has a strong correlation with the north west settlement edge at Russley Green, already influenced by the prominent settlement features and sense of disconnection from the wider agricultural landscape. The settlement area is assessed to have a **medium high** overall sensitivity arising from a lower susceptibility to change due to the settlement characteristics and settlement pattern but high value from the AONB. There is potential for development to form a small scale extension to the village which would have a low visual prominence and remain in keeping with the pattern of settlement. There is potential for the

	settlement edge with the open countryside to be improved and made notably more robust. The magnitude of change to the settlement and its immediate setting is assessed to be **negligible** to low resulting in a **negligible** to minor adverse landscape effect.
Site and immediate context	The character of the site would be changed by the introduction of the development resulting in loss of its semi-rural qualities and becoming a part of the settlement itself. The site is assessed to have medium sensitivity due to its low susceptibility but high landscape value due to landscape designation. The magnitude of change would be medium due to the existing settlement features and low contribution to the character of the wider rural landscape. This would result in a **moderate** adverse landscape effect.
Site features (hedges and trees)	Although the open paddock will be replaced by built form and settlement features, the tree and hedges will remain intact. The influence of existing detractors on site provides ample opportunity for enhancement. There is no loss to the existing hedgerow network or hedgerow trees and the development provides an opportunity for the introduction of new hedgerow planting and improved green infrastructure connectivity. In particular there is an opportunity to introduce new native tree planting along the western and northern boundaries with the wider landscape to create a robust settlement edge. Overall, the site features that contribute most to the local landscape character such as hedgerows and trees are to be retained and extended. Therefore, whilst site features have an overall **medium high** value, they have a **low** susceptibility to the proposed change. Due to the retention of key site features, limited scale of proposals and containment of the study site the magnitude of change assessed

	from the development of the site is assessed to be **low** resulting in a **minor beneficial** landscape effect.
Assessment of Visual Effects	
Road users at Russley Green (Viewpoint photograph VP1)	Road users will see the access to the new development as an extension of the current street. New built form will be seen in the site potentially shortening the view. The character of the present street will remain predominately unchanged as the site has a very limited effect on the character. The magnitude of change is assessed to be medium resulting in a potentially moderate adverse visual effect arising through a change to the scale of the residential area but only where seen through the existing field gate.
Residents at Russley Green and Baydon Road (Viewpoint VP1)	Residents will experience new built form in immediate views which is likely to part obscure existing views of the site and sky like. The openness of the rural field will be changed to an extension of the settlement. High quality buildings and dynamic roofscape can limit the potential magnitude of change but the loss of views cannot be fully mitigated. The magnitude of change is assessed to be high resulting in a substantial adverse visual effect.
Residents north of Russley Green (Viewpoint VP3)	Residents immediately north of Russley Green (The Green) are unlikely to see any changes to views due to the general orientation of dwellings and screening by properties on Russley Green. The magnitude of change is assessed to be negligible to low resulting in a minor adverse visual effect.
Walkers on track north of site (Viewpoint VP3, VP4, VP5 & VP6)	Walkers will not obtain views into the site until almost adjacent when existing gaps I the field boundary are likely to be infilled with new hedgerow to enhance screening and restore green infrastructure. Built form is likely to be seen through hedge and trees in part but such features are already seen in the adjoining properties.

	The magnitude of change likely to be experienced is assessed to be low resulting in a minor adverse visual effect.
Road users Baydon Road west of village (Long distance) (Viewpoint VP7 and VP8)	Road users experience rapidly changing views due to changes in the undulating landscape and established landcover. A long distance view becomes available for a short length of the road at the summit of an elevated part of the road heading east towards the village. The site is identifiable in a long distance view but it is partly screened by trees and hedgerow. Parts of the existing adjoining settlement are also seen but this is not a prominent view and it is incidental in the context of scenic and open views available to the south. The magnitude of change is assessed to be low to negligible resulting in a negligible to minor adverse visual effect.
Road users Baydon Road west of village (Shorter distance) (Viewpoint VP9)	Closer to the village, the immediate roadside hedge becomes lower and allows potential views to the north east in the direction of the site. At time of survey arable crops where screening the view. There is a potential part view of the new roofscape where existing and new vegetation do not fully screen. The magnitude of change is assessed to be low resulting in a minor adverse visual effect.
Construction Phase Landscape and Visual Effects	
Due to the limited scale of the development proposals and the contained nature of the site adjoining the settlement, construction phase effects will be limited and temporary. There will be a loss of tranquillity which will be limited to the site and activities through construction that will have a limited and temporary localised adverse impact on adjoining residents.	

18. Mitigation and Enhancement

Mitigation measures proposed as part of the development to assist with mitigating effects predicted during operational phase are as follow:

- New native tree and hedge planting along open boundaries and boundaries with residential dwellings. This will improve connectivity of green infrastructure enhance the rural setting of the proposals, enclose the site, and help to filter and soften local views
- New tree planting of native species along the northern and western site boundaries to help filter and soften potential views of a future roofscape.
- Creating high quality structures using materials and finishes in keeping with the desirable local vernacular
- Keep external lighting to a minimum to protect dark skies including using strengthened site hedgerows to maintain robust separation not only of the site but of the settlement with the open adjoining countryside.
- The use of local vernacular finishes would be beneficial including the introduction of flint panelling in red brick walls and hanging clay tiles on gables. These would reflect the distinctive local architecture and would be beneficial if introduced into local views.

