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01 Introduction

1.0 Introduction

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Mac Mic Strategic Land Limited have appointed Roberts Limbrick (a Landscape Institute Registered Practice) to undertake a proportionate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to accompany a planning application for residential development at a site which lies on the western edge of Cricklade, Wiltshire.
- 1.2 The proposed development comprises a landscape led scheme of up to 315 dwellings with associated access and infrastructure including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).
- 1.3 This report is based on a site visits which were undertaken in summer 2022, and more recently in February 2026, together with analysis of environmental databases and relevant landscape character assessments.
- 1.4 The LVIA has been undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute, with competencies in landscape design and landscape assessment. The assessment is a proportionate LVIA that has not been prepared as part of a formal Environmental Statement, and therefore 'significance' has not been attached to the assessment of effects.
- 1.5 The assessment has had regard to current best practice (GLVIA3), with the assessment methodology set out within Appendix 1. The report assesses the potential effects resulting from the proposed development on the landscape resource, landscape character and on views from public viewpoints, with consideration given to the visual effects on settlements and residential properties.
- 4.6 It should be noted that heritage assets and settings, such as Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, are not part of the landscape assessment (refer to the separate heritage assessment).

SITE LOCATION & STUDY AREA

- 1.7 The site is located within Wiltshire, on the western edge of the town of Cricklade, as shown on Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan.
- 1.8 The study area for the LVIA is based on an approximate radius of 2km from the site. Given the scale of the site, type of proposed development and surrounding context, this radius is considered sufficient to consider the likely impacts that will be generated by the proposed development.
- 1.9 Following site surveys and the visual assessment, whilst the initial study area that has been considered is a c.2km radius, the 'local area' which is actually influenced by the proposals is anticipated to be smaller, and as this report goes on to demonstrate, there are no effects greater than negligible expected beyond c.200m from the site boundary.

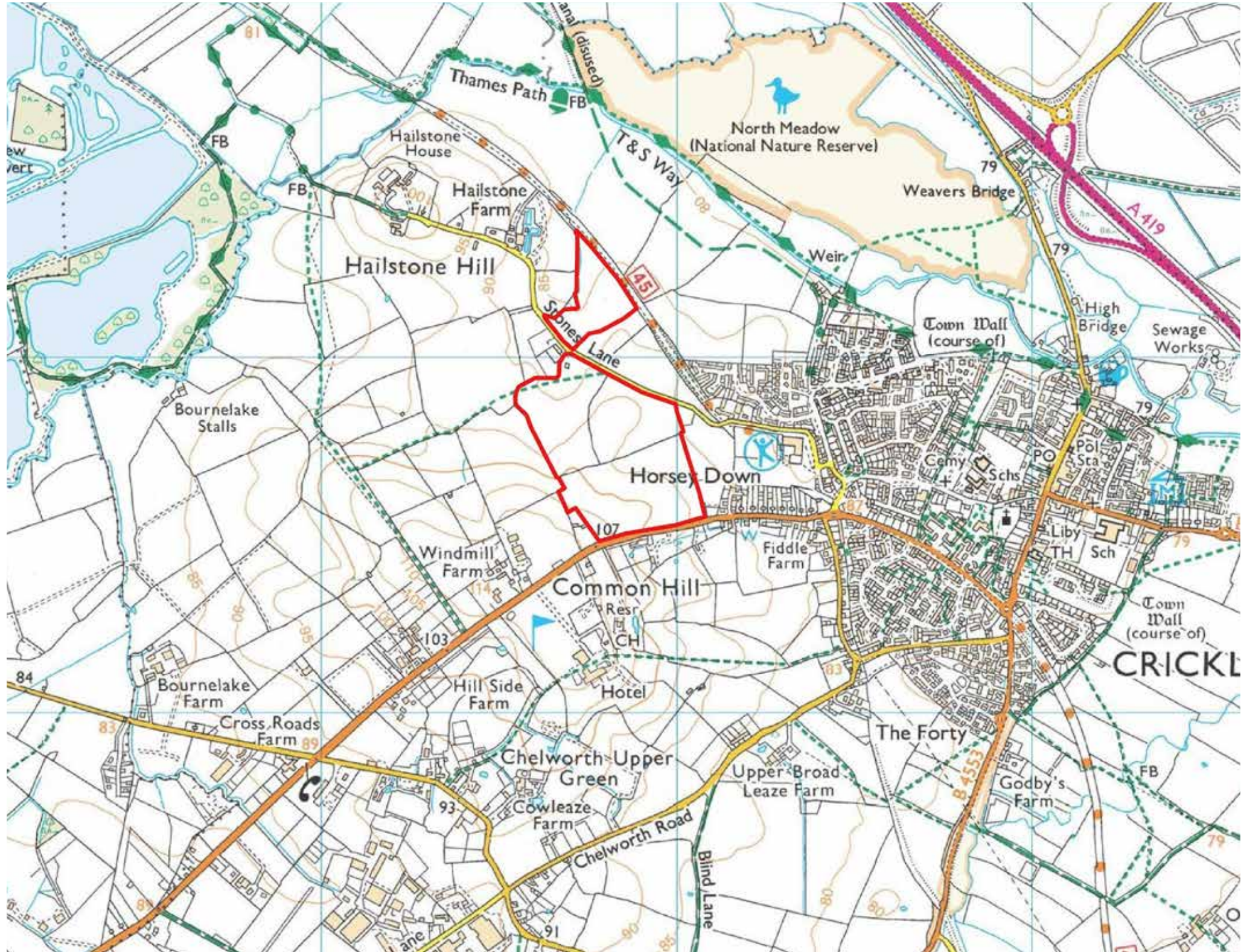


Figure 1.1 : Site Location Plan

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02 Site Context

2.0 Site Context

PLANNING POLICY & DESIGNATIONS

Local Planning Policy

- 2.1 The following policies from the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) are considered relevant to potential development of the site:
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity, requires that any measures to restore, enhance and create habitat must be 'relevant to the local landscape character'.
 - Core Policy 51: Landscape, requires development to 'protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character.' It '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.'
 - Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure, requires development 'to make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire's green infrastructure network', and 'to ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained.'
 - Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping, requires that developments 'make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire' by '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'
 - And also through the 'retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features, (e.g. trees, hedges, banks and watercourses), in order to take opportunities to... effectively integrate the development into its setting' as well as 'responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features'.

- 2.2 As part of the current Wiltshire Local Plan Review, Emerging Policies 91: Conserving and Enhancing Wiltshire's Landscapes, and 93: Green and Blue Infrastructure, seek to replace the aforementioned 2015 Core Policies 51 and 52.
- 2.3 Saved policies of North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 also cover the site and the key relevant landscape policies are:
- NE12: Woodland, which states 'The creation, conservation, enhancement and positive management of woodlands across the district will be supported'
 - NE14: Trees, Site Features and the Control of New Development, which states '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.'
 - CF3: Provision of Open Space, which states 'proposals for new housing development will be required to make provision for open space on site, to provide 15m² for Local Parks and 3m² for play areas per person.' Although it is assumed that this has now been superseded by the Wiltshire Open Space Assessment 2020 (outlined below).
- 2.4 The Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan 2026 (made March 2018) runs until 2026. It is currently under review which will extend it to 2038. The current plan includes the following policies which are considered relevant to potential development of the site:
- Policy H1: The Settlement Boundary - 'Development will not be supported outside [the] Settlement Boundary unless specifically allowed by policies in the development plan'
 - Policy H2: Visual Separation of Settlements - 'Development will not be supported where it would

reduce the visual and physical separation between Cricklade and surrounding settlements in general... and the strategic housing development at Tadpole Farm in Swindon in particular.'

- Policy LAF2: Allotments - 'New residential development of 10 dwellings or over should provide land for allotments on the basis of a minimum of 50m² for every 10 dwellings'
- Policy LAF3: Provision of Public Open Space - 'Open space required to be provided in development proposals should be of a good quality, clearly defined and accommodate any identified need for more play areas for younger and older children'

- 2.5 The Wiltshire Open Space Assessment 2020 sets out the standards of provision of open space for new developments. Due to the location of the site, it is understood that the Urban Area Standards within Section 6.2.1 apply to this site, with the provision of allotments, amenity green space, parks and recreation, play space (children and youth) and natural green space required.
- 2.6 The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire 2022-2030 sets out three key themes; mitigation, adaptation and resilience to climate change; halting the loss of and improving biodiversity; and contributing to health and well-being, which form the basis for the GBI Strategy's vision, goals and implementation.
- 2.7 The Wiltshire Design Guide 2024 provides key expectations with regard to design and integration of nature and public spaces into developments. Key aspects include designing and delivering multi-functional use of new public spaces, and the importance of integrating nature into well designed developments.

Designations

- 2.8 The site itself and immediate environment is not covered by any relevant statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.
- 2.9 The Site is located c. 250m east of the closest designated heritage asset, the Grade II Listed Hailstone Farmhouse, and c. 600m west of the Cricklade Town Banks which forms part of a group of assets largely, though not exclusively, within Cricklade Conservation Area. This covers the majority of the eastern part of the town.
- 2.10 The closest statutory designation is North Meadow Cricklade National Nature Reserve, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located approximately 0.33km north of the site at its closest point. The SSSI underpins the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 2.11 The Cotswolds National Landscape is located, at its closest points, c. 19km, arching to the north and west of the site. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape is located c. 23km to the south of the Cricklade.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 2.12 The site and its surrounding area has been broadly assessed on a national level and more specifically examined on a county and local level.

National Character Assessment

- 2.13 At a national level the site falls within National Character Area 108: Upper Thames Clay Vale.
- 2.14 This NCA is described as “a broad belt of open, gently undulating lowland farmland... [with] contrasting landscapes, including enclosed pastures of the claylands with wet valleys, mixed farming, hedges, hedge trees and

field trees and more settled, open, arable lands. Mature field oaks give a parkland feel in many places.” (Natural England, 2025).

Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.15 At a county level, the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005) locates the site and the surrounding area within landscape character type 12: Open Clay Vale. This LCA occurs over two different areas of land within Wiltshire, and so is split into two landscape character areas, of which the site sits within LCA 12A: Thames Open Clay Vale.
- 2.16 The main characteristics of this landscape area are:
- Low lying area centred on the River Thames and its floodplain
 - Largely tranquil, rural landscape, predominantly level, with vertical elements of lines of willow and other wetland trees
 - Agricultural use of the area combines arable and wet pasture, with open water ditches as well as hedgerows defining boundaries
 - Field patterns vary from small and irregular to larger, geometric fields often in arable use on dryer or drained gravel areas
 - Large extent of open water resulting from gravel extraction – now the Cotswold Water Park – with varied vegetation making them of national significance as scarce marl waters (Cotswold Water Park SSSI)
 - Numerous hay meadows of high ecological interest
 - Strong presence of water – rivers, tributaries, drainage ditches with frequent lines of willows and other wetland vegetation

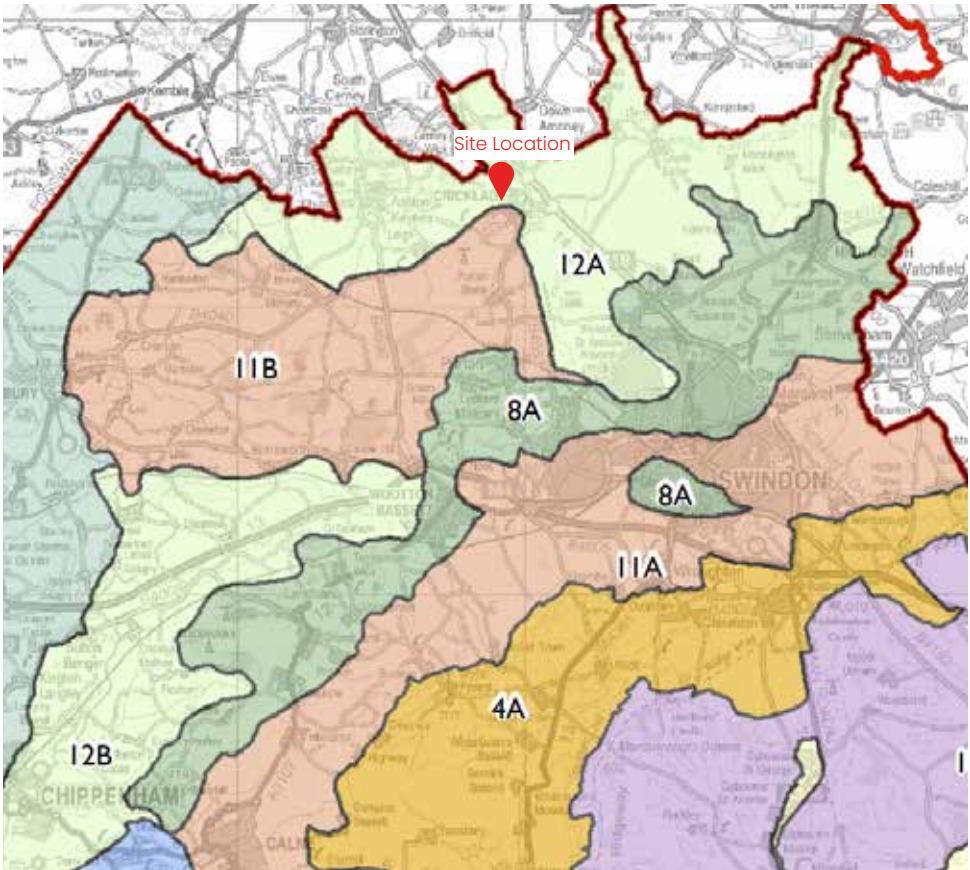


Figure 2.1: Map extract from the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment



Figure 2.2 : Map extract from the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment

- Sparsely populated landscape, with a few small settlements such as Ashton Keynes and the town of Cricklade, but mainly scattered isolated farmsteads; vernacular building materials are brick and stone
- The Roman Ermine Way/A419 runs through the area but most roads are minor rural routes with small bridges crossing the numerous waterways and ditches.

