



OXO_010
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (LVIA)

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

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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:

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Hughes Planning

Design & Access Statement

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- 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

1 INTRODUCTION

2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 SUMMARY OF THE LVIA PROCESS
- 2.2 BASELINE SURVEY

2.3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, MITIGATION & ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

2.4 METHODOLOGY

3 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

- 3.1 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
- 3.2 LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
- 3.3 GEOLOGY, SOIL & WATER COURSES
- 3.4 EXISTING SITE & PLANNING PERMISSION

4 VISUAL BASELINE

- 4.1 DESCRIPTION OF VISUAL BASELINE
- 4.2 ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISUAL INFLUENCE (ZTV)
- 4.3 ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE (ZVI)
- 4.4 VIEWPOINT 1
- 4.5 VIEWPOINT 2
- 4.6 VIEWPOINT 3
- 4.7 VIEWPOINT 4

5 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 CONSIDERED ALTERNATIVES
- 5.2 THE WHOLE SITE
- 5.3 THE HOUSE LOCATION

6 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 6.1 EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS
- 6.2 EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

7 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

- 7.1 EFFECTS ON VISUAL RECEPTORS
- 7.2 EFFECTS ON VIEWPOINT 1
- 7.3 EFFECTS ON VIEWPOINT 2
- 7.4 EFFECTS ON VIEWPOINT 3 - PHOTOMONTAGE
- 7.5 EFFECTS ON VIEWPOINT 4

8 REMAINING LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

- 8.1 DURING CONSTRUCTION, WINTER & ASH DIE BACK

9 SECONDARY MITIGATION MEASURES

- 9.1 HOUSE POSITION, FORM, MATERIALITY & SECONDARY LANDSCAPE MITIGATION

10 CONCLUSION



Site Location and surrounding context

INTRODUCTION

SEED Landscape Design Ltd. was appointed by the Virginia Sweetingham to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) 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 likely potential **landscape** and **visual** implications of proposed development on the existing site and its surrounding context. Throughout the assessment and mitigation processes we have collaborated closely with the architects for the scheme (Helen Seymour-Smith Architects) with a view to enabling 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 landscape character and visual amenity, as follows:

- The **landscape** baseline identifies existing characteristics, features and elements which constitute this particular landscape and its character.

- 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 both the potential landscape and 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 to 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.

The approach taken in this Assessment is considered to be appropriate and proportional in the context of a stand-alone report relating to the potential landscape and visual effects of the development in question.

SITE LOCATION

Oxpens is located to the West of Wigginton parish in Oxfordshire, and North of the River Swere. The site is currently characterised as being of modern and pre-modern agricultural form under the National Historic Landscape Characterisation.

This LVIA has been undertaken by SEED, a Chartered Landscape Architects practice with over 20 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

- 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland' (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), 2002).

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

1. Baseline description of the identified receptors, both landscape and visual.

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

3. Assessment of the likely potential effects of the proposed development on landscape and 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 can be 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.

LANDSCAPE AND PLANNING BASELINE - DATA SOURCES:

In order to inform the baseline, existing background information on the study area has been sourced from:

1. Ordnance Survey – 1:25,000 scale maps;
2. Geology of Britain viewer, British Geological Society)
3. Soil Characteristics (www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/)
4. Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)
5. The National Landscape Character Area 107. Cotswolds
6. Cherwell District Council - Local Plans
7. Magic Website (www.magic.gov.uk)
8. Environmental Agency
9. Design team drawings:

IDENTIFICATION OF RECEPTORS

Desk top studies are undertaken to review international, national or local landscape and planning **designations**.

Existing **landscape character assessments** at a national and local administration level are also identified. Following verification on site, appropriate landscape character areas are described and, as necessary, supplemented with a description of site-level landscape elements where these combine to form a unique landscape character.

In addition to designated landscapes, each landscape character area is considered as a **landscape receptor** which may theoretically be affected by the proposed scheme. Where no effects can reasonably be anticipated, these receptors are scoped out from further assessment.

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, which include 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**. These viewpoints are agreed with the Local Planning Authority at the outset.

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.

2.3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES**THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:-**

A description of the proposed development is provided for elements of the scheme which may have the potential to have an effect on the landscape or visual receptors. Short-term construction activities that may affect the landscape and visual context are also described. Descriptions are taken from material submitted by the applicant to the Local Planning Authority, as follows:

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MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

Mitigation measures are those measures proposed to prevent/avoid, reduce and where possible offset, remedy or compensate for any significant adverse landscape and visual effects. They are essentially proposed to reduce any adverse impacts of development and to ensure it integrates well with its surroundings.

Enhancement measures are subtly different as they seek to improve the landscape resource and the visual amenity of the proposed development site and its wider setting, over and above its baseline condition.

In the case of this proposed development, developing design proposals take guidance from planning policy and published landscape character assessments, as well as from a detailed knowledge of the site, its physical and visual context, and its landscape opportunities and constraints.

Any design measures intended to have either eliminated, reduced or mitigated against potential adverse landscape and visual effects are described in this section.

For detailed information on these mitigation measures, please refer to the Landscape Developed Design document entitled UNA_006 (Developed Design Document) - Stage 3.

2.4 A) ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS - LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

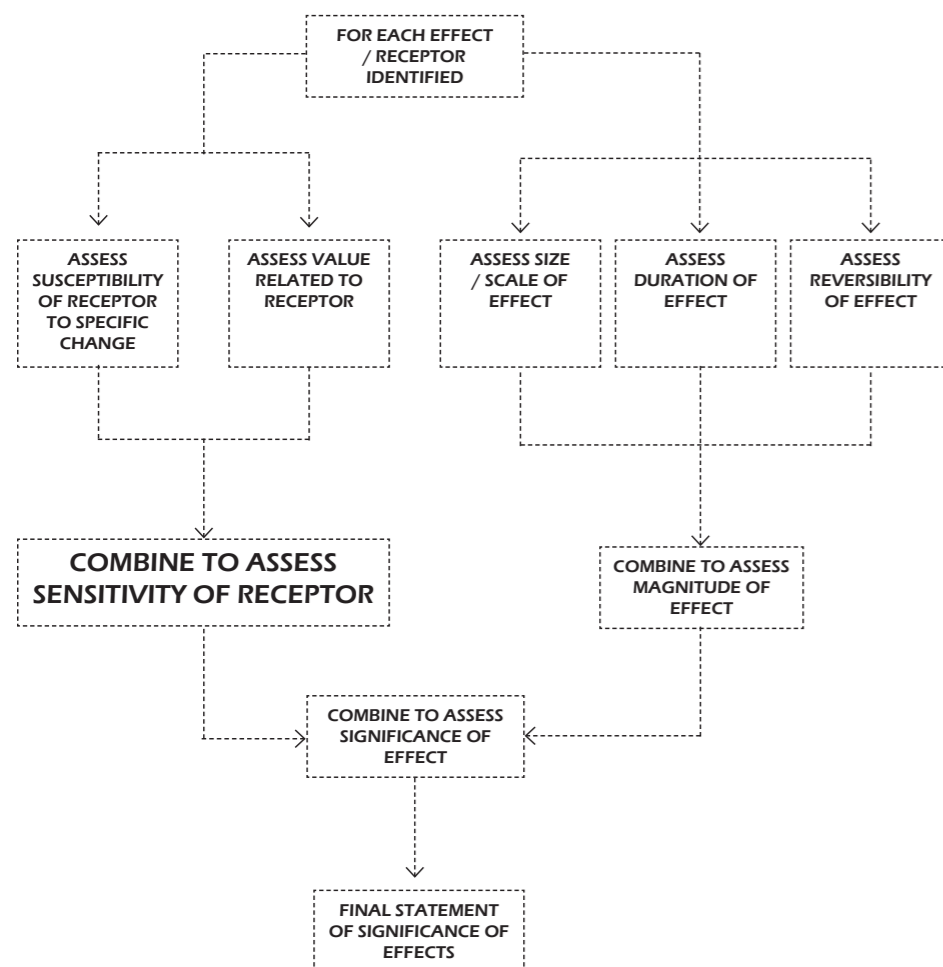


Figure 2: Principles and overview of processes (from ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’, Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013)).

ASSESS SENSITIVITY OF RECEPTORS (LANDSCAPE)

Landscape sensitivity is concerned with the relative value and quality that is attached to different landscapes. Sensitivity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape feature or character area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its components or overall character.

In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is via application of local or national landscape designations. A landscape can nonetheless be valued by different communities for many different reasons without any formal designation.

The assessment of landscape quality (condition) is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape and about its intactness from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements that make up the character in any one place.

It usually follows that higher quality landscapes have higher sensitivity to change, but this must also be assessed in conjunction with landscape value to give an overall assessment of sensitivity.

This study assigns a degree of sensitivity to landscape features and to each landscape character area identified.

Table 1: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY:

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RATING FOR TABLE 5
High (National)	Landscape of exceptional scenic quality, harmonious and unified with pleasing landscape patterns and combinations of landscape features. Landscape containing many attractive features and no visually intrusive or incongruous features. Vegetation in good condition and where appropriate, well maintained. Typically considered very attractive by most people. Designated landscapes e.g, World Heritage Sites, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	High
Medium (Regional)	An attractive landscape but with some minor blemishes, such as unattractive buildings. Vegetation generally in good condition and well maintained. Designated landscapes of regional, county or district importance.	Medium
High (Local)	A reasonably attractive landscape with a mix of attractive features but only a few intrusive elements. Vegetation condition varies in quality. Typical of many landscapes throughout Britain.	Medium
Medium (local)	A pleasant but ordinary landscape with numerous blemishes, such as industrial areas and pylons. Vegetation structure and management poor. Typically an urban fringe landscape.	Low
Low (local)	A degraded or disturbed landscape with a severely damaged landscape structure, for example many hedges removed. Many unattractive and intrusive features. Typical of urban fringe landscapes in need of restoration	Low

2.4 B) ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS - LANDSCAPE MAGNITUDE

ASSESS MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT (LANDSCAPE)

The magnitude of change to the existing landscape character and features is assessed in accordance with the criteria set out in Table 2 below.

These criteria can be applied to both positive and negative impacts.

Table 2: MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER.

