

**LAND AT SOPWORTH ROAD, SHERSTON,
WILTSHIRE**

Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment

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GREENHALGH



Landscape Architecture

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For and on behalf of: **The Silverwood Partnership**

In collaboration with : PlanningSphere
Crossman Ecology

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Overview

This document addresses the topic of Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and has been undertaken by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute at Greenhalgh Landscape Architecture Ltd, a Landscape Institute Registered Practice. It evaluates the potential effects on the landscape and visual resource that would arise from the erection of up to 5 No. single storey dwellings with associated works on land at Sopworth Road, Sherston, Wiltshire (the Site).

The assessment considers: the existing site contexts; the development proposals; and how the proposed development would be received in those contexts.

The document has been prepared as part of a Permission in Principle (PiP) planning application with Wiltshire Council and is to be used in engagement with the relevant officers.

1.1 Introduction

Brief

Greenhalgh Landscape Architecture Ltd has been appointed by The Silverwood Partnership (the ‘Client’) to prepare a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as part of the PiP planning application for land at Sopworth Road (the ‘Site’). The proposals relate to the erection of up to 5 No. single storey dwellings with associated works. The Site boundary (the planning application boundary) is illustrated in Figure 1.

Purpose

This LVIA has been prepared to assess the potential effects and identify likely impacts that the Proposed Development would give rise to on existing views, visual amenity and landscape character. Specific regard is given to: key views including from within locally designated areas such as the Cotswold National Landscape; the potential impacts arising from proposed elements including height or mass of new built form; and planting strategies alongside management of existing trees and vegetation. As such, the purpose of this report is to provide Wiltshire Council and the relevant consultees an overview of the landscape character, views and visual amenity of the Site and its setting, together with an assessment of how the Proposed Development would be received in the immediate and wider contexts.

Key:

Site
(application boundary)

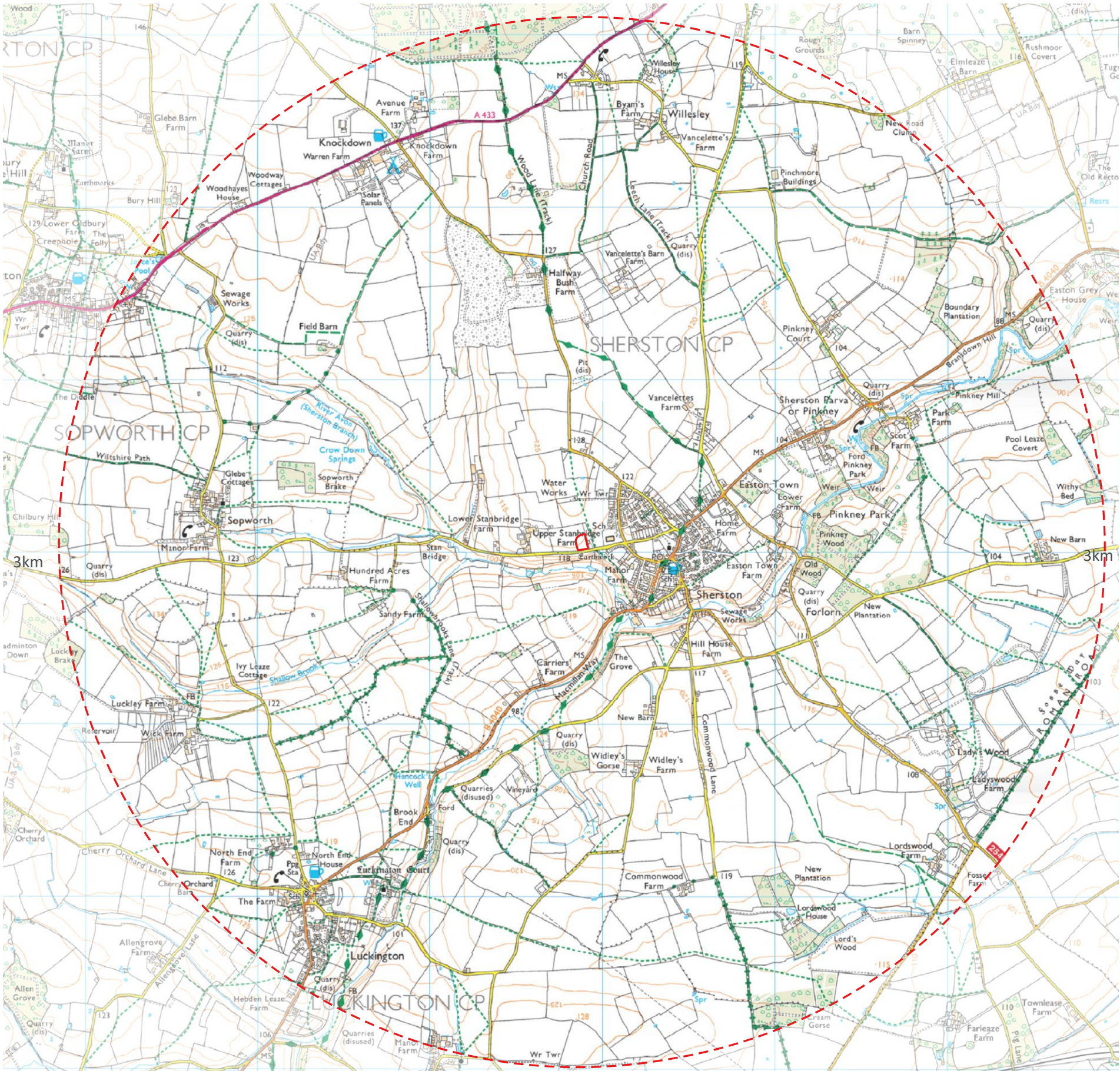


Figure 1. Site location.

1.2 Methodology

This report addresses the topic of Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), discussing the separate but inter-linked issues of landscape character and visual amenity. For clarity, the broad definition of landscape is as follows:

‘Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’ (Council of Europe, 2000).

The aim of this LVIA is to establish the following:

- an understanding of the Site in its landscape setting, identifying the landscape character resource that may be influenced by the Proposed Development;
- identification of key viewpoints and the associated sensitive visual receptors that may perceive the Proposed Development;
- an analysis of the composition, character, quality and value of each resource or view to determine the sensitivities to change;
- an assessment of predicted likely effects of the Proposed Development upon landscape character and views and visual amenity, supported by accurate visual representations;
- compliance of the Proposed Development with relevant policy; and
- the need for any mitigation to reduce, offset or minimise any significant adverse effects.

The assessment considers two inter-linked issues:

- Landscape character effects; the likely effects of the operation of the Proposed Development (i.e. following completion of construction, once in normal use) on the physical, cultural and perceptual characteristics of the Site and the surrounding environs; and
- Visual effects; the likely effects of the operation of the Proposed Development on specific views and general visual amenity as experienced by visual receptors.

The assessment relates to the Proposed Development as defined within the supporting documents of the Permission in Principle (PiP) planning application. Refer also to section 3.0 of this report.

A detailed LVIA methodology is included as **Appendix A** of this document and is derived from current industry guidance and published best practice, namely:

- *‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’*, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Third Edition, 2013;
- *‘Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01: Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3)’*, Landscape Institute, August 2024;
- *‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment’*, Natural England, 2014;
- *‘Landscape Information Note 08/2015: Landscape Character Assessment’*, Landscape Institute, February 2016.
- *‘Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals’*, Landscape Institute, 2019.

1.3 Proposed Development

The Proposed Development comprises the erection of up to 5 No. single storey dwellings with associated works.

A summary of the proposed key elements is outlined below, with a detailed explanation of the design rationale provided in Chapter 3.0.

1. Site access off Sopworth Road positioned to retain the existing tree along the southern boundary;
2. 4m wide strategic planting along the Hillberry Lodge boundary, with a;
3. 13m no build offset from Hillberry Lodge.
4. Open space positioned at the southern end of the Site, including new tree planting and potential drainage features.
5. A minimum 7m width band strategic copse tree planting and native hedgerow wraps around the western and northern Site boundaries.
6. Five single storey dwellings.
7. An offsite 13m band of structural woodland within the Clients land ownership to reinforce the western edge of Sherston.



Figure 2. Landscape Framework Plan.

2.1 Site Context

Located west of Sherston village, the Site comprises the south eastern corner of a moderately sized open field off Sopworth Road. The Sites eastern and southern boundaries comprise a mix of hedgerow, timber close board fence and dry stone walling. To the north and west the Sites boundaries are open to the wider agricultural field which is bordered beyond by mature field hedgerows. Hillberry Lodge abuts the Sites eastern boundary beyond which is Sherson C of E Primary School and the village centre. Beyond the Site to the north, south and west the land is primarily in agricultural use. The Site and Sherston village, sit just inside the eastern boundary of the Cotswold National Landscape.

Access and Communications

Sherston sits on the B4040, linking to Malmesbury and Bath. It is approximately 7 miles from Junction 17 of the M4, providing strategic connectivity to Bristol and Swindon. Public transport includes the 41 bus service to Malmesbury and Yate, while mainline rail stations at Chippenham and Kemble offer direct services to London Paddington.

The Site itself is well situated for access to Sherston C of E Primary School (approximately 85m to the east) and shops and facilities along the village High Street (approximately 415m to the south east). A network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) provide connections along the villages urban fringe as well as into the wider rural landscape.