North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment

- 2.17 At a local level the site is characterised by the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2004). In this assessment, the site and its immediate surroundings are located in Landscape Character Area 2: Thames Valley Lowland. The Landscape Character Type associated with this character area is Lowland Clay Farmland.
- 2.18 The Lowland Clay Farmland landscape character type is described as 'A gently undulating lowland landscape on heavy clay soils forming a transition between the valley bottom and higher ground. Mixed farming and a dispersed settlement pattern enclosed by hedges with trees. Watercourses influence lower lying areas.'
- 2.19 The main characteristics of the Thames Valley Lowland landscape character area are:
- Low, level or undulating ground at between 85m and 100m AOD, on Oxford clay or alluvial deposits
 - Wetland features on the lower ground, including open water ditches and mature willows
 - Continuous hedges with many mature oak and ash, although sparser tree cover in the east, close to the River Thames
 - Field sizes varying from small and irregular, to medium sized and regular shaped enclosures

- Predominantly pasture, with some arable, of which some is ridge and furrow patterns
- Dispersed or nucleated settlements on higher ground, within a largely pastoral landscape
- Strong local character with buildings of stone and local brick, although this begins to break down in the southern approaches to Purton
- A general absence of woodland, with the exception of a few smaller woodlands in the east of the area
- Some wetland and meadow habitats of nature conservation interest
- Generally contained views but with longer views and a sense of containment by high ground to the south, and some wide views over the Thames floodplain.

2.20 In terms of landscape sensitivity of the character area, the assessment notes 'Whilst most of this area is relatively intact in its distinctive landscape elements, some areas have lost defining features such as hedgerow trees, and close to Purton, there is evidence of new land uses which are typical of the urban fringe. These two issues – the loss of hedgerows and mature trees, and encroaching urban fringe land uses – are the main threats to the character of the landscape in this area.'

2.21 It goes on to say 'The landscape is therefore vulnerable to change either through cumulative small scale development which over time will change the area's character or through larger scale developments which have a more obvious immediate effect. The majority of the area has an essentially rural, agricultural character within which only small-scale, sensitively designed development, appropriately associated with existing built form, could be successfully accommodated without adverse landscape impacts. The area is not highly visible, being a quiet rural hinterland, but the railway line, the A419 and local traffic on B roads through the area, open

the area up to views for many'. It also highlights the importance of the continuous hedgerows and mature trees as key characteristics to conserve and enhance.

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

2.22 A number of the key characteristics as identified by the North Wiltshire Character Assessment are reflected within the site and immediate surroundings. These include the low lying, undulating ground, continuous hedges, varying sized pastoral fields, and generally contained views as well as the numerous wetland features, including watercourses lined with willows, varying field sizes and shapes and a general absence of woodland.

2.23 The key characteristics of the local landscape are considered to be:

- low lying, flat to gently undulating, predominantly wet pasture with some arable land,
- wetland features, including small watercourses, ditches, lined with mature willows; extensive areas of open water,
- continuous hedges forming field boundaries and containing views to some extent, in conjunction with variations in topography,
- small, nucleated settlements and scattered farmsteads, beyond the settlement boundary of Cricklade,
- general absence of woodland blocks; hedgerow trees at field boundaries and occasional tree belts and trees within fields.

2.24 In addition to the above characteristics, the site itself is also characterised by its location on the edge of Cricklade, with residential properties of a variety of sizes and styles visible to the site's eastern boundary, along with Cricklade Leisure Centre, as well as the property at the south western corner of the site.

SURROUNDING CONTEXT

Land Use & Development

- 2.25 Mixed farmland is the primary land use within the surrounding area, particularly to the west of the site. There are large areas of open water c.1.5km to the north west, which are part of the Cotswolds Water Park, comprising around 180 lakes with various recreational and leisure uses as well as nature reserves.
- 2.26 The site itself and immediate environment is not covered by any relevant statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.
- 2.27 North Meadow, which is a National Nature Reserve (NNR), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), designated for its wildflower meadows lies c. 500m to the north east of the site.
- 2.28 As a result of the proximity of the site to the North Meadows SAC, provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG), as per Natural England requirements, will be required for any proposed residential development of the site.
- 2.29 To the north, west and south of the site the landscape comprises mainly small to medium sized, low lying, flat to gently undulating agricultural fields typically bounded by hedgerows. The landscape is punctuated by individual farmsteads, a hotel, golf course and individual and small clusters of properties.
- 2.30 Across the surrounding area are numerous smaller settlements, including Cerney Wick, Ashton Keynes, Latton, Calcutt and Purton Stoke, along with individual farms and farmsteads. The town of Cirencester is located c.14km to the north west of the site, and Swindon is located c.16km to the south east of the site.
- 2.31 The site is located some 250m east of the closest designated heritage asset, the Grade II Listed Hailstone

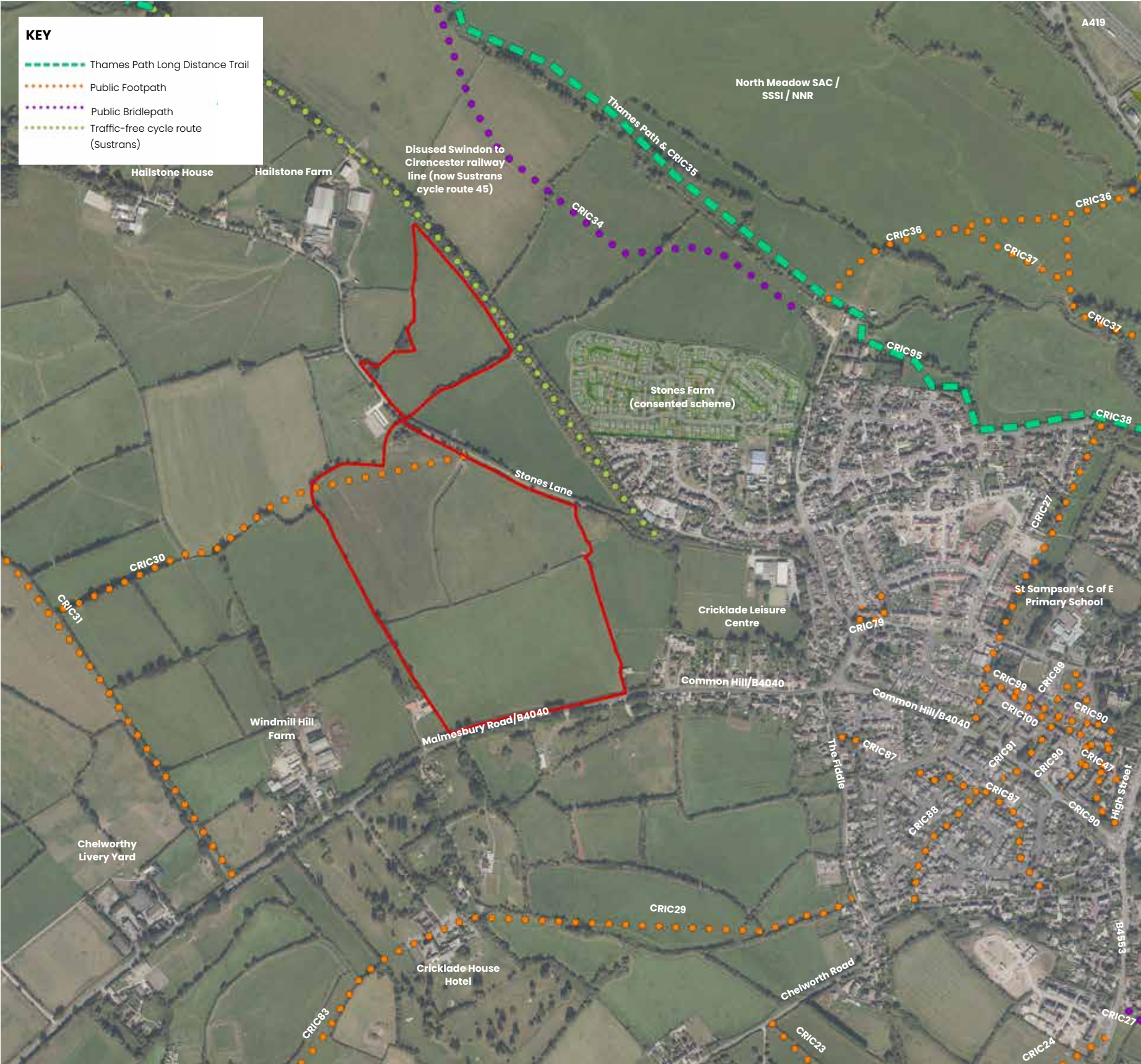


Figure 2.3: Aerial of the Site and Surrounding Context

Farmhouse, and some 600m west of the Cricklade Town Banks which forms part of a group of assets largely, though not exclusively, within Cricklade Conservation Area.

- 2.32 The town of Cricklade, on the edge of which the site is located, comprises primarily residential properties of a variety of styles and ages, typically two storey detached or semi-detached properties. There are several newer developments in Cricklade, such as Hitchings and Stockham Close, which are generally built in keeping with the Conservation Area.
- 2.33 Within the town are numerous amenities, such as Cricklade Leisure Centre, a post office, and variety of shops on the high street. There are also a number of schools located within the town, including St. Sampson's CE Primary School, Meadow Bridge Special Education School and Cricklade Manor Preparatory School.
- 2.34 Cricklade Surgery and Cricklade Dental Practice are located along the High Street, and other community facilities include Cricklade Jenner Parish Hall, Cricklade Museum and Cricklade Rugby Pitch.
- 2.35 Chelworth Industrial Estate sits to the south west of the site and Eysey Manor Quarry sits to the north east, across the A419.
- 2.36 Beyond the site immediately to the east, lies a small agricultural field that has a current planning application under determination, by Bloor Home Developments for up to 70 dwellings. To the east of the northern parcel of the site, across national Cycle Route 45, an application has been granted at Stones Farm for up to 140 dwellings by Newland Homes.

Access and Infrastructure

- 2.37 The larger part of the site is bound by Stones Lane to the north, and the B4040/Malmesbury Road to the south. The

B4040 connects to the A429 in the west – the main route between Cirencester and Malmesbury.

- 2.38 The B4553 runs north-south through Cricklade, connecting into the high street which joins the A419, the main route between Cirencester and Swindon, as does Calcutt Street, branching east-west off the high street.
- 2.39 The A419 connects to the M4 via junction 15, allowing connections into the wider road network and to larger urban areas such as Bristol, Reading and the wider M4 corridor.
- 2.40 A network of minor roads cross the surrounding countryside, linking the A419, A429 and M4, and connecting various farmsteads and villages.
- 2.41 The Golden Valley railway lines from Swindon to Gloucester passes c.6km to the north east of the site, with the closest stations being either Kemble to the north east or Swindon to the south east.
- 2.42 The site and the area surrounding is crossed by numerous Public Rights of Way (PRoW), as shown on Figure 2.3. Footpath CRIC30 runs through the site, west from Stones Lane, across the north of the larger part of the site to join footpath CRIC31.
- 2.43 Numerous footpaths pass through the surrounding area, many within the urban area of Cricklade, and include:
- footpath CRIC31 runs north from Malmesbury Road, just west of Windmill Farm, to join bridlepath CRIC32 west of Hailstone House, to the west of the site;
 - bridlepath CRIC34 runs from the northern tip of North Meadow SSSI down its east side, crosses to the west side of the River Thames and then connects into Cricklade;
 - footpath CRIC38, which forms part of the Thames Path long distance route, runs along the River Thames to the north east of the site;

- footpath CRIC29 runs west from The Fiddle, into CRIC83 which connects just to the minor road running between Cross Roads Farm and Cowleaze Farm;
- Sustrans route 45 runs along the disused railway to the north east of the site, passing along the site's north eastern boundary;
- Numerous other small footpaths cover short stretches within Cricklade.

