
**LAND AT PRATERS FARM, SHERSTON,
MALMESBURY, WILTSHIRE SN16 0PS**

**PRELIMINARY LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL TECHNICAL
ADVICE NOTE**

FOR

**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR
THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF THREE NEW
DWELINGHOUSES**

Prepared by:

WHLandscape

On behalf of:

Mr James Wood

Project Reference: 25.2099

Revision:

MAY 2026

APPOINTMENT

WH Landscape Consultancy Ltd (WHLandscape) has been appointed by James Wood to prepare a Preliminary Landscape and Visual Technical Note exploring the potential for the construction of three new dwellings on a parcel of land at Praters Farm, Sherton, Wiltshire, SN16 0PS. The Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the site is ST85658626.

WHLandscape has an established track record of assessing 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.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Technical Note (TN) has been prepared to outline possible landscape and visual constraints to the construction of three new dwellings on land at Praters Farm on the eastern side of Sherston and, where practicable or applicable, to advise the client how best to mitigate for these. A previous Permission in Principle application for a development of up to five dwellings was formerly submitted in December 2025 (planning ref. PL/2025/08695). This was refused for the following reasons:

'1. The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary for Sherston and is not allocated for development in the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan. Core Policy 1 directs new housing to sustainable locations within settlement boundaries to protect the countryside and maintain a plan-led approach. Development outside these boundaries is generally restricted to specific exceptions, which do not apply here. Although the Sherston Neighbourhood Plan is more than five years old, it remains part of the development plan and identifies appropriate sites for growth. Introducing housing on an unallocated site would undermine the spatial strategy and conflict with Core Policy 1 and NPPF objectives to promote sustainable patterns of development and respect locally prepared plans.

2. The site lies within a designated National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), which is afforded the highest level of protection under national policy. The proposed development would introduce built form into an open rural setting, resulting in a harmful change to the character and appearance of the landscape. This would conflict with Paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty, and with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

3. The proposed development would harm the setting of Praters Farmhouse and its associated Threshing Barn (both Grade II listed) by introducing suburban built form into an open field that currently contributes to their historic farmstead character and rural context. This change would erode the legibility and significance of these heritage assets, contrary to the statutory duty under Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to give special regard to preserving listed buildings and their settings. The harm has not been clearly or convincingly justified and conflicts with Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 208, 210, 212, and 213), which require great weight to be given to the conservation of heritage assets and for any harm to be justified, as well as Core Strategy Policies CP57 and CP58, which seek high-quality design and the conservation of the historic environment.

4. The introduction of up to five two-storey dwellings in this location would appear incongruous with the established rural edge and historic farmstead pattern, leading to coalescence and loss of local

distinctiveness. This is contrary to Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design) and NPPF guidance on achieving well-designed places.'

1.2 Reason '1.' is a planning policy matter, and is dealt with in supporting evidence prepared by the client's planning agent, LPC (Trull) Ltd..

1.3 Reasons '3.' and '4.' relate largely to heritage considerations, and are dealt with primarily by the client's heritage consultant, Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd., although there is some mention of these considerations in this report.

1.4 This TN is mainly concerned with Refusal Reason '2.', therefore: "harmful change to the character and appearance of the landscape".

1.5 This new application represents a substantial reduction in the quantum of development proposed, and the illustrative plans produced by the client (see plan 056/P-102/C, appended) respond to a variety of recommendations set out by both this practice (in respect of landscape and visual considerations) and Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd. (in respect of heritage), in order to ensure that an iterative approach has been taken, and that this has informed the proposals.

1.6 This document seeks to confirm the following landscape baseline conditions:

- The key landscape features and elements which may be affected by the development of the site.
- The potential visual envelope which will need to be considered in respect of the development proposals.

1.7 In response to these, this document will set out the following:

- The development area, including landscape management requirements, indicative building height(s) and the quantum of development.
- The potential vehicular/pedestrian access into the site.
- Structural landscaping/ landscape strategies.
- Other key structuring and placemaking components.

2. SITE LOCATION AND CHARACTER

2.1 The site is located towards the north eastern part of Sherston, to the immediate south of Easton Town (B4040) which is the principal road entering the settlement from the north east. The site occupies the northern part of small grass field on the south western edge of Praters Farm, having once formed part of a larger field enclosure to the south west. The site was enclosed by a new field boundary in the second half of the 20th century. The field to the south west was once part of Praters Farm, but now forms part of Home Farm (which is immediately adjacent to Praters farm, to the south), and this land formed a gap between the Sherston and the small agricultural hamlet of Praters Farm and Home Farm, known as Easton Town (which now give its name to the road). Linear housing development along the B4040, and mid-to-late 20th century housing on the eastern side of Sherston eroded this gap, and the smaller settlement was subsumed into Sherston.

2.2 Although the site lies just outside the settlement boundary (along with Praters Farm, Home Farm and the larger field, described above), it is flanked by development to the north west, and buildings (and domestic gardens) at Praters Farm and Easton Town Cottage to the north east. Some of the mid-20th century housing on the eastern side of Sherston is quite prominent on approach from the north east, and this visually links with housing along the B4040 and around the crossroads near Easton Town Cottage. The perception is that by the time the site is reached, one has already entered the settlement.

2.3 In its wider context, most of Sherston's parish the site lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape, including the settlement itself and the site.

2.4 In late 2025 a Permission in Principle was refused for a five-house scheme on a larger site (i.e. the whole field). Part of the reason for refusal included potential harm to the character and appearance of the landscape, which the decision notice describes as having an "open rural setting". It is important to note neither an internal landscape nor urban design officer provided a consultee response on record for this original application. The Cotswolds National Landscape Conservation Board did provide a response, although it was stressed that his did NOT amount to an objection to the scheme (nor support for it). It did, however, set out how the LPA should (i) ensure that planning decisions are consistent with relevant national and local planning policy and guidance; and (ii) listed a number of Board publications which the case officer should consider. Whilst the officer, in their Decision Notice and Officer Delegated Report, refers to Paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, detailed consideration of the Board's

publications is not included. No substantive examination of the site's underlying landscape/townscape character was provided, therefore.

2.5 The site was visited in preparation for this TN. This found that there is no significant vegetation within the site, although there are several clumps of pioneer species and self-seeded trees present in the remaining part of the field to the south. On the site's eastern boundary, a line of tall conifers dominates, and delineates the boundary between the field and the cluster of farm buildings at Praters Farm. The height of the conifers is such that they appear above surrounding native tree cover on the remaining boundaries, and as a landscape feature looks incongruous to the settlement/rural edge character – particularly on approach from the south west. The remaining boundaries of the small field to the north east, south east and south west are marked by mature native tree/hedgerow cover that is effective in visually enclosing the site from surrounding vantage points, although part of the north eastern boundary is marked by a stone wall that forms the rear garden boundary to Easton Town Cottage, and the site's north western boundary is more open where there is a stone wall (partly overgrown by colonising self-seeded vegetation), although a mature Sycamore tree (which has a Tree Protection Order) and a Walnut tree on the site's north eastern and north western corners, respectively, significantly filter views of the site from the B4040.

