

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment



**Tyler
Grange**

**Land at Gate Farm, High Street,
Sutton Benger
10th December 2025**

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Summary

- S.1. This document accompanies an outline planning application (with all matters reserved except means of access) for up to 90 no. (class C3) residential dwellings (including 40% affordable dwellings) including the creation of new vehicular access from the B4069, pedestrian and cycle paths, parking spaces, public open space, biodiversity enhancement, landscape planting, surface water attenuation, associated infrastructure and other associated works.
- S.2. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) reports the likely effects of the Proposed Development in terms of landscape and views in the context of the Site and surrounding area. In particular, it considers the likely effects on the character and features of the landscape; and on people's views and visual amenity within the 2km Study Area, in accordance with published guidelines. The extent of these effects should be considered within the local context and the proposals degree of conformance with their surroundings. In addition, the effects need to be put in the planning balance with all other economic, social and environmental effects of the development.
- S.3. The Site is not the subject of any statutory landscape designation. This indicates that it is not part of a valued landscape as per paragraph 187 of the NPPF. This LVIA also finds that the Site is not considered 'valued' as per the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02/21 analysis.
- S.4. Having considered the elements related to the landscape character of the Site, the effect of the Proposed Development on Landscape Character Area 8 Hullavington Rolling Lowland within the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment is Moderate/Minor Adverse at Year 1, reducing to Minor Adverse at Year 15. There is a Moderate/Major Adverse effect on the site-specific landscape elements and features at Year 1, reducing to Moderate Adverse by Year 15.
- S.5. In terms of visual effects, the greatest effect is afforded to pedestrians and motorists on High Street. These people will experience a Moderate Adverse effect at Year 1, reducing to Moderate/Minor Adverse by Year 15. The remaining receptors will experience no higher than Moderate/Minor Adverse visual effects at Year 1, with these effects reducing by Year 15 as planting matures and the proposed development is assimilated within the landscape.
- S.6. Views from private residential dwellings have not been tested in the field and therefore this LVIA has provided a commentary on the predicted magnitude of change as a result of the Proposed Development. The greatest change is expected to be afforded to the dwellings near the southern and eastern boundaries of the Site. No more than a Moderate change at Year 1 is expected for these residential receptors.
- S.7. This LVIA therefore finds that the Proposed Development is of a size and scale that would result in limited effects upon the landscape character and visual context of the area. The proposals are also considered to be in accordance with relevant landscape policy.



Section 1: Introduction

Background

- 1.1. Tyler Grange Group Limited (TG) has been appointed by Gleeson Land Limited to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to accompany an outline planning application for the residential development of Land at Gate Farm, High Street, Sutton Benger. The area within the application boundary (as illustrated on **Plan 1: Site and Local Context**) is referred to as 'the Site' within this report. The Site is located within the administrative area of Wiltshire Council (WC).
- 1.2. The proposal seeks outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except means of access) for up to 90 no. (class C3) residential dwellings (including 40% affordable dwellings) including the creation of new vehicular access from the B4069, pedestrian and cycle paths, parking spaces, public open space, biodiversity enhancement, landscape planting, surface water attenuation, associated infrastructure and other associated works.
- 1.3. This is referred to as the 'Proposed Development' within this LVIA, the layout of which is illustrated at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4. This is a standalone report and does not constitute a landscape chapter in the context of an Environmental Statement required by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. The approach taken in the preparation of this report is considered to be appropriate and proportional in the context of the professional guidance published by the Landscape Institute.
- 1.5. The assessment contained within this report has been prepared by an Associate Member of the Landscape Institute and reviewed by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).
- 1.6. This LVIA is accompanied by illustrative plans and photographs, included at the rear of this report.

Site Context

- 1.7. The Site is located on the western edge of the village of Sutton Benger in Wiltshire. The location of the Site and its context is illustrated on **Plan 1: Site and Local Context**. The Site is comprised of one grass covered field. Hedgerow and fencing subdivides the Site from strips of off site land to the north and east. Overhead transmission lines cross the Site along a north/south alignment.
- 1.8. To the north is a retained strip of pasture land with an area of woodland known as The Shrubbery beyond, a watercourse identified as Sutton Benger Brook is present within the woodland. Some of the woodland is designated as an Ancient Woodland.
- 1.9. To the east of the Site is a retained strip of pasture land and the settlement of Sutton Benger. The settlement edge to the east is of a lower density than the main body of the settlement further east, The neighbouring built form is generally positioned within generous plots.
- 1.10. To the south of the Site is High Street. This is the main road through the settlement and traditionally the road has been the focus of the linear settlement pattern in the area. To the south of the road low density built form is present as the road moves west, away from Sutton Benger. Beyond the built form is a continuation of the agricultural fields present within the land around the settlement.



- 1.11. Beyond the western boundary is a continuation of the grass covered field character present within the Site. This continues on to the wider field network. Approximately 325m to the north west of the Site is the Grade II* listed Church of St James and this is set within the former Draycot Estate. Scattered development and roads are present amongst the field pattern.
- 1.12. Further information on the Site character and context is contained within **Section 3**.

Planning Policy

- 1.13. The planning policy framework for WC comprises:
- Saved Policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 (adopted 2006);
 - Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted 2015); and
 - Sutton Benger and Draycot Cerne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2035 (made March 2025).
- 1.14. Policies of relevance to landscape and visual matters have been included within **Appendix 2**. Where appropriate relevant policy has been included on **Plan 2: Landscape Planning Policy and Designations**.
- 1.15. In relation to Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), Guidance and Evidence Base the following are of relevance to the Site and nearby context:
- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted March 2024);
 - Wiltshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (adopted February 2022); and
 - Sutton Benger Parish Character Appraisal (December 2024) (Appendix 1 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan).
- 1.16. Information within the above that is of relevance to the Site and landscape and visual matters are included within **Appendix 2**.



Section 2: Methodology and Scope

- 2.1. To assist the reader in understanding the purpose for undertaking landscape assessment work, the definition of 'landscape' as defined by the European Landscape Convention (ELC, 2000) is set out below.

'Landscape' means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. This definition applies to all urban, peri-urban landscapes, towns, villages and rural areas. It applies to ordinary or degraded landscape as well as those that are outstanding or protected.

- 2.2. The methodology used to write this LVIA has been derived from the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's 'Guidelines for landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition¹ (GLVIA3). Chapter 1, the GLVIA states that landscape and visual assessment relates to:

'...the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity'

- 2.3. In the context of this definition, the assessment process seeks to consider the effects in an objective and systematic manner whilst recognising the perceptual and therefore subjective response to the landscape. Whilst subjectivity can never be removed from the assessment process by following a systematic and structured framework of assessment a more robust assessment can be applied and justified, and transparent conclusions drawn.

- 2.4. Furthermore, the LVIA process deals with the separate but interlinked issues of:

- Landscape Character: The effects of the Proposed Development upon discrete character areas and/or character types comprising features possessing a particular quality or merit; and
- Visual Context: The effects of the Proposed Development on views experienced by visual receptors, and upon amenity value of the views.

- 2.5. Landscape character is defined in the GLVIA3 as:

'A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse'

- 2.6. Changes to the landscape character can arise as a result of:

- Changes to the fabric of the landscape including either through the loss of key elements or the introduction of new features which alter the distinct character of the landscape; and
- Changes which alter the way in which the landscape is perceived or appreciated.

- 2.7. Changes to views will occur where there is:

- Alteration of the view in terms of elements present and the overall composition;

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition



- A change to the skyline; and/or
- There is a change to the distribution or dominance of features.

LVIA Methodology

- 2.8. For the purposes of this LVIA the area shown within 2km of the Site on **Plan 2** is referred to as the 'Study Area'.
- 2.9. The methodology and guidelines used in the preparation of this assessment are attached within **Appendix 3: Methodology**.

Scope of Assessment

Correspondence with WC

- 2.10. A landscape and visual scoping letter and proposed photoviewpoint plan was provided to WC with pre-application enquiry ENQ/2025/01561.



Section 3: Landscape Context

- 3.1. The nearby context and character of the Site is illustrated in **Plan 1** and is discussed below.