Topography

- 2.44 The topography of the site and surrounding area is generally low lying and gently undulating; however, there are two hills to the west of the site; Common Hill at 114m AOD where Windmill Farm sits, and Hailstone Hill, where Hailstone House sits at 100m AOD.
- 2.45 The lands slopes down to the west of these hills towards the Cotswolds Water Park, and to the north-east towards the North Meadow Nature Reserve. Both areas are characterised by large areas of standing water or seasonal flooding due to the low-lying nature of the land.
- 2.46 The town of Cricklade also sits lower than the site, following the area's general topography and sloping gently away from the two hills, at around 87m AOD at the western edge of the town to 78m AOD at the eastern edge.

Vegetation

- 2.47 Vegetation within the area surrounding the site primarily comprises a mix of grassland, where fields are pasture land, hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees, and lines of willow/wet woodland species along watercourses and ditches. Woodland is limited to areas surrounding water bodies at the Cotswold Water Park, and more extensive areas at Farfield Lane to the south-east of Cricklade.

Water Features

2.48 The River Thames flows just north of the site, adjacent to the North Meadow SSSI, and south of the large areas of open water at the Cotswolds Water Park to the north west of the site. The River Key flows just south east of Cricklade, and there are numerous small tributaries and ditches across the surrounding landscape.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.49 The site is located on the western edge of the town of Cricklade in Wiltshire, to the west of Cricklade Leisure Centre, and north of Malmesbury Road/B4040.
- 2.50 The site covers c.20.7 ha comprising four medium pastoral fields, three of which are located between Stones Lane to the north and the B4040 Common Hill / Malmesbury Road to the south, on the western edge of the town of Cricklade in North Wiltshire. One further field is located on the northern side of Stones Lane.
- 2.51 A disused railway sits to the north east of the site and forms Sustrans route 45 of the National Cycle Network which runs between Chester and Salisbury via Swindon.
- 2.52 The area of Cricklade to the east of the site, with the exception of the leisure centre, is mainly residential. There is also a new build dwelling at Common Hill Farm which is located on high ground, just beyond the south western corner of the site, north of the B4040, and thus is afforded views across the site. Beyond this is a small industrial estate and livery yard to the north of Malmesbury Road, and the Cricklade House Hotel to the south.
- 2.53 The site primarily comprises of a mix of hedgerows, and grassland with some incidental hedgerow trees. Continuous hedgerows with a number of hedgerow trees define the four fields of the site, other than along the north western boundary of the northernmost field. This boundary is defined by a much denser belt of trees,

Site Photos



View looking towards properties at the edge of Cricklade from Malmesbury Road, across the proposed Bloor development site



View looking west from south-eastern corner of site towards property on Common Hill



View looking north west towards Hailstone Hill from footpath CRIC30

associated with the former railway line. The majority of trees within and bounding the site are ash, with some oak and field maple, in varying degrees of health, with a number of the ash suffering from die-back. Hedgerows include a mix of elm, hawthorn, blackthorn, elder and rose.

- 2.54 A BS5837 tree survey has been undertaken for the site (refer to Tree Survey Report by SJA), which has assessed the majority of the site's trees and hedgerows was being Cat. C, with some Cat. B.
- 2.55 The site's hedgerows in conjunction with the occasional, hedgerow trees, and topography, add to the sense of enclosure of the site, particularly the lower lying parts of the site, and limit the visibility of the site. The hedgerows are composed of a mixture of native species, including hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, rose and field maple.
- 2.56 Within the site, the primary vegetation feature is grassland, largely used for grazing. The entire site sits on primarily Oxford Clay which functionally only supports permanent pasture. This is the primary land use within the surrounding farmland.
- 2.57 The site slopes gently from south-west down to the north-east, with the highest part of the site being located in the south-western corner of the site, at around 108m AOD. The lowest part of the site is located along the site's eastern boundary at around 85m AOD.
- 2.58 Two low voltage overhead electricity lines cross the site, one running north to south along the site's eastern edge, and one running north-west to south-east across the site's south eastern corner. A gas pipeline also runs north to south along the site's eastern boundary.
- 2.59 There is vehicular access via gated field openings onto Malmesbury Road/ the B4040 and Stones Lane.
- 2.60 The CRIC30 public footpath crosses the northern tip of the larger part of the site, running east-west from Stones



Figure 2.4: Site Features Plan

Lane across the site and adjacent fields to the west, until it connects to footpath CRIC31 which runs north-south from Malmesbury Road to just west of Hailstone House.

2.61 The Sustrans Cycle Route 45, which runs along the former Swindon to Cirencester railway line, is located along the north-eastern boundary of the northernmost field.

2.62 A small water course runs along the western edge of the northern most field, with Hailstone Farm located just beyond.

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03 Proposed Development

3.0 Proposed Development & Landscape Strategy

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposals are described as 'Outline planning permission for up to 315 dwellings with associated access and infrastructure including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. All matters are reserved except for access.'
- 3.2 The proposed development will deliver up to 315 new homes in a sustainable location on the western edge of Cricklade. Including:
- A mix of market and affordable housing, with 40% affordable provision
 - Formal and information public open space including a LEAP and natural play space.
 - Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)
 - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10% will be delivered on site.
 - Access to the south form Common Hill / Malmesbury Road, with pedestrian and cycle connectivity
 - Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG).
- 3.3 There has been a strong landscape led approach to the development of the proposals, which has followed an iterative design process, and is set out within the separate Design and Access Statement, and the remainder of this section.
- 3.4 Figure 3.1 sets out the land use and storey heights parameters upon which the landscape and visual assessment has been undertaken. The development will primarily comprise two storey dwellings with 2.5 storeys proposed in key locations.
- 3.5 The overall application area is considered to be of medium scale within the local context. Of the c. 20.7ha site area, c. 60% of the site is proposed as green infrastructure, with the development area covering an area of c. 7.9ha.



Figure 3.1 :Storey Height Parameter Plan (dwg ref 10542-RL-XX-00-DR-MP-0004)

LANDSCAPE CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

3.6 Following site visits in both summer and winter, and review of the baseline information, several landscape constraints and opportunities, both in landscape character and visual amenity terms, have been identified. These are set out below and illustrated on Figure 3.2.

3.7 The landscape character opportunities and constraints are considered to be:

- The site lies in close proximity to the town of Cricklade, and there are a number of residential properties and farmsteads in the immediate surrounding area, resulting in any development of a residential nature not being out of keeping with the characteristics of the wider landscape.
- The gentle increase in elevation and overall low-lying nature of the site, in conjunction with the existing trees and hedgerows, means that it is generally well enclosed.
- The tree belts and hedgerows associated with the site should largely be maintained, conserved and enhanced, as an identified key characteristic of the site and surrounding area, and to protect the visual enclosure of the site.
- Opportunity to mitigate for the loss of trees due to ash die back with supplementary planting.
- Public footpath CRIC30 which runs through the site should be integrated into any proposals.
- The gently sloping nature of the site offers opportunities for swales and ponds as part of sustainable drainage and habitat creation, adding to the wetland character of the wider landscape.
- Opportunities to enhance the existing grassland diversity of the site.
- Opportunities for SANG creation as part of any proposed development, which would be best located within the more northern and western parts of the site, due to the

increased distance from existing built form / urbanising influences, and more rural character of these parts of the site.

- Opportunities to provide a variety of recreational opportunities across the site, including new footpath routes. However links into the Sustrans 45 route can not be provided in order to ensure additional recreational pressures are not put on the North Meadows SAC.
 - The local vernacular associated with the town of Cricklade should be considered so that any development would sit within the context of the wider landscape and developments.
- 3.8 The landscape opportunities and constraints of the site in terms of visual amenity are considered to be:
- The gentle increase in elevation and overall low-lying nature of the site, in conjunction with the existing trees and hedgerow network, serves to limit visibility of the site when viewed from the more open, low-lying landscape to the north east.
 - The south western parts of the site are considered to be more visually sensitive due to the increased elevation, proximity of adjacent property which has direct views into the site, and views offered from Malmesbury Road/ the B4040.
 - The western edge of the site is also considered to be more visually sensitive due to the surrounding context of fairly open rural land.
 - Consideration will need to be given to the visual impact on views from the public footpath CRIC30 which crosses through the northern corner of the larger part of the site, from Stones Lane west towards where it joins footpath CRIC31 in an adjacent field, which also affords views of the site. This will require appropriate mitigation measures such as additional tree and hedgerow planting and appropriate siting of the proposed development.

- Development should be set back from the public footpath which crosses the site, with the footpath to be retained and set within a green corridor / open space in order to limit visual impacts.
- The parts of the site located closest to the existing residential development are considered the least visually sensitivity due to visual influence of the adjacent built form, which will be heightened if the Bloor development is built out. The higher, western parts of the site are considered to be more visually sensitive so should be considered for open space, sustainable drainage and biodiversity improvements as part of a green and blue infrastructure strategy.
- Consideration will need to be given to the boundary treatments, planting and distances of any proposed development to the existing property at the south western corner of the site, and any proposed properties located along the eastern boundary adjacent to the proposed Bloor development. Boundary treatments should also be considered where Sustrans Cycle Route 45, Stones Lane and Malmesbury Road are adjacent to site boundaries.
- The site's existing trees and hedgerows filter and soften views of the site. The hedgerows and hedgerow trees within the site would serve to break up any proposed development. These features should therefore be retained in order to limit impact on visual amenity and help assimilate any development into the landscape.
- Additional tree planting within the existing hedgerows offers the opportunity to both soften views of any proposed development, and reinforce a key landscape characteristic of the site.



Figure 3.2 : Landscape Constraints and Opportunities

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

- 3.9 Following the identification of the site's landscape and visual constraints and opportunities in the context of residential development, a landscape strategy for the site has been developed, which is presented in Figure 3.3: Landscape Masterplan.
- 3.10 As set out on the Landscape Masterplan, over 60% of the site is proposed for green infrastructure. This has provided the opportunity to set the development within a strong green framework and retain the majority of the site's existing key landscape features.
- 3.11 The landscape proposals can be split into the following key areas:

SANG & Play Space

- Area of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG), with walking routes (1.6km), wildflower meadows, native tree and scrub planting, wetland basin and new and enhanced woodland buffer planting, in line with the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm SAC Mitigation Strategy.
- An equipped play space, naturalistic in style, sits at the entrance to the development from B4040.

Wetlands

- Creation of wetlands as part of the sustainable drainage system, which includes areas of permanent water, with footpaths, grassland and native tree planting.

Green Corridors & Natural Green Space

- Extensive green corridors and natural green space, focused around retained hedgerows, with the creation of a strong landscape buffer along the western boundary of the site, and the most visually sensitive part of the site. Will include incidental natural play opportunities which will form a play trail around the site.
- New meadow grasslands, footpaths, native tree and woodland planting are proposed.

Amenity Space

- Provision of informal amenity space throughout the development, with a kickabout space proposed within the flatter, south eastern part of the site.

Allotments & Community Orchard

- Provision of allotments in the south eastern corner of the site.
- Creation of a community orchard as part of the natural green space within the south western part of the site.

3.12 The proposals meet and exceed the requirements of the Wiltshire Open Space Standards as set out below;

Type	Quality Standard ha/1000 population	Requirement (ha)	Provision (ha)
Allotments*	0.25	0.19	0.19
Amenity Green Space	0.9	0.68	1.90
Parks and Recreation Grounds	1.1	0.83	
Play (children)	0.25	0.19	0.42
Play (youth)	0.3	0.23	
Natural Green Space	1.8	1.36	9.9
TOTAL		3.48	12.4

* Allotments are proposed as allotments & community orchard

3.13 The key landscape and green infrastructure strategy aims for the site are summarised below:

- Retention and enhancement of the site’s existing mature trees and hedgerows, as they are an important feature of the site. Their retention also serves to retain the sense of enclosure afforded to the site and help mitigate potential visual effects;
- Integration of the internal hedgerows as green corridors, offering both ecological and recreational connectivity, and serving to break up and soften views of the proposed development;
- The built form is focused on the lower parts of the site, in order to reduce effects on both landscape character and visual amenity;
- New planting proposed across the site, including new trees, woodland and native scrub in order to reinforce key landscape characteristics, soften views and help assimilate any proposed development into the landscape. Trees to be planted as heavy to extra heavy standards, and the scrub and woodland as a mix of whips, feathered and standard stock;
- New woodland buffer planting to the western site boundary to mitigate landscape impacts the more rural edge of the development;
- Introduction of new habitats, and enhancement of existing within the site, through measures such as grassland improvements, introduction of water features and new trees and scrub planting, as part of biodiversity improvements in line with the Wiltshire Biodiversity Net Gain policy;
- Integration of the existing public footpath into the proposed development, and setting it within open space in order to limit visual impacts;
- Opportunities for new recreational opportunities across the site such as new footpath and cycle links, informal open space and play in line with the Wiltshire Open Space standards.



