

# MIDDLE LYPIATT HOUSE, STROUD

## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



VIS1089lvia



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## 1.0 Executive Summary

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- i. LVIA Ltd were instructed to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment for a single storey extension and internal alterations to Garden Cottage, conversion of existing outbuilding to ancillary accommodation, new access driveway, erection of garage building and associated works located at Middle Lypiatt House, Stroud by [REDACTED] in December 2019. The site and its surrounding landscape were assessed and a total of six viewpoints were selected to represent a variety of receptors in the surrounding area.
- ii. The aim of this report is to provide an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of a proposed development upon the receiving landscape, in line with current legislation and guidance. It comprises two main assessments, the first for landscape and the second for visual effects.
- iii. The assessment has been conducted in line with published best practice guidelines and includes a desk study; (review of local plan policies, published landscape character assessment and production of a computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)) and onsite observations.
- iv. The site is currently located adjacent to Middle Lypiatt House and forms part of a well maintained garden within which sits planting beds and mature trees. The site sits adjacent to existing residential buildings. The site sits in an undulating landform that falls to the east and becomes steeper beyond the residential curtilage where woodland sits along valley sides.
- v. Due to the existing local area, the proposed scheme would not be out of character with its surroundings when considered as part of the wider landscape. The site sits within the Cotswold AONB.
- vi. Mitigation measures have been suggested to aid the schemes visual blending with the existing environs.
- vii. Six viewpoints were considered and of these none were considered to be subject to material visual impacts.
- viii. With the implementation of a successful mitigation strategy, at a residual stage the overall impact on the landscape is considered to have a negligible overall effect on the surrounding landscape character and a negligible effect on the visual impact. It should be considered that this type of development is not out of character within the receiving landscape.

## 2.0 Introduction

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- 2.1.1 LVIA Ltd were commissioned by [REDACTED] in December 2019, to carry out a landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development located at Middle Lypiatt House, Stroud.
- 2.1.2 The brief was to assess the likely landscape and visual impact of the development and identify the degree of change over the existing use and site conditions.
- 2.1.3 The field survey was carried out during February 2020, and all viewpoints were chosen from publicly accessible vantage points.
- 2.1.4 Particular attention was paid to the potential views of receptors of high sensitivity, e.g. users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW).
- 2.1.5 Landscape and visual impact assessments can be defined as a mechanism by which the landscape can be assessed against its capacity to accommodate change. The aim of this report is to provide an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development upon the receiving landscape, in line with current legislation and guidance.

### **The Site**

- 2.1.6 The site is accessed from the existing access to Middle Lypiatt House and the proposals are for a single storey extension and internal alterations to Garden Cottage, conversion of existing outbuilding to ancillary accommodation, new access driveway, erection of garage building and associated works.
- 2.1.7 The site is currently located adjacent to Middle Lypiatt House and forms part of a well maintained garden within which sits planting beds and mature trees. The site sits adjacent to existing residential buildings. The site sits in an undulating landform that falls to the east and becomes steeper beyond the residential curtilage where woodland sits along valley sides.
- 2.1.8 The site sits with the Cotswold AONB.

## 3.0 Methodology

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- 3.1.1 In conjunction with the landscape survey and assessment of the study area, a detailed visual survey has been undertaken in order to assess any potential visual impact of the development. In order to evaluate what the visual impact of the development will be and what can be done to ameliorate the impact, it is necessary to describe the existing situation to describe a basis against which any change can be assessed.
- 3.1.2 As a matter of best practice the assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the advisory guidelines set out in the document - "Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition", published by The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment (2013).
- 3.1.3 The landscape assessment includes a baseline study that describes, and evaluates the existing landscape and visual resources, focusing on their sensitivity and ability to accommodate change.
- 3.1.4 The prime objective is to minimise the potential impact of the development by minimising the potential for visual impact wherever possible.
- 3.1.5 Information regarding the site and surroundings was gathered from Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photographs and on-site observations.
- 3.1.6 In order to assist in the assessment of the potential visual effects of any development, a computer-generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been modelled. The computer ZTV is used as a working tool to inform the assessment team of the extent of the zone within which the proposed development may have an influence or effect on landscape character and visual amenity and the areas within which the study area together with site survey work should be concentrated. It should be noted that this is a topographical information based exercise with no account being taken of the potential effects of vegetation or buildings on views.
- 3.1.7 Landscape has two separate but closely related aspects; firstly is the impact on the character of the landscape which includes responses that are felt toward the combined effect of the development. The significance of this will depend partly on the number of people affected and also on the judgements about how much the changes will matter in relation to the human senses of those concerned. Secondly, visual impact, in contrast to landscape character, is perhaps less prone to being subjective. Visual impact may occur by means of intrusion and/or obstruction, where visual intrusion is impact on the view without blocking it and visual obstruction is impact on a view that would be hidden by the development.

