

## 10. Landscape and Visual Character

### Introduction

- 10.1 This chapter, which was written by Waterman, presents an assessment of the impacts of the Development on the landscape and visual character of the Site and surrounding areas. It highlights relevant policy and guidance concerning landscape and visual matters, describes the methodology used for the impact assessment and describes the baseline conditions of the Site and its environs. The Chapter provides a description of the likely landscape and visual impacts and evaluates their significance for the construction phase and following its completion. The chapter then details any mitigation that may be required in order to avoid, reduce or offset any likely significant adverse impacts arising from the Development.

### Planning Policy Context

- 10.2 The following section summarises planning policy in relation to landscape and visual issues. The section should be read in conjunction with **Figure 10.1** which illustrates pertinent designations from local planning policy.

### National Planning Policy

- 10.3 PPS1: *'Delivering Sustainable Development'* (2005) provides overarching principles for the delivery of sustainable development for England. Regional and local planning bodies should ensure that policies and plans contribute to global sustainability. Planning authorities should promote high quality design for the lifetime of the development. Design which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted.

### Regional Planning Policy

- 10.4 Saved Policy H2 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 (OCC, 2005) considers the redevelopment of the Site specifically, subsection b) of which states:

*"Proposals for development must...demonstrate...conservation of heritage resources, landscape, restoration, enhancement of biodiversity and other environmental improvements across the whole of the former airbase in association with provision of the new settlement."*

### Local Planning Policy

#### Cherwell Local Plan (1996)

- 10.5 The protection of landscape character is provided for under saved Policy C7. The policy states that *"development will not normally be permitted if it would cause demonstrable harm to the topography and character of the landscape"*.
- 10.6 The scale of rural development is addressed in Policy C9. Development of a type, size or scale that is incompatible with the rural location will normally be resisted.
- 10.7 The character and appearance of historic landscapes, parks and gardens is provided under Policy C10, proposals for which will normally be resisted. Rousham Park, approximately 2.5km to the southwest of the Site is a Grade I registered historic park and garden, whilst Middleton Park, 1.1km to the south-east is Grade II registered. The view from Rousham over the adjacent countryside is protected by Policy C11.

- 10.8 Areas of high landscape value are protected under Policy C13 in which the Council will seek to conserve and enhance the environment. The Cherwell Valley area of high landscape value is located approximately 2km to the north-west although it should be noted that the policy wording does not consider the setting of these designations (refer to **Figure 10.1**).
- 10.9 The enhancement of the interface between the new development and the surrounding countryside is encouraged via tree and woodland planting within Policy C17.
- 10.10 Policy C28 pertains to the layout, design and external appearance of new development. Design particulars should be sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development. This policy is further strengthened by Policy C30 to ensure that new developments are compatible with the appearance, scale, layout, character and density of existing dwellings in the vicinity.
- 10.11 The recreational role of the River Cherwell and its floodplain is protected under Policy R7. Its rural character is further protected under Policy C5.

#### Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011

- 10.12 A large area of the Site is designated within Policy UH1 as part of the ad hoc policies for the redevelopment of the former RAF Upper Heyford Airbase. The policy details a number of requirements expected of proposals in order for development to be permitted, subsection i) of which states:

*“provide for the implementation of an integral scheme of landscaping and environmental improvement across the whole of the land covered by the former airbase in accordance with policy UH2.”*

- 10.13 This is further strengthened by Policy UH2 subsection i) which states that development will only be permitted if:

*“Proposals and a programme for the demolition and removal of those buildings and other structures, including the perimeter fencing, which are unacceptably intrusive having regard to:*

- a) Views from outside the former air base;*
- b) The prevailing character;*
- c) Of the surrounding landscape [sic];*
- d) The impact of such buildings on the setting and environment of the proposed village;*
- e) The environment from existing and reinstated public rights of way.*

*But excluding those buildings, structures and complexes of the Cold War era that have been identified by English Heritage as being of national importance...”*

- 10.14 The accompanying text at paragraph 2.19 adds that proposals should pursue the following aims:

*“(ii) To ensure a permanent outcome for the site that removes adverse visual impact including light pollution in views from outside the former airbase, is compatible with prevailing landscape character, provides access for the enjoyment of the countryside, provides access for the enjoyment of the countryside and provides an appropriate context and environment for the new village, such that modification or further work in the future will not be necessary.”*

- 10.15 These policies are further strengthened by Policies UH3 and UH4 which state that any development proposals must be sympathetic to the existing landscape context. Policy UH3 in particular notes:

*“an approach to the design of the village will be sought that will ensure its successful integration in the north Oxfordshire countryside by reflecting locally distinctive character in terms of scale and massing of built development, the colour and texture of construction materials and landscape dominated development at its periphery.”*

- 10.16 Conservation areas are protected under Policies EN39 and EN40 of the non-statutory plan. New development should seek to understand and respect the sense of place and architectural language of the existing context.
- 10.17 The Upper Heyford Conservation area is adjacent to the Site to the west and includes a small area of the access track (within the Site). Moreover, the whole of the RAF base, including the Settlement Area, is designated as a conservation area due to its cold war heritage.
- 10.18 Policy D1 seeks to ensure that all new development adheres to principles of good design and creates attractive places that are both distinctive yet compatible with the character context (refer to **Figure 10.1**).
- 10.19 Policy D3 pertains to local distinctiveness and states that proposals for development that reflect or interpret local distinctiveness will be permitted provided that:
- i) Respect the site’s landform and natural features;*
  - ii) Are well integrated in to the landscape setting;*
  - iii) Reflect the traditional pattern of arrangement of street blocks, plots and their buildings and spaces;*
  - iv) Include the retention and enhancement of existing open spaces and undeveloped gaps of local importance that contribute positively in visual terms to the public realm...*
  - v) Relate to the local palette of building and surface materials;*
  - vi) Relate well to the local architectural styles and the local palette of elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors;*
  - vii) Respect the scale, proportion, massing and height of adjoining buildings and street scene; and*
  - viii) Do not interfere with valued views, vistas and landmarks.”*
- 10.20 Policy D4 calls specifically for high quality architecture that ‘expresses its use and importance and possesses visual interest’ whilst D5 considers the public realm.
- 10.21 Protection of valued views is provided under Policy D12. The policy states that:
- “Buildings will not be permitted whose height, siting and appearance would mar:*
- i) Views of parish churches from within and from beyond the settlement;*
  - ii) Views of significant skylines or open spaces within settlements;*
  - iii) Views of Banbury from the main route corridors; and*
  - iv) Views within the Cherwell Valley.”*
- 10.22 Policy ENV32 pertains to coalescence of settlements, resisting development that would reduce the openness of the land that is important in separating them. The accompany text notes:
- “...the gap between Upper Heyford village and the former RAF Airbase is narrow and vulnerable and should be maintained as open land.”*

- 10.23 The conservation and enhancement of landscape character and appearance is provided for under Policy EN32. The policy states that proposals will not be permitted if they:
- i) Cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside;*
  - ii) Cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography;*
  - iii) Be inconsistent with local character;*
  - iv) Harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures and other landmark features;*
  - v) Harm the historic value of the landscape.”*
- 10.24 Features such as woodlands, trees, hedges, ponds, walls and any other features which are important to the character or appearance of the local landscape as a result of their ecological, historical or amenity value are protected under Policy EN32. Development which would result in the loss of such features will be resisted. Trees and hedgerows are further protected under Policy EN37 which encourages the enhancement and management of these features. These policies are supported by Policy EN36 which seeks to secure the enhancement of the appearance and character of the landscape.
- 10.25 The general principles for the protection of conservation areas and listed buildings are outlined in Policy EN39, EN40 and EN44. Development should preserve the setting of character areas and listed buildings, as well as the intrinsic qualities of these features themselves.

#### [Cherwell Local Development Framework: Draft Core Strategy, February 2010](#)

- 10.26 Policy I2 sets out measures to maintain and enhance the district’s green infrastructure. Policy SD11 states that *“opportunities will be sought to secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, particularly in urban fringe locations, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows. Development will be expected to respect and enhance local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided.”* This policy also reinforces the aims of EN32 of the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan.
- 10.27 Policy SD13 states that *“new development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design.”*

#### [Supplementary Planning Documents \(SPD\)](#)

- 10.28 The RAF Upper Heyford Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief 2007 provides comprehensive guidance for the redevelopment of the former Airbase. Section C6 of the document addresses landscape and visual issues. Development is expected to respond to the existing character and enhance it wherever possible. Moreover, the document notes the intrusion of military features within the views at present, due to their scale, height and/or coloration and considers the base itself an incongruent entity within the overall landscape context.

#### [Other Relevant Documents](#)

- 10.29 The RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal (CDC, 2006) presents an appraisal of the historical value of the RAF base and sets out the reasoning for its designation as a conservation area. The document identifies a number of buildings considered to be of heritage value and also classifies areas of the base into character areas from a built heritage perspective.

- 10.30 The Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Plan (2005) sets out conservation aims for the whole of the former RAF Airbase in relation to its heritage management. The plan identifies character areas for settlements around the former RAF Airbase (i.e. built form only).

## Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

### Assessment Methodology

- 10.31 The landscape and visual character assessment consists of two separate, but inter-linked issues as follows:
- **Landscape Impacts:** the impacts of the Development on the physical and cultural characteristics of the Site and its surroundings and on the landscape character of the study area; and
  - **Visual Impacts:** the impacts of the Development on views from visual receptors and on the amenity value of these views.
- 10.32 The assessment methodology for the landscape and visual character assessment is based on the following guidance:
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) 2002; and
  - Landscape Character Assessment, the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) 2002.
- 10.33 The assessment methodology adopted for landscape and visual matters comprised a combination of desktop and field studies including the following:
- an overview of statutory plans and other data regarding relevant designations and planning policies for the area;
  - a review of other recent Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments carried out on or in the vicinity of the Site, including the 2007 ES (Roger Evans Associates, 2007);
  - an evaluation of the landscape character and quality of the Site, together with the sensitivity of the landscape to change. This includes the classification of the landscape into units of distinct and recognisable character;
  - GIS analysis using Ordnance Survey (OS) data in order to ascertain the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) based on topography of the Site and its surrounds. The ZTV is shown in **Figure 10.2**;
  - identification of representative viewpoints, receptors of those representative viewpoints and classifications of sensitivity;
  - identification and assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of the Development, in terms of their sensitivity and the magnitude of change they are likely to experience; and
  - the preparation of mitigation proposals with the aim where possible, of avoiding or reducing significant adverse landscape or visual character impacts, determined during the course of the assessment.
- 10.34 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) and the visibility of the Site were identified through a review of baseline data (including RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal (CDC, 2006)) and field surveys carried out in July 2010 with additional verification field survey in September 2010.

The location of the representative viewpoints chosen to support the landscape and visual assessment were agreed with CDC.

- 10.35 The visual analysis is based on views from external spaces within the public domain and not from inside buildings or private spaces. However, assessment of private dwellings is made where appropriate. Photographs were taken from selected viewpoints with a digital camera with an equivalent 50mm focal length lens at eye level (1600mm) from the ground. The camera location and details of each viewpoint were recorded.

### Significance Criteria

- 10.36 The significance of landscape and visual character impacts was determined by assessing:

- the sensitivity of the affected landscape or visual receptor; and
- the magnitude of the potential change that would occur.

