
**CLEEVE ROCKS, 46 MIDFORD LANE, BATH, BA2
7DF**

**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL
FOR
REPLACEMENT DWELLING**

**Prepared by:
WHLandscape**

**On behalf of:
Gary Hawkins**

Project Reference: 25.2092

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May2026

APPOINTMENT

WH Landscape Consultancy Ltd (WHLandscape) has been appointed by Gary Hawkins to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) for the proposed replacement dwelling at Cleeve Rocks, 46 Midford Lane, Bath, BA2 7DF.

WHLandscape has an established track record of appraising development proposals. The practice has considerable experience in the field of landscape and visual assessment and uses tried and tested techniques developed and recognised by the Landscape Institute, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, and Natural England.

This appraisal has been undertaken by: Ellie Sims BA (Hons) MA CMLI

Checked by: George Harley BA (Hons) MA CMLI

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This LVA provides an appraisal of the landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed construction of a replacement dwelling at Cleeve Rock, 46 Midford Lane, to the north-west of the village of Limpley Stoke. The site is in the administrative area of Wiltshire Council (specifically West Wiltshire) close to the boundary with Bath and North East Somerset Council, and is located within the Cotswolds National Landscape¹, as well as the Bath, Bristol, and Western Wiltshire Greenbelt. The findings of the appraisal will be used to determine the suitability of the proposals, as well as to suggest appropriate mitigation measures if required.

1.2 PROPOSALS

1.2.1 The application will see the demolition of the existing built form (including a bungalow, garage, annexe, and outbuildings) and the construction of a replacement dwelling comprising three ‘pavilions’ with a loose courtyard formation. The new dwelling will be located to the north-west of the existing dwelling, with a masonry plinth being formed to match the existing finished floor level. A cloister will run along the southern elevation of the central ‘pavilion’ connecting all three buildings with its southern elevation being entirely glazed. The central ‘pavilion’ will be two storeys, whilst the eastern ‘pavilion’ will be single storey and the western ‘pavilion’ will be one and half storey. The buildings will have a maximum height of:

- Central ‘pavilion’ will measure approximately 7.0 metres (m) to the ridge and 5.0m to the eaves.
- Eastern ‘pavilion’ will have a ridge height of 4.50m and an eaves height of 2.50m.
- Western ‘pavilion’ will measure approximately 6.5m to the ridge and 3.0m to the eaves.

1.2.2 The dwelling will be constructed using natural stone elevations with dressed ashlar panels and cills, whilst the roofs will be raised seam metal. All glazed elements will be powder coated aluminium windows.

1.2.3 The existing access point will be moved to the east by approximately 10m in order to create improved visibility to ensure safety when entering and exiting the site. The amenity spaces will include a terrace, as well as a garden area around the property.

¹ Note: on 22nd November 2023, all Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) adopted the name National Landscape. However, as they are still in the process of rebranding there are a number of documents which still have AONB in the title. Documents will be referred to using the existing titles, whilst the Cotswolds AONB will be referred to as the Cotswolds National Landscape.

1.3 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1.3.1 The applicant sought pre-application advice regarding the redevelopment of the site from Wiltshire Council in July 2025, with the scheme being largely unchanged from that described above. The Case Officer stated that the proposals are “*Acceptable in principle*” going on to state that the development:

- Uses materials which are reflective of the local area and its rural context.
- Consolidates all built form into one area within the residential curtilage.
- That the design “*has been carefully considered and would deliver a high-quality design*”.

1.3.2 Concerns were raised by the Landscape Officer related to potential views of the site from across the northern valley and the effect the proposals may have on the Cotswold National Landscape and the Special Landscape Area.

1.3.3 However, while the site is located within the Special Landscape Area (policy C3²), it is also within the Cotswolds National Landscape. As such Policy C3 is not considered relevant to the proposals, as it aims to protect areas within the West Wiltshire Local Plan area which are “*not covered by Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation*”³.

1.4 PRELIMINARIES

1.4.1 This report is for a “non-EIA project”. The Landscape Institute has advised in relation to Landscape and Visual Appraisals / Statements outside a formal EIA process in its ‘Statement of Clarification 1/13’ that:

In carrying out appraisals, the same principles and process as LVIA may be applied but, in so doing, it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant. [...] The emphasis on likely ‘significant effects’ in formal LVIA stresses the need for an approach that is proportional to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. The same principle – focussing on a proportional approach – also applies to appraisals of landscape and visual impacts outside the formal requirements of EIA.

1.4.2 This report therefore provides an assessment of the levels of the effect without commenting on

² Saved from the West Wiltshire Local Plan

³ West Wiltshire District Plan First Alteration (June 2004), pg 13.

their “significance”. Furthermore, this appraisal only considers the proposed development as described, and its findings should not be considered prejudicial against any other future land use proposals for the site, which should each be assessed on their own merits.

1.4.3 For this report, the policy context is taken from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2025) the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015), and the saved policies of the West Wiltshire District Plan (2004). The baseline landscape character has been taken from Natural England National Character Area Profiles (NCA): 107. Cotswolds (2013) Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2016), and Bath and North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (2021), the Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment (2017), the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005), and the West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2007). Also of relevance to this project are the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 - 2030 (2025), the Cotswolds AONB Strategy and Guidelines (2016), the Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statement on Housing (2021), the Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statement on Dark Skies & Artificial Light (2019) including all associated appendices, and the Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan (2020).

2. SCOPE AND APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

2.1 The LVA process is based on the following guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. 3rd ed. (GLVIA 3).
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment.
- Visual Representations of Development Proposals (TGN-06-19, currently under review).

2.2 The LVA is a tool used to identify and appraise the likely effects of change resulting from development, both on the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity. Landscape Effects relate to changes to components of the landscape resource as a result of development. Visual Effects relate to the appearance of development, its effect on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by users of the landscape. The study area to be considered includes the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape with the potential to be influenced by the development.

2.3 BASELINE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL STUDY

2.3.1 The baseline study reviews the existing landscape and visual resources to determine and describe the conditions against which changes resulting from the development can be measured or predicted and appraised. The process comprises three stages, namely a desk study, field survey and baseline analysis. The baseline study helps identify the landscape and visual receptors which are considered susceptible to change as a result of the development and includes description, classification and evaluation. It forms the basis against which to appraise the Magnitude of Effect and, if necessary, the Significance of Effect of development on landscape and visual resources.

DESK STUDY RESOURCES

2.3.2 The following resources have been used to inform the field survey and the analysis:

Mapping

- Ordnance Survey maps and vertical aerial photography
- Definitive Rights of Way: Public Rights of Way Mapping (Wiltshire Council) and Maps (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Geology: Geology of Britain Viewer (British Geological Survey)
- Pedology: Soilscales Map (Soilscales)
- Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Map South West Region (Natural England)

- Designations: Magic Interactive Mapping – Core Strategy Policy Maps (Wiltshire Council) and Maps (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
- Heritage assets: The National Heritage List for England (Historic England)

Planning Policy

- NPPF
- Wiltshire Core Strategy

Character Assessment

- NCA: 107. Cotswolds
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment
- Bath and North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment
- Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment
- Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment
- West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment

Additional Documents

- Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025 - 2030
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines
- Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statement on Housing
- Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statement on Dark Skies & Artificial Light (and associated appendices)
- Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan

FIELD SURVEY

2.3.3 The desk study informs the field survey. Of particular relevance are the Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photography and the Landscape Character Assessments. The field survey is then used to gain a full appreciation of the relationship between the site and study area. The field work is supported by mapped viewpoints and photographic records, representative of, and relevant to, the development.

BASELINE ANALYSIS

2.3.4 The findings of the desk study and field survey inform the baseline analysis, which helps in determining the landscape value of the study area through description, classification and evaluation of the landscape and visual resources relevant to the application site and surrounding study area.

Determining the value of the landscape as a resource helps in identifying specific landscape and visual receptors that have the potential to be affected by the development.

Landscape value

2.3.5 Landscape value is the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society; a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a variety of reasons, however having specific components of value does not mean an area is a valued landscape. Furthermore, while designations can be an indicator of value, the presence of detracting components may mean the value of a designated area locally varies across its geographic extent. Moreover, as identified in GLVIA 3, *“the fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value”*.

2.3.6 Typically, value is determined against a series of predefined factors, to establish an overall landscape value of either Low, Medium, or High, with the importance of any designations also being taken into account. Additionally, the specific value of the site, as a component of the landscape resource, is also considered.

Landscape Receptors

2.3.7 Landscape receptors will be selected to help ascertain the specific aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by the proposed development. Potential receptors include individual elements or features of the study area, both on and off site, as well as the distinct landscape character of the study area as a whole.

Visual Receptors

2.3.8 Visual receptors will initially be identified from where the desk study suggests that the proposed development may be visible, before being verified as part of the field survey. Views will primarily be recorded from Public Rights of Way (PROWs) and other areas with public access, as well as public roads with full public and permissive access. Residential views will be considered, where appropriate, through the use of representative viewpoints. It should be noted views may be recorded from areas which the desk study suggests have no intervisibility with the site, moreover not all potential visual receptors will be recorded during the field survey (e.g. if there is an obvious lack of intervisibility).

2.4 APPRAISAL OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

2.4.1 The landscape appraisal addresses changes in the fabric, character and/or key elements or features of the landscape resource. The visual appraisal addresses changes in visual amenity, and the implication of those changes on specific visual receptors.

2.4.2 The appraisal of effects aims to:

- Estimate the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors as a function of their value and their susceptibility to change.
- Identify the Magnitude of Effect of the development.
- Provide an appraisal of the effects and, subsequently, the Nature of Effect, in a logical and well-reasoned fashion.
- Indicate suitable mitigation measures.

2.4.3 The appraisal will consider the likely effects of the proposed development in the context of Receptor Sensitivity in order to determine the Level of Effect on landscape and visual receptors, with mitigation measures recommended if required. The overall landscape and visual effects of the development will then be reappraised to determine the effectiveness of the recommended mitigation at both implementation and once established.

2.4.4 To be consistent, the determination of sensitivity and the prediction of magnitude have been guided by pre-defined criteria. However, by its very nature, the LVA process requires a significant amount of interpretation and professional judgement.

2.4.5 Designations which may affect the sensitivity of receptors, or how an effect may be perceived, will be taken into consideration where appropriate. In terms of listed buildings and other designated heritage assets as receptors, this report will only consider the potential effects on the historic landscape settings of these structures/areas. It should be noted that, although a development may be visible from a listed building or other designated historic asset, this does not automatically mean that there is an effect on its historic landscape setting.

NATURE OF EFFECT

2.4.6 Change as a result of development may be Positive or Adverse, to varying degrees, or Neutral. Neutral effects are those where change is considered to have neither a Positive nor Adverse effect on the landscape or visual resource being considered. The calculation of a high Level of Effect does not

mean that change is automatically Adverse; Nature of Effect is considered independently to the calculation of Level of Effect. Mitigation can change the Nature of Effect post development, with the aim being to lower the Magnitude of Effect and reduce Adverse effects as far as possible, ideally through mitigation measures that have a Positive effect on landscape and/or visual resources.

3. LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

3.1 The following policy has been taken from the planning documents which are pertinent to the development of the site. The following policy extracts and, where applicable, excerpts of explanatory text are considered to be relevant to the application. The policies listed will be used to guide the appraisal of, and the mitigation strategy for, the proposed development.

3.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.2.1 Originally published in March 2012, with the most recent revision being in February 2025, the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. Of particular relevance to this assessment is Section 15. Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, specifically paragraph 187, which states that "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by":

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*

and:

- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*

3.2.2 Furthermore, in terms of the protection given to designated landscapes Section 15, paragraphs 189 and 190, state:

Paragraph 189

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 Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

Paragraph 190

When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.

Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

3.2.3 Also of relevance to this project is Section 12. Achieving Well-designed Places, specifically paragraph 135, which states:

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) 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;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) 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);*
- d) 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;*
- e) 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*
- f) 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.*

3.2.4 Section 13 Protecting Green Belt Land is also of relevance to this project, specifically the five purposes of Green Belt listed in paragraph 143.

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*

- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

3.2.5 Furthermore, as noted is in paragraph 153:

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

3.2.6 However, paragraph 154 lists the exceptions to this. Of particular relevance to this application is Bullet Point d:

- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;*

3.3 WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY (INCLUDING SAVED POLICIES)

3.3.1 Adopted by Wiltshire Council in January 2015, the Wiltshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document replaced the four local plans that covered Wiltshire. The Core Strategy provides a positive and flexible overarching planning policy framework for Wiltshire for the period up to 2026 in order to ensure that any proposed development is of a high standard and is compatible with the character and visual qualities of the area.

CORE POLICY 51: LANDSCAPE⁴

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

⁴ It should be noted that the efficacy of Core Policy 51 was recently found to be at odds with the NPPF at a public inquiry into a residential site in Devizes (Appeal Reference: APP/Y3940/W22/3312268). In summary, Core Policy 51 cannot be considered a 'nil detriment' policy whereby it can be used to prevent any form of development in a green field site if that development is in keeping with the character of the local area, as it clearly states that any negative impacts caused by development “*must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures*”.

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 (NFNP) or Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) shall demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas. Proposals for development outside of an AONB that is sufficiently prominent (in terms of its siting or scale) to have an impact on the area's special qualities (as set out in the relevant management plan), must also demonstrate that it would not adversely affect its setting.

CORE POLICY 52: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire's green infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained. Where development is permitted developers will be required to:

- i. Retain and enhance existing on site green infrastructure*
- ii. Make provision for accessible open spaces in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Wiltshire Open Space Standards*

- iii. Put measures in place to ensure appropriate long-term management of any green infrastructure directly related to the development*
- iv. Provide appropriate contributions towards the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy*
- v. Identify and provide opportunities to enhance and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of Wiltshire.*

If damage or loss of existing green infrastructure is unavoidable, the creation of new or replacement green infrastructure equal to or above its current value and quality, that maintains the integrity and functionality of the green infrastructure network, will be required.

