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PLANNING**

Part of the ES Group

LADYMEAD FARM,  
QUAINTON

## **Landscape & Visual Appraisal**

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## **PLANS**

<b>PLAN SLP.001</b>	Site Location Plan
<b>PLAN SCP.002</b>	Site Context Plan

## **APPENDICES**

<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology
<b>APPENDIX 2</b>	Extract from Natural England's Character Map of England – "Midvale Ridge" NCA109
<b>APPENDIX 3</b>	Extract from Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment – "Northern Vale" LCA 8.5
<b>APPENDIX 4</b>	Extract from "Defining the special qualities of local landscape designations in Aylesbury Vale District" (2016)
<b>APPENDIX 5</b>	Viewpoint Location Plan (VLP.003) and Photographic Record

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

1.1.1. ES Landscape Planning Ltd was instructed by Antony Barrett to assess the landscape and visual implications arising from the farm track, and associated fencing and planting, that has been constructed between Ladymead Business Park and The Willows at Ladymead Farm, Quinton. The site location is illustrated on Plan SLP.001.

### 1.2. Approach

1.2.1. The purpose of this assessment is to objectively assess the development in the context of the existing landscape character, visual environment and landscape related policy environment.

1.2.2. This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) will take the following format:

- Review of the site's context in terms of landscape related policy, existing landscape character and the receiving visual environment;
- Introduction of the development;
- Assessment of landscape and visual effects upon the existing receptors / resource and in relation to landscape related planning policy; and
- The conclusions of the assessment will be set out.

1.2.3. While this document does not represent a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), it has been prepared in accordance with the methodology that is included in Appendix 1. The methodology has been developed in line with guidance within Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third edition (GLVIA3), prepared by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and the Landscape Institute (LI) in 2013, to ensure an objective and transparent assessment of the potential effects of the development.

1.2.4. A suite of plans and photographs have been prepared to assist the assessment within this LVIA and these are referred to within the text. The photographs are included within Appendix 5.

## **2. BASELINE ASSESSMENT**

### **2.1. The Site**

- 2.1.1. The site lies to the north of The Willows, a minor road that extends north west, from the village of Quainton, to south east, towards Aylesbury. The site is associated with, and lies immediately adjacent to, Ladymead Farm and Business Park, a cluster of residential and commercial buildings set within a maturing landscaped context, which extends just to the west. The site currently crosses two large fields of improved grassland which has been subdivided for grazing use. The site is illustrated within its wider setting on the Site Location Plan (SLP.001).
- 2.1.2. The site currently comprises a gravel track, timber post and rail fencing and native hedgerows that extend north, from The Willows, towards the eastern edge of Ladymead Business Park. Timber gates have been installed into the boundary fencing where the Midshire's Way / Swan's Way public footpath crosses the site. The timber fencing reflects the fences which have been used to define the field boundaries within the immediate setting, as well as the main Ladymead Farm access drive which lies just to the west.
- 2.1.3. Vegetation on site is limited to managed grass verges and new native hedgerow planting either side of the track. Beyond the site, the key vegetation cover is located along the field boundaries, comprising a network of established hedgerows and scattered hedgerow trees. Woodland is largely absent, however there are small woodland copses located along the southern edge of the Ladymead Farm Business Park and occasionally in the corners of the surrounding arable fields. The site and its immediate setting are illustrated on the Site Context Plan (SCP.002) which accompanies this LVA.

### **2.2. The Site's Setting**

- 2.2.1. As noted above, the site lies to the south east of Quainton and Ladymead Business Park. A number of scattered farmsteads and cottages lie within the surrounding agrarian landscape, including Ladymead Farm, Banner Hill Cottage, Denham Hill Farm and Lower Farm, as well as the buildings within Ladymead Business Park. The landscape is generally undulating within the site's immediate setting, but rise steeply to the north, north east and north west forming a scarp slope to the Quainton Wing – Hills Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL). This elevated landscape affords a series of

broad, panoramic views out across the lower lying landscape to the south (refer to Viewpoints 8, 9, 10, 15 and 16 within Appendix 5). The wider landscape to the east, south and south west comprises a network of medium / large scale, rectilinear arable fields, demarcated by a strong network of field boundary hedgerows.

- 2.2.2. **Vegetation Cover** – As noted above, there is limited vegetation cover associated with the site itself, comprising grassed verged to the track and recently planted, native hedgerows either side. The site lies within a predominantly agrarian landscape characterised by a medium / large scale, geometric field pattern. The fields tend to be defined by mature native hedgerows which extend out across the landscape. Localised watercourses form more irregular, meandering boundaries, and tend to be defined by established lines of willows. Woodland cover is sparse within the wider landscape, although the mature hedgerows assist in creating a compartmentalised character and a degree of enclosure within the localised highway and public right of way network which crosses the vale. The site's vegetated setting is illustrated on the Site Context Plan.
- 2.2.3. **Topography** – The site is broadly flat, sitting at around 95m AOD. The site lies within a wider, gently undulating vale that falls gradually south west towards Westcott. To the north, north east and north west, the landform associated within the AAL is much more varied with a series of localised ridges and hills, allowing longer distance views out over the vale, reaching a high point of 187m AOD at Quainton Hill to the north west of the site.
- 2.2.4. **Public Rights of Way (PRoW)** – There is an established network of Public Rights of Way within the setting of the site. The Midshires Way and Swan's Way Promoted Routes are located on a north west to south east alignment, crossing through the centre of the site and providing onward walking routes north west towards Ladymead Farm and Quainton, and south east towards Waddesdon. Timber gates are provided on either side of the track to ensure unimpeded access across the site by walkers and riders. There are a number of other Promoted Routes, footpaths and bridleways that cross the arable landscape, largely associated with the AAL, which include Matthews Way, the North Buckinghamshire Way and the Outer Aylesbury Ring. The public right of way network is illustrated on the Site Location Plan.

## 2.3. Landscape Related Policy Background

- 2.3.1. The site is covered by the policies of the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013 - 2033 (adopted September 2021).
- 2.3.2. The site lies within the “Quainton – Wing Hills” Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) designation as identified within the adopted Local Plan.
- 2.3.3. It is considered that the following landscape related policies are of relevance:

*Policy BE2: Design of new development*

*Policy NE4: Landscape character and locally important landscape*

*Policy NE8: Trees, hedgerows and woodlands*

*Policy QP1: Quainton Settlement Boundary*

- 2.3.4. The Made Quainton Neighbourhood Plan (June 2022) is also a material consideration. Policy QP3 deals with development beyond the Conservation Area and is considered relevant to the application.
- 2.3.5. Section 4 of this LVA will assess the development in line with the landscape related policy of the NPPF and policies of the VALP and Quainton Neighbourhood Plan.

## 2.4. Landscape Character

- 2.4.1. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscape as “...an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors”.
- 2.4.2. As set out within “An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” (Christine Tudor, Natural England; October 2014) “**landscape character may be defined as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive.**”

2.4.3. As part of the baseline assessment, published landscape character assessments have been identified and reviewed and these form the basis of the assessment of the landscape character of the site.

#### Regional Landscape Character Assessment

2.4.4. Natural England have prepared the Character Map of England which provides a broad assessment of landscape character at a regional level. The site lies within the “Midvale Ridge” national character area (NCA109). An extract of the assessment is included within Appendix 2. It is noted that the assessment identifies a number of key characteristics associated with the “Midvale Ridge”, including:

- **“Low, irregular wooded limestone ridge giving way to a series of isolated steep-sided tabular hills in the east which rise from the surrounding clay vales.**
- **Contrast between the moderately elevated limestone hills and ridges and the surrounding low-lying clay vales.**
- **Drained mostly by small springs and streams which run into the Thames, Thame and Ock.**
- **Well wooded – a third of the woodland is designated ancient woodland.**
- **Mixed pastoral and arable landscape with large, geometric fields divided by hedges and regularly spaced hedgerow trees punctuated by blocks of woodland.**
- **Fragmented but rare and important semi-natural habitats, including acid grassland, calcareous fens and flushes, wet woodland and calcareous grass heaths particularly around Frilford and Cothill.**
- **Evidence of previous land use such as iron-age and Romano-British settlements and ridge and furrow through to old quarries still visible in the landscape.**
- **Locally quarried limestone commonly used as building material for local houses.**
- **Settlement pattern of nucleated villages on the hill tops and along the springline with low density of dispersed settlement.**
- **Recreational opportunities include the Thames Path National Trail.”**

2.4.5. The regional assessment is useful in introducing the wider landscape character context in which the site is set.

#### Local Landscape Character Assessment

2.4.6. At a more local level, Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council have undertaken the Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment (2008). An extract from the published assessment is included within Appendix 3. The site lies within the “Northern Vale” landscape character area (LCA 8.5). The published assessment identifies a series of key characteristics associated with the “Northern Vale” LCA which include:

- **“Virtually flat landform**
- **Network of meandering streams feeding into the River Thames**
- **Large open arable fields**
- **Recreational and amenity landscape on the northern fringe of Aylesbury**
- **Historic meadows”**

2.4.7. The assessment considers this LCA is of high sensitivity, noting that:

**“The area has a distinctive character and the historic associations are present in the various medieval and later earthworks but are being diluted by erosion of field pattern. Around the Quarrendon scheduled ancient monument the historic site has unique/rare distinctiveness. Overall the sense of place is moderate. The flat landform and sparse nature of tree cover provides for a high degree of visibility over the core of the area but this is reduced to moderate in the vicinity of the River Thames at Quarrendon due to the higher degree of tree cover. The overall degree of sensitivity is high.”**

2.4.8. The assessment considers that this LCA should be conserved and sets out a series of guidelines. These include the protection and enhancement of existing hedgerows and tree cover, reinforcement of the historic field pattern and preservation of the setting of the historic features associated with the LCA.

#### Quainton Wing – Hills Area of Attractive Landscape Assessment

2.4.9. As noted above, the site is located within the Quainton Wing – Hills AAL, the special qualities of which are outlined within the “Defining the special qualities of local landscape designations in Aylesbury Vale District” (2016). An extract from this document is included in Appendix 4. The published assessment identifies the following special qualities associated with the AAL:

- **“Distinctive landform of low, generally open limestone hills and ridges, enhanced by field boundaries which accentuate the shape of the undulating landform.**
- **Nucleated historic villages, often on hilltops, arranged consistently throughout the landscape and connected by a strong network of rural roads and footpaths. Landmark church towers provide focal points amongst the rhythm of hills and undulations. The landscape provides a strong setting to the many villages and Conservation Areas both within the area and in views from outside the area.**
- **The windmill at Quainton provides a recognisable landmark from Quainton Hill, and an interesting element in the foreground of views across the Vale of Aylesbury.**
- **Spectacular panoramic views from frequent vantage points, providing picturesque views across the undulating rural and agricultural landscape – e.g. the plateau landscape in the east of the area, of the Chilterns from Wingrave and from many of the villages.**
- **Strong sense of rural tranquillity, openness and a coherent landscape character. A lack of intrusion from developments that are out of character, gives prominence to the landscape character and landform, a sense of unity of agricultural land use and visual character of scattered hilltop villages.**
- **Cultural features providing a sense of history - many Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and landscape features such as ridge and furrow and irregular enclosed fields impart a strong sense of time depth to the landscape.**
- **Public rights of way and road network which enable views of and appreciation of the landscape.**
- **The importance of the hills in views from other areas of the district, providing a backdrop and sense of enclosure to Aylesbury Vale.**
- **Remaining ancient woodland in the west of the area that was once part of the medieval hunting forest of Bernwood, irregular and assart fields.”**

2.4.10. The track and associated fencing and landscaping are assessed against the findings of the various published assessments within Section 4 of this LVA.

## 2.5. The Visual Environment

2.5.1. As part of the initial desk study and the subsequent site visit, a number of key views have been identified which are taken from publicly accessible locations showing the site in its localised and wider landscape context. The viewpoints seek to reflect the views of the site by more sensitive receptors, such as walkers on the local public right

of way network, however, the viewpoints are considered representative and not exhaustive.

2.5.2. The viewpoints are illustrated on the Viewpoint Location Plan (VLP.003) within Appendix 5. The photographs were taken in August 2023. The day was overcast, however, there was good visibility at longer distances.

2.5.3. The photographs were taken with a Canon 35mm equivalent digital SLR. The camera is a full frame model so, in line with Landscape Institute TGN 06/19 – Visual Representation of Development Proposals, the photographs were taken at 50mm using a fixed focal length lens. The photographs are presented in Appendix 5 at a scale whereby they can be viewed at a distance of 260mm to represent the view from the particular location. The extent of the site is indicated on the photographs to assist the viewer’s understanding of where the site sits within the context of the view. It must be noted that the photographs are illustrative and do not replace visiting the viewpoints in person.

2.5.4. As part of the baseline visual assessment, key receptors have been identified and this has informed the overall assessment of sensitivity of the view. Table 1, below, identifies the locations, receptors and sensitivities of the key viewpoints.

*Table 1: Baseline Visual Assessment*

Viewpoint	Location	Key Receptors	Receptor Sensitivity
1	Midshires and Swan’s Way Promoted Routes, where they cross the site.	Walkers	High
2	Midshires and Swan’s Way Promoted Routes, approximately 170m west of the site.	Walkers	High
3	Access road for Ladymead Business Park, approximately 140m west of the site.	Employees within Business Park	Low
4	The Willows at gateway to Ladymead Business Park, approximately 200m west of the site.	Motorists	Medium

5	The Willows, adjacent to the southern boundary of the site.	Motorists	Medium
6	Junction of The Willows and Midshires / Swan's Way Promoted Routes, approximately 250m south east of the site.	Motorists Walkers	Medium High
7	Junction of Midshires and Matthew's Way Promoted Routes, approximately 425m north west of the site.	Walkers	High
8	Bridleway QUA 43/1, approximately 560m north of the site.	Walkers	High
9	Bridleway QUA 43/1, approximately 580m north of the site.	Walkers	High
10	Bridleway QUA 43/1, approximately 605m north of the site.	Walkers	High
11	Junction of Bridleway QUA 43/1 and Carters Lane, approximately 660m north of the site.	Walkers Motorists	High Medium
12	Matthew's Way Promoted Route, approximately 490m north east of the site.	Walkers	High
13	Unnamed Lane between The Willows and Church Street, approximately 900m west of the site.	Motorists	Medium
14	Junction of Matthew's Way Promoted Route and Church Street, approximately 1km west of the site.	Walkers Motorists	High Medium
15	North Buckinghamshire Way, approximately 1.6km north west of the site.	Walkers	High
16	Matthew's Way Promoted Route, approximately 1.4km north east of the site.	Walkers	High

2.5.5. As illustrated by the Photographic Record, views of the site are localised to the immediate as a result of the topography, built environment and vegetation cover that characterises the immediate setting of the site. Some elevated views across the wider

vale are possible from the elevated landscapes to the north, north east and north west of the site, however, Ladymead Farm is not a prominent feature within the settled landscape. Section 4.3 of this LVA assesses the effects of the development upon these views.