2.6 The site is visually divorced from the farmstead buildings at Praters Farm (and from those at Home Farm), and therefore the biggest influence of built form is provided by housing opposite the site on the northern side of the B4040. This includes pre-1900 traditional houses, with some modern infill housing, arranged in a mostly linear pattern facing the road. The houses' frontages vary, with some (e.g. number 36) almost abutting the back end of the roadside footway, whilst others (e.g. numbers 40-46) are set well back, with garden space and car parking areas between the houses and the road. The grain of development is quite low in density, due largely in part to these properties having large rear garden plots, although the gaps between the housing is small enough to present as a largely continuous built-up frontage. Whilst there is greater variation in the building materials used for the newer houses, the older houses tend to be constructed in local stone, with some painted render. Traditional roof materials include stone tiles and clay plain tiles, with a tendency for concrete Marley tiles on the newer buildings (and on modern extensions to the older houses).

2.7 Other than the National Landscape designation (covering most of the parish), and the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) for one tree on the north east corner of the site, no natural environment or heritage designations cover the site itself. Several heritage assets (included Listed Buildings and the

village Conservation Area) lie within 500m of the site. A Heritage Statement, prepared by Asset Heritage Consulting on behalf of the applicant describes the landscape setting for these, and sets out the likely impacts that would ensue. The statement concludes that the proposals would NOT result in harm to the identified heritage assets.

WILTSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (2005)

2.8 The site is located within Landscape Character Type 16: Limestone Lowland (LCT 16) of the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, and Landscape Character Area 16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A), as defined in the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005). *(The site is also covered by the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2004), where it lies within Character Area 7 ‘Sherston Dipslope Lowlands’. However, although this has been considered in preparation of this TN, the more comprehensive Wiltshire assessment, and The Cotswold landscape character assessment - ‘The Cotswold Landscape’ – (see below), provide the basis here for a preliminary determination of the character of the site’s receiving landscape.)*

LCT 16: LIMESTONE LOWLAND – KEY CHARACTERISTICS

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

- ***Presence of historic parkland and estates marked by stone estate walls, grand entrances and parkland trees and avenues.***

2.8 Forces for change include “Pressure for new development along rural lanes and around existing settlements”. This is a factor which is not confined to this character area, being generally a county-wide issue due to the increasing pressure on land to meet housing needs.

2.9 The Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment classifies the land across the district into three categories, Conserve, Enhance/Restore, and Create, with LCT 16 falling within the Conserve Category.

The strategy for the Limestone Lowland Landscape Type is to conserve those elements intrinsic to the type’s character or important in their own right, such as the distinctive stone villages, the areas of ecological importance and the historic parkland and to strengthen locally degraded elements such as the flailed hedgerows and overgrown stone walls.

2.10 The strategy for LCA 16 has been developed into a set of broad management objectives, taking into consideration the identified ‘Forces for Change’, to ensure that distinctive character of the LCT is conserved and enhanced.

Broad Management Objectives:

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

COTSWOLD LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (PART 3: 'THE COTSWOLD LANDSCAPE')

2.11 In October 2002 the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership together with the Countryside Agency appointed Landscape Design Associates (LDA) to carry out a Landscape Character Assessment of the Cotswolds AONB with supporting Guidelines. The landscape character across the Cotswolds AONB is subdividing it into 19 landscape character types and 68 landscape character areas. The site and its receiving landscape falls wholly within Landscape Character Type 11: Dip Slope Lowland (LCT 11), and Landscape Character Area 11A: South Cotswold Lowlands (LCA 11A). The LCT is described as having the following key landscape characteristics, some of which are in evidence within the site's wider receiving landscape, though not clearly evidenced in the site's immediate setting.

LCT 16: LIMESTONE LOWLAND – KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- *Broad area of gently sloping, undulating lowland with a predominantly south-easterly fall, changing to a north-easterly fall in the southern perimeter of the area;*
- *lowland landform gently dissected by infrequent small watercourses flowing into the main rivers that cross the area, reinforcing the general grain of the topography;*
- *strong and structured farmland character, more intimate and smaller in scale than the High Wold and High Wold Dip-Slope;*
- *well-managed, productive agricultural landscape of mixed arable and improved pasture, together with more limited areas of permanent pasture, mainly within the valley bottoms;*
- *seasonal variations in colour and texture associated with mixed arable farming;*
- *medium to large scale, regular fields predominate mainly enclosed by hedgerows, with hedgerow trees, together with some stone walls or post and wire fencing;*
- *woodland cover limited to intermittent copses and shelterbelts within agricultural land, but balanced by extensive broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantations within the large estates and associated farmland areas;*
- *limited areas of ancient woodland and species rich grassland;*
- *settlement pattern of intermittent small nucleated villages, hamlets, and isolated farmsteads, together with occasional larger settlements;*
- *distinctive pattern of large estates and associated planned parkland landscape and woodland occurring throughout the Dip-Slope Lowland; and*
- *evidence of long period of occupation of the area.*

2.12 Locally, there are very few areas within the Character Area where habitats are sufficiently important or rare enough to receive a formal designation. There are area of Priority Habitat Inventory deciduous woodland to the east of Sherston (none of which is Ancient), and a large swathe of wood pasture and parkland BAP priority habitat between Easton Town and Sherston Parva to the north east. The impact of these on landscape character is of local significance, but nonetheless will be totally unaffected by the proposals.

Landscape Sensitivity

2.13 The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines (2016) sets out each LCT's 'Landscape Sensitivity'. For the Dip-slope Lowland (LCT11) it states the following (underlined for emphasis):

'The strongly structured cultivated Dip-Slope Lowland landscape is sensitive to large scale developments that might interrupt wide views across the landscape and in particular to developments that would introduce tall vertical elements such as pylons and wind turbines.

However, the presence of more intensively managed landscapes makes the Dip Slope Lowlands generally less sensitive than remoter and more elevated landscapes on the High Wold and High Wold Dip-Slope. Areas where a strong woodland framework exists are particularly suited to accommodate development. However, development proposals should avoid extensive new woodland planting to screen developments, as this would compromise the open character of the landscape and long views across the Dip-Slope Lowlands.'