The implementation of landscape enhancements, (refer to Landscape Analysis Sketch Figure 31) recommendations will result in a net gain of vegetative landscape resources due to proposed new native tree and hedge planting along the site field boundaries

The following measures would assist in mitigating visual effects during the construction phase:

- Limitations on working hours to ensure no external lighting is required as part of the construction
- Control on times of plant equipment and materials deliveries to reduce impact of vehicle movements
- Control on waste/rubbish to prevent excessive stock piling on site

19. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The site consists of a single paddock contained by hedgerow on two sides and bordered by existing modern settlement on two sides. Whilst the field is open it is contained by hedgerow and settlement features, the latter having a notable influence on the character of the site. The site has a strong correlation with the existing settlement edge and a sense of disconnect with the wider downland landscape to which it makes a limited contribution to landscape character.

The settlement of Baydon is well contained by established vegetation so is discrete in its wider open downland setting. The character and pattern of the settlement provides capacity for a minor residential extension without creating a notable change to settlement or landscape character and visual amenity. This appraisal identified very limited landscape and visual effects arising from a development and these effects are assessed to be very localised due to the natural containment of the site.

The site offers the potential to restore and strengthen existing hedgerows which border the wider open agricultural landscape as well as improving existing boundaries with adjoining residential properties. Overall, there is potential to create an improved settlement edge which both mitigates the introduction of the new roofscape and restores the local green infrastructure that contributes to the wider character of the open countryside at its interface with the settlement. Although there is change to the character of the site, this change conserves the wider landscape character of the countryside and of the settlement.

Key issues identified within the AONB management plan of particular relevance to Baydon identify:

- The need to conserve and enhance the remote, secluded and relatively undeveloped character of more enclosed and intimate landscapes, including the character of lanes.
- The need to maintain the pattern of discrete villages set within a quiet rural landscape, ensuring that the views to the surrounding dramatic scarps are undamaged.
- Intense pressure for development throughout the AONB and its setting that threatens the character and quality of its landscape and risks merging of small settlements, encroachment by larger settlements and changes to the scale and nature of development boundaries.

The development proposals would maintain a discrete settlement with almost no recorded adverse visual effects beyond the immediate residents. There would be no changes to the current access and no loss of open rural field which makes a significant contribution to local or wider landscape character. There is potential to improve green infrastructure including planting of new native trees to replace ash and elm. New built form incorporating traditional materials and detailing would be an enhancement if seen in views from

the Baydon Road. However, the views are sufficiently indistinct and indirect that the level of change would not generally be experienced as an adverse change.

Changes to the landscape character would almost totally be contained to the site itself with no identifiable adverse effect on the wider rural landscape and setting of the village.
Although the loss of openness of the site itself cannot be mitigated, the scale and character of the development would conserve and enhance the wider landscape of the AONB and preserve the existing scenic beauty. The development would not contribute to the key issues which impact on the AONB as set out in the AONB management plan and would not conflict with AONB policies that seek to maintain tranquillity and dark skies due to the strong correlation of the site with the existing settlement.

Overall, the development would conserve the special qualities of the AONB, it's character and scenic beauty and form a small scale extension of a part of the village which makers a positive contribution to the wider landscape of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

APPENDIX A - ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

1.1 Assessment Guidelines

The methodology used to identify and assess the landscape and visual effects of proposed development and their significance is based on the following recognised guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment)
- Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Advice Note 01/11 (Landscape Institute)

1.2 LVIA Methodology

The Landscape and visual impact assessment is a tool used to identify and assess the effects of change, resulting from development, and their significance on the landscape as a resource and people's views and visual amenity. It is an iterative process intended to inform design decisions so that new development can avoid or reduce significant negative (adverse) effects on the landscape and visual environment.

It is recognised as important to draw distinctions between landscape and visual effects during the assessment; treating them independently although related. GLVIA sets out the recommended process for assessing the significance of effects by comparing the sensitivity of the visual or landscape receptor with the magnitude of change resulting from development.

The GLVIA states that the assessment should cover the following stages:

- Project description: description of the proposed development for the purpose of assessment; main features of proposals and establish parameters
- Baseline studies: establishes existing nature of landscape and visual environment in the study area, includes information of the value attached to different resources
- Identification and description of effects: that are likely to occur including whether they are adverse or beneficial
- Assess significance of effects: systematic assessment of the likely significance of the effects identified

- Mitigation: proposes measures designed to avoid/prevent, reduce or offset (or compensate for) any significant negative (adverse) effects

Method of Desk Study

Assessment of Ordnance Survey map data, aerial photographs, landscape designations and landscape planning policies are undertaken at the outset to inform the extent of the study area and identify sensitive visual receptors and likely sensitivity of the landscape. Liaison with the Local Planning Authority landscape officer is also undertaken to agree landscape resources and visual receptors of potential sensitivity to be included within the assessment.

Method of Field Work

Site survey is undertaken by at least one chartered landscape architect. Visual and landscape receptors are checked and refined initially from the study site. Visual receptors are then visited from the nearest publicly accessible location to select the most suitable and representative viewpoint. Assessment is undertaken on site; locations and notes recorded on maps and photographs taken from viewpoints. Photographs are taken using a digital SLR set to the equivalent of a 50mm SLR lens; which best represents the view experienced by the human eye.

1.3 Method for Assessing Landscape

Landscape Character and Characterisation

Landscape Character Assessment Guidance defines 'landscape' as consisting of the following elements:

- Natural: Geology, landform, air and climate, soils, flora and fauna
- Cultural/Social: land use, settlement, enclosure
- Perceptual and Aesthetic: memories, associations, preferences, touch and feel, smells, sounds and sight

Landscape Character Assessment Guidance encourages assessment at different scales that fit together as a hierarchy of landscape character areas and types so that each level can provide more detail to the one above. Identifying the existing landscape character is part of establishing the baseline conditions of a study site and its study area.

