

CALA HOMES (MIDLANDS) LTD

aspect  
landscape planning

LAND AT SOUTH LODGE,  
FRINGFORD ROAD, CAVERSFIELD, BICESTER

PINS Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/A/13/2208385

Application Ref: 13/01056/OUT

**Landscape & Visual Proof of Evidence**

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**APPENDICES KC1 - KC7**

FEBRUARY 2014

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**APPENDIX KC 1**  
LVIA Methodology

ASPECT LANDSCAPE PLANNING LTD  
**LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

- 1.1. The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment have jointly published Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment Third Edition (2013) that gives guidance on carrying out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), either as a standalone appraisal or part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This methodology takes on board the above guidance.
- 1.2. When assessing character within an urban context, this methodology can be applied to Townscape Assessments and how the development will affect the elements that make up the townscape and its distinctive character.
- 1.3. The main stages of the LVIA process are outlined below. This process will identify and assess the potential effects of a development on the landscape resource and the visual environment.

1. Baseline study

Landscape

- Define the scope of the assessment.
  
- Outline the planning policy context, including any landscape designations.
  
- Establish the landscape baseline through a site visit and an assessment of published Landscape Character Assessments to identify the value of the landscape resource (receptor), at community, local, national or international levels where appropriate.

Visual

- Define the scope of the assessment.
  
- Identify the extent of visual receptors within the study area, with the use of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) where appropriate, and establish the number and sensitivity of the representative viewpoint and/or groups of people (receptors) within the study area whose views may be altered as a result of the proposals.

2. Project description

The baseline study highlights clear opportunities and constraints for the integration of the proposals into the receiving environment. The aspects of the scheme at each phase that will potentially give rise to effects on the landscape and visual amenity will need identifying. At this time, the proposals can be modified to ensure that further mitigation measures are incorporated into the design as a response to the local landscape and visual environment.

3. Description of Effects

The level of effect on both landscape and visual receptors should be identified in respect of the different components of the proposed development. In order to assess the significance of the effect on the receiving environment, it is necessary to consider the **magnitude**, i.e. the degree of change, together with the **sensitivity** of the receptor.

This will identify whether the effects are:

Adverse or Beneficial - beneficial effects would typically occur where a development could positively contribute to the landscape character or view. Neutral effects would include changes that neither add nor detract from the quality and character of an area or view. Adverse effects would typically occur where there is loss of landscape elements, or the proposal detracts from the landscape quality and character of an area or view.

Direct or Indirect – A direct effect will be one where a development will affect a view or the character of an area, either beneficially or adversely. An indirect effect will occur as a result of associated development i.e. a development may result in an increase of traffic on a particular route.

Short, Medium or Long Term – this relates to the expected duration and magnitude of a development. Within this assessment the potential effects are assessed during the Construction Phase, then at Years 1 and 10, following completion of the development.

Reversible or Irreversible – can the resulting effect of a development be mitigated or not, and whether the result of the mitigation is beneficial or adverse.

4. Significance of Effects (EIA only)



A final judgment on whether the effect is likely to be significant, as required by the Regulations. The summary should draw out the key issues and outline the scope for reducing any negative/ adverse effects. Mitigation measures need to be identified that may reduce the final judgement on the significance of any residual negative effects in the long term.

Assessing the significance of effects

**Landscape Sensitivity**

- 1.4. The sensitivity of a particular landscape in relation to new development is categorised as very high, high, medium, low or negligible. This takes into account the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of development proposed and the value attributed to the existing landscape. The following table explains each threshold and the factors that make up the degree of sensitivity.

**Table 1: Landscape Sensitivity Thresholds**

Sensitivity	Definition
<b>Very High</b>	Landscape resource where there is a very high susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of high value, have a high degree of intimacy, strong landscape structure, a high sense of intactness and contain features worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a high proportion of historic assets. Typical examples may be Nationally designated e.g. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Heritage Coasts, AONB's etc.
<b>High</b>	Landscape resource where there is a high susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be considered of high value, have a high degree of intimacy, strong landscape structure, relatively intact and contain features worthy of protection. Townscapes may include a high proportion of historic assets. Typical examples may be of Regional or County importance e.g. within the setting of National Parks, AONB's, Conservation Areas etc.
<b>Medium</b>	Landscape resource where there is a medium susceptibility to change. Landscapes would be medium scale, good landscape structure, with some detracting features or evidence of recent change. Townscapes may include a proportion of historic assets or of cultural value locally. Typical examples may be designated for their value at District level.

<b>Low</b>	Landscape resource where there is a low susceptibility to change. Typical landscapes would be of local landscape interest, and contain evidence of previous landscape change.
<b>Negligible</b>	Landscape resource where there is little or no susceptibility to change. Typical landscapes are likely to be degraded, of weak landscape structure, intensive land uses, and require landscape restoration.

**Visual Sensitivity**

- 1.5. The sensitivity of the visual receptor will be assessed against the magnitude of visual change, and is categorised as very high, high, medium, low or negligible. Factors affecting the visual sensitivity will be assessed on whether there will be a loss of views of visual amenity.

**Table 2: Visual Sensitivity Thresholds**

Sensitivity	Definition
<b>Very High</b>	Viewers within high quality landscapes on national trails or long distance routes whose prime focus is on the scenic quality of the landscape around, and are often very aware of its value. Examples include viewers within nationally designated landscapes such as National Parks or AONB's.
<b>High</b>	Viewers on public rights of way whose prime focus is on the quality of the landscape around, or occupiers of residential properties with primary views affected by the development. Examples include viewers within regional/local landscape designations, or the setting of a listed building.
<b>Medium</b>	Viewers on public rights of way whose attention may be focused on the landscape, often within low/moderate quality landscapes. Examples include viewers within accessible open spaces and countryside, and occupiers of residential properties with oblique views affected by the development.
<b>Low</b>	Viewers passing through or past the area or those engaged in outdoor recreation other than appreciation of the landscape. Examples include outdoor sport activities, outdoor tourist attractions, rail passengers and road users.
<b>Negligible</b>	Viewers whose attention is focused on their work or activity, and not susceptible to changes in the surrounding landscape.

**Effect Magnitude**

- 1.6. The magnitude of change relates to the degree in which proposed development alters the fabric of the landscape character or view. This change is categorised as very high, high, medium, low, or negligible.

**Table 3: Magnitude of Change**

Magnitude	Effect Definition
<b>Very High</b>	Change resulting in a significant degree of deterioration or improvement, or introduction of dominant new elements that are considered to make a major alteration to a landscape or view.
<b>High</b>	Change resulting in a high degree of deterioration or improvement, or introduction of recognisable new components that may be prominent within a landscape or view.
<b>Medium</b>	Change resulting in a moderate degree of deterioration or improvement, or constitutes a noticeable change within a landscape or view.
<b>Low</b>	Change resulting in a low degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view, or constitutes only a minor component within a landscape or view.
<b>Negligible</b>	Change resulting in a barely perceptible degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view.
<b>No Change</b>	It is also possible for a landscape or view to experience no change due to being totally compatible with the local character or not visible due to intervening structures or vegetation.

**Significance Threshold**

- 1.7. The magnitude of change is then considered against the sensitivity of the landscape resource as a receptor or the existing character of the panorama / view. In formulating the significance of effect, reasoned professional judgement is required which is explained within the assessment. This is carried out both in terms of the predicted effects on landscape character or on visual amenities. The significance

thresholds are predicted as Substantial, Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible and None, and can be either beneficial or adverse. Unless otherwise stated, all effects are predicted in the winter months. The extent of mitigation measures should be clearly stated, and in the case of planting proposals, the contribution to reducing adverse effects should be demonstrated at different stages (construction stage, operational stage year 0, and year 10).

**Table 4: Significance of Effect**

Significance	Threshold Definition
<b>Substantial</b>	A very high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view of national / international importance that has little or no susceptibility to change.
<b>Major</b>	A high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that has limited susceptibility to change. Positive effects will typically occur in a damaged landscape or view.
<b>Moderate</b>	A medium magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that may have the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
<b>Minor</b>	A low magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that has the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
<b>Negligible</b>	A negligible magnitude of change that has little effect on a landscape or view that has the ability to accommodate change.
<b>None</b>	It is also possible for a magnitude of change to occur that results in a neutral effect significance due to the change being compatible with local character or not visible.

- 1.8. The significance of the effect is measured on the ability of a landscape or view to accommodate the change. In assessing the significance of effects, the following matrix will be used to determine the significance thresholds, through determining the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change.



**Table 5: Measuring Significance of Effect**

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

schemes are relevant to the assessment, and what planning stage is appropriate. It is generally considered that existing and consented developments and those for which planning applications have been submitted but not yet determined should be included.

- 1.9. It should be noted that where there is no perceptible change in terms of the effect magnitude regardless of the sensitivity of the receptor, the significance of the effect on a landscape or view will be none.
- 1.10. Landscape and visual effects that are Substantial, Major or Major/Moderate are considered to be **significant**.
- 1.11. A final written statement summarising the significant effects is provided, supported by the tables and matrices. This conclusion relies on professional judgement that is reasonable, based on clear and transparent methods, suitable training and experience, and a detached and dispassionate view of the development in the final assessment.

Assessing cumulative effects (EIA only)

- 1.12. Additional effects caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments. This can be cumulative landscape effects on the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or cumulative visual effects caused by two or more developments being visible from one viewpoint and/or sequence of views. The scope of cumulative effects should be agreed at the outset to establish what

**APPENDIX KC 2**  
National Character Areas



# Upper Thames Clay Vales

This description consists of two sub-character areas: Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Vales; Vales of the White Horse and Aylesbury.