Proposals for major development should be accompanied by an audit of the existing green infrastructure within and around the site and a statement demonstrating how this will be retained and enhanced through the development process.

Development will not adversely affect the integrity and value of the green infrastructure network, prejudice the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, or provide inadequate green infrastructure mitigation.

Green infrastructure projects and initiatives that contribute to the delivery of a high quality and highly valued multi-functional green infrastructure network in accordance with the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy will be supported. Contributions (financial or other) to support such projects and initiatives will be required where appropriate from developers

CORE POLICY 57: ENSURING HIGH QUALITY DESIGN AND PLACE SHAPING

A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality. Applications for new development must be accompanied by appropriate information to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire through:

- i. Enhancing local distinctiveness by responding to the value of the natural and historic environment, relating positively to its landscape setting and the existing pattern of development and responding to local topography by ensuring that important views into, within and out of the site are to be retained and enhanced*
- ii. The retention and enhancement of existing important landscaping and natural features, (e.g. trees, hedges, banks and watercourses), in order to take opportunities to*

- enhance biodiversity, create wildlife and recreational corridors, effectively integrate the development into its setting and to justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development*
- iii. Responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features in terms of building layouts, built form, height, mass, scale, building line, plot size, elevational design, materials, streetscape and rooflines to effectively integrate the building into its setting*
 - iv. Being sympathetic to and conserving historic buildings and historic landscapes*
 - v. The maximisation of opportunities for sustainable construction techniques, use of renewable energy sources and ensuring buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, in accordance with Core Policy 41 (Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy)*
 - vi. Making efficient use of land whilst taking account of the characteristics of the site and the local context to deliver an appropriate development which relates effectively to the immediate setting and to the wider character of the area*
 - vii. Having regard to the compatibility of adjoining buildings and uses, the impact on the amenities of existing occupants, and ensuring that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable within the development itself, including the consideration of privacy, overshadowing, vibration, and pollution (e.g. light intrusion, noise, smoke, fumes, effluent, waste or litter)*
 - viii. Incorporating measures to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial behaviour on the site and in the surrounding area through the creation of visually attractive frontages that have windows and doors located to assist in the informal surveillance of public and shared areas by occupants of the site*
 - ix. Ensuring that the public realm, including new roads and other rights of way, are designed to create places of character which are legible, safe and accessible in accordance with Core Policy 66 (Strategic Transport Network)*
 - x. The sensitive design of advertisements and signage, which are appropriate and sympathetic to their local setting by means of scale, design, lighting and materials*
 - xi. Taking account of the needs of potential occupants, through planning for diversity and adaptability, and considering how buildings and space will be used in the immediate and long term future*
 - xii. The use of high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping, including the provision of street furniture and the integration of art and design in the public realm*
 - xiii. The case of major developments, ensuring they are accompanied by a detailed design statement and masterplan, which is based on an analysis of the local context and assessment of constraints and opportunities of the site and is informed by a*

development concept, including clearly stated design principles, which will underpin the character of the new place

- xiv. *Meeting the requirements of Core Policy 61 (Transport and New Development).*

CORE POLICY 58: ENSURING THE CONSERVATION OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment.

Designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance, including:

- i. *Nationally significant archaeological remains*
- ii. *World Heritage Sites within and adjacent to Wiltshire*
- iii. *Buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest*
- iv. *The special character or appearance of conservation areas*
- v. *Historic parks and gardens*
- vi. *Important landscapes, including registered battlefields and townscapes.*

Distinctive elements of Wiltshire's historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced. The potential contribution of these heritage assets towards wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits will also be utilised where this can be delivered in a sensitive and appropriate manner in accordance with Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping).

Heritage assets at risk will be monitored and development proposals that improve their condition will be encouraged. The advice of statutory and local consultees will be sought in consideration of such applications

3.4 EMERGING WILTSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

3.4.1 Wiltshire council is currently in the process of reviewing their Local Plan. The most recent draft (the Wiltshire Local Plan Pre-Submission Draft 2020 – 2038) underwent a Regulation 19 consultation in autumn 2023. The first stage of hearings in relation to the Duty to Cooperate were held on 24th June 2025 with Stage 2 having commenced on 11th November 2025. However, the Inspectors found that the current emerging Local Plan is not suitable for adoption and recommended that “*the Council withdraw the submitted Plan and address these matters through the preparation of a new plan under*

*the new local-plan making system.*⁵ Therefore, these policies hold no weight in the assessment of this planning application.

3.5 FRESHFORD AND LIMPLEY STOKE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2024 - 2039

3.5.1 In 2015, Wiltshire Council formally adopted the Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan, which was the of the first neighbourhood plans to span a county boundary⁶. The plan will allow residents to determine the scale, pace and location of development, whilst ensuring that the rural environment, which characterises the area, is protected.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

(a) Any development requiring planning permission within the Neighbourhood Plan area should reflect the Guidance contained in the Villages Design Statement.

(b) Applicants must demonstrate to the relevant Local Planning Authority how any planning application conforms to that Statement.

(c) Villages Design Statement

New developments: New developments must be mindful of and sensitive to the physical and environmental context of the site and its location. This includes the need for any development to be proportionate both to its site and in relation to its immediate neighbours.

Design: The design, contemporary or traditional, must be a positive addition to the rural environment reflecting the character of its setting and acknowledging the local built heritage. It must fit well in the landscape and not dominate it.

Detailing: The detailing of new development and changes to existing buildings must reflect the quality of craftsmanship and materials both of the area and of the specific location. Where possible, local and durable materials should be used which improve appearance with age. Any exterior lighting must minimise light pollution.

Car Parking: any development, whether for extensions or new housing, must provide for sufficient off-road car parking to avoid worsening on-road parking and congestion.

⁵ Letter to Wiltshire Council dated 27th February 2026 from Inspectors Philip Mileham and Gareth Wildgoose (document title Document ID13) available at: <https://www.localplanservices.co.uk/wiltshirepexamination>

⁶ The Neighbourhood Plan was adopted by Bath and North East Somerset Council in 2014.

Heritage: The historic fabric of buildings should be preserved and repaired wherever possible (where buildings are 'listed' specialist advice should be sought).

3.6 COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025 – 2030

3.6.1 Published in 2025, the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan aims to influence policies, plans and processes affecting the National Landscape, including development, as well as guiding the management of the National Landscape. The Plan puts forward a series of policies, the following of which are relevant to this project.

POLICY CE1: LANDSCAPE

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.

CE1.4 Rural skills training and the utilisation of those skills – such as dry stone walling, stonemasonry, woodland creation and management and hedge laying – should be supported to ensure the long term retention, creation and management of the key features of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

POLICY CE4: LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS

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 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.

CE4.4. Provision should be made for the quarrying of limestone, at an appropriate scale, in order to provide building materials that help maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness of the National Landscape. Any such mineral sites should be required to demonstrate that they do not have any significant adverse effects on the natural beauty of the National Landscape including its special qualities or the integrity of existing wildlife sites. This should include the consideration of cumulative impacts, including the impact of HGV movements. Any production of aggregate and agricultural lime should only be as by-product for local use and only for essential operational purposes, with sufficient material being left to deliver the agreed restoration plan (or a more natural landform) without relying on imported material. Opportunities should be sought to retain geological outcrops to promote awareness and understanding of the geological and geomorphological features of the CNL. The restoration of mineral sites should be addressed at the earliest opportunity and realise their potential to contribute to nature recovery networks. Consideration should also be given to the after use of quarries for solar energy and battery storage schemes, where appropriate

POLICY CE6: DARK SKIES

CE6.1. 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.

CE6.2. Measures should be taken to increase the area of dark skies in the CNL by removing and, where removal is not possible or appropriate, reducing existing sources of lighting.

CE6.3. Proposals that have the potential to impact on the dark skies or dark landscapes of the

CNL should have regard to and be compatible with:

- ***The National Landscapes Board's Dark Skies & Artificial Light Position Statement.***
- ***Cotswolds National Landscape Technical Lighting Design Guidance***
- ***Best practice standards and guidance, in particular, that published by the Institution of Lighting Professionals.***

CE6.4. Consideration will be given to seeking a formal dark sky designation for those parts of the Cotswolds National Landscape that are least affected by light pollution

4. BASELINE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL STUDY

4.1 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

4.1.1 The site is located within a clearing on the northern edge of the Midford Valley Wood, to the north-west of the village of Limpley Stoke, just off Midford Lane. In its wider context, the site lies just over 4 kilometres to the south-west of the city of Bath and just over a kilometre from the boundary of the World Heritage Site. The part of the site is covered by the Midford Valley Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at the top of the southern slope of the valley of the Midford Brook, which has also been identified as Ancient Woodland. The woodland bounds the site to the east, south, and west; whilst to the north beyond well hedged tree lined stone wall lies Midford Lane. The surrounding landscape is sparsely settled with scattered dwellings and farmsteads found across the valley.

4.1.2 Currently the site comprises part of the woodland, areas of managed grassland, water features, and a number of buildings including:

- A white rendered bungalow with a detached PV canopy
- A white rendered, flat roofed garage
- A timber clad annex
- A white rendered outbuilding
- Three sheds of varying sizes and materials
- Yurt
- Storage container

4.1.3 No natural environment or heritage designations cover the site itself; however, it is located within the buffer zone of the Midford Valley Woods SSSI. The site is not crossed by any routes with public or permissive access, with the closest PRow being Bridleway LSTO13 (approximately 380m to the north-east) and Footpath LSTO1 approximately 440m to the north.

4.1.4 The entire study area falls within the Cotswolds National Landscape, which confers a national landscape designation onto the area for the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty including landform, geology, biodiversity, landscape features and human settlement. Of particular relevance to this project are the unique qualities and characteristics of the Cotswolds National Landscape as identified in the Cotswolds Landscape Character Assessment, and the aims and

objectives for the landscape identified in the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2030.

4.1.5 The site's location within the Green Belt means that development will be tightly controlled, although there are exceptions to this, as identified in paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF. Green Belts serve as a mechanism to aid urban planning and development, to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Although it is noted that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence, its designation is not based solely on the quality of the landscape or its character and appearance.

4.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.2.1 The following Landscape Character Assessments have been used to establish the baseline character of study area:

- NCA: 107. Cotswolds
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment
- Bath and North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment
- Bathscape Landscape Character Assessment
- Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment
- West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment

4.2.2 The study area is covered by NCA: 107. Cotswolds, however, due to the broad level of assessment, the identified key characteristics are too general to be relevant to the site. For this appraisal, the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment and the most detailed Landscape Character Assessment (West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment) will be used to help establish the site's unique landscape character as well as to determine its contribution to the landscape character and/or elements or features which define the wider landscape.

4.2.3 Only information pertaining to the Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and Landscape Character Types (LCTs) in which the site is located has been listed in order to help establish its unique landscape character as well as to determine the site's contribution to the landscape character, elements, and features which define the wider landscape. It is important to note that, due to the extent of individual Character Areas and Types, some of the listed information may not be wholly relevant to the site and surrounding landscape.

COTSWOLDS AONB LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

4.2.4 In 2016, the Cotswolds National Landscape published the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines. These documents offer a comprehensive characterisation of the National Landscape's landscape that can assist in understanding and promoting the concept of local distinctiveness. The site falls within LCT 4: Enclosed Limestone Valley, specifically LCA 4A: Cam and Wellow Brook Valleys, and LCT 13: Low Limestone Plateau, specifically LCA 13B: Hinton Charterhouse Plateau.

LCT 4: ENCLOSED LIMESTONE VALLEY

Key Characteristics:

- *Moderately broad but enclosed river valleys with steep sides separated by areas of Low Limestone Plateaux and High Wold Dip-Slope;*
- *strong physical enclosure of valleys creates a secluded character;*
- *rural character with local influences from large urban centres;*
- *significant areas of woodland, of which a number are ancient semi-natural woodlands particularly on upper and steeper slopes;*
- *area under both arable and pastoral use, together with areas of rough pasture and scrub;*
- *fields of varying sizes, dependent on slope, mainly enclosed by hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees;*
- *road networks following valleys bottoms connecting settlements and ascending valley sides to more isolated dwellings;*
- *industrial heritage of the valleys signified by the presence of railways, mills and canal network within Avon Valley;*
- *impressive features of Victorian engineering; and*
- *surviving vernacular structures such as terraces of weavers' cottages.*

Landscape Character:

Distinct areas of the Enclosed Limestone Valley Landscape Type occur in the most southern section of the Cotswolds AONB, to the south, east and north of Bath, the southernmost valleys forming sections extending to the south and the west beyond the AONB boundary. The landscape type is represented by valley systems that form part of the network of watercourses that flow into the River Avon. A discrete area of the Enclosed Valley type also overlooks Bath. Here, the close proximity and views of urban areas influences local landscape character.

The Enclosed Limestone Valleys are characterised by moderately broad, steep sided river valleys separated by areas of Low Limestone Plateaux (Landscape Character Type 13) and High Wold

Dip-Slope (Landscape Character Type 9). The physical enclosure of the valleys and relatively sparse settlement patterns has resulted in a secluded character. However, in some areas transportation routes along the valley floor give the valleys a busier and more developed character. Large settlements outside the AONB boundary such as Bath, Batheaston, Bathampton and Bradford-on-Avon also exert a strong urbanising influence on local landscape character.

Land cover within the valleys is a combination of both arable and pastoral use, although arable land is more frequently found on lower slopes where growing conditions are more hospitable and soils are deeper. Areas of rough pasture and scrub are located on steeper slopes, together with significant woodland blocks that vary in size and form. Fields size also varies, and mainly enclosed by a network of hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees.

The valley floors are generally flat or gently sloping, giving way to undulating valley sides that progressively increase in steepness. The present form of the valleys is a direct response to the nature of the underlying geology with the Oolitic limestone underlying the steeper upper slopes, and older Lias Group Clays forming the more gentle slopes. The steep valley sides and woodland create a sense of seclusion, and generally contain views along the valley. The upper slopes can be quite open, however, allowing views over the valley landform.

