



OXO_009 rev A
VISUAL ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT (STAGE 3)

LAND AT OXPENS, WIGGINTON
(Para 79e Application)
June 2020

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1 INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

- 1.1 INTRODUCTION
- 1.2 SUMMARY OF THE LVIA PROCESS
- 1.3 BASELINE SURVEY
- 1.4 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS - VISUAL SENSITIVITY
- 1.5 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS - VISUAL MAGNITUDE
- 1.6 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS – SIGNIFICANCE
- 1.7 DESCRIPTION OF VISUAL BASELINE

2 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 CONSIDERED ALTERNATIVES
- 2.2 DEVELOPED PROPOSAL

3 VISUAL APPRAISAL

- 3.1 ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)
- 3.2 ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE (ZVI)
- 3.3 VIEWPOINT 1
- 3.4 VIEWPOINT 2
- 3.5 VIEWPOINT 3
- 3.6 VIEWPOINT 4

4 CONCLUSION

THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH:

SEED Landscape Design:

- OXO_002 (Developed masterplan)_Stage 3
- OXO_005 (Landscape Design Developed Doc)_Stage 3
- OXO_006 (new woodland section)_Stage 3
- OXO_007 (meadow and lake section)_Stage 3
- OXO_008 (damp wood bats and birds)_Stage 3

Seymour-Smith Architects:

- 117-L-01 Site Location Plan 1:1250 @ A1
- 117-P-01 D Site / Roof Plan 1:500 @ A2 / 1:250 @ A0
- 117-P-02 D Ground Floor Plan 1:200 @ A2 / 1:100 @ A0
- 117-P-03 D First Floor Plan 1:200 @ A2 / 1:100 @ A0
- 117-S-01 D Sections A & B 1:200 @ A3 / 1:100 @ A1
- 117-S-02 D Sections C & D 1:200 @ A3 / 1:100 @ A1
- 117-S-03 D Sections E & F 1:200 @ A3 / 1:100 @ A1
- 117-S-04 D Sections 1 & 2 1:200 @ A3 / 1:100 @ A1
- 117-S-05 D Sections 3 & 4 1:200 @ A3 / 1:100 @ A1
- 117-E-01 E Elevations 1:200 @ A2 / 1:100 @ A0
- 117-B-01 A Barn drawings as Existing 1:100 @ A3
- 117-B-02 A Barn drawings as Proposed 1:100 @ A3
- 117-V-01 3d studies not to scale @ A3

Hughes Planning

Design & Access Statement

Ecology by Design:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey Results
- National Vegetation Classification Survey
- Biodiversity Impact Calculator & spreadsheet

Cotswold Wildlife Surveys:

- Trees and Construction BS5837 Tree Survey Assessment
- Canopy Landscaping & Arboricultural
- Tree Inspection Update June 2020

Energy Zone

Concepts for Heating, Power & Ventilation

Clive Onions Consulting Civil Engineer

Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy

SEED Landscape Design Ltd. was appointed by the Virginia Sweetingham to undertake a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) in relation to proposed development of a new family home in the ash plantation at Oxpens.

The purpose of the assessment is to establish the potential visual implications of proposed development on its surrounding context. Throughout the assessment and mitigation process we have been working closely with Architect Helen Seymour-Smith, who is proposing the built element of the development. The aim is to enable the mitigation of adverse effects, the enhancement of potential beneficial effects and ensuring that the scheme is well integrated with its surrounding context.

The existing environment (i.e. baseline) has been surveyed and assessed in terms of its visual amenity, as follows:

- The visual baseline identifies existing views to, across or from the application site, and identifies the visual receptors within a Zone of Visual influence (ZVI), such as nearby residents or users of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs), who might be affected by the proposed development.

An assessment of the visual implications of the proposed development has then been undertaken. For the purposes of this report, the term 'impact' refers to the causation of change and 'effects' are the results of the changes on the landscape and visual context.

Mitigation measures have been identified to avoid, reduce, or otherwise remedy - where possible, practicable and achievable - any potentially unacceptable effects, in order to arrive at a solution that is sensitive to the landscape.

These mitigation measures are demonstrated in the design proposals and in OXO_005 (Developed Design Document)_Stage 3.

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

1.2 SUMMARY OF THE LVIA PROCESS

This VIA has been undertaken by SEED Landscape Design Ltd, a Chartered Landscape Architects practice with over 15 years' experience.

The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the following guidance:

- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition' (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013), and

The LVIA report entails a 3-stage assessment process, leading to an overall conclusion, as follows:

1. Baseline description of the identified visual receptors.

2. Description of the scheme design, mitigation and enhancement measures.

3. Assessment of the likely potential effects of the proposed development on the visual receptors, including the nature of the receptor (sensitivity) and the nature of the change (magnitude of impact), together with a judgement of the level of effects - whether beneficial, neutral or adverse - resulting from the proposed scheme.

A conclusion is then drawn on whether overall the effects would or would not be significant.

DEFINING THE STUDY AREA, ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV) AND ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE (ZVI)

The study area is determined from an analysis of landform, landscape character and an identification of potentially sensitive receptors. This is done via a combination of desk top study and on site survey and appraisal. For this site an extent of 3km radius from site was determined as a suitable study area. This was deemed appropriate due to the relative elevations of the site and surrounding areas.

The Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) is determined accordingly, within the area defined by the study area and a desk top study of the contours. This was refined into a Zone of visual influence (ZVI) by field verification, determining other elements of the landscape that inhibit views such as trees and buildings.

IDENTIFICATION OF RECEPTORS

Visual receptor groups are identified in the first instance by a review of the ZVI to determine groups of people who may experience common views within the study area, including of the proposed development. Whilst it is acknowledged that every person will have an individual relationship with views towards the site, the assessment combines visual receptors into groups that may reasonably be expected to share common experiences with the landscape in order to form a manageable process of assessment.

These typical groups are categorised as follows:

1. Recreational users of PROWs or accessible landscapes, e.g. walkers, horse riders;
2. Residents of and visitors to settlements;
3. Road users;
4. Visitors to specific viewpoints of recognised value, and,

Within an individual visual receptor group, people may experience a range of varying views towards the site. Where relevant, groups may be further sub-divided so that the assessment relates to commonly shared visual experiences, either through geographic or topographic consistency.