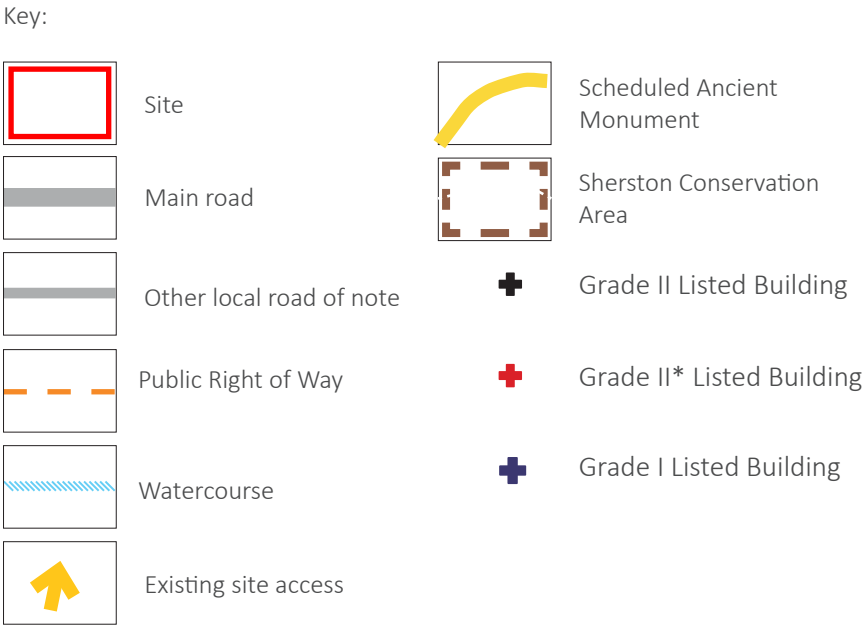


Figure 3. Site context.

Settlement

Sherston is a historic village five miles west of Malmesbury, set on a prominent ridge alongside the River Avon. Centred on High Street and Church Street, the settlement remains physically distinct from Malmesbury, buffered by the Cotswolds National Landscape. Development has historically been concentrated around the village core.

During the post war period Sherston rapidly expanded northwards and eastwards from its historic core along the Hight Street. Since 2003 notable infilling has occurred within the north of the village and development has extended further west towards the Site with housing built at Saxons Close and Butlers Close and Sherston Church of England Primary School extending along Sopworth Road.

Historical mapping and aerial imagery opposite illustrates the Site was part of a larger field up to at least 1945. Between 1945 and 2003 a strip of land along its eastern edge was portioned off to construct Hillberry Lodge and its immediate gardens. From 2003 aerial imagery suggests the houses back garden was extended up to the fields northern hedge and enclosed along its western boundary with hedgerow.

Land use and vegetation

Sherston village is characterised by residential development, with a built environment that includes structures dating back to the 12th century. The River Avon forms a clear southern boundary to the settlement, its course and associated tributaries occupying shallow incisions in the surrounding topography. These watercourses are typically flanked by well-vegetated slopes, which create a continuous green corridor through the study area and contribute to the village’s rural character.

Beyond the settlement edge, the surrounding landscape to the north, south, and west is predominantly agricultural. It is defined by a pattern of medium to large fields enclosed by mature hedgerows and traditional dry stone walls. Tree cover is a notable feature, with mature specimens lining field boundaries and more substantial woodland areas located on higher ground. Smaller copses frequently occur along approach roads, often partially enclosing views and reinforcing the sense of arrival into Sherston.



Figure 4. OS Six Inch map 1830-1880.



Figure 5. Aerial photograph 1945.



Figure 6. Aerial photograph 2003.



Figure 7. Aerial photograph 2026.

Topography

Levels across the Site gently fall from north to south, descending from a high point of approximately 122m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to around 118m along the southern boundary. To the north of the Site, the landform continues to rise up the valley side, reaching approximately 126m AOD at the field boundary.

To the west of the Site, the topography subtly rises by one to two metres, which creates a gentle fold in the landscape within which the Site is situated. Beyond the western and southern field boundaries, ground levels drop more noticeably as the land descends down the valley slopes toward the River Avon.

Sherston village is generally level in topographical terms, occupying an elevated position at approximately 115m AOD. It sits on the southern end of a ridge landform which then steeply slopes south of the village down to the River Avon. The surrounding area within a 3km radius is characterised by gently rolling hills and valleys typical of the Cotswold edge, with watercourses defining the lower-lying terrain.

Key:

Elevation (m AOD)

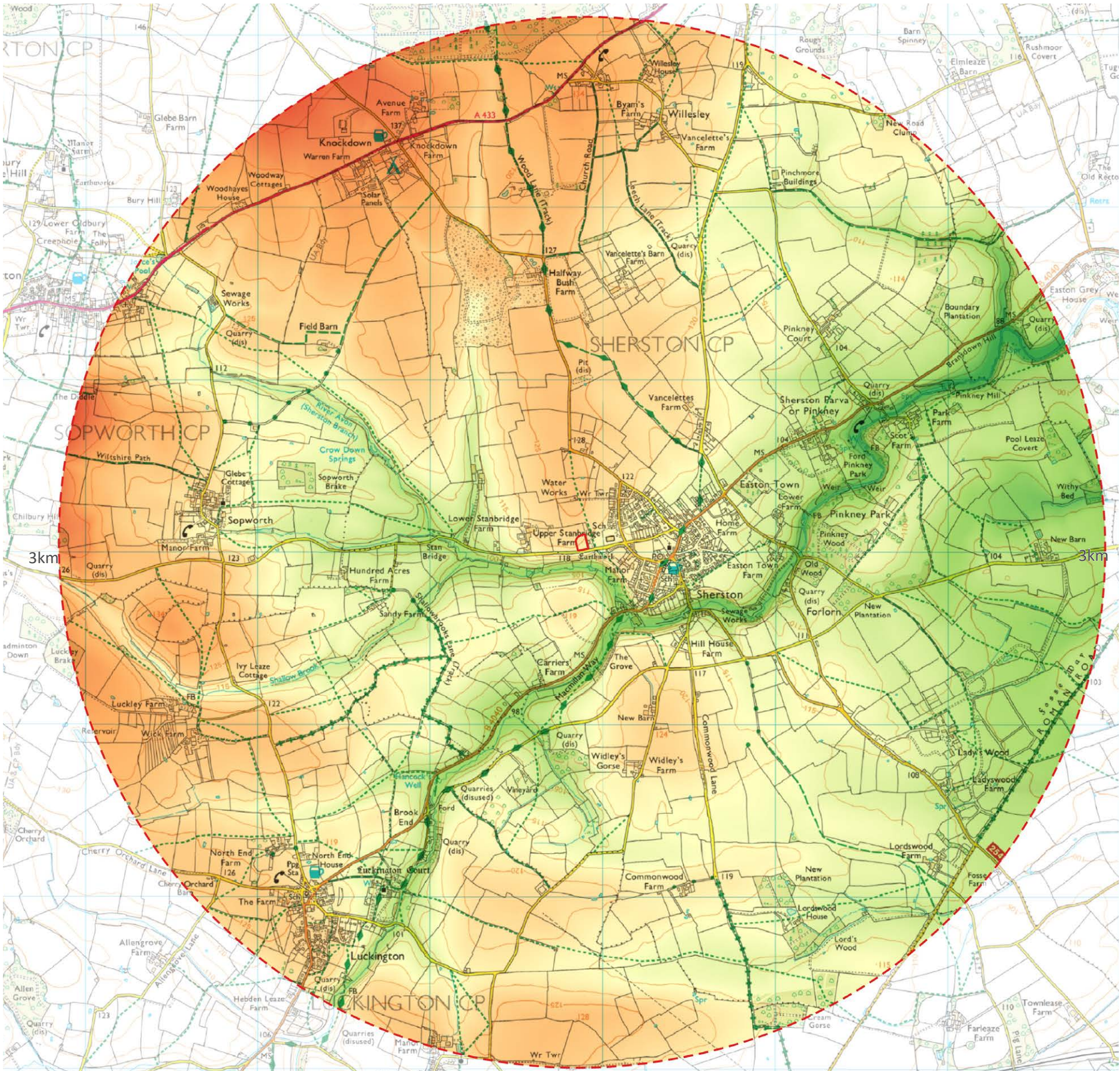


Figure 8. Topographic analysis.

2.2 Planning Policy

As part of this report, a review of planning policy relevant to the landscape and visual aspects of the proposals has been undertaken and is summarised below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was last re-published in December 2024. The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as *‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’*

Section 12 of the NPPF sets out requirements for achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 131 outlines the importance of the design of the built environment and states that *‘good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.’*

Paragraph 135 goes on to state:

‘Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.’*

Paragraph 139 states:

‘Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

(a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes; and/or

(b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.’

Under Section 15 of the NPPF: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, Paragraph 187 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

‘a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes ...;

b) recognising ... the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services... ...including... ...of trees and woodland’.

Paragraph 189 covers development within National Landscapes and states:

‘Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads⁶⁶. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.’

When considering applications for development in National Landscapes Paragraph 190 states that consideration should include an assessment of:

‘c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.’