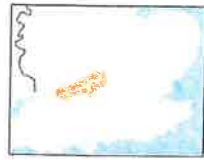
## Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Vales

### Key Characteristics

- Broad belt of open, gently undulating lowland farmland on Upper Jurassic clays containing a variety of contrasting landscapes. Includes the enclosed pastures of the claylands and the wet valley bottoms and the more settled open arable lands of the gravel.
- The valley bottoms, with open floodplain landscapes displaying gravel workings and flooded pits, a regular and well-ordered field pattern, willow pollards and reedbeds along the water courses.
- The Vales in Oxfordshire are dominated by 18th century enclosure landscapes of small woods and hawthorn/blackthorn hedges. Former and current gravel workings along the Thames floodplain also include open water features. The distinctive character of Otmoor with its patchwork pattern of small fields defined by healthy hedgerows of elm add interest and variety to this area.
- In Buckinghamshire, the Vale is a predominantly pastoral landscape including regular fields within a well-defined network of trimmed hedgerows often with oak/ash hedgerow trees and some small blocks of woodland.
- Brick-built buildings within the Vales reflect the widespread use of the local clay as a building material.

Character Area

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MARTIN JONES/COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY

Willow pollards along the Thames Valley and other river systems are distinctive features in the area.

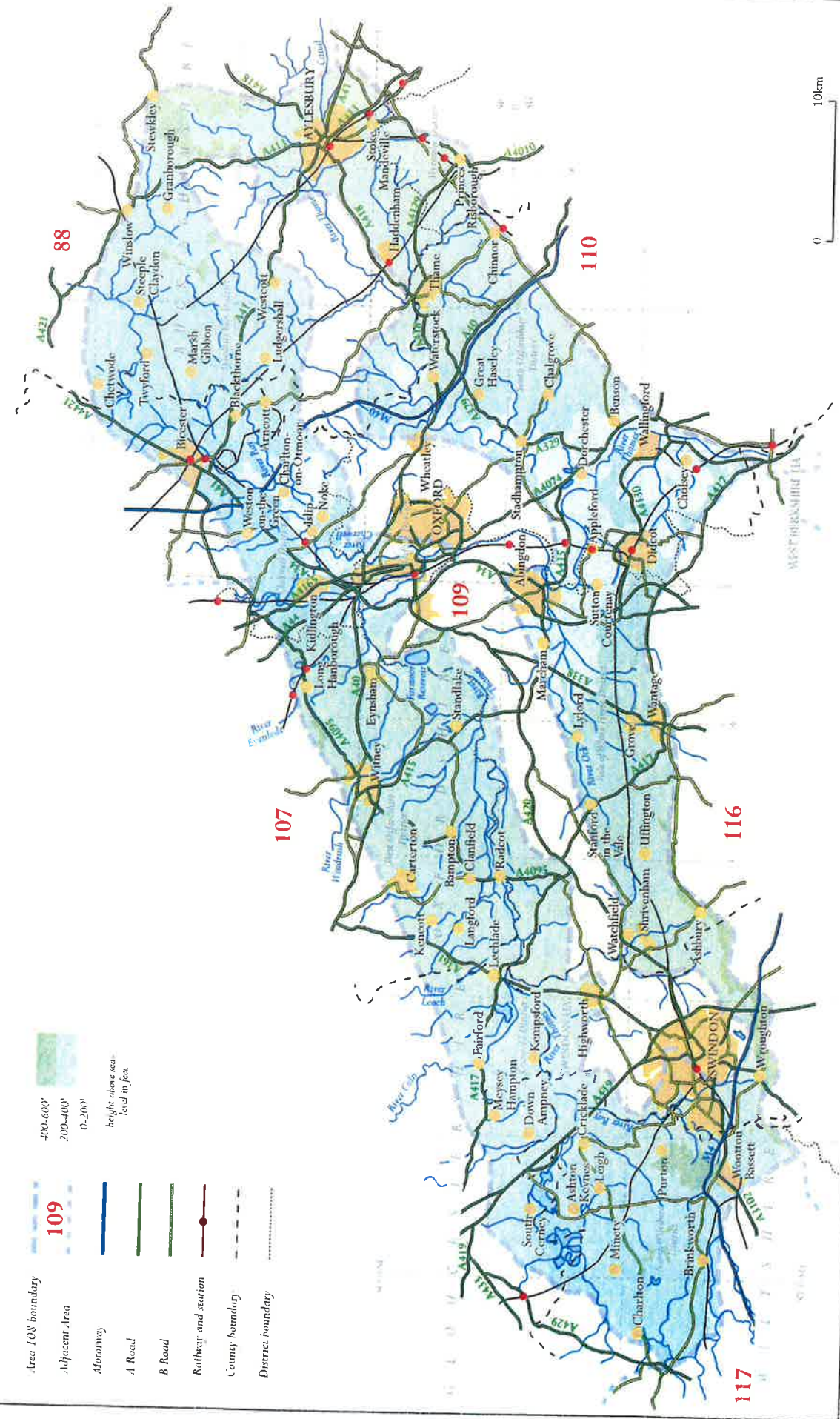
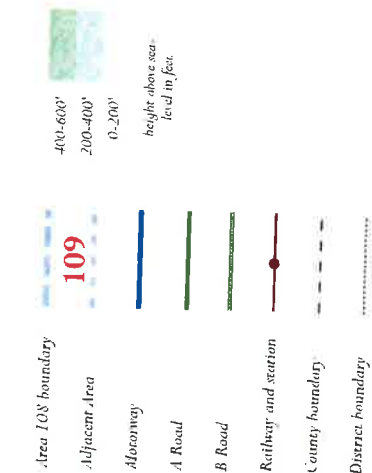
### Landscape Character

The Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Vales form part of a larger belt of clay lowland that links the Cambridgeshire Claylands to the Avon Vales. This area consists of a broad loosely-defined clay belt of open, gently undulating lowland farmland and major river valley floodplains. The clay Vales are bounded by the limestone scenery of the Cotswolds to the north and the narrow limestone outcrop of the Midvale Ridge to the south.

Much of the Vales are of a mixed farmland character with a regular and well-ordered field pattern defined by thick hedgerows. More open floodplain landscapes are also a feature of the area, especially west of Oxford and into Wiltshire, where gravel workings and flooded pits are features in the landscape. Water courses contribute greatly to local landscape diversity with their numerous mature willow stands and pollards, and waterside reed beds.

The Oxfordshire and Wiltshire parts of the Vales are characterised by 18th century enclosure landscapes of small woods and hawthorn/blackthorn hedges. Hedgerow elms were a significant feature although these have inevitably disappeared but there are still many hedges where this species survives as a major shrub component. Former and current gravel workings along the Upper Thames

## Character Area 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales





floodplain, many of which are now open water used for watersports and recreation, such as the Cotswold Water Park, are particularly characteristic of this area. Rivers and watercourses, particularly where tree-lined, are also important landscape features including the springlines which emerge from the base of the chalk escarpment. Further towards Buckinghamshire, the distinctive character of Otmoor adds interest and variety to the Vales. Noticeably devoid of settlement, Otmoor is a low patchwork pattern of small fields defined by healthy hedgerows of elm. Several distinctive villages fringe the area and are connected by a small road that skirts Otmoor itself.

Farther east into Buckinghamshire there is less arable land with pasture becoming predominant on the clay. The regular fields are bounded by a well-defined network of trimmed hedges with mature oak or ash hedgerow trees and interspersed by numerous small blocks of woodland.

Settlement within the Vale is characterised by brick-built buildings that reflect the widespread use of local clay as the principle raw building material. Nucleated villages are generally located on rising ground or confined to the raised gravel spreads above the valley bottoms. Scattered isolated 19th century farmhouses and historic parklands are a characteristic feature of the wider landscape.

Within the overall character of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Vales, much contrast and variety is provided by the pastures and hedgerows of the clay areas, the pollarded willows of the floodplains, the often hedgeless arable fields and the villages confined to the raised areas of gravel.

#### Physical Influences

Contained by limestone uplands to the north and by low hills and ridges to the south, the Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Vales are underlain by a great expanse of heavy blue-grey Oxford and Kimmeridge clays. The topography of the Vales is flat, although to the east the Buckinghamshire Vale is typically more gently undulating, due to the thicker surface deposits. In many places, the clay is covered locally by gravel deposits centred along the major river valleys, and marked by extensive workings and flooded pits.

The Upper Thames drains the Vale to the west before cutting south at the confluence with the lower reaches of the Cherwell through the Midvale Ridge at Oxford. Wide expanses of terraced river gravels of limestone, derived from the Cotswolds, and wide alluvial flats dominate the Oxfordshire Vale. At the confluence of the Thames with the Windrush, Evenlode and Cherwell, distinctive tabular hillocks form low isolated features within the Vale where patches of more ancient pebbly drift rest on the underlying Oxford Clay. Soils are generally yellowish brown earth, gleyed in lower lying areas. The terrace and floodplain soils

over gravel vary although west of Oxford the soils are dominantly calcareous with good drainage.

To the east, the river Ray joins the Cherwell at Islip and drains the wide basin of Otmoor where the soils are covered by a layer of peaty alluvium formed under marshy conditions before the land was drained for agriculture. The gently rising land along the northern rim to the east forms a watershed between the Ray and the river Ouse.



This area is underlain by Oxford Clay with extensive deposits of gravel along the Thames Valley. Gravel pits have become a significant feature within the modern Vale landscape.

#### Historical and Physical Influences

The straight-sided large fields enclosing the Vales are typical of a 'planned countryside'. Domesday Book records little woodland cover in the 11th century with scarcely any mention of place-names relating to woodland. However, by this time, Oxford's 'ford' across the Thames was in evidence, as were the grazed water meadows at Cricklade and at Oxford. Otmoor was being used for summer and autumn grazing.

A major contrast existed between the pattern of pastures and hedgerows associated with the clays, the pollarded willows on alluvium and the hedgeless arable fields and villages confined to gravel spreads within the river valleys. Modern day evidence of the reclamation of the wetter lands exists in the occurrence of 'moor' place names in the Cotswolds Water Park area and also Otmoor. Generally the older, smaller fields are limited to land next to the rivers while the larger arable/grassland fields dominate the higher, drier ground.

