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Muddle Barn Farm, Sibford Gower, Oxfordshire

Landscape and Visual Appraisal for a
Replacement House
DRAFT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Colvin & Moggridge have been instructed by Mr and Mrs Besterman, the owners of Muddle Barn Farm, Sibford Gower, Oxfordshire OX15 5RY to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in support of an application for planning permission to replace the existing house at Muddle Barn Farm.
- 1.2 This report addresses the landscape and visual effects of the proposed house and comprises a baseline study of the existing landscape character and visual amenity of the local area and an assessment of the potential effects without mitigation, and an assessment of the residual effects following mitigation.
- 1.3 The site is located on the Oxfordshire/Warwickshire border, 7.5 miles from Banbury, and approximately 1 mile to the south west of the village of Sibford Gower (see Figure 1). The 12.3ha land holding includes pasture, paddocks and equestrian facilities. Muddle Barn Farm is approached by a long access track that crosses a yard (A) and leads around to the existing farmhouse (B). In addition to the farmhouse there are three barns converted for livery and the exercise of horses (C, D, E) and one barn currently used for storage (F). South of the yard there is a round lunging pen and separate lunging lanes both protected by 3.3m tall Lawson Cypress hedges (G). To the east of the house there is a manege measuring 60 x 20m (H) and a grass dressage arena of similar dimensions (I). These features are shown on Figure 2. Hedges along its north, west and south sides, and part of the east side bound the property. The remaining east boundary comprises walls and fences. Within the site there are four further Lawson cypress hedges but all other field/paddock boundaries within the site are fenced. Photographs of the site are shown in Figure 3.
- 1.4 The proposal is to replace the farmhouse with a new house to the design of Yiangou Architects. Associated with this will be the removal of barn D and the southern half of barn E and the lunging pens. The area studied for this assessment extends to a 1.5km radius around the farm, centred on the site of the proposed new house.
- 1.5 There is no public access to the farm. The nearest public routes are shown on Figure 4 - Landscape Designations and Public Rights of Way.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is guided by the publication “Assessment Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment” (Third Edition) IEMA/LI 2013.

2.2 The LI/IEMA Guidance states that:

‘The two components of LVIA are:

1. assessment of landscape effects: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;
2. assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general amenity experienced by people.’

2.3 The assessment of the effects of proposed development on the landscape and visual resource are based upon the prediction of the potential impact in relation to the baseline conditions. The assessment of landscape and visual impacts relies upon common sense, experience and reasoned judgement, supported by substantiated evidence. In assessing an effect therefore, an assessor may for example consider changes of a relatively low magnitude to be significant if they relate to a highly sensitive (or ‘important’ or ‘vulnerable’) landscape or visual resource.

2.4 This assessment is a revision of that prepared and submitted with previous proposals by Yiangou Architects for the erection of a replacement dwelling on the site. The assessment has comprised both desktop and field studies to gain information on the character, sensitivity and potential of the study area to accommodate the proposed development. A desktop study of landscape designations and analysis of zones of visual influence was carried out using maps, aerial photographs and site survey information. The site was visited on 24 August 2014 and 3 October 2014 to walk local footpaths and bridleways and take photographs from key viewpoints. The photographs were taken with a digital camera using a focal length equivalent to a 50mm lens on a 35mm SLR film camera. The site was re-visited on 6 December 2016 and 5 March 2017 to check that the key viewpoints were still relevant to the revised scheme.

3.0 EXISTING LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL RESOURCE

3.1 The study area has largely been determined by the anticipated visibility of the proposed dwelling. Theoretical visibility covers an inaccurately wide area when determined by topography alone. In reality it is a combination of the lie of the land, intervening vegetation (mature woodland, clumps of mature trees, tree-lined watercourses, hedgerows and roadside tree belts) and buildings that significantly reduce the extent of visibility of the proposed development. Visibility from public rights of way and private houses is illustrated on Figure 5.

Landscape Designations

3.2 Muddle Barn Farm lies in a good quality landscape but there are no local, regional or national landscape designations upon the site. Designated landscape areas near to the study area are shown on Figure 4. The Cotswolds AONB boundary lies approximately 300m to the west of the site.

Topography

3.3 The farm is located at between 160 – 175mOD in undulating countryside on a gentle ridge that falls to the east, to the south and to the west (Figure 6 – Topography). The existing house sits at 170mOD close to the northern boundary of the property. The yard to the south rises from 188mOD to 189mOD. The proposed house will be at a ground level of 168.75mOD.

Site features and land-use

3.4 Existing site features and land-use are shown on Figures 3 and 7. The site is characterised by fenced paddocks and landscape features that detract from the local character of the landscape. There is great scope for landscape enhancement at Muddle Barn Farm.

Landscape Policy and Character Assessments

3.5 Policy ESD13 of Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 describes the Council's policy towards local landscape protection and enhancement. It makes reference to the Cherwell District Landscape Assessment (Cobham 1995), the document that informed the Countryside Design Summary Supplementary Planning Guidance (Cherwell District Council June 1998). The policy also makes reference to the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS, 2004), which is the current landscape assessment for Oxfordshire.

3.6 Muddle Barn Farm lies within the Ironstone Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area in the Cherwell District Landscape Assessment (Cobham 1995). In the

Countryside Design Summary (Cherwell District Council June 1998) the district is divided into four character areas: the site lies within the Ironstone Downs area. In the OWLS, the study area includes two Landscape Types, Rolling Village Pasture and Wooded Pasture, Valleys and Slopes. The site also lies within the Cotswolds National Character Area (Area 107).

3.7 Landscape character areas are shown on Figure 8.

Ecology

3.8 An ecological survey and assessment was undertaken by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust in April 2014. Their report found that the existing gardens, hard standing and horse paddocks are not of ecological interest. The species rich hedgerows along some of the boundaries, particularly the northern boundary are considered to meet the definition of a hedgerow that is a UK priority habitat. Precautionary measures are recommended for bats, nesting birds and badgers. Bat surveys were repeated in June and July 2016: levels of general bat activity were found to be in line with that recorded in 2014.

3.8 There is great scope for habitat conservation and enhancement at Muddle Barn Farm.

4.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The proposed replacement house has been designed to meet Mr and Mrs Besterman's brief and consideration has been given to how best to place it within the curtilage of the existing house. By changing the position of the house in its plot, the proposed house has a more natural alignment with New Barn Farm; by partly embedding it into the ground and retaining rising ground levels to the southwest and northwest of the proposed house, the full height of the north, south and west elevations will not be visible. Moving the house approximately 30m to the south of the existing dwelling increases separation from the nearest public viewpoint. The position takes advantage of existing mature trees and retained buildings and hedges to offset some of the wider visual effects. Visual effects do remain and the landscape proposals below incorporate planting designed to address these effects.

Architectural proposals

- 4.2 An early Georgian property is proposed, constructed from local ironstone (main house) and brick (lower range). See Yiangou Architects Design and Access Statement and drawings for a full description.

Landscape proposals

- 4.3 Figure 9 shows the landscape masterplan to be developed with the proposed replacement house.
- 4.4 The existing access to Muddle Barn Farm will be replaced with a new gravel drive positioned away from the neighbour's garden boundary to give a sweeping approach to the replacement house. Open-fenced along its south side to allow countryside views, to the north side a wildflower meadow will be established on the area of the former drive and retained grassland. Tree planting between the house and meadow will conceal the house from view until the entrance gate is reached.
- 4.5 Within the garden boundary, the proposed house sits in a framework of trees and hedges that will shape the garden areas and will tie the house into the landscape. Large trees will include native Oak, Beech, Sweet Chestnut and Hornbeam. Trees and shrubs reaching a lesser ultimate size will also be planted and will include both native and ornamental species. Ornamental species will not be used near the garden boundaries where they may be visible from the surrounding landscape; native species alone will be used so that the designed landscape integrates naturally with the countryside.

- 4.6 As it approaches the house, the access drive will divide to give primary access to a forecourt which leads on to a turning area with garage access. The secondary drive leads to a maintenance yard and the stables. The drive will be hedged to the east giving privacy to the garden and concealing the house. Clipped Beech hedges will also separate the forecourt from the maintenance yard. Tree planting next to the drive will extend into the forecourt area, reducing its formality and, with the hedges, will help to conceal the outbuildings from the house and the approach drive. With the exception of the forecourt that may be partly paved with flagstones, all vehicular areas described are expected to be gravel-surfaced.
- 4.7 The south, west and north elevations of the main house will be paved and a retaining wall will separate the paved areas from lawn. To the south of the house steps will lead up to a mown lawn which will rise gently to a ha-ha, forming a stock-proof edge to the lawn and allowing countryside views without obtrusive fences. To either side of the lawn, meadow/bulb lawns are proposed, planted with trees and shrubs.
- 4.8 To the north and northwest of the house the garden will rise to existing levels at the retained manege. A woodland garden is proposed in the area towards the north boundary: a good density of trees here will reduce visibility of the house from footpaths to the north. All trees and hedging within the existing garden will be retained to help soften and frame the new building. A combination of tree and shrub planting will screen the manege, and new trees will bring balance to the overall design. Shrub planting and different mowing regimes will further define the garden spaces.
- 4.9 Within the wider landscape the design objectives are to restore a simpler pastoral landscape with features that reflect the positive attributes of local landscape character, enhance the nature conservation interest of the site, and ensure that existing site features that already have value in terms of landscape character are retained and enhanced.
- 4.10 The landscape plan shows a simplified field pattern, with the numerous horse paddocks and associated fences that clutter the existing landscape removed. Across the southern half of the site a single rectilinear field as shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey will be restored with new hedgerows planted along the north and east field boundaries. Across the northern half of the site, the dressage arena and manege will be retained but the remaining area divided into two fields, separated by a new hedgerow.

4.11 Boundary hedges to the north, south and west will be reinforced by the planting of native shrubs to the inside. Hedgerow trees, a feature currently lacking from these hedges, will also be planted. It is suggested that where space permits, the fenceline protecting the new boundary planting is set back from it to allow a strip of tall grassland to establish as well. A native woodland plantation and copses are proposed to provide further habitat diversity and reduce the effect of the replacement building on the wider landscape. Combined these measures will consolidate the ecological interest of the hedges, and strengthen cross-site connectivity and landscape character.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Landscape Character

5.1 As referred to in Section 3.5, the study area has been considered in several landscape character studies carried out at regional, county and district levels. In view of the detailed information available, the large-scale study of Character Area Profile 107 Cotswolds, which covers an area extending from near Banbury in the northeast to Frome in the southwest, will not be considered further in this assessment.

5.2 The key characteristics of the other landscape character studies are distilled in the following table which also considers how well the study area and Muddle Barn Farm itself reflect those characteristics. The key characteristics for each type are shown in full in Appendix D.

Key characteristics	Study area characteristic	Muddle Barn Farm characteristic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly undulating landform of farmed, rounded hills and small valleys 	Yes	Yes, the farm sits at the southern end of a rounded ridge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed land-uses, mainly pasture in the valleys and slopes but where the landscape opens out land is under arable cultivation 	Yes, although some arable land-use extends to the valley floor	Yes, the farm is under permanent grassland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small grazing fields on valley floors and sides Medium/large rectilinear fields over hilltops 	Not clear cut: some bigger fields are grazed, and although there are small grazing fields on the valley floors and sides, there are also larger arable fields present here too.	No. Historically the current farm comprised two medium rectilinear fields but as a result of use of the site for livery the land is now subdivided into numerous small fields and paddocks, demarcated by fences, and uncharacteristic of the wider landscape.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Densely scattered hedgerow trees Fields divided by mature, thick hedges Many hedgerows unmanaged and growing out/gappy. Hedges in areas of arable more closely trimmed Some medium/large arable fields now have a fairly open landscape, with fields sometimes lacking even fences 	Yes. The overall impression is of a patchwork of fields divided by hedgerows. In areas of arable, boundary hedges have been lost. Many hedgerows are grown out. The density of hedgerow trees varies across the area.	No. Native hedges at Muddle Barn Farm are confined to the farm boundary on the north, south and west side, with a short length of hedge remaining on the east side. These hedges are mature and typically outgrown, with gaps and and lacking hedgerow trees. Interior boundaries are fenced or Lawson cypress-hedged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-defined nucleated villages with little dispersal into the wider countryside Settlement pattern of intermittent nucleated hamlets, isolated farmsteads, and individual buildings 	Broadly yes. The settlement pattern is of nucleated villages but with dispersal into the wider countryside, settlement extending southwards from Sibford Gower along Colony Road plus isolated farmsteads and individual buildings	Yes, the farmstead is one of numerous farmsteads and individual dwellings scattered across the area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinctive local vernacular with buildings constructed in Hornton Stone 	Vernacular buildings constructed in Hornton Stone can be found within the study area along with houses constructed in different limestone or brick	No. The existing farmhouse is modern and brick built. Buildings around the farmhouse are of concrete block and profiled fibre sheeting. A mobile home is sited on land between buildings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow stands of trees along road verges gives impression of being well-treed, the area lacks larger woodlands. 	Yes	Yes. The farm has no woodland.