Designations

- 3.2. The Site does not lie within any statutory or local landscape designations. No qualitative landscape designations are present within the 2km Study Area as illustrated in **Plan 2**.
- 3.3. Whilst not specifically related to landscape or visual matters, other designations can indicate value within the landscape. The LI's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 builds on GLVIA3 and identifies a range of factors that can assist in the identification of valued aspects of the landscape such as landscape condition, perceptual (scenic quality), distinctiveness (rarity and representativeness), natural heritage (landscape features with ecological, geomorphological, or physiological interest), cultural heritage (archaeological, historical or cultural interest), associations (artists, writers, poets or historical events and traditions), and recreational value (publicly accessible via PRoW or Open Access Land). Value is considered further in Section 6 of this report.

Arboriculture Designations

- 3.4. The separate Arboricultural Impact Assessment undertaken by Tyler Grange (17958/R02) identifies and discusses arboricultural considerations within and around the Site. It is noted that no TPO are present within or on the boundary of the Site but an area of ancient woodland is present within 'The Shrubbery' woodland off site to the north.

Conservation Area

- 3.5. The Sutton Benger Conservation Area boundary is adjacent to the south east boundary of the Site. No Conservation Area Appraisal document has been produced that outlines important or key views to/from the area. Trees within the Conservation Area that abut the Site are afforded protection by the designation.

Land Use and Vegetation

- 3.6. The Site is comprised of one field defined by hedgerow, trees and fencing (refer to the accompanying Ecological Appraisal by EAD Ecology and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (17958/R02) for further information regarding habitat and vegetation condition). The Site has been subdivided from a slightly larger field and is rectilinear in shape, strips of land to the north and east of the Site have been retained off site and form undeveloped corridors that were formerly within the Draycot Estate parkland.
- 3.7. The northern boundary is formed by vegetation within The Shrubbery. Sutton Benger Brook is also present along a section of the northern boundary. The remaining boundaries are defined by a combination of hedgerow, trees and fencing. Beyond the boundary to the east is development within Sutton Benger while to the south is High Street with further dwellings present to the south of the road. Beyond the western boundary is a field network interspersed with scattered development and roads. The field the Site is located within is characteristic of the landscape use around the Sutton Benger settlement.



Access and Rights of Way

- 3.8. As illustrated by **Plan 1**, there are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) present within the Site. The nearest PRoW is the SBEN22 Bridleway that terminates at High Street to the south of the Site.
- 3.9. Other footpaths are present within the local area and these provide public access to the landscape around Sutton Benger.

Topography and Hydrology

- 3.10. The topography of the Study Area is illustrated on **Plan 3: Topographic Context**. The Site is relatively flat with a gentle sloping character from the higher ground within the south west (circa 69m AoD) to the lower ground in the north east corner of the Site (circa 60m AoD).
- 3.11. Sutton Benger Brook is a watercourse present to the north and passes along the north eastern edge of the Site. The watercourse flows west to east and feeds into the River Avon. A short distance to the north west of the Site the brook has been engineered to form a lake, this was a feature of the former Draycot Estate parkland.



Section 4: Landscape Baseline

- 4.1. The landscape and visual baseline describes the Site-specific landscape character and sets this in the context of the published landscape assessments. This forms the baseline against which the potential development implications are considered.
- 4.2. The characterisation process is a non-value judgement process; therefore, classifying landscapes into distinct areas does not suggest that one character type is more sensitive than another or valued by people more or less.
- 4.3. The landscape character appraisal process reviews the wider landscape character at a national level and explores more detailed character features at a district/local level and sets this in the context of the Site-specific land use that informs local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- 4.4. This appraisal considers the local, site-specific character features and context identified by TG through fieldwork and informed by a review of published assessments. This baseline information will help identify the relevant characteristics, important site features to retain and also detracting features that need to be addressed within the proposals.

Published Landscape Character Assessments

National Character

- 4.5. At the national level, the character of England has been described and classified in the National Character Area (NCA) profiles published by Natural England. The Site and study area is entirely located within NCA 117: Avon Vales. The NCA relates to a large geographical area that does not respond to the Site on a local site-specific level.
- 4.6. Whilst NCA descriptions are broadly representative of the Site's wider landscape context, they are often too generic to enable a reliable assessment in regard to the appropriateness of proposals in the landscape. The published key characteristics do note the presence of a network of small to medium sized arable and pasture fields bound predominantly by hedgerow. The stone-built centres to market towns reflect the former agricultural productivity and wealth of the area. It is often the case that more localised (county, district or borough) landscape character assessment provides a more accurate description of the local landscape with a finer grain of detail.

County Landscape Character

- 4.7. This section of the report considers the characteristics and features set out within the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005) which identifies and describes the features and characteristics of the landscape of Wiltshire. 16 Landscape Character Types (LCT) are identified within the study and these have been further broken down into a series of Landscape Character Areas (LCA).
- 4.8. The Site is identified as being within the 'Limestone Lowland' LCT² as illustrated on **Plan 4: Published Landscape Character**. The characteristics of this LCT are generally considered to be relevant to the Study Area and have been extracted and reproduced below for reference. Those of relevance to the Site and its surroundings are underlined:

² [Microsoft Word - Final Report January 2006.doc](#)



- Gently undulating lowland farmland over underlying geology of predominantly mudstone and limestone with some pockets of clay;
- A peaceful and rural landscape with subtle variations in character relating to the varied geology, topography and water courses;
- Mix of permanent pasture and arable farmland;
- Strong network of hedgerows with hedgerow trees;
- Dry stone wall field boundaries in some areas and around settlements;
- Field pattern predominantly large geometric field typical of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure with small scale irregular fields of medieval pattern close to settlement;
- More open areas of higher ground to the west offer panoramic views of the type, elsewhere occasional woodland blocks, copses and frequent hedgerow trees give a greater sense of enclosure, with intermittent views;
- Numerous rivers forming shallow valleys, with the watercourses sometimes lined with willows;
- Settlements in the form of historic market towns, villages and scattered farmsteads distributed throughout the type linked by network of rural roads;
- Traditional buildings of local limestone buildings an outstanding feature; and
- Presence of historic parkland and estates marked by stone estate walls, grand entrances and parkland trees and avenues.

4.9. LCT 16 only has one LCA. Therefore the key characteristics for LCA 16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands are the same.

4.10. The findings of this assessment provide an initial description and classification of the Wiltshire landscape at the county level.

District Landscape Character

4.11. At the former district level, the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2004)³ provides an analysis of landscape character within the former North Wiltshire administrative area. This assessment sets out a number of Landscape Character Type (LCT) which are further subdivided into LCAs. The Site is located within LCT: Lowland Limestone (Forest Marble) Farmland and LCA 8: Hullavington Rolling Lowland, as illustrated on **Plan 4**.

4.12. The LCT is briefly described within the assessment as ‘*gently undulating lowland farmland underlain by limestone. Open landscape with broad low hills and shallow river valleys. Limestone wall boundaries in places and stone built settlements*’.

4.13. The main characteristics of LCA 8 are set out below, with those of relevance to the Site and surroundings underlined:

- Rolling or lowland hills between 60-120m AOD, on Forest Marble limestone, Oxford Clay and Cornbrash;

³ [Avon Valley](#)



- Patchwork of irregular, medium sized fields, mainly pasture, and larger more recent enclosures used for arable, especially on the richer soils;
- Continuous hedges with many mature oaks;
- Medium sized woodlands and deciduous copses;
- Fine stone villages with muted colours and dispersed farms;
- Historic Corsham Park;
- Use of undressed limestone to walls, ashlar quoins, lintels and mullions, and stone slates; and
- Detractors of the M4, the edge of Chippenham and Hullavington airfield.

Site-specific Landscape Character

- 4.14. Tyler Grange conducted fieldwork on the 1st July 2025 to appraise the landscape character of the Site.
- 4.15. With reference to Section 3 and **Plan 1** which discusses the character of the Site, the following summarises the site-specific landscape features:
- Relatively flat landform with a gentle sloping character;
 - Pasture covered field with some historic sub-division;
 - Hedgerow and tree field boundaries with some fencing also present;
 - The Shrubbery and neighbouring woodland meets the northern boundary;
 - Sutton Benger Brook;
 - Overhead transmission lines and tower; and
 - Adjacent settlement and infrastructure.