EFFECT	RATING FOR TABLE 5
The Proposed Development will either cause a large improvement or complete loss of or major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics, or introduction of elements considered entirely characteristic or totally uncharacteristic.	High
The Proposed Development will cause a noticeable improvement or deterioration of/minor loss to one or more key elements/features/characteristics, or the introduction of elements that are uncharacteristic or characteristic.	Medium
The Proposed Development will cause a barely perceptible improvement or deterioration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics, or introduction of elements that are characteristic or uncharacteristic.	Low

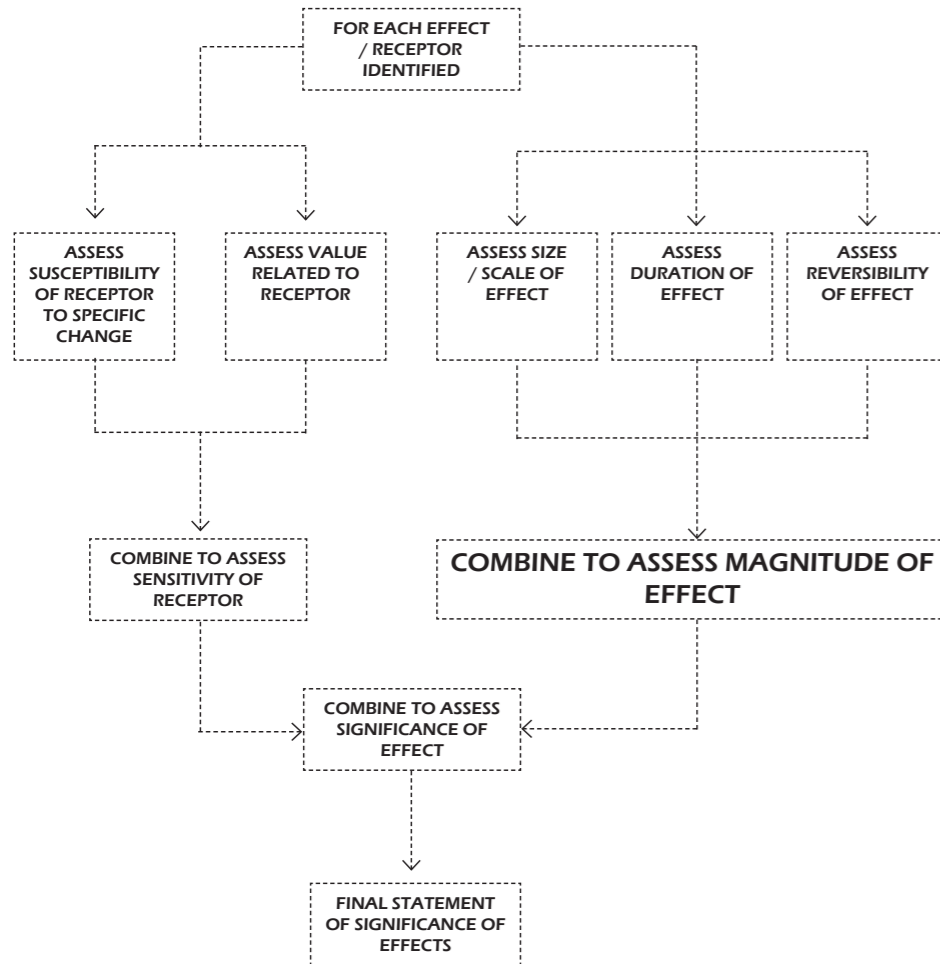


Figure 3: Principles and overview of processes (from 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013)).

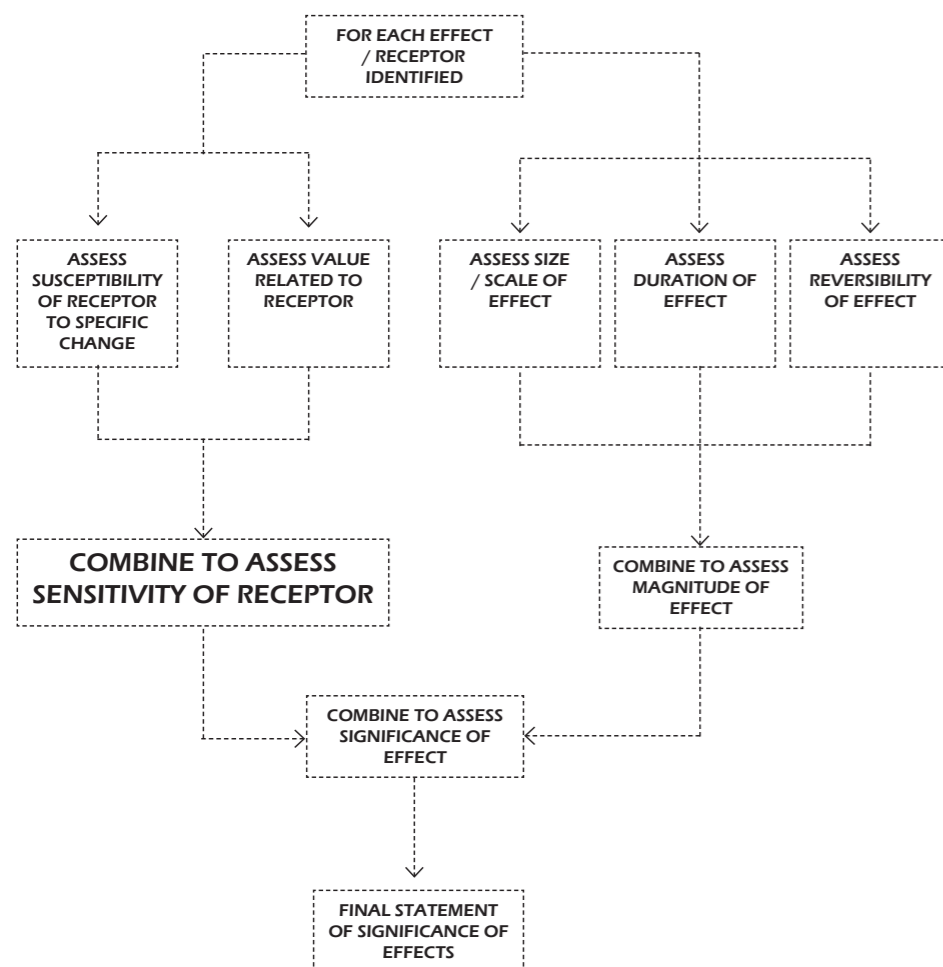


Figure 4: Principles and overview of processes (from 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013).

ASSESS SENSITIVITY OF RECEPTORS (VISUAL)

The sensitivity of a visual receptor 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 townscapes 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

2.4 D) ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS - VISUAL MAGNITUDE

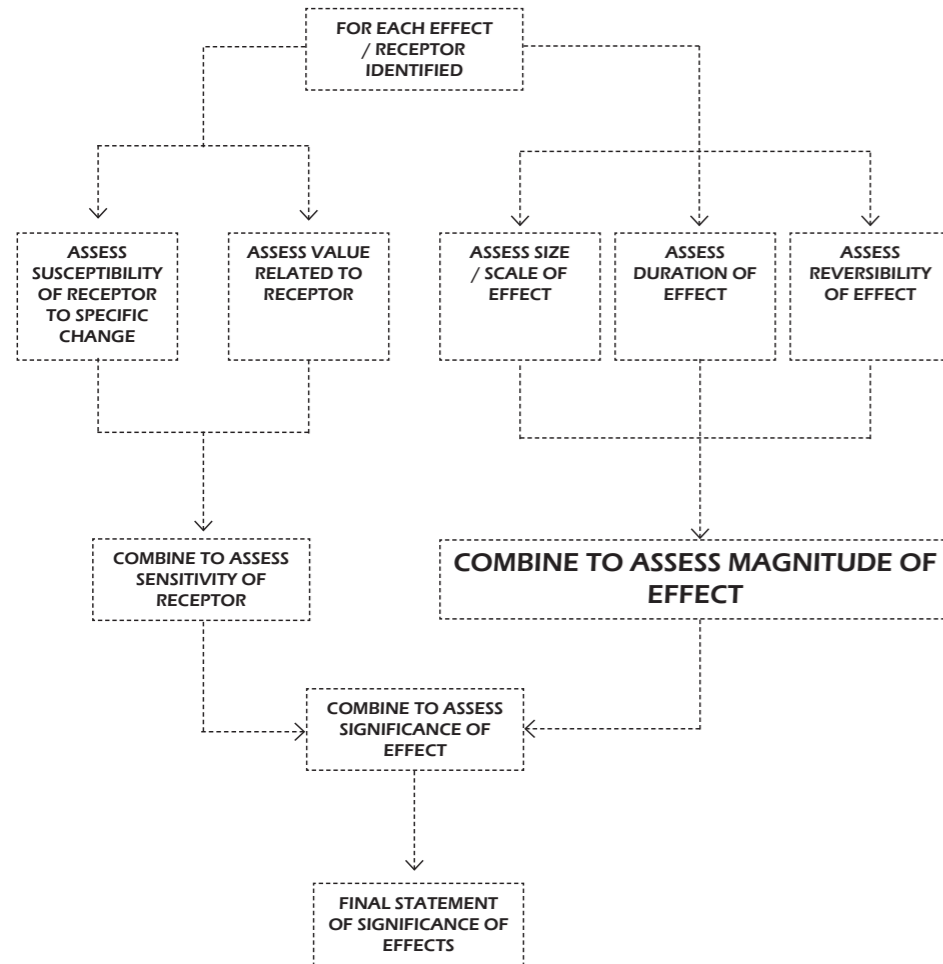


Figure 5: Principles and overview of processes (from 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013)).

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

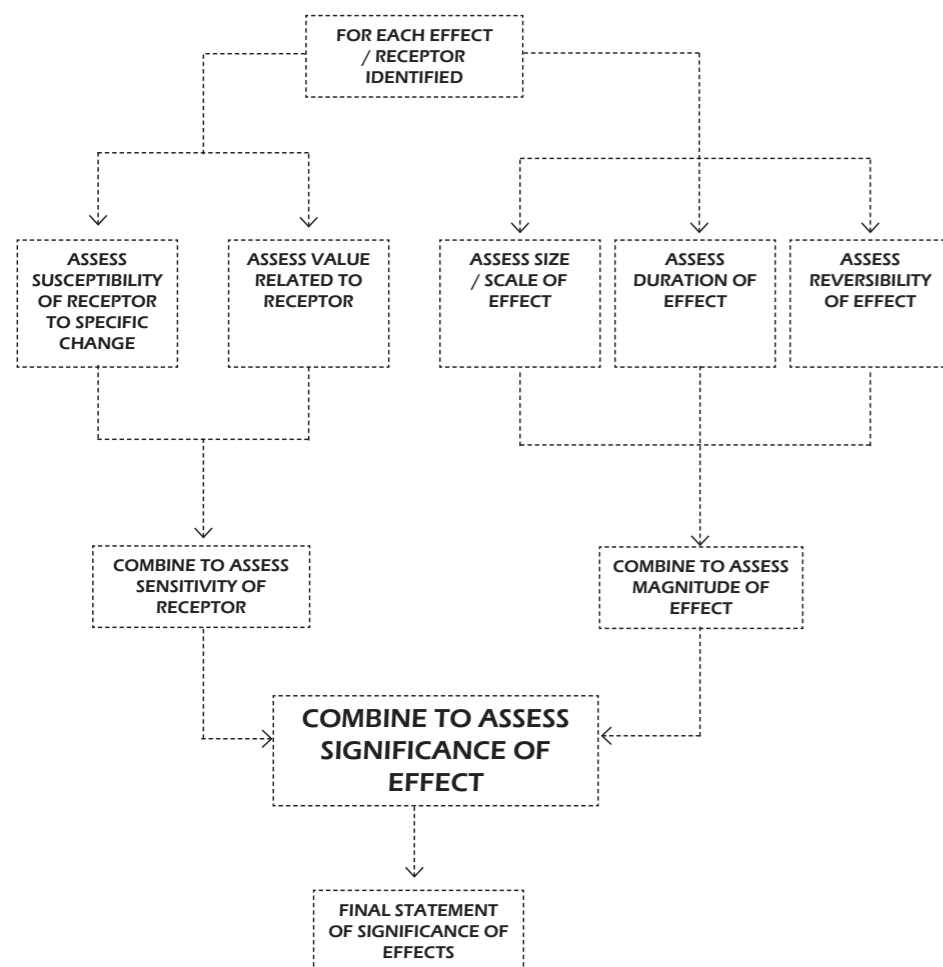


Figure 6: Principles and overview of processes (from 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013)).