5.3 From this it can be concluded that the study area landscape has many of the characteristics identified by the published landscape studies but the proposed development site reflects landscape character less well.

Determining the landscape effect

5.4 Landscape effects are changes in the character, quality and fabric, (collectively the landscape resource) of the landscape as a result of the development.

5.5 To determine the effect of the proposal on the landscape, the proposal is first described and then the existing situation explained: this is based on field survey and where appropriate, is related to the key characteristics of the local character area descriptions. The current condition of existing elements is assessed using the definitions set out in Appendix B.

5.6 The sensitivity of the landscape resource affected is determined by considering it in three aspects:

Significance: cultural consensus about the importance of the landscape resource at either national or local level,

Vulnerability: how scarce or sensitive to change the resource is, and

Replaceability: ease with which the resource can be replaced or recreated.

5.7 The magnitude of the change or the amount of change anticipated arises out of consideration of the scale, extent and duration of the change.

5.8 The criteria used in this assessment are summarised in Appendix A. The implication of the proposed change is determined by combining a score for the sensitivity and the magnitude according to the scoring matrix shown in Appendix C.

Landscape effects during construction

5.9 During construction, the landscape impacts would be construction noise, noise of construction traffic, increased traffic movement on the drive shared by Muddle Barn Farm and New Barn Farm, and on local roads. These impacts would be local and temporary. The potential landscape effects during the construction phase are summarised below.

Summary of potential landscape effects during construction phase

Description	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Effect
Construction of replacement house and demolition of existing house and barns	medium	low	Slight negative

Construction of new length of drive and making good replaced section	medium	low	Slight negative
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Landscape effects on completion

5.10 Proposal 1: The demolition of the existing farmhouse and associated equestrian buildings and replacement with a new house

Description of the proposal: Removal of red brick, chalet-style farmhouse (gross internal floor area 2,232.1 sq.ft., ridge height 177.58m AOD), the whole of one (D, Figure 2) and half of another (E, Figure 2) existing concrete breeze-block/corrugated metal asbestos-roofed agricultural barns converted for equestrian use. Full details of the proposed house and outbuildings are available in Yiangou Architects' Design and Access Statement and drawings submitted with the application.

5.11 Existing situation: An equestrian business is currently run on the property and the barns are in use. The house is tenanted (condition - good) and at its current size is unsuitable for Mr and Mrs Besterman.

5.12 Sensitivity: The existing buildings are familiar elements of the modern farmed landscape, but they have no intrinsic qualities and could be replaced very quickly. At the site level, removal of the buildings would not be detrimental to landscape character. In the context of the wider landscape, it is a characteristic of the landscape that it contains isolated farmsteads and individual buildings of some scale. The replacement of the house does not erode that feature. The proposed replacement dwelling will have a different appearance and being more visible may affect the way Muddle Barn Farm is perceived but it is considered that this is a small change that can be accommodated without detriment to landscape character. Overall, the sensitivity of the landscape resource is assessed to be medium.

5.13 Magnitude: The replacement house will draw on the local vernacular with its use of ironstone and slate and although more evident, large houses are not uncommon in this landscape where farming has historically brought wealth. The amount of change is assessed to be medium.

5.14 Combined effect: Moderate reducing to slight. On completion, new 'instant' semi-mature, native trees, measuring up to 7m in height will be planted around the replacement house, softening the building and integrating it (and the retained farm buildings) into the landscape. After establishment of mitigation planting, the combined effect will reduce to slight. The change proposed will be positive: the replacement house will be of much better design and will use more fitting materials

than the existing house and farm buildings and, set in a framework of appropriate planting, will reinforce attributes of local landscape character.

5.15 Proposal 2: Removal and replacement of the existing access track

Description of the proposal: Removal of the existing access track which lies at the boundary between New Barn Farm and Muddle Barn Farm and replacement with a new gravel surfaced track located at its furthest point, 35m to the south. The proposal includes reinstatement of grassland over the area of the removed track.

5.16 Existing situation: The access track to Muddle Barn Farm is shared with New Barn Farm over a distance of approximately 130m where it divides to give access to the individual properties. The track to Muddle Barn Farm lies next to the south garden boundary of New Barn Farm. The existing track has become worn (condition - average). To the south of the track, over a timber fenced boundary, is species-poor pasture (condition - good).

5.17 Sensitivity: This is a mixed-use agricultural landscape in which permanent grassland is abundant and access tracks an accepted feature of landscape character. The grassland concerned is improved and species poor and could be recreated in a very short timescale. It is considered that the landscape can accommodate the proposed change without detriment to local character or the quality of the setting. Overall, landscape sensitivity is assessed to be low.

5.18 Magnitude: The amount of change is assessed to be low. The reversion of the existing track and part of the area of the adjacent lunging pen offsets the loss of grassland caused by the new track.

5.19 Combined effect: Negligible. Replacing the track in a different position will not have a detrimental effect on landscape character. The proposed change will have a positive effect because it moves the access drive away from the neighbour's boundary (and the mature trees along it) and provides an opportunity to establish by seeding and over-seeding an area of species rich wildflower meadow.

5.20 Proposal 3: Removal of Lawson Cypress hedges

Description of the proposal: Removal of four Lawson Cypress hedges and replacement with lawn, native tree planting and circulation space.

- 5.21 Existing situation: Four Lawson Cypress hedges measuring 113m, 68m, 22m and 25m in length and varying in height between 2.8m and 4m, encircle the two lunging pens and provide shelter within the yard.
- 5.22 Sensitivity: The hedges have negligible ecological value and do not contribute to landscape character in a positive way. Their removal is assessed to be of very low sensitivity.
- 5.23 Magnitude: The hedges are distinctive features in the landscape and are inconsistent with the wider landscape character. Their removal is no loss: the hedges are not a key element or feature of the landscape and the proposed change will have no detrimental impact on landscape character. The magnitude of change is assessed to be low.
- 5.24 Combined effect: Insignificant. The removal of these hedges would have a two-fold positive effect – removal of a feature that detracts strongly from landscape character and replacement with native trees and grassland that will integrate more sensitively with the wider landscape and offer greater ecological benefit.
- 5.25 Proposal 4: Creation of gardens and provision of access around the house
Description of the proposal: The conversion of paddock, lunging pens, extensive concrete hard-standing and part of the area currently occupied by farm buildings to gardens and hard-standing around the house. The removal of four established Lawson Cypress hedges is described separately above.
- 5.26 Existing situation: The area concerned comprises ground that lies mainly within the area of the existing farmyard but also includes a small part of the paddocks (condition – good) and the lunging pens. Within the farmyard the land affected is mainly either surfaced with loose stone or concrete, or is occupied by the equestrian buildings.
- 5.27 Sensitivity: The elements affected contribute little to the quality of the wider landscape character. All elements described could all be recreated in a very short timescale: the grassland is improved and of low ecological value and the farm buildings generic. Taking land out of grazing will cause a small loss of character but pasture is not scarce and the landscape context can accommodate a small amount of change without detriment to character. Overall, landscape sensitivity is assessed to be low.

- 5.28 Magnitude: The proposed change would be permanent and at the site level would see the area of domestic landscape character increased. An objective of the garden design is to keep the layout to the southeast and southwest of the house, which may be visible in distant views, simple. Planting will be of native trees and shrubs to tie the proposed house into the landscape, integrating it in a natural way and respecting the wider context of the development. The amount of change is assessed to be low.
- 5.29 Combined effect: Insignificant. The nature of the change is very localised and is considered to be positive as it removes features associated with horsiculture which are not characteristic landuse of the local area.

6.0 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Visual Amenity

- 6.1 The study area for the visual assessment is largely defined by the locally undulating topography, hedges, hedgerow trees and roadside tree belts that restrict views of the proposed development site. Site visibility is shown on Figure 5. Figure 5 also identifies the location of houses that could have views of the proposed development. Actual views from these houses could not be ascertained but site survey suggests that there may be intervisibility between them and the proposed development.

Viewpoints

- 6.2 The viewpoints chosen are representative of views that will be gained from public rights of way at various orientations to, and distances from, the site. All views are transient, experienced fleetingly when moving: the development does not affect any formally recognised viewing positions. The viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 5. The views are described below and their sensitivity defined using the criteria set out in Appendix A.

Visual effects during construction

- 6.3 The localised and temporary visual effects would relate to the removal of the existing buildings and hedges, and to the construction work associated with building the replacement house. The site of the new house is overlooked by New Barn Farm and the construction traffic using the drive passing the garden boundary will be visible from the house. From this sensitive receptor there will be a perceivable alteration to the view of medium magnitude resulting with a 'substantial negative' effect whilst works are on-going. Some work during the construction phase will be evident from BW348/2 and FP348/7 (see Figure 4), and possibly from more distant public rights of way, but vegetation and buildings will reduce the visible working area.

Visual effects on completion

- 6.4 At completion of the replacement house, the existing house and more than half the floor area of the associated barns would be gone. Visual effects of the proposal would be determined by any modification of views. These potential effects are identified and assessed in the written descriptions below. Figures 10 to 17 show the viewpoint photographs. To help visualise the proposal, these photographs are accompanied by the same image showing the buildings to be removed and the profile of the replacement house. These images have been prepared by Yiangou Architects.

6.5 The viewpoint photographs were taken in 2014. During the more recent site visits the viewpoints were checked to ensure they were still relevant, and although some hedges were cut shorter and trees have put on growth, no significant change was found.

6.6 Receptor location 1A – Footpath 348/7 (Figure 10)

Description of receptor location: This footpath is a well-used public right of way which extends from the edge of the village of Sibford Gower in a south-westerly direction over a distance of approximately 1km where it ends at Bridleway 348/2. The proposed development site can be seen from this footpath when walking southwest though it disappears from view as the footpath crosses the valley. Two viewpoints are considered, location 1A and 1B (see 6.11 below).

6.7 Description of the view: As the footpath turns to the south around the corner of a woodland block a wide view of a gently undulating farmed landscape is revealed, beyond a foreground dominated by arable land. At this position, the development site is at a distance of about 1km from the footpath and the buildings comprising New Barn Farm and Muddle Barn Farm though indistinct, can be seen against a backdrop of agricultural land and wood.

6.8 Sensitivity: Located on a public right of way at a position where the view is of good quality, the sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed to be high.

6.9 Magnitude of change: The proposed development will be a permanent change but because it affects such a small proportion of the view at the distance being studied, and it affects an area in the view already occupied by buildings, the amount of change is assessed to be very low.

6.10 Combined effect: Slight reducing to negligible. Nestled into the landscape by retained buildings and trees, the house will have very little effect on the view. Ultimately tree planting carried out in concert with the development will grow to create a backdrop to all the buildings and the existing gap in the boundary vegetation will no longer be perceived.

6.11 Receptor location 1B – Footpath 348/7 at junction with Bridleway 348/2 (Figure 11)

Description of receptor location: At this location footpath 348/7 meets Bridleway 348/2. At this position the proposed development site is approximately 150m due south and can be seen when facing south.