### 3. THE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. This is a retrospective application relating to the construction of the farm track with associated fencing and landscaping at Ladymead Farm, between The Willows and Ladymead Business Park.
- 3.2. The track, fencing and planting have been implemented and run broadly north – south from the eastern side of the Ladymead Farm development, across the two fields, down to The Willows. The access track extends to approximately 500m in length and is 4 metres wide. The track is constructed of 100mm depth of road plainings over a base of a 400mm layer of crushed hardcore. The track joins The Willows in the south eastern corner of the southern field and utilises an existing field access off the road. The hardstanding is located at the northern end of the track, adjacent to Ladymead Farm, and an existing area of hardstanding and surface storage, and is of similar construction and extends to approximately 1,600m<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.3. An existing established hedgerow defines the northern edge of the area of hardstanding with a new, landscaped bund wrapping around the eastern and southern edges of this element. Established landscaping associated with the wider Ladymead Farm development encloses the hardstanding to the west. Native hedgerow plants have been planted along its entire length and it is contained within a 1.5m high timber post and rail fence. Where the promoted routes cross the track, timber gates have been installed ensuing unimpeded access for walkers and riders on the bridleway.

## 4. ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE & VISUAL EFFECTS

### 4.1. Background

- 4.1.1. In line with the guidance in GLVIA3, it is appropriate to assess the effect of the development upon the baseline landscape character and visual environment as identified in Section 2 of the LVA. As noted in the introduction, while this LVA does not represent a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) it has been undertaken in accordance with the methodology, that is included in Appendix 1, and which reflects the approach recommended within GLVIA3 to ensure an objective and transparent assessment of the development in terms of its landscape and visual effects.

### 4.2. Effect upon Landscape Character

#### Regional Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.2.1. With regard to the effect of the development upon the “Midvale Ridge” national character area (NCA 109), the assessment sets out a series of key characteristics which define this undulating rural landscape, as set out in Section 2 and Appendix 2.
- 4.2.2. The scheme comprises a gravel access track which crosses two large pastoral fields between The Willows and Ladymead Business Park. The track is enclosed by timber post and rail fences along which mixed native hedgerow planting has recently been established. This is set within grass verges which line the track.
- 4.2.3. The site lies within a settled landscape defined by a mix of arable and pastoral land uses which extend across a large scale, geometric field pattern defined by hedges and scattered hedgerow trees. This part of the NCA is characterised by a number of scattered farmsteads and properties which tend to be set back from the local highway network and accessed via private tracks / drives which follow the geometric field pattern. These drives are often lined by timber post and rail fences and / or hedgerows, creating defensible edges to the wider field network. There are numerous examples within the localised setting of the site, including Ladymead Farm and Business Park, approximately 150m west of the site, Lower Denham Farm, which includes a hard surfaced track extending south from The Willows, approximately 260m west of the site, and with the approach to the various properties associated with Denham, including Denham Hill Farm, approximately 550m north of the site, and

Denham Lodge to the north west. Gravel / hardcore access tracks, lined by post and rail fences and hedgerows are considered to be existing components within the NCA. The development, therefore, would not be at odds with this character or represent alien features. The track extends back from The Willows, broadly parallel to the existing Ladymead Farm access, reflecting the geometric field pattern. The boundary treatments of the track also reflect those present elsewhere locally. The track does not affect an appreciation or understanding of those features which are considered characteristic of the wider NCA, such as the topography, land use, heritage, settlement pattern or public access.

4.2.4. Nor does the presence of the track compromise the ability to achieve the various aims and objectives set out within the Statements of Environmental Opportunities. The track does not compromise the local distinctiveness or sense of place associated with the NCA and appears well-integrated within this landscape setting. The track has not adversely affected any existing woodlands or hedgerows and has not resulted in the loss of any valuable, semi-natural habitats. It is concluded that the track, and its associated means of enclosure, can be integrated without harm to the “Midvale Ridge” NCA. Overall, the effect of the introduction of the track into this landscape is considered to be Neutral.

#### Local Landscape Character Assessment

4.2.5. As noted within Section 2, the site is located within the “Northern Vale” LCA as identified within the Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment. The published assessment identifies a number of key characteristics associated with the LCA and it is considered appropriate to assess the effect of the development against each of these to assess the overall effect upon the LCA. This is set out in Table 2 below.

*Table 2: Effect on Published Landscape Characteristics*

Key Characteristics of the “Northern Vale” LCA	Effect of the Development
<i>Virtually flat landform</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The track did not require any ground remodeling and does not affect the perception of the flat, vale landscape that characterises the LCA.

<p><i>Network of meandering streams feeding into the River Thames</i></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b> – The site is located away from the nearest watercourse and, as such, the track has not affected the hydrology of the LCA.</p>
<p><i>Large open arable fields</i></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b> – The track has resulted in the loss of a narrow strip of land from agricultural use, extending across two large, geometric fields between The Willows and Ladymead Business Park. The land lost comprised improved grassland, which is not considered to be of ecological interest and does not reflect the wider arable landscape. The track has been aligned to reflect the geometric field pattern, running parallel to the local field boundaries and the existing drive to Ladymead Farm. The track does not compromise the perception of a larger scale network of fields.</p>
<p><i>Recreational and amenity landscape on the northern fringe of Aylesbury</i></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b> – The track is located well away from Aylesbury and its associated amenity landscapes. There are a number of public rights of way within the immediate and wider setting of the site, including the Midshires and Swan’s Way Promoted Routes which cross the track. The track has maintained the existing alignment of these routes, incorporating timber gates to ensure that the public’s ability to access the countryside is not affected and secure field boundaries are achieved.</p>
<p><i>Historic meadows</i></p>	<p><b>No Change</b> – As noted above, the site crosses two larger fields of improved grassland rather than species-rich meadows and would not compromise the historic field boundaries. The nature of the development is considered in keeping with the localised setting, with a number of farmsteads and properties set back from the local highway network and accessed by hard surfaced tracks bound by fences and hedgerows.</p>

4.2.6. As set out above, it is considered that the introduction of the track, and associated boundary treatments, has not affected any of the key characteristics identified by the published assessment as defining the “Northern Vale” LCA. The scheme does not represent the introduction of built form into this landscape and the track is not at odds with the rural character of the LCA. As noted in this assessment, it is considered that

there are a number of examples of access tracks / drives within the localised setting of the site, within this LCA. These are characterised by hard surfacing, typically running parallel to field boundaries with a mix of timber post and rail or hedgerows creating defensible edges between the routes and the wider fields. The photographs within Appendix 5 illustrate some of the other examples locally.

- 4.2.7. The introduction of the track has not compromised the perception of the localised vale topography and has not resulted in the loss of any arable land or important semi-natural habitats. Nor is the track at odds with the geometric character or scale of the local field pattern. The track reflects the alignment of the existing Ladymead Farm access which links through to the various farmsteads at Denham. The track incorporates timber post and rail fencing which is a characteristic feature within the localised setting and mixed native hedgerows have been established along both sides of the route. These are considered positive from a biodiversity perspective and complement the field boundary hedgerows which characterise this LCA and define the field pattern. The track has not affected any existing treescape associated with the LCA and the client has implemented new planting around the area of hardstanding which will mature to reinforce the vegetated setting of Ladymead Farm as well as contain views of the hardstanding from the public rights of way to the south.
- 4.2.8. The track does not lie within the landscape setting of any important heritage assets and has not resulted in the loss of any historic features. The track does cross the Midshire's Way and Swan's Way promoted routes, but incorporates accessible timber gates to ensure that access along the bridleway by walkers and riders is unaffected. Timber post and rail fences are an existing feature within the setting of these routes, being used to sub-divide the larger fields to create defensible paddocks. The track and associated boundary features do not affect the overall perception of a larger scale, agricultural landscape.
- 4.2.9. It is noted that the published assessment refers to a high degree of visibility across the core of the LCA. As illustrated by the localised viewpoints in Appendix 5, the site is set within an established, low lying, landscaped setting, which is characterised by similar features. The track and associated boundary treatments do not affect the visibility across the LCA, nor are they considered prominent or out of place.
- 4.2.10. When considered in this landscape context, it is considered that the track, fencing and hedgerows are entirely in keeping with this part of the LCA and do not lead to the creation of alien features which would be at odds with the rural character. Given

the nature and the scale of the development it is considered that the track does not adversely affect the character of the “Northern Vale” LCA. It is considered that there is no perceptible change to the character of the “Northern Vale” LCA and, as such, the overall effect of the track, fencing and hedges, is Neutral.

- 4.2.11. As noted above, the site is located within the “Quinton – Wing Hills” Area of Attractive Landscape, as identified within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 – 2033 (Adopted September 2021).
- 4.2.12. The supporting assessment, “Defining the special qualities of local landscape designations in Aylesbury Vale District” identifies a series of special qualities associated with the AAL and it is considered appropriate to assess the development against these qualities to understand the effect of the track and associated boundary features upon the “Quinton – Wing Hills” AAL (refer Table 3).

Table 3: Effect on the “Quinton – Wing Hills” AAL

Special Qualities of the “Quinton – Wing Hills” AAL	Effect of the Development
<i>Distinctive landform of low, generally open limestone hills and ridges, enhanced by field boundaries which accentuate the shape of the undulating landform.</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The track has not required any ground remodeling that would affect the public’s perception and appreciation of the characteristic landform of the AAL. The alignment of the track, together with the associated post and rail fencing and mixed native hedgerow, reflects the geometric character of the field pattern in the vale, which forms the setting for the hills.
<i>Nucleated historic villages, often on hilltops, arranged consistently throughout the landscape and connected by a strong network of rural roads and footpaths. Landmark church towers provide focal points amongst the rhythm of hills and undulations. The landscape provides a strong setting to the many villages and Conservation Areas both within the area and in views from outside the area</i>	<b>Neutral</b> – The track is located away from Quinton and its Conservation Area and does not affect the perception of the historic village or its setting. The track has not affected the alignment of any public rights of way associated with the localised or wider setting of the site or Quinton, incorporating gates across the route to ensure unimpeded access for walkers and riders.

<p><i>The windmill at Quainton provides a recognisable landmark from Quainton Hill, and an interesting element in the foreground of views across the Vale of Aylesbury</i></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b> – The development is located approximately 1.4km away from this focal point, set within a well-vegetated and very gently undulating landscape. These existing features, together with the low level nature of the track, ensure that there is no intervisibility between the windmill and the access track and the scheme does not affect views towards this landmark from the localised or wider public realm.</p>
<p><i>Spectacular panoramic views from frequent vantage points, providing picturesque views across the undulating rural and agricultural landscape – e.g. the plateau landscape in the east of the area, of the Chilterns from Wingrave and from many of the villages.</i></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b> – As illustrated by Views 8, 9, 10, 15 and 16 within Appendix 5, the site is set down within the landscape and afforded a degree of integration by the mature structure planting that surrounds Ladymead Business Park. The views illustrate the presence of other tracks, runs of timber post and rail fencing and native hedgerow field boundaries within the localised setting of the site. These features form part of the existing settled landscape and ensure that the elements associated with the site do not appear alien or out of character within these broad panoramic views. The development does not affect the public’s ability to experience or enjoy views out across the wider vale from these elevated landscapes.</p>
<p><i>Strong sense of rural tranquillity, openness and a coherent landscape character. A lack of intrusion from developments that are out of character, gives prominence to the landscape character and landform, a sense of unity of agricultural land use and visual character of scattered hilltop villages.</i></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b> – As noted above, it is considered that the timber post and rail fence, native hedgerow and agricultural access track would be entirely in keeping with the localised landscape character. The scheme is located within the lower lying parts of the vale, away from the established hilltop villages and represents a discrete feature within this rural landscape. The scale of the development ensures that it does not give rise to the perception of the wider Ladymead Farm development extending out into the wider countryside and does not result in any additional light or noise beyond the activities already associated with Ladymead Business Park or the surrounding road network. The track is ancillary, related more closely to the agricultural activities at Ladymead Farm rather than the commercial uses and adopts a recessive, rural appearance. The track does not increase traffic movements within this landscape, and it is considered that it can be integrated without detriment to the perceived tranquility of the AAL.</p>

<p><i>Cultural features providing a sense of history - many Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and landscape features such as ridge and furrow and irregular enclosed fields impart a strong sense of time depth to the landscape.</i></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b> – The site is located well away from any Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments or other heritage assets. It is considered that the track does not affect the historic and cultural context of this landscape. As noted above, the track and its associated fencing and hedgerow respect the prevailing large-scale, geometric field pattern and would not affect the public’s appreciation and understanding of this active, agricultural landscape.</p>
<p><i>Public rights of way and road network which enable views of and appreciation of the landscape.</i></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b> – As above, the track does not affect the public’s ability to access and enjoy the countryside. Where the track is visible, it is seen in the context of the existing settled and active agricultural landscape associated with the vale which forms the setting of the hills. Other examples of fenced in tracks are present within the localised landscape setting and are perceived from the public realm. The track does not, therefore, represent a new or alien component within the context of the localised and wider public right of way network. The track does not affect views towards, or the appreciation of, the rising landform, nor does it harm any panoramic views out across the vale from the Hills.</p>
<p><i>The importance of the hills in views from other areas of the district, providing a backdrop and sense of enclosure to Aylesbury Vale.</i></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b> – The scheme is small scale and discrete, located within the lower lying vale landscape and does not project above the existing vegetation that characterises the immediate setting of the site. The scheme does not affect any longer distance views towards, or the appreciation of, the Quainton – Wing Hills AAL.</p>
<p><i>Remaining ancient woodland in the west of the area that was once part of the medieval hunting forest of Bernwood, irregular and assart fields</i></p>	<p><b>Neutral</b> – There is no ancient woodland associated with the site and the track would not affect the irregular field patterns which characterise other parts of the wider AAL. As established within this assessment, it is considered that the site is located within a larger scale, geometric field pattern which the track has responded positively to.</p>

4.2.13. It is acknowledged that the designated nature of the landscape elevates the sensitivity of this landscape setting, however, the track represents a small scale, discrete addition into the context of the AAL, located within the lower lying part of the landscape and within an established landscaped setting. Other examples of access tracks, timber post and rail fencing and hedgerows, reinforcing the geometric field pattern are evident within the localised setting of the site and this part of the AAL. It is concluded that the track and its associated fencing and hedges do not affect the special qualities or distinctiveness of this landscape setting and can be integrated into the “Quainton – Wing Hills” AAL without detriment. Indeed, it is considered that in the longer term, there would be a small betterment to the network of field boundaries as a result of the new native hedgerows which have been planted along the length of the track.

