

**PEAR TREE COMMUNITY FARM,
CHURCH LANE, FRESHFORD**

Landscape & Visual Appraisal

370_GLA_00_XX_RP_L_0002
July 2026

GREENHALGH

Landscape Architecture



Project Address: **Pear Tree Community Farm**
 Church Lane
 Freshford
 Bath

For and on Pear Tree Community Farm Ltd
behalf of:

- In collaboration with :
- Arboricultural Consultant** | Assured Trees
 - Architect** | David Edmonds Design
 - Heritage Consultant** | Gould Architects
 - Highways Consultant** | Miles White Transport
 - Planning Consultant** | PlanningSphere

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Overview

Greenhalgh Landscape Architecture has been appointed by Pear Tree Community Farm Ltd (the ‘Client’) to prepare an appraisal of landscape character, views and visual amenity to inform design proposals as part of the detailed planning application for the development of land at Church Lane, Freshford, Bath (the ‘Site’).

The proposals relate to the creation of a community farm with new site access and ancillary buildings essential to operations (the ‘Proposed Development’). This document records and analyses the existing baseline conditions of the Site and its setting and sets out design recommendations and strategies for the Proposed Development.

This document has been prepared at the detailed planning application stage and is to be used in engagement with Wiltshire Council and the relevant consultees.

1.1 Introduction

Purpose

Greenhalgh Landscape Architecture has been commissioned by Pear Tree Community Farm Ltd (the ‘Client’) to prepare an appraisal of landscape character and visual amenity as part of a Detailed Planning Application which seeks permission for the creation of a community farm with new site access and ancillary buildings essential to operations (the ‘Proposed Development’), at Church Lane, Freshford, Bath (the ‘Site’).

The purpose of this report is to record and analyse the existing baseline conditions of the Site and its setting, and to summarily appraise the potential effects on the landscape and visual resource that would arise from the Proposed Development. It is an integral part of the iterative analysis and design process. Specific regard is given to key views including: close-range experience such as from public footpaths; and longer-range positions within existing settlement and publicly accessible areas in the wider setting. The analysis and appraisal are then used to inform landscape proposals for the Site including mitigation measures.

This document has been prepared as part of a Detailed Planning Application with Wiltshire Council (WC) and is to be used in engagement with the relevant officers and consultees.

Brief

This Landscape & Visual Appraisal (LVA) considers the existing Site context, the development proposals, and the likely way in which the Proposed Development would be perceived within that context. It has been prepared in accordance with standard industry guidance and best practice, as outlined in the methodology.

Pre-application advice (ENQ/2026/00256) was received from Wiltshire Council in May 2026 and this has been used to inform scheme refinement and optimisation of the layout.

Methodology

Industry guidance states that the chosen approach should be appropriate and proportionate to the scale of the project and the nature of its potential effects. Accordingly, LVA was deemed the most suitable approach. It does not include a formal ‘assessment’ and does not constitute a Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). Instead, it provides:

- a description and analysis of the Site and its context;
- an appraisal of landscape character and visual amenity; and
- consideration of the likely implications of the Proposed Development on the existing situation including regard to mitigation measures.

The LVA process and the methodology for photography and fieldwork is derived from current industry guidance and published best practice, namely:

- ‘*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*’, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Third Edition, 2013;
- ‘*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*’, Natural England, 2014;
- ‘*Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals*’, Landscape Institute, 2019; and
- ‘*Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations*’, Landscape Institute, 2021

All fieldwork was undertaken in January 2026, and the weather was clear and bright with light cloud cover but good visibility for the duration of the visits. All photography was captured in accordance with the above standards/ guidance using a Nikon D750 digital SLR camera with a fixed 50mm lens and a tripod with a panoramic head.

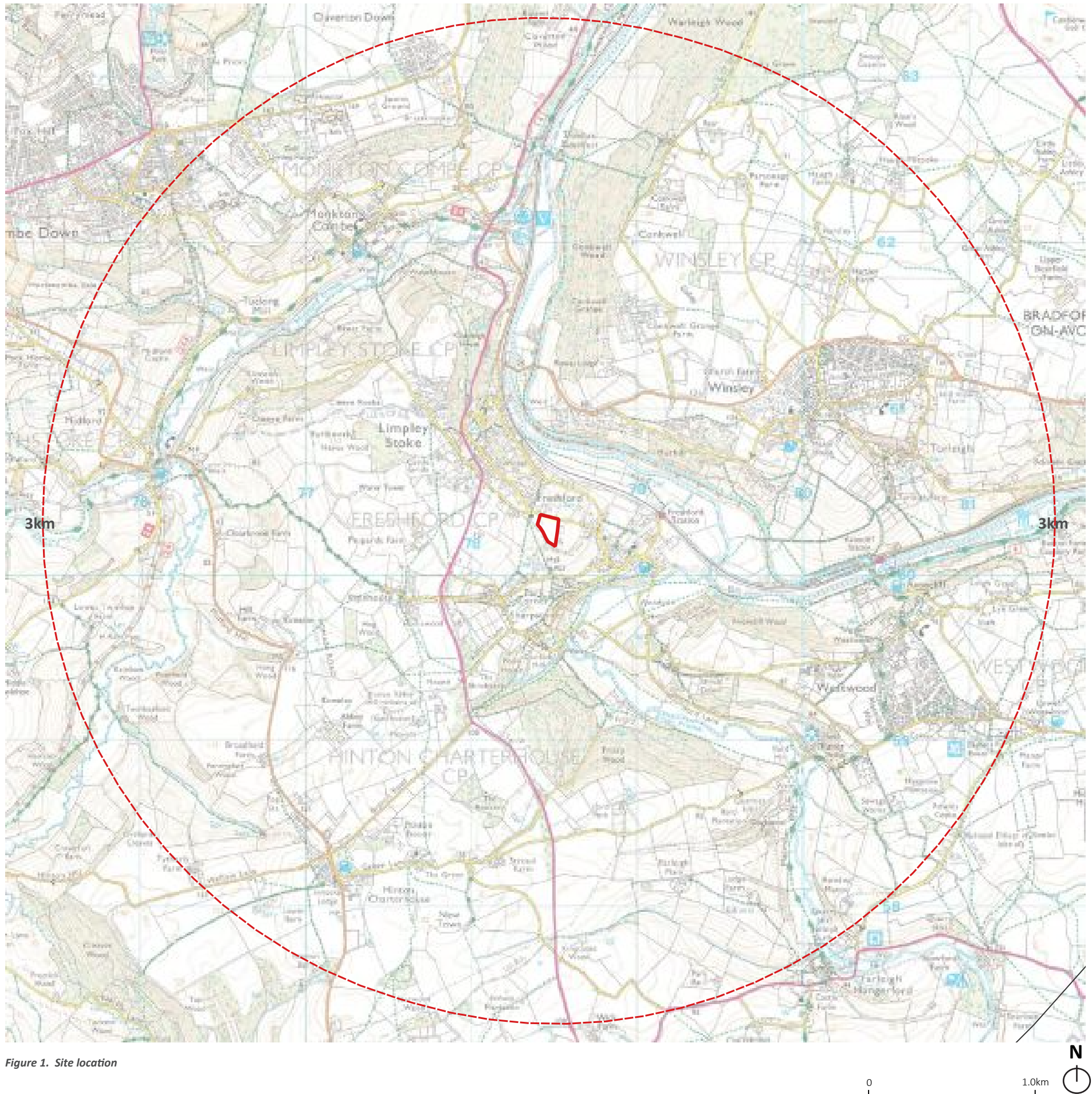


Figure 1. Site location

1.2 Site Location

The Site is situated approximately 5 miles south east of the city of Bath, between the villages of Limpley Stoke and Freshford. It is situated on agricultural land off Church Lane which is a residential road connecting Warminster Road (A36) with the village of Freshford.

The local context is discussed in Section 2.0.