- 10.37 This is illustrated as a matrix in **Appendix 10.1** where the significance of potential and residual landscape and visual character impacts are described as being:

**Beneficial Impact of Very High Significance:** The Development would fit extremely well with the scale, landform and existing pattern of the landscape, and bring substantial enhancements. The Development would create a very substantial improvement in views;

**Beneficial Impact of High Significance:** The Development would fit very well with the scale, landform and existing pattern of the landscape, and bring considerable enhancements. The Development would create a substantial improvement in views;

**Beneficial Impact of Moderate Significance:** The Development would fit well with the scale, landform and existing pattern of the landscape, and maintain and/or enhance the existing landscape character. The Development would create a noticeable but improved change in the views;

**Beneficial Impact of Minor Significance:** The Development would complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, whilst maintaining the existing character. The Development would result in minor improvements to the views;

**Negligible:** The Development would cause very limited changes to the landscape and/or views, but creates no significant impacts;

**No Impact:** There would be no perceptible impact as a result of the Development on either the landscape character or the visual amenity of the surrounding environment. The view/character may change but that change is not a radical departure from the existing context;

**Adverse Impact of Minor Significance:** The Development would cause minor permanent and/or temporary loss or alteration to one or more key elements of the landscape. This includes the introduction of elements which may not be uncharacteristic of the existing landscape. The Development would cause limited visual intrusion;

**Adverse Impact of Moderate Significance:** The Development would cause considerable permanent loss or alteration to one or more key elements of the landscape, to include the introduction of elements that are prominent but may not be substantially uncharacteristic of the landscape. The Development would be visually intrusive and would adversely impact upon the landscape;

**Adverse Impact of High Significance:** The Development would cause substantial permanent loss or alteration to one or more key elements of the landscape, to include the introduction of

elements that are prominent and uncharacteristic of the landscape. The Development would be visually intrusive and would adversely impact upon the landscape; and

**Adverse Impact of Very High Significance:** The Development would cause total permanent loss or major alteration to key elements and features of the landscape, to include the introduction of elements totally uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape. The Development would be very visually intrusive and would disrupt fine and valued views both into and across the area.

- 10.38 The assessment of the nature of landscape and visual impacts was based on the degree to which the Development:
- complements, respects and fits into the existing scale, landform and pattern of landscape context;
  - enables enhancement, restoration or retention of the landscape character and visual amenity; and
  - affects strategic and important views in addition to the visual context of receptors.
- 10.39 The assessment process aims to be objective and to quantify impacts as far as possible. However, it is recognised that subjective judgement is appropriate, if it is based upon training and experience, and supported by clear evidence, reasoned argument and informed opinion. Whilst changes to a view can be factually defined, the evaluation of landscape character and visual impact does require qualitative judgements to be made. The conclusions of this assessment therefore combine systematic observation and measurement with informed professional interpretation. Waterman is an assessor grade member of IEMA and has experience in assessing the visual impacts for various development schemes in a variety of scenarios.

### Assumptions and Limitations

- 10.40 The field survey and verification field survey were undertaken in July and September 2010. This represents sub-optimum conditions for visual assessment owing to the screening effects of deciduous summer vegetation in leaf. The visibility of the Development would be likely to increase in winter conditions when leaf cover is minimal. Provision for these effects has been made within this assessment and it is considered that the assessment still provides a reliable and robust consideration of the likely impacts of the Development on the local landscape context despite this limitation. Landscape character assessment is unaffected by seasonality.

### Baseline Conditions

#### Statutory Designations

#### Conservation Areas

- 10.41 The whole of the former RAF Upper Heyford Airbase is designated as a conservation area due to the value of its cold war heritage. The Upper and Lower Heyford Conservation area abuts the site to the west and includes part of the access track leading east from Kirtlington Road.

### Listed Buildings

- 10.42 There are no listed buildings within the Site. There are a number of listed buildings on the Flying Field to the north of the Site including the Nose Docking Sheds (Buildings 325, 327 and 328), Squadron Headquarters (Building 234) and the Control Tower (Building 340). Full details of built heritage can be found within **Chapter 11**.

### Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 10.43 There are no recognised formal public rights of way, such as footpaths or bridleways, within the Site. However, southern and eastern areas of the Site are residential areas open to the public whilst some areas to the north of Camp Road (itself a public road) are restricted access used by light industry.

### Tree Preservation Orders

- 10.44 There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within or immediately adjacent to the Site. However, all trees within the Former RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area are protected under this designation, requiring notification before any works, including removal, can be undertaken to them.

### Non-Statutory Designations

- 10.45 The RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area Appraisal has identified a number of buildings of local significance within this designation.

### Landscape Character

- 10.46 The section should be read in conjunction with **Figure 10.3**, which illustrates the location and extent of character areas identified.

### National Character

- 10.47 The Countryside Character Map of England Volume 5: West Midlands (Countryside Agency, 1999) identifies strategic character areas across the whole of England. The Site is classified within Character Area 107: Cotswolds. The key characteristics of this area include:
- defined by its underlying geology: a dramatic scarp rising above adjacent lowlands with steep combs, scarp foot villages and beech woodlands;
  - rolling, open high wold plateau moulded by physical and human influences, with arable and large blocks of woodland divided up by small, narrow valleys;
  - incised landscapes with deep, wide valleys;
  - flat open dip slope with extensive arable farmland;
  - honey-coloured Cotswold stone in walls, houses and churches; and
  - attractive stone villages with a unity of design and materials.
- 10.48 The wider environs of the Site demonstrate some of these characteristics, notably the incised valleys and contrasting rolling wold plateaus.



### Regional Character

- 10.49 The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004) identifies the Site within the Farmland Plateau character area. Key characteristics of this area include:
- 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; and
  - long, straight roads running along the ridge summits.
- 10.50 The Site's environs demonstrate some of these characteristics particularly the narrow valleys and rolling open ridge topography.

### Local Character

#### *Cherwell District Landscape Assessment (Cobham Resource Consultants, 1995)*

- 10.51 This local assessment for Cherwell District classifies the Site as within the 'Upper Heyford Plateau' character area. The text notes that this is an 'exposed, level and open plateau, which dips very gently into rolling hills to the south-east. Upper Heyford Airbase comprises about a third of this character area and dominates the landscape. Key characteristics of this area include:
- exposed, open yet level plateau;
  - gently rolling, large agricultural land in arable production;
  - little vegetation with weak field boundaries; and
  - dominance of Upper Heyford Airbase with the area.

#### *Upper Heyford Conservation Plan - Landscape Assessment (2005)*

- 10.52 In addition to the district assessment, specific assessment for the Upper Heyford area linked to the future redevelopment of the former RAF Airbase was undertaken and used to inform the Upper Heyford Conservation Plan. This *ad hoc* assessment classifies the Site within Character Area 14: Upper Heyford. These areas are shown within **Figure 10.3** and are used as the basis for the character assessment. Key characteristics of this character area include:
- complex of buildings, structures and hard surfaces with extensive areas of grassland;
  - very wide range of building types, materials and colours;
  - Hardened Aircraft Shelters with distinctive 'Nissen hut' form;
  - prominent vertical structures – water towers, masts etc;
  - contrast between densely built up area in the south and open landscape in the north;
  - scale emphasised by broad sweeps of grassland; and
  - abrupt junction with adjacent areas emphasised by perimeter fence".
- 10.53 As this character area is essentially defined by the former RAF Upper Heyford Airbase many of the characteristics described above are manifest within the Site. In landscape terms, the sensitivity of this character area is considered to be high (local) owing to its designation as a conservation area. Adjacent character areas to the Site identified within this study are summarised below.

- 10.54 Character Area 10: Mudginwell Slopes:
- contrast between open slopes with low hedges and enclosed small valley within Mudginwell Farm at head;
  - intermittent standard trees in hedges, but hedges generally low and sparse;
  - mainly arable use; and
  - very open area immediately downslope of Quick Reaction Area.
- 10.55 The sensitivity of this character area is classified as 'county' because it is within a special landscape area.
- 10.56 Character Area 12: Fritwell Plateau:
- nineteenth century enclosed fields with strong rectilinear pattern;
  - variable frequency and quality of hedgerows;
  - sufficiently dense tree cover to partially wooded skyline in long views; and
  - local dominance of railway and motorway.
- 10.57 The sensitivity of this character area is considered to be moderate (local) owing to its elevated position within the rural landscape.
- 10.58 Character Area 15: Upper Heyford:
- footslope village spreading uphill from manorial centre around church;
  - riverside character at foot of slope;
  - rows of closely spaced cottages rising up hill;
  - twentieth century houses adjacent to busy road; and
  - ragged east edge of allotments and isolated buildings.
- 10.59 The sensitivity of this character area is classified as 'county' because it is within a special landscape area and contains the Upper Heyford Conservation Area.
- 10.60 Character Area 17: Caulcott Plateau:
- very open landscape with very large fields;
  - few hedgerow trees;
  - woodland close to edges of area but not within; and
  - mainly arable.
- 10.61 The sensitivity of this character area is classified as moderate (local) owing to its elevated position within the rural landscape.
- 10.62 Character Area 18: Middleton Stoney Estate lands:
- very slightly undulating land falling towards central stream;
  - rectilinear pattern of large fields;
  - a few substantial farmsteads;
  - bands of woodland with conifers; and
  - straight roads, mainly arable land-use.
- 10.63 The sensitivity of this character area is classified as moderate (local) owing to the locally valued components and features within it.

- 10.64 The character of each particular section of the Site itself (refer to **Figure 10.3**) is addressed in detail within the Upper Heyford Conservation Plan (2005) and detailed within **Chapter 11**. For the purposes of this assessment its sensitivity is considered to be high (local) because it is designated as a conservation area.

### Visual Amenity

- 10.65 This section considers the visual amenity of the Site from a variety of representative views at a range of distances from the Site. **Table 10.1** summarises the representative views, provides an indication of the likely receptors at that location and assigns a degree of sensitivity to those receptors. Reference should be made to **Figure 10.4** and the photoviewpoints in **Figures 10.5** to **10.16** when reading this section.

#### Views From Within the Site

- 10.66 Views from within the Settlement Area are largely limited by built form, particularly the large buildings of the technical area into the north and the service and recreation area in the west. However, the layout of buildings within the technical area creates linear vistas towards the main entrance on Camp Road. An assortment of buildings forms the main composition of views, some of which are distinct because of their function. However, as a result of their utilitarian character, the majority of these buildings cannot be considered to be of architectural merit from a classical perspective. It is of note that inter-visibility between different areas of the site is largely limited, with each being relatively self contained. Camp Road forms a prominent physical barrier between the technical areas to the north and the residential areas to the south.
- 10.67 Although predominantly of built form, views within the Site are softened by vegetation, usually forming tree-lined avenues aligning the main thoroughfares. Small amenity areas, in combination with the relative low density of development, further soften the overall dominance of buildings within the Site. Moreover, some of the trees on-site are mature specimens that contribute to the character of the Site as well as forming interesting features within internal views.