Hamlets and villages within the Enclosed Limestone Valleys are located on the valley sides, in particular on the upper slopes where they are generally dispersed and linear, with villages also extending along the valley bottoms adjacent to springlines. The close proximity of large settlements has an urbanising influence on the perimeter of the landscape type and particularly in the Perrymead Slopes Landscape Character Area, which rise above the eastern fringes of Bath. Predominant building materials include limestone with clay tiles and sometimes slate roofs and rendered finishes, with a number of dwellings dating from the Georgian period. In the Lam Brook and St Catherine's Brook character area Oolitic Limestone is a particularly characteristic building material used for both buildings and walls. A network of meandering roads connects villages along the valley floor, and also to other minor routes leading up the valley sides to dwellings on the upper slopes. Such lanes are typically within deep-set cuttings resulting in characteristic sunken lanes or holloways, with old hedge banks and tall hedgerows creating a sense of enclosure.

LCA 4A: CAM AND WELLOW BROOK VALLEYS

Description:

This Character Area to the south of Bath comprises the valleys of the Cam and Wellow Brooks which run from west to east joining at Midford to become Midford Brook. Separating the two

moderately wide and steep valleys is an area of low limestone plateau. Land use within the valleys is a mixture of arable, improved pasture and short term ley, and permanent pasture, with generally an equal proportion of each, although arable tends to be in more localised blocks on gentle slopes. Fields can be small and irregularly shaped, although larger ones located on the higher and shallower slopes are more regular in shape. The valley is moderately wooded primarily with deciduous species in significant woodland blocks such as Cleaves Wood, which is an ancient woodland and a SSSI. In areas around Combe Hay and Tucking Mill, woodland extends down the valley creating irregular shaped blocks. However, a number of smaller scattered areas of woodland are more regular in shape.

There are a number of features of interest within the area including Midford Castle, a Grade I listed building located on the valley side, north of Midford Brook. Adjacent to the Brook is the Limestone Link, a long distance footpath that utilises the line of the former railway and provides access along the length of the Cam Valley to Midford and beyond to the River Avon in the adjacent Bathampton and Limpley Stoke Character Area (4B). Further reminders of the area's industrial past are the remnants of the Somerset Coal Canal. The line of the Wellow Brook formed part of the Stop Line Green, also known as the Bristol Outer Defence Line, an anti-tank defence set up protect Bristol during the Second World War.

LCT 13: LOW LIMESTONE PLATEAU

Key Characteristics:

- *Gently undulating open plateau;*
- *expansive long distance views across the open plateau to distant hills and immediate surrounding valleys;*
- *generally equal distribution of arable and pastoral land of medium and occasionally large sized, geometric fields enclosed principally by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees;*
- *fields generally enclosed by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees;*
- *sparse woodland cover of small farm woodlands and shelter belts limiting the sense of exposure;*
- *limited areas of species rich grassland on the fringes of the landscape type;*
- *sparsely settled with little settlement beyond isolated farmsteads;*
- *communication routes principally limited to minor roads connecting small settlements and individual dwellings; and*
- *limited number of archaeological remains, although their presence verifies the long history of settlement and use of the area.*

Landscape Character:

The Low Limestone Plateau is characterised by small areas of plateau landscape with gentle undulations located in the most southern section of the Cotswolds AONB, south of Bath. These fragmented sections of the character type form part of a broader area of Low Limestone Plateau that extends to the south and west, beyond the AONB boundary. In common with the Oolitic Limestone that underlies the main part of the Cotswolds AONB the underlying geology has a unifying effect on character. Limited small settlements and scattered farmsteads harmonise with the landscape through the use of local materials, although modern farm buildings can look out of place due to their size, materials and design.

Arable and pastoral land combine in equal amounts to dominate land use within the area. Woodland planting is limited to small, scattered blocks that are regular in shape and fit with the pattern and texture of the landscape. Hedgerows provide the most common boundary feature with scattered hedgerow trees, which in areas can lead to the impression that the landscape is more wooded than it actually is.

The open nature of the plateau areas allows long views over valleys to surrounding hills, including views as far as the Wiltshire Downs. The sky provides an important feature of the views and tall elements such as pylons, masts and towers are consequently highly visible.

LCA 13B: HINTON AND CHARTERHOUSE PLATEAU

Description:

The low limestone plateau located to the south of Bath separates the Wellow Brook and Frome/Avon Valleys to the west and east respectively. The Forest Marble Formation covers the majority of the area, below which further horizons of the Great Oolite Group limestones are evident on the fringes of the plateau. Cornbrash can be found on the highest points. The drainage of soil can be impeded over the Forest Marble mudstone, though is usually free draining over the Oolitic Limestone. The soils have a considerable amount of brashy limestone debris.

Fields of arable and pastoral land are medium in size, and occasionally large, enclosed by hedgerows and post and wire / rail fences. Mature hedgerow trees are frequent, usually oak, with a smaller number of ash, sycamore and beech. Stone walls can also be found around settlements and intermittently along roadsides. Woodland within the area is very limited, although where it does occur, deciduous species predominate with only limited areas of coniferous plantation.

The two main settlements within the area are the village of Hinton Charterhouse and the hamlet of Pipehouse, both typical dispersed rural settlements related to agriculture, with dwellings mainly constructed from Oolitic limestone with red clay or brown concrete tiles. There are also a number of individual farmsteads scattered across the plateau. Cutting across the area to the east is the A36(T) with the B3110 to the west, both of which run in a north south direction. Connecting the two roads and dwellings is a more minor road network.

Features of interest on the plateau include the water tower at Pipehouse, Hinton House and surrounding 18th century parkland and Hinton Carthusian Priory. A number of Second World War relics are also visible around Pipehouse, including pillboxes and anti-tank and infantry trenches. A small limestone quarry is located north of Pipehouse. Archaeological remains verify the long history of settlement and use of the area and include tumuli and a section of Roman road south west of Pipehouse, designated as a SAM.

4.2.5 The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines document details forces for changes and strategies for each landscape type. The strategies and guidelines for LCT 4: Enclosed Limestone Valley and LCT 13: Low Limestone Plateau share a number of guidelines that are relevant to the new development:

- ***Avoid development that will intrude negatively into the landscape and cannot be successfully mitigated.***
- ***Ensure new development is proportionate and does not overwhelm the existing settlement.***
- ***Ensure that new development does not adversely affect settlement character and form.***
- ***Promote the use of local stone and building styles in the construction of new buildings and extensions to existing dwellings.***

WEST WILTSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

4.2.6 In 2007, Chris Blandford Associates, under the appointment of West Wiltshire District Council, produced the West Wiltshire District Landscape Character Assessment. The assessment aims to ascertain a clear understanding of the landscape resource and set out management guidelines which will contribute to the environmental enhancement of the district. The site falls within LCT A: Limestone Lowland, specifically LCA A4: Cleeve Limestone Lowland.

LCT A: LIMESTONE LOWLAND

Key Characteristics:

- *Gently undulating lowland landscape which rises gradually from east to west across the type.*
- *A mixture of arable farmland and permanent pasture underlain by geology of predominantly mudstone and limestone with some pockets of clay.*
- *Numerous small rivers and stream corridors crossing the landscape.*
- *Field boundaries delineated by a strong network of hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees.*
- *Scattered settlement pattern, consisting predominantly of villages and isolated farmsteads.*
- *Predominantly rural landscape with subtle variations in character relating to the varied geology, topography and watercourses.*
- *Large-scale, predominantly geometric field pattern, typical of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure with small-scale irregular fields of medieval pattern close to small settlements.*
- *Landscape scattered with traditional buildings, of local limestone, which provide a key distinguishing characteristic.*

Summary of Visual Character:

The limestone lowlands are underlain by geology of the Great Oolite Groups, formed in the Mid Jurassic Period. The landform undulates rising from 35m AOD adjacent to the Limestone River Floodplain Landscape Type in the south-east to higher land in the north-west (200m). Numerous small rivers and stream corridors cross the type. There is a strong network of hedgerows, with frequent hedgerow trees and field trees visible. Settlement pattern consists of scattered villages and isolated farmsteads which are connected by a series of minor rural roads. Villages are peaceful and rural, often centred on a village green, pond or area of common land. Buildings are traditional in style, with many dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, built from local limestone. Away from the main A363 and A365 road corridors, there is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity.

LCA A4: CLEEVE LIMESTONE LOWLAND

Location and Boundaries:

This small section of limestone plateau is part of a much larger area separating the Wallow Brook and Frome/Avon Valleys to the west and east respectively. It lies within the Cotswolds AONB.

Key Characteristics:

- *Gently undulating open plateau; expansive long distance views across the open plateau to distant hills and immediate surrounding valleys.*
- *Generally equal distribution of arable and pastoral land of medium and occasionally large sized, geometric fields enclosed principally by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees.*
- *Sparse woodland cover of small farm woodlands and shelterbelts limiting the sense of exposure.*
- *Limited areas of species rich grassland on the fringes of the landscape type.*
- *Sparsely settled with little settlement beyond isolated farmsteads.*
- *Communication routes principally limited to one minor road connecting small settlements and individual dwellings; and*
- *Limited number of archaeological remains, although their presence verifies the long history of settlement and use of the area.*

Summary of Visual Character:

Fields of arable and pastoral land are medium in size, and occasionally large, enclosed by hedgerows and post and wire / rail fences. Mature hedgerow trees are frequent, usually oak, with a smaller number of ash, sycamore and beech. Tracts of biologically important species rich calcareous grassland and hay meadow are scattered across the area. Stone walls can also be found in the area and intermittently along the roadsides. Deciduous woodland predominates, with only limited areas of coniferous plantation. The settlement pattern consists of a number of individual farmsteads scattered across the plateau.

Inherent Landscape Sensitivities:

- *The intact pattern of medium and irregular pastoral fields bounded by a network of hedges.*
- *Tracts of biologically important species rich calcareous grassland and hay meadow.*
- *The ancient woodland.*
- *The skyline which is largely free from development.*
- *Vernacular farmstead buildings constructed from local stone.*

4.3 THE STUDY AREA

4.3.1 The study area has developed over a mixed bedrock comprising various mudstone, limestone, and sandstone formations. Over time watercourses have eroded the sedimentary bedrock, creating various river valleys across the study area, including the valleys of River Avon and the Midford Brook which surround the large hill on which the site is located. This has resulted in a notably varied

topography with a high point of 158m (spot height) Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to the north at Combe Down and a low point of 25m AOD along the River Avon and the Midford Brook.

4.3.2 Lime rich soils with varying levels of drainage dominate the study area, with the majority of the valleys comprising soils with impeded drainage. Superficial deposits of Alluvium are found along the watercourses, whilst a single deposit of '*Sand and gravel of uncertain age and origin*' is located to the south-west of Hayes Wood.

4.3.3 Settlement within the study area is defined by the southern edge of Combe Down (on the outskirts of Bath) and the villages of Limpley Stoke, Freshford, and Monkton Combe, as well as scattered farms and residential properties which are commonly seen amongst an established landscape structure. At the south-eastern end of Midford Lane, dwellings are clustered together on the edge of Limpley Stoke, whilst to the south-west dwellings are more isolated within larger plots. There are a range of building styles and materials found throughout the study area, largely reflective of the period in which they were constructed. Traditional materials include limestone or rendered finishes with clay tiled or slate roofs. The existing built form within the site has been constructed using a range of materials including painted render and timber cladding with pitched tile roofs or flat felt roofs.

4.3.4 Away from the settlements, the prevailing land use of the study area is agricultural with pastoral land being more common, however, arable land is more prevalent to the south. Field sizes and patterns are mixed with evidence of medieval enclosure alongside larger, more modern enclosures. Fields are often divided by hedgerows with mature trees, while traditional stone walls are also present. Riparian vegetation is found along the Midford Brook and the River Avon through which the Kennet and Avon Canal passes.

4.3.5 Across the study area, woodland blocks and belts are generally found on the valley sides, with the exception of Hayes Wood which is located on the hill to the south-east of the site, with several being identified as Ancient Woodland. The study area contains a number of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and SSSIs (including Midford Brook), areas of Ancient Woodland (including the one in which the site is located), and fields. Within Combe Down there are several areas which have been identified as Special Areas of Conservation for bats.

4.3.6 There are a number of listed buildings within the study area, the majority of which are located within the Conservation Areas of Combe Down and Monkton Combe. There is only one listed building within 500m of the site, the Grade II listed *Barn at Brett Farm*. The southern end of the Grade I listed Registered Park and Garden of Prior Park is located within the study area, as well as the south-eastern edge of the City of Bath World Heritage Site. However, due to the local landform and high level of dense vegetation it is considered that all heritage assets are physically and visually divorced from the site.

4.3.7 Vehicular access through the study is largely contingent on two distinct roads to the east and west of the site; the A36/Warminster Road to the east and the B3110/Midford Road to the west. There is network of more minor roads providing vehicular connections between the villages, hamlets, scattered dwellings/farmsteads, and Combe Down (and beyond to Bath). A section of the Great Western Railway, Bathampton to Bradford Junction, passes through the study area along the River Avon stopping at Freshford Station.

4.3.8 Pedestrian access is provided by a series of PRow, including footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic providing connections between the settlements. Three Sustrans cycle routes pass through the study area; route 24 and 244 which follow the route of the disused railway through the valley to the west of the study area where views are restricted by landform and vegetation, and route 4 which runs alongside the River Avon where views are restricted by vegetation within the valley. The Circuit of Bath recreational route bisects the study area, following the River Avon and the Midford Brook, providing a 20-mile circular route around the outskirts of the city of Bath.

4.4 BASELINE ANALYSIS

4.4.1 The findings of the desk study and field survey have been used to determine the landscape value of the study area and subsequently identify specific landscape and visual receptors that have the potential to be affected by the development. The effect of the development on these receptors will be calculated, leading to an overall determination of the effect on both the landscape resource and the visual amenity of the study area.