- 6.12 Description of the view: At this position near the top of the ridge the view in the direction of travel is of arable land and, on the skyline, the boundary hedge between the field and New Barn Farm and Muddle Barn Farm; New Barn Farmhouse and its outbuildings, and some of the Muddle Barn Farm barns. The buildings and telegraph poles are prominent and the view not particularly engaging (note the foreground telegraph pole has been removed). The existing Muddle Barn Farmhouse can be just glimpsed through the Birch tree canopy.
- 6.13 Sensitivity: Located on a public right of way at a position where the view is unremarkable, the sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed to be medium.
- 6.14 Magnitude of change: Although screened in part by existing boundary vegetation, the roof and chimneys of the proposed replacement house will be seen over the top of the boundary hedge to the left of the existing inconspicuous dwelling, against the skyline. The view includes New Barn Farm, clearly also a dwelling so the proposal is not uncharacteristic of the existing landscape. The amount of change is assessed to be medium.
- 6.15 Combined effect: Moderate reducing to negligible. On completion, new 'instant' semi-mature native trees, girth 20cm plus, measuring up to 7m in height, will be planted behind the boundary hedge, between the Birches screening the existing house and the retained Leylandii hedge: this will reduce visibility of the proposed house immediately. After establishment of mitigation planting, the combined effect will reduce to negligible and views of the house will become filtered, like the view of the existing house. Overall, this view will be enhanced by further proposed tree planting which will set retained Muddle Barn Farm buildings amongst trees and frame the west end of New Barn Farm.
- 6.16 The boundary hedge and the height at which it is maintained is important as it has a strong bearing on the visibility of the existing and the proposed dwellings from Footpath 348/7 and Bridleway 348/2. Ideally it should be maintained at a height not less than 6m (surveyed height in 2014) whilst the internal structure planting establishes.
- 6.17 Receptor location 2A - Bridleway 348/2 (Figure 12)
Description of receptor location: This bridleway is a well-used public right of way which extends east west from Colony Road, south of Sibford Gower, to Ditchedge Lane (public right of way SS63) at the Oxfordshire/Warwickshire boundary over a distance of approximately 750m. The proposed development would be seen from

about half the length of the bridleway. Two viewpoints are considered, location 2A and 2B (see 6.22 below).

- 6.18 Description of the view: At this near-hilltop position the view looking west is dominated by an arable field which extends across the plateau to its boundary hedge and hedges nearby which form the skyline. To the southeast, the distant landscape can be seen over the top of the boundary hedge. The roof of the existing house is just visible above the hedge to the left of the ash tree at a distance of 275m from the viewpoint.
- 6.19 Sensitivity: Located on a public right of way at a position where the view lacks diversity and interest, the sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed to be medium.
- 6.20 Magnitude of change: Mostly concealed by existing vegetation, a small part of the proposed development will be seen below the canopy of the ash tree. The existing house is currently inconspicuous and at this position the viewer may be unaware of it. The domestic character of the replacement land-use may be apparent but will not be imposing and will affect a very small proportion of the view. The amount of change is assessed to be very low.
- 6.21 Combined effect: Negligible. Planting proposed along the inside of the existing Ash-dominated hedge on the north boundary of the property will grow to screen the replacement house from the view. Selected trees will be planted at a large size (7m) to reduce the visibility of the proposed house from completion. Additional planting of smaller tree and shrub stock will ultimately reduce the visibility of the house further to levels similar to the current situation. The effect is considered to be positive, new trees and shrubs that will perpetuate and enhance the boundary hedge will also ultimately conceal the presence of a domestic building.
- 6.22 Receptor location 2B - Bridleway 348/2 (Figure 13)
Description of receptor location: At this location the viewer is approximately 200m to the northwest of the site of the proposed replacement house.
- 6.23 Description of the view: At this position the view from the bridleway looking east becomes more expansive and diverse and the characteristic land-use and landform more evident. A gap in the hedge next to the bridleway currently allows views around to Sibford Ferris in the northeast but these views will be lost when the field barn permitted to be built adjacent to Hayne's Barn is constructed. The roof of the existing farmhouse is seen in a view oblique to the direction of travel and is incidental to the main view to the east.

- 6.24 Sensitivity: Located on a public right of way, at a position where the quality of the view can be appreciated, the sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed to be high.
- 6.25 Magnitude of change: The change affects a small part of an oblique view in which one house will be replaced by another house. The proposed house will occupy a position that overlaps with the existing house. The slightly higher roofline will sit at the skyline, the chimneys just above it. The boundary hedge that currently screens much of the existing house will also screen much of the replacement house. Although the proposed development will be different in character to the existing dwelling and to New Barn Farm, the proposed construction materials, ironstone and slate roof tiles, which reflect the materials used in the construction of the New Barn Farm outbuildings and are distinctive features of the wider landscape - provide a visual reference that will help the proposed house to integrate with its immediate and wider setting. The area of the view occupied by built development will be similar to the current situation but because the change will be clearly visible and the new house likely to attract the eye, the amount of change is assessed to be medium.
- 6.26 Combined effect: Substantial reducing to negligible. Although a significant effect is predicted it is not thought that the proposed house will detract from the view. The fine detailing of the building and the gable end view will mean the mass of the house is broken. The view of the house will become sieved by proposed tree planting along the north boundary of the property and within the woodland garden as it establishes. Selected trees will be planted at a large size which will reduce the visibility of the proposed house from completion and ultimately, the replacement house will be less visible than the existing house. After establishment of mitigation planting, the combined effect will reduce to negligible. The effect is considered to be positive because the planting proposals associated with the development will break up the roofline of the replacement house, an improvement on the current situation where the roof is conspicuous in the view.
- 6.27 Receptor location 3 - Bridleway 347/1 (Figure 14)
Description of receptor location: A public right of way to the east of the proposed development site which extends 850m from Sibford Ferris westwards to Colony Road where it ends opposite BW 348/2.
- 6.28 Description of the view: The development site can be seen intermittently in views close to the direction of travel when travelling westwards. Views south are contained by tall vegetation and rising topography. Views west are of farmland seen above roadside and stream valley trees. The representative viewpoint is approximately

750m from the development site. The development site is framed in the view by mature trees that lie along the north and south boundaries of New Barn Farm. Existing farm buildings and a small part of New Barn Farm are visible.

- 6.29 Sensitivity: Located on a public right of way at a position where the view is of good quality, the sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed to be high.
- 6.30 Magnitude of change: When moving westwards the proposed development will be seen in the direction of travel affecting a small proportion of the view in an area already characterised by buildings. The new house will be visually tied into the landscape from the outset by adjacent mature trees, intervening hedges and younger trees, and the farm buildings. The domestic character of the house will contrast with the adjacent farm buildings but its materials will be in keeping with local built character, as, for example, with Haynes Barn also to be seen in the view. The country house character too will be evident at this distance, but detailing, for example the tall chimneys that break up the roofline, would give it a finer appearance. As the proposed change will be clearly visible but will affect only a small proportion of the view in an area of existing built development, where existing vegetation will frame and soften the replacement house from the outset, the amount of change is considered to be low.
- 6.31 Combined effect: Moderate reducing to slight. Again, although a significant effect is predicted it is not thought that the proposed house will detract from the view. On completion, new 'instant' semi-mature, native trees, measuring up to 7m in height will be planted to the east side of the house and will reach the height of the single storey element and break up the elevations of the house almost immediately. Additional tree planting to the west and north west of the proposed house will further soften the building and integrate it and the other farm buildings into the landscape. After establishment of mitigation planting, the combined effect will reduce to slight. The effect is considered to be positive because the proposed house will add interest to the view and give roots to the farm buildings.
- 6.32 Receptor location 4 - Minor road between Sibford Ferris and Millhill Barn (Figure 15)
Description of receptor location: Woodway Road provides access between Sibford Ferris, Millhill Barn and Woodway Farm, and settlements further south. Although a transport corridor this is likely to be used by walkers as a link between public rights of way.
- 6.33 Description of the view: The focus of receptors will be on the direction of travel (north-south) but the hedge along the east side of the road and the rising topography

to the south encourages walkers to look not only to the south but also to the west where the site is visible intermittently. Good views to the north and northwest are also gained when moving northwards. In the representative viewpoint at approximately 1.2km from the proposed development site, Muddle Barn Farm and New Barn Farm are seen in an oblique view west, though not in much detail at this distance. The roof of Barn A breaks the skyline. The view shows the mixed landuse characteristic of the landscape and contains attractive elements such as hedgerows and a strong presence of trees as well as detracting features such as the row of Poplars, the uniform Lawson cypress hedges and fenced field boundaries.

- 6.34 Sensitivity: Woodway Road is a narrow rural road. There is a verge but the road makes for an easier footway. Previously the sensitivity of the visual receptor was assessed to be high but this underplayed the fact that the view is from a transport corridor and although quiet and with reasonable sight lines, recreational enjoyment may be moderated by thought for the road. Taking this into account but accepting that this is a position where a good quality view can be appreciated, the sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed to be medium.
- 6.35 Magnitude of change: When moving along this lane, the east side is closed in by the hedge so the main views are to the north, south and west. Hedgerow and other trees do intervene but generally the west side is open and wide views can be seen from here across the adjacent arable land (see wider view, Figure 15). The proposed development will see the removal of the existing farmhouse and some of the barns currently visible, together with the Lawson cypress hedges. The replacement house will take the place of the barn whose ridge breaks the skyline (though the ridge of the new house will be 5.7m above it); approximately half of the visible elevation will be seen against the sky but the remaining area will be screened by existing mature trees and retained farm buildings. Design details would be difficult to discern at this distance but the receptor would be aware of a change to the building group. As a permanent change affecting a small proportion of the view in the context of an area already characterised by built development, the amount of change is considered to be medium.
- 6.36 Combined effect: Moderate reducing to slight. On completion, new 'instant' semi-mature native trees, measuring up to 7m in height will be planted between the house and the east boundary of the property breaking up the elevations of the house immediately. Tree planting to the west of the house will similarly help mitigate the effect quickly breaking up the roofline of the single storey wing of the house. Tree planting to the south over the area of the Lawson cypress hedges will give the built area balance and ease the transition from mid-distance to far-distance views. After

establishment of mitigation planting, the combined effect will reduce to slight and ultimately the house will be glimpsed through trees. Until then, much as other country houses that stud the landscape, the replacement house will add interest and intrigue to the view and the effect is considered to be positive. Removal of the Lawson cypress hedges will also considerably enhance the view.

6.37 Receptor location 5 – Footpath 347/2 (Figure 16)

Description of receptor location: A public right of way to the southeast of the proposed development site. The site is intermittently visible in oblique views when travelling southwest.

6.38 Description of the view: The representative viewpoint is 980m to the southeast of the proposed replacement dwelling. Beyond the immediate field boundary hedge, the opposite ridge can be seen with Muddle Barn Farm, New Barn Farm and Haynes Barn, set amongst trees, hedges and farmland. The roof of the existing dwelling breaks the skyline but this is difficult to discern clearly from this distance. The Lawson cypress hedges read less noticeably than in the previous view, sitting immediately above the outgrown hedge of the foreground arable field.

6.39 Sensitivity: Located on a public right of way where their focus is on the landscape, the sensitivity of the visual receptor is assessed to be high.

6.40 Magnitude of change: From this viewpoint existing mature trees will embed the proposed house into the landscape. Part of the roof will be visible against the sky but being between trees and lower in height than the Oak to the right lessens its visual effect. The scale of the dwelling is greater than the house to be replaced but seen in association with other buildings in the view (the farm buildings, New Barn Farm and Haynes Barn) and by using the dark brown ironstone, in keeping with local colour and characteristics, and taking into account the small proportion of the view affected the amount of change is assessed to be low.

6.41 Combined effect: Moderate reducing to slight. The removal of the Lawson Cypress hedges is a positive development but it can be seen that vegetation in their position would help to ground the new house into the landscape. This view will really benefit from the planting proposals including the planting of woodland inside the existing east boundary hedge, the planting of further trees to the east of the house and, to lessen the effect of the roofline, the planting of additional trees along the northern boundary hedge, and new hedges and trees to the south west of the new house, the latter taking the place of the Lawson Cypress hedges in the view. Included in this planting will be 'instant' native trees (not less than 7m in height) carefully positioned

to frame and soften the elevations of the house immediately. After establishment of the planting, the combined effect will reduce to slight. The changes proposed will have a positive effect on the view: the Lawson cypress hedges will be replaced by new planting that will integrate more naturally with the landscape and the replacement house, set amongst trees, will add interest to the view without standing out.