Figure 3.3 : Landscape Masterplan

04 Landscape Effects

4.0 Landscape Effects

LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

4.1 In the context of the proposals described within the previous chapter, this section sets out an assessment of the likely physical landscape effects upon the site in respect of its component elements and features (each of which are treated as a landscape receptor in their own right) and the anticipated landscape effects upon the character of the site and the wider area as expressed in the published landscape character assessments.

Likely causes of effects

4.2 Although any landscape has some intrinsic sensitivity, different landscapes contain a range of components which will respond differently to change, subject to the type and nature of the proposals. Therefore, in order to inform the analysis of effects, judgements should be made with reference to the specific changes which arise from the type and nature of proposals being considered.

4.3 The following section sets out the likely causes of effects which would occur in relation to the proposals for the site.

Causes of temporary effects during construction

4.4 The temporary construction work which may give rise to effects on landscape and visual receptors are listed as follows:

- Site clearance and setting out;
- Movement and presence of associated construction vehicles;
- Presence of materials storage and machinery storage on site during construction;
- Reprofiting internally for new site entrance, housing footprints, parking areas and access;
- Tree protection measures (Heras barriers) will be erected prior to site construction works as required.

4.5 All of these measures will be temporary in nature.

Causes of effects at completion

4.6 The permanent components of the proposals which may give rise to effects on landscape and visual receptors are listed as follows;

- Construction of new residential properties;
- Construction of new entrance, access roads and parking areas;
- Installation of the drainage and SUDS;
- Creation of the SANG; and
- Installations of planting proposals and landscaping integrated into the development proposals (e.g. trees, shrubs, grassland areas, native structure/hedgerow planting).

4.7 Effects at completion are concerned with the long-term alteration in the landscape from the current site context, to the future scenario with the proposals in place. The works associated with the proposed residential scheme including planting will have been completed and will be a permanent component in the landscape.

4.8 In the long term, impacts will be associated with the influence of mitigation measures upon landscape character. This establishes the changes to landscape character as a result of proposed mitigation measures/ planting fully established and performing their intended function. The effects are considered to be long term and not reversible.

4.9 In terms of physical landscape resources, the direct changes will be restricted to the site only.

4.10 Overall, the physical landscape impacts are considered to be direct and will be limited to the extent of the site, and site access arrangements. There will be no additional

direct impacts on the wider areas around the site or to the wider landscape context of the local character area.

EFFECTS UPON LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

4.11 This section assesses the effect of the proposals on the elements and features that currently characterise the site.

4.12 In the following paragraphs effects will be assessed at;

- Year 1 - when built form has been completed, and any earthworks and landscape has been installed (but not yet established or grown); and
- Year 15 - When sufficient time has gone by to allow the built form elements to have weathered, and for any landscaping interventions such as trees, shrubs and grassland etc to have established, and grown sufficiently to provide any screening, filtering, landscape/ecological enhancements.

4.13 NB - for the purposes of this LVIA, a growth rate of between 0.3m and 0.5m per annum for newly implemented shrub and hedgerow planting has been allowed for.

LANDSCAPE RESOURCE

4.14 A key part of the assessment of effects on the landscape relates to the landscape features which make up, individually and jointly, part of the landscape character of the site.

4.15 The provision of additional landscape features, as is often the case with residential developments on greenfield sites, is likely to provide benefits to varying degrees. This is the case for this proposed development, notably with the addition of native scrub and woodland buffer planting, individual trees, improved grassland and SUDS wetland features.

4.16 The North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment for

the Thames Valley Lowland LCA notes the importance of hedgerows and mature trees to maintaining the landscape character, highlighting the significance of retaining these landscape features.

4.17 The development proposals seek to retain almost all of the site's existing landscape features, namely the existing trees and hedgerows, the public footpath, a large extent of the grassland in the smaller, northern parcel of land, and topography.

4.18 In addition, a significant amount of new planting of varying types is proposed, along with the introduction of new features, such as SUDs wetland features and areas of native scrub and woodland buffer planting. These increase the landscape resource of the site, are in keeping with the characteristics of the area, respond to the aims of the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, and offer biodiversity enhancements.

4.19 As demonstrated by the BNG assessment for the proposals, the landscape enhancements put forward for the site would deliver a biodiversity net gain of 18.49% in terms of habitat units and 17.51% for hedgerow units.

4.20 Figure 4.1 summarises the likely effects on the landscape features of the site.

Feature	Sensitivity	Change	Effect (beneficial / adverse)
Topography	Medium	Gently sloping site likely to be slightly adjusted to create building platforms, roads and SUDs features. Majority of proposed residential development is located on the lower and more gently sloping / flatter parts of the site, limiting the changes needed to topography.	Neutral
Hedgerows	Medium	The majority of the site's hedgerows will be retained, with only some minor loss to facilitate road and footpath access, and incorporated into green corridors within the proposed layout. Improved management and supplementary planting would improve the current condition of the hedgerows.	Neutral
Trees	Medium	The existing trees are to be retained and incorporated into the proposed layout. In addition a significant amount of new tree planting is proposed, as scattered planting through the proposed open space.	Beneficial
Native woodland buffer planting	Medium	Proposed creation of areas of native woodland buffer planting to the western boundary, and the north eastern boundary of the northern parcel, which are locally characteristic within the lower lying part of the landscape associated with water features and former railway line.	Beneficial
Scrub	Low	Introduction of several new areas of mixed native scrub for biodiversity benefits.	Beneficial
Grassland	Low	Retention and enhancement of a large area of the site's existing grassland in the northern parcel. Variety of grassland types increased with the introduction of wildflower meadows and wetland meadows.	Beneficial
Public Access	High	Retention of the existing PROW running through the site, set within open space. Introduction of new footpath and cycle routes through the site. Additional pedestrian and cycle access points proposed.	Beneficial
Water Features	Medium	Introduction of new water features within the site, with the provision of SUDs basins, with the basins designed to hold a degree of permanent water for both aesthetic and wildlife benefits. This is locally characteristic within the lower lying part of the landscape.	Beneficial

Figure 4.1 : Effects on Landscape Features

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.21 The sensitivity of a particular landscape to a particular type of development is derived through a judgement based upon a landscape's susceptibility i.e.

"the ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences" and the landscape's 'value' i.e. "the relative value that is attached to different landscape by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons".

4.22 The landscape value and landscape susceptibility to the type of development proposed is discussed below for both the North Wiltshire LCA 2: Thames Valley Lowland (as the most relevant published assessment to the proposed development), and the local landscape character, in order to help determine the landscape sensitivity.

Landscape Value

4.23 The Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact (GLVIA 3) sets out at Box 5.1 a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. These factors include:

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity;
- Representativeness;
- Conservation Interests;
- Recreation Value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Associations.

Value of the LCA 2: Thames Valley Lowland:

4.24 The key characteristics of this LCA as identified by the North Wiltshire Character Assessment, relevant to this study area, are the low, level or undulating land, patchwork of irregular small to medium sized fields of mainly pasture, continuous hedges with mature oaks and ash. There are many wetland features and also dispersed villages, and some detractors including power lines and transport infrastructure.

4.25 It is generally a well-maintained, quiet pastoral landscape in fair condition. There are recreational opportunities across the area with a good network of public rights of way. North Meadow SSSI sits to the north east of the site.

4.26 Overall the Thames Valley Lowland LCA is considered to be of **medium landscape value**.

Value of the Local Landscape Character:

4.27 The local landscape shares a number of the key characteristics identified by the published landscape character assessment, including being strongly characterised by the low, level or undulating landform, mix of small to medium scale mainly pastoral fields and strong network of hedgerows with mature trees.

4.28 The local landscape is well accessed via a network of local roads which link a number of small settlements, and a good network of public rights of way.

4.29 The local landscape has a calm and settled feel to it, with a degree of tranquillity. The landscape is pleasant but unremarkable, and is generally in good condition and well maintained.

4.30 The site itself and immediate environs are also characterised by the town of Cricklade, which contains residential properties of a variety of sizes and styles, from the historic core of the village, to more modern developments. The properties on the western edge of the

village are visible beyond the site's eastern boundary. Several farmsteads and smaller settlements are scattered through the area.

4.31 Overall the local landscape is considered to be of **medium landscape value**.

Landscape Susceptibility

Susceptibility of LCA 2: Thames Valley Lowland:

4.32 As noted within the LCA description, the area could potentially accommodate 'small scale, sensitively designed development, appropriately associated with existing built form' without adverse landscape impacts. The area is noted as not being highly visible.

4.33 The scale of the landscape is considered to have a medium capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed, when sited in proximity to existing settlements, providing appropriate context for residential development. Built form and other detractors are present within the LCA.

4.34 There is the ability for existing landscape elements to be retained and further enhanced.

4.35 Overall the Thames Valley Lowland LCA is considered to be of **medium susceptibility** to the type and scale of development proposed.

Susceptibility of the Local Landscape Character:

4.36 The local landscape is of a medium scale with an existing presence of built form and small settlements. The strong hedgerow network with hedgerow trees provides the opportunity to site a development of an appropriate scale within a strong landscape framework whilst retaining and potentially reinforcing and enhancing the key landscape features.

4.37 Overall the local landscape character is considered to be of **medium susceptibility** to the type of development proposed.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.38 Overall from review of the landscape value and susceptibility of the Thames Valley Lowland LCA and the local landscape character, both are considered to be of **medium landscape sensitivity** to the type of development proposed.

Landscape Effects

LCA 2: Thames Valley Lowland:

- 4.39 In the scale and context of the LCA, the proposed development would form an extension to the town of Cricklade. The proposed development is located just beyond the existing western edge of the town, with existing residential properties located to the east of the site.
- 4.40 The proposed Bloor development would extend the built edge of Cricklade up to the eastern site boundary (subject to planning approval). The consented Stones Farm development to the north east of the site, would extend the presence of residential development in close proximity to the site.
- 4.41 The site forms a very small part of the wider LCA area. The main effect will be the change of part of the site (c.7.9ha of the c.20.7ha site area) from grassland to residential development. The site's key characteristics, the hedgerows and hedgerow trees, are to be retained. These existing key landscape features are to be reinforced and enhanced with an increased variety of grasslands, additional scattered tree planting, and the introduction of other landscape features, such as wetland areas, native woodland buffer planting and scrub, which are characteristic of the wider landscape.
- 4.42 The site is largely visually contained from the wider LCA by the surrounding existing built form, undulations in landform and vegetation. Its visibility is largely limited to its

immediate context and from some middle distance views to the north east of the site. It is considered the proposed development would only influence the landscape in the local context of the site, and not have a wider effect on the landscape character.

- 4.43 Overall the proposed development is considered to bring about a very minor alteration to the local landscape characteristics of the LCA which are not uncharacteristic within the surrounding landscape. Therefore it is considered there will be a **negligible** magnitude of change on this LCA.
- 4.44 With a medium landscape sensitivity and negligible magnitude of change, the proposed development is considered to bring about a **negligible adverse effect** on the Thames Valley Lowland at completion of the development, which is considered to remain negligible by year 15 as the proposed planting matures.

Local Landscape Character:

- 4.45 The proposed development covers an area of c.20.7ha, and c. 7.9ha (c.40%) of this is proposed for built development. The remaining c.60% of the site is proposed primarily for informal recreation, landscape and biodiversity enhancements.
- 4.46 A number of the key landscape characteristics of the site and surrounding area, namely the strong hedgerow network and hedgerow trees, along with wetland features have been acknowledged, and the proposals have sought to both protect and reinforce these key characteristics.
- 4.47 The number of dwellings proposed results in a development that is considered of medium scale within the local context. To reduce the impact of the scale of the development, the areas of built form within the site have been appropriately sited so that they are located away from the western part of the site and its rural edge, closer to the existing built form of Cricklade.

