

**BRADFIELD SOUTHEND**

**COLD ASH**

**COMPTON**

**EASTERN URBAN AREA**

**LAMBOURN**

**NEWBURY**

**THATCHAM**

**THEALE**

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## BRADFIELD SOUTHEND

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Bradfield Southend</b>
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas:</b>	
LCA 8A Hermitage Wooded Commons	
<b>Date of site survey</b>	<b>7 May 2015</b>
<b>Surveyor</b>	<b>AG</b>

### **Key landscape characteristics of LCA8A**

- Broad undulating plateau
- Intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and small areas of remnant heathland
- Large interconnected woodland blocks (along river Bourne)
- Strong hedgerow pattern with mature trees
- Enclosed and intimate character
- Small irregular fields of informal and piecemeal enclosures
- Intricate network of rural lanes, many sunken and overhung with woodland
- Ancient and semi-natural woodland
- Reorganised fields and paddocks, formerly pre 18th C irregular fields (HLC)
- Blurring of the urban/rural boundary as result of introduction of paddocks (HECZ)
- Network of lanes with old hedgebanks (NDLCA LCT15)
- Linear woodland (NDLCA LCT15)

### **Key visual characteristics of LCA8A**

- Low wooded horizons

### **Key settlement characteristics of LCA8A**

- Dispersed settlement pattern characteristic of encroachment into woodland and commons
- Linear roadside settlements as at Southend
- Development has extended beyond the settlement boundary
- Original centred on two drove roads
- Mix of farmhouses and poly-focal hamlets with several nuclei clustered around road junctions at Southend (HECZ)
- Housing developments from the 1960s concentrated around the historic settlements of South End, typified by small housing estates and developments constructed around the historic nuclei. Development at South End has shifted the settlement's focus to the south-west and away from the historic core (HECZ)
- Ridgetop roads and settlements (NDLCA LCT15)
- Insensitive modern infill development (NDLCA LCT15)

### **Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development**

The whole of Bradfield Southend and its hinterland lies within the AONB landscape character area LCA 8A Hermitage Wooded Commons. The village extends along a low ridge at 95 to 100m AOD above the river Bourne valley to the south and the river Pang valley to the north. A minor stream in a shallow valley defines the northern edge of the village. The settlement is largely linear in character, as the historic nucleated hamlets have been linked through more modern housing along Cock Lane and South End Road, although these are linked by development along Heath Road. The settlement edge is fragmented but much more clearly defined at the west end of the village on Cock Lane and at the top of Aldmoor Lane. The village has few open views; with framed views into adjacent fields. The Bourne valley to the south is a local feature and the local tree and hedgerow cover helps to contain the village.

The village still maintains its ridgetop character and largely retains a linear pattern. The impact of modern infill development is partly mitigated by the lack of large or medium sized estates and the open space between Cock Lane and South End Road. The village would benefit from a greater sense of containment and clearer definition to the main approaches into the village. This is already in evidence at Cock Lane and further development beyond the existing boundary here should be resisted. The character of Aldmoor Lane should be conserved and development should not extend down the ridgeline slopes. Minor extensions at each end of South End Road might be achieved without harm to the AONB provided that an opportunity was sought to enhance the settlement edge and the village did not expand beyond any well-defined landscape features.

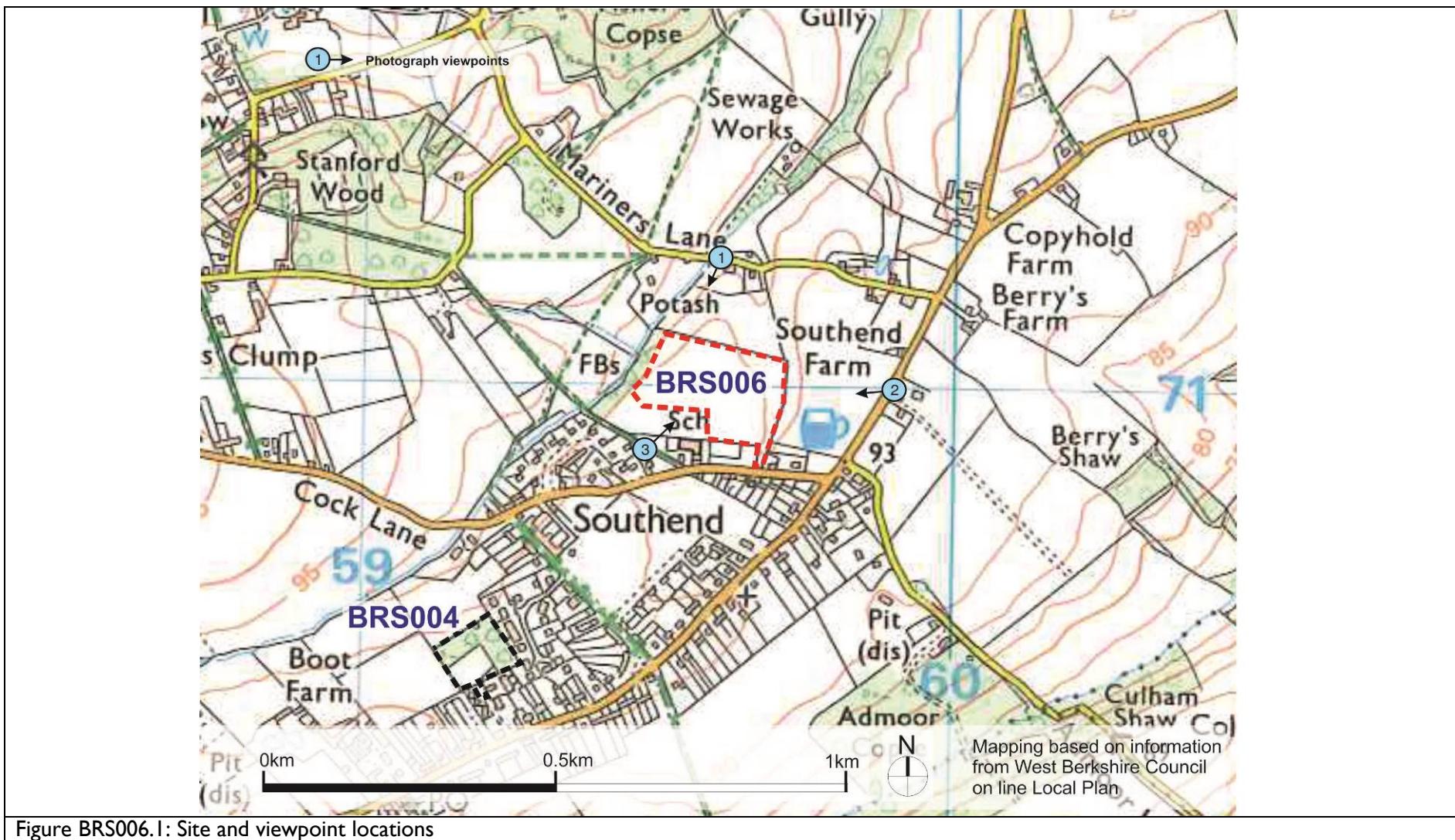
#### **Sources:**

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002

Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ)

A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: BRS006: Land at Ash Grove



## PHOTOGRAPHS

	
<p>Viewpoint 1: View south west from Mariners Lane. Site is screened by the tree belt on the eastern boundary of the site.</p>	<p>Viewpoint 2: View west from a field gate along South End Road. Site is screened by the tree belt (seen beyond the open field) which is on the eastern boundary of the site.</p>
	
<p>Viewpoint 3: View north east from footpath alongside Bradfield Primary School. The site is largely screened by foreground vegetation and buildings.</p>	

## Site description

Site BRS006 is located on the northern side of Bradfield Southend, entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The site's southern boundary is adjacent to the school field of Bradfield Primary School and a small, recent housing estate, all accessed off Cock Lane. Otherwise the site's western, northern, and eastern boundaries are adjacent to the surrounding countryside. The eastern boundary is formed by a tree belt, with a wooded stream corridor forming the western boundary and with a hedge along the northern boundary. The site is flat to undulating, dropping to the stream on the western edge. From aerial photograph the field appears to be used as pasture. The site is very difficult to view from publicly accessible viewpoints and has very little intervisibility with the village, except with the school and houses immediately adjacent to the site.

### Relationship with adjacent settlement

- The site is adjacent to loose built form on its southern boundary, but extends beyond the current settlement edge
- The site is at the edge of the plateau on which the village sits
- There is very little intervisibility with the wider village
- Urban edge largely well vegetated, but partially open along the southern boundary
- Settlement between Heath Road and South End Road has been infilled with small scale developments increasing the width of the built form but generally retaining the linearity, particularly along Cock Lane between the school and South End Road
- The western edge of the settlement either side of Cock Lane is clearly defined by the stream corridor

### Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- Strong relationship with the wider AONB and typical of the LCA
- Part of the intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and larger arable fields
- Strong pattern of hedgerows and woodland
- Largely enclosed landscape
- Part of the tranquil landscape north of Bradfield Southend
- No public rights of way across the site or links to the wider countryside

#### **Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Potential loss of significant tree belts
- Loss of matrix of woodland and pasture which has links with the wider landscape
- Loss of visual and aural tranquillity

#### **Impact on key visual characteristics**

- The site is well screened from within Bradfield Southend and the wider countryside

#### **Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development of the whole site would result in substantial ‘backland’ extension to the existing development north of Cock Lane and erosion of the linear pattern of much of the village
- Limited visual and physical connections with the existing built form

#### **Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Development on the whole of this site would result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB. However, the south eastern part of the site, adjacent to the settlement edge could be developed without harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

#### **Recommendations**

Part of this site may be suitable for further consideration as a housing site as shown in figure BRS006.2 subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB and to generally retain the linear settlement pattern of the village:

- Development is contained in the south eastern part of the site adjacent to the settlement edge
- The retention of existing trees
- The provision of a tree belt to contain the housing on the northern edge, continuing along the northern edge of the school grounds and linking the tree belt on the eastern edge with the wooded stream corridor on the western boundary.
- The preferred access from Cock Lane, subject to an assessment of the impact on existing trees.
- A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site.

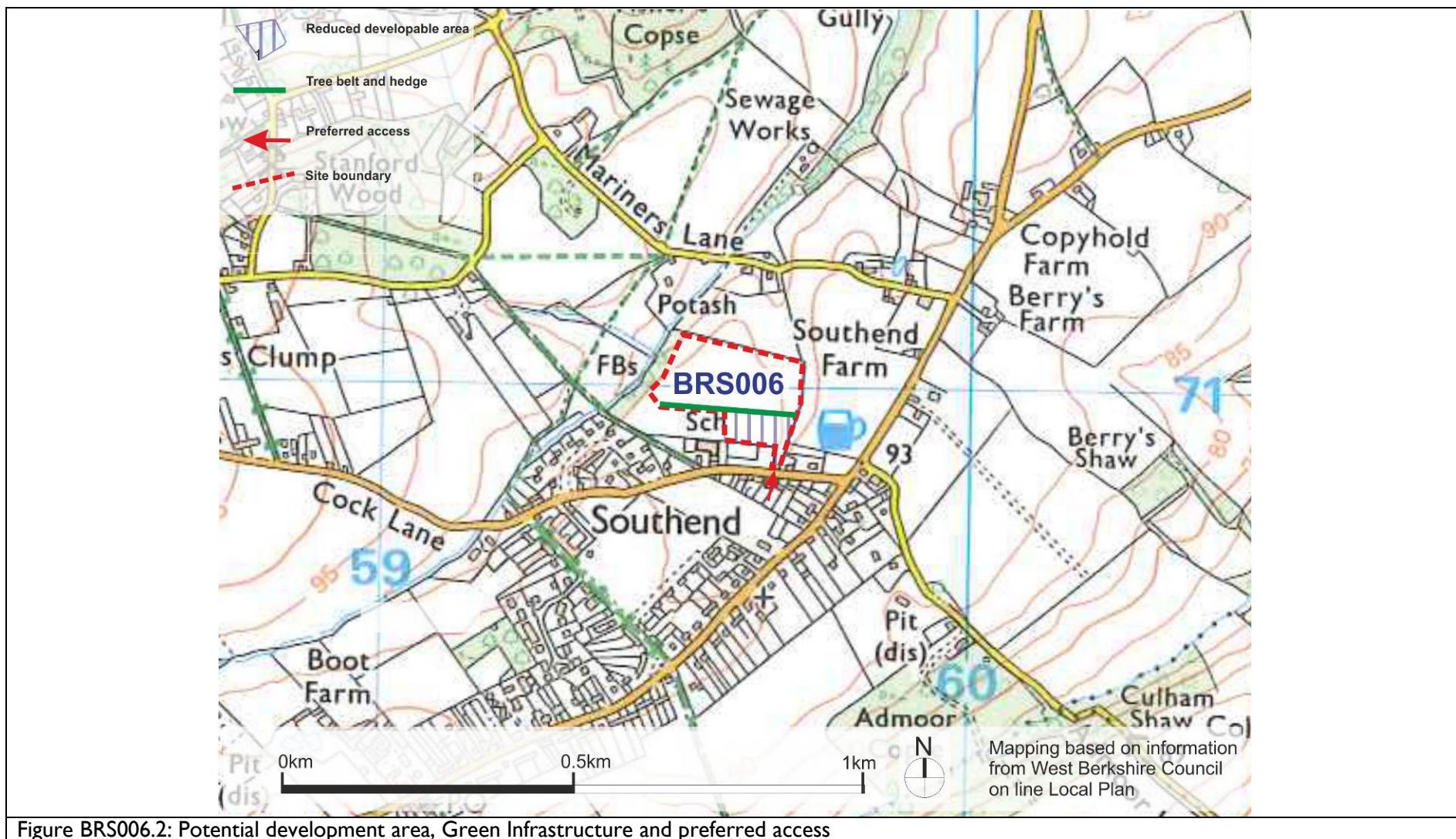


Figure BRS006.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

## COLD ASH: ADDITIONAL SITES

### Assessment of Settlement

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Cold Ash</b>
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas:</b>	
LCA 8A Hermitage Wooded Commons	
<b>Newbury District Landscape Assessment Landscape Character Types:</b>	
13 Gravel plateau woodlands with pastures and heaths	
14 Plateau Edge Transitional Matrix	
<b>Date of site survey</b>	7 May 2015
<b>Surveyor</b>	AG

**PLAN OF SETTLEMENT AND SITES COL 002, 006, 011**

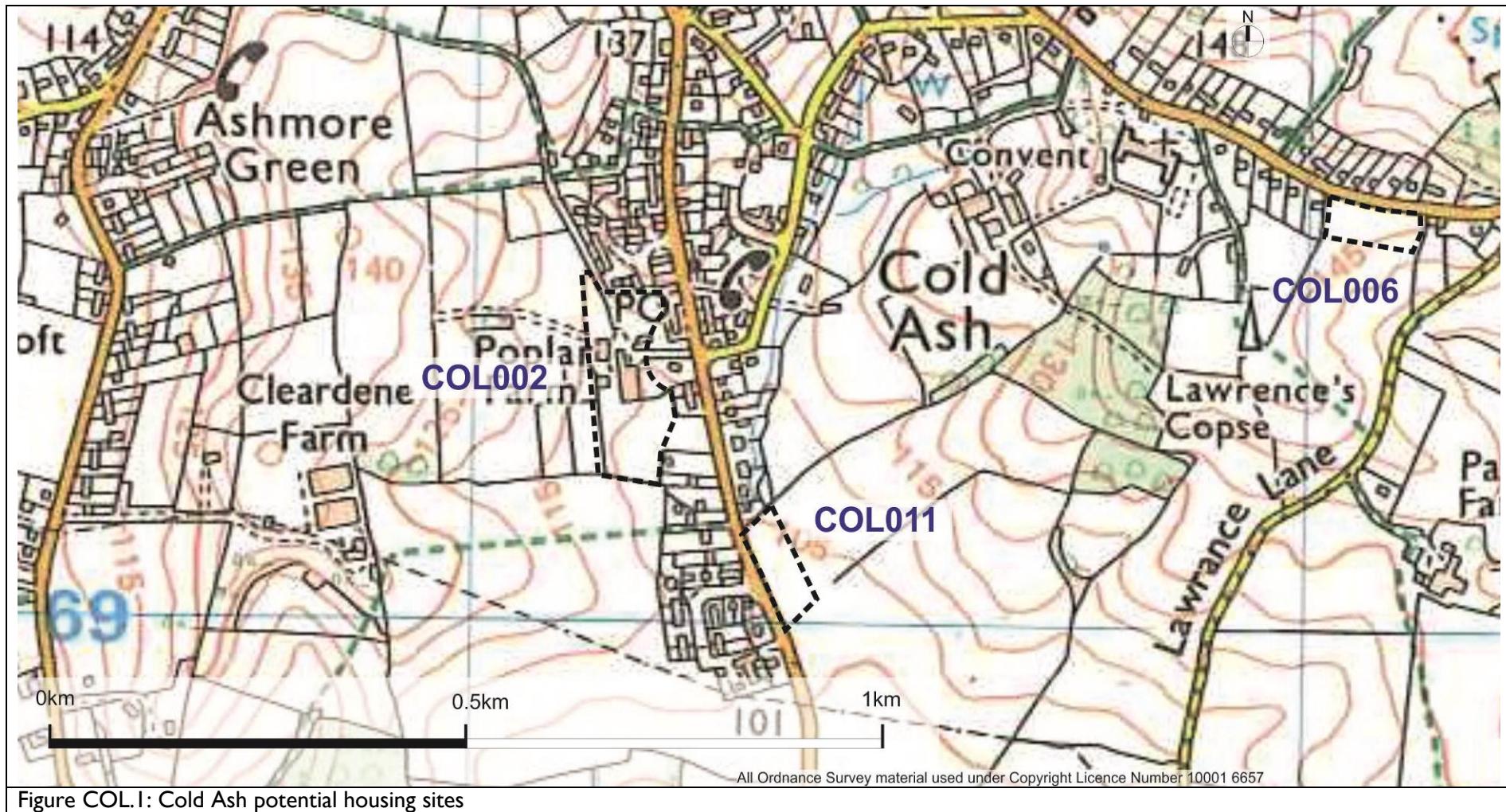


Figure COL.1: Cold Ash potential housing sites

### Key landscape characteristics of LCA8A

- lowland area at the base of the chalk dipslope, underlain by clays, silts, sands and gravels of the Reading and Bagshot Beds and London Clay, giving rise to nutrient poor, often acidic, soils;
- a broad undulating plateau falling towards the Kennet Valley to the south east and dissected by River Pang;
- variable land cover forming an intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and small areas of remnant heathland. Some more open areas of arable land can be found on the slopes that drop to the Pang Valley and to the south east near Beenham;
- large, interconnected woodland blocks and strong hedgerow pattern with mature trees restrict views and create an enclosed and intimate character. Low wooded horizons are a feature;
- numerous semi-natural woodlands of ancient origin, with some large commercial plantations. Wooded commons and small areas of remnant heath are a distinctive element;
- many features of biodiversity interest including heathland, dry and wet woodland, bog and areas of wet meadow;
- dominated by small irregular fields of informal and piecemeal enclosures, of medieval and post-medieval date with some larger, more regular and straight edged, formal Parliamentary enclosure on flatter terrain in the south-east and west;
- intricate network of rural lanes, many sunken and overhung by woodland plus more intrusive road infrastructure;
- historic parkland based on medieval deer parks and manor houses with associated ornamental parklands with gardens, rides and plantings are a particular feature;
- flat to undulating plateau, generously scaled rolling landscape with some pronounced wooded ridges (VDS);
- a complex pattern of landscape, dominated by woodland; coniferous, or mixed with beech and birch (VDS);
- pastures; remnant heathlands and commons (VDS);
- heathland and woodland habitats – deciduous and mixed woodland to pasture and arable (VDS);
- the area abounds with natural drains, issues and sinks, all of which help to ensure natural drainage and control the run-off of excessive rainfall. These are particularly evident in the local gaps between Cold Ash and the neighbouring parishes (VDS);
- woodland is a dominant natural feature in this area with a typical landscape of pine and birch. The area along and round Hermitage Road in particular is densely treed and provides a contrast to the more open oak dominated landscape of the clay soils which surround The Ridge (VDS);
- the older parts of the villages are more wooded and have larger and more mature species than the newer parts (VDS);
- in the future, the lack of large trees could have an adverse effect on the village as a whole if sufficient open space is not provided in new developments to allow for planting larger trees (VDS);
- the parish is served with a network of well-used public footpaths, which lead from Ashmore Green via Cold Ash Hill to The Ridge and across wooded areas (VDS);

#### **Key visual characteristics of LCA8A**

- mainly enclosed landscape;
- notable view from The Ridge across Westrop Farm and Westrop Gulley to Frilsham and Yattendon should be taken into consideration in future development, with efforts made to conserve or enhance it (VDS);
- new development should be designed to conserve and enhance the views of the village within the wider landscape and to conserve and enhance views of the wider countryside from the two villages (VDS);

#### **Key settlement characteristics of LCA8A**

- dispersed pattern of settlement characteristic of encroachment into areas of common and woodland;
- includes large nucleated villages, lines of estate cottages, loose roadside settlements as well as many dispersed farmsteads and residential country houses;
- well settled area with rising population due to proximity to accessibility to Reading;
- linear settlements within wooded areas; clustered farmsteads and private residences (VDS);
- road pattern with complex winding side lanes with banks and hedgerows and a bridleway network (VDS);
- where appropriate, any proposed development should conserve the diversity and mix of landscape character types in the parish, eg the wooded setting of Cold Ash (VDS);

#### **Key landscape characteristics of LCT 13**

- Intimately scaled, flat to undulating plateau with abrupt edge escarpments and small incised valleys with streams;
- Complex pattern of landscape dominated by woodland; coniferous or mixed with beech and birch; pastures, paddocks remnant heathlands and Commons with acid soil indicators;
- Important heathland and woodland habitats;
- Road pattern often with dominant straight ridge top roads and complex winding side lanes and bridleway network.

#### **Key visual characteristics of LCT 13**

- Outward views are limited by tree cover

#### **Key settlement characteristics of LCT 13**

- Dispersed, linear settlements within wooded areas and some sub-urban areas;
- Large private houses and private education establishments;

**Key landscape characteristics of LCT 14**

- A small to medium-scaled complex occurring on escarpments and forming a transition between plateau woodlands and lower open farmland;
- Clearly defined plateau edge with upper slopes often concave with hummocks and the lower slopes often with streams and springs with a convex, rounded slope profile;
- Gradation of land use closely associated to underlying geological sequence of Tertiary beds; deciduous and mixed woodland to pasture to arable;
- Coniferous woodland and heathland of adjacent Gravel Plateaux often found at edges of LCT 14, making the transition between the two undifferentiated;
- Poor pasture is often found on the upper slopes, with oak trees a constituent of both woods and hedgerows;
- Areas of clay are often made up of pasture typified by rounded landform and a rich patterning of mature oak trees;
- Small streams draining the escarpments are marked by irregular linear woodlands;
- Lower slopes often arable, with larger fields;
- The variety of vegetation provides a rich area for wildlife;
- An interesting and varied landscape where the mixture of woodlands, pasture and open farmland includes some of the ‘most delightful’ countryside which is easily accessible by foot.

**Key visual characteristics of LCT 14**

- Quite dense mixed woodland often occurs on the upper slopes, giving a sense of enclosure;

**Key settlement characteristics of LCT 14**

- Clustered farmsteads, private residences and small villages marked by churches;
- Settlements interconnected by an irregular network of lanes which rarely traverse the slopes;
- Many footpaths and bridleways preserve historic routes linking settlements.

### **Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development**

The village of Cold Ash sits on the southern edge of the North Wessex Downs AONB, with much of the village just outside the boundary and only the houses to the east of The Ridge within the boundary. This area is within AONB landscape character area LCA 8A Hermitage Wooded Commons. The rest of the village sits within the Newbury District Landscape Character Types 13 Gravel plateau woodlands with pastures and heaths and LCT 14 Plateau Edge Transitional Matrix.

The linear eastern part of the village extends along a low ridge at 140 to 150m AOD above the river Pang valley to the north east. The eastern countryside edge is generally wooded, with ribbon residential development between woodland blocks and few views over the countryside to the north framed by woodland. The settlement is largely based along the two forked main roads Cold Ash Hill and The Ridge which are joined by Collaroy Road making a loose triangular form. To the south of the village core Cold Ash Hill and The Ridge move further apart with the land dropping down from 140-150m AOD along The Ridge to Cold Ash Hill which sits in a valley at around 100-105m AOD.

To the north of the main settlement, Hermitage Road becomes heavily wooded. Much of the eastern settlement edge along The Ridge is defined by woodland, with one part at the northern end more open. The western edge is more fragmented with less woodland. The village has few open views; with occasional framed views into adjacent fields, though south along Cold Ash Hill the landscape is more open.

The settlement developed following the enclosure of common heathland and none of the existing buildings pre-date 1800. The village has no Conservation Area. The majority of houses have been built since 1940 with some small estates and a number of modern houses along roads leading down to the valleys. Post-war development in the wider area has been intense and spread along the roads between the older settlements of Cold Ash, Longlane, Curridge, Hermitage and Little Hungerford.

The village still largely maintains its ridge top character and linear pattern. The lack of large or medium sized estates helps to retain the distinctive character. The approach to the village at the southern end of The Ridge is clearly defined and the village would benefit from a similar definition to the main approach from Thatcham along Cold Ash Hill.

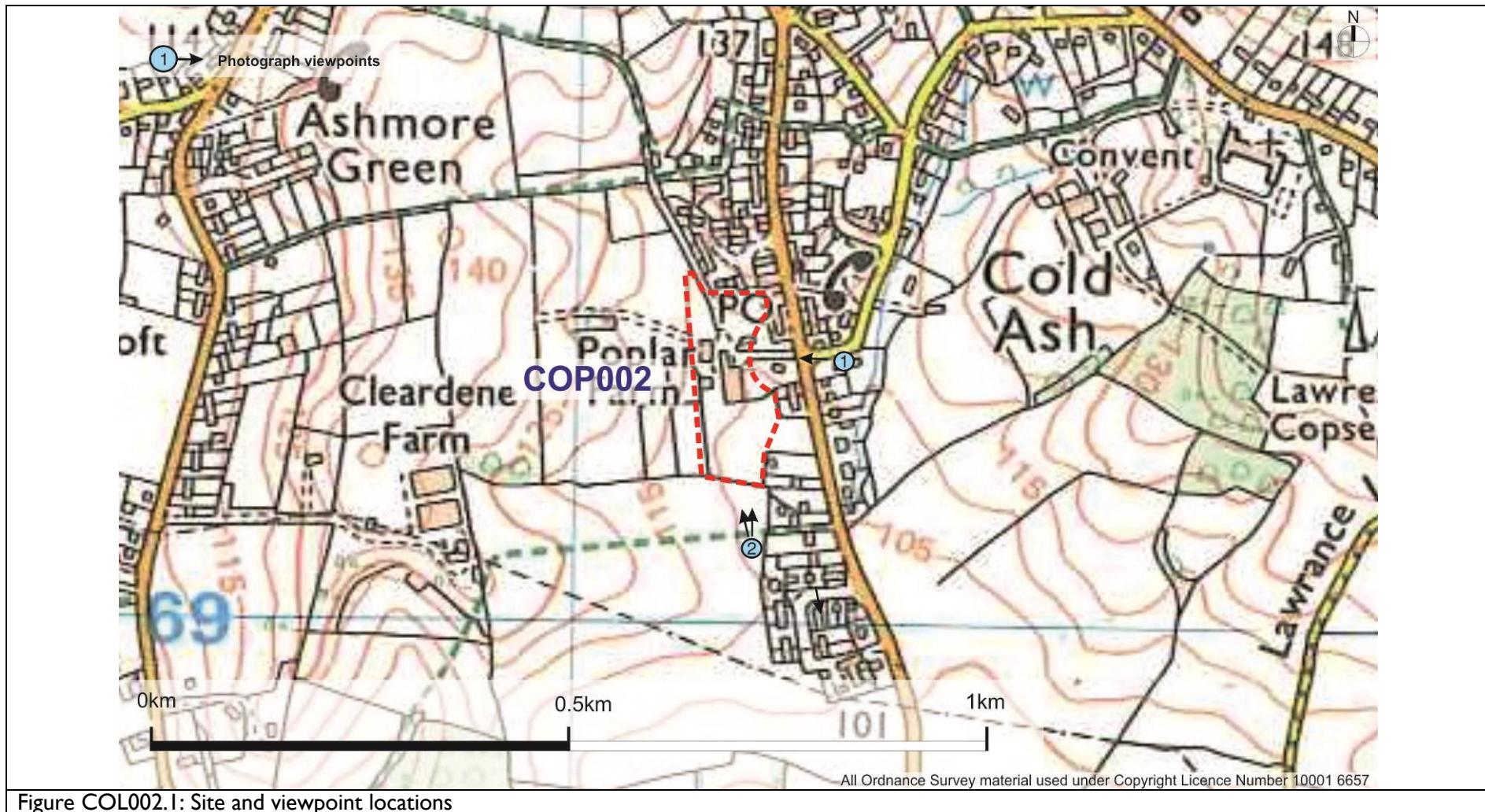
#### **Sources:**

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Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ)
- Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement 2002 (VDS)

**A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: COL002: Poplar Farm, Cold Ash Hill, Cold Ash**  
**B.**



## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View along farm access road from Cold Ash Hill



Viewpoint 2: View from footpath to south of site

### Site description

Site COL002 lies on the south west side of Cold Ash, outside of the boundary of the North Wessex Downs AONB. The site is set behind the ribbon residential development on the west side of Cold Ash Hill extending further into the countryside and up the hill than the housing, with the western boundary open (not defined by hedgerow or other boundary treatment). The site contains a number of barns within the open, grazed field and is accessed via a track off Cold Ash Hill. The access track is outside the site boundary. The southern boundary is marked by a gappy hedgerow and the site contains a number of trees.

**Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site is set behind the ribbon of residential built form along the west side of Cold Ash Hill
- The site is part of the rural approach to the village from the south

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The site is surrounded by countryside to west and south, adjacent to houses and gardens to parts of the east
- Part of the open, valley landscape south of the village

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Loss of valley side landscape which has links with the landscape south and west of Cold Ash
- Impact on rural approach to Cold Ash from the south

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- Site is not widely visible from within the village, but the southern part can be glimpsed from the rural approach to Cold Ash from the south
- Visual impact on PRoW to the south and south west and north west, including from a viewpoint on high ground noted in the Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement
- Not visible from the AONB

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development of the whole site would extend the settlement off the valley floor up the slope to the west
- Development of the whole site would widen the linear nature of the built form to the south

**Summary of compliance with NPPF on AONB**

The site could be developed without harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that only part of the site is considered further as a potential housing site to avoid affecting the linear, valley bottom settlement pattern and open landscape at the southern end of the village. The development should be contained on the lower ground in the north east of the site and only extend up the valley side in the area already containing the barns, as indicated in Figure COL002.2. Development should be subject to the provision of:

- a tree belt and hedgerow along the western and southern boundaries;
- woodland block in the north western corner to mitigate effects on views from the PRoW to the north west;
- woodland block along the southern edge to mitigate effects on views from the PRoW to the south;
- a hedgerow and trees along the eastern edge
- The preferred access is from Cold Ash Hill, via the existing farm track access;
- A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site

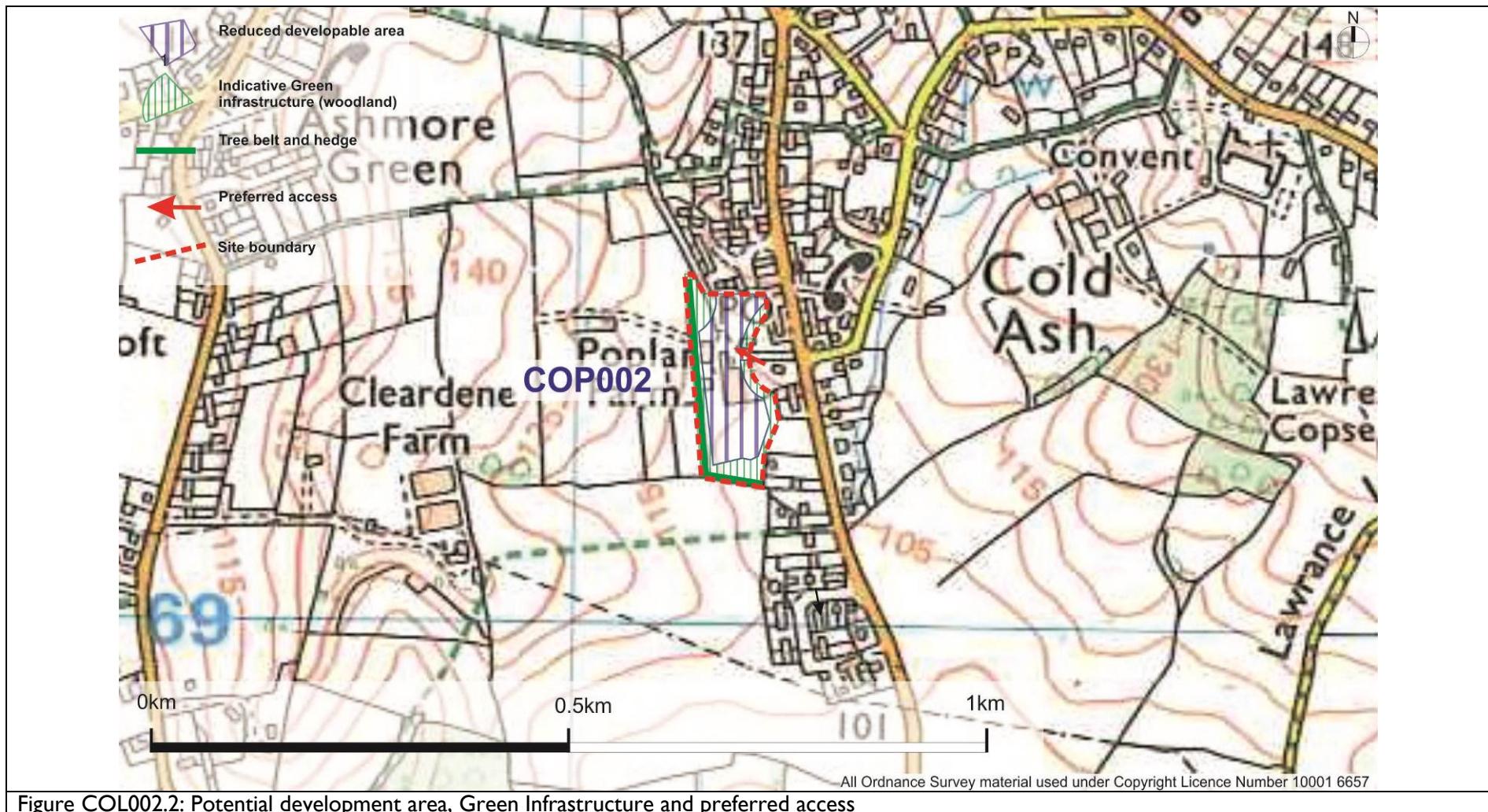
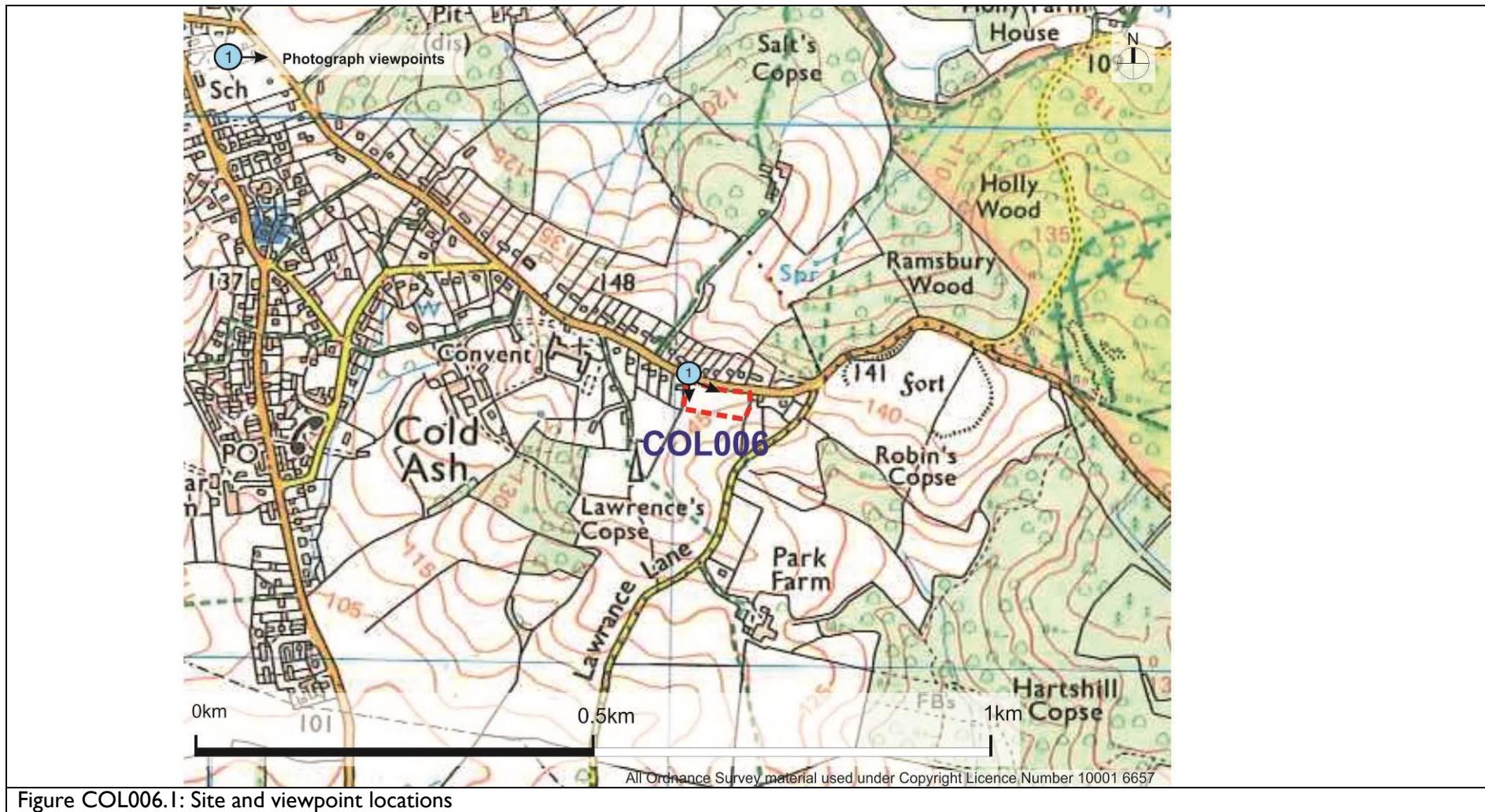


Figure COL002.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

B. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: COL006: south of The Ridge, Cold Ash



## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View south east from The Ridge through a field gate – a rare, elevated view across the Kennet Valley

### Site description

Site COL006 lies at the eastern edge of Cold Ash, adjacent to the southern boundary of the North Wessex Downs AONB. The site forms an open gap at the east end of the residential development on the south side of The Ridge, with two houses in large plots further to the east of the site and isolated from the settlement. The linear residential development continues on the north side of The Ridge opposite the site. The site forms the northern part of a much larger arable field with no hedgerow to the south west. A field hedge runs along the northern boundary with The Ridge and houses and gardens contain the site to the east and west. The field drops away to the south east off of the ridge and panoramic views of the wider countryside to the south east are possible from the site and through the field gate from The Ridge.

#### **Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site forms an open gap at the east end of residential built form along the south side of The Ridge, with two further residential plots to the east
- The site is part of the rural approach to the village from the east and by its openness and rare long views is important in reducing the density of linear development towards the edge of the settlement

#### **Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The site is somewhat typical of LCA 8A and LCTs 13 and 14 and strongly linked to the rolling countryside to the south and south east, with no hedged boundary separating it, and which is part of the setting of the AONB (though not widely visible)

#### **Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Potential loss of rolling fields dropping down from the plateau which have links with the landscape south and east of Cold Ash, and which are part of the setting of the AONB
- Impact on rural character of the approach to Cold Ash from the east and to the AONB from Cold Ash
- While not widely visible from the road (only visible through the field gate), the absence of built form gives a strong perception of connection with the countryside and being at the edge of the settlement

#### **Impact on key visual characteristics**

- The site is visible from the rural approach to Cold Ash from the east
- Loss of a rare elevated view over the countryside to the south and east from The Ridge. Though the road edge is hedged the glimpsed view is important as it gives a strong perception of visual and physical connectivity with the wider landscape, on the approach to the AONB
- Potential visual impact on PRoW to the south, which forms an approach to the AONB

#### **Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development of the whole site would extend the settlement off the ridge and down the slope to the south east
- The presence of the two residential properties east of the site does not affect the importance of the site providing connections with the wider landscape as there is still a perception of being at the edge of the village, close to open countryside and the AONB, which would be lost if the settlement was extended to close the open gap
- Potential introduction of modern estate housing which will be out of character with the linear arrangement of low density, detached housing which faces onto the road
- A new linear development reflecting the existing built form and not extending down the slope might be acceptable provided gaps are available between new buildings to allow occasional views through and to soften the impact of the development

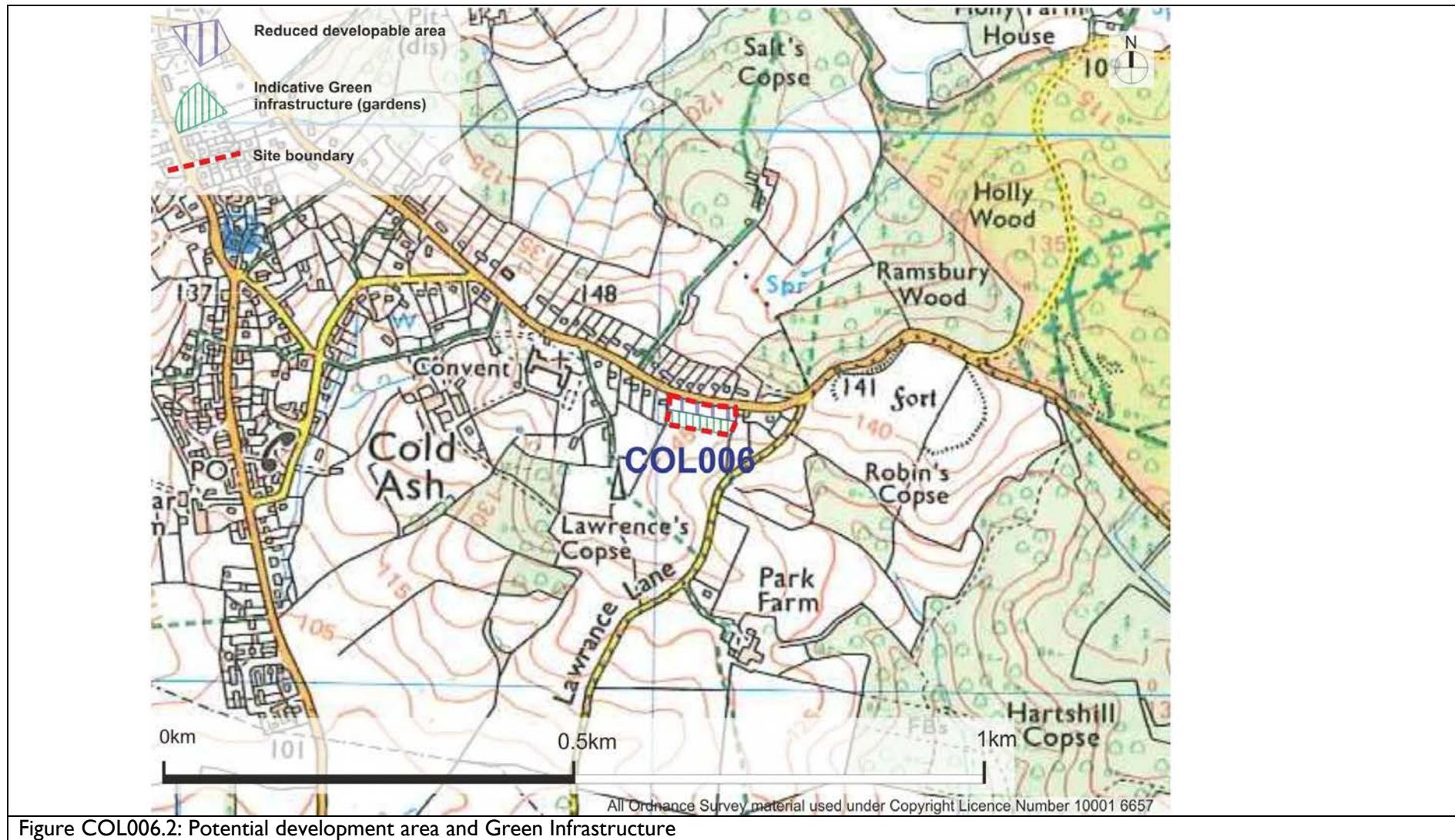
#### **Summary of compliance with NPfF**

Development of this site may be possible without harm to the setting of the AONB provided an opportunity to retain views southwards towards the Kennet valley is included within the development layout and the rural character of this approach to Cold Ash is conserved and enhanced.

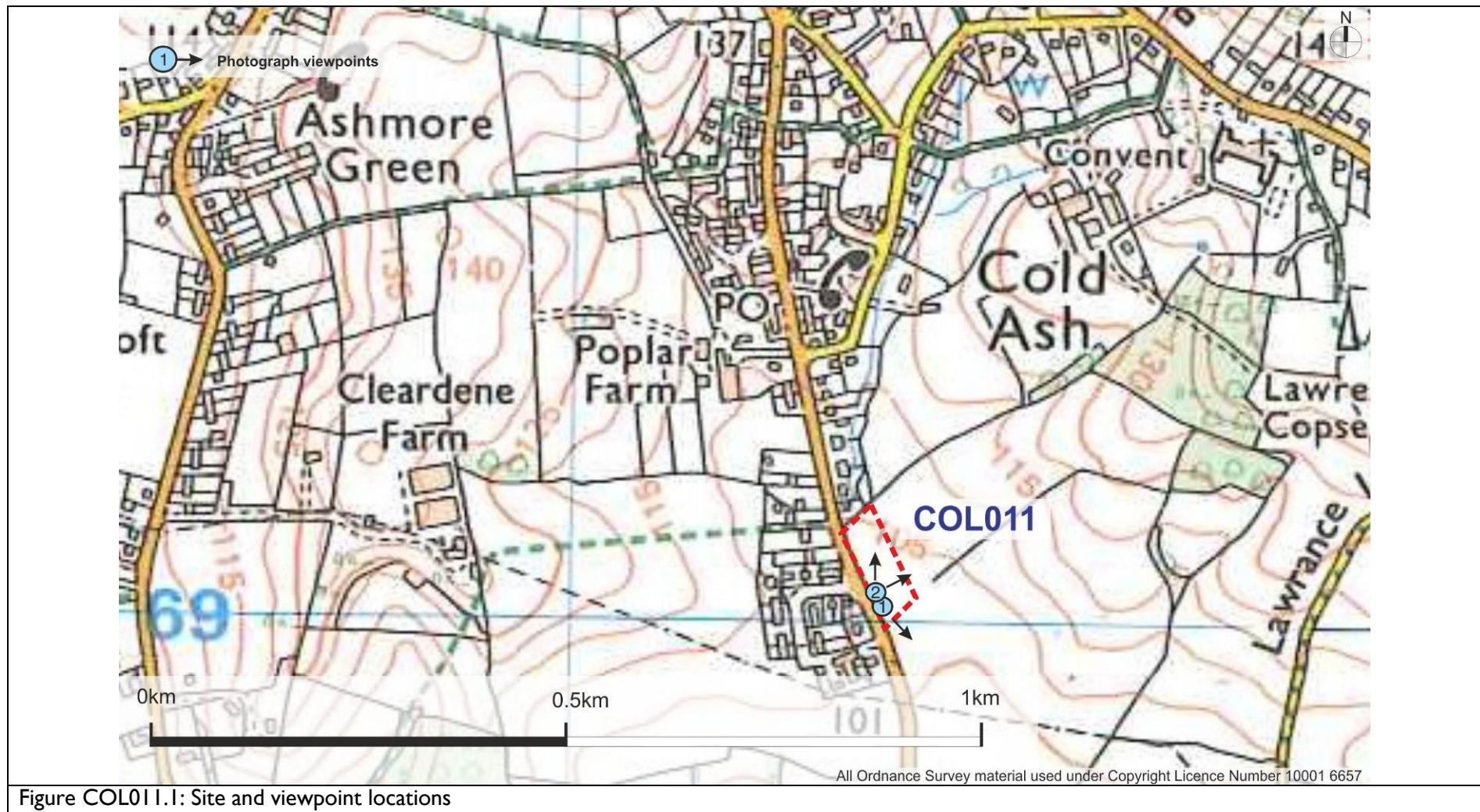
### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that only part of the site is considered further as a potential housing site to avoid affecting the setting of the AONB and retain the rural character and pattern of linear ribbon development along The Ridge. The development should be contained on the higher ground along the road, as indicated in Figure COL006.2. Development should be subject to the provision of:

- A gap in the built form to allow views through the development to the open landscape to the south;
- Individual driveway access onto The Ridge in keeping with the local pattern;
- A soft edge to the southern boundary of the site with tree planting;
- Retention of the hedgerow front boundary treatment;
- A density to reflect that of the adjoining houses on The Ridge;
- A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment which will be required to inform the final capacity of the site



C. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: COL011: east of Cold Ash Hill, Cold Ash



## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View south east across open countryside from field gate off Cold Ash Hill. The site extends only a short way in this direction, with the south eastern boundary partly formed by a hedge (to left of photo) and partly open.



Viewpoint 2: View north east from field gate off Cold Ash Hill. The settlement is off to the left and is largely well hidden by vegetation. The site is part of a large, arable field extending up the hill to Lawrence's Copse.

### Site description

Site COL011 lies on the southern side of Cold Ash, less than 1km south west of the boundary of the North Wessex Downs AONB. The settlement extends from its core south along Cold Ash Hill, stopping just north of the site on the east side of the road and extending just to the south of the site west of the road. Between the southern-most point of the village and the northern built up edge of Thatcham there is an open gap of approximately 250m. The site's north western and south western boundaries and part of the south eastern boundary are formed by field hedges. There are mature hedgerow trees in the hedge to the south east. The north eastern boundary is open to the remainder of a large field which extends up the hill to the north east towards Lawrence's Copse. The field is in use for arable farming.

#### **Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site is part of the open, rural approach to the village from the south and by its openness and views is important in reducing the density of linear development at the southern edge of the settlement

#### **Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The site is somewhat typical of LCA 8A, more typical of LCT 14, and strongly linked to the rolling countryside to the north east, east and south east, with no hedged boundary separating it from the rising ground to the north east and which is part of the setting of the AONB (though not widely visible)

#### **Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Loss of valley side landscape which has links with the landscape south of Cold Ash
- Impact on rural character of the approach to Cold Ash from the south
- Loss of open countryside separation between Cold Ash and Thatcham

#### **Impact on key visual characteristics**

- The site is visible from the rural approach to Cold Ash from the south and approach to the AONB via Cold Ash
- Visual impact on PRoW on rising ground to the west, including potentially from a viewpoint on high ground noted in the Cold Ash and Ashmore Green Village Design Statement

#### **Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development of the whole site would contain built form on the valley floor which is typical for this part of Cold Ash
- The presence of built form further south on the west side of Cold Ash Hill does not affect the importance of the site being part of the wider landscape as there is still a perception of being at the edge of the village, within open countryside. This would be lost if the settlement was extended on both sides of the road, though the settlement edge could benefit from increased planting to create a softer urban edge and better define the approach to the village
- Potential erosion of the separate identities of Cold Ash and Thatcham
- Poor landscape and visual connections with the main built form of the settlement

#### **Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Development of this site would result in harm to the setting of the AONB by introducing more built form into views approaching the village and AONB via the village

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that this site should not be pursued further as a potential housing site.

## Conclusion

The above analysis recommends only parts of COL 002 and CLO006 as potential areas for housing on landscape and visual grounds. Development would be locally visible but seen within the context of and well related to the settlement. These two sites lie on either side of the village and therefore development would not result in a cumulative adverse impact on the AONB. Other areas are heavily constrained by the following:

- The need to retain local landscape features,
- The need to avoid land that lies above or below the local settlement pattern in terms of the topographical spread
- The need to avoid any landscape intrusion on or into the wider landscape
- The need to avoid the creation of an exposed urban edge
- The need to avoid the erosion of open countryside between settlements
- The need to conserve and enhance landscape links and patterns that are characteristic of the AONB
- The need to seek the opportunity to mitigate existing visual intrusion from the settlement where this is not in conflict with the above.

## COMPTON

<b>Settlement</b>	Compton
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas:</b>	
LCA ID	Blewbury Downs open downland
<b>Date of site survey</b>	7 May 2015
<b>Surveyor</b>	AG

**PLAN OF SETTLEMENT AND SITES COM 009/010/011 AND COM 012**

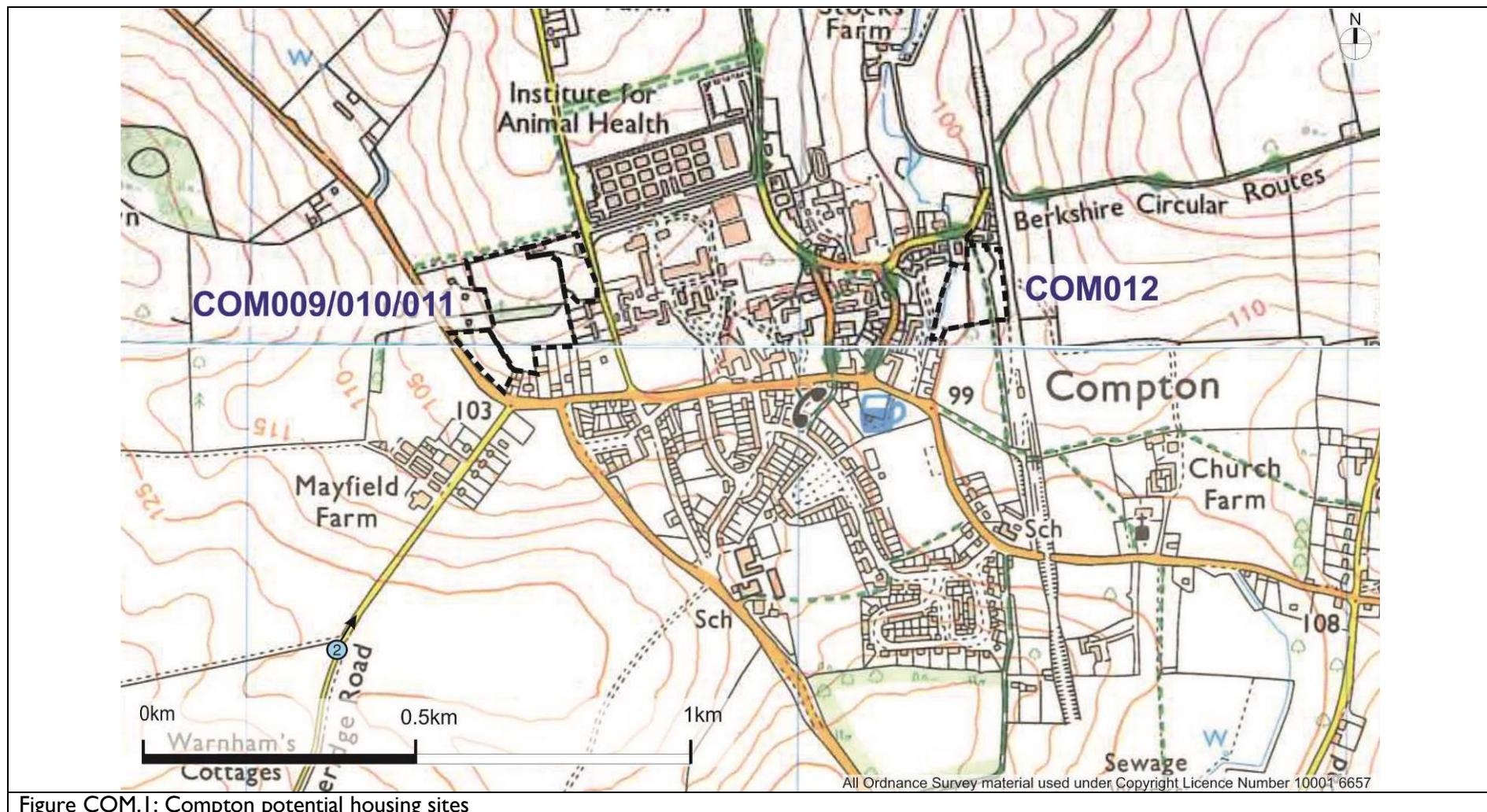


Figure COM.I: Compton potential housing sites

### Key landscape characteristics

#### AONB LCA ID Blewbury Downs (unless source noted otherwise)

- Strong structural landform of elevated downland with round or flat topped hills
- Intersecting dry valleys
- Large open landscape of rectilinear fields with little subdivision
- Dominated by arable farmland with sparse woodland on the tops
- Little enclosure
- Racehorse gallops and equestrian centres
- Numerous rights of way including the Ridgeway
- Sense of remoteness
- Some skyline tree belts and sparse hedgerow trees (NDLCA LCTI)
- Southern boundary of the village is marked by the extensive tree belts and woodlands (NDLCA LCTI)
- Upper winterborne section of the river Pang on the eastern boundary of the village and where appropriate new development should have due regard for any rise in the water table. (VDS)
- Important area of meadow at Stocks Farm west of the railway line (VDS)
- Historically most land to the north of the Pang was downland grazing, with open fields to the south (HECZ Upper Pang Valley)

### Key visual characteristics

#### AONB LCA ID Blewbury Downs (unless source noted otherwise)

- Long views
- Valleys often concealed from view by the landform (NDLCA LCTI)
- Area is noted visually for its broad sweeping lines and the vastness of the wide horizons
- Views out from the village to the Downs (VDS)

### Key settlement characteristics

#### AONB LCA ID Blewbury Downs (unless source noted otherwise)

- More settled than other areas of open downland
- Villages nestle at the heads of dry valleys
- The more major roads and lanes tend to follow the valley bottoms (NDLCA LCT1)
- Nucleated settlement (BLCA E4 Farnborough open downlands)
- Compton has a more modern character with ‘business park’ like buildings (BLCA E4 Farnborough open downlands)
- East Compton is a cluster of sporadic residential dwellings, originally clustered around the church. This area is visually and physically distanced from the remainder of the village by the railway line (VDS)
- Older housing in small groups lies north of the High Street, much of which is in the Conservation Area (VDS)
- South of High Street the estates are larger post war and modern but do not form a solid mass (VDS)
- The village benefits from private and public open green spaces within the village boundary (VDS)
- Industrial buildings on the eastern boundary are visible on the skyline (VDS)
- Economically diverse village with good community facilities reflected in its buildings and built form (CPP)

### Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development

The whole of Compton and its hinterland lie within the AONB landscape character area LCA ID Blewbury Downs. It is recommended that an overriding objective should be that the village remain small and contained within its dry valley setting and ensure that the wider landscape retains its visual qualities and sense of relative remoteness. The northern side of Compton is noted for its openness and it is very important that no development should be visually intrusive. The existing Pirbright Institute site currently detracts from the character of the village (except where it abuts the High Street) and the special qualities of the AONB, and opportunities should be sought to remedy this. Compton also lies on the transition of open downs to the more wooded hillsides to the south, whereby the existing tree cover in the south of the village is of particular value. Most of the settlement lies on lower flat ground at 100 – 115m AOD, either side of the main route through the village, and west of the River Pang, whose winterbourne upper section passes along the eastern side of the village. Any proposed development which would result in the loss of woodland cover, would extend up onto higher ground, or would lead to the loss of views into the open countryside is likely to have a detrimental effect on the special qualities of the AONB and the settlement of Compton.

The village is also noted for its pattern of generous open spaces within the settlement, many of which are linked visually or physically and lead the eye into the surrounding countryside. The village also has a distinctive settlement pattern. The two settlements of Compton and East Compton have distinct characters which should be maintained. The strong rural character of East Compton is a special feature of this area and a valuable contrast to the more modern and economically vibrant main village. The historic core and the pattern of small development plots in Compton require that the scale of any development is important. East Compton would not be able to accommodate any housing in even small estates without significant harm to the AONB. Any proposed development needs to respect these characteristics.

Although Compton has a large site on the edge of the settlement which has long been under some form of development, the development of large and homogeneous estates would detract from the special qualities of this area. Great care will also be needed to minimise the impact on the landscape character of the surrounding AONB, through limitations on the scale of development and generous provision of linked open space, and to mitigate the existing harm to the AONB landscape from intrusive built form as at the Pirbright Institute site and the industrial buildings.

