Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

January 2026

Land at Wyvols Court Farm

Prepared by
CSA Environmental

On behalf of:
Wyvols Court Farm Ltd

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CSA environmental

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CSA Environmental has been appointed by Wyvols Court Farm Ltd ('the Applicant') to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of Land at Wyvols Court Farm (the 'Site'), in the village of Swallowfield. The proposal is for the development of three commercial units with associated parking and landscape planting.

1.2 The Site lies within the administrative area of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). The location and extent of the Site is shown on the Location Plan at **Appendix A** and on the Aerial Photograph at **Appendix B**.

1.3 This LIVA describes the existing landscape character and quality of the Site and the surrounding area. The report then goes on to discuss the suitability of the Site to accommodate the development proposals, and the potential landscape and visual effects on the wider area.

Methodology

1.4 This LVIA is based on a site visit undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced Landscape Architect in November 2025. The weather conditions at the time were fine and dry and visibility was good.

1.5 In LVIA, a distinction is drawn between landscape effects (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and visual effects (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape from public vantage points, including public rights of way and other areas with general public access, as well as effects from residential properties). This report therefore considers the potential impact of the development on both landscape character and visibility. The methodology utilised in this report is contained in **Appendix H.**

1.6 Photographs contained within this document (**Appendix C**) were taken using a digital camera with a lens focal length approximating to 50mm, to give a similar depth of vision to the human eye. In some instances images have been combined to create a panorama. The photographs and visualisations within this report have been prepared in general conformance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19, as set out in the Methodology in **Appendix H**.

2.0 LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Context

2.1 National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'). Section 15 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 187 of the document states that the planning system should contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural and local environment through, among other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, '… *(in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)'*. The paragraph also outlines that the planning system should recognise 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.'*

2.2 The Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') adds further context to the policies contained in the NPPF. The guidance as relevant to this assessment covers landscape and the natural environment, and the design of new developments.

2.1 The National Design Guide (2019) has been produced as part of the PPG. It provides guidance to '… *illustrate how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.'* The National Model Design Code (July, 2021) expands upon the ten characteristics of good design providing an overarching framework for design.

2.2 Those sections of the NPPF and PPG relevant to this assessment are summarised in **Appendix E**.

Local Policy Context

<u>Core Strategy (2010)</u>

2.3 Planning policy for Swallowfield is set out in the WBC Local Plan which was adopted in 2010 and will guide growth until 2026. The following policies contained within the adopted Local Plan are of relevance to this LVIA:

- **Policy CP1: Sustainable development;**
- **Policy CP3: General Principles for development;**
- **Policy CP7: Biodiversity;**
- **Policy CP9: Scale and location of development proposals;** and

- **Policy CP11: Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside).**

Adopted Managing Development Delivery (MDD) local plan (2014)

2.4 The MDD was adopted by the WBC in 2014. It expands on the Core Strategy and sets out more detailed policies for managing development. MDD policies of relevance to this LVIA include:

- **Policy CC02 Development Limits;**
- **Policy CC03 Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping;**
- **Policy TB21 Landscape Character:**
- **Policy TB23 Biodiversity and Development:** and
- **Policy TB24 Designated Heritage Assets**.

The Local Plan Update 2023-2040

2.5 As the current Local Plan runs only until 2026, a new Local Plan is available to view as a 'Proposed Submission Plan'. The following draft policies contained within this document are considered of relevance to this LVIA:

- **Draft Policy SS1: Sustainable development principles;**
- **Draft Policy SS5: Development in the countryside;**
- **Draft Policy C4: Green and blue infrastructure and public rights of way**
- **Draft Policy FD3: River corridors and watercourses;**
- **Draft Policy NE4: Trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows;**
- **Draft Policy NE5: Landscape and design;**
- **Draft Policy NE6: Valued landscapes:** Following WBC's 2024 Landscape Character Assessment, it has identified 13 valued landscapes based on them holding particularly valued attributes which would benefit from additional protection. The Proposed Submission Plan identifies a broad swathe of land around Swallowfield, including the Site, which is identified as the 'River Loddon Valued Landscape'. It is stated that '*Development proposals affecting Valued Landscapes will only be supported where they protect, and where appropriate, integrate with and/or enhance the special features, characteristics and*

qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the harm'.

- **Draft Policy DH1: Place making and quality design;**
- **Draft Policy DH2: Safeguarding amenity;**
- **Draft Policy DH5: The historic environment;** and
- **Draft Policy HC7: Light pollution**

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

<u>The Borough Design Guide (2012)</u>

2.6 The Wokingham Borough Design Guide seeks to encourage well designed developments which complement and build on the character of the areas around them. The guide describes a number of design principles for non-residential development including:

- **NR1**: This states that '*Non-residential development should be designed to respond to and exploit key features or characteristics of the site and the local context';*
- **NR2**: states that 'Non-*residential development should be designed to contribute towards improving the character and quality of the area';*
- **NR10:** states that '*Car parking should be positioned unobtrusively and well designed and landscaped'*; and
- **NR12:** states that '*Boundary treatments should form an integral part of the design of proposals for non-residential development'*.

2.7 Design principles for rural and settlement edges include:

- **RD1**: This states that '*New development and associated landscape should retain, incorporate and enhance features that contribute towards the landscape character and biodiversity of the area'*;
- **RD3:** states that '*The location and design of new development must respond to and should not harm the setting of the village in the landscape'*;
- **RD4**: states that: '*New development must be carefully composed in relation to important views into or out of a village, so that the setting of the village in the landscape is maintained or enhanced'*; and

- **RD9**: This states that *'The location, siting and design of new development on the edge of settlements must be carefully designed to create an edge to the built up area with a character that relates to the local pattern and incorporate soft landscape to soften the edge of settlements and to help integrate new housing into its rural setting'*.

3.0 SITE CONTEXT

Site Context

3.1 The Site is located to the north western edge of Swallowfield, adjacent to the B3349 Basingstoke Road. It is located within the existing Wyvols Court Farm development site and comprises an irregularly-shaped area of land. The Site location and its immediate context are illustrated on the Location Plan and Aerial Photograph in **Appendices A** and **B**, and on the photographs contained within **Appendix C**.

3.2 Immediately north of the Site lie existing commercial and industrial buildings and associated hardstanding and driveway, as well as Wyvols Court Farmhouse (**photograph 4 & 5**) which are all contained within the Wyvols Court Farm area and accessed via a gated access track from Basingstoke Road. The Grade II Listed Wyvols Court Business Centre lies approximately 30m north east of the Site, accessed via a separate driveway from Basingstoke Road, and is used as a serviced office space with associated parking (**photograph 6**).

3.3 Immediately to the east lies the B3349, Basingstoke Road, which lies within a shallow cutting and is heavily vegetated (**photographs 9 & 10**). East beyond the Basingstoke Road lies the village of Swallowfield which has a nucleated settlement pattern. Houses in the village are typically detached, two storey, red brick dwellings, which date mainly from the 20th century. There are also some much older properties and the eastern part of the village is designated as a Conservation Area.

3.4 Land immediately to the south of the Site, lies within Wyvols Court Farm (and under the applicant's control), and largely comprises open grassland, although a belt of mature trees projects north eastwards from the western tip of the Site boundary. The existing access road runs southwards from the entrance gates, parallel to the Basingstoke Road, and leads to a cluster of commercial buildings, a residential property and some hardstanding which are largely screened from view by the aforementioned tree belt (**photograph 3**). Planning consent has recently been granted for two additional agricultural related buildings (Units 14 and 15) immediately to the northeast of the existing buildings in this area.

3.5 To the west and north west of the Site, lies open grassland on land which is under the Applicant's control. A ditch with some tree planting runs from the north eastern corner of the Site north towards the River Loddon. North beyond this lies the heavily vegetated corridor of the River Loddon, and land adjacent to the river in this area accommodates commercially grown willow trees (**photograph 11**).

National Landscape Character

3.6 Natural England has produced profiles for England's National Character Areas ('NCAs'), which divides England into 159 distinct natural areas, defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. The Site is located in the Thames Basin Heaths (NCA profile129). The profile notes that '*Arable land and improved pasture are found in the valleys, on alluvium'* and '*Valley floors are wet with ditches, numerous watercourses, ponds, waterfilled gravel pits, reedbeds and carr. Historic features include mills, relict water meadows'* The profile also remarks on the '*winding lanes and historic dispersed villages and farmsteads of traditional, locally made brick and tile'*.

District / Local Landscape Character

3.7 In 2019 LUC prepared the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment. This study identified 14 landscape character types (LCTs) each representing a distinct identity and reflecting the range of contrasting landscapes across the Borough. Landscape types share broadly similar patterns of geology, topography, vegetation and human influences in each area in which they occur. Each landscape type was then divided into a number of geographically specific Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). These share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type but have their own particular identity or 'sense of place'. This study identified 28 separate LCAs. An extract from the 2019 assessment for LCA I2: Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland in which the Site lies is provided in **Appendix F.**

3.8 The Site lies to the northern end of LCA I2: Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland, which is defined as "*A rural lowland area dominated by intensive arable farming in large open fields bounded by hedgerows and fences. Rural roads are lined with ditches, banks and mature oak trees. Settlement is confined to scattered farmsteads, Riseley village and part of Swallowfield.'*

3.9 Valuable landscape attributes for this LCA are described as:

- *'Rural character of the working agricultural landscape with its homogenous land use in large arable fields;*
- *Lightly settled character with rural villages and scattered farms, some Grade II listed;*
- *Roadside verges and water-filled ditches lined by overgrown hedgerows and trees along the rural lanes which provide scenic quality, as well as ecological interest;*

- *Views across the open arable landscape to wooded horizons in surrounding character areas, which provide a degree of distant visual enclosure; and*

- *Remote character due to the scarcity of settlement and relative isolation between the river valleys of the Loddon and Blackwater which results in a strong sense of rural tranquillity and dark skies'.*

3.10 To maintain the landscape character of the Riseley Open Clay Lowland the document states that it is important to *'conserve and enhance the existing remote rural character of the agricultural landscape',* and in terms of development, *'the aim is to conserve the rural settlement pattern'*.

3.11 Specific landscape guidelines for this character area include:

- *'Conserve the open and rural qualities of the farmed landscape. Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods around intensively farmed arable fields;*

- *Reinstate or repair hedgerows with native species where there are opportunities to do so;*

- *Increase the limited extent of BAP priority habitat deciduous shelterbelts and woodland using locally occurring native species linking to existing woodland sites in adjacent character areas in particular, encourage restoration of pollarded willows, which are an important feature in the landscape;*

- *Conserve, enhance and manage farmland and woodland habitats particularly protect from changes in land use;*

- *Conserve the rural character of the open farmed landscape between adjacent village centres, to protect the individual identity and rural character as well as retaining their sense of physical and visual separation, resisting the spread of linear development;*

- *Maintain and enhance the character of rural lanes with their roadside verges and water-filled ditches resisting unsympathetic highways improvements, infrastructure and signage;*

- *Use appropriate tree and hedgerow planting to help integrate new or existing roads, such as the A33 into the landscape. Encourage the retention and reinstatement of native roadside trees;*

- *Protect open views to adjacent areas. Particular care should be taken in the siting and design of large agricultural buildings, pylons and wires or other vertical elements, which have the potential to be highly visible in the open landscape;* and

- *Protect the strong perceptions of tranquillity and remoteness in the landscape, through the careful and strategic management of development'*.

3.12 From our own assessment of the Site and its wider landscape setting, the Site and its wider context reflect the findings of the 2019 assessment. The Site lies within a lowland area within an area of open farmland. Basingstoke Road immediately east of the Site has a rural character and features ditches, banks and mature trees. Whilst the Site itself is located within the relatively busy working area of Wyvols Court Farm, the landscape character immediately north and west of the Site towards the River Loddon, is more remote and rural.

Valued Landscapes Assessment

3.13 The Valued Landscape Assessment (2024) by WBC draws on the findings of the 2019 Landscape Character Assessment detailed above. It identifies 13 areas as Valued Landscapes within the Borough, with the Site lying within the River Loddon Valued Landscape area. The report identifies attributes for this Valued Landscape area, although it is worth noting that whilst the Site lies within LCA I2: Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland as described above, the Valued Landscape Assessment only refers to the attributes of LCA A2: Loddon River Valley LCA, which runs north of LCA I2, and B1: Loddon River Valley with Open Water which lies distant to the Site.

3.14 Nonetheless, valued attributes mentioned for the River Loddon Valued Landscape area, that could also be applicable to the Site and the wider surrounding landscape include, *'The naturalness of the River Loddon and wide floodplain'; 'the wooded backdrop of mature broadleaved woodland and natural riparian corridors'; 'important wetland features and habitats'; 'historic riverside features';* and '*the registered historic parkland at Swallowfield'*. An extract from the 2024 assessment is provided in **Appendix G.**

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations

3.15 The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside Map ('MAGIC') and the Proposals Map (adopted 2010) indicates that the Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for landscape character or quality.

3.16 However as detailed above, the Local Plan Update 2023-2040, proposes designating a broad swathe of land around Swallowfield, including the Site, as the 'River Loddon Valued Landscape' under draft Policy NE6: Valued landscapes, based on the Council's 2024 'Valued Landscapes Assessment (please refer to extract in **Appendix G**).

3.17 Swallowfield Park which lies just east of Swallowfield village is classified as a Registered Park and Garden. It dates from the 17th and 18th century and comprises a country house with gardens and pleasure grounds, surrounded by a landscaped park.

Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

3.18 Swallowfield Conservation Area is located to the east of the village over 0.5km from the Site. There are several Listed Buildings in the village and close to the Site (please refer to **Appendix D**). The closest of these is the Grade II listed Wyvols Court which lies immediately east of the Site. Bowers Farmhouse and Granary are located over 300m south east along The Street, and Sheepbridge Court which is just over 500m to the north east, is Grade II* listed. There is also a Moated site at this location which is classified as a Scheduled Monument.

Public Rights of Way

3.19 There are no public rights of way within the Site. Just over 250m north west of the Site, a public footpath (SWAL19) runs from Kingsbridge Hill, eastwards alongside the River Loddon; after crossing the Basingstoke Road it becomes SWAL18 and heads east past Sheepbridge Court Farm. Public rights of way within the wider context of the Site are illustrated on the OS Mapping on the Site Location Plan at **Appendix A**.

Tree Preservation Orders

3.20 There are no trees on the Site covered by a Tree Preservation Order ('TPO'). There are however 9 TPOs within the grounds of Wyvols Court (Business Centre) which lies immediately north of the Site. This is confirmed by the examination of the Protected Tree Map on WBC's website on 24th November 2025.

4.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND VISIBILITY

Site Description

4.1 The Site comprises a small field, part of a field, and a short section of the driveway through the Site, on land immediately south and east of existing commercial development within the Wyvols Court Farm development area.

4.2 At the Site's eastern end, the small grassland field is surrounded by hardstanding to its northern and western boundaries, and the Wyvols Court Farm access driveway adjoins the southern boundary of this part of the Site (**photograph 1**). Although not included in the Site area, the belt of trees and understorey vegetation along Basingstoke Road lies immediately to the east, forming a dense visual screen between the road and the Site.

4.3 The western section of the Site comprises an irregularly shaped parcel of land which lies within a much larger grassland field. The boundaries of this area are open and not delineated on the Site. The western tip of the Site boundary abuts a belt of mature trees that run eastwards through the wider field (**photograph 4**).

Topography

4.4 The Site is fairly flat and low lying at approximately 50 metres Above Ordnance Datum ('AOD'). It lies on the very gently sloping north west facing side of the valley of the River Loddon, and the wider area of land comprising Wyvols Court Farm, falls very gently to approximately 45m AOD adjacent to the river. South of the Site, the wider landscape rises gradually beyond the Basingstoke Road through Swallowfield towards Riseley where the most elevated land is at approximately 80m AOD. North of the Site, the land gradually rises northwards to reach heights of approximately 65m AOD at Spencers Wood.

Visibility

4.5 An assessment of the visibility of the Site was undertaken and a series of photographs taken from public vantage points, rights of way and public highways. The viewpoints are illustrated on the Location Plan and Aerial Photograph contained **Appendices A** and **B** and on the photographs in **Appendix C**.

4.6 From our assessment, whilst the Site has open boundaries and is visible from locations and buildings within the wider Wyvols Court Farm area (land under the Applicant's control), it is not easily seen from public viewpoints within the wider area, including from the village of

Swallowfield and its Conservation Area, and from the public footpath (SWAL19) along the River Loddon north of the Site. The dense, mature vegetation to the Basingstoke Road immediately east of the Site, serves to screen and filter the majority of views from this road, and also from properties near the Site along this road. Due to roadside and intervening vegetation and buildings, combined with the flat topography , there is also unlikely to be any intervisibility with nearby historic features including the Conservation Area, the Scheduled Monument at Sheepbridge Court, and Swallowfield Park (Registered Park & Garden). There are however views of the Site from the Listed Wyvols Court which lies immediately east of the Site, and any development proposals for the Site must be carefully designed in consultation with a heritage specialist, to minimise any adverse effects on this building and its setting.

4.7 The key views of the Site are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Visual Baseline

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Description of Views
Wyvols Court - business centre (reciprocal views at photographs 4 & 5)	High	From the Grade II Listed Wyvols Court, there are views across the fields within the Site from south west-facing first floor windows. From the ground floor of this building views are likely to be mainly obscured by fencing and filtered by boundary vegetation.
Commercial buildings immediately north of the Site-within Wyvols Court Farm area (reciprocal views at photographs 4 & 5)	Low	From commercial buildings (on land under the applicant's control) immediately north of, and adjacent to the Site, there are open views of the Site through windows and also from parking areas.
Commercial buildings south of the Site-at Handpost Farm (reciprocal views at photograph 3)	Low	From commercial buildings (on land under the Applicant's control) south of the Site, views of the Site are be heavily filtered by the tree belt that runs east west from the western tip of the Site. This screening effect will be less effective and views more open in the winter when deciduous trees are not in leaf.
Public footpath SWAL19 (photographs 12 & 13)	High	From footpath SWAL19 which runs alongside the River Loddon north of the Site, there are only occasional opportunities for views of the Site due to the dense vegetation alongside the river. Where visible, views are heavily filtered and the ground plane of the Site is not easily discernible, although adjacent commercial buildings within the Wyvols Court Farm development are partially visible.
Public footpath SWAL18	High	From SWAL18, which is a continuation of SWAL19 after it has crossed Basingstoke Road to the north east, the Site is not visible due to intervening buildings and vegetation.

Basingstoke Road: south of the Site- Southbound view (photographs 6 & 7) Northbound view (photographs 8, 9 & 10)	Medium	On approaching the Site from the north, users of this road have very limited opportunities to see the Site, due to the dense belt of vegetation alongside Basingstoke Road, which screens views eastwards into the Site. On approaching the Site from the south, users similarly have very limited views of the Site, again due to the dense roadside vegetation. The sinuous nature of the road, combined with the screening roadside vegetation means the Site entrance itself is only visible from a very short section of the road, and open views along the existing driveway are only available when viewers are virtually opposite the gated entrance. It is to be noted that when roadside vegetation is not in leaf in the winter, this screening effect will be reduced, although views of the Site will still be heavily filtered.
Basingstoke Road: north of the Site (photograph 14- from Sheep Bridge)	Medium	From this stretch of Basingstoke Road, views south and eastwards to the Site are screened by dense roadside planting. From locations where there could potentially be views, the Site itself is obscured by intervening vegetation as well as buildings adjacent to the Site including Wyvols Court, Wyvols Court Farm and adjacent commercial buildings. Moving further north along Basingstoke Road towards Spencers Wood, despite the slightly rising landform, views of the Site are restricted by roadside and intervening planting, and existing buildings including those at Lambs Farm Business Park, north of the Site.
Barge Lane	Medium	Views eastwards to the Site from this narrow lane are blocked by dense roadside vegetation. There may be heavily filtered, glimpsed views when vegetation is not in leaf, but these will also be restricted by existing built development south of the Site around Handpost Farm.
Kingsbridge Hill (photograph 11)	Medium	Whilst most views eastwards from this rural lane are restricted by roadside vegetation, there are views towards the Site from the Kingsbridge which crosses the River Loddon and lies approximately 350m from the Site. From this location, there are distant, partial views of existing commercial buildings adjacent to the Site, and the listed Wyvols Court building is also noticeable in the background of the view.
Lambs Lane (photograph 15)	Medium	From this narrow lane, hedge banks and vegetation largely screen views southwards towards the Site. Whilst there may be occasional glimpsed views from higher ground where there are gaps in the roadside planting, the Site itself is not discernible due to intervening riverside vegetation and tree planting.
The Street	Medium to High	The Street runs eastwards off Basingstoke Road near to the Site entrance and leads into Swallowfield village; the most easterly part of it lies within the Conservation Area. There are no views of the Site from this road, apart from at its junction with Basingstoke Road where there may be heavily filtered views of the Site through the roadside vegetation (similar to the view in **photograph 7**); the Site entrance is not visible from this location. There will be no views of the Site from the Swallowfield Conservation Area to the east of the village.
Sheepbridge Court Moated Site: Scheduled Monument	High	There are very unlikely to be views of the Site from this location due to the flat local topography, dense planting along the River Loddon corridor and along the adjacent Basingstoke Road.
Swallowfield Park: Registered Park & Garden	High	There will be no views from this park due to dense planting within the park and alongside the Basingstoke Road, combined with the locally flat landform which restricts views.

Residential Receptors		
Property at Wyvols Farmhouse (reciprocal views at photographs 4 & 5)	High	There may be partial views of the Site from this property, although many views will be restricted by intervening vegetation and by adjacent commercial buildings.
Property at Handpost House/Farm (reciprocal views at photograph 3)	Medium	Views looking north to the Site, from this location south of the Site, will be largely screened by the adjacent commercial buildings and the belt of east-west mature tree planting adjacent to the Site.
Properties opposite the Site east of Basingstoke Road e.g Wyvols House & The Croft (reciprocal views at photographs 9 & 10)	Medium	Although located fairly close to the Site, views from properties along Basingstoke Road in this location (near the Site access), are heavily filtered by mature vegetation to both sides of the road. Nevertheless there may be some limited views of the Site from west-facing, first floor windows, particularly in winter when the vegetation is not in leaf.
Grade II listed Bowyers Farmhouse & Granary on The Street	Medium	Located just over 300m east of the Site, there are unlikely to be views of the Site from these listed buildings, due to intervening properties along The Street and the screening effect of roadside vegetation.
Properties in the main part of Swallowfield village	Medium	Whilst the main settlement in Swallowfield lies less than 200m east of the Site, there are limited opportunities for views towards the Site to the west. This is due to the dense, mature planting to Basingstoke Road combined with the curving nature of the local roads, and the intervening buildings and vegetation which serve to block most views. There is no intervisibility with the Conservation Area.

