

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS OF A REPLACEMENT DWELLING AT HIGHLANDS FARM, COLLINGBOURNE DUCIS, WILTSHIRE

for
Mr Toby Helme

August 2025

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FIG. 1 - THE SITE

KEY:
 The Site



I INTRODUCTION

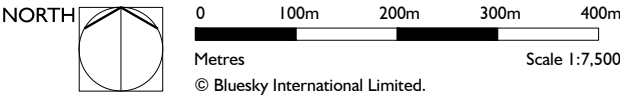
I.1. Reason for assessment

- I.1.1. This document addresses the likely landscape and visual effects of a replacement dwelling at Highlands Farm near Collingbourne Ducis, Wiltshire.
- I.1.2. It forms part of the documentation associated with a Detailed Planning Application and has been prepared by Indigo Landscape Architects Ltd.

I.2. Site location (refer to Figure 1)

- I.2.1. The Site comprises part of the wider landholding of Highlands Farm which is largely under equestrian and livery use, set within a cluster of further equestrian development known as 'Herridge Farm Stud', some 1.4km to the northeast of the village of Collingbourne Ducis. An existing dwelling currently occupies the Site, set within a parcel of land of c.1.47ha which includes the property's garden and a couple of horse paddocks.
- I.2.2. The Site falls within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB))¹.

¹ It should be noted that 'National Landscape' is a newly adopted term for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and that the term AONB remains present in planning documents including the NPPG, Local Development documents and AONB publications. Both 'National Landscape' and 'AONB' have therefore been used in this Appraisal.



1.3. Aim and approach

- 1.3.1. The purpose of this assessment is to outline the aims and methods of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA); to detail the process of assessment according to accepted guidance in the field;² and to apply this approach to the proposals on the Application Site.
- 1.3.2. The assessment therefore has the following objectives:
- i. To identify the existing significant landscape features and the landscape quality of both the Application Site and the surrounding Study Area.
 - ii. To assess the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposals taking account of any mitigation proposed.
- 1.3.3. The approach to the assessment has therefore involved:
- i. Recording and analysis of the key components of the landscape which contribute to overall landscape character, and of the visual baseline associated with the Site and surrounding area through desk-based study and field appraisal;
 - ii. An evaluation of the sensitivity of the existing landscape, and of visual receptors likely to be affected by the proposed development;
 - iii. Appreciation of the nature, form, scale and materials associated with the development, including mitigation measures proposed; and,
 - iv. An assessment of the magnitude of effect and its potential for significance as a result of the implementation of the proposed development.

1.4. Basis of assessment

- 1.4.1. This planning application is not the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 1.4.2. It is instead, a detailed application for a replacement residential dwelling where overall effects are likely to be restricted to a limited area of the surrounding landscape. The report therefore recognizes the need for proportionality,³ and this has guided the scope of the Appraisal.
- 1.4.3. The above said, however, it is important to acknowledge that the assessments made have been based on a detailed set of drawings and reports which form the planning application, and whilst a description of the proposals is included within Section 6 of this document, a full description of the scheme is also contained within the Planning Statement.
- 1.4.4. It is also important to understand that both the landscape and visual impact assessments undertaken have been prepared using a methodology which deliberately avoids forming an opinion on the merits of the architecture proposed. The assessment methodology is designed to make the assessment process as objective as possible. The impacts of built form (size, shape, condition, materials etc.) are considered, but a judgement of design quality does not form part of this assessment.
- 1.4.5. It is also essential to understand that in landscape character terms, the consideration of effects does not focus on the Site alone. Instead it focuses on the effects of the proposed development on the character of the landscape surrounding the Site. Whilst the Site itself forms part of the baseline and the effects on the Site form part of the consideration of effects, the question that is asked is not simply “*would the landscape character of the Site itself change as a result of the proposals*”, but “*would the character of the landscape resource as a whole change as a result of the proposals and do the changes affect the integrity of the wider setting or are they largely in keeping with the existing landscape despite the changes that occur*”.

2 The assessments have been based on the guidance contained within the “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment” - 3rd edition, 17th April 2013 (GLVIA3), however, as the scheme is not the subject of an Environmental Statement (as required by EIA Regulations) this document takes the form of a Landscape and Visual Impact “Appraisal”.

3 GLVIA 3 - Paragraphs 3.16 and 6.2.

- 1.4.6. Finally, it is important to bear in mind that some landscape and visual effects are an almost inevitable consequence of development. It is up to the decision makers (in this case Wiltshire Council’s Planning Department) to consider any adverse effects identified in the context of beneficial effects that may also exist in other areas (such as the provision of much needed housing) and to strike a balance in making a decision on the application.

1.5. Identification of the preliminary Study Area

- 1.5.1. The preliminary (desk top) study area for this assessment was centred on the Site and included all areas within a 5km radius where the proposed development could potentially have an effect on landscape character and visual amenity, taking into account topography and significant areas of built form and vegetation.

1.6. Site survey work

- 1.6.1. The identification of the preliminary study area was followed up with detailed field survey work undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute on the 15th May 2025 (trees in leaf). Weather conditions were dry with good visibility.
- 1.6.2. Representative photographs were taken at viewpoints chosen to demonstrate the visibility of the Site in the surrounding landscape. Where many similar viewpoints were available, photographs were taken at the location where the Site is most visible.
- 1.6.3. Photographs were taken with a Nikon D3500 or D3400 digital SLR camera with a fixed 35mm focal length lens and presented using a 1.5x multiplication factor to give the equivalent of 52.5mm. They are intended to be viewed **digitally** and replicate a normal eye level view at 1.6 metres above ground level.⁴
- 1.6.4. The fieldwork undertaken has enabled the estimated Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) to be established (refer to Section 4.2 and Figure 2 on pages 11 and 12 respectively); and this in turn has guided the detailed Study Area for the landscape baseline study.

1.7. Scope of the Appraisal

- 1.7.1. As set out above, the scope of this Appraisal has been guided by the nature of the proposals and the landscape in which it is located. In this case, given the nature of the proposals, the Site, and the surrounding landscape context, the assessments undertaken within this document have been limited to the following:
- i. The visual assessment has been undertaken during daylight hours, and in order to take account of the effect of time, has been considered in both the short (year 1) and medium to longer term (year 10).
 - ii. Assessments have not been carried out at night; during an enabling works demolition phase; during construction; or during a decommissioning stage.
 - iii. 17 viewpoints have been chosen to represent the visibility of the proposals from the public domain surrounding the Site. Viewpoints are representative, and therefore illustrate the nature of views experienced around each location.
 - iv. The photographs presented in Section 8 have been taken in summer, however, the assessments consider the likely effects in both summer and winter seasons, and where necessary separate assessments have been made.
 - v. Effects on receptors in private properties have also been considered, however, as planning is principally concerned with views from the public domain these have been grouped to minimise the extent of this work.
 - vi. In undertaking the landscape assessment an overall assessment of the effects of the development on landscape character has been made. Detailed assessments of the effects on individual elements that contribute to landscape character have not been assessed individually - Instead 20 individual elements that contribute to landscape character have been considered within the environmental baseline under three broad headings ‘Physical Influences’, ‘Influences of Human Activity’ and ‘Aesthetic and Perceptual Factors’ and the effects on them considered collectively in coming to a conclusion on the effects on overall landscape character.

4 Note: Refer to Appendix C for technical details.

2 METHODOLOGY, ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT

2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1. This section sets out the methodology used in the preparation of this document. It sets out guidance referenced, terminology used, the concept behind the process of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, and the methodology which has been applied.
- 2.1.2. It also sets out both assumptions made and limitations acknowledged, and is supported by a glossary which defines terms used throughout.

2.2. Guidance and terminology

- 2.2.1. The methodology, guidelines and terminology used in the preparation of this Appraisal have been developed from the following:
 - i. ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition’ (GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and which came into force on the 17th April 2013;
 - ii. The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 (published in August 2024) which provides a compilation of clarifications on GLVIA3;
 - iii. The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21, ‘Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations’;
 - iv. ‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment’, Natural England, 2014; and
 - v. ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets’, Historic England, 2017.
- 2.2.2. All photographs have been taken and presented in accordance with the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19 “Visual Representation of Development Proposals”, and with reference to the associated Technical Information Notes.
- 2.2.3. The generic title of the process followed is Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The term ‘impact’ in this context is often seen as interchangeable with the term ‘effect’ (and there may be circumstances in which the terms ‘impact and effect’ are interchangeable), however, GLVIA 3 defines impact as the ‘action being taken’, and effect as ‘the change resulting from that action’, and these definitions have been followed throughout this assessment. Put simply, ‘impacts’ have an ‘effect’.
- 2.2.4. For the avoidance of doubt:
 - i. ‘Km’ means kilometre/s; ‘m’ means metre/s.
 - ii. All distances are approximate.
 - iii. All references to points of the compass are generalised and are used for descriptive purposes only.
 - iv. ‘Site’ refers to the main Development Site within the red line shown on Figure 1.