4.2.14. It is concluded that the agricultural track, together with the associated timber post and rail fencing and native hedgerows, can be integrated into this landscape setting without any notable adverse landscape effects upon the special features and characteristics that define the “Midvale Ridge” NCA, the “Northern Vale” LCA or the “Quainton – Wing Hills” Area of Attractive Landscape.

### 4.3. Effect upon the Visual Environment

4.3.1. Table 4, below, assesses the effect of the development upon the identified key views which are included within Appendix 5.

*Table 4: Assessment of Visual Effects*

Viewpoint(s)	Location	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance
1	Midshires and Swan’s Way Promoted Routes, on site.	High	Low	<b>Moderate Adverse at Year One</b>  <b>Negligible Adverse / Neutral at Year Fifteen</b>

*Assessment:* It is acknowledged that the track and associated fencing is visible from these Promoted Routes. However, the small scale and agricultural nature of the track would ensure that it does not appear as an uncharacteristic or alien feature within the agrarian landscape, nor would it appear prominent or overbearing within the view. The timber post and rail fence and native hedgerow reflect existing features found within the localised context of the promoted routes, including within Ladymead Business Park and around Denham Hill Farm. Once the native hedgerow has established, this will help to soften the perceived extents of the track and fencing from views adjacent to the site, helping to integrate them into this agricultural setting. Mi native hedgerows are a characteristic feature in this landscape and the scheme will not appear out of character in this context. It is considered that the track and associated boundary treatments will not give rise to any notable long term effects upon this view and can be integrated without detriment to the character of the promoted routes. The scheme includes gates through the timber post and rail fencing ensuring that the public's ability to enjoy the bridleway and its setting are not impeded.

2	Midshires and Swan's Way Promoted Routes, approximately 170m west of site.	High	Negligible	<p><b>Negligible Adverse at Year One</b></p> <p><b>Negligible Beneficial at Year Fifteen</b></p>
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*Assessment:* From this location, it is acknowledged that the timber post and rail fence is visible from this location, however, it is seen in the context of other fencing within the wider setting which ensures that post and rail fencing is an existing component of the local visual environment. The fencing is not considered to be at odds with the character and qualities of the view. The level topography of the wider field ensures that views of the track are not evident from this location. At Year 15, once the native hedgerow has matured, this will further integrate the track and fencing, reinforcing the vegetated setting of the site and blending the scheme into the agricultural context of the view. Longer distance views out across the AAL and towards the Chilterns AONB escarpment are unaffected by the track, its fencing or the hedgerows. It is considered that the scheme does not affect the amenities of this view or the setting and the public's enjoyment of the Promoted Routes.

3	Access road for Ladymead Business Park, approximately 140m west of site.	Low	Negligible	<p><b>Negligible Adverse / Neutral at Year One</b></p>
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				<b>Negligible Beneficial at Year Fifteen</b>
<p><i>Assessment:</i> From this location, the northern two thirds of the track would be completely screened by the intervening native hedgerow which lies to the left of the view. At present the southern part of the track and associated fencing are visible, but not prominent, set down in the landscape. Where these are visible, they are seen in the context of the access drive and fencing associated with Ladymead Farm (in the foreground) and the fencing associated with Banner Hill Cottage, which forms a backdrop to the view. The fencing is not prominent or overbearing and does not appear out of character within the context of this view. As the native hedgerow planting matures it will screen the track and soften the fencing, reinforcing the vegetated and geometric field boundaries.</p>				
4	The Willows at gateway to Ladymead Business Park, approximately 200m west of site.	Medium	No Change	<b>Neutral</b>
<p><i>Assessment:</i> From this location the established intervening landform around the gateway to Ladymead Farm and Business Park screen views towards the track. The nature of the development ensures that it does not extend above these established features and is not perceived from this location.</p>				
5	The Willows, at entrance to site, along site's southern boundary.	Medium	Negligible	<b>Low Adverse at Year One  Negligible Adverse at Year Fifteen</b>
<p><i>Assessment:</i> From this location on The Willows, the track is visible where it meets the local highway. At present the fencing is evident with the new hedgerow yet to mature. The gravel track and metal 6 bar gate have a rural appearance and do not appear out of place within this context. As the hedgerow planting matures it will create a screen to the fencing, extending the presence of vegetated field boundaries across the view. Even where glimpsed views of the track and fencing remain, they will be seen in the context of the main access road to Ladymead Farm, which characterises the backdrop to the view. The development is all low level and does not introduce prominent new vertical features into the view. It is considered that the track, fencing and hedgerow can be integrated into this view without detriment to the setting, and appreciation, of the rising landscape of the Quainton – Wing Hills AAL which defines the backdrop to the view. The nature of the receptors must also be considered. The</p>				

<p>primary receptors of this view are motorists who are considered transient, with the view at right angles to the direction of travel. The extent to which the development affects views out from the streetscene is therefore reduced. Further to the left and right of this viewpoint, the mature roadside hedges on The Willows contain views of the track and fencing. Any views are highly localised.</p>				
6	Junction of The Willows and Midshires / Swan's Way Promoted Routes, approximately 250m south east of site	Medium  High	No Change	<b>Neutral</b>
<p><i>Assessment:</i> From this location, the established intervening roadside native hedgerow and built form at Banner Hill Cottage completely screens views of the track and associated fencing, even during the winter. The small scale nature of the development ensures that they do not extend above these established features and would not be perceived from this location even in the longer term.</p>				
7	Junction of Midshires and Matthew's Way Promoted Routes, approximately 425m north west of site.	High	No Change	<b>Neutral</b>
<p><i>Assessment:</i> From this location the established intervening vegetation and built form associated with Ladymead Farm and Business Park completely screens views of the track and fencing, even during the winter. The view illustrates that access tracks, timber post and rail fencing and track-side hedgerows are an existing component within the landscape setting of the site and, as such, where visible, the development does not appear out of context or alien.</p>				
8 - 10	Bridleway QUA 43/1.	High	Negligible	<b>Neutral</b>
<p><i>Assessment:</i> There are heavily filtered, glimpsed views of the track from these locations during the winter. However, the track occupies a very small proportion of the views and does not appear prominent or out of character. The fenced track up to Denham Hill Farm is evident in Viewpoint 8 ensuring that where glimpsed views of the track and fence are possible, they do not appear out of character. The intervening distance ensures that the track is not a prominent component in the view, forming a natural addition to the rural view from the bridleway. It is considered that the track and fencing are compatible with views from the bridleway and do not affect the public's enjoyment of the route or their appreciation of the wider vale landscape from these elevated locations.</p>				

11	Junction of Bridleway QUA 43/1 and Carters Lane, approximately 660m north of site.	High  Medium	No Change	<b>Neutral</b>
<i>Assessment:</i> From this location the established intervening roadside native hedgerow and agricultural built form screen views towards the track, even during the winter.				
12	Matthew's Way Promoted Route, approximately 490m north east of site.	High	No Change	<b>Neutral</b>
<i>Assessment:</i> From this location, the established intervening field boundary vegetation screens views of the development, even during the winter. The ridgeline for the established built form at Ladymead Business Park is just visible above the intervening hedgerow, leaving the lower extents screened from view. The low level nature of the track and fencing ensures that they are not perceived in the context of these middle distance views.				
13 & 14	Unnamed Lane between The Willows and Church Street, approximately 900m west of site.  & Junction of Matthew's Way Promoted Route and Church Street, approximately 1km west of site.	High  Medium	No Change	<b>Neutral</b>
<i>Assessment:</i> From these locations, the established intervening roadside native hedgerow and landform on the eastern edge of Quinton Conservation Area, completely screen views towards Ladymead Farm and the site. Even once the track-side hedgerow is matured it would not break the characteristic skyline of these views or affect the setting of the Conservation Area.				
15	North Buckinghamshire Way, approximately 1.6km north west of site.	High	No Change	<b>Neutral</b>

<p><i>Assessment:</i> From this location, the scheme is afforded a degree of screening by the surrounding vegetation structure and is barely perceptible due to the intervening distance. As the track-side hedgerow matures it will reinforce the vegetated character of the vale landscape. The development does not affect the perceived field pattern or broad panoramic view over the vale from this elevated position in the AAL.</p>				
16	<p>Matthew's Way Promoted Route, approximately 1.4km north east of site.</p>	High	No Change	<b>Neutral</b>
<p><i>Assessment:</i> Similarly to Viewpoint 15, the track and fencing are barely perceptible from this location due to the intervening distance. Where visible the track and fencing are seen in the context of the existing Ladymead Farm access track and do not introduce any prominent or alien features into the view. The development does not affect the broad panoramic views to the south and south west towards the rising ground around Waddesdon Manor or an appreciation of the rural, vale landscape. As the hedgerow planting matures it will integrate the track and fencing, reinforcing the hedgerow defined field pattern. The alignment of the track also ensures that the geometric, large scale character of the landscape is not compromised. It is considered that the development can be integrated without detriment to the longer distance views from the elevated landscape of the AAL.</p>				

4.3.1. As set out in Table 4, views of the track and fence are highly localised as a result of the surrounding vegetation structure, landform and built form. Where views are possible, these are infrequent and glimpsed with the track and fencing being barely perceptible. It is acknowledged that visibility will increase slightly during the winter, however, where visible, the scheme is seen in the context of the existing built environment at Ladymead Farm, as well as nearby to other existing references to post and rail fencing and native hedgerow vegetation. The development does not introduce any new or alien components into these views. The track and fencing are low lying and form discrete features within the wider landscape setting. As the hedgerow planting matures it will not only assist the integration of the track and fencing but also reinforce the vegetated, large scale and geometric field pattern. The development does not adversely affect any views from or towards the elevated landscape of the Quainton – Wing Hills AAL.

4.3.2. It is concluded that the track and associated fencing and hedgerow planting can be integrated without any notable adverse visual effects.

#### 4.4. Effect upon Landscape Related Policy

- 4.4.1. In terms of the effect upon national and local landscape related policy and as noted above, the site and its setting are located within the “Quainton – Wing Hills AAL”. As set out in Section 2, it is considered that the site does represent a “valued landscape” in the context of Para 174a of the NPPF. The NPPF seeks to protect and enhance valued landscapes. As set out above, in relation to landscape character and views, it is considered that the track and associated boundary features can be integrated without any long term harm to the receiving landscape. Certainly the scheme does not give rise to any adverse effects upon those characteristics and special qualities which define the AAL. It is considered that the development complies with Para 174a.
- 4.4.2. Para 174b of the NPPF requires development to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. As set out within this assessment, it is considered that the development can be integrated without any adverse effects upon those landscape receptors which characterise the site and its wider landscape setting. It is concluded that the track and associated boundary features do not harm the intrinsic character or beauty of the countryside in which the site is set and therefore comply with para 174b of the NPPF.
- 4.4.3. As noted above, in Section 2, the site is covered by the policies of the VALP 2013 - 2033 (adopted September 2021) and the Quainton Neighbourhood Plan 2-15 – 2033 (June 2022). With regard to VALP “Policy NE4: Landscape character and locally important landscape” the policy states that **“development must recognise the individual character and distinctiveness of particular landscape character areas set out in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), their sensitivity to change and contribution to sense of place”**.
- 4.4.4. It is considered that the development conserves the character and appearance of the area and does not result in any notable adverse effects to any of the key characteristics that define the “Northern Vale” LCA or the “Quainton – Wing Hills AAL. Indeed, the inclusion of new native hedgerows along the length of the access track will result in some betterment to the network of field boundaries, in the long term. Furthermore, as noted in Section 4.2, the track is located a good distance away from Quainton, ensuring that the amenity of residential dwellings within the settlement is unaffected. It is considered that the development complies with Policy NE4 of the VALP.

- 4.4.5. With regard to Policy BE2, the policy sets out a series of five criteria, of which “criteria d” is of relevance to landscape and visual matters, stating that development shall respect **“the effect on important public views and skylines”**.
- 4.4.6. As noted above in Section 4.3, views of the development are highly localised as a result of the surrounding vegetation structure, landform and built form. Where views are possible from the wider setting of the site, these are infrequent and glimpsed and the track is barely perceptible. The small scale nature of the development ensures that, where glimpsed, it does not break the well vegetated skyline that characterises the immediate setting of the site. It is considered that the development complies with Policy BE2 of the VALP.
- 4.4.7. Policy NE8 of the VALP seeks to conserve and enhance the tree cover within the Vale. As noted above, there are no trees or woodland associated with the site and the small scale nature of the track presents limited opportunities to enhance the tree and woodland cover within the Vale. However, the scheme does include substantial areas of new native hedgerow planting that would provide new habitat connectivity between the mature vegetation on the eastern edge of Ladymead Business Park and the wider hedgerow network, as well as reinforcing the vegetated field pattern which characterises the wider vale LCA. It is considered that the development complies with Policy NE8.
- 4.4.8. “Policy QP1(a): Quainton Settlement Boundary” also states **“proposals for development will be supported where they respect the character of the immediate locality; contribute to local distinctiveness; and maintain appropriate amenity of adjacent dwellings”**. As noted in Section 4.2, the track is located a good distance away from Quainton, ensuring that the amenity of residential dwellings within the settlement is unaffected. It is concluded that the track and associated fencing and landscaping would respect the local character, with the new planting contributing to local distinctiveness. It is considered that the development complies with Policy QP1 of the Quainton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.4.9. Policy QP3 of the Made Quainton Neighbourhood Plan deals with development outside of the Quainton Conservation Area. It is considered that the track and associated boundary features do not significantly detract from any Key Views, conserve the historic character of the area, do not affect the amenities of any neighbours and that the fencing complements existing boundary treatments already present within the localised landscape setting. It is concluded that the development complies with Policy QP3.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.5. ES Landscape Planning Ltd was instructed by Antony Barrett to assess the landscape and visual implications arising from the farm track, and associated fencing and planting, that has been constructed between Ladymead Business Park and The Willows at Ladymead Farm, Quainton.
- 4.6. The site lies to the north of The Willows, a minor road that extends north west, from the village of Quainton, to south east, towards Aylesbury. The site is associated with, and lies immediately adjacent to, Ladymead Farm and Business Park, a cluster of residential and commercial buildings set within a maturing landscaped context, which extends just to the west. The site currently crosses two large fields of improved grassland which has been subdivided for grazing use.
- 4.7. The site currently comprises a gravel track, timber post and rail fencing and native hedgerows that extend north, from The Willows, towards the eastern edge of Ladymead Business Park. Timber gates have been installed into the boundary fencing where the Midshire's Way / Swan's Way public footpath crosses the site. The timber fencing reflects the fences which have been used to define the field boundaries within the immediate setting, as well as the main Ladymead Farm access drive which lies just to the west. Vegetation on site is limited to managed grass verges and new native hedgerow planting either side of the track.
- 4.8. The site lies within the Quainton – Wing Hills Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) designation.