LANDSCAPE VALUE

4.4.2 The site and study area are located within the Cotswolds National Landscape which confers a national statutory landscape designation onto the landscape. Furthermore, the study area also falls within the Bath, Bristol, and Western Wiltshire Green Belt, which serves to prevent urban sprawl by

keeping land permanently open and controlling inappropriate development, thus helping retain the overall quality of the landscape. The Bath World Heritage Site is partially located within the study, however, the historic city is deemed to be beyond the influence of the site itself.

4.4.3 Overall the value of the landscape is *High*, which means that it is a ‘valued landscape’ under Section 15, Paragraph 187, Bullet Point a), of the NPPF.

LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

4.4.4 The following landscape receptors have been identified as being aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by the proposed development:

- The established landscape components which define the landscape in which the site is located, in particular:
 - The unique qualities and characteristics of the Cotswolds National Landscape
 - Dark Skies and the effect the proposals may have on the nocturnal environment
 - Local character, particularly that of the built form of other dwellings on Midford Lane
- The effect on the character and appearance of the Bath, Bristol, and Western Wiltshire Greenbelt
- The historic environment, in particular the cluster of Grade II listed structures to the west of the site, including associated visual character
- The existing vegetation and its importance in respect of the containment of the site within the study area

VISUAL RECEPTORS

4.4.5 The following visual receptor locations have been identified as having potential intervisibility with the proposed development:

Roads:

- Midford Lane
- Midford Road/B3110
- Summer Lane
- Brassknocker Hill

PRoWs:

- Footpath BA16/13
- Footpath BC62/2

LEVEL OF EFFECT

4.4.6 Due to the site's location within a National Landscape and within the Green Belt, it is considered to be a 'valued landscape'; therefore, an appraisal will be carried out to determine the overall Level of Effect of the development proposals in terms of both the landscape resource and the visual amenity of the study area.

4.4.7 It should be noted that, while specific receptors have been identified for consideration, this does not necessarily mean that they will be adversely affected by the proposals. Moreover, if there are high level Adverse effects on specific receptors, this does not automatically mean that there will be high level Adverse effects on the study area as a whole.

4.4.8 The Level of Effect can be expressed as a correlation between the Magnitude of Effect and Landscape or Visual Sensitivity in a single matrix to determine the level, as shown in Table 1. However, it must be noted that the matrix is not in itself a substitute for professional judgement, for which allowances must be made. Although mitigation measures are often proposed where the Level of Effect is Minor or None, it is the Major and Major/Moderate categories which provide the highest Level of Effect in terms of effect on the landscape and visual resources.

Table 1: Level of Effect as a Correlation of Sensitivity and Magnitude, Applicable to the Landscape Resource and Visual Amenity

Landscape or Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect			
	<i>Substantial</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Negligible</i>
<i>High</i>	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor
<i>Medium</i>	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor
<i>Low</i>	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/None
<i>Negligible</i>	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/None	None

5. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

5.1 LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

5.1.1 The Landscape Value of the study area as a whole is *High* due to its inclusion within the Cotswolds National Landscape, which confers a national statutory landscape designation on to the landscape, as well as the fact that the study area is also part of the Bath, Bristol, and Western Wiltshire Green Belt. The Overall Susceptibility to Change of the application site as a component of the landscape is considered *Low*, in respect of the development proposed. While the proposals will see an increase to the height of the on-site built form, the site has a well-established residential context and is well very contained within the receiving landscape. As such, the Overall Landscape Sensitivity of the development area within the surrounding landscape is *Medium*.

5.1.2 The site itself does not represent a specific feature or element defined as a key characteristic of the study area, nor will its development result in a change to the area's prevailing rural character or have a significant effect on the area's tranquillity. The design of the replacement dwelling will consolidate all the built form scattered across the site into one area, around the footprint of the existing bungalow. Moreover, the concept of residential development on the site has already been established through the existing bungalow and therefore the proposals will not constitute the *"encroachment of built development into the valleys"*⁷ and will *"maintain the tranquil, secluded and often remote and sparsely settled character"*⁸ of the receiving landscape.

5.1.3 However, the proposals will see the construction of a much larger dwelling than is currently present on the site. Nevertheless, despite the increase in size, the proposals are in keeping with the scale of existing nearby dwellings, which are often two storey, detached dwellings within their own large plot. Furthermore, the development will reduce the spread of built form across the site through the demolition/removal of the ancillary buildings and storage container. Overall, the proposals will *"not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building"* and will therefore meet the criteria for an exception to inappropriate development within the Green Belt, as set out in paragraph 15, bullet point c, of the NPPF.

⁷ Potential Landscape Implications of new development within Enclosed Limestone Valley of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines.

⁸ Landscape Strategies and Guidelines for new development within Enclosed Limestone Valley of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines.

5.1.4 The new dwelling will introduce additional glazed elements within the nocturnal environment over and above the existing bungalow; however, there has been a dwelling on the site since the second half of the 20th century and as such it is already an established light source. Furthermore, despite the increased size of the dwelling, additional light spill, visible from the wider landscape of the National Landscape, is highly unlikely as the site is extremely well contained within the dense vegetation of woodland that surrounds it. The proposals will only represent a minor change in the nocturnal environment when considered in terms of the development proposed, compared to the existing dwelling and local residential development.

5.1.5 The Cotswolds Conservation Board recognizes that there are circumstances when external lighting is necessary, but that this should be implemented to avoid or minimise light pollution. The proposals do not currently include an external lighting scheme; however, should it be required, the guidance provided by the Cotswolds National Landscape should be followed to ensure that only *“well-designed artificial light that is directed to where it is needed, when it is needed”*.

5.1.6 The proposals will have a negligible effect on the landscape settings of the listed buildings within the study area, with heritage assets being both physically and visibly divorced from the site, even with the increase in height. The landscape settings of these heritage assets have already been subject to a high level of change over the years due to the construction of new dwellings and modern farm buildings, as well as changes in farming practices. Overall, the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the historic landscape character of the area or historic landscape settings of any heritage assets within the study area.

5.1.7 To the east, south, and west, the site is partially within and surrounded by Ancient Woodland and the Midford Valley Woods SSSI. Government guidance⁹ recommends that Ancient Woodlands *“should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the boundary of the woodland to avoid root damage”*. The proposals will see the demolition and removal of all existing built form within the site, including several ancillary buildings and storage containers located within the Ancient Woodland and SSSI. The existing garage and driveway access are located within the 15m Ancient Woodland buffer; however, the garage will be removed. The removal of development from within the SSSI is a positive; however, this should be undertaken with care reflecting the site’s ecological value. Although the

⁹ Ancient Woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions>)

driveway will be extended slightly into the Ancient Woodland area, there has been a driveway access here since the bungalow was constructed in the 1960s. This pre-dates the identification of Ancient Woodland (1980s) and will not see the loss of any trees covered by the designation. Moreover, the proposed replacement dwelling has been located in such a way as to protect the woodland area through the provision of a buffer of more than 15m, in which no development will take place. Therefore, the proposals comply with current Government guidelines relating to Ancient Woodland.

5.1.8 The proposals will require the felling of 14 C grade trees, which are mixture of native and domestic species including apple, silver birch, maple, holly, magnolia, ginkgo, pittosporum, and leylandii. None of these trees fall within the SSSI or the Ancient Woodland area. The removal of these trees will not affect the level of containment afforded to the site as they are not located on the site's boundaries. Additionally, the mature landscape structure of the site will be unaffected as they are of lower heights and quality. Due to the size of the site, there are opportunities for new tree planting to offset these losses. In order to accommodate the required visibility splays, a small section of the mixed native hedgerow will need to be cut back. However, as the access point is proposed to be moved 10m to the east, additional hedgerow can be established to offset this loss. Details of trees to be removed, as well as the detail of tree protection during construction, can be found in the Tree Survey and Arboricultural Method Statement provided by Atworth Arboriculture and submitted as part of this application.

5.1.9 In terms of the Overall Magnitude of Landscape Effect resulting from the proposals, any change has to be considered in terms of the landscape components that will definitely be affected and those that will potentially be affected. The importance of these components as part of the wider landscape is also a consideration. Although the proposals will see a change to the overall height of the dwelling and spread of development across the site, this will not result in the loss of key elements, features or characteristics of the baseline condition of the site.

5.1.10 While the dwelling size will increase, this will not result in the development becoming unduly prominent or detracting from the surrounding landscape. The scattered built form across the site will be consolidated into one building around the footprint of the existing bungalow, with the total footprint and volume being comparable to that of the existing built form. The proposed development will be well contained within the site, which is sufficient size to accommodate the development proposed, with the use of materials ensuring it will integrate well into the receiving landscape. As

such, the Overall Magnitude of Landscape Effect is *Slight*, resulting in an Overall Level of Landscape Effect of *Moderate*.

5.1.11 Furthermore, in landscape terms, the redevelopment of the site will also not affect the key characteristics of Green Belt land, with the perceived openness and permanence of the Green Belt remaining unchanged. The application meets the criteria of paragraph 154, bullet point c, of the NPPF, as it “*does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building*”.

5.1.12 Although the overall height of the dwelling will increase, the scheme has been designed to reflect the site’s rural context through the proposed material choice. This approach will ensure the property does not dominate the site and remains subservient to its rural setting. Overall, the proposed layout, appearance, scale, materials palette and building style of the proposed development is commensurate with other similar properties within the local area and can be accommodated alongside suitable landscape mitigation. The development proposals will not conflict with the relevant key issues, strategies, objectives and policies identified across the relevant Character Assessments, specifically the strategy and guidelines for Cotswold National Landscape LCT 4: Enclosed Limestone Valley and LCT 13: Low Limestone Plateau, as listed in section 4.2.5. As such, the Overall Nature of Landscape Effect of the proposed development is *Neutral*, with several positive effects as a result of the consolidation of built form and removal of ancillary buildings from the Ancient Woodland and SSSI.

5.2 VISUAL APPRAISAL

5.2.1 The recorded viewpoints can be used to predict possible effects from PROWs, roads, publicly accessible areas and residential properties within the study area. Viewpoints have been determined from where the desk study suggested that the development areas may be visible, as well as observations during the field survey. The recorded viewpoints are considered appropriate for the scale of the development and the prevailing topography and land cover. All photographs were taken using a digital equivalent of a 50mm focal length traditional 35mm SLR lens to represent most accurately the views as seen by the human eye.

5.2.2 For the purpose of this appraisal, close views are between 0m – 500m from the proposed development, medium views are between 500m – 1000m, and long views from further than 1000m. Views are representative and not totally exclusive. (See Appendix 2: Viewpoint Photographs for enlarged copies of the selected viewpoints).

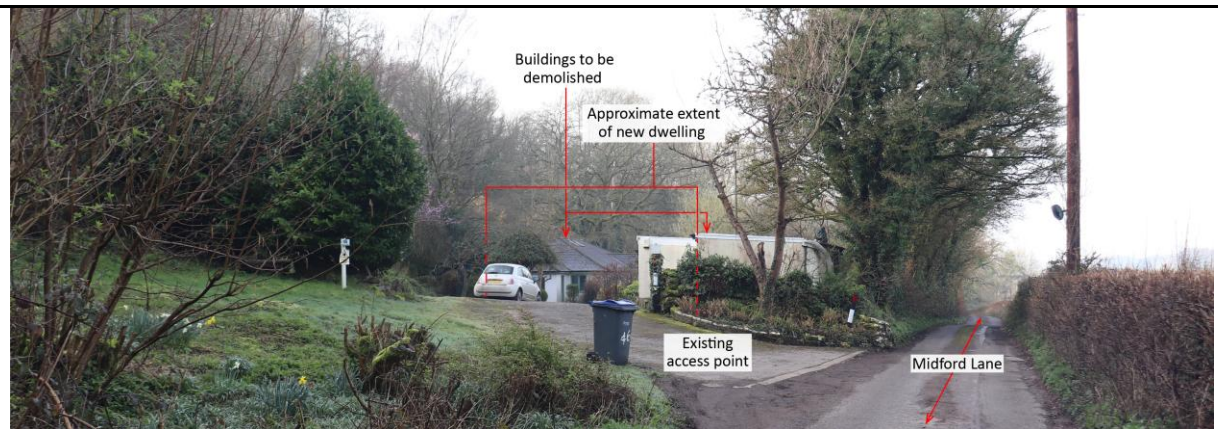
5.2.3 The Viewpoints were visited in March 2026 when vegetation was beginning to emerge. The seasonal differences (seasonality), in respect of potential effects arising from the varying degree of screening/filtering of views by vegetation that will apply in summer and winter, have been considered in the appraisal of all recorded viewpoints; as per the recommendation of GLVIA3. It is important to note that the recording of viewpoints during different seasons is not a prerequisite of the consideration of seasonality, as GLVIA3 states:

The timing of the assessment work and the project programme will also influence the practicality of covering more than one season.

VIEWPOINT 1

Approximate distance from site: Adjacent

OS map elevation: Between 105-110m AOD



VIEWPOINT 2

Approximate distance from site: Adjacent

OS map elevation: Between 100-105m AOD



VIEWPOINT 3

Approximate distance from site: Adjacent

OS map elevation: Between 95-100m AOD



Close distance views, taken south-west, east, and north-east (respectively) along Midford Lane. As receptors travel south-westwards along Midford Lane (approximately 85m), there will be limited views into the site within which the new dwelling will be seen. As receptors pass the site's access

point, views of the dwelling will be filtered by mature boundary vegetation which breaks up and softens views. Furthermore, in months of higher leaf cover, views towards the built form will become heavily filtered.

Although the proposed dwelling is larger than the existing, it is well contained by an established and dominant landscape structure. Moreover, the proposals will also see the demolition of the garage which will consolidate the built form further into the site and reduce the visual prominence of built form within the site.

Additionally, a result of their pale colouration, the existing bungalow and associated buildings are readily apparent and likely to draw the attention of receptors. Conversely the proposed materials are of a more naturalistic appearance and will help to settle the new built form into the site's wooded context. Overall, despite the replacement dwelling being visible as a new feature, change would be limited with the existing residential use being an established component of the views had from this section of Midford Lane. Furthermore, in terms of visual character, receptors will be acutely aware of the local residential context, as when travelling from the south-east receptors will have passed through Limpley Stoke; whilst from the west, receptors will have passed scattered dwellings along the road.