2.3. Process of assessment

- 2.3.1. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is a process where the features and qualities of views and of the Application Site and surrounding landscape are examined, the proposed development is set out, and assessments are undertaken in accordance with the approach set out in GLVIA3.
- 2.3.2. The process considers the **susceptibility** to change of the “receptor” and the **value** attached to the view / landscape element to determine **sensitivity**; and weighs this against the **magnitude of effect** to determine the **level** (sometimes referred to as significance) **of effect**.

Sensitivity x magnitude = Level of effect

- 2.3.3. Although interrelated, landscape assessment is distinctly separate from the process of visual assessment:
 - **Landscape** effects are concerned with changes to the landscape, including the effect on its character as a whole and on the individual elements contributing to this character. “Receptors” can therefore include physical influences (for example vegetation or water bodies); influences of human activity (for example land use or the character of buildings / built form); or aesthetic and perceptual factors (for example tranquillity or wildness); all of which contribute to overall landscape character.
 - **Visual** effects are the effects on “receptors” of changes (resulting from development) in the character of available views. In this case the “receptors” are people experiencing the view such as users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) or occupants of residential properties.

- 2.3.4. Detailed Methodologies are set out within Appendices A (Landscape) and B (Visual).

2.4. Assumptions made

- 2.4.1. In undertaking both the landscape and visual assessments, certain assumptions have been made regarding plant growth and maintenance heights for new planting. These are set out below:
 - a) Hedgerow planting will be:
 - i. Planted with native species as transplants at 4 per linear metre in double staggered rows, guide height 1m at year 1.
 - ii. Fully established as a solid hedge in year 10 – with the hedgerow maintained at 3m in height (in line with the existing hedgerows on Site).
 - b) Tree planting (Advanced Nursery Stock specimens) will be:
 - i. 4.5 – 6m tall in year 1.
 - ii. 6.5 - 8m tall in year 10.
 - 2.4.2. It should be noted, however, that tree heights will vary with species and are made on the assumption that planting and maintenance (watering etc.) is to a high specification and that shocks to plant physiology (drought etc.) are avoided. For example, in these conditions a semi-mature oak tree planted at 5m in height is likely to reach over 6m by year 7, and around 7.5m by year 15, whilst the equivalent aged sweet chestnut planted at 6.5m in height may reach 8m by year 7 and up to 10m by year 15.
 - 2.4.3. Finally, it should also be noted that for the assessments made in the medium to longer term (year 10) it has been assumed that there would be no significant change (growth or loss) in offsite / foreground vegetation.
- 2.5. Limitations of assessment
- 2.5.1. The assessments undertaken are based on certain assumptions and therefore have certain limitations. Whilst the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) calls for assessments to be appropriate and proportionate to the nature of the development proposed, these limitations should be recorded. For this study these have been identified as follows:
 - i. The assessment only assesses effects on visual receptors on publicly accessible land and from private residences (estimated) – Whilst this is entirely normal it should be noted that visual effects from locations on surrounding fields are not covered.
 - ii. No photomontages or other forms of visualisation have been used in the assessments undertaken.
 - iii. Assessments from private land / residences have been undertaken, however, the visibility of the Site from private viewpoints has been estimated both by looking towards the Site from public areas, and by standing on Site and looking outwards. No attempt has been made to access private property for more detailed assessment.

- iv. Night time; enabling works / demolition; detailed construction; and decommissioning phase assessments have not been undertaken. However, effects of lighting have been considered.
- v. As set out above, for the visual assessments made in the medium to longer term (year 10) it has been assumed that there will be no significant change (growth or loss) in offsite / foreground vegetation.
- vi. Finally, whilst the estimated Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) is mapped to a good degree of accuracy and takes into consideration the screening effects of topography, built form and significant areas of vegetation as noted from site work, it should be understood that there will still be locations within the mapped ZVI where the complexity of landscape (such as intervening vegetation / buildings) or lack of public access makes it impossible to reasonably determine the exact visibility of the proposed development. In reality there will be some areas within the mapped ZVI where the proposed development will not be visible, and there may also be some un-mapped areas where glimpses of the proposed development would exist.

3 BASELINE STUDY - PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND DESIGNATIONS

3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1. This section sets out the planning policy background applicable to the Site at the local and national level, in particular policies relating to landscape and visual amenity contained in the current Development Plan. It also sets out landscape, heritage, tree and habitat designations that fall within the Study Area.
- 3.1.2. In planning terms the Site lies within the Wiltshire Council planning area, and within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB).
- 3.1.3. The planning policy context applicable to this Site therefore includes the NPPF (supported by the NPPG) at a national level; and at a local level, documents prepared by Wiltshire Council and supported by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape Partnership.

3.2. National Landscape (AONB) context

- 3.2.1. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape (previously AONB) was designated in 1972 under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act to conserve and enhance the outstanding natural beauty of the area. It covers 668 square miles of countryside overlapping the boundaries of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, southern Swindon and West Berkshire, and includes the entire Study Area associated with this assessment.
- 3.2.2. National Landscapes are nationally important assets, recognised for their landscape characteristics and quality, and form an important part of the nations heritage assets and environmental capital.
- 3.2.3. The 1949 Act, along with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CRoW Act) and the National Landscape’s Management Plan makes it clear that as well as their landscape characteristics, natural beauty includes wildlife, scientific and cultural heritage.

3.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.3.1. National planning policy contains guidance on planning and related issues on a national basis. From the 12th December 2024 this has primarily been set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), superseding the previous versions of this document. Other national planning policy that remains current is identified in the introduction to the NPPF (associated with nationally significant infrastructure projects / traveller sites and waste policies); however, these have no relevance to these proposals.
- 3.3.2. The NPPF is a wide-ranging document comprising of 17 chapters which sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied.
- 3.3.3. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced; it must be taken into account in preparing the Development Plan; and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 3.3.4. The framework proposes that development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and any proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise;⁵ however, it should be recognised that the ‘*presumption in favour of sustainable development*’ does not automatically apply within National Landscapes, as confirmed by NPPF paragraph 11 (both 11b)i and 11d)i) and footnote 7 (page 6), due to other policies relating to National Landscapes elsewhere within the Framework.
 - For **plan-making** being in a National Landscape ‘*provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area*’ (paragraph 11b)i); and
 - For **decision-taking** the contravention of policies that protect a National Landscape ‘*provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed*’ (paragraph 11d)i).

- 3.3.5. There is no direct reference in the NPPF to Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, although their need is an intrinsic requirement of assessing the effects of development on the surrounding landscape; and ‘cumulative landscape and visual impacts’ are mentioned in paragraph 165a under planning for climate change.
- 3.3.6. The key paragraphs relating to landscape and visual assessment are contained within Section 15 of the NPPF.

NPPF Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 3.3.7. This section of the NPPF sets out the requirement that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (amongst other criteria) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, and by protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity.
- 3.3.8. It sets out that “*planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*” (inter alia)
 - “a) *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes [which include National Landscapes] (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 the 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; and by*
 - d) *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs*” (paragraph 187).
- 3.3.9. It also sets out that plans “*should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries*” (paragraph 188).
- 3.3.10. The NPPF specifically requires “*great weight*” to “*be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues*”; states that “*the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads*”; and it states that the “*scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas*” (paragraph 189). It also provides guidance for development in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes (paragraph 190); and provides guidance for planning policies and decisions in areas defined as Heritage Coast (paragraph 191 - although this is not relevant to the Application Site).
- 3.3.11. Under a sub-heading of ‘habitats and biodiversity’ development plans are required to enhance biodiversity and geodiversity including the requirement to “*identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity*” (paragraph 192b), and a series of principles are listed which local planning authorities should apply when determining planning applications (paragraphs 193).
- 3.3.12. Furthermore, under a second sub-heading of ‘Ground conditions and pollution’, ground conditions and the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment are also considered. In doing so paragraph 198 refers to noise pollution, and paragraph 199 refers to air quality management (both outside the remit of this assessment), however, paragraph 198b refers to the need for planning policies and decisions to “*identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason*”, and 198c refers to the need to “*limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation*”.
- 3.3.13. Other policies of particular relevance to the nature of development proposed on the Application Site (but have less direct relevance to landscape character and visual matters) are set out in the following sections of the NPPF

5 NPPF - paragraph 48, page 14.

and detailed further (as required) in the Planning Statement which accompanies this application:

- NPPF Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development;
- NPPF Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- NPPF Section 11 – Making effective use of land;
- NPPF Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places; and
- NPPF Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change; and
- NPPF Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

3.4. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 3.4.1. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource, provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It adds further context to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and it is intended that the two documents should be read together.
- 3.4.2. The NPPG replaces over 7,000 pages of planning guidance that was previously published in separate documents. It is now available entirely in one place, online and not in hard copy.
- 3.4.3. Plan makers (mainly Local Authorities who are responsible for a Local Plan but also community groups who may be working on a Neighbourhood Plan) must have regard to national policies and advice contained in the guidance when developing their plans. The guidance is also a ‘material consideration’ when taking decisions on planning applications. This means that if a local policy is deemed out of date, local authorities may be directed by the requirements of the NPPG.
- 3.4.4. The Planning Practice Guidance helpfully includes landscapes, environmental gain, National Landscapes and their settings in the Natural Environment section (most recently updated on the 9th June 2025). Under a sub-heading of ‘Landscape’, paragraph 036 sets out that “the cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully” and paragraph 037 states that “to demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used”.
- 3.4.5. Paragraph 039 (in relation to National Parks, The Broads and National Landscapes) sets out⁶ the statutory duty of “relevant authorities” (including local government (including planning authorities), Ministers of the Crown, individual councillors, any public body, statutory undertakers and holders of public office) to “seek to further” the purposes for which these areas are designated (conserving and enhancing natural beauty); and notes that this “is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or National Landscape boundaries, but which might have an impact on their setting or protection”.
- 3.4.6. Paragraph 041 also makes it clear that the scale and extent of development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes “should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their landscapes and scenic beauty”, and that any development in these areas “will need to be located and designed in a way that reflects their status as landscapes of the highest quality” [emphasis added]; and paragraph 042 then highlights the importance of the settings of National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes. It notes the harm that can be done by poorly located or designed development (“especially where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary”); and it notes that “development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account”.