### Effect upon Landscape Character

- 4.9. In terms of the effect of the development upon the receiving character of the area, it is considered that the track and associated boundary treatments would not result in the loss of, or damage to, any key landscape features or characteristics associated with the "Midvale Ridge" NCA, "Northern Vale" LCA or the "Quainton – Wing Hills Area of Attractive Landscape". Indeed, it is considered that the native hedgerow along the length of the track would result in betterment to the overall hedgerow resource of the localised context of the LCA.
- 4.10. It is acknowledged that the designated nature of the landscape elevates the sensitivity of this landscape setting, however, the track represents a small scale, discrete addition into

the context of the AAL, located within the lower lying part of the landscape and within an established landscaped setting. Other examples of access tracks, timber post and rail fencing and hedgerows, reinforcing the geometric field pattern are evident within the localised setting of the site and this part of the AAL. It is concluded that the track and its associated fencing and hedges do not affect the special qualities or distinctiveness of this landscape setting and can be integrated into the “Quainton – Wing Hills” AAL without detriment. Indeed, it is considered that in the longer term, there would be a small betterment to the network of field boundaries as a result of the new native hedgerows which have been planted along the length of the track.

- 4.11. It is concluded that the agricultural track, together with the associated timber post and rail fencing and native hedgerows, can be integrated into this landscape setting without any notable adverse landscape effects upon the special features and characteristics that define the “Midvale Ridge” NCA, the “Northern Vale” LCA or the “Quainton – Wing Hills” Area of Attractive Landscape.

#### Effect upon the Visual Environment

- 4.12. views of the track and fence are highly localised as a result of the surrounding vegetation structure, landform and built form. Where views are possible, these are infrequent and glimpsed with the track and fencing being barely perceptible. It is acknowledged that visibility will increase slightly during the winter, however, where visible, the scheme is seen in the context of the existing built environment at Ladymead Farm, as well as nearby to other existing references to post and rail fencing and native hedgerow vegetation. The development does not introduce any new or alien components into these views. The development is low lying and forms discrete features within the wider landscape setting. As the hedgerow planting matures it will not only assist the integration of the track and fencing but also reinforce the vegetated, large scale and geometric field pattern. The development does not adversely affect any views from or towards the elevated landscape of the Quainton – Wing Hills AAL.

- 4.13. It is concluded that the track and associated fencing and hedgerow planting can be integrated without any notable adverse visual effects.

#### Effect upon Landscape Related Policy

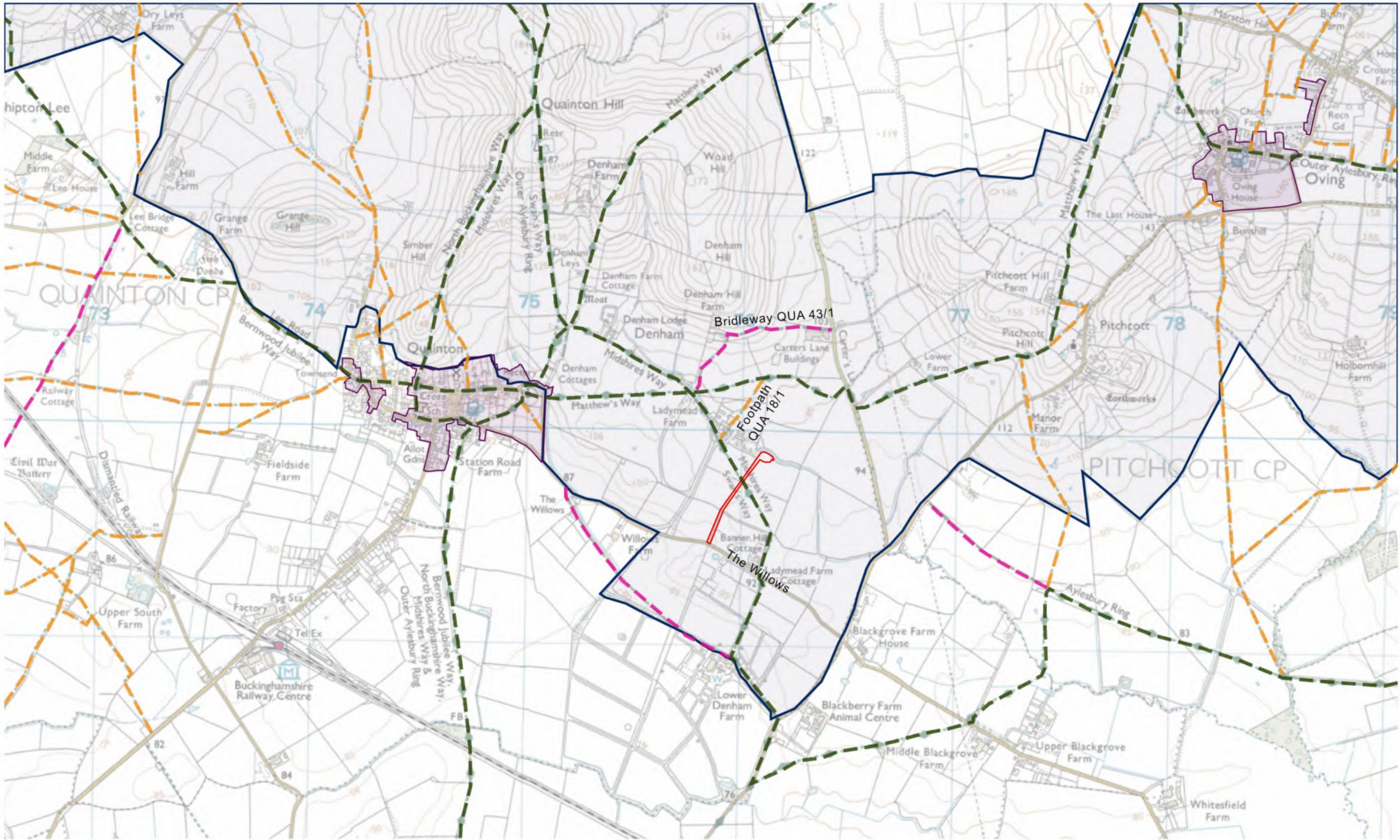
- 4.14. In terms of the effect upon national and local landscape related policy and as noted above, the site and its setting are located within the “Quainton – Wing Hills AAL”.

- 4.15. The track and associated boundary treatments represent a small – scale addition to this existing land use that do not give rise to any notable landscape and visual effects. As noted above, the scheme does not result in any notable adverse effects on the special qualities of the Quainton – Wing Hills AAL.
- 4.16. National and local policy seek to achieve high quality and sustainable development. As set out above, it is considered that the development does not give rise to any notable adverse effects from a landscape and visual perspective. It is considered that the development complies with the aims and objectives set out within the national and local planning policy framework from a landscape and visual perspective and can be integrated without detriment to the receiving landscape.

#### Conclusion

- 4.17. It is considered that the track, fencing and hedgerow planting can be integrated in this location without long term adverse effects upon the receiving landscape character and visual environment. It is concluded that the development is supportable from a landscape and visual perspective.

**PLANS**



Not to Scale

Key

- |   |                   |   |                               |
|---|-------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | Site Boundary     |  | Promoted Routes               |
|  | Public Footpaths  |  | Areas of Attractive Landscape |
|  | Public Bridleways |  | Conservation Area             |



Ladymead Farm, Quanton

Site Location Plan

Client: Antony Barrett

Drawing Ref: 11786L.SLP.001

Date: Nov 2023 Drawn: SA Checked: AM



Not to Scale

Key



Site Boundary



Public Footpaths



Public Bridleways



Promoted Routes



Area of Attractive Landscape

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Ladymead Farm, Quanton

Site Context Plan

Client: Antony Barrett

Drawing Ref: 11786L.SCP.002

Date: Nov 2023 Drawn: SA Checked: AM

## **APPENDIX 1**

### Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology



## **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. This methodology, and the assessment to which it applies, has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:
  - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition – GLVIA3 (2013) - Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment;
  - Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Technical Guidance Note 06/19), published by the Landscape Institute (2019).
- 1.2. The purpose of this methodology is to set out a clear and transparent approach to the assessment of landscape character and visual effects, in line with guidance set out by GLVIA3.
- 1.3. When assessing character within an urban context, this methodology can be applied to Townscape Assessments and assessing how a proposed development could affect the elements that make up the townscape and its distinctive character.

## 2. THE LVIA PROCESS

2.1. The main stages of the LVIA process are outlined below. The process comprises:

- the baseline study;
- the description of the proposed development; and
- the assessment of effects.

2.2. This process seeks to provide a clear and transparent method that will assist in identifying the potential effects of a development on the receiving landscape and the visual environment.

### ***Stage 1 - Baseline Study***

2.3. The baseline assessment sets out the existing landscape character and visual environment conditions against which any future changes resulting from new development can be measured or predicted and assessed.

#### Landscape

1. The scope of the assessment is defined.
2. Landscape related planning policy, including any landscape designations, is identified and outlined.
3. The landscape baseline is established through an initial desk study, which includes an assessment of published regional and local Landscape Character Assessments, where available, and subsequently a site visit to identify the value and susceptibility of the landscape resource (receptor) to a change of the type proposed, at community, local, national or international levels, as appropriate.

#### Visual

1. The scope of the assessment is defined.
2. The visual baseline is identified as the extent of visual receptors within the study area, and establishes the number and sensitivity of the representative viewpoint and/or groups of people (receptors) within the study area whose views may be altered as a result of the proposals. The

use of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) models can be a useful tool, assisting in identifying the theoretical visual extent of a proposal, where appropriate. However, it must be noted that these are not definitive, and do not replace viewing the site “in the field” as set out in GLVIA3, but can assist in scoping out those areas where topography will contain views of a development. Photographs from the key viewpoints are taken and presented in accordance with best practice guidance, illustrating the baseline situation.

### ***Stage 2 - Description of the Development / Design Proposals***

- 2.4. The baseline study will highlight opportunities and constraints for the integration of the proposals into the receiving environment. The various components of the proposals at each phase of the development process, which will potentially give rise to effects on the landscape character and the visual environment, need to be identified. At this time, the proposals can be modified to ensure that further mitigation measures are incorporated into the design in response to the local landscape and visual environment.

#### **Mitigation of landscape and visual effects**

- 2.5. Paragraph 4.21 of GLVIA3 states that “*measures proposed to prevent / avoid, reduce and, where possible, offset or remedy (or compensate for) any significant adverse landscape and visual effects, should be described*”. In practice, such mitigation measures are generally considered to fall into three categories:
- Primary measures, developed through the iterative design process, which have become integrated or embedded into the project design;
  - Standard construction and operational management practices for avoiding and reducing environmental effects;
  - Secondary measures, designed to address any residual adverse effects remaining after primary measures and standard construction practices have been incorporated into the scheme.

### ***Stage 3 - Description of Effects***

- 2.6. The assessment should then identify the level of effect as a result of the different components of the proposals upon both landscape and visual receptors.

- 2.7. In order to assess the significance of the effect on the receiving environment, it is necessary to consider the **magnitude**, i.e. the degree of change, together with the **sensitivity** of the receptor.
- 2.8. The assessment will identify the type of effect experienced by the receptor, as set out in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Interpretation of Effects**

Type of Effect	Interpretation
Direct	A direct effect will be one where a development will affect the character of a landscape or a view, either beneficially or adversely.
Indirect	An indirect effect will occur as a result of elements associated with a development, i.e. a development may result in an increase of traffic on a particular route.
Short, medium or long term	This relates to the anticipated duration and magnitude of effects associated with a development. Within this assessment, the potential effects are typically assessed during the Construction Phase, then at Years 1 and 15, following completion of the development.
Temporary or Permanent	This relates to whether the resulting effect of a development can be mitigated or not, and whether the result of the mitigation is beneficial or adverse.
Beneficial or Adverse	<p><u>Beneficial effects</u> would typically occur where a development would positively contribute to the landscape character or view.</p> <p><u>Adverse effects</u> would typically occur where there key landscape elements are lost, or the proposal detracts from the quality and / or character of a landscape or view.</p> <p><u>Neutral effects</u> can occur where changes neither add nor detract from the quality and character of a landscape or view.</p>

Assessing cumulative effects

- 2.9. Cumulative effects are additional effects caused by a proposed development in combination with other similar developments. This can be cumulative landscape effects on the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or cumulative visual

effects caused by two or more developments being visible from one viewpoint (in combination) and / or from a route where the viewer has to move to another viewpoint to see the same or a different development (sequentially). The scope of cumulative effects should be agreed at the outset to establish what schemes are relevant to the assessment, and at which planning stage this is appropriate. It is generally considered that existing and consented developments, and those for which planning applications have been submitted but not yet determined, should be included. The assessment of cumulative effects must be considered as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) but does not have to be assessed as part of a non-EIA project.

#### ***Stage 4 - Significance of Effects (EIA only)***

- 2.10. A final judgement on whether the effect is likely to be significant will be made, as required by the EIA Regulations. These conclusions should draw out the key issues and outline the scope for reducing any negative / adverse effects.

### 3. ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. The purpose of the LVIA is to provide an objective assessment of the potential effects of the proposals upon the identified landscape and / or visual receptor. GLVIA3 states that *“Assessing the significance of landscape and visual effects is a matter of judgement. It is vital that the basis of such judgements are transparent and understandable, so that the underlying assumptions and reasoning can be examined by others”*.
- 3.2. This section sets out the basis for assessing landscape and visual sensitivity, the magnitude of proposed effects, and the overall assessment of significance.

#### LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

- 3.3. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development is categorised as very high, high, medium, low or negligible. This takes into account the **susceptibility** of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the **value** attached to different landscapes by society.

##### Susceptibility of the Landscape Receptor

- 3.4. GLVIA3 defines the **SUSCEPTIBILITY** of a receptor to change as being the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue negative consequences upon the baseline situation.
- 3.5. A judgement as to the level of susceptibility (High, Medium, Low or Negligible) is made in relation to each criterion, and these judgements contribute to an overall judgement of susceptibility for the landscape receptor.
- 3.6. A landscape deemed to be highly susceptible is likely to be small-scale, with a mosaic of natural habitats and limited human influences, while a less susceptible landscape receptor is likely to be simpler, with noticeable human influences and fewer natural / semi-natural habitats present.

##### Value of the Landscape Receptor

- 3.7. Following the publication of GLVIA3, it is now generally agreed that the **VALUE** of a landscape receptor can be determined by a range of factors set out within Box 5.1 of GLVIA3. These include:

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity and representativeness;
- Conservation interests;
- Recreation value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Associations.

3.8. The Box 5.1 criteria are used to determine the value of landscape receptors. The resulting value levels under each factor are recorded, and an overall judgement of the level of value is reached.

3.9. A judgement as to the value of the landscape receptor is made in relation to each factor (High, Medium, Low or Negligible) and these factors contribute to an overall judgement of value.

Overall Judgement of Landscape Sensitivity

3.10. Once judgements of the susceptibility and the value of the landscape receptor have been made, an overall judgement of landscape sensitivity is made. The following table explains each threshold, and the factors that contribute to the degree of sensitivity.

**Table 2: Definition of Landscape Sensitivity Thresholds**

Sensitivity	Definition
<b>Very High</b>	Landscapes which would have a high susceptibility to change, and which are considered to be of high value. Such landscapes would have a high degree of intimacy, strong landscape structure, and a high sense of intactness, and contain features worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a high proportion of historic assets and be designated as a World Heritage Site. Typical examples may be nationally or internationally designated, e.g., World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Heritage Coasts or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
<b>High</b>	Landscapes where there is a medium - high susceptibility to change, and which are considered to be of high value. Such landscapes may be small scale, have a strong landscape structure, be relatively intact and contain features and / or

	elements worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a number of historic assets. Typical examples may be of local importance or within the immediate setting of National Parks, AONBs, Conservation Areas, etc.
<b>Medium</b>	Landscapes where there is a medium susceptibility to change, and which are considered to be of medium value. Such landscapes will have good landscape structure, with some detracting features or evidence of recent change. Townscapes may include a proportion of historic assets or assets of cultural value locally.
<b>Low</b>	Landscapes where there is a low susceptibility to change, and which are considered to be of low value. Typical landscapes will have some characteristics of interest, but human influences and some detractors will be present.
<b>Negligible</b>	Landscapes where there is little or no susceptibility to change, and which are of low value. Typical landscapes are likely to be characterised by extensive human influences, be of weak landscape structure, with intensive land uses present, and require landscape restoration.

## VISUAL SENSITIVITY

3.11. As part of the assessment of visual effects, the sensitivity of the visual receptor will be assessed against the magnitude of visual change. Each receptor should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity, and also the value attached to particular views. The sensitivity of receptors is categorised as very high, high, medium, low and negligible.

**Table 3: Visual Sensitivity Thresholds**

<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Very High</b>	Viewers on public rights of way, within nationally designated landscapes such as National Parks or AONBs, whose prime focus is on the high quality of the landscape around, and who are very aware of its value.
<b>High</b>	Viewers on public rights of way, whose prime focus is on the landscape around, or residential properties which lie

	immediately adjacent to, and look directly onto the development site. Examples may include users of the public right of way network (e.g., promoted routes, national trails, footpaths or bridleways), or the setting of a listed building.
<b>Medium</b>	Viewers engaged in outdoor recreation with some appreciation of the landscape, occupiers of residential properties with oblique views from which the proposals may be visible, and users of rural lanes and roads, including pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders. Examples may include viewers within moderate quality landscapes and / or local parks or recreation grounds.
<b>Low</b>	Viewers engaged in outdoor sports or recreation, whose prime focus is on their activity rather than their setting, or those passing through the area on main transport routes (A-roads, dual carriageways, motorways or the rail network), whose attention is focused away from an appreciation of the landscape through which they are passing.
<b>Negligible</b>	Viewers whose attention is focused on their work or activity, and who are not susceptible to changes in the surrounding visual environment.

## MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT

3.12. The magnitude of change relates to the extent to which a proposed development will affect the characteristics and / or elements that define the landscape character or view. This change is categorised as high, medium, low, or negligible.

**Table 4: Magnitude of Change**

Magnitude	Effect Definition
<b>High</b>	Change resulting in a high degree of harm or improvement, such as the introduction of prominent new elements that are considered to make a major alteration to a landscape or view.
<b>Medium</b>	Change resulting in a moderate degree of harm or improvement, or when constitutes a perceptible change within a landscape or view.

<b>Low</b>	Change resulting in a low degree of harm or improvement to a landscape or view, or which constitutes only a minor component within a landscape or view.
<b>Negligible</b>	Change resulting in a barely perceptible degree of harm or improvement to a landscape or view.
<b>No Change</b>	It is also possible for a landscape or view to experience no change, due to the proposed development being totally compatible with the receiving environment or not visible due to intervening structures or vegetation.

### **Significance Threshold**

- 3.13. To assess the overall significance of the effect, the magnitude of change is considered against the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor.
- 3.14. In formulating the significance of the potential landscape or visual effect, reasoned professional judgement, based on clear and transparent methods, suitable training and experience, and a detached and dispassionate view of the development, is required. The matrix at Table 6 should be used as a guide for consistency rather than a prescriptive tool. Where the final judgement differs from the matrix, this will be supported by a clear explanation.
- 3.15. The significance thresholds are predicted as Substantial, Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible, and can be either beneficial or adverse. Where there is no perceptible change in terms of the magnitude, regardless of the sensitivity of the receptor, the significance of the effect on a landscape or view will be Neutral.
- 3.16. Unless otherwise stated, all effects are predicted in the winter months. The extent of mitigation measures should be clearly stated, and in the case of planting proposals, the contribution to reducing adverse effects over time should be demonstrated at different stages (typically construction stage and operational stages year 1 and year 15).

**Table 5: Significance of Effect**

Significance	Threshold Definition
<b>Substantial</b>	A very high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view of national / international importance which has no ability to accommodate change.
<b>Major</b>	A high magnitude of change that materially affects a high sensitivity landscape or view which has some ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a damaged landscape or view.
<b>Moderate</b>	A medium magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view which may have the ability to accommodate the type of development proposed. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
<b>Minor</b>	A low magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view which can integrate the type of development proposed. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
<b>Negligible</b>	A negligible magnitude of change that has little effect on a landscape or view which has the ability to accommodate change.
<b>Neutral</b>	A significance of neutral occurs where there is no perceptible change, or the proposals are considered compatible with local character or views.

3.17. The significance of the effect is measured on the ability of a landscape or view to accommodate the change. In assessing the significance of effects, the following matrix provides a guide through determining the significance of the effect based on the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change, but it is not a prescriptive tool.

**Table 6: Measuring Significance of Effect**

		Sensitivity of Receptors				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of Change	High	Substantial	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
	Medium	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
	Low	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible/ Neutral

3.18. In terms of assessing whether the effects are significant or otherwise, it is noted that para 5.56 of GLVIA3 states that there are no “hard and fast rules” about what makes a significant effect. For the purposes of this methodology, and with regard to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (updated 2017), “significant” landscape or visual effects are those effects considered to be of Substantial, Major or Major / Moderate significance, as set out within Table 6.

3.19. It is reasonable to say that, where development will result in substantial loss of or irreversible adverse effects over an extensive spatial area on features and / or aspects that are key to the aesthetic and perceptual character of nationally valued landscapes, these will be of the greatest significance. By contrast, effects which may be reversible or can be mitigated over a shorter duration, within a more restricted spatial extent, on features that contribute to but may not be key characteristics of a landscape which has some (or even limited) local value, are likely to be of lesser significance, depending on the circumstances. Landscape and visual assessments must make a professional and objective judgement on the significance of the effect, and whether or not these are considered significant, providing reasoned justification as to how the conclusions have been reached.

## **APPENDIX 2**

Extract from Natural England's Character Map of England – "Midvale Ridge" NCA109

# 109: Midvale Ridge

Supporting documents

Introduction & Summary

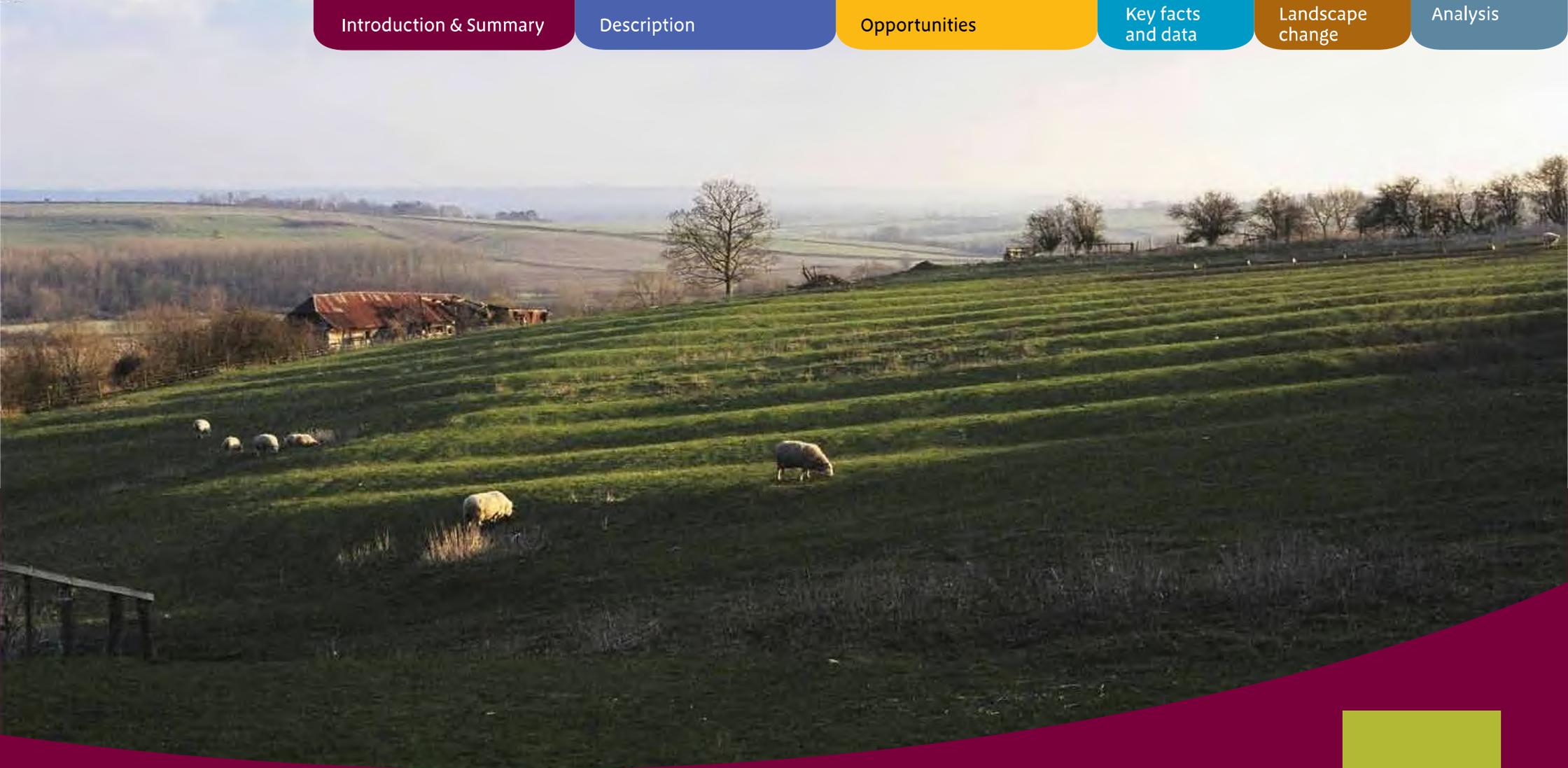
Description

Opportunities

Key facts  
and data

Landscape  
change

Analysis



[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)



Toggle full screen

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## Summary

The Midvale Ridge National Character Area (NCA) is a band of hills stretching east-west from the Vale of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire to Swindon. It is surrounded by the flat lands of the Oxfordshire and Berkshire Downs. It offers extensive views across the surrounding countryside. It is a predominantly agricultural area with a mixed arable/pastoral farming landscape. The most important arable crop is wheat. The main towns are Swindon and Oxford, which lies across the centre of the area, but other settlements are scattered along the springline. The soils types are a mix of heavy rendzinas and lighter sandy brown earths with small patches of sandy soils.