The sparse settlement pattern within the Vales was more or less established by the 11th century with the upper Thames area generally quite well-populated compared to the Vale further to the east. There were occasional hamlets, farmsteads or inns near river crossing points but the settlements tended to be on the higher ground around the edges of the gravels and loams along the river valleys due to the risk of flooding. Otmoor was, as now, largely devoid of any buildings or settlement.

Significant archaeological features are visible within the Vale. These include the Roman roads such as the Ermine Way, ancient field systems evident as crop marks along gravels and remnant embankments and ditches associated with royal hunting grounds. Numerous settlement sites on gravel spreads provide evidence of continuity of settlement from the Iron Age through the Saxon and Roman period and beyond although there are virtually no Palaeolithic or Mesolithic remains due to the difficulty of cultivating the heavy clay soils before the advent of crude tools.

Otmoor's distinctive patchwork pattern of small fields and hedgerows are thought to have inspired Lewis Carroll's chess board landscape in *Alice Through the Looking Glass*.

#### Buildings and Settlement

The overall pattern of settlement within the Vales follows the rim of the area with villages located on rising ground or confined to the raised gravel spreads within the flood-prone lowlands. Otmoor is devoid of settlement but is fringed by several distinctive villages comprising linear developments along the small road that skirts the moor itself. Some villages are more nucleated and isolated 19th century farmhouses are characteristic of many areas.

Brick-built buildings within the Vale reflect the widespread use of the local clay as a building material with plain-tiled roofs also common. However, there are the some older stone walled and stone-slatted buildings particularly in the Oxford Vale, their character reflecting the influence of the Cotswolds to the north.

#### Land Cover

The Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Vales is mainly a pastoral landscape dominated by stock rearing with areas of arable in some places. There are also some areas of old unimproved hay meadows north of Oxford with more diverse flora. Wetter areas are usually under grass ranging from ley grassland to unimproved pasture or meadows. The larger arable fields in contrast tend to be restricted to the elevated gravel terraces characterised by their better drained soils. The 'chequer board' landscape resulting from the juxtaposition of the arable and grassland fields in Otmoor is a notable feature within the wider, more uniform landscape.

Woodlands are generally scarce within the Vales and historically this has been the case for many centuries. Occasional coniferous trees appear within shelter belts around buildings on the areas of higher gravels within the Vale. These drier areas which are less liable to flooding also support a thick network of hedges with oak and ash hedgerow trees. In the past, many of these hedges would have included elm. Watercourses are often marked by lines of willows or black poplar. Lush waterside vegetation forms

irregular natural boundaries in some areas, while post and wire fencing and stone walls are found in others.

There are extensive areas of flooded gravel pits around the Cotswold Water Park where recreation is now the major land use. The very flat fields contain small ponds and are typically surrounded by ditches defined by the odd willow which thrives in the wet soil conditions. Cattle graze the fields with the often moderately pronounced pattern of ridge and furrow showing an older field system.

#### The Changing Countryside

- Deterioration of hedgerows due to a combination of undermanagement and neglect.
- Numerous and extensive gravel workings have altered the appearance and ecology of the open floodplain landscape in many places, resulting in benefits for wildlife.
- Intensification of agricultural activities resulting in the removal of hedgerows and enlarged fields, new farm buildings and structures in the landscape and neglect of landscape features such as farm ponds.
- River canalisation and land drainage.
- Planting of poplar plantations have changed the open character of many riverside landscapes.

#### Shaping the Future

- Hedgerows and field margins within arable fields would benefit from conservation management.
- The restoration of river corridors and wet meadow would benefit the area.

#### Selected References

- Richards Moorhead and Laing Ltd (1989), *Buckinghamshire Trees and Forestry Strategy: Volumes 1, 2 and 3*, Richards Moorhead and Laing, Clwyd.
- Reed, M (1979), *The Buckinghamshire Landscape*, Hodder and Stoughton, London.
- Emery, F (1974), *The Oxfordshire Landscape*, Hodder and Stoughton, London.
- Martin, A F and Steel, R W (eds), (1954), *The Oxford Region*, Oxford University Press, London.
- Anderson, J R L (1970), *The Upper Thames*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London.

#### Glossary

gleyed: waterlogged



# Cotswolds

## Key Characteristics

- Defined by its underlying geology: a dramatic scarp rising above adjacent lowlands with steep combes, scarp foot villages and beech woodlands.
- Rolling, open, high wold plateaux 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 landscape with extensive arable farmland.
- Prominent outliers within the lowlands.
- Honey-coloured Cotswold stone in walls, houses and churches.
- Attractive stone villages with a unity of design and materials.

## Landscape Character

The Cotswolds form perhaps the best-known of the stone-belt uplands that stretch right across England from Dorset to Lincolnshire. The dominant pattern is of a steep scarp and long, rolling dip slope cut into a series of plateaux by numerous rivers and streams. There is great variety of landform and vegetation and a number of distinct landscapes can be identified. However, in briefly describing these, the fundamental unity must not be underrated. This derives in part from the harmony of the ever-present honey-coloured oolitic limestone in walls, houses, mansions and churches. It dominates the villages which have a distinctive Cotswold style derived from repeating simple elements. There are many other common elements such as beech woods, outstanding landscape parks, valley bottom meadows and a strong sense of a long period of settlement and human activity. The latter derives from the many outstanding features ranging from prehistoric monuments to the dry stone walls of 18th century enclosure.

At the western edge of the Cotswolds, the scarp face, fretted by deep combes, dominates the Severn Valley.



## Character Area 107



Dense beechwoods, tree clumps, scrub, semi-natural grassland and prehistoric earthworks, most notably the Iron Age hillforts, contribute to an attractive and imposing skyline. Although hedged fields divide up much of the scarp's pastures, there are surviving commons, including Cleeve Common. Settlements on the scarp are confined to a few sheltered sites, but there are frequent villages where springs emerge at its foot. Around Bath, Stroud and Winchcombe, the landform is characterised by deep, wide valleys, often accentuated by densely-wooded ridge crests. Tree-clad streams wind down the steep slopes where fields are often small with overgrown hedges but, on the ridge tops, the landscape is usually open arable divided up by dry stone walls.



The use of Cotswold oolitic limestone for buildings is one of the most dominant and characteristic features of the area. It can be seen throughout the built landscape of the Cotswolds especially in the great 'wool' churches.

Beyond the scarp to the north-west, there are outlying hills of which Bredon is the largest and best-known. They have an outward-facing radial form with field boundaries appearing to radiate from a central point. Several are crowned by ridges.

To the east of the scarp and its deeply-incised valleys, the landform becomes gentler and there are the broad rolling plateaux of the high Wolds. The large-scale, generally open landscape, is characterised by blocks of woodland and

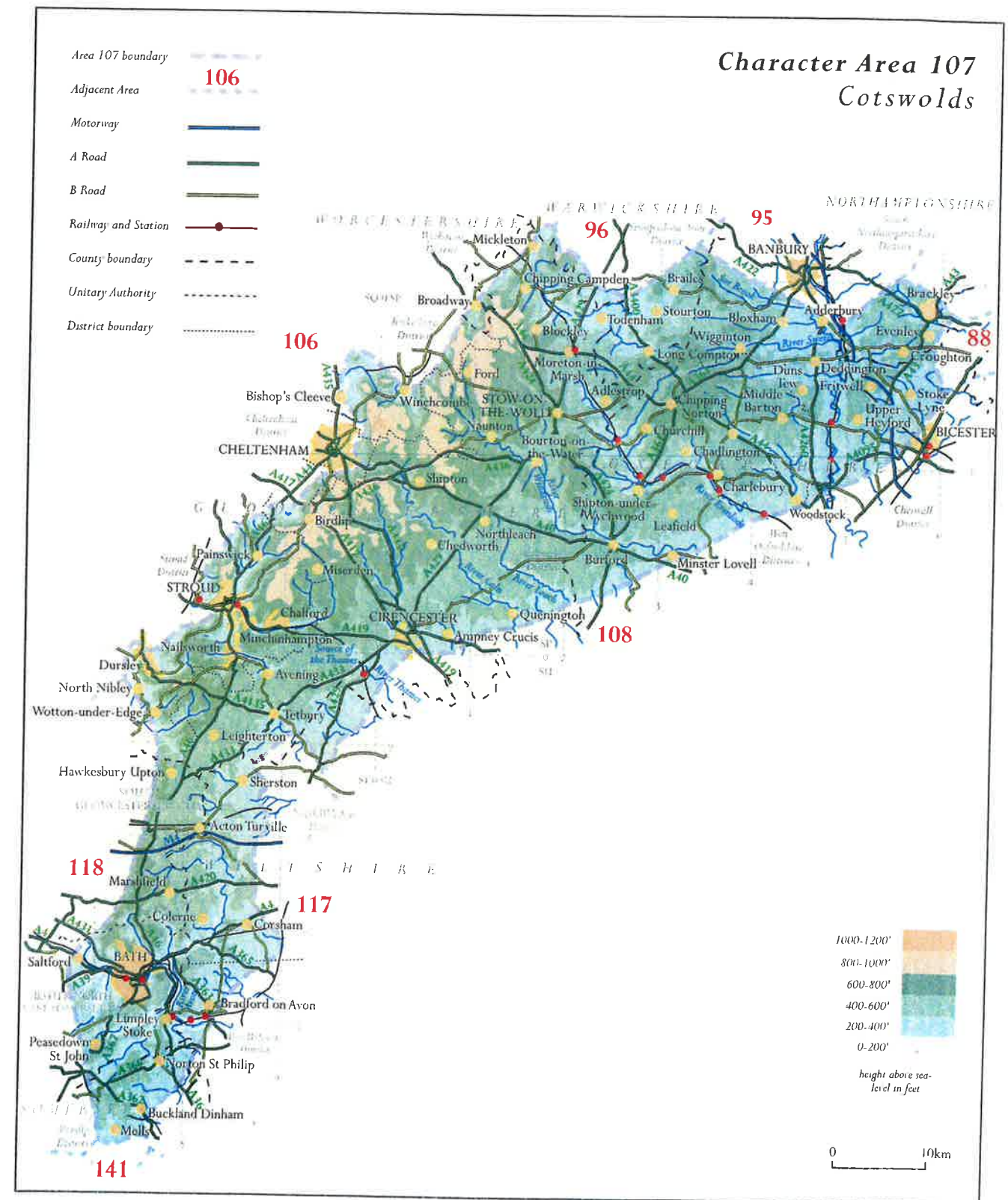
arable, but there are also lush, narrow, enclosed valleys forming a strong contrast, emphasised by the dry stone walls of the plateaux and the hedges of the valleys. Villages are near the spring lines, sometimes lying around a central common or green.