- 4.48 The development in terms of its architectural style is expected to respond to the character of the local context.
- 4.49 In addition to the built form, the development would introduce a degree of noise and movement into the site from the new residents, visitors and users of the open space and new recreational routes, reducing the current level of tranquillity within the site and immediate context.
- 4.50 In terms of lighting effects, the residential development will be subject to a lighting scheme that is consistent with lighting schemes for this type and scale of development. Light sources already exist in areas close to the site, specifically residential lighting, with which the proposed development will be consistent. The proposed development is not considered to generate significant lighting effects on landscape character.
- 4.51 As noted by the published LCA, 'small scale, sensitively designed development, appropriately associated with existing built form' could be accommodated without adverse landscape impacts. Whilst the proposed residential development is considered to be of medium scale, due to the adjacent residential land uses, and the siting of the development within a strong landscape framework on the lower parts of the site, the development will be visually well contained, limiting its influence on the character of the wider landscape. The local landscape also contains a variety of built form to the west of the site including farms, hotel and golf club, reducing the rural characteristics of the landscape.
- 4.52 The proposed development would bring about a notable change to the character of the site itself, but in the context of the local landscape, it is considered a partial alteration which is not uncharacteristic within the surrounding landscape.

4.53 It is considered all of the key characteristics of the local landscape will remain and prevail. Therefore it is considered there will be a **medium magnitude of change** on the local landscape character.

4.54 With a medium landscape sensitivity and medium magnitude of change, the proposed development is considered to bring about a **moderate adverse effect** on the local landscape character at completion of the development, which is considered to reduce to **low** by year 15 as the proposed planting and landscape setting matures.

05 Visual Effects

5.0 Visual Effects

- 5.1 A visual survey was undertaken in February 2026, when there was limited leaf cover. Photographs were taken on a bright sunny day. A number of representative viewpoints were selected from publicly accessible locations, as shown on Figure 5.1.
- 5.2 The site is located within a low, flat to gently undulating landscape, with a strong network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees creating varying degrees of visual enclosure within the local landscape. Views are generally short to middle distance, with longer distance views limited by the low lying topography and vegetation cover.
- 5.3 The presence of Cricklade, along with other urbanising influences and built form such as farmsteads, Cricklade House Hotel and golf course, and the local road network, results in a landscape with varying degrees of visual influence from existing built form and development.
- 5.4 The site itself is partially visually enclosed by the adjacent built form of Cricklade, generally limiting views out to the east. More open views are afforded to the west and north from the site, but are often filtered by intervening vegetation and topography.
- 5.5 The visibility of the site from the surrounding area varies, largely depending on the elevation and level of surrounding vegetation and topography. Typically, the views to the site from the east are limited due to the built form on the edge of Cricklade. Views from the west and north towards the site vary due to the elevation and degree of intervening landform and vegetation.
- 5.6 Consequently, the views are typically limited to short and occasional middle-distance views, either located within or immediately adjacent to the site, or from more open or elevated vantage points in the middle distance generally to the north of the site.
- 5.7 Viewpoints 1-6 and 9 demonstrate the nature of the views from short range viewpoints, located along Malmesbury

Road, Stones Lane and from public footpath CRIC30 within or in close proximity to the site.

- 5.8 Viewpoints 7, 8, 10 and 11 demonstrate medium range views from several locations along roads and footpaths to the north and east of the site. Viewpoints further west of the site were assessed and discounted due to the lack of visibility of the site due to the intervening land form and vegetation.
- 5.9 Due to the surrounding built form, undulating landform and intervening vegetation, the site was not considered to be readily discernible from longer distance viewpoints.

VISUAL EFFECTS

- 5.10 A detailed assessment has been undertaken for each of the representative viewpoints, which are presented on the following pages, and a summary table set out in Figure 5.2.
- 5.11 Visual impacts would occur during the construction period, at completion of the development and as the proposed planting matures.
- 5.12 Visual impacts arising from the temporary construction period include the initial site clearance and vehicle, plant and building activities associated with the construction of the dwellings and associated infrastructure. At completion the visual impacts would be the presence of built form on former pastoral fields, along with the new planting. Post completion the visual impacts would change as the proposed planting matures.
- 5.13 It is anticipated that the proposed trees would be planted as heavy to extra heavy standards, and the hedgerows, scrub and native buffer as a mix of whips, feathered and standard stock, with a growth rate of c.0.5m per year, assuming appropriate management and maintenance.

Views from the Public Right of Way Network

- 5.14 There are a range of views afforded of the proposed development from the local public right of way network.
- 5.15 These include footpaths within close proximity to the site, notably CRIC30 which passes through the site (Viewpoint 2), and through fields adjacent to it (Viewpoint 3). From footpath CRIC30 views of the development will be afforded. However, the proposed development is set away from the PROW, which, in combination with the retention of the existing hedgerows, extensive green infrastructure proposals, including new scrub and scattered tree planting, as well as wetland features, will soften views and limit impacts of the proposed development.
- 5.16 The National Cycle Route 45 is also within close proximity and affords views of the site. However, because the views are into the northern parcel of the site, views of built form are anticipated to be limited as this parcel is not proposed for development but for the creation of the SANG.
- 5.17 From footpaths to the north and east of the site such as CRIC34 and CRIC35, as well as the Thames Path (Viewpoint 10) medium range views of the proposed development are not anticipated to be afforded due to the intervening vegetation and the topography.

Views from the Local Highway Network

- 5.18 There are a range of views afforded of the proposed development from the local highway network, largely those in close proximity, due to the nature of the site being bound by Stones Lane and Malmesbury Road/B4040. From Stones Lane views are limited to field openings and otherwise restricted by the hedgerow boundary. Views from Malmesbury Road/B4040 offer short-mid distance views into the site which will be filtered to some extent by the hedgerow boundary and the topography.

- 5.19 Viewpoint 8 from Stones Lane is anticipated to offer glimpsed views of built form on the site in the middle distance, limited by intervening proposed vegetation at the north of the site, the set back nature of the development and the topography. Viewpoint 1 is anticipated to offer views of proposed built form as it is a short range view into the centre of the developed part of the site. However this is anticipated to be filtered to some extent by proposed scattered tree planting.
- 5.20 Viewpoint 4 from the B4040 is anticipated to afford glimpsed mid-distance views of proposed built form, set against existing built form at the edge of Cricklade, and viewed in conjunction with intervening existing and proposed vegetation. Viewpoint 5 affords a short range view into the site, with anticipated glimpsed views of built form beyond intervening proposed vegetation including scattered tree planting surrounding SUDS features and allotments in the south eastern corner of the site. Viewpoint 6 affords glimpsed middle-distance views of the site which are likely to be filtered by proposed tree planting and viewed in conjunction with existing built form at Common Hill Farm.

Views from the Settlement Edge / Adjacent Neighbours

- 5.21 There will be views of the proposed development from the property adjacent to the site at Common Hill Farm, and also from those at the western edge of Cricklade, as well as Cricklade Leisure Centre.
- 5.22 From the property at Common Hill Farm there will be short distance views of the proposed development, although the built form will be set back from the western boundary, with native woodland buffer planting, meaning the impacts will be reduced, especially as the proposed planting matures.

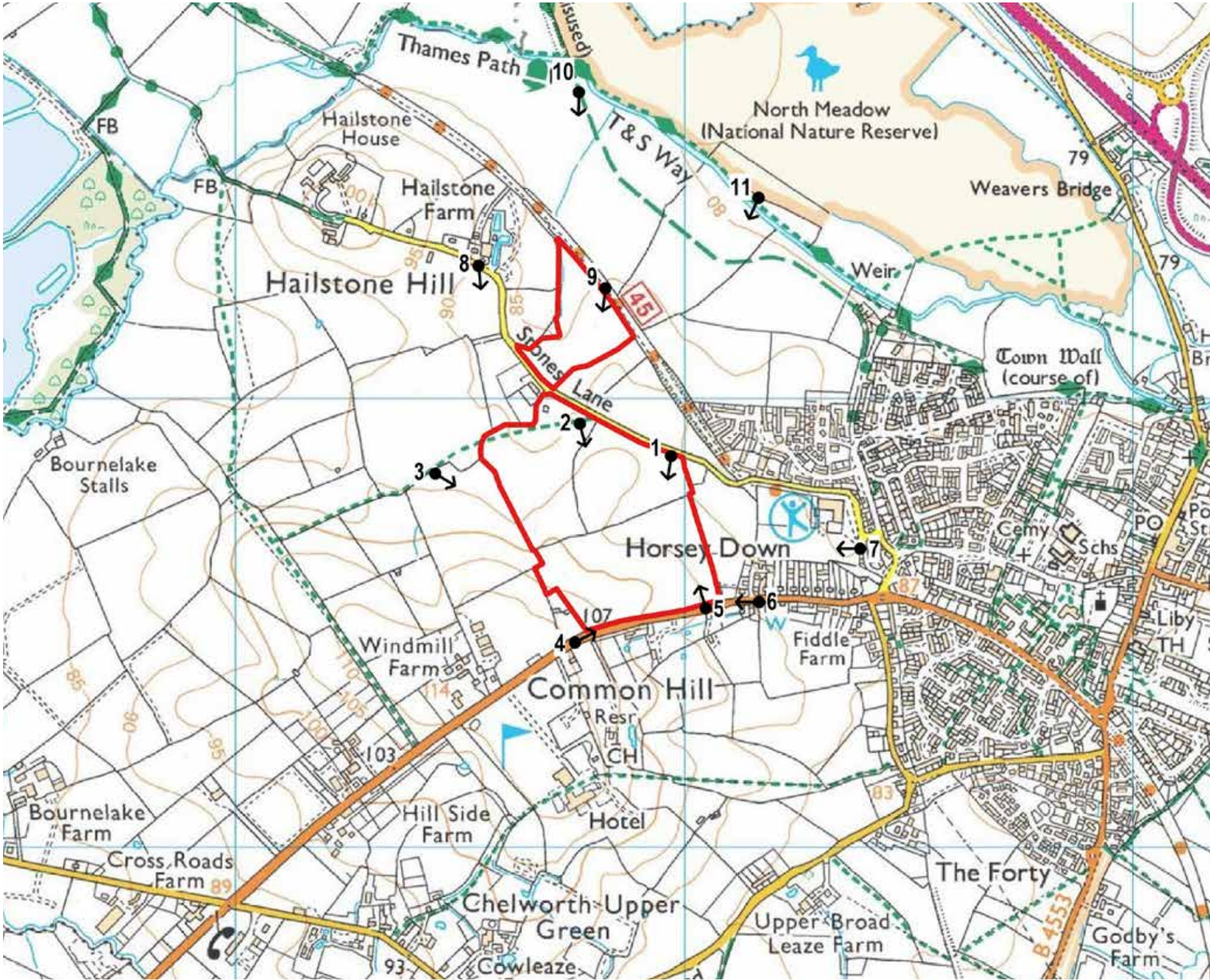


Figure 5.1 : Viewpoint Location Plan

View-point	Distance from Site	Direction from Site	Receptor	Value of View	Susceptibility of Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Visual Impact	Residual Impact
1	3m	South west	Road users and pedestrians	Low-medium	Medium	Medium	High	Major adverse	Moderate adverse
2	0m	South east	Footpath users	Medium	High	High	High	Major adverse	Major adverse
3	125m	South east	Footpath users	Medium	High	High	Low	Moderate adverse	Slight adverse
4	53m	North east	Road users	Low	Low	Low	Low	Slight adverse	Negligible adverse
5	16m	North west	Road users	Low	Low	Low	High	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
6	80m	West	Road users and pedestrians	Low	Medium	Medium	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse
7	335m	West	Footpath & sports ground users	Low	Medium	Medium	Negligible	Negligible / neutral	Negligible / neutral
8	380m	South	Road users and pedestrians	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Slight adverse	Negligible adverse
9	2m	South	Foot/cycle path users	Medium	High	High	Low - negligible	Slight adverse	Slight adverse
10	450m	South	Footpath users	Medium	High	High	No change	None	None

Figure 5.2 : Summary of Viewpoint Impacts

5.23 For those properties located at the western edge of Cricklade, views of the proposed development are anticipated to be limited due to intervening existing vegetation, fencing and the topography. The proposed Bloor development sitting between these properties and the site would further limit these views (if consented).

5.24 Views from Cricklade Leisure Centre are anticipated to be limited due to intervening vegetation, distance and the topography.

Summary of Visual Effects

5.25 The visual effects of the proposed development vary significantly depending on proximity to the development and the degree of screening afforded by existing landform and vegetation.

5.26 The greater visual effects will be from those areas in close proximity, primarily users of the local rights of way network running through the site and in the adjacent fields (Viewpoints 2 and 3). From these locations the

effects range from **major adverse** for the section of footpath running through the site, to **moderate adverse** as the footpath moves away from the site. These effects will reduce overtime as the proposed planting matures.