**Table 1: Landscape Quality (or Condition)**

Landscape Quality (or Condition)	Typical Indicators
<b>Very High</b>	All landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Buildings are in local vernacular and materials. No detracting elements are evident
<b>High</b>	Most landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Most buildings are in local vernacular and materials. Few detracting elements are evident
<b>Medium</b>	Some landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Some buildings are in local vernacular and materials and some detracting elements are evident
<b>Low</b>	Few landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Few buildings are in local vernacular and materials. Many detracting or incongruous elements are evident
<b>Very Low</b>	No landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Buildings are not in local vernacular and materials. Detracting or incongruous elements are much in evidence

**Table 2: Landscape Value**

Landscape Value	Typical Indicators
<b>Very High</b>	Areas comprising a clear composition of valued landscape components in robust form and health, free of disruptive visual detractors and with a strong sense of place. Areas containing a strong, balanced structure with distinct features worthy of conservation. Such areas would generally be internationally or nationally recognised designations, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
<b>High</b>	Areas primarily containing valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition and lacking prominent disruptive visual detractors. Areas containing a strong structure with noteworthy features or elements, exhibiting a sense of place. Such areas would generally be national statutorily designated areas. Such areas may also relate to the setting of internationally or nationally statutory designated areas, such as AONB.
<b>Medium</b>	Areas primarily of valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition with low levels of disruptive visual detractors, exhibiting a recognisable landscape structure. Such areas would generally be non-statutory locally designated areas such as Areas of Great Landscape Value.
<b>Low</b>	Areas containing some features of landscape value but lacking a coherent and aesthetically pleasing composition with frequent detracting visual elements, exhibiting a distinguishable structure often concealed by mixed land uses or development. Such areas would be commonplace at the local level and would generally be undesigned, offering scope for improvement.
<b>Very Low</b>	Areas lacking valued landscape components or comprising degraded, disturbed or derelict features, lacking any aesthetically pleasing composition with a dominance of visually detracting elements, exhibiting mixed land uses which conceal the baseline structure. Such areas would generally be restricted to the local level and identified as requiring recovery.

**Table 3: Character Sensitivity**

Character Sensitivity	Typical Indicators
Very High	<p><b>Landscape elements:</b> Important elements of the landscape susceptible to change and of high quality and condition.</p> <p><b>Scale and Enclosure:</b> Small-scale landform/land cover/ development, human scale indicators, fine grained, enclosed with narrow views, sheltered.</p> <p><b>Manmade influence:</b> Absence of manmade elements, traditional or historic settlements, natural features and 'natural' forms of amenity parkland, perceived as natural 'wild land' lacking in man-made features, land use elements and detractors</p> <p><b>Remoteness and Tranquillity:</b> Sense of peace, isolation or wildness, remote and empty, no evident movement.</p>
High	<p><b>Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Very High criteria but exceed those for Medium</b></p>
Medium	<p><b>Landscape elements:</b> Important elements of the landscape of moderate susceptibility to change and of medium quality and condition.</p> <p><b>Scale and Enclosure:</b> Medium-scale landform/land cover/ development, textured, semi-enclosed with middle distance views.</p> <p><b>Manmade influence:</b> Some presence of man-made elements, which may be partially out of scale with the landscape and be of only partially consistent with vernacular styles.</p> <p><b>Remoteness and Tranquillity:</b> some noise, evident, but not dominant human activity and development, noticeable movement.</p>
Low	<p><b>Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Medium criteria but exceed those for Very Low.</b></p>
Very Low	<p><b>Landscape elements:</b> Important elements of the landscape insusceptible to change and of low quality and condition.</p> <p><b>Scale and Enclosure:</b> Large-scale landform/land cover/ development, Featureless, coarse grained, open with broad views.</p> <p><b>Manmade influence:</b> Frequent presence of utility, infrastructure or industrial elements, contemporary structures e.g. masts, pylons, cranes, silos, industrial sheds with vertical emphasis, functional man-made land-use patterns and engineered aspects.</p> <p><b>Remoteness and Tranquillity:</b> Busy and noisy, human activity and development, prominent movement.</p>



**Table 4: Landscape Visual Sensitivity**

Landscape Visual Sensitivity	Typical Indicators
Very High	<b>Visual interruption:</b> Flat or gently undulating topography, few if any vegetative or built features. <b>Nature of views:</b> <b>Densely populated, dispersed pattern of small settlements, outward looking settlement, landscape focused recreation routes and/or visitor facilities, distinctive settings, gateways or public viewpoints.</b>
High	Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Very High criteria but exceed those for Medium.
Medium	<b>Visual interruption:</b> Undulating or gently rolling topography, some vegetative and built features. <b>Nature of views:</b> <b>Moderate density of population, settlements of moderate size with some views outwards, routes with some degree of focus on the landscape.</b>
Low	Where, on the whole, indicators do not meet the Medium criteria but exceed those for Very Low.
Very Low	<b>Visual interruption:</b> Rolling topography, frequent vegetative or built features. <b>Nature of views:</b> <b>Unpopulated or sparsely populated, concentrated pattern of large settlements, introspective settlement, inaccessible, indistinctive or industrial settings.</b>

**Table 5: Definition of Magnitude of Landscape Impacts**

Magnitude	Description
Large	Total loss of or major alteration to key valued elements, features, and characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements considered being prominent and totally uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Would be at a considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape. Would cause a high quality landscape to be permanently changed and its quality diminished.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements, features, characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Would be out of scale with the landscape, and at odds with the local pattern and landform. Will leave an adverse impact on a landscape of recognised quality.
Small	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features, characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. May not quite fit into the landform and scale of the landscape. Affect an area of recognised landscape character
Negligible	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features, and characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Maintain existing landscape quality, and maybe slightly at odds to the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape.

3.1.8 'Material' landscape effects would be those effects assessed to be major or major/moderate and are indicated by shading in the following table.

**Table 6: Significance of Landscape Effects**

Magnitude	Sensitivity				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Large	Major	Major	Major/ moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ minor
Medium	Major	Major/ moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ minor	Minor/ negligible
Small	Moderate	Moderate/ minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Minor/ moderate	Minor	Minor/ negligible	Negligible	Negligible

3.1.9 The prediction and extent of effect cannot always be absolute. It is for each assessment to determine the assessment criteria and the significance thresholds, using informed and well-reasoned professional judgement supported by thorough justification for their selection, and explanation as to how the conclusions about significance for each effect assessed have been derived, as noted in GLVIA 3rd edition para 2.23-2.26 and 3.32-36.