2.14 Whilst new development, including expansion and infilling of settlements is recognised as a local 'force for change', where it has the potential to create an intrusion of expanded settlement fringes into the landscape; the degradation of views; the erosion of distinctive settlement patterns; and, the proliferation of suburban building styles. However, the proposals for land at Praters Farm cannot be seen to contribute to this force for change, due to their scale (three houses) that will not be seen to expand the settlement outwards; will not affect views across the landscape (including in key views towards local landmarks); and, will have no discernible impact on the established settlement pattern, which has already changed substantially in that last century. The proposals can be designed sympathetically to mirror local vernacular in both architectural style and materials (to be specified at the detailed design stage).

2.15 Importantly, the proposals can be fully implemented in line with the landscape strategies and guidelines set out for the Dip- lope Lowland, including:

- The proposals will not affect the open character of the Dip-slope as they will be located within a visually discrete and enclosed site contained within the edge of Sherston.
- The proposals will not intrude into the landscape, nor be visible on a hillside or area of open landscape.
- They are wholly proportionate in their scale, and will not 'overwhelm' the settlement.
- They will not negatively affect Sherston's character, nor appear in key views across its landscape setting.
- The proposals will reflect local grain/density and will not result in a hard urban edge to the Sherston.
- The proposals can be designed to respect local vernacular style.
- All significant boundary vegetation will be retained, and augmented/strengthened where necessary.

3. VISUAL BASELINE

3.1 As described in Sections 1.0 and 2.0 above, the site is extremely well-enclosed visually, and there is very little public visibility of the site, therefore, despite its location within the edge of the settlement. Therefore, representative viewpoints have been selected that represent the viewing experience of visual receptors close to the site. Two wider viewpoints (7 and 8) were selected to demonstrate how the site is absorbed into its landscape setting from slightly further afield. Due to the flat nature of the surrounding landscape, and the level of enclosure provided by intervening trees and existing build form on the edge of Sherston, no longer-distance views of the site or its immediate setting are possible.

LOCAL VIEWS

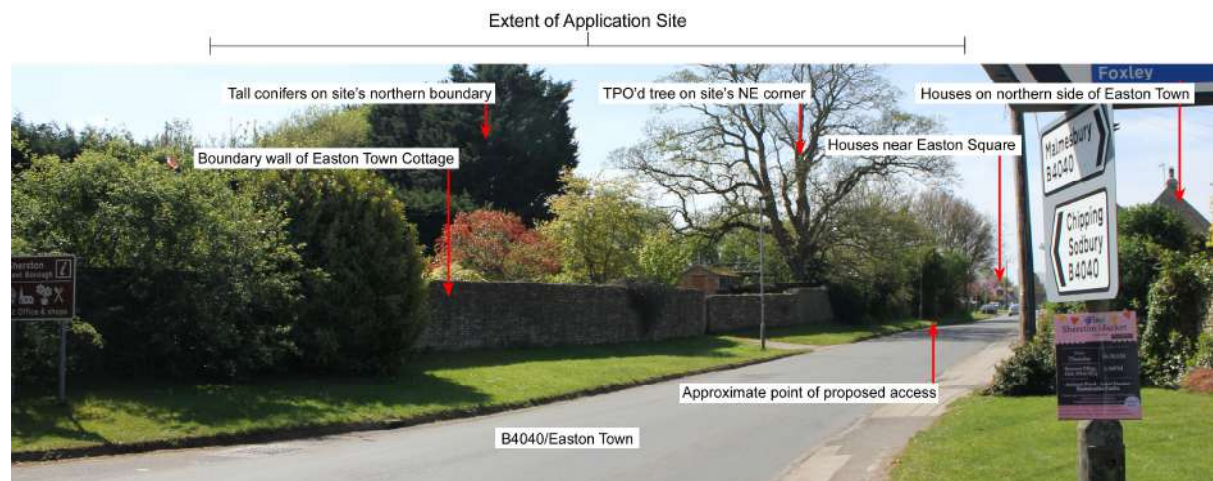
3.2 It has been established that the only local views towards the proposals will be from the B4040/Easton Town (see VPs 1 to 5). All other local views, including from Tetbury Road, will be obscured by existing vegetation/tree cover and built form. From the minor road that passes to the north of Praters farm and Home Farm, views are obscured by a combination of farmstead buildings, boundary walls, hedging and dense tree cover (see VP 6). There are no views from Tetbury Road.