Finally, there is the dip slope which is yet more gentle than the high Wolds. The valleys, like those of the Windrush and Coln, are much broader and sometimes give the

impression that they are simply undulations in the plateau. Arable predominates, but marshy valley bottoms with willows, alders and watermeadows still survive.

## Physical Influences

The north-west-facing scarp reaches its highest point just north of Cheltenham, becoming less prominent to the north and south. The Jurassic oolitic limestone of the upper scarp





forms the freely-draining high land of the northern and western wolds, as well as the ridge tops between the steep valleys to the south and east. Steeply-incised stream and river valleys cut through the scarp, flowing westwards towards the Severn. To the south and east, the oolite dips beneath wetter clays which form broad valleys around the main rivers and streams which flow eastwards.



JIM HALLETT/COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY

To the north east an undulating wolds landscape with wide views, large fields, dry stone walls, plantation and shelter belts is broken by a lush, enclosed and settled valley.

Jurassic rocks predominate, the strata dipping towards and becoming progressively younger to the south and east. Small areas of Oxford Clay and coarse, crumbly Cornbrash occur at the south-eastern extremity. The Great Oolite underlies most of the plateau area but the massive limestone escarpment to the north and west is formed by the underlying Inferior Oolite which, if anything, is even more sought after as a building stone. Lower down the scarp face, and surrounding the northern and western fringes, the Lias shales, sandstones and siltstones of the Lower Jurassic are exposed. These are soft and easily weathered and have slumped or eroded to form the hummocky ground, stream valleys and bays at the escarpment foot.

Many of the Cotswold soils are derived directly from the parent rock and tend to be alkaline and of low fertility. Thin, well-aerated, brashy soils derived from limestone are common on the steeper slopes, particularly to the west. More fertile, deeper, clayey soils of alluvial origin are present along the valley floors and on lower-lying land to the south and east.

#### Historical and Cultural Influences

The Cotswolds have some outstanding prehistoric monuments ranging from the Neolithic long barrow of Hetty Pegler's Tump near Uley to the many impressive Iron age hillforts like Bredon Hill and Meon Hill. They are evidence of substantial human activity which almost certainly saw the clearance of areas with light and easily

cultivable soils at an early date and it was probably these that formed the basis of the extensive Roman occupation of the area. Villas and lesser settlements were frequent and the road pattern of the Foss Way, Ermin Street, Akeman Street and Ryknild Street is still very apparent.

It is not entirely clear whether the Saxons took over a substantially cleared and settled landscape or whether the clearance of the heavier land took place during the Anglo-Saxon period. However, by the late 11th century, the area was extensively settled and there was little woodland. Common fields were in use soon after, if not before, the preparation of Domesday Book and, at that time and in the ensuing medieval centuries, much of the land was in large estates, both ecclesiastical and lay. There were vast open sheepwalks which formed the basis of medieval prosperity and sheep were moved seasonally from low to high ground.



DAVID MORRIS/COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY

A plateau of large-scale arable farmland with a sparse settlement pattern of isolated farmsteads and hamlets.

After the disasters of the early and mid-14th century, large estates were consolidated and a prosperous cloth trade expanded from its early medieval beginnings with the many fast-flowing streams being used for fulling. Small market towns like Northleach and Chipping Camden expanded and many fine Perpendicular churches and merchants houses were built. The land market that followed the dissolution of the monasteries enabled the consolidation of the large estates, leading ultimately to the fine country houses and historic parks like Dyrham, Badminton and Compton Wynyates. Many of the villages owe their present uniform character to the strong influence of estates which, in many cases, has persisted down to the present day. Throughout the late medieval and post-medieval period, there was piecemeal enclosure of open fields, commons, waste and sheepwalks but many of the sheepwalks remained unenclosed until the late 18th and 19th centuries and the prominent rectilinear patterns characterise much of the higher ground today.

In the early modern period, the cloth industry concentrated in the valleys around Dursley, Stroud, Chalford and Painswick. Although it was originally a cottage industry, by

1800 large mills were built with cottages nearby. However, by the 1830s the industry was in decline and, apart from quarrying, agriculture has been the principal industry of the Cotswolds in the present century. There has been large-scale conversion from grassland to arable, removal of hedges and conversion of broadleaf woodland to conifers. The other major change has been the growth of tourism and the expansion of settlement.

#### Buildings and Settlement

Settlements throughout the area are united by the use of the Cotswold stone and a relatively small range of architectural styles. The great wool churches were built in Perpendicular style, mostly in the 15th century. They generally have profusely ornamented square towers although spires are sometimes found. It is, however, the high quality of the domestic architecture that is distinctive, typically comprising a steep roof of graded limestone 'slates', parapeted gables with finials, stone mullions, rectangular dripstones, dormer windows in subsidiary gables and four-centred arches over doorways. Ashlar is usually used on the front of buildings at least and the overall impression is one of diversity on a common theme of refinement and simple elegance, blending seamlessly into the surrounding landscape.

The principal towns – Bath, Stroud and Cirencester – lie on the very edges of the area and the fine qualities of the oolite-dominated townscape of Bath in particular is too well

known to need description. The smaller towns and villages lie at the scarp foot, in the valley bottoms or on the valley sides with the gentlest gradients. Plans vary between compact and linear with some lying around a wide central green or common. Away from these sheltered town and village sites, usually never far from water, there are generally only small hamlets and isolated farmsteads, so that the higher ground often seems very sparsely populated. The settlements are linked by a complex network of roads. The oldest (the Roman roads) and the most recent (the enclosure roads) sweep across the landscape in almost straight lines but the typical Cotswold road is a winding lane linking villages along the valleys and rising over the high ground.

#### Land Cover

Much of the high ground of the plateau is arable, broken by occasional woodland blocks and shelterbelts with dry stone walls but also with hedges. In the valleys, at least on the steeper slopes, pasture predominates and along the valley bottoms there are meadows and tree-lined watercourses. On the scarp slopes, scrub, beech woodland, hedges and tree clumps are present and some areas of species-rich grassland survive.

The beech woodlands are of national importance and have a characteristic, if limited, flora. Other woodlands, typically located on the upper slopes of valleys and on the flat plateau tops, are more varied and contain a wide range of



JOHN TYLER/COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY

The west facing Cotswold scarp supports high calcareous grassland and fine beech woods.



calcicole shrubs and ground flora. The unimproved grassland, too, contains typical calcicole species. The streams and marshes have varied marginal vegetation and unimproved wet meadows with alder and willow carr.

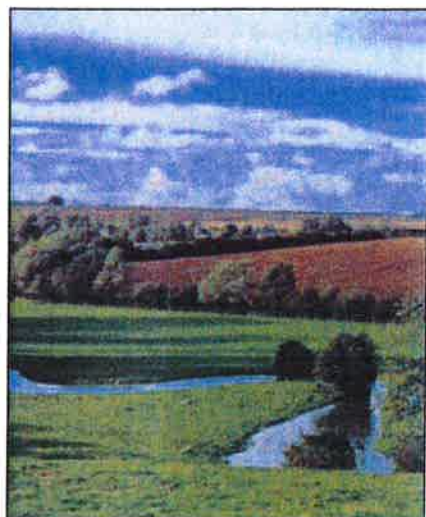
### The Cotswolds Countryside

- Agricultural improvement and conversion to arable have brought widespread loss of semi-natural habitats and landscape features in the period since the last war. Much of the unimproved, species-rich limestone grassland has been lost, marshes have been drained and hedges and dry stone walls removed. However, these changes have now more or less abated.
- Loss of unimproved grassland has probably been checked but scrub invasion through declining grazing is affecting what remains.
- There is pressure for expansion of villages and for the creation of new rural settlements, particularly those within easy reach of major towns and cities. Much new building has been infilling and unsympathetic in design and materials. Many farm buildings have been converted to residential use.
- Tourism and through-traffic have brought a requirement for upgraded roads, bypasses and through-routes with associated upgrading and an increased number of signs for minor routes.
- There is pressure for facilities at tourist honeypots, with associated congestion, erosion of footpaths, bridleways and viewing points.
- Dry stone walls are in long-term decline: the limestone walls become friable with age and require regular maintenance which is labour-intensive and expensive.
- Some small woodlands have been converted to conifers. Many existing small woodlands are unmanaged.
- There are continuing pressures for landfill, quarrying and extraction of gravel and minerals.

### Shaping the Future

- Much of the scarp would benefit from an improved management of the limestone grassland and a reduction of scrub.
- There are opportunities for the sound management of hedges, woodlands, copses and – particularly – the distinctive beechwoods.

- The sensitive management of wetland habitats of the valley bottoms including wet grassland, scrub, willows and the streams themselves should be addressed.
- There is much interest in the conservation of dry stone walls and hedge management. Priorities need to be set for the areas that are most important in the landscape.
- The quality of Cotswold villages is often jealously guarded. Local design initiatives offer a basis for turning this into precise guidelines and activity.



Cotswold streams provide interest in the landscape and are generally of high quality supporting brown trout, dippers and, in a few areas, native crayfish.