5.27 Close range viewpoints from Stones Lane and Malmesbury Road/B4040 (Viewpoints 1 and 5), will experience **major adverse** effects initially, reducing to **moderate adverse**.

5.28 From beyond the immediate vicinity of the site, the visual effects reduce to **slight adverse** to **none** as the development becomes an increasingly smaller scale feature, glimpsed through intervening vegetation. Views are often partly or fully restricted by a combination of landform and vegetation.

5.29 As the proposed planting matures, the development will become increasingly well assimilated into the landscape.



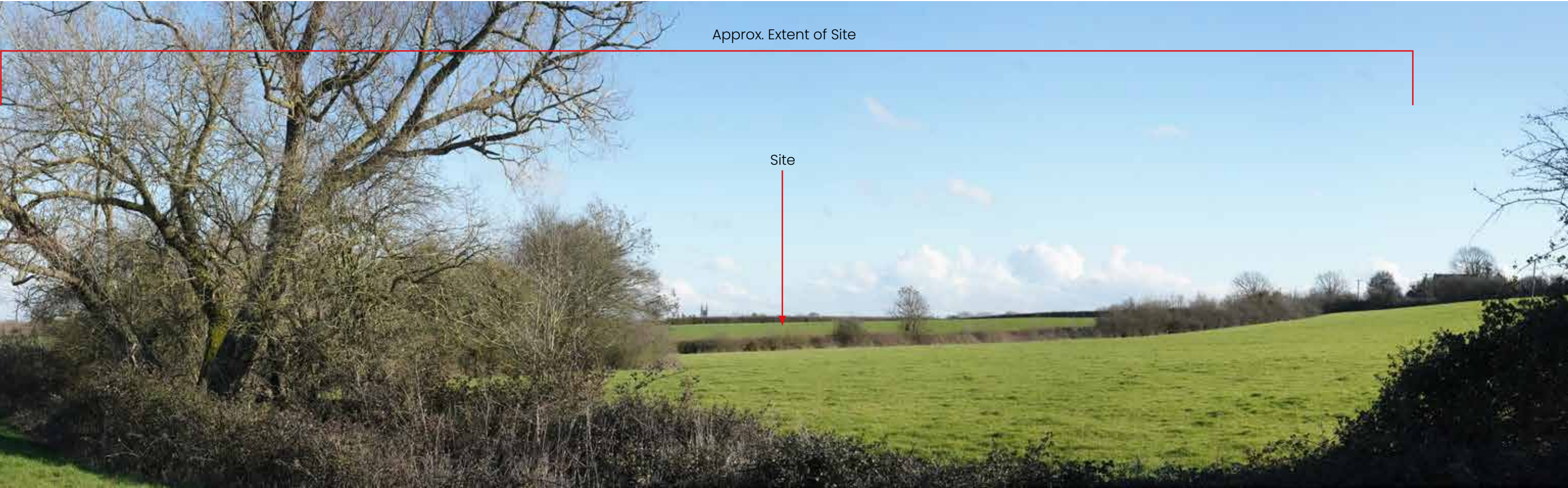
Viewpoint 1 – from Stones Lane looking south into the site

Time and Date:	13:58 04.02.26	Receptors	Road users and pedestrians along Stones Lane	Proposed View	View would look over the proposed open space comprising of SUDS basin, grassland, tree and native scrub planting, with the new properties visible beyond.
Distance to Site:	3m	Value of View	Low-medium – moderate scenic quality within undesignated landscape with some visual detractors		
Direction of View:	South west				
Camera:	Sony A7III Full Frame	Receptor Susceptibility	Medium – users travelling through the landscape on minor roads	Mitigation & Enhancement	Setting back of the development from Stones Lane, with area of open space in the foreground. Planting of trees and retention of existing hedgerow.
Focal Length:	50mm				
Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Receptor Sensitivity	Medium	Magnitude of Change	High – major addition of features and change to composition of view, with the proposed development prominent in the foreground of the view
Projection	Cylindrical	Existing View	View through existing field gate looking into the site. Gate framed by hedgerows which, in combination with other vegetation beyond, partly restrict the view. View looks over a pastoral field located to the north east of the larger parcel of the site, towards the hedgerows and hedgerow trees which sit within the site. Beyond this sits the property adjacent to the site at Common Hill Farm. In the middle distance, low voltage overhead lines cross the view.	Visual Impact at Year 1	Major adverse
				Residual Impact at Year 15	Moderate adverse – with the visual impact reduced as the proposed planting matures



Viewpoint 2 – from public footpath CRIC30, just west of Stones Lane looking south

Time and Date:	14:26 04.02.26	Receptors	Footpath users along CRIC30	Proposed View	Viewpoint would be located within the proposed SANG area, adjacent to the proposed SUDs basin, set within wildflower meadows with native scrub and tree planting. The proposed informal play space and surfaced footpaths would be in the immediate foreground of the view along with the retained existing hedgerow.
Distance to Site:	(Within site)	Value of View	Medium – unremarkable scenic quality within undesignated landscape		
Direction of View:	South east	Receptor Susceptibility	High – PROW users		
Camera:	Sony A7III Full Frame	Receptor Sensitivity	High		Beyond the hedgerow the frontages of new dwellings would be visible. Views of the dwellings would be filtered by proposed new trees.
Focal Length:	50mm	Existing View	View over pastoral field towards a field gate set between hedgerows which frame the view, in conjunction with mature trees to the left, limiting the view beyond into another pastoral field.	Mitigation & Enhancement	Retention of existing hedgerow and proposed scattered tree planting.
Visualisation Type:	Type 1			Magnitude of Change	High – major addition of features and change to composition of view, with the proposed development prominent in the foreground of the view
Projection	Cylindrical			Visual Impact at Year 1	Major adverse
				Residual Impact at Year 15	Major adverse – although the visual impact will reduce as the proposed planting matures, but not significantly



Viewpoint 3 – View from public footpath CRIC30 looking south-east toward the site

Time and Date:	14:39 04.02.26	Receptors	Footpath users	Proposed View	Filtered views of the upper parts of the proposed new dwellings would be visible in the middle distance beyond the hedgerow which forms the site boundary, and intervening proposed native buffer and scattered tree planting.
Distance to Site:	125m	Value of View	Medium – moderate scenic quality within undesignated landscape		
Direction of View:	South east				
Camera:	Sony A7III Full Frame	Receptor Susceptibility	High – users of PROW	Mitigation & Enhancement	Retention of existing trees and hedgerows. Setting back of the development beyond an area of public open space (SANG) featuring additional green infrastructure including new tree and native buffer planting.
Focal Length:	50mm	Receptor Sensitivity	High		
Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Existing View	View over hedgerow into an open pastoral field in the foreground. In the mid-distance another hedge forms the site boundary, beyond which is a pastoral field which is located within the north west of the site. Beyond the site, further vegetation is visible, and St Sampson’s Church is discernible in the distance.	Magnitude of Change	Low – moderate proportion of the view occupied by proposed development in the mid-distance.
Projection	Cylindrical		The view is framed by mature hedgerow trees in the foreground, partially limiting the view of the site in the mid-distance.	Visual Impact at Year 1	Moderate adverse
				Residual Impact at Year 15	Slight adverse – with the visual impact reduced as the proposed planting matures

Approx. Extent of Site



Viewpoint 4 - View from the B4040 by Common Hill Farm looking east

Time and Date:	12:29 04.02.26	Receptors	Road users	Proposed View	The proposed development would be visible in the middle distance beyond the hedgerow boundary which sits between the site and Malmesbury Road/B4040. The first floors and roofs of new dwellings anticipated be visible beyond the proposed native buffer and tree planting at the south-eastern corner of the site.
Distance to Site:	53m	Value of View	Low - unremarkable scenic quality within undesignated landscape, including visual detractors		
Direction of View:	North east				
Camera:	Sony A7III Full Frame	Receptor Susceptibility	Low - people travelling on B road		
Focal Length:	50mm	Receptor Sensitivity	Low	Mitigation & Enhancement	Retention of existing hedgerows. Setting back of the development from the western boundary. New scattered tree and native woodland buffer planting along the western boundary and tree planting to the southern boundary.
Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Existing View	View along Malmesbury Road/B4040 towards Cricklade, with properties at the western edge of the town discernible in the distance and vegetation beyond. Overhead wires and pole are visible in the mid-distance, across the road, which is bordered by dense hedgerow and mature trees which obscure much of the view.	Magnitude of Change	Low - moderate addition of features within the view, seen in conjunction with existing built form and filtered by existing and proposed planting.
Projection	Cylindrical			Visual Impact at Year 1	Slight adverse
				Residual Impact at Year 15	Negligible adverse - with the visual impact reduced as the proposed planting matures



Viewpoint 5 – View from the B4040 looking north into the site

Time and Date:	12:38 04.02.26	Receptors	Road users	Proposed View	The proposed development will be visible in the foreground of the view, set back from the south eastern corner by the provision of open space, which comprises play space, wildflower meadows and proposed tree planting, with the frontages of new dwellings visible beyond. New dwellings will also be visible along the site boundary which borders Malmesbury Road/B4040, partially limited by the retained existing hedgerow.
Distance to Site:	16m	Value of View	Low – unremarkable scenic quality within undesignated landscape and some visual detractors		
Direction of View:	North west				
Camera:	Sony A7III Full Frame	Receptor Susceptibility	Low – people travelling on B road		
Focal Length:	50mm	Receptor Sensitivity	Low		
Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Existing View	View across Malmesbury Road/B4040 towards hedgerow forming the site boundary in the foreground, including a field gate access point. Beyond this lies a pastoral field located within the south east of the site, crossed by overhead wires. Vegetation is discernible across the field in the distance, and the property at Common Hill Farm is visible to the left.	Magnitude of Change	High – major change in the composition of the view, affecting a major proportion of the view.
Projection	Cylindrical			Visual Impact at Year 1	Moderate adverse
				Residual Impact at Year 15	Moderate adverse – although the visual impact will reduce as the proposed planting matures, but not significantly



Viewpoint 6 – View along B4040 at junction with Horsey Down, looking west

Time and Date:	13:01 04.02.26	Receptors	Road users and pedestrians	Proposed View	New dwellings will be visible beyond proposed tree planting and allotments behind the existing retained hedgerow at the site boundary.
Distance to Site:	80m	Value of View	Low – unremarkable scenic quality within undesignated landscape, including some visual detractors		
Direction of View:	West				
Camera:	Sony A7III Full Frame	Receptor Susceptibility	Medium – pedestrians and people travelling on B road within residential area	Mitigation & Enhancement	Setting back of the proposed development from the south eastern corner of the site, retention of existing hedgerow and planting of new trees to south eastern corner and southern site boundary.
Focal Length:	50mm				
Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Receptor Sensitivity	Medium	Magnitude of Change	Negligible – minor change in composition of view and minor proportion of view affected
Projection	Cylindrical	Existing View	Properties at the western edge of Cricklade, along Malmesbury Road/B4040 and on Horsey Down, are visible in the foreground. Looking along the road towards the property at Common Hill Farm, the pastoral field forming the southern area of the site is visible beyond its hedgerow boundary in the mid-distance. Hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting comprise a large proportion of the foreground, sitting between the road and the properties on Horsey Down.	Visual Impact at Year 1	Negligible adverse
				Residual Impact at Year 15	Negligible adverse