SELECTION OF VIEWPOINTS:-

A proportionate number of viewpoints are selected from within the ZVI and verified during site visits, to illustrate the range of views afforded towards the site. Viewpoints are selected wherever possible to be representative of different visual receptor groups. It is acknowledged, however, that visual receptor groups are likely to experience a varying degree of exposure to views (duration and extent) and that a view from one location may be very different from another in close proximity.

Specific and representative viewpoints from publicly accessible land are selected for key visual receptor groups.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGING

Photographs of views from each viewpoint were taken using a Canon EOS 550D single-lens reflex camera at a focal length of 35 mm unless otherwise stated.

Panoramic views have also been taken with 35mm focal length, and then stitched together with Adobe Photoshop. The perspective of the photos has not been changed.

LIMITATIONS TO SURVEY METHOD

The assessment was undertaken on 1st October 2019. All dates are noted on individual photos.

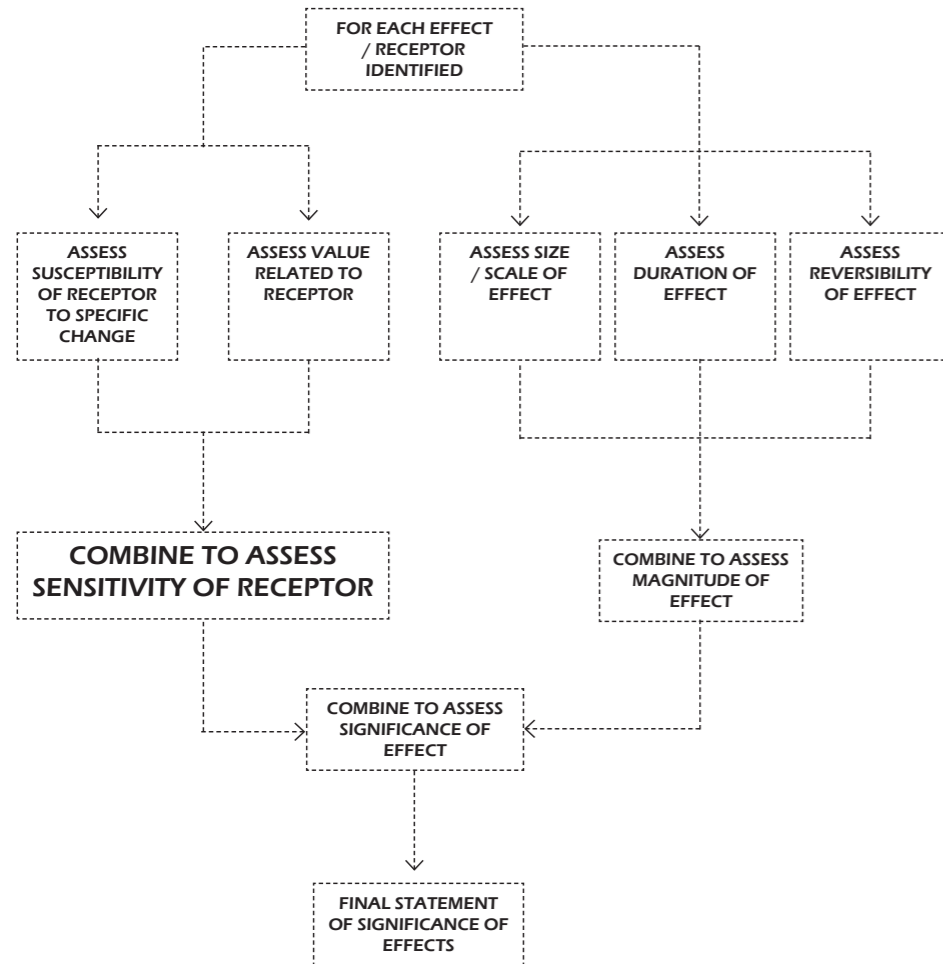


Figure 4: Principles and overview of processes (from 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013).

ASSESS SENSITIVITY OF RECEPTORS (VISUAL)

The sensitivity of visual receptors depends on its location and context, the expectations and occupation or activity of the viewer and on the importance of the view.

The purpose of describing the baseline visual environment is to identify the most important sensitive visual receptors around the site which have views to or across the proposed development. A visual receptor is essentially any viewer who would be likely to be affected as a result of the Proposed Development.

Table 3: SENSITIVITY OF RECEPTOR (VISUAL).

TITLE	RATING FOR TABLE 5
Views from within internationally and nationally designated high quality landscapes (National Parks, AONB), scheduled monuments or Grade 1 listed buildings and their setting, where views from, or near to public rights of way/public roads (where the attractive nature of the environment is a significant factor in the enjoyment of the visit, typically National Trails and Long Distant Footpaths.). Views from large numbers of residential properties in the same location (typically 100+). Views from roads promoted as scenic drives. Views from well used public rights of way where the attractive nature of the countryside is a significant factor in the enjoyment of the walk.	High
Views from within high or medium high quality regionally designated landscapes (Areas of Great Landscape Value), parks or gardens listed in the National Gardens Register, Grade II* and II listed buildings and their settings. Views from within medium quality non-designated but locally important landscapes, Outdoor sports or recreation (where the landscape is not a factor in the enjoyment of the sport). Views from public rights of way used locally and passing through attractive rural landscapes. Views from or near to residential properties, from passenger trains, or people within cars on rural roads of main tourism routes through a region. Views from a numerous residential properties within a similar location (typically between 10-100).	Medium
Views from within medium-low non-designated but locally important landscapes. Views from less well used public rights of way which pass through less attractive landscapes or townscape and are not used for enjoyment of the scenery. Views from single or small groups of residential properties (less than ten). Views from or near to main roads such as dual carriageways and motorways, major roads, or business premises.	Low