While effects are largely limited, the site provides opportunities for strategic planting which will serve to further soften and break up these restricted views of the proposed dwelling.

VIEWPOINT 4

Approximate distance from site: 710m

OS map elevation: Between 80-85m AOD

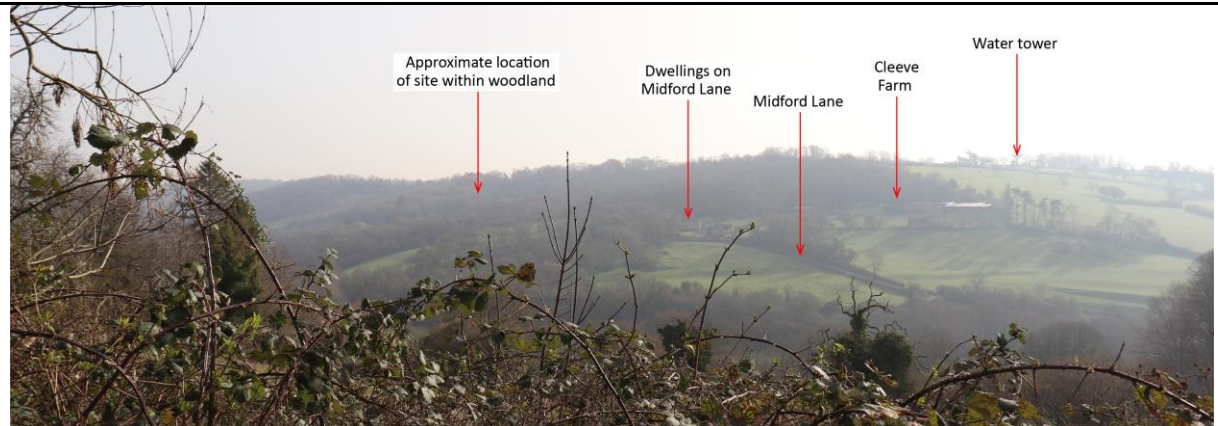


Medium distance view, south-east; taken from Summer Lane. The site is obscured by the mature woodland that surrounds the dwelling and will remain so year-round.

VIEWPOINT 5

Approximate distance from site: 1220m

OS map elevation: Between 100-105m AOD



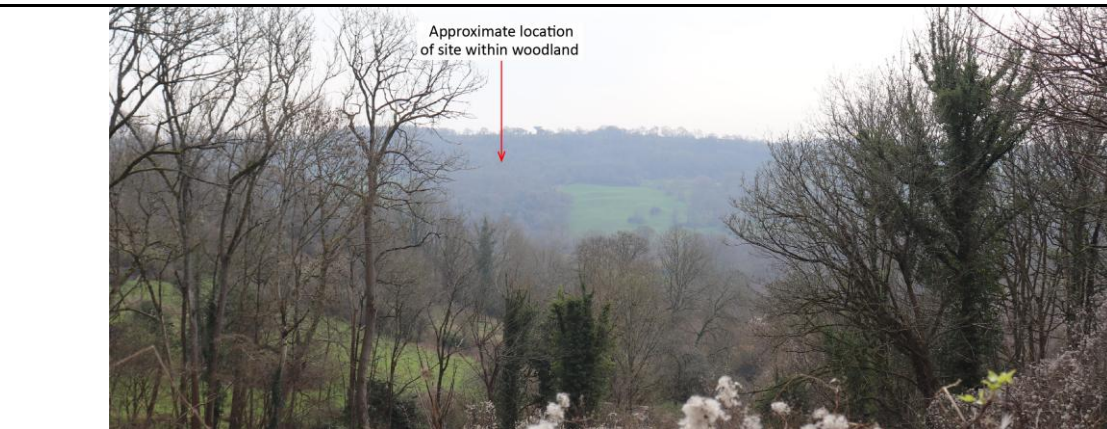
Long distance view, east; taken from Midford Road/B3110. This viewpoint is taken from the entrance to Midford Castle.

The site will be obscured year-round due to the density of the woodland on the valley slope.

VIEWPOINT 6

Approximate distance from site: 1320m

OS map elevation: Between 120-125m AOD

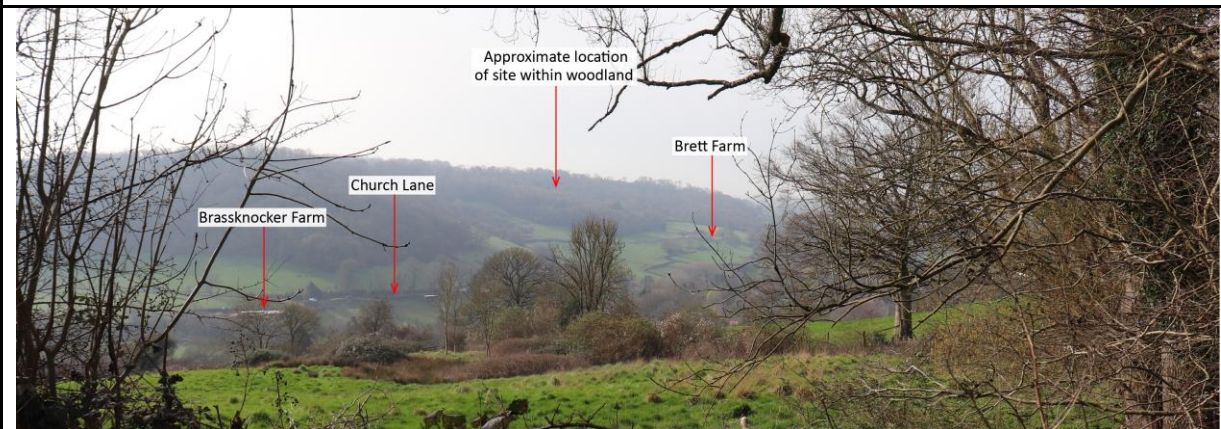


Long distance view, south-east; taken from the junction of Summer Lane and Footpath BC62/2. Despite its elevation, the site is obscured by dense intervening vegetation and will remain so year-round.

VIEWPOINT 7

Approximate distance from site: 1455m

OS map elevation: Between 110-115m AOD



Long distance view, south-west; taken from the junction of Brassknocker Hill and Footpath BA16/13. The site is obscured by dense woodland on the valley slope and will remain so year-round.

POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL VIEWS (NOT RECORDED)

5.2.4 There is potential for residential views from the dwellings on the opposite side of the valley, which has not been possible to record representatively due to a lack of public access. However, due to the density of the woodland surrounding the site, it is unlikely that there will be any views of the proposed dwelling.

POTENTIAL VIEWS FROM MIDFORD CASTLE (NOT RECORDED)

5.2.5 Although there are views of Midford Castle from within the site, the dense woodland around the site will mean any intervisibility with the development will be extremely difficult for residents to discern throughout the year, with any effects being negligible.

SUMMARY OF VISUAL EFFECTS

5.2.6 The Overall Visual Sensitivity of the site within study area is considered *Medium – Low*, in respect of the development proposed. Despite the site being located within a 'valued' landscape, the proposals will see the existing residential built form replaced with a new dwelling, with the replacement dwelling being of materials and colouration which is more sympathetic to its mature woodland setting. Due to the topography of the area coupled with the high level of vegetation, the visual envelope of the site is extremely limited with the development only being visible along a short section (approx. 85m) of Midford Lane directly adjacent to the site. Moreover, where seen, the dwelling will be filtered by the mature vegetation along the site's northern boundary.

5.2.7 From the limited number of locations where the development is visible, there will be no views of the replacement dwelling where existing built form is not already seen, with the new development being located around the footprint of the property. Although the proposals will see an increase in the overall size of the on-site dwelling, the removal of the outbuildings scattered across the site will reduce the visual effect of the spread of development. Furthermore, the consolidated built form will reflect the pattern of two storey dwellings already seen to the west along Midford Lane.

5.2.8 Overall, while the proposed replacement dwelling will see a change within the landscape, the effect on the visual amenity and visual character of the study area will be extremely limited, with the receiving landscape being one where large, detached houses are already a visual component. As such, the Overall Magnitude of Visual Change within the local landscape is *Slight* as result of the change to the on-site built form, reducing to *None* within the wider landscape due to the high of containment afford to the site. Therefore, the Overall Level of Visual Effect is *Minor*.

5.2.9 Where visible, along a short section of Midford Lane, the proposed replacement dwelling will be filtered by the mature vegetation on the site's boundary with the road. Despite the increased size of the dwelling, the built form within the site will be consolidated reducing its overall visual effect and will not "*restrict or obscure views to the upper valley slopes*"¹⁰. As such, the Overall Nature of Visual Effect of the proposed development will be *Neutral*, with the changes from the existing bungalow having no greater effect on views and visual amenity.

5.3 CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

5.3.1 While only being temporary, the construction of the proposed replacement dwelling, alongside the operation of heavy plant at the site, will have an effect on the landscape resource and views and visual amenity in the short term.

5.3.2 The construction period will see on-site operations that are contrary to the prevailing rural character of the receiving landscape, and which will also have some effect on the area's tranquillity. However, this will be temporary.

5.3.3 Machinery working on the site will be visible from the viewpoints that have intervisibility with the various development areas of the site, with some machinery and infrastructure potentially

¹⁰ Landscape Strategies and Guidelines for new development within Enclosed Limestone Valley of the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines.

extending higher than the tallest elements of the development during construction (e.g. scaffolding and cranes). However, while this will likely draw attention to the site, it will not result in any additional views beyond those already recorded.

5.3.4 To ensure that the construction of the proposed development does not result in any residual effects, the following recommendations have been made:

- During construction access to the site should be taken through the existing access point, with the new driveway being created before construction of the buildings begins. This will mean that construction traffic can access the site without the creating additional access points.
- To avoid the garden being overrun by construction vehicles, the internal tracks and working areas should be delineated prior to development commencing.
- Construction exclusion zones should be in place to prevent taller vehicles affecting tree canopies.
- Where possible, construction/demolition equipment and vehicles should be kept outside of the Ancient Woodland and its associated 15m buffer. In terms of the removal of structures within the Ancient Woodland/SSSI, this should be undertaken in accordance with tree protection measures and in such a way to cause as little damage to the understorey as possible.
- Wherever necessary, temporary ground protection should be used to prevent the compaction of soil within the root protection areas of retained trees and hedgerows.
- If any vegetation not identified for removal is damaged during construction, it should be identified and replaced as soon as it is feasible within the agreed work programme.
- Construction materials and equipment should be appropriately stored in designated compounds outside the RPAs of retained trees, shrubs and hedgerows

5.3.5 While there will be some short-term adverse effects during the construction period, these will be temporary and will gradually reduce as the development works progress. Overall, any effects will be short-term and will have no residual adverse effects on the recorded landscape and visual receptors.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The key considerations when determining the acceptability of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposals are the receptors that will be potentially affected by the development and how far any effects are/can be mitigated. Of particular importance to the consideration of the developments overall effect is whether a replacement dwelling at the site will have an unacceptable effect on the landscape resource and the visual amenity of the study area. Key mitigating factors are the historic land use of the site and the pattern of scattered farmsteads/residential properties across the receiving landscape, as well as the extremely limited visual envelope of the site.

6.2 Pre-mitigation, the Overall Level of Effect of the proposed development is considered to be *Moderate/Minor – Minor*. It is acknowledged that the proposals will be seen as a new feature, but with a notable lack of intervisibility from the wider landscape. Furthermore, the replacement dwelling will reflect the pattern of built form along the western end Midford Lane as well as seeing the consolidation of built form within the site and the removal of structures from within the Ancient Woodland/SSSI.

6.3 MITIGATION STRATEGY

6.3.1 Mitigation measures will focus on the retention of existing trees and hedgerows, alongside a scheme of new indigenous and selective domestic planting. It is acknowledged that the existing landscape structure around the site plays a key role in setting the development within the landscape, and as such it should be appropriately managed.

6.3.2 New planting will focus on softening the dwelling and further integrate it into the landscape, while at the same time providing landscape enhancements wherever possible. To offset the loss of hedgerow for the visibility splays at the site's entrance, new sections of mixed native hedgerow should be planted either side of the gateway, as well as strategic tree planting across the site to further break up restricted views of the dwelling from Midford Lane.

6.3.3 There a number of ancillary buildings to be removed or demolished as part of the proposals. Four of these are located wholly or partially on land which will form part of the grassed amenity area; therefore, they should be reseeded with a grass mixture tolerant of the shady conditions within the site. Five structures are located within the Ancient Woodland/SSSI, once removed these areas should

be left for the woodland to colonise naturally and then managed as part of ongoing woodland management.

6.3.4 The following recommendations are appropriate to reduce the level of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development, with the aim being to mitigate the development, using an appropriate scheme of planting and management that in and of itself, does not compromise the character of visual amenity of the area.

Management and Enhancement of Existing Planting:

- Any vegetation marked for removal should be cleared prior to development commencing and should avoid the bird nesting season (March to September).
- Existing poor quality/diseased vegetation or invasive species should be removed and replaced if necessary/appropriate.
- Suitable root protection area stand-offs should be applied around all vegetation to be retained where necessary.
- The trees identified on drawing WHL-2092-05: Landscape Mitigation Strategy should be appropriately managed, with a focus on undertaking remedial work, including thinning, removal of low growth and crown raising as necessary to ensure longevity and well balanced, dense crowns.
- The existing mixed native hedgerow along the northern boundary of the proposed dwelling, as identified on drawing WHL-2092-05: Landscape Mitigation Strategy, should be gapped up as necessary using native species and grown and managed at least its current height.
- Tree and hedgerow management will take place between mid-December and early March. This will avoid the dormice active period and bird-nesting season and allow berries to be used for foraging wildlife.

Proposed Mitigation and Planting:

- The following recommendations should be taken into account in respect of plants being used for mitigation purposes:
 - ♦ All new planting, including planting for the purposes of replacement should comprise appropriate native species characteristic of the area.
 - ♦ Root barriers should be used where appropriate.