Landscape Features

4.8 The dense belt of mature trees along Basingstoke Road to the immediate east, is a key feature of the Site, particularly as this serves to contain and filter views of the Site very effectively (**photographs 7,8,9 & 10**). The oak tree belt that projects east-west from the western tip of the Site is also an important structural feature and this also filters views of the Site from the south (**photograph 3**). Key landscape features of the Site are set out in detail in Table 2 below:

Table 2 – Landscape Features Baseline		
Landscape feature	**Sensitivity**	**Description of Feature**
Trees	High - Medium	There are no trees within the Site boundary area, but there are several tree groups and individual species close by (and within the area of land under the Applicant's control), which could be affected by any potential development on the Site. The tree survey identified 12 individual trees and 6 tree groups. The majority of these are located within the dense tree belt along Basingstoke Road and close to the Site entrance. This belt comprises mainly oak, with other native species such as elm, hornbeam and beech, which are generally Category Grade B (moderate quality). The tree belt that projects east-west from the southern tip of the Site, comprises 11 mature oaks with an understorey of ash, maple and blackthorn. These trees are mainly Category Grade A (high quality). There are no TPOs within the Site, although there are 9 TPOs within the grounds of Wyvols Court (Business Centre) immediately north of the Site.
Watercourses	High	There are no watercourses within the Site area, although there is a ditch adjacent to the eastern part of the Site boundary. The River Loddon lies north west of the Site, bordering the edge of land under the Applicant's control. This is a heavily vegetated and sensitive landscape feature which has the public footpath-SWAL19- running alongside.
Land use (farmland - grass fields)	Medium	The Site comprises one small field and a small part of an adjacent field which are currently grassland.

Landscape Quality, Value and Susceptibility

4.9 In terms of landscape quality, the Site comprises relatively ordinary farmland that adjoins land that has already been developed with several commercial buildings. Whilst the Site has open boundaries which are undefined on the ground, the wider area of farmland and commercial development, which comprises Wyvols Court Farm area (land under the Applicant's control), is contained from its surroundings by established vegetation particularly along the Basingstoke Road, and this helps to separate it from the village of Swallowfield and its Conservation Area. The character of the Site is heavily influenced by commercial development, with its associated traffic including HGVs, which have adversely affected its tranquillity and visual qualities. In spite of this, the River Loddon with its heavily vegetated corridor which lies just west of the Site is an important landscape feature which contributes to the aesthetic quality of the wider area. Overall the Site is assessed as being of **medium landscape quality**.

4.10 In terms of landscape value, the Site does not currently carry any statutory designations for landscape character or quality. As previously described, the Local Plan Update 2023-2040, (Proposed Submission Plan) identifies a swathe of land around Swallowfield (including the Site), as

the 'River Loddon Valued Landscape' under draft Policy NE6: Valued landscapes. There is no public access into the Site, and whilst it lies close to the River Loddon, its character is largely influenced by the adjacent commercial development on the Applicant's land, and associated traffic and noise and could not be considered to be wild or tranquil. Overall, based on our site assessment and the 'draft-only' status of the council's proposed Valued landscapes Policy, the Site is considered to be of **medium landscape value**.

4.11 In terms of the landscape susceptibility of the Site to commercial development, there are few landscape constraints to development, although established vegetation along Basingstoke Road and the mature oak tree belt adjacent to the western tip of the Site, should be retained and protected. As the Site currently has an open boundary to the north west and opportunities exist to create a strong vegetated boundary here which would minimise any landscape or visual effects on land around the River Loddon corridor to the north. Care should also be taken to minimise effects on the setting of Listed Wyvols Court which lies adjacent to the Site.

4.12 The Site comprises relatively ordinary countryside, which adjoins an area of existing commercial development to the north and east. The Site and wider area of Wyvols Court Farm is discretely separated from the village of Swallowfield by the Basingstoke Road, and the road's dense belt of mature vegetation combined with the relatively flat local landform, prevents intervisibility with the residential area. Overall, it is considered that development at the Site would not be out of character in this location and overall is assessed as being of **medium landscape susceptibility**.

4.13 Considering the landscape value and susceptibility of the Site, it is assessed as being of overall **medium landscape sensitivity**.

4.14 The landscape character of the Site and surrounding landscape / townscape is set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Landscape Character Baseline

Landscape / townscape character area	Sensitivity	Existing Conditions
The Site and immediate surroundings	Medium	The Site comprises relatively ordinary farmland where adjacent land has already been developed with commercial buildings. This development has influenced its character and made it less typical of the wider rural landscape. Land west and north west of the Site is open farmland and characteristic of the wider River Loddon corridor.

Townscape character of immediate surroundings	High	The Site is separated from the nearby village settlement of Swallowfield by the Basingstoke Road which is heavily vegetated. Swallowfield village has a nucleated settlement pattern. Houses in the village are typically detached, two storey, red brick dwellings, which date mainly from the 20th century. There are also some older properties; the northeastern part of the village is designated as a Conservation Area.
Wider Landscape Character	Medium - high	The Site, and wider landscape to the south and west, comprises the Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland landscape character area. This is a rural lowland area dominated by intensive arable faming in large open fields bounded by hedgerows and fences. Rural roads are lined with ditches, banks and mature oak trees. Settlement is confined to scattered farmsteads, Riseley village and part of Swallowfield.

5.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

5.1 The proposed development comprises commercial development with three new commercial units (Units 8, 9 and 10) of approximately 35m by 20m size, with a ridge height of 10m. New building units will be painted olive green to blend into the rural setting, and new parking areas including four HGV bays will be created for each of the units. The Site will be accessed off the existing access point, and this will include a shared surface area, new 2m footpath and an HGV turning circle.

5.2 A Landscape Plan has been prepared for the Site **(Appendix I)**. The key landscape proposals that have underpinned the design and masterplanning of the Site are as follows:

- The construction of a landscaped bund approximately 1.5m high with 1:3 side slopes, which will project south west across the Site as far as the existing belt of oak trees;
- The bund will be planted with native trees and shrubs such as those already found in the locality which include: English oak, Common ash, hawthorn, hazel, spindle, field maple, willow and blackthorn. Once established, this planting will screen and filter views of the Site from public viewpoints to the north and west, and contribute to the local green infrastructure and biodiversity;
- New native tree and shrub planting to the northern site boundary, immediately west of listed Wyvols Court, which will screen and filter views from this building and its setting;
- New native tree and shrub planting along the south east boundary, to filter views of the new buildings along the driveway, and from Basingstoke Road;
- New native thicket, tree and hedge planting to screen any views of the 3m acoustic fence to the south east of the Site;
- New landscape planting within the Site boundary area including new specimen trees and shrubs, which will enhance the Site's amenity value and landscape structure, soften and filter views, and contribute to local biodiversity;
- A new SuDs (Sustainable Drainage System) swale, which will be planted with an appropriate wildflower mix, which will enhance biodiversity;
- Existing vegetation within the wider Wyvols Court Farm area will be retained through the proposals, and existing trees will be

carefully protected during the construction phase as appropriate, to avoid any damage.

5.3 The key landscape and visual effects are summarised in the following tables.

Relationship to Settlement

5.4 The Site is located to the north western edge of Swallowfield, and adjacent to the B3349, Basingstoke Road. Immediately north of the Site lie existing commercial and industrial buildings, as well as Wyvols Court Farmhouse which are all contained within the Wyvols Court Farm area. To the southern end of the land under the Applicant's control, there are a few existing commercial buildings at Handpost Farm similar to those proposed for the Site. In addition, planning consent has recently been granted for two additional agricultural related buildings (Units 14 and 15) immediately to the northeast of the existing buildings in this area. These new buildings are proposed to be a similar scale to those proposed for the Site.

5.5 Although the proposed scheme would increase the extent of built development within agricultural land, the proposed commercial development would be well-related to the existing Site which has already been developed with buildings of a similar scale. By setting the proposed buildings back slightly from the Basingstoke Road, the intervening proposed and existing tree planting will soften views from the road. The Basingstoke Road physically separates the Site from the historic village of Swallowfield, and dense vegetation and banks along this road help contain the Site and will largely prevent views of the new buildings from nearby properties. There would be no intervisibility with the Swallowfield Conservation Area.

Effects on Landscape Features

5.6 There are no trees within the Site boundary area, but those close by within the area of land under the Applicant's control, will be retained through the proposals, and protected during the construction phase as appropriate. New planting is proposed to help assimilate the new buildings into the local landscape, with new tree planting to the landscape bund to the south west of the Site; to the northern site boundary immediately west of Wyvols Court; and along the south west boundary. There will also be new specimen trees planting within the driveway and car parking areas. Although the proposed development will result in the loss of some areas of grassland, and small section of ditch will be infilled, there will be an overall net increase in the Site's tree cover and native shrubs as a result of the proposals, contributing to local biodiversity and green infrastructure.

5.7 The effects on individual landscape features are set out in detail within Table 4 below.

Table 4 – Effects on Landscape Features				
Landscape features and Sensitivity	**Nature of Effect and Mitigation**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Year 1 Effect**	**Year 15 Effect**
Trees **High - Medium sensitivity**	There are no trees within the Site boundary area, but there are several tree groups and individual species close by (and within the area of land under the applicant's control). All of these existing trees will be retained through the proposals and root protection areas will be established for trees in order to protect them from potential damage during the construction phase. It may be necessary to cut back some limited vegetation around the Site entrance along Basingstoke Road in order to facilitate Site access and the construction operations. No TPO trees within the adjacent Wyvols Court will be affected by development on the Site. New native tree planting will be established to the landscape bund to the south west of the Site, to the northern site boundary immediately west of Wyvols Court, and along the south west boundary. There will also be new specimen tree planting within the driveway and carparking areas.	Slight	Slight beneficial	Slight beneficial
Watercourses **Medium sensitivity**	There are no watercourses within the Site area, although there is a ditch adjacent to the north eastern part of the Site boundary. A small section of this ditch will need to be infilled as a result of the development and replacement ditch provided. The River Loddon which lies approximately 250m north west of the Site (bordering the edge of land under the Applicant's control), is a sensitive landscape feature but will be unaffected by the proposed development.	Slight	Slight adverse	Slight adverse
Farmland - grass fields	The Site comprises one small field and a small part of an adjacent field which are currently grassland. The	Substantial	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse

Medium sensitivity	scheme will result in the loss of these areas of open farmland and the development of this land for commercial uses. The development will include the retention of all existing vegetation surrounding the Site, with new tree and shrub planting to the Site's periphery which will enhance biodiversity.			

Effects on Landscape Character

5.8 The character of the Site will clearly undergo change as open fields are replaced with new commercial buildings. However, nearby land has already been developed with buildings of a similar scale and massing, which has influenced the Site's character and made it less typical of the wider rural landscape, and it is considered that the proposed development would not be out of character in this location. The creation of a planted bund combined with the existing belt of oak trees south west of the Site, will contain the Site and new buildings, separating it from the surrounding countryside, and minimise adverse effects on the local landscape character, and in particular on the River Loddon corridor. In terms of townscape, the Site is physically and visually separated from Swallowfield village by the Basingstoke Road, and existing roadside vegetation combined with proposed native planting to the Site's periphery will further screen and separate the Site and new buildings from the village to the east. It is considered that there would be very limited effects on the townscape character of Swallowfield, and no direct visual effects on its Conservation Area.

5.9 The effects on the landscape character of the Site and the surrounding landscape / townscape are set out in Table 5 below:

Table 5 – Effects on Landscape Character				
Landscape / townscape character area and Sensitivity	**Nature of Effect and Mitigation**	**Magnitude of Change**	**Year 1 Effect**	**Year 15 Effect**
The Site and immediate surroundings **Medium sensitivity**	The character of the Site will clearly undergo change as open fields are replaced with new commercial buildings, although as adjacent land has already been developed with similar buildings it is considered that this development would not be out of character in this location.	Site: Substantial	Site: Moderate - substantial adverse	Site: Moderate adverse (as new planting matures)

	Land west and north west of the proposed Site (under the applicant's control) is open farmland and views here look towards the River Loddon corridor. The creation of a planted bund combined with the existing belt of oak trees south west of the Site, will contain the Site and new buildings, separating it from the surrounding countryside, and minimise adverse effects on the local landscape character.	Immediate surroundings: Moderate	Immediate surroundings: Moderate adverse	Immediate surroundings: Slight adverse (as new planting matures)
Townscape character of immediate surroundings **High sensitivity**	The Site is physically and visually separated from the nearby village settlement of Swallowfield by the Basingstoke Road. Once mature, proposed native planting to the Site's periphery, combined with existing roadside vegetation will further screen and separate the Site and new buildings from the village to the east. Overall, it is considered that there would be very limited effects on the townscape character of Swallowfield, and no direct effects on the Conservation Area.	Slight adverse	Slight adverse	Negligible (as new planting matures)
Wider Landscape Character **Medium - High sensitivity**	The proposed development will be contained by existing and proposed vegetation along Basingstoke Road, the existing belt of oak trees to the south west, and by the new landscaped bund to the north west part of the Site. This vegetation will separate the development from the wider countryside as it matures, helping to screen and filter views. Effects on the wider landscape will therefore be limited to a local level.	Slight	Slight adverse	Negligible

Visual Effects

5.10 As discussed in Section 4, whilst the Site has relatively open boundaries and is visible from locations and buildings within the wider Wyvols Court Farm area (land under the Applicant's control), it is not easily seen from public viewpoints within the wider area, owing to the dense, mature vegetation to the Basingstoke Road, other intervening vegetation and buildings, and the relatively flat local topography. Views of the new buildings will be similarly restricted and mainly limited to properties and businesses near to or adjoining the Site (including listed Wyvols Court), and to motorists passing the Site along Basingstoke Road. There is unlikely to be any intervisibility with nearby historic features including the

Swallowfield Conservation Area, the Scheduled Monument at Sheepbridge Court, and Swallowfield Park Whilst there may be occasional glimpsed views of the development from the Kingsbridge and from the nearby riverside footpath (SWAL 19), views will be largely screened by existing and proposed vegetation, and by the generally flat local topography which limits vantage points and prevents most views of the Site's interior.

5.11 The key visual effects of development at the Site are set out in Table 6 below.

Table 6 - Visual Effects

Visual Receptor and Sensitivity	Nature of Effect and Mitigation	Magnitude of Change	Visual Effect Year 1	Visual Effect Year 15
Wyvols Court -business centre **High sensitivity**	From Grade II listed Wyvols Court, from south-facing windows to the first floor, there will be direct, near views of Unit 8, with partial views of Units 9 and 10 to the background. Vehicles within the parking area as well as HGVs may also be noticeable. Views of new buildings are likely to be partially obscured by boundary fencing and filtered by existing vegetation. New native tree and shrub planting along the boundary with Wyvols Court will soften and filter these views in the long term. Whilst there will definitely be a noticeable change in the view from this location (which currently looks across open fields), there are already likely to be existing views of adjacent built development within the Wyvols Court Farm area, so the development would not appear incongruous.	Substantial	Substantial adverse	Moderate adverse (as new landscaping matures)
Commercial buildings immediately north of the Site-within Wyvols Court Farm area **Medium sensitivity**	From commercial buildings (on land under the Applicant's control) immediately north of, and adjacent to the Site, there will be open views of the proposed buildings, and associated cars and HGVs. Whilst the scale of development will be greater than the existing, the character of the new development will be similar to the existing and not incongruous. Views will be softened and filtered by proposed landscaping within the development.	Moderate	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse

Commercial buildings south of the Site near Handpost Farm- within Wyvols Court Farm area **Low sensitivity**	From commercial buildings (on land under the Applicant's control) south of the Site, views of the new buildings will be heavily filtered by the tree belt that runs east west from the western tip of the Site. This screening effect will be less effective and views more open in the winter when deciduous trees are not in leaf.	Low	Slight adverse	Slight adverse
Public footpath SWAL19 **High sensitivity**	From footpath SWAL19 which runs alongside the River Loddon north of the Site, there may be occasional glimpsed views of new buildings and HGVs within the Site, although dense vegetation alongside the river corridor will filter most of these. Proposed planting to the new landscape bund will serve to further limit views of the new development once this vegetation matures.	Low	Slight adverse	Slight adverse
Public footpath SWAL18 **High Sensitivity**	Views of the new development are likely to be screened from this location by intervening vegetation and buildings	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse
Basingstoke Road: south of the Site **Medium Sensitivity**	On approaching the Site from the north, users of this road may obtain oblique, glimpsed views of new buildings within the Site. However, views are predicted to be heavily filtered by the dense belt of existing vegetation alongside Basingstoke Road. On approaching from the south, users will similarly have very limited views of the new development, again due to the dense roadside vegetation. The twisting nature of the road, combined with the screening roadside vegetation means the Site entrance itself is only visible from a very short section of the road. Open views along the new driveway will only be available when viewers are virtually opposite the gated entrance, and the layout of the Site means that the buildings themselves are setback from the access road so unlikely to be easily seen. It is to be noted that when roadside vegetation is not in leaf in the winter, the screening effect will be reduced, although views of the new buildings will still be heavily filtered.	Slight-moderate	Slight-moderate adverse	Slight-moderate adverse

Basingstoke Road: north of the Site **Medium Sensitivity**	From this stretch of Basingstoke Road, views of new buildings within the site will be largely screened by the dense roadside planting, as well as intervening vegetation and buildings near and adjacent to the Site. Moving further north along Basingstoke Road towards Spencers Wood, despite the slightly rising landform, views of the new development will be similarly obscured by intervening vegetation and buildings. Any views of new buildings that are available will be filtered by proposed planting to the Site periphery.	Slight	Slight adverse	Slight adverse-negligible (when new planting matures)
Barge Lane **Medium Sensitivity**	Views of new buildings and acoustic fence will be heavily filtered by dense roadside vegetation and by existing built development south of the Site around Handpost Farm. The existing belt of oak trees and proposed landscaped bund within the Site will also restrict views eastwards from this road.	Slight	Slight adverse	Slight adverse-negligible (when new planting matures)
Kingsbridge Hill **Medium Sensitivity**	Most views eastwards from this rural lane are restricted by roadside vegetation which will obscure views of the new buildings. However, from Kingsbridge which lies approximately 350m from the Site, there are likely to be distant views of the new buildings within the Site, set against a backdrop of the existing buildings within the Wyvols Court Farm area. These views will be partially filtered by willow planting alongside the river and the proposed landscaped bund will also filter views once the planting matures.	Moderate	Moderate adverse	Slight adverse (when new planting matures)
Lambs Lane **Medium Sensitivity**	From this narrow lane, whilst users may have occasional, distant oblique views towards the Site, hedge banks and intervening vegetation will screen views of the new buildings.	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse
The Street **Medium to High Sensitivity**	There will be no views of new buildings within the Site from this road, apart from at its junction with Basingstoke Road where there may be heavily filtered views of new buildings and vehicles within the Site viewed through the roadside vegetation. Proposed planting to the Site periphery will further reduce any views in the long term. There will be no views of the new development	Slight	Slight adverse	Negligible - Slight adverse (as new landscaping matures)

	from the Swallowfield Conservation Area to the east of the village.			
Sheepbridge Court Moated Site **High Sensitivity**	There are very unlikely to be views of the new development from this location due to the flat local topography, dense planting along the River Loddon corridor and along the adjacent Basingstoke Road.	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible adverse
Swallowfield Park **High Sensitivity**	There will be no views of the proposed development from this park due to dense planting within the park and alongside Basingstoke Road, combined with the locally flat landform which restricts views.	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Residential Receptors				
Property at Wyvols Farmhouse **High Sensitivity**	From this property, there are likely to be partial views of the new buildings although these will be restricted by intervening vegetation and by adjacent commercial buildings.	Moderate	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Property at Handpost House/Farm **Medium Sensitivity**	Views of the new development from this location will be largely screened by the adjacent commercial buildings and the belt of east-west mature oak trees adjacent to the Site.	Slight	Slight adverse	Slight adverse
Properties opposite the Site east of Basingstoke Road **Medium Sensitivity**	From properties in this location (such as Wyvols House & The Croft) there may be views of development to the southern half of the Site, and particularly of Units 9 & 10. Views will be mainly from west-facing, first floor windows, and will be heavily filtered by mature vegetation to both sides of the road. Proposed planting adjacent to Unit 9 will further screen and soften any views in the long term.	Slight-moderate	Slight-moderate adverse	Slight adverse (as new landscaping matures)
Grade II listed Bowyers Farmhouse & Granary on The Street **Medium Sensitivity**	Located just over 300m east of the Site, there are unlikely to be views of new buildings within the Site from these listed buildings, due to intervening properties along The Street and the screening effect of roadside vegetation. Proposed planting to the Site periphery will further screen and soften any views in the long term.	Slight	Slight adverse	Negligible - Slight adverse (as new landscaping matures)
Properties in the main part of Swallowfield village	There are unlikely to be many opportunities for views of development within the Site from properties in the village. This is due to the dense, mature planting to	Negligible	Negligible adverse	Negligible - adverse

Medium Sensitivity	Basingstoke Road combined with the curving nature of the local roads, and the intervening buildings and vegetation which serve to block most views. There is no intervisibility with the Conservation Area			
Seasonal Variation				
The above assessment is based upon an appraisal of late Autumn views, when most of the vegetation was not in leaf. Later in the Winter some views of the Site will be more open due to the reduction in the screening effects of boundary and intervening vegetation. In the Summer and early Autumn, the new development will be more screened as all vegetation will be in leaf.				

Cumulative Effects

5.12 Planning consent has recently been granted for two additional agricultural related buildings (Units 14 and 15) on land immediately to the south of the proposed Site, that lies within Wyvols Court Farm (and under the applicant's control) at Handpost Farm. No other developments, that are approved or allocated, within the vicinity of the Site which would affect this assessment have been identified.

Lighting

5.13 The Site is currently grassland and unlit, but the immediately adjacent commercial units, driveway and parking which comprise Wyvols Court Farm, will currently be lit at night.

5.14 The proposal is for a commercial development with associated lighting. The development is not anticipated to give rise to any abnormal night time effects and will result in a small increase in background lighting levels which will be seen in the context of existing lighting within the adjoining commercial area.