3.5. Local planning context

- 3.5.1. Wiltshire Council’s current development plan for this area consists of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015), The Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (adopted February 2020), Saved Policies of the Kennet local Plan 2011, and policies within the Minerals and Waste plans.⁷
- 3.5.2. These documents are supported by the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024 (2019),⁸ and a number of Position Statements and Guidance Notes which have also been published by the AONB Partnership (including one on housing; one on colour; and several on dark skies, artificial light and external lighting); and the character of the area is also detailed within various Landscape Character Assessments including the North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002 (updated in 2025 but remains in draft) and the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005).⁹
- Core Strategy (2015)
- 3.5.3. Core Policy 26: Spatial Strategy for the Tidworth Community Area identifies Collingbourne Ducis as a ‘large village’ and states that:
- “Development proposals in the Tidworth Community Area will need to demonstrate how the relevant issues and considerations listed in paragraph 5.140 will be addressed....”*
- 3.5.4. The considerations listed at paragraph 5.140 include:
- *“All development within the Community Area will need to conserve the designated landscape of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting (Core Policy 51), and where possible enhance its locally distinctive characteristics; and*
 - *Development in the vicinity of the River Avon (Hampshire) or Salisbury Plain Special Areas of Conservation must incorporate appropriate measures to ensure that it will not adversely affect the integrity of those Nature 2000 sites.”*
- 3.5.5. In landscape terms, however, the key policies applicable to these proposals are Core Strategy Policies 51 - Landscape, and 57 - Ensuring high quality design and place shaping.¹⁰
- 3.5.6. Policy 51 deals with the protection and conservation of landscape character and makes specific reference to the AONB, stating that:
- “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, geological and topographical features.*

6 With reference to Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988, and Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

7 There is no Neighbourhood plan covering the Site, which falls within the Collingbourne Ducis Parish. The area remains undesignated and there is no Plan underway.

8 As advised by DEFRA, the Plan has been extended until November 2025 as detailed within the Partnership’s ‘Light Touch Review Statement’. See: <https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/>

9 Refer to Section 4 below.

10 Other relevant policies are set out within the Planning Statement which supports this application.

- 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 (NFP) 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."

3.5.7. Policy 57 sets out how developments should be designed, focussing on respecting and enhancing the local character. It states (inter alia):

"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 through:

- i. *Enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development and responding to local topography by ensuring that important views into, within and out of the site are to be retained and enhanced;*
- ii. *The retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features, (e.g. trees, hedges, banks and watercourses), in order to take opportunities to enhance biodiversity, create wildlife and recreational corridors, effectively integrate the development into its setting and to justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development;*
- iii. *Responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting;*
- iv. *Being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and historic landscapes; [...]*
- vi. *Making efficient use of land whilst taking account of the characteristics of the site and the local context to deliver an appropriate development which relates effectively to the immediate setting and to the wider character of the area;*
- vii. *Having regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants, and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, including the consideration of privacy, overshadowing, vibration, and pollution (e.g. light intrusion, noise, smoke, fumes, effluent, waste or litter). [...]"*

Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan (2020)

The Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan followed a review of settlement boundaries (post Core Strategy) which ensured that boundaries of settlements were up to date and adequately reflected changes which had happened since they were first established. Collingbourne Ducis' Settlement Boundary is defined within Appendix A of this plan, however the Site falls far outside of the settlement within open countryside.

Other documents

North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024 (2019)

- 3.5.8. The above documents are supported by the North Wessex Downs AONB (National Landscape) Management Plan 2019 - 2024. This is a strategic plan for the conservation and enhancement of the AONB drawn together on behalf of the various organisations that make up the AONB Partnership.
- 3.5.9. It is a comprehensive document which identifies key issues facing the AONB and sets out objectives for its long term future, and is divided into 10 'Themes' of which 'Theme 6' (chapter 7) deals with development.
- 3.5.10. Key issues which have "the potential to have significant influence on the AONB's Development Special Qualities" are listed on page 79, and include (inter alia):
 - "b) New large free-standing dwellings as replacement dwellings in the open countryside.
 - c) The change of use of land to domestic garden use.
 - d) The loss of rural character through suburbanising influences from new development (new fencing, lighting, signage, parking areas, paved footpaths, loss of native hedgerows and creation of new garden areas).
 - f) The threat of incremental housing development outside settlements from conversions, redevelopments or rural workers' accommodation which are not clearly beneficial.
 - g) Impact on dark skies and tranquillity of high-powered external lighting, especially where poorly directed or in an exposed location (not usually subject to planning control).
 - o) Development that results in a material loss of tranquillity and/or impact on the dark night skies within the North Wessex Downs or its setting.
 - p) Development that does not provide for or support existing Green Infrastructure.
 - q) Development that does not provide for appropriate mitigation (including through the Community Infrastructure Levy)."

3.5.11. A series of development 'Policies' are then given on page 81 including:¹¹

- "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 06 - Encourage, support and promote the expansion of 'net gain' principles developed for biodiversity, to apply to wider natural capital assets, including in particular to landscape and natural beauty.
- DE 08 - 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."

North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement on Housing (October 2012)

3.5.12. The North Wessex Downs AONB partnership have also published a 'Position Statement on Housing' which states

¹¹ AONB 'Policies' are intended to guide and inform the planning policies and actions of all members of the North Wessex Downs Partnership (which include 3 unitary authorities and four district/borough Councils).

that in locations where new house building may be acceptable in planning policy terms, the AONB will apply a series of 15 criteria when considering planning applications for residential development (paragraph 323, page 8). These include (inter alia) the following:

- “(i) *Developments should integrate well into the historical pattern and character of the settlement. This will vary depending on the landscape and built character type and needs to be determined on a case-by-case basis. Specific consideration should also be given to the established density, scale, building height, roof pitches and layout of an area in designing new proposals.*
- (ii) *Building style should respect the local tradition. Inappropriate, particularly suburban styles, layouts and materials should be avoided. Where new building is required, it should be to a high standard of design as befits a nationally designated landscape. Innovative schemes based on sustainable construction principles are to be supported though should still respect local styles and materials.*
- (iii) *External building materials should respect and reflect the locally occurring rock types, brick, and roofing materials to ensure the finished design relates to the landscape that surrounds it. Locally sourced materials are also encouraged, to reduce long travel-to-site distances as well as the use of reclaimed materials.*
- (iv) *Developments must respect and conserve and not obstruct public views to higher slopes, skylines, or sweeping views across the landscape or landmark views within the settlements.*
- (vii) *Particular care should be taken in new housing development to ensure external lighting is minimal and any that is installed is designed to be downlighting with no light spillage, discreet and “dark night sky compliant”. Preferably external lighting (including street lighting) should not be installed where it does not already exist. Where lighting is essential it should be minimised and only used for short periods in limited locations. Paragraph 125 of the NPPF states “By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”*
- (x) *All new housing should include measures to save energy and resources and should meet or exceed relevant Government targets in this respect.*
- (xi) *All new housing should be located and designed to take account of and protect existing landscape features such as trees and hedges of value and where appropriate to provide new landscaping to frame or soften new developments and to increase biodiversity. Soft landscaping can also hold rainfall and reduce water run-off, avoiding unsustainable drainage options.*
- (xiv) *Replacement dwellings should be of a scale and location that does not result in the new dwelling being particularly larger or higher or in a different location compared to the existing, unless exceptional justification and other landscape and ecological benefits can be provided. Proposals for replacement dwellings should demonstrate how the quality of the landscape is conserved and enhanced.”*

3.5.13. A number of other Position Statements and Good Practice Notes have also been published by the AONB Partnership (including one on colour and several on dark skies and good lighting); and the character of the area is also detailed within various Landscape Character Assessments including the North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment 2025.¹²

3.6. Landscape, heritage and tree designations

3.6.1. There are no international landscape or heritage designations (e.g. World Heritage Sites) covering the Application Site or within the Study Area; however, as set out in various locations above the Site lies within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB), and the Salisbury Plain Special Landscape Area (local designation) falls within the Study Area (but outside of the ZVI of the proposed development).¹³

3.6.2. In terms of heritage assets,¹⁴ there are no heritage designations on Site, and the Collingbourne Ducis Conservation Area lies approximately 2km to the southwest of the Site (entirely outside the ZVI of the proposals).