National Character Assessment
Establishes broad pattern of the landscape of the wider countryside
↓
District Character Assessment
Establishes pattern of the landscape of the district/county countryside
↓
Local Character Assessment
Establishes pattern of the landscape at a local level
↓
Site elements and features
Establishes to landscape resources on the site such as trees, hedges etc

Value of the landscape receptor

Value can apply to areas of landscape as a whole, or to the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. Value is determined by some or all the following aspects:

- Importance applied to landscape by designation or planning policy and the level of this importance in terms of local, regional or national importance
- The views of the local consultees including the local planning authority, members of the public, special interest groups such as Parish Council, wildlife or walking groups
- The rarity, importance and condition of the landscape resource as judged objectively by the landscape professional

International and Nationally designated landscapes tend to be of the highest value, locally designated landscapes are most likely to be of moderate value and undesignated landscapes can either be of lower to moderate value depending on an assessment taking into account the following factors:

- Condition of the local landscape
- Scenic quality
- Rarity
- Representativeness
- Conservation interests
- Recreation value
- Perceptual aspects
- Associations

The definitions of value used are as follows:

- **Very High**: such as World Heritage Sites
- **High**: such as National Parks, AONB, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings
- **Medium:** such as Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Great Landscape Value, several protected features such as Tree Preservation Orders, site may be mentioned in literature, art, tourism or in district/county landscape character assessments or sensitivity assessments.
- **Medium Low**: generally undesignated, may have value at a community level by tourism, literature, art, village greens or allotments, may have a small number of protected features
- **Low**: no designated features or landscape, limited value, no protected features

Susceptibility of the landscape receptor to the proposed change

This relates to the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of the of landscape planning policies.

The definitions of susceptibility of the proposed change to landscape used are as follows:

- **High**: Elements, features or whole landscapes that are susceptible to change, with limited opportunities to accommodate change based on the strength of the existing landform, pattern, land cover, settlement pattern, sense of enclosure, visual context, tranquillity
- **Medium**: Elements, features or whole landscapes that are partially susceptible to change, with some opportunities to accommodate change based on the strength of the existing landform, pattern, land cover, settlement pattern, sense of enclosure, visual context, tranquillity
- **Low**: Elements, features or whole landscapes that have limited susceptibility to change, with opportunities to accommodate change based on the strength of the

existing landform, land use pattern, land cover, settlement pattern, sense of enclosure, visual context, tranquillity

Definition of Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape **sensitivity** is determined by combining judgements of the **susceptibility** to the proposed change and the **value** of the receptor. Refer to Table A.

Table A: Definition of Landscape Sensitivity:

Sensitivity	Definition
High	- High susceptibility to proposed change - May be a designated landscape valued at a National or International level - Landscape characteristics are vulnerable and unable to accommodate change - Development may result in significant changes to landscape character
Medium-High	- Medium or high susceptibility to proposed change - May be a designated landscape valued at a local or national level - Landscape characteristics are vulnerable with limited ability to accommodate change - Development may result in moderate changes to landscape character
Medium	- Medium susceptibility to proposed change - Some designated features and/or valued at a local level - Landscape characteristics are able to accommodate some change - Development may not result in significant changes to landscape character
Medium-Low	- Low or medium susceptibility to proposed change - Likely to be an undesignated landscape but possibly some designated features and/or valued at a local level - Landscape characteristics are resilient to accommodating change - Development may not result in significant changes to landscape character
Low	- Low susceptibility to proposed change - Undesignated landscape and/or valued at a community level - Landscape characteristics are robust and able to accommodate change - Development may not result in significant changes to landscape character
Negligible	- No susceptibility to proposed change - Undesignated, valued at a site level - Landscape characteristics that are degraded or discordant with landscape character - Development may result in an improvement to landscape character

Landscape Receptor – Overall Magnitude of Effect

The magnitude of the effect is determined by combining the professional judgements about the **size or scale** of the landscape effect, the **geographical extent** over the area which the effect occurs, its **reversibility** and its **duration**. Refer to table B:

- The scale of the effect – for example, whether there is complete loss of a particular element/feature/characteristic or partial loss or no loss; proportion of key elements or features of the baseline that will be lost, the value/importance of these elements to the landscape character and the degree of contrast between the development and the landscape character

- The geographical extent of the area affected relative to the receptor; this will range from the site itself, a short distance comprising the immediate local area, a medium distance comprising the local and middle landscape and long distance comprising the wider landscape