3.1.10 In order to determine the magnitude of impact for any critical viewpoints of the subject site, whether in the immediate locality or further afield, the assessment of visual impact takes into account the;

- Sensitivity of the views and viewers (visual receptor) affected;
- Extent of the proposed development that will be visible;
- Degree of visual intrusion or obstruction that will occur;
- Distance of the view;
- Change in character or quality of the view compared to the existing.

3.1.11 The locations from which the proposed development will be visible are known as ‘visual receptors’. For the purposes of a visual assessment the visual receptors would be graded according to their sensitivity to change.

**Table 7: Visual Receptor Sensitivity**

Receptor Sensitivity	Description
High	Occupiers of residential properties. Users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape <b>Communities where the development results in changes in the landscape setting or valued views enjoyed by the community.</b>
Medium	People travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars, on trains or other transport routes where higher speeds are involved and views sporadic and short-lived. <b>People engaged in outdoor recreation where enjoyment of the landscape is incidental rather than the main interest.</b>
Low	People at their place of work, Industrial facilities.

**Table 8: Definition of Magnitude of Visual Impact**

Magnitude	Description
Very Large	<p>The development would result in a dramatic change in the existing view and/or would cause a dramatic change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would appear large scale and/or form the dominant elements within the overall view and/or may be in full view the observer or receptor.</p> <p>Commanding, controlling the view.</p>
Large	<p>The development would result in a prominent change in the existing view and/or would cause a prominent change in the quality and /or character of the view. The development would form prominent elements within the overall view and/or may be easily noticed by the observer or receptor.</p> <p>Standing out, striking, sharp, unmistakable, easily seen.</p>
Medium	<p>The development would result in a noticeable change in the existing view and/or would cause a noticeable change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would form a conspicuous element within the overall view and/or may be readily noticed by the observer or receptor.</p> <p>Noticeable, distinct, catching the eye or attention, clearly visible, well defined.</p>
Small	<p>The development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or character of the view. The development would form an apparent small element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor.</p> <p>Visible, evident, obvious.</p>
Very Small	<p>The development would result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or would form an inconspicuous minor element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor.</p> <p>Lacking sharpness of definition, not obvious, indistinct, not clear, obscure, blurred, indefinite.</p>
Negligible	<p>Only a small part of the development would be discernible and/or it is at such a distance that no change to the existing view can be appreciated.</p> <p>Weak, not legible, near limit of acuity of human eye.</p>

**Table 9: Significance of Visual Effects**

Magnitude	Sensitivity		
	High	Medium	Low
Very large	Major	Major	Major/moderate
Large	Major	Major/moderate	Moderate
Medium	Major/moderate	Moderate	Moderate/minor
Small	Moderate	Moderate/minor	Minor
Very Small	Minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

(Shaded areas show material effects)

## 4.0 Receiving Environment

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### 4.1 Existing Features

4.1.1 The overall landscape character of the site and its surroundings can be determined as the result of the relationship between landform, land cover, landscape elements and climate.

4.1.2 An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment which was published by Natural England in 2014 offers five key principles of Landscape Assessment at paragraph 1.4. These are given as:

- Landscape is everywhere and all landscape and seascape has character;
- Landscape occurs at all scales and the process of Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at any scale;
- The process of Landscape Character Assessment should involve an understanding of how the landscape is perceived and experienced by people;
- A Landscape Character Assessment can provide a landscape evidence base to inform a range of decisions and applications;
- A Landscape Character Assessment can provide an integrating spatial framework – a multitude of variables come together to give us our distinctive landscapes.

4.1.3 The site falls within national character area (NCA) 107 – Cotswolds; as defined by Natural England in their nationwide assessment.

4.1.4 The key characteristics of NCA 107 are defined as (characteristics of relevance to the site and context have been emboldened for ease of reference):

- Defined by its underlying geology: a dramatic limestone scarp rising above adjacent lowlands with steep combes, and outliers illustrating the slow erosion of escarpments. The limestone geology has formed the scarp and dip slope of the landscape, which in turn has influenced drainage, soils, vegetation, land use and settlement.
- Open and expansive scarp and high wold dipping gently to the southeast, dissected by river valleys.
- Arable farming dominates the high wold and dip slope while permanent pasture prevails on the steep slopes of the scarp and river valleys with pockets of internationally important limestone grassland.
- **Drystone walls define the pattern of fields** of the high wold and dip slope. On the deeper soils and river valleys, hedgerows form the main field boundaries.
- Ancient beech hangers line stretches of the upper slopes of the scarp, while oak/ash woodlands are characteristic of the river valleys. Regular blocks of coniferous and mixed plantations are scattered across the open high wold and dip slope.
- Large areas of common land, important for unimproved calcareous grassland, are characteristic of the scarp and high wold around the Stroud valleys and along the crest of the scarp to Cleeve Hill.