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 (LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL)

SENSITIVITY OF THE RECEPTOR			MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT
HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	
MAJOR	MODERATE / MAJOR	MODERATE	HIGH
MODERATE / MAJOR	MODERATE	MINOR / NEUTRAL / NO SIG	MEDIUM
MODERATE	MINOR / NEUTRAL / NO SIG.	MINOR / NEUTRAL / NO SIG	LOW

Table 6: SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA (LANDSCAPE AND 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.

THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 107. COTSWOLDS (by Natural England)

The site is situated within National Landscape Character Area 107 Cotswolds. Below are the key extracts from this character area assessment. **Key relevant characters highlighted.**

STATEMENTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES:

SEO 1: Protect and enhance the highly distinctive farmed landscape, retaining the balance between productive arable, pastoral and wooded elements and the open, expansive views particularly from the scarp, high wold and dip slope.

SEO 2: Safeguard and conserve the historic environment, cultural heritage and geodiversity that illustrate the history, evolution, foundations, land use and settlement of the Cotswolds landscape, and enable access to and interpretation of the relationship between natural processes and human influences.

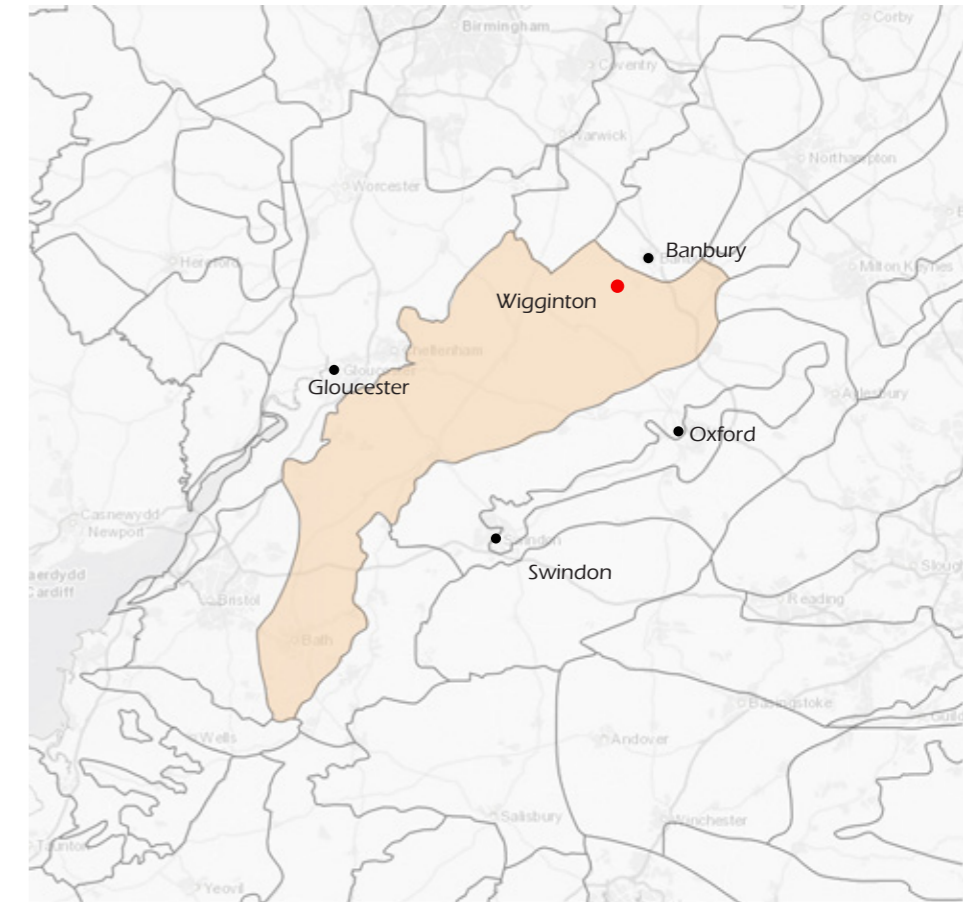
SEO 3: **Protect, maintain and expand the distinctive character of the Cotswolds and the network of semi-natural and arable habitats, including limestone grassland, beech woods and wetlands along streams and rivers, to enhance water quality, strengthen ecological and landscape connectivity, support rare species and allow for adaptation to changes in climate.**

SEO 4: **Safeguard and manage soil and water resources, allowing naturally functioning hydrological processes to maintain water quality and supply; reduce flooding; and manage land to reduce soil erosion and water pollution and to retain and capture carbon.**

KEY CHARACTERISTICS:

Defined by its underlying geology: a dramatic limestone scarp rising above adjacent lowlands with steep combes, and outliers illustrating the slow erosion of escarpments. The limestone geology has formed the scarp and dip slope of the landscape, which in turn has influenced drainage, soils, vegetation, land use and settlement.

- Open and expansive scarp and high wold dipping gently to the southeast, dissected by river valleys.
- Arable farming dominates the high wold and dip slope while permanent pasture prevails on the steep slopes of the scarp and river valleys with pockets of internationally important limestone grassland.
- Drystone walls define the pattern of fields of the high wold and dip slope. On the deeper soils and river valleys, hedgerows form the main field boundaries.
- Ancient beech hangers line stretches of the upper slopes of the scarp, while oak/ash woodlands are characteristic of the river valleys. Regular blocks of coniferous and mixed plantations are scattered across the open high wold and dip slope.
- Large areas of common land, important for unimproved calcareous grassland, are characteristic of the scarp and high wold around the Stroud valleys and along the crest of the scarp to Cleeve Hill.
- **The majority of the principal rivers flow south-eastwards forming the headwaters of the Thames with the exception of rivers in the west which flow into the River Avon and then the Severn Estuary.**
- Rich history from Neolithic barrows, iron-age hill forts and Roman roads and villas to deserted medieval villages, grand country houses, cloth mills and Second World War airfields. The field patterns largely reflect both the medieval open field system, with fossilised areas of ridge and furrow, and later planned enclosures.
- Locally quarried limestone brings a harmony to the built environment of scattered villages and drystone walls, giving the area a strong sense of unity for which the Cotswolds are renowned. Bath stone is also famous and has been used for building since Roman times, both locally in the principal buildings and streets of Bath and more widely, for example for Buckingham Palace in London. Parkland, gardens and historic designed landscapes are features particularly of the dip slope and broad lowland, such as Lawrence Johnston's garden at Hidcote, and Heather Muir's garden at Kiftsgate, parkland at Stanway, Chastleton and Blenheim Palace.
- Prominent natural and built features in the landscape include the City of Bath WHS, Brailes Hill, Broadway Tower, Cleeve Hill, the Tyndale monument, Freezing Hill, Kelston Round Hill and Blenheim Palace WHS.



NCA Profile: 107. Cotswolds (NE420)

**LANDSCAPE TYPES:
 EXTRACTS FROM OXFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPE
 STUDY (OWLS)**



River
 Meadowlands

Key characteristics

- Flat, low-lying topography with seasonally flooded alluvial floodplains.
- Meandering river channels.
- Grazing meadows and small fields of permanent pasture.
- Riparian character with a strong pattern of riverside willows and tree-lined ditches.
- Sparsely settled with a few roads.

Geology and landform

- A thin strip of alluvium underlies the river corridors, giving rise to heavy soils with naturally impeded drainage.
- Many areas are still liable to flooding and are predominantly under permanent pasture.

Land use and vegetation

- Small fields of permanent pasture, consisting mainly of wet and semi-improved grassland and some neutral and marshy grassland.
- Tree cover is a notable element in this landscape type, with tree-lined corridors dominated by willows, often pollarded, being characteristic throughout the landscape.
- White willow is more common along the upper Cherwell, the river Swere and Evenlode, with crack willow common elsewhere.
- Other tree and shrub species include alder, poplar, ash and hawthorn.
- Small deciduous plantations, frequently dominated by poplar, and small blocks of wet and semi-natural woodland also add to the tree cover along the river valleys.

Cultural pattern

The small pasture fields are enclosed by hawthorn hedges and associated ditches. In places it is the ditches, often bordered by pollarded willows, that form the main field boundaries. Hedges often include scattered ash, willow and oak trees.

- This landscape type has historically been subject to annual flooding and this is reflected in the relative lack of settlements and buildings.
- The main buildings are water mills, scattered barns and farmhouses.
- The main building materials are stone and stone tiles.



Rolling Village Pastures

Key Characteristics

- A strongly undulating landform of rounded hills and small valleys.
- Small to medium-sized fields with mixed land uses, but predominantly pasture.
- Densely scattered hedgerow trees.
- Well-defined nucleated villages with little dispersal into the wider countryside.