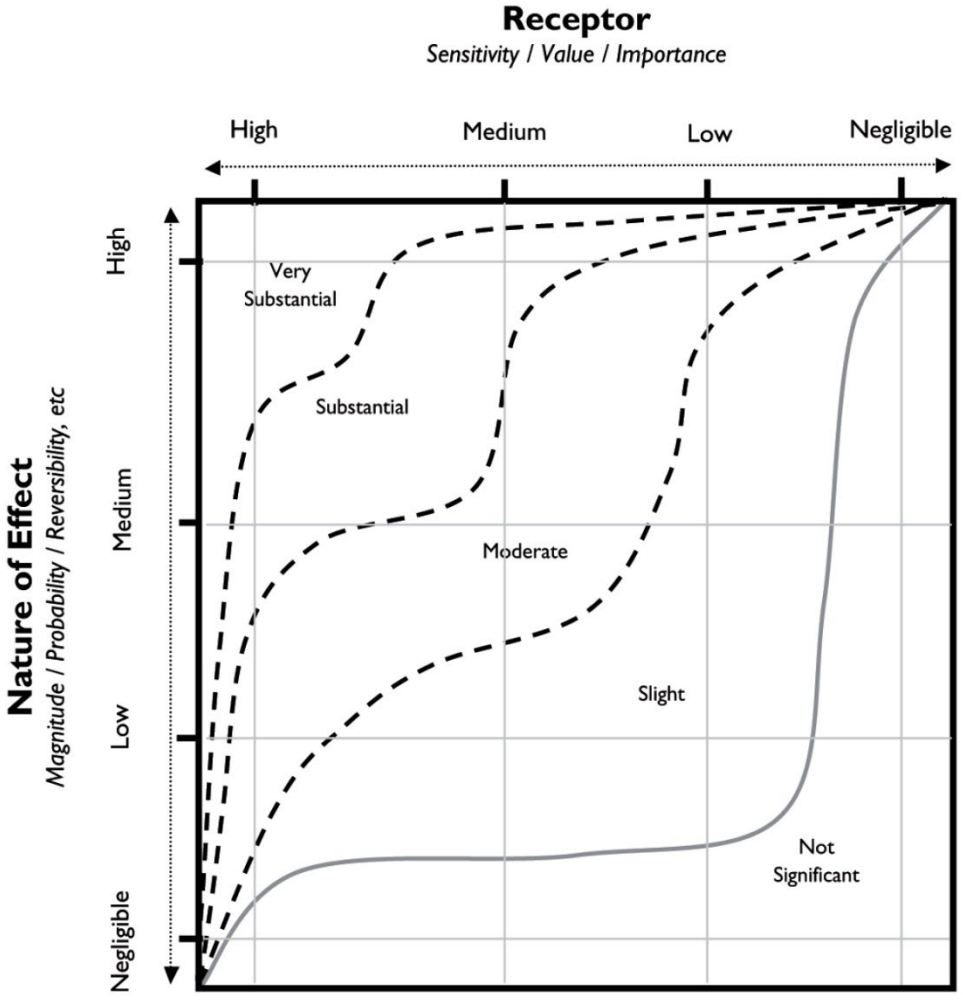
- The duration of the effect; 0-1 year for the construction period is considered short term duration, 1-10 years for mitigation to establish is considered medium term duration, 10 years and beyond is considered long term duration

- Reversibility; the extent to which the development could be removed and the land reinstated. Reversible and temporary development would include solar farms and wind turbines. Other development such as housing would be considered irreversible and permanent

Table B: Definition of Landscape Magnitude of Effect:	
Magnitude of change:	Predicted landscape effects:
High	- Very substantial loss of landscape elements of the landscape, and/or the lost elements make a substantial contribution to landscape character, and/or change affects a large geographical area, and/or the development introduces a dominating and contrasting characteristic to the landscape
Medium-High	- Substantial loss of landscape elements of the landscape, and/or the lost elements make a large contribution to landscape character, and/or change affects a moderate to large geographical area, and/or the development introduces a prominent and partially uncharacteristic feature to the landscape
Medium	- Moderate loss of landscape elements of the landscape, and/or the lost elements make a moderate contribution to landscape character, and/or change affects a moderate geographical area, and/or the development becomes an identifiable feature but not wholly uncharacteristic to the landscape
Medium-Low	- Partial loss of landscape elements of the landscape, and/or the lost elements make a moderate to small contribution to landscape character, and/or change affects a small to moderate geographical area, and/or the development is perceptible but not wholly uncharacteristic to the landscape
Low	- Minor loss of landscape elements of the landscape, and/or the lost elements make a small contribution to landscape character, and/or change affects a small geographical area, and/or the development introduces elements not uncharacteristic to the landscape
Negligible	- Negligible or no loss of landscape elements of the landscape, and/or the lost elements make a limited contribution to landscape character, and/or change affects a very small geographical area, and/or the development introduces characteristics that are consistent with or enhance the landscape, and/or effects may be short term, temporary or reversible

Assessment criteria used to assess landscape effects

Landscape effects are judged by assessing the overall sensitivity (susceptibility to change and value of receptor) of the existing landscape and the overall magnitude of effect predicted as a result of the development (size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of effect). The diagram below, produced by IEMA for Environmental Impact Assessment, is utilised to judge the effect.



1.4 Method for Assessing Views

A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is often produced as an initial desktop tool to inform the extent of the study area based on the theoretical visibility of the development. The (ZTV) illustrates the extent to which the proposed development site as a whole is potentially visible from the surrounding area. ZTV's are prepared using GIS software (Global Mapper) by carrying out an analysis of the visibility of the site from the surrounding area up to 5km using a digital terrain model from OS Landform DTM profile and OS Panorama DTM data. Calculations are based on bare earth survey OS height data with a viewer height set at 1.7m. The digital terrain model and subsequent output are based on bare earth modelling and as such do not take into account any screening from land cover such as buildings, hedgerows and trees. ZTV mapping therefore represents a 'worst case' scenario assuming 100% visibility, where the actual extents of visibility are likely to be less extensive. ZTV's are used to determine where there may be potential views of the development which are then further verified with site visits. The ZTV is then used to identify potential key views of the development which are then verified by field work to further identify and visit visual receptors. Where a ZTV is not produced, the study area is determined by reviewing land use and landform shown on OS maps and aerial photos. Field work is then undertaken to refine the extent of views.

Viewpoints selected for inclusion in the assessment and for illustration of the visual effects fall broadly into three groups:

- **Representative viewpoints**, selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where larger numbers of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the significant effects are unlikely to differ – for example, certain points may be chosen to represent the views of particular public footpaths and bridleways
- **Specific viewpoints**, chosen because they are key and sometimes promoted viewpoints within the landscape, including for example specific local visitor attractions, viewpoints in areas of particularly noteworthy visual and/or recreational amenity such as landscapes with statutory landscape designations, or viewpoints with particular cultural landscape associations
- **Illustrative viewpoints**, chosen specifically to demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues, which might, for example, be restricted visibility at certain locations

Visual effects are determined through a process of identifying which visual receptors are likely to experience significant visual effects. The process of identifying effects involves determining the **sensitivity** of each visual receptor and **magnitude** of change experienced at each which leads to a professional judgement of the **visual effects**.