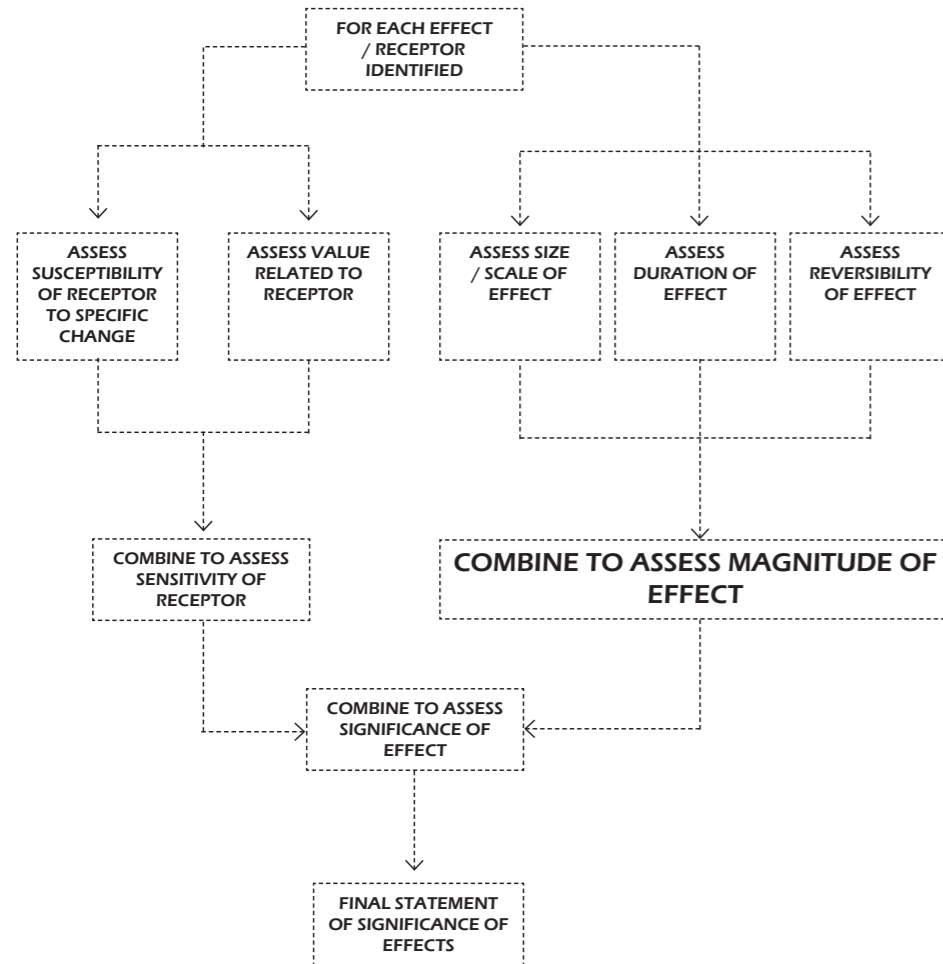


Figure 5: Principles and overview of processes (from 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013)).

ASSESS MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT (VISUAL)

The magnitude of change to the current visual environment depends on a combination of factors, such as the size of change, the nature of change and the ability of the viewer to appreciate the change.

Table 4 provides definitions for the magnitude of both positive and negative impacts.

Table 4: MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT (VISUAL).

DESCRIPTION	RATING FOR TABLE 5
The Proposed Development will either be visually dominant and intrusive and will disrupt views (or entirely block views) or will result in a significant improvement of the view.	High
The Proposed Development will be readily noticeable within the view and will result in either an easily perceived improvement or deterioration of the view.	Medium
The changes to the view arising from the proposed development will be visible but difficult to perceive.	Low
The changes to the view arising from the proposed development will not be perceptible.	None

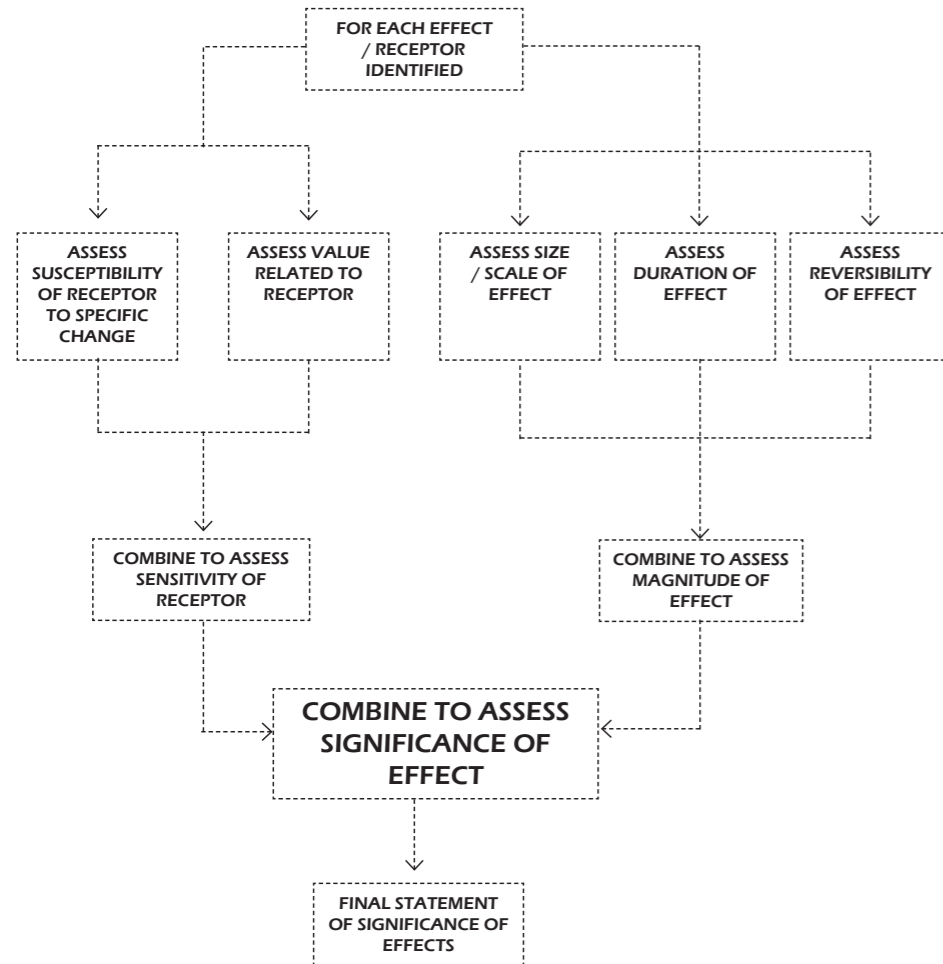


Figure 6: Principles and overview of processes (from 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013)).