Wooded Pasture Valleys and Slopes

Key characteristics

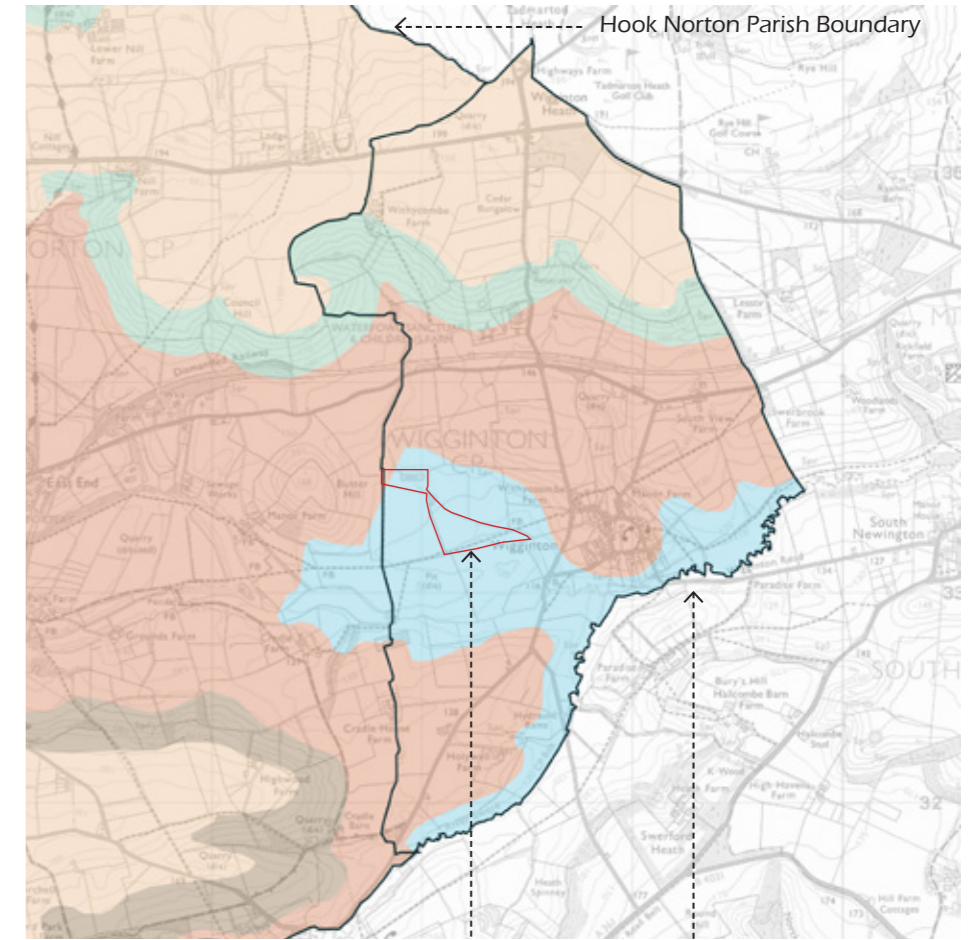
- Steep sided valleys and slopes.
- Large, interlocking blocks of ancient and plantation woodland.
- Small pasture fields with localised unimproved grassland.
- Tall, thick hedges and densely scattered hedgerow trees.
- Small intact villages and hamlets.



Farmland Plateau

Key Characteristics

- Level or gently rolling open ridges dissected by narrow valleys and broader vales.
- Large, regular arable fields enclosed by low thorn hedges and limestone walls.
- Rectilinear plantations and shelterbelts.
- Sparsely settled landscape with a few nucleated settlements.
- Long, straight roads running along the ridge summits.



Site boundary

Wigginton parish boundary



River
 Meadowlands



Rolling Village
 Pastures



Wooded Pasture
 Valleys and Slopes



Farmland Plateau

SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

(source: <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>)
 Key points highlighted:

Soilscape 18:
 Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils
 Texture: Loamy and clayey
 Drainage: Impeded drainage
 Fertility: Moderate

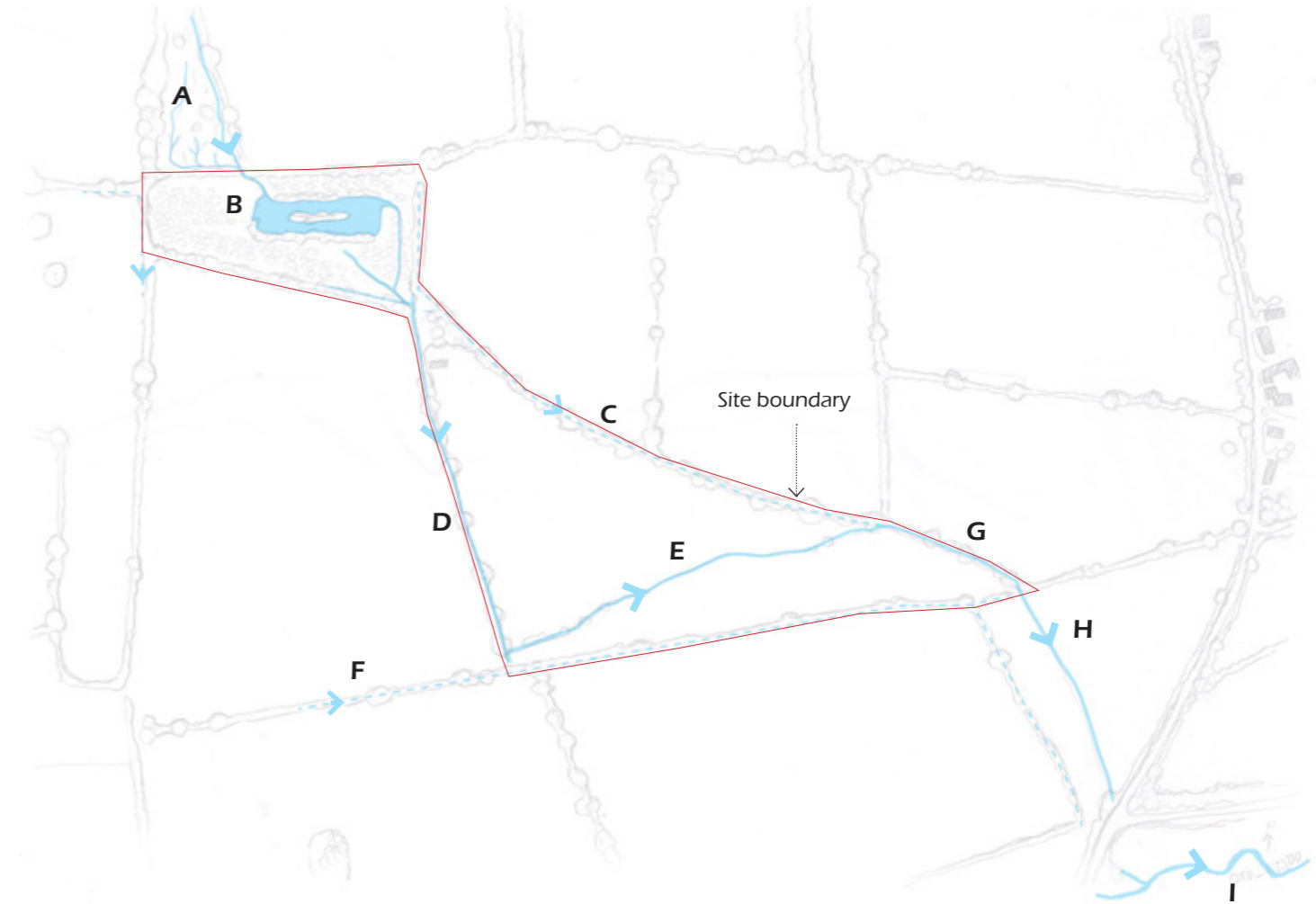
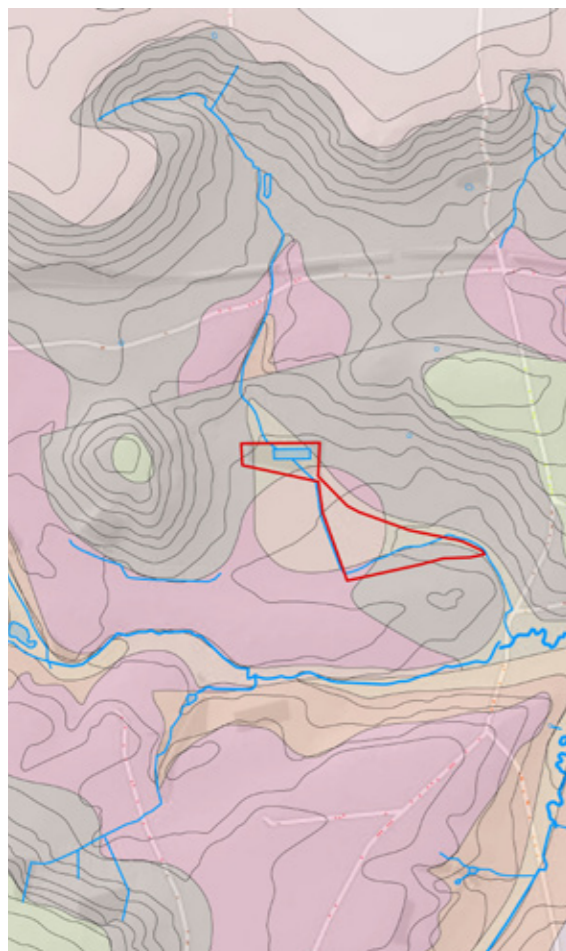
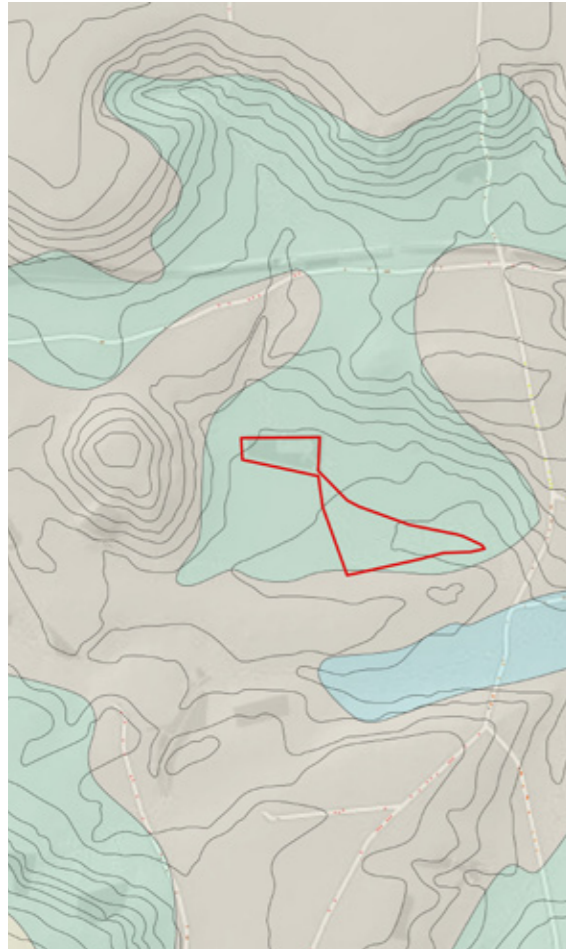
Habitats: Seasonally wet pastures and woodlands
 Landcover: Grassland and arable some woodland
 Carbon: Low
 Drains to: Stream network
 Water protection:
 Main risks are associated with overland flow from compacted or poached fields. Organic slurry, dirty water, fertiliser, pathogens and fine sediment can all move in suspension or solution with overland flow or drain water
 General cropping:
 Mostly suited to grass production for dairying or beef; some cereal production often for feed. Timeliness of stocking and fieldwork is important, and wet ground conditions should be avoided at the beginning and end of the growing season to avoid damage to soil structure. Land is tile drained and periodic moling or subsoiling will assist drainage.