The LVA considers a study area of 3km radius from the centre of the Site. This extent is informed by a combination of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis to identify potential visibility towards the Site, confirmation of visibility through fieldwork, and the limitations of the naked eye. ZTV and visual baseline is provided at Section 2.9.

Plans and diagrams in this report indicate the extents of the field in which the Proposed Development would located, edging the field in a red line and noted as 'Wider Site'. Separately, the Application Site is given in Greenhalgh Landscape Architecture drawing 'Site Location Plan' 370_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1004 which accompanies this application. The Application Site falls within the Wider Site.

Key:



2.1 Local Context

The Site is situated off Church Lane. To the north of Church Lane is a cluster of large residential dwellings. Directly adjacent to the Site’s western boundary is St Mary’s Church (Grade II* Listed).

To the south, the Site is contiguous with open, rolling agricultural and arable land parcels and has a relatively open aspect. The Site is a parcel of land within a larger open field, comprising approximately half of the western portion of the existing field. There is field gate access into the wider field but no direct access into the ‘Wider Site’ itself.

The A36 Warminster Road is located within 500m of the Site, providing a direct route for a larger volumes of local traffic entering and exiting the settlements. Church Lane benefits from direct access to the A36. It is essentially a residential route flanked by numerous large detached homes, connecting roads that feed other parts of the settlement, and giving direct connection into the historic core of Freshford. The village of Freshford and nearby hamlet of Sharpstone are within a Conservation Area.

While there is no public access directly within the Site, the surrounding area is relatively well served by a network of local footpaths and bridleways. The closest established route is PRoW BA12/22, which begins near St Mary’s Church, traverses the adjacent field and extends down to the Freshford Village Memorial Hall.

Key:

Wider Site

‘A’ Road

Other local road of note

Limpley Stoke Villiage

Freshford Eastern Settlement

Conservation Area

Public Right of Way

Existing access

Freshford Southern settlement

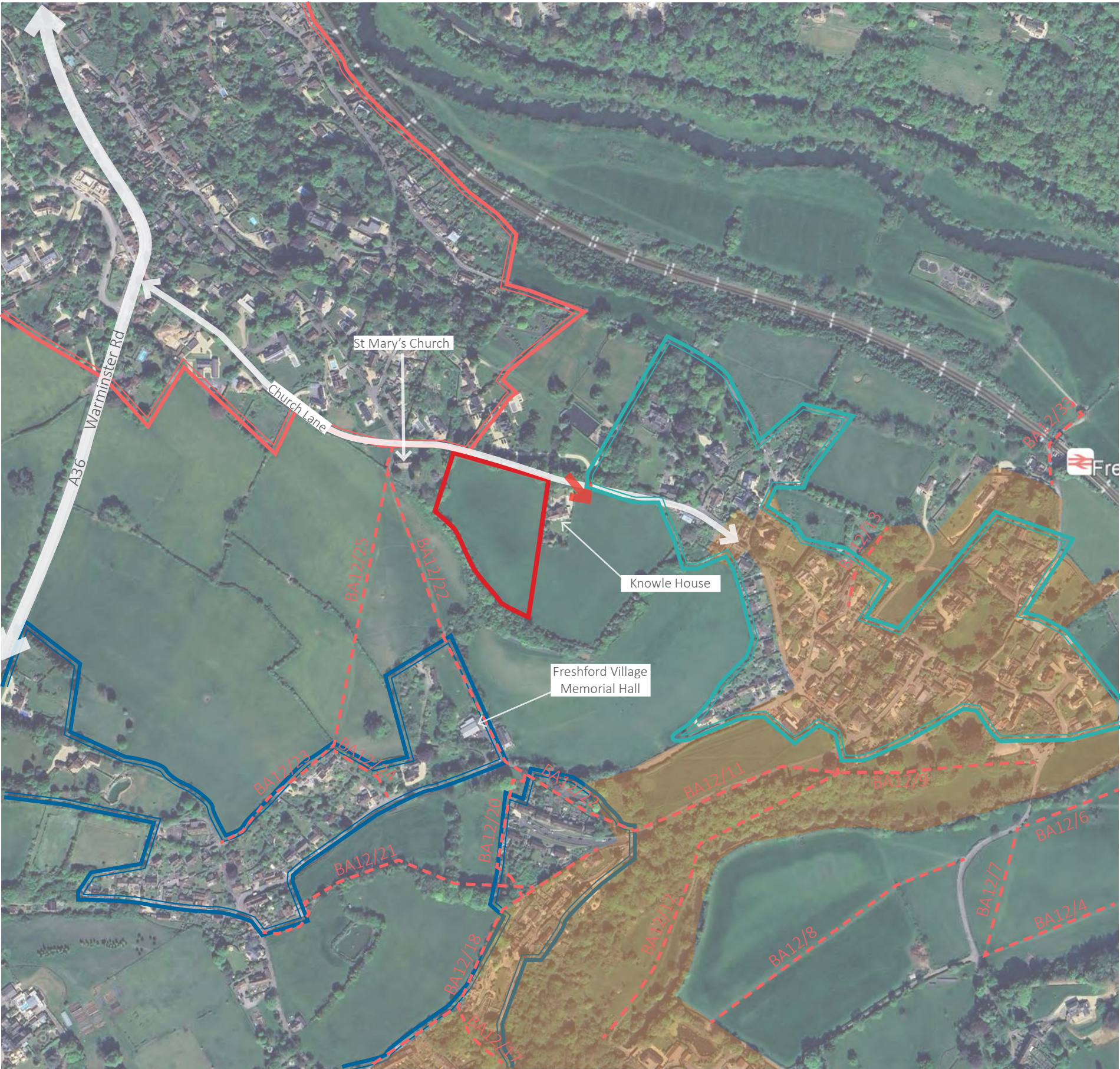


Figure 2. Local context



Figure 3. Aerial image to show existing vegetation and boundaries

In terms of existing vegetation, the site is bounded by agricultural farmland to its south which has distinctive irregular field patterns lined with hedgerows and mature trees. There are clusters of trees and wooded areas along the valley slopes and following the meandering path of the River Avon.

The northern boundary of the Wider Site runs parallel to Church Lane, consisting of a mixed native hedgerow and scattered mature trees atop an earth bank.

The eastern boundary is divided into two distinct sections: the upper half is bordered by the residential curtilage of Knowle House, featuring a mix of stock-proof fencing, low timber fencing of domestic aesthetic, and high stone walls; and the lower half is open to the remainder of the agricultural field with no physical boundary.

The southern boundary of the Wider Site is defined by the field edge which includes large trees and a hedgerow.

The western boundary is formed by St Mary's Church, featuring a low stone wall, mature trees, and a degree of inter-visibility to and from the church graveyard.

Key:



Wider Site



Application Site

refer to Greenhalgh Landscape Architecture drawing
'Site Location Plan' 370_GLA_00_00_DR_L_1004

2.2 Local Landscape Character and Site Setting



A. Church Lane is a narrow lane defined by large residential dwellings set back from the road, stone walling and tall hedgerows. The Site is elevated from the lane by approximately 1.5m. Occasionally along the lane clusters of trees form near full canopy cover interspersed with glimpsed long distance views over the valley to the south.



B. From the grounds of St Mary's Churchyard there are relatively open views looking east over the Site and local residential dwellings towards wooded hillsides and Avoncliff Woods on the horizon.



C. The northern boundary of the Site is defined by a hedgerow with sporadic clusters of trees. Some neighbouring residential properties are clearly visible along this boundary. Longer distance views are glimpsed but typically screened by vegetation and dwellings.



D. The eastern boundary of the Site is defined in part by the residential boundary to Knowle House. The remainder of the boundary is undefined from the rest of the field. There are long range views looking east towards Avoncliff Woods.



E. Looking south west over PROW BA12/22, rolling hillsides and tree-lined hedgerows are typical of the local area. In the longer distance, tree-lined ridges and steep sloping fields are visible.



F. The western boundary of the Site is defined by a tree-lined hedgerow with large mature species. To the north west of the Site the stone wall to St Mary's Church forms part of the boundary.