Summary of Landscape Receptors

- 4.16. For the purposes of this LVIA, the effects of the Proposed Development upon the character of the landscape will be considered for the Site and published landscape character as it relates to the Study Area. The assessment focuses upon the features and characteristics identified within the review of published studies, TG's site-specific appraisal and valued components of the landscape. These include the following:
- North Wiltshire Landscape Character Area 8: Hullavington Rolling Lowland; and
 - The site-specific character and landscape features (such as landform, pasture covered field, hedgerow and trees, woodland, watercourse, transmission lines and tower and adjacent settlement and infrastructure).



Section 5: Visual Baseline

- 5.1. In order to establish the degree of any change that may arise from future development of the Site and the extent to which such changes will affect identified local receptors (people), it is important to understand the existing situation in terms of visual amenity alongside the availability and context of views associated with the local area. Chapter 6 of the GLVIA3 sets out how the visual baseline is established. The baseline should establish the area in which the Proposed Development may be visible, those people who may experience views of the development, the viewpoints representative of affected views and the nature of the views at the viewpoints.
- 5.2. The visibility of the Site considers representative views towards it from the surrounding area. This is based on the findings of topographical mapping (**Plan 3**) and Geographic Information System (GIS) first sieve analysis mapping (**Plan 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Photoviewpoint Locations**) and has been refined and verified through field assessment.
- 5.3. The software generated ZTV illustrates the extent to which development of up to 9m high on the Site would be potentially visible within a 2km radius to a 1.6m high receptor. The calculation is based on LIDAR 2m Digital Surface Model data and takes into account built form and vegetation present within the landscape. It does not account for the reduction in scale of the Proposed Development within the view over distance, or the reduced contrast experienced over distance due to atmospheric conditions. The ZTV generated for the Proposed Development on the Site clearly identifies the influence of the topography, vegetation and built form in limiting views and is a 'worst case scenario' used to identify the maximum potential visibility of the Site.
- 5.4. The first sieve exercise has been verified in the field to take into account vegetation or built form which further restricts or limits the extent of visibility. Following the completion of the visit to the Site, a number of representative viewpoints have been included that illustrate the approximate extent of areas from which the Site is visible. These are illustrated by the **Photosheets** contained to the rear of this report. In accordance with GLVIA3, the visual analysis is based on views from external spaces within the public domain excluding barely discernible views and not from inside buildings or private spaces. However, where notable views from private properties are possible, these have been considered where relevant.
- 5.5. Photographs were taken from selected viewpoints with a cropped frame (1.6x) digital SLR camera taken with a focal length equivalent to a full frame camera with 50mm focal length. Images were taken at eye level (approximately 1600mm above ground). A total of eight representative viewpoints have been chosen from locations surrounding the Site to enable the implications of the development to be assessed from all directions (see **Plan 5**).
- 5.6. Whilst the views are chosen to be representative of the area, they cannot provide continuous coverage of all potential locations within the vicinity of the development. Often, views will occur as a sequence within the surrounding environment and are assessed further within this report. Likewise, where transient or fleeting views are possible, these will also be assessed as part of the report.
- 5.7. The viewpoint photographs that are presented within this LVIA were taken in July 2025 on a clear day with good visibility.

Viewpoint Study

- 5.8. This section should be read in conjunction with the supplied **Photosheets**.



Views from the north

- 5.9. The ZTV mapping indicates that views toward the Site are limited to the area south of the M4 motorway corridor. The vegetation associated with The Shrubbery and neighbouring woodland to the north of the Site forms a prominent feature within the landscape that screens views of the Site from the north (**Photoviewpoint 1** and **Photoviewpoint 2**).
- 5.10. From Footpath SBEN9 (which is illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 2**) a small section within the east of the Site is visible due to the presence of the corridor that has been cut through the woodland to accommodate electricity lines. Within this view the Sutton Benger settlement edge can be seen beyond the Site.

Views from the east

- 5.11. The ZTV mapping indicates that views towards the Site from the east are limited by the presence of the Sutton Benger settlement and this has been confirmed in the field.
- 5.12. A view has been recorded from the south eastern Site boundary (**Photoviewpoint 4**). This view has also been identified within the Made Sutton Benger and Draycot Cerne Neighbourhood Plan (NP) as an 'important view' within Policy SB3 of the plan. This view is identified as 'PM1' and is described as a '*view looking north west towards Draycot Park Farm and St James Church*'. It is important to note that the view recorded within the NP has been taken from the gate within the Site, this land is private with no public access meaning the view that has been recorded is inaccessible to the public.
- 5.13. **Photoviewpoint 4** is taken from the pavement along High Street, the road is at a lower elevation to the Site which reduces the view into the Site. The settled context of Sutton Benger is present in the view. The Site occupies the foreground of the view and is characterised as a grass covered field bound by hedgerow and fencing. The electricity lines and towers that cross the Site are evident in the view and form a common feature in the local landscape. Beyond the Site The Shrubbery and adjacent woodland can be seen to the north.

Views from the south

- 5.14. The ZTV mapping indicates a wider area of potential visibility from the south of the Site, This is due to a reduction in the density of intervening features compared to the north and east. Development along the south side of High Street is linear in settlement pattern and of a low density which provides the opportunity for more views of the Site. The intervening development does result in filtering to views. Views have been recorded from the south side of High Street (**Photoviewpoint 5**) and from the pavement north of High Street, south west of the Site (**Photoviewpoint 7**). Being from the pavement alongside a busy road, perceptual detractors beyond sight are also experienced.
- 5.15. From **Photoviewpoint 5** (taken on High Street) the view of the Site is reduced by elevation change between the road and the southern edge of the Site. The southern boundary hedgerow is located on top of the elevated land and these features in combination restrict views into the Site. Beyond the Site The Shrubbery and adjacent woodland can be seen above the hedgerow. The Sutton Benger western settlement edge is present in the view as is electricity infrastructure crossing the landscape.
- 5.16. The view from **Photoviewpoint 7** is taken approximately 430m to the west of the Sutton Benger settlement edge along High Street. A break in the hedgerow along High Street affords an oblique view across the neighbouring grass covered field towards the Site. The hedgerow along the western Site boundary can be seen. Breaks and/or weak points in the hedgerow allow views into and across the Site which is comprised of a grass covered field.



Beyond the Site, development within the Sutton Benger settlement can be seen. To the north of the Site The Shrubbery and neighbouring woodland are ever present within the view.

- 5.17. Bridleway SBEN22 begins at High Street and is initially set within a developed context but then heads south away from the settlement and into the characteristic fields that surround the Site. **Photoviewpoint 8** is located to the south of the settlement within a grass covered field. Looking north the Sutton Benger settlement can be seen beyond the intervening hedgerows that divide the characteristic field network. To the west of the main body of the settlement linear ribbon development along High Street can be seen. This ribbon development and curtilage filters views of the Site beyond it. To the north of the Site The Shrubbery and adjacent woodland can be seen. The landform beyond the Site rises in elevation and forms an elevated backdrop to the north of Sutton Benger.

Views from the west

- 5.18. The ZTV mapping indicates the widest area of potential visibility is from the adjacent fields to the west which have no public access. Beyond the grass covered neighbouring field intervening features such as vegetation and scattered built form reduce views. A view from a nearby field to the west has been recorded on footpath SBEN13 (**Photoviewpoint 6**). This view looks across grass covered fields towards the Site. Trees and hedgerows form characteristic boundary treatments to the fields and these filter some views of the Site. Elevation change in the neighbouring field to the west of the Site screens much of the Site from **Photoviewpoint 6** and the route overall. Settlement associated with Sutton Benger is only visible beyond the north eastern corner of the Site.
- 5.19. The Grade II* listed Church of St James is located approximately 310m to the west of the Site within the former Draycot Estate parkland. The Church lies within neighbouring vegetation that reduces the availability of views from the Church. An 'important view' has been identified in the NP that looks west away from the Site. This view is identified as 'PM11' and is described as '*View from road and footpath by Draycot Church*'. It should be noted that the photograph taken to illustrate PM11 was taken from private land and is therefore not publicly accessible.
- 5.20. To the south of the Church is the former driveway to the now demolished Draycot House and footpath SBEN16. It was noted during fieldwork that the footpath was overgrown and evidently receives little use. An 'important view' has been identified in the NP that looks east across the water. This view is identified as 'PM16' and is described as '*view from SBEN16 north east Draycot Park Lake*'. It should be noted that the photograph taken to illustrate PM16 was taken from private land and is therefore not publicly accessible. **Photoviewpoint 3** has been taken from footpath SBEN16 to the south and looks across Draycot Park Lake towards the woodland north of the Site. The field to the west of the Site is also evident in the view, the elevation rises within the field which screens the baseline context of the Site from the view. The top of some vegetation present on the western Site boundary is visible above the elevated landform.