SIMON WARREN/COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY

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### Glossary

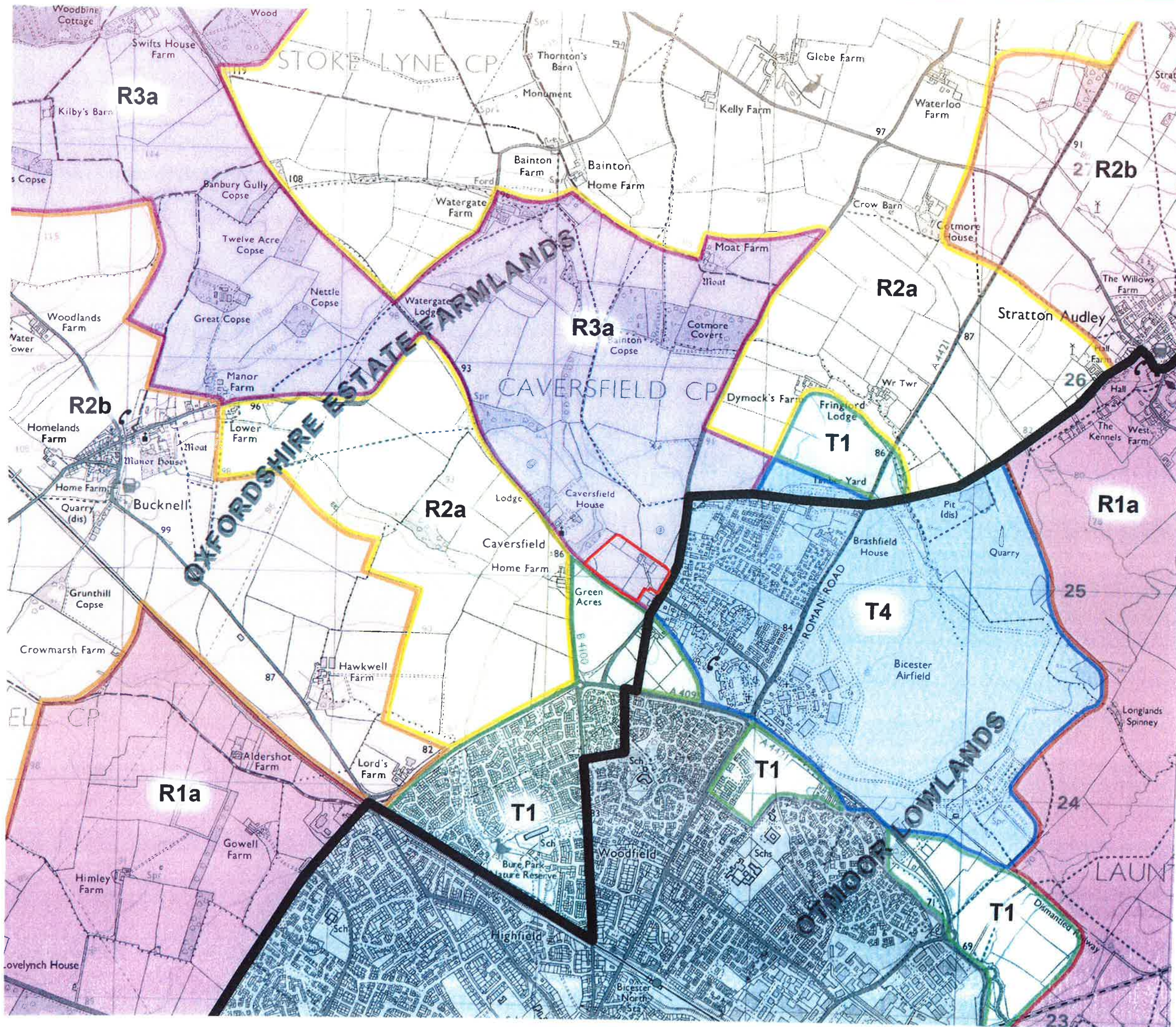
- calcicole*: plant that grows best in calcareous soil
- carr*: a marshy copse



**APPENDIX KC 3**








Cherwell Landscape Character Types  
5330/Figure 1 Landscape Character Types





NOTES:  
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 No Dimensions to be scaled from the drawing.



- Key:
-  Appeal Site Boundary
  -  T1 Rural fringe farmland
  -  T4 Airfields (Operational and disused)
  -  R1a Flat low-lying, arable farmland with weak structure
  -  R2a Rolling arable landscape with weak field pattern and isolated trees
  -  R2b Rolling arable landscape with strong field pattern, copses and hedgerow trees
  -  R3a Large scale arable farmland enclosed by woodland belts

Source: Cherwell Landscape Assessment (November 1995)

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN
REVISIONS			DRG

**aspect** landscape planning

TITLE  
 Caversfield, Bicester  
 Landscape Character Types (Cherwell LCA)

CLIENT  
 Cala Homes

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN
Not to Scale	JAN 2014	SB
DRAWING NUMBER		REVISION
5330/ Figure 1		



## **APPENDIX KC 4**

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study

## Landscape Types: Wooded Estatelands



### 19. WOODED ESTATELANDS

#### Regional Character Areas

Cotswolds, Northamptonshire Uplands, Midvale Ridge and Upper Thames Vale.

#### Location

The landscape type includes parklands at the eastern end of the Cotswolds, ranging from the area around Blenheim Park, Steeple Barton, Middleton Park and as far as Shelswell Park to the north of Bicester. Further south it includes Eynsham Hall Park and Bladon Heath Wood and it also covers the majority of the wooded and parkland areas in the undulating landscape of the Corallian Ridge.

#### Overview

A wooded estate landscape characterised by arable farming and small villages with a strong vernacular character.

#### Key Characteristics

- Rolling topography with localised steep slopes.
- Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable sizes.
- Large parklands and mansion houses.
- A regularly-shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.
- Small villages with strong vernacular character.

#### Geology and landform

The geology of the landscape type varies according to the locality. Much of the landscape across the Cotswold area is underlain by a mix of Cornbrash and Great Oolite limestone. The geology in the area around Bicester and further south is dominated by Oxford Clay, whilst the landscape across the Corallian Ridge is underlain by Corallian beds, which are a mix of sands and sandy limestones.

The landform is generally rolling, ranging from gently rolling to undulating. Across the

Corallian Ridge the landform is strongly undulating, and is steeply sloping in places resulting in small valleys. At the junction of the Corallian beds and the clay vale, springlines emerge and small streams flow through the valleys.

#### Land use and vegetation

The landscape has a mix of land uses but is largely dominated by arable farming. On the steeper slopes there is some semi-improved grassland, as well as pockets of calcareous grassland, acid grassland and gorse. This is a well-wooded landscape with large, prominent blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland often located on the steeper slopes. In addition, there is a significant number of smaller, mainly mixed plantations that are scattered throughout much of the area and this adds to the overall sense of enclosure. Dense corridors of willows and poplars, and belts of semi-natural woodland bordering the valley streams are other locally prominent features.

#### Cultural pattern

The field pattern is generally characterised by a geometric pattern of medium to large-sized fields, with arable cropping in the larger fields. A less regular pattern of enclosure is associated with the strongly undulating landform across the Corallian Ridge close to places like Faringdon, Cumnor and Boar's Hill and around Beckley and Shotover Country Park. Fields are generally enclosed by woodland, as well as thorn and elm hedges. There are also a number of species-rich hedges bordering roads and close to woods. Although there are only a few mature oak and ash hedgerow trees, they still contribute to the wooded character of the landscape. They are more obvious in the vicinity of ancient woodland and quite sparse where arable cropping is dominant. Views are generally filtered through trees and framed by woodland blocks. Large parklands with their distinctive country houses, extensive woodland and ornamental lakes at Blenheim, Middleton, Eynsham Hall and Buscot are also very typical of this landscape type and underline its estate character.

The settlement pattern is characterised by small settlements as well as scattered farmhouses in the wider countryside. The vernacular character is strong in most of the villages and this is reinforced by features such as stone walls. The most widely used building materials are limestone, stone and clay tiles. There are also limestone houses with thatched roofs at Fyfield, Tubney, Hatford, Beckley and Stanton St. John. Stone with bricks around the windows is characteristic in villages such as Sunningwell, Cumnor and South Hinksey. Red bricks with clay tiles can be seen at Nuneham Courtenay, timber framed houses with thatched roofs at Horton-cum-Studley and ironstone houses at Duns Tew.

## BIODIVERSITY

#### Overview

This landscape type is associated with parklands and their associated estatelands. It has a wide range of both locally important and priority habitats.

#### Key Characteristics

- Predominantly medium to very high bioscores.
- Priority and important habitats include ancient semi-natural woodland, species-rich hedgerows with trees, unimproved grassland, fen, reedswamp and species-rich ponds and watercourses.

#### General Description

This is a very large landscape type occupying around 11.2% of the rural county. It includes a large part of the Midvale Ridge and a significant part of the Cotswolds character area. It is a diverse area and supports a wide range of locally important and priority habitats. Within the Midvale Ridge and on the corallian limestone there are many substantial blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland including Stanton Great, Brasenose and Waterperry Woods to the east of Oxford. To the west of Oxford, around Frilford, there are significant areas of acid grassland, heath and calcareous fen. There are also areas of limestone grassland within Chilswell Valley to the west of the City and in the Cotswolds near Fawler and Charlbury. The many



parklands support a wide range of habitats including mature and veteran trees, species-rich lakes and semi-improved grassland, with Blenheim probably being the best example. In addition, there are smaller areas of neutral and wet grassland and reedswamp. There are also a number of important geological sites including Stratton Audley and Shellingford quarries.

## LOCAL CHARACTER AREAS

### A. Blenheim Park (CW/29)

#### Landscape character

The field pattern is dominated by large-scale arable fields and some grass fields around Combe. Woodland cover is prominent throughout the landscape, with large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations. The woods of the Ditchley estate consist mainly of ash, beech and some hazel coppice, whilst the woodland at Blenheim is mainly ash and oak, with a substantial number of conifers. Parklands are very characteristic in this area, including the picturesque landscapes at Blenheim and Ditchley. Mature hedgerow trees are also thinly scattered throughout and they are mainly oak, ash, beech and some sycamore. Fields are enclosed by woodland and thorn hedges. Roadside hedges are often species-rich and gappy, and internal field hedges are fragmented and lost in places.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 128/H

This area supports locally important habitats including plantations, semi-improved grassland and species-poor hedges with trees. It also has a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands including Out Wood which is just under 20 ha in size. Species-rich hedgerows are found throughout the area particularly in association with the ancient woods. Blenheim Park with its veteran trees, lakes and woodlands is particularly important. There are small surviving patches of limestone grassland along the Saltway near Ditchley and in the parish of Fawler. An important geological site is located near Charlbury.