- Native and domestic trees should be planted across the site. Native trees can be used across the site, whilst domestic trees should be restricted to areas adjacent to the dwelling. Trees should be planted at a minimum of 5.00m centres.
- New sections of mixed native hedging should be established either side of the proposed gateway. Hedging should be a traditional, hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) rich composition, planted in a double staggered row, and grown and managed at a minimum of 1.75m in height.
- Shade tolerant lawn grass mix should be established within the footprints of structures removed within the site.

Recommended Native Tree Species					
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Girth (cm)	Approx. height (m)	Clear stem height (m)
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple	Selected Standard	10-12	3.00/3.50	Min 2.00
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	Light Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.50/1.75
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Wild crab apple	Light Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.50/1.75
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild cherry	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Pyrus communis</i>	Wild pear	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00

Recommended Domestic Tree Species					
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Girth (cm)	Approx. height (m)	Clear stem height (m)
<i>Acer x conspicuum</i> 'Silver Vein'	Snakebark maple 'Silver Vein'	Light Standard	6-8	2.50/3.00	1.50/1.75

Recommended Mixed Native Hedge Species				
Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Approx. height (cm)	%
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	20
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	55
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	5
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	Pot-grown (3ltr)	40-60	2.5
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Wild Privet	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	2.5
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	10
<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Wayfaring tree	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	5

Recommended Grass Mixes	
Grass Mix	Sowing Rate (g/m ²)
Shaded Amenity Lawn – Naturescape NL5 – Shaded Areas Lawn Mixture (or equivalent)	50

6.4 EFFECT OF MITIGATION

EFFECT OF MITIGATION ON LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

6.4.1 At Implementation: The Overall Level of Effect and Nature of Effect will remain largely the same. In both instances, while removal of inappropriate vegetation, and general remedial work will be an improvement to the area, any changes associated with the mitigation will primarily become apparent when planting reaches maturity.

6.4.2 Once Established: Any landscape Effects will be mitigated as far as possible, with the Overall Level of Landscape Effect being reduced to *Negligible*. The site boundary will be well defined by a strong northern boundary hedgerow, with long-term management and restocking ensuring as it continues to play a key role in containing the site. Any adverse effects as a result of the hedgerow removal for visibility splays will be offset due to the new hedgerows and native trees at the site access. The Overall Nature of Effect will remain *Neutral*, however there will be several positive effects in respect of enhancements to green infrastructure network around the site, with a hierarchy of tree ages also being established in the area.

EFFECT OF MITIGATION ON VISUAL RECEPTORS

6.4.3 At Implementation: Effects will be largely the same from the majority of Viewpoints. However, the use of native and domestic tree species will help to break-up views from Midford Lane, particularly in respect of views along the driveway.

6.4.4 Once Established: Any visual effects will be mitigated as far as possible, with the Overall Level of Visual Effect being reduced to *Minor – None* with the site being even further contained within the landscape. While the development will still be glimpsed from certain locations along Midford Lane, it will be defined by an appropriate, mature, landscape structure that creates a setting that responds positively to the established visual character of the local area. The Overall Nature of Effect will remain *Neutral*, with any localised adverse effects having been mitigated as far as possible.

6.5 CONCLUSIONS

6.5.1 As a result of the appraisal of landscape and visual effects, it has been determined that proposed development would not have a notable adverse effect on the landscape resource or on views and visual amenity, having a largely neutral effect pre-mitigation. Taking account of the proposed landscape mitigation and enhancement recommendations, the development can be undertaken so that the proposed replacement dwelling will further integrate into the receiving landscape, maintaining its rural character without being visually intrusive, or having an unacceptable detrimental impact on the appearance or the landscape character of the area within which it is located.

6.5.2 The proposed development will not be notably detrimental to any of the key characteristics or descriptions of the site and the surrounding landscape as identified in this document. The proposed development can be undertaken in compliance with the relevant guidance and policies in the NPPF, with the application meeting the criteria for appropriate development within the Green Belt as listed in paragraph 154, Bullet Point c of the NPPF. Furthermore, it complies with the Wiltshire Core Strategy including the saved policies from the West Wiltshire District Plan, as well as the guidance detailed in the Cotswolds AONB Strategy and Guidelines, the relevant Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements (including all associated appendices), and the Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan.

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ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Cotswolds Conservation Board, 2023. *Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025-2020*. Available at: <<https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/our-work/cotswolds-national-landscape-management-plan/>>

Cotswolds Conservation Board, 2016. *Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines*. Available at: <<https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-strategy-guidelines/>>

Cotswolds Conservation Board, 2021. *Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statement Housing*. Available at: <<https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/position-statements-2/>>

Cotswolds Conservation Board, 2019. *Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statement Dark Skies & Artificial Light*. Available at: <<https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Cotswolds-Dark-Skies-Artificial-Light-Position-Statement.pdf>>

Freshford and Limpley Stoke Parish Councils, 2020. *Freshford & Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan 2024 - 2039*. Available at: <<https://www.freshford.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Freshford-and-Limpley-Stoke-Neighbourhood-Plan.pdf>>

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL



Railway
- Track multiple or single

- KEY:**
- Site
 - Other land under applicant's control
 - Off-set from site boundary
 - Viewpoint
- Public Rights of Way**
- Footpath
 - Bridleway
 - Byway open to all traffic
- Other Public Access**
- Other routes with public access
 - Circuit of Bath Walk (Recreational route)
 - Traffic-free cycle route
- Roads**
- Main road
 - Secondary road
 - Road generally more than 4m wide
 - Road generally less than 4m wide
 - Other road, drive or track

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Sandcliffe House, Northgate Street,
Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1JT
t: 01380 727539 e: info@whlandscape.co.uk

Project:
Replacement Dwelling, Cleeve Rock

On behalf of:
Gary Hawkins

Drawing title:
Location and Viewpoint Plan

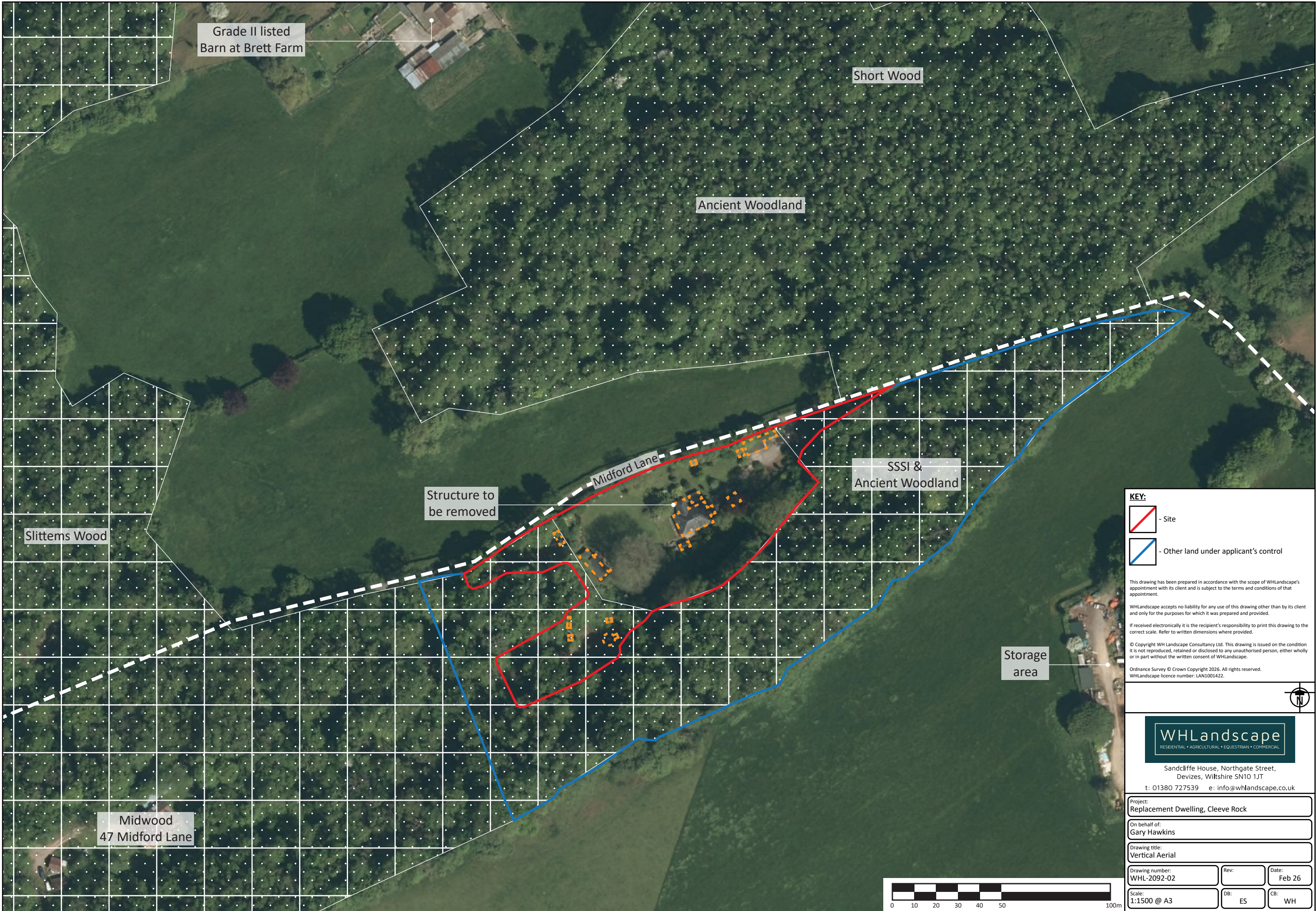
Drawing number:
WHL-2092-01

Rev:
Date:
Feb 26

Scale:
1:10000 @ A3

DB:
ES

CB:
WH



KEY:



- Site



- Other land under applicant's control

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Sandcliffe House, Northgate Street,
Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1JT

t: 01380 727539 e: info@whlandscape.co.uk

Project:
Replacement Dwelling, Cleeve Rock

On behalf of:
Gary Hawkins

Drawing title:
Vertical Aerial

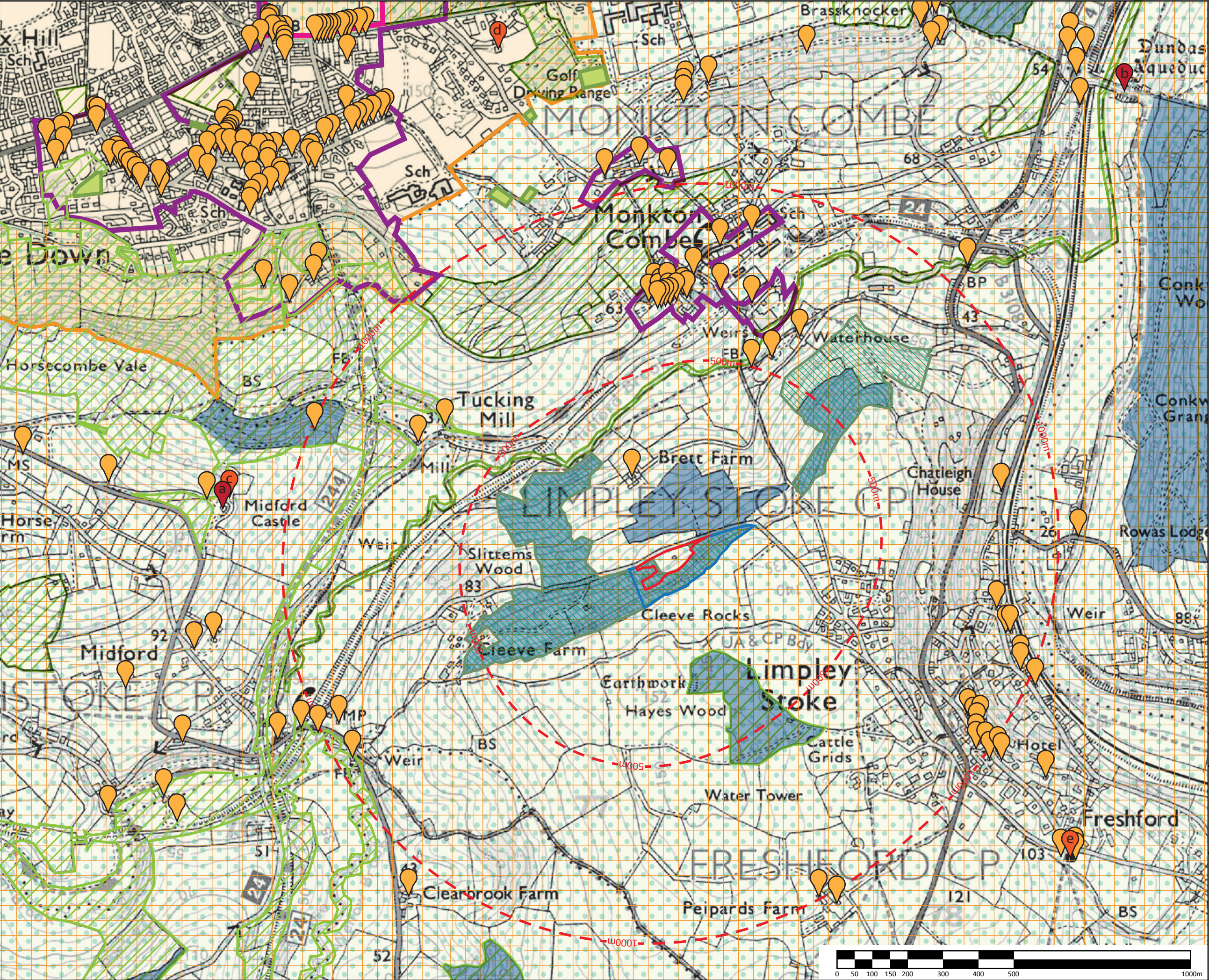
Drawing number:
WHL-2092-02

Rev:
Date:
Feb 26

Scale:
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DB:
ES

CB:
WH



KEY:

- Site
- Other land under applicant's control
- Off-set from site boundary

Statutory Designations

- Cotswolds National Landscape
- Bristol, Bath, and Western Wiltshire Green Belt

Natural Environment Designations

- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Site of Nature Conservation Importance
- Ancient Woodland

Heritage Designations

- City of Bath World Heritage Site
- Conservation Area
- Registered Park and Garden
- Grade I listed structure
 - a. Midford Castle
 - b. Dundas Aqueduct
- Grade II* listed structure
 - c. The Stables etc at Midford Castle
 - d. Lodge Style
 - e. Church of St Mary
- Grade II listed structure

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Sandcliffe House, Northgate Street,
Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1JT
t: 01380 727539 e: info@whlandscape.co.uk

Project:
Replacement Dwelling, Cleeve Rock

On behalf of:
Gary Hawkins

Drawing title:
Designations

Drawing number:
WHL-2092-03

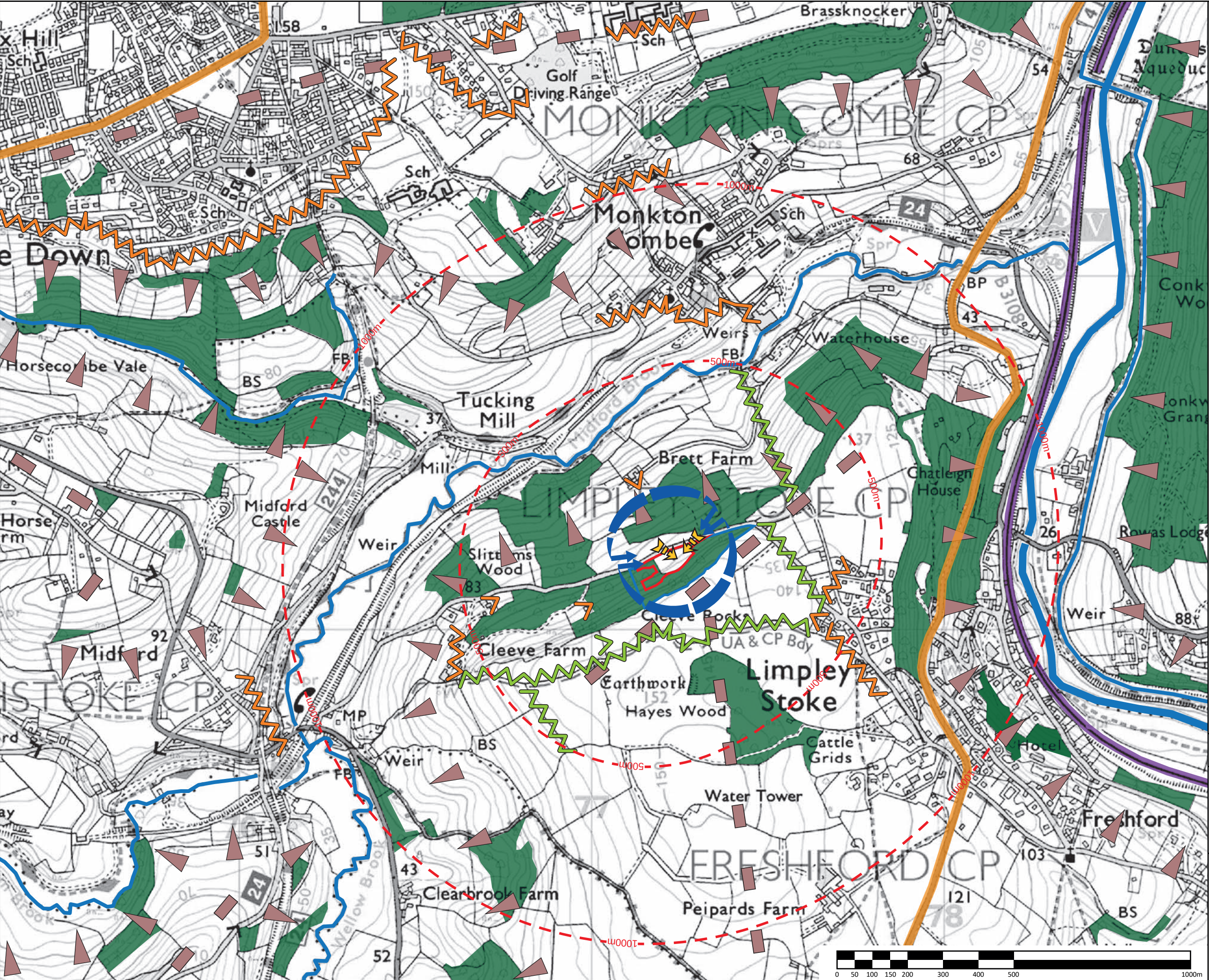
Rev:

Date:
Feb 26

Scale:
1:10000 @ A3

DB:
ES

CB:
WH



- KEY:**
- Site
 - Other land under applicant's control
 - Off-set from site boundary
 - Ridgeline
 - Downslope
 - Watercourse
 - Significant vegetation
 - Trees and hedgerows obscuring/filtering views
 - Notable development
 - Railway
 - Major transport corridor (A36 & A3062)
 - Partial view
 - Views obscured by landform and vegetation

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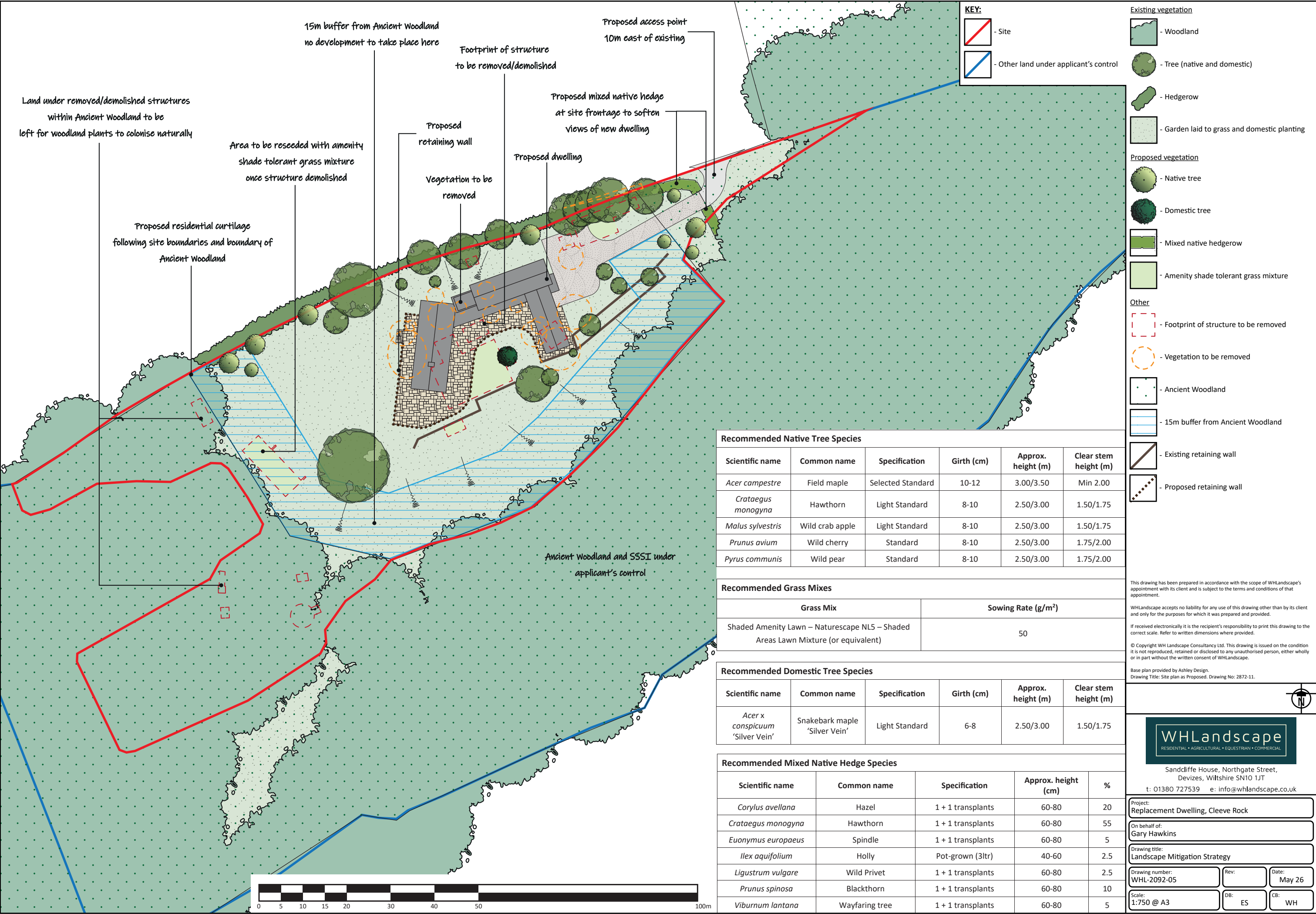
Sandcliffe House, Northgate Street,
Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1JT
t: 01380 727539 e: info@whlandscape.co.uk

Project:
Replacement Dwelling, Cleeve Rock

On behalf of:
Gary Hawkins

Drawing title:
Landscape and Visual Analysis

Drawing number: WHL-2092-04	Rev: ES	Date: Feb 26
Scale: 1:10000 @ A3	DB: ES	CB: WH



KEY:

- Site
- Other land under applicant's control

Existing vegetation

- Woodland
- Tree (native and domestic)
- Hedgerow
- Garden laid to grass and domestic planting

Proposed vegetation

- Native tree
- Domestic tree
- Mixed native hedgerow
- Amenity shade tolerant grass mixture

Other

- Footprint of structure to be removed
- Vegetation to be removed
- Ancient Woodland
- 15m buffer from Ancient Woodland
- Existing retaining wall
- Proposed retaining wall

Recommended Native Tree Species

Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Girth (cm)	Approx. height (m)	Clear stem height (m)
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple	Selected Standard	10-12	3.00/3.50	Min 2.00
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	Light Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.50/1.75
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Wild crab apple	Light Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.50/1.75
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Wild cherry	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00
<i>Pyrus communis</i>	Wild pear	Standard	8-10	2.50/3.00	1.75/2.00

Recommended Grass Mixes

Grass Mix	Sowing Rate (g/m²)
Shaded Amenity Lawn – Naturescape NLS – Shaded Areas Lawn Mixture (or equivalent)	50

Recommended Domestic Tree Species

Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Girth (cm)	Approx. height (m)	Clear stem height (m)
<i>Acer x conspicuum</i> 'Silver Vein'	Snakebark maple 'Silver Vein'	Light Standard	6-8	2.50/3.00	1.50/1.75

Recommended Mixed Native Hedge Species

Scientific name	Common name	Specification	Approx. height (cm)	%
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	20
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	55
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Spindle	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	5
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly	Pot-grown (3ltr)	40-60	2.5
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	Wild Privet	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	2.5
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	10
<i>Viburnum lantana</i>	Wayfaring tree	1 + 1 transplants	60-80	5

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Base plan provided by Ashley Design.
Drawing Title: Site plan as Proposed. Drawing No: 2872-11.

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Sandcliffe House, Northgate Street,
Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1JT
t: 01380 727539 e: info@whlandscape.co.uk

Project:
Replacement Dwelling, Cleeve Rock

On behalf of:
Gary Hawkins

Drawing title:
Landscape Mitigation Strategy

Drawing number:
WHL-2092-05

Rev:
ES

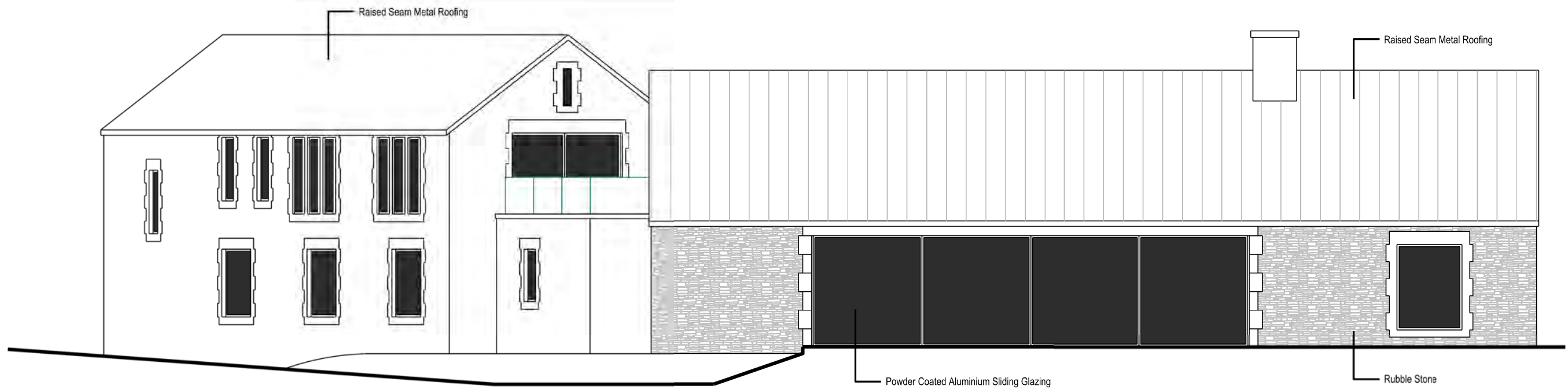
Date:
May 26

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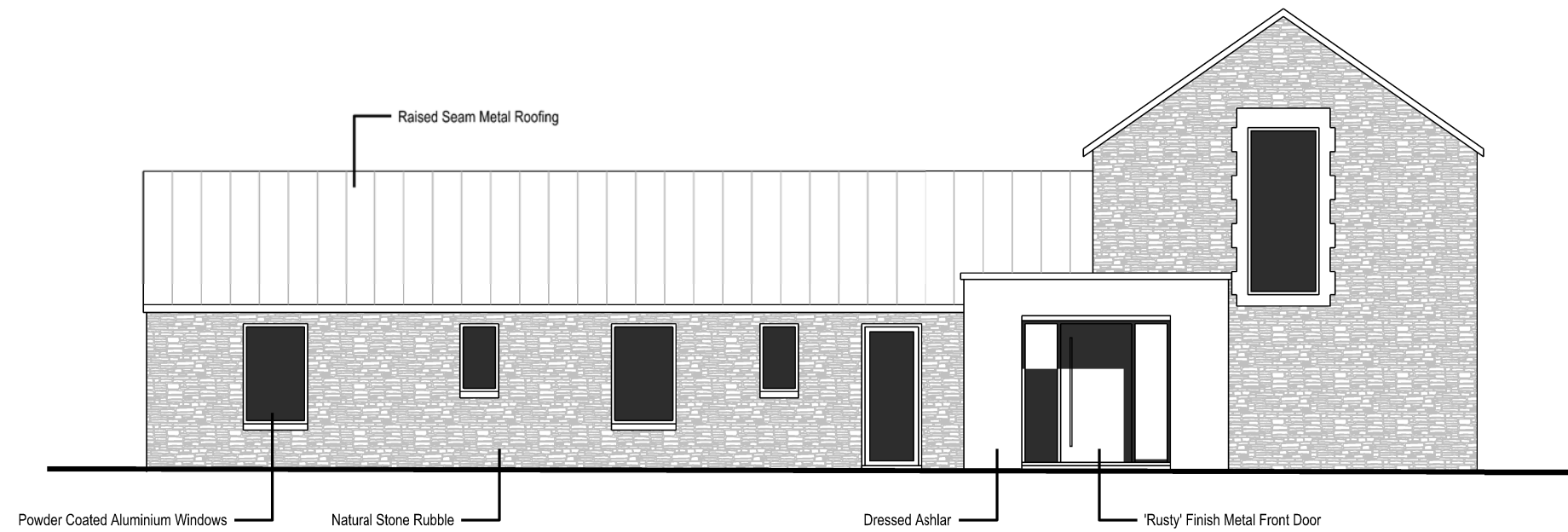
DB:
WH