- The majority of the principal rivers flow south-eastwards forming the headwaters of the Thames with the exception of rivers in the west which flow into the River Avon and then the Severn Estuary.
- Rich history from Neolithic barrows, iron-age hill forts and Roman roads and villas to deserted medieval villages, grand country houses, cloth mills and Second World War airfields. The field patterns largely reflect both the medieval open field system, with fossilised areas of ridge and furrow, and later planned enclosures.
- Locally quarried limestone brings a harmony to the built environment of scattered villages and drystone walls, giving the area a strong sense of unity for which the Cotswolds are renowned. Bath stone is also famous and has been used for building since Roman times, both locally in the principal buildings and streets of Bath and more widely, for example for Buckingham Palace in London. Parkland, gardens and historic designed landscapes are features particularly of the dip slope and broad lowland, such as Lawrence Johnston's garden at Hidcote, and Heather Muir's garden at Kiftsgate, parkland at Stanway, Chastleton and Blenheim Palace.
- Prominent natural and built features in the landscape include the City of Bath WHS, Brailes Hill, Broadway Tower, Cleeve Hill, the Tyndale monument, Freezing Hill, Kelston Round Hill and Blenheim Palace WHS.

4.1.5 The site and its context exhibit very few of the characteristics of NCA 107, primarily the drystone walls forming field boundaries.

### **Sub-Regional Character**

4.1.6 Stroud Council produced a Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance documents in November 2000 which provides information about character information at the sub-regional level.

4.1.7 The site falls within landscape character type (LCT) Wold Tops, but close to the boundary of another LCT; Secluded Valleys, so may exhibit some characteristics of both types. The key characteristics of LCT Wold Tops are defined as follows (characteristics of relevance to the site and context have been emboldened for ease of reference):

- **Simple expansive character with long views giving the impression of a plateau.**
- Broad **undulating elevated topography.**
- Large scale strong visual pattern of fields and woodland.
- Lack of enclosure from hedgerow trees, scrub or building.
- Simple landcover textures.
- Extensive arable land use.
- **Linear shelterbelts and well-managed woodland blocks.**
- **Sparse settlement.**
- Lack of surface water.

4.1.8 The site and its context exhibit some of the characteristics of LCT Wold Tops, primarily the simple character of the area with some longer range views, the undulating topography, the shelterbelts and well managed woodlands and the spare settlement pattern.

4.1.9 The key characteristics of LCT Secluded Valleys are defined as follows (characteristics of relevance to the site and context have been emboldened for ease of reference):

- Enclosed, secluded character.
- Steep sides, concave narrow valley form; steeper upper slopes forming abrupt break of slope with Wold Tops landscape.
- Complex interlocking valley/ridge forms in some areas.
- **Extensive bands of deciduous ancient woodland along valley rims.**
- Tall hedges forming enclosure within the valleys with many hedgerow trees.
- Predominantly pastureland.
- Field size varies relative to degree of slope; more open character where valleys join and broaden out.
- Scrub and unimproved grassland on steep and broken slopes.
- Fast flowing streams draining to River Severn and tributaries.
- Dry stone walls on higher land.
- Settlement: larger settlements at valley mouth and junctions on flatter land; smaller settlements, e.g. cottages and mills along valley bottoms and along upper valley rims.

4.1.10 The site and its context exhibit very few of the characteristics of LCT Wold Tops, primarily the extensive bands of woodland along valley rims.

### **Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment**

4.1.11 The site sits within the Cotswolds AONB and the AONB body produced a landscape character assessment. The site falls within LCT 7 – High Wold. The key characteristics of this LCT are defined as follows (characteristics of relevance to the site and context have been emboldened for ease of reference):

- Broad, elevated, gently undulating plateau area dissected by a network of dry valleys with distinctive convex profile valley sides;
- expansive long distance views across the open plateau, and to distant hills beyond the Severn Vale;
- **elevated areas of plateau surrounded by deeply incised valleys;**
- predominantly arable land use with some improved pasture/grass leys, and very limited permanent pasture mainly confined to valley bottoms;
- **large scale, regular fields mainly enclosed by dry stone walls, together with hedgerows** with very occasional hedgerow trees, and post and wire fencing;



- small to moderate size geometric farm woodlands, many comprising small coniferous and broadleaved plantations and shelterbelts, and plantations bordering roads;
- settlement limited to small stone built villages and hamlets, generally within valleys, and isolated farmsteads and individual dwellings;
- network of mainly linear roads following ridge tops, and linking settlements;
- evidence of long period of occupation of the land;
- seasonal rotation of arable cropping patterns and improved grassland interrupts otherwise homogenous and simple land cover;
- remnants of once more extensive commons survive on the fringes of the escarpment;
- occasional active and disused limestone quarries located across the High Wold; and
- use of locally quarried stone for both walls and houses, frequently constructed in distinctive local vernacular.

4.1.12 The site and its context exhibit few of the characteristics of LCT 7 - High Wold, primarily the dry stone walls and hedgerows used to define fields and the landform.

4.1.13 The LCT is further subdivided into landscape character areas (LCA). The site falls within LCA 7B – Bisley Plateau. The LCA is described as follows (description of relevance to the site and context has been emboldened for ease of reference):

*Similarly to LCA 7A the Bisley Plateau has a complex and convoluted form, extending across the upland plateau to the west and north of Stroud and as far north as Birdlip. **The plateau projects extended 'fingers' of elevated and gently sloping land between a series of steep sided valleys.** Unlike LCA 7A, however, the plateau is detached from the main Cotswold escarpment by the re-entrant strike valleys of Painswick and Slad. (LCA 8A) Generally rising above 200m AOD, there are a number of higher 'summit areas' across the plateau, eg 267m AOD north of Bisley, and 303m AOD south of Birdlip. The area has a distinctive open character and although there are a number of nucleated plateau top villages, notably Bisley, Whiteway, Brimpsfield and Birdlip, it is generally sparsely populated in character. However, located on the edge of the character area, **the village of Bussage does have an urbanising influence on the High Wold** due to the development of football pitches, schools, allotments and horsiculture. There is much evidence of former occupation of the area including a number of tumuli and long barrows.*

*A prominent telecommunication mast is located at the extreme western limit of the plateau overlooking the town of Stroud below.*

4.1.14 The site and its context exhibit few of the characteristics of LCA 7B – Bisley Plateau, primarily the urbanising effect of Bussage and its landform of plateau 'fingers' between valleys.