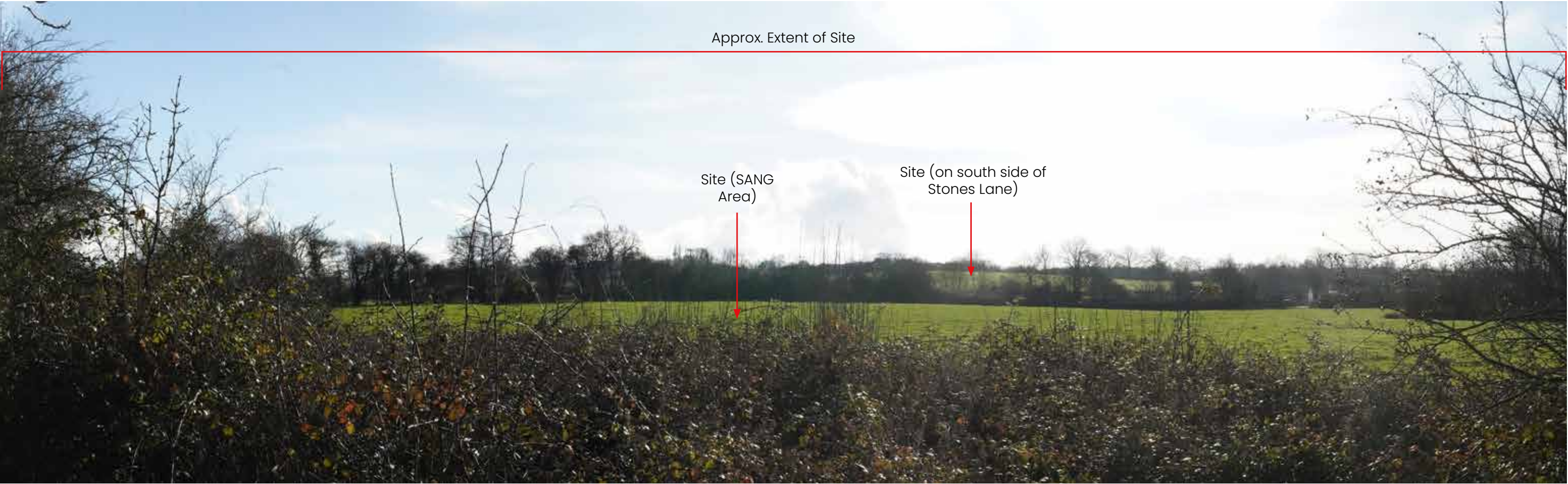
Viewpoint 7 – View from Cricklade Leisure Centre looking west

Time and Date:	13:13 04.02.26	Receptors	Footpath users and users of sports grounds at Cricklade Leisure Centre	Proposed View	View is anticipated to remain largely unchanged. The tops of rooftops of new dwellings may be visible beyond the hedgerow at the edge of the sports ground.
Distance to Site:	335m	Value of View	Low – unremarkable scenic quality within undesignated landscape with visual detractors		
Direction of View:	West				Proposed development would be screened by the Bloor development should it be consented.
Camera:	Sony A7III Full Frame	Receptor Susceptibility	Medium – people engaged in outdoor sporting activity		
Focal Length:	50mm	Receptor Sensitivity	Medium	Mitigation & Enhancement	Setting back of the residential development from the eastern boundary and proposed tree planting.
Visualisation Type:	Type 1			Magnitude of Change	Negligible – proposed development is anticipated to be either slightly or not at all visible
Projection	Cylindrical	Existing View	View across Cricklade Leisure Centre sports grounds towards hedgerow and mature hedgerow trees in the distance. Properties on Common Hill/B4040 discernible to the left beyond mature trees, hedgerows and fencing to rear gardens. The Leisure Centre building is just visible beyond the trees and car park in the foreground. The playground of the leisure centre is discernible behind the car park.	Visual Impact at Year 1	Negligible / neutral
				Residual Impact at Year 15	Negligible / neutral



Viewpoint 8 – View from Hailstone Farm along Stones Lane looking south

Time and Date:	14:58 04.02.16	Receptors	Road users and pedestrians	Proposed View	The proposed development will be visible in the middle distance, with views of new dwellings filtered by proposed scattered tree planting within an area of proposed open space (SANG) to the north of the site, including the retained existing hedgerow and proposed scrub planting.
Distance to Site:	380m	Value of View	Medium – moderate scenic quality within undesignated landscape		
Direction of View:	South				
Camera:	Sony A7III Full Frame	Receptor Susceptibility	Medium – users of minor road		
Focal Length:	50mm	Receptor Sensitivity	Medium	Mitigation & Enhancement	Setting back of the residential development to the south, behind an area of open space and part of the proposed SANG, including scattered tree planting and retention of existing hedgerows.
Visualisation Type:	Type 1			Magnitude of Change	Low – moderate addition of features in the view at mid-distance
Projection	Cylindrical	Existing View	View along Stones Lane with farm buildings to the left, and pastoral fields bound by hedgerows to the right. A field gate opening sits in the foreground of the view, between hedgerows that bound a pastoral field in the foreground. Beyond this field are numerous other pastoral fields, one of which is the site, visible in the distance in front of the property at Common Hill Farm.	Visual Impact at Year 1	Slight adverse
				Residual Impact at Year 15	Negligible adverse – as proposed planting matures



Viewpoint 9 – View from National Cycle Network Route 45 looking south-west

Time and Date:	15:28 04.02.26	Receptors	Foot/cycle path users	Proposed View	Scattered tree planting with pockets of scrub planting across wildflower meadow in the mid-distance, beyond the existing hedgerow in the foreground.
Distance to Site:	2m	Value of View	Medium – moderate scenic quality within undesignated landscape		
Direction of View:	South				
Camera:	Sony A7III Full Frame	Receptor Susceptibility	High – foot/cycle path users		Proposed development located beyond the vegetation in the middle distance, partial views likely to be afforded of the rooftops / upper floors.
Focal Length:	50mm	Receptor Sensitivity	High		
Visualisation Type:	Type 1				
Projection	Cylindrical	Existing View	View over hedgerow in the foreground, framed by hedgerow trees, looking across pastoral fields with hedgerows and hedgerow trees in the mid-distance and long-distance.	Mitigation & Enhancement	Use of this parcel of the site for the creation of the proposed SANG, meaning no built form is proposed here.
				Magnitude of Change	Low to negligible – minor change in the composition of the view across a moderate proportion of the view, although the changes in the foreground as considered to be beneficial.
				Visual Impact at Year 1	Slight adverse
				Residual Impact at Year 15	Slight adverse



Viewpoint 10 – View from where the Thames Path joins public footpath CRIC35/the Thames and Severn Way, looking south

Time and Date:	15:55 04.02.26	Receptors	Footpath users	Proposed View	The proposed development is not anticipated to be visible from this location due to the intervening landform and vegetation.
Distance to Site:	450m	Value of View	Medium – moderate scenic quality within undesignated landscape	Mitigation & Enhancement	None required
Direction of View:	South	Receptor Susceptibility	High – PROW users	Magnitude of Change	No change
Camera:	Sony A7III Full Frame	Receptor Sensitivity	High	Visual Impact at Year 1	None
Focal Length:	50mm	Existing View	View over low lying pastoral field across River Thames in the foreground with riverside trees and post and wire field boundary. Vegetation line in the mid-distance with buildings at Hailstone Farm beyond and properties on the edge of Cricklade discernible in the distance to the left.	Residual Impact at Year 15	None
Visualisation Type:	Type 1				
Projection	Cylindrical				

06 Summary & Conclusion

6.0 Summary & Conclusion

- 6.1 This landscape and visual impact assessment has been undertaken to assess the impact of residential development on a site located on the western edge of Cricklade in Wiltshire.
- 6.2 The site itself and immediate environment are not covered by any relevant statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.
- 6.3 The site falls within the Thames Valley Lowland LCA as assessed by the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment. This describes the area as a low, level or undulating landscape with a patchwork of field of small irregular to medium regular fields of mainly pasture, with continuous hedges. There are wetland features, dispersed villages and farmsteads, and generally contained views. It notes that the area could potentially accommodate 'small scale, sensitively designed development, appropriately associated with existing built form' without adverse landscape impacts.
- 6.4 At a local landscape character level, the landscape shares a number of the key characteristics identified by the published landscape character assessment. These include the low lying, undulating ground, continuous hedges, varying sized pastoral fields, and generally contained views as well as the numerous wetland features, including watercourses lined with willows, varying field sizes and shapes and a general absence of woodland.
- 6.5 The site itself and immediate environs are also characterised by the settlement of Cricklade, which contains residential properties of a variety of sizes and styles, from the historic core of the town, to more modern developments. Several farms are scattered through the surrounding area.
- 6.6 The site itself covers an area of c.20.7ha, comprising four medium sized pastoral fields located three of which are located between Stones Lane to the north and the B4040 Common Hill / Malmesbury Road to the south, on the western edge of the town of Cricklade in North Wiltshire. One further field is located between Stones Lane to the south and the former Swindon to Cirencester railway line (now Sustrans cycle route 45). Hedgerows define the fields within the site.
- 6.7 The site slopes gently from south west down to the north east, with the highest part of the site being located in the south western corner of the site, at around 108m AOD. The lowest part of the site is located along the site's eastern boundary at around 85m AOD. Public footpath CRIC30 crosses the northern part of the larger parcel of the site. This extends through adjacent fields, as well as several other footpaths in the surrounding area. There is vehicular access via gated field openings onto Malmesbury Road/ the B4040 and Stones Lane.
- 6.8 The proposed development comprises residential development of up to 315 dwellings with new site access, green infrastructure and SUDS proposals, including SANG.
- 6.9 There has been a strong landscape led approach to the scheme, with green infrastructure proposals occupying c. 60% of the site. The proposals include formal play provision, allotments, orchard, footpaths, amenity space and semi-natural green space and sustainable drainage features designed to hold permanent water. These proposals meet and exceed the requirements of the Wiltshire Open Space Standards, and seek to follow the aspirations of the Wiltshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.
- 6.10 In terms of impact on landscape resource, the proposals would result in the loss of existing modified grassland across the site. This loss will be mitigated by the creation and enhancement a variety of grassland types and new planting as part of the development.
- 6.11 In addition to the retention of existing hedgerows, the development proposes a large amount of new tree, scrub, and native buffer planting, resulting in a BNG score of 18.49% for habitat units and 17.51% for hedgerow units. New wetland features are also proposed. The existing public footpath which crosses the site is to be retained and set within open space. Overall as set out within Figure 4.1, there are **beneficial effects** on the landscape resource across the site.
- 6.12 In terms of effects on the Thames Valley Lowland LCA, the proposed development is considered to bring about very little alteration to the landscape characteristics of this LCA which are not uncharacteristic within the surrounding landscape. The proposed development is considered to bring about a **negligible adverse effect** on the Thames Valley Lowland at completion of the development, which is considered to reduce to **neutral** by year 15 as the proposed planting matures.
- 6.13 At a local landscape character level, a number of the key landscape characteristics of the site and surrounding area, namely the strong hedgerow network and wetland features have been acknowledged, and the proposals have sought to both protect and reinforce these key characteristics.
- 6.14 The areas of built form within the site have been appropriately sited so that they are not located within the south-western part of the site, which is both the highest and most visible part of the site and adjacent to the rural edge of Cricklade. The development is expected to architecturally respond to the local character and is of an appropriate scale.
- 6.15 As noted by the published LCA, 'small scale, sensitively designed development, appropriately associated with existing built form' could be accommodated without

adverse landscape impacts. Whilst the proposed residential development is considered to be of medium scale, due to the adjacent residential land uses, and the siting of the development within a strong landscape framework on the lower parts of the site, the development will be visually well contained, limiting its influence on the character of the wider landscape. The local landscape also contains a variety of built form to the west of the site including farms, hotel and golf club, reducing the rural characteristics of the landscape.

- 6.16 The proposed development would bring about a notable change to the character of the site itself, but in the context of the local landscape, it is considered a partial alteration which is not uncharacteristic within the surrounding landscape.
- 6.17 It is considered all of the key characteristics of the local landscape will remain. The proposed development is considered to bring about a **moderate adverse effect** on the local landscape character at completion of the development, which is considered to reduce to **low** by year 15 as the proposed planting matures.
- 6.18 The visibility of the site from the surrounding area varies, largely depending on the elevation and level of surrounding vegetation and built form. Typically, the views to the site from the east are limited due to the built form at the edge of Cricklade. Views from the west and north towards the site vary due to the elevation and degree of intervening landform and vegetation.
- 6.19 Consequently, the views are typically limited to short and occasional middle-distance views, either located within or immediately adjacent to the site, or from more elevated vantage points in the middle distance generally to the north of the site.

- 6.20 The visual effects of the proposed development vary significantly depending on proximity to the development and the degree of screening afforded by existing landform and vegetation.
- 6.21 The greater visual effects will be from those areas in close proximity, primarily users of the local rights of way network running through the site and in the adjacent fields (Viewpoints 2 and 3). From these locations the effects range from **major adverse** for the section of footpath running through the site, to **moderate adverse** as the footpath moves away from the site. These effects will reduce overtime as the proposed planting matures.
- 6.22 Close range viewpoints from Stones Lane and Malmesbury Road/B4040 (Viewpoints 1 and 5), will experience **major adverse** effects initially, reducing to **moderate adverse**.
- 6.23 From beyond the immediate vicinity of the site, the visual effects reduce to **slight adverse** to **none** as the development becomes an increasingly smaller scale feature glimpsed through intervening vegetation. Views are often partly or fully restricted by a combination of landform and vegetation.
- 6.24 As the proposed planting matures, the development will become increasingly well assimilated into the landscape.
- 6.25 Overall it is considered that the site could successfully accommodate the proposed residential development with limited impacts on the landscape resource, character and visual amenity of the site and surrounding area.