6.42 Receptor location 6 – Traitor’s Ford Lane/SS63 (Figure 17)

Description of receptor location: For a length of 500m, bridleway SS63 follows Traitor’s Ford Lane, a public highway to the south west of Muddle Barn Farm.

6.43 Description of the view: When moving in a northerly direction, over a distance of about 75m, a distant oblique view (1150m to the north east) of the Muddle Barn farmhouse and New Barn Farm can be seen as part of a much wider view, on the skyline over the roadside hedgerow between hedge trees. Another dwelling, College Barn Farm can also be seen.

6.44 Sensitivity: Traitor’s Ford Lane is a narrow rural road. There is a verge but the road makes for an easier footway. Sight lines along the road are short because the road descends steeply out of sight: the attention of those using the road has at least to be divided between the road, where they are stepping if they are forced on to the verge, and the view. Taking these circumstances and the long distance between the receptor and the proposed development into account, although located on a recreational route at the edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the sensitivity of receptors is assessed to be low.

6.45 Magnitude of change: In this view, the position of the replacement house will partly coincide with the position of the existing house. The proposed house will have more presence than the plain house it replaces and the other isolated dwellings already part of the view, and occupy more of the skyline, but the use of ironstone and grey slate tiles, which reflect the tones of other buildings in the landscape (e.g. College Barn Farm), will help the new house to recede into the landscape. From the outset, the north boundary hedge and the retained trees to the north of the existing house and the outgrown hedge along the southern boundary of the property provide a setting that will tie the house into the landscape. The change will be a permanent but in an area already populated with buildings, where vegetation exists to help integrate the development, and where the proportion of the view affected by the change will be small at the distance studied, the amount of change is assessed to be medium.

- 6.46 Combined effect: Moderate reducing to slight. Planting proposed to reduce the effect includes a new hedgerow to the south of the house (restoring an historic field boundary) and native tree planting within the garden, both to include 'instant' specimen trees. The development will have a positive effect, enhancing the view by the replacement of the generic farmhouse and barns with a house of traditional design, well-suited to its isolated position. This effect will be further improved by the planting described. After establishment of mitigation planting, the combined effect will reduce to slight.
- 6.47 Receptor location: New Barn Farm
Description of receptor location: A private dwelling lying at its closest point 32m to the north east of the proposed development.
- 6.48 Description of the view: The property's principal views appear to be to the north and south but it is speculated that views of Muddle Barn farmyard and house may be gained from first floor windows facing south and west.
- 6.49 Sensitivity: As occupiers of a residential property the sensitivity of the visual receptor is high.
- 6.50 Magnitude of change: The proposed changes are not insignificant but the retention of farm buildings between New Barn Farm and the site of the new house will moderate the amount of change visible. The replacement house will occupy a larger proportion of the site than the current house, and will be more conspicuous in character than the existing house. As a dwelling it is not fundamentally uncharacteristic of the site. The amount of change is assessed to be medium.
- 6.51 Combined effect: Substantial reducing to slight. Although a significant effect is predicted the effect of the development on views from New Barn Farm is thought to be positive removing approximately half the total area of generic farm buildings, replacing the nondescript dwelling with a finely-detailed house of traditional design, and removing other features of the existing landscape such as the Lawson cypress hedges that impinge on other views from New Barn Farm. Mitigation measures comprising the planting of 'instant' trees (not less than 7m in height) between the two properties, at the southern end of the retained part of Barn E and additional planting in the forecourt will break up the view of the replacement house and as they mature should substantially screen or, in winter, filter views of the replacement dwelling, reducing the effect to slight.

Consideration of other possible views

- 6.52 Actual views from private properties were not ascertained.
- 6.53 Possible receptor location: College Barn Farm
Description of receptor location: A private dwelling lying approximately 325m to the south of the proposed development.
- 6.54 College Barn Farm was not observed when looking out from the area of the proposed development and it is thought that the outgrown hedge along the southern property boundary combined with landform restricts visibility of the development site. Placing the replacement house south of the existing house may increase its visibility but it is thought that framework tree planting within the curtilage of the new house will partly screen the house and wider landscape proposals to restore the east-west hedge within the site and plant new hedgerow trees along this and the southern boundary will increase the vegetation between the properties and reduce any visibility.
- 6.55 Possible receptor location: Haynes Barn
Description of receptor location: A derelict barn undergoing conversion to a private dwelling lying approximately 180m to the north of the proposed development.
- 6.56 Currently a building site, the hedge that would have screened the proposed development site has been removed. The landscape plan and planting scheme show the intention is to re-plant the hedge. The elevations and cross-sections indicate that the principal views from the house will be to the east, views to the south towards Muddle Barn Farm enclosed by the replacement boundary hedge.
- 6.57 Possible receptor location: Rye Hill Farm
Description of receptor location: A private dwelling lying approximately 600m to the north of the proposed development.
- 6.58 Mature trees and shrubs to the front of the farmhouse narrow the view from the property. It is thought New Barn Farm may be visible but Muddle Barn Farm lying a little further to the west is probably not. If it is visible, the mitigation planting proposals described elsewhere should be effective in screening the proposed house from view.
- 6.59 Possible receptor location: Colony Road and adjacent properties
Description of receptor location: Colony Road extends southwest from Sibford Gower. The length of road affected lies between 1km and 650m from the proposed development site. Most houses have views to the north and south but some have

west-facing windows in their gable ends and may have visibility of the proposed development.

6.60 Visibility of the development site is intermittent, reduced by intervening hedges, roadside and hedgerow trees. Where it can be seen, the upper parts of the development will be visible behind the range of existing buildings comprising New Barn Farm, nestled into the landscape by the same existing mature framework vegetation, all to be retained. Planting proposals will further blend the development into the landscape. It is considered the development will have a negligible effect on views from the road and adjacent affected properties and in all likelihood would be missed by the casual observer.

6.61 Possible receptor location: Hawk's Lane, Sibford Ferris

Description of receptor location: Hawk's Lane extends north from Sibford Ferris to Burdrop and there are views over paddocks, out to the west, along a valley. The Lawson cypress hedges of Muddle Barn Farm are visible at a distance of 1.6km. It is thought that the proposed development may be visible but will be seen behind and adjacent to existing trees resulting in a slight effect on the view.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The landscape assessment has found that the effect of the development proposals range from moderate to insignificant. It is accepted practice that where the assessment process has identified elements of the proposal to have a moderate or greater than moderate impact on the landscape mitigation measures are described. Accordingly the planting of trees including advanced nursery stock trees is proposed to quickly establish an informal native tree framework around the replacement house which will help to integrate the development into the wider landscape character and reduce the overall effect from moderate to slight.

7.2 The visual effect assessment has found that the effect of the development proposals on views ranges from substantial to negligible. Implementation of the tree planting within the curtilage of the replacement dwelling together with tree and hedge planting proposals in the wider landscape will mitigate the greater effects reducing them to levels of slight or negligible. The proposed building does not detract from or block any noteworthy viewpoints. All views are experienced transiently.

7.3 Addressing Policy ESD13 'Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement' (Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1), the development will not be inconsistent with local character because:

- In contrast to the existing house, it will use building materials appropriate for the locality;
- it will not add to the developed countryside, it re-uses an existing site,
- buildings of some scale are a visible part of the landscape character, and
- planting to help integrate the replacement house into the landscape will reflect local landscape structure and character.

7.4 The development will not cause undue visual intrusion into the open countryside because

- existing vegetation and buildings will help to integrate the replacement house into the countryside;
- the proposed development will retain all hedges and trees along the boundaries of the site;
- the colour of building materials will associate with the natural colours of landscape, and
- proposed planting will be of a type and character that will further integrate the house into its landscape setting

- 7.5 The site lies within the key landform and landscape feature of the ironstone ridges and valleys (ref. para B252 Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031). The development will not cause undue harm to this natural feature because:
- it is located within an already developed site;
 - the scale of the proposed development is small, and
 - the scheme is designed to integrate with the landscape.
- 7.6 The site lies within one of the two most tranquil areas in Cherwell District (based on CPRE's Tranquillity Map of Oxfordshire 2007): the development will not reduce the tranquillity of the area as the landuse is the same. On development, the existing equestrian business would be closed down, so overall the site will generate less noise and tranquillity will be enhanced.
- 7.7 The proposal will not harm the setting of settlements or buildings because
- it is not a new development site: it is located in a place where development is established and the built landuse familiar;
 - the orientation of the replacement house is altered from that of the existing house in order to have a more natural alignment with New Barn Farm;
 - existing boundary hedges and trees will be retained;
 - its design attributes are in keeping with local character: the proposed house has a traditional design and will be built from traditional, local materials, and
 - planting associated with the development, also in keeping with local character, will integrate the house into the landscape.
- 7.8 The proposed development site does not lie in a landscape formally designated for its historic value but the wider area has a strong sense of history given by the age and character of local settlements and buildings in the landscape, rural land-use and mature trees; larger houses are not uncommon in landscapes where farming has historically brought wealth and this sense of history will not be lost by the proposed development.
- 7.9 The development is considered to be positive because it will reinforce and enhance landscape character by:
- removing the small paddock landscape and associated fences
 - removing prominent Lawson Cypress hedges
 - restoring hedged field boundaries
 - the planting of hedgerow trees, shrubs and woodland, and
 - use of vernacular building materials

- 7.10 The development is considered to be positive because it will bring about an enhancement of landscape views by:
- the removal of an everyday farmhouse and modern farm buildings and replacement with a finely-designed Georgian house, set amongst trees, adding interest to cross-countryside views;
 - the removal of uniform Lawson Cypress hedges which are unnatural in views, and
 - incidentally establishing backdrop planting to New Barn Farm and retained farm buildings, softening their impact on views.
- 7.11 Restoring features of the historic landscape (simpler rectilinear field pattern), boundary hedges and hedgerow tree planting will reinforce attractive characteristics of the landscape (patchwork of fields, densely scattered hedgerow trees, mature thick hedges). Once these changes are implemented and planting has established, the site will really exemplify wider landscape character. Proposed planting is not on a scale or of a type to change the nature of the valley landscape.
- 7.12 It is acknowledged that trees take time to grow and have visual presence but to precipitate this effect the landscape scheme will include the planting of some large trees at the outset to help integrate the built development into the landscape as soon as planted. Planting of additional smaller nursery stock will in time enhance this effect.
- 7.13 Four viewpoint photographs have been selected and the development of the planting over 15 years visualised (Figures 18-21). At the small scale shown it is difficult to portray planting with great accuracy. Planting plans have not yet been prepared but would seek to achieve the effect shown as soon as possible using a combination of advanced semi-mature and nursery stock. The successful establishment of the planting through an effective aftercare programme, including watering, will be key to its mitigating effect.
- 7.14 The planting will have screening effect in winter: twigs, branches and trunks will remain to filter views, reduce visibility and form backdrop. The majority of the trees planted around the house will be planted in groups, several trees deep, more so on the north side of the house, to give density and enhance the concealing effect during winter. Other planting proposed within the wider landscape, hedgerows, trees, woodland will also serve to integrate the development into the landscape. Key in achieving this too is the use of local stone in the building.
- 7.15 As well as creating a setting for the replacement dwelling, helping it to blend into countryside views and reinforcing landscape character, the landscape proposals

address 'forces for change' described in the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study. For example, the retention and reinforcement planting of existing hedgerows and the provision of new hedgerows will conserve and enhance the pattern of hedgerows; field pattern will also be strengthened by the replacement of fencing with hedgerow; pasture will be retained and small-scale deciduous woodland planted: all actions that will safeguard and enhance the landscape character of the site.