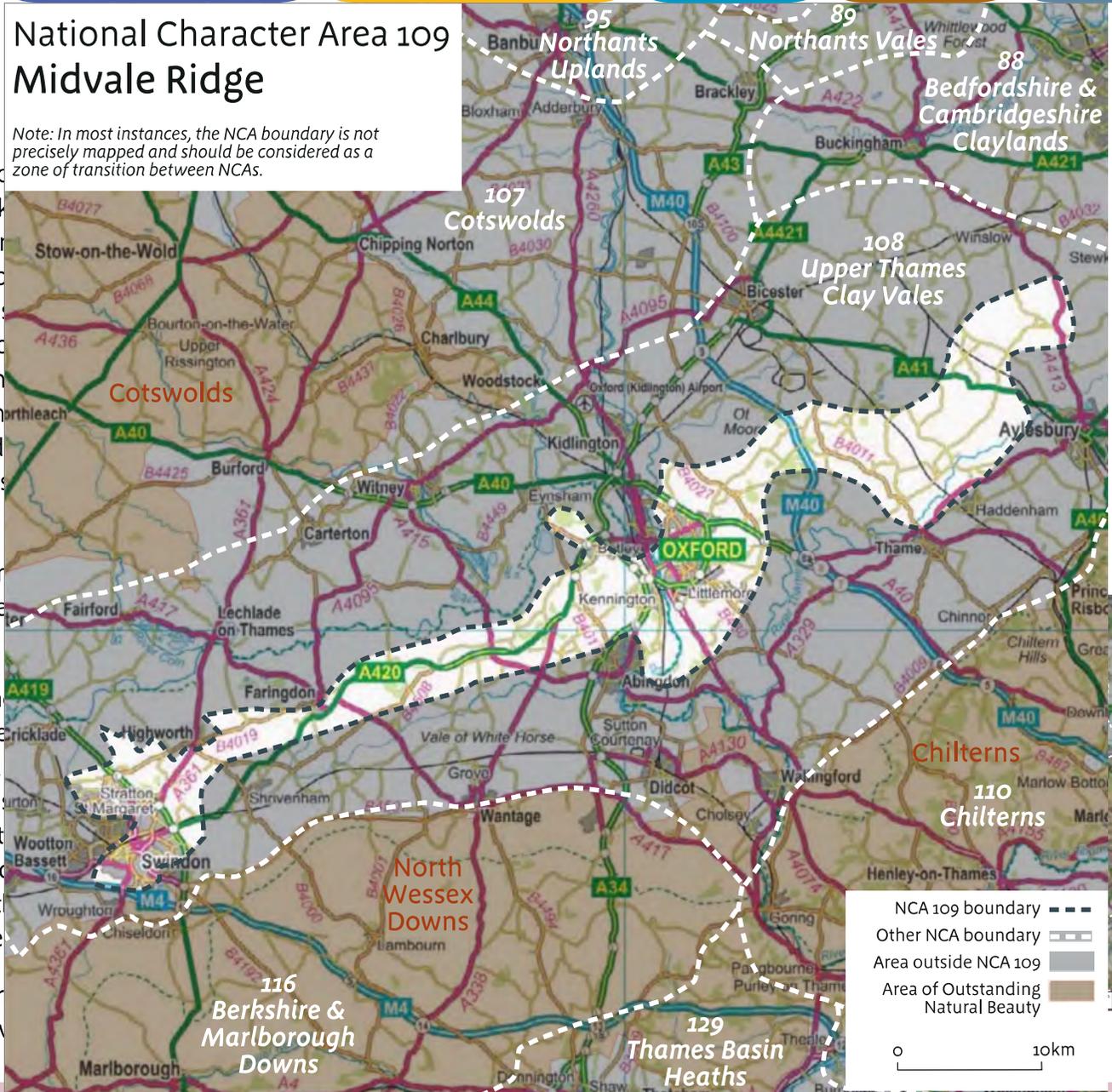
The area is significant for its geological sites and has been a focus of scientific interest since the 19th century. It has yielded fossils of international importance, including the holotypes for several ammonite species and several species of sponges known only from the Faringdon area.

The unusual geology gives rise to habitats that are uncommon elsewhere in England, such as calcareous flushes and fens, calcareous heath and grassland. These in turn support a variety of rare plants and animals, including narrowleaved marsh orchid, southern damselfly and many species of butterflies. In the wetlands can be found solitary bees. Although the NCA is small, it is also host to several other habitats such as lowland dry acid grassland and acid heath. One of the largest populations of the snakeshead fritillary can be found in the area.

The NCA is notably more wooded in character than the surrounding areas. It is bordered to the east by the Thames Clay Vales NCA with about 9 per cent woodland cover.

### National Character Area 109 Midvale Ridge

*Note: In most instances, the NCA boundary is not precisely mapped and should be considered as a zone of transition between NCAs.*



## Statements of Environmental Opportunities:

**SEO 1:** Maintain the historic environment and cultural character of the Midvale Ridge by ensuring that permitted development is well integrated to preserve local distinctiveness and sense of place and providing green space and recreational opportunities for the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.

**SEO 2:** Manage, enhance and expand the valuable semi-natural habitats of the Midvale Ridge such as fens, grassland and calcareous heathland to benefit biodiversity, prevent soil erosion, improve water regulation and quality, support pollinators and protect and enhance wildlife corridors.

**SEO 3:** Manage and enhance the woodland cover and expand areas of native broadleaved woodland to benefit landscape character and biodiversity, for carbon sequestration, to prevent soil erosion, improve water quality, supply renewable fuel and to provide access and recreation opportunities.

**SEO 4:** Maintain and enhance the National Character Area's internationally important geological heritage for the educational benefits it provides, its contribution to a sense of place and history and to increase recreational opportunities.



Old clay pits at Brill Common.

## Description

### Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

Midvale Ridge National Character Area (NCA) is completely enclosed by the surrounding Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA and offers wide views across the adjacent countryside from many points. In places it is possible to see the hills of the Chilterns NCA to the south-east, the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs NCA to the south-west and the Cotswolds NCA to the north-west.

At Oxford, the Thames cuts through the ridge to flow south from its source in Gloucestershire on towards Reading and London. The Thame, a tributary of the Thames, flows along the lower reaches of the ridge in the south-eastern half of the area and joins the Thames just south of Dorchester. Much of the ridge functions as a minor aquifer, eventually feeding into the rivers Thames, Thame and Ock, also a tributary of the Thames.<sup>5</sup>

To the east, several major transport links between London, Oxford and the Midlands, including the M40, A40 and the Chiltern Railways line, cross the area. Although part of the city of Oxford lies within the NCA, the historical centre is in the neighbouring Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA. Many of Oxford's most notable buildings, for instance the Radcliffe Camera, are built from stone quarried on the ridge. To the west, the Great Western Community Forest stretches from Royal Wootton Bassett in the Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA to Faringdon.

<sup>5</sup> Groundwater Quality Review: The Corallian, Environment Agency (April 2004)



Brill Windmill, a popular visitor destination for both local residents and visitors alike.

## Key characteristics

- Low, irregular wooded limestone ridge giving way to a series of isolated steep-sided tabular hills in the east which rise from the surrounding clay vales.
- Contrast between the moderately elevated limestone hills and ridges and the surrounding low-lying clay vales.
- Drained mostly by small springs and streams which run into the Thames, Thame and Ock.
- Well wooded – a third of the woodland is designated ancient woodland.
- Mixed pastoral and arable landscape with large, geometric fields divided by hedges and regularly spaced hedgerow trees punctuated by blocks of woodland.
- Fragmented but rare and important semi-natural habitats, including acid grassland, calcareous fens and flushes, wet woodland and calcareous grass heaths particularly around Frilford and Cothill.
- Evidence of previous land use such as iron-age and Romano-British settlements and ridge and furrow through to old quarries still visible in the landscape.
- Locally quarried limestone commonly used as building material for local houses.
- Settlement pattern of nucleated villages on the hill tops and along the springline with low density of dispersed settlement.
- Recreational opportunities include the Thames Path National Trail.



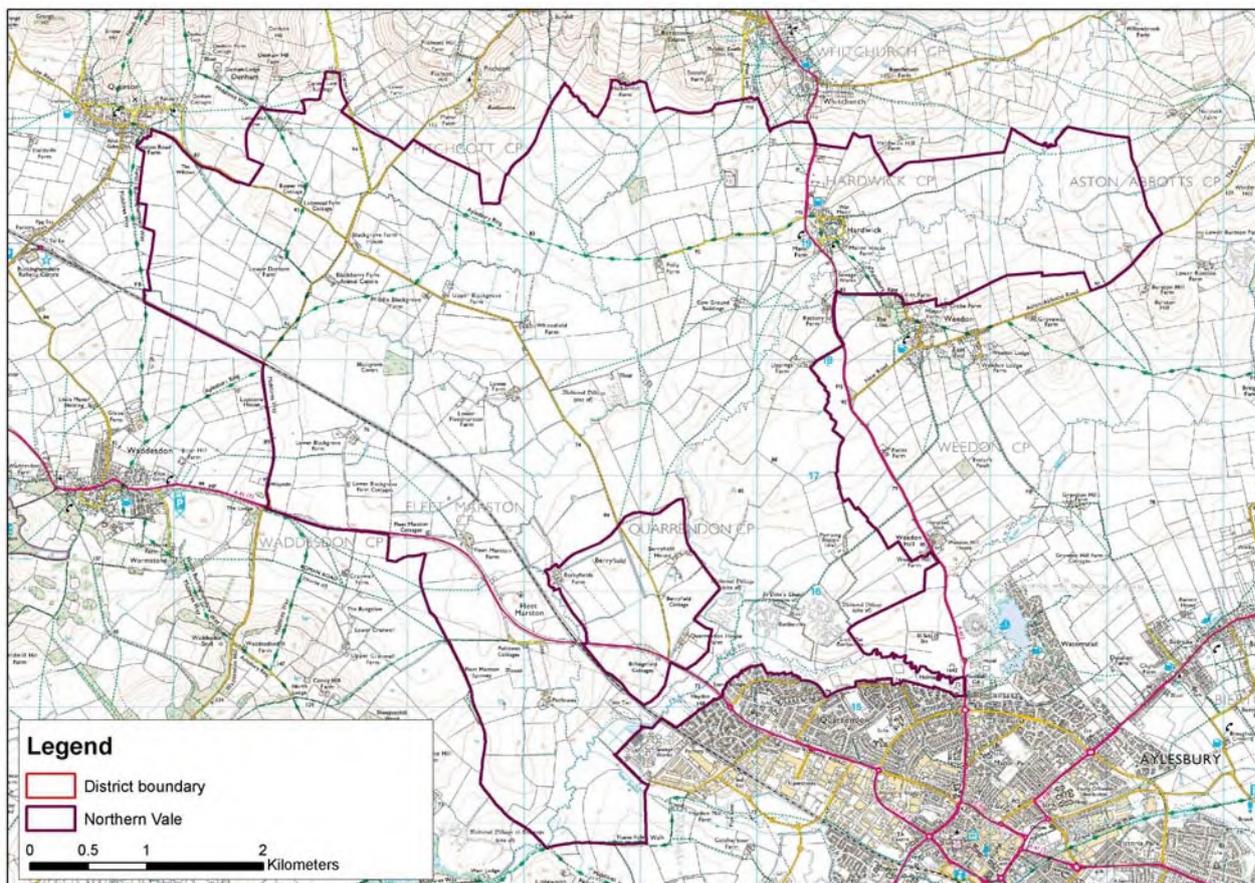
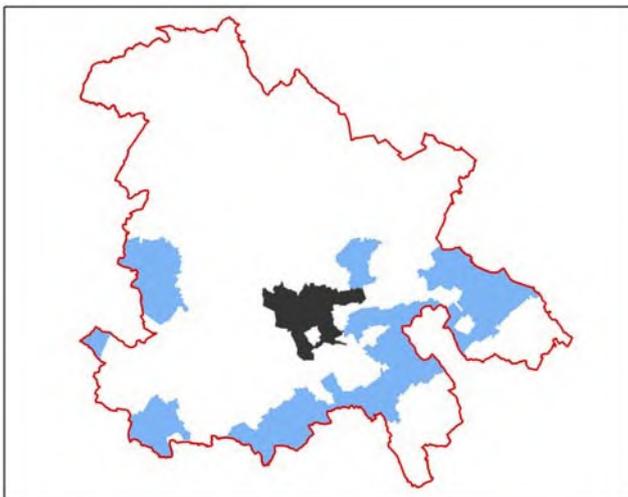
Southern damselfly at Cothill Fen SSSI, one of the many rare invertebrates found there.

### **APPENDIX 3**

Extract from Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment – “Northern Vale” LCA 8.5

LCA 8.5 Northern Vale

Landscape Character Type: LCT 8 Vale



## LCA 8.5 Northern Vale (LCT 8)

### Key Characteristics

- Virtually flat landform
- Network of meandering streams feeding into the River Thames
- Large open arable fields
- Recreational and amenity landscape on the northern fringe of Aylesbury
- Historic meadows

### Distinctive Features

- Deserted medieval settlements
- Site of Quarrendon Tudor mansion and gardens
- Roman roads and settlements
- Hardwick church
- Fleet Marston church
- River Thames
- Large areas of neutral grassland in northeast

### Intrusive Elements

- Western fringe of area crossed by pylons
- Disused pumping station west of Weedon Hill Farm
- Railway line (occasional use only)
- Traffic on A41 and A413

**Location** The area lies immediately northwest of Aylesbury. The western extent is defined by the Waddesdon – Eythrope ridge whilst the eastern boundary is broadly the A413 corridor including a small valley north of Weedon that feeds into the Vale. The northern boundary merges gradually into the rising land that forms the Quainton – Wing Hills.

**Landscape character** Open vale landscape emphasised by very low level of settlement, limited topography, large scale landscape pattern and the hills lying to the north and south which define the visual horizon in most views. Despite the proximity of Aylesbury often clearly visible, there is a sense of isolation away from the A41 and A413.

**Geology** Ampthill Clay Formation - grey mudstone overlain locally with alluvium and Head deposits.

**Topography** Low lying vale crossed by a network of shallow valleys. The higher ground at the northern end lies at approximately 85m AOD. The land falls gently from 100m AOD at the head of the valley north of the Weedon Ridge to the river Thames which lies at a level of approximately 70m AOD. Immediately north of Quarrendon historic earthworks rise above the level of the vale landscape. Most notable are remains of the medieval settlement and Civil War earthworks.

**Hydrology** Feeder streams running from the higher ground to the north towards the river Thames meander across the flat vale landscape but often are not marked by vegetation.

**Land use and settlement** The dominant land use is arable. The fields are large scale, open with well trimmed hedges. The fields are often irregular in shape with notable loss of hedgerows due to field amalgamation. Land use on the northern and southern fringes changes to mixed arable and pastoral use. Grazing land is often found adjacent to water courses. The area of flood plain immediately between the River Thames and the northern edge of Aylesbury is laid out as recreational land with sports pitches connected by footpaths and parkland planting.

The area is sparsely populated, the settlement of Hardwick on the northern edge of the area being the exception. Elsewhere settlement comprises occasional farmsteads dispersed over the area with associated barns and notably some with taller structures such as silage storage facilities.

There are a number of deserted medieval village sites - one site lies to the north of Berryfield and there is a complex of sites to the east of Quarrendon House Farm comprising several earthworks including a ruined church and the site of a Tudor moated mansion and gardens. These are locally visible but do not feature strongly in the wider landscape. The south western corner of the area is crossed by Akeman Street, a Roman road. The church tower of St Mary's Church at Hardwick is a distinctive local feature.

**Tree cover** There are no large blocks of woodland, there are however, small groups of trees associated with farmsteads, following streams and grouped around ponds. Oak and ash are the dominant species on drier ground, whilst mature black poplar are often found along watercourses and ditches either as individuals or in groups. Mature pollarded willows are also common along wet ditches.