2.3 Church Lane Character

Church Lane, between the A36 and its junction with New Road and Crowe Hill in Freshford, has a varied character influenced by settlement and infrastructure. Historically it was a narrow rural lane giving access between the village and the main road network. This is evident by the dimensions of the road and the few remnant sections of hedgerow. Today, it is mainly defined by domestic frontage or domestic curtilage.

At its eastern end where it meets the core of Freshford the lane is tightly bound on both sides by domestic frontages. These are chiefly historic properties but with some modern interventions/ additions and expanded accesses to accommodate vehicles (photo G).

Leading westwards away from the village the lane's edges become defined by the domestic garden boundaries of the older properties curtilages, often in the form of low stone walls, occasional timber fencing, and variable mixed native and non-native trees and shrubs. With the exception of the domestic curtilage of Knowle House fronting the lane with its conspicuous timber fencing and lack of hedgerow (photo H), much of the eastern half of the lane on its southern side is defined by hedgerow, trees and embankment (photo I).

West of the Site, the northern side of the lane is mainly defined by the frontages or domestic curtilages of several large detached dwellings. There are open views towards the large properties, boundary walls are often renewed or realigned to improve vehicle access, and hedges are typically monoculture and clipped. The effect is a controlled, domestic and urbanised character. (Photos J and K).

West of the Site, the southern side of the lane is a variety of hedgerows and domestic frontage. The church's stone wall frontage and vegetated bank gives a historic feel to this section and clear visibility of the church.

The painted pedestrian footway along the southern side of the lane from the church westwards up to the A36 is a further urbanising feature (photo K).

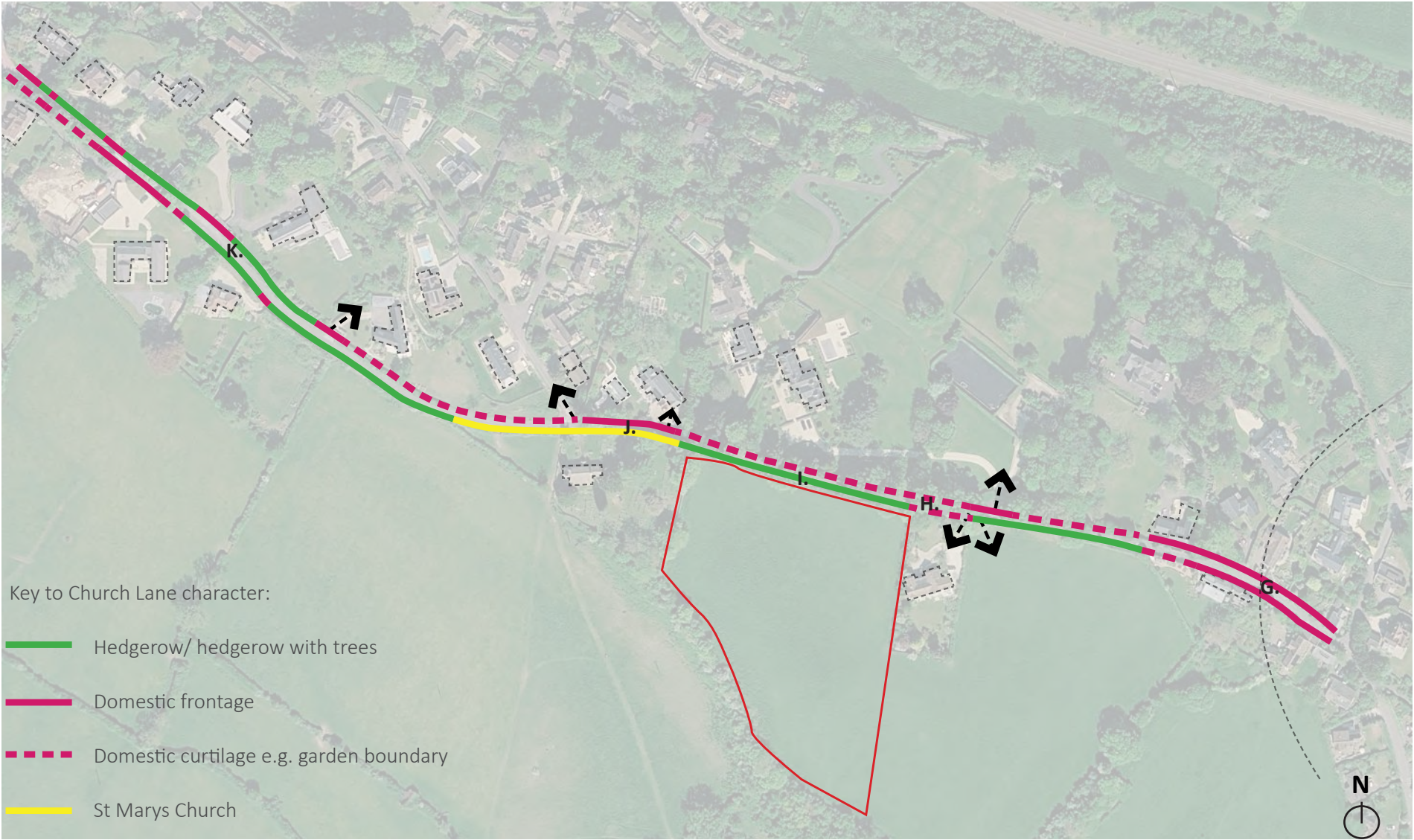


Figure 4. Church Lane existing character

Not to scale



G.



H.



I.



J.



K.

2.4 Topography

The topography of the Site gently falls from approximately 96.5m AOD along the western boundary to 87.22m AOD in the south east corner.

Land immediately adjoining the Site to the north, east and south continues to fall towards the Rivers Avon and Frome. Staples Hill and Avoncliff Woods further to the east and are visually prominent in the landscape where they stand at the confluence of the River Avon and Frome and their respective valleys.

To the west the ground gradually rises towards the A36 Warminster Road.