- 7.16 The proposed development will be a gain for biodiversity. The landscape scheme will use native and locally characteristic species to enhance existing landscape corridors and create cross-site connectivity where it currently does not exist; areas of species diverse grassland, copses and many additional trees will be established to increase habitat diversity on the site.
- 7.17 It is the conclusion of this study that the proposed replacement house and its associated landscape will have ultimately a positive effect on landscape character, biodiversity and visual amenity.

REFERENCES

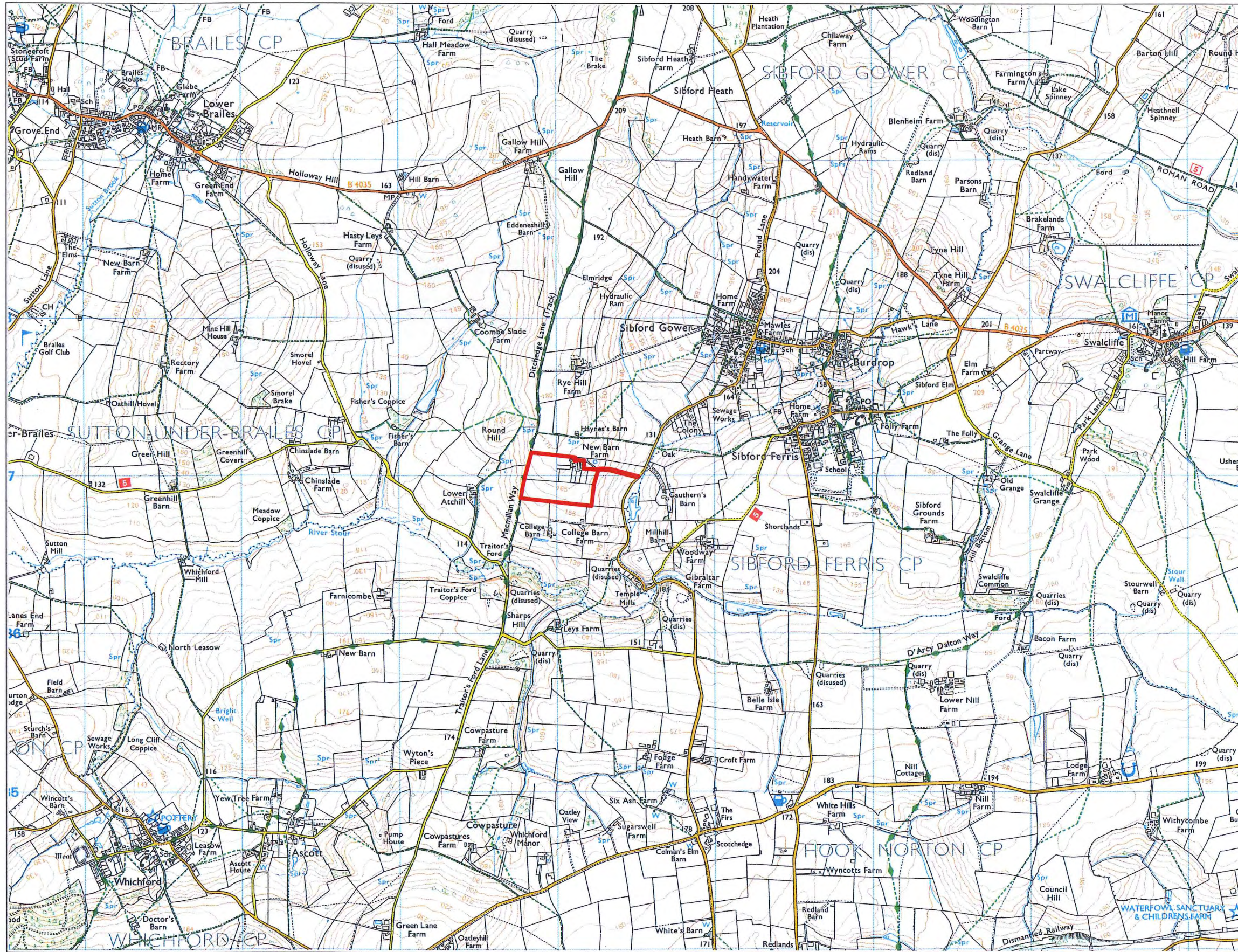
Cherwell District Council, Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1

Cherwell District Council, Countryside Design Summary, June 1998

Cobham Resource Consultants for Cherwell District Council, Cherwell District Landscape Assessment 1995

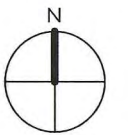
Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study, 2004

FIGURES



Key

— Site Boundary



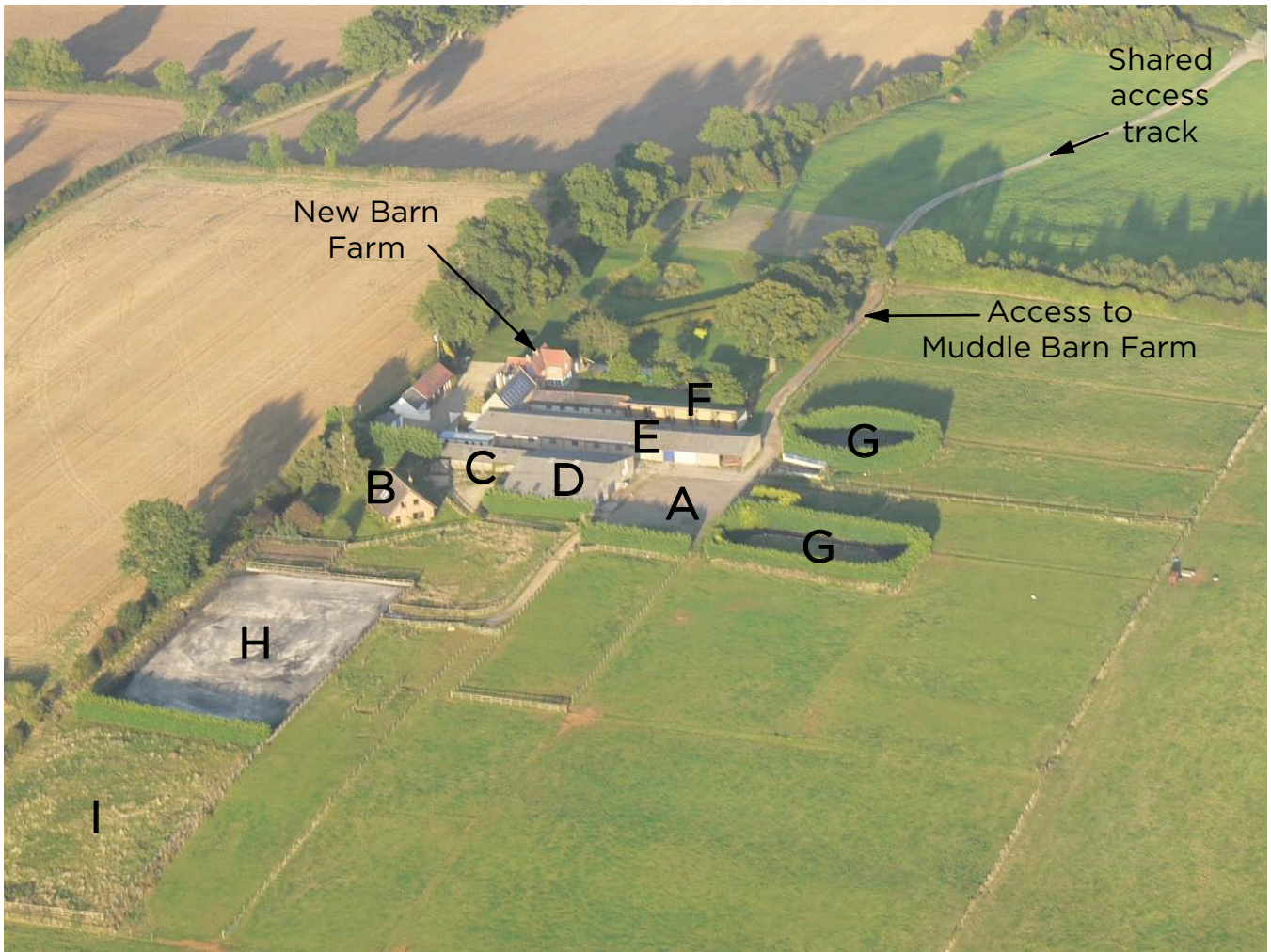
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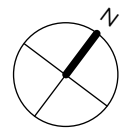
DATE	SCALE	ISSUE	<p>Figure 1</p>
Sept 2014	1:25,000 @ A3	CLP/IH	
<p>Muddle Barn Farm</p>			<p>Site Location</p>
<p>Site Location</p>			

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South west aerial view



Muddle Barn Farm	
Existing site layout	
SCALE	NTS
DATE	Sept' 2014
DRAWN	CLP/IH
Figure 2	