GEOLOGY LEGEND

(source: Geology of Britain viewer, British Geological Society)

BEDROCK KEY

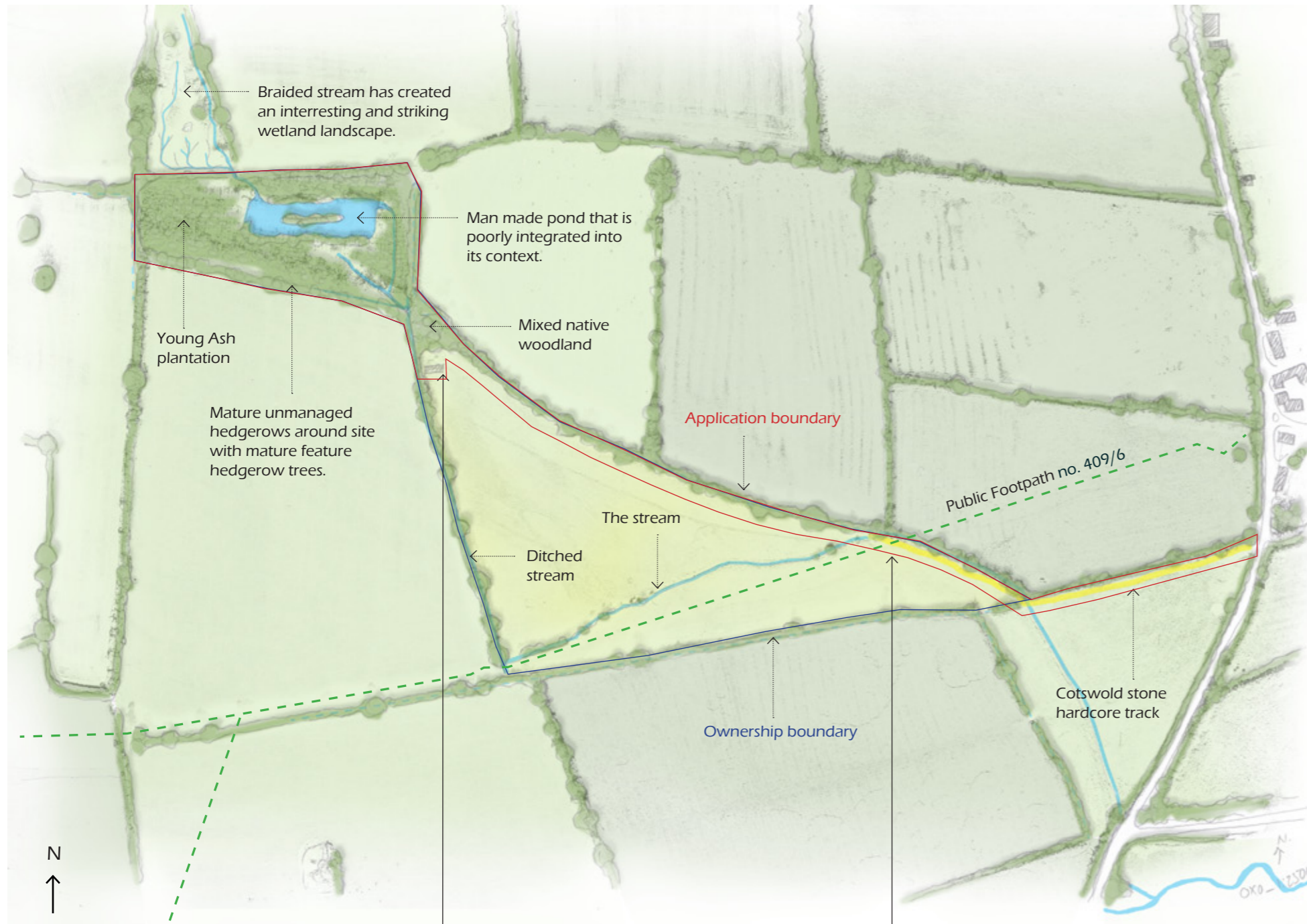
	Whitby Mudstone Formation. Mudstone
	Marlstone Rock Formation. Ferruginous Limestone and Ironstone
	Chipping Norton Limestone Formation Limestone, Ooidal
	Dyrham Formation. Siltstone And Mudstone, Interbedded
	Charmouth Mudstone Formation. Mudstone.
	Northampton Sand Formation. Sandstone, Limestone And Ironstone.
	Horsehay Sand Formation. Sandstone



Existing water courses in and around the site. (Source: mapped by SEED and Clive Onions (Hydrologist))

WATER COURSES

- A** The water enters the site from the north via a braided stream / wetland. This uncontrolled water course is a result of an defunct pond that was constructed around 2009.
- B** Approx 15 years ago a rectangular pond was created and willow planted on the island and around the edge. It does not feel natural or sit comfortably within the landscape.
- C** Old (dry) ditch to field boundary.
- D** This is now the main water course and appears to have been created between 1833 and 1842.
- E** Between 1833 and 1842 the stream was diverted to flow through the field. It does not feel natural, but it now supports a rich variety of wetland meadow plants and is part of the landscape.
- F** Field ditch that appears to be dry most of the time. Although intercepts water from ridge and furrow field to the south.
- G** The diverted streams appears to meets its pre 1833 course. This is marked on site by a large pollarded Willow.
- H** From the historical maps this looks like the pre 1833 course of the stream. Although appears to have been canalised.
- I** The pre 1833 course of the stream and the start of the Wigginton Meanders .



Immediate Surroundings

The site sits within a rural context. The surrounding fields have remnants of ridge and furrow and are predominately improved grassland. The field boundaries are unmanaged hedgerows with a number of large mature hedgerow trees, predominately oak and ash.

Character of Site

The site comprises two distinct landscapes; an ash plantation and pond in the north and an open field with stream in the south.

The Northern Section of the Site

The man made pond is fed by an overgrown, unmanaged stream to the north of the site. The pond is rectangular in shape, has an unnatural character and is in poor condition due to lack of management. The water flows out of the pond on the south side and is directed along the field boundaries via man made ditches.

There is a 4m fall across the site from the north west to the south east corner. A young ash plantation dominates the northern half of the site. The trees are planted in lines and have ash dieback.

The boundaries of the northern section of the site comprise of overgrown and gappy hedgerows with a number of large mature trees, predominantly oak and ash.

The threshold between the northern and southern sections of the site is a small area of mixed native woodland, with a number of mature oak trees.

The Southern Section of the Site

The southern section of the site is an open agricultural field. The grassland is diverse and has the potential to become a nationally important damp meadow habitat. A public footpath crosses the field to the south of the stream.

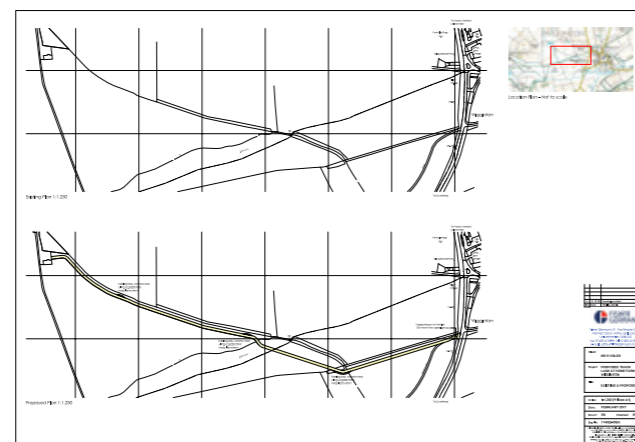
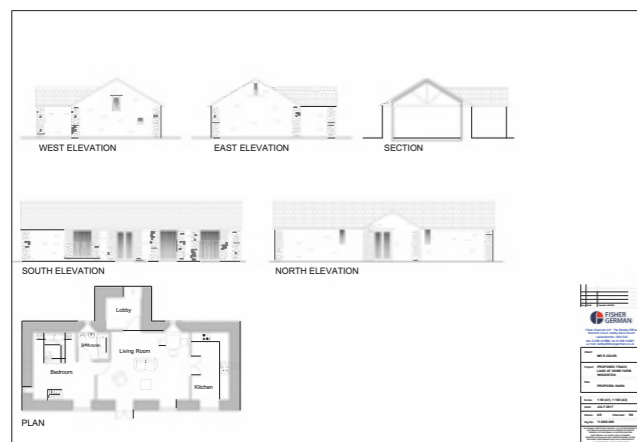
The stream emerges from the ditch in the south western corner of the field and flows east across the field. The stream bed is low within the field (between 0.5 and 1m) which does not make the stream immediately visible within the landscape. The western end has a number of self seeded hawthorns along it. A new Cotswold stone hardcore track bridges the eastern end of the stream via a plastic culvert.

All of the boundary hedgerows are mixed, native and un-managed.

The western boundary hedgerow contains a number of mature willows, a few oaks and a few ash. The ash has ash dieback.

The hedgerow trees along the southern boundary are all ash and have ash die back. The southern hedgerow is the least dense of all of the hedgerows on site.

The north eastern hedgerow has a mixture of willow, ash and oak. All of the ash have ash dieback.



The Barn Planning Permission

In January 2018 planning permission was granted for the change of use of the barn to a dwelling and the associated access track.