VIEWPOINTS 1 TO 3 APPROACHING SITE FROM THE NORTH EAST ON B4040

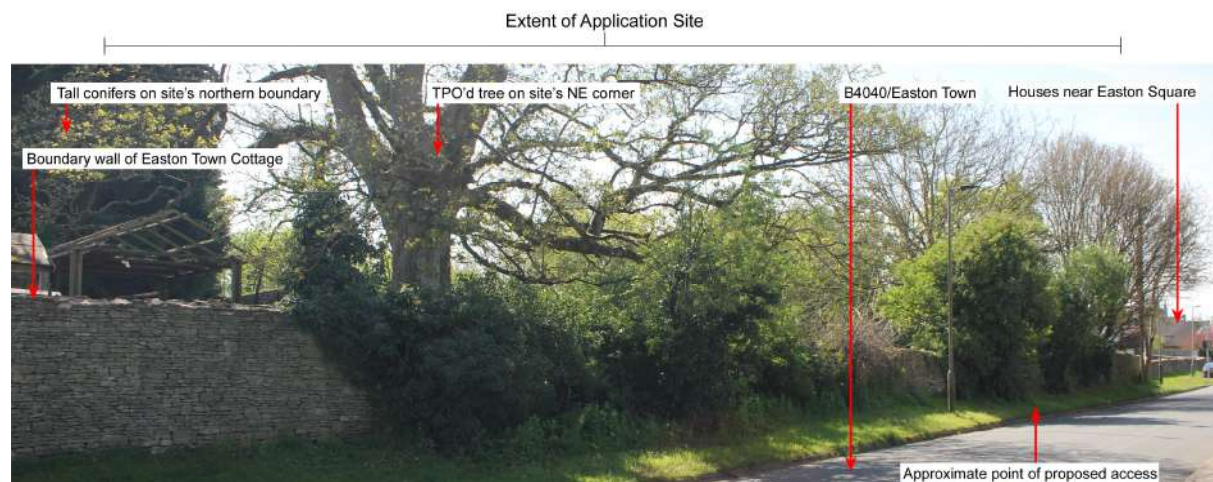
VIEWPOINT 1



VIEWPOINT 2



VIEWPOINT 3



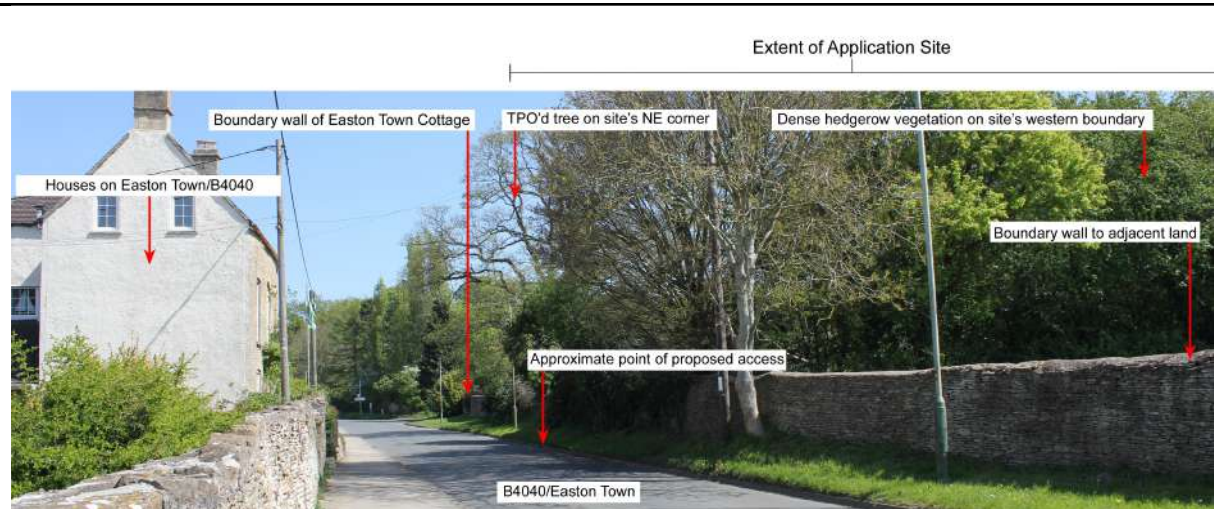
Views from B4040 (Easton Town) on approach from the north east upon entering the village. Sensitive receptors include those moving quickly through the landscape in moving vehicles, who will experience the view only briefly, but also those using the footway adjacent to the road, who will have a more prolonged exposure to each view, and potentially a greater interest in it. Viewpoints 3 is also representative of views from houses on the northern side of the B4040.

Roadside signage and infrastructure, existing houses on the road and in the distance, and some domestic paraphernalia in the domestic garden adjacent the site, are clear indicators of the settlement edge.

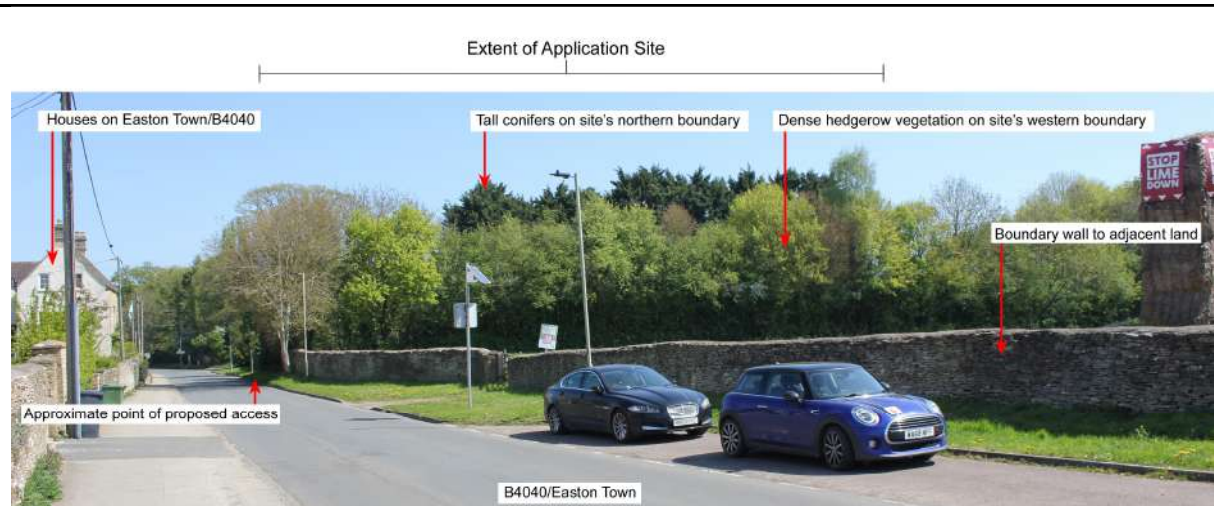
The proposals will be heavily filtered by existing vegetation on approach into the village, and visually absorbed within the settlement edge, although will become a more noticeable new feature closer to the site, although will not unduly affect the balance or nature of the view, and the proposals will have only a minor level of effect on local landscape character and visual amenity. The protection/retention of the frontage trees, combined with some new frontage planting and an offset to the development will provide effective landscape mitigation for the proposals.