Wiltshire Core Strategy, January 2015

Core Policy 51 *‘seeks to ‘protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire’s distinctive landscape character.’* The policy also highlights a *‘need to protect the distinct character and identity of the villages and settlements in Wiltshire’.* The Policy states that,

‘Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies. In particular, proposals will need to demonstrate that the following aspects of landscape character have been conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures:

- i. The locally distinctive pattern and species composition of natural features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and waterbodies.*
- ii. The locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings.*
- iii. The separate identity of settlements and the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe.*
- iv. Visually sensitive skylines, soils, geological and topographical features.*
- v. Landscape features of cultural, historic and heritage value.*
- vi. Important views and visual amenity.*
- vii. Tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion.*
- viii. Landscape functions including places to live, work, relax and recreate.*
- ix. Special qualities of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the New Forest National Park, where great weight will be afforded to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty.*

Proposals for development within or affecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), New Forest National Park (NFP) or Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) shall demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas.’

Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 – 2030

Policy CE1: Landscape states,

‘CE1.1. Proposals that have the potential to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL), should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of the landscape character of the location, as described by the CNL Board’s Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. There should be a presumption against the loss of key characteristics identified in the landscape character assessment.

CE1.2. Proposals that have the potential to impact on, or create change in, the landscape of the CNL, should seek to further the conservation and enhancement of the scenic quality of the location and its setting, views, including those into and out of the National Landscape and visual amenity.

CE1.3. Conserving and enhancing landscape character should be a key objective of Environmental Land Management and rural development support mechanisms in the Cotswolds National Landscape’.

Policy CE4 covers local distinctiveness and states:

‘CE4.1. Proposals that are likely to impact on the local distinctiveness of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of this local distinctiveness.

This should include:

- being compatible with the CNL Board’s Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change and any relevant position statement or guidance published by the Board.*
- being designed to respect local settlement patterns, building styles, scale and materials and in accordance with design guidance prepared by local planning authorities.*
- using an appropriate colour of Cotswold limestone to reflect local distinctiveness.*

CE4.2. Innovative designs, compatible with the conservation of natural beauty – which are informed by local distinctiveness, character and scale – should be welcomed.

CE4.3. The development of design guidance – which is supported by a robust evidence base and which reflects relevant guidance published by the CNL Board – will be encouraged.’

In terms of darks skies Policy CE6.1 states that *‘proposals that have the potential to impact on the dark skies of the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seek to further the conservation and enhancement of these dark skies, by seeking to avoid and where avoiding is not possible, minimise lighting.’*

Development and infrastructure is covered by Policy CE13, within which Policy CE13.1.states:

‘Development and infrastructure proposals in the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) and its setting should be delivered in a way that is compatible with and seeks to further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the CNL including its special qualities.’

Policy CE13.5 stipulates that the *‘cumulative impacts of development proposals on the natural beauty of the CNL should be fully assessed.’*

Policy CE13.6 covers how development should be approached, stating:

‘A landscape-led approach should be applied to the planning, design and implementation of development and infrastructure proposals in the CNL and its setting, proportionate to the type and scale of development being proposed, whereby proposals:

- a) Address the natural beauty of the CNL as primary consideration at all stages of the development process, from initial conception through to implementation*
- b) Address all of the factors that contribute to the natural beauty of the area*
- c) Address access to natural beauty including the character of the public rights of way network and its role within wider green infrastructure*
- d) Reflect and enhance the character of the local area*
- e) Avoid adverse effects where possible and, if adverse effects can’t be avoided, minimise them*
- f) Seek opportunities to enhance the natural beauty of the CNL and*
- g) Deliver more beneficial effects than adverse effects for the natural beauty of the CNL.’*

Local Planning Context

The Sherston Neighbourhood Plan (SNP), made in May 2019, allocated three development sites within the village, including land east of Hillberry Lodge (Policy 4) as shown on Figure 9. However, this allocation has since been superseded by extant planning permissions. These include outline permission for a GP surgery and associated car park on the portion of the site adjacent to Sopworth Road (ref. PL/2021/10696), and full planning permission for 45 dwellings and associated infrastructure on the remainder of the site (ref. PL/2024/00865).

The SNP covered a planning period up to 2026 and is currently being refreshed in line with national and local policies. To inform this update, a Site Assessment Report (SAR) was prepared by Master Land and Planning in 2025 to consider potential housing allocations within the village.

Ten sites were assessed, of which six were identified as ‘potentially suitable’. The closest to the Proposed Development is Site 9, comprising Hillberry Lodge and its associated curtilage, which is also identified within the councils Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) as having a potential capacity for 16 dwellings.

The Site, along with the wider field within which it is located, was assessed within the SAR as Site 7. However, it was concluded to be ‘not currently available, suitable, and deliverable’, primarily due to its contribution to the village’s rural setting, its high degree of openness, and its separation from the settlement boundary.

Notwithstanding this, the assessment acknowledges that ‘the context of the site may change significantly once the allocated site in Policy 4 is developed, including the expansion of the built form of the village and the creation of a new footway. This may allow the site to be re-assessed in the future, and a different conclusion to be reached.’

In light of recent planning permissions between the Site and existing development along Knockdown Road, together with the draft allocation of Site 9, it is reasonable to deduce that the village is expanding westwards towards the Proposed Development. Consequently, the Site can be considered to adjoin the village’s emerging western edge.

Key:

Site

Existing Allocations

Potentially Suitable Sites- Emerging SNP

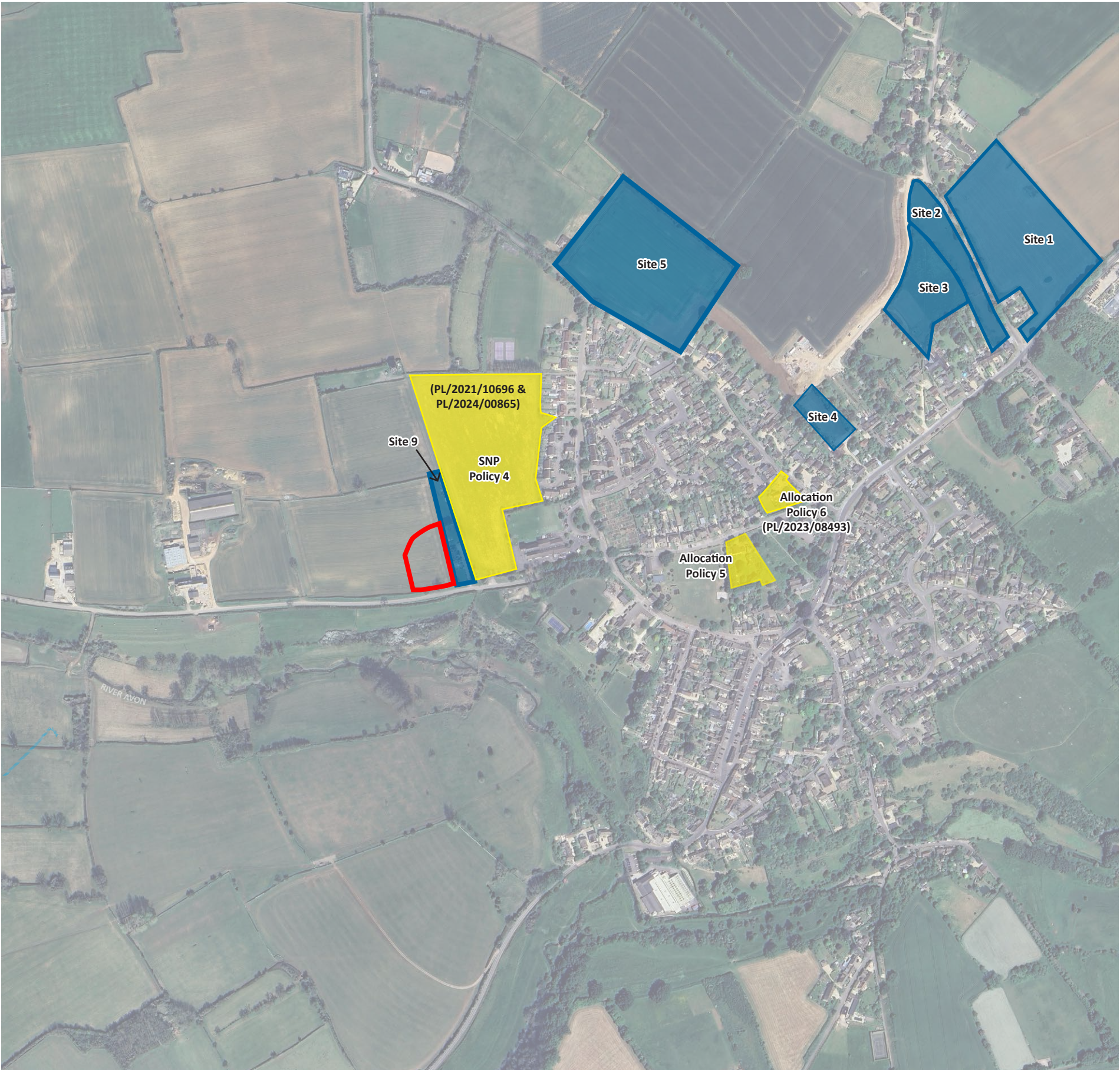


Figure 9. Local planning context

2.3 Landscape Designations

Sherston Village and the Site are located within the Cotswold National Landscape (CNL), a statutory designation of national significance where great weight is given in planning decisions to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. Further detail on CNL policy is provided in Section 2.2.

The Site lies approximately 36m from the western boundary of the Sherston Conservation Area. The nearest Listed Buildings are located within this area, primarily concentrated in the historic core of the village, including High Street and Cliff Road.