#### Views from the Immediate Locality

- 10.68 Views of the Site from the immediate locality are also limited because of the flat topography and intervening vegetation. Camp Road forms the dominant east to west visual axis, bisecting the Site although due to topography, vegetation and built form, views along its entire length are not possible (Photoviewpoint 1 and 5).
- 10.69 Views from the Flying Field are also largely limited as a result of topography and built form (Photoviewpoints 6 and 7) and it is only the upper reaches of the buildings within the technical area that can be seen above the tree line.

#### Views from the North

- 10.70 Views further north, beyond the Flying Field become further obscured as a result of the undulating topography and increasing distance. The perimeter vegetation of the Flying Field area obscures views from the north, so whilst the Flying Field area may be visible from these locations, the Site itself is not.
- 10.71 From long distance views from the west, chiefly along the A4260 (Photoviewpoints 13, 15 and 17) it is only the water towers of the airfield that can be clearly discerned, forming a notable landmark on the horizon.

### Views from the South

- 10.72 Relatively open views across arable fields are possible from the hamlet of Caulcott and the B4030 where gaps in the vegetation occur (Photoviewpoints 12 and 20). Within these views the residential areas of the Site to the south of Camp Road can clearly be seen although the slight undulation of the terrain and the perimeter vegetation of the Site's southern boundary filter these to some extent. Despite this, the airmen's housing and bungalow area is apparent. The tallest elements of the airbase, notably the water towers, chimney and aerial antenna, form notable vertical landmarks within the view. The B4030 itself is lined by a mature, woody hedgerow and vehicles along it travel at speed, limiting the potential for lasting views toward the Site.
- 10.73 The airmen's housing, dormitory and recreation areas in the south of the Site are notable in views from the local footpath network to the south. Whilst the bungalows of the airmen's housing area are largely unobtrusive from all but close proximity, taller structures such as the water towers, gym and 3 storey dormitory buildings are notable features of the view, the eye being constantly drawn to the water towers which act as prominent landmarks within all views. The large concrete post and wire fencing forming the southern boundary is also prominent at close range (Photoviewpoint 18), creating an abrupt, and somewhat intimidating, edge between the Site and open countryside to the south.

### Views from the East

- 10.74 Local views from the east from Leys Farm (Photoviewpoint 8), Chilgrove Drive (Photoviewpoint 9) and the bridleway adjacent to the Gorse (Photoviewpoint 11) are largely filtered by intervening vegetation (the effect of which will decrease in winter) although taller elements of the airbase are visible. Built form within the Site can be glimpsed through the vegetation although is not a prominent feature of the composition of these views.
- 10.75 Long range views from the east from Middleton Stoney and the B430 are restricted by intervening vegetation, notably the Copse and the Heath. Views from Middleton Stoney Park, a Grade II registered park and garden, are not possible due to intervening vegetation.

### Views from the West

- 10.76 Views of the Site from within Cherwell valley, including from Upper Heyford, Lower Heyford (both with the Upper and Lower Heyford Conservation Area), and along the Oxford Canal Walk, are not possible as a result of the falling topography and it is only the tallest elements of the airbase (i.e. the water towers) that can be seen on the horizon from these locations.
- 10.77 Views further west from Steeple Aston, Middle Aston and North Aston are largely intermittent due to the intervening built form of these settlements and their nestled location within the folds on the Cherwell valley. It is only from open areas near to these settlements that views of the airbase are possible (Photoviewpoint 14) and even then it is only the water towers that can be clearly discerned, the Site itself being screened from view.
- 10.78 The opportunity for views of the Site from Rousham Park is limited as a result of the vegetation that surrounds the grounds of the estate. Views from the Park (protected under Policy C11 within the Local Plan) include views of the airbase from isolated points within the grounds of the parkland, namely adjacent to the statues, where breaks in the vegetation afford views of the water towers on the horizon, where they form a distinct landmark for the airbase. The Site itself is not discernible.

Table 10.1: Representative Photoviewpoint Locations, Receptors and Sensitivity

Photoviewpoint Location	Description	Receptors	Sensitivity
1	View from Camp Road within the Site adjacent to the gatehouse main entrance roundabout looking north. Military buildings adjacent to Camp Road can be seen although extensive views across the Site are not possible due to vegetation lining the road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local pedestrians</li> <li>Local road traffic</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <p><b>Low</b></p>
2	View from Harris Road within the Site looking north east. The residential dormitories of the RAF domestic section tower over the smaller scale bungalows of the airmen's housing area. The interface between the two is softened to a small degree by mature vegetation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private residents</li> <li>Local pedestrians</li> </ul>	<p><b>Very high</b></p> <p><b>Low</b></p>
3	View from within the Site looking southeast towards the gatehouse main entrance. Tree lined boulevards create vistas through the Site limiting views in combination with surrounding built form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local businesses</li> </ul>	<b>Negligible</b>
4	View from within the Site looking south towards the gatehouse main entrance. A long, tree-lined vista towards the gatehouse is created along the road. Views over the Site are restricted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local businesses</li> </ul>	<b>Negligible</b>
5	View from Camp Road adjacent to the Site looking east across the Site. The recreational area and airmen's housing area is visible to the south whilst views further across the Site are restricted by topography and vegetation lining Camp Road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local pedestrians</li> <li>Local road traffic</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low</b></p> <p><b>Low</b></p>
6	View from the Flying Field area looking southeast towards the Site. The roofs of hangers and other ancillary buildings are visible whilst the water towers act as landmarks within the view. The Site is not visible as it is screened by intervening structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local businesses</li> </ul>	<b>Negligible</b>
7	View from the Flying Field area looking southwest towards the Site. The water towers are just visible although the majority of the airfield, including the Site, tends to merge with the horizon due to distance and topography. The Site is not discernible from this location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local businesses</li> </ul>	<b>Negligible</b>
8	View from Leys Farm looking west towards the Site. The mature vegetative boundary surrounding the perimeter of the former RAF Airbase domestic area screens views of the Site from this location although the upper storeys and rooflines of some buildings on the periphery of this area are visible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private residents</li> </ul>	<b>Very high</b>
9	View from the junction of Chilgrove Drive with Camp Road looking west toward the Site. A small section of Camp Road is visible in the middle ground. The mature vegetative boundary surrounding Larsen Road restricts views into the Site although a break in the vegetation allows a glimpse through to the Site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local road traffic</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b>
10	View from Kirtlington Road looking east toward the Site. The school and recreational sections of the former RAF Airbase are visible in the middle ground of the view although other sections tend to merge within the existing vegetation. The water towers act as prominent landmarks for the Site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local road traffic</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b>

11	View from the bridleway near 'The Heath' looking northwest toward the Site. The mature vegetation along the eastern boundary of the Site limits views from nearby environs although the rooflines of some buildings within the former RAF Airbase domestic area and Water Tower B can be seen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walkers/horse riders</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>
12	View from Hill Cottage, Caulcott looking north toward the Site. Southern sections of the Site, in particular the airmen's housing area, can be seen in the middle ground. Taller elements of the former RAF Airbase, such as the water towers and chimney stack act as distinct landmarks within the view.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private residents</li> <li>Local road traffic</li> </ul>	<b>Very high</b> <b>Low</b>
13	View from the footpath adjacent to the pumping station on the A4260 looking east toward the Site. The water towers act as landmarks to the Site and some of the larger hangars of the Flying Field can be seen. However, the Site itself is indiscernible at this distance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walkers</li> <li>Traffic on the A4260</li> </ul>	<b>High</b> <b>Low</b>
14	View from Middle Aston Lane looking east toward the Site. The water towers act as landmarks to the Site although the Site itself is indiscernible at this distance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents at Middle Aston</li> <li>Local road traffic</li> </ul>	<b>Very high</b> <b>Low</b>
15	View from the footpath near 'The Holt Hotel' looking northwest toward the Site. The water towers act as landmarks to the Site although the Site itself is indiscernible at this distance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walkers</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>
16	View from Rousham Park adjacent to 'The Dying Gladiator' looking northeast toward the Site. Water Tower A acts as a landmark for the Site although the Site itself is indiscernible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourists</li> </ul>	<b>Very high</b>
17	View from the lay-by near Maiden Bower on the A4260 looking northeast toward the Site. The water towers are just discernible at this distance although the Site itself is not.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic on the A4260</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b>
18	View from the footpath at the junction with Kirtlington Road looking east toward the Site. The domineering concrete post and wire mesh fence forms an abrupt and intimidating boundary to the Site whilst the recreational area can also be clearly seen. Other residential areas within the Site are less conspicuous. Views further into the Site are not possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walkers</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>
19	View from the footpath running towards the Gorse from Kirtlington Road looking north toward the Site. Taller elements of the airbase, such as the water towers and chimney act as landmarks within the view. The airmen's housing and bungalows are also prominent whilst the upper storeys of the dormitory buildings can also be seen. Views further into the Site are not possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walkers</li> </ul>	<b>High</b>
20	View from the B4030 looking north toward the Site. The taller elements of the airfield act as distinct landmarks within the view whilst the rooflines of the airmen's bungalow housing are also visible. Views further into the majority of the Site are not possible. Views along this stretch of road are limited to glimpses through breaks in the hedgerow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local road traffic</li> </ul>	<b>Low</b>

- 10.79 In light of the above, the principal visual receptors of the Site are identified as being:
- residential properties within the Site at the airmen's housing section of the Settlement Area;
  - local traffic along Camp Road;
  - residential properties at Caulcott; and
  - local public rights of way to the south of the Site.

## **Impact Assessment**

### **Demolition and Construction Phase**

- 10.80 The demolition and construction phase of the Development has the potential to affect the landscape and visual amenity of the Site and its surrounds as a result of the following processes:
- demolition and clearance of existing structures on site;
  - ground work preparations;
  - movement of heavy plant and material both within, to and from the Site;
  - erection of construction infrastructure (e.g. scaffolding and cranes) and siting of workers welfare facilities; and
  - construction of new structures and buildings.
- 10.81 Due to the transient nature of construction activities, all impacts identified for the construction phase are short term in nature lasting for the duration of the construction phase. Upon completion they would cease and operational impacts would commence.

### **Landscape Character**

- 10.82 Due to the utilitarian nature of the former RAF Airbase at present, construction activities within the Site would not represent a radical departure from the overall character currently extant. Compartmentalisation of the Site into distinct functional areas, such as the recreational area and the domestic area, means that construction impacts would likely be restricted to these working areas and their immediate environs.

### *Character of the Site*

- 10.83 The retention of a considerable number of buildings on the Site would maintain a link to the historical character and former use of the RAF base, particularly the large workshops of the technical area and core administration area. Moreover the retention of dwellings within the airmen's housing section (Gordon Road south to Harris Road) and married quarters section (Larsen Road/Trenchard Circle) mean that very little new demolition or construction work would occur within these areas in any case.
- 10.84 Other parts of the Site, such as the technical area, recreational area and domestic area would experience a considerable amount of disruption due to the extensive nature of demolition and construction works planned for these areas. However, as these areas are currently vacant and in some cases approaching dilapidation, the removal of detracting structures and introduction of construction activities, invigorating a currently derelict sector, is considered to be a beneficial to the overall character of these areas individually and the Site as a whole.

- 10.85 The sensitivity of the character of the Site is considered to be high because it is within the RAF Upper Heyford Conservation Area. As noted previously, demolition and construction activity is likely to vary considerably across the Site. However, overall, these activities are considered to be consistent with the utilitarian/military character. The magnitude of change to the character of the Site is therefore considered to be low to medium resulting in direct, short-term and **beneficial impact of low to medium significance** to the character of these areas.