VIEWPOINTS 4 & 5 APPROACHING SITE FROM THE SOUTH WEST ON B4040/EASTON TOWN

VIEWPOINT 4

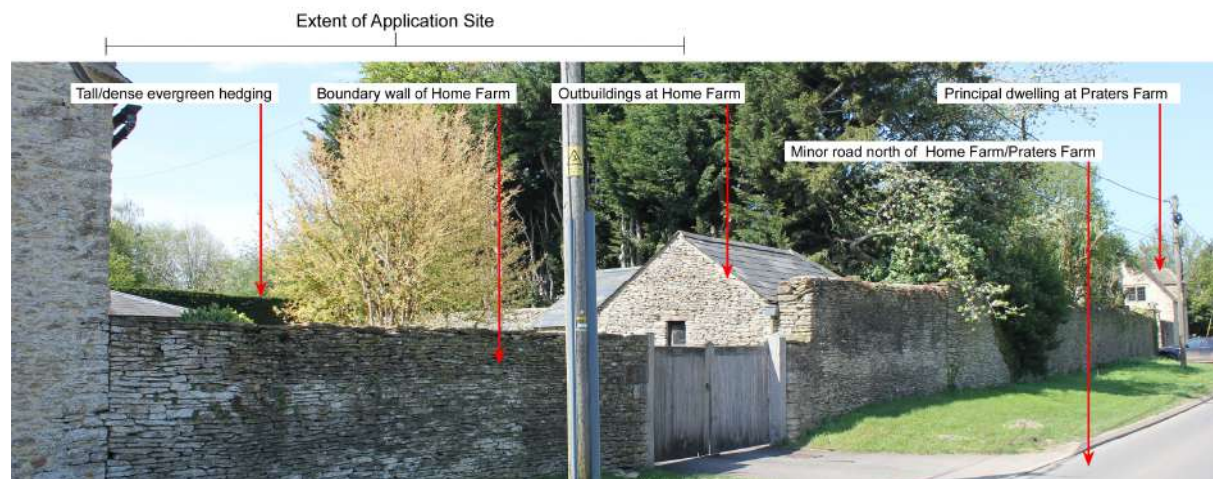


VIEWPOINT 5



Views from B4040 (Easton Town) on approach from the south west upon, within the village. Sensitive receptors include those moving quickly through the landscape in moving vehicles, who will experience the view only briefly, but also those using the footway adjacent to the road, who will have a more prolonged exposure to each view, and potentially a greater interest in it. Roadside signage and infrastructure, existing houses on the road and car parking bays are clear indicators of being within the settlement, albeit close to its edge. The line of tall conifers are a small detracting feature. From distance (VP5) the proposals will be largely obscured between Spring and Autumn, and heavily filtered in the winter, by existing vegetation on the site's southern boundary, however they will become a more noticeable new feature when closer to the site, seen in the context of the settlement edge character. This will have a minor affect the balance and nature of the view, and the proposals will have a minor level of effect on local landscape character and visual amenity, therefore. The protection/retention of the boundary trees/hedgerow, strengthened where necessary to provide a dense structure, will provide effective landscape mitigation for the proposals.

VIEWPOINT 6 ADJACENT TO HOME FARM



View west towards the site from the minor road next to Home Farm, close to the crossroads with Tetbury Road/ B4040. Sensitive receptors are primarily occupants of moving vehicles who will only glimpse the view, but may include occasional recreational walkers connecting with the wider PRow network, who will have a more prolonged exposure to the view. The proposals will likely be obscured by intervening built form and existing tree cover around Home Farm and Praters Farm, and there will be no perceived change to the balance and make up of the view.

3.3 The level of visual effects on these close-distance views range from negligible to minor, with the minor effects only occurring where the proposals will be visible as a new feature in the view. In these locations the new houses will be seen in the context of existing houses, and within the settlement edge. The proposals will have no impact on the open countryside to the north of the village (i.e. beyond the crossroad between the B4040 and Tetbury Road). Protecting and strengthening the site's boundary vegetation where necessary will ensure that it is successfully absorbed into its village edge setting.

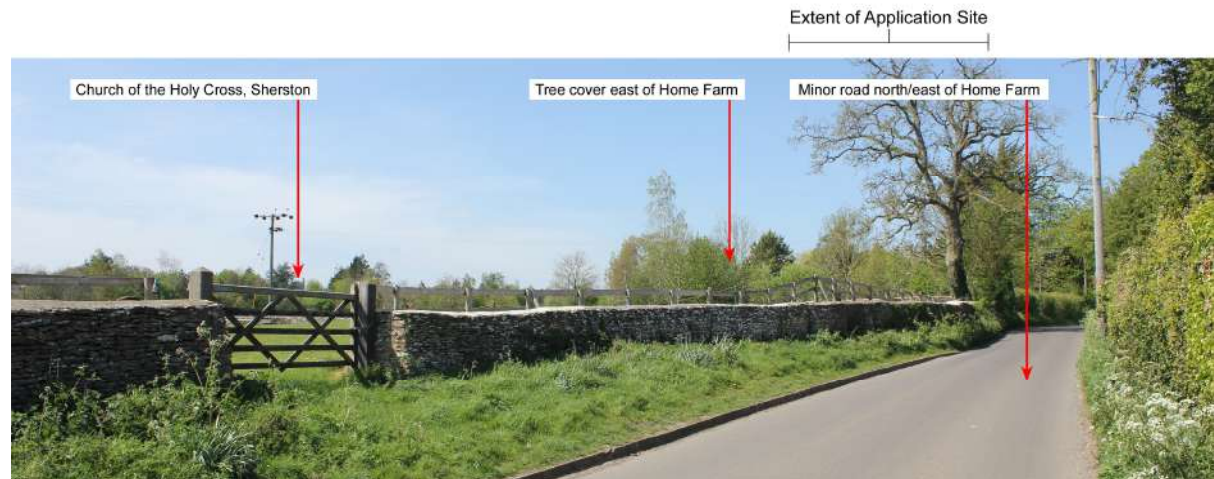
3.4 The proposals, although they will be visible from some windows in houses opposite the site, will not be overbearing, nor cause overshadowing, loss of daylight/sunlight, not allow loss of privacy though overlooking. Therefore, there will be no material effects on residential amenity.

WIDER VIEWS

3.5 Wider views have also been considered at the preliminary stage to ascertain the potential visual effects of the development of the site's wider setting within the National Landscape. Desk study analysis, corroborated by fieldwork, found that the site exerts no visual influence on the wider landscape as the site lies within the settlement edge where it is visually contained by existing built

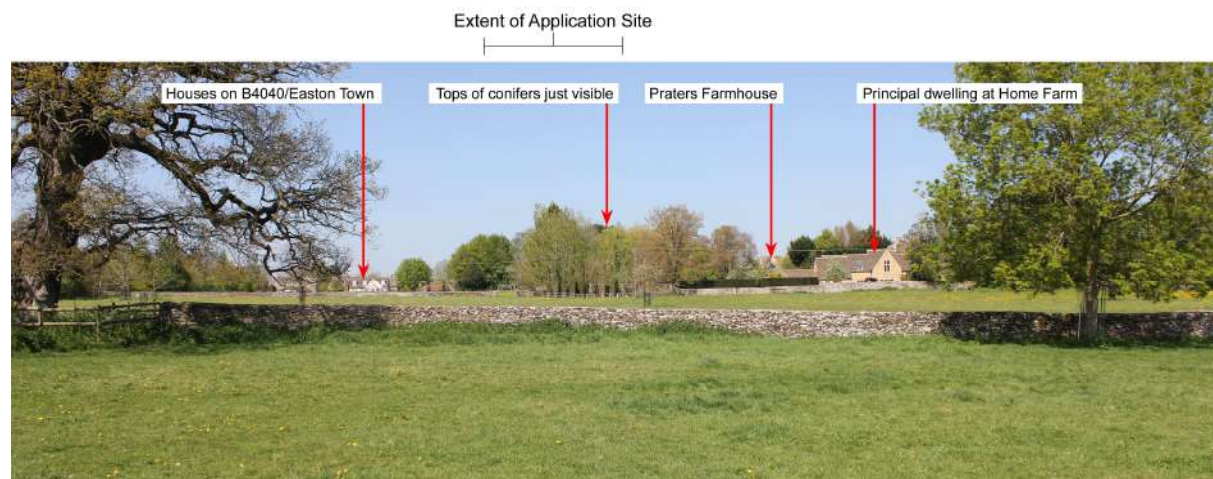
form and mature vegetation. However, there was some theoretical visibility from the unnamed minor road south east of Home Farm, on approach to the village, and from Footpath SHER26, to the south of Home Farm.