ASSESS SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT (LANDSCAPE & VISUAL)

The significance of impacts is assessed using the appropriate national and international quality standards and professional judgement. For clarity and transparency, criteria have been used to attribute levels of significance. Broadly, the significance is a function of the magnitude of the impact and the number and sensitivity of receptors. The reversibility and duration of the effect are also important considerations.

For each assessment factor the SENSITIVITY OF RECEPTOR is combined with MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT to give an overall score for the SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IMPACT as set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IMPACT (VISUAL)

MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT	SENSITIVITY OF THE RECEPTOR		
	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
HIGH	MAJOR	MODERATE / MAJOR	MODERATE
MEDIUM	MODERATE / MAJOR	MODERATE	MINOR
LOW	MODERATE	MINOR	MINOR

Table 6: SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA (VISUAL)

SIGNIFICANCE	DEFINITION
MAJOR ADVERSE	The Proposed Development will cause substantial degradation of the landscape character/landscape features/existing views. These adverse effects are key factors in the decision making process. These effects are generally, but not exclusively, associated with sites or features of international, national or regional importance that are likely to suffer a most damaging impact and loss of resource integrity. However, a major change in a site or feature of local importance may also enter this category.
MODERATE ADVERSE	The Proposed Development will cause noticeable degradation of the landscape character/elements/existing views. These adverse effects may be important, but are not likely to be key decision-making factors. The cumulative effects of such factors may influence decision making if they lead to an increase in the overall adverse effect on a particular resource or receptor.
MINOR ADVERSE	The Proposed Development will cause small degradation of the landscape character elements/existing views. These adverse effects may be raised as local factors. They are unlikely to be critical in the decision-making process, but are important in enhancing the subsequent design of the project.
NEUTRAL	Beneficial effects balance out adverse effects such that there is no overall beneficial or adverse effect.
NO SIGNIFICANCE	No effects or those that are beneath levels of perception, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error.
MINOR BENEFICIAL	The Proposed Development will cause a small improvement to the landscape character/elements/existing views.
MODERATE BENEFICIAL	The Proposed Development will cause noticeable improvement to the landscape character/elements/ existing views.
MAJOR BENEFICIAL	The Proposed Development will cause substantial improvement in landscape character/elements/existing views. In making a decision about the proposal this advantageous effect may be considered to compensate to some degree for other, non-landscape, adverse effects.

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

1.7 DESCRIPTION OF VISUAL BASELINE

This section of the report comprises an evaluation of the existing visual amenity in the locality based on identified viewpoints, and the contribution that the site makes to existing visual amenity.

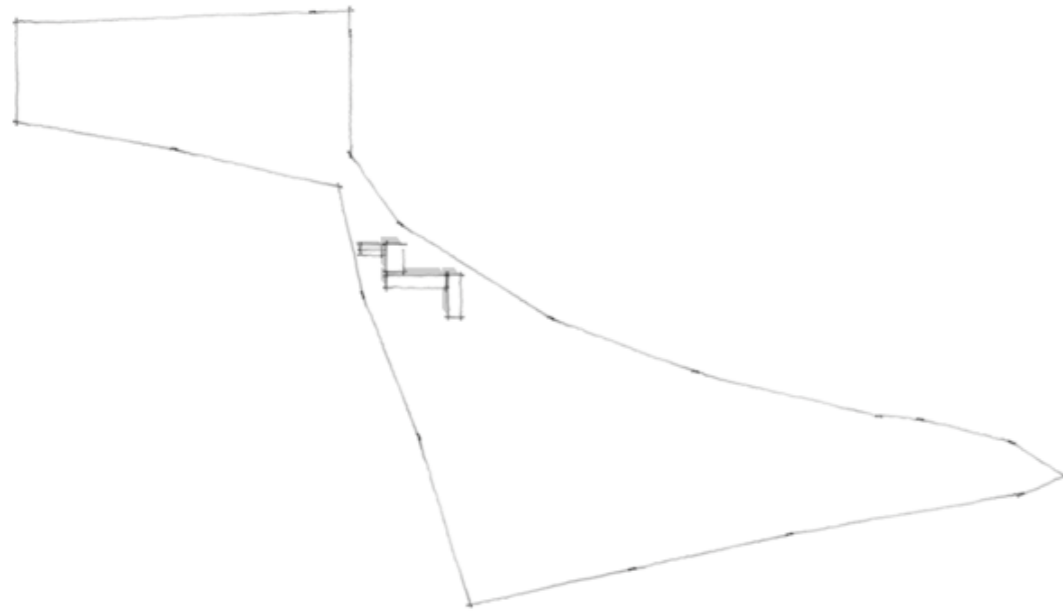
Extent of visibility

Visibility of the site is largely to the south along with a isolated view to the east. Views from the north and west are limited by the existing topography along with the intervening tree cover (along the dismantled railway), or the boundary planting on site itself. There are no views beyond 1.5km distance.