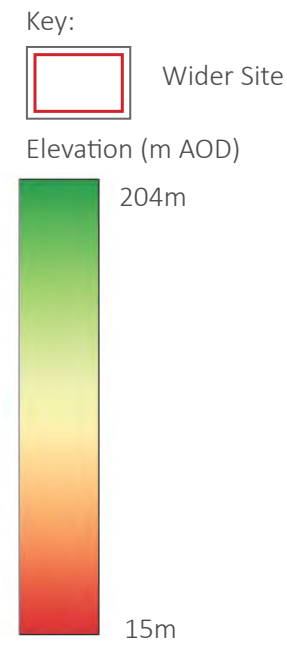


Figure 5. Site contours

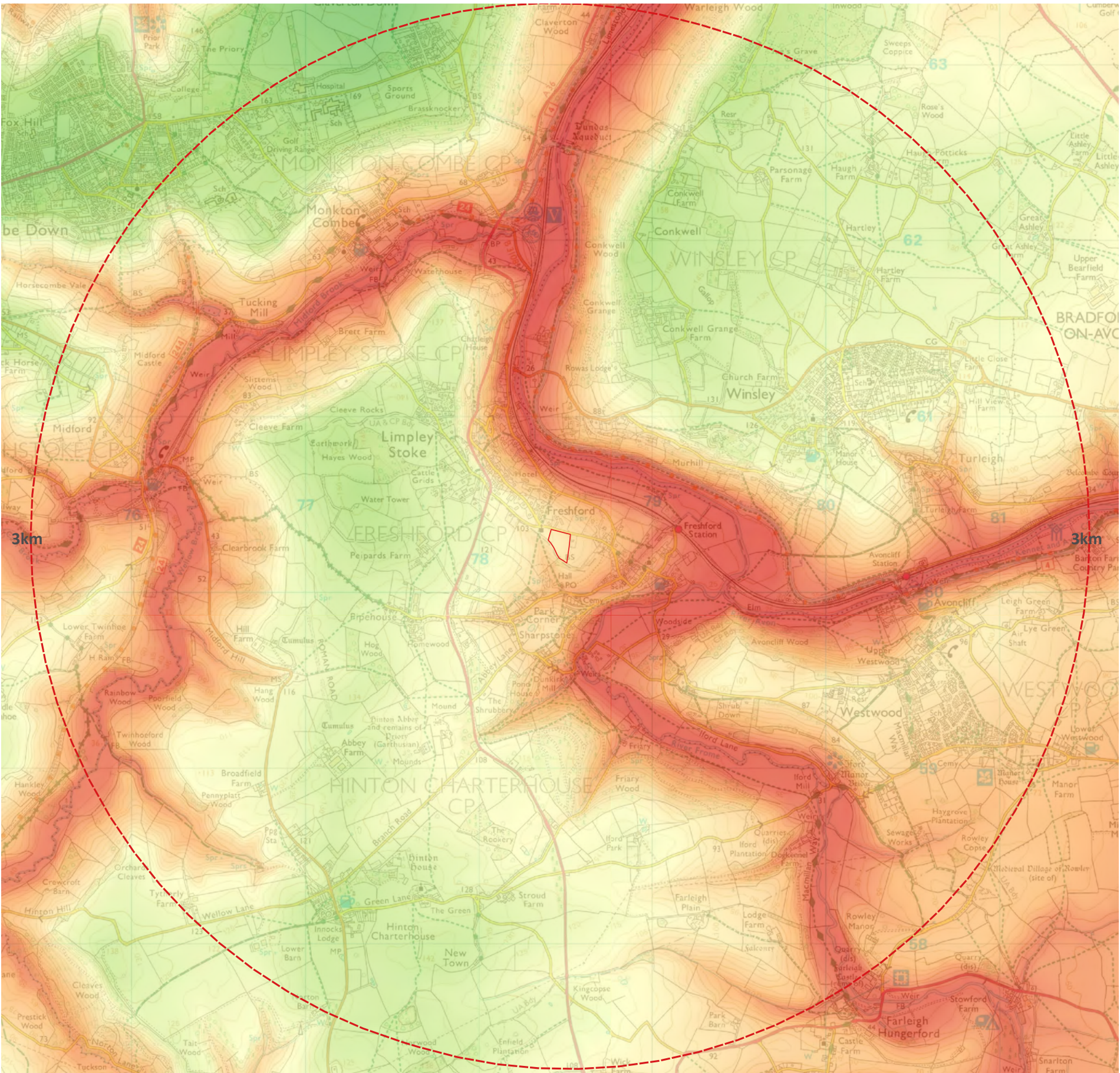


Figure 6. Topographic analysis

2.5 Landscape and Heritage Designations

The Site sits towards the southern edge of the Cotswold National Landscape which is notable for its quintessential English countryside, characterised by rolling hills, picturesque villages and distinctive honey-coloured limestone buildings.

The Site is entirely within Wiltshire but shares a border with Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) along the southern and western boundaries. The Site is also within the Bristol and Bath Green Belt which serves to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, in line with UK planning frameworks.

The Site is within close proximity to the Freshford and Sharpstone Conservation area which boasts special interest due to its location within a National Landscape and its landscape setting within a valley framed by hills and woodland as well as numerous historic buildings.

St Mary's Church which sits adjacent to the Site's north western boundary is a grade II* listed building which features a number of grade II listed monuments within its grounds.

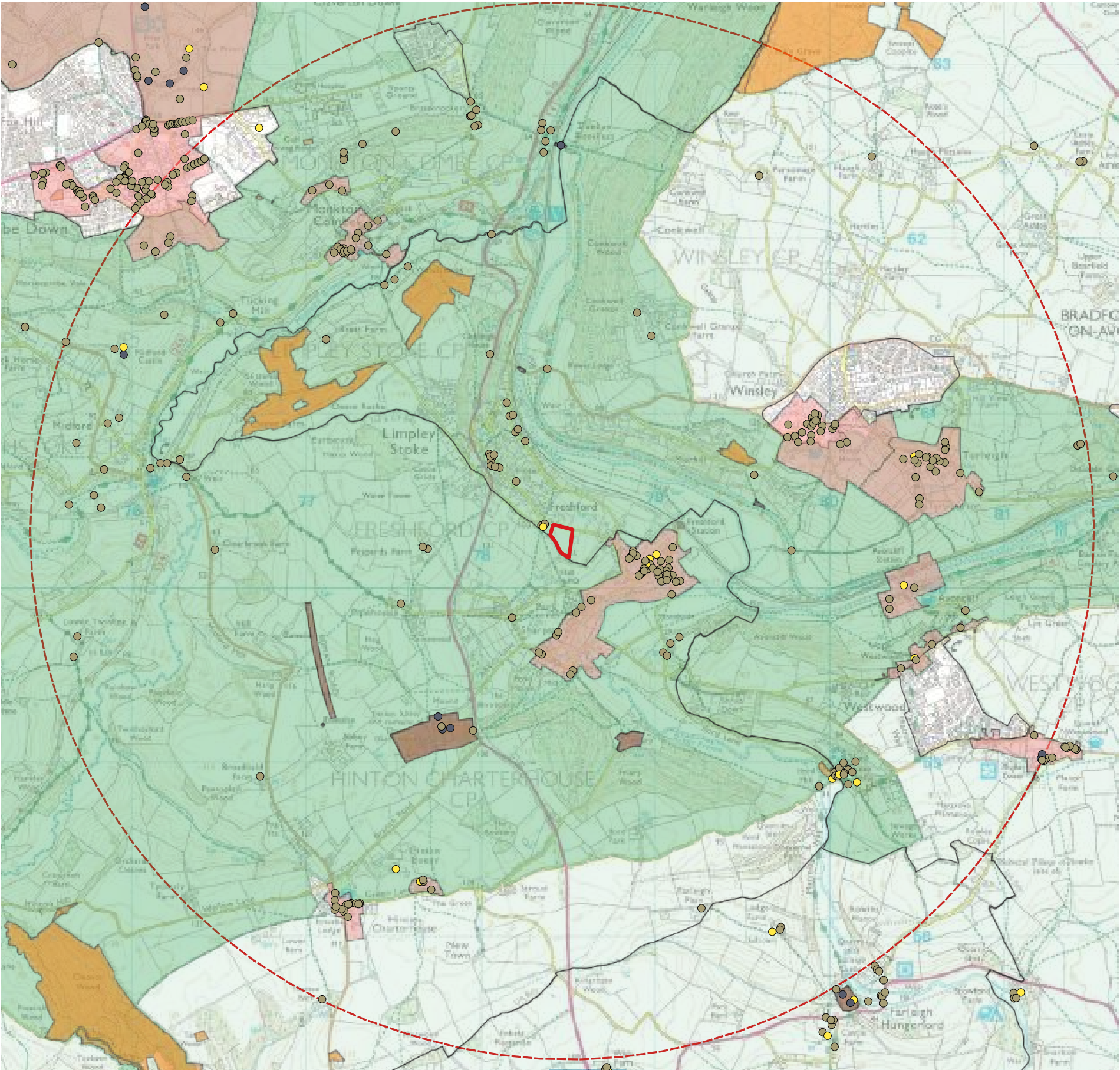
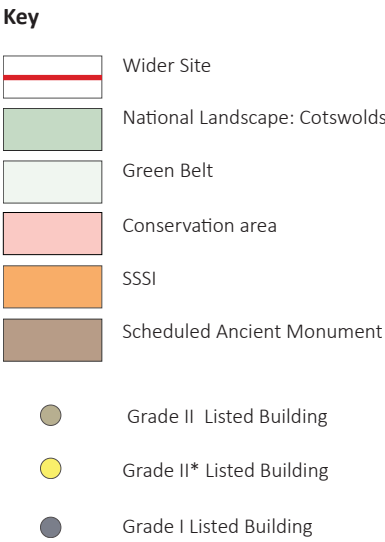


Figure 7. Landscape and Heritage Designations

2.6 Published Landscape Character

Key:



Wider Site

National Character Area: 107 Cotswolds

Wiltshire Local Landscape Character Assessment (2004)



10B Limestone Valleys- Avon Limestone Valley



16A Limestone Lowland: Malmsbury- Corsham Limestones Lowlands

Bath & North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (2021)



3C Enclosed Valleys- Frome Valley (Freshford to Iford)



6b Limestone Plateaux- Hinton Charterhouse and Baggeridge Plateau

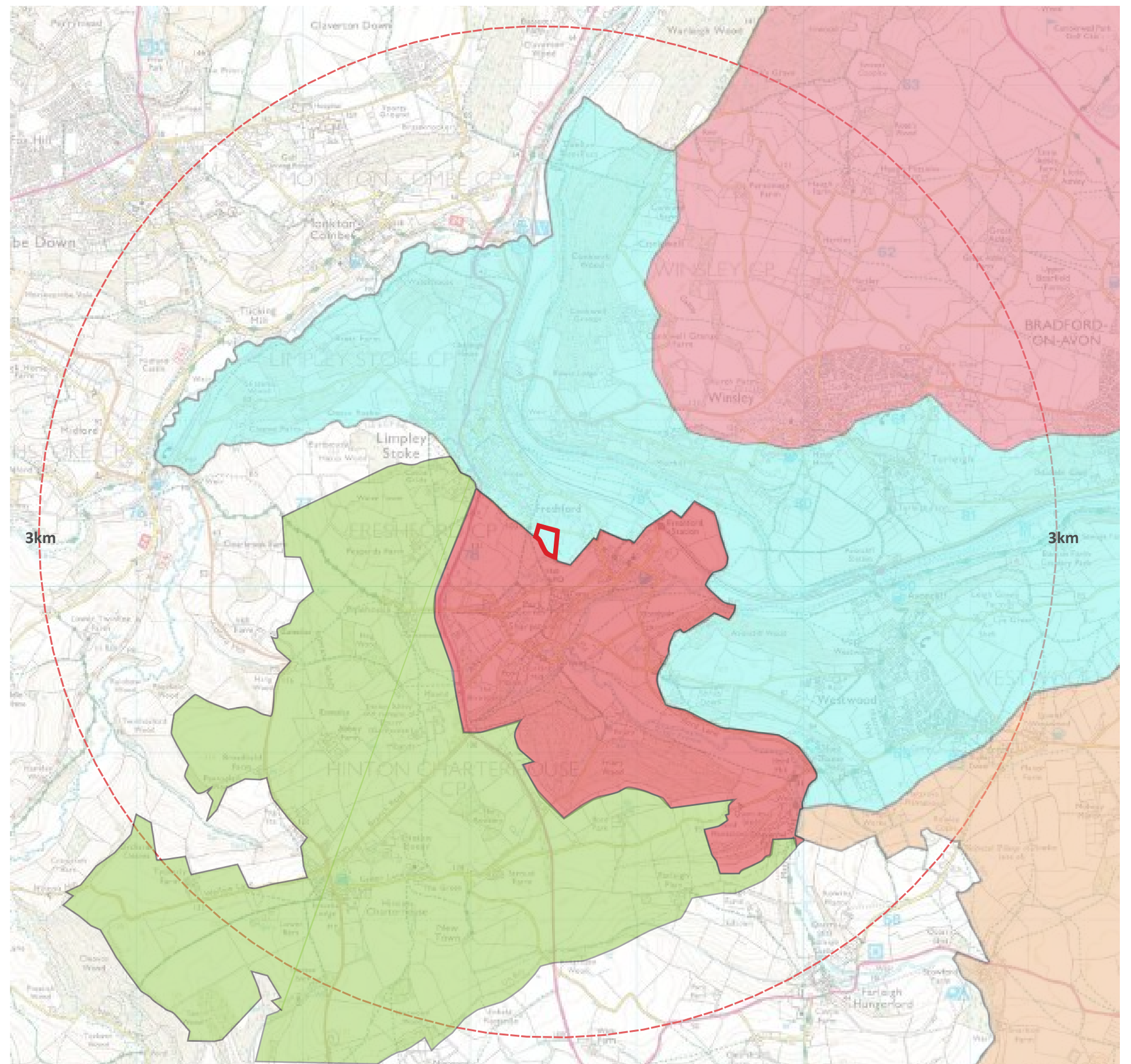


Figure 8. Relevant Landscape Character Areas from 'Somerset Landscape Character Assessment (2024)' and 'Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005)'

A scale bar indicating a distance of 1.0 km, and a north arrow pointing upwards.

Published Landscape Character Assessment

The Site is within Wiltshire and sits on the border with B&NES.

The Site is covered by the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment produced by LUC for Wiltshire Council in April 2004. The assessment subdivides the authority’s area into several distinct landscape character areas (LCA) each with their own defined profile and characteristics. Consideration should also be given to the adjacent LCA due to its proximity to the site and key characteristics shared by both.

The Site lies wholly within **LCA 10B: Avon Limestone Valley**, a subcategory of **Landscape Character Type 10: Limestone Valleys**. Key characteristics of LCA 6 which are of relevance to the Site and its context include:

- *Moderately broad river valleys with gently undulating valley floors and steep limestone sides.*
- *Intimate, small scale landscape with landform and woodlands restricting long views out of the valley.*
- *Strong sense of enclosure created by landform contributing to a remote, rural character, despite numerous settlements.*
- *Some significant areas of woodland, a number of which are ancient semi-natural woodlands, particularly on steeper slopes of the valleys cut by tributaries.*
- *Predominance of open pastoral farmland divided by hedgerows into a variety of field sizes.*
- *Sequence of stone built villages occupying secluded locations in valley bottoms, often in association with a bridging point or along transport routes defined by the valley.*
- *Associations with the 18th and 19th century weaving industry with weavers cottages, mills and other industrial relics.*

The assessment outlines a strategy for future management of the LCA with the aim to ‘*conserve the rural character of the valleys and retain the important landscape elements and patterns*’. To assist with this, the assessment details the following broad management objectives :

- *Conserve and manage important areas of ancient woodland and species rich grassland and take opportunities to extend these habitats.*
- *Counteract the impact of degraded urban edges with new woodland planting that links to existing woodland of the valley slopes.*
- *Retain the distinctive character of the villages by restricting development that encroaches the valley sides. Ensure any change respects the traditional stone built character and vernacular form.*
- *Conserve and restore traditional hedgerow boundaries.*
- *Conserve the distinctive rural and dispersed settlement pattern and the network of rural roads and sunken lanes that connect them.*

The adjacent LCA is covered by the Bath & North East Somerset Landscape Character Assessment which was produced for B&NES in August 2021. It is **LCA 3c Frome Valley (Freshford to Iford)**, a subcategory of **Landscape Character Type 3: Enclosed Valleys**. Key characteristics of LCA 3 which are of relevance to the Site and its context include:

- *Narrow valley of the River Frome with steep and often well-wooded valley sides*
- *Field boundaries are generally hedged, with a mix of clipped and unclipped*
- *Densely wooded valley slopes*
- *Settlement concentrated on valley sides*
- *A landscape of traditional settlement including farmhouses of characteristic golden Oolitic Limestone*
- *Mill buildings and associated features such as mill races*
- *A visually contained valley landscape with limited association with surrounding character areas*
- *Extensive view across and along the valley*
- *A scenic and rural agricultural landscape located within the Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB)*

Character Summary

The Site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 10B: Avon Limestone Valley, a subcategory of Landscape Character Type 10: Limestone Valleys.

The Site is seen within the context of the Cotswold villages of Freshford and Limpley Stoke. The Site is an open field bound by existing development to the north, east and west these structures are typically built of the local limestone. To the south the land gives way to a network of rolling irregular agricultural fields with mature hedgerows and woodland blocks. These are all key features identified within the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and create reference points when considering how potential development can be sensitively integrated into the landscape.