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1. Existing access drive



2. Part hedge part fenced east boundary



3. Existing barns to left and right.
New Barn Farmhouse at centre.



4. Boundary wall. New Barn Farm out buildings
to north of wall



5. Existing barn at north boundary



6. Existing farmhouse



7. Existing yard looking east



8. Horse paddock fencing, looking southeast



9. Horse paddock, looking west.
Manege to right of picture.



10. Outgrown hedge along north boundary.
Manege leylandii hedge on skyline to right.



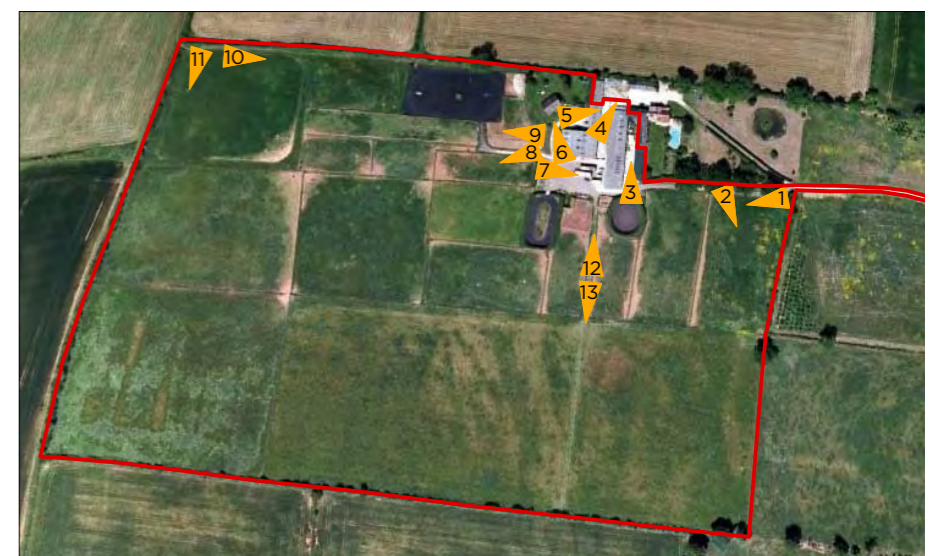
11. Outgrown hedge along west boundary



12. View from south to yard with lunging pens to left and right



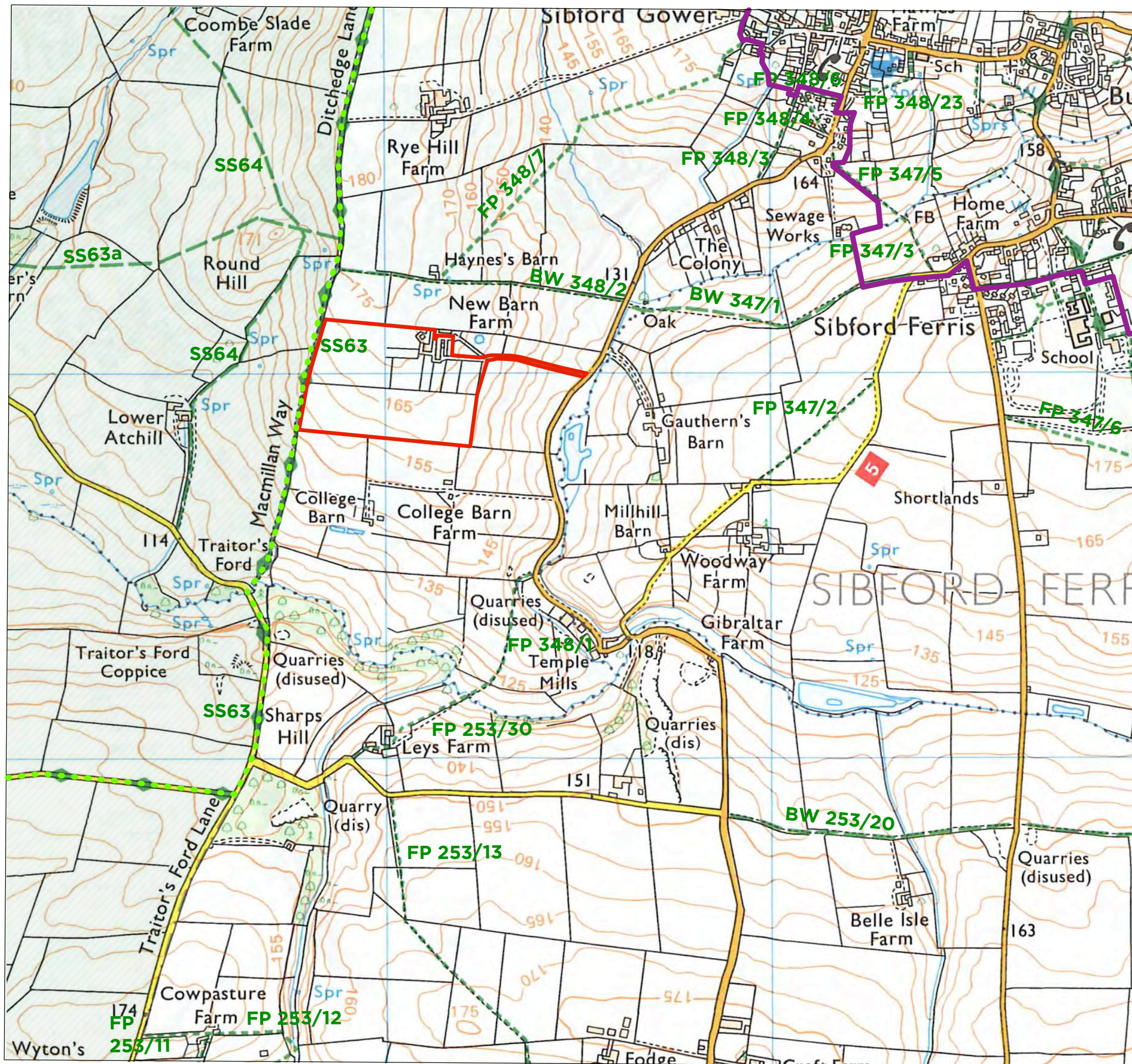
13. Outgrown hedge along south boundary








Location of photographs

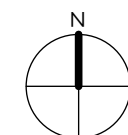
Muddle Farm Barn
Existing Site Photographs

Figure 3



Key

-  Site boundary
-  Cotswolds AONB
-  Conservation Area - Sibford Gower Sibford Ferris
-  **FP 348/23**
BW/348/2 Public Rights of way
-  Macmillan Way



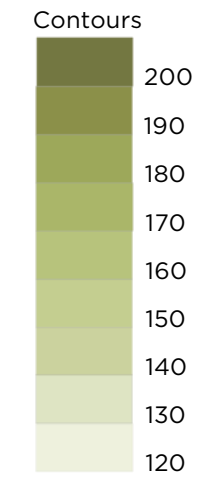
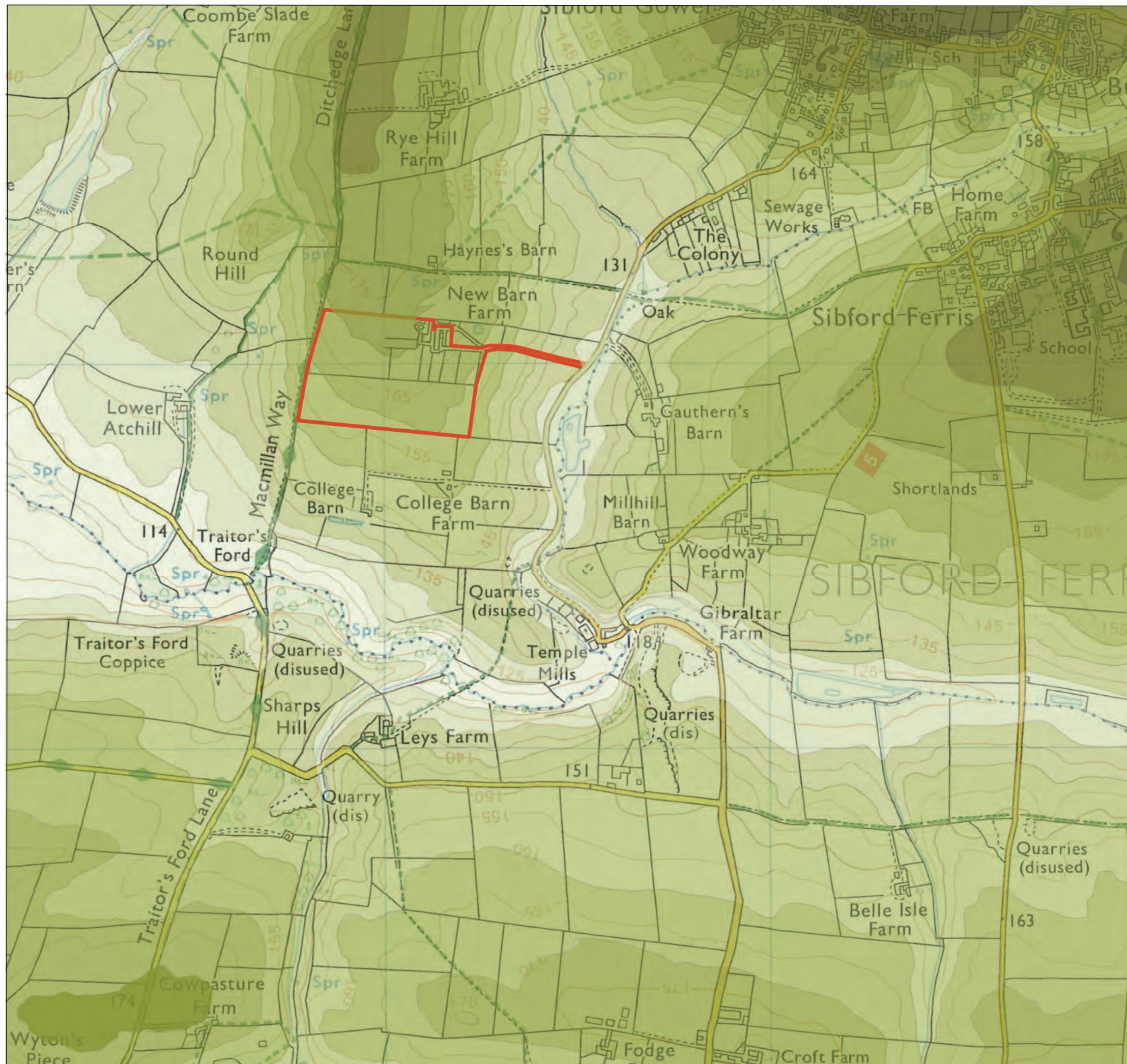
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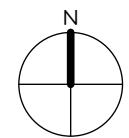
Muddle Barn Farm	
Landscape Designations and Public Rights of Way	
SCALE	1:10000@A3
DATE	March 2017
DRAWN	CLP/IH
Figure 4	

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— Site boundary



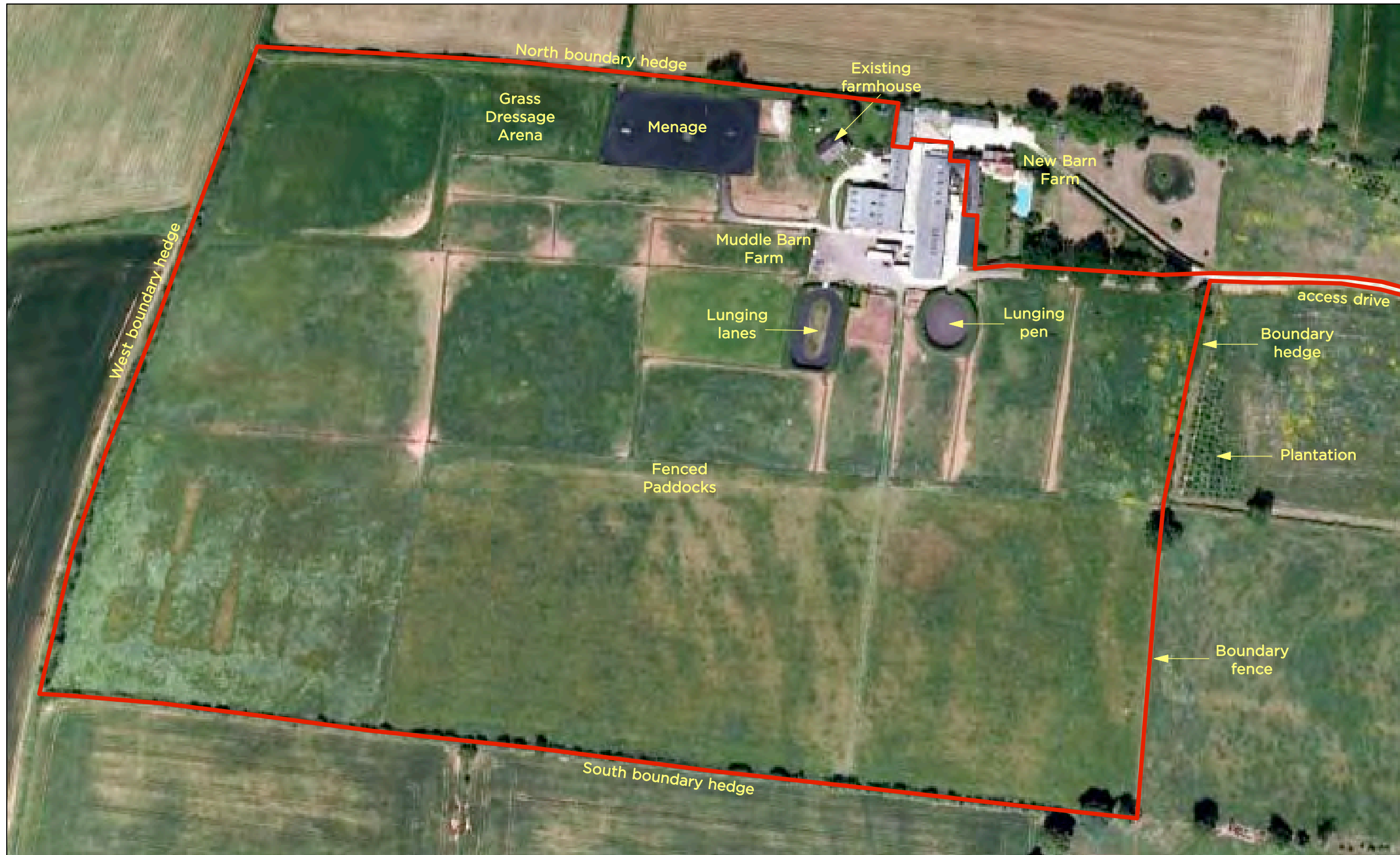
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Muddle Barn Farm	
Topography	
SCALE	1:10000@A3
DATE	Sept' 2014
DRAWN	CLP/IH
Figure 6	