Key receptor groups

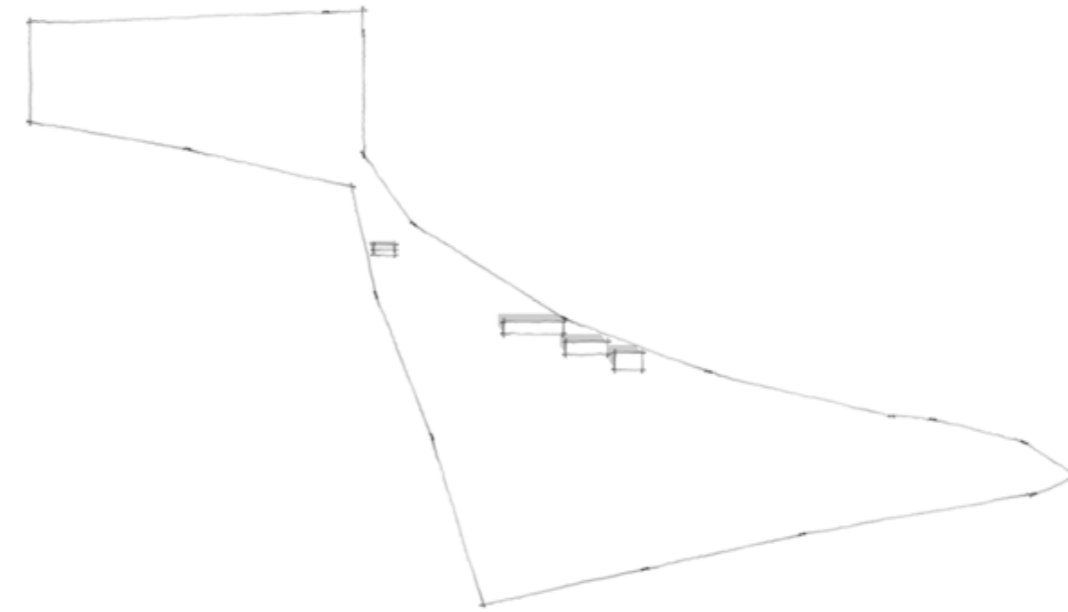
The receptor groups potentially affected by this development are as follows:

- Users of public rights of way
- Residential of Cradle Farm



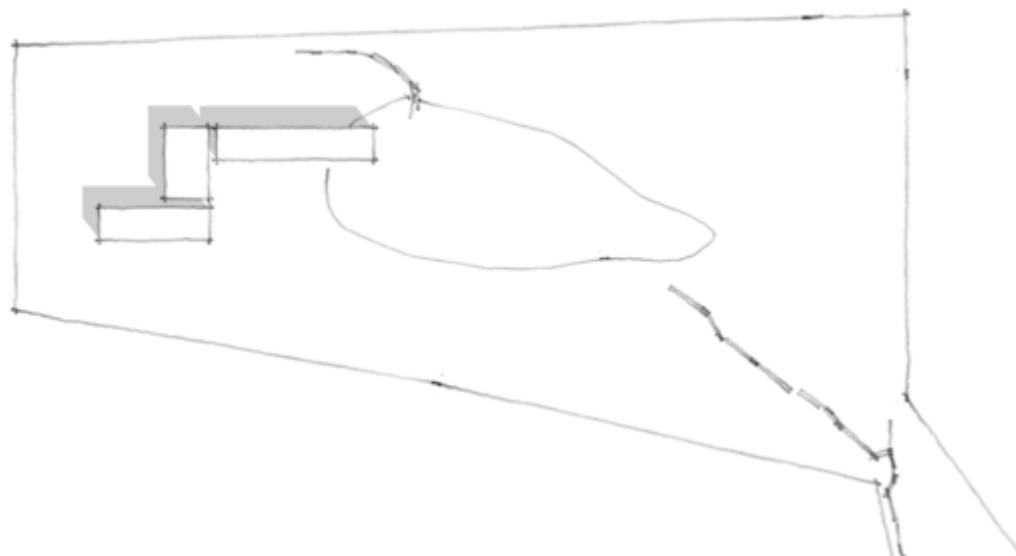
ALTERNATIVE 1 - Extend the barn

This location was discounted because: The visual impact would be too great and difficult to mitigate.



ALTERNATIVE 2 - Other meadow locations

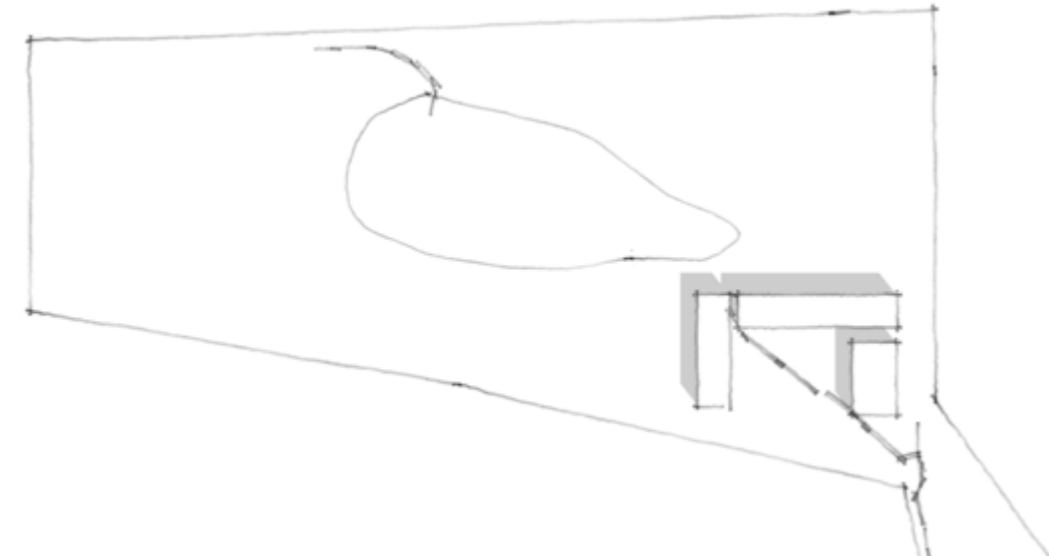
This location was discounted because: The visual impact would be more than a building adjacent to the barn.



ALTERNATIVE 3 - Within the ash plantation

Having discounted the meadow we looked at locations within the ash plantation.

This location was discounted because: It did not make the most of a southern aspect or the water on site.



ALTERNATIVE 4 - Within the ash plantation

This location was discounted because: It did not make the most of a southern aspect or the water on site. It also felt squashed in a corner.