### **Landscape Receptors**

4.1.15 The site is currently located adjacent to Middle Lypiatt House and forms part of a well maintained garden within which sits planting beds and mature trees. The site sits adjacent to existing residential buildings. The site sits in an undulating landform that falls to the east and becomes steeper beyond the residential curtilage where woodland sits along valley sides.

4.1.16 Some views of the built form of Bussage can be seen to the south east where vegetation does not form a visual barrier to potential views.

- 4.1.17 The site sits within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), but falls within no other areas of designation. Listed buildings sit adjacent to the proposals.
- 4.1.18 The site would be consistent with the current landscape character of both the site and its surrounding context, sitting as part of the existing built form of Middle Lypiatt House. With a successful mitigation strategy, the proposal would further integrate with its setting.

## 4.2 Limits to study Area

- 4.2.1 The limits to the study area have been determined by the visual envelope of the development site. This area has been adopted as the main study area, as it surrounds the site and may be considered likely to be most impacted by physical change.
- 4.2.2 In order to assist in the assessment of the potential visual effects of any development, a computer-generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been modelled. The computer ZTV is used as a working tool to inform the assessment team of the extent of the zone within which the proposed development may have an influence or effect on landscape character and visual amenity and the areas within which the study area together with site survey work should be concentrated. It should be noted that this is a topographical information based exercise with no account being taken of the potential effects of vegetation or buildings acting as a visual barrier. The ZTV is shown in Figure 3: Zone of Theoretical Visibility.
- 4.2.3 The initial study area was set to a radius of approximately 2.5km from the centre of the site (N51°44'28, W02°10'42) on the basis that, at this distance, this form of development, when seen by the human eye, would be hardly discernible or not legible.
- 4.2.4 Viewpoints have been detailed in table 10: Viewpoint Details which outlines location and rationale for selection.

**Table 10: Viewpoint Details**

No	Location	Distance and direction of view	Northing	Westing	Rationale for selection
1	PRoW MBL7	0.16km, N	51°44'23	02°10'41	Users of PRoW
2	Unnamed road	0.15km, E	51°44'29	02°10'50	Road users
3	Unnamed road	0.29km, S	51°44'38	02°10'43	Road users
4	Entrance to PRoW MBL120	0.86km, SW	51°44'48	02°10'11	Users of PRoW
5	Vatch Lane	1.03km, NW	51°44'03	02°10'06	Road users
6	PRoW MBL17	1.20km, NW	51°44'15	02°09'43	Users of PRoW

### 4.3 Views to the site

- 4.3.1 It is clear that, despite the study area being potentially visible from a wide variety of locations, at varying distances and from a limited number of private and public areas, that the visual envelope is actually quite limited.
- 4.3.2 The visibility of the site is dependent on a range of factors, including location of viewpoint, distance of view, the angle of the sun, time of year and climatic conditions. Of equal importance will be whether the site is seen completely or in part of the skyline, where land provides a backcloth and where there is a complex foreground or an expansive landscape surrounding the view. The aspect of dwellings and whether it is a main view or one from a secondary window less frequently used is also a consideration.
- 4.3.3 A photographic study of the site has been undertaken. The viewpoints are at varying distances from the site and have been selected to represent potential views seen by the most sensitive receptors from around the site.
- 4.3.4 The site visit has been undertaken during the winter months when vegetation has lost its foliage and is acting as less dense visual barriers and represents 'worst case scenario'. In months when vegetation has regrown its foliage, it will act as denser visual barriers and less views will be available.
- 4.3.5 The sensitivity of most of the local receptors is assessed as either high or medium as shown in table 7: Visual Receptor Sensitivity.
- 4.3.6 For the field assessment, a Canon EOS 500D camera with an 18-55mm lens was used, set at 35mm focal length. This is in line with best practice as shown in the Visual Representation of Development Proposals technical guidance note issued by the Landscape Institute (Technical Guidance Note 06/19).
- 4.3.7 The site was visited on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2020, the weather was clear and bright.

Viewpoint 1: View from PRow MBL7



Vp1	Panoramic View	<i>(Distance 0.16km looking north)</i>
Baseline Description	This is a view from PRow MBL7 looking north towards the proposed site. The local topography is undulating and rises to the north, with residential curtilage defined by hedgerows with trees, dry stone walls and post and rail fences. A small number of existing detached residential dwellings and outbuildings are set within large gardens in a small nucleated group.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the proposals will not be discernible due to the mature vegetation acting as a dense filter to potential views. In summer months when vegetation has regrown its foliage, fewer views of the landscape will be available due to it acting as a denser visual barrier.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the current built form that is situated in the nearby landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The proposal would result in no change in the view that would be discernible to an observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	High – Users of PRow
	Magnitude	Negligible
Significance of Effect		<i>Negligible – Not a material change</i>

Viewpoint 2: View from unnamed road



Vp2	Panoramic View	<i>(Distance 0.15km looking east)</i>
Baseline Description	This is a view from an unnamed road looking east towards the proposed site. The local topography falls to the east and allows some longer range views of the built form of the settlements of Eastcombe and Bussage beyond Toadsmoor Valley further to the east. A dry stone wall with a row of mature trees follows the road at this point defining a field in agricultural use. Middle Lypiatt House can be partly seen along with parts of its associated outbuildings.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the proposals will be partly visible with views limited by the falling landform. These views will sit adjacent to the existing built form and will read as part of Middle Lypiatt House with heavy visual filtering by existing mature trees that sit within the residential curtilage.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the current built form that is situated in the nearby landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	Only a small part of the proposal would be discernible to an observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	Medium – Road users Negligible
<i>Significance of Effect</i>		<i>Negligible – Not a material change</i>