Value attached to views

Visual sensitivity is partially determined by judgements made attributing value to views. Judgements take account of:

- Recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment (such as parking places, sign boards and interpretive material) and reference to them in literature or art

The value of views is defined as follows:

- **High**; Recognition of the view by its relation to a heritage asset or national planning designation (AONB, National Park, National Trail). Appearance in guidebooks, tourist maps or featured in well-known art works. Provision of facilities such as interpretation panels, parking places & signage. Views enjoyed at a local or national level.
- **Medium**; Local planning designation (Country Park, AGLV) or valued locally by village design statement or sensitivity assessment. May be some detractor elements, views enjoyed at a local level.
- **Low**; No specific value placed by designation or publication, may be a large proportion of detractor elements within the view, views enjoyed at a community or site level.

Susceptibility of visual receptors to change

Visual sensitivity is partly determined by the susceptibility to change of each visual receptor. The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and
- The extent to which their attention is focussed on the views and visual amenity they experience at particular locations

The susceptibility of visual receptors to change in views and visual amenity is defined broadly as follows:

- **High**; residents at home (generally rooms occupied during daylight hours), people engaged in outdoor recreation (public rights of way or where attention is focussed on the landscape or particular views), visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where the surroundings are important to the experience, communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area
- **Medium**; travellers on road, rail or other transport modes such as cyclists
- **Low**; people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views, people at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity

Combining judgements regarding the **susceptibility of change** with the **value** attached to views leads to a professional judgement of **sensitivity** of each visual receptor.

Table C: Definition of Visual Sensitivity	
Sensitivity rating:	Definition:
High	Receptor may have high susceptibility to changes in view/visual amenity, views experienced may be of a high value designated landscape or at a defined publicised viewing point/attraction, receptors may include residents at home (from rooms generally occupied in daylight hours), users of national or long distance trails or visitors to listed parks/gardens.
Medium-High	Receptor may have medium or high susceptibility to changes in view, views experienced may be of a high or medium value designated landscape, receptors may include travellers on scenic road routes, residents at home (from rooms not facing the development or generally not occupied in daylight hours), users of public rights of way.
Medium	Receptors may have medium susceptibility to changes in view/visual amenity, views experienced may be within medium value locally designated landscape, receptors may include travellers on roads, pedestrians or cyclists.

Medium-Low	Receptors may have with low or medium susceptibility to changes in view/visual amenity, views experienced may be of a medium or low value locally designated landscape where there maybe be some detractors, receptors may include commuters on busy roads such as motorways or urban roads, users may be involved in passive outdoor sport such as golf.
Low	Receptors may have low susceptibility to change in views/visual amenity, views experienced are likely to be of low value undesignated landscape with several detractors, receptors may include people at work, people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not depend on landscape as a setting
Negligible	Receptors may have low or negligible susceptibility to change in views/visual amenity, views experienced are likely to be of low value undesignated landscape dominated by detractors where there are low numbers of receptors engaged in indoor active work

Visual Receptor – Overall Magnitude of Effect

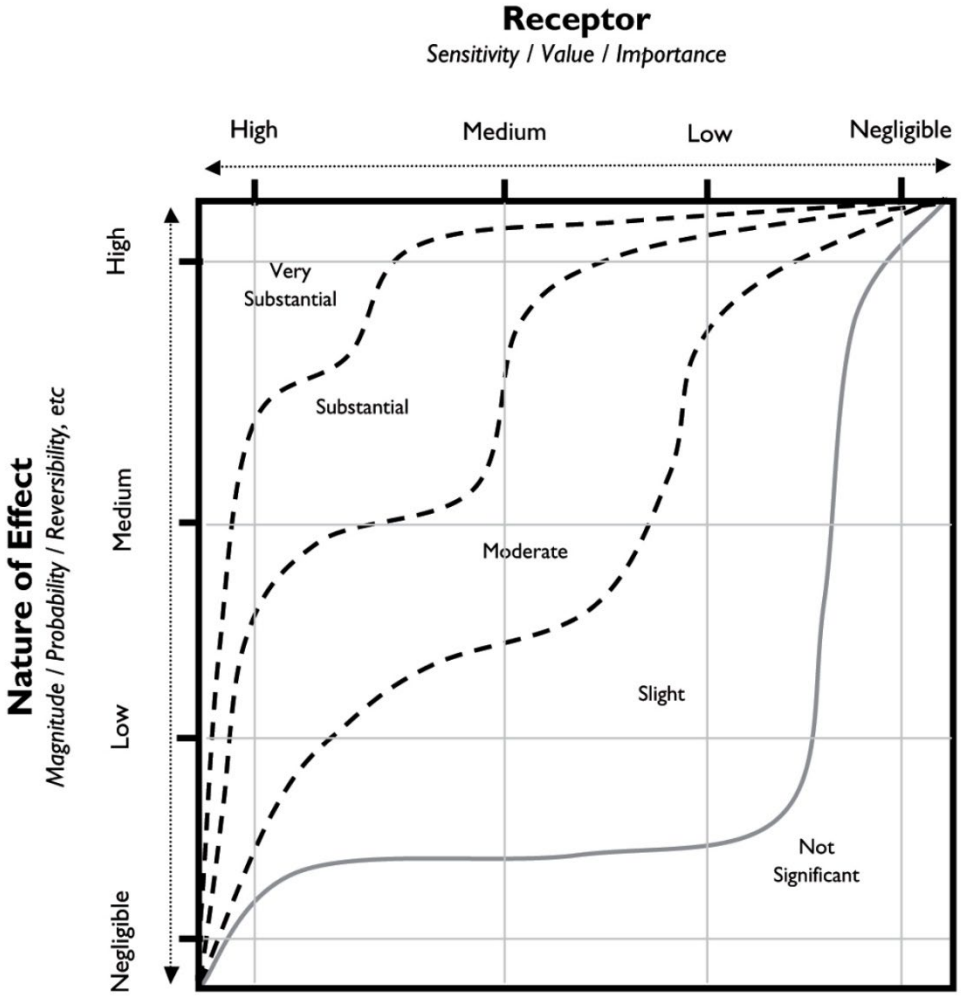
The magnitude of the effect is determined by combining the professional judgements about the **size or scale** of the visual effect, the **geographical extent** over the area which the effect occurs, its **reversibility** and its **duration**. Refer to table D:

Table D: Definition of Visual Magnitude of Effect	
Magnitude of change:	Predicted visual effects:
High	Total loss or very substantial alteration of key views, and/or site may form a very large proportion of the view, and/or all of the site may be visible, and/or views of the site may be experienced over a long distance by high numbers of receptors, and/or views may be permanent and irreversible
Medium-High	Substantial alteration of key views, and/or site may form a medium to large proportion of the view, and/or most of the site may be visible, and/or views of the site may be experienced over a moderate to long distance by moderate to high numbers of receptors, and/or views may be permanent and irreversible
Medium	Moderate alteration of key views, and/or site may form moderate proportion of the view, and/or around half of the site may be visible, and/or views of the site may be experienced over a moderate distance by moderate numbers of receptors, and/or views may be permanent and irreversible
Medium-Low	Moderate to minor alteration of key views, and/or site may form moderate to minor proportion of the view, and/or partial views of the site, and/or views of the site may be experienced over a moderate to

	short distance by moderate to low numbers of receptors, and/or views may be permanent and irreversible
Low	Minor alteration of key views, and/or site may form small proportion of the view, and/or partial or obscured views of the site, and/or views of the site may be experienced over a short/local distance by low numbers of receptors, and/or views may be permanent and irreversible
Negligible	Limited alteration of key views, and/or site may form very small proportion of the view, and/or limited views of the site, and/or views of the site may be experienced over a very short distance by a limited number of receptors, and/or views may be temporary, reversible, permanent or irreversible

Assessment criteria used to assess visual effects

Visual effects are judged by assessing the overall sensitivity (susceptibility to change and value of receptor) of the existing landscape and the overall magnitude of effect predicted as a result of the development (size/scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of effect). The diagram below, produced by IEMA for Environmental Impact Assessment, is utilised to judge the effect.



1.5 Assessment criteria used to assess significance of effects

Following identification of the sensitivity, extent and significance of the individual landscape and visual effects the overall effects are combined with each other. A judgement is then made by identifying the most significant effects, after mitigation, resulting in the likely impacts of the proposed development. The definitions of the final statement of significance are shown in **Table E**.

Table E: Definition of significance	
Significance of impact:	Definition of predicted effects:
Substantial beneficial (positive) effect	The proposals would result in: the scheme causing a significant improvement to the existing view

	successful mitigation providing significant improvements to landscape quality and character fitting in very well with the scale, landform and pattern of the existing landscape
Moderate beneficial (positive) effect	The proposals would result in: the scheme causing a noticeable improvement to the existing view successful mitigation providing noticeable improvements to landscape quality and character fitting in well with the scale, landform and pattern of the existing landscape
Slight beneficial (positive) effect	The proposals would result in: the scheme causing perceptible improvement in the existing view successful mitigation providing slight improvements to landscape quality and character fitting in with the scale, landform and pattern of the existing landscape
Not significant	The proposals would result in: the scheme causing no discernible deterioration or improvement to the existing view mitigation that neither deteriorates nor improves landscape the scale, landform and pattern of the current landscape is broadly retained
Slight adverse (negative) effect	The proposals would result in: the scheme causing a slight perceptible deterioration to the existing view almost wholly success in mitigating adverse effects not quite fitting the landform and scale of the landscape
Moderate adverse (negative) effect	The proposals would result in: the scheme causing a noticeable deterioration to the existing view only partial mitigation of adverse effects variance to the existing landscape, out of scale or at odds with the local pattern and landform
Substantial adverse (negative) effect	The proposals would result in: the scheme being immediately apparent causing significant deterioration to the existing view no way of fully mitigating adverse effects considerable variance to the existing landscape, degrading the integrity of its overall character