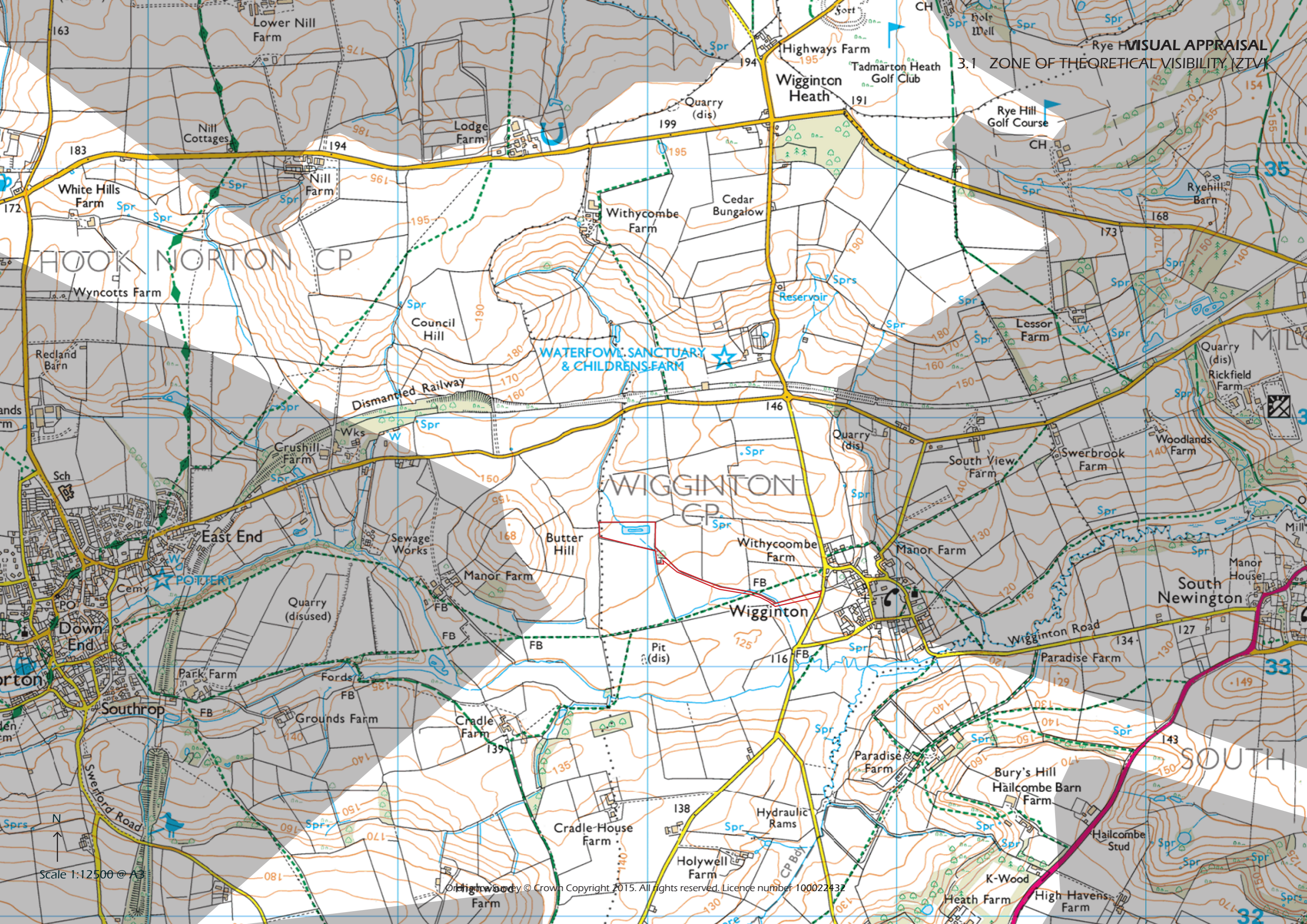


- A The old barn and landscape maintenance storage
- B Entrance drive
- C The entrance courtyard
- D The damp woodland
- E The filter wetland
- F The lake
- G Existing stream
- H Mixed native woodland
- I Native meadow with mown paths and destinations
- J Existing hedgerow laid to open up views out