Residential Views

- 5.21. This LVIA has focused upon the analysis of views from publicly accessible locations. Views from private residential dwellings are not protected by national or local planning policy. Residential receptors do however remain relevant to this assessment in identifying the nature and extent of visual change and have therefore been appraised separately within this LVIA.
- 5.22. As a result of intervening features such as topography, vegetation and existing development within the landscape, views from residential properties are generally limited to the near vicinity and properties immediately adjacent to the Site boundary or within close proximity. These include the following:

- Residents of dwellings adjacent to the eastern Site boundary; and



- Residents of dwellings to the south of High Street.

Summary of Visual Context

- 5.23. Due to the nature of both the natural and engineered topography of the Site and Study Area, existing built form and the presence of mature vegetation in the form of hedgerows and trees, views of the Site are limited.
- 5.24. The following visual receptors have been scoped out due to a lack of intervisibility and likelihood of negligible visual effects:
- Footpath SBEN8 users to the north (**Photoviewpoint 1**);
 - Footpath SBEN9 users to the north west (**Photoviewpoint 2**); and
 - Footpath SBEN16 users to the west (**Photoviewpoint 3**).
- 5.25. The following visual receptors have been identified for the assessment of visual effects:
- Footpath SBEN13 users to the west (**Photoviewpoint 6**);
 - Bridleway SBEN22 users to the south (**Photoviewpoint 8**); and
 - Pedestrians and motorists on High Street (**Photoviewpoints 4, 5 and 7**).
- 5.26. Residential views are analysed separately within this LVIA.



Section 6: Value and Sensitivity of Receptors

6.1. The following landscape receptors will be assessed as part of this section:

- North Wiltshire Landscape Character Area 8: Hullavington Rolling Lowland; and
- The Site-specific character and landscape features (such as landform, pasture covered field, hedgerow and trees, woodland, watercourse, transmission lines and tower and adjacent settlement and infrastructure).

6.2. The following visual receptors will be assessed as part of this section:

- Footpath SBEN13 users to the west (**Photoviewpoint 6**);
- Bridleway SBEN22 users to the south (**Photoviewpoint 8**); and
- Pedestrians and motorists on High Street (**Photoviewpoints 4, 5 and 7**).

Landscape Value of the Site

6.3. As set out within GLVIA3, when identifying the landscape baseline, it is necessary to establish the relative value of the potentially affected landscape as this will inform later judgements about the level of effect. Value can apply both to areas as a whole, or the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions that contribute to the character of the landscape.

6.4. The LI's Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02/21 builds on GLVIA3 (Box 5.1) and identifies a range of factors that can assist in the identification of valued aspects of the landscape. Table 1 within **Appendix 5** is derived from TGN 02/21 and provides a description as to the extent the valued factors are present within the Site. The assessment has drawn upon this guidance and the landscape character assessment detailed above.

6.5. On balance, having analysed the Site against the landscape value factors, a review of the landscape evidence base, and informed by site-specific analysis and fieldwork, the landscape of the Site and its associated features are considered to be of **Medium** value.

Sensitivity of Receptors

6.6. The sensitivity of landscape and value receptors is a product of value and susceptibility, as set out in the methodology in **Appendix 3**. The assessment of sensitivity is set out in **Appendix 5** and summarised as follows:

Landscape Receptors

- Medium sensitivity:
 - North Wiltshire Landscape Character Area 8: Hullavington Rolling Lowland; and
 - The Site-specific character and landscape features (such as landform, pasture covered field, hedgerow and trees, woodland, watercourse, transmission lines and tower and adjacent settlement and infrastructure).



Visual Receptors

- Medium sensitivity:
 - Footpath SBEN13 users to the west (**Photoviewpoint 6**); and
 - Bridleway SBEN22 users to the south (**Photoviewpoint 8**).
- Medium/Low sensitivity:
 - Pedestrians and motorists on High Street (**Photoviewpoints 4, 5 and 7**).



Section 7: Proposed Development and Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Development

- 7.1. The proposal seeks outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except means of access) for up to 90 no. (class C3) residential dwellings (including 40% affordable dwellings) including the creation of new vehicular access from the B4069, pedestrian and cycle paths, parking spaces, public open space, biodiversity enhancement, landscape planting, surface water attenuation, associated infrastructure and other associated works.
- 7.2. The Proposed Development, will comprise:
- A development area of up to 90 dwellings with associated infrastructure, public open space, biodiversity enhancement, landscape provision and surface water attenuation incorporated within the development;
 - Primary access to be taken from High Street (B4069). Additional pedestrian access points to be created to from High Street at the south east corner of the Site;
 - Areas retained/created for ecological benefit including green corridors, riparian corridor, attenuation areas and the introduction of fruiting plant species;
 - Retained and enhanced vegetation within and around the Site. Some of the hedgerow will be removed to facilitate access to the Proposed Development but overall there will be an increase in planting provision across the Site;
 - Within the Site, pedestrian only links will be provided through the scheme to create public access to the area, increase permeability and create circular routes around the space;
 - A play space would be created within the scheme to promote activity and play. Natural surveillance would be provided by surrounding properties; and
 - Open space within the scheme promotes movement.
- 7.3. The application is submitted with a Design and Access Statement (DAS) which provides further details of the proposal.

Landscape Design including Mitigation and Enhancement

- 7.4. Mitigation measures are those which are designed to prevent, reduce, offset or remedy any likely effects caused by a development. Mitigation measures can be either primary: those incorporated into the masterplan and design, such as building height and layout; or secondary: those which are not incorporated into the main design, such as planting.
- 7.5. Landscape and visual effects caused by the Proposed Development are assessed at Year 1, when no planting has become established, and based on the masterplan as shown and incorporating primary mitigation measures, and at Year 15, when planting and secondary mitigation has become established. This demonstrates the potential best and worst-case scenario for development effects.
- 7.6. Enhancement measures are those which do not mitigate potential effects, but which elevate the Site above the current baseline.



Published Landscape Strategy and Guidelines

County Landscape Character

7.7. The strategy for the Limestone Lowland LCT is to conserve landscape features intrinsic to the type's character or important in their own right. The 'broad management objectives' for the LCT are reproduced below but are considered to have limited relevance to the Site:

- *Conserve the network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland copses and take opportunities for new planting where this will strengthen local character (for instance avoiding planting that will affect the open views in the high ground at the west of the area);*
- *Encourage conservation and rebuilding of dry stone wall field boundaries, particularly close to settlement;*
- *Conserve the remaining areas of ecological interest such as those with statutory designations, areas of ancient woodland, veteran hedgerow trees and chalk grassland;*
- *Maintain the subtle variations that occur throughout the landscape, encouraging local distinctiveness for instance in the variation in field boundaries from hedgerows to stone walls;*
- *Encourage management and restoration of the historic parkland landscapes that are characteristic of the area;*
- *Retain the distinctive character of the villages; ensuring any change respects the traditional stone built character and vernacular form; and*
- *Resist the urbanisation of the country lanes through addition of road markings and concrete kerbs or lamp posts or excessive signage that detracts from the rural character of the area.*

Former District Landscape Character

7.8. The management guidelines for the LCA that are of relevance to the Site are to '*conserve and enhance its pastoral character, and to ensure that any new development respects the grain of the dispersed settlement in the area and the vernacular building materials*'. The guidelines continue to state '*the continuity of hedgerows is important in shaping the character of the area, and should encourage this through appropriate land management programmes*'.