#### *Remaining Character of the Former RAF Upper Heyford Airbase*

- 10.86 The Flying Field Character Area, abutting the Site to the north, would be largely unaffected by construction within the Site due to the screening effect of the large workshops of the technical area. Moreover the slight dome topography of the Flying Field would further limit potential views of the construction phase, meaning that essentially no change would occur to the character beyond this ridgeline threshold, approximately demarcated by the alignment of the main runway. The resultant impacts to the character of the Flying Field area and other areas of the former base outside the Site boundary during the demolition and construction phase are assessed to be direct, short term in nature and of **negligible significance**.

#### *Neighbouring Character Areas*

- 10.87 It is character areas abutting or close to the Site that would have the greatest potential to be affected by demolition and construction within the Site itself. These areas include LCA17: Caulcott Plateau, abutting the Site boundary to the south, and potentially LCA15: Upper Heyford and LCA18: Middleton Stoney Estatelands which lie to the west and east of the Site respectively. Construction in the south of the Site (within the service and recreation and RAF domestic and residential areas) has the potential to affect the character of these areas as there is no Flying Field 'buffer' between construction and the adjacent countryside.
- 10.88 It is of note that, at present, there is a very definitive line between the character of the Site and that of the wider surrounding countryside, set by the imposing perimeter security fencing of the airbase. As such, any demolition and construction activities are likely to relate to, and be contained within, the existing Site boundary and are not expected to perceptibly encroach to any great extent into the wider countryside. The magnitude of change to LCA17 would therefore be low, resulting in direct, short term **impact of negligible significance** to this area.
- 10.89 LCAs 15 and 18 would be expected to experience no change to their character owing to their distance from the Site. Direct, short term **impact of negligible significance** would therefore be concluded for these areas.
- 10.90 Character areas further from the Site, namely those not addressed specifically above, would not experience any change to their character due to distance from the Site. The significance of impact to these LCAs would therefore be of **negligible significance**.

#### **Visual Amenity**

- 10.91 Owing to the extensive nature of demolition and construction within the Site, the disruption to visual amenity caused during these activities would likely be considerable. However, the compartmentalisation of the Site and its relative self containment within the wider countryside means that the most prominent intrusions would likely be restricted to views from within and close to the Site.



*Views From Within the Site (Photoviewpoints 1, 2, 3 and 4)*

- 10.92 Views from within the Site would be likely to experience large amounts of change due to the extent of demolition and construction activities. However, the exact amount of change is likely to vary considerably between different areas of the Site dependent on the extent of works proposed. Areas where most construction works would take place are considered to be the service and recreation area and the technical site (Photoviewpoints 3 and 4) where, fortunately, no highly sensitive receptors are located (such as residential properties) and public access is either restricted or not possible. The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of receptors within the technical area and recreational area would therefore be very high resulting in direct, short term **adverse impact of minor significance**.
- 10.93 Views from within the airmen's housing and bungalows area, currently occupied by private residential dwellings, (Photoviewpoint 2) would experience some impacts as a result of adjacent construction activities and the refurbishment of these dwellings themselves. The retention of trees where possible within the Site would soften the effects of construction works to a small degree. The magnitude of change would be high resulting in direct, short term **adverse impact of minor to high significance**. However, as noted previously, the visible presence of construction activities (although not ideal) could be deemed more favourable than that of derelict and slowly decaying buildings currently visible from within the airmen's bungalow area.
- 10.94 The RAF married quarters residential area, to the east of the Site is relatively self contained and unlikely to experience any significant effects as a result of construction within the rest of the Site although views from the upper storeys of properties adjacent to the technical area may experience some disruption. Therefore direct, short term **impacts of negligible significance** are predicted for these receptors.

*Leys Farm and Cheeseman's Barns (Photoviewpoint 10)*

- 10.95 Filtered views of the Site are possible from Leys Farm although they are screened from the caravan park which is set slightly further back. This is also the case for dwellings at Cheeseman's Barns where a mature coniferous perimeter hedge screens views out from this property. The construction phase would be visible to some degree resulting in a low magnitude of change to views. Overall the significance of impact to visual receptors at Leys Farm and Cheeseman's Barns is considered to be direct, short term, **adverse** and of **negligible to minor significance**.

*Local Footpath Network to the South (Photoviewpoints 10, 11, 18 and 19)*

- 10.96 Demolition and construction activities would be visible in views from the nearby footpaths to the south (Photoviewpoints 10, 18 and 19). However, due to the screening vegetation within these views it is not considered that the construction phase would constitute a dominant or even prominent feature within them. Whilst demolition of the recreation area and domestic area would perhaps be apparent, the most prominent area is the airmen's bungalows sector which would remain largely unchanged. Moreover, as discussed previously, the clear delineation between the confines of the base and the wider countryside means that any demolition and construction within views from these footpaths would be seen within the boundaries of the base and as part of its redevelopment context and not as an intrusion into undeveloped countryside. The magnitude of change to these receptors on local footpaths to the south would be low leading to direct, short term, **adverse impact of minor significance**.

*Local Footpath Network to the North, East and West*

- 10.97 Views from the local footpath network to the north, east and west would not be affected as a result of the construction phase due to screening topography and vegetation.

*Caulcott Village and the B4020 (Photoviewpoints 12 and 20)*

- 10.98 It is only the upper reaches of demolition and construction that would be visible from the village of Caulcott to the south due to the screening effect of vegetation, both on the boundary of the Site and intervening field hedgerows. The most visible sector of the Site from this location is the airmen's bungalows although these buildings would largely remained unchanged during the construction phase.
- 10.99 A mature woody hedgerow lines the B4020 and traffic on the road is usually travelling at speed. As a result, views of the Site are limited to fleeting views through breaks in the hedgerow, usually through field gateways. Views beyond the B4020 within Caulcott hamlet itself are not possible.
- 10.100 In light of the above, impacts to receptors at Caulcott and those on the B4020 are assessed to be direct, short term of **negligible significance**.

*Upper Heyford Village*

- 10.101 Due to the topography, falling away from the Site, views of the demolition and construction phase are not possible from the village. **No impacts** would therefore occur to visual receptors at this location.

*The River Cherwell*

- 10.102 Views of the Site are not possible from the River Cherwell due to the low-lying topography and the slope of gradient which screens views. **No impacts** are therefore predicted to receptors on or in the vicinity of the river.

*Steeple Ashton, Middle Ashton, North Ashton and the A4260 (Photoviewpoints 13, 14, 15 and 17)*

- 10.103 Views of the Site are possible from Steeple Ashton and Middle Ashton (Photoviewpoints 13 and 14) although views are often truncated as these settlements are deeply nestled within the western flanks of the valley. From these locations it is only the water towers of the airbase that can be seen with any clarity, and construction activities within the Site would likely be indiscernible. Therefore direct, short term **impacts of negligible significance** are concluded for receptors in this area.
- 10.104 The A4260 is a main A road linking Oxford to Banbury. Traffic on it often travels at speed although there are a number of sections where the vegetation lining the road wanes and expansive, open views over the countryside to the east is possible. The water towers of the airbase are visible, although at this distance, the former Airbase and the Site would be largely indiscernible. The significance of impact to receptors on the A4260 is therefore concluded to be direct, short term of **negligible significance**.

*Rousham Park (Photoviewpoint 16)*

- 10.105 Due to distance from the Site and intervening vegetation the construction phase would not be visible from Rousham Park or its parkland (Photoviewpoint 16). **No impacts** would occur to this receptor as a result of the demolition and construction phase.

## Completed Development

- 10.106 This section considers the likely effects on the landscape character and visual amenity as a result of the Development once completed. All impacts identified are anticipated to be long term in nature, lasting for the lifespan of the Development.
- 10.107 The Development involves the redevelopment of the majority of the Settlement Area with new built form, notably the recreation area, the domestic and residential area and the technical area. These areas would consist of new built form, areas of open space and associated access and infrastructure, regenerating areas that are currently falling into decline and disrepair. Taller elements of the Development (buildings of 3 and 4 storeys) are concentrated within the core of the Site, restricting their visibility from outside of the Site whilst the demolition of taller buildings at the periphery, such as the dormitory block, gym complex and chimney of building 467, would reduce the intrusion of the Site at present into neighbouring countryside (and indeed dwellings within the airmen's housing area – refer to Photoviewpoint 2). The retention of buildings of value and the intention to retain as many mature trees as possible adds maturity to the Development and provides a historical connection to the past importance of the former Airbase.
- 10.108 The area of former airmen's housing, the bungalows area and the former officers married quarters area would remain largely unchanged in form. Moreover, the general renovation of retained historic buildings across the Site is considered positive, bringing currently worn and in some cases vacant and derelict built form back into useful employment.
- 10.109 Importantly, the enhancement of the interface along Site's southern boundary is proposed through new structure planting. In combination with the demolition of taller buildings currently extant, the impact the Site has over neighbouring countryside to the south, including its prominence in views from Caulcott, would be reduced.

## Landscape Character

### *Character of the Site*

- 10.110 The character of the Site itself would alter considerably as old buildings are either demolished or refurbished and new built form and areas of public open space are created although it is recognised that some areas within the Site would experience more change than others. Nonetheless the overall 'demilitarisation' of the Site, whilst retaining links to its important historical past, is considered beneficial as currently jaded and declining areas are regenerated and a more welcoming 'community' sense of place is established. The magnitude of change is assessed to be medium to very high leading to direct, long term, and **beneficial impact of medium to high significance** to the character of the Site.
- 10.111 For further discussion and assessment as to the impacts to individual character areas of the Site and the setting of important historical buildings within it, please refer to **Chapter 11**.

### Remaining Character of the Upper Heyford RAF Base

- 10.112 Character beyond the Site boundary within the RAF base, namely the Flying Field area and the school area would remain largely unchanged as, owing to their military planning, are relatively compartmentalised, although direct, long term **negligible** improvements to the setting of their character may be expected.

### Neighbouring Character Areas

- 10.113 Character areas adjacent to the Site are the most likely to benefit from the Development. As considered previously, the strengthening of the southern boundary would improve the interface between the Site at present and the surrounding countryside leading to a more harmonistic transition between the two. The magnitude of change to LCA17: Caulcott Plateau is assessed as medium resulting in direct, long term **beneficial impact of low significance** to the character of this LCA.
- 10.114 LCAs 15 and 18 are anticipated to experience no change to their character due to their distance from the Site. Direct, long term **impact of negligible significance** is therefore concluded for these areas.
- 10.115 Character areas further from the Site, namely those not addressed specifically above, would not experience any change to their character due to distance from the Site. The impact to these LCAs is therefore found to be of **negligible significance**.

### Visual Amenity

- 10.116 As with landscape character, it is visual receptors within, and close to, the Site that would experience most change as a result of the Development. Overall, the Development would be less conspicuous and less visually intrusive than at present, improving the visual amenity for those within the area.