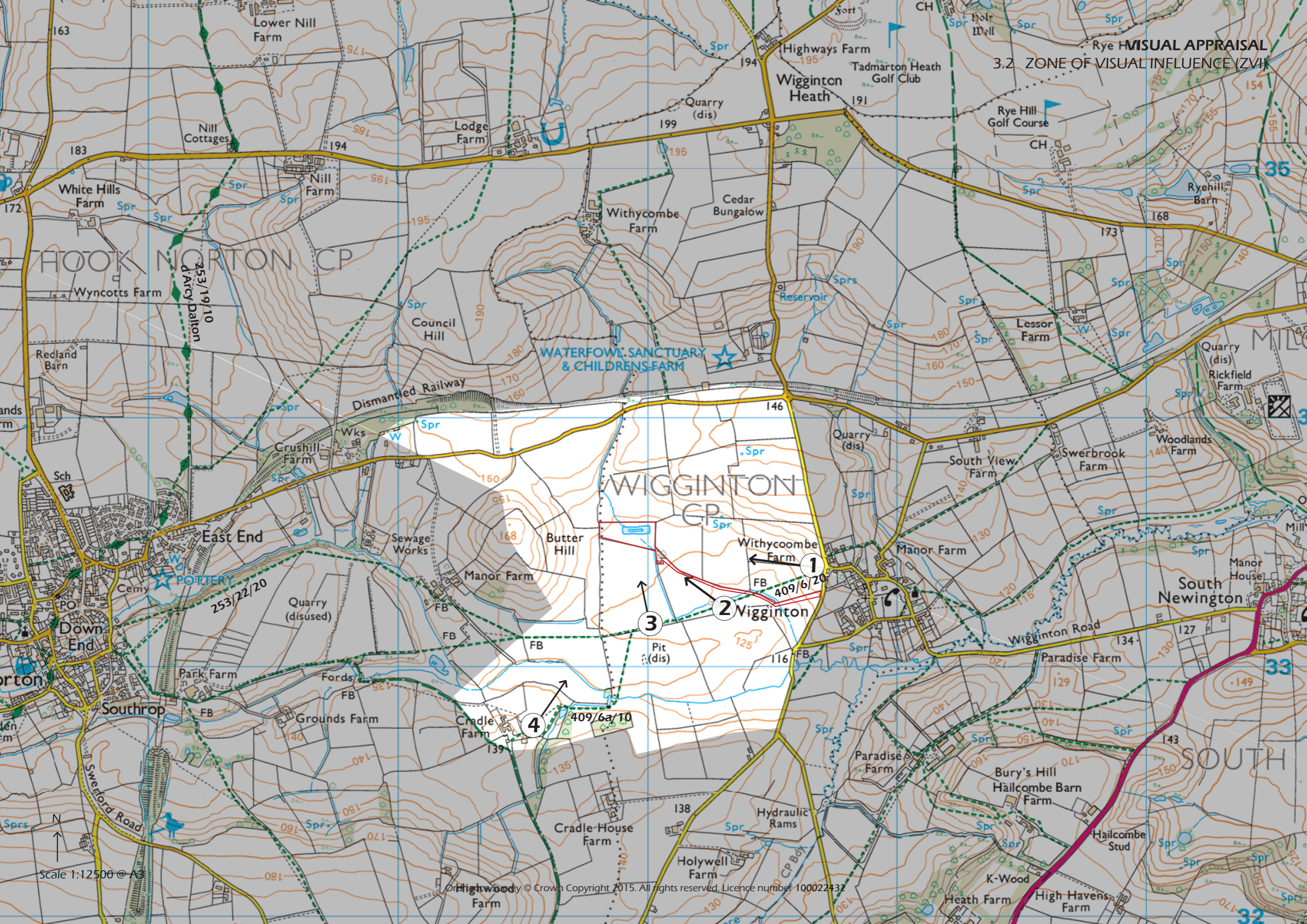
Scale 1:1000 @ A3

3.1 ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)



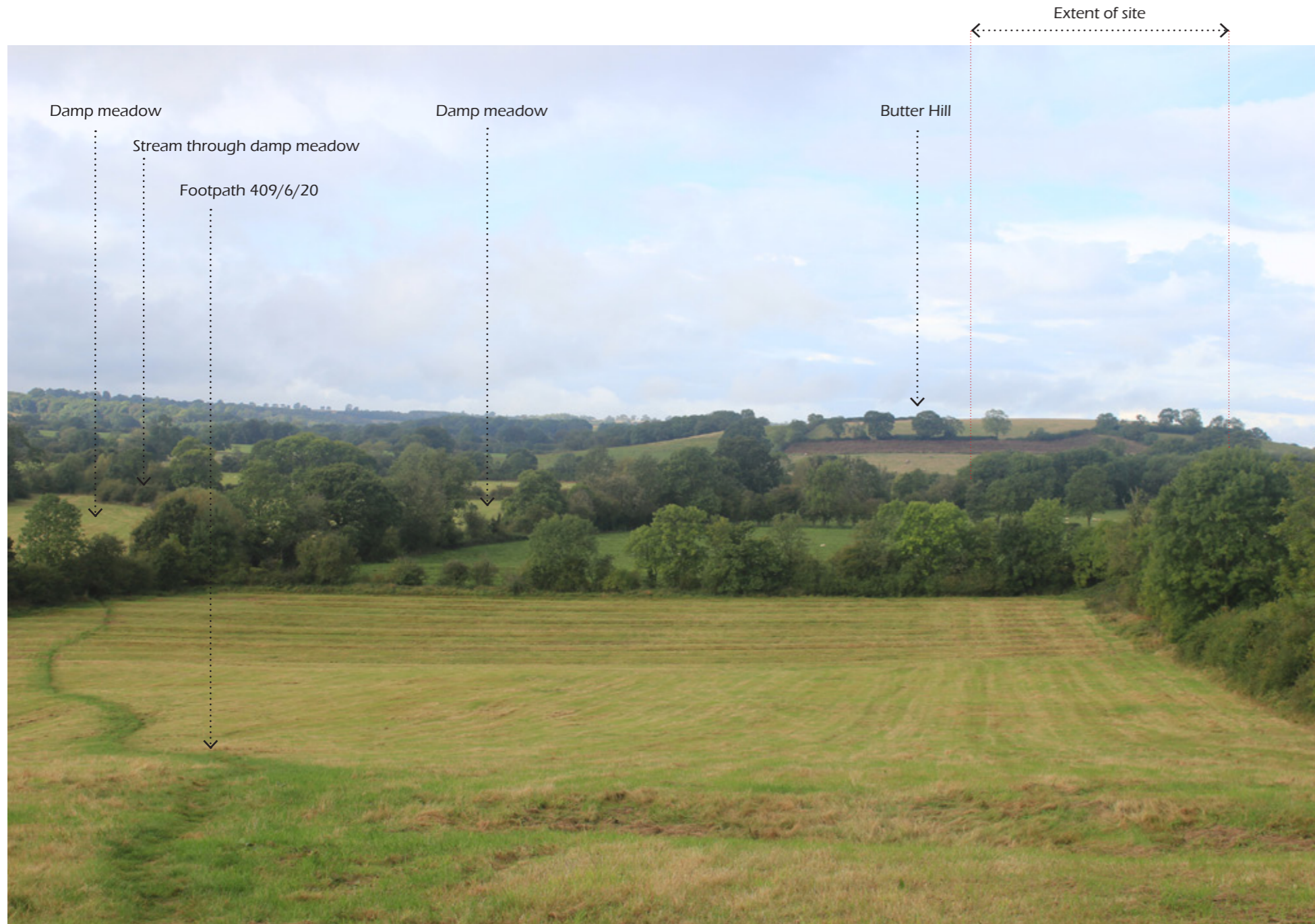
Scale 1:12500 @ A3

3.2 ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE (ZVI)



Scale 1:12500 @ A3

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VIEWPOINT 1

Date & location: 1st October 2019. View from footpath 409/6/20 with a 35mm lens.