**Sources:**

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment

2002; Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ)
- Compton Parish Plan (CPP)
- Compton Village Design Statement (VDS)

A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: COM009/010/011: Land between Ilsley Road and Churn Road, Compton

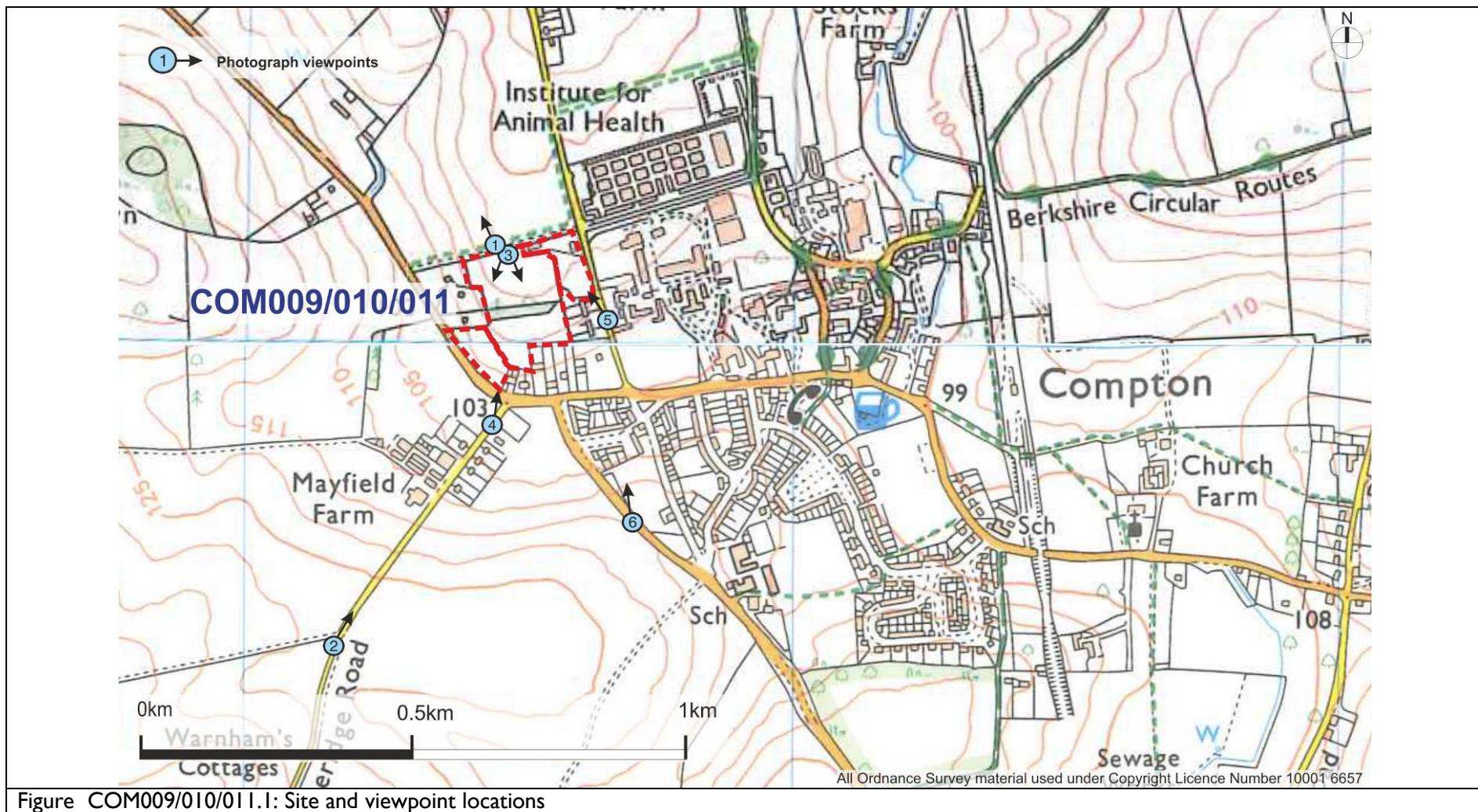


Figure COM009/010/011.1: Site and viewpoint locations

## PHOTOGRAPHS

		
<p>Viewpoint 1: Long views north from PRoW along northern boundary. Built form on higher ground in northern part of site would be widely visible from the AONB</p>	<p>Viewpoint 2: View from Chesaridge Road on high ground to south west. Parts of site would be visible in winter amongst trees between white shed roofs and silo</p>	
		
<p>Viewpoint 3: The northern part of site visually prominent in views from the PRoW along northern boundary</p>		



Viewpoint 4: The southern part of site (COM011 and part of COM009) is visually prominent and forms a wooded skyline in views from the valley to the south (from IIsley Road)



Viewpoint 5: View of COM010 from Churn Road – forms skyline from down the hill.



Viewpoint 6: View north from Newbury Road. Higher parts of COM009 and COM010 are visible.

### **Site description**

Site COM009/010/011 is located on the western edge of Compton on the north side of the main road passing through the village, on land rising northwards between 100m AOD and 120m AOD. The site, which is entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB, comprises one field to the north west which is separated by an area of tree / scrub woodland from the southern part of site which extends to meet Ilsley Road. In the north east there is a small field on rising ground, with Churn Road forming the eastern boundary and houses to the south. The northern fields are on the brow of the hillside which rolls over to the north where the land continues to rise to the Compton Downs. Both fields are used as pasture. The northern boundary has a public right of way just beyond the boundary. Long views northwards are possible from the PRoW and the higher ground within the site in the north west. The southern part of the site is contained by the settlement to the south east, with large gardens containing mature trees to the west.

#### **Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- Site lies on western edge of Compton
- The northern edge of site extends beyond the 115m contour below which much of the settlement lies
- South and south east boundaries are adjacent to settlement
- Some intervisibility with parts of the village

#### **Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- Lies on the lower to middle slopes leading up to Compton Downs, but beyond the highest elevation of much of the settlement (115m AOD)
- North western part of the site links with the open landscape to the north and forms a transition with the smaller scale landscape in the valley, to which the southern part of the site contributes
- The site forms part of the open space of the village which has physical and visual links with the surrounding countryside

#### **Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Impact on tree groups / scrub woodland at the interface between the open upper slopes and the more enclosed valley landscape
- Impact on character of PRoW adjacent to northern boundary
- Topography would require major modification to enable housing development
- Loss of visual and aural tranquillity
- Loss of locally uncommon pasture

#### **Impact on key visual characteristics**

- Impact on views from PRoW adjacent to northern boundary
- Visual impact on the wider countryside to the north and south within the AONB, including a number of PRoWs and roads
- Loss of views out to surrounding countryside from the village edge

#### **Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Expansion beyond upper limits of Compton above 115m AOD
- Loss of distinctive views to the countryside from the village

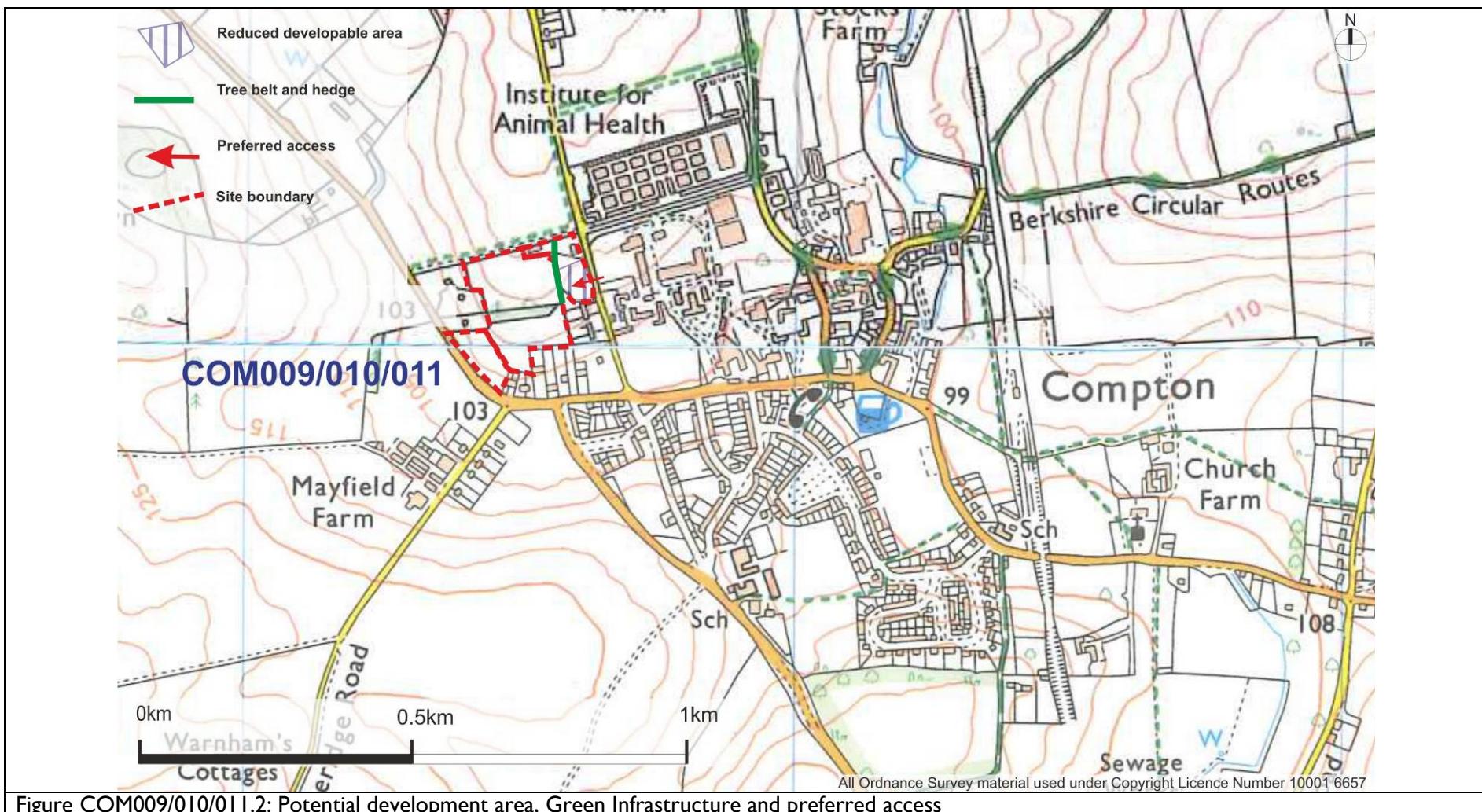
#### **Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Much of the site is not suitable for development and would result in significant harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

#### **Recommendations**

Much of the site is not suitable for development and is constrained by potential visual and landscape harm to the AONB and the settlement pattern. Only part of the relatively enclosed small field in the north east would be suitable for development as shown in figure COM009/010/011.2 and subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB:

- Development should be in the form of a continuation of the linear cottages to the south.
- Development should be kept off of the higher ground to the north and north west.
- A new hedgerow with hedgerow trees should be planted to the western edge, linking two areas of woodland / scrub.



**B. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: COM012: Land off Wallingford Road, Compton**

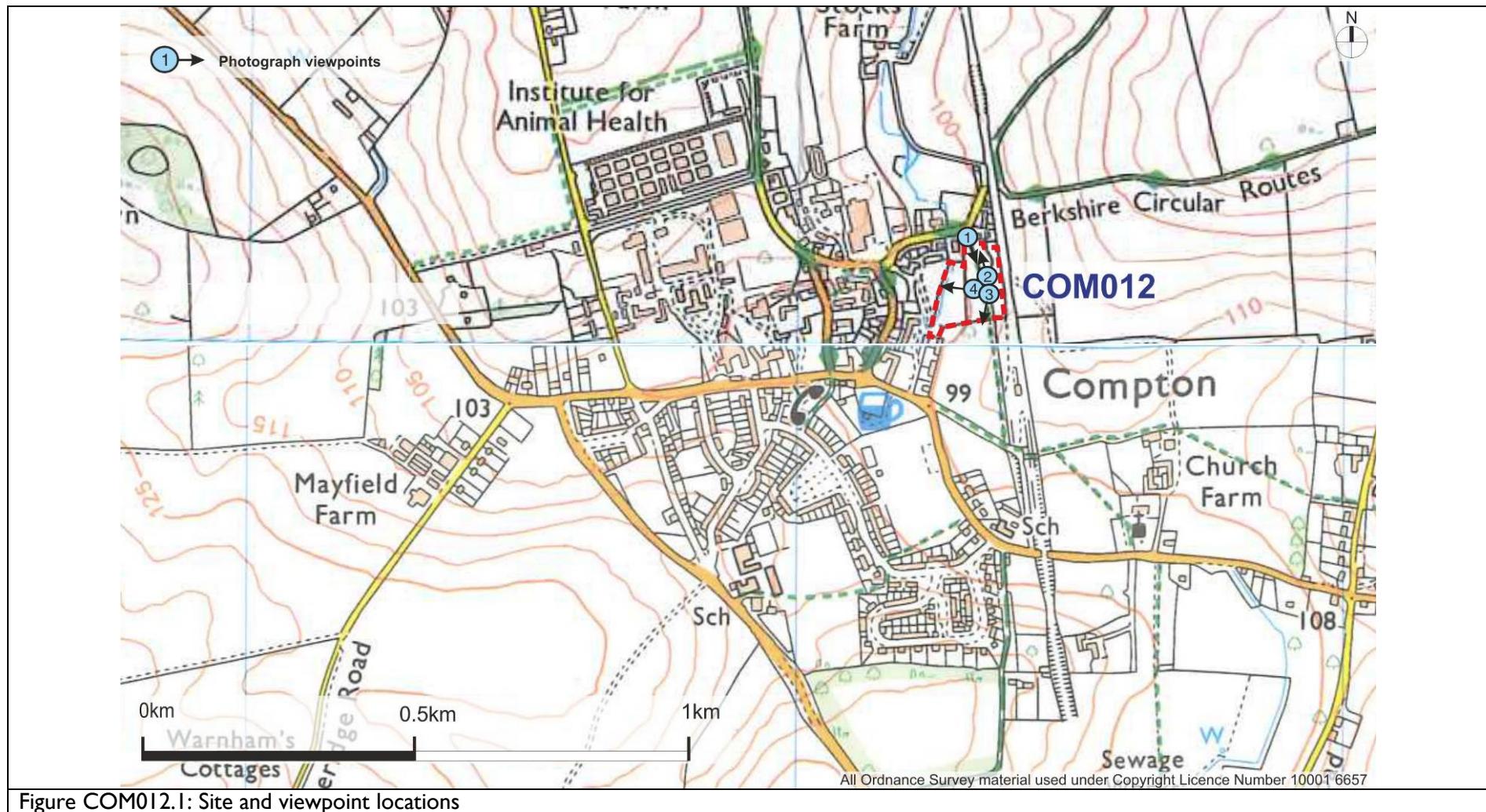


Figure COM012.1: Site and viewpoint locations

## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View south from Wallingford Road



Viewpoint 2: View north from public footpath in centre of site



Viewpoint 3: View south west from public footpath in centre of site. Edge of village is well screened by mature trees.



Viewpoint 4: View west from public footpath in centre of site. Edge of village is largely well screened by mature trees. Roden House and its garden is visible through trees.

## Site description

Site COM012 is located on the north eastern edge of Compton, entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB and on ground gently rising to the downs to the east of Compton. The site is set back from Wallingford Road, behind houses and accessed from the road in the north western corner of the site between two houses. The eastern boundary is formed by a hedgerow on the line of a dismantled railway and the western boundary by the winterbourne section of the River Pang, with mature trees along much of the boundary, and the large garden of Roden House beyond, which is within the Compton Conservation Area. Rear gardens form the northern and north western edges and the southern boundary is formed by a fence with mature trees, through which there are glimpses of the village across an open field. The small, early 2000s housing estate of Yew Tree Stables is adjacent to the south western corner of the site, with houses set each side of the Pang. The site is used for horse grazing and is subdivided by post and wire fencing. There are a number of mature horse chestnut trees in the site, giving a parkland character.

### Relationship with adjacent settlement

- The site extends beyond the tight historic core of the village and forms one of the typical generous open spaces of the village
- The site extends east of the Pang (most of the village is on the western side of the Pang)
- The site is below the 100m contour where much of the village sits
- There is some intervisibility with the village, including the Conservation Area
- The urban edge is well vegetated to the west and otherwise partially open to the north

### Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- Not typical of the LCA, being small in scale and enclosed and related to the valley bottom which reaches into the settlement
- A public right of way crosses the site linking to the Berkshire Circular route to the north and local links to East Compton

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Impact on characteristic valley bottom and side topography
- Loss of visual and aural tranquillity
- Loss of specimen trees and parkland character
- Impact on setting of the River Pang
- Impact on the setting of the public right of way
- Development on the western part of site would be within the flood zone of the Pang

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- The site is not visible from the wider AONB
- The site is visible from the Conservation Area, forming a characteristic open space within the settlement with views out to the wider landscape

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development of the whole site would result in ‘backland’ extension to the linear built form along Wallingford Road
- Development of the whole site would introduce uncharacteristic estate development on the eastern side of the Pang
- Development of the western section would continue the built form of Yew Tree Stables (to the south west) along the Pang
- Development of the site would impact on the setting of the Conservation Area
- Development would be contained below the 100m AOD contour

**Summary of compliance with NPPF**

- Development on this site would cause harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB by eroding the distinctive settlement pattern of Compton which forms an integral part of local character and distinctiveness and adds to the diversity of the AONB landscape as a whole.

**Recommendations**

The site should not be pursued further as a potential housing site.

**Conclusion**

The above analysis recommends only one small potential area for housing on landscape and visual grounds. Other areas are heavily constrained by the following:

- The need to retain local landscape features,
- The need to avoid land that lies above or below the local settlement pattern in terms of the topographical spread
- The need to avoid any landscape intrusion on or into the wider landscape
- The need to avoid the creation of an exposed urban edge
- The need to conserve and enhance landscape links and patterns that are characteristic of the AONB
- The need to take advantage of enclosed and screened sites that relate well to the modern built form
- The need to seek the opportunity to mitigate existing visual intrusion from the settlement where this is not in conflict with the above.

The area considered suitable for development is the north eastern part of COM009/010/011 and this would result in a minor extension to the linear settlement pattern. Development would be locally visible but seen within the context of and well related to the settlement. The cumulative impact of the development of this area combined with the potential development of COM004 as identified in the 2011 Landscape Sensitivity Study could, depending on access to COM004, result in a change to the character of the rural lane. It would be important to retain the mature vegetation on the western boundary of COM004 to limit intervisibility between the two sites and from the lane.

## EASTERN URBAN AREA: ADDITIONAL SITES

### Assessment of Settlement

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Tilehurst, Purley and Calcot</b>
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas:</b>	
Adjacent to LCA 8A Hermitage Wooded Commons (EUA007 and EUA007A)	
<b>Date of site survey</b>	15 April 2015
<b>Surveyor</b>	BK



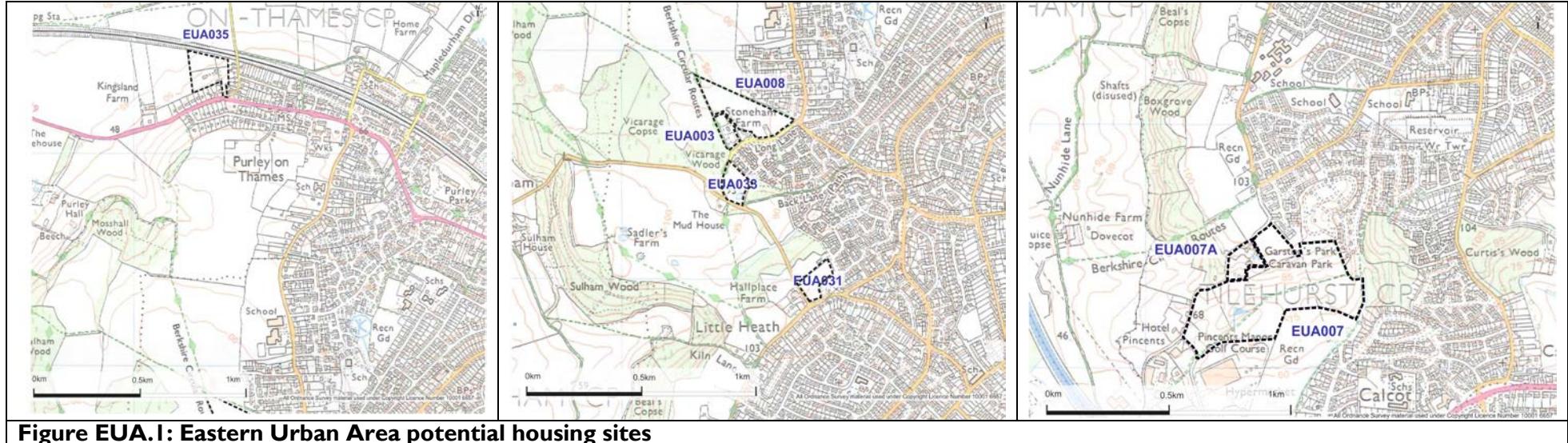


Figure EUA.I: Eastern Urban Area potential housing sites

### **Key landscape characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- lowland area at the base of the chalk dipslope, underlain by clays, silts, sands and gravels of the Reading and Bagshot Beds and London Clay, giving rise to nutrient poor, often acidic, soils
- a broad undulating plateau falling towards the Kennet Valley to the south east and dissected by the River Pang
- variable land cover forming an intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and small areas of remnant heathland. Some more open areas of arable land can be found on the slopes that drop to the Pang Valley and to the south east near Beenham
- large, interconnected woodland blocks and strong hedgerow pattern with mature trees restrict views and create an enclosed and intimate character. Low wooded horizons are a feature
- numerous semi-natural woodlands of ancient origin, with some large commercial plantations. Wooded commons and small areas of remnant heath are a distinctive element
- many features of biodiversity interest including heathland, dry and wet woodland, bog and areas of wet meadow
- dominated by small irregular fields of informal and piecemeal enclosures, of medieval and post-medieval date with some larger, more regular and straight edged, formal Parliamentary enclosure on flatter terrain in the south-east and west
- intricate network of rural lanes, many sunken and overhung by woodland plus more intrusive road infrastructure
- Expansive flat valley floor (NDLCA LCT17)
- historic parkland based on medieval deer parks and manor houses with associated ornamental parklands with gardens, rides and plantings are a particular feature – for example Englefield Park Grade II Registered Park and Garden north of Theale

### **Key visual characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- Open views over large arable fields (NDLCA LCT17)
- Open landscape visible from the AONB escarpment (NDLCA LCT17).

### **Key settlement characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- dispersed pattern of settlement characteristic of encroachment into areas of common and woodland
- includes large nucleated villages, lines of estate cottages, loose roadside settlements as well as many dispersed farmsteads and residential country houses
- well settled area with rising population due to proximity and accessibility to Reading
- Theale characterised by its linear Conservation Area with pre-War development to the north and scattered along Church Street. Post war suburban development in large areas encloses the historic core to the north, west and south with Late 20<sup>th</sup> century private housing development to the north-east and south along the A4. (Quality Design SPD- Part 3)
- Open landscape valued as a setting to Theale (NDLCA LCT17)
- Linear settlement patterns traditionally along the A4 (NDLCA LCT17)

### **Key landscape characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- A broad undulating plateau falling towards the Kennet Valley to the south east and dissected by River Pang
- Variable land cover forming an intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and small areas of remnant heathland. Some more open areas of arable land can be found on the slopes that drop to the Pang Valley and to the south east near Beenham
- Large, interconnected woodland blocks and strong hedgerow pattern with mature trees restrict views and create an enclosed and intimate character. Low wooded horizons are a feature
- Numerous semi-natural woodlands of ancient origin, with some large commercial plantations. Wooded commons and small areas of remnant heath are a distinctive element
- Many features of biodiversity interest including heathland, dry and wet woodland, bog and areas of wet meadow
- Dominated by small irregular fields of informal and piecemeal enclosures, of medieval and post-medieval date with some larger, more regular and straight edged, formal Parliamentary enclosure on flatter terrain in the south-east and west
- Intricate network of rural lanes, many sunken and overhung by woodland plus more intrusive road infrastructure
- Ridge top straight roads (NDLCA LCT13)
- Historic parkland based on medieval deer parks and manor houses with associated ornamental parklands with gardens, rides and plantings are a particular feature
- Intimate scale on flat to undulating plateau (NDLCA LCT13)

### **Key visual characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- Mainly enclosed landscape with views restricted by woodland (NDLCA LCT13).

### **Key settlement characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- Dispersed pattern of settlement characteristic of encroachment into areas of common and woodland
- Includes large nucleated villages, lines of estate cottages, loose roadside settlements as well as many dispersed farmsteads and residential country houses
- Well settled area with rising population due to proximity and accessibility to Reading
- Tilehurst/Purley/Calcot characterised by late 20<sup>th</sup> century private housing development and small areas of semi-rural very low density housing along the urban edge (Quality Design SPD- Part 3)

**Key landscape characteristics of LCA7D and landscape setting**

- Dominated by arable farmland in north part of 7D
- Medium to large fields enclosed by low flailed hedgerows and post and wire fencing
- Willow pollards, poplar, alder and strips of pasture
- Manor houses and manor farms
- Relic valley floor features including former water meadows
- Comparatively isolated in parts containing only minor lanes and tracks
- Small scale landscape

**Key visual characteristics of LCA7D and landscape setting**

- Open landscape in north part of 7D (NDLCA LCT2)
- Strong horizontal visual character (NDLCA LCT2)

**Key settlement characteristics of LCA7D and landscape setting**

- Scattered settlement
- Small attractive settlement of Pangbourne
- Maintain pattern of tiny hamlets, two small villages and scattered farmsteads
- Well settled area with rising population due to proximity and accessibility to Reading
- Tilehurst/Purley/Calcot characterised by late 20<sup>th</sup> century private housing development and small areas of semi-rural very low density housing along the urban edge (Quality Design SPD- Part 3)

**Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development**

The additional potential housing sites in this part of the Eastern Urban Area all lie in close proximity to the North Wessex Downs AONB and in the case of EUA 035 in close proximity to the Chilterns AONB, where it meets the western urban edge of Purley-on Thames. A detailed strategic assessment of the landscape sensitivity around the Eastern Urban Area has already been undertaken in a previous landscape sensitivity study, ‘An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire’ (LSS) (2009) <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36263&p=0>). This addendum builds upon the work in that assessment by examining the Eastern Urban Area and its landscape setting in greater detail, specifically concentrating on the special qualities and key characteristics which contribute to the natural beauty of the AONB. The sensitivity classification and key landscape and visual aspects of each LLCA are considered within each potential housing site report.

The landscape pattern, the exposure and character of the adjacent built form and the visual qualities all vary along this edge of the AONB and there is some subsequent variation in the landscape sensitivity of the open land on the urban edge. This is reflected in the findings of the LSS. The three additional potential housing sites in this area fall within LLCAs in that study which vary from *low to high* sensitivity.

The lower levels of landscape sensitivity reflect the urbanising influence of Calcot, Purley and Tilehurst. The main part of Tilehurst sits on the plateau, at 100m AOD and higher, above the Pang Valley and the Kennet Valley. The built form has however split down the upper slopes towards Calcot in the south and Purley in the north so that Tilehurst now merges with these two smaller settlement areas. Despite this the western boundary of Tilehurst is well defined with most built form east of Pincent's Lane, Little Heath Road and Long Lane, although scattered groups of houses, the Ikea site, and two small estates at Purley are located west of these roads. The undeveloped plateau extends westwards up to the wooded escarpment (Sulham Wood etc). The land then falls steeply down the escarpment which is either wooded as at Sulham Wood to the west or open as above Pincent's Manor to the south.

To the north close to Tilehurst/Purley the slopes are much gentler with the steep escarpment some distance west of the urban edge. This latter landform is open with blocks of woodland giving rise to high intervisibility between the Chilterns AONB in the north and the North Wessex Downs AONB in the south, across the River Thames Valley. In the south the settlement edge east of Pincent's Lane is fragmented with large scale commercial areas, and a supermarket. These extend down to the A4 beyond which lies the settlement at Calcot and the open land flanking the M4 and River Kennet.

Although the Eastern Urban Area has expanded west and south of the Tilehurst plateau to Calcot and to merge with Purley next to the River Thames, further major expansion would detract from the special qualities of the AONB. Where some smaller scale development may be recommended, great care will still be needed to minimise the impact on the landscape character of the surrounding AONB, through limitations on development and generous provision of Green Infrastructure. In some cases, in order to mitigate the existing harm to the AONB landscape from existing built form such as modern housing on the edge of the town, some new development may be advantageous. Particular care will be needed to avoid intrusion from the built form on the wider AONB landscape, especially where the open panoramic views are a notable valued feature and a key constraint on development.

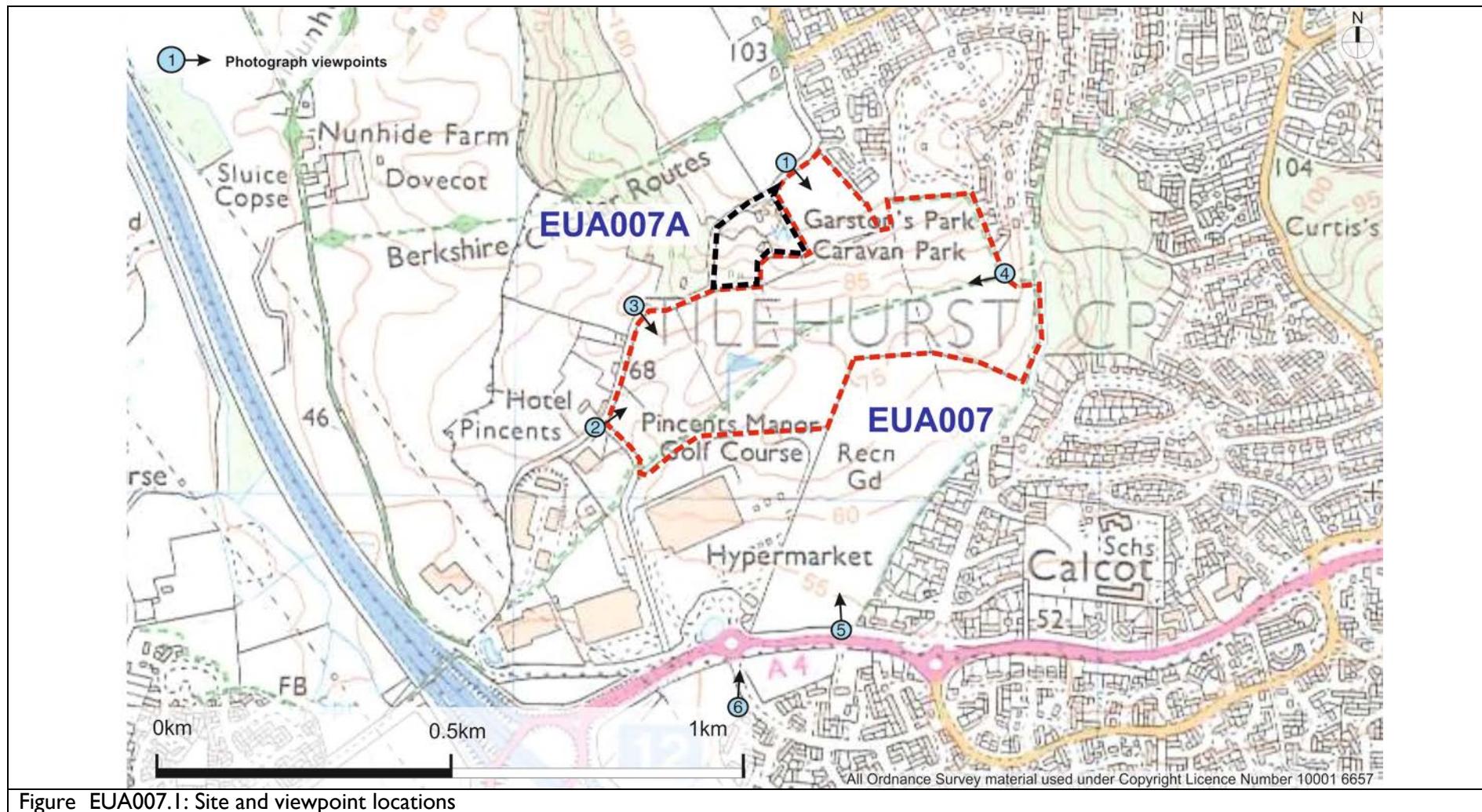
**Sources:**

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002; and An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: West Reading

Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Quality Design SPD- Part 3
- Pincent's Lane – Landscape Appraisal LDA January 2014
- Site at Land off Pincent's Lane, Tilehurst – planning application ref: 09/01432/OUTMAJ and planning appeal ref: APP/W0340/A/10/2133957

K. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: EUA007 Pincent's Hill



**An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009:** LLCA14J: Tilehurst Plateau Edge with a small area in the north-east within LLCA13E: Little Heath Gravel Plateau

**LLCA14J: Tilehurst Plateau Edge** has an overall *medium* sensitivity.

LLCA14J Tilehurst Plateau Edge is characterised by its sloping topography and pattern of woodland and open fields with little settlement except for a farmhouse. Panoramic views from the open slopes. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Escarpment topography
- Extensive scarp woodlands connecting into adjacent woodland cover
- Extensive areas of open grassland with public access
- Scattered mature trees on open slopes
- Panoramic views from open slopes
- Areas of medium to high historic landscape sensitivity in the south
- Good public access and recreational provision
- Medium biodiversity with significant area of Woodland BAP habitats

Wider landscape: LLCA14J Tilehurst Plateau Edge is an important part of the escarpment landscape to the west of Reading, above the Pang Valley. Where it wraps around to the south above Calcot, there are visual and physical links with both the open areas of LLCA20E and open fields of 2J.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA14J Tilehurst Plateau Edge is separated from Tilehurst by LLCA13E but in the south it abuts Calcot. The rising slopes form an important setting to Calcot where the urban edge is particularly exposed. Strong contrast with the adjacent urban form.