### *Views From Within the Site (Photoviewpoints 1, 2, 3 and 4)*

- 10.117 Views from within the Site would experience substantial change as new built form and open space replace old utilitarian structures. However, the exact amount of change is likely to vary considerably between different areas of the Site, dependent on location within it. The magnitude of change to the visual amenity of receptors within the technical area and recreation area, where most change would occur, is considered to be very high resulting in direct, long term and **beneficial impact of minor significance**.
- 10.118 From within the airmen's bungalow housing area (Photoviewpoint 2), where existing private dwellings are overshadowed by the dominant 3 storey dormitory buildings, **direct, long term and beneficial impact of high significance** is expected due to the removal of this feature and the creation of new areas of public open space.
- 10.119 Other currently residential areas, such as the RAF married quarters residential area, to east of the Site is relatively self contained and would experience low levels of change as a result of improvements to localised views. Therefore direct, long term and **beneficial impacts of minor to moderate significance** is predicted for these receptors.

### *Leys Farm and Cheeseman's Barns (Photoviewpoint 10)*

- 10.120 Filtered views from these private properties are possible towards the southern boundary of the Site where the strengthening of structure planting along the boundary and demolition of taller elements of the existing built form is considered to result in medium magnitude of change at this location. Consequently, direct, long term **beneficial impact of minor to moderate significance** would occur to the visual amenity of these private dwellings as a result of the Development.

*Local Footpath Network to the South (Photoviewpoints 10, 11, 18 and 19)*

- 10.121 The demolition of taller elements of the Site visible in these views and the strengthening of the southern boundary through structure planting as a result of the Development would enhance the visual amenity from these footpaths. Although built form may still be visible from these locations, it would be less visibly intrusive creating a greater sense of rurality and enhancing the recreational experience available from these footpaths. The refurbishment of the airmen's bungalows would improve views that may be possible of built form until enhancement planting is established and matured. It is worthy of note that landmark features, such as the water towers, lie outside the Site boundary and would remain, retaining curiosity within the view. The magnitude of change to receptors on these footpaths as a result of the Development is assessed to be low to high resulting in direct, long term **beneficial impacts** of **minor** to **high beneficial significance**.

*Local Footpath Network to the North, East and West*

- 10.122 Views from the local footpath network to the north, east and west would not be affected as a result of the completed Development due to screening topography and vegetation.

*Caulcott Village and the B4020 (Photoviewpoints 12 and 20)*

- 10.123 The built form of the Development would be less apparent and conspicuous than that at present within views from Caulcott and the B4020. Due to the strengthening of the southern boundary, at this distance, it is likely that only the upper storeys and rooflines would be visible from these locations. The magnitude of change to receptors at these locations is assessed to be low to medium resulting in direct, long term and **beneficial impacts** of **minor** to **moderate significance**.

*Upper Heyford Village*

- 10.124 Due to the topography, views of the Development would not be possible from the village. **No impacts** would therefore occur to visual receptors at this location.

*The River Cherwell*

- 10.125 Views of the Site are not possible from the River Cherwell due to the low-lying topography and the slope of gradient which would screen views of the Development. **No impacts** are therefore predicted to receptors on or in the vicinity of the river.

*Steeple Ashton, Middle Ashton, North Ashton and the A4260 (Photoviewpoints 13, 14, 15 and 17)*

- 10.126 Due to distance and intervening vegetation, the Site itself is not clearly discernible from Steeple Ashton, Middle Ashton, North Ashton and the western flank of the Cherwell River valley in general (Photoviewpoints 13, 14 and 15). The Development is likely to blend into the existing context and be largely indiscernible. The water towers, acting as distinct landmarks within views, would remain. No perceptible change to views is expected leading to direct, long term **impact** of **negligible significance** to the visual amenity of receptors at these locations.
- 10.127 Despite occasional open views towards the Site from the A4260, at this distance the Site is largely indiscernible (Photoviewpoints 13 and 17). The water towers would remain as distinct landmarks within these views. The significance of impact to receptors on the A4260 is therefore concluded to be direct, long term and of **negligible significance**.

### *Rousham Park (Photoviewpoint 16)*

- 10.128 Due to distance from the Site and intervening vegetation the Development would not be visible from Rousham Park or its parkland (Photoviewpoint 16). Even in winter when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf views of the Development would be hidden from view by the topography. **No impacts** would occur to this receptor as a result of the completed Development although it is of note that the water towers would still be visible, acting as distinct landmarks to the former Airbase in the view.

## **Mitigation Measures and Residual Impacts**

### **Demolition and Construction Phase**

- 10.129 The following mitigation measures should be adopted to avoid and/or reduce any adverse impacts to the character and visual amenity that may occur during the demolition and construction phase. Due to the extensive nature of demolition and construction a number of adverse impacts would occur to the landscape and visual amenity of the Site and its immediate environs. The significance of these could be limited by implementing the following strategies:
- tactical phasing of the Development to minimise disruption to areas that can continue to function as normally as possible during demolition and construction activities;
  - adopting a Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) to ensure good Site management and housekeeping;
  - adopting dust and noise avoidance measures (such as wheel washes) to limit the intrusion of construction activities on local environs;
  - careful siting of construction machinery, materials and welfare facilities to avoid unnecessary intrusion, particularly privacy wise into adjacent areas; and
  - erecting semi-temporary wooden hoarding around construction areas to clearly delineate working areas.

### **Completed Development**

- 10.130 Iterative design has been integral as part of the development process to ensure that the Development respects, is sensitive to and ultimately enhances the existing character context. Central to this is the 'demilitarisation' of the Site where not of historical value to create a more liveable and welcoming character setting. New planting and areas of green public open space are paramount to this aim and should be pursued zealously to ensure that a high quality, sustainable new community is achieved. Other mitigation measures should include:
- the retention of mature trees, avenue trees and areas of green space currently extant within the Site where possible, most notably within the technical area;
  - the retention of historic buildings (where possible) that contribute to the historical context of the Site and also act as attractive local landmark buildings within it. Means for their interpretation of their importance (such as interpretation boards and plaques) should be encouraged;
  - the removal of militaristic, utilitarian buildings and structures that are not of significant historical value and that do not contribute positively to the character of the Site or visual amenity at present;
  - the phased removal of functional screening species within and along the boundaries of the Site and enhancement through replanting of native structure planting; and

- the creation of new 'natural' habitat areas for the encouragement of wildlife and conservation (refer to Green Infrastructure Plan).

10.131 Although impacts would likely be reduced as a result of the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above, they are not considered to reduce the overall significance of impact from that previously identified. Therefore residual impacts would be likely to remain the same as those concluded in the absence of mitigation measures.

## **Conclusions**








10.132 The Development would result in the comprehensive redevelopment of the Settlement Area of the former Airbase. Inevitably this would result in adverse impacts during the demolition and construction phase due to comprehensive nature of works required. However, any significant impacts to the character and visual amenity during the construction phase are anticipated to be restricted the Site itself and its immediate environs. Even from local footpaths to the south, where open views of the Site are possible, construction activities would not constitute a prominent feature of views.

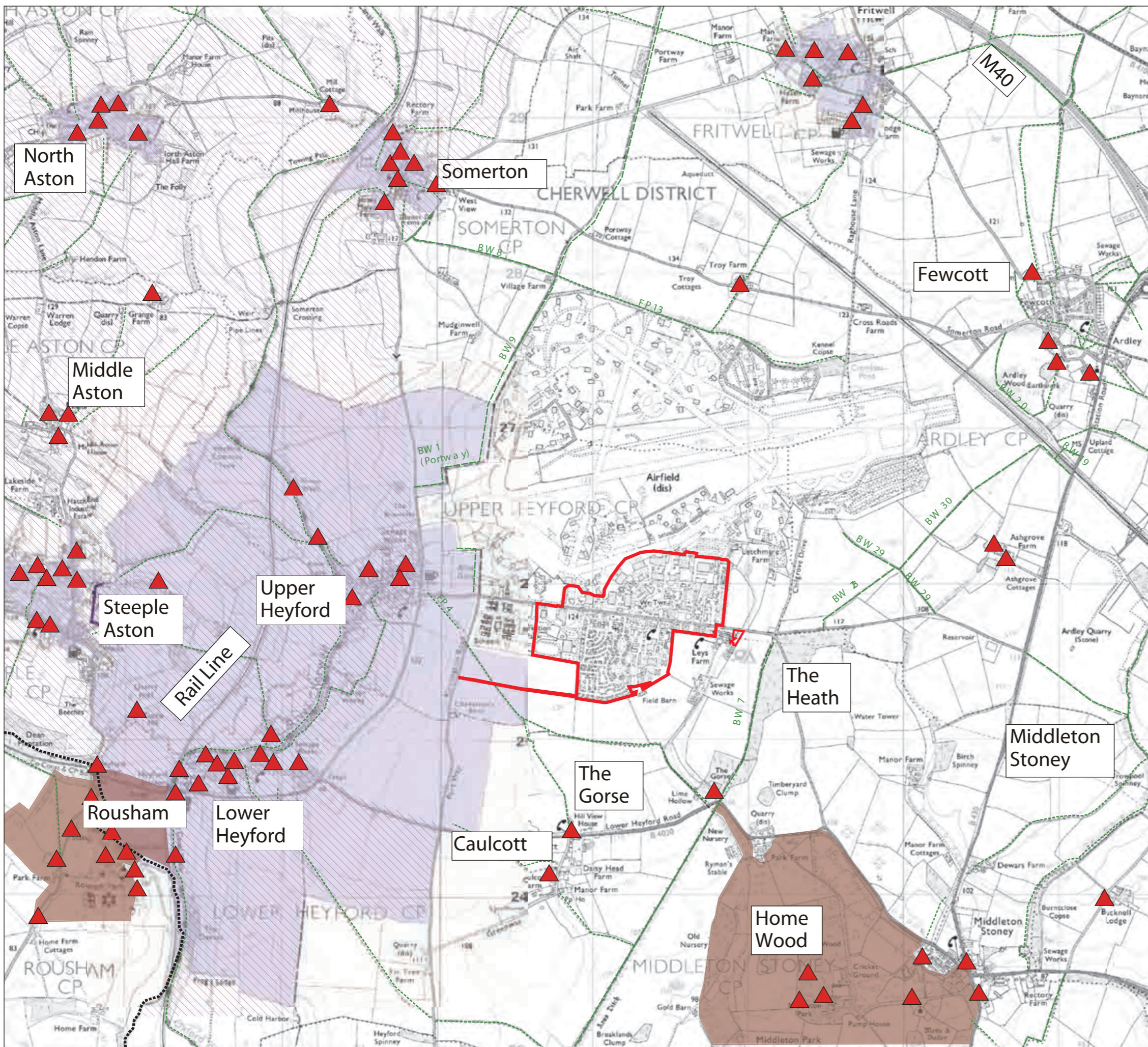
10.133 In relation to landscape character, the demolition of jaded and vacant utilitarian buildings which do not contribute positively to the character of the Site is considered beneficial. Character of neighbouring areas, notably adjacent countryside, would experience limited visual intrusion due to screening by vegetation.

10.134 The completed development is anticipated to result in a comprehensive change to the character of the Site as currently utilitarian and intimidating built form is replaced by new community led residential and open space. Due to its compartmentalisation, other areas of the former Airbase would experience negligible impacts. The character of other areas adjacent to the Site would experience some improvement whilst those further away would experience negligible impact.