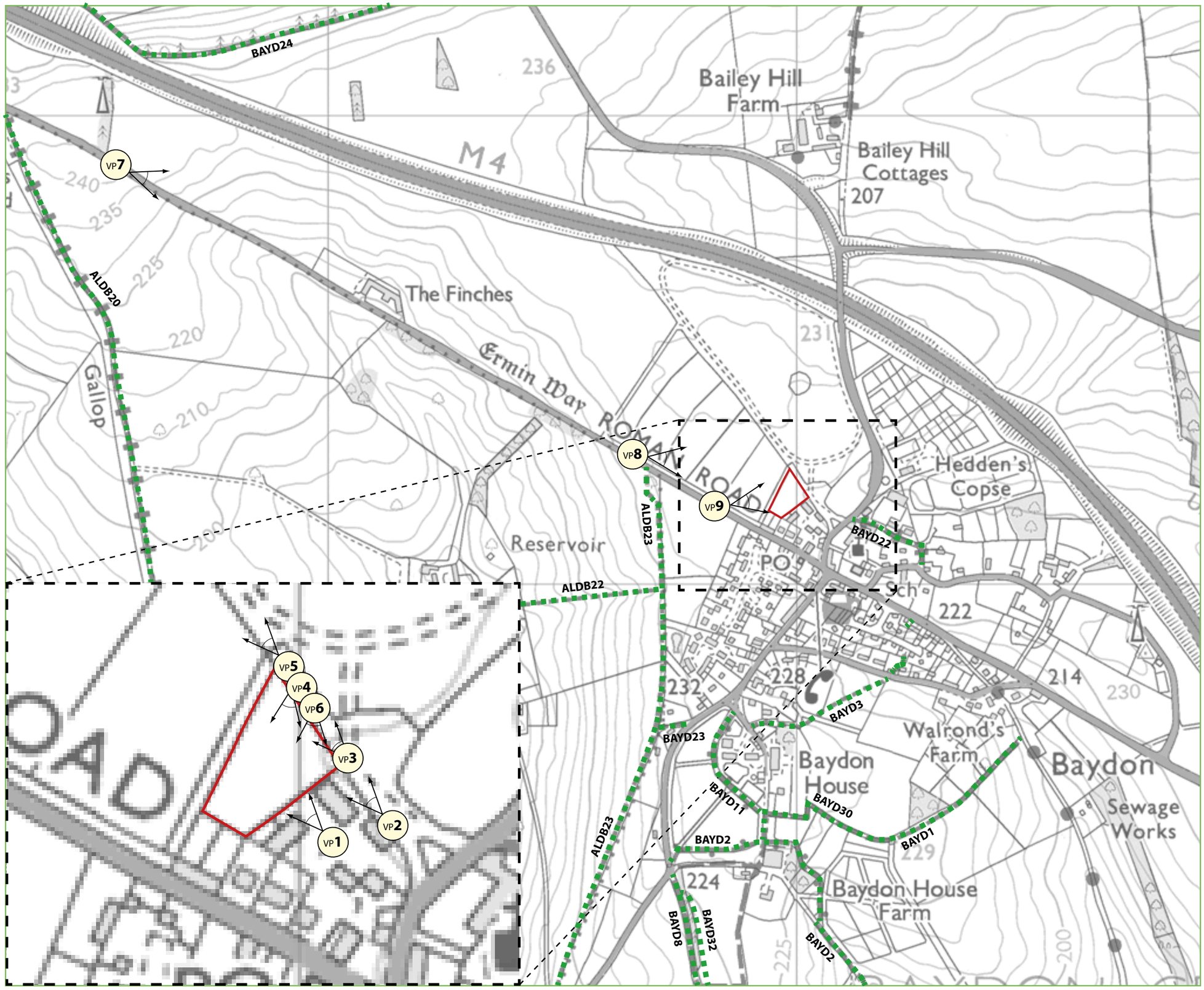
APPENDIX B – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Some of the terms listed below may not have been used within the document.

Characterisation	The process of identifying areas of similar landscape character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.
Designated landscape	Areas of landscape identified as being of importance at international, national or local levels, either defined by statute or identified in development plans or other documents.
Elements	Individual parts which make up the landscape, such as, for example, trees, hedges and buildings.
Geographical Information System (GIS)	A system that captures, stores, analyses, manages and presents data linked to location. It links spatial information to a digital database.
Green Infrastructure (GI)	Network of green spaces and watercourses and water bodies that connect rural areas, villages, towns and cities.
Indirect effects	Effects that result indirectly from the proposed project as a consequence of the direct effects, often occurring away from the site, or as a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway. They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects.
Iterative design process	The process by which project design is amended and improved by successive stages of refinement which respond to growing understanding of environmental issues.
Key characteristics	Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.
Land use	What land is used for, based on broad categories of functional land cover, such as urban and industrial use and the different types of agriculture and forestry.
Landform	An area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and /or human factors.
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)	A tool used to identify and assess the likely significance of the effects of change resulting from development both on the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.
Landscape Character	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.
Landscape Character Areas (LCA's)	These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.
Landscape Character Assessment	The process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape and using this information to assist in managing change in the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscape distinctive. The process results in the production of a Landscape Characterisation Assessment.
Landscape Effects	Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right.
Landscape quality (condition)	A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual

	areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
Landscape receptors	Defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
Landscape value	The relative value that is attached to different landscape by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.
Magnitude (of effect)	A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.
Photomontage	A visualisation which superimposes an image of a proposed development upon a photograph or series of photographs.
Scoping	The process of identifying the issues to be addressed by an EIA. It is a method of ensuring that an EIA focuses on the important issues and avoids those that are considered to be less significant.
Sensitivity	A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.
Significance	A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect, defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic.
Susceptibility (or vulnerability)	How susceptible or vulnerable the landscape receptor is to accommodate the proposed development without undue negative consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation
Time depth	Historical layering – the idea of a landscape as a 'palimpsest, a much written –over manuscript.
Tranquillity	A state of calm and quietude associated with peace, considered to be a significant asset of landscape.
Visual amenity	The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.
Visual effects	Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.
Visual receptors	Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
Visualisation	A computer simulation, photomontage or other technique illustrating the predicted appearance of a development
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	A map, usually digitally produced, showing areas of land within which, a development is theoretically visible.