Application No.: 18/00063/Q56

4.1 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

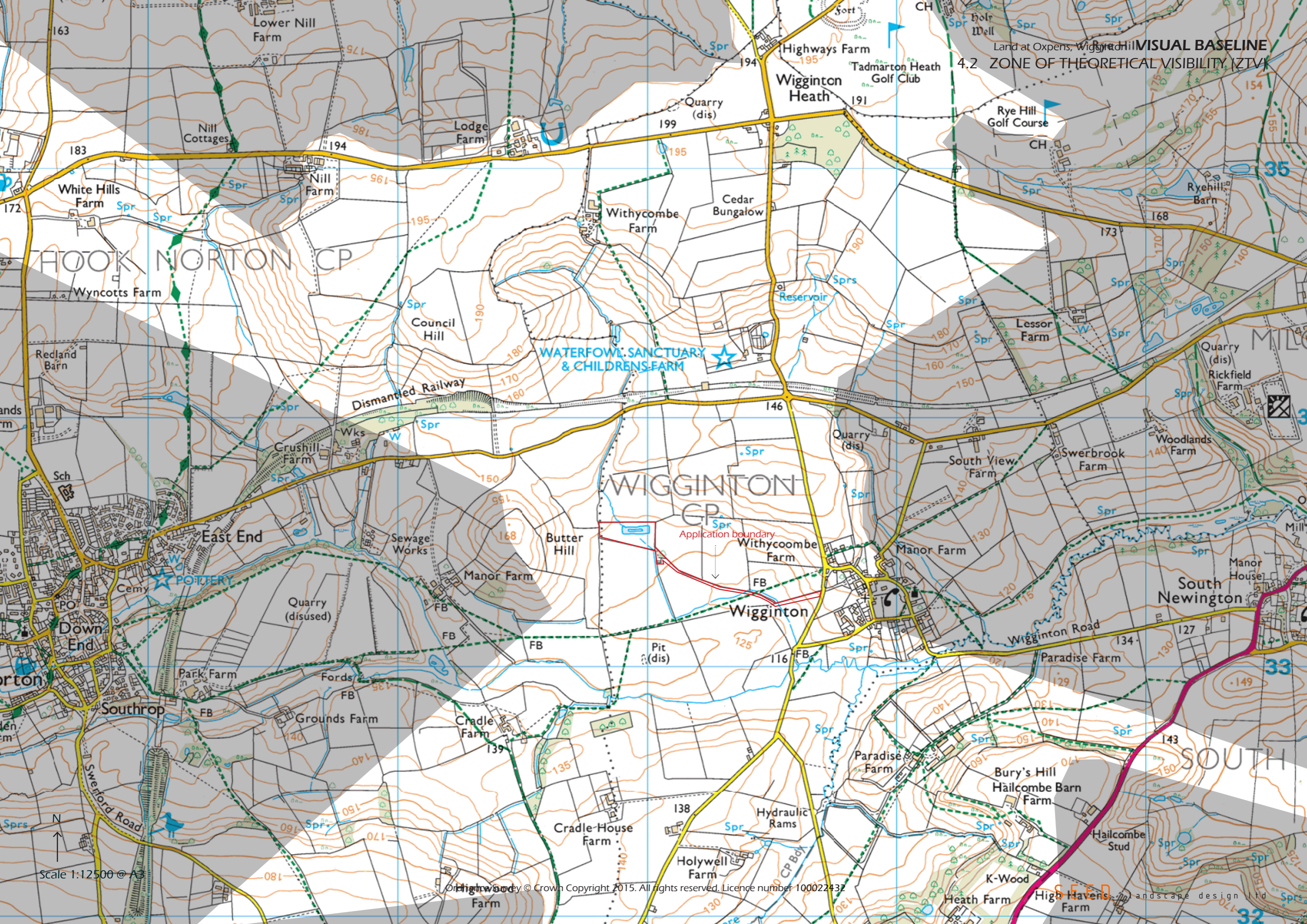
Visibility of the site is largely from the south along with a isolated view from the east. Views from the north and west are limited by the existing topography along with the intervening tree cover (along the dismantled railway), or the boundary planting on site itself. There are no views beyond 1.5km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

Key receptor groups

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

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

4.2 VISUAL BASELINE
ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)

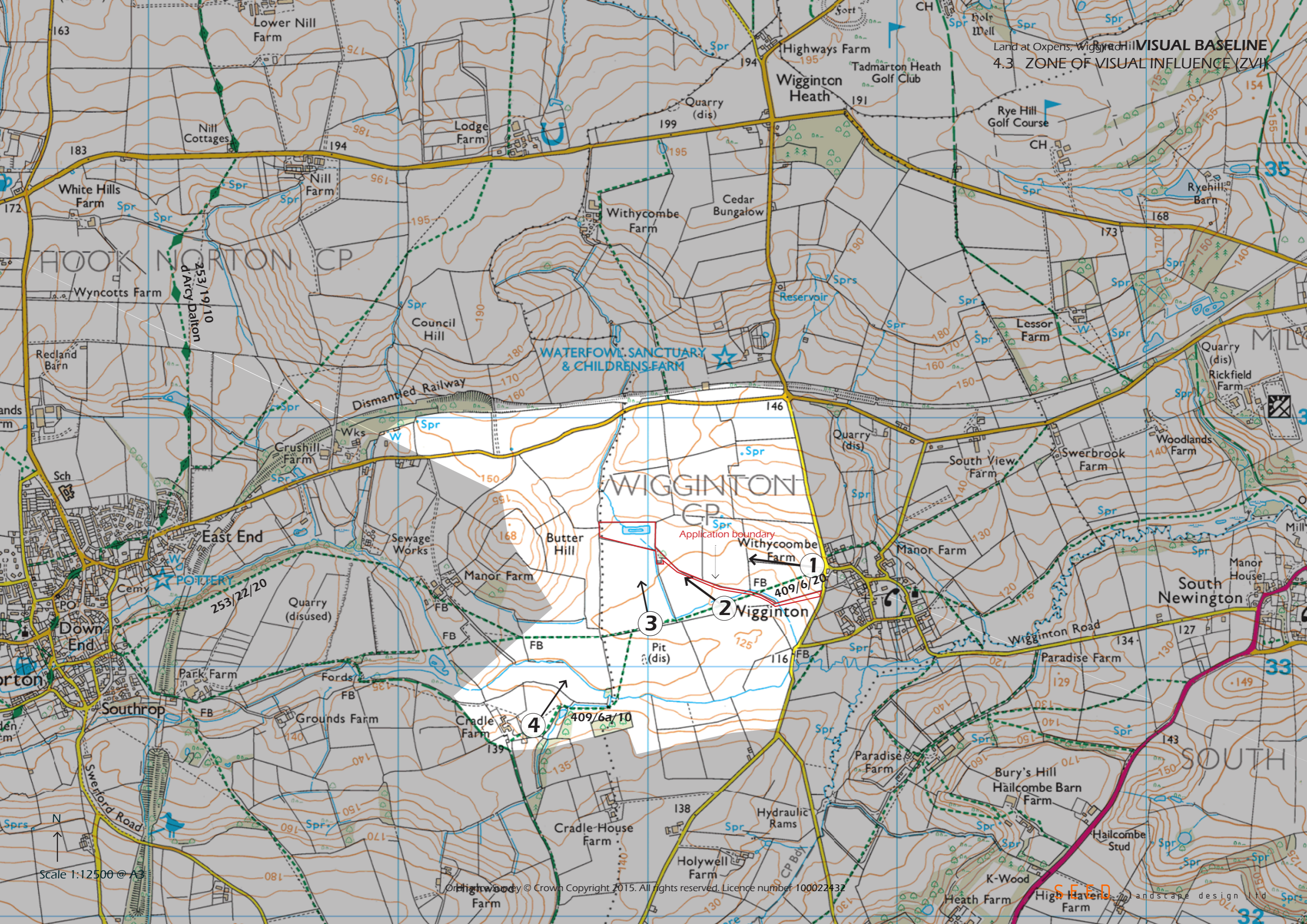


Scale 1:12500 @ A3

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SEED landscape design Ltd

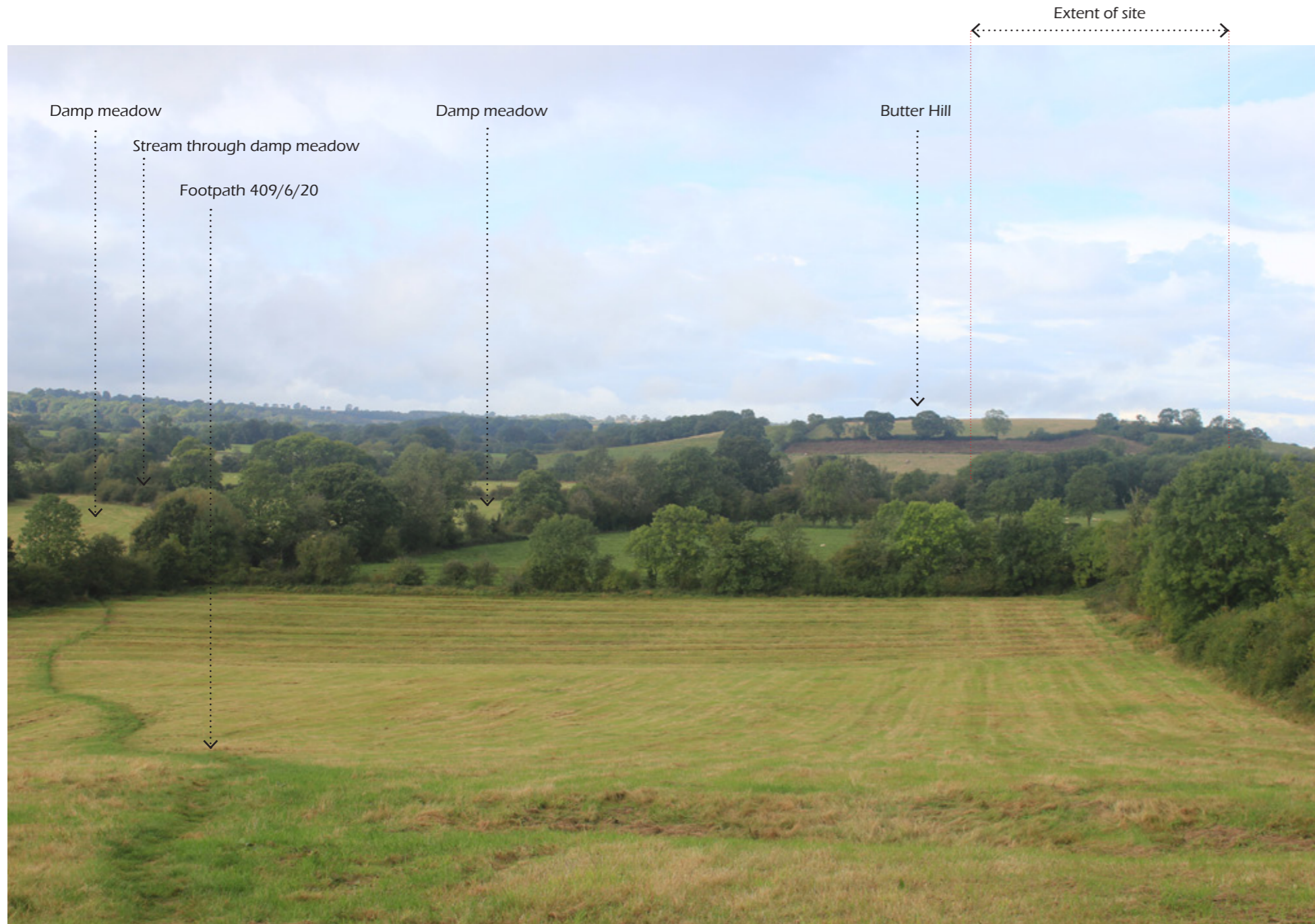
VISUAL BASELINE
4.3 ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE (ZVI)



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.





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.





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.