## LCA 8.5 Northern Vale (LCT 8)

**Biodiversity** The terrestrial habitat is dominated by an uneven mix of arable and grasslands peppered with small areas of broadleaved woodland within a framework of hedges and streams.

In the northwest of the area there is a high density of unimproved grassland and of neutral grassland, a broad habitat type. This is reflected in the designations of CWS and BNS in this locality. The CWS include the botanical interest of the previous Waddesdon Station and adjoining railway embankments, and of the seven species rich meadows at Waddesdon Common which include areas of ridge and furrow and ponds.

Aquatic habitat is provided by the river Thame and its tributaries. Adjacent to the Thame at Aylesbury Sewage Works a CWS has been designated in recognition of the importance of the marshy grassland and scrub for birds, riparian mammals and botanic interest.

**Historic environment** To the north of Aylesbury lies an extensive area of pre 18<sup>th</sup> century irregular enclosure land extending north from the flood meadows of the River Thame up to the Pitchcott - Whitchurch Ridge. These are large irregular fields that were probably established in the late 15<sup>th</sup> to early 16<sup>th</sup> century following the depopulation of the medieval villages and the change over from arable to pastoral agriculture. The area also has a wide expanse of meadows with relict water channels on the outskirts of Aylesbury which are some of the best examples in Buckinghamshire. Dispersed over the area are moderate sized groups of fields which are 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure land. Parliamentary enclosure land is concentrated over two areas around Hardwick, in two major groups to the southwest and southeast of the village and covering the fields to the northwest where they run up to the boundary at Quainton. There are large 20<sup>th</sup> century prairie fields stretching in a belt between Fleet Marston, northwest of Aylesbury and the Pitchcott to Whitchurch Ridge to the north.

The area also contains a number of nationally important archaeological site at Quarrendon; this comprises several earthworks including deserted medieval settlements, a ruined church and the site of a Tudor moated mansion and gardens built by Sir Henry Lee, Queen's Champion to Elizabeth I and founder of Aylesbury Grammar School. At Fleet Marston there is a substantial archaeological site of a 'Roman Small Town' along Akeman Street and a minor Roman Road leading to Thornborough. Across the rest of the area there is a dense scatter of Roman farmsteads and a few prehistoric sites. To the north of the Roman town is the deserted medieval village of Fleet Marston. The only tangible remains of the settlement is the grade II\* redundant parish church of St Mary's dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century. There is also another small deserted medieval settlement known as Quarrendon III and some ridge and furrow. Other listed buildings, including a prominent church, are concentrated in the conservation area at Hardwick.

This area has a high amenity potential as the site of Quarrendon is focus of current conservation and access proposals.

### **Designations**

Conservation Area at Hardwick

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Deserted Village & Earthworks

Archaeological Notification Areas – 30 No.

CWS – 5 No.

BNS – 8 No.

## LCA 8.5 Northern Vale (LCT 8)



Open vale landscapes with scattered farmsteads, large fields, well clipped low hedges and occasional trees.



**LCA 8.5 Northern Vale (LCT 8)**

**Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Good</b>
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Visual Detractors:	Some
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Very strong
<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>High</b>
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	High
<b>Guidelines</b>	<b>Conserve</b>

**Condition**

Generally the condition of the landscape is considered to be good. The pattern of hedgerows has been eroded by the process of field amalgamation within the core of the area. It often remains only where boundaries are defined by ditches and drains. There are, however, better preserved field patterns and hedgerows on the northern fringe of the area. The general pattern of elements is considered to be coherent and there are few detracting features over this large area. The cultural integrity is good, the area contains a rich concentration of archaeological sites and monuments including the nationally important earthworks of Quarrendon as well as historic meadows and fields. Ecological integrity is strong as a result of good connectivity and a relatively large area of designated sites and

habitats of District significance. Overall the functional integrity is very strong.

**Sensitivity**

The area has a distinctive character and the historic associations are present in the various medieval and later earthworks but are being diluted by erosion of field pattern. Around the Quarrendon scheduled ancient monument the historic site has unique/rare distinctiveness. Overall the sense of place is moderate. The flat landform and sparse nature of tree cover provides for a high degree of visibility over the core of the area but this is reduced to moderate in the vicinity of the River Thames at Quarrendon due to the higher degree of tree cover. The overall degree of sensitivity is high.



Fleet Marston church.

## LCA 8.5 Northern Vale (LCT 8)

### Landscape Guidelines Conserve

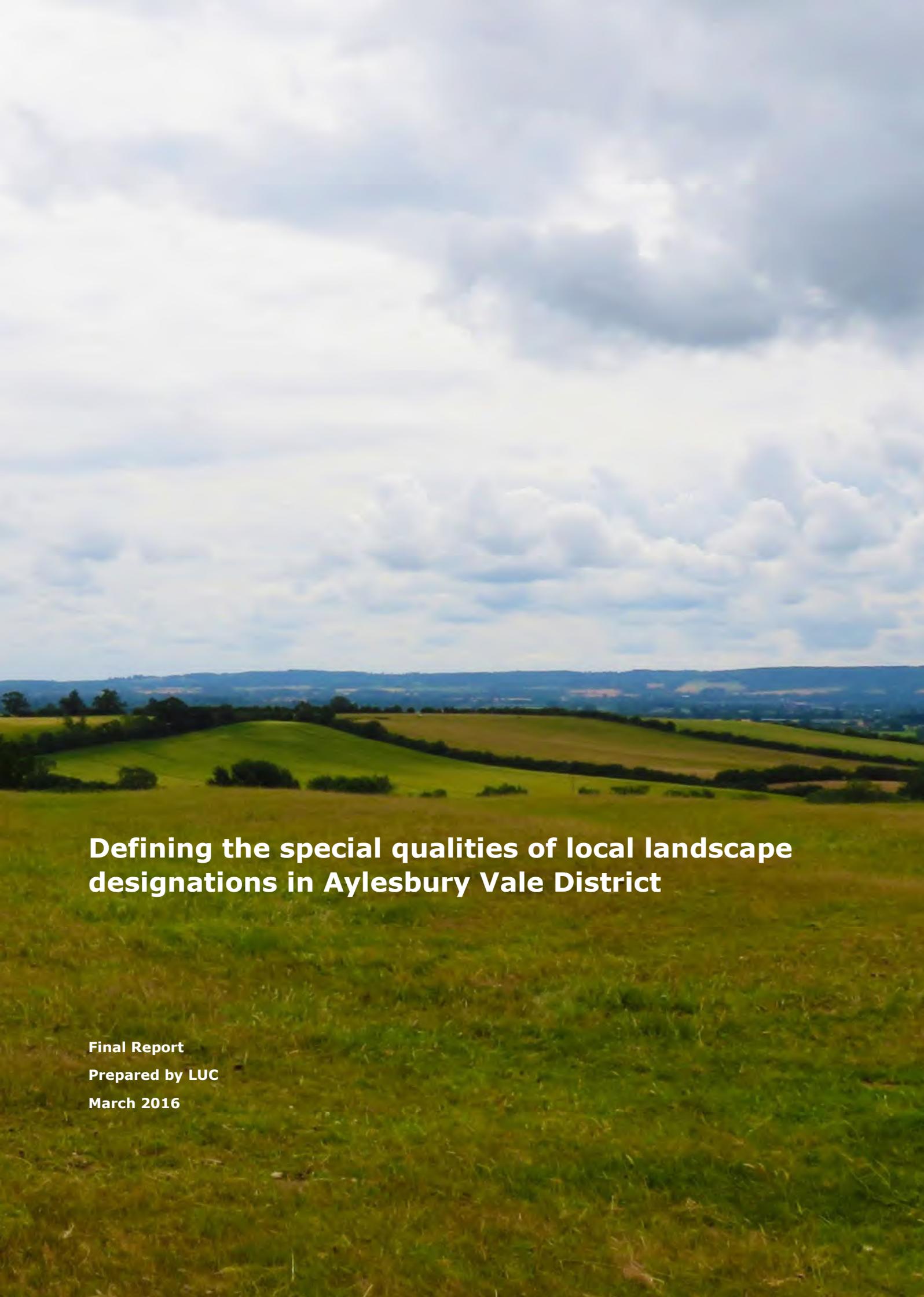
Guidelines for the Northern Vale are as follows:

- Restore and enhance the original field pattern, where practical, including support for initiatives for management and replanting of hedgerows and infilling of gaps.
- Maintain and improve condition of existing hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Encourage the establishment of new hedgerow trees.
- Encourage planting of new woodlands and hedgerow trees particularly to reduce the visual impact of intrusive elements.
- Encourage the development of native vegetation including black poplar, along streams and other watercourses.
- Encourage traditional management of historic meadows.
- Maintain strong connectivity between habitats.
- Maintain extent and condition of neutral grassland.
- Where arable farming occurs next to watercourses encourage the creation of buffer strips of grassland and bank side vegetation to provide more diverse habitats enhance the landscape and reduce impact of run off of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers.
- Encourage improved access, conservation and interpretation of the area's rich historic environment, especially the Quarrendon scheduled ancient monument site in response to proposed development.
- Encourage the establishment of non-car based recreational routes into the countryside from the northern edge of Aylesbury. The routes should aim to be accessible to the less mobile.
- Encourage arable reversion or minimum cultivation to protect buried archaeological remains
- Encourage the preservation of historic earthworks and ridge and furrow by maintaining a continuous grass sward and do not allow bare patches of soil to develop.
- Preserve or enhance the setting of key heritage features.
- Seek opportunities to bring the redundant church at Fleet Marston back into appropriate beneficial use.



## **APPENDIX 4**

Extract from “Defining the special qualities of local landscape designations in Aylesbury Vale District” (2016)

A landscape photograph showing rolling green hills under a cloudy sky. The foreground is a grassy field, and the background features distant hills and a valley. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds, with some darker patches of blue visible.

# **Defining the special qualities of local landscape designations in Aylesbury Vale District**

**Final Report**

**Prepared by LUC**

**March 2016**

### 3. Quainton-Wing Hills

Looking south across the hills from a high vantage point on the plateau in the east of the area on Lines Road, west of Aston Abbots, with the woodland of Fox Covert on the left



17<sup>th</sup> – early 18<sup>th</sup> century timber framed Grade II listed building with thatched roof in Aston Abbots



## 3. Quinton - Wing Hills

### Statement of Significance

Undulating hills and ridges with distant panoramic views across the strongly rural and picturesque landscape, including to the Vale of Aylesbury to the south. Together with the Brill-Winchendon Hills they form a series of low, generally open limestone hills with hilltop settlements, between the foot of the Chilterns escarpment and the dip slope of the Cotswolds. The prominent hills form a backdrop to many views in the district. Nucleated villages create texture, a sense of history, variety and rhythm. The strong sense of history is present in the many Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and landscape features such as ridge and furrow and irregular enclosed fields.

### Special Qualities of Quinton - Wing Hills

- Distinctive landform of low, generally open limestone hills and ridges, enhanced by field boundaries which accentuate the shape of the undulating landform.
- Nucleated historic villages, often on hilltops, arranged consistently throughout the landscape and connected by a strong network of rural roads and footpaths. Landmark church towers provide focal points amongst the rhythm of hills and undulations. The landscape provides a strong setting to the many villages and Conservation Areas both within the area and in views from outside the area.
- The windmill at Quinton provides a recognisable landmark from Quinton Hill, and an interesting element in the foreground of views across the Vale of Aylesbury.
- Spectacular panoramic views from frequent vantage points, providing picturesque views across the undulating rural and agricultural landscape – e.g. the plateau landscape in the east of the area, of the Chilterns from Wingrave and from many of the villages.
- Strong sense of rural tranquillity, openness and a coherent landscape character. A lack of intrusion from developments that are out of character, gives prominence to the landscape character and landform, a sense of unity of agricultural land use and visual character of scattered hilltop villages.
- Cultural features providing a sense of history - many Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments and landscape features such as ridge and furrow and irregular enclosed fields impart a strong sense of time depth to the landscape.
- Public rights of way and road network which enable views of and appreciation of the landscape.
- The importance of the hills in views from other areas of the district, providing a backdrop and sense of enclosure to Aylesbury Vale.
- Remaining ancient woodland in the west of the area that was once part of the medieval hunting forest of Bernwood, irregular and assart fields.