3.6.3. Similarly, whilst a number of Listed Buildings are found within Collingbourne Ducis, none lie within the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals¹⁵; and no Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields or Registered Parks and Gardens or other heritage assets lie within the ZVI.¹⁶

3.6.4. There are also no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on the Site or within its immediate vicinity.¹⁷

3.7. Habitat designations¹⁸

3.7.1. There are no statutory designations such as Ramsar Sites, SPAs, SACs, SSSIs, National or Local Nature Reserves within the Study Area.¹⁹ However, large areas of Collingbourne Wood to the east and Brokenway Copse to the north of the Site are locally designated as County Wildlife Sites in the Local Plan Policies Map (Tidworth Community Area).

3.7.2. Large areas of Collingbourne Wood and Brokenway Copse are also designated as Ancient Woodland, and the majority of the surrounding woodland is also listed within the Priority Habitat Inventory as Deciduous Woodland, but none such designations are found on Site.²⁰

12 Refer to Section 5 below.
13 Some 2km+ away at its closest point. See: <https://wiltscouncil.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=74a353612a934bd48fee1f2bc564cdd8>.

14 Heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Designated Sites of Archaeological Importance, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields, and Registered Parks and Gardens; as well as any non-designated assets identified.
15 The nearest Listed Buildings to the Site being ‘Mount Orleans Farmhouse’ and a listed ‘Milestone 80 metres south of Cadley Road junction’, both of which fall just outside the ZVI of the proposals.
16 A couple of Scheduled Monuments lie within the Study Area (including a Bowl barrow on Wick Down), however none fall within the ZVI.
17 See: <https://wiltscouncil.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=74a353612a934bd48fee1f2bc564cdd8>
18 The assessment of effects on habitats and species falls outside the scope of this assessment. Details of habitat designations are referred to here for consideration of landscape value and contextual purposes only.
19 Salisbury Plain is designated as a SSSI, SPA and SAC (4.3km away at its closest point), but falls outside of the ZVI. See: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html?chosenLayers=lnrPIndex,lnrIndex,nnrPIndex,nnrIndex,ramPIndex,ramIndex,proposedRamsarP,proposedRamsar,sssiPIndex,sssiIndex,sssiPIndex,sssiIndex,sacPIndex,sacIndex,sacPossibleP,sacPossible,spaPIndex,spaIndex,spaPotentialP,spaPotential&box=421427:151383:432401:156462>
20 See: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html?chosenLayers=lnrPIndex,lnrIndex,nnrPIndex,nnrIndex,ramPIndex,ramIndex,proposedRamsarP,proposedRamsar,sssiPIndex,sssiIndex,sssiPIndex,sssiIndex,sacPIndex,sacIndex,sacPossibleP,sacPossible,spaPIndex,spaIndex,spaPotentialP,spaPotential,ancwoodIndex,ancwoodrevIndex,bapdeclIndex,orchardIndex&box=423395:152941:429979:155988>

4 BASELINE STUDY - THE VISUAL BASELINE

4.1. Introduction

- 4.1.1. The visual baseline sets out all areas of the surrounding countryside from where the proposed development may be seen and establishes the types of receptor found in each location.
- 4.1.2. As set out in the Methodology in Appendix B, it is established through desk top study and extensive fieldwork and determines the estimated Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) presented in Figure 2.²¹ Within the area identified it is estimated that views of the proposed development may be possible from ground level or within buildings.
- 4.1.3. Representative photographs and viewpoint commentaries are presented in Section 8 of this Appraisal. Higher quality photographs are also presented separately in Appendix D to allow easy digital scaling and viewing of viewpoints.

4.2. The estimated Zone of Visual Influence

- 4.2.1. In the case of this development, due largely to the nature of surrounding topography, built form and vegetation, the Zone of Visual Influence of the development proposals is contained within an area of the surrounding countryside located within approximately 1.95km of the centre of the Site (refer to Figure 2):

Views from the north:

- From the north views are restricted by the nature of the topography and by the built form of the surrounding farm/ equestrian yards. There are views into the Site from the Byway (CDUC 31) which runs along its northern boundary, although these are heavily filtered by the vegetation along the boundary (Viewpoint 2); and from parts of the yards to the north, although these would be quickly contained by the built form and vegetation coupled with the falling topography.
- There would be no views from the Footpaths to the north of the Stud Farm (CDUC 32 and CKIN 17) due to the topography and intervening built form (Viewpoint 4), and even where the ground begins to climb further north (Viewpoints 16 and 17), the Site remains hidden.

Views from the south:

- The majority of available views of the Site are from the south, where the nature of the topography and limited vegetation allows views from across the local valley (which cuts northeast - southwest through the immediate landscape just south of the Site).
- Close proximity views are largely contained to the surrounding private fields, however there may be glimpses of the rooftop of the dwelling from a very short section of Bridleway CDUC 33, although the track is bound by tall hedgerows (and woodland to the north) which truncate most views (Viewpoints 13 and 14).
- Views are also possible from the rising ground on the south side of the valley, which comprises mainly private land; however there would be some views from Bridleway CDUC 35 which runs along the edge of Collingbourne Wood (Viewpoint 7), from Byway CDUC 7 as it heads towards Cadley Road (Viewpoint 8), and from Footpath CDUC 14 as it heads from Wick Down towards Mount Orleans Farm (Viewpoints 9 and 10); however these would all be occasional distant glimpsed views through intervening vegetation, mainly lining the tracks themselves.
- Beyond this (to the south and southeast), views are contained by the higher ground around Wick Down and by Collingbourne Wood.
- Views from the southwest are restricted by the topography which falls towards Collingbourne Ducis and remains at lower levels (Viewpoint 12), coupled with a local ridge which runs north-south just to the west of Herridge Stud Farm. Whilst there are views of Herridge from Bridleway CDUC 13 just east of Collingbourne, the Site is hidden behind higher ground and intervening vegetation (Viewpoint 11).

Views from the east:

- Views from the east are similarly restricted by the falling topography and the vegetation within the valley bottom and following the Byway (CDUC 31). There are glimpsed views from a short length of the Byway (Viewpoint 3) before being truncated by topography and vegetation, and even where the land begins to climb again further east (Viewpoint 5), the valley bottom vegetation restricts views.
- To the southeast views are contained to the private land immediately surrounding the Site, and to a patch on the other side of the valley (as described above), before other vegetation within the fields restricts views (Viewpoint 6).

Views from the west:

- Similarly, views from the west are contained by topography (the local ridge which runs north-south just to the west of Herridge), vegetation and built form to views from the neighbouring property, 'Herridge House', a short length of Byway CDUC 31 (Viewpoint 1), and the adjacent private land.
- There are no views possible from the western section of CDUC 31 or from Brunton Road (Viewpoint 15) due to the topography which falls towards Collingbourne Ducis.

- 4.2.2. More distant views (beyond approximately 1.95km) are prevented by a combination of topography and vegetation.

4.3. Visual receptors

- 4.3.1. Bearing in mind the extent of the Zone of Visual Influence around the Site, potential visual receptors within the public domain are limited to people found in the following locations:
 - People using Byway CDUC 31 as it passes the Site.
 - People using a short section of Bridleway CDUC 35 to the east / southeast of the Site.
 - People using a very short section of Bridleway CDUC 33 (Cadley Road) to the south of the Site.
 - People using Byway CDUC 7 to the south of the Site.
 - People using Footpath CDUC 14 to the south of the Site.
 - People using Bridleway CDUC 13 to the southwest of the Site.
 - People using Footpath CDUC 32 to the north of the Site.
 - People using Footpath CKIN 17 to the north of the Site.
 - People using Bridleway CKIN 18A to the north of the Site.
 - People using Brunton Road to the west / southwest of the Site.
 - People using Cadley Road to the southwest of the Site.
- 4.3.2. From the private domain, receptors include:
 - People within Herridge House to the west of the Site.
 - People within the farmyard / buildings to the north of the Site.
 - People within Mount Orleans Farm to the southwest of the Site.
- 4.3.3. There are no views from any community facilities, and the majority of the ZVI consists of agricultural fields where there is no public access.