10.135 In relation to visual amenity it is receptors within the Site and in its vicinity to the south that would experience the greatest amount of change. Overall the Development is considered to improve the amenity of views, reducing the intrusion of built form and creating a more natural transition between the Site and surrounding countryside. As such, enhancements are predicted to views from within the Site and from local footpaths and dwellings at Caulcott. At further distances, such as from Upper Heyford, Rousham Park and the Cherwell River valley, the Site becomes indiscernible and negligible impacts are predicted.

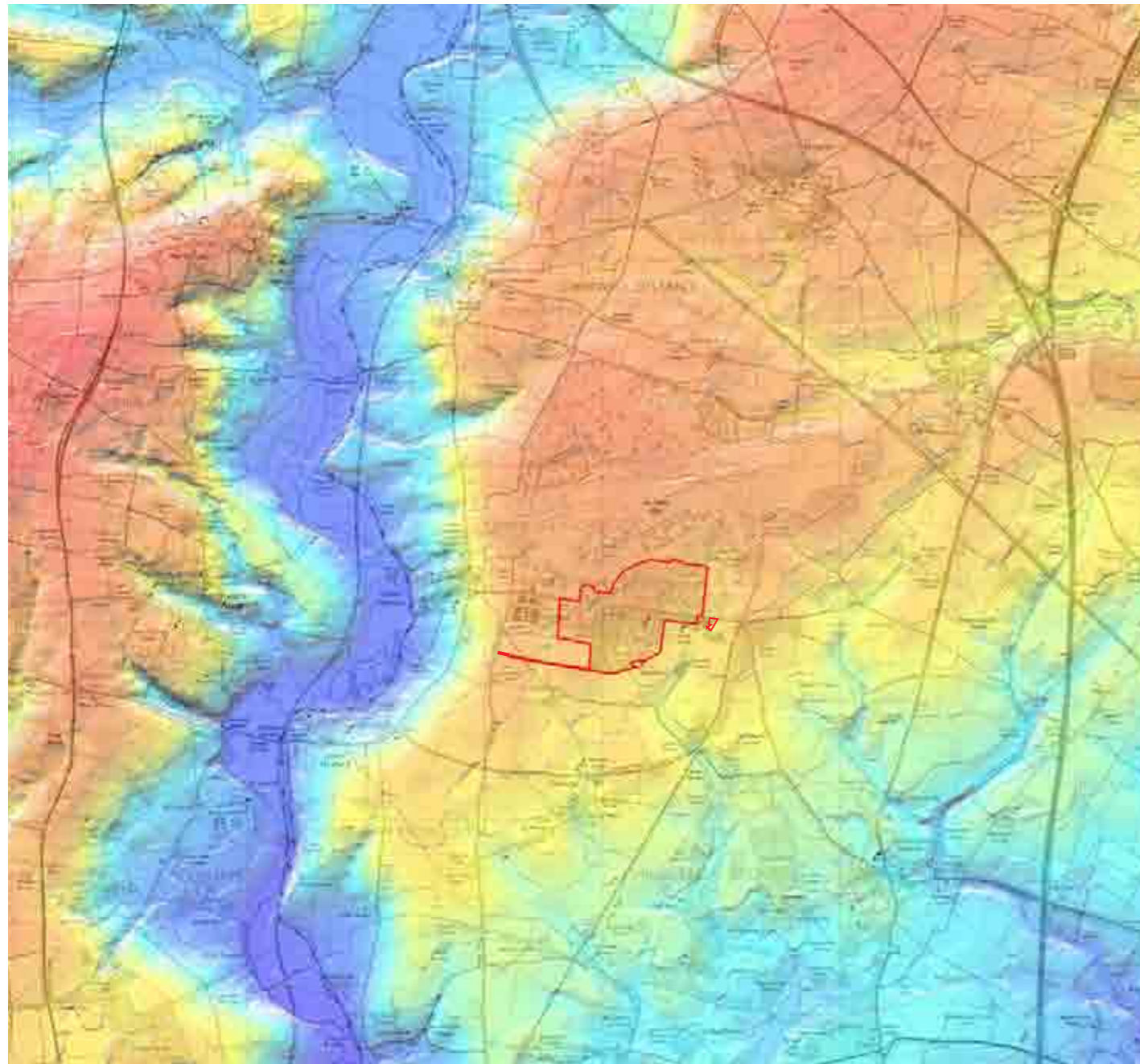
Notes:  
 1. Taken from Cherwell District Local Plan Adopted November 1996  
 2. Taken from Oxfordshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record  
 3. Taken from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, Oxfordshire County Council Licence No. LA076805

-  Planning Application Boundary
-  Local Authority Boundary
-  Conservation Area (Note 1)
-  Area of High Landscape Value
-  Historic Parks and Gardens (Note 1 & 2)
-  Listed Buildings (Note 2)
-  Existing Right of Way

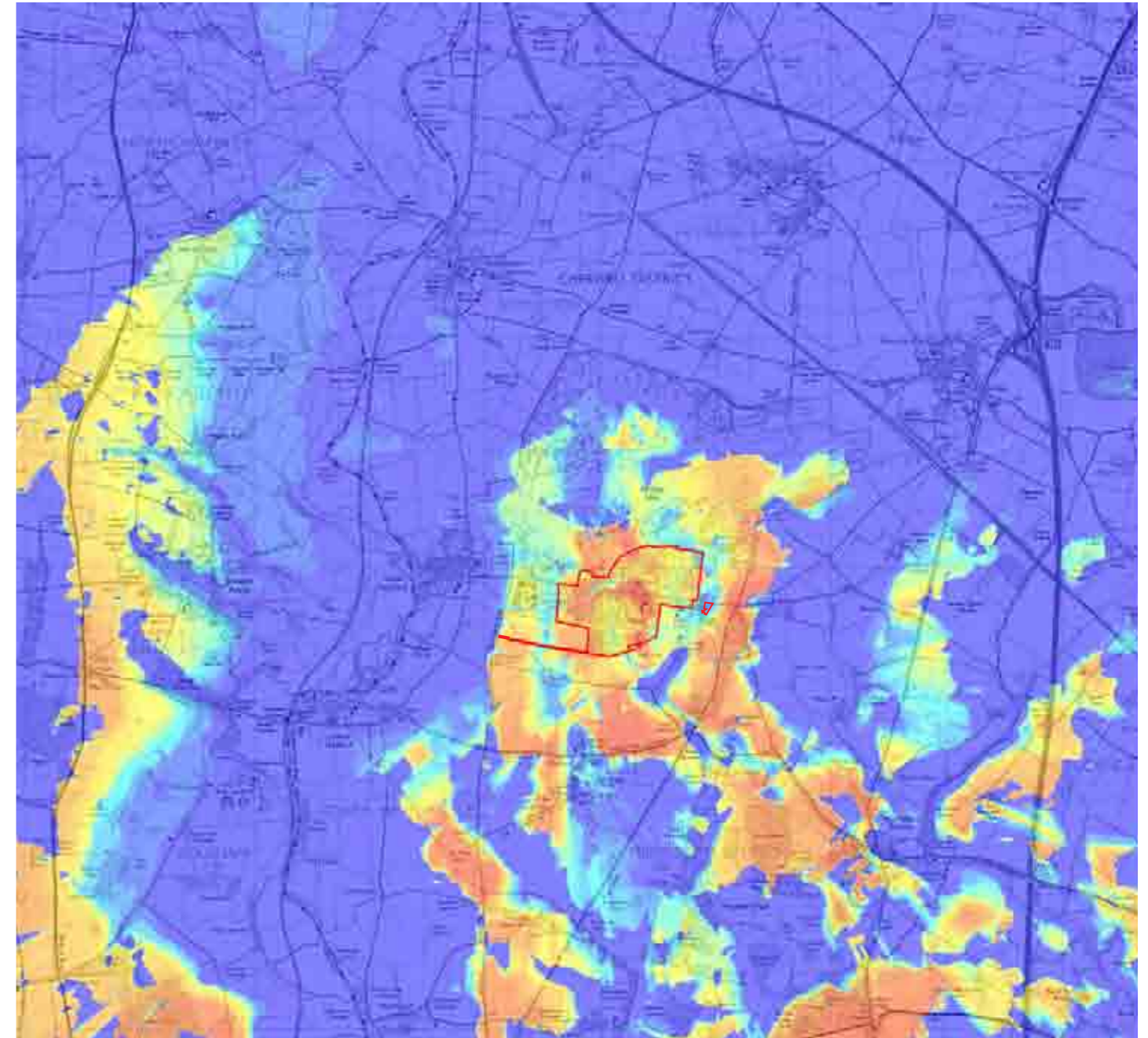


Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.1A: Landscape Planning Context
Figure Ref	E10738-100_GR_LVIA_10.1A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-hp2weed\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures

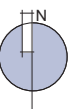
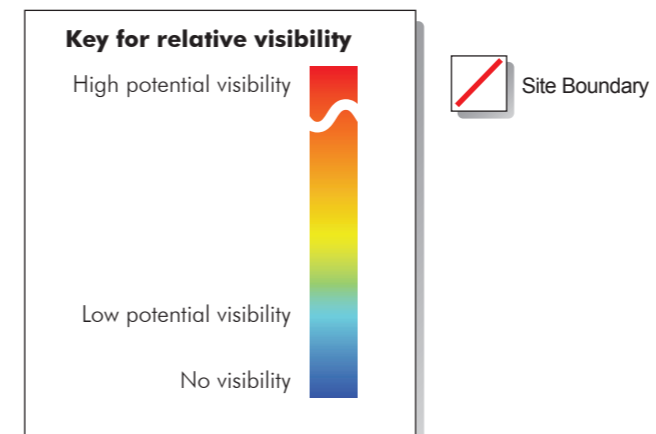