### B. North Aston (CW/51)

#### Landscape character

The area is mainly characterised by large-scale arable fields and some improved grassland. Surviving acid grassland and gorse can be found close to Tackley Wood. Large blocks of ancient woodland, mixed plantations and small woods add variety to an otherwise intensively managed landscape. The composition of the woods is mainly oak and ash but, at places like Tackley Wood, they have been largely replanted with conifers. Thorn hedges are generally low and gappy, but are taller in the vicinity of Tackley Wood. Hedgerow trees, consisting mainly of ash, some sycamore and occasional oak, are sparsely scattered particularly in the area around Tackley Wood. There are also some species-rich hedges in the southern part of the area. The parkland at Steeple Barton, with its mature trees, lakes and pasture, adds to the diversity of the landscape.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 135/H

The area has a number of locally important habitats including plantations, semi-improved grassland, scrub and species-poor hedges with trees. It also has a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands, such as Tackley Wood, some of which have been substantially replanted with conifers. Species-rich hedgerows with trees feature in the southern part of the area, and the parkland at Steeple Barton is important for its mature trees and lakes. There is some surviving acid grassland and gorse at Tackley Heath, but much of the common is dominated by bracken.

### C. Middleton Stoney (CW/59, CW/58, UT/37)

## Landscape Character

The area is dominated by large arable fields and localised improved grassland. There are smaller grass fields around villages, particularly Bletchington and Kirtlington. Woodland is a strong landscape element, and large woodland blocks are associated with the parklands and estates. It is mainly ancient semi-natural woodland, with species such as ash, oak, hazel, and field maple, as well as mixed plantations. Throughout the landscape, there are belts of young mixed and coniferous plantations next to roadside hedges and they often function as field boundaries. Hedgerow trees such as ash, sycamore and occasionally oak are found in some roadside hedges, but they are sparser to the north where there is more intensive arable cropping. In parts there are dense corridors of willow and ash, belts of semi-natural woodland and poplar plantations bordering watercourses. Hedgerows vary from tall, thick species-rich hedges with shrubs such as wayfaring tree, dogwood, hazel, field maple, spindle and wild privet through to low, gappy internal field hedges. Parklands are a prominent feature throughout and they include Middleton, Bignell and Tusmore Parks in the north and Kirtlington and Bletchington Parks in the south.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscores/biobands: 199/VH: 49/LM: 71/M

This combined local character area supports a range of locally important habitats including deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, scrub, species-poor hedges with trees and tree-lined watercourses. It also has a number of important and priority habitats and these are largely associated with the broad limestone plateau to the east of the Cherwell valley. They include ancient semi-natural woodland such as Stoke Bushes and species-rich hedgerows with trees. Kirtlington and Middleton Parks with their associated trees, woodlands and lakes are also very important. There are surviving fragments of limestone grassland, but these are very small and often restricted to old quarries such as Ardley and Stratton Audley. These quarries are also of geological importance. A site noted for its calcareous fen falls partially within the area near Weston on the Green.

### D. Hethe (BC/4)

#### Landscape Character

The area has medium-sized geometrically-shaped fields and a mix of land uses dominated by arable farming. Occasionally, patches of gorse and unimproved grassland can be found, particularly close to woodland. The landscape is characterised by interlocking large blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland, mixed plantations and smaller deciduous and conifer plantations. The composition of the woods is ash, oak and some beech. Extensive areas of parkland are an integral part of the woodland complex at Shelswell Park. Many mature oak and ash hedgerow trees emphasize the strong wooded character of this area. Hedges consist mainly of hawthorn, elm and field maple and are generally in good condition, but become gappier where there is intensive arable farming.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 134/H

The area has several locally important habitats including plantations, semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedgerows with trees and tree-lined watercourses. It also has parkland and its associated habitats of mature trees and lakes at Shelswell, ancient semi-natural woodland including Spilsmere Wood and some wet woodland. There is some surviving limestone grassland and scrub on the old disused railway to the north of the area.

### E. Freeland (UT/24)

#### Landscape Character

The area has medium-sized fields with a mix of land uses including some small pasture fields on the steep valley sides in the eastern part of the area. The landscape has a very strong wooded character, resulting from the large ancient semi-



natural woods and mixed plantations of ash, oak and conifers that are largely associated with the parklands at Eynsham Hall and Freeland. The mature oak and ash hedgerow trees reinforce this wooded character, although they are sparser to the south of Cogges Wood where arable farming dominates. The belts of semi-natural woodland associated with the valley sides and floor reinforce the intimacy of this pastoral landscape. Fields are enclosed by thorn hedges and woods, and the grass fields on the valley sides are bordered by watercourse trees and fences. Hedges are generally tall and in good condition, but are more intensively maintained and gappy where they enclose arable land.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 99/MH

Locally important habitats include deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedges with trees and tree-lined watercourses. There are several significant blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland including Cogges and Pinsley Woods. Eynsham Hall Park with its mature trees and lakes is also important. A small area of neutral grassland near Freeland partially overlaps with an adjacent landscape type.

### F. Bladon (UT/27)

#### Landscape Character

The area is characterised by a well-defined, large-scale, geometric pattern of arable fields enclosed by thorn and elm hedges. Large blocks of ancient woodland are locally prominent. Burleigh Wood has been largely replanted with conifers. There are a few hedgerow oak and ash trees, which are largely confined to roadside hedges. Overall, the hedges are low and in good condition, but some of the internal field hedges are gappy and intensively maintained.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 31/LM

Locally important habitats include plantations and species-poor hedges with trees. The only other significant habitat is ancient semi-natural woodland including Burleigh Wood, but this has been largely replanted with conifers.

### G. Buscot Park (UT/1)

#### Landscape Character

The area is characterised by a geometrically-shaped, large-scale field pattern dominated by arable farming with some improved grassland. There are large blocks of ancient woodland which are part of the Buscot estate, and these are locally prominent features. Views are also interrupted by medium-sized, mixed plantations. Fields are enclosed by thorn and elm hedges which are fragmented in places. They are generally taller and thicker next to ditches and along parish boundaries. Mature ash and oak hedgerow trees are generally thinly scattered throughout, but are denser along ditches and parish boundaries. The parkland at Buscot, with its ornamental lakes and mature trees, is a significant landscape element in an otherwise intensively managed landscape.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 72/M

The area includes locally important habitats such as deciduous woodland, plantations, species-poor hedges with trees and tree-lined watercourses. Badbury Forest is a substantial area of ancient semi-natural woodland, and the mature trees and lakes associated with Buscot park are also important.

### H. Appleton Lower Common Wood (UT/15)

#### Landscape Character

The area has medium and large-sized fields with a mix of land uses, although large arable fields dominate. Small, mainly deciduous plantations are dotted throughout the landscape and small to medium-sized blocks of ancient woodland with ash and some oak also contribute to the woodland cover. Fields are enclosed by woods, hawthorn and elm hedges. The hedges are generally in poor condition and fragmented in many places, particularly where they enclose arable fields. They are often taller where they surround pastureland. Hedgerow trees, mainly ash, dead elm and oak, are sparsely scattered throughout. They are denser where they border ditches, and comprise a mix of crack and shrub willow, dead elm, ash and oak.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 85/M

Locally important habitats include plantations, semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedges with trees and tree-lined watercourses. There are a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands. Appleton Lower Common is an important wet ash-wych elm woodland south of the River Thames.

### I. Faringdon (CR/2)

#### Landscape Character

The area is dominated by medium to large-sized arable fields. On the steeper slopes there is some semi-improved pasture and some gorse nearer the top. Fields are generally enclosed by hedges, woods and narrow winding lanes. Large blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland and different sized mixed plantations are characteristic. The main tree species in the plantations are elm, beech, oak, Scots pine and larch. Hedges are mainly thorn and elm, with a few oak trees. Most of the hedges are intact and well-maintained, but a few are quite low, particularly where they are associated with areas of arable farming. Parkland features, including mature trees, can be found around Faringdon House and St Mary's Priory.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 65/M

Locally important habitats include deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland and species-poor hedges with trees. There is some ancient semi-natural woodland including Coxwell Wood, which is around 50 ha in size, and some parkland habitat near Faringdon. An important geological site lies to the south of Faringdon.

### J. Stanford in the Vale (CR/3)

#### Landscape Character

The landscape is characterised by a geometrically-shaped pattern of very large, open arable fields, and some improved grassland crossed by a network of straight roads. This is a very varied landscape of scattered, different sized mixed and deciduous plantations. There is also a large block of ancient woodland which has largely been replanted with conifers. A number of small copses, planted in field corners and around farmhouses, add to the woodland cover. Dense corridors of pollarded willows and linear strips of wet woodland bordering streams are also locally prominent features throughout. Fields are enclosed by hedges of hawthorn, elm and blackthorn. They are fragmented, low and, in many places, have been completely removed resulting a very open landscape. Hedges, with a few scattered trees, are more intact around the Pusey Estate. Distinctive parklands and their mixed plantations are part of the Pusey and Buckland estates. To the north of the village there is an existing limestone quarry and partially restored landfill site.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 167/VH

This area is very varied and supports a wide range of locally important and priority habitats. The former include deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved



grassland, species-poor hedges with trees and tree-lined watercourses. There are a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands including sites such as Buckland Warren wood which has been largely replanted with conifers. A number of wet woodlands, such as Chinaman Copse and Newhouse Covert, border watercourses near Hatford and Longworth. Calcareous and marshy grassland is associated with Cherbury Camp near Charney Bassett, and there are scattered examples of acid grassland, wet grassland and reedswamp. The parklands at Pusey and Buckland, with their mature trees and lakes, also add to the overall diversity of the area.