21 Which in turn determines the detailed Study Area upon which the rest of the Appraisal is based.

FIG. 2 - THE ESTIMATED ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE

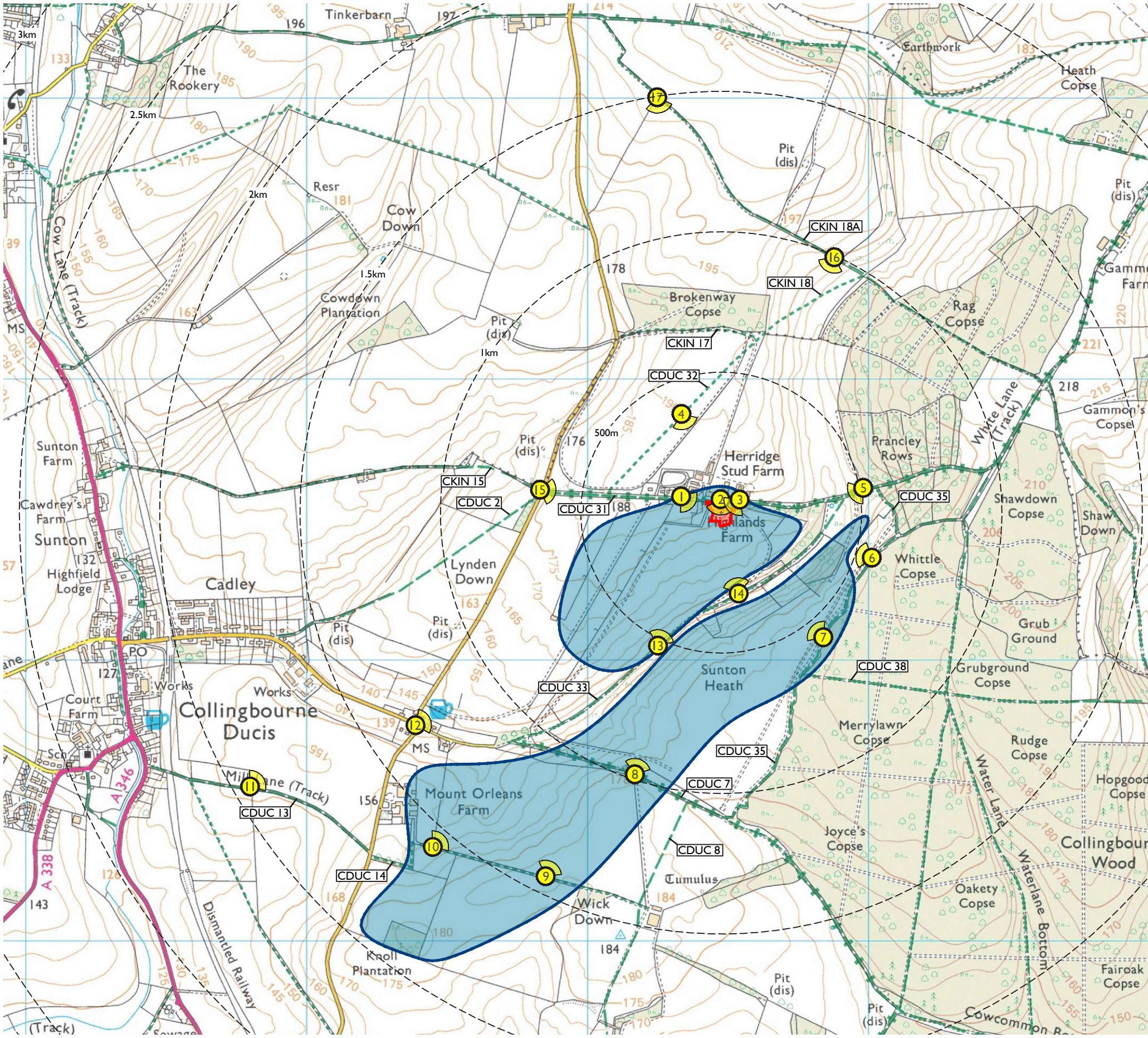
KEY:

The Application Site

Estimated Zone of Visual Influence

Public Viewpoint Location

Public Right of Way reference number



NORTH

0 200m 500m 1km

Metres Scale 1:15,000

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5 BASELINE STUDY - THE ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. The environmental baseline is a record of the state of key constituent elements of the landscape within the Study Area. It includes a brief description of the Site and records the existing landscape condition within the Study Area, considering some 20 key characteristics under three broad headings; ‘Physical Influences’, ‘Influences of Human Activity’, and ‘Aesthetic and Perceptual Factors’.
- 5.1.2. The environmental baseline has been based on both desktop research and field survey work, and includes reference to the following published Landscape Character Assessments, from which key characteristics of the landscape relevant to the Study Area have been drawn out:
- National Character Area Profile 130. Hampshire Downs (Natural England, 2014); and National Character Area Profile 132. Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs (Natural England, 2015).
 - ‘Kennet Landscape Assessment’ (June 2001);²²
 - ‘Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment’ (Land Use Consultants, December 2005); and
 - North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment draft report (Land Use Consultants, July 2025). Within this document the Site lies within Landscape Character Type 2 ‘Downland with Woodland’ and within Character Area 2E: ‘Chute Forest - Facombe Downs’ (which in this area is identical to Character Area 2B of the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment 2005). This is the most up-to-date character assessment for the area and has been the key reference point used to inform the landscape baseline below. Extracts of this Character Type and Character Area are contained within Appendix G.

5.2. Site description

- 5.2.1. The Site consists of the residential dwelling of Highlands Farm and its associated residential curtilage, extending to an area of approximately 0.48ha. It is set within a wider parcel of land of c.1.47ha which includes a couple of horse paddocks on either side of the property’s garden, with further larger paddocks found to the east and south. The main equestrian yard (known as ‘Herridge Stud Farm’) lies to the north / northwest of the Site, comprising a series of barns and stable blocks, with further paddocks and gallops found beyond. A large property named Herridge House neighbours the Site to the west, with further properties found to the northwest of the Stud.
- 5.2.2. The Site is accessed from a Byway Open to All Traffic that runs through the wider Stud (reference CDUC 31), connecting Brunton Road to the west to Collingbourne Wood and ultimately to the Chute Causeway at a point some 2.6km to the northeast of the Site. A gravel drive connects to the Byway in the northwestern corner of the Site, with a turning area to the north of the dwelling.
- 5.2.3. The existing dwelling is two storey, brick built with a clay tile roof, built in the 1980s. It is broadly rectangular with a 1.5 storey extension to the east, located centrally within the Site.
- 5.2.4. The Site is compartmentalised by a series of tall native hedgerows which divide the paddocks and the gardens, and is surrounded by hedgerows and tree lines on all boundaries, apart from a gap along the southern boundary of the garden where there is a ha-ha.

5.3. Existing landscape condition

- 5.3.1. In terms of **physical influences**, this is a landscape of chalk downland and undulating valleys associated with the dip-slope of the chalk escarpment to the north (Fairmile Down), with the River Bourne valley cutting through to the west (at Collingbourne). Bedrock **geology** consists of the Seaford Chalk Formation, with the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation in the valley immediately to the east of the Site and on the rolling hilltops to the north and northwest of the Site; and the area is overlain with superficial geology consisting of areas of ‘Clay with Flints

Formation’ on the hill tops, with areas of ‘Head’ deposits (clay, silt, sand and gravel) found on the lower dip-slopes (including below part of the Site) and in the wet and dry valley bottoms.²³

- 5.3.2. **Soils** reflect the underlying geology, and consist of freely draining ‘shallow lime-rich soils over chalk or limestone’ over much of the wider area; but below the Site and on a significant area to the east and southeast they consist of ‘freely draining slightly acid loamy soils’; and an area of ‘slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage’ is also found below the west side of Collingbourne Wood.²⁴
- 5.3.3. As noted above, the **topography** of area is dominated by the rolling hills associated with the dip-slope of the escarpment to the north, and the River Bourne valley. Within this context the Site itself is located at around 180m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) on the southeast facing slopes of a gentle ridge that climbs to the north-northwest towards the escarpment of Fairmile Down (c.220m AOD), and falls to the southwest towards the village of Collingbourne Ducis (c.130m AOD). To the east of the Site the landscape falls into a localised dry valley, before climbing towards Collingbourne Wood which covers the east side of the valley (around ‘Prancley Rows’ and ‘Rag Copse’), and the adjacent sub-ridges (which climb to the north towards Tidcombe Down).
- 5.3.4. Ground levels on the Site itself fall some 8m from a level of 184m AOD in the northwestern corner to 176m AOD in the southeastern-most corner.
- 5.3.5. **Drainage** in the area is defined by the underlying chalk geology, and by the River Bourne which runs through the Collingbourne valley (west of the Site) from south of Burbage (in the vale of Pewsey to the north) towards Salisbury and the River Avon to the southwest.²⁵ A small pond is shown on Ordnance Survey maps at the bottom of the adjacent dry valley (east of the Site), but no water bodies or other drainage features are found on Site or in the immediately surrounding landscape.
- 5.3.6. In terms of **vegetation** this is a landscape characterised by arable farmland, with some small woodland blocks on the surrounding hills, and the significant wooded area of ‘Collingbourne Wood’ to the east, the majority of which is designated as Ancient Woodland.²⁶ Paddocks and gallops with some dividing hedgerows associated with Herridge Stud surround the Site itself; and hedgerows (often with trees) bound the majority of the local lanes and other Public Rights of Way; but in the wider landscape to the north and west field sizes are large and hedgerows are managed or often missing entirely.
- 5.3.7. In terms of **influences of human activity** this is an agricultural landscape which away from the Collingbourne valley (west of the Site) is sparsely settled.
- 5.3.8. **Land use** in the area surrounding the Site is agricultural and largely arable, although as noted above there is some pasture associated with the Stud itself; and to the east there is significant woodland (Collingbourne Wood).
- 5.3.9. The **landscape pattern** of the area is characterised by medium to large arable fields (with generally regular boundaries and occasional field corner copses) found across the surrounding chalk landscape; with the large area of woodland associated with Collingbourne Wood to the east; and small areas of pasture and some hay meadows (within the gallops) associated with the paddocks found around the Stud.
- 5.3.10. **Settlement pattern** in the wider area is characterised by the military towns of Ludgershall and Tidworth to the south and southwest respectively; and by the chain of linear (predominately residential) villages found along the Collingbourne valley to the west of the Site;²⁷ but the hills around the Site are sparsely settled, with only occasional