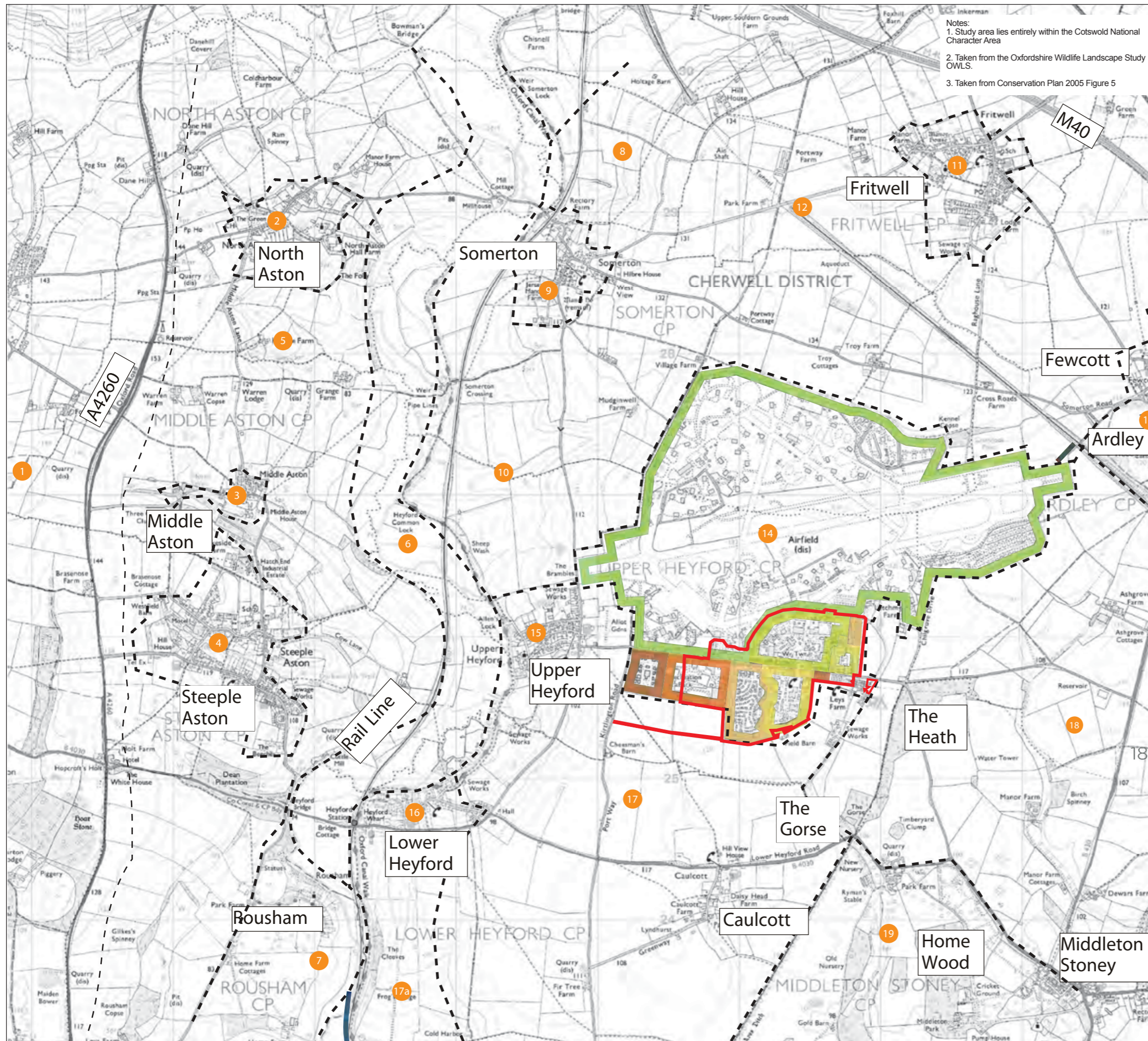
Topography



Visual Analysis - GIS Analysis of Visual Envelope



Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.2: GIS Analysis
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.2A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lmpg2\weed\projects\10658\103\graphics\lp\issued figures



Planning Application Boundary

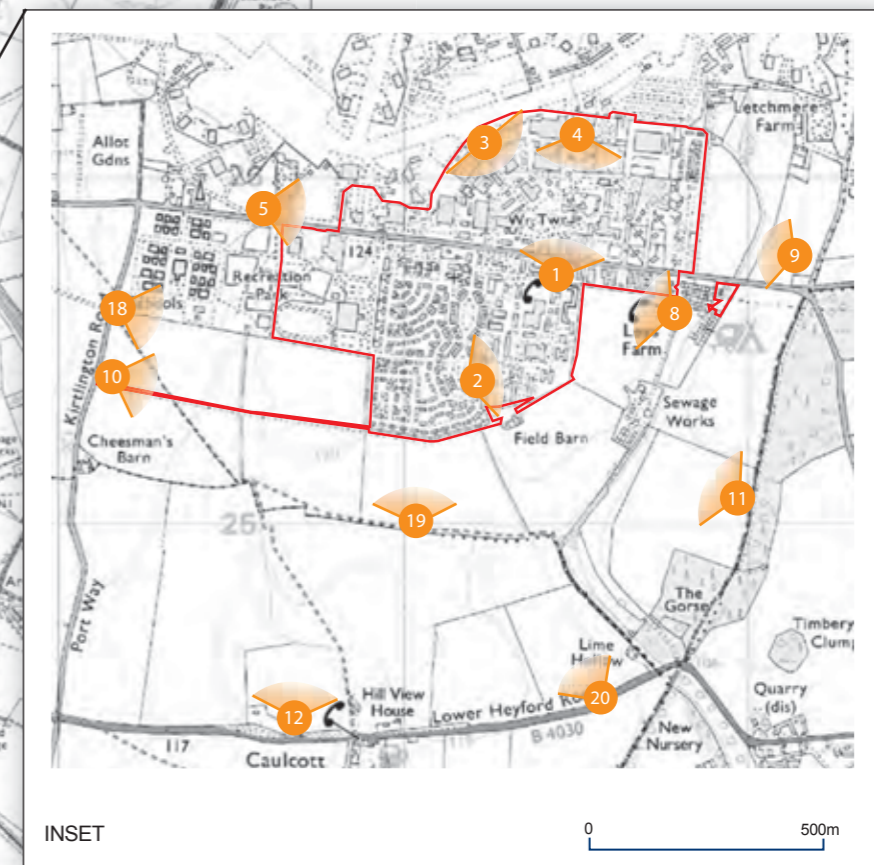
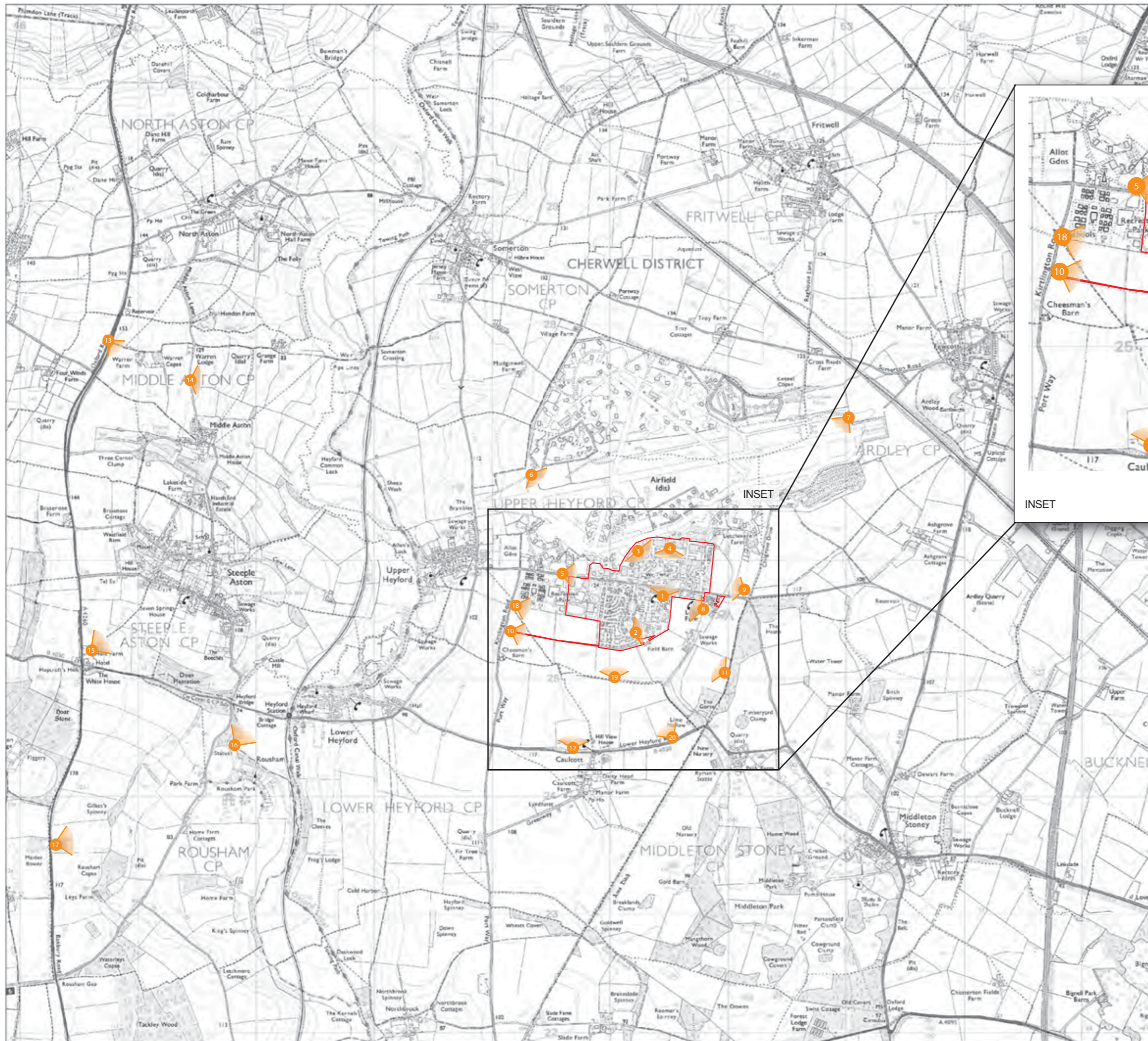
**County Character Areas:**



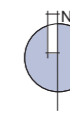
- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Local Character Areas (See Note 2) | Fritwell                     |
| Cherwell Ridge                     | Fritwell Plateau             |
| North Aston                        | Ardley-Fewcott               |
| Middle Aston                       | Upper Heyford Airbase        |
| Steeple Aston                      | Upper Heyford                |
| Aston Slopes                       | Lower Heyford                |
| Cherwell Valley Floor              | Caulcott Plateau             |
| Rousham                            | Caulcott Plateau Edge        |
| Somerton-Souldern Slopes           | Middleton Stoney Estatelands |
| Somerton                           | Middleton Stoney Park        |
| Mudginwell Slopes                  |                              |

**Site Specific Character Areas (See note 3)**

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Flying Field                          | Airmans Housing and Bungalows                 |
| Technical Site                        | Service and Recreational Area                 |
| RAF Officers Married Residential Area | School and other Area Prefabricated Buildings |
| RAF Domestic and Residential Quarters |   |

<b>Project Details</b>	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
<b>Figure Title</b>	Figure 10.3: Landscape Character Area's
<b>Figure Ref</b>	E10658-100_GR_NTS_10.3
<b>Date</b>	October 2010
<b>File Location</b>	\\nt-lmpg2weed\projects\10658\103\graphics\lva\issued figures



-  Site Boundary
-  Photoviewpoint Location
- 

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.4: Photoviewpoint Locations
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.4A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lngp2weed\projects\10658\100\graphics\lvia\issued\figures



Photoviewpoint 1: View from Camp Road within the site adjacent to the gatehouse main entrance roundabout looking north. Military buildings adjacent to Camp Road can be seen although extensive views across the site are not possible due to vegetation lining the road.

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Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.5: Photosheet 1
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.5A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lhpg2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures



Photoviewpoint 2: View from Harris Road within the site looking north east. The residential dormitories of the RAF domestic section tower over the smaller scale bungalows of the airmen's housing area. The interface between the two is softened to a small degree by mature vegetation.



Photoviewpoint 3: View from the within the site looking southeast towards the gatehouse main entrance. Tree lined boulevards create vistas through the site limiting views in combination with surrounding built form.

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.6: Photosheet 2 and 3
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.6A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lnp2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures



Photoviewpoint 4: View from within the site looking south towards the gatehouse main entrance. A long, tree-lined vista towards the gatehouse is created along the road. Views over the site are restricted.