Construction Phase

5.15 There will be temporary landscape and visual effects arising from the construction phase of the scheme. These will include, amongst other things, stock piling of materials, temporary hoardings/fencing and vehicle and plant movements, both on Site and on the surrounding road network. It is not anticipated that the scheme will give rise to any abnormal landscape or visual effects above those that would be expected from a development of this nature. It is anticipated that the extent and timing of these effects will be controlled through a Construction Management Plan.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The Site is located to the north western edge of Swallowfield, and adjacent to the B3349 Basingstoke Road. It is located within the existing Wyvols Court Farm site and adjacent to existing commercial development in this location. The Site is not covered by any statutory designations for landscape character or quality but falls within the 'River Loddon Valued Landscape' under draft Policy NE6: Valued landscapes in the Local Plan Update 2023-2040.

6.2 Whilst the Site has open boundaries which are undefined on the ground, the wider area of farmland and commercial development, which comprises Wyvols Court Farm area, is contained from its surroundings by established vegetation particularly along the Basingstoke Road, helping to separate it from the village of Swallowfield and its Conservation Area. The character of the Site is heavily influenced by commercial development, with its associated traffic including HGVs, which have adversely affected its tranquillity and visual qualities. Despite this, the River Loddon, with its heavily vegetated corridor which lies just west of the Site, is an important landscape feature which contributes to the landscape character of the wider study area.

6.3 The proposed commercial development comprises three new commercial units with associated parking and access off existing access point to Basingstoke Road. The proposed landscape will include a new landscaped bund, which will project south west across the Site and be planted with native trees and shrubs. Once established, this planting will screen and filter views of the Site from public viewpoints to the north and west, and contribute to the local green infrastructure and biodiversity. Other native planting belts will be established to the northern boundary to screen listed Wyvols Court, and along the south west boundary, to filter views of the new buildings along the driveway and from Basingstoke Road. Existing vegetation within the wider Wyvols Court Farm area will all be retained through the proposals.

6.4 The character of the Site will clearly undergo change as open fields are replaced with new commercial buildings. However, nearby land has already been developed with buildings of a similar scale and massing, which has influenced the Site's character and made it less typical of the wider rural landscape, therefore it is considered that the proposed development would not be out of character in this location. The creation of a planted bund combined with the existing belt of oak trees south west of the Site, will contain the Site and new buildings, separating it from the surrounding countryside, and minimise adverse effects on the local landscape character, and in particular from the River Loddon corridor. In terms of townscape, the Site is physically and visually

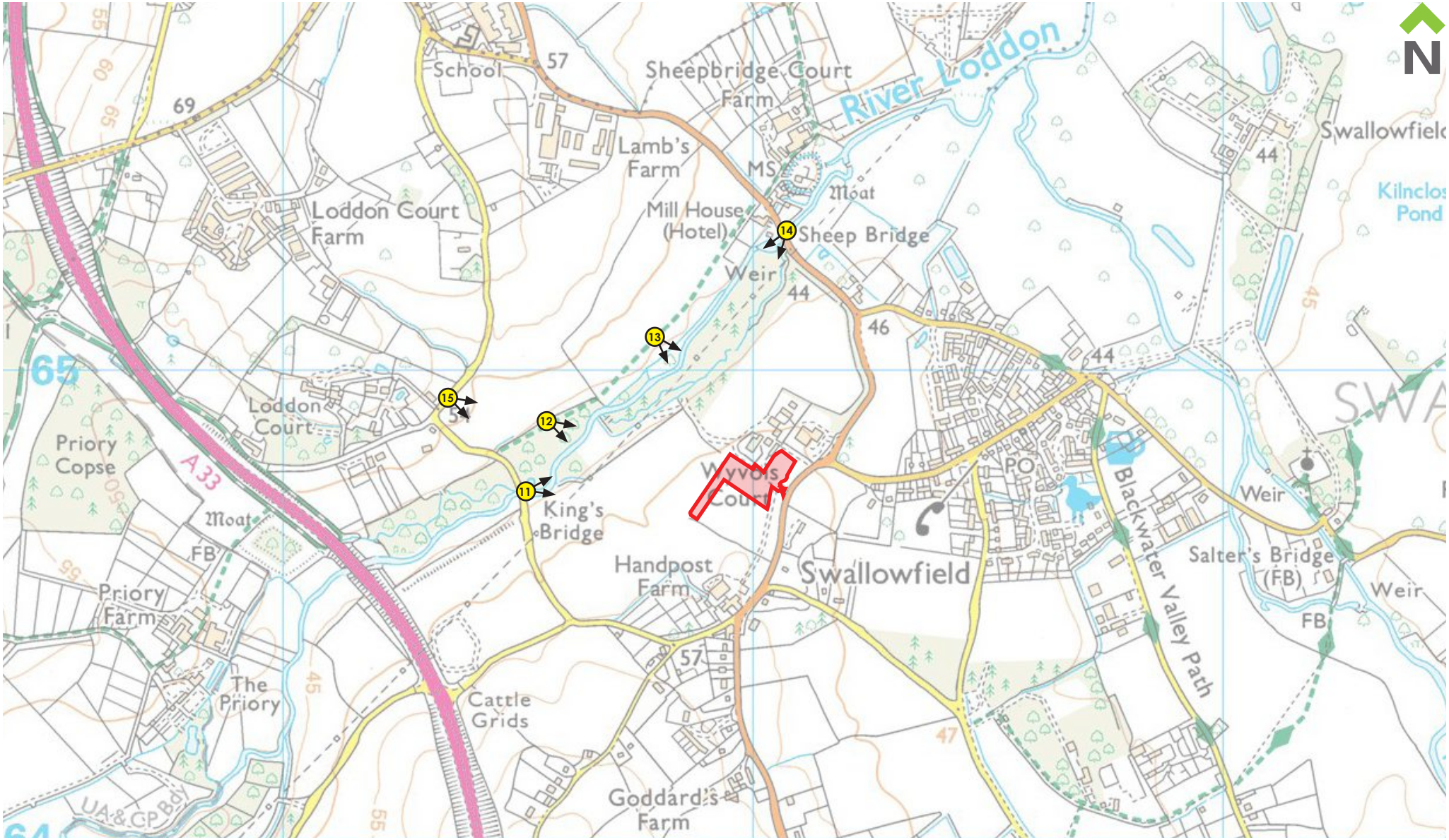
separated from Swallowfield village by the Basingstoke Road, and existing roadside vegetation combined with proposed native planting to the Site's periphery, will further screen and separate the Site and new buildings from the village to the east.

6.5 In terms of visual effects, whilst the Site has relatively open boundaries and is visible from locations and buildings within Wyvols Court Farm area, it is not easily seen from public viewpoints within the wider area, owing to the dense, mature vegetation to the Basingstoke Road; other intervening vegetation and buildings; and the relatively flat local topography. Views of the new buildings will be similarly restricted and mainly limited to properties and businesses near to or adjoining the Site (including listed Wyvols Court) and to motorists passing the Site along Basingstoke Road. There is unlikely to be any intervisibility with nearby historic features including the Swallowfield Conservation Area, the Scheduled Monument at Sheepbridge Court, and Swallowfield Park. Whilst there may be occasional glimpsed views of the development from Kingsbridge to the west, and from the nearby riverside footpath (SWAL 19), views will be largely screened by existing and proposed vegetation, and by the generally flat local topography which limits vantage points and prevents most views of the Site's interior.

6.6 Overall, it is considered that the new development will be well related to existing commercial development within the Wyvols Court Farm area, and the scheme would not result in any unacceptable adverse effects on the local landscape and townscape character or views.

Appendix A

Site Location Plan
(Showing middle to long distance photo locations)



Site Boundary Photos Locations Contextual Photos

CSA environmental Dixies Barns, High Street, Ashwell, Hertfordshire SG7 5NT t 01462 743647 e ashwell@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk	Project: Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Date: November 2025	Drawing No.: CSA/7728/100
	Drawing Title: Site Location Plan	Scale @ A4: NTS	Rev: B
	Client: Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn: MC	Checked: CS

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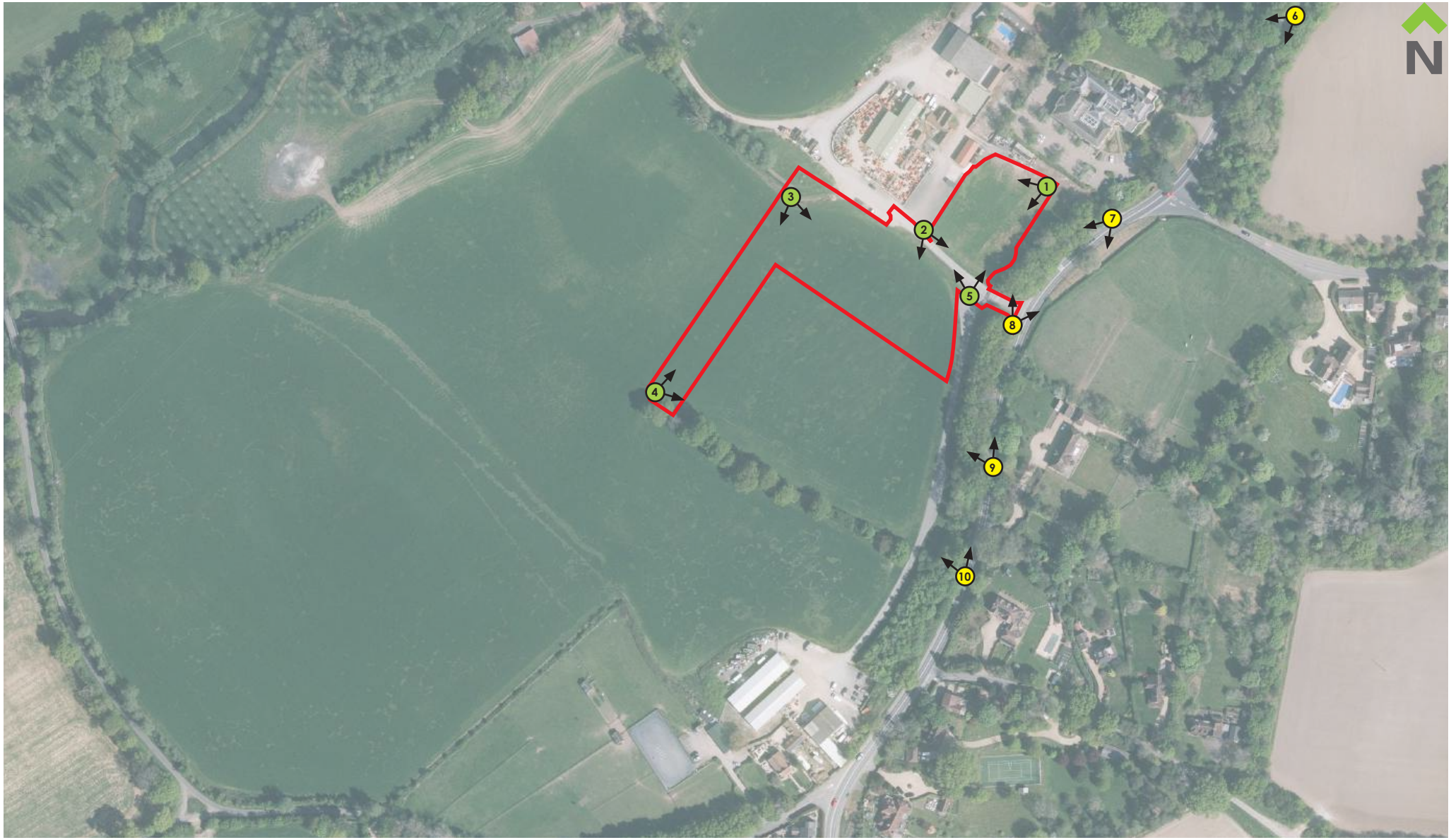
Appendix B

Aerial Photograph
(Showing near distance photo locations)



Site Boundary Photos Locations Contextual Photos

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Date December 2025	Drawing No. CSA/7728/101
Drawing Title	Aerial Photograph	Scale @ A4 NTS	Rev B
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS

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Appendix C

Photosheets

Photograph 1 View from eastern corner of the Site looking west.

Photograph 2 View from the existing parking area looking south-east across the Site towards Basingstoke Road.

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Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	December 2025	
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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Photograph 3 View from northern Site boundary, west of Wyvols Court Farm, looking south.

Photograph 4 View from western section of the Site looking east towards Basingstoke Road.

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Photograph 5 View from the entrance to the Site looking north.

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Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	December 2025	
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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Photograph 6 View from Basingstoke Road/B3349 looking south-west towards Site.

Visualisation Type 1
Cylindrical projection
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
17.11.2025, 14:24
Canon EOS 5D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm
HfoV 90°
Looking direction: W

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Drawing No. CSA/7728/102		
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date December 2025		
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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Photograph 7 View from Basingstoke Road/B3349 looking south-west towards Site.

Visualisation Type 1
Cylindrical projection
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
17.11.2025, 14:29
Canon EOS 5D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm
HfoV 90°
Looking direction: SW

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Drawing No. CSA/7728/102		
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date December 2025		
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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Approximate extent of Site

Photograph 8 View from the Site entrance on Basingstoke Road/B3349 looking north-east towards Site.

Visualisation Type 1
Cylindrical projection
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
17.11.2025, 14 :35
Canon EOS 5D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm
HfoV 90°
Looking direction: NE

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Drawing No.	CSA/7728/102	
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	December 2025	
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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Photograph 9 View from Basingstoke Road/B3349 looking north-west towards the Site.

Visualisation Type 1
Cylindrical projection
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
17.11.2025, 14:39
Canon EOS 5D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm
HfoV 90°
Looking direction: NW

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Drawing No.	CSA/7728/102		
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	December 2025		
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn	MC	Checked	CS	Rev	A

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Approximate extent of Site

Photograph 10 View from Basingstoke Road/B3349 looking north-west towards the Site.

Visualisation Type 1
Cylindrical projection
48% @ A3, 96% @ A1
17.11.2025, 14:44
Canon EOS 5D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm
HfoV 90°
Looking direction: NW

CSA environmental
Dixies Barns, High Street,
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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Drawing No.	CSA/7728/102	
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	December 2025	
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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Panorama 11

Photograph 11

View from King's Bridge looking east towards the Site.

Visualisation Type 1
Planar projection
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
17.11.2025, 12:35
Canon EOS 5D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm
HfoV 40°
Looking direction: E

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Drawing No.	CSA/7728/102	
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	December 2025	
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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Panorama 12

Photograph 12

View from public footpath SWAL19 near King's Bridge looking south-east towards the Site.

Visualisation Type 1
Planar projection
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
17.11.2025, 13:27
Canon EOS 5D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm
HfoV 40°
Looking direction: SE

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Drawing No.	CSA/7728/102	
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	December 2025	
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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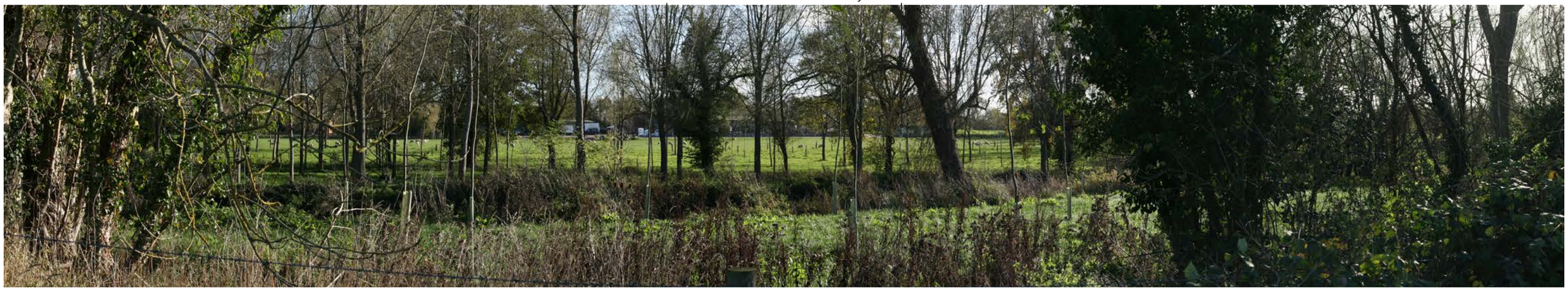

Panorama 13

Photograph 13

View from public footpath SWAL19 looking south-east towards the Site.

Visualisation Type 1
Planar projection
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Canon EOS 5D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm
HfoV 40°
Looking direction: SE

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Drawing No.	CSA/7728/102	
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	December 2025	
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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Panorama 14

Photograph 14

View from Sheepbridge looking south-west towards the Site.

Visualisation Type 1
Planar projection
75% @ A3, 150% @ A1
17.11.2025, 13:02
Canon EOS 5D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm
HfoV 40°
Looking direction: SW

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Drawing No.	CSA/7728/102	
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	December 2025	
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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Panorama 15

Photograph 15

View from Lambs Lane looking south-east towards the Site.

Visualisation Type 1
Planar projection
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17.11.2025, 13:35
Canon EOS 5D 1.6x, Canon EF-S 18-55mm
HfoV 40°
Looking direction: SE

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Drawing No.	CSA/7728/102	
Drawing Title	Photosheets	Date	December 2025	
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn MC	Checked CS	Rev A

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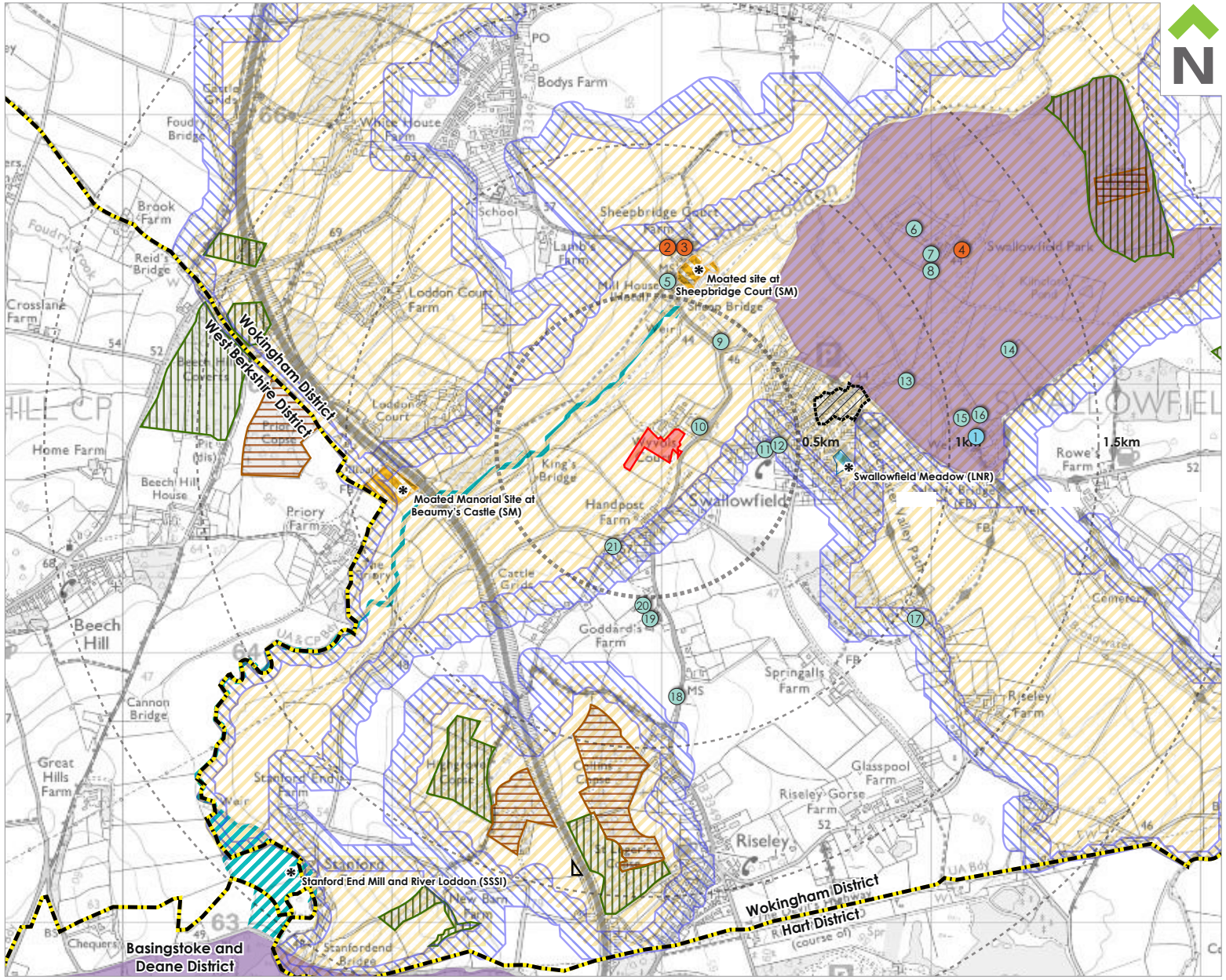
Appendix D

Designations and Local Policy Plan



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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield	Date December 2025	Drawing No. CSA/7728/102
Drawing Title	MAGIC Map and Local Plan Extract	Scale @ A4 NTS	Rev -
Client	Wyvols Court Farm	Drawn TV	Checked CA

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Appendix E

National Landscape Policy Context

1.0 APPENDIX E – NATIONAL LANDSCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

1.1 National policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and those parts relevant to this assessment are summarised below.

1.2 Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the NPPF state that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be applied in relation to both plan-making and decision-taking.

1.3 Paragraph 20 of the NPPF states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for, among other elements, the '*(d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.*'

1.4 Section 12 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Paragraph 132 states that '… *design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics*.' Paragraph 133 requires local authorities to prepare design guides and codes which act as a framework to reflect local character and design preferences to create high quality designed places which are beautiful and distinctive.

1.5 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions, should ensure that developments, amongst others:

- '*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*…'

1.6 Paragraph 136 highlights the importance of new and retained trees to the character and quality of urban environments, with appropriate species choice for the location and the needs of all users.

1.7 Paragraph 137 states that the design quality should be integral to the evolution and assessment of proposals, and paragraph 139 goes on to state that poorly

designed development should be refused, particularly where it does not follow local or government design guidance.

1.8 Section 15 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 187 of the document states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through, among other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, '… *(in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*'. The paragraph also outlines that the planning system should recognise 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.*'

1.9 Paragraph 188 highlights that plans should:

'… *distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries*.'

1.10 Paragraph 193 notes that in the process of determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply several principles. Among these, the paragraph notes that, '*(c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists*'.

Planning Practice Guidance

1.11 The Planning Practice Guidance ('PPG') as relevant to this assessment covers landscape and the natural environment, and the design of new developments. The PPG may be out of date in its reference to NPPF paragraph numbers, and where this is the case, the latest paragraph number has been included in the text in square brackets.