**LLCA13E: Little Heath Gravel Plateau** has an overall sensitivity of *medium to low*.

LLCA13E: Little Heath Gravel Plateau is characterised by its pattern of small pasture fields, copses and mixed types of development in the plateau top. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Pattern of small fields of pasture with copses
- Hedgerows and lines of trees
- Listed Late 16th century farmhouse at Hall Place, and 17th century Kiln Cottage
- Good public access
- Value of woodland habitat links with adjacent woodlands on the escarpment

Other landscape sensitivity interests are:

- Plateau top to escarpment
- Scattered mixed development broken up by small open areas
- Good level of visual enclosure

- Recreational provision

Wider landscape: LLCA13E Little Heath Gravel Plateau has a distinct landscape pattern which differs from the wider plateau and escarpment landscape of large fields and woodland blocks. Views are generally contained by the adjacent woodland in LLCA 14I and J.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA13E: Little Heath Gravel Plateau is influenced by its close proximity to Little Heath, resulting in fragmentation and domestic land uses. A thin belt of trees and hedgerows separates the settlement form the LLCA.

### **West Berkshire Core Strategy: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of Potential Strategic Development sites 2011**

**Area 10 Tilehurst Recommendation:** Strategic Area 10 covered the whole of EUA007. The Study concluded that some development within this potential strategic site could be acceptable provided that it is well designed with substantial green infrastructure. The development would need to provide a buffer to the AONB, maintain landscaped links between the wider landscape and the open landscapes of the strategic gap, and better integrate the urban form into the landscape. It would also need to enhance the urban form which is currently fragmented in this area. Although the southern part of 13E is not in the AONB, it shares landscape characteristics with the rest of 13E, which does lie in the AONB. The Study concludes that this field should be excluded from any site selection.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View over north-west part of the site from Pincent's Lane on southern edge of the AONB plateau



Viewpoint 2: View from Pincent's Lane over south-west part of the site from adjacent to Pincent's Manor



Viewpoint 3: View over site looking east to Withy Copse and Oliver's Copse from Pincent's Lane adjacent to AONB and southern edge of EUA007A



Viewpoint 4: View from footpath across the site looking west towards Pincents Lane and Calcot



Viewpoint 5: View from edge of the A4 over recreation ground to central parts of the site with Withy Copse and Oliver's Copse visible to the right



Viewpoint 6: View from Dorking Way over open land to rising ground on the site and wooded skyline

## Site description

Site EUA007 forms a large area on rising ground between the commercial development at Calcot and the wooded edge of Tilehurst. The northern part of the site is on higher steeper ground and abuts the wooded ridgeline of the plateau, EUA007A, Pincent's Hill and the AONB and Garston Park Home Village. The eastern boundary in part follows the western edge of Tilehurst on the higher ground, separated by a belt of woodland; and in part abuts the prominent woodland at Withy Copse and Oliver's Copse which form an extensive woodland edge to the Tilehurst/Calcot boundary. Tilehurst/Calcot is both separated from the site and screened by this woodland cover which links into the woodland belts along the urban edge to the north and south. The southern edge of the site is partly bounded by the curtilage of the commercial buildings and Sainsbury's store in the south-west; and partly by a line of conifers, an open fenced boundary and woodland edge planting which separate the site from the recreation ground to the south. The western boundary follows Pincent's Lane, separated by a mature hedgerow. In 2009 a planning application was submitted for this site which was refused (ref 09/01432/OUTMAJ). A subsequent appeal in 2011 was also dismissed (ref APP/W0340/A/10/2133957). The Planning Inspector's report noted a number of features of the site that are particularly sensitive in landscape and visual terms:

- The role of the open character of the site in preventing coalescence between the existing development at Theale/Calcot in the south-west and Tilehurst/Calcot to the east
- The two copses provide a 'green relief' from the appearance of a continuous built up area along the settlement boundary
- The site plays an important role in delineating the extent of built form along the ridgeline
- It forms a link between the AONB and the open land of the playing fields
- It links the wooded areas of Withy Copse with the AONB and other wooded areas
- It is a visual buffer between the settlement and commercial area
- The site is a prominent open space
- Development along the western part of the site would be harmful to the AONB but development was not ruled out and the depth and form of any landscape buffer would be crucial.

**Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site is separated from Tilehurst by a very substantial wooded edge which includes Withy Copse and Oliver's Copse
- The site is on the upper and middle slopes falling away from the ridge of the plateau
- The site makes a major contribution to the area of open semi-rural land which forms a transitional setting to the hard settlement edge east of the woodland
- The lower south-westerly part of site is part enclosed by existing development and lies on the lower slopes relating well to the adjacent commercial part of Calcot

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The site makes a major contribution to the area of open semi-rural land which forms a transitional setting to the AONB
- The north-west part of the site reflects the characteristics of the wider AONB landscape
- The open site provides an important link between the landscape of the AONB and the woodland along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site
- Visually the site forms an important extension of open countryside east of the AONB up to the settlement edge

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Potential loss of an open landscape setting to the AONB
- Urbanisation of setting of local woodland
- Potential loss of key areas of open space contributing to the distinctive character of the AONB and the open landscape between the AONB and the settlement
- Potential loss of informal recreational areas

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- Potential visual impact on the views from the AONB, identified during the appeal process
- Potential impact on views over and from the recreational ground to the wooded skyline which borders the site and the AONB
- Potential for visually prominent development on the middle and upper slopes and on the plateau

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Potential coalescence of the commercial area of Calcot with Tilehurst with consequent loss of local distinctive character
- Major expansion of Reading west of the settlement boundary beyond an existing strong natural wooded boundary
- Major expansion of built form north of Calcot commercial area up the open escarpment

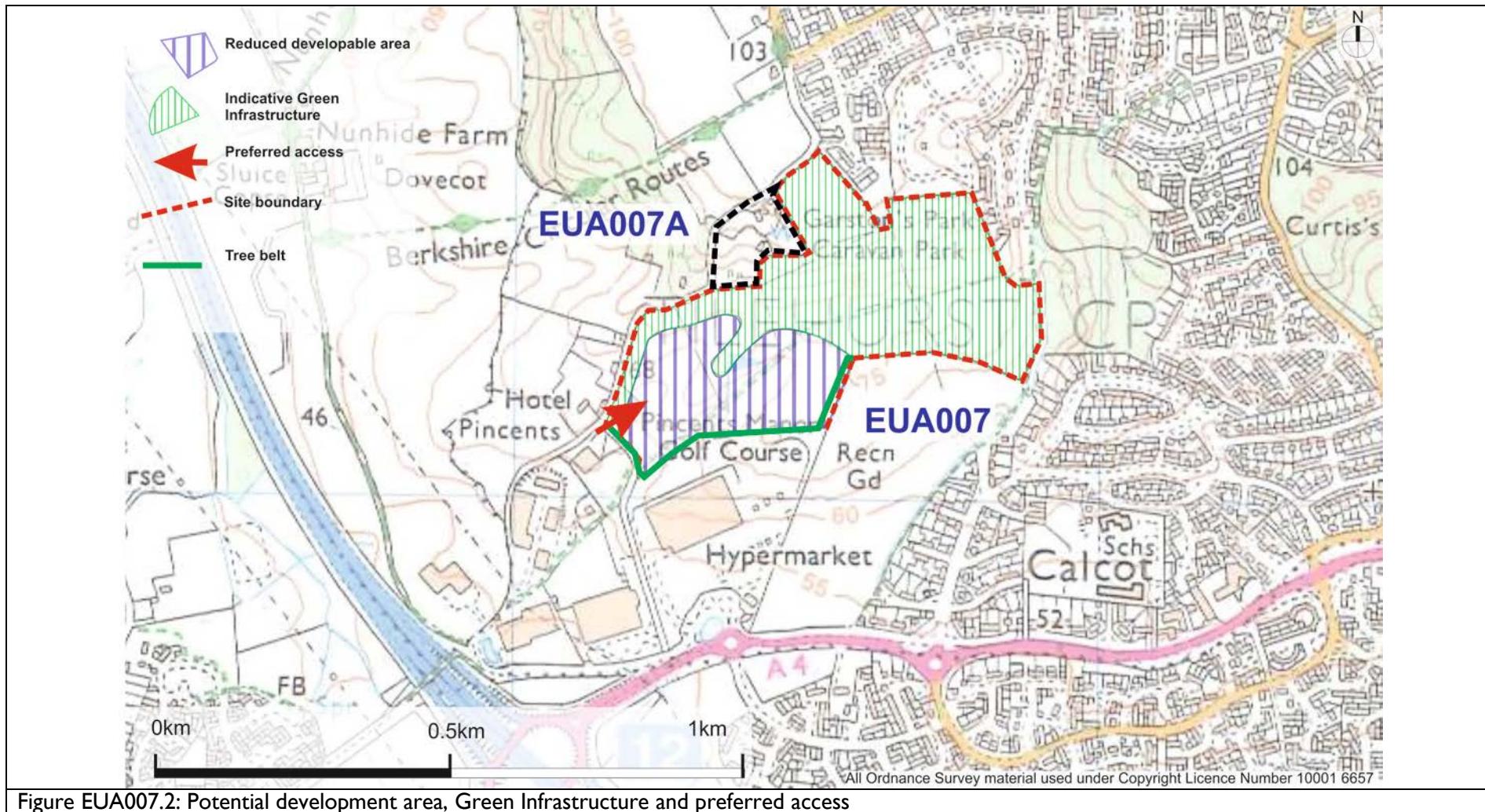
**Summary of compliance with NPPF on AONB**

Development on the western and northern part of the site would result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

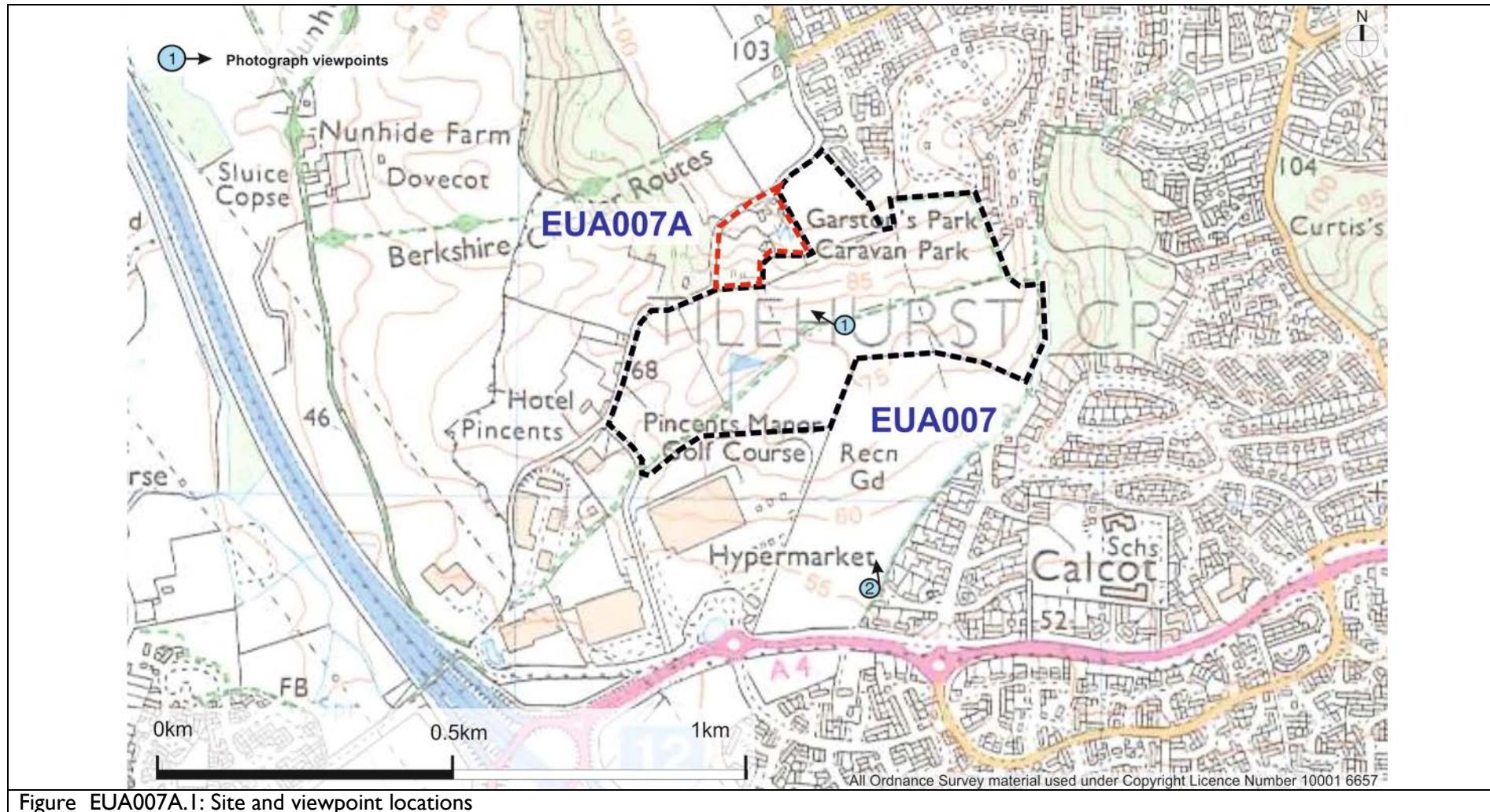
### Recommendations

This site is recommended for further consideration as a potential housing site as shown in Figure EUA007.2 subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB; to retain open links between the recreation ground and the AONB and the wooded edge to the north and the east; and to maintain the containment of Tilehurst beyond the existing strong wooded buffer including Withy Copse and Oliver's Copse:

- Development area to be contained below the 75m AOD contour. Any minor extensions above 75m but below 80m AOD would need to demonstrate that the development would not be visually prominent from sensitive viewpoints
- Containment of development area west of the existing conifer line between Sainsbury's store and the recreation ground. Replacement of conifer line with native woodland belt and creating of pedestrian links to recreation ground to be considered
- Retention of open views from the A4 and the recreation ground to the wooded skyline
- Substantial 15m wooded landscape buffer along the east side of Pincent's Lane to retain the rural character and the AONB
- Reinforcement of wooded skyline and woodland links between AONB and Withy and Oliver's copses
- Reinforcement of tree belt along northern edge of the commercial area
- Avoid creating isolated built form through creation of landscaped links into adjoining built form
- Preferred access off Pincent's Lane as shown in Figure EUA007.2



L. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: EUA007A Pincents Hill



**An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: LLCA14J: Tilehurst Plateau Edge**

**LLCA14J: Tilehurst Plateau Edge** has an overall *medium sensitivity*.

Tilehurst Plateau Edge is characterised by its sloping topography and pattern of woodland and open fields with little settlement except for a farmhouse. Panoramic views from the open slopes. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Escarpment topography
- Extensive scarp woodlands connecting into adjacent woodland cover
- Extensive areas of open grassland with public access
- Scattered mature trees on open slopes
- Panoramic views from open slopes
- Areas of medium to high historic landscape sensitivity in the south
- Good public access and recreational provision
- Medium biodiversity with significant area of Woodland BAP habitats

Wider landscape: LLCA14J Tilehurst Plateau Edge is an important part of the escarpment landscape to the west of Reading, above the Pang Valley. Where it wraps around to the south above Calcot, there are visual and physical links with both the open areas of LLCA20E and open fields of 2J.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA14J Tilehurst Plateau Edge is separated from Tilehurst by LLCA13E but in the south it abuts Calcot. The rising slopes form an important setting to Calcot where the urban edge is particularly exposed. Strong contrast with the adjacent urban form.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

	
Viewpoint I: View from EUA007 north into EUA007A	Viewpoint I: View from recreation ground with site situated within the treed skyline

## Site description

Site EUA007A forms a triangular parcel of land on rising ground at the edge of the plateau between EUA007 to the south and east and Pincent's Hill and the AONB to the north and west. It comprises a single dwelling with its grounds and adjoining woodland. The grounds of the house are mainly laid to grass with trees and shrubs. The woodland is extensive, extending into the centre of the site and forming both the western and southern boundaries of the site. This woodland links into the woodland on the AONB escarpment (Harefield Copse) to the east. The third eastern boundary with the open grassland in EUA007 is part open / part tree lined.

**Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site is separated from Tilehurst by open land in EUA007 which is not recommended as a location for potential housing for the reasons given in the report on EUA007
- The site is remote from the remainder of Tilehurst and Calcot
- The existing development on the site is typical of scattered dispersed settlement in the AONB within LCA 8A and along Pincent's Lane north of Pincent's Manor

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The site is very typical of the pattern of woodland and open grassland within the AONB
- The site is located on the upper slopes and lip of the plateau which defines the AONB and open countryside within EUA007
- There are strong links with Harefield Copse
- The site and its tree cover form the skyline and are highly visible in views to the AONB from the open land and developed areas of Calcot
- Intervisibility with Berkshire Circular Route in the AONB to the west

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Loss of woodland and tree cover and contribution to wooded escarpment
- Urbanisation of rural character of Pincent's Hill
- Development on the plateau lip

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- Development would be on the prominent plateau edge
- Development would introduce urban form on the skyline
- Development would be highly visible from the open land between Tilehurst and Calcot
- Visible from the Berkshire Circular Route in the AONB

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development would introduce urban form onto Pincent's Hill remote from both Tilehurst and Calcot

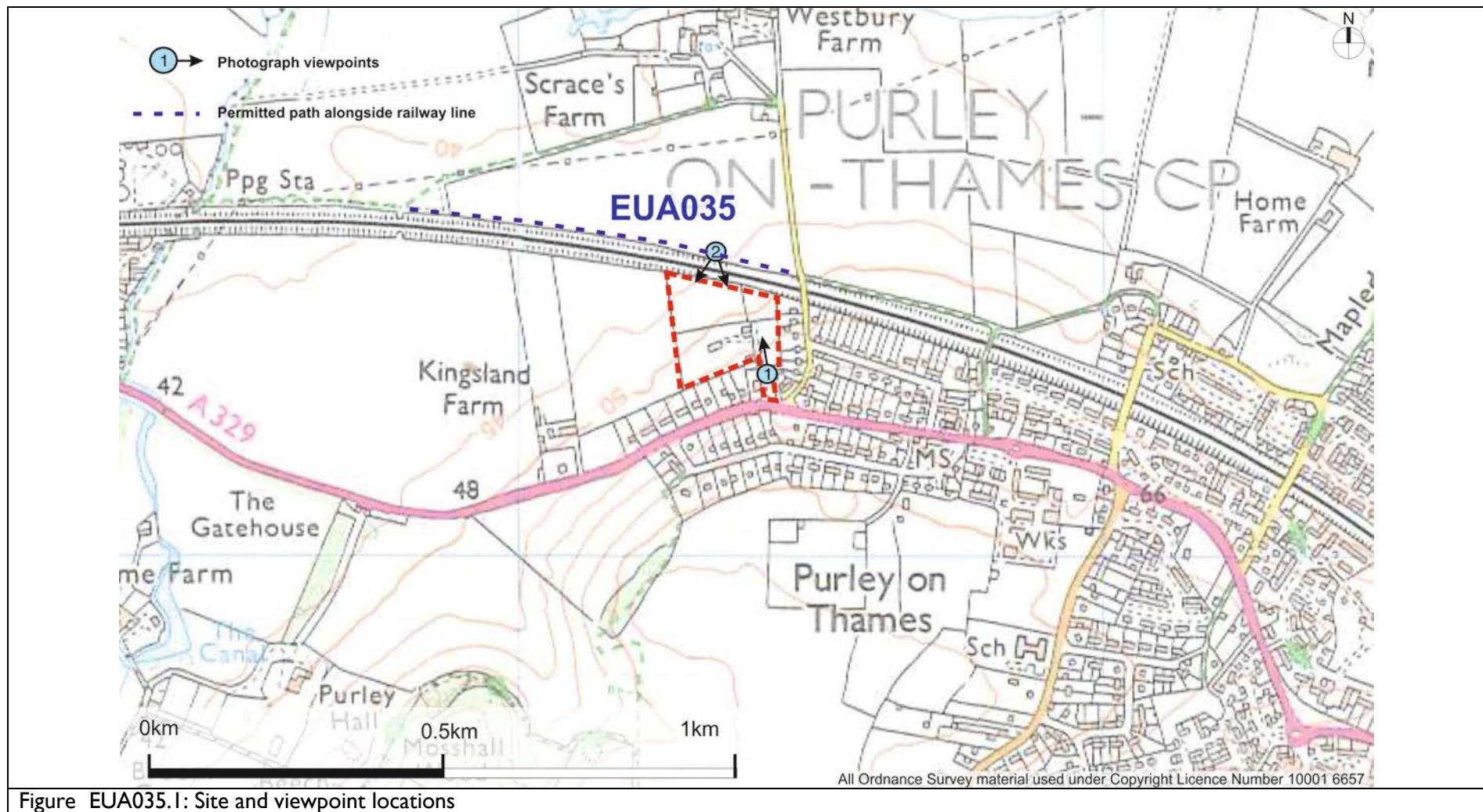
**Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Due to the proximity of the site to the AONB, the contribution that the site makes to the setting of the AONB in its current form, and the potential visibility of development from sensitive visual receptors in the AONB, development on this site would result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

**Recommendations**

The site should not be pursued further as a potential housing site.

M. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: EUA0035 72 Purley Rise



**An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009:** EUA035 lies adjacent to LLCA2H Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands

**LLCA2H Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands** has an overall *medium to low sensitivity*.

**Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands** is characterised by open fields and the remnants of former valley floor landscape features. It sits in the river Thames floodplain enclosed and overlooked by the two AONBs. It includes a sewage works but generally is not affected by degrading urban fringe uses. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Believed to be part of the inspiration for Kenneth Graham's Wind in the Willows
- Extensive views to and from the wider landscape
- 60% of area in the floodplain
- Part of the river valley floor
- Remnants of valley floor landscape features (willow pollards, hedgerows, small copses)
- Sparse settlement

Wider landscape: LLCA2H Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands does not have strong character links with the adjacent character areas, although it does act as a transitional landscape between the riparian 10A and the escarpment 2I. There is however some visual continuity with 10A, 18F and 2I and the Chilterns.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA2H: Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands abuts both Pangbourne and Purley. The relationship with Pangbourne is much weaker and the urban form less intrusive. Purley sits on rising land with little screening to 2H, making it much more exposed to the urban form. 2H forms an important 800m wide open gap between these two settlements.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View of southern edge of the site from access track into the site off A329 Purley Rise

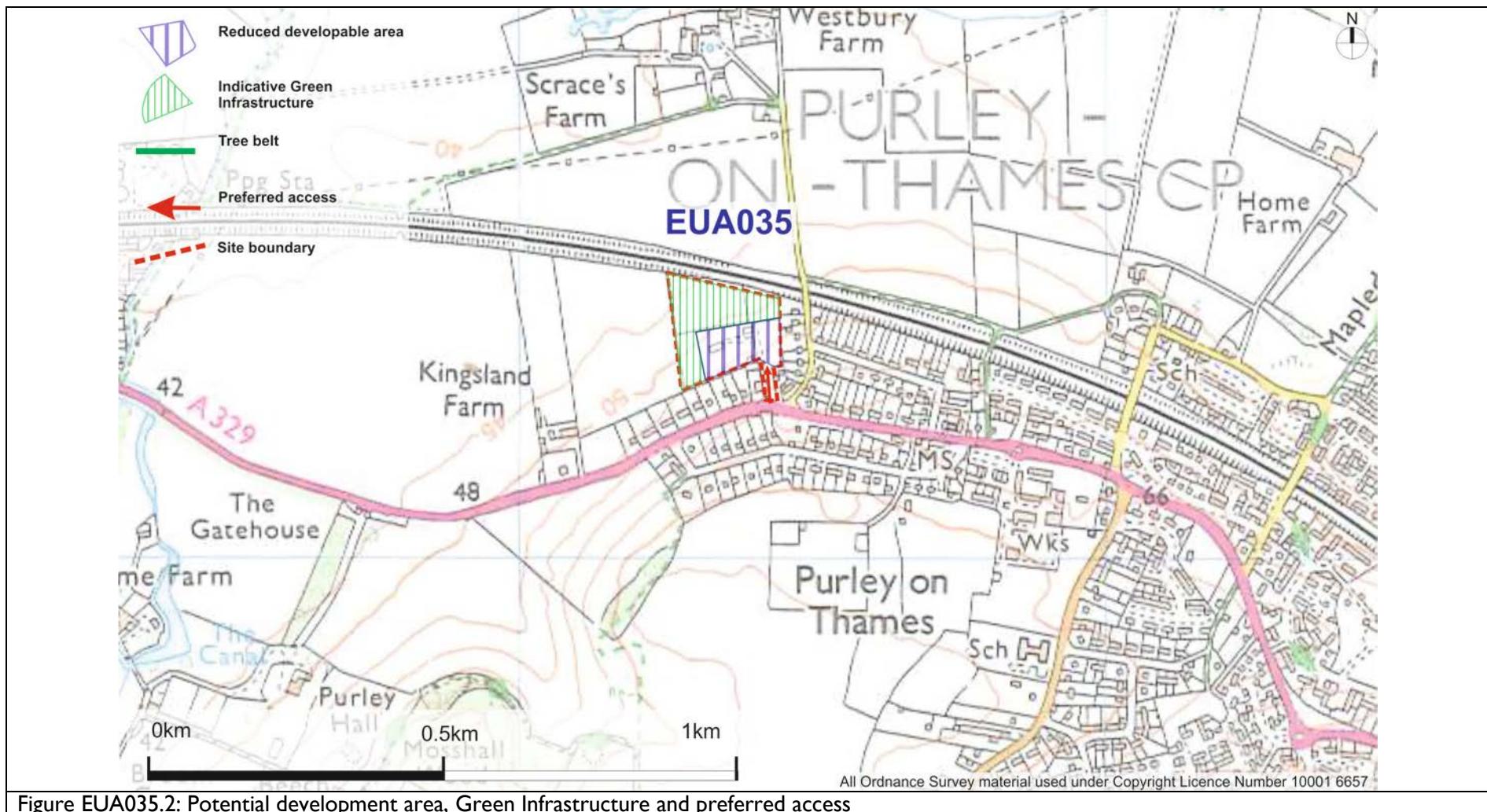


Viewpoint 2: View from permitted path along northern side of railway line with single storey buildings on the site visible below the tree line

### Site description

Site EUA035 comprises two areas between the railway line to the north and houses fronting onto the A329 Purley Rise to the south. The northern part is grassed with little vegetation except for some scrub, a few trees and hedgerow to the western boundary. The southern part contains a number of single storey buildings and sheds with a driveway and hardstandings in a poor condition on the site of a former caravan site. This part includes some mature tree cover in the west of the site, along its northern boundary and in part along the southern boundary to the adjacent gardens. The site is bounded by suburban housing to the south and east and an open countryside of large arable fields in the river Thames floodplain to the north and west. The existing buildings are visible from a permitted path south of the railway line but no other public viewpoints have been identified. The site lies within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB which extends to the south and is part of the river valley landscape that separates the North Wessex Downs AONB from the Chilterns AONB, north of the river Thames.

<p><b>Relationship with adjacent settlement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The southern part of the site lies largely above the 50m AOD contour, which reflects the existing settlement pattern</li><li>• The site is influenced by housing to the east and south</li></ul>
<p><b>Relationship with adjacent wider countryside</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The site is severed to some extent from the open wider landscape to the river Thames valley by the railway line</li><li>• The northern part shares a sense of open countryside with the land to the west and is part of the valley floor landscape</li><li>• The site contrasts with the open arable and riparian landscape which dominates LCA 7D</li></ul>
<p><b>Impact on key landscape characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential loss of tree cover</li><li>• Potential loss of open grassland which forms a part of the open valley floor landscape</li></ul>
<p><b>Impact on key visual characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential increase in the prominence of new development on the northern edge of Purley</li><li>• Potential increase in the prominence of existing development if there is tree loss on the site</li></ul>
<p><b>Impact on key settlement characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The northern part would be outside of the current topographical limit of the settlement in this location</li><li>• Development on the southern part would not significantly change the settlement pattern in this area</li></ul>
<p><b>Summary of compliance with NPPF</b></p> <p>Development on the southern part of the site could result in localised harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB if it were to be more visually intrusive than the existing built form. Development on the northern part would result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of this part of the AONB.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>It is recommended that the southern part of the site as shown in Figure EUA035.2 should be considered further as a potential housing site subject to the following constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retention of the open northern part as undeveloped open space</li><li>• Retention of the tree cover on the site and around the boundaries</li><li>• Provision of open space and Green Infrastructure within area shown in Figure EUA035.2 to conserve and enhance the setting of the AONBs and landscape character of the settlement edge</li><li>• Densities and mass and scale of the development to reflect the adjacent settlement character</li><li>• The height of the development and landscape treatment to be designed to avoid increasing the visual prominence of development on the edge of Purley.</li></ul>



### **Conclusion and cumulative effect of all EUA sites (EUA003, EUA007, EUA7A, EUA008, EUA031, EUA033 and EUA035)**

Of the above sites and those considered in 2014, only EUA003, EUA007, EUA008, EUA031, EUA033 and EUA035 are recommended for further consideration as potential development areas. The inclusion of a potential development area at EUA007 would be the only site recommended site north and west of Calcot. It is not recommended that there is any development on the plateau close to the AONB at EUA007 or EUA007A. As a consequence there would be no intervisibility between EUA007 and EUA031 and no accumulation of development within LCA8A of the AONB or LLCA13E on the plateau. The potential cumulative effect of EUA003, EUA008, EUA031 and EUA033 is set out in the July 2014 Study.

Of these EUA035 is the only site in Purley and therefore there would not be a cumulative impact on the northern part of this settlement. The nearest potential sites at EUA003 and EUA008 lie beyond and to the south of the upper AONB plateau to the west of Purley with no intervisibility between the sites. EUA035 also lies within a different landscape character area to EUA003 and EUA008 so that the limited area of development recommended at EUA035, and the reduced areas in EUA003 and EUA008, would not result in a cumulative impact on the landscape character of either LCA 8A or LCA7D of the North Wessex Downs, or on the LLCAs 2I or 2H. The potential cumulative effect of EUA003 and EUA008 is set out in the July 2014 Study.

In conclusion, the addition of the reduced areas of potential development as shown in figures EUA007 and EUA035 would not have a cumulative impact with EUA003, EUA008, EUA031 and EUA033.