7.9. Further to the above, the LCA sets out a series of short and long term management strategy actions, those of relevance are set out below:

Short term

- Conserve hedgerows and mature trees, including planting new trees in existing hedges and planting specimen trees in field corners;
- Encourage woodland management to provide continuity of cover while optimising ecological value;
- Enhance the wetland character in riverside locations by planting willows along water courses in informal groups and broken lines, and by encouraging landowners to help in the creation of more diverse waterside habitats;
- Ensure development reinforces the locally distinctive character and respects the vernacular. The use of traditional building materials including limestone are important in this area; and



- Discourage development in the rural hinterland.
- 7.10. The sole long term management strategy is related to development around Chippenham and is not relevant to the Site.
- 7.11. In relation to the ‘*key views management strategy*’ for LCA 8, the document states that ‘*many wide views are possible over this broad, rolling landscape. Within the rural hinterland, the key visual elements are the mature trees and the patchwork of small irregular fields. A number of major roads cross the area, including the M4 Motorway and the A429 and A420. Views from these roads, and the connecting B roads, are important for the perceptions of many local people. Much of the rural hinterland, however, is relatively remote and tranquil*’. This has some relevance to the Site, the ZTV within **Plan 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Photoviewpoint Locations** illustrates that there are no views from the M4 motorway corridor and limited views from the B roads within the wider study area. It also highlights a limited extent of visibility along High Street (B4069), with greater visibility afforded near to the Site. The report also provides a list of ‘*indicators of change from chosen viewpoints*’ these are:
- *Loss of hedgerows and mature oak trees;*
 - *Landscape elements associated with riverside environments – in particular wet meadows, waterside trees, and reed beds or other wetland species; and*
 - *Built form using traditional stone materials and detailing.*

Design Response

- 7.12. Details of mitigation and enhancement measures proposed include the following:
- Retaining and enhancing the existing vegetation around the Site, in particular the native hedgerows and trees that are present, where possible. This is designed to ensure a filtering effect to views is maintained from day 1 and also to retain and enhance hedgerow provision as a characteristic feature. This reflects the management strategies of the published LCA;
 - Retain existing trees of merit within the Site and provide separation from development. All category A and B trees and hedgerows are located either within the woodland off site to the north or the hedgerow mix on the boundaries. Their retention provides biodiversity and amenity benefit plus any filtering effect to views;
 - There are opportunities for the planting of native trees within the public open space with ornamental tree species planted within the development area, as illustrated by the Illustrative Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan. This is designed to filter and soften views of the proposed built form and enhance the existing vegetated character of the area; and
 - There is an opportunity to improve the appearance of the settlement edge in views by positioning development within a robust framework of planting where built form is set back from the edge. Additionally dwellings on the edge of development would be orientated to face the outside landscape with back gardens and boundary treatments facing away from the wider landscape, this will create a positive frontage to the settlement.



Section 8: Assessment of Effects

- 8.1. This section of the LVIA assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape and visual receptors identified through the baseline appraisal set out earlier in this report. This has included consideration of the effects arising at Year 1 and Year 15, i.e. before and after mitigation planting has become established.
- 8.2. Effects during construction are not specifically assessed and the removal of existing landscape features, where appropriate, are assessed at Year 1. However, magnitude of effects during construction generally balance out against those at Year 15 for the following reasons.
- Construction activity is more discordant in views than completed development, comprising disparate elements, such as moving plant, sheeting materials, fencing and scaffolding. These changes would increase the magnitude of effect; and
 - Construction activity is temporary, lasting for a limited number of years, as opposed to the final development which is assessed as permanent.

Likely Landscape Effects

- 8.3. The assessment of the landscape effects at Year 1 and residual effects of the proposals upon completion and maturation of the landscape planting (Year 15) is set out in full at **Appendix 6** and includes explanations and justifications of the judgements made.
- 8.4. The sensitivity of the various receptors is summarised on **Table 1** below. The explanation for the judgements of sensitivity is set out in detail in **Appendix 5**.

Table 1: Likely effects upon Landscape receptors

Landscape Resource	Sensitivity of the Receptor (from baseline review)	Magnitude of Change		Level of Effect	
		Year 1	Year 15	Year 1	Year 15
Site-specific landscape elements and features	Medium	Moderate/Major	Moderate	Moderate/Major Adverse	Moderate Adverse
North Wiltshire Landscape Character Area 8: Hullavington Rolling Lowland	Medium	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Moderate/Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse



Likely Visual Effects

- 8.5. The assessment of visual effects at Year 1 and residual effects of the Proposed Development upon completion and semi-maturation of the landscape planting (Year 15) are set out in detail at **Appendix 7**. The results of this assessment are summarised in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Likely effects upon visual receptors

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of the Receptor (from baseline review)	Magnitude of Change		Level of Effect	
		Year 1	Year 15	Year 1	Year 15
Footpath SBEN13 users to the west (Photoviewpoint 6)	Medium	Minor	Negligible	Minor Adverse	Negligible
Bridleway SBEN22 users to the south (Photoviewpoint 8)	Medium	Moderate/ Minor	Minor Adverse	Moderate/ Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Pedestrians and Motorists on High Street (Photoviewpoint 4, 5 and 7)	Medium/Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate/ Minor Adverse

- 8.6. This LVIA has focussed upon the analysis of views from publicly accessible locations. Views from private residential dwellings have not been tested in the field, the likely magnitude of the change for these people is set out within **Appendix 7**. The findings are summarised in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Residential visual amenity summary

Receptor	Magnitude of Change	
	Year 1	Year 15
Residents of dwellings adjacent to the eastern Site boundary	Moderate	Moderate/Minor
Residents of dwellings to the south of High Street	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor



Section 9: Conclusions

- 9.1. This report accompanies an outline planning application (with all matters reserved except means of access) for up to 90 no. (class C3) residential dwellings (including 40% affordable dwellings) including the creation of new vehicular access from the B4069, pedestrian and cycle paths, parking spaces, public open space, biodiversity enhancement, landscape planting, surface water attenuation, associated infrastructure and other associated works.
- 9.2. This LVIA reports the likely effects of the Proposed Development in terms of landscape character and views in the context of the Site and surrounding area. In particular, it considers the likely effects on the character and features of the landscape; and on people's views and visual amenity within the Study Area, in accordance with published guidelines. The extent of these effects should be considered within the local context and the proposals degree of conformance with their surroundings. In addition, the effects need to be put in the planning balance with all other economic, social and environmental effects of the development.
- 9.3. The Site is not the subject of any statutory landscape designation. This indicates that it is not part of a valued landscape as per paragraph 187 of the NPPF. This LVIA also finds that the Site is not considered 'valued' as per the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02/21 analysis.
- 9.4. Having considered the elements related to the landscape character of the Site in Section 4 and given that the Site is not designated in landscape terms, this LVIA finds that the Site has a **Medium** landscape sensitivity overall.
- 9.5. Local, non site-specific policies relating to the enhancement of local landscape and GI network are applicable to the Site, as set out within **Appendix 2**.
- 9.6. The majority of the existing landscape framework of hedgerows and trees will be retained and enhanced. There will be selective removal of hedgerow and trees to provide access from High Street (B4069). Compensatory planting will be planted both within the areas of built form and new areas of public open space. This treatment will soften the appearance of built form across the Site and provide biodiversity and Green Infrastructure benefit. This is set out within the accompanying Illustrative Landscape Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (**Appendix 8**).
- 9.7. As set out in Section 8, the landscape effect on the site-specific landscape elements and features has been assessed as Moderate/Major Adverse at Year 1 and reducing to Moderate Adverse at Year 15 for the resulting proposals. The landscape effect on the Hullavington Rolling Lowland has been assessed as Moderate/Minor Adverse at Year 1 and reducing to Minor Adverse at Year 15. The nature of the development proposed is not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape context.
- 9.8. As highlighted within Section 5 and Appendices 2 and 7 of this report it is noted that the location of 'important view' PM1 within the NP varies between its location on plans and the photograph that has been recorded within the NP. The location used for the photograph is on private land on the edge of the Site and is therefore not the view experienced by the public and is discounted as a location to be assessed within this report.
- 9.9. However, Photoviewpoint 4 is representative of the varying locations shown for PM1 on figures 12 and 14 within the NP and has been recorded from the pavement on the north side of the High Street (B4069), it is publicly accessible and does represent the view experienced by the public. As set out below, pedestrians and motorists experiencing the change in view from Photoviewpoint 4 were identified as experiencing a Moderate Adverse visual change at Year 1 due to the proximity and scale of the change experienced from this location



on the edge of the Site. At Year 15, after maturation of the proposed mitigation planting, this effect reduces to Moderate/Minor Adverse. This assessment has concluded that this view does not constrain the Proposed Development and that the Illustrative Masterplan (**Appendix 1**) responds well to the local environment.