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Key

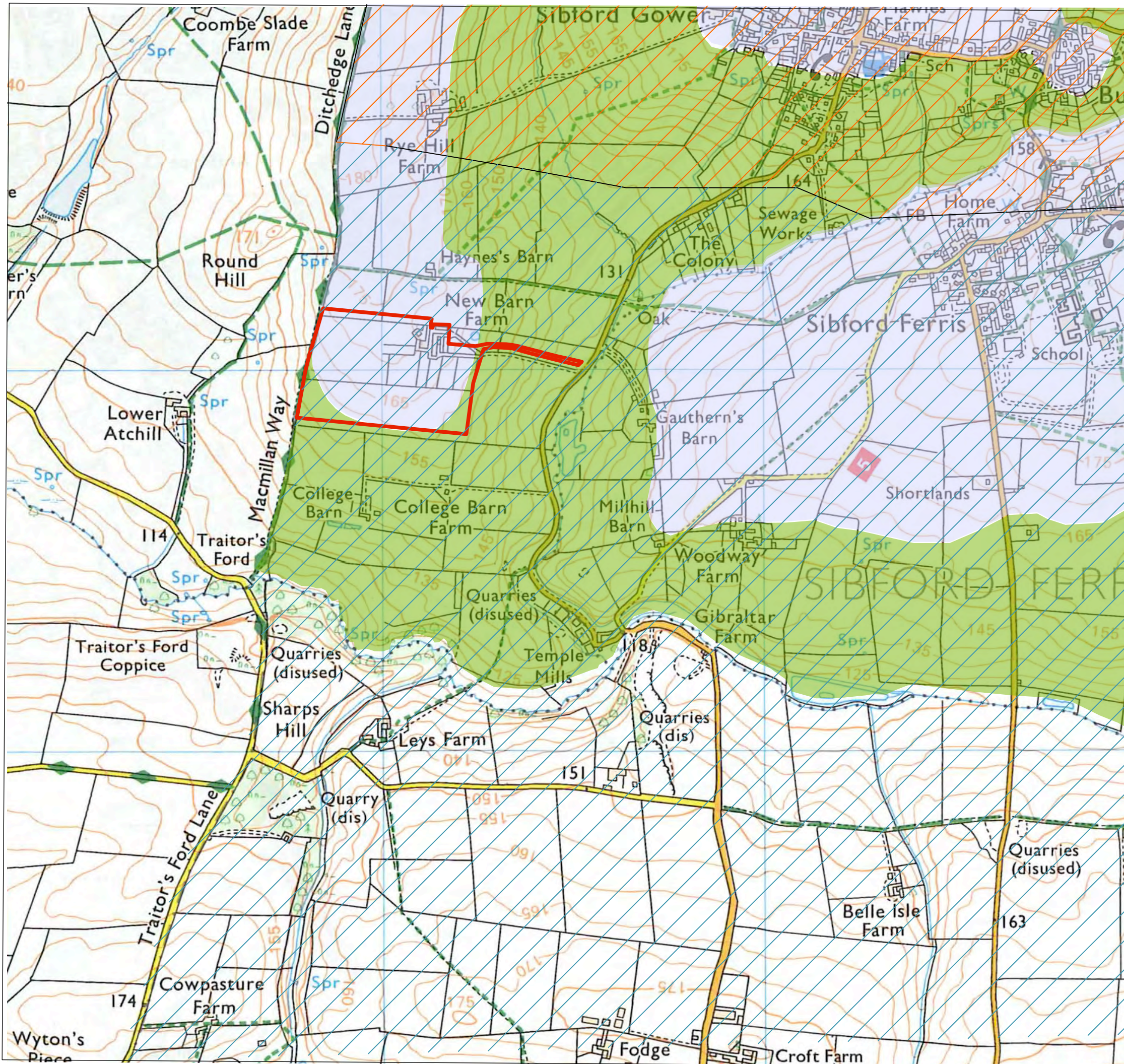
— Site boundary








Muddle Barn Farm	
Landuse	
SCALE	
NTS	Figure 7
DATE	
CLP/IH	

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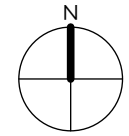
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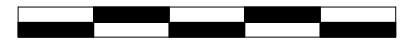
Key

-  Site boundary
- Oxfordshire Wildlife Landscape Study
Cherwell Landscape Types:
-  Rolling Village Pasture
-  Wooded Pasture Valleys and Slopes
- Cherwell District Council Landscape
Types:
-  R2a - Large Scale Undulating Farmland
Rolling arable landscape with
weak field pattern and isolated
trees
-  R4a - Small Scale Enclosed Farmland
Strongly undulating complex of
farmed hills and valleys

Note both R2a and R4a lie within the 'Ironstone Downs' Countryside Character Area identified in Cherwell District Councils Countryside Design Summary



Scale 0 100 200 300 400 500m



Muddle Barn Farm	
Landscape Character	
SCALE	1:10000@A3
DATE	March 2017
DRAWN	CLP/IH
Figure 8	

colvin & moggridge

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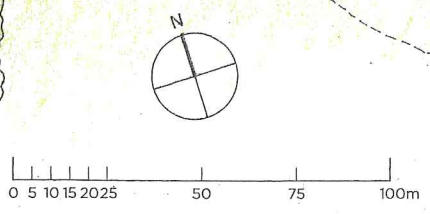


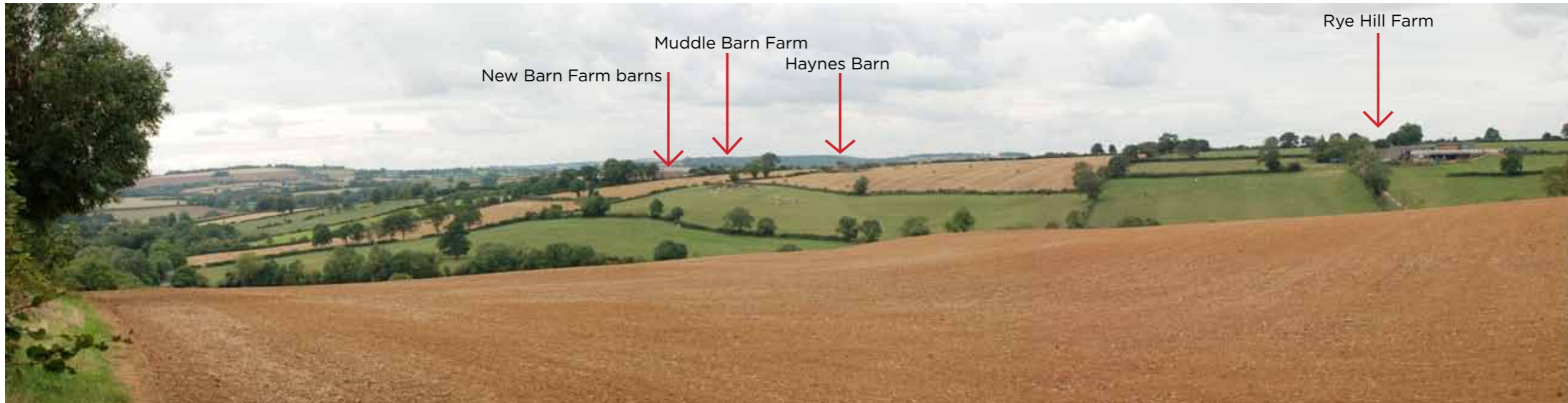
- Key**
- Existing tree
 - Proposed tree
 - Existing hedge
 - Proposed hedge
 - Proposed stock proof fence
 - Proposed park rail fence
 - Proposed wall
 - Proposed tree planting
 - Proposed shrub planting
 - Existing contour

Muddle Barn Farm	
Landscape Proposals	
Planning	
Scale	1:1000@A1
Date	Dec'2016
Author	CLP/IH

Figure 9

colvin & moggridge





Existing view



Visualisation including proposed replacement house



Zoomed in view showing replacement house (buildings to be removed shown with dashed red line)

Figure 10
Viewpoint photograph 1A
Footpath 348/7



Existing view

Note: Foreground telegraph pole has been removed



Visualisation including proposed replacement house

Figure 11
Viewpoint photograph 1B
Footpath 348/7



Muddle Barn Farm visible
just above the hedge

Ash tree

Existing view



proposed house

Visualisation including proposed replacement house



Zoomed in view showing replacement house (existing house removed shown with dashed red line)