1.12 Paragraph 001 (ID 26-001-20191001) of the Design: process and tools section sets out the purpose of the guidance, which aims to explain the process and tools that can be employed to achieve well-designed places. The guidance refers to paragraph 134 [139] of the NPPF which relates to ensuring good design, and states that the section should be read in conjunction with the National Design Guide (published Oct, 2019), which it notes should be used in

both plan-making and decision making. Ten good design characteristics are identified in the National Design Guide, and these are set out as follows in the PPG:

- Context
- Identity
- Built form
- Movement
- Nature
- Public places
- Uses
- Homes and buildings
- Resources
- Lifespan.

1.13 Paragraphs 006 and 007 deal with masterplans, stating that they should be site specific and should '… *set the vision and implementation strategy for a development*… '. Paragraph 006 notes that they may need to be accompanied by other technical reports including landscape assessment and proposals for securing biodiversity net gain.

1.14 The Natural environment section of the guidance aims to explain the key issues to consider in relation to the implementation of policies to protect and enhance the natural environment, including local requirements.

1.15 Paragraph 004 defines Green Infrastructure, while in paragraph 005 it explains its importance as a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, including enhanced biodiversity, landscapes and urban cooling. In paragraph 006 the guidance sets out the planning goals green infrastructure can assist in achieving, and these are:

- *Building a strong, competitive economy;*
- *Achieving well-designed places;*
- *Promoting healthy and safe communities;*
- *Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change;*
- *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.*

1.16 The final paragraph (008) in the green infrastructure sub-section notes that:

'*Green infrastructure opportunities and requirements need to be considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, as an integral part of development and infrastructure provision, and taking into account existing natural assets and the most suitable locations and types of new provision*.'

1.17 Within the Biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystems section, the topic of net gain has been included. Paragraph 020 describes net gain as '… *an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. Net gain is an umbrella term for both biodiversity net gain and wider environmental net gain*.'

1.18 In the Landscape section of the guidance, paragraph 036 refers to that part of paragraph 180 of the NPPF which deals with the recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in local plans, and the need for strategic policies to '… *provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside*.' Paragraph 036 goes on to note that:

'*Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully*.'

National Design Guide

1.19 The National Design Guide (2019) provides guidance to illustrate '… *how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice*.'

1.20 The guidance identifies ten good design characteristics and the following are of most relevance to landscape and visual assessment (our emphasis):

- <u>Context</u> is described as '… *the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings.*' The Guide goes on to state that,

  '*An understanding of the context, history and cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion.*

- *The <u>identity</u> or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings and how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses. Local character*

makes places distinctive. Well-designed, sustainable places with a strong identity give their users, occupiers and owners a sense of pride, helping to create and sustain communities and neighbourhoods.

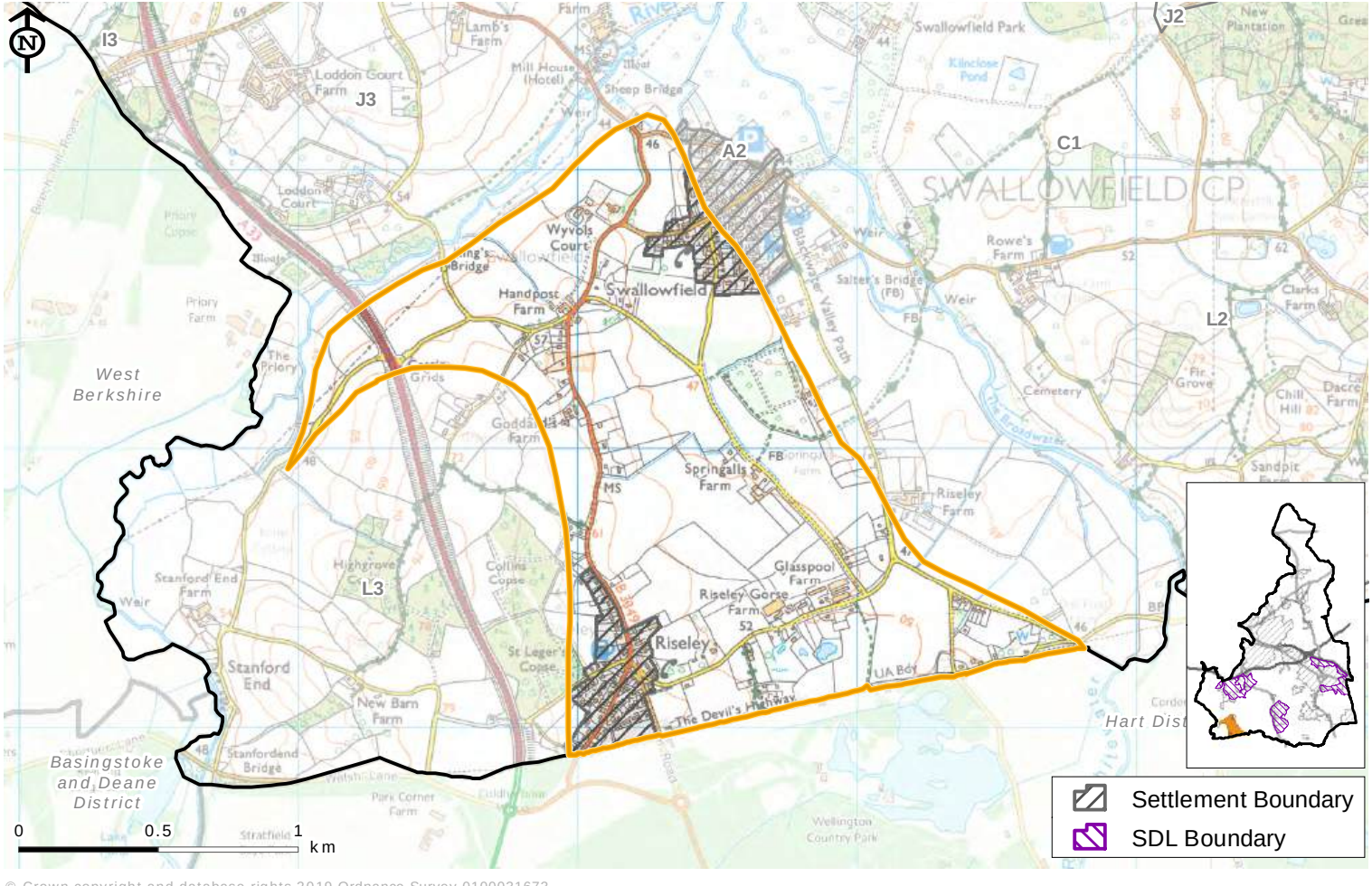
- *<u>Nature</u> contributes to the quality of a place, and to people's quality of life, and it is a critical component of well-designed places. Natural features are integrated into well-designed development. They include natural and designed landscapes, high quality public open spaces, street trees, and other trees, grass, planting and water.'*

1.21 The National Model Design Code (July, 2021) expands upon the ten characteristics of good design providing an overarching framework for design. The document provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It is split into two parts; Part 1 focusing on the coding process, and Part 2 comprising guidance notes.

Appendix F

Extract from Wokingham Borough Council's
Landscape Character Assessment (2019)

I2: Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland



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SUMMARY

A rural lowland area dominated by intensive arable faming in large open fields bounded by hedgerows and fences. Rural roads are lined with ditches, banks and mature oak trees. Settlement is confined to scattered farmsteads, Riseley village and part of Swallowfield.

The Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland is a small area to the south west of the borough, bound to the north and east by the valleys of the Loddon and Broadwater (A2), and to the west by the ridge of L3: Stanford End Wooded Sand and Gravel Hills. The southern boundary is defined by the borough boundary, although the character extends into Hart District. The boundaries are defined loosely following the 45m contour line on the edge of the valley floor, and the 65m contour line in the southwest at the foot of the ridge.

Key Characteristics

- Gently shelving landform from 45m to 65m AOD, underlain by London Clay bounded by alluvium from the river valleys to the north and river terrace gravels to the south east.
- Historic deep water filled ditches due to the water-logged soils often lined with pollarded willows.
- Limited woodland with only small blocks of BAP priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland east of Charlton/Trowe's Lane and a small area of BAP priority habitat wet woodland (The Marshes, Riseley LWS and LNR).
- Arable farming in large irregular fields dominates, with open pasture and horse and pony paddocks on settlement edges. Fields are bound by gappy overgrown hawthorn hedgerows with veteran trees, often oaks, with some post and rail and post and wire fencing.
- The GHQ Stop Line (General Headquarters Line), a defensive zone built during the summer of 1940 to contain the threatened German invasion ran east from Bristol to the Thames Estuary.
- Small scale settlement concentrated in the villages of Riseley and outskirts of Swallowfield. Elsewhere scattered farmsteads, some Grade II listed, are linked by rural lanes. Victorian and modern buildings have a predominately polychromatic Reading brick character, with occasional traditional timber framing and traditional barge board detailing.
- Rural lanes bounded by wide grassy verges, banks with wildflowers and overgrown mixed hedgerows. The busy A33 cuts through the northwest of the area, bringing noise and movement to the area.
- Lack of woodland and hedgerows results in an open landscape where there are views across the flat fields to distant wooded horizons. Pylons and wires, large agricultural buildings and shelter belts are visually dominant within the character area.
- Simple and unvaried agricultural landscape, with an isolated character due to its location between the Loddon and Broadwater valleys, and relative inaccessibility by public rights of way, which results in a strong sense of tranquility and an experience of 'dark skies'.

Natural Landscape

I2.1 The underlying geology of the area is London Clay bounded by the Alluvium of the river valleys to the north and with gravel of the Third River Terrace to the south east. The ground shelves gently from west to east, from 65m AOD down to 45m AOD. The soils are liable to short-term flooding, which has resulted in the pattern of drainage ditches through the area with very wide and deep ditches by the side of many roads, lined by pollarded willow and poplar. There are no tributaries within the area, although there is a cluster of ponds south of Glasspool Farm, possibly caused by extraction of the underlying river terrace gravel.

I2.2 The fertile soils support arable farming as the principal land use of the area, in large irregular fields. It is a simple landscape with little variety. Hedgerows bound the fields but these are overgrown and have frequent gaps. Hedgerow trees are sparse and often ancient. In places the hedgerows have been replaced with post and rail or post and wire fences. By the roads the hedgerows include a wide variety of trees: holly, poplars, oak and ash.

I2.3 Large agricultural buildings, pylons and small shelter belts dominate the views over the open fields. Shelter belts vary from small plantations of conifers or deciduous trees to lines of poplar,

which are highly visible in the almost flat landform. There is limited BAP priority habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland within this area. Wooded horizons and a sense of semi-enclosure is provided by the adjacent character area L3: Stanford End Wooded Gravel and Sand Hills and more distant L2: Farley Hill Wooded Gravel and Sand Hills.

I2.4 The Marshes, Riseley, near to School Road and Riseley Farm is the only Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and LNR in the area, designated for its BAP priority habitat wet woodland. Along Bull Lane, west of Riseley, a small section of St Leger's Copse/Collin's Copse LWS lies within this area, however the vast majority is in L3: Stanford End Wooded Gravel and Sand Hills. The Loddon Valley South BOA extends north of Handpost Farm. This is mainly concentrated on A2: Loddon River Valley, however the farmland bordering the Loddon is potentially important for farmland birds such as Yellowhammer.

I2.5 Elsewhere the most important wildlife habitats are likely to be the deep permanently water-filled ditches, which have stands of aquatic vegetation, and areas of improved grassland.

Cultural Landscape

I2.6 There is evidence of small Iron Age settlements at Riseley with later Romano-British settlement located close to the line of the Roman road between London and Calleva (Silchester), known locally as the Devil's Highway.

I2.7 The established pattern of medium to large irregular fields indicates early enclosure, with recent amalgamation of fields resulting in boundary loss and loss of much of the former historic field system. The pattern of small rectangular fields north of the Roman road, indicates more recent enclosure at the edge of the former Riseley Common which is also fringed by a number of 16th and 17th timber-framed farms.

I2.8 A more recent historic feature of the Loddon Valley is the GHQ Stop Line, a defensive zone built during the summer of 1940 to contain the threatened German invasion. The line ran east from Bristol to the Thames Estuary and included a section through the borough. This swathe of World War II defences consists of pillboxes (concrete defensive bunkers often hexagonal in shape) and the fortified natural defences of the rivers Loddon, Broadwater and Blackwater (including in-built chambers for demolition charges in the local bridges).

I2.9 The Reading to Basingstoke turnpike, established in 1718, (now B3349) passes through the village of Riseley, with its adjacent network of lanes serving the farms. This road is increasingly busy with traffic, which has resulted in the erosion of verges. The area has a network of rural roads, often with wide deep ditches and sometimes banks topped by hedgerows with hedgerow trees (often mature oaks) or with lines of poplar. The ditches and banks, with native vegetation such as primroses beneath mature oak trees, contribute to the rural character. There are few rights of way within the area.

I2.10 Settlement is composed of a regular pattern of farmsteads with the village of Riseley to the south and the outskirts of Swallowfield to the north. Buildings are predominately brick, some with traditional detailing including barge boards and polychromatic Reading brick. A number are Grade II listed, both within Riseley and the farmhouses and associated buildings in the surrounding countryside. Riseley also has 20th century and modern houses, often with an estate feel or linear development of bungalows along the roads, e.g. Bull Lane. Large farm buildings are prominent in the open landscape because of their scale. There are derelict agricultural buildings on the outskirts of Riseley.

Perceptual Landscape

I2.11 The working agricultural landscape, crossed by a network of rural roads has a tranquil character with an experience of dark skies. The area is isolated by its location between the valleys of the Loddon and Broadwater and semi-enclosed by distant wooded horizons in adjacent character areas at Stanford End and Farley Hill.

I2.12 The landscape is simple and unvaried but can appear disjointed when large agricultural buildings, shelter belts and pylons dominate views over the flat open fields. Derelict agricultural buildings and unmanaged hedgerows introduce a neglected character to the area.

I2.13 The writer Mary Russell Mitford (1787-1855) moved to Swallowfield in 1851 due to the number of repairs required to her cottage at Three Mile Cross (see I3: Grazeley Open Clay Lowland). The area has changed considerably since she wrote of her move:

I walked from the one cottage to the other in an Autumn evening. Here I am now in this prettiest village, in the cosiest of all snug cabins; a trim cottage garden, divided by a hawthorn hedge from a little field guarded by grand old trees; a cheerful glimpse of high road in front, just to hint that there is such a thing as a peopled world; on wither side the deep silent woody lanes, that form the distinctive character of English scenery.

Valuable Landscape Attributes

- Rural character of the working agricultural landscape with its homogenous land use in large arable fields.
- Lightly settled character with rural villages and scattered farms, some Grade II listed.
- Roadside verges and water-filled ditches lined by overgrown hedgerows and trees along the rural lanes which provide scenic quality, as well as ecological interest.
- Views across the open arable landscape to wooded horizons in surrounding character areas, which provide a degree of distant visual enclosure.
- Remote character due to the scarcity of settlement and relative isolation between the river valleys of the Loddon and Blackwater which results in a strong sense of rural tranquility and 'dark skies'.

Landscape Condition

The rural land use with arable and some pasture set in large open fields and small-scale local features such as drainage ditches and roadside banks and verges are in moderate condition.

Non-native shelter belts, both derelict and large agricultural buildings and pylons disturb the openness and scale of the landscape. Elements to improve include the scrubby hedgerow boundaries and intensively farmed arable land.

Key Issues

- Effects on tree health or species composition of woodland and wet woodland as a consequence of pathogens and climate change. Climate change is also likely to result in increased seasonal variation in river flows.
- Hedgerow loss and soil erosion associated with the expansion of fields and intensification of agriculture.
- Past use of fertilisers and pesticides resulted in a polluted run-off affecting water quality and biodiversity within the water filled ditches.
- Lack of the recruitment of young trees (through natural regeneration or planting) required to rebalance the age structure of parkland and hedgerow trees is an on-going threat to the character of the landscape.
- Introduction of non-native shelter belts which are visually dominant in the flat landscape.

- Potential pressure for horse/pony paddocks, particularly at settlement edges leading to a decrease in rural intactness.
- Demand for housing resulting in dereliction and loss of traditional dwellings, dilution of vernacular character and loss of distinct architectural style.
- Pressure for expansion within existing settlements, leading to the linear spread of development leading to the loss of individual settlement identity and potential amalgamation of adjacent settlements.
- Decline or decay of historic features including the GHQ Stop Line.
- Increasing demand for large-scale agricultural buildings leading to visual intrusion of these elements.
- The A33 brings noise and movement to the area, disturbing the tranquillity. There has been an increase in traffic on the B3349, which may lead to demands for upgrading the winding network of rural lanes with new signage, line painting and widening. This will threaten the intimate rural character of the lanes.
- This character area contains a reservoir of 'dark skies. Light pollution is a key issue affecting the night landscape.
- Increasing demand for communication masts, pylons and poles leading to visual intrusion of these elements in the open landscape.

Landscape Strategy

To maintain the landscape character of the *Riseley Open Clay Lowland* the following strategy is required: to conserve and enhance the existing remote rural character of the agricultural landscape.

There are opportunities to improve the condition, intactness and presentation of the farmed landscape without affecting the sense of openness which is central to the character of the landscape. In particular there is an opportunity to strengthen the hedgerow network and consider restoration of pollarded willows and native, rather than coniferous, shelterbelt planting.

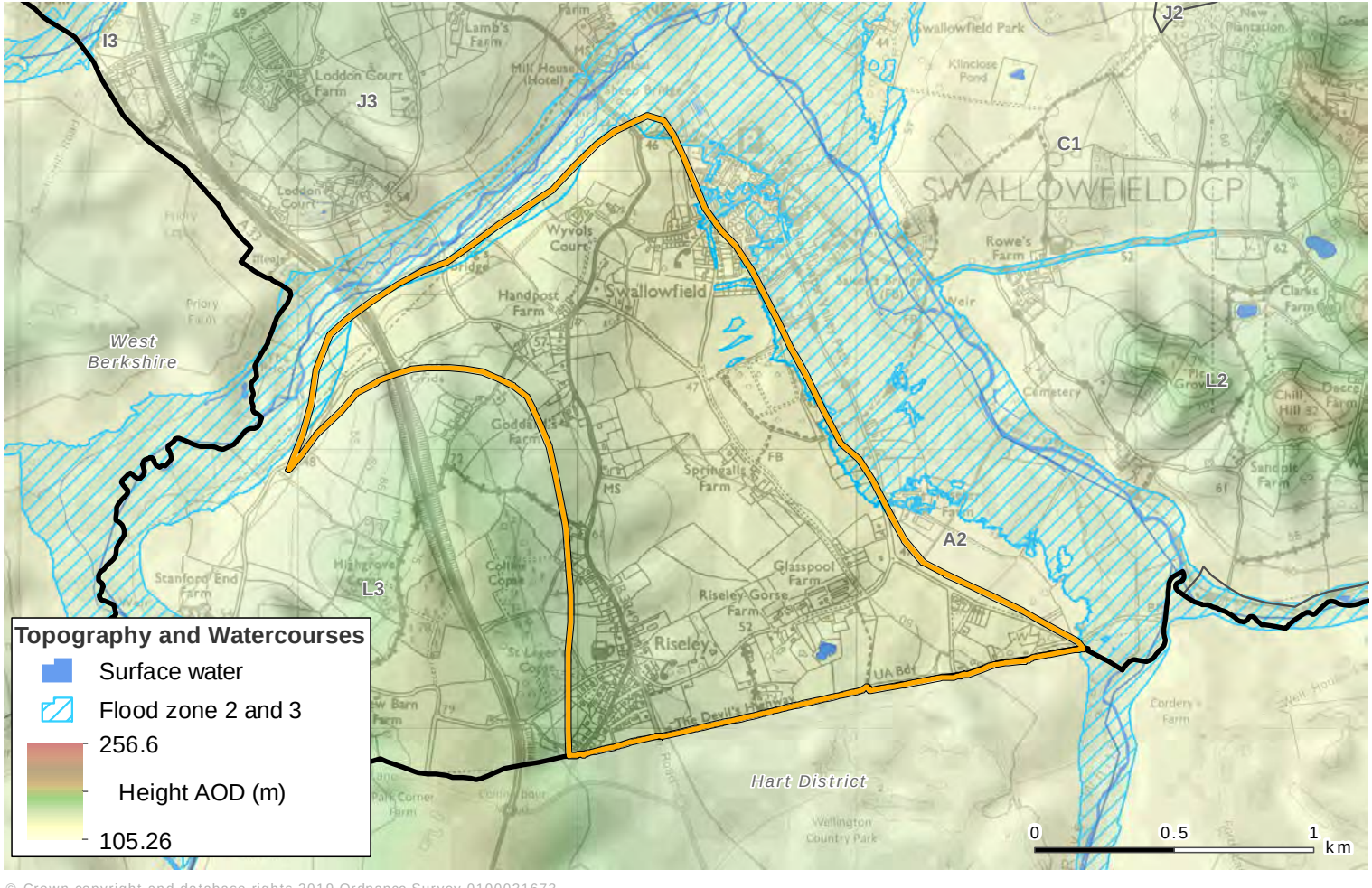
In terms of development, the aim is to conserve the rural settlement pattern.

Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve the open and rural qualities of the farmed landscape. Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods around intensively farmed arable fields.
- Reinstate or repair hedgerows with native species where there are opportunities to do so. Plan for the next generation of hedgerow trees with a programme of tree planting.
- Increase the limited extent of BAP priority habitat deciduous shelterbelts and woodland using locally occurring native species linking to existing woodland sites in adjacent character areas in particular, encourage restoration of pollarded willows, which are an important feature in the landscape.
- Manage the integration of equine related activities into the landscape through the maintenance of existing boundaries or restoration of hedgerows and control of associated built elements.
- Conserve, enhance and manage farmland and woodland habitats particularly protect from changes in land use. A strip of land in the north of the character area is part of the Loddon Valley

South BOA. This network of natural habitats has been identified as a target for habitat creation and restoration and positive management of lowland meadow and wet woodland. There are opportunities for meadow and woodland creation in this area along the Loddon.

- Conserve the rural character of the open farmed landscape between adjacent village centres, to protect the individual identity and rural character as well as retaining their sense of physical and visual separation, resisting the spread of linear development.
- Conserve the features associated with the GHQ Stop Line.
- Maintain and enhance the character of rural lanes with their roadside verges and water-filled ditches resisting unsympathetic highways improvements, infrastructure and signage.
- Use appropriate tree and hedgerow planting to help integrate new or existing roads, such as the A33 into the landscape. Encourage the retention and reinstatement of native roadside trees.
- Protect open views to adjacent areas. Particular care should be taken in the siting and design of large agricultural buildings, pylons and wires or other vertical elements, which have the potential to be highly visible in the open landscape.
- Protect the strong perceptions of tranquillity and remoteness in the landscape, through the careful and strategic management of development.