Viewpoint 3: View from unnamed road



Vp3	Panoramic View	<i>(Distance 0.29km looking south)</i>
Baseline Description	This is a view from an unnamed road looking south towards the proposed site. The local topography falls to the east and allows some longer range views of the built form of the settlements of Eastcombe and Bussage beyond Toadsmoor Valley further to the south and east. A hedgerow follows the road at this point, defining a field in agricultural use with an associated storage structure. Middle Lypiatt House can be partly seen along with parts of its associated outbuildings beyond the mature row of trees that act as a visual filter to longer range views. .	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, views of the proposals will be very limited by the falling landform and mature vegetation that sits along the edge of the curtilage of Middle Lypiatt House.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the current built form that is situated in the nearby landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	Only a small part of the proposal would be discernible to an observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	Medium – Road users Negligible
<i>Significance of Effect</i>		<i>Negligible – Not a material change</i>

Viewpoint 4: View from entrance to PRow MBL120



Vp4	Panoramic View	<i>(Distance 0.86km looking south west)</i>
Baseline Description	This is a view from the entrance to PRow MBL120 looking south west towards the proposed site. The local topography forms a valley that falls to the south towards Toadsmoor Woods. Some views of the large detached residential dwellings set within large curtilages can be barely discerned along the unnamed road from which viewpoints 2 and 3 were taken. Mature trees and undergrowth follow the road at this point creating visual filters to wider views of the landscape.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the proposals will not be discernible due to the intervening vegetation and landform that sits between the site and the viewpoint acting as visual barriers.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the current built form that is situated in the nearby landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The proposal would result in no change in the view that would be discernible to an observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	High – Users of PRow Negligible
<i>Significance of Effect</i>		<i>Negligible – Not a material change</i>



Viewpoint 5: View from Vatch Lane



Vp5	Panoramic View	<i>(Distance 1.03km looking north west)</i>
Baseline Description	This is a view from a layby on Vatch Lane looking north west towards the proposed site. Toadsmoor Valley is well wooded and sits in the middle ground. Middle Lypiatt House can be partly seen, filtered by mature trees where the landform rises further to the north west in the nucleated group of residential dwellings and associated outbuildings. The wider landscape surrounding the built form is agricultural and laid out in fields defined by a combination of hedgerows with trees, fences and dry stone walls. Mature trees form a wooded backcloth to views.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, small parts of the proposals will be visible with views limited by the intervening mature vegetation. These views will sit adjacent to the existing built form and will read as part of Middle Lypiatt House with heavy visual filtering by existing mature trees that sit within the residential curtilage and wider landscape.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the current built form that is situated in the nearby landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The proposal would result in a barely perceptible change in the view that would be indistinct to an observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	Medium – Road users
	Magnitude	Very small
<i>Significance of Effect</i>		<i>Minor – Not a material change</i>

Viewpoint 6: View from PRow MBL17



Vp6	Panoramic View	<i>(Distance 1.20km looking north west)</i>
Baseline Description	This is a view from PRow MBL17 Lane looking north west towards the proposed site. Toadsmoor Valley that is well wooded in the middle distance. The wider landscape surrounding the built form is agricultural and laid out in fields defined by a combination of hedgerows with trees, fences and dry stone walls. Mature trees form a wooded backcloth to views. Telegraph poles can be seen crossing the landscape.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the proposals will not be discernible due to the intervening vegetation and landform that sits between the site and the viewpoint acting as visual barriers.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposals would be comparable to the current built form that is situated in the nearby landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The proposal would result in no change in the view that would be discernible to an observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity	High – Users of PRow
	Magnitude	Negligible
Significance of Effect	<i>Negligible – Not a material change</i>	

## 5.0 Characteristics of Proposal

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- 5.1.1 The proposed development is a single storey extension and internal alterations to Garden Cottage, conversion of existing outbuilding to ancillary accommodation, new access driveway, erection of garage building and associated works.
- 5.1.2 The construction of building elements, together with associated traffic, parking, lighting and security fencing can temporarily but substantially change the landscape character of an area and impact upon its existing visual and/or recreational amenity.
- 5.1.3 In order to minimise potential impacts, together with the optimum benefit for landscape character and visual amenity the proposals should provide environmental enhancement and make a positive contribution to the landscape, not only of the development itself, but to its wider setting. This should include visual barriers as close to the viewer as possible. Its principal objectives are to:
- Minimise views from residential areas.
  - Assist visual integration of the development.
  - Provide an internal site landscape structure and enhance internal road corridors.
  - Provide additional ecological elements to provide a benefit to green infrastructure and biodiversity. These will take the form of an orchard and restoration of the pond.
  - Reinforce the opportunity to maintain wildlife corridors at the site boundaries.
- 5.1.4 The initial construction phase will give rise to temporary, short term impacts. Any modifications or extensions that occur from time to time in the future will also give rise to this short term construction impact.
- 5.1.5 The site and its context have an overall weighted very high landscape character sensitivity due in most part to the sites location within the Cotswolds AONB. This conclusion was reached in line with the landscape character assessment criteria shown in tables 1 to 4 within this document.
- 5.1.6 The scale and nature of the proposal and its juxtaposition to other built form will have an overall weighted landscape impact that could be considered negligible as they are not uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the existing landscape and will maintain the existing landscape quality. This conclusion was reached in line with the definitions of magnitude landscape impact shown in table 5 within this document.
- 5.1.7 The overall weighted level of landscape effect can be considered minor/moderate (i.e. not a material change).
- 5.1.8 The visual impact and the significance of the impacts of the development on the open countryside have been assessed as potentially minor (i.e. not a material change) at the construction stage. Mitigation measures have been recommended to further reduce this limited impact at a residual stage and these are located in section 6.0 Conclusion.