## LAMBOURN

<b>Settlement</b>	Lambourn
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas:</b>	
LCA 1B: Lambourn Downs; LCA 7B: Lambourn Valley	
<b>Date of site survey</b>	7 May 2015
<b>Surveyor</b>	AG

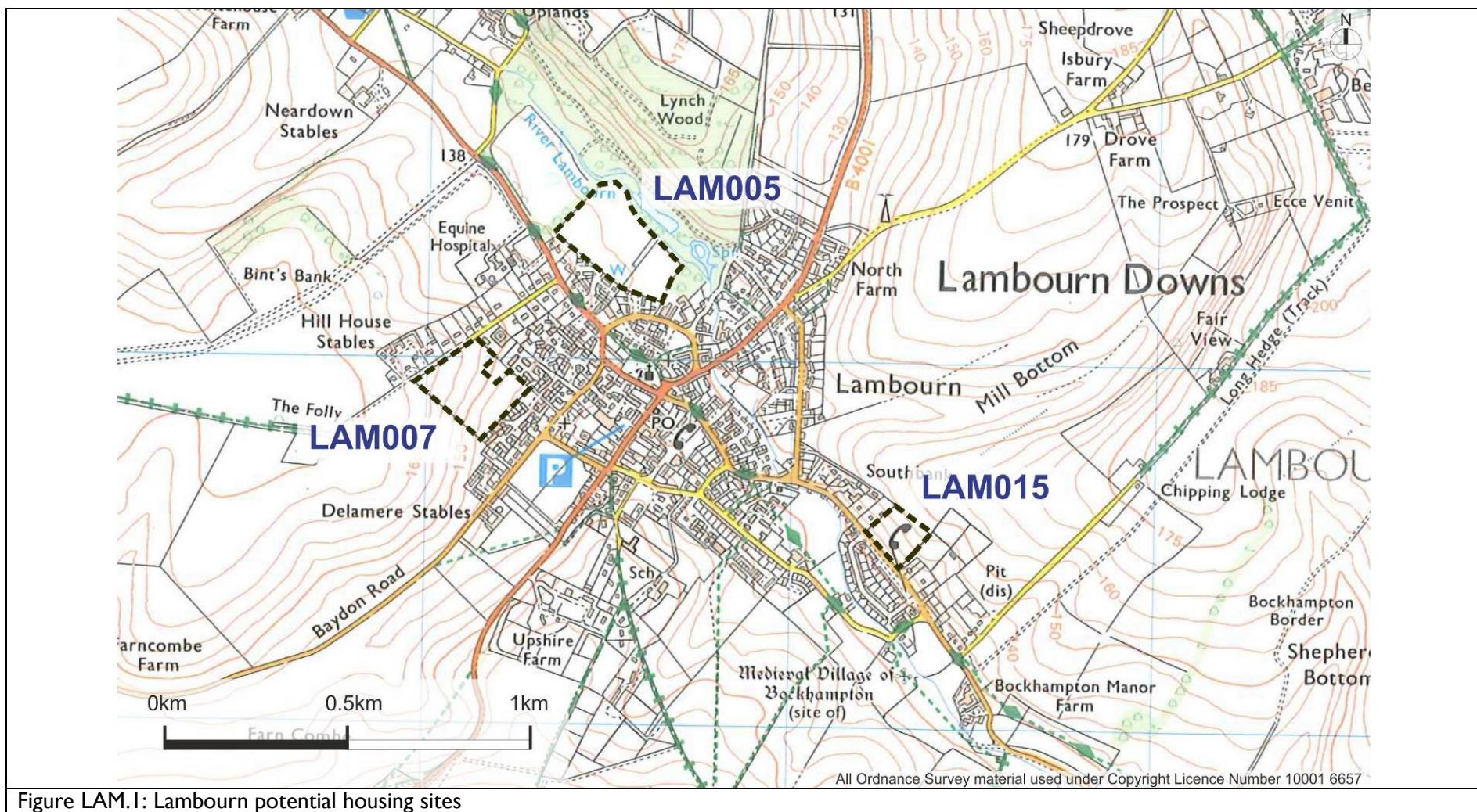


Figure LAM.1: Lambourn potential housing sites

### Key landscape characteristics

**AONB LCA** (unless source noted otherwise)

**IB Lambourn Downs** (LAM007 and LAM015)

- A strong, structural landform with a series of flat topped or gently rounded hills and ridgelines forming successive horizons, intersected by wide, dry valleys
- Large scale arable fields dominate with tiny fragments of surviving unimproved pasture on steep slopes
- Hedgerows tend to be gappy and poorly maintained with occasional mature hedgerow trees
- Thin linear skyline shelterbelts, hill top beech clumps and small, isolated mixed woodland blocks, are a distinctive feature of the area;
- Limited road access with minor tracks connecting farms. By contrast there is an extensive network of public rights of way (PROWs), gallops and rides.
- Historic features include prominent hilltop barrows, prehistoric field systems, trackways and settlements
- Remote and open with sparse population outside the larger valley settlement of Lambourn
- Around Lambourn itself, large areas of former fields and downs are now covered by land-uses related to race horse breeding and training (HECA: Lambourn Valley)
- Sinuous grain due to the convergence of several valleys at Upper Lambourn and the existence of numerous routes radiating out to surrounding watersheds (HECZ: Lambourn Valley and Downs – Racing – LAM005 northwest section, 007)
- Hedgerows require replanting to ensure continuity of character (NDLCA)
- Dramatic, rolling landform (BLCA)

### 7B Lambourn Valley (LAM005)

- The river flows through a narrow corridor
- Varied field pattern including small fields with sinuous boundaries that may date to the Saxon period plus informal and later formal enclosures
- Large manor houses and manor farms with ornamental parkland are a feature
- The Lambourn is a clear, fast flowing lowland chalk river with valuable wetland habitats including flood pastures and water meadows
- Medieval mills and weirs survive along the river e.g. at Weston. Remnant floated meadows are also a feature
- Regular spacing of attractive linear settlements along the valley with detached houses
- Almost all of Lambourn parish was enclosed into fields through Act of Parliament in the early 19th century, however the wider field pattern includes sinuous boundaries from 17th and 18th century informal enclosure (HECA: Lambourn Valley)
- Historically, the landscape was very sparsely wooded, with nucleated settlements of medieval or earlier origin regularly spaced along the valley floor. Valley sides were open fields with riverside meadows used for common grazing (HECA: Lambourn Valley)
- Long narrow zone along valley floor, with areas outside settlements largely consisting of water meadows until early 20th century, now arable or pasture (HECZ: Lambourn Valley Floor – LAM003)
- Southern side of valley historically covered with open fields with areas of downland (HECZ: Lambourn Valley – Scattered archaeological records – LAM004)
- River Lambourn, unusually, dries up in winter and flows again in the spring (VDS)
- Paddock fencing should be replaced with new hedgerows; replant to improved existing gappy hedgerows (NDLCA)

### **Key visual characteristics**

#### **1B Lambourn Downs (LAM007, 015)**

- Mainly open with strong horizons formed by ridgelines
- Scale and structure of the landscape is emphasised by a lack of strong field boundaries
- Exposed, bleak character created by uniform arable cover and lack of trees
- Large areas almost totally unwooded – the open aspect of the Historic Zone is important (HECZ: Lambourn Valley and Downs – Racing – LAM005 northwest section, 007)
- Limit visual influence of horse gallops and stable developments on the landscape, by selective siting (not screening with exotic conifers) (NDLCA)
- Open remote character west of Lambourn, with numerous bridleways, extensive panoramic views (BLCA)
- Open, undeveloped and highly visible skylines (BLCA)

#### **7B Lambourn Valley (LAM005)**

- The valley sides form a close horizon, a contained visual setting and a strong sense of enclosure
- The valley itself forms a small scale landscape of great interest, intimacy and detail compared to surrounding downs
- Preserve views to open, undeveloped valley sides and crests; preserve distinct character of settlements and their clear relationship to the surrounding landscape (BLCA)
- Lambourn has a particularly rural and remote character (BLCA)

### Key settlement characteristics

#### 1B Lambourn Downs (LAM007, 015)

- Late 19th and late 20th century settlement growth is modest and limited to infill or growth around existing settlements (HECA: Lambourn Valley)
- Late 20th century development over Parliamentary fields, which were formerly open fields, downland and meadow. 1960s development on the east side of the village consisting of small estates, parks and schools. Development from 1980s onwards largely on the west side of the village and consisting of a mix of large detached houses and dense groups of small houses (HECZ: Lambourn – Recent Settlement – LAM005 south east section, 009)
- The distinctive oval pattern of Saxon settlements still dictates the street pattern of Lambourn, the circuit being formed by Market Place, Oxford Street, The Broadway, Big Lane and Parsonage Lane, with the church on the southern edge. (VDS)
- Redevelopment of the small number of 'Brownfield' sites in the village centre is a threat to the character of the settlement (HECZ: Lambourn – Historic Core)
- New development proposals that are insensitive or uncharacteristic, e.g. tennis courts, conifer plantations, cut and fill, or amalgamation of settlements to form a continuous ribbon, should be prevented (NDLCA)
- The continued expansion of large settlements including Lansdown and linear expansion infill to join smaller settlements (e.g. Chieveley – Downend to Beadon) should be avoided to prevent loss of character and local identity (NDLCA)
- Limited infill within defined settlement boundaries would be preferable (NDLCA)
- Large scale developments in this open farming landscape would be visually intrusive (NDLCA)
- Lambourn has a historic core with more modern peripheral development (BLCA)
- Further development or intensification of existing settlements would need to maintain the feeling of remoteness (BLCA)

#### 7B Lambourn Valley (LAM005)

- Late 19th and late 20th century settlement growth is modest and limited to infill or growth around existing settlements (HECA: Lambourn Valley)
- Late 20th century development over Parliamentary fields, which were formerly open fields, downland and meadow. 1960s development on the east side of the village consisting of small estates, parks and schools. Development from 1980s onwards largely on the west side of the village and consisting of a mix of large detached houses and dense groups of small houses (HECZ: Lambourn – Recent Settlement – LAM005 south east section)
- New development proposals that are insensitive or uncharacteristic, e.g. tennis courts, conifer plantations, cut and fill, or amalgamation of settlements to form a continuous ribbon, should be prevented (NDLCA)
- New development should be severely restricted to conserve character of existing settlements - large-scale developments are not appropriate in this narrow river valley (NDLCA)
- Prevent amalgamation of settlements to form continuous ribbon along valley bottom (NDLCA)
- Lambourn noted for its nucleated form around the church and market cross (BLCA)

### **Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development**

The village of Lambourn is centred on the convergence of several valleys, chiefly the valley of the River Lambourn and extending up a dry valley to the north east. The settlement is contained within two AONB landscape character areas: LCA 1B Lambourn Downs and 7B Lambourn Valley.

Development occurs both in the valley floor and on the valley sides, mostly below the 150m AOD contour, but in some areas, notably on the western side of the village, up to the 170m contour. Development at the higher elevations tends to be made up of low density, detached properties with associated land often related to horse training. The result of the settlement extending up the slopes is that many views from within the settlement contain houses rather than clear, open countryside.

The valley landscape is noted for its small scale landscape mosaic, contrasting with the more exposed, large scale and open character of the surrounding Downland landscape. The enclosed valley landscape offers opportunities for locating new development whilst still retaining the visual enclosure. However, great care will also be needed to minimise the impact on the landscape character of the surrounding AONB, through limitations on development and generous provision of Green Infrastructure, to ensure that new buildings are appropriately integrated into the landscape. It is recommended that development within the valley floor and on open bluffs is avoided and that the settlement pattern is maintained along the direction of the valley and main road and that nucleated compactness of the village is maintained through small estates.

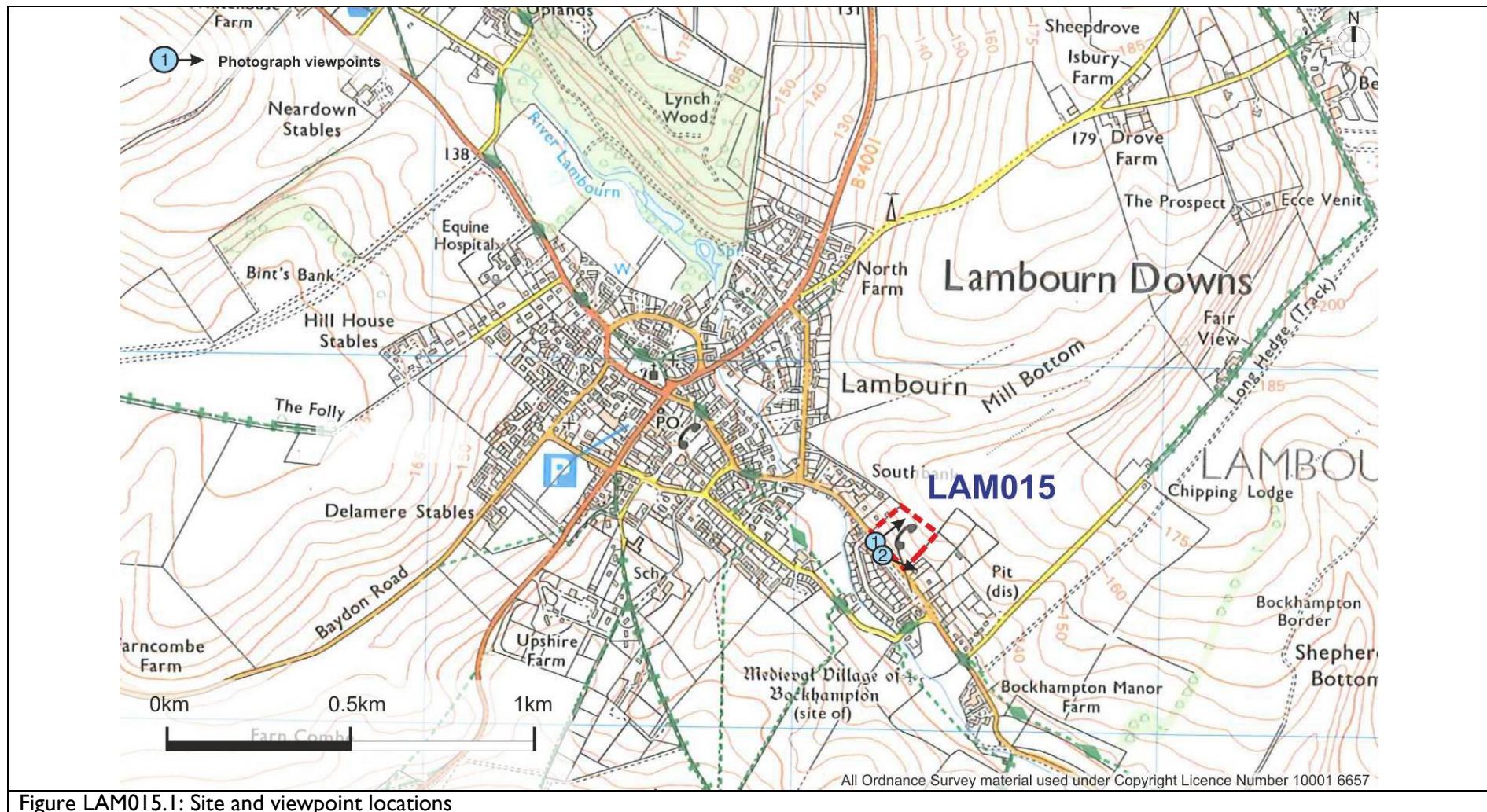
#### **Sources:**

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002

Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ)
- Historic Environment Character Area Report (HECA)
- Lambourn Parish Plan (VDS)

A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: LAM015: Land at Newbury Road, Lambourn



## PHOTOGRAPHS



## Site description

Site LAM015 is located on the south eastern edge of Lambourn, entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB and on rising ground on the north eastern slope of the River Lambourn valley. Newbury Road forms the south western boundary which is partly hedged and has a number of semi-mature trees. The small, 1960s estate of Woodbury is on the opposite side of Newbury Road. The site forms a gap in the loosely developed settlement on the north east side of Newbury Road, with detached houses in large gardens each side of the site. The north eastern boundary is formed by a gappy hedge with a farm track beyond with larger, exposed fields leading up to Lambourn Downs beyond that. The field is used as pasture and is not publicly accessible. The tranquillity of the site is affected by the road and the settlement edge.

### Relationship with adjacent settlement

- The site is part of the loose built form along the north east side of Newbury Road which extends to the south east of the village, beyond the main settlement envelope
- The site is below the 150m contour where much of the village sits
- There is some intervisibility with the south eastern part of the village
- Urban edge is well vegetated to the south east and otherwise partially open

### Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- Linked with the wider AONB and somewhat typical of the LCA, though smaller in scale and less exposed
- Part of the valley side landscape which reaches into the settlement
- No public rights of way across the site or links to the wider countryside

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Impact on characteristic valley side topography
- Loss of visual and aural tranquillity

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- The site is likely to be visible from the wider AONB across the valley to the south, but set within other built form
- The site is visible from the road and the visual connection with the countryside as seen across the site from the road would be lost, though the rest of the settlement has generally good intervisibility with the surrounding countryside

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development of the whole site would result in 'backland' extension to the existing loose and linear built form on the north east side of Newbury Road
- Intense development of the site would mirror the 1960s Woodbury estate on the south western side of Newbury Road
- Development would be contained below the 150m AOD contour

**Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Development on the north eastern part of the site would result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

**Recommendations**

The south western part of the site adjacent to the road, as shown in Figure LAM15.2 could be developed subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB:

- Development being contained on the lower ground;
- Access being possible from Newbury Road.
- Development should take the form of a continuation of the linear built form on the north east side of Newbury Road but not the widening of the linearity.
- The retention of open space on the higher ground and the provision of a hedge with hedgerow trees to contain the housing on the north eastern edge, continuing along the south eastern edge to link with garden planting.
- A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site.

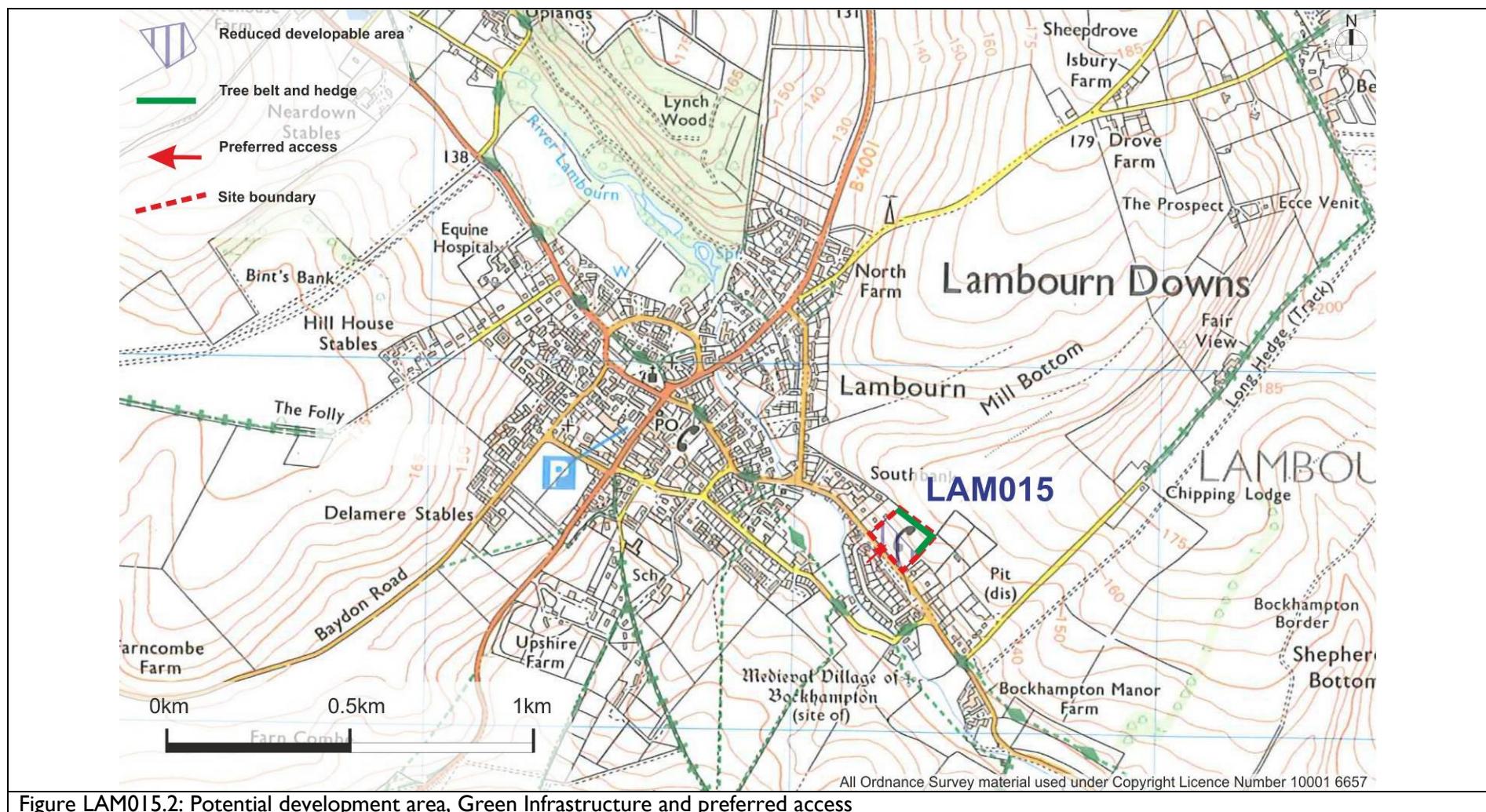


Figure LAM015.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

## Conclusion

The above analysis recommends one potential area for housing on landscape and visual grounds. The site is heavily constrained by the following:

- The need to retain local landscape features,
- The need to avoid land that lies above or below the local settlement pattern in terms of the topographical spread
- The need to avoid any landscape intrusion on or into the wider landscape
- The need to avoid the creation of an exposed urban edge
- The need to conserve and enhance landscape links and patterns that are characteristic of the AONB
- The need to take advantage of enclosed and screened sites that relate well to the modern built form
- The need to seek the opportunity to mitigate existing visual intrusion from the settlement where this is not in conflict with the above.

The recommended site is a reduced part of LAM015. The area considered suitable for development has been reduced from the greater site area to avoid impacts on the settlement pattern. The linear settlement pattern will be continued but would be totally lost if the whole of the site were to be developed. The cumulative impact of the development of this area combined with the potential development of LAM005 and LAM007 as identified in the 2011 Landscape Sensitivity Study would be very limited due to the lack of intervisibility between the sites and the small scale of the proposed area on LAM015.

## NEWBURY

### Assessment of Settlement

<b>Settlement</b>	Newbury
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas closest to sites :</b>	
Near to LCA 8B Winterbourne Farmland but separated by A34	
Within NDLCA LCT14	
<b>Date of site survey</b>	1 May 2015
<b>Surveyor</b>	BK

#### Key landscape characteristics of LCA8B

- Lowland clay belt rising from the Lambourn Valley floor
- Hedgerows often in a poor condition
- More wooded area in the east (to the immediate west of the site)
- Mixed pattern of field enclosure
- Scattered farms along a series of tracks and rural lanes
- Extensive network of rights of way including the Lambourn Valley Way
- Linear tree belts
- Vulnerable to development (NDLCA LCT14)

#### Key visual characteristics of LCA8B

- Open large scale landscape

#### Key settlement characteristics of LCA8B

- Absence of settlement

### **Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development**

The site lies on a rising shoulder of land north of the village of Speen on the extreme western edge of Newbury. The town has expanded westwards on the lower slopes above the valley floor of the rivers Kennet and Lambourn, leaving open valley landscape corridors. A mix of inter-war suburban housing, with the historic core of Speen, and some rural very low density housing characterise the area of Speen in the vicinity of the site. Some of this is on the higher ground next to the site.

The AONB extends eastwards almost up to the edge of the town which is influenced by the highway infrastructure of the A34 and A4 but is otherwise well conserved especially along the valley floors and within the Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens of Benham Valence and Donnington Park. The site is separated from the wider landscape of the AONB and LCA 8A by the A34. It is important that any future development does not harm the landscape and visual setting of the AONB or the Registered Parks and Gardens. It will also be important to retain the riparian landscape character of the river valley floors.

The site lies within LLCA20A as defined in An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009.

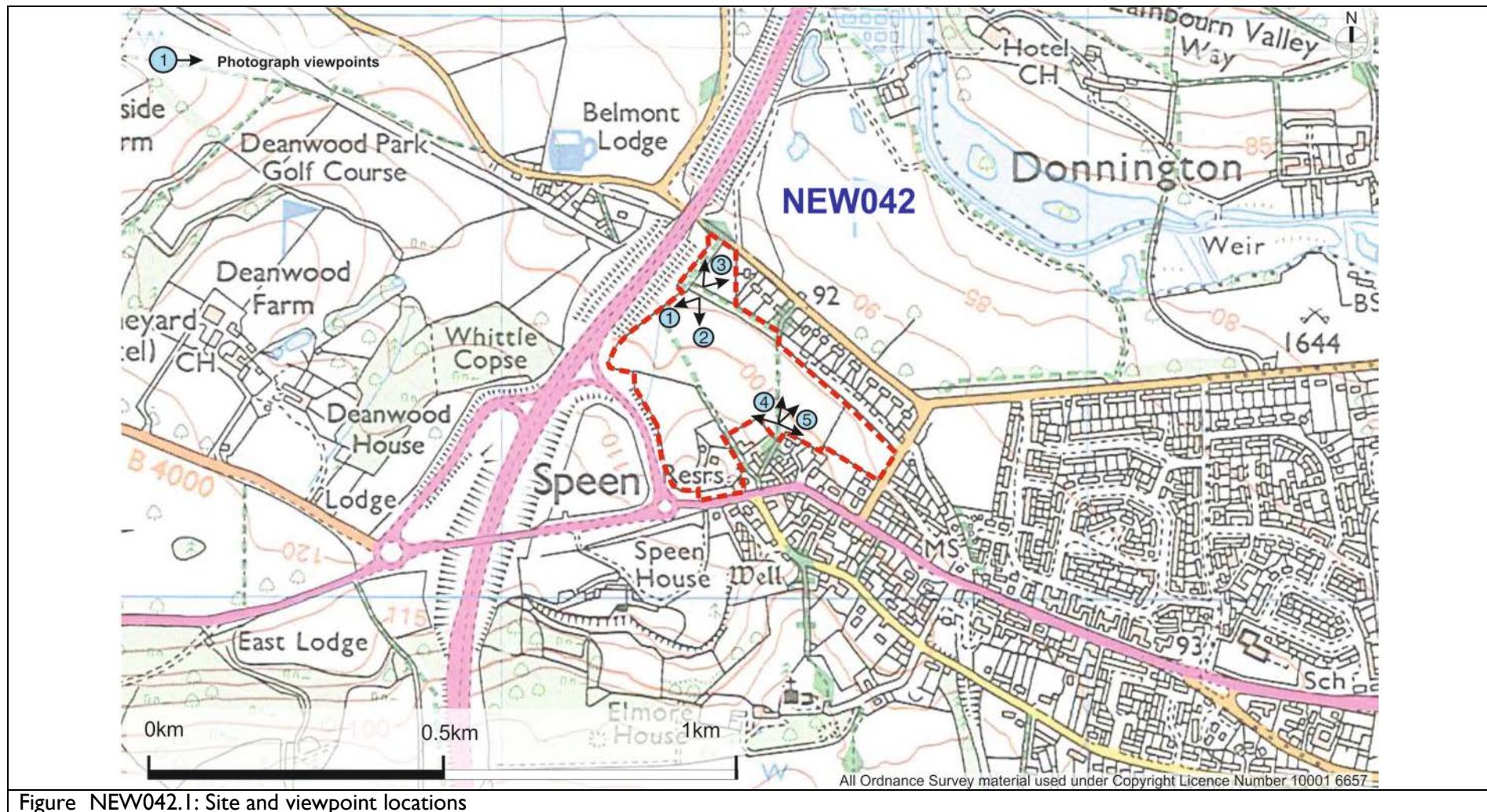
#### **Sources:**

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002;

Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Quality Design SPD- Part 3

A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: NEW042



### An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: LLCA20A: West Speen

LLCA20A: West Speen has an overall *medium to high sensitivity*.

West Speen lies on a generally gentle south facing slope, part of the gradually diminishing ridge between the Rivers Kennet and Lambourn. The southern part is generally open, and has strong links with the valley floor (LLCA8E), while the northern part is steeper and wooded. There are panoramic views south in places, to Beacon Hill, and north to Donnington Castle from the A34/A4 junction. Speen House and the tower of Speen church are landmark features. The Key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Grade 2 agricultural land in the south
- Contrast between north and south of the area: strong definition in north from woodland and tree belts; little definition in south, which is mainly open arable land, apart from trees along former railway route
- Long views, especially from the higher ground, across the Kennet valley to high ground to the south, with distant views of Beacon Hill
- Long views north to Donnington Castle from the A34/A4 junction *Wider landscape*: LLCA14A: Ashmore Green and Lower Cold Ash Plateau Edge has good landscape links with 15A to the west and 14F to the east. Intervisibility between these areas is good if broken up by the landform and vegetation. 14A contrasts with the character of 13C with the boundary marked by the change of slope.
- Very secluded in wooded area to north, and along the lane in the south, but the A34 is a major intrusion to much of the area, detracting from its otherwise very rural character
- Speen House is a landmark from within and outside the LLCA, including from the A34; Speen church tower is a local landmark
- Many features of archaeological interest, including extant earthworks around Speen House, church of Saxon origin, holy well, many listed buildings, unregistered battle site. Low, low to medium and medium historical sensitivity. Overall medium to high historic interest
- Mainly low to medium levels of tranquillity due to A34
- Some new housing on the edge of Speen, just outside the LLCA, intrusive on the otherwise wooded skyline
- Little built form within the area apart from Speen House, church and Elmore Abbey
- Contains a number of PROW including a designated recreational route, medium sensitivity
- Contains BAP priority habitat and good bird populations: medium biodiversity sensitivity
- Lady well, Benedictine abbey, Village Design Statement: high cultural sensitivity

*Wider landscape:* LLCA20A: West Speen has a strong connection with the valley landscape west of the A34, despite the physical severance, as well as strong continuity with the valley sides to the north and the south, and distant higher ground to the south.

*Setting to the urban form:* LLCA20 A: West Speen abuts the Speen area of Newbury, with a generally very soft boundary. A short part of the eastern boundary is more open to the back gardens of houses on Croft Lane. Like the northern part of LLCA11A, the open valley sides are very sensitive to built development, which could be very intrusive.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View over western part of the site from line of disused railway along the northern boundary of the site



Viewpoint 2: View from same location looking east to edge of housing in Speen



Viewpoint 3: View over small northern part of the site close to Lambourn Road from line of disused railway along the northern boundary of the site



Viewpoint 4: View looking north-west over the site from the higher section of the Lambourn Way across the site with houses backing onto the site



Viewpoint 5: View from the same point at viewpoint 4 but looking northeast to the rear gardens and allotments to the east of the site

### Site description

Site NEW042 lies to the north of the village of Speen. It forms an irregular area of land on rising ground between properties on Lambourn Road and properties on the A4 at Speen. To the west the site is bounded by the A34 and a major junction of the A34 with the A4 beyond which lies the open countryside of the North Wessex Downs AONB and Benham Valence Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden. The width of the A34 and the highway landform and planting tend to separate the site from the wider landscape. To the north beyond Lambourn Road lies Donnington Park, a Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden. To the east the site is enclosed by housing on three sides off Station Road, beyond which lies modern housing. To the south beyond the A4 lies the historic core of Speen. The site is mainly under grass with the exception of the most easterly part which is in use as allotments. The site is crossed by the Lambourn Valley Way and additional footpaths. The remains of an old railway line follow the line of The Sidings to the rear of the houses on the northern boundary.

**Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site is enclosed in its eastern part by modern and older housing within the western edge of Newbury and the village of Speen
- The site sits on the higher ground above the valley floors between 95 and 110m AOD as is typical of the settlement pattern in this area
- It forms an open wedge between linear built form to the north and varied settlement pattern in the south along the A4

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The site is severed from the wider landscape by the A34 and its landform and planting
- The site shares characteristics (open grassland, tree cover, undulating land form) with the landscape west of the A34 and the AONB but is heavily influenced by the surrounding townscape and highway infrastructure

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Loss of open grassland setting to the edge of the settlement
- Potential loss of tree cover
- Loss of definition of historic rail alignment
- Urbanisation of the Lambourn Way across the site
- Little impact on the nearby Grade II Registered Historic Parks and Gardens due to screening by existing built form and tree cover

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- Visual impact on users of the Lambourn Valley Way and other footpaths
- Prominence of housing on the higher ground

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Little adverse impact on the character of the settlement
- Mass and scale of any development needs to be modified to respect the character of the village of Speen
- Development on this site would reflect location of settlement above the valley floors

**Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Development on this site would not result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

**Recommendations**

The site is recommended for further consideration as a potential housing site as shown in Figure NEW042.2 subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the landscape edge to Speen; and to maintain the character of Speen and west Newbury:

- Limitation of built form to below the higher ground as shown in Figure NEW042.2 to avoid introducing prominent development on the skyline
- Retention of the allotments
- A tree planted landscape buffer to the A34, slip road and A4 to maintain the rural character of the western approach into Newbury
- Tree belts to be provided to the rear gardens of the adjacent houses linking into the tree line along the former railway line
- Preferred access off Lambourn Road

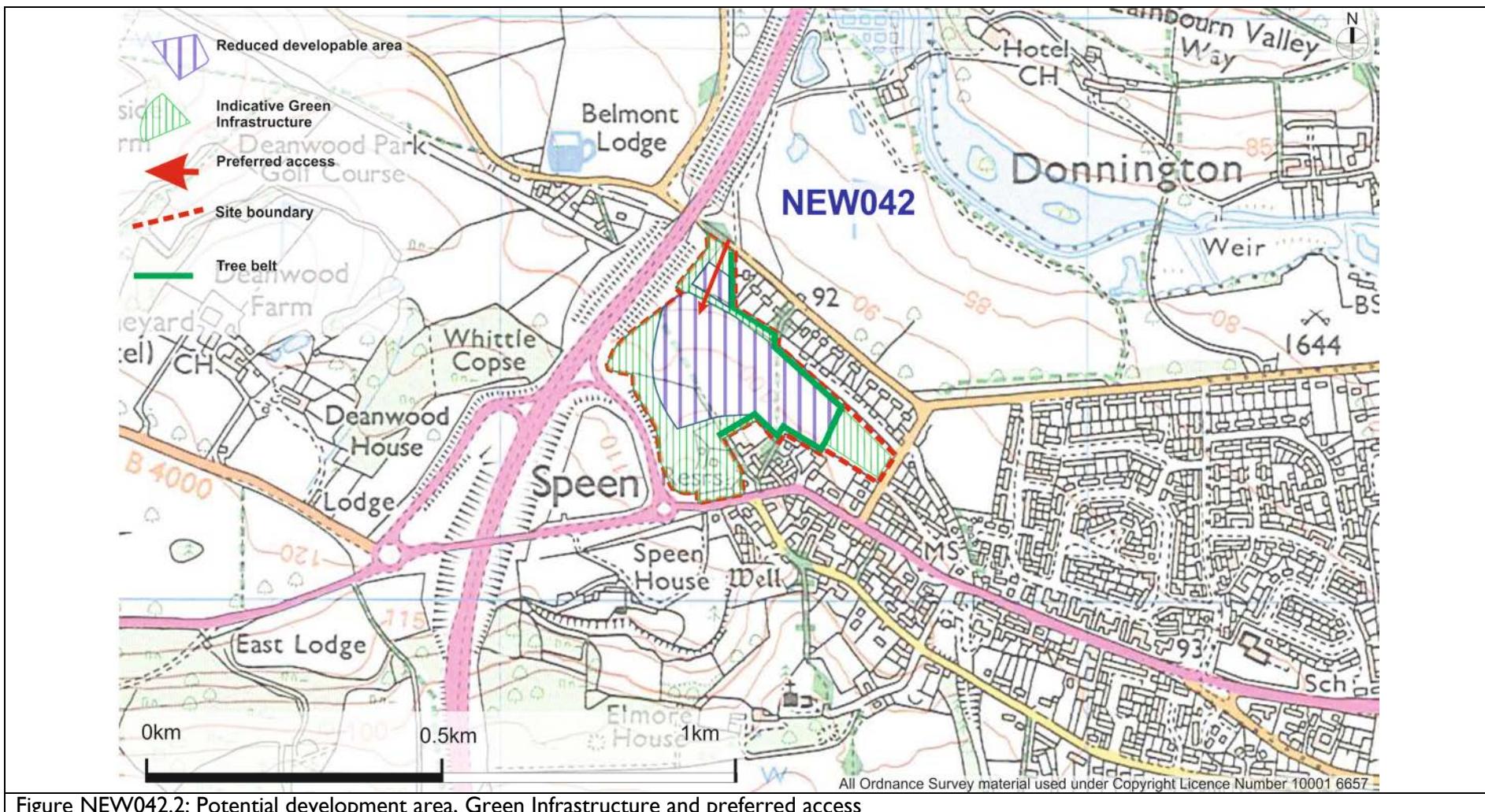
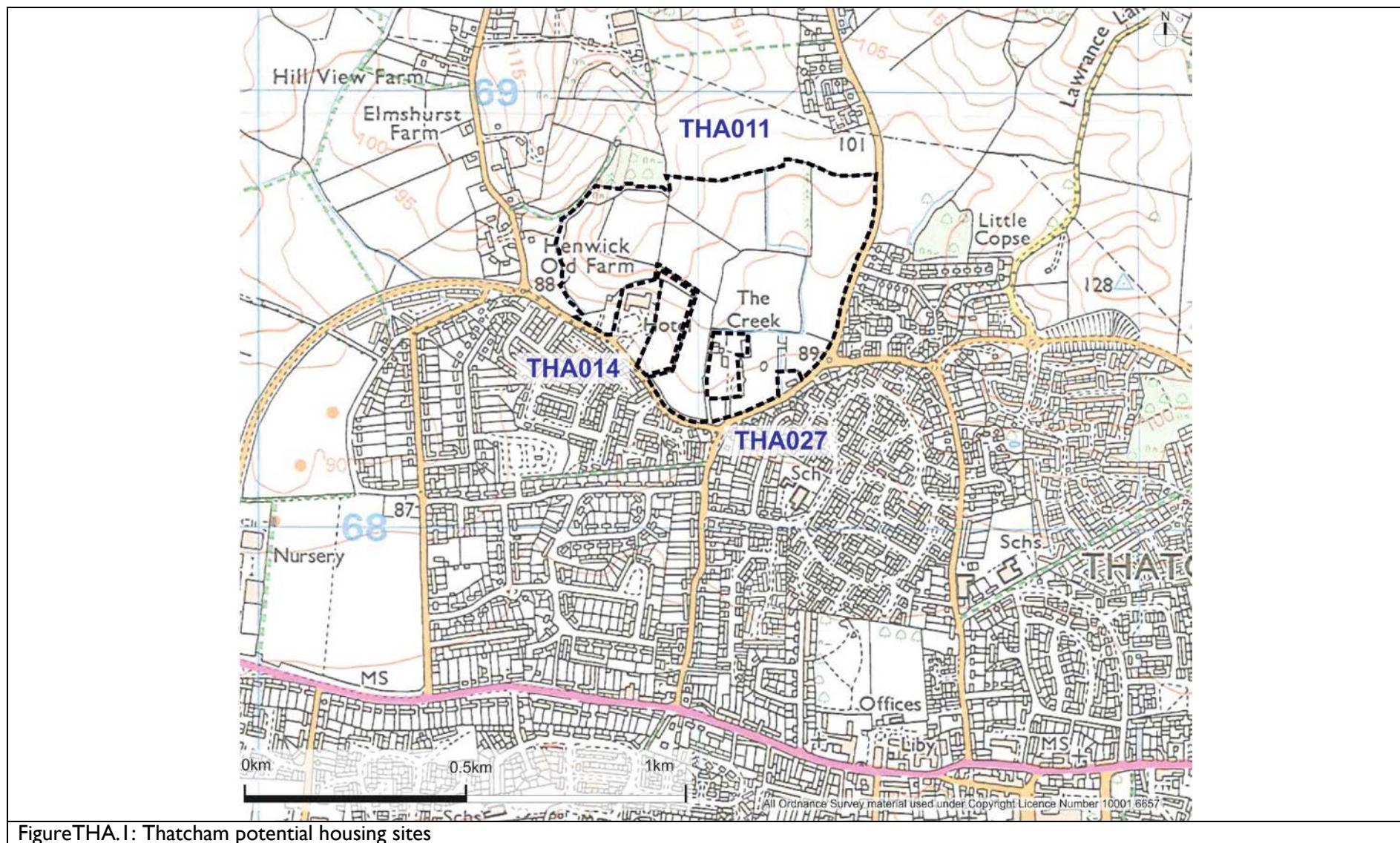


Figure NEW042.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

## THATCHAM



## Assessment of Settlement

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Thatcham</b>
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas closest to Thatcham sites :</b>	
Adjacent to LCA 8A Hermitage Wooded Commons	
<b>Date of site survey</b>	1 May 2015
<b>Surveyor</b>	BK

#### **Key landscape characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- lowland area at the base of the chalk dipslope, underlain by clays, silts, sands and gravels of the Reading and Bagshot Beds and London Clay, giving rise to nutrient poor, often acidic, soils
- a broad undulating plateau falling towards the Kennet Valley to the south east and dissected by River Pang
- variable land cover forming an intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and small areas of remnant heathland. Some more open areas of arable land can be found on the slopes that drop to the Pang Valley and to the south east near Beenham
- large, interconnected woodland blocks and strong hedgerow pattern with mature trees restrict views and create an enclosed and intimate character. Low wooded horizons are a feature
- numerous semi-natural woodlands of ancient origin, with some large commercial plantations. Wooded commons and small areas of remnant heath are a distinctive element
- many features of biodiversity interest including heathland, dry and wet woodland, bog and areas of wet meadow
- dominated by small irregular fields of informal and piecemeal enclosures, of medieval and post-medieval date with some larger, more regular and straight edged, formal Parliamentary enclosure on flatter terrain in the south-east and west
- intricate network of rural lanes, many sunken and overhung by woodland plus more intrusive road infrastructure
- Small to medium scaled transition from plateau to lower open farmland (NDLCA LCT14)
- Lanes traversing the slopes (NDLCA LCT14)
- Valued countryside of a mix of woodlands, pasture and open farmland (NDLCA LCT14)

#### **Key visual characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- Visually intrusive horse paddocks (NDLCA LCT14)
- Valued views of parklands (NDLCA LCT14).

#### **Key settlement characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- Interconnected small hamlets and scattered farmsteads above the valley settlement of Thatcham (NDLCA LCT14)
- Historic routes linking settlements (NDLCA LCT14)
- Thatcham characterised by large estates of inter-war housing, post-war suburban housing and late 20<sup>th</sup> century private housing development with an older town centre (Quality Design SPD- Part 3)

**An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: LLCA14A: Ashmore Green and Lower Cold Ash Plateau Edge**

LLCA14A Ashmore Green and Lower Cold Ash Plateau Edge has an overall *medium* sensitivity.

Ashmore Green and Lower Cold Ash Plateau Edge is characterised by a mix of small and complex field pattern and modern linear settlement. There are good landscape links with the adjacent parts of the escarpment and there is a well defined edge to Thatcham. The Key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Complex rolling topography part of the long escarpment along the southern edge of the AONB
- Mosaic patchwork of small fields with woodlands
- Locally important hedgerows and tree lines in southern part
- Roadside trees
- Long views from east part across the Kennet Valley
- Woodland BAP habitat
- Strong linear settlement pattern
- Poor internal boundary definition in some parts
- Generally a moderate level of tranquillity
- Mixed age and style built form with older farmsteads scattered, closest to Thatcham

Wider landscape: LLCA14A: Ashmore Green and Lower Cold Ash Plateau Edge has good landscape links with 15A to the west and 14F to the east. Intervisibility between these areas is good if broken up by the landform and vegetation. 14A contrasts with the character of 13C with the boundary marked by the change of slope.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA14A: Ashmore Green and Lower Cold Ash Plateau Edge abuts Thatcham and is separated from it by the perimeter road and tree planting along the road edge. The settlement edge follows the contours, with older farmsteads hugging the road.

**West Berkshire Core Strategy: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of Potential Strategic Development sites 2011**

**Area 8 North Thatcham Recommendation:** Extension of Thatcham onto the more prominent higher ground of the shallow ridgeline should be avoided. However, provided that the extant vegetation and the setting of the historic farmhouses is retained and used to break up the site, the lower fields in the south-east part of the area may be suitable for urban expansion. Built development on the small scale steeply sided valley near Henwick Old Farm should be avoided.

## **Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development**

A detailed strategic assessment of the landscape sensitivity around Thatcham has already been undertaken in the previous landscape sensitivity study, 'An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire' (LSS) (2009)

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHtppHandler.ashx?id=36263&p=0>. This assessment builds upon the work in that assessment by examining the northern part of Thatcham and its landscape setting in greater detail, specifically concentrating on the special qualities and key characteristics which contribute to the natural beauty of the AONB. The sensitivity classification and key landscape and visual aspects of each LLCA are considered within each potential housing site report.

The landscape pattern, the exposure and character of the adjacent built form and the visual qualities of the AONB all vary along its edge and so there is some subsequent variation in the landscape sensitivity of the open land on the urban edge of Thatcham. This is reflected in the findings of the LSS. The three additional potential housing sites in this area all fall within LLCA14A with a *medium* sensitivity.

The main part of Thatcham sits on the valley floor of the Kennet Valley, between 70m and 95m AOD, below the rising slopes up to the plateau edge which in turn lies below the plateau ridge which characterises the AONB. The built form has expanded northwards from the A4 and the town centre but rarely extends above 90m AOD, only locally above 90m AOD at Cold Ash Hill and the Regency Park Hotel, and is largely contained by the peripheral road along Bowling Green Road and Floral Way. This gives Thatcham a generally very well defined northern boundary which separates the town from the AONB.

To the north of Thatcham the slopes start gently and then steepen with incised valleys and higher bluffs running in a general north-south direction. This landform is reinforced by the pattern of woodland which often follows the landform. The North Wessex Downs AONB is distinguished here by medium sized woodlands along the plateau edge which restrict views from the AONB southwards to Thatcham. However there are many rural lanes and footpaths which drop down the slopes giving views to Thatcham and back up to the edge of the AONB. The settlement is at times softened by tree planting in the hedgerows and copses in the open landscape, or tree planting and woodland within the urban area and by planting along the peripheral road. Elsewhere, where such tree cover is absent, the housing is exposed.

The town is flanked to the south by the Greenham/Crookham escarpment which rises steeply from the valley floor allowing vistas across the valley to the town and open countryside to the north above the settlement edge. In these views Thatcham is prominent but contained within the valley floor. Individual properties on higher ground 100m AOD and above, such as Colthrop Manor and Henwick Manor, are prominent within the open countryside, illustrating the prominence of these rural slopes.

Although Thatcham has expanded northwards towards the AONB, further major expansion may impact on the landscape setting of the AONB. Where some smaller scale development may be recommended, great care will still be needed to minimise the impact on the landscape character of the surrounding AONB and its landscape setting, through limitations on development and generous provision of Green Infrastructure. Particular care will be needed to avoid intrusion from the built form on the wider AONB landscape, especially where the open panoramic views are a notable valued feature and a key constraint on development.

**Sources:**

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002; and An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: West Reading

Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Quality Design SPD- Part 3

A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: THA011

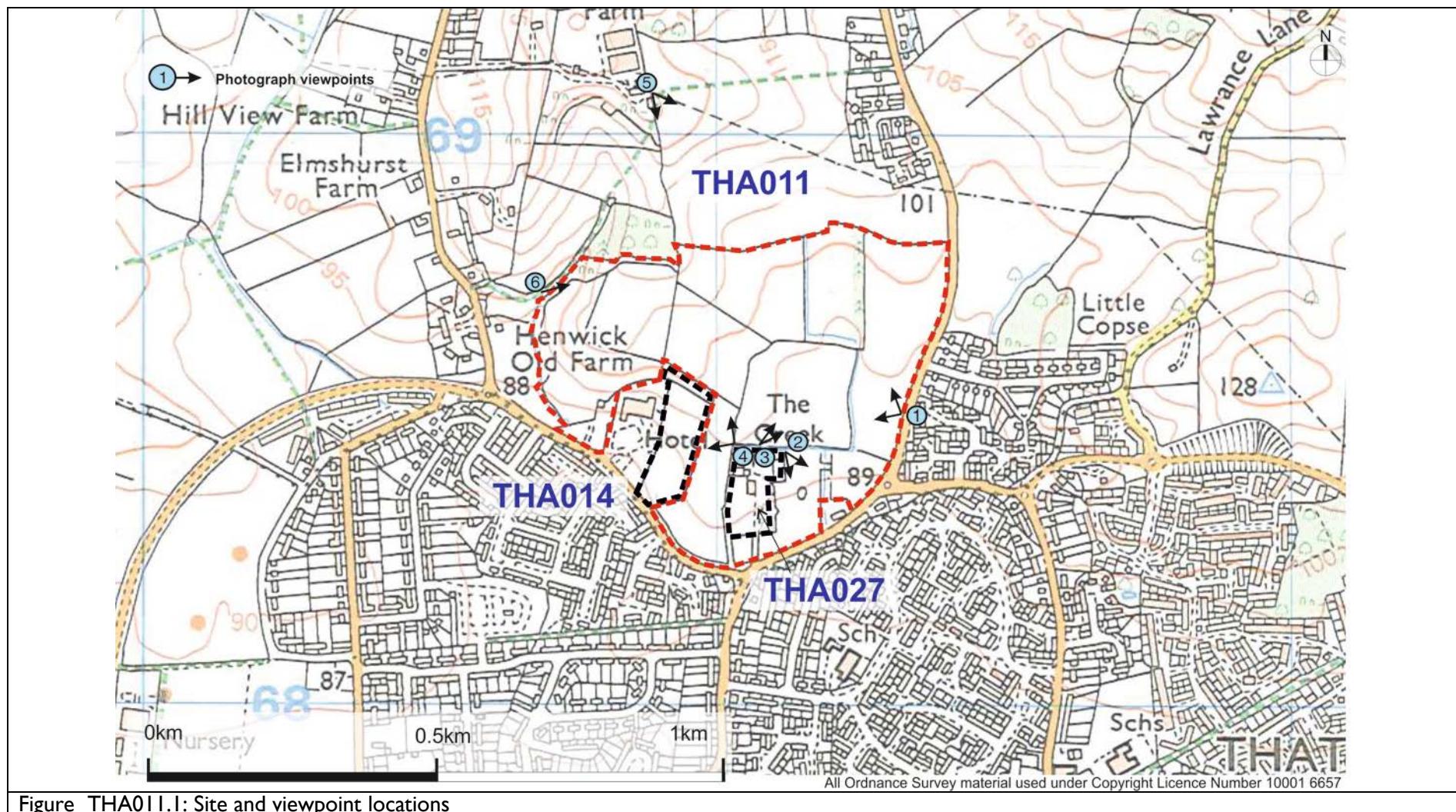


Figure THA011.1: Site and viewpoint locations

## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View over site from Cold Ash Hill looking west and north with houses on southern edge of Cold Ash visible in the distance to the north



Viewpoint 2: View over site from the garden of THA027 looking east over fields with tree cover along Bowling Green Road to the far right



Viewpoint 3: View from garden of THA027 looking north north-east to tree cover up the hillside and houses along Cold Ash Hill



Viewpoint 4: View from gardens to THA027 looking westwards over fields towards THA014



Viewpoint 5: View from the footpath running from Henwick Old Farm to Cold Ash Hill south of Poplar Farm. The site is visible through the tree line at the far end of the open field in the foreground and extends across the view. View to Greenham-Crookham escarpment on the horizon. Glimpses of Thatcham in the valley



Viewpoint 6: View from footpath from Henwick Old Farm looking up the steep landform of the western edge of the site

### **Site description**

Site THA011 forms a large area of open countryside under grass to the north of Bowling Green Road and Heath Lane. It is bounded to the east by Cold Ash Hill. The southern part of this eastern boundary is open with housing opposite, to the east of Cold Ash Hill, below the lower slopes 95m AOD contour. The north part of the Cold Ash Hill is defined by a hedge with open fields to the east of Cold Ash Hill. To the south, the site is bounded by the well defined edge of Thatcham along Heath Lane and Bowling Green Road and the dense mature tree cover to the north side of these roads. To the west lies Henwick Old Farm, a listed building with its own grounds. North of Henwick Old Farm is a footpath which runs through a shallow but pronounced valley and up the hillside to cross over to Cold Ash Hill, north of the site. The northern boundary follows a tree lined field boundary between woodland north-west of the site and Cold Ash Hill. The site is surrounded on three sides by open countryside and forms the major part of the open countryside between Cold Ash and Thatcham. The site wraps around THA014 and THA027 which are considered later in this report.

**Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- Southern part of the site adjoins modern housing off Bowling Green road, Heath Lane and Cold Ash Hill
- The site lies beyond the well defined edge of Thatcham which is delineated by the roads and the mature tree cover along the northern boundary of the highway
- The south eastern part of the site lies on the lower slopes below the 95m AOD contour
- The larger part lies on the rising middle slopes up to 105m well away from the valley floor

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The open fields are an important part of the open wider landscape above Thatcham
- The landscape pattern of well defined field boundaries with hedgerows, trees and either tree belts or copses is typical of the local landscape character
- The site is an important part of the open landscape between Cold Ash and Thatcham
- The upper parts of the site are also an important part of the landscape (rather than visual) setting of the AONB
- There are no views from the AONB
- Visual links with the wider landscape are visible from the footpath and Cold Ash Hill

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Loss of open field network
- Landscape features on the site would be absorbed into development
- Potential loss of tree cover
- Urbanisation of upper slopes of the site
- Loss of open countryside separation between Cold Ash and Thatcham

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- Visual impact on views from the footpath through open countryside

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Expansion of Thatcham above its valley floor location
- Potential expansion above the current limit of development in this area at 95m AOD
- Potential urbanisation of the rural setting of Henwick Old Farm listed building
- Expansion north of the current strong boundary
- Potential erosion of the separate identities of Thatcham and Cold Ash

**Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Development on the whole of this site would result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB. Cold Ash is an AONB settlement and although it has expanded southwards out of the AONB and down the slope towards Thatcham, it retains a distinctive separate identity. The development of the whole of this site would lead to the perception of a merging of the two settlements and would therefore have an adverse impact on the AONB settlement pattern.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that only part of the site should be pursued further as a potential housing site as shown in Figure THA011.2. subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB and to maintain the character of the land north of Thatcham:

- The potential development area is in two main areas, wrapping around THA027 to the west, south and east, and limited to land on the lower slopes lying below the 95m AOD contour
- Development should not extend into the central 'square' field or north of the road named Southend off Cold Ash Hill in order to maintain the separate identities of Cold Ash and Thatcham
- This limitation of the potential development area would also soften the Cold Ash Hill approach into Thatcham; and provide an opportunity to retain the agricultural fields whilst providing a good sized area of Green Infrastructure to the north of the potential development area
- The extent of the potential development area is also limited by the need to protect the rural setting of Henwick Old Farm and the small scale distinctive landscape north-east of the listed building
- Retention of the agricultural fields on the middle slopes above 95m AOD as shown in Figure THA011.2
- Creation of a generous area of Green Infrastructure to the north of the potential development area as shown in Figure THA011.2 to act as a transition between the built up area and retained open countryside; to screen views from the north; and to contribute to the environmental assets of the area
- Existing tree belts to be retained and supplemented with new tree belts along Cold Ash Hill and along the boundaries with the adjacent open countryside, THA027 and THA014
- Green Infrastructure to break up the built form
- Preferred access is from the more urban sections of the road network as shown on figure THA011.2

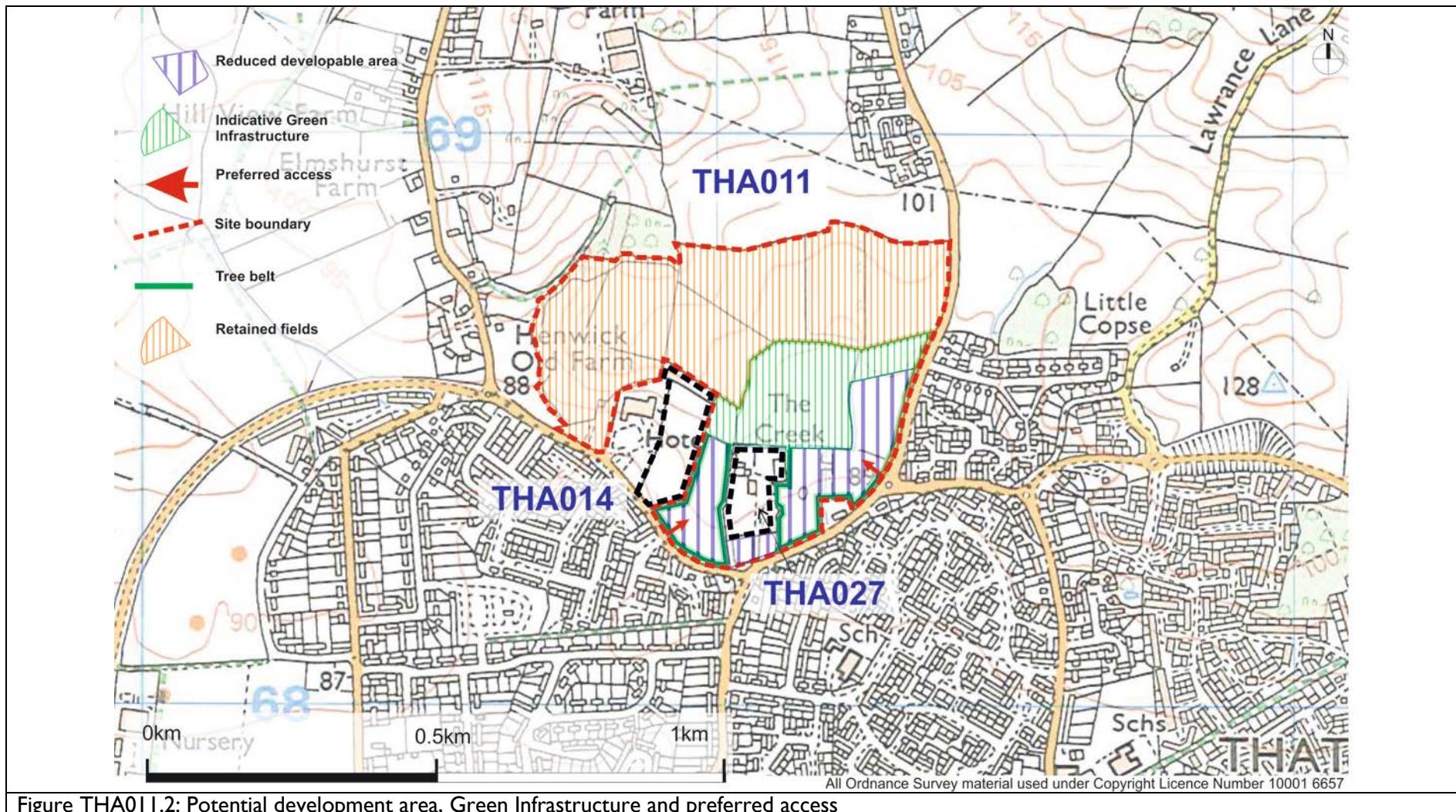
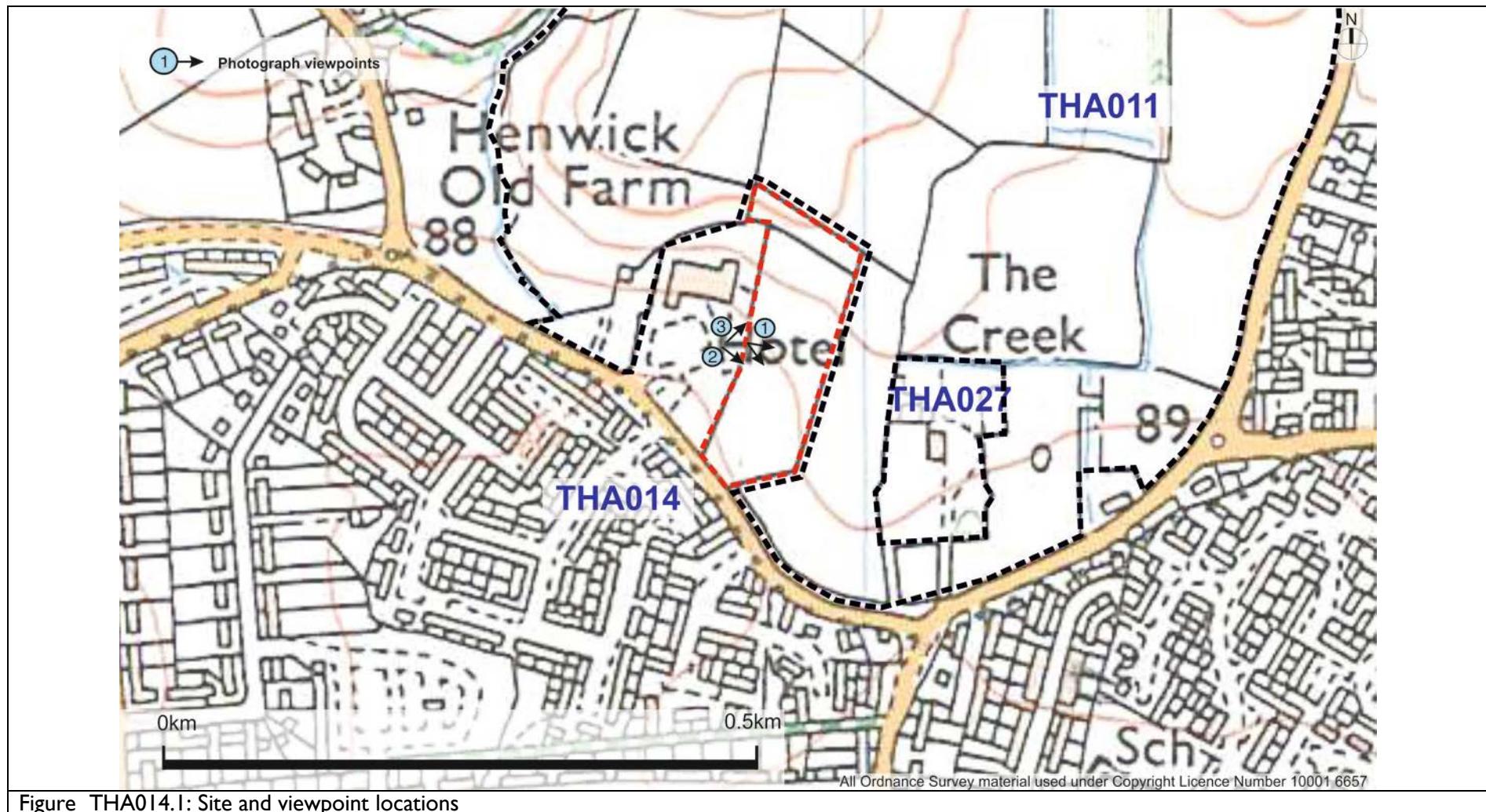


Figure THA011.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

B. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: THA014



## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View from the car park at the Regency Park Hotel looking south-east to the trees along Bowling Green Road



Viewpoint 2: View from hotel parking into the south-east corner of the site with planting along Bowling Green Road to right



Viewpoint 3: View from hotel car park to north end of site adjacent to hotel building

## Site description

Site THA014 forms a large area of amenity grassland immediately to the east of the Regency Park Hotel. The boundary of the site with an area of car parking and hotel buildings is open. Dense hedgerow encloses the site along the northern, southern and eastern boundaries with glimpses through to the fields within THA011 to the east.