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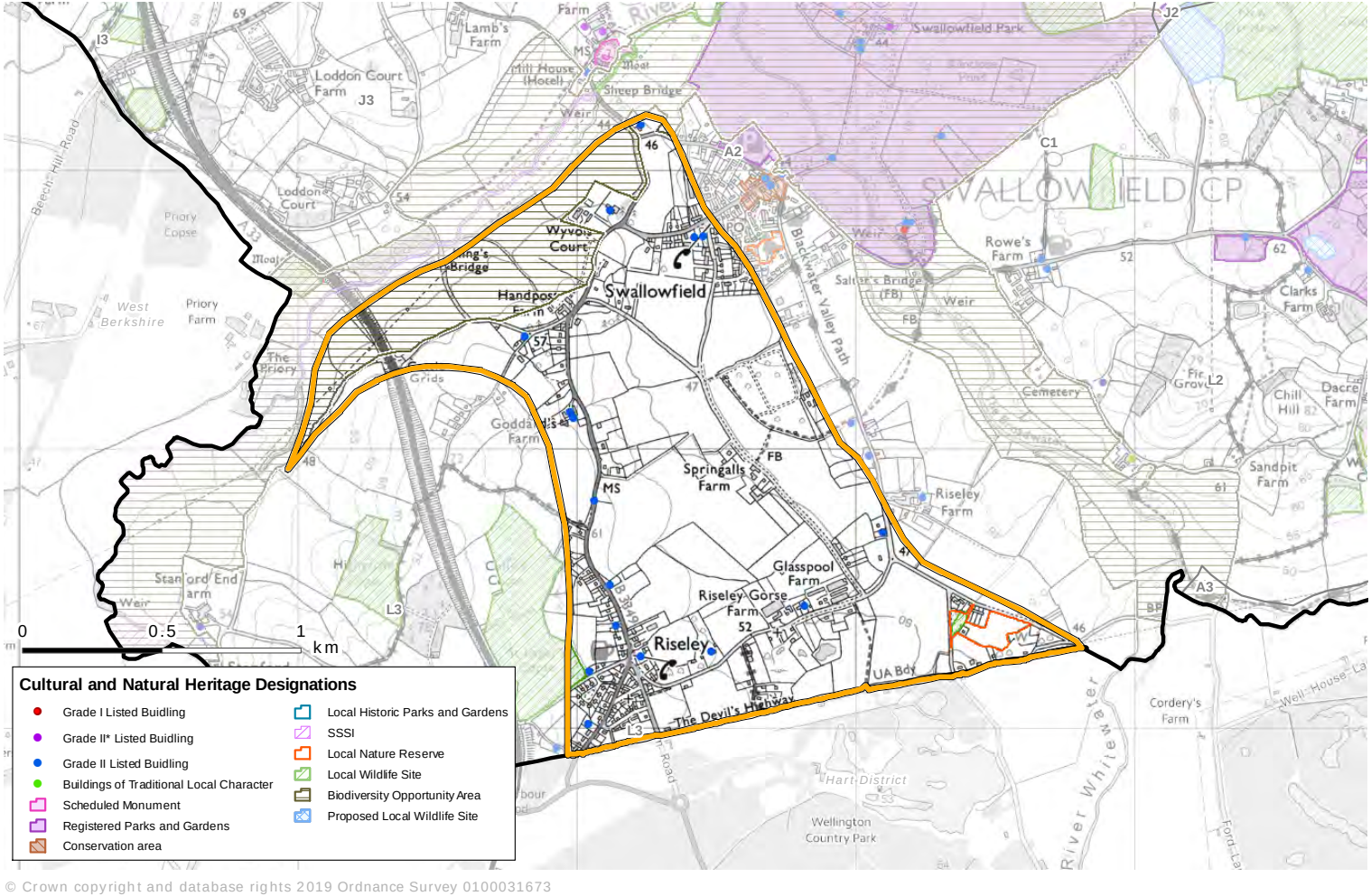
I2: Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland

I2: Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland



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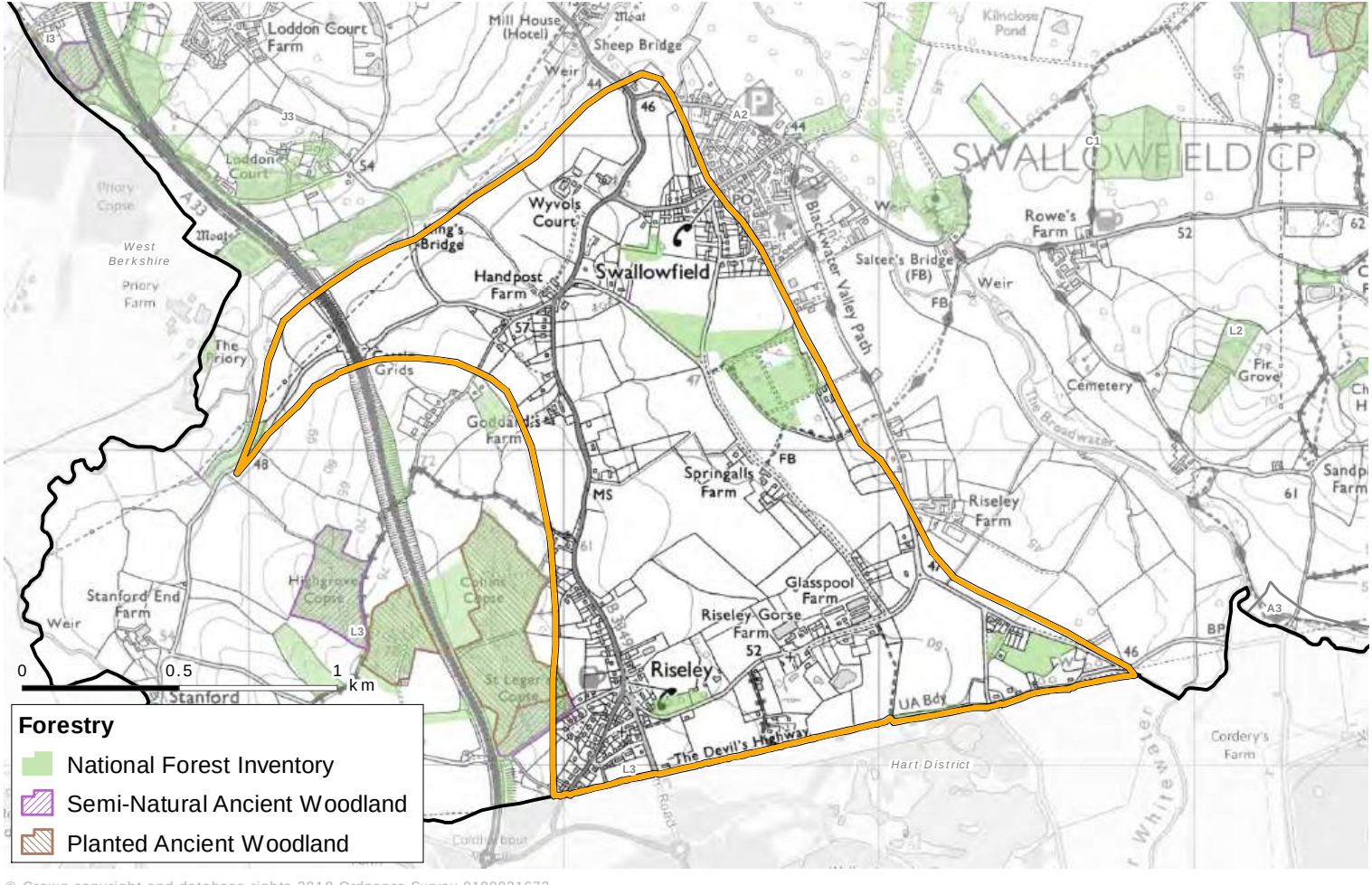
I2: Riseley Farmed Clay Lowland



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Appendix G

Extract from Wokingham Borough Council's
Valued Landscapes Assessment (2024)

River Loddon Valued Landscape Narrative

River Loddon Valued Landscape Narrative

> *I spent a fortnight at Wargrave with my friend Mr. Marks. We had perfect weather, the grey morning mists which hung about the river, giving way each day to the sun, the thin sear foliage on the willows softly gleaming out like clouds of gold dust, and in the evening the banks in the lanes bright with numerous glowworms. I made studies here for my picture called "Willow, Willow" from the banks of the Loddon, which joins the Thames at Shiplake Weir*
>
> *George Leslie Dunlop in Our River (published 1888)*[1]

Introduction

The River Loddon Valued Landscape runs the entire length of that part of the river within the borough. It mostly occupies the A2 'Loddon River Valley' and B1 'Loddon River Valley with Open Water' Landscape Character Areas (LCA) as identified in the Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2019). The valued landscape occupies the generally flat, alluvial floodplain of the river and parts of the river terraces, from where it enters the borough to the west of Risley, to where it joins the River Thames Valued Landscape upstream of Wargrave.

The valued landscape has important landscape features along its entire length from the Roman Road on its south-western boundary to the Habitats of Principal Importance on the floodplain where it joins the River Thames Valued Landscape. Although bisected by the A329(M) and two railway crossings, it represents a significant green and blue infrastructure corridor running diagonally across the southern half of the borough. It is valued for its character and appearance, biodiversity, history, perceptual qualities, recreational value and associations. The southern half is more natural but the northern part above the A329(M) has been substantially modified, principally by gravel extraction and the development of housing and transport networks. Many of the existing mineral extraction sites have been developed for recreation, in many cases, mitigating for the loss of naturalness through restoration and further management for the public benefit.

Where it has been necessary to indicate which bank of the river a feature of the landscape lies, the normal convention of labelling the left and the right banks viewed when facing downstream have been used in this narrative.

[1] LESLIE, George Dunlop *Our River (The Thames)*, 1881, Bradbury Agnew and Co.

Attributes of the valued landscape

Landscape quality (condition) – The valued landscape sits within the A2 'Loddon River Valley' and B1 'Loddon River Valley with Open Water' LCAs. The Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019) discusses landscape condition in the 'Key Characteristics' section of the A2 'Loddon River Valley' and B1 'Loddon River Valley with Open Water' LCAs. On landscape condition of the A2 'Loddon River Valley' LCA, it states:

> *'The meandering course of the river and the flat floodplain landscape is intact. For the most part this is a remote and rural landscape with characteristic riverside features and important wetland habitats which contribute to the overall perception of a landscape in moderate condition. However, views to adjacent large scale development and busy infrastructure corridors, particularly in the north of the area fragment the rural landscape. There are opportunities for improvement and particular enhancement to habitat interconnectivity'.*[2]

The A2 'Loddon River Valley' LCA landscape, containing the lower part of the valued landscape is not greatly affected by the disturbance from the M4 motorway and the settlements of Earley and Winnersh to the north. Although development pressures continue, the southern part of the LCA still demonstrates many characteristics of the natural river and floodplain.

For the B1 'Loddon River Valley with Open Water' LCA, it states:

> *'This peaceful floodplain landscape in the valley of the River Loddon falls between the urban areas of Woodley and the large villages of Winnersh, Twyford and Charvil. Former gravel extraction has modified the landscape resulting in a mix of land uses including open water bodies, landfill sites, and restored agricultural fields, nature reserves and country parks.'*[3]

Scenic Quality – The Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019) summarises the scenic quality of the landscape and identifies valuable landscape attributes that relate to scenic quality.

For the A2 'Loddon River Valley' LCA, it states:

> *'The meandering course of the river and the flat floodplain landscape is intact. For the most part this is a remote and rural landscape with characteristic riverside features and important wetland habitats which contribute to the overall perception of a landscape in moderate condition. However, views to adjacent large scale development and busy infrastructure corridors, particularly in the north of the area fragment the rural landscape. There are opportunities for improvement and particular enhancement to habitat interconnectivity.'*[4]

[2] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 57
[3] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 75
[4] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 57

Within the 'valuable landscape attributes' section for the A2 'Loddon River Valley' LCA, the LCA (2019) highlights the following relating to scenic quality and expands upon them in the main text:

> *The naturalness of the River Loddon and wide floodplain; the wooded backdrop of mature broadleaved woodland and natural riparian corridors; important wetland features and habitats; historic riverside features including medieval moated sites, old brick watermills and bridges, registered historic parkland at Swallowfield and the GHQ [General Headquarters] Stop Line and associated Second World War features following the course of the river; sparse settlement pattern of farmsteads and the village of Swallowfield and a strong local vernacular.*[5]

Regarding the scenic quality of the B1 'Loddon River Valley with Open Water' LCA, it states:

> *'The undeveloped nature of much of the floodplain crossed by rivers, and characterised by open water bodies and associated wetland habitats are in moderate condition. The urban influence and potential expansion of the settlement edge from Winnersh and Woodley/Earley and the increasing impact of the busy road and rail network means that there is a considerable need but also opportunities for landscape improvements.'*[6]

In the 'valuable landscape attributes' section for the B1 'Loddon River Valley with Open Water' LCA, the LCA (2019) highlights the following relating to scenic quality:

> *Undeveloped riverine character with its network of rivers, drainage ditches and restored lakes which provides a strong sense of place; wooded context and fringing carr vegetation with pollarded willows; remnant pockets of traditional pasture, with pollarded willows along banksides and ditches; mosaic of ecologically valuable wetland and woodland; restored gravel works supporting a range of birds and nationally scarce flora; distinctive historic built form clustered at river crossings including historic mills, bridges and listed buildings at Twyford; farms on the floodplain edge giving a sense of time-depth and contributing to scenic quality.*[7]

Rarity – Assessing rarity of landscape types and individual features is not simple. However, a number of sources can assist, including the Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (2004). This archive document provides an indication of rarity in its' assessment of sensitivity where it addressed the re-creatability of landscape elements.

In assessing the A2 'Loddon River Valley' LCA, as a landscape with high sensitivity to change, it identified the following as being features which would be hard to re-create: the naturalness of the river course and its associated habitats; the presence of mature trees and the area's tranquil remote character and absence of development on the valley floor. Many of the characteristics were noted to be of regional and national importance including: Stanford End Mill and River Loddon Site of Special

[5] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 56
[6] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 79
[7] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 79

Scientific Interest (SSSI); numerous Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and the Registered Park and Garden at Swallowfield Park. Chapter A2 of the LCA (2004) also noted the visual sensitivity to change because of the valley form with its' potential for views from the adjacent river terrace (in the C1 'Arborfield River Terrace' LCA) and farmland (in the J2 'Arborfield Cross and Barkham Settled and Farmed Clay' LCA).

In looking at the B1 'Loddon River Valley with Open Water' LCA, the LCA (2004) identifies the far northern part of the River Loddon Valued Landscape as being of overall moderate sensitivity to change. It identifies wetland habitats as being most sensitive to change and notes that many are of national importance because of the rarity of the flora and fauna present. It appears to give local significance to small areas of land between settlements and the potential for views across the floodplain from the C2 'Hurst River Terrace' LCA lying to the east.

Particularly rare attributes of this valued landscape are: the Registered Park and Garden at Swallowfield Park; the Second World War General Headquarters (GHQ) Stop Line which reinforced the natural barrier of the River Loddon in this southern part; and the high concentration of buildings or sites with moats – medieval feature created for status (for example at Sheepbridge Court) or, as in the case of the fortified Beaumys Castle for defence (although NB Beaumys sits adjacent to the River Loddon but is within the boundary of the Ridge and Rivers Valued Landscape).

Representativeness – 'Rarity' is discussed in the previous section. However, opposite of rarity is representativeness. Unless a landscape type is particularly common, which this particular valued landscape is not, the characteristics and features which make a landscape rare are also those that make it distinctive and therefore representative of its type. Notwithstanding the many special attributes that make this part of the countryside a valued landscape, the River Loddon is in many ways representative of many lowland river floodplain landscapes in the south east.

Conservation Interests – In terms of wildlife and biodiversity, the River Loddon Valued Landscape provides an important mix of wildlife sites and habitats:

Habitats of principal importance including: lowland mixed deciduous woodland; wood pasture and parkland remaining in historic parks; wet woodland; lowland meadows; coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; ponds; and rivers. Traditional orchards are reported but exist at a very local scale.

The Loddon Valley Gravel Pits and the Loddon Valley South Biodiversity Opportunity Areas lie within the valued landscape and are described in the Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan[8].

There are three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the valued landscape: two at Lodge Wood and Sandford Mill SSSI and one at Stanford End Mill and River Loddon SSSI.

First designated in 1952 the Stanford End Mill and River Loddon SSSI designation[9] states:

[8] The Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), 2011, Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum
[9] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1002963.pdf

'The site comprises Stanford End Mill meadows, a series of traditionally-managed seasonally waterlogged hay meadows, and a 4 km stretch of the River Loddon, a tributary of the River Thames. The valley is situated on Tertiary deposits of Valley Gravel and River Alluvium overlying London Clay.'

And:

'The site is of interest particularly for nationally important populations of two rare plants: the fritillary Fritillary meleagris*, a native bulb of unimproved damp meadows now mainly confined to scattered localities in southern Britain, and the Loddon pondweed* Potamogeton nodosus*, a very rare aquatic species for which this length of the River Loddon is the national stronghold.'*

Additionally, the SSSI designation highlights the following: sparce oak, ash and alder trees giving only moderate shade (that encourages growth of water plants); numerous cricket-bat willows grown commercially; two rare pea-mussels Pisidium moitessierianum and P.tenuilineatum whose presence reflects the high water quality and base-rich conditions. Several uncommon species of mollusc in the meadows, including the snails Vertigo antivertigo and V. moulinsiana which are restricted to fens and marshes; a variety of coarse fish, water voles and nesting birds, including little grebe, moorhen, coot, mute swan and kingfisher.

First designated in 1953, Lodge Wood and Sandford Mill SSSI designation[10] states:

'The woodlands are situated on London Clay, which is largely overlain by alluvium at Sandford Mill and valley gravel at Lodge Wood. The poorly-drained and seasonally-waterlogged soils conform to the Fladbury 3 and Hurst associations, and consist of stoneless, fine, clay-like silts and loams. Both woodlands occur on relatively flat ground which is affected by groundwater and susceptible to intermittent flooding from the Loddon'.

And:

'Although Lodge Wood is shown on Rocque's map of Berkshire in 1761 and may be an ancient woodland site, management has modified its original composition and structure. Both woodlands are dominated by alder and crack willow Salix fragilis, together with some ash. There is a relatively poorly developed understorey which includes hazel, dogwood, elder, blackthorn and red currant Ribes sylvestre. The southern part of Lodge Wood is drier, and dominated by pedunculated oak and ash, with some hawthorn and spindle and occasional planted exotics.'

Of particular interest in the valued landscape is the presence of the Loddon Lily which occurs in only 48 sites in England. The two sites of this SSSI are a stronghold for this species which derives its common name from the River Loddon. At the time of designation, they contained ten percent of the population of the species in England. The designation states:

[10] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1003870.pdf

'Both Lodge Wood and Sandford Mill Woods support large colonies of Loddon Lily or summer snowflake Leucojum aestivum. This species has a very restricted distribution in Britain, and is listed in the British Red Data Book of vascular plants. In England it is largely confined to the Thames Basin, with one centre of distribution between Reading and Windsor, and another between Goring and Abingdon. It was first recorded from near Reading in 1799, and from the confluence of the Thames and Loddon in 1809. Because of its mode of dispersal the Loddon Lily is almost wholly associated with rivers, and the majority of colonies are found on islands or in dense willow carr. After flowering in April or May, when it is pollinated by bees, the fruits develop flotation chambers. Although they remain attached to the stem, in the event of flooding the stems break and the fruits are carried downstream and stranded amongst debris in thickets or on flood-plains. The bulbs can also be transported during heavy floods and deposited on river banks.'

There are three Local Nature Reserves (LNR) within the River Loddon Valued Landscape: Alder Moors, Lavells Lake and Swallowfield Meadow.

Alder Moors LNR is ancient woodland dominated by alder trees. There is a rich ground flora including bluebells, marsh marigolds, primroses and wood anemones. Lavell's Lake LNR is at the northern most tip of Dinton Pastures Country Park and is managed by Wokingham Borough Council in partnership with the Friends of Lavell's Lake. Emphasis is placed in encouraging bird species and the site is known nationally for both resident and migratory species. The Friends of Lavell's Lake record '*125 species recorded in the breeding seasons since records began in 1979 and 108 in winter*'[11]. Swallowfield Meadows LNR is a small site of only 0.7 hectares. It incorporates four balancing ponds and ditches as part of flood prevention measures. As well as a rich variety of habitats, the ponds and ditches have attracted endangered northern water voles (Arvicola amphibius).

The Ancient Tree Inventory[12] shows aggregations of Ancient and Veteran Trees at Swallowfield Park and Dinton Pastures Country Park and a number of large girth pollard willows lining the river and drainage ditches within the floodplain.

There are a number of smaller Ancient Woodlands mostly on higher ground above the river floodplain. Some small areas of ancient woodland are sited on the urban fringes of Woodley in the north of the valued landscape, for example: Sandpit Copse, Norris's Copse and Alder Moors Copse. Others, like the group of larger than average woodlands between Swallowfield and Arborfield grow in the countryside north-east of Swallowfield Park: Great Wood, Moor Copse and Rounds Copse.

There are 29 Local Wildlife Sites within the valued landscape incorporating a wide range of habitats and a wide variety of species.

[11] http://rva.org.uk/organisation/friends-of-lavells-lake/

[12] The Ancient Tree Inventory is an online resource made available by the Woodland Trust. The Government refers developers to this resource in online planning guidance on Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: protecting them from development – last updated 5th November 2018, available at: *https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/tree-search/*

Cultural heritage and built form - the valued landscape encompasses parts of the following Conservation Areas**:** Swallowfield, Twyford Station and Twyford.

The valued landscape forms the setting, and forms part of views in and out, of the Conservation Areas and listed buildings and structures in, and adjacent to, the valued landscape. The locations and forms chosen for such buildings were influenced by the landscape; and the buildings in their turn have helped add features of value to the landscape. The site of Swallowfield Court, a royal building and park, was at the western edge of the Royal Forest of Windsor and, in the crotch of two rivers, would have been more easily defended and imparked. It may have been a defensive position in its earliest origins as, for example, the nearby moated site at Beaumys Castle situated next to the River Loddon in the adjacent Ridge and Rivers Valued Landscape. Both sites depended on the low-lying water-logged landscape for the formation of a defensive moat or park boundaries. Another listed building for which the riverside location was essential is the Grade II listed Sandford Mill, an 18th Century building on Sandford Lane which, as a working mill, derived its power from the River Loddon.