Other villages within the wider Study Area are also designated as Conservation Areas. The closest is Sopworth Conservation Area, situated approximately 1,890m to the west, which likewise contains a notable concentration of Listed Buildings. In the rural landscape between villages, historic farm buildings and structures are often designated; this includes Field Barn, located approximately 1,860m to the northwest of the Site.

At a more local level, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (List Entry 1004703) is located within 90m of the Site. This monument comprises a curvilinear bank and ditch, believed to be of medieval origin. Although it is situated on privately owned land with no public access, it remains highly visible from the public footpath to the south and from Sopworth Road to the north.

The Site is not publicly accessible, however there is an established Public Right of Way (PRoW) network within the local area. The closest is PRoW footpath SHER22 which runs along the eastern boundary of Hillberry Lodge and connects Knockdown Lane with Sopworth Road before continuing south to Brook Hill. Also of note is PRoW footpath SHER21 which runs along a ridge approximately 305m south of the Site on the opposite side of the River Avon.

Key:

Site

Cotswold National Landscape

Conservation Area

Ancient Woodland

Scheduled Ancient Monument

Grade II Listed Building

Grade II* Listed Building

Grade I Listed Building

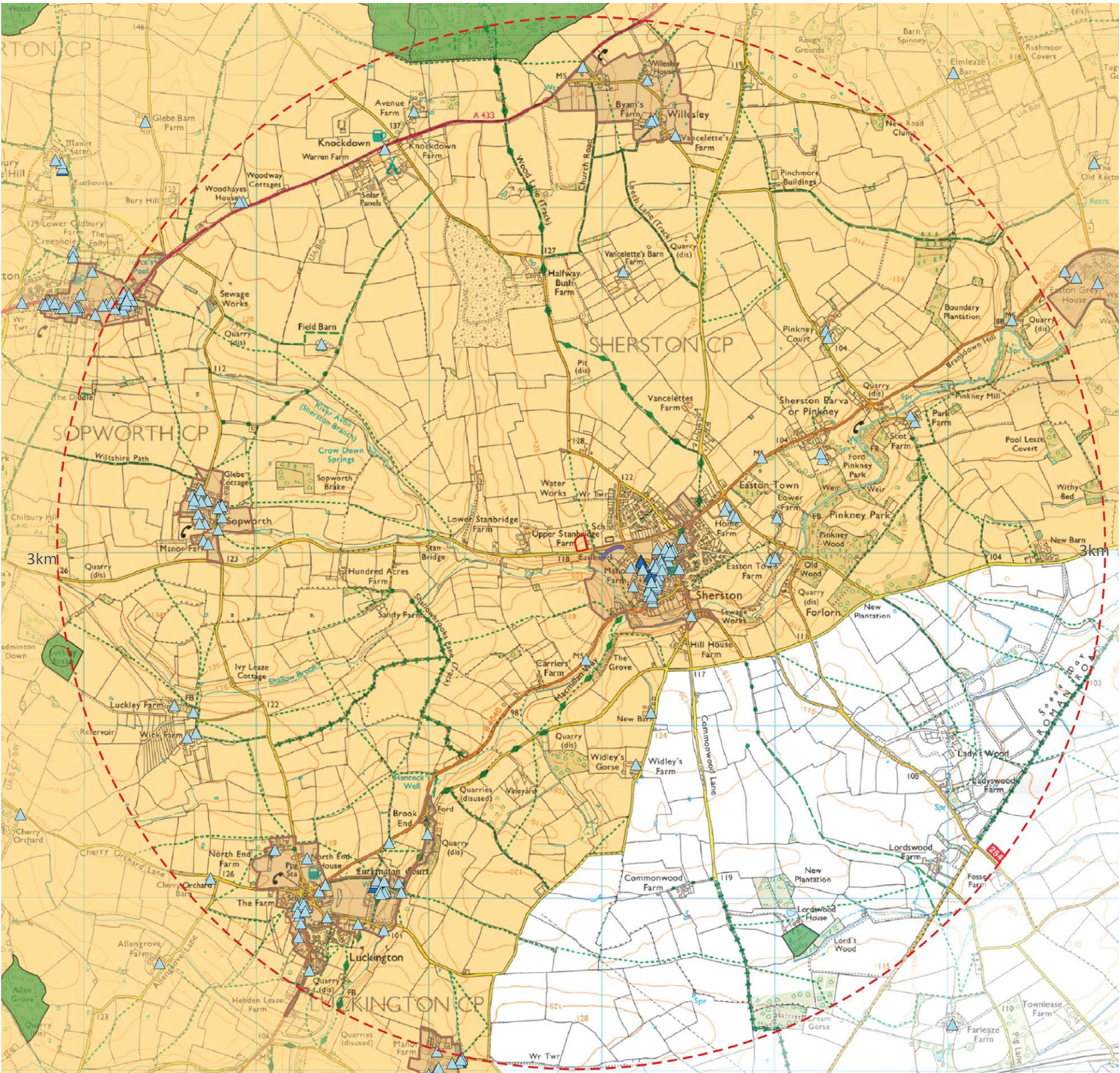


Figure 10. Landscape designations.

2.4 Landscape Character

A brief summary of the published landscape character assessments in the context of the Site is detailed below and on the following pages.

National Character Area

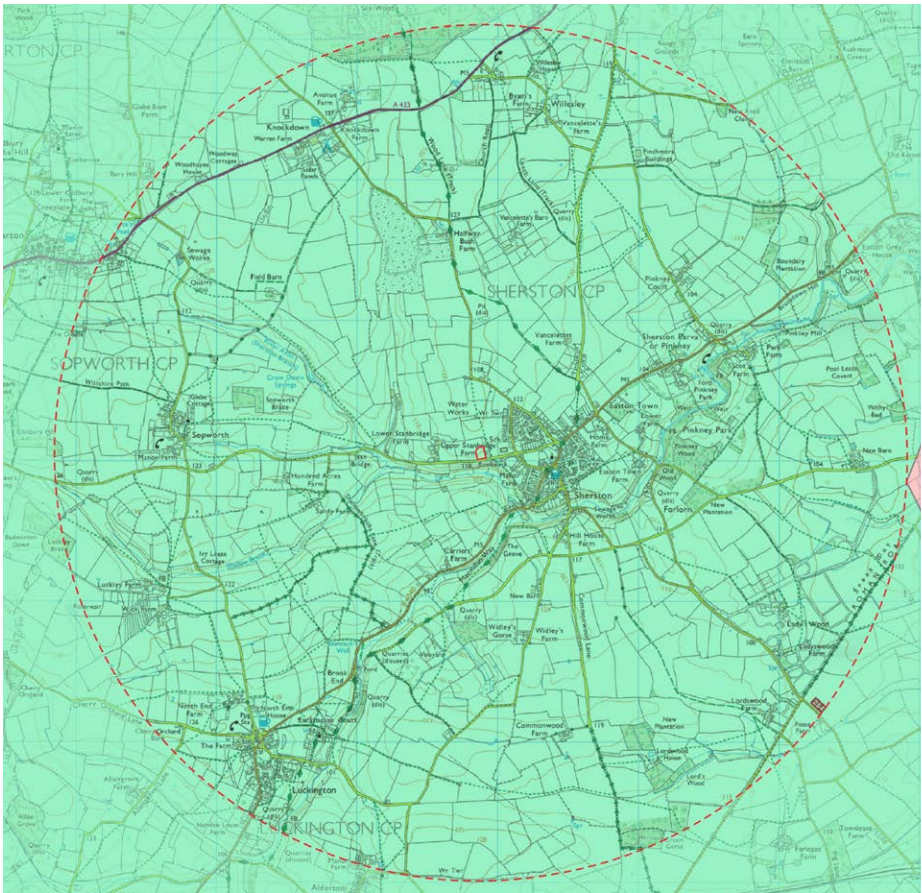


Figure 11. National character areas.

- NCA 107: Cotswolds
- NCA 117: Avon Vales

District Character Areas

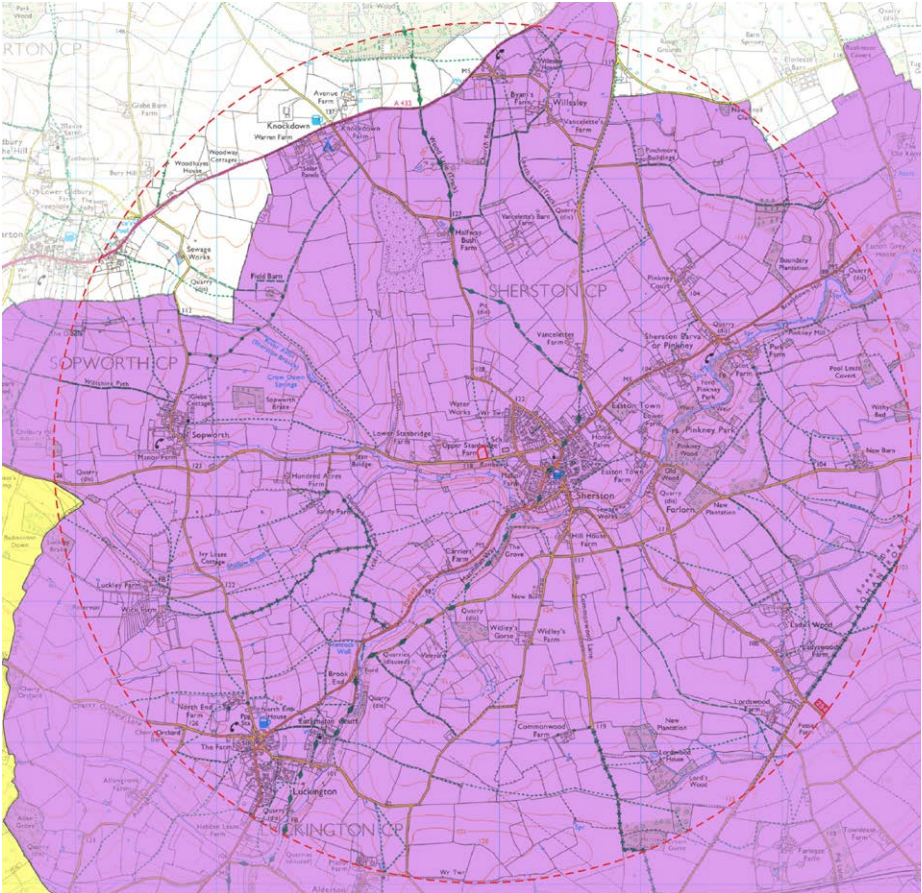


Figure 12. District landscape character areas.

- Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2005
 - Landscape Type 16: Limestone Lowland
 - LCA 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone
- South Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment
 - Landscape Type: Plateau and Scarp
 - LCA 1: Badminton Plateau

Cotswold National Landscape

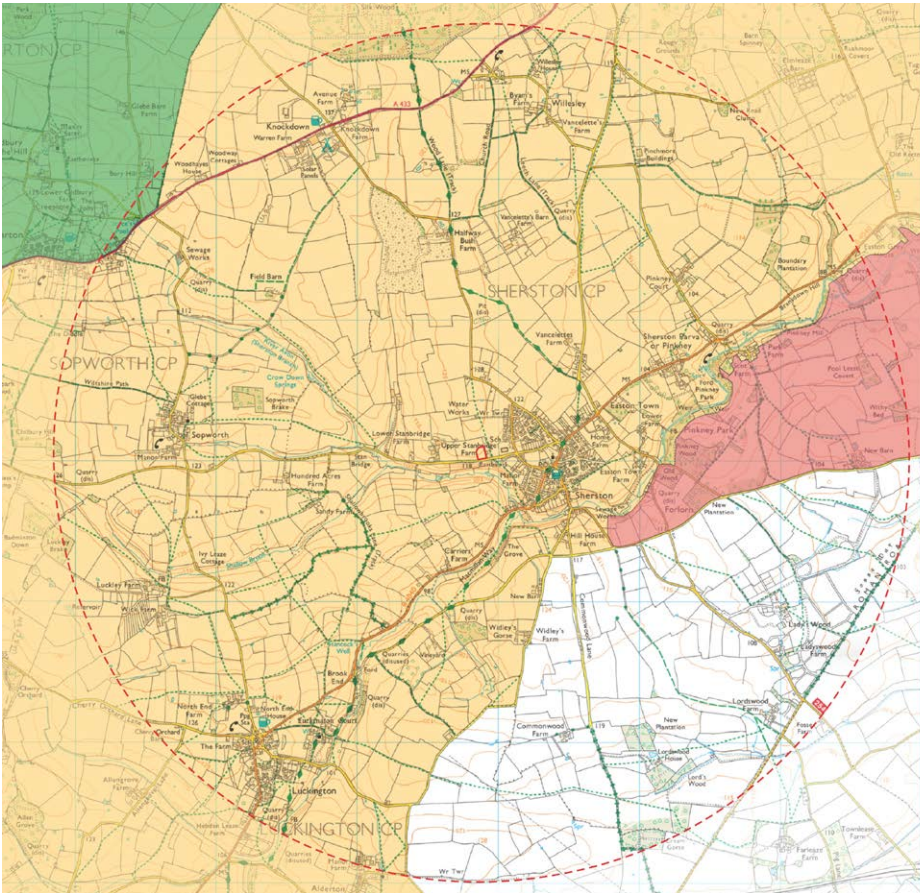


Figure 13. Cotswold national landscape character areas.

- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment, 2016
 - Landscape Type 11: Dip-slope Lowland
 - LCA 11A South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands
 - Landscape Type 14: Cornbrash Pastoral Lowlands
 - LCA 14A: Biddestone Lowland Farmland
 - Landscape Type 9: High Wold Dip Slope
 - LCA 9D: Cotswolds High Wold Dip-Slope

The national description provides a very broad framework for the more detailed district and Cotswold Landscape Character Studies. Therefore the latter are referenced for the purposes of this report.

LCA 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands within the Limestone Lowland Landscape Type, Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2005

The Limestone Lowland Type covers a large swathe of northwest Wiltshire with its western edge forming part of the Cotswolds National Landscape. Key characteristics of relevance to the Site and Study area include:

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

Sub character area 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands is the only area within the Limestone Lowland Landscape Type. The assessment considers the area to be in generally **good** condition with *‘intact hedgerows, traditional villages of vernacular stone dwellings, village greens and stone walls’.*

The assessment considers the area to have a **moderate** strength of character

due to its *‘traditional stone built settlements however, other elements such as land use, topography and field boundaries vary subtly across the type making it less distinctive and cohesive’.*

Inherent sensitivities which are of relevance to the Site include:

- *‘The peaceful rural nature of the area.*
- *The setting, containment and scale of the limestone villages.*
- *The remaining medieval field patterns and dry stone walls around and close to settlement.’*

Broad management objectives for the area which are of relevance to the proposals include:

- *‘Conserve the network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland copses and take opportunities for new planting where this will strengthen local character (for instance avoiding planting that will affect the open views in the high ground at the west of the area).*
- *Encourage conservation and rebuilding of dry stone wall field boundaries, particularly close to settlement.*
- *Maintain the subtle variations that occur throughout the landscape, encouraging local distinctiveness for instance in the variation in field boundaries from hedgerows to stone walls.*
- *Retain the distinctive character of the villages; ensuring any change respects the traditional stone built character and vernacular form.*
- *Resist urbanisation of the country lanes through addition of road markings and concrete kerbs or lamp posts or excessive signage that detracts from the rural character of the area.’*

LCA 11A South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands Character Area within 11 Dip-slope Lowlands, Cotswolds National Landscape, 2016

Key characteristics of the Dip Slope Lowlands of relevance to the Site include:

- *Broad area of gently sloping, undulating lowland with a predominantly south-easterly fall, changing to a north-easterly fall in the southern perimeter of the area;*
- *lowland landform gently dissected by infrequent small watercourses flowing into the main rivers that cross the area, reinforcing the general grain of the topography; strong and structured farmland character, more*

intimate and smaller in scale than the High Wold and High Wold Dip-Slope;

- *well-managed, productive agricultural landscape of mixed arable and improved pasture, together with more limited areas of permanent pasture, mainly within the valley bottoms;*
- *seasonal variations in colour and texture associated with mixed arable farming;*
- *medium to large scale, regular fields predominate mainly enclosed by hedgerows, with hedgerow trees, together with some stone walls or post and wire fencing;*
- *woodland cover limited to intermittent copses and shelterbelts within agricultural land, but balanced by extensive broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantations within the large estates and associated farmland areas;*
- *limited areas of ancient woodland and species rich grassland;*
- *settlement pattern of intermittent small nucleated villages, hamlets, and isolated farmsteads, together with occasional larger settlements;*
- *evidence of long period of occupation of the area.*

The Cotswolds National Landscape provides Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for new development within 11 Dip-slope Lowlands. For new development guidelines of relevance to the Proposed Scheme are as follows:

11.1 Development, expansion and infilling of settlements including residential, industrial and leisure

- *Maintain the open, sparsely settled character of the Dip-slope Lowland by limiting new development to existing settlements.*
- *Avoid development that will intrude negatively into the landscape and cannot be successfully mitigated, for example, extensions to settlements on visible hillsides or areas of open landscape*
- *Ensure new development is proportionate and does not overwhelm the existing settlement*
- *Ensure that new development does not adversely affect settlement character and form or impact on views of key features such as church towers/spires*
- *Avoid developments incorporating standardised development layout, suburban style lighting, construction details and materials that cumulatively can lead to the erosion of peaceful landscape character.*
- *Layout of development should respect local built character and avoid cramming up to boundaries resulting in hard suburban style edge to the*

settlement.

- *Control the proliferation of suburban building styles and materials*
- *Promote the conservation and/or encourage the restoration of existing stone buildings in preference to new built development particularly in rural areas.*
- *Promote the use of local stone and building styles in the construction of new buildings and extensions to existing dwellings. (New buildings should, at least, respect local vernacular style).*
- *Conserve the existing dark skies.*
- *Adopt measures to minimise and where possible reduce light pollution*
- *Retain existing trees, dry stone walls, hedges etc as part of the scheme.*
- *Ensure new development is visually integrated into its surroundings and does not interrupt the setting of existing settlements. Break up harsh edges of new development with appropriate and adequate tree planting ideally in advance of the development taking place.*
- *Ensure the density of new development reflects its location relative to the 'core' of the settlement and its proximity to the surrounding rural landscape*
- *Promote advice and guidance on road verge management*

Local Landscape Character



The undulating landform immediately to the west and north of the Site provides effective screening of the Site’s ground plane and the ground floor of Hillberry Lodge from these directions.



The water tower occupies a high point near the Site and Sherston and, as a result, forms a prominent reference point within the Study Area.