22 Referred to as the ‘East Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment’ on Wiltshire Council’s website.

23 See: https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/?_ga=2.269051377.1243879132.1679561665-301710316.1679561665

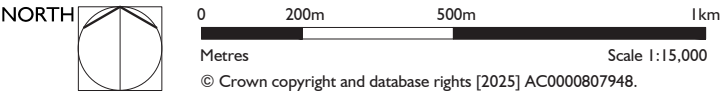
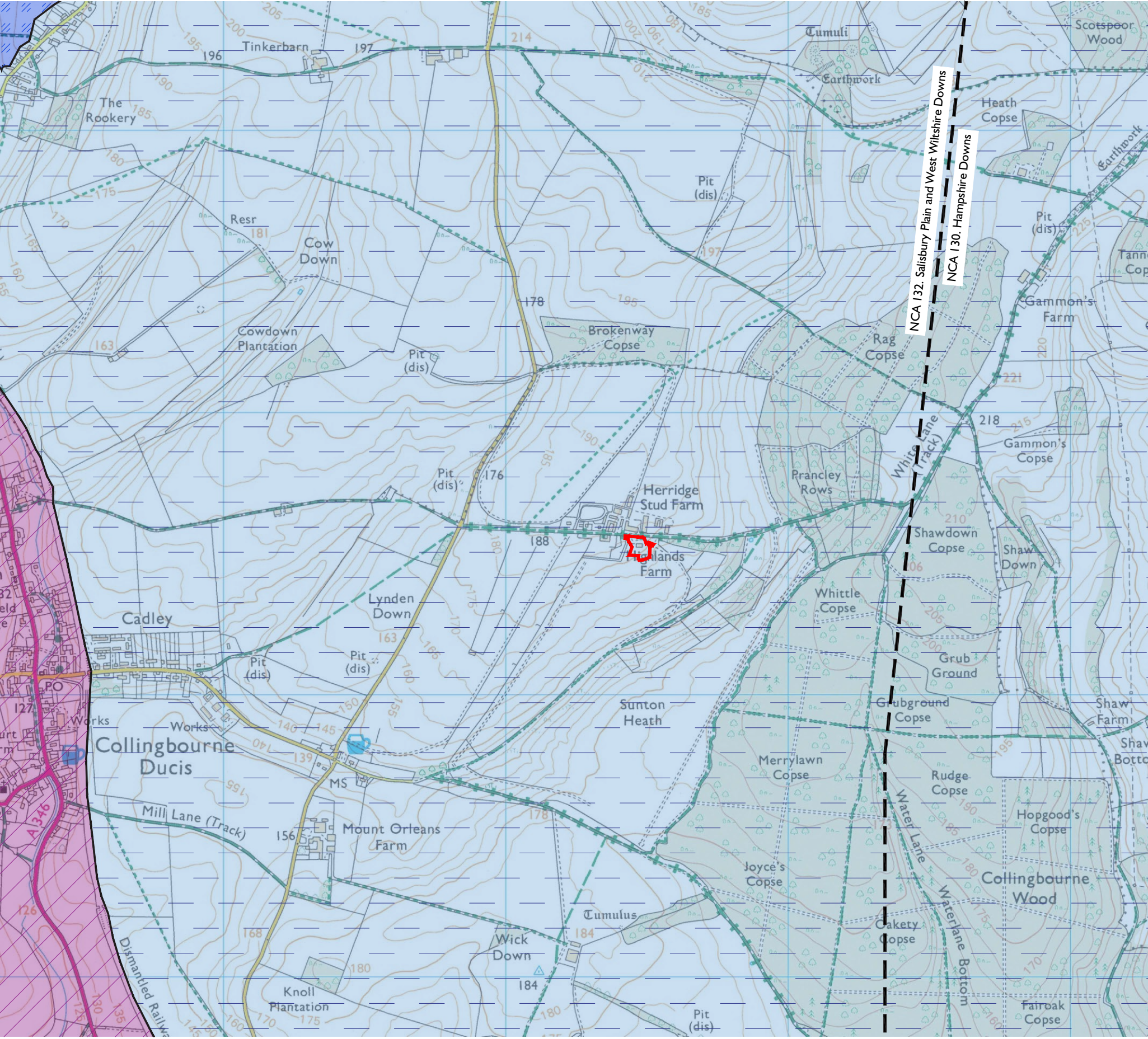
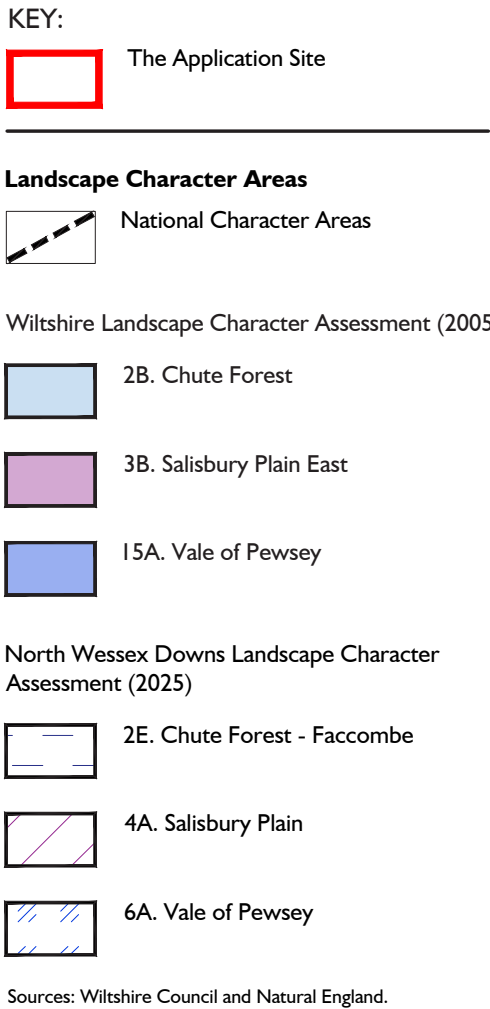
24 See: <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>

25 There are two Bourne valleys in the Character Area, the minor river the west of the Site adjacent to Salisbury Plain (which is referenced above); and a more prominent river valley some 11km to the east of the Site which contains the ‘Bourne Rivulet’ (which runs from Hurstbourne Tarrant to Hurstbourne Priors where it connects to the River Test).

26 See: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.html?chosenLayers=ancwoodIndex&basemapSet=OSGreyVector&box=420531:151910:431404:156989>

27 Including both Collingbourne Ducis and Collingbourne Kingston (which itself includes the hamlets of Aughton and Brunton at its northern end and Sunton to the south).

FIG. 3 - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS



farms (such as Herridge / Highlands Farm where the Site is located) and barns found on the surrounding hills.

- 5.3.11. Access / movement through this landscape is characterised by the A338 running along the Collingbourne valley; by the 'Fair Mile' / Brunton Road (a minor road which connects the A338 northwest of Marten (north of the Site in the Vale of Pewsey) to the A346 just south of Collingbourne Ducis, passing to the west of the Site across the upper downland); and by an extensive network of Footpaths, Byways and Bridleways which connect the Collingbourne valley to the landscape around Collingbourne Wood to the east.
- 5.3.12. There is no public access through the Site itself (as determined by the planning red line), and no National Trails or Long Distance Paths pass through this landscape; but a Byway Open to All Traffic (Reference CDUC 31) passes immediately north of the Site through the wider Stud, a Bridleway (Reference CDUC 33) runs along the valley bottom to the south / southeast; and several other Bridleways, Byways and Footpaths connect Collingbourne Ducis and the 'Fair Mile' / Brunton Road to the woods to the east (refer to Figure 2 on page 12).
- 5.3.13. As set out above the Site itself is accessed directly from the Byway that runs through the Stud (reference CDUC 31), connecting Brunton Road to Collingbourne Wood and ultimately to the Chute Causeway at a point some 2.6km to the northeast of the Site.
- 5.3.14. There are no heritage assets on or close to the Site, and whilst Conservation Areas are found in Collingbourne Ducis, Collingbourne Kingston and Brunton to the west and northwest of the Site, none fall within (or close to) the estimated Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals. The nearest Listed Buildings to the Site are 'Mount Orleans Farmhouse' and a listed 'Milestone 80 metres south of Cadley Road junction' (some 1.5km and 1.3km to the southwest respectively), however both fall just outside the ZVI of the proposals.
- 5.3.15. Similarly, as noted in Section 3 above, there are no World Heritage Sites, Registered Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens, or Scheduled Monuments near the Site.²⁸
- 5.3.16. Built form on the Site consists of the existing brick built farmhouse and a couple of sheds / old stable buildings. Around the Site built form within the wider farm / Stud includes a variety of barns and stable buildings and a few properties to the north of Byway, as well as a further dwelling to the south of the Bridleway (west of the Site).
- 5.3.17. Architectural styles within the Stud vary from a few large two storey brick and flint properties and traditional brick and flint barns and stable buildings; to less remarkable brick stables and a significant number of modern equestrian buildings / barns built of concrete blocks and sheet clad materials.
- 5.3.18. Within the wider landscape buildings are of different ages and styles but are generally of two-storey construction. Vernacular buildings in the nearby settlements are predominately of brick and flint roofed with clay tiles, although harder chalk was sometimes used in walls and several are lime-washed. Lots of older buildings retain timber framing and chalk cob, and thatched roofs are very common.
- 5.3.19. Lighting within the landscape is limited to the villages and occasional farmsteads (and lights from cars using the surrounding road network), and locally to the Site there is little skyglow (although this is very dependant on weather and in certain conditions skyglow from both Ludgershall and Tidworth is likely to be discernible).
- 5.3.20. Whilst the area is not an International Dark Sky Park or Reserve,²⁹ it falls within some of the darkest skies as recorded on the CPRE nightblight website,³⁰ and sits within area 'E0 - Dark Sky Zone' (with the darkest skies) in the AONB's guide to good external lighting.³¹