The valued landscape has two Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens: Swallowfield Park[13] and a small portion of Stratfield Saye Park[14] that touches its south-western edge. The parks and gardens are described by Historic England in the National Heritage List for England[15]:

Swallowfield Park is a Grade II listed park and garden. The manor of Swallowfield was in royal ownership since before Great Domesday (1086)[16] until the reign of Elizabeth I. The Historic England register entry for the park and garden[17] states:

> *'Swallowfield Park was enclosed by Edward III in 1354, remaining in royal ownership until the C16. The estate …passing by marriage into the hands of Henry Hyde (d 1709) shortly before he became second Earl of Clarendon in 1674. In 1685 Lady Clarendon (d 1700) was accompanied to Swallowfield by John Evelyn who wrote an account of the estate in his diary for 22 October 1685, describing the features and plants he found, `the gardens and waters as elegant as `tis possible to make a flat [site] by art and industry and no mean experience ... the nurseries, kitchen garden full of the most desirable plants, two very noble Orangeries well furnished, but above all the canal and fishponds. The second Earl rebuilt the house 1689-91, the designs being those of William Talman, Comptroller of the King's Works. Edward Hyde, the third Earl, sold the estate some time before 1718 to the nabob Thomas Pitt, late Governor of Madras, known as `Diamond Pitt, who bought the estate with part of the proceeds of selling the Pitt or Regent diamond, and died there in 1726. Pitt employed John James to alter the house, and it is also thought that James designed the bridge in the park (Inspector's Report 1990).'*

[13] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000537
[14] https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000866
[15] Historic England, *National Heritage List for England- Park Place, and Temple Combe*, last updated 31 January 2020, https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000588
[16] Great Domesday Book, 1086, National Archive E 31/2/2 -
[17] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000537

And:

> *'The estate was sold out of the Pitt family in 1737, passing through various families during the remainder of the C18, and being sold to Sir Henry Russell, first Baronet in 1820. The formal landscape of rides present to the south of the house in the 1760s (Rocque, 1761), laid out in patte d'oie form, had disappeared by the 1790s (Pride, 1790), by which time the park had been entirely landscaped. In the early C19 (estate map, 1809) the estate was crossed by a network of ponds and canals, these being removed in the 1850s. The estate remained in the Russell family until 1965 when it was divided up and sold, the house and stables being converted into residential apartments for the Country Houses Association, in which use they remain (1998).'*

Stratfield Saye is a Grade II listed park and garden with similarly ancient origins, but its chief interest lies in being the seat of the first Duke of Wellington, the Iron Duke, Arthur Wellesley the victor of Waterloo. The Register entry states:

> *'A mid to late C18 garden, laid out from 1745 by George Pitt, Lord Rivers, comprising walled and formal compartments and informal, tree-planted pleasure grounds which are set within a landscape park of the same period; the estate was further developed and planted throughout the C19 and C20 by the dukes of Wellington, whose home it became from 1815.'*

And:

> *'A manor was formed at Stratfield Saye in the C11 and was owned by the Stotefield family in the C12. It acquired its present name by the marriage of a Stotefield heiress to Robert de Say. William de Say was granted a licence to inclose his wood to form a park in 1216 and by c 1340, a house had been built there (VCH 1911). In the late C14, the estate passed by marriage to the Dabridgecourt family and remained in their ownership until, in the early C17, their indebtedness to Sir William Pitt enforced conveyance of the estate, in various parcels of land and buildings throughout the 1620s, to the Pitt family. Sir William Pitt is traditionally credited with the building of the present house, on obtaining final possession of the estate in 1630 (CL 1948). The marriage of his grandson, George, to the daughter of John, Earl Rivers (she was the widow of Lord Chandos of Sudeley), brought the connection with the Rivers peerage to the Pitts of Stratfield Saye and when a descendent, another George, was ennobled in 1776, he took the title Baron Rivers of Sudeley. Lord Rivers had succeeded to the estate in 1745 and, through the second half of the C18 until his death in 1803, he made major changes and improvements, these being recorded in some detail in an account written by his steward, Mr Brookes, in a manuscript of c 1810 (CL 1948). Lord Rivers removed the `regular terraces and square fishponds with clipped hedges and quaint parterres, and felled most of the avenues. The present walled gardens north-west of the house were built and the pleasure grounds planted with an arboretum of exotic trees. The park was greatly enlarged and planted with specimen trees `which gradually recede into open groves thence by a gentle transition into a depth of thick woodland forming a varied and picturesque horizon, while the course of the River Loddon was widened and smoothed.'*

And:

> *'Following his victory at Waterloo in 1815, the Duke of Wellington purchased the estate in 1817. Probably for financial reasons, none of the various designs for the replacement of the house, prepared by architects such as James Wyatt's eldest son Benjamin Dean Wyatt, and C R Cockerell, were pursued (drawings at Stratfield Saye). The first or Great Duke made a number of additions and alterations to the house, adding the conservatory and the outer wings. Planting in the gardens and park continued throughout the C19 and C20 by the Great Duke and his descendants, the most notable tree species being the Wellingtonia which was first planted at Stratfield Saye by the second Duke in 1854, following its introduction in 1853. The estate remains (1999) in private hands.'*

The Roman Road forms the northern boundary of Stratfield Saye Park and the southern edge of the valued landscape. The course of this major Roman transport artery from Londinium (London) in the east, to Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) in the west, runs along Welsh Lane and crosses the River Loddon just to the south of the borough boundary, a few metres upstream of Stanford End Bridge. The Park is well screened and no features other than trees and hedges, and a Second World War pillbox glimpsed between them, are visible from the valued landscape. This pillbox twinned with one on the other side of Welsh Lane guarded the bridge from attack from the west. Together they formed a forward position of the Second World War General Headquarters Stop Line. This four-hundred-mile defence (in depth) was built using natural defensive features such as rivers and high ground wherever possible. The River Loddon, and other geographical features, were an important part of the natural defences strengthened by structures such as pillboxes and tank ditches rapidly constructed during the summer of 1940 in preparation for the expected German invasion.

In the foreword to *Beeches, fields, streets and hills…the anti-invasion landscapes of England 1940*[18]. Professor Holmes makes a strong case for the special protection of landscapes of the GHQ Stop Line. He writes *'Our landscape is indeed given added meaning by these defences'*. Whilst some of the defences have been lost from the landscape the presence of many others (including features of archaeological, historical and cultural interest e.g. buried tank ditches, pillboxes etc.) combined with the geographical and topographical features modified to create the GHQ Stop Line have created the specific features that, in Professor Holmes's opinion give *'added meaning'* to the landscape.

There are thirty-nine listed buildings and structures ranging from the Grade II listed 17th Century Waggon and Horses public house on the Old Bath Road at Twyford, to the Grade II* listed Sheepbridge Court a late 16th and 17th Century farm house on a 13th Century moated site[19], one of two scheduled monuments in the valued landscape (the other being early 13th Century Beaumys Castle[20] lying within the buffer zone of this valued landscape but described in the narrative for the Ridge and Rivers Valued Landscape which is contiguous with the River Loddon Valued Landscape at this point). Moated sites were built between 1250 and 1350 AD and are rare in the south of England and so it is worth noting that there is one other moated site in the vicinity of the valued landscape

[18] HOLMES E R in the foreword to FOOT William, *Beaches, Fields, Streets and Hills…the anti-invasion landscapes of 1940*, 2006, Council for British Archaeology Report 144

[19] Sheepbridge Court moat *https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1013336*

[20] Beaumys Castle moat https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1013179

but not within it as currently mapped. The site lies within two-and-a-half kilometres to the north-east of Sheepbridge Court at Kenney's Farm[21] where a modern house sits with the moat.

A cluster of listed buildings and structures sit on the left bank of the River Loddon just upstream of the A33 crossing. The site of the 12th Century priory of Stratfield Saye (dissolved 1399) lies immediately to the south-west of Beaumys castle on the left bank of the river. The old abbey meadows forming part of the Stanford End Mill and River Loddon SSSI. The site is now occupied by three listed buildings or structures: a Grade II listed, late 17th Century, Dovecote and wall, a Grade II listed 18th Century timber framed granary, and the Priory mansion itself, a Grade II* listed 16th Century extended brick house with some timber framing in older parts with old tile roofs gabled, and one half hipped.

The Waggon and Horses public house, a former 17th Century Inn is Grade II listed and situated on the Old Bath Road at Twyford, convenient for the crossing of the river at the two fords of the braided river channel reflected in the name of the village.

Recreational Value – The LCA (2019) assesses public accessibility of the A2 'Loddon River Valley' and B1 'Loddon River Valley with Open Water' LCAs. The recreational opportunities of the northern and southern halves of the valued landscape are different and complementary. The southern portion offers fewer opportunities to access the landscape but greater tranquillity. The northern or downstream portion of the valued landscape offers a greater number and variety of riverine and wetland experiences, with reduced tranquillity.

For the A2 'Loddon River Valley' LCA it states:

> *'There is a loose network of lanes serving this primarily agricultural landscape, with a limited number of river crossing points.'*[22]

And comments on severance and lack of access, stating there is:

> *'Little public access to the floodplain except for the Blackwater Valley Path which runs south and east of Swallowfield. Busy roads cross the flood plain, including the A33, M4 and Winnersh and Shinfield Eastern Relief Roads, and create physical and visual severance along the floodplain.'*[23]

Further downstream, in that portion of the valued landscape lying north of the A329(M), located in the B1 'Loddon River Valley with Open Water' LCA, the LCA (2019) states there are:

> *'Popular recreational landscapes including Dinton Pastures Country Park, Charvil Country Park and Charvil Meadows.'*[24]

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[21] Kenney's Farm moat https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1013139
[22] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 55
[23] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 53
[24] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 76

The River Loddon is a landscape valued by local anglers including the seven hundred members of the Twyford and District Angling Club[25].

Perceptual Aspects – are addressed in the LCA (2019) which identifies some disturbance and light pollution along transport corridors, but higher levels of tranquillity and dark night skies in other parts of the valued landscape.

For the A2 'Loddon River Valley' LCA it identifies 'valuable landscape attributes' stating that it is a:

> *'Remote and rural landscape in the south of the area due to the limited access to the floodplain and absence of development on the valley floor.'*[26]

With:

> *'Localised areas with a strong sense of tranquility particularly in the south, with naturalistic qualities and experience of dark skies away from roads and visual influence of large scale settlement in adjacent areas.'*[27]

And a:

> *'Tranquil and rural character away from river crossings and visual influence of large scale settlement in adjacent areas. The south of the area is also a resource of 'dark skies'.'*[28]

For the B1 'Loddon River Valley with Open Water' LCA, it states that the landscape has:

> *'Localised areas of tranquillity particularly around the restored lakes, and away from transport corridors and the visual influence of adjacent settlements.'*[29]

Associations – This landscape has a very high number of close associations with nationally important figures.

The manors of Shinfield and Swallowfield were important royal manors at the time of Edward the Confessor and William I, not to mention King Harold Godwinson (the Anglo-Saxon King and victor at Stamford Bridge who died at Hastings and was written out of Domesday as the new Norman oligarchy stamped its mark on nation and landscape).

Swallowfield Court continued to be a royal residence on the fringes of the Royal Forest of Windsor and Edward III improved and imparked it in 1354. Swallowfield Court remained an important royal residence and was endowed to Catherine of Aragon, the wife of Henry VIII as part of her dowry.

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[25] Twyford and District Angling Club website https://www.tdfc.org.uk/
[26] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 56
[27] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 56
[28] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 53
[29] Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2019), page 79

A famous non-royal association is with Thomas 'Diamond' Pitt (1653 –1726). He was the grandfather to William Pitt, 1st Earl of Chatham ("Pitt the Elder") and was great-grandfather of William Pitt the Younger, both Prime Ministers. 'Diamond' Pitt is best known for his purchase of a 410-carat uncut diamond acquired from an Indian merchant in Madras in 1701.

Pitt bought the diamond for 48,000 pagodas or £20,400 and sent it back to England in 1702 concealed inside his eldest son Robert's shoe. A 141-carat stone, with several secondary stones, was cut from the rough stone. Pitt and his sons took the diamond to Calais in 1717 and the stone was sold to the French regent, Philippe II, Duke of Orléans, for £135,000, becoming one of the crown jewels of France. "Le Régent", as the stone is known, is on display in the French Royal Treasury at The Louvre. With the proceeds of the sale, Pitt bought property including at Swallowfield Court and Swallowfield Park – his favourite residence.

The present house of Swallowfield Court was mainly built by Lord Clarendon in 1689–90. According to the Victoria County History, the gardens of Swallowfield Court were visited and described by John Evelyn, who wrote much about *'the delicious and rarest fruits,' the 'innumerable timber trees in the ground about the seate,' the walks and groves of elms, limes, oaks and other trees, the quarters, walks and parterres, nurseries, kitchen garden, two very noble orangeries*, and, *'above all, the canal and fishponds, the one fed with a white, the other with a black running water, stored with pike, carp, bream and tench*[30].

A further association relates to the Duke of Wellington who 'retired' to his estate at nearby Stratfield Saye in 1817. He was active in local affairs and appears to have been held in high regard with numerous notable (and now highly visible) plantings of Wellingtonia (Sequoiadendron giganteum), a tree discovered after his death but named in his honour. It is these trees that now adorn the Victorian estates on the high clay ridge that forms the core of this valued landscape.

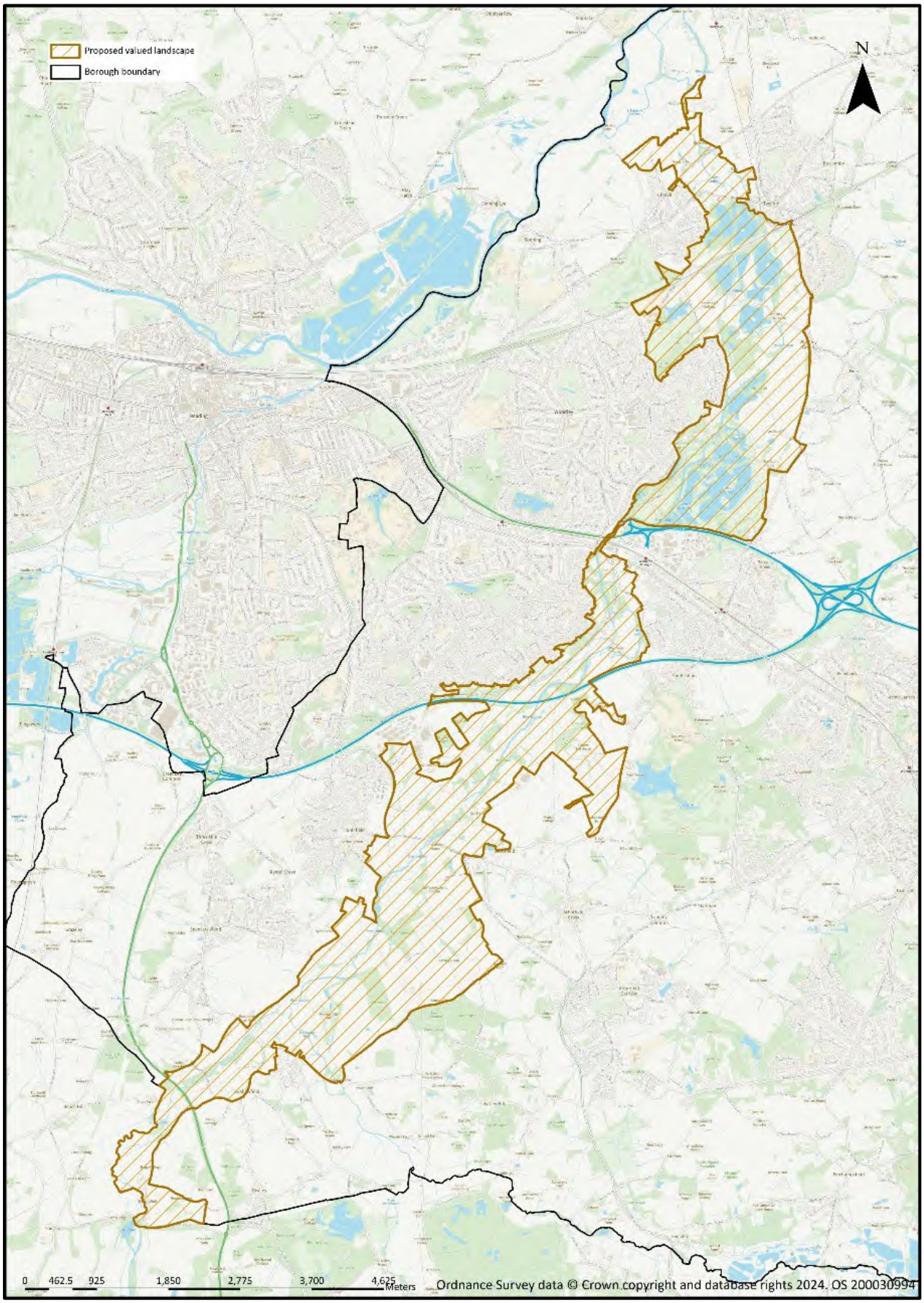
One further association from that period was with the writer Mary Russel Mitford (1787 Alresford, Hants - 10 January 1855 Swallowfield Berks), a contemporary and acquaintance of Jane Austen, who is best known for *'Our Village'*[31], a collection of chapters of contemporary village scenes and characters based on her life at Three Mile Cross. She was schooled at Reading Abbey Girls School (also attended by Jane Austen). Mitford met Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1836, and they became close friends. Mitford was granted a civil list pension in 1837 (she was a favourite of many powerful Victorians including the Queen) partly due to her heroic struggle to support her spendthrift father. In 1842, her father died. A subscription was raised to pay his debts, and the surplus helped ease Mitford's financial burdens. In 1851 she moved from Three Mile Cross to a cottage in Swallowfield, where she died on 10 January 1855. She is buried in Swallowfield churchyard.

The architect of the home defences during the early months of the Second World War was General Edmund Ironside. William Edmund 'Tiny' Ironside, 1st Baron Ironside, GCB, CMG, DSO (6 May 1880 – 22 September 1959) was a career soldier. He served throughout the Second Boer War spying on German colonial forces in Southwest Africa. He commanded troops on the front during the First

[30] A History of the County of Berkshire: Volume 3. 1923 Victoria County History, London, pages 267 - 274
[31] MITFORD Mary Russel, Our Village, 1835, Sampson Low, Son & Co

World War before being appointed to a position on the staff. In 1918, he was given command of a brigade on the Western Front. In 1919, he was promoted to command the Allied intervention force in northern Russia following the Bolshevik Government's withdrawal from the First World War. As Governor of Gibraltar, preparing for retirement, he was recalled to the UK and appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff on the outbreak of the Second World War. After nine months, he took Command of Home Forces responsible for preparing the defence of the country for an expected German Invasion. As the architect of an astonishing system of defence lines hurriedly built during the summer of 1940, he retired with the rank of Field Marshall on July 19th 1940. Baron Ironside would have utilised the terrain and landscape in preparation for defence along the GHQ Stop Line and during combat, particularly following the aftermath of defeat in Normandy and retreat from Dunkirk.

River Loddon Valued Landscape Map



Appendix H

Methodology for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

METHODOLOGY FOR LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

M1 In landscape and visual impact assessment, a distinction is normally drawn between ***landscape/townscape effects*** (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape (or townscape), irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and ***visual effects*** (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape, principally from public rights of way and areas with public access, but also private views from residential properties). Thus, a development may have extensive landscape effects but few visual effects if, for example, there are no properties or public viewpoints nearby. Or alternatively, few landscape effects but substantial visual effects if, for example, the landscape is already degraded or the development is not out of character with it, but can clearly be seen from many residential properties and/or public areas.

M2 The assessment of landscape & visual effects is less amenable to scientific or statistical analysis than some environmental topics and inherently contains an element of subjectivity. However, the assessment should still be undertaken in a logical, consistent and rigorous manner, based on experience and judgement, and any conclusions should be able to demonstrate a clear rationale. To this end, various guidelines have been published, the most relevant of which, for assessments of the effects of a development, rather than of the character or quality of the landscape itself, form the basis of the assessment and are as follows:

- 'Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment', produced jointly by the Institute of Environmental Assessment and the Landscape Institute (GLVIA 3rd edition 2013); and
- 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', October 2014 (Christine Tudor, Natural England) to which reference is also made. This stresses the need for a holistic assessment of landscape character, including physical, biological and social factors.
- 'Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations', Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21
- 'Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3)', Landscape Institutes Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 (August 2024)

LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

M3 Landscape/townscape quality is a subjective judgement based on the condition and characteristics of a landscape/townscape. It will often be informed by national, regional or local designations made upon it in respect of its quality e.g. National Landscapes (formerly AONBs). Sensitivity relates to the inherent value placed on a landscape / townscape and the ability of that landscape/townscape to accommodate change (i.e. landscape susceptibility).

M4 GLVIA defines susceptibility to change as '*the ability of the landscape receptor (whether the overall character or quality / condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and / or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and / or the achievement of planning policies and strategies.*'

Landscape susceptibility can vary with:

(i) existing land uses;
(ii) the pattern and scale of the landscape;
(iii) visual enclosure/openness of views, and distribution of visual receptors;
(iv) relationship to neighbouring settlement;
(v) the scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape; and
(vi) the condition and value placed on the landscape.

M5 The concept of landscape/townscape value is considered in order to avoid consideration only of how scenically attractive an area may be, and thus to avoid undervaluing areas of strong character but little scenic beauty. In the process of making this assessment, the following factors, among others, are considered with relevance to the site in question: landscape quality (condition), scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreation value, perceptual aspects and associations.

M6 Nationally valued landscapes are recognised by designation, such as National Parks and National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) which have particular planning policies applied to them. Nationally valued townscapes include areas identified as World Heritage Sites. Paragraph 187 of the current NPPF outlines that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes '*…in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*'.

M7 For the purpose of our assessment, landscape/townscape quality, value and susceptibility are assessed using the criteria in Tables LE1 and LE2. Assessing landscape sensitivity to a particular type of development is made by combining judgements on landscape value and susceptibility to the type of development proposed. The different levels of landscape sensitivity are defined in Table LS1 below.