### K. Tubney (CR/6)

#### Landscape Character

The area has a geometrically-shaped pattern of medium to large-sized fields with a mixture of arable cropping and semi-improved pasture. There are also large fields dominated by pig farming to the north of Marcham and there are some orchards around Fyfield. Acid grassland interspersed with heather and gorse is a significant feature at Frilford Heath Golf Course. Woodland cover is very prominent in this area and consists of large blocks of ancient woodland, including Tubney Wood, and a number of different sized mixed plantations. Fields are enclosed by thorn and elm hedges with a scattering of elm, oak, sycamore, poplar and willow. These become sparser where arable cropping is dominant. However, a much more prominent feature is the dense corridors of poplars and pollarded willows bordering streams and ditches. Hedges are generally tall and overgrown, but where they enclose arable land they are intensively maintained and in some cases removed altogether and replaced by fences. There are small parklands with semi-improved grassland and mature trees at Besselsleigh School, Sheepstead Park and Kingston Bagpuize House.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 172/VH

This area is notable for its range of locally important and priority habitats. The former include plantations, semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedges with trees and tree-lined watercourses. There are significant areas of acid grassland and some heathland associated with Frilford Heath Golf Course. Examples of calcareous fen can be found near Frilford, Cothill and Marcham. Frilford Heath is also notable for its species-rich ponds and areas of wet woodland. There are also blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland including Tubney Wood and parkland habitat is found at places such as Sheepstead Park and Kingston Bagpuize House.

### L. Cumnor Hill (CR/9)

#### Landscape Character

The area has a mix of land uses including medium-sized, semi-improved grass fields and larger arable fields. There are remnants of calcareous grassland on the steeper slopes adjacent to the Thames floodplain. Woodland dominates the landscape, particularly towards the east where there are very large blocks of ancient woodland including Kennington and Radley woods. The minor valleys and small streams, bordered by belts of dense scrub and wet woodland, are distinctive features that add diversity to the landscape. The streams are often species-rich, with significant patches of reedswamp vegetation. Fields are enclosed by thorn and elm hedges, but there are also some species-rich hedges with shrubs such dogwood, spindle and wayfaring tree close to the ancient woodland. Hedgerow trees of oak, ash and dead elm are also more prominent in the vicinity of ancient woodland, but are almost absent towards the west, where arable cropping predominates. Hedges are generally taller and in better condition in the eastern part of the area and are very low, fragmented or replaced by fences in the west.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 166/VH

Again, this area supports a wide range of locally important and priority habitats. There is deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedges with trees and tree-lined watercourses. There are several large blocks of

ancient semi-natural woodland, including Bagley and Radley Woods, and species-rich hedges with trees. A number of valleys, including Chilswell Valley, have been created by springlines draining the corallian ridge to the west of Oxford. These support a range of priority habitats such as calcareous grassland, fen, species-rich watercourses and wet woodland.

### M. Stanton St. John (CR/20, CR/21)

#### Landscape Character

The landscape is characterised by medium-sized arable fields with smaller fields of semi-improved grassland mainly on the steep hillsides, along with remnants of calcareous grassland. This is a very diverse landscape where fields are enclosed by woods, prominent tall thorn and elm hedges and narrow winding lanes. Large blocks of ancient and semi-natural woodland are strong landscape features, particularly on steeper slopes in the northern part of the area. Hedges are also tall, thick and species-rich in this area. Many mature oak, ash and sycamore hedgerow trees contribute to the enclosed wooded character. Hedges are lower, gappier and with fewer trees in the south where arable farming dominates. Another characteristic feature is the minor valleys and small streams bordered by willows, poplars, belts of semi-natural woodland and neutral grassland. The parkland at Shotover and Shotover House underlines the estate character of this area.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscores/biobands: 198/VH; 12/L

In this area there is a range of locally important habitats including deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedges with trees and tree-lined watercourses. There are several large blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland, including Stanton Great Wood, and species-rich hedges with trees. Examples of unimproved meadows can be found near Beckley and acid and calcareous grassland is associated with Sidling's Copse, a nature reserve owned and managed by the local wildlife trust.

### N. Shotover (CR/17)

#### Landscape Character

This area lies predominantly outside the Country Park and is dominated by large arable fields with some smaller, semi-improved grassland fields on Shotover Hill. Patches of acid grassland and heathland occur within the Country Park. The landscape is characterised by interlocking blocks of ancient and semi-natural woodland, which are particularly prominent on Shotover Hill. Parts of the area are remnants of the old Royal Forest of Shotover. Many field boundaries of thorn and elm have been removed, resulting in an open landscape. Some survive on Shotover Hill, where they are mixed with gorse and spindle. Hedgerow trees, mainly mature oak and ash, are mainly associated with the wooded area on Shotover Hill. Poplar shelterbelts sometimes border arable fields.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 79/M

Within this area there are a number of locally important habitats including deciduous woodland, semi-improved grassland and species-poor hedges with trees. Combe Wood is a large block of ancient semi-natural woodland, and survives from the old Royal Forest of Shotover. Most of the important priority habitats can be found within the Country Park, including restored areas of acid grassland and heath.

### O. Horton-cum-Studley (CR/23)

#### Landscape Character

The area is characterised by a mix of land uses, including medium-sized fields with



semi-improved and occasionally unimproved acid grassland interspersed with gorse, particularly on some of the steeper slopes. Mature oak hedgerow trees are densely scattered throughout the area. Large blocks of ancient woodland are found on the steep slopes. Fields are enclosed by tall, very gappy hedges, with hawthorn, hazel and elm dominating.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 63/M

Locally important habitats include semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedges with trees and some tree-lined watercourses. Waterperry Wood is a large block of ancient semi-natural woodland and there is some surviving acid grassland associated with part of the golf course near Horton-cum-Studley.

#### P. Nuneham Courtenay (CR/15)

##### Landscape Character

The area is dominated by large geometrically-shaped arable fields. Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations are prominent throughout the area. There are a few hedgerow trees, but they are not a significant landscape feature. Fields are enclosed by woodland and gappy thorn hedges. The parkland surrounding Nuneham Park is dominated by arable farming.

#### Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 100/MH

A number of locally important habitats have been recorded in this area, including deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedges with trees and tree-lined watercourses. There are blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland, parkland and some acid grassland associated with the arboretum at Nuneham Courtenay.

#### FORCES FOR CHANGE

- Overall, the hedges are in good condition but intensive agriculture has led to the fragmentation of field boundaries, particularly in areas dominated by arable farming. In such areas the hedges are very intensively maintained, fragmented, and in places removed altogether and replaced by fences.
- The vernacular character is strong in most of the villages and there is generally a low impact from residential development, especially within the wider countryside. However, in some villages new residential development is out of character, even though it is contained within the village envelope. There is also sprawling development along some of the main roads, particularly the A420 and A338, although this is mitigated to some extent by woodland and mature garden trees.
- In very intensive areas of arable farming some of the new, large-scale barn complexes are visually intrusive.
- Some large-scale business parks using inappropriate building materials are also visually intrusive.
- There is a localised visual impact from operational quarries and partially restored landfill sites, particularly around places such as Stanford-in-the-Vale.
- The golf course next to the A420 close to Buckland is visually prominent. Frilford Heath golf course, by comparison, blends well with the surrounding countryside by integrating successfully with existing woodlands and heath.
- Overhead pylons are very intrusive in the more open areas where intensive arable farming predominates. This is evident in areas near Nuneham Park, Cumnor and Harcourt hills and to the north of Cuddesdon.
- In the flat, open area near Weston-on-the-Green, the large airfield is visually prominent, in spite of the dense screen planting.

#### Landscape Strategy

**Safeguard and enhance the characteristic landscape of parklands, estates,**

#### woodlands, hedgerows and unspoilt villages.

#### Guidelines

- Conserve and maintain semi-natural and ancient semi-natural woodland. Where appropriate, replace non-native conifer species with native species such as oak and ash. Promote the establishment and management of medium to large-scale deciduous and mixed plantations in areas where the landscape structure is particularly weak.
- Strengthen the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn and hedgerow trees such as oak and ash.
- Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type.
- Conserve and sympathetically maintain species-rich hedgerows and, where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle.
- Conserve parklands and their associated landscape features such as stone walls, lakes, mature trees and woods.
- Conserve the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland, particularly within parklands.
- Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting willows and ash and where appropriate, pollarding willows.
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses such as quarries, landfill sites, airfields and large-scale development, such as new barns and industrial units, with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.
- Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development and that is appropriate to this landscape type.

#### Biodiversity Strategy

**Ensure that all surviving priority habitats are safeguarded, in favourable condition and management, and enhanced to satisfy the actions and targets identified within the relevant habitat and species action plans. Safeguard, maintain and enhance all locally important habitats in a way that is appropriate to the landscape character of the area. Promote agri-environment schemes, which will benefit biodiversity in general and protected species and farmland birds in particular.**

#### Guidelines

- Parts of this landscape type support a range of important priority habitats including acid grassland, heath, limestone grassland and fen. The majority of these habitats are associated with sites that have been designated as sites of special scientific interest or county wildlife sites. The priority must be to ensure that all these sites are in favourable condition and management. With S.S.S.I.s this can be achieved, where appropriate, through formal agreement between the landowner and English Nature. For county wildlife sites this can be promoted with advice from organisations such as the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, and the targeting of agri-environment schemes.
- The acid grassland, heath, fen and ponds at Frilford, including part of the golf course, are particularly important within the landscape type and a priority must be to ensure that they are in favourable condition and management.
- Within the valleys to the west of Oxford achieve a balance between species-rich limestone grassland and scrub. Prevent scrub encroachment in areas of species-rich grassland by grazing, as exemplified by the work of Oxford City Council in Chilswell Valley. Opportunities for expanding this habitat include the establishment and management of field margins/buffer strips adjacent to existing limestone grassland habitat using native wildflower species appropriate to the area.
- Opportunities for extending the range of these habitats is feasible, particularly acid grassland, on suitable land adjacent to existing similar habitats across the Corallian ridge. Oxford City Council has been successfully restoring acid grassland and heath within Shotover Country Park, and the techniques applied here can be used on soils



with a similar fertility and acidity.