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS



West Elevation



East Elevation

The Old Ride
Bath Road
Bradford on Avon
Wiltshire
Tel 01225 866220
Fax 01225 890088

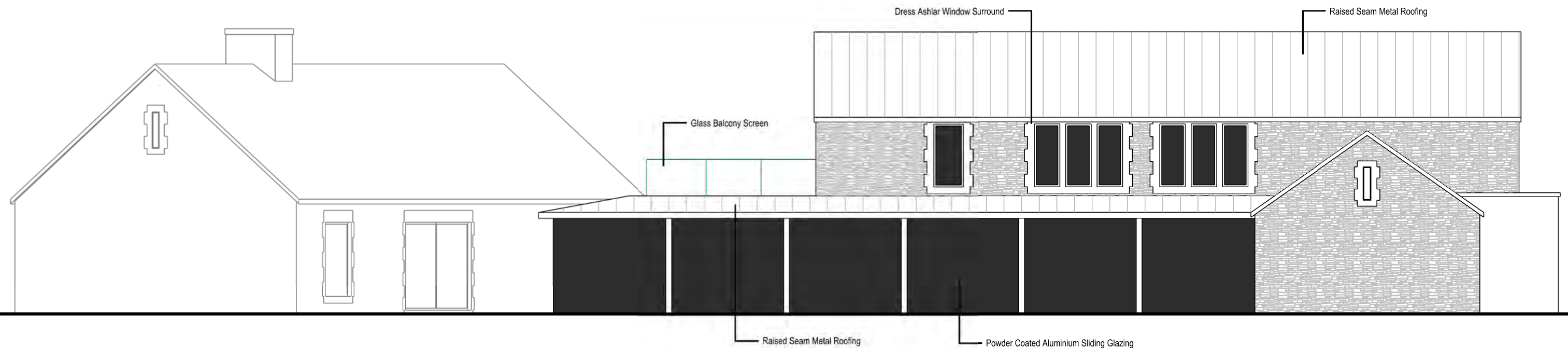
ASHLEY
DESIGN

CLIENT Gary Hawkins
PROJECT Cleeve Rock Midford Lane, Midford.
DRAWING TITLE Sketch East and West Elevation
SCALE 1:100@A3 DRAWN Jan 2026 DATE MAS

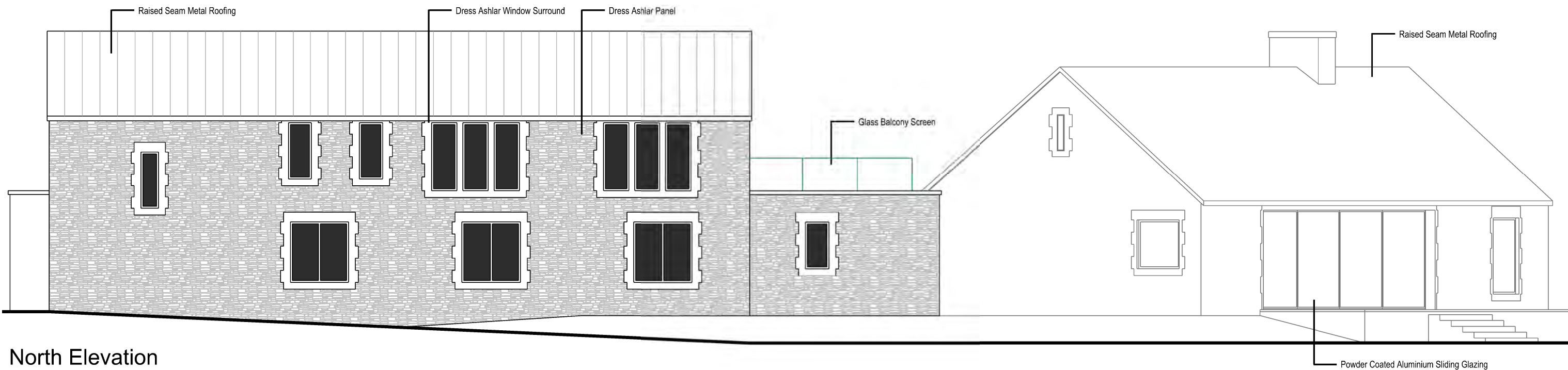
DRAWING NUMBER
2872-07

REVISIONS
A

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South Elevation



North Elevation

The Old Ride
Bath Road
Bradford on Avon
Wiltshire
Tel 01225 865220
Fax 01225 890088

ASHLEY
DESIGN

CLIENT Gary Hawkins
PROJECT Cleeve Rock Midford Lane, Midford.
DRAWING TITLE Sketch North and South Elevation
SCALE 1:100@A3 DRAWN Jan 2026 DATE MAS

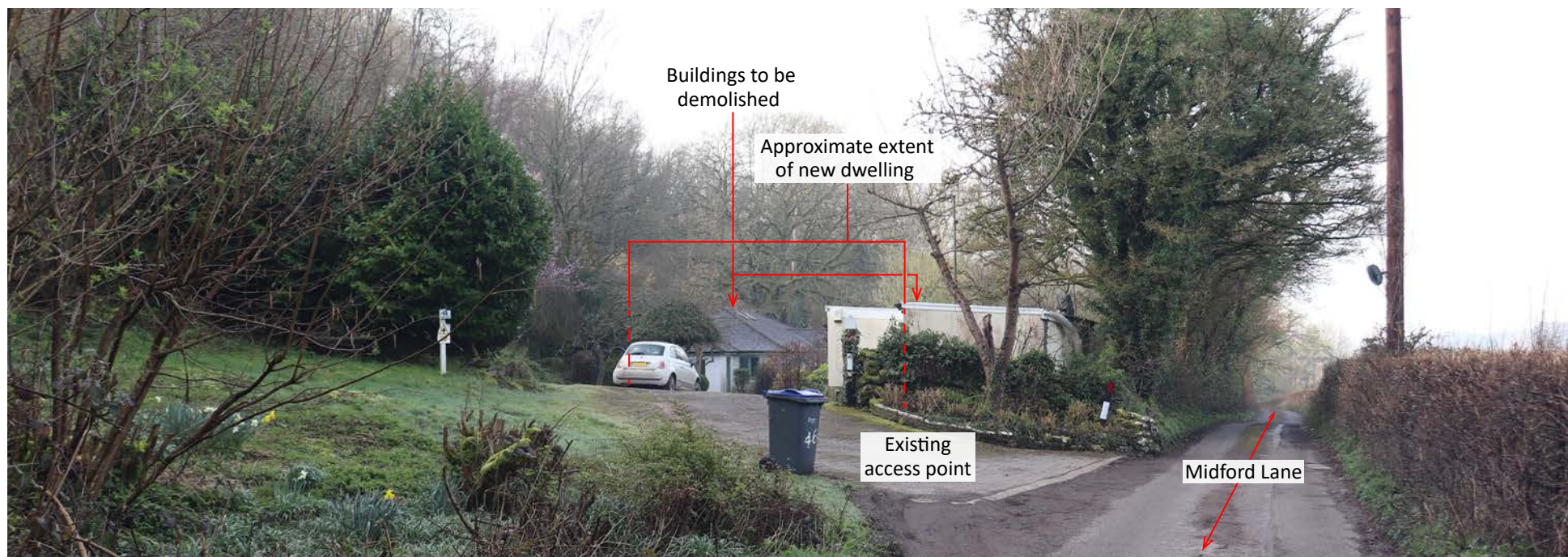
DRAWING NUMBER
2872-08

REVISIONS

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APPENDIX 2: VIEWPOINT PHOTOGRAPHS



VP: 1

Viewpoint direction: South-west

Approximate distance from site: Adjacent

Taken by: ES

Photograph date: March 2026

OS map elevation: Between 105-110m AOD



VP: 2	Viewpoint direction: East	Approximate distance from site: Adjacent
Taken by: ES	Photograph date: March 2026	OS map elevation: Between 100-105m AOD



VP: 3	Viewpoint direction: North-east	Approximate distance from site: Adjacent
Taken by: ES	Photograph date: March 2026	OS map elevation: Between 95-100m AOD



VP: 4	Viewpoint direction: South-east	Approximate distance from site: 710m
Taken by: ES	Photograph date: March 2026	OS map elevation: Between 80-85m AOD



VP: 5

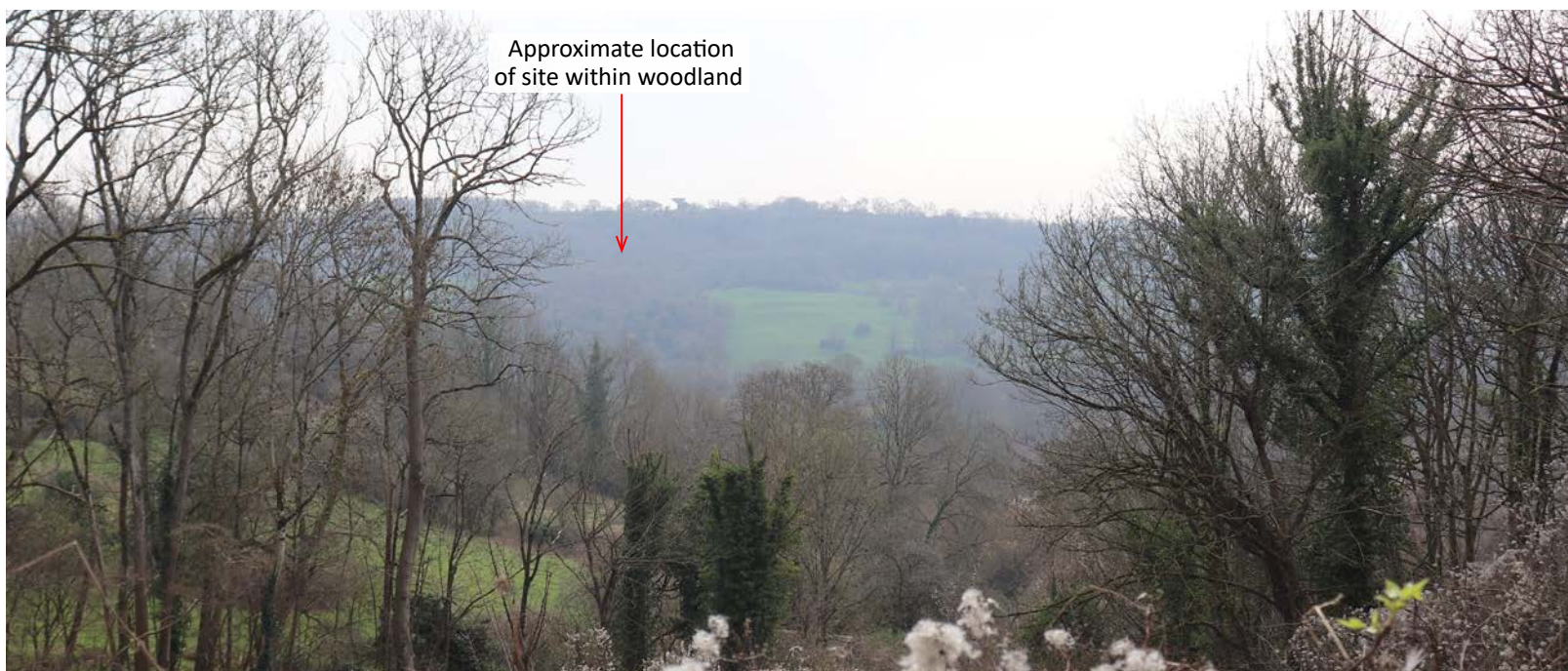
Viewpoint direction: East

Approximate distance from site: 1220m

Taken by: ES

Photograph date: March 2026

OS map elevation: Between 100-105m AOD



VP: 6	Viewpoint direction: South-east	Approximate distance from site: 1320m
Taken by: ES	Photograph date: March 2026	OS map elevation: Between 120-125m AOD



VP: 7	Viewpoint direction: South-west	Approximate distance from site: 1455m
Taken by: ES	Photograph date: March 2026	OS map elevation: Between 110-115m AOD