## Summary information for Quinton - Wing Hills

<b>Extent of area</b>	The series of hills and ridges, from Finemere/ Balmore Woods in the west to Mentmore Park in the east and including the villages of Pitchcott, Oving, Whitchurch, Creslow, Dunton, Weedon, Cublington, Aston Abbots, Wingrave, Crafton, Mentmore, and Ascott. It is defined by the foot of the slopes to the south and the more pronounced hills to the north and the higher quality landscape south of the former Wing aerodrome.
<b>Description</b>	A large area of undulating hills and ridges spanning east – west and populated with a series of small villages.
<b>Landscape character context (Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment)</b>	LCT 09: Low Hills and Ridges (9.1 Finemere Hill; 9.2 Quinton Hill; 9.3 Pitchcott Whitchurch ridge) LCT 08: Vale (8.2 Kingsbridge valley; 8.5 Northern Vale -small parts; 8.3 Ouzel Valley Catchment – small part; 8.6 Hulcott Vale – small part). LCT 04: Undulating Clay Plateau (4.14 Wingrave – Mentmore Ridge); 4.13 Cublington-Wing Plateau; 4.15 (Weedon Ridge). LCT 05: Shallow Valleys (5.8 North Marston undulating claylands – small part); 5.9 Westcott Claylands – small part). LCT 07: Wooded Rolling Lowlands (7.4 Kingswood Wooded Farmland – small part)

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Summary description</b>
<b>Distinctiveness</b>	Distinctive band of low, generally open limestone hills, ridges and plateau to the north of Aylesbury Vale. Strong character and sense of place as a result of the coherent character of the landform, consistent land use of agricultural fields (pastoral and arable) and the scattering of attractive villages.
<b>Perceptual character</b>	Strong sense of rural tranquillity, openness and sense of the dominance of landscape. The dominance of landscape and sense of openness – particularly on the plateau in the east of the area, provides opportunities to appreciate the landscape from roads and public rights of way. Frequent attractive views of the undulating hills from the many vantage points. Views to the Vale of Aylesbury to the south from vantage points and many of the villages perched on the ridge– e.g. Quinton Hill, Wingrave, Aston Abbots – with the landscape providing an attractive setting to villages. Wheat fields provide attractive tones of yellowy-orangey colour in summer that glints in the sunshine.
<b>Landscape and scenic quality</b>	High scenic quality of the undulating hills and ridges from within the area and within views from outside the area (e.g. Middle Claydon Conservation Area; refer to other relevant Conservation Area Appraisals for specific views). Spectacular and panoramic views – e.g. to the south east towards the Chilterns from Wingrave and the Brill-Winchendon Hills – refer to relevant Conservation Appraisals for more details on views. Some very old and characterful historic buildings – e.g. in Aston Abbots, Whitchurch and Oving. Picturesque villages present a smaller scale, and the landscape is usually visible from vantage points within them (e.g. from Wingrave). Church towers are local landmarks. Mature trees and hedgerows nestle buildings and structures into the landscape.
<b>Natural character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancient woodlands, with a particular concentration in the west of the area – many of which are also SSSI/ LWS</li> <li>• Grassland LWS e.g. Cublington Motte and Blackgrove Meadows neutral grassland Biological Notification Site.</li> <li>• Wetland LWS e.g. Monument Field</li> <li>• Ecological value of farmlands and parklands including two</li> </ul>

	Biological Notification Sites at Ascott House grounds and Creslow Manor Farm
<b>Cultural character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong sense of history – remaining ancient woodland in the west of the area that was once part of the medieval hunting forest of Bernwood, irregular and assart fields</li> <li>• Ascott House and Mentmore Towers Registered Park and Garden (II*)</li> <li>• Large number of Scheduled Monuments, concentrated within the medieval villages – e.g. Crafton, Cublington, Ascott, Bolbec Castle at Whitchurch, sites of Medieval villages of Burston and Denham Lodge.</li> <li>• Large number of Conservation Areas – Crafton, Aston Abbots, Cublington, Weedon, Whitchurch, Oving, containing characterful listed buildings, many of them timber framed</li> <li>• Earthworks of well preserved ridge and furrow e.g. North Marston, and at Quainton Hill are amongst the finest surviving examples to be found in England.</li> </ul>
<b>Function</b>	Good network of public rights of way including long distance trails – e.g. the Bernwood Jubilee Way, North Buckinghamshire Way, Outer Aylesbury Ring, Matthew’s Way

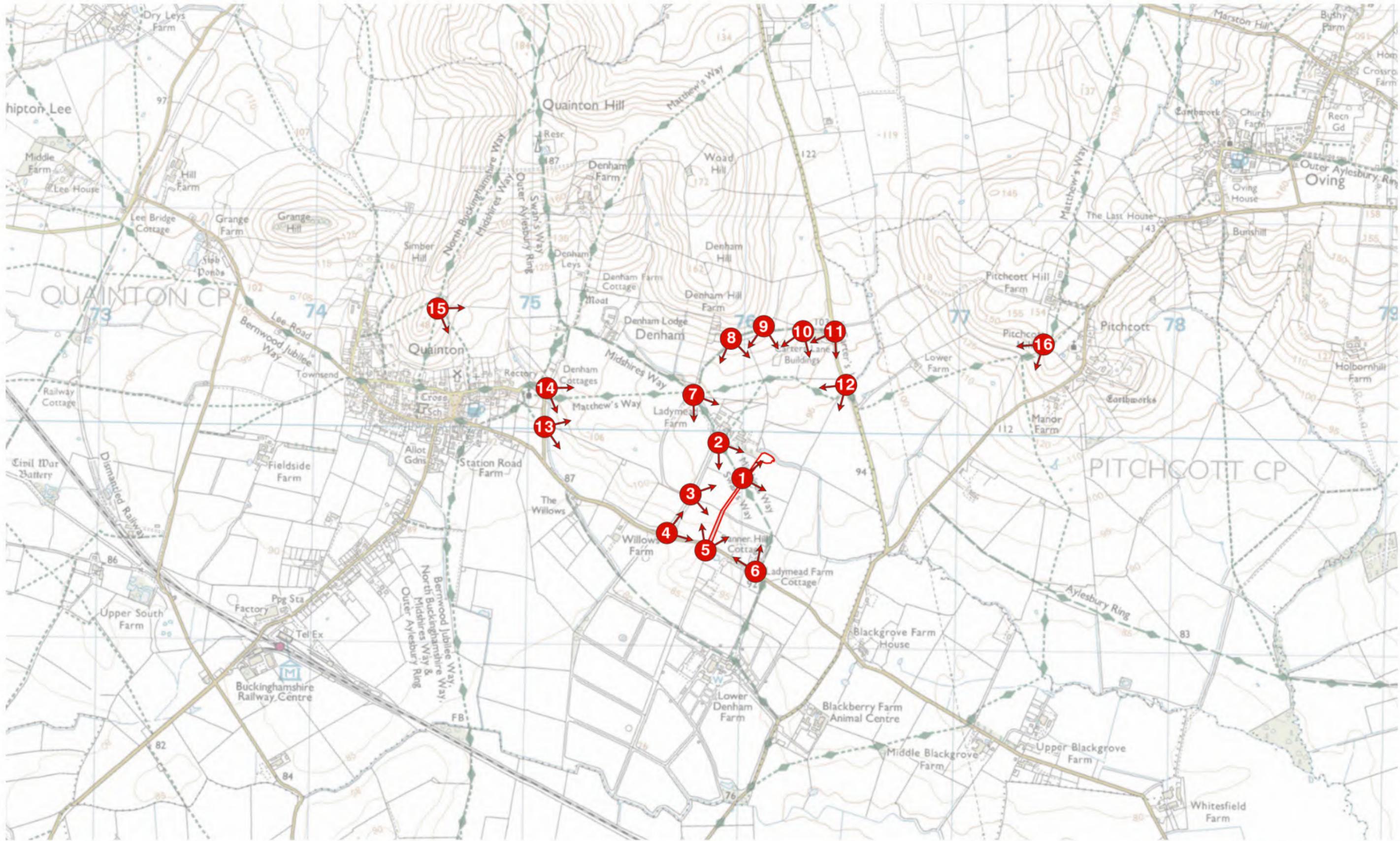
**Guidelines for landscape management in the area, based on guidelines from the relevant landscape character areas**

<b>Guidelines for landscape management<sup>13</sup></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maintain and improve condition of existing hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.</b></li> <li>• <b>Maintain the condition and extent of woodland using traditional techniques to create and manage a wide diversity of habitats.</b></li> <li>• <b>Promote connectivity of habitats, particularly the calcareous grassland and woodland.</b></li> <li>• <b>Maintain the distinctive pattern of historic routeways.</b></li> <li>• <b>Support and promote recreational access by footpaths and bridleways – e.g. to Finemere Hill.</b></li> <li>• <b>Promote information and understanding about the historic importance and appropriate management of historic woodland features such as irregular edges, assarts, banks and ditches.</b></li> <li>• <b>Maintain the sparsely settled remote character of the landscape.</b></li> <li>• <b>Retain and enhance views from publicly accessible land.</b></li> <li>• <b>Ensure the preservation of archaeological earthworks and ridge and furrow by maintaining grassland.</b></li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> Management guidelines are taken from the relevant Landscape Character Assessment areas (Jacobs, 2008)

## **APPENDIX 5**

Viewpoint Location Plan (VLP.003) and Photographic Record



Not to Scale

Key

-  Site Boundary
-  Viewpoints



Ladymead Farm, Quanton

Viewpoint Location Plan

Client: Antony Barrett

Drawing Ref: 11786L.VLP.003

Date: Nov 2023 Drawn: SA Checked: AM



**Viewpoint 1**



**Viewpoint 2**

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera (Canon EOS 6D) is a full sensor DSLR model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 50mm focal length using a fixed 50mm Canon lens. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context.



High voltage power lines,  
east of Carters Lane

Chilterns AONB escarpment

Banner Hill Cottage

The Willows  
(behind intervening vegetation)

Approximate extent of site

**Viewpoint 3**



Application site, behind intervening  
vegetation and landform

The Willows

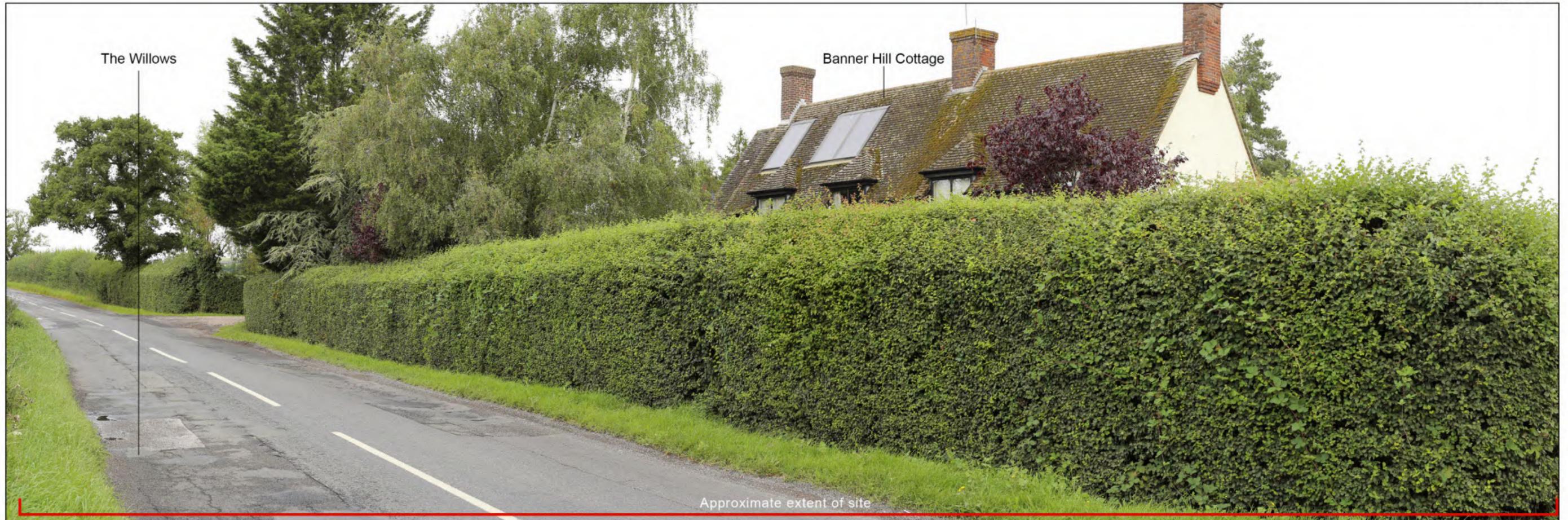
Approximate extent of site

**Viewpoint 4**

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**Viewpoint 5**

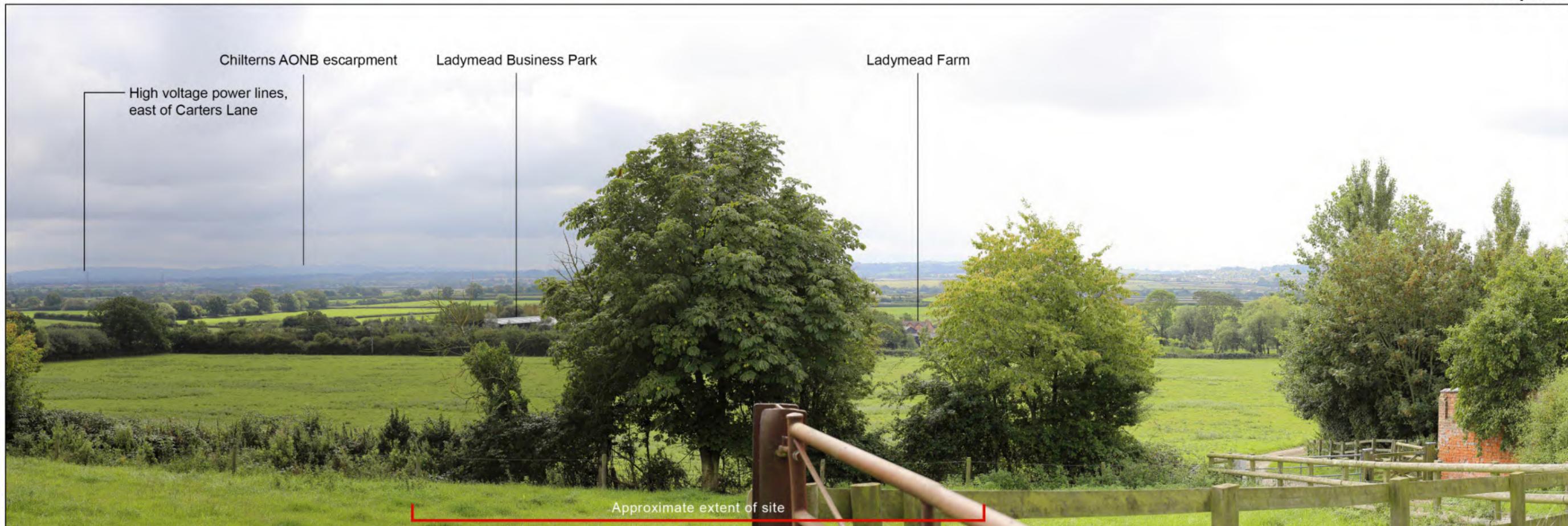


**Viewpoint 6**

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**Viewpoint 7**



**Viewpoint 8**

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**Viewpoint 9**



**Viewpoint 10**

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**Viewpoint 11**



**Viewpoint 12**

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**Viewpoint 13**



**Viewpoint 14**

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High voltage power lines,  
east of Carters Lane

Holy Cross & St Mary's Church

Chilterns AONB escarpment

Quainton Windmill

Properties in Quainton

Approximate extent of site

**Viewpoint 15**



Chilterns AONB escarpment

Pitchcott Hill

High voltage power lines,  
east of Carters Lane

The Willows  
(behind intervening vegetation)

Properties in Quainton

Banner Hill  
Cottage

Approximate extent of site

**Viewpoint 16**

NOTE: PHOTOGRAPHS ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY AND SHOULD NOT REPLACE VISITING THE VIEWPOINTS IN PERSON TO ENSURE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs which are stitched together in Adobe Photoshop. The photographs are taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera in line with best practice and current guidance. The camera (Canon EOS 6D) is a full sensor DSLR model and, as such, the photographs are taken at a 50mm focal length using a fixed 50mm Canon lens. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and, when printed at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 260mm curved through the same radius in order to most closely reflect the existing landscape context.



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