APPENDIX C – FIGURES AND PLANS



KEY

- Study Site
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW)
- VP1 Viewpoint Location/Direction

Base map reproduced from **OS Explorer 1:25000**

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SCALE: **NTS**

Project Name:
Land off Russley Green

MHP Reference:
23156

Revision:	Status:	Date:
		16/08/2023

Figure 1 Site Location, Designations, Viewpoint Locations and Context
23156 Land off Russley Green

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Extent of Single Frame View

Figure 2 Viewpoint Photograph 1 - Panoramic View for Context
23156 Land off Russley Green

Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Camera Make/Model:	Nikon D7200
Projection:	Planar	Camera Lens:	Nikon DXPrime 35mm
Enlargement factor:	100% @A3	HFoV:	N/A
Image captured:	AUG 2023	Direction of view:	Looking north west

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Figure 3 Viewpoint Photograph 2 - Single Frame View
23156 Land off Russley Green

Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Camera Make/Model:	Nikon D7200
Projection:	Planar	Camera Lens:	Nikon DXPrime 35mm
Enlargement factor:	100% @A3	HFoV:	39.6°
Image captured:	AUG 2023	Direction of view:	Looking north west

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Extent of Single Frame View

Figure 4 Viewpoint Photograph 3 - Panoramic View for Context
23156 Land off Russley Green

Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Camera Make/Model:	Nikon D7200
Projection:	Planar	Camera Lens:	Nikon DXPrime 35mm
Enlargement factor:	100% @A3	HFoV:	N/A
Image captured:	AUG 2023	Direction of view:	Looking north west

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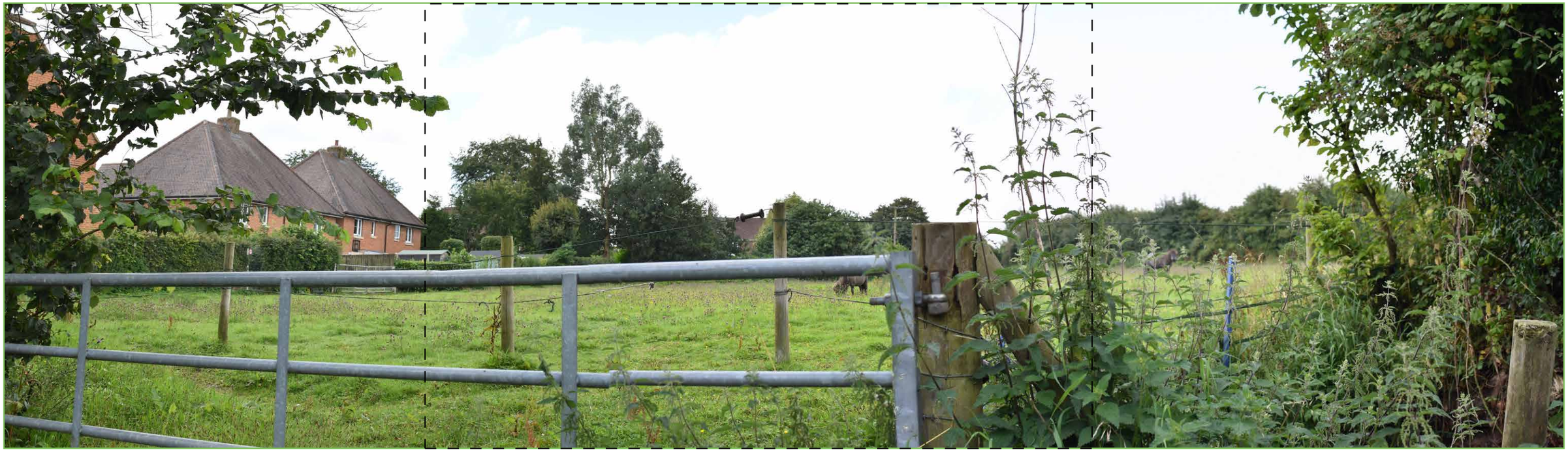

Extent of Single Frame View

Figure 5 Viewpoint Photograph 4 - Panoramic View for Context
23156 Land off Russley Green

Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Camera Make/Model:	Nikon D7200
Projection:	Planar	Camera Lens:	Nikon DXPrime 35mm
Enlargement factor:	100% @A3	HFoV:	N/A
Image captured:	AUG 2023	Direction of view:	Looking south

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Figure 6 Viewpoint Photograph 5 - Single Frame View
23156 Land off Russley Green

Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Camera Make/Model:	Nikon D7200
Projection:	Planar	Camera Lens:	Nikon DXPrime 35mm
Enlargement factor:	100% @A3	HFoV:	39.6°
Image captured:	AUG 2023	Direction of view:	Looking north west

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Figure 7 Viewpoint Photograph 6- Single Frame View
23156 Land off Russley Green

Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Camera Make/Model:	Nikon D7200
Projection:	Planar	Camera Lens:	Nikon DXPrime 35mm
Enlargement factor:	100% @A3	HFoV:	39.6°
Image captured:	AUG 2023	Direction of view:	Looking south

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Figure 8 Viewpoint Photograph 7- Single Frame View
23156 Land off Russley Green

Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Camera Make/Model:	Nikon D7200
Projection:	Planar	Camera Lens:	Nikon DXPrime 35mm
Enlargement factor:	100% @A3	HFoV:	39.6°
Image captured:	AUG 2023	Direction of view:	Looking south east

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Extent of Single Frame View

Figure 9 Viewpoint Photograph 8 - Panoramic View for Context
23156 Land off Russley Green

Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Camera Make/Model:	Nikon D7200
Projection:	Planar	Camera Lens:	Nikon DXPrime 35mm
Enlargement factor:	100% @A3	HFoV:	N/A
Image captured:	AUG 2023	Direction of view:	Looking east

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Figure 10 Viewpoint Photograph 9 - Panoramic View for Context
23156 Land off Russley Green

Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Camera Make/Model:	Nikon D7200
Projection:	Planar	Camera Lens:	Nikon DXPrime 35mm
Enlargement factor:	100% @A3	HFoV:	N/A
Image captured:	AUG 2023	Direction of view:	Looking east

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KEY

- Study Site
- Proposed native tree planting
- Potential views
- Existing vegetation to be retained and restored
- Visual Screen Enhancers

Base Image source: **Google Earth Pro.**
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Project Name:
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MHP Reference:
23156

Revision:	Status:	Date:
		16/08/2023

Figure 11 Landscape Analysis Sketch
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