- 9.10. In terms of visual effects, one receptor group was identified as experiencing a Moderate Adverse visual change (Pedestrians and Motorists on High Street (Photoviewpoints 4, 5 and 7)) at Year 1. This is due to the proximity and scale of the change. At Year 15, after maturation of the proposed mitigation planting, this effect reduces to Moderate/Minor Adverse. The remaining visual receptors are assessed as being no higher than Moderate/Minor Adverse at Year 1, reducing to no more than Minor Adverse after 15 years.
- 9.11. This LVIA finds that the Proposed Development is of a scale and appearance that would be sympathetic to and in-keeping with the landscape character and visual context, with natural features (trees and hedgerows) of the Site retained as far as practicable to allow access while also preserving the character they contribute to. Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not result in unacceptable effects on landscape and visual receptors as the development preserves the characteristic attributes of the landscape and responds positively to the Sutton Benger settlement.



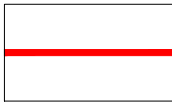
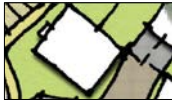
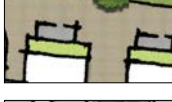
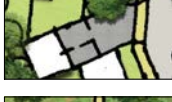
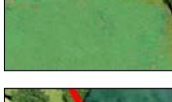
Appendix 1: Illustrative Masterplan





The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision	Date	Drn	Ckd
C	Graphics Updated	20.11.25	SM FM

-  Site Boundary
-  Dwelling House
-  Gardens
-  Primary Vehicular Route
-  Formal Square
-  Shared Surface
-  Lane / Private Drive
-  Parking
-  Footpath
-  Play Space
-  Attenuation Basin
-  Proposed Tree Planting
-  Existing Tree Planting

Project

Sutton Benger

Drawing Title

Illustrative Site Layout

Date

31.07.25

Scale

1:1,250 @A2

Drawn by

M.D.

Check by

F.M./S.B.

Project No

333102291

Drawing No

STN-GEN-SW-DR-MP-06

Revision

C







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Appendix 2: Relevant Planning Policy



Appendix 2 – Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)²

- 1.1. The NPPF outlines the Government's planning policies for England, setting out how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions and any development will need to accord with the planning provisions it outlines. The NPPF is supported by the NPPG. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 1.2. Para 131 states that *"the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable in communities"*.
- 1.3. Para 136 states that *"Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible"*.
- 1.4. Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment specifies how planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.
- 1.5. Para 187 states that protection and enhancement of 'valued landscapes, Sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils' should be 'in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan'. It also notes that the 'intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services' should be recognised.
- 1.6. Para 188 makes it clear that there is a hierarchy to the importance and value attributed to landscapes, and that the development plan should identify the quality of particular landscapes that are not subject to statutory protection.
- 1.7. In addition to the NPPF and NPPG, the National Design Guide³ addresses how to recognise well-designed places by outlining the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics. It is based on national planning policy, practice guidance and objectives for good design set out in the NPPF.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 1.8. Relevant Planning Policy Guidance which accompanies the NPPF includes information relating to Green Infrastructure, Landscape, and Design (including the National Design Guide).

¹ [National Planning Policy Framework - Guidance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-guidance)

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

- 1.9. In respect to landscape specifically, the PPG makes reference to the Planning Policy framework, stating *'it is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes'*.
- 1.10. Para 037 (Reference ID: 8-037-20190721, Revision date: 210719) relates to the use of landscape character assessment and identifies that Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used to demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape.
- 1.11. In relation to design, the PPG confirms well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications and the post approval stage. Good design is set out in the National Design Guide as comprising of 10 characteristics including context, identity, nature and public spaces (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 26-001-20191001, revision date 010119).
- 1.12. In confirming the role of parameter plans in achieving well designed places, the guidance confirms parameter plans can include information on the proposed land use, building heights, areas of potential built development, structure of landscape and green infrastructure, access and movement and other key structuring and placemaking components (Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 26-011-20191001, revision date 011019).

Local Planning Policy

- 1.13. At a local level, the Site lies within the administrative area of Wiltshire Council (WC). The following documents form part of the adopted Wiltshire Development Plan.

Saved Policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 (Adopted 2006)⁴

- 1.14. **Policy NE14: Trees and the Control of New Development** states that *'Permission will not be granted for proposals that would result, or be likely to result, in the loss of trees, hedges, lakes/ponds or other important landscape or ecological features that could be successfully and appropriately incorporated into the design of a development'*.
- 1.15. **Policy CF3: Provision of Open Space** states that *'proposals for new housing will be required to make provision for open space on site, to provide 15m² for Local Parks and 3m² for play areas per person'*.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (Adopted 2015)⁵

- 1.16. Policies within the Local Plan considered relevant to landscape and/or visual matters include:
- 1.17. **Core Policy 51: Landscape** states 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'*. The policy requires development proposals to be informed by, and sympathetic to, distinctive character areas and proposals are required to demonstrate that aspects of landscape character have been conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures.
- 1.18. **Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure** states that *'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*

⁴ [Microsoft Word - Written Statement Local Plan 2011- Adoptable Version.doc](#)

⁵ [Wiltshire Core Strategy - Wiltshire Council](#)

provided and maintained. Where development is permitted developers will be required to retain and enhance existing on site green infrastructure;

- i. Make provision for accessible open spaces in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Wiltshire Open Space Standards;*
- ii. Put measures in place to ensure appropriate long-term management of any green infrastructure directly related to the development;*
- iii. Provide appropriate contributions towards the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy; and*
- iv. Identify and provide opportunities to enhance and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of Wiltshire’.*

1.19. **Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping** to achieve this the policy states that ‘*proposals will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire’*. Those of relevance to landscape are reproduced below:

- 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, streetscapes and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting; and*
- iv. Being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and historic landscapes’.*

Wiltshire Local Plan – pre-submission draft 2020 – 2038 (draft September 2023)⁶

1.2. WC is currently preparing its Local Plan which will cover the plan period 2020-2038. It was submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local government for independent examination on 28th November 2024 and is aiming for a late 2025 adoption. Emerging policies within the Local Plan considered relevant to landscape and/or visual matters include:

- **Policy 90: Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees** – This policy requires the retention of woodlands, hedgerows and trees and seeks to ensure that these are incorporated into development proposals. Development proposals should also ensure that they contribute to the tree planting targets of Wiltshire Council through a combination of tree lined streets, orchards and garden tree planting;
- **Policy 91: Conserve and Enhance Wiltshire’s Landscape (replaces Core Policy 51)** – This policy outlines the requirements for future development proposals to consider existing local features (landscape and built) that contribute to an area’s distinctive sense of place. The policy also seeks to protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire’s distinctive landscape character. In terms of Wiltshire’s designated landscapes the policy states “Development within, and influencing the setting of, these designated areas should be

⁶https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/11976/Wiltshire-Local-Plan-Pre-Submission-Draft-2020-2038-Regulation-19/pdf/Wiltshire_Local_Plan_Reg_19_web_accessible_version.pdf?m=1695730562743

limited in scale and extent and are expected to contribute towards conserving and enhancing their natural beauty”.

- **Policy 92: Conserving and Enhancing Dark Skies** – “Within an International Dark Sky Reserve and/or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, development will only be supported where it conserves or enhances the intrinsic quality of dark skies. Development proposals must ensure that all opportunities to reduce light pollution are taken.” The Site is not located within an International Dark Sky Reserve nor the CNL.
- **Policy 93: Green and Blue Infrastructure (replaces Core Policy 52)** – This policy outlines the requirements for the provision and retention of Wiltshire’s Green Infrastructure (GI) network. Proposals should also ensure that suitable links to the wider network are provided and maintained.
- **Policy 98: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping (replaces Core Policy 57)** – This policy seeks to ensure that proposals for new development are of a design that creates a strong sense of place, which is complimentary to the locality. Schemes should retain and enhance existing important landscape features, respond positively to the existing townscape and overall enhance local distinctiveness.