Figure 9. View from within the Site on the boundary of St Mary's Church looking east

2.7 Visual Baseline

The visual baseline is based on a number of representative viewpoints located at publicly accessible points within the surrounding environs of the Site. Viewpoint locations are illustrated on Figure 9 and images of these views are included as viewpoint photographs presented in the following pages.

The viewpoints are all from publicly accessible locations where a degree of visibility of the Site or existing vegetation bounding the Site was observed. Photography and associated fieldwork was undertaken in January 2026 at which time deciduous trees and vegetation were without leaf cover and therefore a scenario of essentially minimal visual screening was encountered.

ZTV Analysis

The viewpoint location plan has been based on a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis plan. The ZTV is generated from a receptor height of 1.6m (approximate average UK adult eye level) and receiver/ target heights within the Site of 5.5m to represent the visual envelope of a single storey structure around the farmstead. The ZTV is based on 1m LiDAR First Return DSM (Digital Surface Model) terrain data which includes intervening features such as existing trees/ vegetation and buildings in the landscape. Some changes within the landscape may have occurred since the DSM data and ZTV was created. Data source: ordnancesurvey.co.uk. This ZTV also includes Earth's curvature.

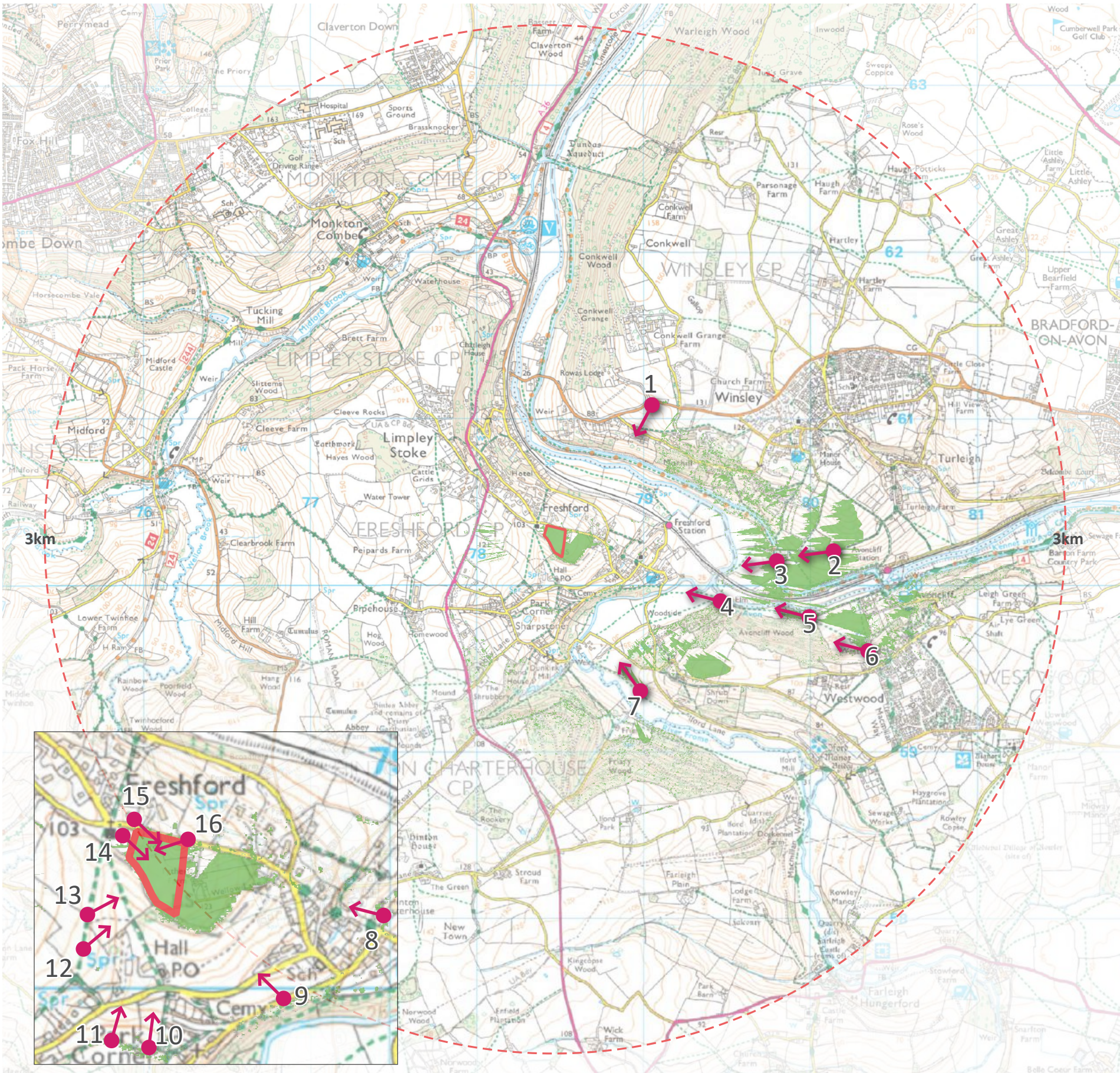


Figure 10. ZTV and Viewpoint Locations



Viewpoint 1:			
Visual Receptors	Road users on the B3108 and pedestrians on the informal access path around field perimeter adjacent to footpath WINS17.		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	950m	Direction of view:	SW
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 011:41	Approximate elevation (AOD):	124m





Viewpoint 2:			
Visual Receptors	Pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders on WINS8 Bridleway.		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	1586m	Direction of view:	West
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 12:14	Approximate elevation (AOD):	66m





Viewpoint 3:			
Visual Receptors	Pedestrians on footpath WINS53 on the Kennet and Avon canal tow-path.		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	1282m	Direction of view:	West
Date/ time:	20.01.2026 10:36	Approximate elevation (AOD):	35m





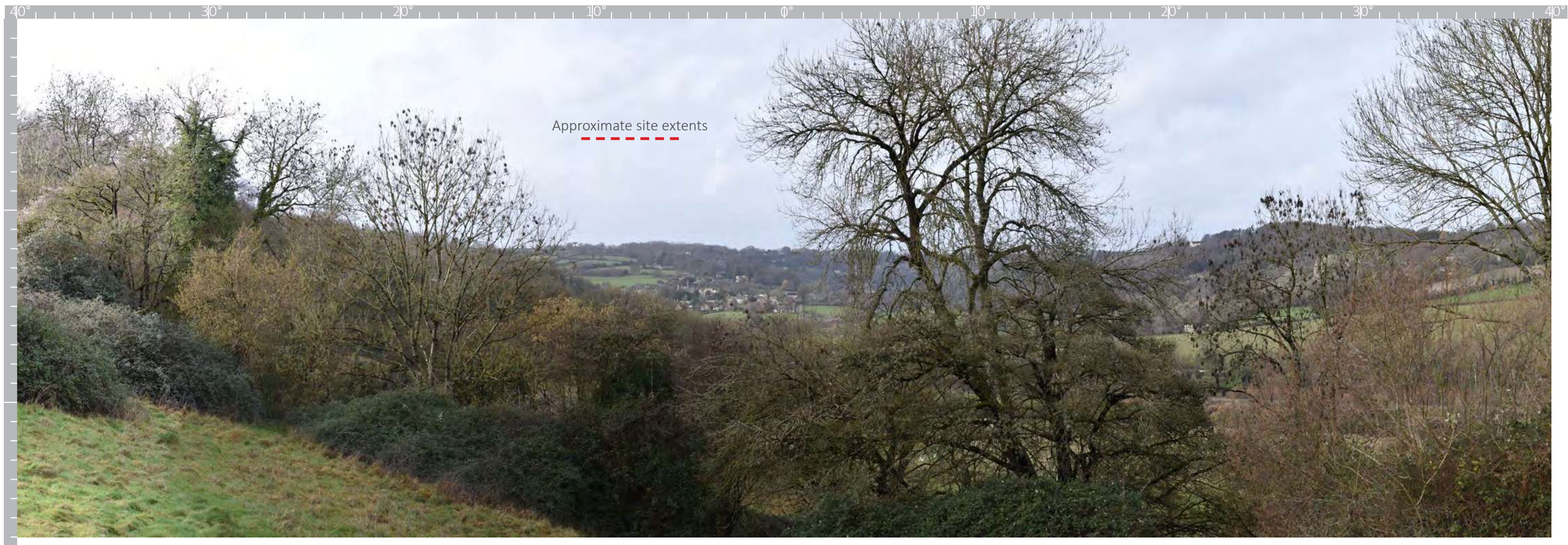
Viewpoint 4:			
Visual Receptors	Pedestrians on the footpath BA12/4		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	956m	Direction of view:	W
Date/ time:	20.01.2026 11:10	Approximate elevation (AOD):	37m