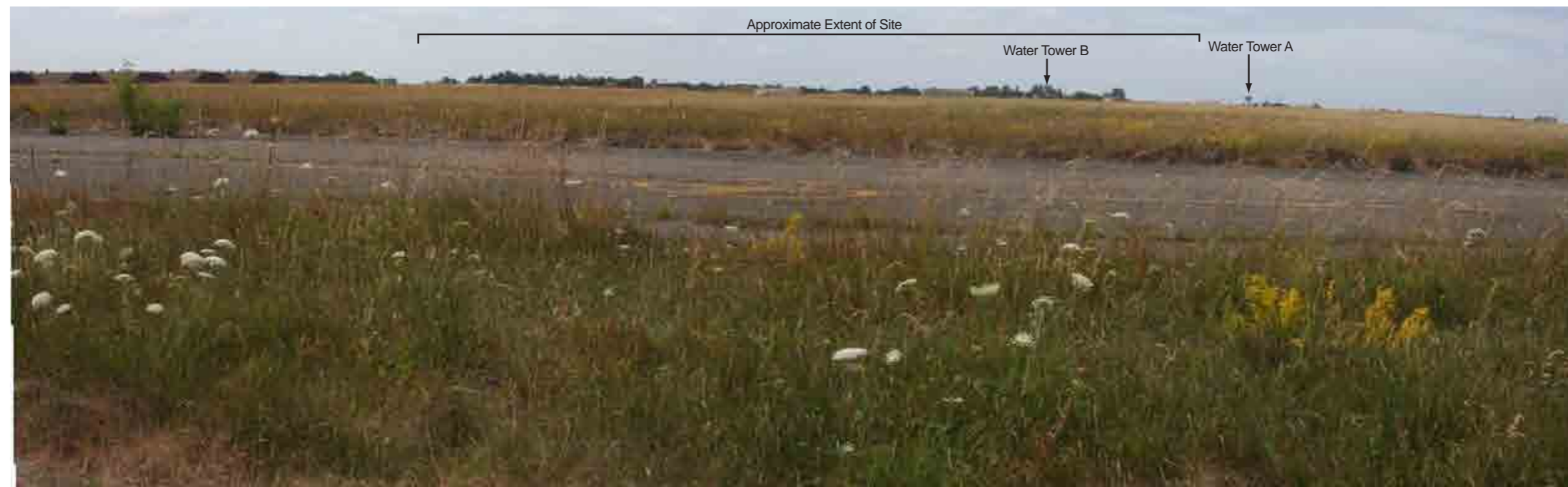


Photoviewpoint 5: View from Camp Road adjacent to the site looking east across the site. The recreational area and airmen's housing area is visible to the south whilst views further across the site are restricted by topography and vegetation lining Camp Road.

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.7: Photosheet 4 and 5
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.7A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lnp2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures



Photoviewpoint 6: View from the flying field area looking southeast towards the site. The roofs of hangers and other ancillary buildings are visible whilst the water towers act as landmarks within the view. The site is not visible as it is screened by intervening structures.



Photoviewpoint 7: View from the flying field area looking southwest towards the site. The water towers are just visible although the majority of the airfield, including the site, tends to merge with the horizon due to distance and topography. The site is not discernible from this location.

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.8: Photosheet 6 and 7
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.8A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lmpg2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures

Approximate Extent of Site



Photoviewpoint 8: View from Leys Farm looking west towards the site. The mature vegetative boundary surrounding the perimeter of the RAF domestic section screens views of the site from this location although the upper storeys and rooflines of some buildings on the periphery of this area are visible.

Approximate Extent of Site



Photoviewpoint 9: View from the junction of Chilgrove Drive with Camp Road looking west toward the site. A small section of Camp Road is visible in the middle ground. The mature vegetative boundary surrounding Larsen Road restricts views into the site although a break in the vegetation allows a glimpse through to the site.

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.9: Photosheet 8 and 9
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.9A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lmpg2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures





Photoviewpoint 10: View from Kirtlington Road looking east toward the site. The school and recreational sections of the RAF base are visible in the middle ground of the view although other sections tend to merge within the existing vegetation. The water towers act as prominent landmarks for the site.

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Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.10: Photosheet 10
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.10A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lhpg2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures



Photoviewpoint 11: View from the bridleway (Ref. No. 7) near 'The Heath' looking northwest toward the site. The mature vegetation along the eastern boundary of the site limits views from nearby environs although the rooflines of some buildings within the RAF domestic section and Water Tower B can be seen.

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Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.11: Photosheet 11
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.11A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lhpg2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures



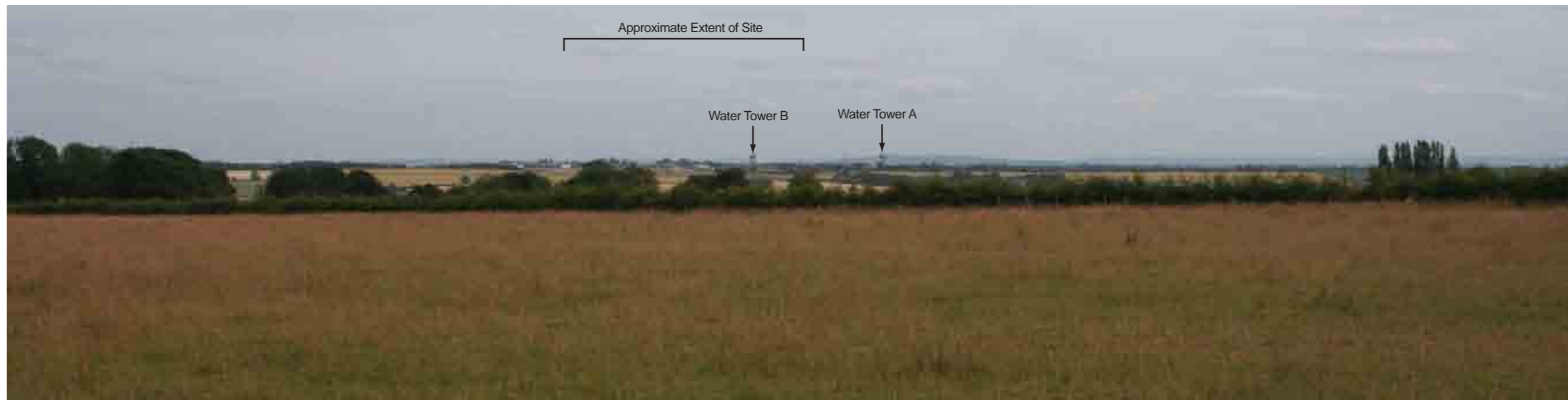
Photoviewpoint 12: View from Hill Cottage, Caulcott looking north toward the site. Southern sections of the site, in particular the airmen's housing area, can be seen in the middle ground. Taller elements of the RAF base, such as the water towers and chimney stack act as distinct landmarks within the view.

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Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.12: Photosheet 12
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.12A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lmpg2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures

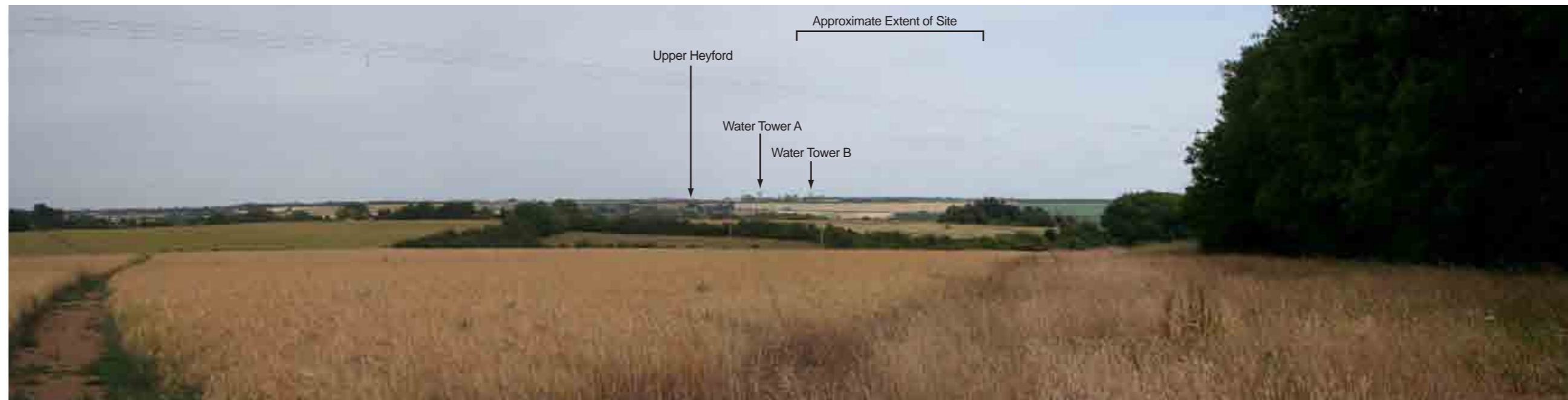


Photoviewpoint 13: View from the footpath adjacent to the pumping station on the A4260 looking east toward the site. The water towers act as landmarks to the site and some of the larger hangars of the flying field can be seen. However, the site itself is indiscernible at this distance.



Photoviewpoint 14: View from Middle Aston Lane looking east toward the site. The water towers act as landmarks to the site although the site itself is indiscernible at this distance.

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.13: Photosheet 13 & 14
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.13A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lnp2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures



Photoviewpoint 15: View from the footpath near 'The Holt Hotel' looking northwest toward the site. The water towers act as landmarks to the site although the site itself is indiscernible at this distance.



Photoviewpoint 16: View from Rousham Park adjacent to 'The Dying Gladiator' looking northeast toward the site. Water Tower A acts a landmark for the site although the site itself is indiscernible.

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.14: Photosheet 15 & 16
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.14A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lmpg2\weed\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures



Photoviewpoint 17: View from the lay-by near Maiden Bower on the A4260 looking northeast toward the site. The water towers are just discernible at this distance although the site itself is not.



Photoviewpoint 18: View from the footpath at the junction with Kirtlington Road looking east toward the Site. The domineering concrete post and wire mesh fence forms an abrupt and intimidating boundary to the Site whilst the recreational area can also be clearly seen. Other residential areas within the Site are less conspicuous. Views further into the Site are not possible.

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.15: Photosheet 17 & 18
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.15A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lmpg2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures



Photoviewpoint 19: View from the footpath running towards the Gorse from Kirtlington Road looking north toward the Site. Taller elements of the airbase, such as the water towers and chimney, act as landmarks within the view. The airmen's housing and bungalows is also prominent whilst the upper storeys of the dormitory buildings can also be seen. Views further into the Site are not possible.



Photoviewpoint 20: View from the B4030 looking north toward the Site. The taller elements of the airfield act as distinct landmarks within the view whilst the rooflines of the airmen's bungalow housing is also visible. Views further into the majority of the Site are not possible. Views along this stretch of road are limited to glimpses through breaks in the hedgerow.

Project Details	E10658-103: Upper Heyford
Figure Title	Figure 10.16: Photosheet 19 & 20
Figure Ref	E10658-103_GR_LVIA_10.16A
Date	July 2010
File Location	\\nt-lmpg2\weedl\projects\10658\103\graphics\lvia\issued figures