- 5.3.21. In terms of cultural associations (in art, literature, music, film etc), there are numerous associations with the North Wessex Downs National Landscape in both art and literature, although there are limited associations with the Collingbourne valley and none appear to be directly associated with the Site.
- 5.3.22. In terms of **aesthetic and perceptual factors**, landscape scale is moderate to large; and tranquillity (both aural and visual) is reasonably high (particularly on the downland and away from the line of the A338); and the landscape has a peaceful, secluded quality.³²
- 5.3.23. Similarly, complexity on the surrounding downland is low (consisting largely of arable fields with occasional intervening hedgerows and with the large area of woodland to the east); but increases slightly within the Collingbourne valley where the A338 and associated villages are found; and increases locally around the Site where the buildings and infrastructure and paddocks associated with the Stud are found within the otherwise agricultural landscape.
- 5.3.24. In the wider landscape, the general lack of intervening vegetation means that there are expansive, open views across the higher downland landscape from the roads (such as the 'Fair Mile' to the north-northwest) and Public Rights of Way crossing this elevated landscape; and there are also extensive views north over the Vale of Pewsey from the tops of the downland scarp slopes to the north. From the Site itself, however, there are localised views across the valley to the south, southeast and southwest, but longer views are restricted by the surrounding topography and the woodlands to the east.
- 5.3.25. Enclosure / openness therefore varies between the open hilltops and higher valley sides; and the more enclosed nature of the valley bottoms and well-vegetated PRow. As quoted from the North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment: *"the diverse landscape pattern creates experiences ranging from intimate and enclosed to dramatic and open depending on the particular combination of landform and land cover."*³³
- 5.3.26. Finally, the Site and surrounding landscape is not wild or truly remote,³⁴ although there is a sense of relative remoteness and seclusion in the area as a consequence of the lack of settlement and the undulating nature of the landscape (with the majority of settlement hidden within the Collingbourne valley to the west of the Site). However, the network of lanes and Public Rights of Way and the dominating agricultural land use are a constant reminder that this is a settled landscape which has formed as a result of centuries of human intervention.
- 5.3.27. Overall, this is a strongly rural undulating landscape, with a strong sense of place that is heavily influenced by the underlying chalk geology and associated topography, and by its extensive agricultural nature and vegetative pattern.

5.4. **Identified strategies / guidelines / sensitivities**

- 5.4.1. The draft North Wessex Downs Landscape Character Assessment (2025) identifies 'Forces for change' and 'Landscape Guidelines' for each Landscape Character Type and each Landscape Character Area.³⁵
- 5.4.2. 'Key Characteristics' of the LC2 Wooded Downland Landscape Character Type are given on page 139 to 140 of the Landscape Character Assessment.
- 5.4.3. In addition (although not all are relevant to the landscape around the Site), the 'Forces For Change' for the Landscape Character Type are given on pages 140 to 142 of the Landscape Character Assessment as follows:

- "The following are identified as forces for change common to the Downland with Woodland as a whole:*
- Decrease in livestock so that some marginal areas of pasture may no longer be grazed leading to alternative uses e.g. as horse paddocks/training gallops or neglect/scrub encroachment.*

28 The closest Scheduled Monument is a Bowl Barrow on Wick Down, some 1.2km to the south of the Site and falls outside the estimated Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals.

29 See: <https://www.darksky.org/our-work/conservation/idsf/finder/>

30 See: <https://www.cpre.org.uk/light-pollution-dark-skies-map/>

31 Dark Skies of the North Wessex Downs - A Guide to Good External Lighting. See: https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Lighting_Guide_07-05_MEDRES.pdf

32 Refer to glossary for definition of tranquillity.

33 Page 188, paragraph 5.209 of LCA 2E: Chute Forest - Facombe Downs.

34 Refer to glossary for definitions.

35 Copies are contained within Appendix G.

- Lack of appropriate management for woodlands, particularly ancient and semi-natural woodlands formerly managed by coppicing and as areas of wood pasture.
- Loss of hedgerow boundaries and poor management of remaining hedgerows, including hedgerow trees.
- The increased popularity in field sports, especially of shooting, impacts the management of both small-scale woodland and of nearby arable fields. This includes the planting of large blocks of maize as a cover crop to feed the young birds, complimenting grant-aided conservation plots such as wild bird seed mixes. The incremental associated infrastructure including platforms for shooting and pens for birds can have an impact on landscape character.
- An increase in visually intrusive larger agricultural barns disturbs the open horizon and interrupts the sinuosity of the smooth downland landscape.
- Development pressures within settlements both within the Downland with Woodlands and in adjacent landscapes may alter the landscape character, including the expansive skyline and panoramic views.
- Development in the setting to the National Landscape including large-scale and /or tall development on the edges of Andover, Basingstoke, Newbury, and Reading. These affect panoramic views from the downland and its wider setting, as well as the sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Pressure for tall structures such as communications masts, transmitters and renewable energy developments (potentially wind turbines) that will be particularly intrusive on the strong sweeping skylines and could have a negative impact on the sense of remoteness.
- High traffic levels on the rural lane network impact on the rural character of the lanes, and make them less attractive for walking and riding. Cumulative impact of small-scale incremental change for road upgrades e.g. signage, fencing, kerbing of rural lanes on the remote qualities of the chalk upland landscape.
- The Downland with Woodland landscapes are susceptible to the impacts of climate change, including:
 - Changes in rainfall patterns including wetter winters and drier summers may lead to different types of crop being grown (e.g. maize, grape vines, soya), which would change the appearance of the landscape.
 - Wetter winters and increased flash flooding on the thin arable soils will cause erosion and impact the winter crop sowings and also decrease the water quality for livestock on the downs.
 - Hotter, drier conditions in the summer will put more pressure on water resources, which may result in a change in crops to less water-reliant plants, and to increase the heat stress of livestock.
 - Drier summers and wetter winters will cause increased tree mortality and die-back from drought and stress and waterlogging, affecting the distinctive pattern of woodlands.
 - Drier and hotter summers increase fire risk affecting grassland habitats and the recreational resource of the landscape.
 - Hotter temperatures may result in increased competition from invasive species and greater numbers of insect and mammal pests. This could impact the choice of crops grown, and the appearance of the landscape.
 - More extreme weather events leading to a greater risk of wind-throw and loss of mature trees, which could affect the ancient woodlands.
 - Deciduous woodlands are facing decline due to warmer winters, altered rainfall patterns, drier summers and increased frequency of extreme events. There may be a shift in vegetation type and composition, increased competition from invasive species, greater numbers of insect and mammal pests, a greater risk of infection by various soil and waterborne pathogens, and a greater risk of wind-throw and loss of mature trees. It could also lead to the die-back of certain hedgerow tree species, and increased storm activity may lead to the loss of mature and veteran trees within hedgerows."