The western boundary of Hillberry Lodge comprises a combination of close-board fencing, ornamental hedgerow, and single species native hedgerow. Together with the evergreen trees in the rear garden, these elements contrast with the adjoining landscape, which is characteristic of the surrounding LCA.



Upper and Lower Stanbridge Farms, due to the scale of their outbuildings, form prominent features in views from the wider landscape to the west and northwest. They also contribute to screening the western edge of Sherston.



Figure 14. Local landscape character.



Outline planning permission for a GP surgery and associated car park on the portion of the site adjacent to Sopworth Road (ref. PL/2021/10696), together with full planning permission for 45 dwellings and associated infrastructure on the remainder of the site (ref. PL/2024/00865), will effectively close the development gap between Sherston and Hillberry Lodge. As a result, the villages’ development fringe will extend to the eastern boundary of the site.

(Image: Visualisation 01 by Thrive Architects)

2.5 Visual Baseline

ZTV Analysis

The viewpoint location plan has been based on a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis plan. The ZTV is generated from a receptor height of 1.6m (approximate average UK adult eye level) and receiver/ target heights of 6m to represent a maximum ridge height for the Proposed Development. Multiple targets were placed within the Site boundary to best represent points that may be visible. The ZTV is based on 1m LiDAR First Return DSM (Digital Surface Model) terrain data which includes intervening features such as existing trees/ vegetation and buildings in the landscape. Some changes within the landscape may have occurred since the DSM data and ZTV was created. Data source: ordnancesurvey.co.uk. This ZTV also includes Earth's curvature.

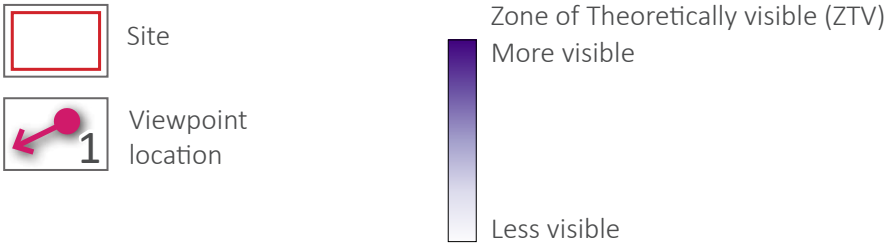
A study area of 3.0km offset from the Site boundary was chosen to reflect the scale of the Proposed Development, consideration of landform and general land cover, to encompass outlying settlements and with consideration of the limits of perceptibility to the naked eye. Theoretical visibility is then further confirmed or disproved through fieldwork and the selection of representative viewpoints thereby refined.

Viewpoints

A series of view locations (viewpoints) have been selected from a which a degree of visibility of the site is experienced or as informed by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis. Viewpoint locations are illustrated on Figure 15 and images of these views are included as viewpoint photographs 1-10. The viewpoints are all from publicly accessible locations where a degree of visibility of the Site or existing vegetation bounding the Site was observed. Photography and associated fieldwork was undertaken in February 2026 at which time deciduous trees and vegetation were without leaf cover and therefore a worst case visual scenario was encountered.

The potential visual impact of development of the Site is considered by firstly understanding how the existing Site and its features are read in the immediate and wider contexts. Refer to **Appendix A** for baseline photography and detailed descriptions of the views.

Key:



2.6 Visual Baseline Summary

CLOSE-RANGE VIEWS TO THE NORTH

From public locations the Site ground plain is visually screened by hedgerow in the wider field and at Hillberry Farm.

CLOSE-RANGE VIEWS TO THE SOUTH

Views of the Site from transient road and footpath users are possible through gaps in vegetation along Sopworth Road where it is seen within the context of Hillberry Lodge house and the approved housing scheme on the adjacent field (planning ref. PL/2024/00865)

MID-RANGE VIEWS TO THE SOUTH

Users of roads and footpaths running along ridgelines on the opposite side of the valley have views of the Site through gaps in intervening vegetation. From this angle the proposed housing and GP surgery, located east of the Site would be visible and would bridge the development gap between Sherston and Hillberry Lodge.

MID-LONG RANGE VIEWS FROM THE WEST

Views from publicly accessible locations towards the Site are limited to gaps in hedgerow and from localised high points, however these are mid range (Viewpoint 6). From these locations the development edge of Sherston and the Site is generally well screened.

LONG-RANGE VIEWS FROM THE NORTH WEST

Views towards the Site are over boundary vegetation and walling with groups of trees and hedgerows across the view creating a strong framework of vegetation within which agricultural building sit. These features form an effective visual screen to the edge of Sherston village and the Site.



3.1 Site Analysis

A detailed on site review of land within the clients ownership combined with the baseline review undertaken in Chapter 2.0 enabled a series of landscape related development constraints and opportunities to be drawn out as illustrated on Figure 17. This in turn helped guide the approach to development.

Key:

1. The established building line, set back from the road and defined by neighbouring Hillberry Lodge, should be maintained within the Site.
2. Opportunity for a woodland copse type feature to reinforce the edge of the village.
3. The Site's eastern hedgerow is currently in poor condition, with gaps allowing views across the Site from west-facing windows at Hillberry Lodge. There is an opportunity to strengthen this boundary through improved planting, enhancing biodiversity while also creating a visual buffer to the neighbouring property.
4. The northernmost part of the Site is more visually prominent due to its elevated position and should therefore remain free from development. However, this area offers an opportunity to introduce tree planting to soften views of proposed housing on the adjacent development (planning ref. PL/2024/00865).
5. Views from Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpath SHER22 towards the Site could be filtered by proposed planting at icon 5.
6. Distant views from PRoW around Field Barn include Sherston water tower, however the Site and village development edge is difficult to decipher due to distance and layers of intervening vegetation. The introduction of additional planting will make it harder and reinforce the development fringe.
7. A combination of agricultural buildings at Upper Stanbridge Farm, existing hedgerows, and subtle variations in topography help to limit visibility from road users approaching Sherston and from more distant viewpoints to the west.
8. There is potential to taper the development line so that Site proposals align with the edge of the proposed housing on the neighbouring scheme.
9. The elevated nature of PRoW SHER21 on the opposite side of the valley allows partially filtered views into the Site. It is therefore important to reinforce and enhance this frontage.
10. Site access to be aligned to avoid conflict with the existing trees.



Figure 17. Constraints and opportunities diagram.

3.2 Settlement Approach Review

Due to the Site’s location on the edge of Sherston, the design approach has been informed by an assessment of the key approach roads into the village. Sherston is typically accessed via a network of narrow rural lanes defined by field hedgerows. Along these routes, intermittent farmsteads and agricultural-style buildings (see Figure 18), often arranged around courtyards or areas of hardstanding, define the transition from open countryside to the urban settlement.

Mature tree groups and small copses, together with established hedgerows, filter views and soften the perception of built form, maintaining a strong rural character up to the settlement edge.

However, recent development along the western approach—including Hillberry Cottage and the consented residential and GP surgery schemes (PL/2024/00865 and PL/2021/10696)—has disrupted this established pattern. These schemes extend built form beyond the farmstead and tree group settlement approach cues located around Manor Farm and weaken the legibility of the transitional sequence.

The Site therefore presents an opportunity to re-establish a coherent rural-to-settlement transition which is characteristic of the area, while reinforcing a clearly defined and sensitive western edge to Sherston.

Key:

Site

Approach roads to Sherston

Notable farmsteads and agricultural style buildings on the approach

Notable mature tree groups and copses on the approach

Figure 18. Settlement approaches.

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3.3 Landscape Framework

The site analysis and settlement approach review have informed the development of a Landscape Framework Plan to guide future development of the Site. Key features of the Plan include:

1. Vehicular access from Sopworth Road, carefully positioned to retain the existing tree along the southern boundary, while also enabling the repair and retention of the existing dry stone wall on either side of the access.
2. A 4m-wide planted landscape buffer adjacent to Hillberry Lodge, reinforcing the eastern Site boundary and helping to soften views from the property.
3. A 13m-wide no-build offset from Hillberry Lodge, further helping mitigate potential impacts on existing residents and allowing for the creation of a green corridor along the eastern edge of the Site.
4. Open space located at the southern end of the Site, incorporating woodland copse planting. This will soften the approach into Sherston from the west and help filter views of the proposed development from receptors on the opposite side of the river valley.
5. A band of tree planting along the western and northern Site boundaries, providing additional visual screening from the west and creating a copse-like character to enclose the development.
6. Five single-storey dwellings which could be arranged in a farmstead-style layout and constructed using materials characteristic of the local area.
7. Development edges align with Hillberry Lodge and consented housing east of the Site.
8. The 13m-wide landscape buffer will extend northwards to create a woodland buffer, further reinforcing the western edge of Sherston.



Figure 19. Landscape framework plan.

4.1 Mitigation Measures and Enhancements

Primary mitigation measures have been embedded within the Proposed Development through an iterative process of design evolution informed by ongoing assessment.

Drawing on the landscape character and visual baseline, alongside a review of relevant planning policy and character guidance, a series of primary mitigation measures and design enhancements have been identified. These have directly informed the evolution of the Proposed Development, as illustrated in Chapter 3.