### Relationship with adjacent settlement

- The site lies beyond the well defined boundary of Thatcham formed by Bowling Green Road and its tree and hedgerow cover between the site and the road
- The site is separated by open fields from the modern housing on Heath Lane and Cold Ash Hill
- A large part of the site lies below 95m AOD which forms the limit of development up the hillside to the east
- The site is separated from the older settlement at Henwick Old Farm by the hotel grounds
- The site is influenced by the built form of the hotel

### Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- The character of the site contrasts with the open landscape to the west, north and east
- The site is largely separated from the wider landscape by the surrounding vegetation
- The site is not visible from the wider landscape

### Impact on key landscape characteristics

- Potential loss of boundary vegetation
- Loss of open land to the north of Bowling Green Road within the open countryside

### Impact on key visual characteristics

- Limited visual impact provided the boundary vegetation is retained

### Impact on key settlement characteristics

- Expansion of Thatcham north of a well defined boundary formed by Bowling Green Road and its vegetation
- Development could be largely below the current northerly limit in this area at 95m AOD
- Development could be contained as an adjunct to the hotel

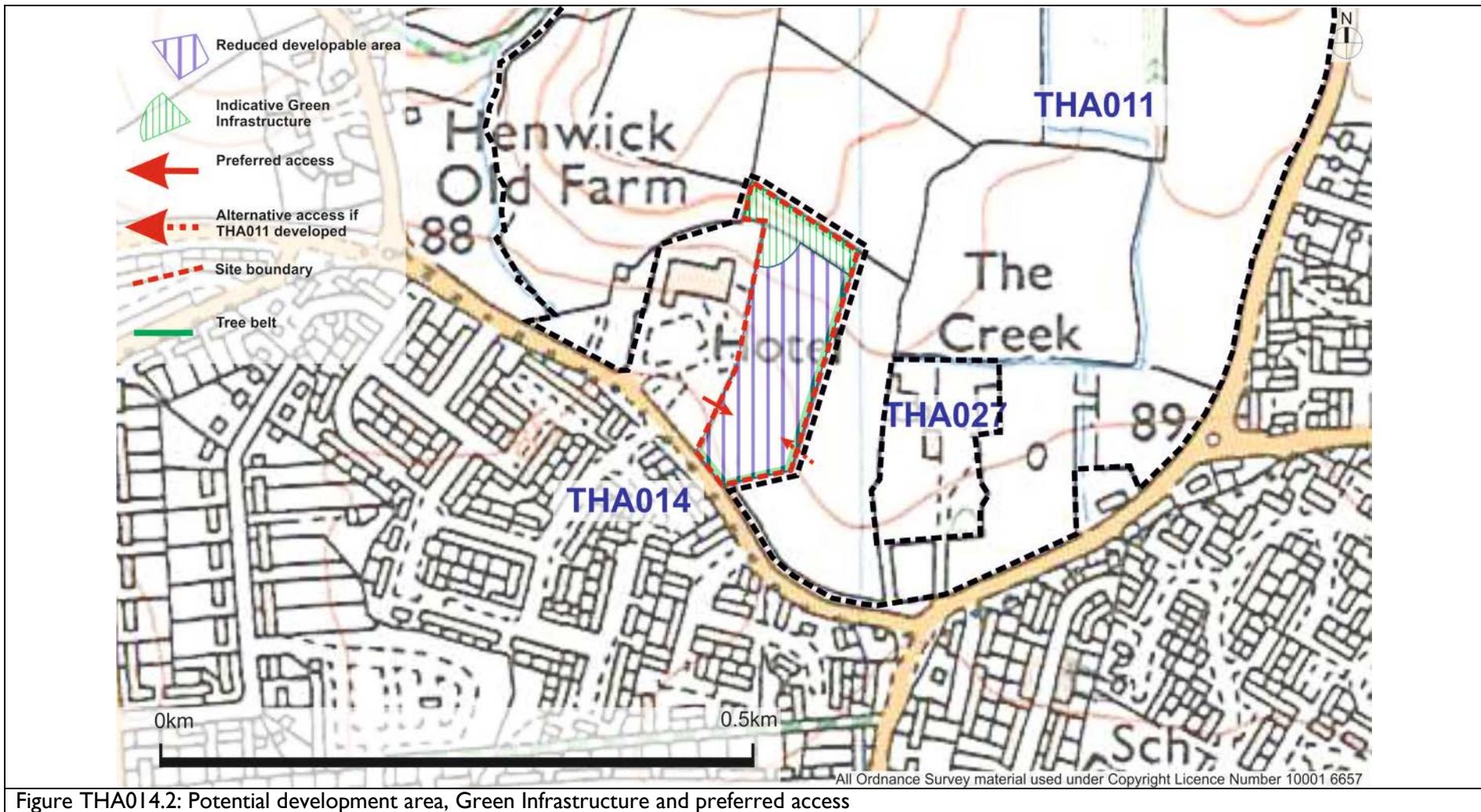
### Summary of compliance with NPPF

Development on this site would not result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

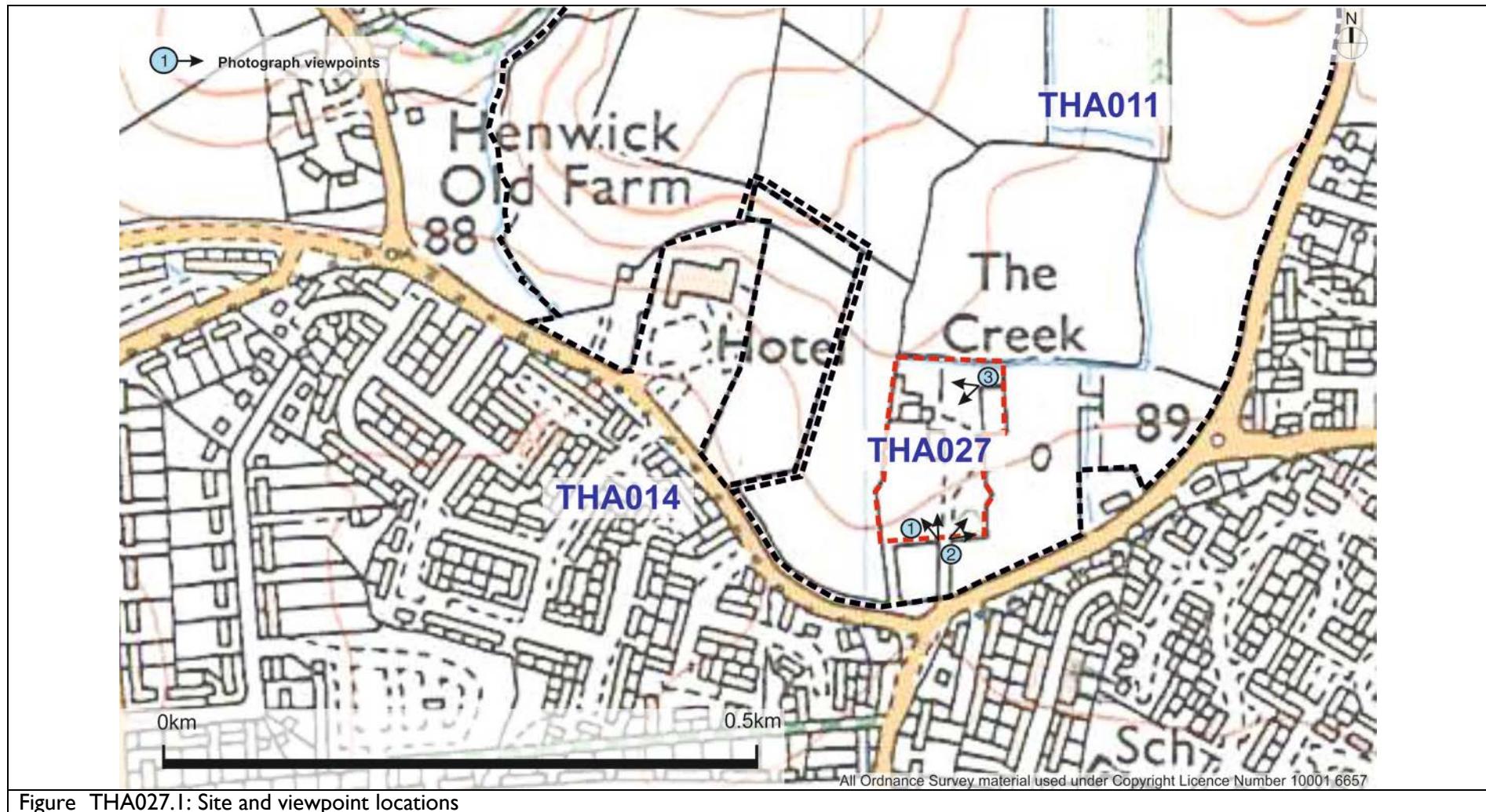
### Recommendations

It is recommended that this site should be considered further as a potential housing site as shown in Figure THA014.2. subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB; and to maintain the character of the land north of Thatcham:

- The potential development area should be retained below the 95m AOD contour as shown in THA014.2
- Retention of the tree cover and incorporation into an area of Green Infrastructure in the north of the site
- Reinforcement of existing tree line along the Bowling Green Road, eastern and northern boundaries
- Green Infrastructure to break up the built form
- Preferred access is from within the southern part of hotel grounds or, if THA011 is developed, from the western portion of the potential development area in Figure THA001.2



C. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: THA027



## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View north north-west from entrance to site off Bowling Green Road towards the house over former lawn tennis courts



Viewpoint 2: View north north-east from entrance to site off Bowling Green Road towards the house over former lawn tennis courts - with land within THA011 to the east



Viewpoint 3: View west from edge of hard tennis courts to house, cottage and stables

### Site description

Site THA027 forms a house and grounds which include the main house, a cottage, stables and hard tennis court with lawns, mature trees and ornamental planting. It is surrounded by the open fields under pasture of THA011 which are visible through post and rail fences around the site. To the south lies an area of open land, part of THA011, which separates the site from Bowling Green Road. There are only filtered views into the site.

**Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site lies beyond the well defined boundary of Thatcham formed by Bowling Green Road and its tree and hedgerow cover between the site and the road
- The site is separated by open fields from the modern housing on Heath Lane and Cold Ash Hill
- The site lies below 95m AOD which forms the limit of development up the hillside

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The character of the site contrasts with the open landscape to the west, north and east
- However it is typical of more isolated properties set within the hillsides leading up to the AONB and Cold Ash
- The site is not visible from the wider landscape

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Potential loss of good trees
- Loss of very low density developed site which contributes to the transition from the town to the open countryside

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- Potential views from Bowling Green Road, Heath Lane and Cold Ash Hill depending on the form of the development

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Expansion of Thatcham north of a well defined boundary formed by Bowling Green Road and its vegetation
- Development would be below the current northerly limit in this area at 95m AOD

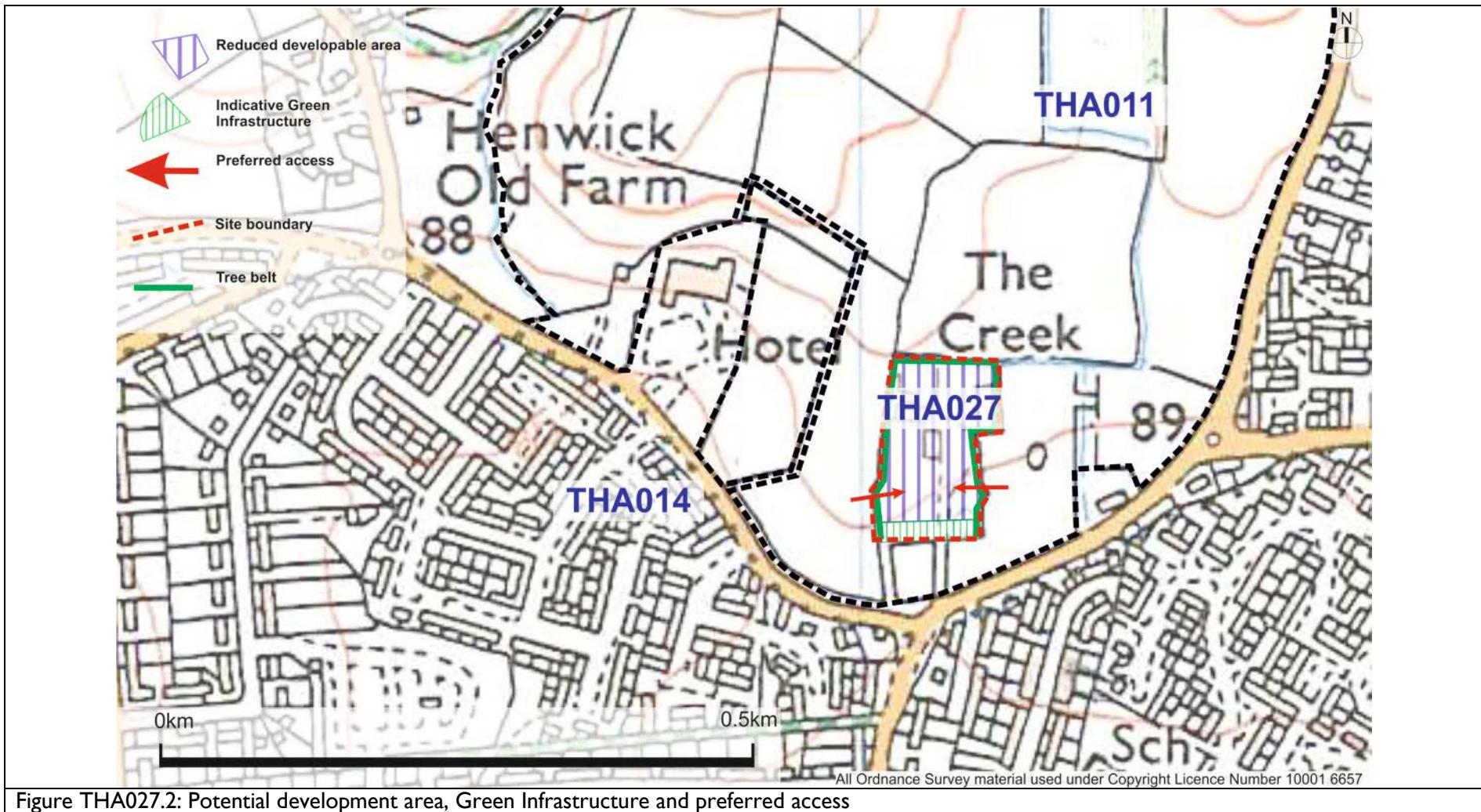
**Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Development on this site would not result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the site could be considered further as a potential housing site in conjunction with THA011, as shown in THA027.2 and THA011.2. Any development would be subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB; and to maintain the character of the land north of Thatcham:

- The potential development area would be below the 95m AOD contour and form the northern limit of development off Bowling Green Road as shown in THA027.2
- Most of the site would be suitable for development subject to a narrow belt of Green Infrastructure along the southern edge as shown in Figure THA027.2 to retain the character of the Bowling Green Road at this point
- Tree belts to be provided to the boundaries with open countryside or to the adjacent THA011 potential development area
- Green Infrastructure to break up the built form
- Preferred access from either the existing access point or from THA011 if this is considered further.



**Conclusion and cumulative effect of all THA sites (THA011, THA014 and THA027) and the potential cumulative impact on Thatcham and Cold Ash**

It is recommended that the above three sites should only be considered further as a whole, limiting development to the slopes below 95m AOD. If any one of the sites were to be developed in isolation this would result in an unacceptable level of expansion of Thatcham north of the well defined settlement boundary along Bowling Green Road and Heath Lane. In the light of modern housing along the lower slopes of Cold Ash Hill, the low visibility of those parts of the sites close to the settlement and the more suburban character of these particular areas, the recommended reduced developable areas shown in THA011.2, THA014.2 and THA027.2 could be justified in landscape and visual terms. However it is particularly important to limit the northern expansion of this area in order to retain the separate identities of Cold Ash and Thatcham, to retain the open rural character of the open countryside between the two settlements and to prevent further intervisibility between the built forms of each settlement.

Figures THA011.2, THA014.2 and THA027.2 all show individual access points in accordance with the study methodology but the preferred access would be to as shown in Figure THA011.2 with access points into the adjacent sites, as shown as alternative access points on Figures THA014.2 and THA027.2.

**THEALE:**

<b>Settlement</b>	Theale
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas closest to Theale sites :</b>	
Adjacent to LCA 8A Hermitage Wooded Commons	
<b>Date of site survey</b>	15 April 2015
<b>Surveyor</b>	BK

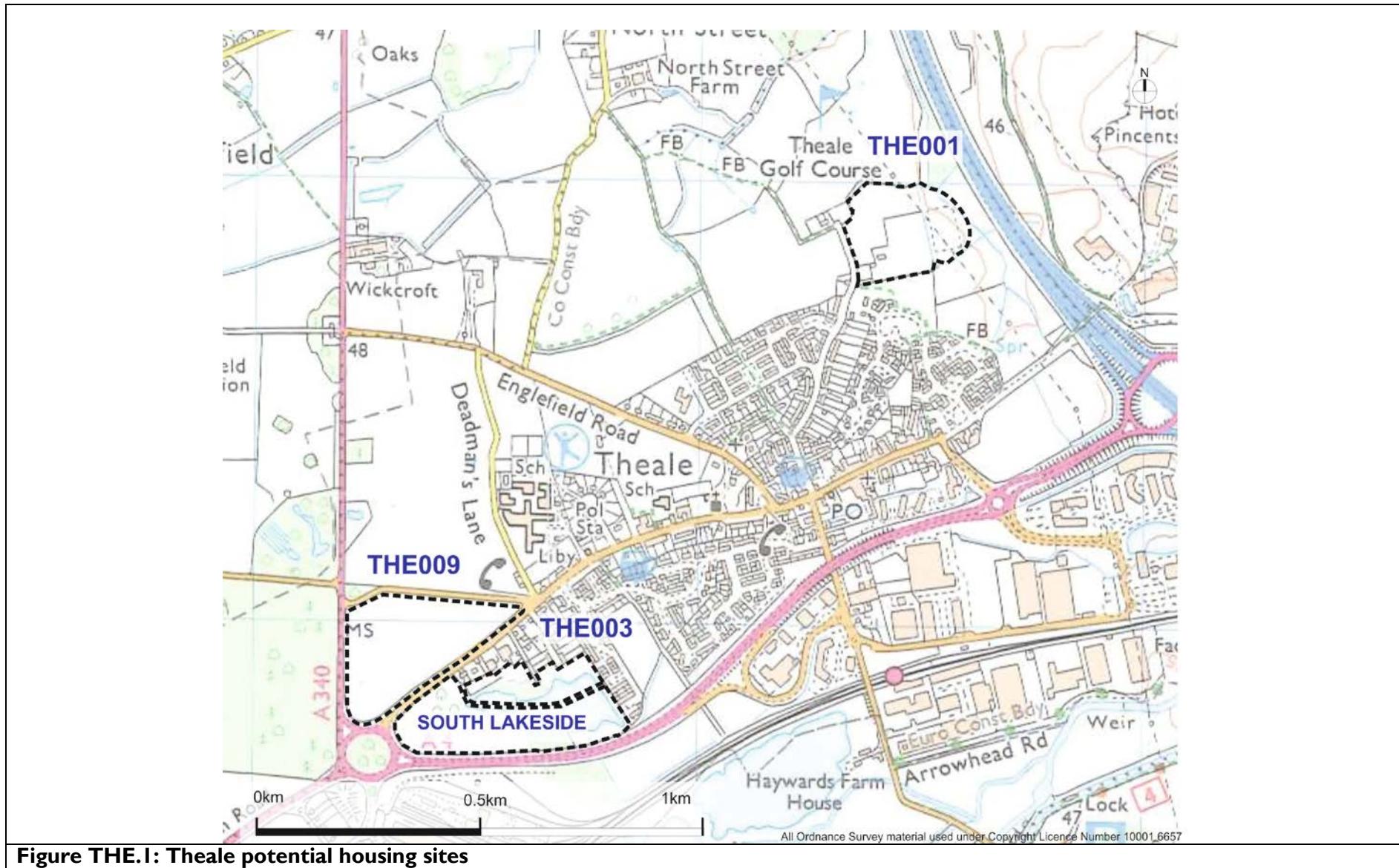


Figure THE.1: Theale potential housing sites

#### **Key landscape characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- lowland area at the base of the chalk dipslope, underlain by clays, silts, sands and gravels of the Reading and Bagshot Beds and London Clay, giving rise to nutrient poor, often acidic, soils
- a broad undulating plateau falling towards the Kennet Valley to the south east and dissected by River Pang
- variable land cover forming an intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and small areas of remnant heathland. Some more open areas of arable land can be found on the slopes that drop to the Pang Valley and to the south east near Beenham
- large, interconnected woodland blocks and strong hedgerow pattern with mature trees restrict views and create an enclosed and intimate character. Low wooded horizons are a feature
- numerous semi-natural woodlands of ancient origin, with some large commercial plantations. Wooded commons and small areas of remnant heath are a distinctive element
- many features of biodiversity interest including heathland, dry and wet woodland, bog and areas of wet meadow
- dominated by small irregular fields of informal and piecemeal enclosures, of medieval and post-medieval date with some larger, more regular and straight edged, formal Parliamentary enclosure on flatter terrain in the south-east and west
- intricate network of rural lanes, many sunken and overhung by woodland plus more intrusive road infrastructure
- Expansive flat valley floor (NDLCA LCT17)
- historic parkland based on medieval deer parks and manor houses with associated ornamental parklands with gardens, rides and plantings are a particular feature – for example Englefield Park Grade II Registered Park and Garden north of Theale

#### **Key visual characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- Open views over large arable fields (NDLCA LCT17)
- Open landscape visible from the AONB escarpment (NDLCA LCT17).

#### **Key settlement characteristics of LCA8A and landscape setting**

- dispersed pattern of settlement characteristic of encroachment into areas of common and woodland
- includes large nucleated villages, lines of estate cottages, loose roadside settlements as well as many dispersed farmsteads and residential country houses
- well settled area with rising population due to proximity and accessibility to Reading
- Theale characterised by its linear Conservation Area with pre-War development to the north and scattered along Church Street. Post war suburban development in large areas encloses the historic core to the north, west and south with Late 20<sup>th</sup> century private housing development to the north-east and south along the A4. (Quality Design SPD- Part 3)
- Open landscape valued as a setting to Theale (NDLCA LCT17)
- Linear settlement patterns traditionally along the A4 (NDLCA LCT17)

## **Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development**

The additional potential housing sites in Theale all lie in close proximity to and within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB. A detailed strategic assessment of the landscape sensitivity around Theale has already been undertaken in a previous landscape sensitivity study, '*An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire*' (LSS) (2009) <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=36263&p=0>). This Study identified local landscape character areas (LLCAs) and describes the landscape sensitivity of each LLCA. This addendum builds upon the work in that assessment by examining Theale and its landscape setting in relation to three sites THE001; THE003; and THE009 in greater detail, specifically concentrating on the special qualities and key characteristics which might contribute to the natural beauty of the AONB. The sensitivity classification and key landscape and visual aspects of each LLCA are considered within each potential housing site report.

The landscape pattern, the exposure and character of the adjacent built form and the visual qualities all vary along this edge of the AONB and there is some subsequent variation in the landscape sensitivity of the open land on the urban edge. This is reflected in the findings of the LSS. The three additional potential housing sites in this area fall within LLCAs in that study which vary from low to medium sensitivity.

The lower levels of sensitivity reflect the influence of large scale commercial development as at Foster Yeoman, major highway infrastructure and derelict sites such as South Lakeside and the influence of modern development at Theale. Theale lies on the valley floor on the slightly higher ground above the river Kennet. Commercial development is concentrated south of the A4 with housing and village facilities extending north of the A4 into the open landscape in the southern part of LLCA16A: Englefield Wooded Farmlands. A triangle of open countryside north of Theale, between the A340 to the west (at the foot of the Englefield AONB escarpment) to the M4 to the east (at the foot of the Sulham AONB escarpment), lies outside of the AONB but provides a rural setting to the AONB and interface between the two areas of the AONB. All three sites lie in the flat valley floor to the north and west of the village.

Further expansion of Theale has to be considered carefully to avoid undermining the value of the open land in maintaining an attractive landscape setting to the AONB and avoid harming the special qualities of, and views to and from, the AONB escarpments west of Reading. Particular care will be needed to avoid intrusion from the built form on the wider AONB landscape, especially where the open panoramic views are a notable valued feature and a key constraint on development. In order to retain the village character, the balance of development and open space within any new village envelope is an important factor in considering any future development.

**Sources:**

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002; and An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: West Reading

Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Quality Design SPD- Part 3

A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: THE001 Former Sewage Works, Theale

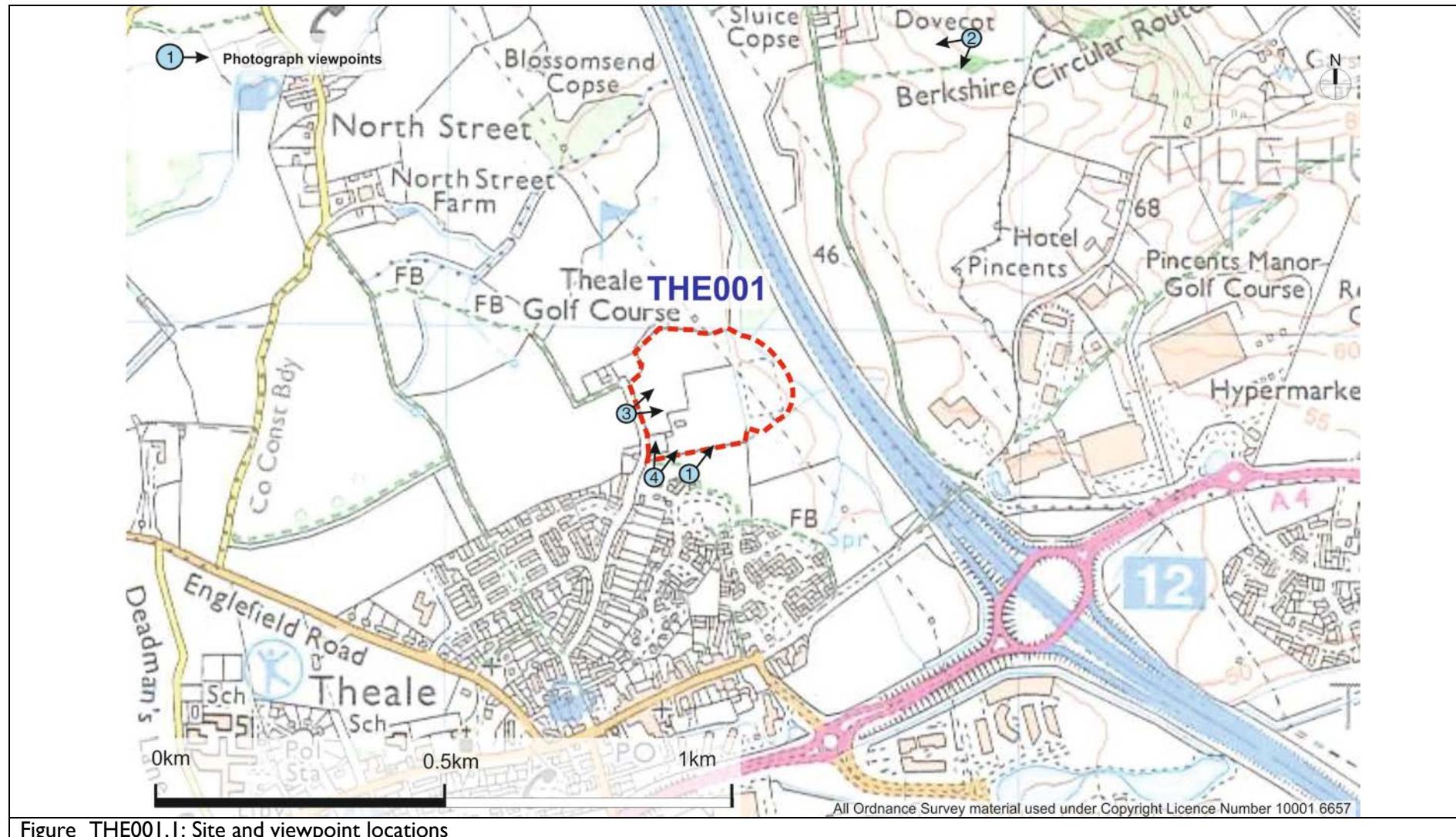


Figure THE001.1: Site and viewpoint locations

**An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: LLCA16A: Englefield Wooded Farmlands**

**LLCA16A: Englefield Wooded Farmlands** has an overall *medium sensitivity*.

*Englefield Wooded Farmlands* is characterised by its mixed agricultural and recreational land use. The area is well vegetated with a complex vegetation pattern in the north, typical, but naturalistic, golf course planting in the centre and little internal boundary treatment and neat roadside hedges in the south. The landscape structure in the south has been weakened and the character eroded through urban fringe elements. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Part of the flat valley floor between the river Kennet and river Pang
- Extensive areas of woodland, pasture and amenity grassland
- Small to medium scale field pattern well defined by hedgerows and tree belts
- Good sense of seclusion in north
- Narrow winding rural road network
- Contained linear village at North Street
- Scattered farmsteads and other built form clusters
- Visually exposed to views from the escarpments, in particular Englefield
- Significant individual historic buildings and settlement at North Street
- Good level of recreational provision and public rights of way
- BAP woodlands and significant lengths of hedgerow
- Weakened landscape structure in the south west
- Some urban fringe elements such as pylons, sewage plant, lighting to school playing fields
- Tranquillity compromised by urban fringe elements and M4

Wider landscape: LLCA16A Englefield Wooded Farmlands has strong landscape links with land to the north and north west at the foot of the Englefield escarpment beyond the study area. It is a visually enclosed area but visible from the higher ground of the rural escarpments.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA16A Englefield Wooded Farmlands abuts Theale village and 20E on its southern boundary. The built form of Theale is visually exposed but 16A provides a strong contrast and rural landscape setting to the village.

## West Berkshire Core Strategy: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of Potential Strategic Development sites 2011

**Area 11 East Theale Recommendation:** Area 11 covers the south-east corner of LLCA16A (including THE001) and north-west quadrant of LLCA20E. This Study recommended that only a very small section of the north-west quadrant of 20E (to the south of the site), north of Hoad Way and no further east than the current built form edge, be considered as an option site if the gap is to be maintained. Part of 16A may also be acceptable if the existing landscape structure is used to integrate the development and is reinforced to maintain a perceptible gap.

### PHOTOGRAPHS

	
<p>Viewpoint 1: View from open space north of Woodfield Way to eastern part of the site with views to the dovecot close to the Berkshire Circular Route in the AONB</p>	<p>Viewpoint 2: View from dovecot in the AONB to Theale in the valley. The pylon is located a few metres north of the site. The site is partly screened by tree and shrub vegetation.</p>



Viewpoint 3: View east over site from Blossom Lane with the tree cover along the M4 and within the AONB visible on the horizon



Viewpoint 4: View from open space north of Woodfield Way north into the site. The hedgerow forms the southern boundary of the site.