## 6.0 Conclusion

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- 6.1.1 The scale and nature of the development and its juxtaposition to other agricultural development will have a very high landscape character sensitivity and the magnitude of change is negligible; therefore resulting in a level of landscape effect of minor/moderate (i.e. not a material change).
- 6.1.2 The visual effects are minimal due in most part to dense intervening vegetation between the viewer and site, the topography in the area and the similar agricultural setting of the proposed scheme.
- 6.1.3 For the proposed site and the surroundings during construction, an increase of delivery vehicles and people travelling to the works can be expected. These effects will be short lived however and will not require mitigation during the construction process.
- 6.1.4 The viewpoints assessed showed that parts of the site are visible from four of the six assessed and that none of these views can be considered to be subject to a material change. The majority of receptors in the local area can be considered high or medium, (users of PRow or road users). The visual impact of the development on the open countryside has been assessed, at worst case scenario, as minor (i.e. not a material change) this is mainly due to the limited nature of the proposals and the mature vegetation and undulating landform in the landscape.
- 6.1.5 Mitigation measures would include:
- Native tree and hedgerow planting to the site boundaries along with local species orchard tree planting;
  - Additional tree planting to reintroduce a historic landscape feature in the form of a circle of walnut trees;
  - Management and maintenance of existing surrounding hedgerow and trees;
  - External lighting to be minimised, kept at low level and louvered in line with best lighting practice to prevent light spill;
  - Glazing to be coated to prevent potential reflection of light;
  - The use of materials for the external envelope of the buildings which minimise potential visual intrusion and follow the local vernacular to aid visual blending, for example Cotswold stone.
- 6.1.6 With suitable mitigation measures, at a residual stage, the development will have a negligible visual impact (i.e. not a material change).

## 7.0 Appendices

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Figure 1: Ordnance Survey Map

Figure 2: Aerial Photograph

Figure 3: Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Figure 4: Viewpoint Location Plan

Figure 5: Designation Plan



**LEGEND**



Site boundary



For ordnance survey map legend, refer to:  
<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/legends/25k-raster-legend.pdf>

Client: Vision Planning

Scheme: Middle Lypiatt House, Stroud

Drawing: Ordnance Survey Plan

Figure No: 1

LVIA Ltd Ref: VIS1089

Scale: NTS@A3

Drawn: SC

Checked: JPF





LEGEND



Site boundary



Image supplied by Google Maps  
<https://maps.google.co.uk/>  
Accessed 17/03/2020

Client: Vision Planning

Scheme: Middle Lypiatt House, Stroud

Drawing: Aerial Photograph

Figure No: 2

LVIA Ltd Ref: VIS1089

Scale: NTS@A3

Drawn: SC

Checked: JPF

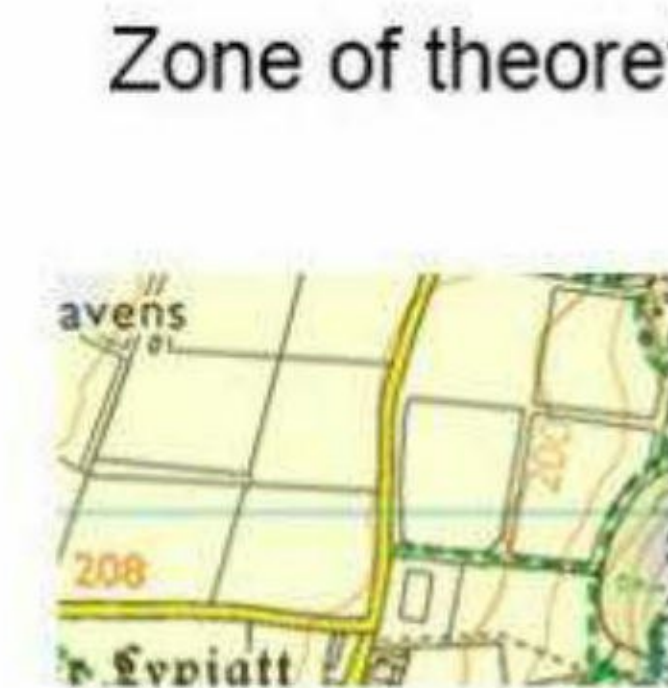




**LEGEND**



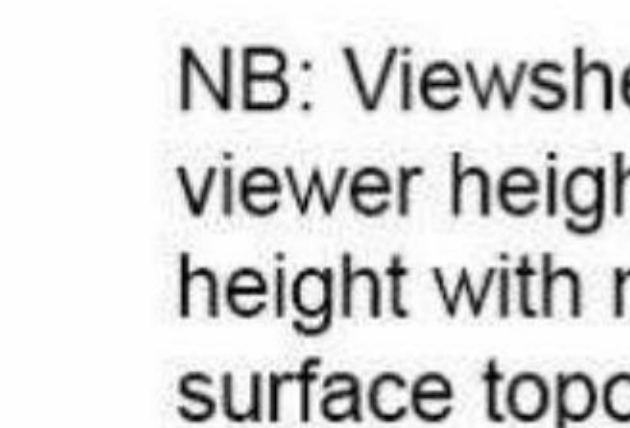
Site boundary



Zone of theoretical visibility



Yellow wash - Potential view



Grey wash - No potential view

NB: Viewshed analysis run with 1.6m viewer height and buildings at a 6.382m height with mapinfo and represents surface topography, without taking into account potential visual barriers in the form of trees, hedgerows, woodland, buildings and other manmade elements.