Table LS1: Landscape / Townscape Sensitivity	
Very High	A landscape/townscape with a very low ability to accommodate change such as a nationally designated landscape or World Heritage Site.
High	A landscape/townscape with limited ability to accommodate change because such change may lead to some loss of valuable features or elements. Development of the type proposed could potentially be discordant with the character of the landscape/townscape.
Medium	A landscape/townscape with reasonable ability to accommodate change. Change may lead to a limited loss of some features or characteristics. Development of the type proposed would not be discordant with the character of the landscape/ townscape.
Low	A landscape/townscape with good ability to accommodate change. Change would not lead to a significant loss of features or characteristics and there would be no significant loss of character or quality. Development of the type proposed would not be discordant with the landscape/ townscape in which it is set and may result in a beneficial change.

M8 There is a strong inter-relationship between landscape/townscape quality, value and susceptibility as high quality/value landscapes/townscapes usually have a low ability to accommodate change. Typically, landscapes/townscapes which carry a quality designation, and which are otherwise attractive or unspoilt will in general be more sensitive, while those which are less attractive or already affected by significant visual detractors and disturbance will be generally less sensitive. However, to avoid making this process overly formulaic, the assessment of landscape / townscape sensitivity includes a degree of professional judgement and where necessary this is explained in the narrative text within the report.

M9 The magnitude of change is the size / scale, extent and duration of change to a landscape arising from the proposed development and was assessed using the criteria in Table LE3.

M10 The size / scale of change relates to the loss or introduction of landscape elements resulting from the proposed change. This is particularly relevant where proposals will impact on key landscape components which contribute to local landscape character. The geographic extent is the overall area in which the landscape effects will be felt and will vary depending on the nature of the proposals. For instance, effects could be experienced at the site level, its immediate setting, at a character area level, or could impact on several landscape character areas. Duration is the expected time frame during which effects will be experienced. In some instances, such as wind / solar farms which have a limited life span, effects may be reversible as once the development is decommissioned the land can be restored.

M11 Landscape/townscape effects are assessed in terms of the interaction between the magnitude of the change brought about by the development and the quality, value & susceptibility of the landscape resource affected (using the criteria set out in Table LE4). The landscape/townscape effects can be either beneficial, adverse or neutral. Landscape effects can be direct (i.e. impact on physical features, e.g. landform, vegetation, watercourses etc.), or indirect (i.e. impact on landscape character as a result of the introduction of new elements within the landscape or a significant increase in site traffic movement). Direct visual effects result from changes to existing views.

M12 In this way, landscapes/townscapes of the highest sensitivity, when subjected to a high magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to give rise to 'substantial' landscape/townscape effects which can be either adverse or beneficial. Conversely, landscapes of low sensitivity, when subjected to a low magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to give rise to only 'slight' or neutral landscape effects. Beneficial landscape effects may arise from such things as the creation of new landscape features, changes to management practices and improved public access. For the purpose of this assessment the landscape/townscape effects have been judged at completion of the development and in year 15. This approach acknowledges that landscape/townscape effects can reduce as new planting/mitigation measures become established and achieve their intended objectives.

VISUAL EFFECTS

M13 Visual effects are concerned with people's views of the landscape/townscape and the change that will occur. Like landscape effects, viewers or receptors are categorised by their sensitivity. For example, views from private dwellings are generally of a higher sensitivity than those from places of work.

M14 In describing the content of a view the following terms are used:

- No view - no views of the development;

- Glimpse - a fleeting or distant view of the development, often in the context of wider views of the landscape;
- Partial - a clear view of part of the development only;
- Filtered - views to the development which are partially screened, usually by intervening vegetation - the degree of filtering may change with the seasons;
- Open - a clear view to the development.

M15 The sensitivity of the receptor varies according to its susceptibility to a particular type of change, and the value placed on it (e.g. greater value will be attached to a view from a recognised beauty spot, or views towards a designated heritage asset). As set out in GLVIA, paragraph 6.32, the susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views / visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- *'The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and*
- *The extent to which their attention or interest is focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.'*

M16 Visual sensitivity was assessed using the criteria in Table VE1 by combining judgements on the value of the views and their susceptibility to change.

M17 The magnitude of change is the degree in which the view(s) may be altered as a result of the proposed development and will generally decrease with distance from its source, until a point is reached where there is no discernible change. It takes into account the scale and extent of change in the view and the contrast between the existing landscape / townscape and the proposed development. The magnitude of change in regard to the views was assessed using the criteria in Table VE2.

M18 Visual effects were then assessed in terms of the interaction between the magnitude of the change brought about by the development and also the sensitivity of the visual receptor affected.

M19 As with landscape effects, a high sensitivity receptor, when subjected to a high magnitude of change from the proposed development, is likely to experience 'substantial' visual effects which can be either adverse or beneficial. Conversely, receptors of low sensitivity, when subjected to a slight magnitude of change from the proposed development, are likely to experience only 'slight' or neutral visual effects, which can be either beneficial or adverse.

M20 Unless specific slab levels of buildings have been specified, the assessment has assumed that slab levels will be within 750mm of existing ground level.

MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS

M21 Mitigation measures are described as those measures, including any process or activity, designed to avoid, reduce and compensate for adverse landscape and/or visual effects resulting from the proposed development.

M22 In situations where proposed mitigation measures are likely to change over time, as with planting to screen a development, it is important to make a distinction between any likely effects that will arise in the short-term and those that will occur in the long-term or 'residual effects' once mitigation measures have established. In this assessment, the visual effects of the development have been considered at completion of the entire project and at 15 years thereafter.

M23 Mitigation measures can have a residual, positive impact on the effects arising from a development, whereas the short-term impact may be adverse.

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

M24 The assessment concisely considers and describes the main landscape/townscape and visual effects resulting from the proposed development. The narrative text demonstrates the reasoning behind judgements concerning the landscape and visual effects of the proposals. Where appropriate, the text is supported by tables which summarise the sensitivity of the views/landscape/townscape, the magnitude of change and describe any resulting effects.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

M25 Cumulative effects are *'the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together.'*

M26 In carrying out landscape assessment it is for the author to form a judgement on whether or not it is necessary to consider any planned developments and to form a judgement on how these could potentially affect a project.

ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)

M27 A ZTV map can help to determine the potential visibility of the site and identify those locations where development at the site is likely to be most visible from the surrounding area. Where a ZTV is considered appropriate for a proposed development the following methodology is used.

M28 The process is in two stages, and for each, a digital terrain model ('DTM') using Key TERRA-FIRMA computer software is produced and mapped onto an OS map. The DTM is based on Ordnance Survey Landform Profile tiles, providing a digital record of existing landform across the UK, based on a 10 metre grid. There is the potential for minor discrepancies between the DTM and the actual landform where there are topographic features that are too small to be picked up by the 10 metre grid. A judgement will be made to determine the extent of the study area based on the specific site and the nature of the proposed change, and the reasons for the choice will be set out in the report. The study area will be determined by local topography but is typically set at 7.5km.

M29 Different heights are then assigned to significant features, primarily buildings and woodland, thus producing the first stage of an 'existing' ZTV illustrating the current situation of the site and surrounding area. This data is derived from OS Open Map Data, and verified during the fieldwork, with any significant discrepancies in the data being noted and the map adjusted accordingly. Fieldwork is confined to accessible parts of the site, public rights of way, the highway network and other publicly accessible areas.

M30 The second stage is to produce a 'proposed' ZTV with the same base as the 'existing' ZTV. The proposed development is introduced into the model as either a representative spot height, or a series of heights, and a viewer height of 1.7m is used. Illustrating the visual envelope of the proposed development within the specific site.

M31 The model is based on available data and fieldwork and therefore may not take into account all development or woodland throughout the study area, nor the effect of smaller scale planting or hedgerows. It also does not take into account areas of recent or continuous topographic change from, for instance, mining operations.

VISUALISATION TYPE METHODOLOGY

M32 The photographs and visualisations within this report have been prepared in general conformance with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19. The 'types', as set out within the Guidance, comprise the following:

Type 1 - annotated viewpoint photographs;
Type 2 - 3D wireline / model;
Type 3 - photomontage / photowire;
Type 4 - photomontage / photowire (survey / scale verifiable).

M33 Photographs were taken with a digital camera with a lens that approximates to 50mm, to give a similar depth of view to the human eye. In some cases images have been joined together to form a panorama. The prevailing weather and atmospheric conditions, and any effects on visibility are noted. Images are displayed at the most appropriate size, taking into account the published guidance, legibility at A3 paper size, and context (which is often shown for illustrative purposes only), and allows for enlarged scale printing if required.

M34 The Guidance Note advocates a proportionate and reasonable approach, which includes professional judgement, in order to aid informed decision making.

M35 The determination of the suitable Visualisation Type to aid in illustrating the effects of the scheme, has been determined by a range of factors as set out below, including the timing of the project, the technical expertise, and costs involved.

M36 Where it is deemed suitable or necessary to utilise the Visualisation Types set out within the Guidance Note, the table below has been used to determine which Visualisation Type is most appropriate to the project, unless otherwise specified within the report.

M37 The table below (based on Table 1 within the Guidance Note) sets out the intended purpose and user of the report, and the Likely Level of Effect. The Likely Level of Effect is based on Tables LE4 and VE3 in this methodology, and takes into consideration the type and nature of the proposed development, as well as the sensitivity of the host environment and key visual receptors. The Likely Level of Effect is based on an initial consideration of the landscape and visual effects of the project as a whole, and the subsequent assessment may conclude a lesser or higher level of overall effect, once completed. Table VMT also provides an indication as to the appropriate Visualisation Type, noting that it is not a fixed interpretation, and that professional judgement should always be applied. In certain instances, where there is neighbouring development which is of a similar scale to that of the proposed development, which provides a point of reference, it is not always considered necessary to produce photowire or photomontage visualisations.

M38 Additional photographs (which do not conform to any Type) may be included to illustrate the character of the landscape/townscape, or to illustrate relevant characteristics, for example the degree and nature of intervening vegetation, or reciprocal views from residential properties.

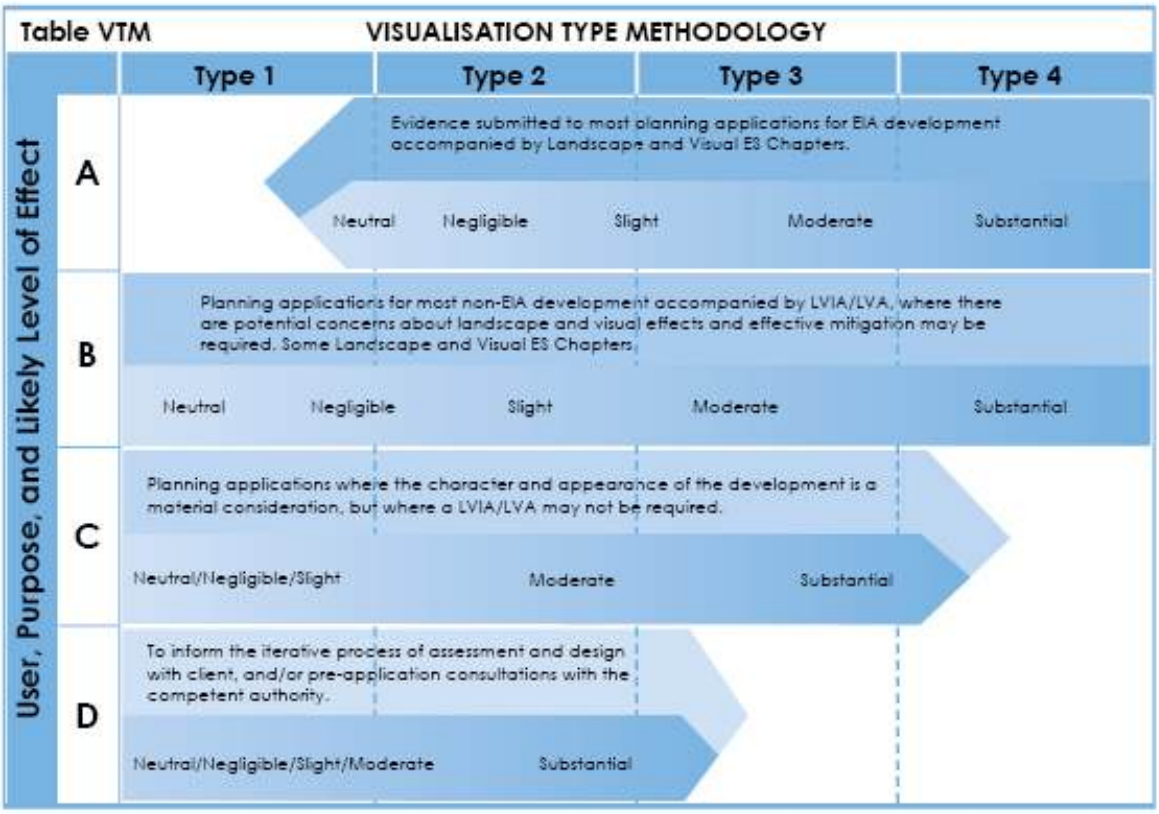


Table VTM
VISUALISATION TYPE METHODOLOGY
Type 1
Type 2
Type 3
Type 4
User, Purpose, and Likely Level of Effect
A
Evidence submitted to most planning applications for EIA development accompanied by Landscape and Visual ES Chapters.
Neutral
Negligible
Slight
Moderate
Substantial
B
Planning applications for most non-EIA development accompanied by LVIA/LVA, where there are potential concerns about landscape and visual effects and effective mitigation may be required. Some Landscape and Visual ES Chapters.
Neutral
Negligible
Slight
Moderate
Substantial
C
Planning applications where the character and appearance of the development is a material consideration, but where a LVIA/LVA may not be required.
Neutral/Negligible/Slight
Moderate
Substantial
D
To inform the iterative process of assessment and design with client, and/or pre-application consultations with the competent authority.
Neutral/Negligible/Slight/Moderate
Substantial

Table LE 1 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE QUALITY AND VALUE

Description of Landscape/Townscape Quality and Value	Very High	High	Medium	Low
	Landscape Quality: Intact and very attractive landscape which may be nationally recognised/designated for its scenic beauty. e.g. National Park, National Landscapes or World Heritage Site. **Townscape Quality:** A townscape of very high quality which is unique in its character, and recognised nationally/internationally, e.g. World Heritage Site **Value:** Very high quality landscape or townscape with Statutory Designation for landscape/townscape quality/ value, e.g. National Park, World Heritage Site, Registered Park or Garden. Contains rare elements or significant cultural/historical associations.	**Landscape Quality:** A landscape, usually combining varied topography, historic features and few visual detractors. A landscape known and cherished by many people from across the region. e.g. County Landscape Site such as a Special Landscape Area. **Townscape Quality**: A well designed townscape of high quality with a locally recognised and distinctive character e.g. Conservation Area **Value:** High quality landscape/townscape or lower quality landscape with un-fettered public access, (e.g. commons, public park) or with strong cultural associations. May have important views out to landmarks/designated landscapes and few detracting features. May possess perceptual qualities of tranquility or wildness.	**Landscape Quality:** Typically non-designated landscape area, generally pleasant but with no distinctive features, often displaying relatively ordinary characteristics. May have detracting features. **Townscape Quality**: A typical, pleasant townscape with a coherent urban form but with no distinguishing features or designation for quality. **Value:** An ordinary landscape/townscape of local value which may have some detracting features. Typically no statutory designations for landscape/townscape quality. A landscape which may have limited public access and/ or have pleasant views out, or be visible in public views.	**Landscape / Townscape Quality:** Unattractive or degraded landscape/townscape, affected by numerous detracting elements e.g. industrial areas, infrastructure routes and un-restored mineral extractions. **Value:** Landscape/townscape generally of lower quality. A landscape with limited public access, typically no designations or recognised cultural significance. Limited public views.

CSA environmental

Table LE 2 **LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY**

	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Description of Susceptibility	Highly distinctive landscape, / townscape with strong character generally in excellent condition, exhibiting a number of positive attributes and no or few detracting elements. Development would be entirely at odds with the scale, pattern and character of the landscape / townscape. A landscape with little ability to accommodate change of the type proposed without significant impacts on landscape / townscape character and on key characteristics and / or aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the character area. Little or no scope for mitigation.	Distinctive landscape / townscape with few detracting features. Landscape elements in good condition and make a positive contribution to local character. Landscape with low potential to accommodate change of the type proposed without loss or alteration of key landscape / townscape elements or adverse change to landscape / townscape character. Limited scope for mitigation.	Relatively commonplace landscape /townscape typically in moderate condition. Proposals would be largely compatible with the scale, pattern and character of the landscape / townscape. Proposals could be absorbed with limited impact on key landscape features, and perceptual and aesthetic qualities. Scope to provide landscape mitigation / enhancements.	Landscape / townscape of mixed character and / or with some detracting and intrusive elements. Landscape features pose little constraint and / or are capable of replacement. Proposals would be well related to the scale, pattern and character of the local landscape / townscape. Good potential for landscape mitigation and enhancements which would contribute to landscape / townscape character.

CSA environmental

Table LE 3 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE

Description of the Change predicted	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
	Total loss of or significant impact on key characteristics, features or elements				
		Partial loss of or impact on key characteristics, features or elements			
			Minor loss of or alteration to one or more key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements		
				Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements	
					No loss or alteration of key landscape/ townscape characteristics, features or elements

Table LE 4 LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE EFFECTS

Description of the Effect	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
	The proposals will alter the landscape/ townscape in that they: • will result in substantial change in the character, landform, scale and pattern of the landscape/townscape; • are visually intrusive and would disrupt important views; • are likely to impact on the integrity of a range of characteristic features and elements and their setting; • will impact a high quality or highly vulnerable landscape; • cannot be adequately mitigated.				
		The proposals: • noticeably change the character, • scale and pattern of the landscape/ townscape; • may have some impacts on a landscape/ townscape of recognised quality or on vulnerable and important characteristic features or elements. • are a noticable element in key views; • not possible to fully mitigate.			
			The proposals: • do not quite fit the landform and scale of the landscape/townscape and will result in relatively minor changes to existing landscape character; • will impact on certain views into and across the area; • mitigation will reduce the impact of the proposals but some minor residual effects will remain.		
				The proposals: • complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape/townscape; • development may occupy only a relatively small part of the Site; • maintain the majority of landscape features; • incorporates measures for mitigation to ensure the scheme will blend in well with the landscape/townscape and mitigates any loss of vegetation.	
					The proposals: • change is neither better nor worse; • maintain existing landscape/ townscape character; • maintain the majority of landscape features; • incorporates measures for mitigation to ensure the scheme will blend in well with the landscape/townscape and mitigates any loss of vegetation.

Footnote:

1. Each level (other than neutral) of change identified can be either regarded as 'beneficial' or 'adverse'. The above table relates to adverse landscape effects, however where proposals complement or enhance landscape character, these will have a comparable range of benefical landscape effects.

CSA environmental

Table VE 1

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Description of the Receptor	High	Medium	Low
	Residential properties with predominantly open views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from ground and first floors and from two or more windows of rooms mainly in use during the day. Users of Public Rights of Way in sensitive or generally unspoilt areas. Predominantly non-motorised users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside. Views from within an National Landscape, National Park, World Heritage Site or Conservation Area and views for visitors to recognised viewpoints or beauty spots. Users of outdoor recreational facilities with predominantly open views where the purpose of that recreation is enjoyment of the countryside - e.g. Country Parks, National Trust or other access land etc.		
		Residential properties with partial views from windows, garden or curtilage. Views will normally be from first floor windows only, or an oblique view from one ground floor window, or may be partially obscured by garden or other intervening vegetation. Users of Public Rights of Way in less sensitive areas or where there are significant existing intrusive features. Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views or where the purpose of that recreation is incidental to the view e.g. sports fields. Schools and other institutional buildings, and their outdoor areas. Users of minor or unclassified roads in the countryside, whether motorised or not.	
			People in their place of work. Users of main roads or passengers in public transport on main routes. Users of outdoor recreational facilities with restricted views and where the purpose of that recreation is unrelated to the view e.g. go-karting track.

CSA environmental

Table VE 2 VISUAL MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE

Description of the Change predicted	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
	Large and dominating changes which affect a substantial part of the view.				
		Clearly perceptible and noticable changes within a significant proportion of the view.			
			Small changes to existing views, either as a minor component of a wider view, or smaller changes over a larger proportion of the view(s).		
				Very minor changes over a small proportion of the view(s).	
					No discernible change to the view(s).

Table VE 3 VISUAL EFFECTS

Description of the Effects	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Neutral
	The proposals would have a significant impact on a view from a receptor of medium sensitivity, or less damage (or improvement) to a view from a highly sensitive receptor, and would be an obvious or dominant element in the view.				
		The proposals would impact on a view from a medium sensitive receptor, or less harm (or improvement) to a view from a more sensitive receptor, and would be a readily discernible element in the view.			
			The proposals would have a limited effect on a view from a medium sensitive receptor, but would still be a visable element within the view, or a greater effect on a view from a receptor of lower sensitivity.		
				The proposals would result in a negligible change to the view but would still be discernible.	
					No change in the view.

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Footnote:
1. Each level (other than neutral) of change identified can be either regarded as 'beneficial' or 'adverse'.

Appendix I

Landscape Plan

Indicative Planting Schedule

Trees

Natives only

Name	Common Name
Acer campestre	Field maple
Alnus glutinosa	Common alder
Betula pendula	Silver birch
Pinus sylvestris	Scots Pine
Quercus robur	Common, English oak
Sorbus torminalis	Wild service tree
Tilia cordata	Small-leaved lime

Native Species-Rich Hedging

Name	Common Name	Height	Form	Brks	Mix
Acer campestre	Field maple	80-100cm	Transplant		5%
Cornus sanguinea	Common dogwood	80-100cm	Bushy	5	10%
Corylus avellana	Hazel, Cobnut	80-100cm	Transplant		10%
Crataegus monogyna	Common hawthorn	80-100cm	Transplant		50%
Ilex aquifolium	Holly	60-80cm	Bushy -3L		10%
Ligustrum vulgare	Common privet	60-80cm	Bushy -3L		10%
Rosa canina	Dog rose	80-100cm		4	5%

Native Scrub/Thicket Mix - buffer / boundary infill plant mix

Name	Common Name	Height	Form	Brks	Cntr	Density (m2/lin m)
Cornus sanguinea	Common dogwood	80-100cm	Bushy	5		1
Corylus avellana	Hazel, Cobnut	80-100cm	Transplant			1
Crataegus monogyna	Common hawthorn	80-100cm	Transplant			1
Euonymus europaeus	Spindle	80-100cm	Transplant	4		1
Ilex aquifolium	Holly	60-80cm	Bushy		3L	1
Ligustrum vulgare	Common privet	60-80cm	Transplant	4	3L	1
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	80-100cm	Transplant	4		1

Wetland Thicket Mix 1 - taller local wetland scrub plant mix

Name	Common Name	Height	Form	Brks	Cntr	Density (m2/lin m)
Rhamnus frangula	Alder Buckthorn	60-80cm	Transplant	3		5
Salix cinerea	Grey Willow	60-80cm	Branched	3		5
Rosa canina	Dog Rose	40-60cm	Branched	4	3L	5
Viburnum opulus	Guelder Rose	40-60cm	Branched	4	3L	5

Marginal Aquatic Planting -

Name	Common Name
Butomus umbellatus	Flowering rush
Deschampsia cespitosa	Tufted hair grass
Lythrum salicaria	Purple loosestrife
Filipendula ulmaria	Meadowsweet

PLANTING SPECIFICATION

General Guidance

All plant handling to be in accordance with the HTA 'Handling and establishing landscape plants' Part I, Part II and Part III (obtainable from the Horticultural Trades Association) and the CPSE publication: 'Plant Handling' and all planting to conform to National Planting Specification Guidelines.