Viewpoint 5:			
Visual Receptors	Pedestrians on footpath WWO023		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	1527m	Direction of view:	NW
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 13:16	Approximate elevation (AOD):	33m





Viewpoint 6:			
Visual Receptors	Pedestrians on footpath WWO023		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	1937	Direction of view:	W
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 13:28	Approximate elevation (AOD):	79m





Viewpoint 7:			
Visual Receptors	Pedestrians using the informal footpath in the field adjacent to footpath BA12/1		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	864m	Direction of view:	N
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 13:48	Approximate elevation (AOD):	47m





Viewpoint 8:			
Visual Receptors	Users of St Peters Church graveyard in Freshford.		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	460m	Direction of view:	E
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 14:06	Approximate elevation (AOD):	49m





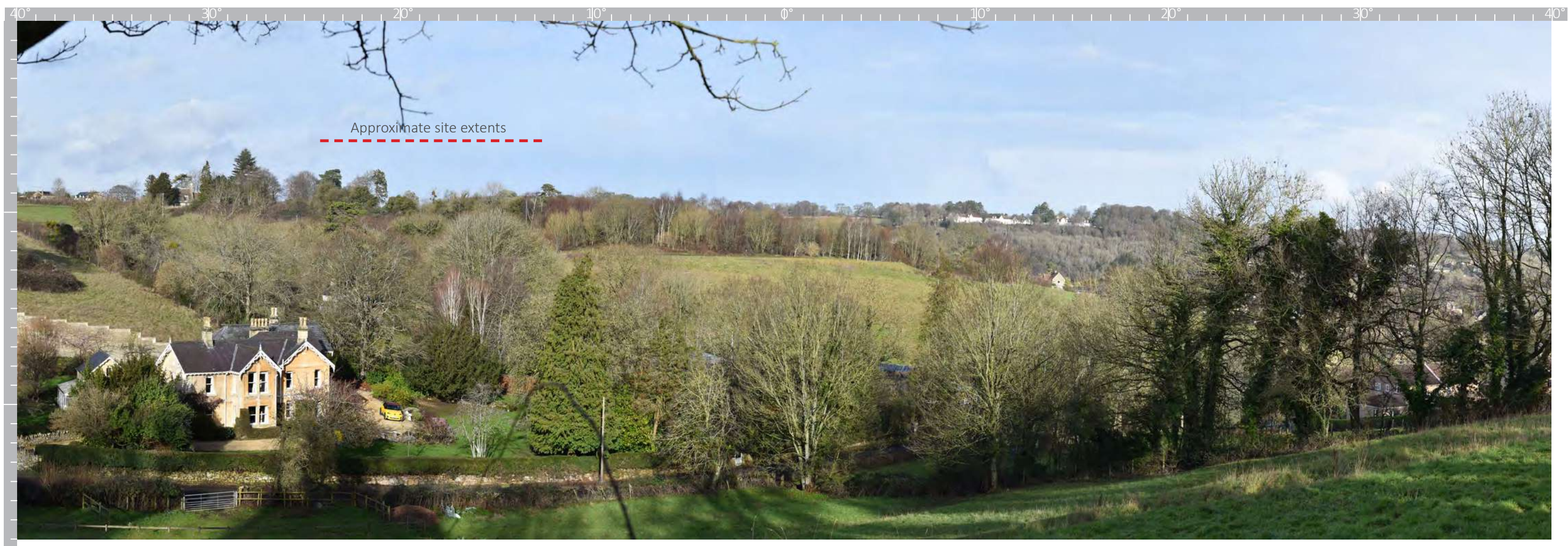
Viewpoint 9: View from The Tying looking north west.			
Visual Receptors	Pedestrians and road users of The Tying		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	328M	Direction of view:	NW
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 14:23	Approximate elevation (AOD):	55m





Viewpoint 10: View from PRow BA12/21 looking north			
Visual Receptors	Users of the footpath		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	323m	Direction of view:	N
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 14:33	Approximate elevation (AOD):	85m





Viewpoint 11: View from PRow BA12/21 looking north west towards the site.			
Visual Receptors	Pedestrian users of the footpath		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	327m	Direction of view:	NE
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 14:39	Approximate elevation (AOD):	90m





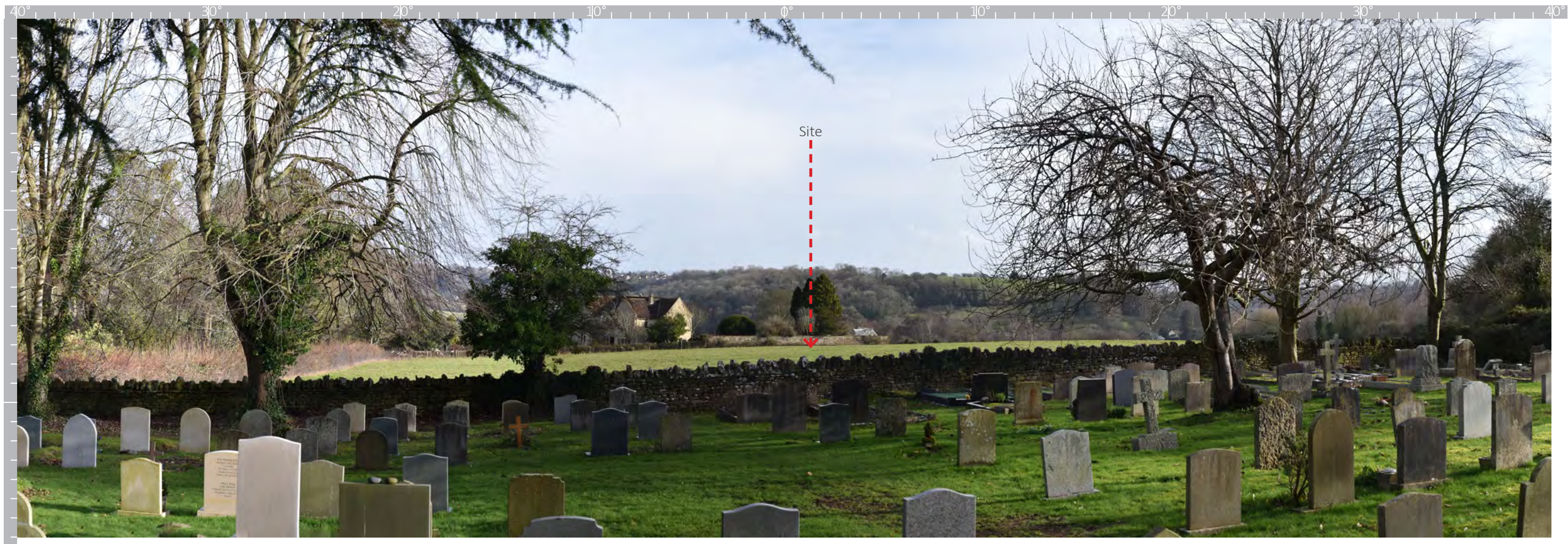
Viewpoint 12: View from PRow BA12/25in the southern field.			
Visual Receptors	Users of the footpath		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	198m	Direction of view:	NE
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 14:52	Approximate elevation (AOD):	89m