VIEWPOINT 7



View west towards the site from the minor road south east of Home Farm, on approach to the village. Sensitive receptors are primarily occupants of moving vehicles who will only glimpse the view, but may include occasional recreational walkers connecting with the wider PRow network, who will have a more prolonged exposure to the view. The proposals will be obscured throughout the year by intervening mature tree cover around Home Farm and Praters Farm, and there will be no perceived change to the balance and make up of the view.

VIEWPOINT 8



Open view north, from Footpath SHER26, south of Home Farm. Some housing on the B4040 Easton/Town is visible in the distance (c. 0.35km), including some modern housing south of Huntersfield. The principal dwelling at Home Farm is also more clearly visible, and (out of shot) modern housing at the end of Gaston Lane on the eastern part of Sherston. Primary sensitive receptors are walkers who will have a prolonged exposure to the view as they move slowly through the landscape.

The proposals will be obscured throughout the year by intervening mature tree and hedgerow cover around Home Farm and Praters Farm, and there will be no discernible change to the make up or balance of the view.

3.6 The more open rural landscape to the south of Home Farm has more theoretical visibility of the proposals, although in reality there is very little publicly- accessible land (limited to SHER26), and in reality, in the density of tree cover around Home Farm and Praters Farm visually coalesces to create an edge to the north of Sherston and this has the effect of visually intervening in views towards the site. There will be no material change between the baseline visual condition and future views.

SUMMARY

3.7 The visual envelope of the development is very limited, with existing housing on the B4040 and at Praters Farm, Home Farm and Easton Town Cottage, combined with mature vegetation on the settlement edge, largely confining visibility to just a short section of the B4040. There are no longer distance or elevated views from within the National Landscape, and the site does not appear in key views towards the settlement (for example, where there are views towards the Church of the Holy Cross).

3.8 From close distances on the B4040s (Easton Town) there will be some visibility of the proposals. The nature of these receptor locations, where the proposals will be seen in the context of existing

housing (including modern housing), means they will be less sensitive to the visual change resulting from the introduction of a small and discreet scheme of three houses. The existing boundary vegetation combined with landscape mitigation/enhancements, where additional trees can be planted to soften the frontage, and the hedgerows can be strengthened with infill/underplanting (if required), means the proposals can be effectively visually absorbed into their setting.

3.9 The proposals will be visually divorced from the listed buildings at Praters Farm (and Home Farm), and there would be no harm to the landscape settings of these. The proposals will have no perceivable impact on the openness of the countryside to the north and east of Sherston, and therefore will have no discernible effect on the character of the visual character of the National Landscape.

4. LANDSCAPE POLICY AND GUIDANCE

4.1 NATIONAL POLICY

4.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2025) provides the overarching policy context for planning in England.

4.1.2 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 TN 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;

4.1.3 Paragraphs 189 and 190 concern protected landscapes, in particular areas with national designations. They state:

'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.

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:

- *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;*
- *the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.'*

4.1.3 Section 12 concerns 'achieving well-designed and beautiful places. Paragraphs 135 states that Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); [...]*

4.1.4 The proposals can be carried out in compliance with these overarching policies: they are small in scale, affecting only a small site that has no formal biodiversity designations that, although within the Cotswolds, are visually contained within the established settlement edge. The application is for Permission in Principle only at this stage, but it is asserted that the proposals can be designed in a manner that will be fully able to conform to the relevant points of Paragraph 135 through good architectural design that reflects local vernacular.

4.2 LOCAL POLICY

4.2.1 Core Policy 51: 'Landscape', is taken from the Wiltshire Core Strategy (January 2015). Core Policy 51 seeks to protect, conserve and enhance Wiltshire's distinctive landscape character¹. The term 'landscape' here is used to refer to the built, historic and natural environment in urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

¹ 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".

CORE POLICY 51: LANDSCAPE

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

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

Proposals for development within or affecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), New Forest National Park (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.

4.2.2 Also of relevance is Core Policy 57 'Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping', which sets out the requirements for achieving a high standard of design is required in all new developments and will be key to ensuring a successful outcome on this site should development go ahead.

4.2.3 Following formal examination of the replacement Wiltshire Local Plan, the Planning Inspectors set out two options for the council, to either (i) withdraw the Local Plan from examination or (ii) request that the Inspectors draft a final report (which would recommend non-adoption). Wiltshire Council have scheduled cabinet and Council meetings in order to decide the formal prior to advising the planning Inspectorate of their decision on their options by 13 March 2026. Therefore, at the time of writing, the draft replacement plan carries little weight, and the adopted plan remains the development plan for Wiltshire. Although other policies may be of relevance at the later full planning application stage, the draft policy most relevant to this TN (although it carries little weight at present) is Policy 91: 'Conserving and Enhancing Wiltshire's Landscapes'.

POLICY 91: CONSERVING AND ENHANCING WILTSHIRE'S LANDSCAPES

Development will conserve and where possible enhance Wiltshire's landscapes by:

- 1. being located and designed to respect landscape character and maintain an area's distinctive sense of place and reinforce local distinctiveness as set out in the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment and landscape strategy;*
- 2. conserving, enhancing, and restoring the characteristics and views of landscapes along with valued attributes and existing site features such as trees, hedgerows, dry stone walls and waterbodies that contribute to the character and quality of the area;*
- 3. conserving and enhancing the locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings;*
- 4. conserving and enhancing the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe;*
- 5. being of high-quality design appropriate to its townscape and landscape context in accordance with the National Design Guidance and Wiltshire Design Guide, that incorporates green and blue infrastructure, supports climate resilience, biodiversity enhancement, and health and wellbeing of the local community;*
- 6. be located and designed to prevent erosion of relative tranquillity (light pollution and noise) and intrinsically dark landscapes, and use opportunities to enhance areas in which tranquillity have been eroded;*
- 7. where necessary, being supported by a proportionate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape and Visual Appraisal, or Townscape Appraisal that shows how, through an iterative process that has considered the site context, this has helped integrate and enhance the proposed development;*
- 8. protecting geology and soils that underpin the landscape character of Wiltshire enhancing healthy 'living' soils as the foundation for successful plant growth, natural*

carbon sequestration, groundwater storage and filtration, as well as all eco-system services.