### Site description

Site THE001 forms a flat parcel of land which has formerly been in use as sewage works and is now mainly rough grassland with some hardstandings. A single building in the south of the site has been removed. The site is enclosed by poor fencing and a mature hedgerow with hedgerow trees with gaps in this cover allowing views in from the open space north of Woodfield Close and Blossom Lane. The site is surrounded by a mix of recreational uses (Theale golf course lies to the north and west and the open space at Woodfield Close to the south) and a mix of rough grassland and woodland along the western

M4 corridor to the east. Properties immediately adjacent to the site are rural in character although the site is in close proximity to the housing estates to the south.

**Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site is separated from Theale by the narrow open space north of Woodfield Close
- Settlement around the site is otherwise rural in character
- Site is rather isolated from the existing built up area of Theale

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- Although not in a good condition, the landscape of the site is typical of the open land west of the M4 which contributes to the rural setting of Theale
- The site contributes to the landscape and visual setting of the AONB Sulham escarpment
- Site is well screened by surrounding tree and hedgerow cover

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Loss of open character
- Potential to retain and enhance existing boundary vegetation

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- Potential visual impact on views from the AONB and resulting perception of Theale expanding towards the AONB
- Impact on rural character of views from Blossom Lane and the open space north of Woodfield Close
- No impact on adjoining footpaths

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Expands Theale into the open landscape between Theale and Calcot

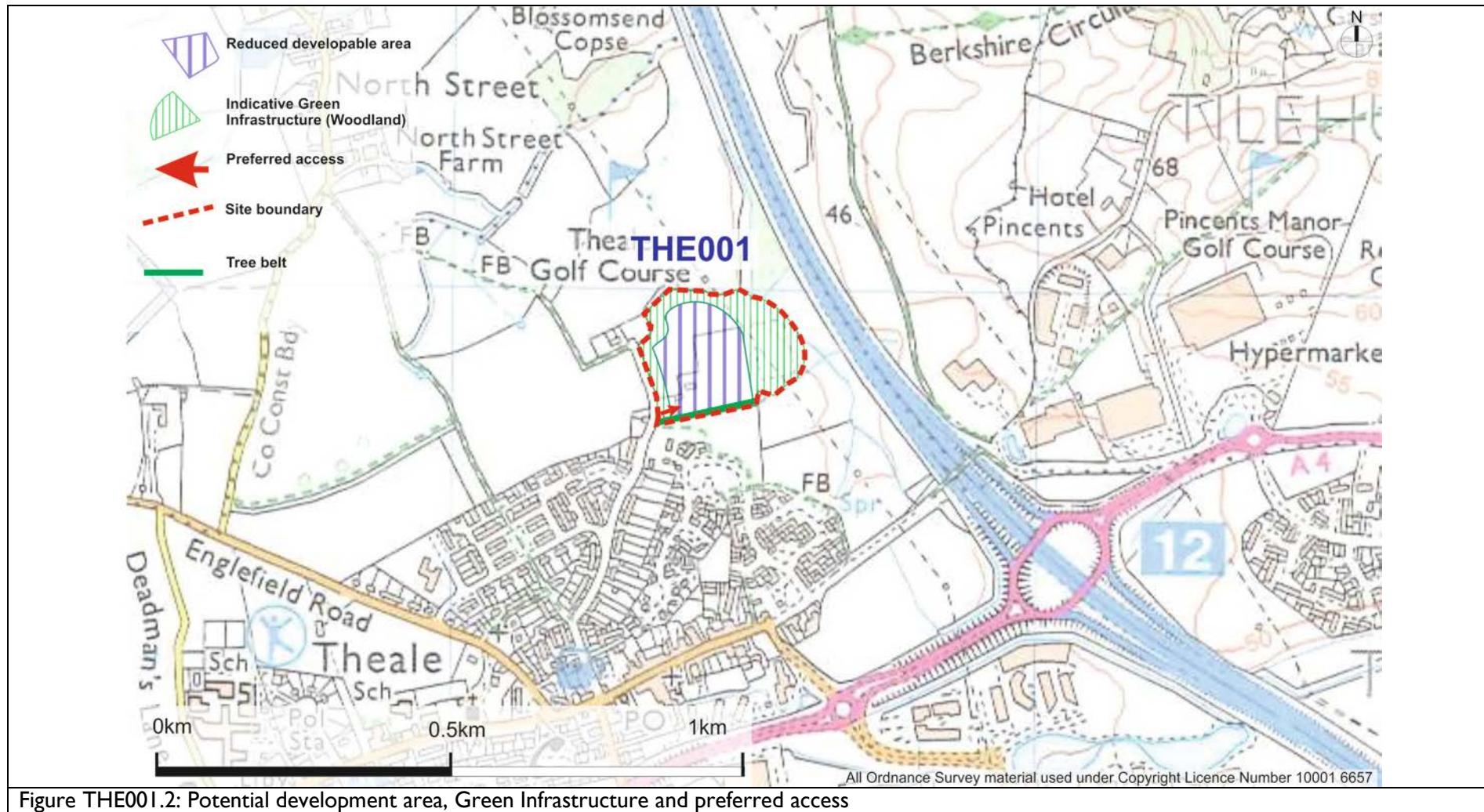
**Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Development on this site could potentially result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB if the built form was readily visible from the Sulham escarpment and increased the perception of urbanisation of the landscape setting to the AONB.

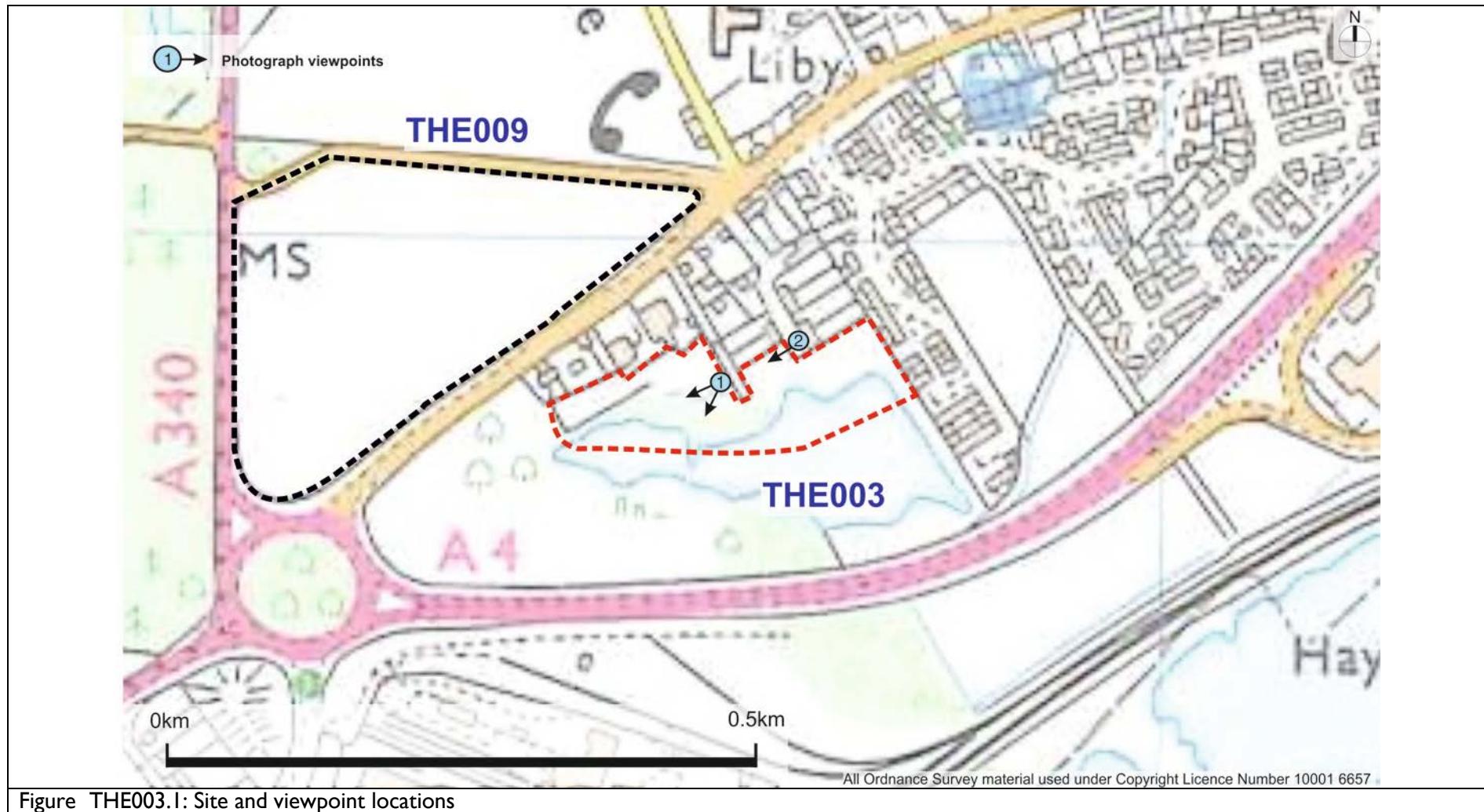
**Recommendations**

The site may be suitable for further consideration as a potential housing site but the extent should be limited as shown in Figure THE001.2 and would be subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB; and to maintain the character of the land north of Theale:

- Limit the developable area to that shown in Figure THE001.2
- Retain a landscape buffer of a minimum of 15m to Blossom Lane and footpath to retain the immediate open planted landscape setting
- Additional layers of tree planting to be included in area shown as Green Infrastructure in Figure THE001.2 to screen views from the AONB
- Orientate development to face onto open space off Woodfield Close whilst retaining the majority of the boundary planting
- Break up built form with substantial areas of tree planting to break up the roofscape
- Preferred access off existing access point
- Reduce density to reflect semi-rural edge of Theale



B. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: THE003 North Lakeside Theale



## An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: LLCA20F: West Theale

**LLCA20F: West Theale** has an overall *low sensitivity*.

West Theale is characterised by a mix of intense commercial activity at Foster Yeoman and derelict land at Theale Lakeside. Set within this, are the woodlands and a lake, which have either resulted from former older gravel pits or highway planting. These make an important contribution to the area and the western approach to Theale. The Foster Yeoman building is a landmark feature. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Theale lake and its surrounding woodland
- Some historic interest
- Generally medium to low biodiversity interest but with some BAP habitats
- Flat valley floor significantly modified by man made landform
- Mix of commercial and derelict land with some important tree screening
- Major large scale commercial buildings abut low rise residential development
- Major communication routes
- Informal public access

Wider landscape: LLCA20F West Theale is a self contained area which contrasts considerably with the adjacent Kennet valley landscape of 8G and the farmed landscapes of 16A and 17A. It is visually enclosed except for along its western and northern boundaries.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA20F: West Theale forms the western edge of Theale but its built form characteristics are very different. It forms an important transition zone between the AONB to the west and the village and setting and approach to Theale.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

	
Viewpoint 1: View from the entrance to the anglers' car park looking west into the centre of the site	Viewpoint 2: View from the end of St Ives Close looking west into the centre of the site

## Site description

Site THE003 forms an area of mixed shrubs and trees and rough grassland with a boundary with the northern bank of the lake. To the north and east the site is bounded by the private gardens of adjoining houses, mainly demarcated by garden fencing. To the west and south the land is within South Lakeside development area which has planning permission for large scale residential development, with an access off The Green which has already been constructed. THE003 (North Lakeside) is separated from South Lakeside by the lake.

#### **Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site lies between the existing built up area in the village and the approved South Lakeside development
- The open landscape of THE003 acts as a contrasting open setting to the approved large mass and scale of the South Lakeside development
- The site also acts as a landscape buffer between the approved South Lakeside development and the existing properties

#### **Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The site does not share the predominant open arable landscape characteristics of the wider area
- However it is similar in character to the well vegetated landscape buffer between the existing houses and the A4
- It forms an important setting to the open lake and its vegetated banks which provide a potentially valuable local landscape asset

#### **Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Loss of tree cover and mixed vegetation
- Loss of landscape buffer and well vegetated setting to Theale
- Impact on the undeveloped natural tree lined character of the lake and its banks

#### **Impact on key visual characteristics**

- Limited to mainly private views from the adjacent properties

#### **Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development on the site would be set within the context of the approved development at South Lakeside and the existing houses and would not extend the village westwards beyond its existing and permitted boundaries
- Development would merge the approved South Lakeside development with the existing houses with the loss of a potentially beneficial landscape setting to both areas

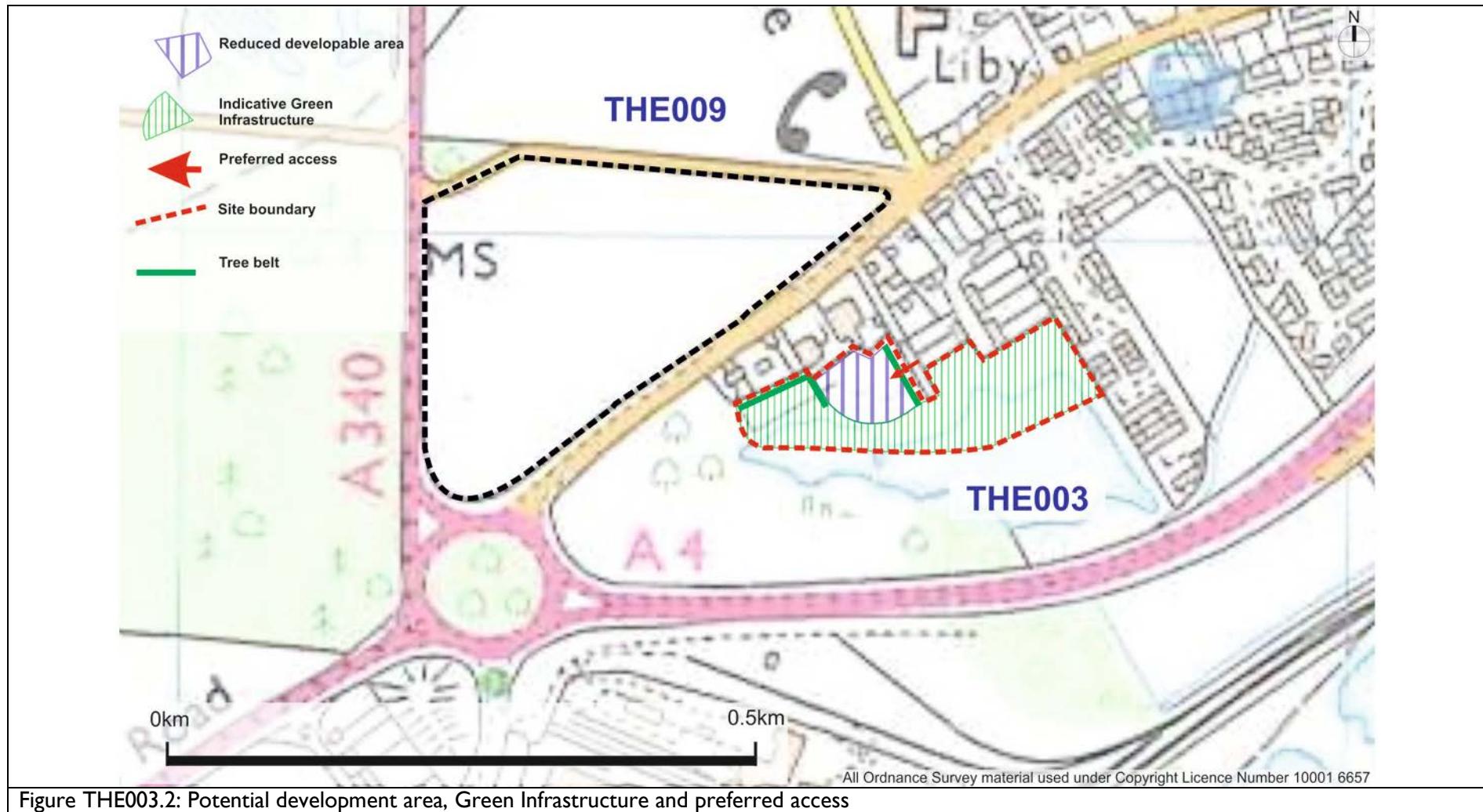
#### **Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Development on this site would not result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

#### **Recommendations**

Part of the site may be suitable for further consideration as a potential housing site but the extent should be limited as shown in Figure THE003.2 and would be subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the setting of Theale and the approved development of South Lakeside; and to maintain the natural undeveloped character of the lake:

- Limit the developable area to that shown in Figure THE003.2 to the south of the commercial premises and car parking to the blocks of flats
- Retain a landscape buffer of a minimum of 10m to the lake
- Provide new tree planting to the western and eastern boundaries to screen views from the existing dwellings
- Create accessible open space on the remainder of THE003 as shown in THE003.2 to enhance the landscape, arboricultural and ecological benefit of the area
- Retain tree and shrubs as far as possible to retain a well vegetated open space with open grassland
- Access the site through the existing access to the anglers car park
- The density should reflect the semi-rural edge of Theale



C. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: THE009 Land between A340 & The Green

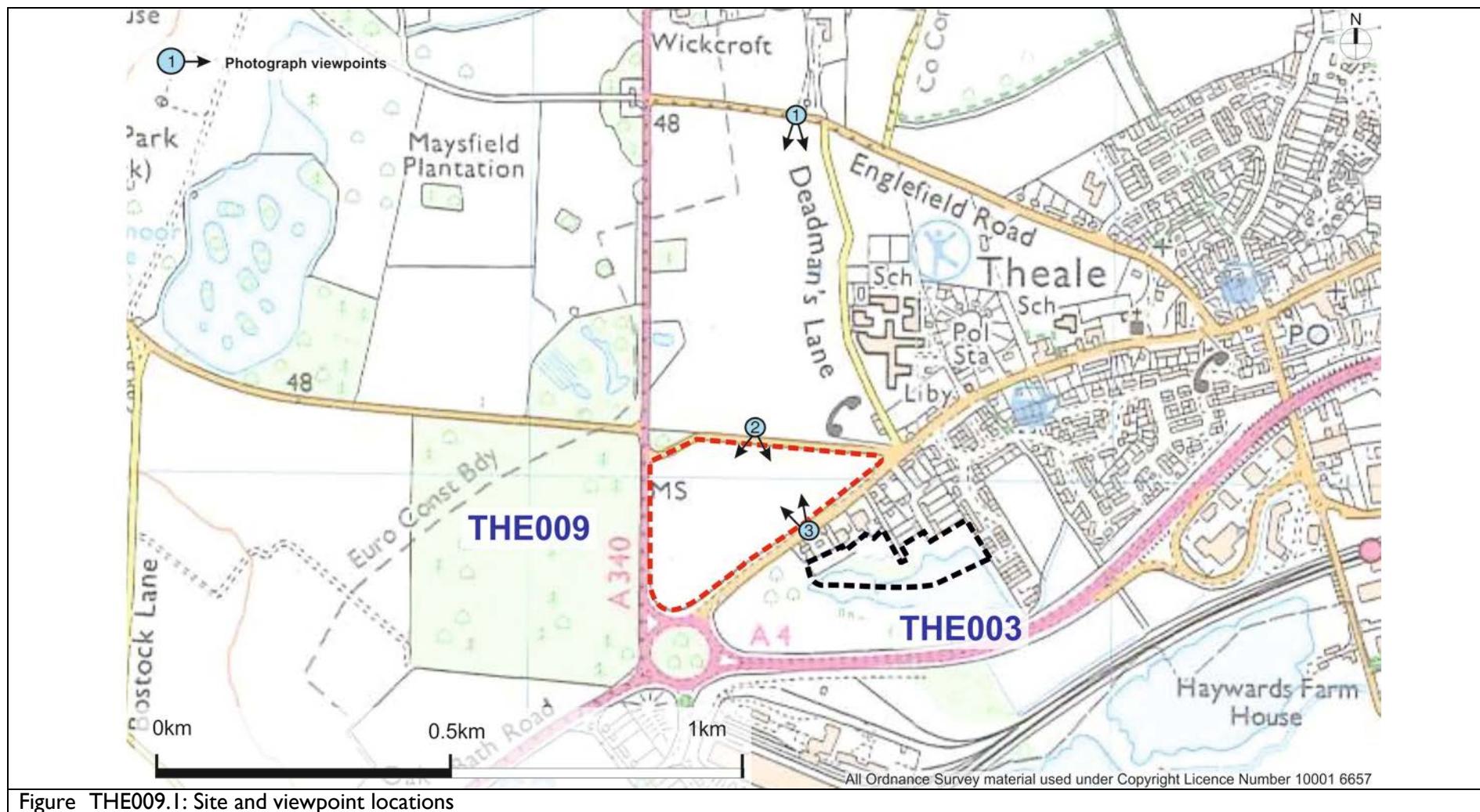


Figure THE009.1: Site and viewpoint locations

**An Integrated Landscape Sensitivity Approach to Settlement Expansion within West Berkshire (LSS) 2009: LLCA16A: Englefield Wooded Farmlands**

**LLCA16A: Englefield Wooded Farmlands** has an overall *medium sensitivity*.

*Englefield Wooded Farmlands* is characterised by its mixed agricultural and recreational land use. The area is well vegetated with a complex vegetation pattern in the north, typical, but naturalistic, golf course planting in the centre and little internal boundary treatment and neat roadside hedges in the south. The landscape structure in the south has been weakened and the character eroded through urban fringe elements. The key elements of landscape sensitivity are:

- Part of the flat valley floor between the river Kennet and river Pang
- Extensive areas of woodland, pasture and amenity grassland
- Small to medium scale field pattern well defined by hedgerows and tree belts
- Good sense of seclusion in north
- Narrow winding rural road network
- Contained linear village at North Street
- Scattered farmsteads and other built form clusters
- Visually exposed to views from the escarpments, in particular Englefield
- Significant individual historic buildings and settlement at North Street
- Good level of recreational provision and public rights of way
- BAP woodlands and significant lengths of hedgerow
- Important approach to the model estate at Englefield
- Weakened landscape structure in the south west
- Some urban fringe elements such as pylons, sewage plant, lighting to school playing fields
- Tranquillity compromised by urban fringe elements and M4

Wider landscape: LLCA16A Englefield Wooded Farmlands has strong landscape links with land to the north and north west at the foot of the Englefield escarpment beyond the study area. It is a visually enclosed area but visible from the higher ground of the rural escarpments.

Setting to the urban form: LLCA16A Englefield Wooded Farmlands abuts Theale village and 20E on its southern boundary. The built form of Theale is visually exposed but 16A provides a strong contrast and rural landscape setting to the village.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



Viewpoint 1: View from Englefield Road across open fields to site in the middle distance with Foster Yeoman building to the right beyond the site and school buildings to the left



Viewpoint 2: View over the site from lane along the northern boundary of the site with (left to right) school buildings, housing and Foster Yeoman building and A340/A4 roundabout and woodland cover visible beyond



Viewpoint 3: View from The Green on the southern boundary of the site looking north to the wooded park and escarpment at Englefield and the AONB and to Wickcroft Farm

### Site description

Site THE009 forms a triangle of open arable land on the western edge of Theale. The boundaries are hedged beyond which the open landscape north of Theale extends northwards between the M4 and the A340 up to the boundary of the AONB to the west, north and north-east of these two roads. Englefield Park, within the AONB, lies to the north-west of the site. To the west lies the A340 beyond which lies a wooded area and then the flat open arable fields of the AONB. To the south-west is the large roundabout at the junction of the A340 and A4. South of this junction the landscape is dominated by the Foster Yeoman building. Immediately south of the site and The Green lies a linear group of houses which front onto The Green. South of these houses lie two open areas: North Lakeside THE003 and South Lakeside. These are described under the assessment of THE003. Views into the site, despite its open character, are limited to the local road network. No views have been identified to date from public viewpoints within the AONB but this would have to be verified through any detailed landscape and visual impact assessment as the AONB is visible from views out from the site.

<p><b>Relationship with adjacent settlement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The eastern part of the site is heavily influenced by the adjacent school buildings and houses on The Green</li><li>• The western part is influenced by the presence of the existing Foster Yeoman building and will also be influenced eventually by the development at South Lakeside</li><li>• The approved South Lakeside development will extend the settlement westwards as far as the east side of the roundabout</li><li>• Foster Yeoman already gives the appearance of built form west of the roundabout but this area is separated from the village by the A4, local tree cover, and open fields and by the contrast in character between the Foster Yeoman area and the village</li></ul>
<p><b>Relationship with adjacent wider countryside</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The site shares common characteristics with the open arable land to the north and west</li><li>• However the site has little in common with the special qualities of the AONB and the parkland character of Englefield Park</li></ul>
<p><b>Impact on key landscape characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loss of open arable land</li><li>• Loss of part of the open setting to Theale</li></ul>
<p><b>Impact on key visual characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential visual impact on views from the edge of Englefield Park and the AONB</li><li>• Local impacts on views from the surrounding road network, houses on The Green and local farmsteads</li></ul>
<p><b>Impact on key settlement characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential over expansion of Theale to the west</li><li>• The western limits of South Lakeside are an influence on the potential for housing in this area</li></ul>
<p><b>Summary of compliance with NPPF</b></p> <p>Development on the eastern part of this site would not result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>The site may be suitable for further consideration as a potential housing site but the extent should be limited as shown in Figure THE009.2 and would be subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB; and to maintain the character of the land west of Theale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The western extent of the developable area is limited as shown on THE009.2 to prevent over expansion westwards (tying in with the outer extent of the school grounds and the approved South Lakeside development); to limit the western edge of the settlement; and importantly to retain an open landscape buffer between the edge of the village and Englefield Park and the boundary of the AONB</li><li>• Creation of open space and Green Infrastructure in the western part of the site as shown in THE009.2 to enhance the gateway to the village; and to assist in screening the Foster Yeoman building and approved development at South Lakeside in the views from the north of Theale</li><li>• Woodland copses and open grassland to be provided within the above open space</li><li>• To retain and enhance tree planting along the road network around the site, in particular to help soften and screen the development in views from the north</li><li>• Preferred access from a point opposite the existing South Lakeside access point</li></ul>

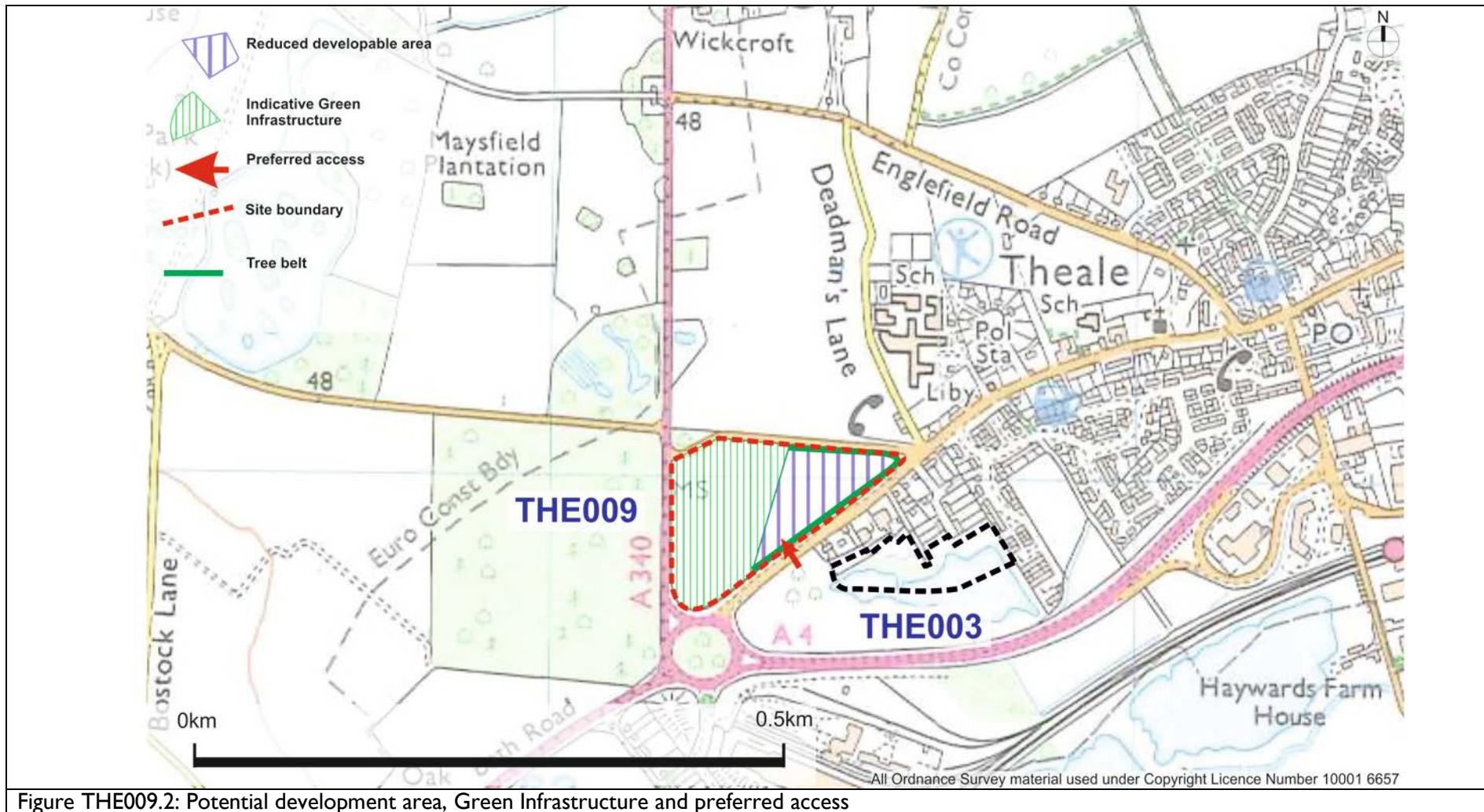


Figure THE009.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

### **Conclusion on cumulative effect of THE001 in conjunction with THE003, THE009 and South Lakeside**

THE001 is located on the north side of the village and is separated from THE003, THE009 and South Lakeside by existing settlement at Theale. Development at THE001 therefore would not result in a cumulative landscape impact in conjunction with development as recommended on these other sites.

### **Conclusion and cumulative effect of THE009 in conjunction with South Lakeside and/or THE003 on Theale and the AONB**

The development of THE009, in conjunction with South Lakeside and THE003, as shown in the figures above, would give rise to a significant level of development in the west of Theale. However, in the light of the approved footprint of development at South Lakeside and the limit of the current development at Theale Green Community School, THE 009 would not result in a substantial extension into the open land north of Theale. It also has the potential to provide an improved landscape buffer between the settlement and the commercial buildings; and the AONB. In order to avoid damage to the character of the settlement and of the open landscape, it will be important that any development here should be in scale with the existing houses. Development of the scale of the approved scheme at South Lakeside would result in significant harm to the local character contrary to Core Strategy policy CS19.

THE003 is small and contained and would not have a cumulative landscape impact with THE009.

Should all three areas come forward for development there should not be an adverse impact on the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB, provided the constraints identified in the above recommendations are observed. The potential impact on the character of Theale will depend on the scale of development on THE003 and THE009 within the areas identified above. There is a risk, given the approved scale of development at South Lakeside, of changing the character of west Theale, its landscape setting and its relationship with the AONB. It is therefore important that the mass and scale of the approved scheme at South Lakeside is not continued into THE003 and THE009 and that future development is in keeping with the low density pattern along The Green.