Other relevant Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted March 2024)⁷

- 1.20. The Wiltshire Design Guide (WDG) was formally adopted on 25th March 2024. The SPD *“sets out the approach to appreciating context and focusing on what is important in design and place-shaping will ensure future development makes a positive contribution to the physical character and heritage of Wiltshire and to the livelihood of its communities”*. It is aimed to support adopted Policy 57 and emerging Policy 98 ‘Ensuring high quality design and place shaping’.
- 1.21. Within the document, there are ‘Expectations’ stated of Wiltshire Council in terms of processes, requirements and outputs through the design, planning and development and delivery stages of a project.

Wiltshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (adopted February 2022)⁸

- 1.22. This document forms Wiltshire Council’s vision and strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of green and blue infrastructure (GBI) at a catchment and landscape scale. In terms of planning principles, the strategy states that development should seek to:
 - *“1. Contribute to the delivery of high quality multi-functional networks of GBI to provide long-term benefits for people, places and nature in Wiltshire.*
 - *2. Embed GBI in ways that help reinforce and enhance the local built, natural and historic character of Wiltshire’s landscapes and townscapes.*
 - *3. Embed GBI in ways that help support nature recovery and reverse the decline in biodiversity in Wiltshire by providing a net biodiversity gain.*
 - *4. Embed GBI in ways that help Wiltshire’s communities and wildlife be more resilient to a changing climate.*

⁷https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/13006/Wiltshire-Design-Guide-2024/pdf/8320_WiltshireDesignGuide_Consultation_Accessible.pdf?m=1711382742703

⁸<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/6463/Towards-a-Green-Blue-Infrastructure-Strategy-for-Wiltshire-Jan2021-/pdf/Towards a Green Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire.pdf?m=637541804349930000>

- 5. *Embed GBI in ways that help contribute to healthy living and well-being by providing spaces for recreation, relaxation and growing local food in Wiltshire.*
- 6. *Contribute to long-term management and maintenance of related GBI through financial contributions, management schemes and management plans as appropriate.”*

Sutton Benger and Draycot Cerne Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2035 (Made March 2025)⁹

1.23. The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was developed by the local community to inform development and growth within the local area. The Site is located within the area covered by the NDP. There are a number of policies relevant to landscape character and visual considerations. Those of relevance are reproduced below.

1.24. The vision for the plan area is:

‘To maintain the rural character and landscape of the Parish (Plan Area), whilst supporting sustainable development that is of an appropriate scale and design to benefit the local community’

1.25. **Policy SB1: Landscape – The Rural Character** states that *‘development proposals should demonstrate how they protect, conserve and enhance the features which positively define the character of the neighbourhood area, and respond positively to the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment and Sutton Benger Parish Character Appraisal’.*

1.26. **Policy SB2: Landscape – Maintaining the Separation of Settlements** states that *‘new development should respect the rural landscape setting of the neighbourhood area and preserve the distinctive separation between the settlements of Sutton Benger and Draycot Cerne’.* It goes on to say that dependant on scale *‘development proposals on the land between the settlements, should be supported by a landscape and visual impact assessment which demonstrates that the development will not harmfully erode the physical or visual separation of the settlements’.*

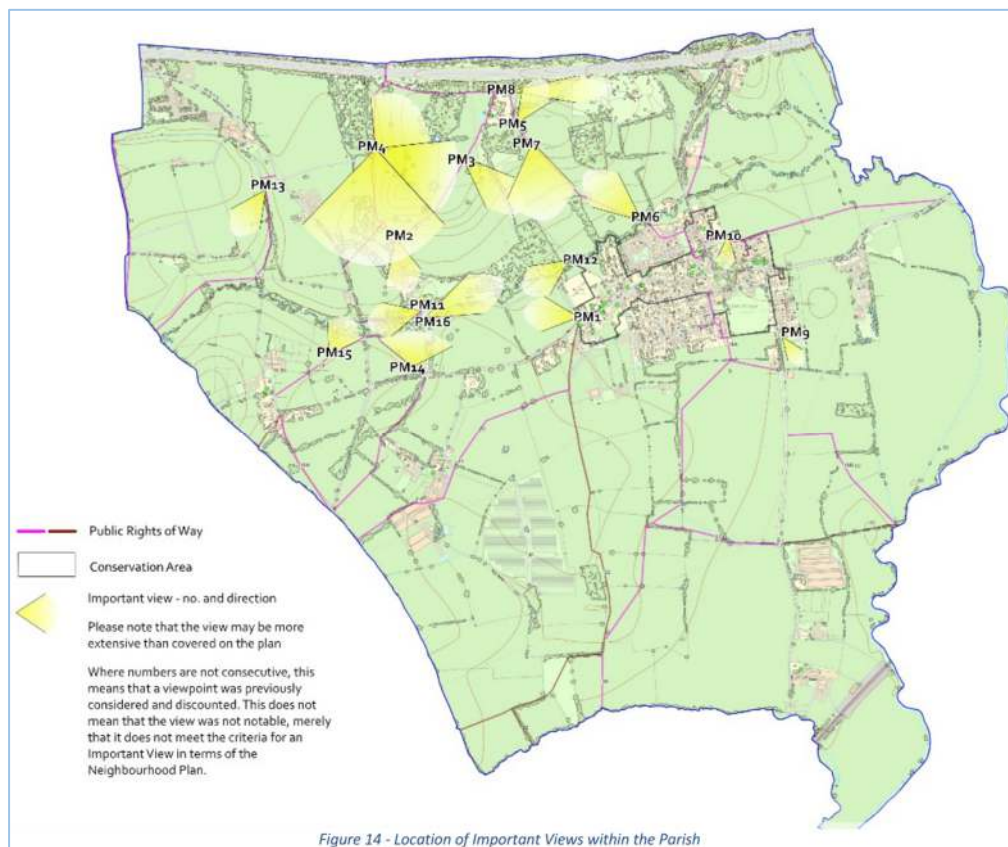
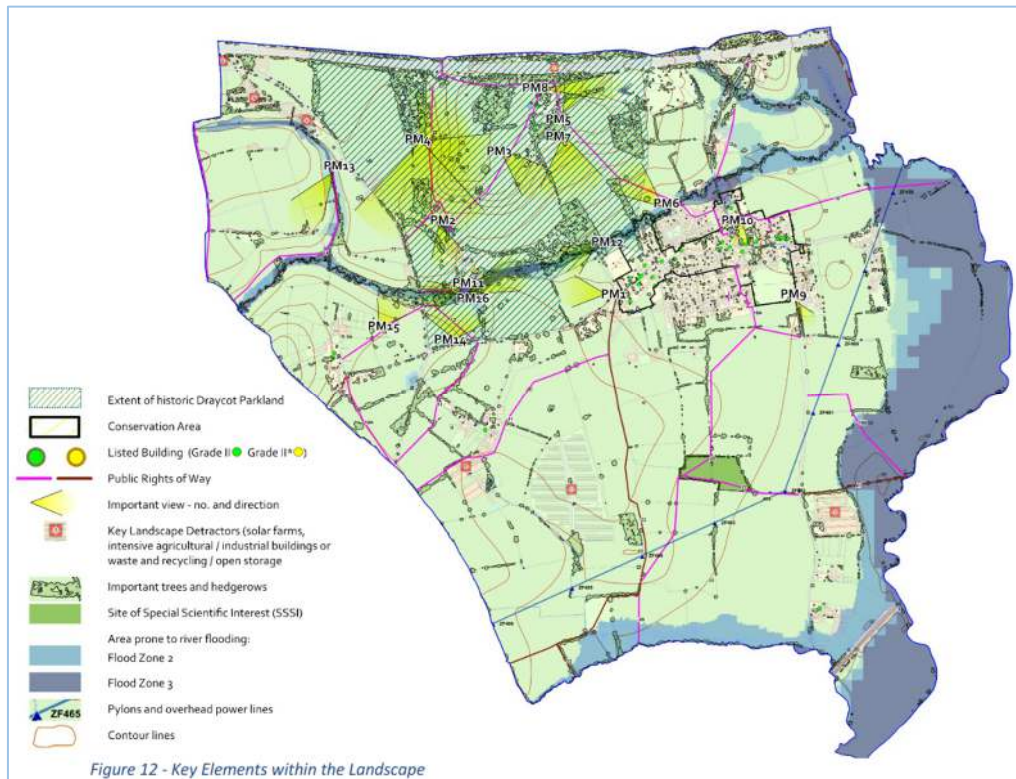
1.27. **Policy SB3: Important Views and Vistas** identifies important views to the community and were submitted by individuals. The policy states that *‘development proposals should respond positively to the identified views and demonstrate consideration of matters relating to design, height, and massing, either individually or cumulatively. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable impact on an identified Important View will not be supported’.* The ‘important views and vistas’ with the potential to include the Site and its surrounding area are listed below:

- **PM1** – View looking north west towards Draycot Park Farm & St James Church
- **PM3** – View looking south west from SBEN9
- **PM4** – View looking in four directions from SBEN32
- **PM7** – View looking south from footpath by lost oak
- **PM12** – Views towards Church and Seagry Road and the Old Rectory
- **PM14** – View from SBEN13 looking SE, NW and NE

⁹ [Sutton Benger and Draycot Cerne Neighbourhood Development Plan.pdf](#)

- **PM16 – View from SBEN16 NE Draycot Park Lake**

1.28. The figures below are reproduced from the NDP (Figures 12 and 14 of the NDP). As can be seen there are discrepancies between some of the locations of the relevant viewpoints (PM1, PM7 and PM12).