Wiltshire's designated landscapes

Great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of Wiltshire's designated landscapes, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the New Forest National Park. Development within, and influencing the setting of, these designated areas should be limited in scale and extent and are expected to contribute towards conserving and enhancing their natural beauty.

Proposals for development within or affecting designated landscapes must 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 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 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.

Development will not be supported if it cannot demonstrate conservation or enhancement to the landscape character and special qualities of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or National Park.

4.2.4 Policy 98: 'Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping' is also a relevant emerging policy; however, the landscape related text is unchanged from the extant Core Policy 57.

4.2.5 The proposals can be achieved whilst remaining compliant to adopted and emerging policy. The site is in a discreet location that can absorb the proposed quantum of development without detrimental effects on the National Landscape, the landscape setting of Sherston nor on important views and visual amenity. The proposals will have no effect on important geological or topographical features, nor affect any significant trees or hedgerows, which are to be retained and strengthened where necessary as part of a landscape mitigation strategy.

4.3 SHERSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (MADE 2019)

4.3.1 The Sherston Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in May 2019, and subsequently formed part of the development plan for Sherston. However, under paragraph 14 of the NPPF, the specific protection that gives significant weight to recently made neighbourhood plans applies only where the plan is less than five years old and contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.

Therefore, although the plan remains part of the development plan, its policies carry reduced weight, and it does not automatically override the presumption in favour of sustainable development (e.g. where triggered by a housing land supply shortfall).

4.3.2 Although paragraph 11 of the NPPF allows for a presumption in favour of development, this can be overridden where there is an identified need to protect areas or assets of particular importance, in which case there may be a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development. The National Landscape designation and presence of nearby designated heritage assets are material considerations in this instance, therefore.

4.3.3 Objective 2 of the Plan states:

The Plan will ensure that all future development in the village:

- ***Conserves or enhances Sherston's significant heritage assets;***
- ***Respects the high quality of the local environment by employing the use of building materials in sympathy with the Cotswold AONB;***
- ***Is of the highest quality of design – utilising wherever possible traditional styles and proportions;***
- ***Safeguarding those parts of the settlement that have been identified as being worthy of protection from development by reason of their landscape quality, ecological importance, historic interest or local significance.***

4.3.4 The issue of heritage assets is covered by the Heritage Statement prepared by Asset heritage Consulting, which found that the proposals would not result in harm.

4.3.5 The proposals can be fully compliant with bullet points 2 and 3, by using local materials that respect the local vernacular of the Cotswolds and being of a high quality in their architectural design.

4.3.6 The site has not been specifically identified prior to the original PiP in respect of bullet point four.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Whilst national and local planning policy may initially appear restrictive in respect of the site's development, which lies outside of the settlement boundary (albeit adjacent to it, and site lies within the parish boundary) on a small undeveloped parcel of grassland, the site's receiving landscape (i.e. the site and its immediate environs) are far less sensitive to change than land to the north of the settlement edge, which is more logically perceived as open countryside.

5.2 The site lies on the inner side of the settlement edge, between Praters Farm / Easton Town Cottage and modern housing to the south west, and is faced to the north by housing on the opposite side of Easton Town/B4040. The proximity of this existing development has the effect of lowering visual sensitivity in respect of the proposals. The site is enclosed on three sides (and visually contained, therefore) by mature tree and hedgerow vegetation, and its frontage with Easton Town is softened by two mature trees.

5.3 Although the site lies within the Cotswold National Landscape, the proposals will not affect the character or appearance of it, and the proposals can be carried out in line with the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for the Dip-slope Lowland (LCT11) which allows for small scale development on the edge of settlements, provided it does not intrude unacceptably into the countryside, create an urbanising edge to an existing settlement or affect its character, or impact views of key features.

5.4 The overarching National Planning Policy Framework maintains a presumption in favour of sustainable development where there is no five-year housing land supply (as is the case here), and it is acknowledged that the site will help meet this shortfall (see PL/2025/08695 Case Officer's Report). Notwithstanding this, the NPPF prioritises the protection of valued landscapes such as National Landscape's over the need for development, and stresses that in these situations the planning balance in must fall on the side of protection for these landscapes. However, in this instance the level of landscape and visual effects resulting from the development would be below those considered material (i.e. Moderate/Major and above), and the proposals will therefore not have a detrimental impact on the National Landscape (nor on heritage assets at Praters Farm and Home Farm – see Heritage Statement).

5.5 The initial visual survey shows that the most sensitive views of the development will be from receptor locations immediately adjacent to the site to the north on the B4040, although ground plane of the site itself is currently obscured by frontage vegetation and a stone wall, set back slightly from the carriageway edge by a grass verge. Whilst the trees on the site's frontage contribute to the street scene, the wall is partially overgrown and does not effectively visually enhance view along the road. By creating a new opening into the site, the three new dwellings will be visible on from the adjacent road and footway (and from the houses directly opposite the site. This will represent a small change to the visual baseline, although this change will be read in the context of existing housing development along Easton Town/B4040, and the intervisible 1950's housing further to the south west. Existing tree cover on the site's frontage will significantly soften the view of the new houses, and any new tree or hedgerow planting within the site's frontage will filter views further.

5.6 The proposals represent a significant decrease in the quantum of development originally proposed (down from 5 to 3 houses), and landscape and heritage guidance provided to the applicant has resulted in an illustrative scheme that has 'pulled' the development in from the site boundaries, and left a substantial part of the site (the southern part) free from development (provision for an access into this land may be provided as the only access into the site is currently via a pedestrian gate on its north eastern boundary with Praters Farm).