Viewpoint 13: View from PRow BA12/25 in the northern field.			
Visual Receptors	Users of the footpath		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	160m	Direction of view:	E
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 14:58	Approximate elevation (AOD):	87m



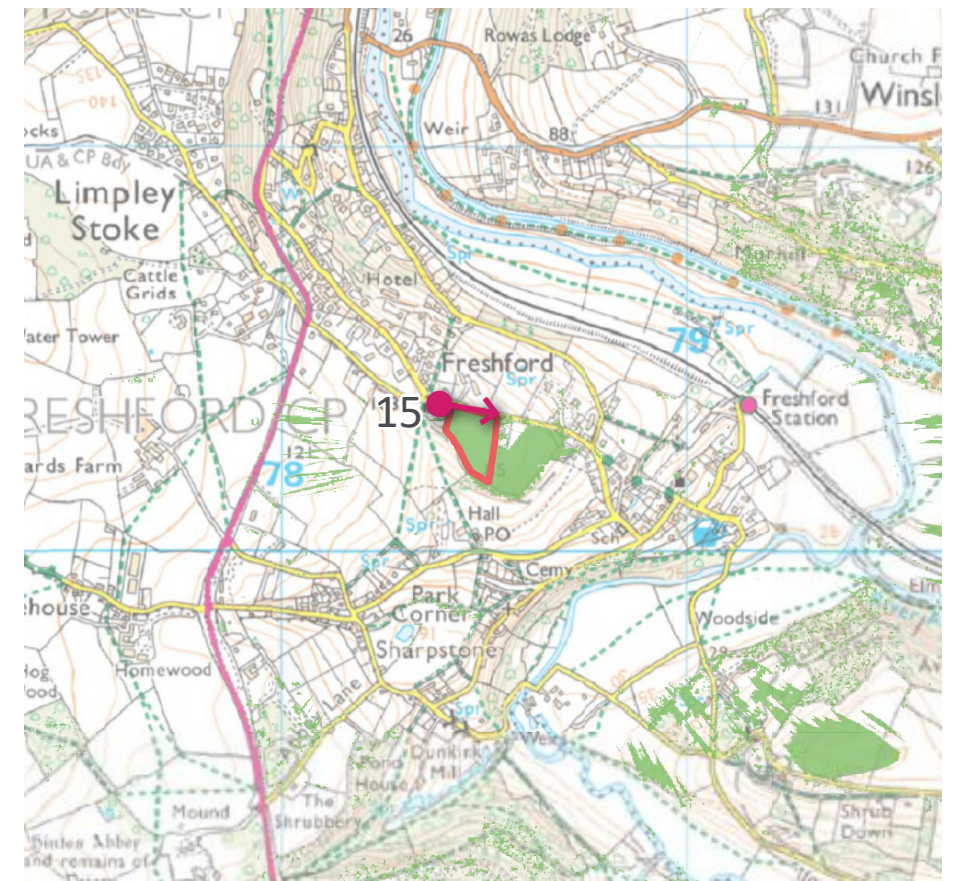


Viewpoint 14: View from the grounds of St Mary's Church adjacent to the Site.			
Visual Receptors	Users of the church and grounds.		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	0m	Direction of view:	E
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 15:06	Approximate elevation (AOD):	89m



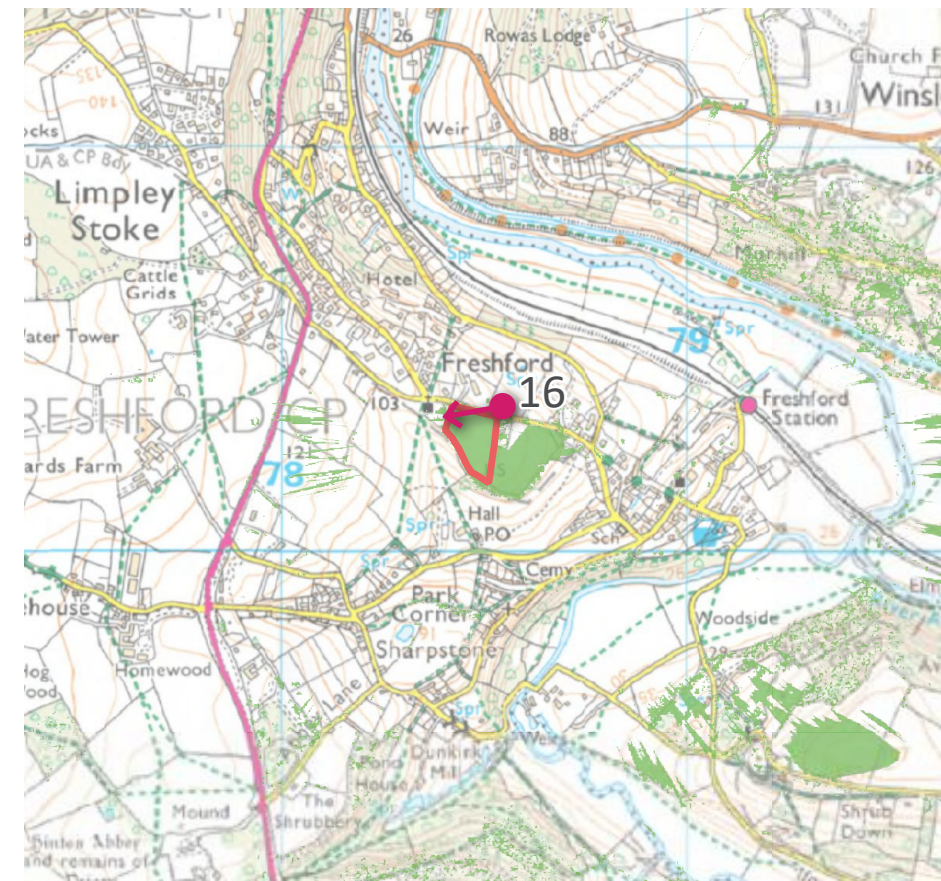


Viewpoint 15: View from the pavement along Church Lane in Freshford			
Visual Receptors	Road users and pedestrians		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	5m	Direction of view:	East
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 15:11	Approximate elevation (AOD):	95m





Viewpoint 16: View from the footway along Church Lane in Freshford			
Visual Receptors	Road users and pedestrians		
Distance from closest point of site boundary:	10m	Direction of view:	West
Date/ time:	27.01.2026 15:16	Approximate elevation (AOD):	83m



VISUAL SUMMARY

Beyond approximately 2km there is no visibility of the Site due to the nature of local topography and vegetation. Views are generally localised with the majority of mid-range views being from the east.

MID-RANGE VIEWS FROM THE NORTH

There are glimpsed views of the northern portion of the Site visible from elevated ground to the north. The Site is mostly obscured by layers of mature vegetation and residential properties in the foreground and is seen within the context of the village.

MID-RANGE VIEWS FROM THE EAST

There are glimpsed views of the Site from the east on ground at the same elevation as the Site or higher. From this perspective the Site is seen in the context of the village of Freshford with views being screened or filtered by mature vegetation and topography. The southern portion of the Site is more visible with the visibility of the north completely screened by residential properties, topography and localised mature vegetation.

CLOSE-RANGE VIEWS FROM THE SOUTH

Views are limited to the southern area of the Site. All views are filtered through vegetation and the northern area of the Site is screened entirely.

CLOSE-RANGE VIEWS FROM THE WEST

Views are from an elevation similar to that of the Site itself. Glimpsed views of the Site and neighbouring residential properties are filtered through mature boundary vegetation.

CLOSE-RANGE VIEWS FROM ST MARY'S CHURCH YARD

At this close-range elevated position it is possible to see the majority of the Site from this vantage point.

CLOSE RANGE VIEWS FROM THE NORTH

Views from Church Lane are confined due to the nature of the narrow road. The Site is set at an elevated position above the road giving limited visibility into the field. Consideration will need to be given to the entrance formed into the Site which could open up a view from the road.



Figure 11. Visual baseline summary diagram