5.4.4. The 'Landscape Guidance' for the Landscape Character Type is then given on pages 142 to 143 as follows:

"The following are identified as guidelines for protecting and enhancing valued characteristics of the Downland with Woodland, taking into consideration the forces for change which are affecting, or which are expected to affect, this landscape:

- Manage the small areas of distinctive chalk grassland to enhance their biodiversity value; ensure best practice management through suitable grazing regimes and avoiding agrochemical and fertiliser inputs.
- Consider opportunities to increase the area of chalk grassland through restoration around existing areas, extending and linking existing sites.
- Ensure that areas that might act as refugia from climate change (such as areas with north facing slopes, complex micro-topography and/or low nitrogen levels) are under optimal management.
- Focus on woodland areas that have been degraded to improve biodiversity and ecosystem health. Where appropriate, expand the extent of existing woodland through targeted restoration projects.
- Develop and implement woodland management plans that balance conservation and sustainable use by traditional practices including coppicing and selective thinning to maintain healthy woodlands.
- Carry out consistent management and restocking of hedgerows and nurture new hedgerow trees to maintain stock and enhance the historic hedgerow network. Where possible avoid replacing hedgerows with fencing.
- Consider the cumulative impact of incremental changes as a result of field sports and bird shoots. Minimise the size and extent of these structures where possible, using the existing woodland as screening where possible.
- Retain the sparse settlement pattern. Consider the cumulative impact of incremental changes to the small villages through extensions, which may change the character of the settlements.
- Conserve the rural roads and lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features, using local styles and materials. Ensure any road lighting schemes retain the experience of dark night skies within the wooded downland.
- Conserve the expansive open views from higher ground. Consider the impact of any tall structures on views from within this landscape, and in views from outside the landscape.
- Protect the tranquil character of the wooded downland. Consider the siting and colours used for any new agricultural barns or equestrian development so they do not disturb the open horizon and sinuosity of the smooth downland landscape as little as possible.
- Conserve the dark skies and minimise lighting with new lighting only introduced where necessary. Consider the impact of lighting on night-time views from lower ground as well as within the locality."

5.4.5. The 'Valued qualities'; and 'Local forces for Change / issues' for Landscape Character Area '2E Chute Forest - Facombe Downs' are then given on pages 189 to 190 as follows:

"The **key valued qualities** identified for LCA 2E Chute Forest - Facombe Downs are: [bold emphasis added]

- Dramatic landform of rolling hills, scarps, combs and dry valleys creates a distinctive sense of place.
- Woodland coverage including sinuous wooded hangers on coombe slopes, ancient and semi-natural woodlands.
- Remnants of unimproved chalk grassland are nationally important, as demonstrated by the SSSI designations of Hogs Hole and Rushmore and Conholt Downs.
- Strong sense of time-depth from prehistoric earthworks including Neolithic long barrows and Iron Age hill fort at Fosbury, along with historic field pattern with evidence of assarting, and large manors with associated parks, including Grade II Registered Biddesden House.
- Intricate network of winding rural lanes, with characteristic sunken lanes overhung by deep grass banks and trees creates an enclosed, tranquil character.

- Peaceful, unspoilt and tranquil landscape with long-reaching views from the higher ground towards wooded horizons and skylines.

In addition to the forces for change at LCT level, **local forces for change and issues** affecting LCA 2E Chute Forest - Facombe Downs are: [bold emphasis added]

- Lack of appropriate management for the extensive woodland cover of the ancient and semi natural woodlands of Chute Forest.
- An existing single wind turbine has recently gained permission to be extended in height. This may create pressure for new, taller wind turbines and other large infrastructure which could be very visible within this landscape.

5.4.6. Finally, the ‘Strategy and Local Guidelines’ for Landscape Character Area ‘2E Chute Forest - Facombe Downs’ is set out on page 190 as follows:

“In addition to the guidelines set out for the Downland with Woodland LCT, the following guidelines are of particular relevance to the Chute Forest - Facombe Downs:

- Develop and implement woodland management plans for Chute Forest that balance conservation and sustainable use by traditional practices including coppicing and selective thinning to maintain healthy woodlands. Where appropriate, consider new planting to link woodland areas, and convert conifer plantations to appropriate native deciduous woodlands.*
- Carefully consider future applications for tall infrastructure including wind turbines within this landscape, and applications in adjacent landscapes which would be intrusive.”*

5.5. Landscape function, condition and scenic quality

- 5.5.1. In terms of function this is an agricultural landscape which functions as part of the River Avon catchment³⁶ (with the catchment of the River Test lying just to the southeast);³⁷ and it is a landscape which has particular value in terms of its function as part of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.
- 5.5.2. The recreational function of the landscape is high; the landscape generally is in good physical condition with few detractors / incongruous features; and scenic quality is high with long views from higher ground or where vegetation allows within the more intimate valleys.

5.6. Overall landscape sensitivity

- 5.6.1. Bearing in mind all of the above, in accordance with Tables A2 and A3 of the methodology in Appendix A, the Site and Study Area are judged to be in a landscape of **high value** with a **medium susceptibility to change** of the nature proposed, resulting in **MEDIUM-HIGH SENSITIVITY**.
- 5.6.2. The landscape is one that is designated for the protection of the beauty of the countryside, but the proposal is for a replacement dwelling on a site containing existing built form, and the landscape has moderate ability to accommodate the nature of the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. The predicted levels of effect described later in this report are therefore based on this level of sensitivity.

Value: High Susceptibility to change: Medium = SENSITIVITY OF RECEPTOR: MEDIUM-HIGH

36 See: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB108043022390>
37 See: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB107042022810>

6 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.1. Introduction

- 6.1.1. As set out in paragraph 1.1.2 above, this Appraisal forms part of the documentation associated with a Detailed Planning Application. Full details have therefore been submitted with the application, but have been summarised below for convenience.
- 6.1.2. It should be noted, however, that the design has evolved through an iterative process in which decisions on location, size / form, materials and the surrounding planting proposals have all responded to the initial site analysis. “Mitigation” is an integral part of the design and is not identified separately below.

6.2. Description of the proposed development

- 6.2.1. Figure 4 shows the proposed dwelling within its immediate landscape context, with the location of the existing dwelling indicated by a thin dashed red line. For the full drawing refer to drawing 1283-MP-01, a copy of which is included within the submission documents.
- 6.2.2. Key elements of the proposals are as follows:
- i. The proposed dwelling is located in the centre of the Site, a few metres south of the location of the existing property. It would be oriented south-southeast to take advantage of the views across the valley.
 - ii. The proposed building is traditional in character and consists of a main house which is two storeys in height (9.65m from FFL to ridge level),³⁸ with a single storey ‘orangery’ to the west. The main house would be brick and flint under a plain clay tile roof, with brick to the front of the ‘orangery’ with stone string and coping, and stonework to the rear with a flat roof. Symmetrical sash windows with brick arches would characterise the facades of the main dwelling, with a series of doors along the ground floor for access onto the patio / gardens. A portico would frame the front door to the north of the building, and a balcony would be provided at the rear (south) for the principal bedroom. The ground floor of the house is set at a Finished Floor Level (FFL) of 179.42m AOD, and two chimneys are proposed at roof level of the main house. No dormer windows or rooflights are proposed.
 - iii. Access is proposed from the existing drive at the northwestern corner of the Site, with the driveway sweeping further south into a parking area at the front (north side) of the proposed dwelling. The existing track which heads east would also be surfaced with gravel as a secondary access into the Site (meeting the track to the east which is under the same ownership and serves as access to the surrounding paddocks).
 - iv. All of the existing vegetation around the Site would be retained, with the exception of a stretch of hedgerow internal to the Site which would need to be removed to allow for the positioning of the new dwelling, and a couple of trees which would need to be removed for the new driveway. The hedgerow would be replaced by two new sections which would open-up the gardens of the property, whilst retaining the two eastern and southwestern fields as paddocks; and several new trees would be planted within the gardens. An informal orchard would also be created within the smaller field parcel to the west.
 - v. The existing ha-ha to the south of the garden would be retained, with meadow / areas of longer grass featuring around the edges of the garden and to the north of the driveway for added biodiversity benefit.
 - vi. No external up-lighting is proposed within the gardens or parking area; and any external lighting on the building or within the parking area will be dark skies and wildlife friendly, shielded with appropriate cowls and deflectors, and will be specified and positioned in accordance with the National Landscape’s published guidance.

- vii. In terms of proposed planting:
- All trees on the Site are to be retained with the exception of a couple of large shrubs / trees to the northeast of the proposed dwelling and a Hawthorn to the northwest which would be lost to the new driveway.
 - As above, a length of hedgerow would also be removed to the west of the property, to allow for the reorientation of the proposed dwelling and its positioning further down the slope. This would be replaced by two new lengths of mixed native hedgerow which would define the paddock to the southwest, and the new informal orchard to the west. All other hedgerows are to be retained and protected.
 - A number of Advanced Nursery Stock trees are proposed within the garden and surrounding paddocks to enhance the setting of the house, including fruit trees within a proposed informal orchard to the west of the house.
 - The edges of the garden, the area to the north of the driveway, and the orchard would be left to meadow / longer grass for biodiversity benefit.
- viii. Hard landscape materials would include natural stone paving slabs on the paths / patios, and buff coloured gravel in the parking area / driveway to the north of the building.

38 With the same AOD height as the existing dwelling (189.07m AOD).

FIG. 4 - LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

KEY

- Existing vegetation to be removed
- Existing vegetation to be retained
- Existing grassland to be retained
- Proposed tree planting
- Proposed hedge planting
- Lawn
- Meadow / areas of longer grass
- Proposed shrub planting around house
- Gravel driveway
- Proposed paved surface
- Building to be removed
- Existing ha-ha



NORTH

SCALE

0 5 10 20 25m