- Expansion of these habitats should be promoted through the use of agri-environment schemes and the restoration of mineral workings.
- Ancient semi-natural woodland is an important and characteristic feature throughout the landscape type. A priority is to ensure that it is sustainably maintained so that it remains in favourable condition and management. A substantial amount has been replanted with conifers, and where practicable these should be replaced with native tree and shrub species appropriate to the landscape type.
- Species-rich hedgerows are distributed throughout different parts of the landscape type. Priority should be given to safeguarding, maintaining and expanding this resource, particularly in those local character areas where they remain a significant feature.
- Parklands, and their associated habitats of woodlands, trees, lakes and grassland, make a significant contribution to the biodiversity resource of the landscape type and a priority must be to ensure that they remain in favourable condition and management.
- Tree-lined watercourses are a feature throughout the landscape type. They should be safeguarded and enhanced by planting species such as ash and willows, pollarding willows where appropriate, and establishing buffer strips/field margins to potentially benefit small mammals, invertebrates and birds.
- Conserve the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland, particularly on land adjacent to watercourses.
- Opportunities for the establishment of other locally important habitats, such as semi-improved grassland and medium to large-size deciduous woodlands, should be promoted in order to strengthen wildlife corridors and enhance the local landscape character.
- Promote the use of agri-environment schemes such as conservation headlands, overwintered stubbles and winter-sown crops to benefit farmland birds such as skylarks and yellowhammers.
- Parts of the Corallian limestone ridge are notable for their rare arable weeds, and every opportunity should be sought to safeguard and expand this interest through the use of agri-environment schemes and the restoration of mineral workings.

#### **Key Recommendations**

- **Safeguard and enhance landscape character of the ancient woodlands, parklands, species-rich hedgerow network and tree-lined watercourses.**
- **Ensure that all priority habitats are in favourable condition and management, and opportunities for expanding this resource should be promoted through agri-environment schemes and the restoration of mineral sites.**



**APPENDIX KC 5**

Landscape Analysis





5330/Figure 2 Landscape Analysis





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- Key:
-  Appeal Site Boundary
  -  Listed Buildings
  -  Available Views
  -  Existing Urban Edge

REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN

**aspect** landscape planning

TITLE  
 Caversfield, Bicester  
 Landscape Analysis

CLIENT  
 Cala Homes

SCALE      DATE      DRAWN  
 Not to Scale      FEB 2014      SB

DRAWING NUMBER      REVISION  
 5330/ Figure 2

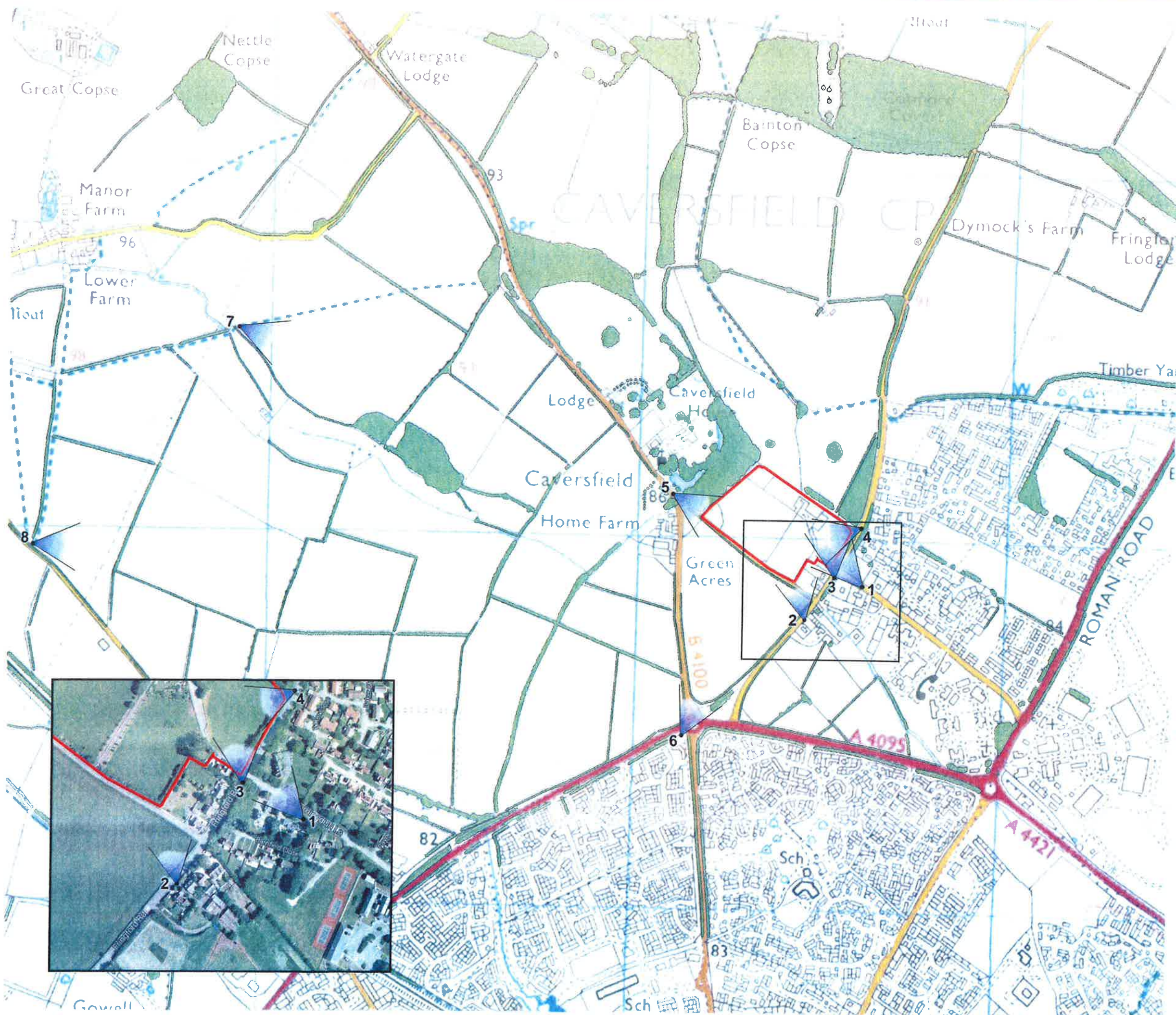


**APPENDIX KC 6**

Visual Assessment

5330/Figure 3 Viewpoint Location Plan





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Key:  
 Appeal Site Boundary  
 KC Viewpoint Location



REV	DATE	NOTE	DRAWN

**aspect** landscape planning

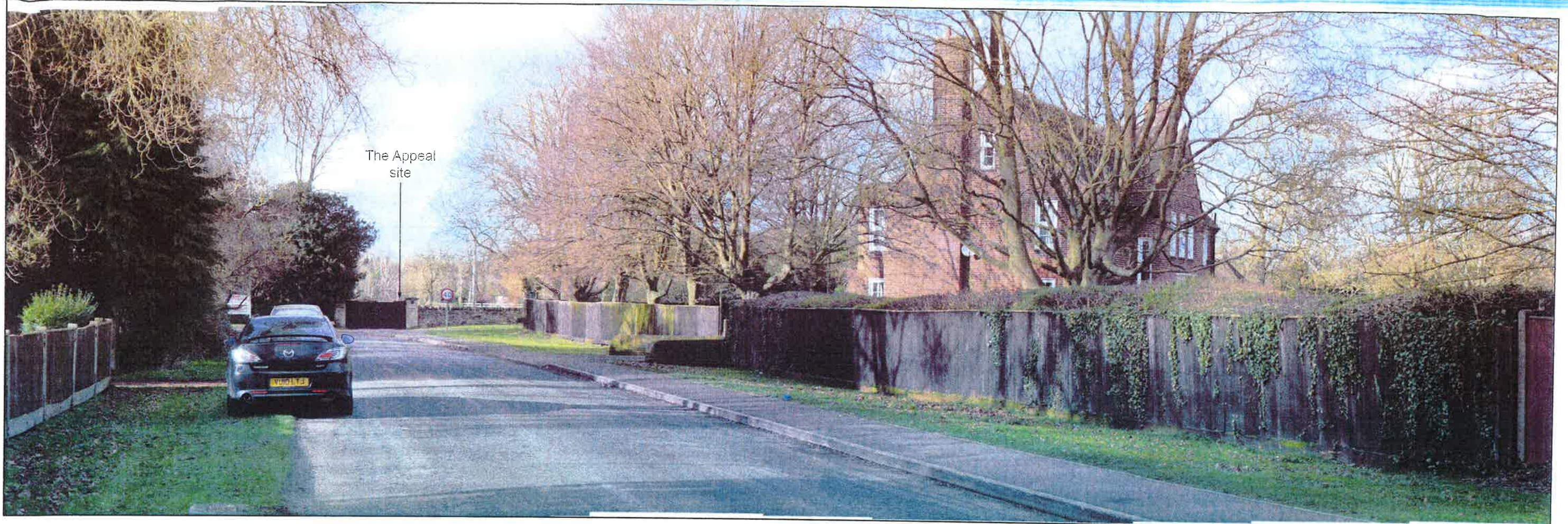
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 Viewpoint Location Plan**

CLIENT  
**Cala Homes**

SCALE DATE DRAWN  
 Not to Scale FEB 2014 JC

DRAWING NUMBER REVISION  
 5330/ Figure 3





Viewpoint KC 1



Viewpoint KC 2





**Viewpoint KC 3**



**Viewpoint KC 4**





Appeal site beyond  
intervening  
vegetation

**Viewpoint KC 5**



Old Vicarage

**Viewpoint KC 6**





Approximate  
location of Appeal  
site

**Viewpoint KC 7**



Mature treescape  
associated with  
Caversfield House

**Viewpoint KC 8**



## **APPENDIX KC 7**

The Appeal Proposals in Context  
5330/Figure 4 Context Masterplan