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:

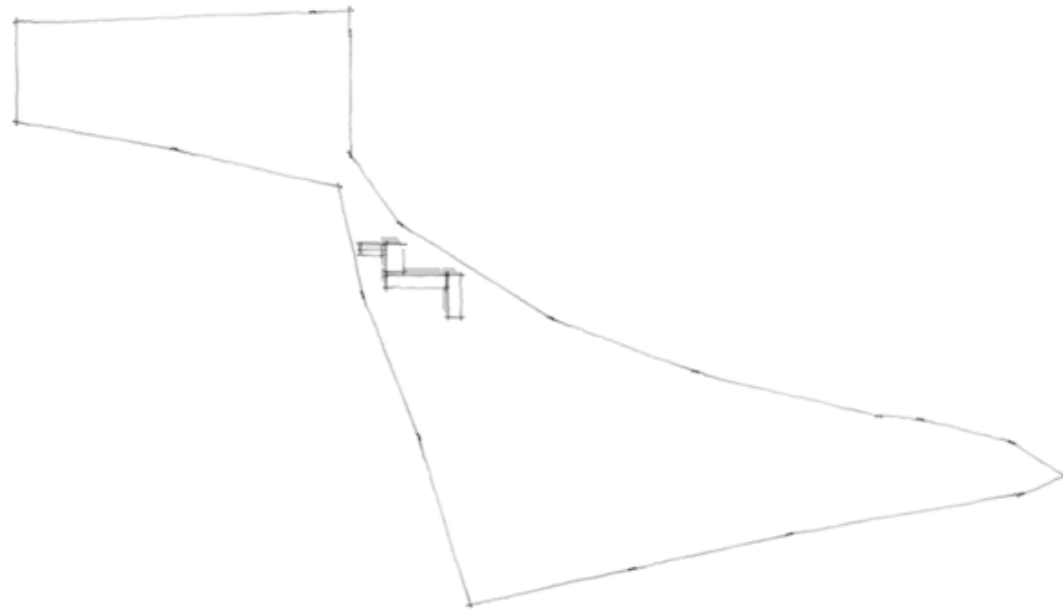
This view is from public footpath 409/6a/10 at the gate to Cradle Farm. The view looks north towards the site from the south side of the valley.

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.

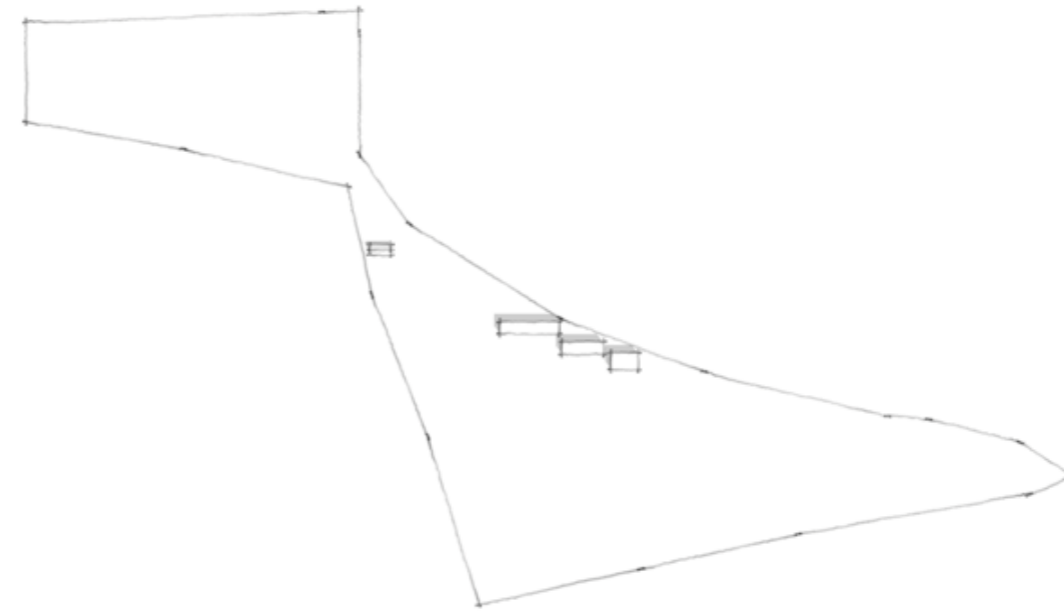
The background is formed by the north side of the valley.





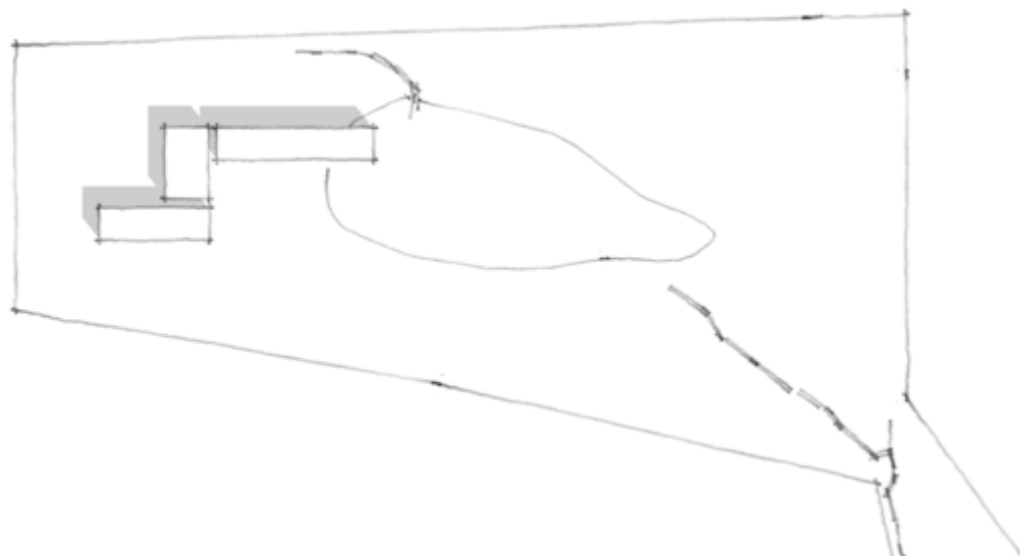
ALTERNATIVE 1 - Extend the barn

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



ALTERNATIVE 2 - Other meadow locations

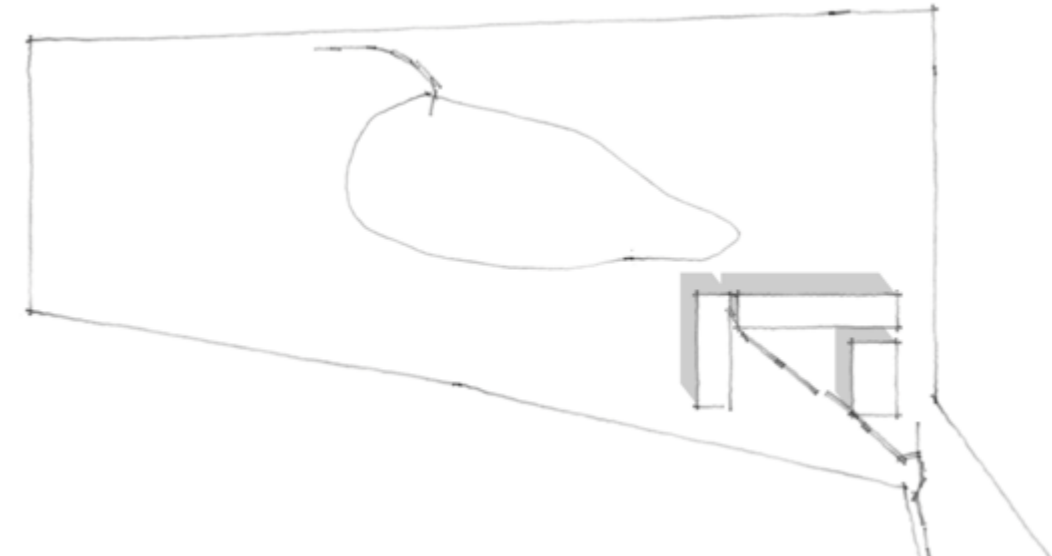
This location was discounted because: The visual impact would be more than a building adjacent to the barn.



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.



THE SETTING FOR THE HOUSE

Application boundary

THE OLD BARN

Ownership boundary

THE DAMP MEADOW

THE TOP FIELD
(Not within ownership boundary)

3m wide Spray tar and chip tyre access track. Gravel will be locally sourced and chosen to be recessive in the landscape.

Tarmac with tar bonded gravel passing place.

Tarmac surface forming 6m threshold with road. Timber gate to match adjacent field.

Site access will be via the existing farm access. The agricultural gates will be set 6m back from the road. The existing 4m wide Cotswold hardcore track will be replaced by two 1m wide spray tar and chip tyre tracks.

The meadow will be traditionally managed with the aim of restoring the nationally important MG4 meadow. The hedgerows will be managed and repaired to enhance the landscape character and ecological value.

The old Barn will be repaired, its character retained and used to store garden and landscape maintenance equipment. The stone work will be 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.

The Northern section of the site has been chosen for the house setting. These proposals are described on the following page.



Scale 1:1250 @ A3



Application boundary

- A The old barn and landscape maintenance storage
- B Entrance drive
- C The entrance courtyard and rill garden
- 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

The house occupies the north east corner of the site to make the most of its context while having minimal impact on its surroundings. The south west aspects overlooks the lake, while the north east aspect overlooks a woodland courtyard. The building has been orientated so that the gable ends make the most of the views to the field and hedgerow oak trees.

The landscape proposals are based on 3 landscape concepts:

The character of the existing mixed native woodland in the south east corner will be brought into the site. It will gradually replace the mono culture of the ash plantation (which has ash dieback) and wrap around the building helping to anchor it in its landscape context. The 3m wide access drive winds through this woodland and opens up into the woodland courtyard.

The existing water body on the site will be reshaped and its edges reprofiled increasing the biodiversity and creating a naturalistic setting for the house to look out over.

Finally key views out will be opened up. Focused views of the oaks will be created to the east and west, helping link the building into its surrounding landscape context. A section of the southern boundary hedge will be laid facilitating views over the hedge and under the canopy of the hedgerow trees.

All of the surface water will be retained on site and control released back into the water course. This happens within the rill garden where the planting has been designed to thrive in damp and fluctuating water levels.



Scale 1:1000 @ A3

IMPACT ON: THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 107. COTSWOLDS

The Cotswolds are defined by the underlying limestone geology, which in turn has influenced the drainage, soil, vegetation, land use and settlements.

The proposals respect and take inspiration from this landscape character

Landscape Sensitivity (Table 1):

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

Magnitude of effect on landscape (table 2):

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

Significance of impact (table 5 & 6):

The resulting effect is considered to be **No Significance**.

IMPACT ON: OXFORDSHIRE WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPE STUDY (OWLS)

The site is predominately within the River Meadowlands character area, although looks out over the Rolling Villages Pastures character area. The proposals have been inspired by these two characters and seek to reinstate and celebrate this character within the site.

Landscape Sensitivity (Table 1):

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

Magnitude of effect on landscape (table 2):

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

Significance of impact (table 5 & 6):

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

IMPACT ON: TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

There will need to be a small amount of reshaping of the lake, but overall the proposed development will work with the existing contours.

Landscape Sensitivity (Table 1):

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

Magnitude of effect on landscape (table 2):

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

Significance of impact (table 5 & 6):

The resulting effect is considered to be **No Significance**.