The individual setting-out of the plants on site shall be the responsibility of the contractor and should follow closely the locations shown on the detailed planting proposal drawings supplied by the landscape architect. Contractor to ensure that plants are equally spaced within individual planting groups.

Contractor to ensure that smaller plants are located to the front of plant species groups as shown on detailed planting plans.

Contractor shall maintain existing levels around the base of existing trees and shall undertake all planting works occurring within root protection areas (RPA) in accordance with BS5837:2012. Contractor shall not remove or relocate any tree protection fencing without prior consent of the client.

Contractor to check the locations of all underground services, existing and proposed, prior to the excavation of any tree pits or shrub beds and identify any potential conflicts to the client / landscape architect.

All arisings shall be removed from site and the contractor shall at all times, keep the site free from rubbish and debris.

For the duration of the works the contractor shall keep the site free from injurious weeds as listed in the Weeds Act 1959.

All plants should be supplied at the same size and of the same species as specified in the planting schedules on the landscape proposals plan. Any proposed replacement species or deviation from the planting schedules should be highlighted to and agreed with the client prior to installation.

All plants shall be hardened-off at the Contractor's own nursery or at the source prior to planting out.

All field grown and rootballed trees must have been transplanted or undercut in the nursery no less than 18 months prior to supply.

The Contractor shall carry out the work while soil and weather conditions are suitable. Planting is not to take place during periods of frost or strong winds.

The contractor is to ensure that adequate watering and weed control is provided at the time of planting.

Any topsoil retained on site in stockpiles for use in planting works is to be stored in accordance with the DEFRA publication; 'Code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites'

Do not use peat or peat based products.

Prior to planting, planting areas shall be cleared of grass and weed growth physically and/or chemically with a proprietary translocated herbicide and a period of time shall be allowed to elapse as recommended by the manufacturer before commencement of soil preparation for planting.

All plants are to be watered thoroughly before planting stage to ensure rootball is thoroughly soaked prior to final backfilling.

Tree Planting

Generally plant trees in pits with minimum dimensions of;-

- 1000 x 1000 x 700-800mm deep for trees in soft, planted areas including; grass/shrub areas and rear gardens.

Backfill the pits in layers as specified below (from bottom up);-

Drainage layer

- 200mm layer of compacted inert free draining gravel or pea shingle, wrapped in geo-textile membrane
- 100m layer of washed medium-coarse sand to act as blinding layer between geotextile and soil.

Topsoil layer

- 400-500mm layer of retained site-sourced topsoil (free from weeds) or imported topsoil (Multi-purpose grade to BS3882:2015; sandy loam); depth dependant on size of rootball.

Depth of topsoil should only be as deep as the rootball of proposed tree to a max. depth of 400-500mm. Should the rootball be larger i.e. 800mm height, then the pit should be increased in depth to suit, but with the difference in depth from the 400-500mm topsoil layer and the drainage layer made up of quality imported free-draining subsoil to BS8601:2013 to avoid topsoil occurring at depths of greater than 500mm.

Likewise, for smaller trees i.e. feathered trees, with more limited rootballs/bare root, the depth of topsoil can be reduced to reflect the surrounding topsoil depths or to a max. topsoil depth of 350mm, with a further layer of site-sourced or imported subsoil (to BS8601:2013) below to create a total depth of growth medium of between 400-500mm i.e. 150-200mm layer of subsoil. Drainage layer should remain as above.

As stated above, the min. pit size for trees planted in newly created planting areas should be 1m x 1m, however where planting is occurring in clean, undisturbed ground, pits should be dug to approx. 200mm greater than the rootball to limit distribution of surrounding soil structure. For very large stock, pit dimensions should be increased accordingly.

Break up bottom of tree pit to a depth of 200mm and ensure ground is free-draining. Loosen edges of tree pit at time of planting by hand, using a fork to ensure good drainage. Pits should be excavated no greater than 48hrs prior to planting and dewatered as required.

Incorporate a soil conditioner/ameliorant in the form of peat-free tree and shrub compost or well rotted spent mushroom compost or 'Rootmaster' by Greentech Ltd (01423 332100) into backfilled topsoil material at the rate of min. 40L per pit.

Incorporate soil improver 'Terracottem Arbor' by Greentech Ltd (01423 332100) at a rate of 1kg per pit, mixed thoroughly into backfilled topsoil.

Backfill topsoil mix in layers of 150mm, firming at each layer and loosening the pit sides to aid drainage. The surface level of the pit should be 50mm above the surrounding ground.

Trees shall be planted in the centre of the excavated pits.

Trees in soft planted areas to be dressed with a minimum 75mm mulch layer, consisting of pine bark fines, particle size 15-50mm to a min. diameter of 1000-1200mm.

Semi-mature trees shall be secured by use of a proprietary underground guying system, incorporating guy mats to protect the upper surface of the rootball and secured to the base of the tree pit or by use of deadman anchors. Guying supports to be sized in line with the size of the tree as recommended by the manufacturers.

Extra-heavy and heavy standard trees shall be staked and supported with a low, double stake consisting of 2No. 75mm diameter x min. 2000mm length, rounded timber posts driven into the ground, 600mm above ground level and fixed to the tree by a proprietary rubber tree tie / horizontal cross support.

Standard trees shall be staked and supported with a low, single stake consisting of 1No. 75mm diameter x min. 2000mm length, rounded timber post driven into the ground at 45 degree angle to approx. 450mm above ground level and fixed to the tree by a proprietary rubber tree tie.

Trees shall be installed with proprietary flexible perforated irrigation/aeration pipe with integral cap. Pipe to be installed encircling equally around rootball to the full depth of planting pit, with the final cap section installed just above ground level and nailed securely in place to the adjacent timber stake.

All trees in grass areas to be protected by min. 450mm high (Rodent) x 38mm diam. proprietary biodegradable plastic spiral guards, by Green-tech Ltd. or equal and approved. Where trees have a basal trunk diameter greater than this, e.g. semi-mature, then two or more guards should be joined together using jointing tape and then secured in place.

Root Barrier Membranes

Where trees are proposed in close proximity to hard paved areas or proposed service runs, a root barrier membrane is to be installed as prescribed below.

For all proposed trees centred in a location within 3m of an adjacent hard standing/footpath or carriageway kerb line, a proprietary root barrier membrane will be installed to protect the hard standing and any underground services located beneath from future damage by tree roots.

Root barrier membrane(s) to be installed on the tree side along the back edge of the kerb / edging restraint to the adjacent hard standing and are to extend a minimum 3m in each direction from a point taken perpendicular from the tree trunk to the kerb/edging face.

Root barrier membranes are to extend to a depth as outlined below:-

- For trees adjacent to hard standings only (no underground services); install 'Reroot 300' by GreenBlue Urban (01424 717797) or equal and approved, ribbed root barrier membrane, to a depth of 300mm, ribs facing tree, joints fixed with jointing tape, install 10mm above final surface level of soft landscaping.
- For trees adjacent to hard standings incorporating underground services; install the following dependant on the depth of underground services;

For services 450mm deep

- 'Reroot 600' by GreenBlue Urban (01424 717797) or equal and approved, ribbed root barrier membrane, to a depth of 600mm, ribs facing tree, joints fixed with jointing tape, install 10mm above final surface level of soft landscaping.

For services 800mm deep

- 'Reroot 1000' by GreenBlue Urban (01424 717797) or equal and approved, ribbed root barrier membrane, to a depth of 1000mm, ribs facing tree, joints fixed with jointing tape, install 10mm above final surface level of soft landscaping.

For services deeper than 800mm

- 'Reroot 2000' by GreenBlue Urban (01424 717797) or equal and approved, ribbed root barrier membrane, to a depth of 2000mm, ribs facing tree, joints fixed with jointing tape, install 10mm above final surface level of soft landscaping.

For locations where a hard standing with or without underground services exists on both sides of the tree e.g. grass verge, then a root barrier is to be installed against both kerb / edging faces.

For trees located within hard surfaces themselves i.e. surrounded by hard paved surfaces, install 'Root Director' by GreenBlue Urban (01424 717797) or equal and approved, ref: RD1400; 1400mm x 1400mm x 450mm, plastic root director with integral ribs.

Ornamental Hedge Planting (incl. single species native hedges)

Plant hedges into pre-prepared planting trenches, 500-600mm wide for double rows. Planting strips to consist of topsoil to a depth of 350-400mm, mixed with soil conditioner as specified below.

Topsoil to be either; existing retained site-sourced topsoil (free from weeds) or imported topsoil (Multi-purpose grade to BS3882:2015; sandy loam) or a combination of the two as necessary.

Incorporate a soil conditioner/ameliorant in the form of peat free general-purpose shrub compost or well rotted spent mushroom compost along planting trench in a 50mm layer at the rate of 100kg per m2, and incorporate to a depth of 225mm.

Install a proprietary weed suppressant membrane onto the surface of the pre-prepared trench, with minimum 300mm laps. Plant hedge plants into pre-prepared planting strips which are deep enough as to be 200mm greater than the root depth of the supplied plant stock.

All hedge planting areas to be dressed with a minimum 75mm mulch layer, consisting of medium chipped tree bark, composted for 2-4 weeks, particle size 15-50mm, laid directly on weed suppressant membrane.

Where not planted against an proposed fence-line or wall, hedges to be supported by min. 1000 high timber post and wire fence, consisting of min. 75mm diameter x 2000mm long, rounded timber posts, driven in at 2000mm centres with 3No. galvanised wire supports evenly spaced along the vertical axis of the post. Corner posts and/or straining posts are to be additionally supported by 45° angled, 50mm diameter timber struts.

Thicket Planting / Woodland Planting

Where existing vegetation is to be removed, clear any surface vegetation in proposed woodland and thicket areas, utilising proprietary herbicide where appropriate and install plants into isolated pre-prepared planting pits, generally 300 x 300 x 450mm deep or 200mm greater than the rootstock, whichever is greater, backfilling with either existing retained site sourced topsoil (free from weeds) or imported topsoil (sandy loam, General Purpose grade to BS3882:2015) or a combination of the two as necessary.

Where planting occurs into a retained sward, then planting pits shall be excavated locally for each plant, with the surface vegetation removed.

Incorporate a soil conditioner/ameliorant in the form of peat free tree and shrub compost or well-rotted spent mushroom compost into backfill material at the rate of 5L per pit, incorporating a slow release fertiliser e.g. Enmag (or similar approved) at a rate of 5g per pit.

Ensure planting conforms to planting matrix where appropriate and in all other areas appears random / natural and not formal in accordance with the planting proposal layouts.

Plant Protection

Where rabbits are a known issue, all woodland and thicket areas are to be fully enclosed by min. 900mm high rabbit proof fencing, supplied as min. 19 Gauge (1.2mm) galvanised mesh with max. 31mm openings, nailed with galvanised 20mm staples to 50-75mm diameter treated timber stakes at 1.5m centres, incorporating 3No. horizontal galvanised straining wires. Mesh fence to be heeled into ground 150mm below ground level. Straining posts of 100mm diam. timber should be installed every 50m or at every turn of direction 90 degrees or greater.

If additional deer protection fencing is required, all woodland and thicket areas are to be fully enclosed by min. 1.8m proprietary plastic mesh fencing (50mm x 45mm gauge) secured to min. 100mm rounded, treated softwood posts, driven min. 750mm below ground level at 3.5m centres. Mesh fence to be heeled into ground 150mm below ground level. NB:- In areas where rabbits are also a known problem, an additional 300mm high section of min. 19 Gauge galvanised mesh (chicken wire) with max. 31mm openings to be fixed to the lower portion of the deer fencing and attached using proprietary plastic cable ties.

Any standard trees in the woodland/thicket areas to be protected by min. 450mm high x 38mm diam. proprietary biodegradable plastic spiral guards, by Green-tech Ltd. or equal and approved.

All small / feathered trees within woodland/thicket areas to be protected by biodegradable 'Nature Tubes Tree Shelter' by Green-tech ltd. or equal and approved, and secured in place with min. 25mm square treated softwood timber stake and fixed with plastic cable ties. NB:- Should red or fallow deer reside in the locality the tree guards/shelters should be increased in height to 1.8m.

Any coniferous trees and/or beech transplants (Fagus sylvatica) within woodland/thicket areas must only be protected by open mesh tree guards.

All bushy thicket shrubs to be protected by min. 750mm high x 200mm diam. proprietary biodegradable plastic shrub shelters / spiral guards, by Green-tech Ltd. or equal and approved, and secured in place with treated softwood timber stake and plastic cable ties.

All single stem thicket transplants to be protected by min. 600mm high x 50mm proprietary biodegradable plastic spiral guards, by Green-tech Ltd. or equal and approved, secured with min. 12-14ib x 900mm long bamboo cane. Cane to be fully inserted into the ground by 300mm.

All woodland and thicket plants to be installed with a min. 500mm square, proprietary 'Treebio Biodegradable Weed Mat' mulch mat, by Green-tech Ltd. or equal and approved, securely pegged in place and weighted down with bark mulch.

Where woodland / thicket areas are created from freshly cultivated ground i.e. not into the existing sward, then the planting area should be over-seeded with a proprietary meadow grass mix ('A4' mix by Germinal Seeds Ltd) at a rate of 35gs m2 between planting stations.

Amenity Grass Seeding

Areas to be seeded are to be finely graded to bring to a uniform and even grade at the correct finished level and to remove all minor hollows and ridges. All stones and debris greater than 50mm in size to be removed and disposed of off-site.

Seeded areas are to consist of min. 150mm topsoil; either existing retained site sourced topsoil (free from weeds) or imported topsoil (Multi-purpose grade to BS3882:2015; sandy loam) or a combination of the two as necessary; overlying min. 150mm layer of clean, free-draining subsoil. Subsoil should be prepared as per shrub specification, ensuring full decompaction and free-drainage.

Unless otherwise stated, finished levels of seeded areas to be 30mm above adjoining paving and kerbs; 150mm below the dpc of adjoining buildings.

Final preparation of the seeded areas shall be carried out as to create a fine tilth surface suitable for seeding.

For amenity grass areas only, a pre-seeding fertiliser shall be applied at a rate of 250kg/ha approx. 7 days prior to seeding and raked into top surface e.g. GroRight Lawn Establishment fertiliser by Rolawn Ltd, slow-release granular fertiliser, 7:10:10 NPK, or equal and approved by Landscape Architect.

The area(s) is to be seeded between April and October with approved grass seed mix, as specified in the planting schedules at the specified rate. Following seeding, areas are to be hand raked and lightly rolled.

The contractor shall take the necessary precautions to ensure all grass areas are protected throughout the establishment period, with the use of chestnut pale fencing where appropriate.

The contractor shall ensure that all seeded and turfed areas are watered fully at the time of installation to the full cultivated depth, and that sufficient subsequent watering is carried out to ensure healthy establishment of the grass sward.

Wildflower / Wet Meadow / Meadow Grass Seeding

Kill off any existing vegetation by spraying off with proprietary herbicide and allow a time to elapse as recommended by the manufacturer before commencing any cultivation works.

If time permits, a 'stale seed bed' is to be established, by allowing the graded meadow area to colonise with weeds from the existing soil seed bank following initial cultivation / rotovation and an additional application of proprietary herbicide applied to remove any weed growth.

Areas to be seeded are to be finely graded to bring to a uniform and even grade at the correct finished level and to remove all minor hollows and ridges. All stones and debris greater than 50mm in size to be removed and disposed of off-site.

Wildflower seeded areas are to consist of min. 150mm deep existing retained topsoil (free from weeds) subsoil mix (50:50) over existing site subsoil layer. No imported topsoil should be used in the formation of wildflower meadows. Where feasible/practible, topsoil should be fully stripped and seeding conducted into pre-prepared subsoil layer, however subsoil analysis will be required first to determine the need for any soil enhancement or enrichment in lieu of the topsoil strip.

Final preparation of the seeded areas shall be carried out as to create a medium tilth surface suitable for seeding.

No pre-seeding fertiliser shall be applied.

Wildflower seeded is to be undertaken preferably in Spring (Early March to late June) or if not feasible in Autumn (Mid August to October). Where sowing rates are low and sowing is to be undertaken by hand broad-casting, the contractor should mix the seed evenly with a fine, dry sand to bulk up the sowing mixture. Seeding by this method should only be undertaken on calm days with no wind, after seeding, areas are to be hand raked and lightly rolled. Seed to the thoroughly mixed before seeding to ensure even distribution of different seed weights.

For sloped areas e.g. SuDS, consideration by the contractor should be given to the use of Hydroseeding techniques to improve establishment.

The contractor shall take the necessary precautions to ensure all grass areas are protected throughout the establishment period, with the use of chestnut pale fencing where appropriate.

The contractor shall ensure that all seeded areas are watered fully at the time of installation to the full cultivated depth, and that sufficient subsequent watering is carried out to ensure healthy establishment of the grass sward.

Wildflower Plug Planting (into existing grassland sward)

In the locations shown on the landscape plan, strim down any existing vegetation to a 300mm diameter area.

Dig out the 300mm diameter sod of earth with the existing vegetation left intact to a depth of approx. 200mm, keeping the entire sod intact. The earth sod should then be inverted on itself so the earth surface is exposed and firmed in place.

Install plug plants into the inverted sod by hand using a trowel, 3No. per sod, equally spaced across the surface and firm in place.

Plant Sourcing

All plant and seed material will be will be UK sourced and grown and wherever feasible, sourced from local suppliers in close proximity to the Site.

All plant material to be sourced from reputable suppliers with all necessary biosecurity and phytosanitary procedures in accordance with DEFRA guidelines.

General Planting Maintenance

All soft landscape areas to be maintained to BS7370-4:1993.

Sufficient watering should be undertaken by the contractor to establish and maintain healthy plant growth.

The first cut / mow of all amenity grass seeded / turf areas should be undertaken when the established sward reaches 35-50mm in height down to a height of 25mm, after which all amenity grassed areas should be maintained at a nominal height of 25mm (March to October). All arisings are to be removed from site and composted.

The first cut / mow of all meadow and wet meadow (wildflower) areas to be undertaken when the established sward reaches 50mm in height or weeds colonise to a height of 300mm (whichever is sooner), to a nominal height of 25-35mm.

For spring sown meadows/wet meadows, the second cut should take place about 8 weeks after sowing, after which establishing meadow should be cut monthly down to 100mm during the first growing season to control weed growth, after which all meadow grass areas should be cut twice annually (June and September), to a nominal height of 100mm, once any wildflowers have set seed.

For autumn sown meadows/wet meadows, the second cut should take place in April, after which establishing meadow should be cut monthly down to 100mm during the first growing season to control weed growth, after which all meadow grass areas should be cut twice annually (June and September), to a nominal height of 100mm, once any wildflowers have set seed.

All meadow arisings should be left lying for 48hrs before being removed from site and composted.

Meadow areas should be hand-weeded or spot swiped for any perennial weeds such as docks, nettles and ragwort.

All failed / defective plants identified within the first 5 years of installation should be replaced by the contractor at the soonest available planting season to ensure a continued coverage of growth. Replacement plants should be of the same species and specification of the failed specimens.

Bare areas and areas of dead grass which become apparent should be rectified by overseeding and/or turf re-installation at the soonest available planting season.

All amenity grassed areas and planting beds should receive an application of a proprietary slow release fertilizer twice yearly in the spring and the autumn.

All shrub planting and formal hedges shall be pruned at least twice per annum, removing dead or dying wood, to maintain a healthy, natural shape and promote good form.

Dead heading of herbaceous plants including flowering marginal aquatic plants, should be undertaken following flowering.

All planting areas should be kept tidy and free from weeds, trimmings, debris and litter. Weeds should be removed by hand unless where it is unfeasible; whereby weeds can be treated by the application of a suitable proprietary herbicide.

NB:- Herbicide usage to be limited to spray usage on calm days (no wind) and undertaken by suitably qualified operatives in accordance with current legislation.

Tree stakes, ties and guards should be checked annually for adjustment and/or replacement/removal as required.

LEGEND

SITE BOUNDARY

Existing

EXISTING TREES/VEGETATION

Softworks

EXTRA-HEAVY STANDARD TREE PLANTING

HEAVY STANDARD TREE

STANDARD TREE PLANTING

NATIVE HEDGE PLANTING

AG4 — **AMENITY GRASS SEEDING -** 'A22 (Low Maintenance) seed mix by Germinal Seeds Ltd or equal and approved. 50g / m², overseed rate: 20g / m².

NSM — **NATIVE SCRUB/THICKET MIX**

WF1 — **WILDFLOWER MEADOW MIX -** 'WFG8 Hedgerows and Shaded Areas Mix' by Germinal Seeds Ltd or equal and approved. 5g / m²

WF2 — **WET WILDFLOWER MIX -** 'WFG9 Wetland and Pond Areas Mix' by Germinal Seeds Ltd or equal and approved. 5g / m²

MARGINAL AQUATIC PLANTING

Hardworks

BITUMINOUS MACADAM SURFACE - to vehicular areas to engineers details and specification.

SURFACE DRESSED MACADAM - 6-10mm light grey colour loose aggregate laid over single layer of hot-applied bitumen emulsion, lightly rolled once laid with rubber drum. Finished level to be flush with adjacent level.

BITUMINOUS MACADAM SURFACE - to footpath to engineers details and specification.

Boundary Treatments

ACOUSTIC FENCING - 3000mm high acoustic fencing

Rev	Date	By	Description
A	27/01/26	AC	Updates to landscape scheme in line with new layout

Drawing Status

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Project	Wyvols Court Farm, Basingstoke Road, Swallowfield
Title	Landscape Plan
Client	Wyvols Court Farm

Scale	1:500 @ A1	Drawn	AC
Date	December 2025	Checked	CA
Drawing No.	CSA/7728/112	Rev	A

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