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Appendix 1

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Methodology

OVERVIEW

The Landscape and Visual Impacts of the proposals have been assessed using accepted methodology set out within;

- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3);
- Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment;
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals; and
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations.

The results are based on a combination of desk-based research and field-survey work.

LEVEL OF ASSESSMENT

Principles and good practice for undertaking landscape and visual impact assessment are set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3).

The GLVIA3 acknowledges the landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) can be carried out either as a standalone assessment or as part of a broader EIA. GLVIA3 notes that the overall principles and core steps in the process are the same but that there are specific procedures in EIA with which an LVIA that sits within an EIA must comply.

Heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas all contribute to the overall present-day landscape character, context and setting of an area. These aspects have been given consideration in the LVIA in terms of physical landscape resources (for example, trees and hedgerows) and landscape character. However this LVIA does not address the historic significance, importance or potential impacts on heritage assets and designations; these assets are assessed in the context of landscape and visual matters only.

APPROACH

The approach may be summarised as follows:

- Identify the study area and its planning context;
- Assess the landscape character types, landscape features, scenery, land-use, topography and public access;
- Identify the Constraints and Opportunities likely to influence the design process;
- Identify, describe and assess the physical and visual impacts that the proposed development would have on the existing landscape and on visual amenity;
- Propose measures to enhance the developments setting and the wider landscape; and
- Identify and assess residual impacts.

Both landscape and visual impacts have been assessed:

- **Landscape impacts** result from changes to components and/or character or quality of the landscape. The criteria used to define the magnitude of change include; character and quality of existing scenery, key landscape features, the degree of likely change, and the ability of the landscape to accommodate change.
- **Visual impacts** result from changes to the appearance of the landscape as a result of the development proposals either intruding into or obstructing existing views or by the overall impact on visual amenity.

The degree of impact depends on both the degree of change and the sensitivity of the affected receptors.

The landscape and visual effects are assessed from combining the sensitivity of the receptors to landscape and visual changes, and magnitude of the change that they experience.

ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Landscape Receptors

These are elements of the landscape which will be affected either positively or negatively by development. Elements could include natural or man-made features.

The effect of the development on the particular character and characteristics of the landscape such as landform, scenic qualities or patterns of development is also considered.

Landscape Value

Landscape value is the relative value attached to a potentially affected landscape. Landscape value will vary in relation to the different users experiencing or using a landscape.

The value of the landscape is judged on a number of factors including its quality/condition, rarity, local / national/ international designations, scenic quality, sense of seclusion or isolation, distinctiveness, recreational use, and conservation or cultural value. Consideration has to be made of the value of both the landscape as a whole and the individual elements such trees, buildings and hedgerows.

Table 1 – Criteria for Landscape Value

HIGH	• Designated landscapes at National or International level, and also considered an important part of the country’s character, experienced by a high number of users. • Well maintained landscape in good condition. • Rare or distinctive landscape elements are key components of the landscape character. • High level of recreational opportunities where the experience of the landscape is important and/ or promoted • Good perceptual scenic / visual qualities • Strong sense of wildness / tranquillity and / or dark skies
MEDIUM	• Designated landscapes at Regional or County level, and also considered an important part of the regional / county character, experienced by a large number of users. • Generally well maintained landscape in fair condition. • Rare or distinctive landscape elements which are notable components of the landscape character. • Recreational opportunities where the experience of the landscape is important and/or promoted. • Perceptual scenic / visual qualities are considered ordinary. • Some sense of wildness / tranquillity and / or dark skies.
LOW	• No formal landscape designations, but a landscape of local relevance, including recreational open spaces, valued by local users. • Landscape in poor condition with a visible lack of maintenance. • Lack of distinctive landscape elements reflecting a generic sense of identity. • Recreational opportunities where the experience of the landscape is important and/or promoted are limited. • Perceptual scenic / visual qualities are considered poor. • Sense of wildness / tranquillity and / or dark skies are degraded.

Landscape Susceptibility

Susceptibility to change can relate to both the overall landscape and a particular landscape elements. Its ability to accommodate the proposed development will depend on existing land-use, existing patterns of landscape development, landscape character, degrees of openness or enclosure or how easily mitigation measures can be put in place.

Table 2 – Criteria for Landscape Susceptibility

HIGH	- Landscapes which due to the scale of enclosure have a low capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed due to the nature of, and interactions between, landscape components (e.g. topography, vegetation cover and built form). - Landscapes which land uses have no or very little existing reference or context to the type of proposed development. - Landscapes with existing elements that are not easily retained, replaced or substituted or that reflect strategies for landscape conservation. - Landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is not present or where these are present but their influence on the landscape is limited.
MEDIUM	- Landscapes which due to the scale of enclosure have a medium capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed due to the nature of, and interactions between, landscape components (e.g. topography, vegetation cover and built form). - Landscapes where the existing land uses have some existing reference or context to the type of proposed development. - Landscapes with existing elements that are easily retained, replaced or substituted or that reflect strategies for landscape maintenance or enhancement. - Landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is present and the influence of these on the landscape is noticeable.
LOW	- Landscapes which due to the scale of enclosure have a high capacity to accommodate the type of development proposed due to the nature of, and interactions between, landscape components (e.g. topography, vegetation cover and built form). - Landscapes which land uses have extensive existing reference or context to the type of proposed development. - Landscapes with existing elements that are easily retained, replaced or substituted, or where there are few/no existing elements present or that reflect landscape strategies for landscape creation or restoration. - Landscapes where detracting features or major infrastructure is present and the influence of these on the landscape is dominant.

Sensitivity of Landscape

Landscape sensitivity is formed by a combination of the value of the landscape and the degree to which the landscape can accommodate change (otherwise referred to as susceptibility to change).

Table 3 – Criteria for Landscape Character Sensitivity

HIGH	Areas that exhibit a strong positive character with valued features that combine to give unity, richness and harmony. These are landscapes that may be considered to be of particular importance to conserve and which may be particularly sensitive to change in general and which may be detrimental if change is inappropriately dealt with. Exceptional may be used to describe smaller areas of especially high quality or nationally or regionally recognised landscapes such as AONBs and National Parks.
MEDIUM	Areas that exhibit positive character but which may have evidence of alteration to/degradation/ erosion of features resulting in areas of more mixed character. Potentially sensitive to change in general; change may be detrimental if inappropriately dealt with but it may require special or particular attention to detail.
LOW	Areas generally negative in character with few, if any valued features. Scope for positive enhancement. Locally recognised landscapes.

ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

Visual Receptors

Visual receptors are people impacted on by the development proposals. Receptors include residents of nearby properties, communities of people who experience a change in their landscape setting, leisure users of rights of way, people engaged in outdoor sport or people at or travelling to work.

Value of View

The value attached to a view includes recognition of value through formal designations (for example planning designations or heritage assets) and indicators of value attached to views by visitors (for example inclusion on maps/ guidebooks, provision of facilities, presence of interpretation).

For example, views of higher value are likely to be from designated landscapes where the condition or scenic quality of the view is higher and where distinctive elements or features form a prominent part of a view; views of lower value are likely to be from area of landscapes where the condition and scenic quality of the view is poorer, where there is no reference to distinctive elements or features and where detracting features are prominent in the view.

Table 4 – Criteria for Value of View

HIGH	Views with high scenic value within designated landscapes
MEDIUM	Views with moderate scenic value within undesignated landscapes including urban fringe and rural countryside.
LOW	Views with unremarkable scenic value within undesignated landscapes with partly degraded visual qualities and detractors.

Susceptibility of Visual Receptors

The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is judged based on the activity of people experiencing the view at any given time or location and the extent to which their attention would be focused on the view and visual amenity rather than on the activity being undertaken.

For example, views more susceptible to change are likely to be permanent views, in unenclosed or elevated positions in the landscape and where the landscape forms a primary focus for the activity of the receptor; views less susceptible to change are likely to be transient or temporary views, located in enclosed areas of the landscape where the landscape is a secondary focus or consideration to the activity of the receptor.

Table 5 – Criteria for Visual Receptor Susceptibility

HIGH	Includes occupiers of residential properties and people engaged in recreational activities in the countryside using public rights of way (PROW).
MEDIUM	Includes people engaged in outdoor sporting activities and people travelling through the landscape on minor roads and trains.
LOW	Includes people at places of work and people travelling through the landscape on major roads and motorways.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Visual receptors will be more or less sensitive to landscape changes depending on their relationship with the landscape in question. In particular account needs to be taken of the receptors susceptibility to change. For example a residential or leisure user is likely to be more sensitive to landscape impacts than a receptor at a workplace or a commuter.

In addition a judgement has to be made on the value of the view to the receptor, this might be based on its scenic or heritage value.

Table 6- Criteria for Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

HIGH	Residents at home. People engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of designated trails and long distance paths or public rights of way, whose attention is likely to be focussed on the landscape and particular views. Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience.
MEDIUM	People travelling generally through the landscape on roads and other transport routes. Local public rights of way. Sporting and recreational facilities not specifically focused on the landscape. Areas generally negative in character with few, if any valued features. Scope for positive enhancement. Locally recognised landscapes.
LOW	People travelling on main roads, rail or other transport routes where enjoyment of the view is not an intrinsic part of the journey. People at their place of work, shoppers, people at industrial and commercial premises, passengers on commercial railway lines.

MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT

A combination of the scale of change, degree of contrast with the existing landscape, duration, distance and angle or view from main receptors from the proposed development, the extent over which changes would be visible and the reversibility of the changes.

Table 7 – Landscape Resource Magnitude of Effect

HIGH	Major loss or major alteration to an existing landscape feature.
MEDIUM	Some loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape feature.
LOW	Minor loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape feature.
NEGLIGIBLE	Very minor loss or alteration to existing landscape features.
NO CHANGE/ NEUTRAL	No loss or alteration to existing landscape features.

Table 8 – Landscape Character Magnitude of Effect

HIGH	Total loss or major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline landscape, or introduction of elements considered to be totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
MEDIUM	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
LOW	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline, or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
NEGLIGIBLE	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline, or introduction or elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape.
NO CHANGE/ NEUTRAL	No perceivable loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the baseline, approximating the no change situation.

Table 9 – Visual Amenity Magnitude of Effect

HIGH	Major loss or addition of features in the view. Major change in the composition of the view. A major proportion of the view may be occupied by the proposed development. The proposed development is prominent when set within existing views of the landscape in terms of form, scale, mass or colour.
MEDIUM	Views may be short-distance and direct. Changes in the view may be visible over a large proportion of the view. The proposed development is permanent and irreversible.
LOW	Moderate loss or addition of features in the view. Moderate change in the composition of the view. A moderate proportion of the view may be occupied by the proposed development. The proposed development is noticeable when set within existing views of the landscape in terms of form, scale, mass or colour. Views may be mid-distance, direct or oblique. Changes in the view would be visible over some of the view.
NEGLIGIBLE	Minor loss or addition of features in the view. Minor change in the composition of the view. A minor proportion of the view may be occupied by the proposed development. The proposed development is perceptible when set within existing views of the landscape in terms of form, scale, mass or colour. Views may be long-distance and oblique. Changes in the view would be visible over a small proportion of the view.
NO CHANGE/ NEUTRAL	Barely perceptible loss or addition of features in the view. Barely perceptible change in the composition of the view. A very minor proportion of the view may be occupied by the proposed development. The proposed development is barely perceptible when set within existing views of the landscape in terms of form, scale, mass or colour. Views may be long- distance, oblique and/ or partly screened. Changes in the view would be visible over a very small proportion of the view. No part of the proposed development, or work or activity associated with it, is visible. There will be no perceivable change in the view.

LEVEL OF EFFECT

The level of the landscape and visual effects is determined by considering together the magnitude of the change, the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors and effects of mitigation.

Table 10 demonstrates the general relationship between sensitivity and magnitude based on the criteria given above but is given for illustrative purposes only. To some extent it is an over simplification of the process and so it is not used rigidly to determine the level of an effect upon any given receptor.

Effects are considered as being beneficial (positive), neutral, or adverse (negative) in nature.

The duration and the reversibility of the effects are considered, either being permanent or temporary / reversible.

Effects are considered at year 1 / completion of the development, and at year 15, when any proposed planting is likely to have matured.

Table 10 – Level of Landscape & Visual Effects

		Sensitivity of Receptor		
		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Magnitude of Change	HIGH	Major	Major	Moderate
	MEDIUM	Major	Moderate	Slight
	LOW	Moderate	Slight	Negligible / Neutral
	NEGLIGIBLE	Slight	Negligible / Neutral	Negligible / Neutral
	NO CHANGE/ NEUTRAL	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