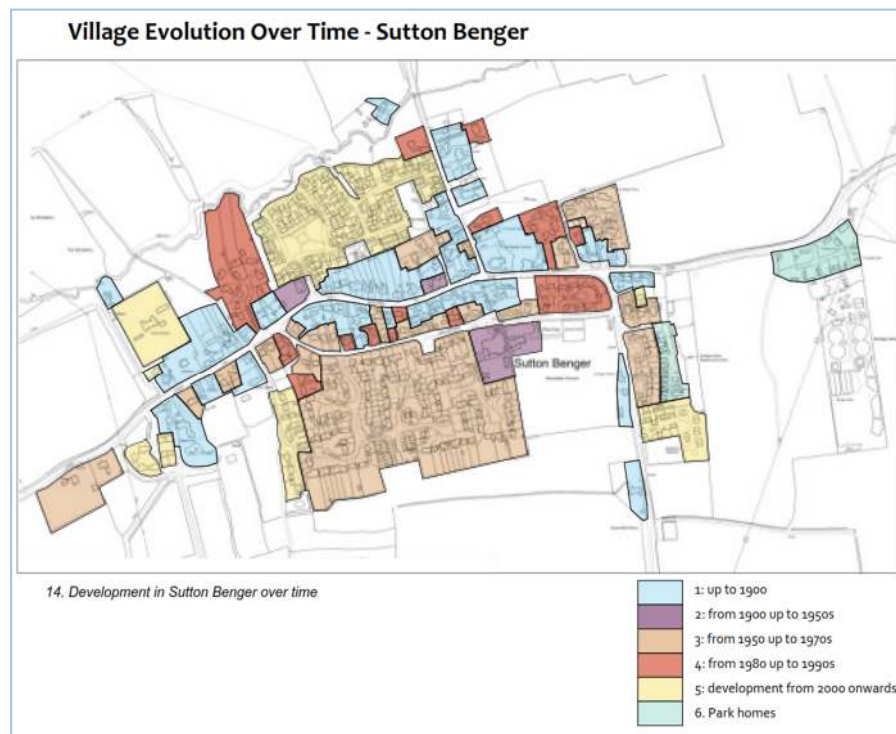


Sutton Benger Parish Character Appraisal (December 2024)¹⁰

- 1.29. This document was prepared by the NDP Steering Group in conjunction with Bluestone Planning. The aim of the report is to provide evidence regarding the character of the Parish and how it is perceived by residents.

Evolution of the Settlements Over Time -Sutton Benger

- 1.30. A plan has been provided within the report that illustrates the age of development within the settlement, this plan is extracted below:



Landscape Character Assessment

- 1.31. Regarding the landscape character of the area the appraisal repeats the findings of the published Landscape Character Assessments highlighted within the LVIA.

Important Views

- 1.32. The Important Views highlighted within the NDP are discussed further within this document. The views were submitted by the community and assessed. The 'Important Views Assessment' is a separate document alluded to in the report but it is not publicly available at this time.
- 1.33. Unlike the NDP this document has the full suite of precedent images for the 'Important Views'. It is noted that the images do not necessarily line up with the locations shown on the location plans supplied across the documents.

¹⁰ [Character Appraisal V6 mar 24 ref](#)

Analysis Conclusion

1.34. The conclusion of the report sets out a number of 'key issues for consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan'. These are reproduced below:

- *Protect the distinctive form of the original settlements and their setting;*
- *Retain the parkland setting of the Draycot Estate;*
- *Where possible, restore levels of tranquillity and reduce dominance of highway and electricity infrastructure;*
- *Reinforce existing local features and enhance sense of place, particularly alongside the River Avon and its tributaries;*
- *Maintain and further enhance the network of open spaces in the parish;*
- *Encourage riverside character planting, where appropriate; and*
- *Reinforce the edge of the built up area through appropriate landscape planting and avoid deterioration in the settlement fringe arising from poor design and intrusive development.*

Appendix 3: Methodology



LVIA Methodology

- 1.1. The methodology and guidelines used in the preparation of this assessment have been developed from the following document:
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England, Second Version, October 2014¹;
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition, LI and IEMA, 2013;
 - Visual Representation of Development Proposals (TGN 06/19), LI, September 2019;
 - Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (TGN 02/21), May 2021; and
 - Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (LITGN-2024-01), LI, August 2024.
- 1.2. To assist the reader in understanding the purpose for undertaking landscape assessment work, the definition of 'landscape' as defined by the European Landscape Convention (ELC, 2000) is set out below.
- "'Landscape' means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors."*
- 1.3. In the context of this definition the assessment process seeks to consider the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual receptors in an objective and systematic manner whilst recognising the perceptual and therefore subjective response to the landscape. Whilst subjectivity can never be removed from the assessment process, by following a systematic and structured framework of assessment, a more robust assessment can be performed, and more rational and transparent conclusions drawn.
- 1.4. Furthermore, the LVIA process deals with the separate but interlinked issues of:
- Landscape Character: The effects of the Proposed Development upon discrete character areas and/or character types comprising features possessing a particular quality or merit; and
 - Visual Context: The effects of the Proposed Development on views from visual receptors, and upon the amenity value of the views.
- 1.5. Landscape character is defined in the GLVIA3 as:
- "A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse."*
- 1.6. Changes to the landscape character can arise as a result of:

¹ Natural England (2014) [An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Second Edition](#)



- Changes to the fabric of the landscape including either the loss of key elements or introduction of new features which alter the distinct character of the landscape; and
- Changes which alter the way in which the landscape is perceived or appreciated.

1.7. Changes to views will occur where there is alteration of the view in terms of elements present and their distribution or dominance. Such changes may or may not have a significant effect on the visual amenity of identified visual receptors.

1.8. The assessment process is set out in further detail below but involves the following steps:

- Baseline appraisal of landscape, visual and planning policy baseline;
- Identification of potential receptors to change and their sensitivity;
- Assessment of potential effects on identified receptors;
- Proposed mitigation measures.

Baseline Appraisal

1.9. The baseline appraisal process is a crucial part of any assessment and includes:

- A desktop and on-site appraisal of the landscape features and topography of the area;
- The identification of relevant designations at national and local level;
- The review of relevant planning policy and evidence base;
- The review of relevant published landscape character assessments;
- An on-site review of the character of the Site and its surroundings;
- Field work to determine the extent to which the Site can be seen from the wider area, taking into account any significant vegetation or built form which restricts or limits the extent of visibility; and
- Identification of representative viewpoints and determination of likely visual receptors.

Identification of Receptors and Their Sensitivity

1.10. The desktop and on-site appraisals are used to identify potential receptors to change. Landscape receptors may be individual landscape elements, such as trees and hedgerows, or landscape character. In order to avoid double counting, this methodology addresses the loss or enhancement of landscape elements in the round when dealing with changes to landscape character. Visual receptors are always people. The sensitivity of the identified receptors to change are then assessed.

Identification of Receptors

1.11. Receptors are identified through the baseline analysis as set out above. This is used to identify areas of landscape character and visual receptors that may be affected by the Proposed Development. Receptors that are identified but