Direction of view: West

Distance from centre of existing pond: 0.70 km

Elevation difference to Oxpens: +6 m

OS Grid reference: 438669 233372

DESCRIPTION:

This view is from the top of footpath 409/6/20 as it comes off the road. To the left of this view is the gentle valley created by the tributary streams that flow into the River Swere.

The foreground fields are typical to the area. They are improved grassland bounded by un-managed hedgerows.

The site is in the middle ground below Butter Hill. The only part of the site that is visible in this view are the trees along the eastern boundary.

Butter Hill forms the background to this view with the valley lowlands to the left.

PREDICTED CHANGE TO THE VIEW:

There will be no predicted change to this view.





VIEWPOINT 2

Date & location: 1st October 2019. View from footpath 409/6/20 with a 35mm lens.

Direction of view: North West

Distance from centre of existing pond: 0.4km

Elevation difference to Oxpens: -8 m

OS Grid reference: 438266 233242

DESCRIPTION:

This is a view from the footpath that crosses the damp meadow on the south side of the stream. The damp meadow is bounded by overgrown hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

The barn is nestled in the edge of the woodland, which forms the south east corner of the site.

PREDICTED CHANGE TO THE VIEW:

The damp meadow will be managed to increase ecological diversity.

The new access track will be visible along the hedgerow when the meadow is cut.

The barn will remain. The stone work repaired and the boundary wall rebuilt. The existing rusting sheet roofing will be replaced with dark grey corrugated steel sheeting, and the existing openings will be infilled with horizontal timber ship lap cladding.



ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL IMPACT

Sensitivity of receptor (table 3):

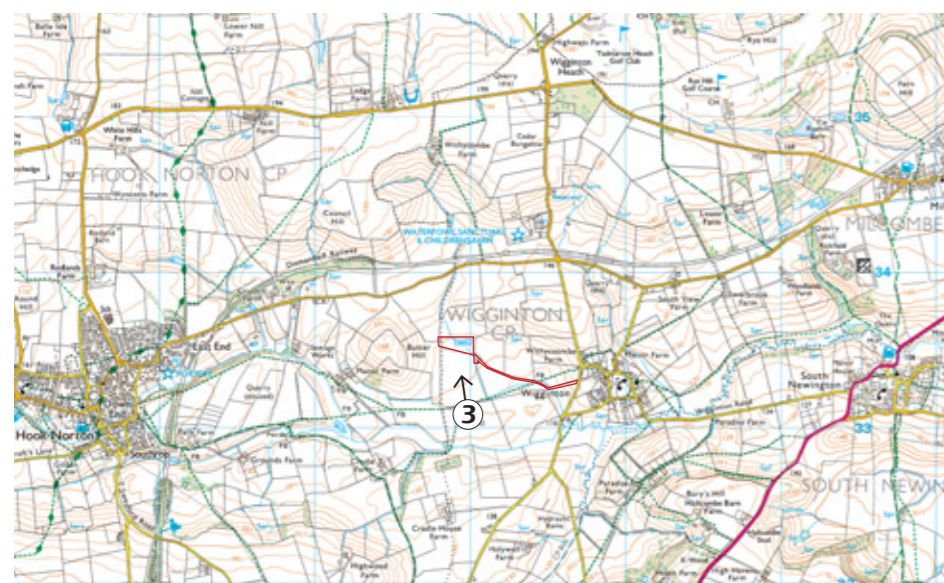
The sensitivity of the viewpoint is considered to be **Medium**.

Magnitude of effect (table 4):

The magnitude of change is considered to be **Low**.

Significance of impact (table 5):

The resulting effect is considered to be **Neutral**.



VIEWPOINT 3

Date & location: 1st October 2019. View from footpath 409/6/20 with a 35mm lens. NB this view is two frames stitched together to form a panoramic.

Direction of view: North

Distance from Old Clifford Reservoir: 0.4km

Elevation difference to Oxpens: -3.5 m

OS Grid reference: 437978 233165

DESCRIPTION:

This view is from the public footpath that crosses the field to the south of the site. The field is improved grassland.

The trees along the southern site boundary are a mixture of overgrown hedgerow and hedgerow trees which form the backdrop to this view.

PREDICTED CHANGE TO THE VIEW:

All of the boundary hedgerow trees will be retained. The central section of the overgrown boundary hedgerow will be laid. This will open up glimpsed views into the site. Parts of the meadow and snap shots of the house will become visible.

ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL IMPACT

Sensitivity of receptor (table 3):

The sensitivity of the viewpoint is considered to be **Medium**.

Magnitude of effect (table 4):

The magnitude of change is considered to be **Low**.

Significance of impact (table 5):

The resulting effect is considered to be **Minor Adverse**.



VIEWPOINT 4

Date & location: 1st October 2019. View from footpath 253/23a with a 50mm lens.

Direction of view: North East

Distance from Old Clifford Reservoir: 1km

Elevation difference to Oxpens: +8m

OS Grid reference: 437517 232741

DESCRIPTION:

This view is from public footpath 409/6a/10 at the gate to Cradle Farm. The view looks north towards the site from the south side of the valley.

The foreground is an improved grassland field bounded by overgrown hedgerows.

The site sits in the middle ground. It is hard to pick out from the surrounding woodland copses and overgrown hedgerows.

The background is formed by the north side of the valley.

PREDICTED CHANGE TO THE VIEW:

There will be no predicted change to this view.



This site presents an opportunity for a landscape-led scheme. Three core landscape elements have inspired the landscape and building design; the water on the site, the ash dieback on site and the views out from the site.

The damp meadow enhancements provided a great opportunity to enhance and protect a MG4 lowland meadow habitat and enrich its surroundings.

Visual effects range from 'minor adverse' to 'neutral'

Viewpoint 3 is the only view that has an adverse impact. It is a short section of the public footpath and the change is small. However this small change is important in enhancing the design and tying it into its context.

In the context of the local area, including the implementation of suitable mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures, it is considered that the proposed development of the site is appropriate in visual terms.