The primary mitigation measures and embedded design enhancements are as follows:

- The proposed built form is sited to avoid the northern part of the wider field within the client’s ownership, which lies on higher ground and is more visually exposed. Instead, development is concentrated in the south-eastern corner of the field, where subtle changes in topography—particularly slightly higher land to the west—provide a degree of natural screening. This location also allows the development to integrate with existing built form at Hillberry Lodge and the consented development between the lodge and Sherston C of E Primary School.
- The development is set back from Hillberry Lodge, with a landscaped buffer incorporated to reduce potential impacts on residential amenity. This buffer also enhances ecological connectivity along the eastern edge of the Site. This boundary will be strengthened through the introduction of native hedgerow planting, trees, and species-rich field margins, enhancing biodiversity and replacing the currently incongruous boundary treatments with ones more characteristic of the local landscape.
- A maximum of five dwellings is proposed, enabling the use of a private access from Sherston Road. This allows for a narrower access road, constructed using materials that reflect the character of local farmstead tracks, and facilitates a low level of external lighting.
- All buildings are proposed as single-storey structures to minimise visual impact in views from the west and from neighbouring receptors.
- The buildings could follow a farmstead-style arrangement, reflecting the form and pattern of traditional agricultural development on the approaches to Sherston.
- The northern and western boundaries will be defined by hedgerows and bands of woodland planting. These features will help enclose the

development when viewed from more open areas to the west, aiding assimilation into the landscape and reflecting the woodland copse features typical of the village setting.

- Building façades could utilise local stone and be detailed to reflect the established architectural character and vernacular of the surrounding area.

4.2 Planning Policy Compliance

As described in Sections 3.0 (Proposed Development) and 4.1 (Enhancement and Mitigation), the Proposed Development represents a contextually sensitive design response that reflects the distinct character and identity of Sherston, in accordance with Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 51.

A landscape-led approach has been adopted for the Proposed Scheme, informed by the site’s context and the emerging pattern of development along the western edge of Sherston, in line with CNL Management Plan Policy CE13.6.

The Proposed Scheme incorporates tree copse planting and hedgerows to enhance green connectivity, reflecting the locally distinctive pattern and species composition of natural features (Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 51).

The form and distribution of proposed tree cover are intended to reinforce the landscape framework along the village’s western edge. This will help assimilate incongruous elements alongside the eastern edge of the scheme, while also strengthening off-site tree cover on higher ground to soften longer-distance views of the wider village fringe (CNL Management Plan Policies CE1.2 and CE1.3).

The proposed form and materiality are designed to contribute positively to local distinctiveness and identity (CNL Management Plan Policy CE4.1), while also creating a softer rural transition. Key landmarks will be respected, and careful consideration will be given to building lines, roofscape, materials, landscaping, and boundary treatments.

The proposals seek to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area by responding to local distinctiveness, character, and scale (CNL Management Plan Policy CE4.2).

The Proposed Scheme will be sensitively designed to preserve the dark skies initiative of the CNL (CNL Management Plan Policy CE6.1).

4.3 Assessment of effects

The assessment of effects is considered at three points in the life of the Proposed Development:

- during construction;
- at completion (year 1) to reflect the newly completed scheme; and
- at 15 years post-completion to allow for the maturation of the scheme including the growth of new tree planting or other vegetation which might provide visual screening benefit.

The assessment of landscape effects is summarised in Section 4.3.1, covering the construction period and the operational period at years 1 and 15 post-completion. The landscape assessment at years 1 and 15 is presented in detail in **Appendix B**.

The assessment of visual effects is summarised in Section 4.3.2, covering the construction period and the operational period at years 1 and 15 post-completion. The visual assessment at years 1 and 15 is presented in detail in **Appendix C**.

During the construction phase the Proposed Development is likely to give rise to a number of changes to the landscape character and visual amenity, arising from Site preparation and construction activities. The construction phase is predominantly a period of temporary change; however any earthmoving, recontouring or building work can give way to permanent changes to the landscape. The construction activities in themselves could also be a source of disruption and visual intrusion. The principal construction operations likely to have temporary effects on landscape character and visual amenity include:

- site clearance works (including limited dry stone wall removal to enable access);
- fixed and mobile construction plant;
- site compound(s), utilities and protective hoardings;
- groundworks and construction of substructure (e.g. excavations, foundations and perimeter walls);
- construction of the vertical structures (the proposed buildings);
- construction of roads; and
- increase in movement and disturbance associated with construction works and the operation of construction plant.

The assessment assumes that by the time construction commences on Site the consented development of 45 houses and a GP surgery (planning ref. PL/2021/10696 & PL/2024/00865) will have been constructed on land to the east and will form part of the baseline.

4.3.1 Assessment of landscape effects

This section summarises the assessment of landscape effects. Reference should be made to **Appendix B** for detailed assessment of each landscape receptor/resource, at Year 1 and Year 15.

The Proposed Development would directly affect a number of identified landscape features within the Site and the published landscape areas in which it is located, LCA11A and LCA16A.

Summary of effects on landscape features within the Site

During construction, the Site would be accessed off of Sopworth Road with access configured to ensure the mature ash tree along this boundary can be retained. Construction activities would be offset from existing hedgerows along the eastern and southern boundaries to ensure they are unaffected. Consequently the proposals would have a **neutral** effect on ***Trees and other vegetation.***

In the longer term at year 15, the proposed planting would have matured helping to create a new copse type feature and ecological resource on the edge of the village which would have a permanent **beneficial effect of moderate significance.**

During construction, a short length of existing ***Dry stone wall*** along Sopworth Road would be removed to form the construction site access. During the majority of the construction period the boundary at this access would be formed of temporary site hoarding and hoarding vehicular gates. This is assessed to be of **minor adverse** magnitude of change which equates to a **temporary adverse effect of minor significance.** At completion, the stone wall will have been rebuilt with entrance piers reflective of those further along Sopworth Road. The wall and piers would be managed in perpetuity by the new residents to ensure this entrance feature into the village remains in the long term. On balance it is considered these effects would have a **permanent neutral effect** at years 1 and 15.

Summary of effects on Landscape Character Areas

The Proposed Development is located within ***LCA16A: Malmesbury Corsham Limestone Lowland*** within Wiltshire Councils assessment and ***LCA11A: South and mid Cotswold Lowlands*** within the Cotswolds National Landscape assessment. Construction traffic using the existing road network, potential construction noise and increased activity levels would directly affect the LCA’s.

All such effects would be temporary and, with the exception of construction traffic accessing the Site, would be localised to within the Site boundary.

Construction of proposed buildings would occur in an area relatively open to the west and as such views of construction vehicles and scaffold would appear out of context with the agricultural character. However the change would occur along a development fringe which has recently experienced the construction of 45 new homes and a GP surgery on land east of the Site. Therefore the Proposed Scheme would result in a **temporary adverse effect of minor-moderate significance** during construction.

Following completion the proposals would result in a change to the Site’s character from agricultural land to housing. However, this change would occur along a fringe of Sherston already influenced by urban development with features such as ornamental hedging, timber fencing, and tall evergreen trees bordering the Site - and appearing incongruous with the surrounding rural landscape. Furthermore 45 new homes and a GP surgery will occupy land east of the Site.

The Proposed Development would retain existing vegetation and introduce a new copse woodland to enclose the housing, helping to integrate the scheme into its surroundings. This approach would also reinforce and better assimilate the currently incongruous features along the Sherstons western fringe.

The positioning, materiality, and design of the new buildings will be carefully considered to minimise their visual presence, and could reflect the character of traditional farmsteads encountered on the approach to Sherston.

Although the proposed landscaping will require time to establish, resulting in **effects of minor adverse significance** in the short term, this is expected to improve to **effects of minor beneficial significance** by Year 15 once planting matures.

4.3.2 Assessment of visual effects

This section summarises the assessment of visual effects. Reference should be made to **Appendix C** for detailed assessment of the effects on visual receptors associated with each viewpoint, at Year 1 and Year 15.

Summary of effects on visual receptors during construction

During the construction phase, construction operations would introduce movement in the form of construction traffic, personnel and fixed and mobile construction plant, and contextually incongruous elements such as scaffolding and hoarding. This would be most apparent in views at closest proximity to the Site such as viewpoints 2 and 3b and to a lesser extent viewpoints 3a, 4 and 9. Operations such as construction of vertical structures (elements of the new building), compounds and movement would be most apparent from viewpoints 2 and 3b looking directly at the proposed Site access at very close proximity, constituting a prominent change from a highly localised area. For visual receptors at viewpoints 2 and 3b the magnitude of change is assessed to be **moderate adverse** which for motorist receptors equates to a **temporary adverse effect of moderate significance**. For walkers associated with viewpoint 2 this would also equate to a **temporary adverse effect of moderate significance**.

The extent of visibility of such operations would reduce with distance from the Site access along Sopworth Road such that there would be a lesser degree of legibility from viewpoint 3a due to intervening hedgerow and landform with the effect considered of **minor - moderate magnitude and of temporary minor-moderate adverse significance**. The magnitude of change for visual receptors at viewpoints 4 and 9 is assessed as **minor adverse** which for walkers and motorist receptors at these locations equates to **temporary adverse effects of minor-moderate significance**. From viewpoints 1a and 6 landform and vegetation will screen the vehicle movements and ground floor construction activities and therefore the tops of scaffold and roof ridges will be the only features visible, the effect of this is considered of **Negligible Minor adverse effect** and of **temporary minor significance**.

Viewpoints 1b, 5, 7 and 8 would experience no visibility towards construction activities on Site and effects are assessed to be **neutral**.