Client: Vision Planning

Scheme: Middle Lypiatt House, Stroud

Drawing: Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Figure No: 3

LVIA Ltd Ref: VIS1089

Scale: NTS@A3

Drawn: SC

Checked: JPF







**LEGEND**



Site boundary



Viewpoint location

Zone of theoretical visibility



Yellow wash - Potential view



Grey wash - No potential view

NB: Viewshed analysis run with 1.6m viewer height and buildings at a 6.382m height with mapinfo and represents surface topography, without taking into account potential visual barriers in the form of trees, hedgerows, woodland, buildings and other manmade elements.



Client: Vision Planning

Scheme: Middle Lypiatt House, Stroud

Drawing: Viewpoint Location Plan

Figure No: 4

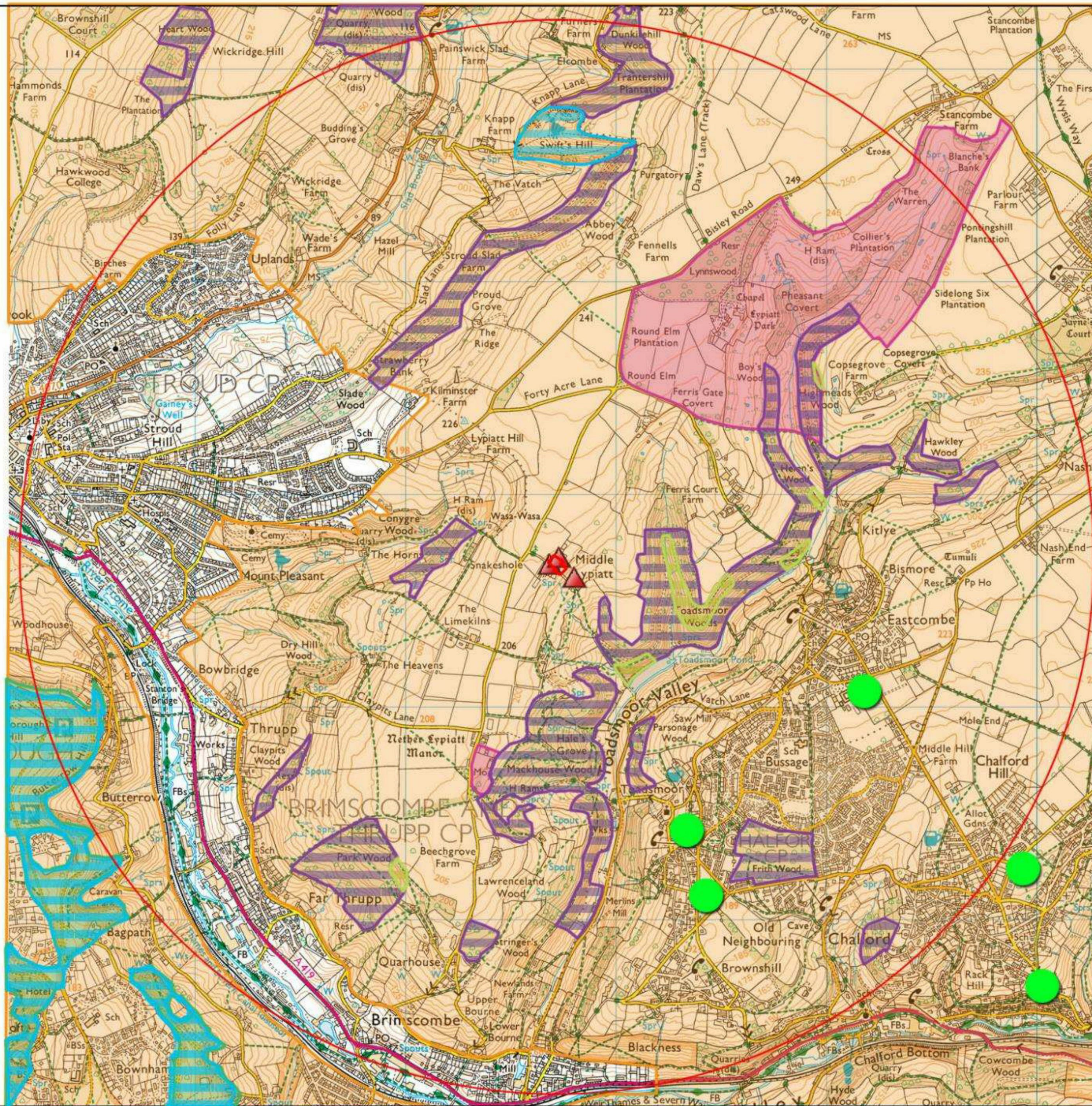
LVIA Ltd Ref: VIS1089

Scale: NTS@A3












Drawn: SC

Checked: JPF





**LEGEND**

-  Site Boundary
-  2.5km Radius
-  SSSI
-  Registered Common Land
-  Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
-  Ancient Replanted Woodland
-  Registered Parks and Gardens
-  AONB
-  Listed Buildings
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Town and Village Greens



Client: Vision Planning		
Scheme: Middle Lypiatt House, Stroud		
Drawing: Designations Plan		Figure No: 5
LVIA Ltd Ref: VIS1089		
Scale: NTS@A3	Drawn: SC	Checked: JPF





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