5.7 Landscape recommendations to the client in preparation for the PiP can be summarised as follows:

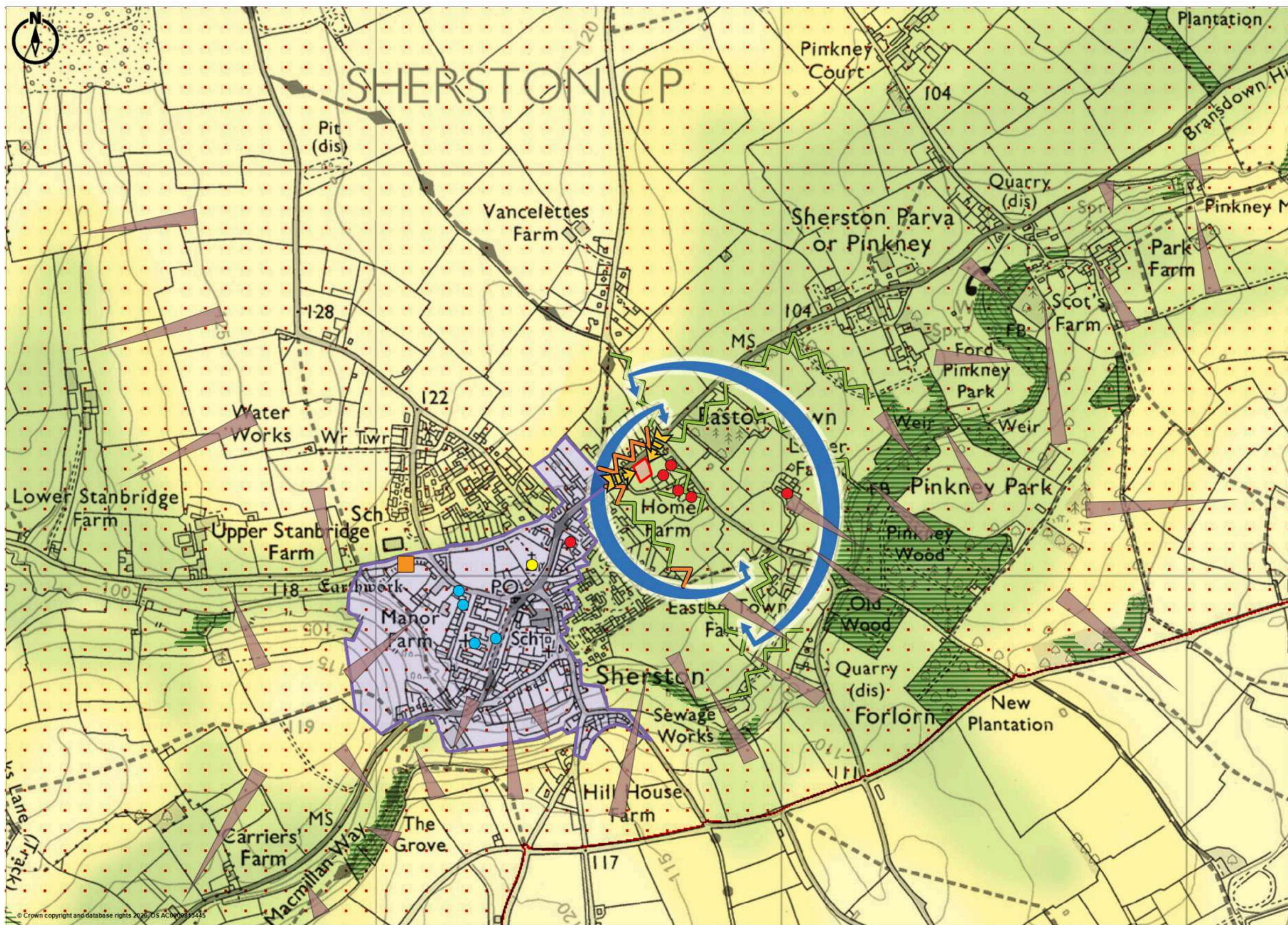
1. Offset the proposed units from the site's boundaries, and set back the development from the road, providing a deeper frontage.
2. Avoid the root protection areas (RPA's) of the two mature trees on the site frontage.
3. Avoid development in the southern part of the site, moving the red line boundary northwards in line with the Heritage Consultant's recommendations.
4. Provide variety between the units to create architectural interest, thereby contributing to the public realm (*i.e.* avoid use of single house type).
5. Locate the site's access away from the RPA's of the frontage trees. Ensure visibility splays are maintained, but retain the frontage wall for the remainder of the northern boundary.
6. Consider providing basic scale parameters (*e.g.* ridge heights) as part of PiP.

5.8 Landscape recommendations for future consideration include:

1. Protect frontage trees and boundary vegetation to BS5837: Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction during construction phases of the development).
2. Augment/strengthen boundary hedgerows with infill/under-planting where necessary in order to maintain a dense hedgerow structure around the site.
3. Reduce the depth/height of the conifers on the site's northern boundary, facing these back and underplanting to form a hedge.

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

WHL-2099-01: LOCAL LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS



KEY:

- Application Site

Heritage Designations

- Grade I Listed building
- Grade II* Listed building
- Grade II Listed building/structure within 250m of application site
- Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area

Significant Landscape Features

- Downslope
- Notable development
- Visually intervening vegetation
- Significant areas of deciduous woodland

Landscape Designations

- Cotswold National Landscape

Visibility

- Partially obscured local views of proposals
- Views contained by combination of topography, tree cover and built form

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Project:
Land at Praters Farm, Sherston, Malmesbury SN16 0PS

On behalf of:
Mr James Wood

Drawing title:
Local Landscape Analysis

Drawing number:
WHL-2099-01

Rev:

Date:
May 26

Scale:
1:10,000 @ A3

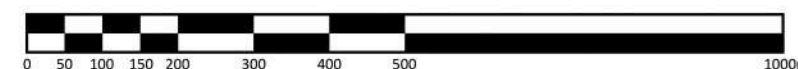
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WHL-2099-02: VERTICAL AERIAL



KEY:

- Application Site Boundary

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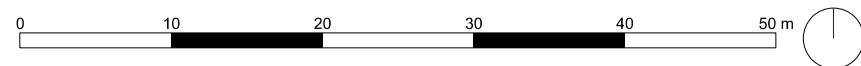
Project:
Land at Praters Farm, Sherston, Malmesbury SM16 0PS

On behalf of:
Mr James Wood

Drawing title:
Vertical Aerial

Drawing number: WHL-2099-02	Rev: 	Date: May 26
Scale: N.T.S.	DB: RL	CB: WH

PROPOSED SITE PLAN/ROOF PLAN 056/P-102/C
(WOOD ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN LTD)



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2 Do not scale from this drawing.
3 All dimensions to be checked on site and the Architect to be informed of any discrepancies before construction commences.
4 All references to drawings refer to current revisions of that drawing.
5 Structural and services information shown is indicative only. Refer to consultants' drawings for details and setting out.
6 All work and materials to be in accordance with current applicable statutory legislation and to comply with all relevant codes of practice and British and European standards.

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REVISION	DATE	CHK

PROJECT	PRATERS FARM Paddock
TITLE	PROPOSED SITE PLAN ROOF PLAN
STATUS	PLANNING
SCALE	1: 500@A3
DATE	11.08.2025

Wood Architecture & Design Ltd
 Info@wood-arch.com

PROJECT	DRAWING No.	REVISION
056	P-102	C