Summary of effects on visual receptors at year 1 and year 15

As motorists approach Sherston along Sopworth Road, oblique views are available over the roadside hedgerow towards the Site. A gentle rise in the field topography to the west of the Proposed Development would partially screen the ground floors of the proposed housing, with upper rooflines visible against the backdrop of Hillberry Lodge and the rooflines of the recently constructed housing (planning refs. PL/2021/10696 and PL/2024/00865). On approaching the Site entrance, glimpsed and oblique views into the Site would be possible along the entrance road, with the proposed housing appearing as a small-scale residential farmstead. This experience would then be quickly followed by a sequence of two further junctions slightly further along Sopworth Road. At Year 1, the proposed planting would be juvenile and provide only limited screening. Consequently, motorists travelling along Sopworth Road would experience **temporary minor to moderate adverse visual effects of significance**. However, these adverse effects would diminish over time. By Year 15, once the proposed vegetation has matured, views of the proposed housing would be heavily filtered, visually enclosing the development within a copse-like woodland structure. Off-site woodland planting proposed as part of the application would also soften views of Sherston’s development edge, including the rooflines of the recently constructed 45 dwellings visible as road users approach the village (Viewpoint 3a). Closer to the Site (Viewpoint 3b), new planting at the entrance and within the southern open space would further filter views of the proposed housing, while also softening and partially screening views of Hillberry Lodge’s western boundary. Overall, the introduction of this copse-like landscape framework would soften and enhance the transitional experience into the village and would result in **permanent minor beneficial visual effects of significance** on Sopworth Road (Viewpoints 3a and 3b).

Walkers travelling along PRoW footpaths within the valley south of the Site (Viewpoints 2 and 4) would experience glimpsed and partially filtered views of the proposed housing at Year 1 when travelling across elevated or open ground, or where the footpath passes close to Sopworth Road. Where visible, the proposals would be seen adjacent to Hillberry Lodge and the recently constructed 45 dwellings and GP surgery, with the development appearing as a low-level farmstead form. As a result, Viewpoint 4 is considered likely to experience **temporary minor - moderate adverse significance** at Year 1, while effects at Viewpoint 2 would reduce to **temporary minor adverse significance** due to the increased viewing distance and the wider panoramic context across Sherston’s development fringe. By Year 15, trees within the Site’s open spaces would have matured sufficiently to help assimilate the housing into the settlement edge. Consequently, effects would reduce to a **permanent neutral–minor adverse level of significance** for both views.

Beyond the valley to the south, brief glimpses of the proposals would be

possible for motorists travelling along a short elevated section of road near the Church Road/Thompson’s Hill junction (Viewpoint 9), where views are available above lower sections of roadside hedgerow. At this distance, motorists would find it difficult to readily discern the proposals at Year 1 within the context of surrounding recent development and therefore a **temporary adverse effect of neutral - minor significance** would be experienced. By Year 15, the proposals would become barely perceptible due to screening provided by the proposed tree planting. The addition of this vegetation within the wider view would also reinforce the village edge and improve the transition between the built environment and the adjoining rural landscape west of Sherston resulting in a **long-term neutral effect** at Viewpoint 9.

Viewpoints 1a and 1b represent walkers travelling south along footpath PRoW SHER22 within the field to the east of Hillberry Lodge. The immediate context for these receptors will already change substantially following construction of the consented 45 dwellings and GP surgery. From the highest point along the footpath (Viewpoint 1a), partial and glimpsed views of the proposed upper rooflines may be possible above intervening hedgerows at Year 1. The resulting effect is considered to be of **temporary minor adverse significance** while the proposed planting establishes and matures. As walkers continue southwards, the footpath gently descends and the combination of hedgerow vegetation and existing planting within Hillberry Lodge would increasingly screen the proposed development (Viewpoint 1b), resulting in a **neutral effect**. By Year 15, both on-site and off-site vegetation would have matured sufficiently to provide effective screening of the proposed housing. The planting would appear as a natural extension of the existing vegetation associated with Hillberry Lodge and, consequently, Viewpoints 1a and 1b would experience **permanent effects of neutral significance**.

A combination of landform, intervening vegetation and agricultural structures within the open landscape to the north-west and west of the Site would help to screen views of the proposals from the majority of receptors (Viewpoints 5, 7 and 8). Where mid-range views are available, these would principally occur from the isolated location represented by Viewpoint 6, where only upper rooflines would be perceptible. These would be seen against the backdrop of Hillberry Lodge and within the context of the adjacent 45 dwellings. Consequently, effects at Year 1 for Viewpoint 6 are considered to be of **temporary minor adverse significance**. In the longer term, once the proposed tree planting has matured by Year 15, views of the proposed housing would become heavily filtered, while the planting would also partially screen the neighbouring 45 dwellings. This would result in **permanent minor beneficial effects of significance** by helping to soften and further integrate Sherston’s settlement edge into the surrounding landscape.

5.1 Summary

Summary

The assessment of landscape character and visual amenity has considered the baseline conditions of the Site and its wider landscape setting. Sensitive receptors have been identified, and an assessment of the potential effects arising from the Proposed Development during construction, and at Years 1 and 15 following completion (to allow for the establishment and maturation of planting), has been undertaken.

Located to the west of Sherston village, the Site comprises the south-eastern corner of a moderately sized open field off Sopworth Road. The Site’s eastern boundary abuts Hillberry Lodge and has a domestic character, with ornamental hedgerows and close-board fencing that appear incongruous within the surrounding rural landscape, which is otherwise defined by native hedgerows and dry-stone walls.

Beyond Hillberry Lodge to the east lies Sherston C of E Primary School and the village centre. To the north, south and west of the Site, the land is primarily agricultural in character and strongly influenced by the River Avon and its tributaries. These watercourses dissect the Study Area broadly along an east–west axis, creating a series of localised ridges and valley bottoms.

The Site and Sherston are located within the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL). Consequently, planning policy places significant emphasis on conserving, protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

The Site falls within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 11A: South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands, which is described as being in good condition and possessing a moderate sense of character. Sherston itself is an evolving large village, with consent granted for 45 new dwellings and a GP surgery on land to the east of the Site (planning references PL/2021/10696 and PL/2024/00865). In addition, the potential for up to 16 dwellings at Hillberry Lodge, directly adjoining the Site to the east, has been considered through the Council’s Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and taken forward as an option within the Sherston Neighbourhood Development Plan Review.

Despite the open nature of the Site’s western boundary, views of the Proposed Development from publicly accessible receptors within the mid- to long-range Study Area to the west would be very limited due to the screening effects of existing vegetation, the presence of large agricultural buildings located on the

valley side approaching Sherston and the localised undulating topography in the field west of the Site.

The clearest and closest views would be experienced from Sopworth Road and short sections of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) footpaths within the valley to the south of the Site, where the proposed housing would be partially visible through gaps in vegetation. However, as the proposed tree planting matures, it would enclose the development within a woodland copse framework. This, combined with the proposed off-site woodland planting, would assist in mitigating all but the closest footpath views south of the site, while also softening and reinforcing the wider western development edge of Sherston. This approaches borrows from the wider character of the settlement.

The design of the Proposed Development has been optimised with regards to landscape character and visual amenity, through an iterative process between design development, cross-discipline design team meetings, planning policy review and ‘LVIA’ assessment.

The following Tables 1 & 2 summarise the assessment outcomes, separated between Landscape and Visual Resources. For visual receptors associated with each viewpoint refer to **Appendix A**. For the full assessment tables including narrative on predicted effects and the balance of adverse and beneficial aspects at year 1 and year 15, refer to **Appendices C**. For ease of reference in this summary, the tables opposite have been colour-coded accordingly:

Table 1. Summary of landscape character assessment

Landscape Resource	Significance of effect		
	During construction	Year 1	Year 15
Landscape features within Site			
Trees and vegetation	Neutral	Minor Beneficial	Moderate beneficial
Dry stone walls	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Landscape Character Areas			
LCA16A	Minor- moderate adverse	Minor adverse	Minor beneficial
LCA11A	Minor- moderate adverse	Minor adverse	Minor beneficial

Table 2. Summary of visual assessment

Viewpoint	Receptor	Significance of effect		
		During Construction	Year 1	Year 15
1a	Walkers	Temporary minor adverse	Temporary minor adverse	Neutral
1b	Walkers	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
2	Walkers	Temporary moderate adverse	Temporary minor- moderate adverse	Permanent neutral - minor Adverse
3a	Motorists	Temporary minor- moderate adverse	Temporary minor adverse	Permanent minor beneficial
3b	Motorists	Temporary moderate adverse	Temporary minor- moderate adverse	Permanent minor beneficial
4	Walkers	Temporary minor adverse	Temporary minor adverse	Permanent neutral - minor Beneficial
5	Motorists	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
6	Pedestrians/ motorists	Temporary minor adverse	Temporary minor adverse	Permanent minor beneficial
7	Walkers	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
8	Walkers	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
9	Motorists	Temporary minor adverse	Temporary neutral - minor Adverse	Neutral
10	Motorists	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral

	Beneficial effect of substantial significance
	Beneficial effect of moderate-substantial significance
	Beneficial effect of moderate significance
	Beneficial effect of minor-moderate significance
	Beneficial effect of minor significance
	Neutral
	Adverse effect of minor significance
	Adverse effect of minor-moderate significance
	Adverse effect of moderate significance
	Adverse effect of moderate-substantial significance
	Adverse effect of substantial significance

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