IMPACT ON: WATER COURSES

The water courses on the site have been redirected numerous times since 1833. The most recent interventions were in 2009. These interventions along with the ash plantation have had a large impact on the watercourses. The pond is in a poor conditions and during flood events bursts its banks and floods the woodland. Historically this flooding would have happened in the damp meadow down stream. This has meant the damp meadow has deteriorated over time.

The landscape proposals aim to reverse this decline by reshaping the pond and allowing the meadow to flood.

Landscape Sensitivity (Table 1):

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

Magnitude of effect on landscape (table 2):

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

Significance of impact (table 5 & 6):

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

IMPACT ON: LAND USE OF NORTH SECTION OF THE SITE

The proposed development will alter the use of the land. It will change it from a monoculture ash plantation with ash dieback and a pond in poor repair to a permanent dwelling. The proposals include limited 'domestic' landscape and focus on integrating the building within the surrounding landscape by using a range of appropriate habitats.

Landscape Sensitivity (Table 1):

The sensitivity of the landscape is considered to be **Low**.

Magnitude of effect on landscape (table 2):

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

Significance of impact (table 5 & 6):

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

IMPACT ON: LAND USE OF SOUTHERN SECTION OF THE SITE

This part of the site will have an recessive two track access drive. The rest of the landscape will be managed entirely for ecological betterment.

Landscape Sensitivity (Table 1):

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

Magnitude of effect on landscape (table 2):

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

Significance of impact (table 5 & 6):

The resulting effect is considered to be **Moderate Beneficial**.

IMPACT ON: THE BARN PLANNING APPLICATION

The barn commands a key but sensitive location within the damp meadow.

The current planning permission will not be implemented. Instead the barn and wall will be repaired and used to store landscape maintenance equipment.

Landscape Sensitivity (Table 1):

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

Magnitude of effect on landscape (table 2):

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

Significance of impact (table 5 & 6):

The resulting effect is considered to be **Moderate Beneficial**.

IMPACT ON: PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PRoWs)

There is no physical impact on the nearby PRoW.

Landscape Sensitivity (Table 1):

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

Magnitude of effect on landscape (table 2):

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

Significance of impact (table 5 & 6):

The resulting effect is considered to be **No Significance**.

VISUAL AMENITY OF PROW USERS

The complex landform and regular hedgerows results in only short stretches of footpaths having views to the site. A short section of the footpath south of the site (409/6/20) offer glimpsed views of the site once the section of hedgerow has been laid.

The area of landscape visually influenced by the site is very small due to the complex surrounding landform, overgrown hedgerow boundaries and scattered blocks of woodland.

ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL IMPACT:

Sensitivity of receptor (table 3):

The sensitivity of the viewpoint is considered to be **Low**

Magnitude of effect (table 4):

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

Significance of impact (table 5 & 6):

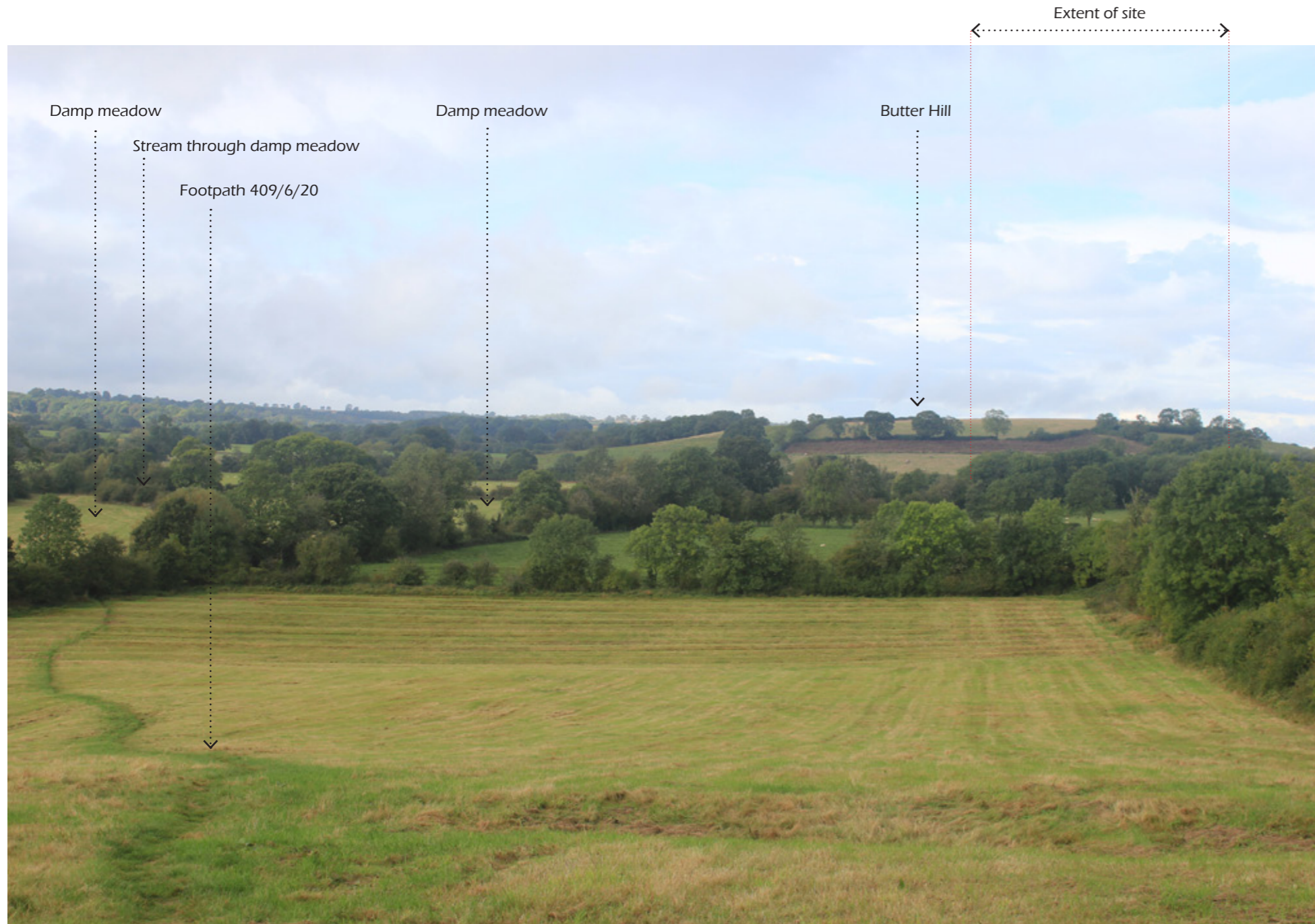
The resulting effect is considered to be **Neutral**

VISUAL AMENITY OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

The only property that could afford views of the development is Cradle Farm. There will be no perceived change to the views view from the public footpath outside the farm.

VISUAL AMENITY OF ROAD USERS

There are no views from the roads due to hedgerows and scattered woodland, specifically the woodland along the old railway to the north.



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 centre of existing pond: +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 perceived changes 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 centre of existing pond: -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 barn 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 centre of existing pond: 0.4km

Elevation difference to centre of existing pond: -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 to centre of existing pond: 1km

Elevation difference to centre of existing pond: +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 perceived change to this view.



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT DURING CONSTRUCTION

Given that Wigginton and the nearest house to the site are 500m away noise and disruption to the local community and neighbours will be fairly minimal. However construction traffic will be using the roads, specifically Swerford Heath Hill outside the site entrance.

- The boundary landscape works are to be implemented prior to any construction works.

- The materials / management compound is to be sited in the north of the site.

- The main contractor shall be enrolled in the 'Considerate Contractors' programme and the construction is anticipated to be between 18 and 24 months.

VISUAL IMPACT DURING WINTER

It is unlikely that the development will be visible from the west, north and east during winter. This is because there are few visual receptors and a significant number of over-grown hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

The development will be more visible from public footpath 409/6/20 to the south of the site, and possibly 253/23a outside Cradle Farm. Without assessing this in winter it is hard to ascertain the significant of the impact. However it is worth noting that if the development is visible it will only be for short sections of both footpaths (approx 280m from 409/6/20).

THE IMPACT OF ASH DIE BACK

Ash die back is within the site, specifically the plantation ash. A number of the mature surrounding hedgerow trees also have it.

Ash and Oak are the dominant climax trees within the area, specifically within hedgerows. If the ash is killed by ash die back then this landscape will become very different. This will also be the case for the mature ash within and around the site.

It is hard to predict accurately the impact of ash die back on the area, but very sadly it is likely to be significant.

9.1 HOUSE POSITION, FORM, MATERIALITY & SECONDARY LANDSCAPE MITIGATION

From the beginning we have looked to the surrounding rural landscape context for inspiration.

We have been inspired by the native hedgerows and woodland, the water on site and views out to the rural context.

All of these elements have helped us integrate this scheme into its context in a sensitive and considered way.

HOUSE POSITIONING

The positioning of the houses has been carefully considered and alternative location explored. The location in the north eastern corner of the site has the least impact on the surrounding countryside while making the most of the water and views out.

HOUSE FORM

The built form is low and elongated, minimising visual impact whilst maximising the connection between inside and outside. The central two storey element has a flat roof (concealing extensive PV), and the pitched roofs of the two wings slope down from two storey in the centre to single storey at their extremities. This dynamic form emphasises the east-west axis, particularly of the west wing, which dramatically projects out over the water.

The arrangement of the three main elements and garage creates a shared arrival courtyard to the north east, enabling each element to take advantage of the predominantly southerly aspect, and the view over the water.

HOUSE MATERIALITY

The house is to be entirely clad in timber - a sustainable material, reflecting and assimilating into the woodland plantation, and referencing local timber clad agricultural sheds, as well as the verticality of the existing ash trees.

Three different types of timber will be used, as a manifestation of the multi-generational concept which weaves through the whole scheme. Taking inspiration from the different types of wood found in the cross-section of a tree as it ages, the heartwood, sapwood and bark will be represented by western red cedar, larch and charred larch respectively, and will be layered on the facades. Larch will be the predominant material, peeling back around the windows and at the open ends of each wing to reveal the sapwood / western red cedar beneath. In keeping with the theme of reflections and contrasts, the central section will have an outer layer of textured bark / charred larch.

LANDSCAPE MITIGATION MEASURES

The landscape proposals will provide an ecological net gain of 35%.

The Hydrology of the site will be significantly improved. The pond and ditch system will control all of the water on the site and direct it to the damp meadow recreating conditions for this potential nationally important habitat to recover.

The mono culture ash plantation will be replaced with a mixed native woodland. This will be phase, it will increase biodiversity and create a much more robust, diverse landscape.

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.

The Landscape effects range from **No significant** to **Moderate Beneficial**

The Moderate Beneficial assessment is in response to the proposed restoration work to the potentially nationally important damp meadow.

The 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 and beneficial in terms of landscape.