Figure 12
Viewpoint photograph 2A
Bridleway 348/2



Existing view

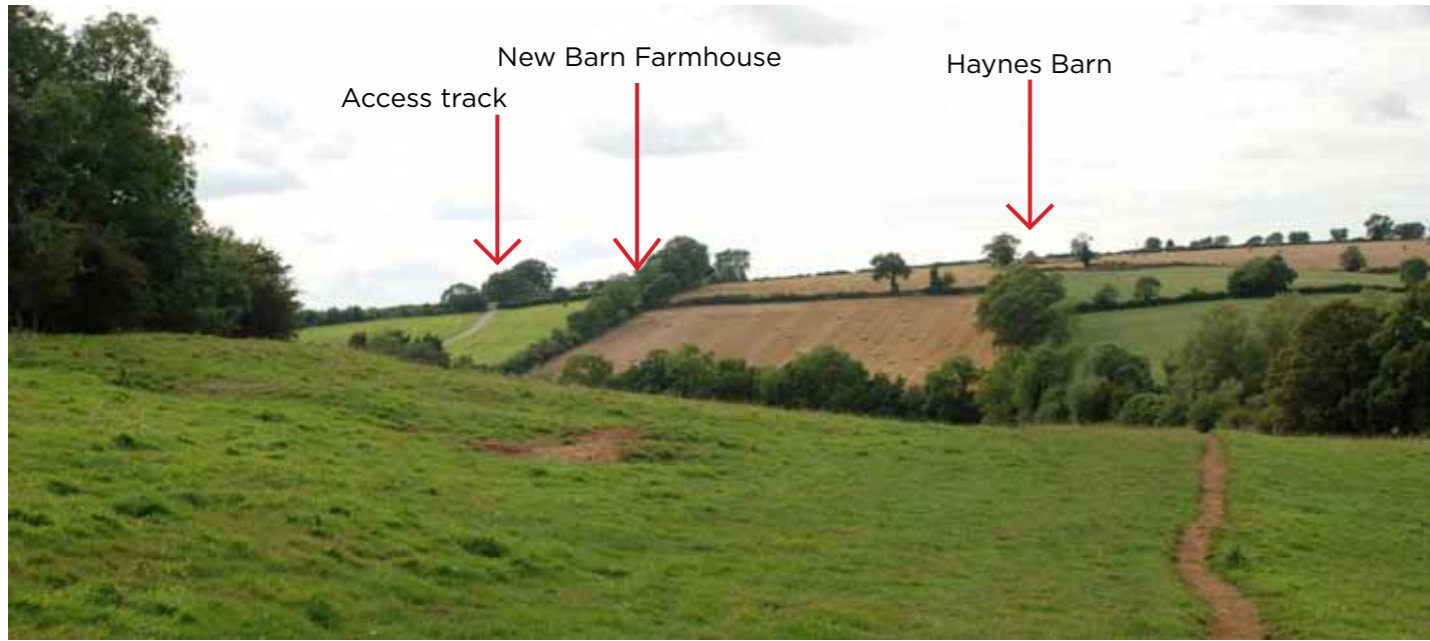


Visualisation including proposed replacement house



View looking east along direction of travel

Figure 13
Viewpoint photograph 2B
Bridleway 348/2



Existing view

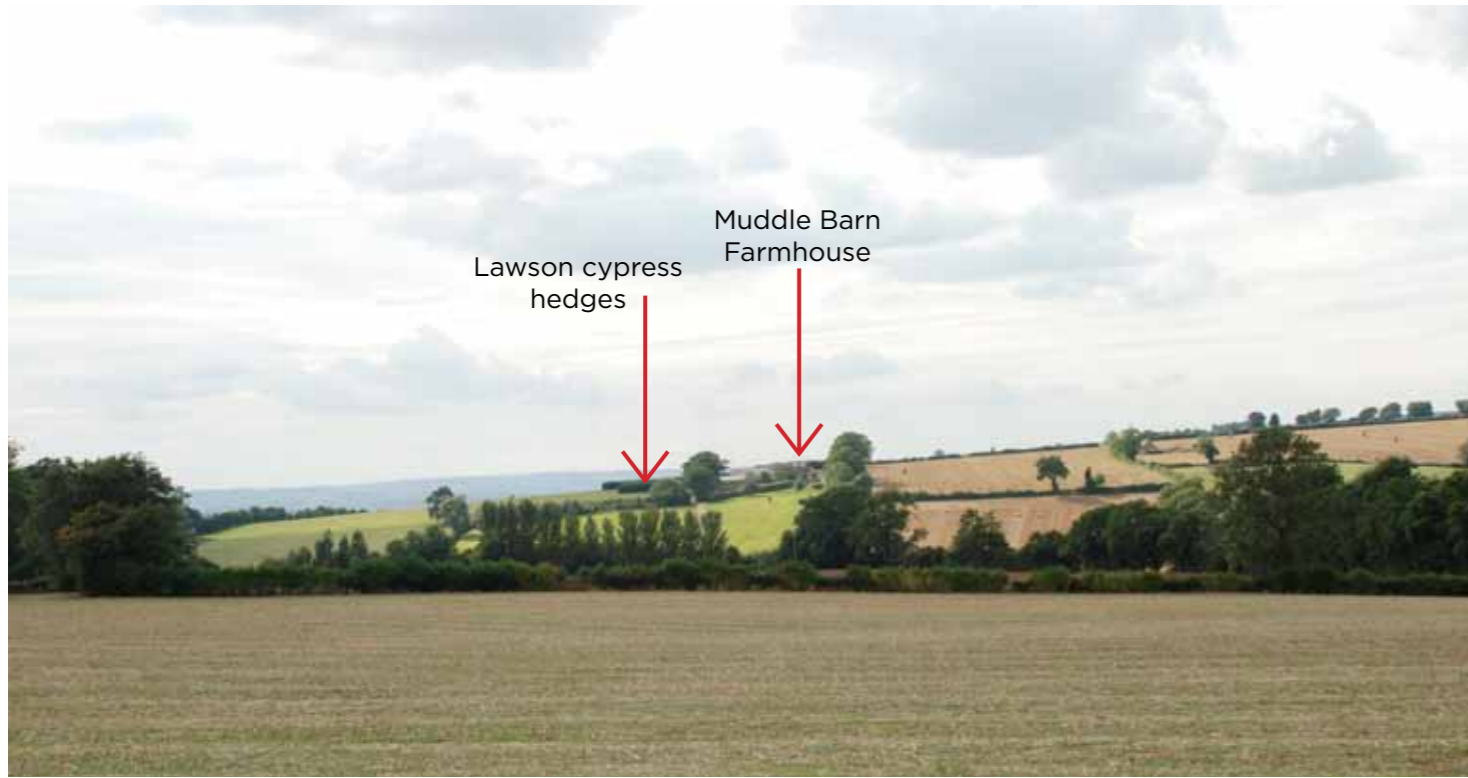


Visualisation including proposed replacement house



Character of wider view just above position of viewpoint described

Figure 14
Viewpoint photograph 3
Bridleway 347/1



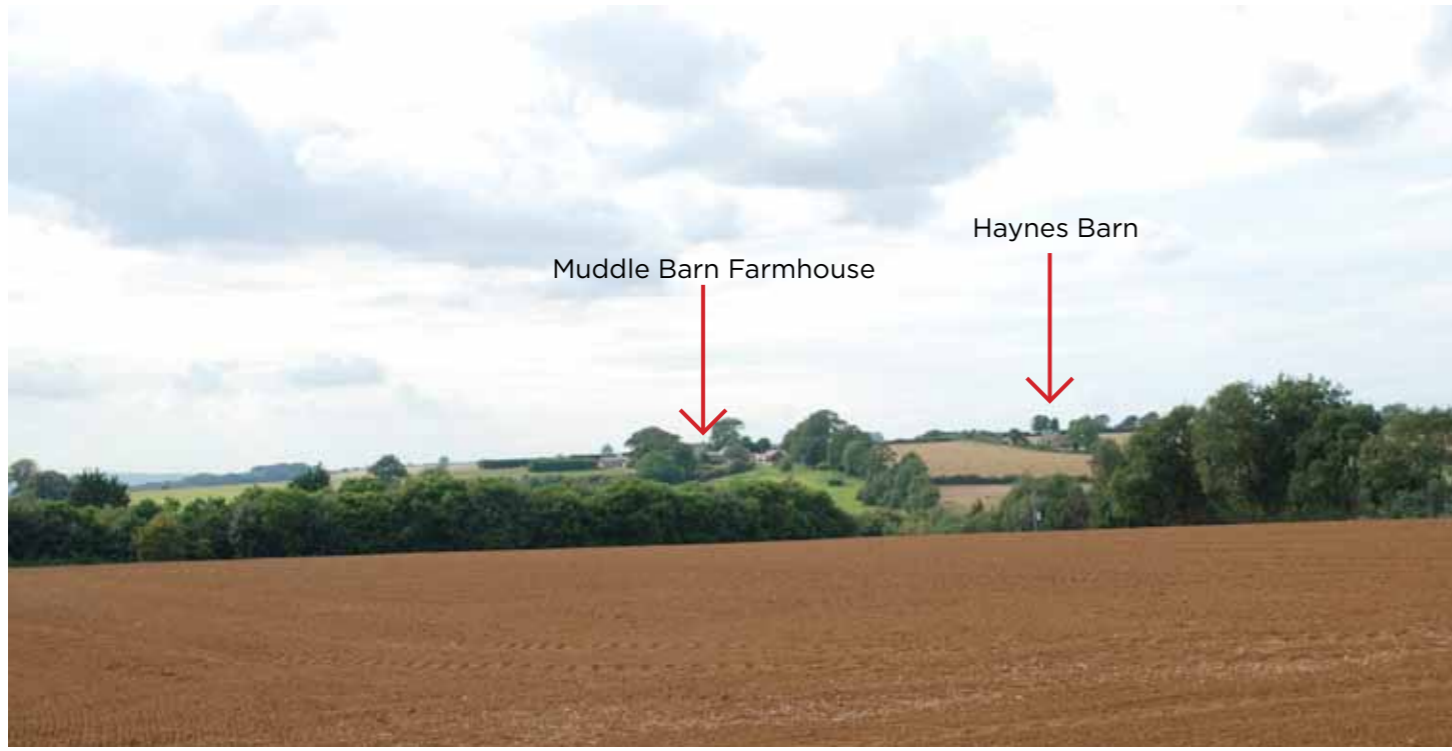
Existing view



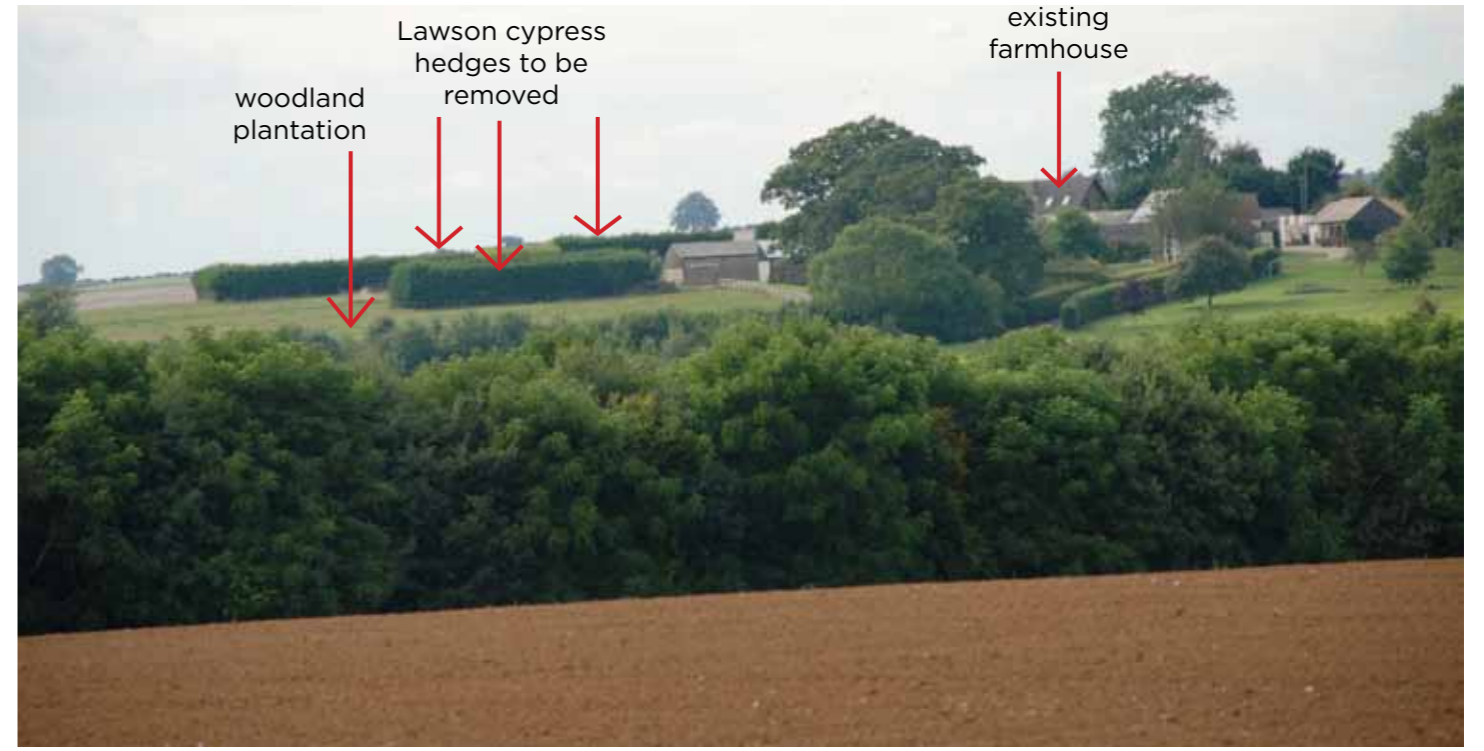
Visualisation including proposed replacement house



Character of wider view



Existing view



Zoomed in view



Visualisation including proposed replacement house



Zoomed in view showing replacement house (buildings to be removed shown with dashed red line)

Figure 16
Viewpoint photograph 5
Footpath 347/2



Existing view



Visualisation including proposed replacement house



Wider view

Figure 17
Viewpoint photograph 6
Traitors Ford Lane/SS63

Proposed
view before
tree planting



Year 1



Year 15



Figure 18
Sketch showing impact of planting on
viewpoint 1B (FP 348/7)

Proposed
view before
tree planting



Year 1



Year 15



Figure 19
Sketch showing impact of planting on
viewpoint 2B (BW 347/1)

Proposed
view before
tree planting



Year 1



Year 15



Figure 20
Sketch showing impact of planting on
viewpoint VP5 (FP 347/2)

Proposed
view before
tree planting



Year 1



Year 15



Figure 21
Sketch showing impact of planting
on viewpoint VP4 (FP 347/2)

APPENDIX A: Criteria for assessment of Landscape and Visual effects

EXAMPLE DEFINITIONS OF LANDSCAPE AND VIEW SENSITIVITY	RATING	EXAMPLE DEFINITIONS OF MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE TO LANDSCAPE OR VIEW
<p>LANDSCAPE VALUE: Element has very high cultural or ecological value at a local, regional or national scale.</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Replaceability): Element is difficult or impossible to replace or can only be replaced in a long timescale (14+ years).</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Significance): Element is scarce and/ or an accepted part of landscape character. Any further losses will affect landscape character.</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Vulnerability): Landscape context cannot accommodate change/ more change without detriment to character.</p> <p>VISUAL IMPACT: Landscape has very high aesthetic value at a local, regional or national scale.</p> <p>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY: Important public location where the accepted activity is specifically enjoyment of the view.</p>	Very High	<p>LANDSCAPE: A total loss or major alteration to one of the existing landscape elements.</p> <p>VISUAL: The introduction of prominent elements of a scale, form and colour that cause degradation of the surrounding landscape character.</p> <p>Change affects a very large proportion of the view at the distance studied and /or will be long lasting (14 years +)</p>
<p>LANDSCAPE VALUE: Element has some high cultural or ecological value at a local regional or national scale.</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Replaceability): Element can be replaced in the medium- long timescale (10-14 years).</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Significance): Element is not yet scarce, it is an accepted part of landscape character and further losses will cause loss of character.</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Vulnerability): Landscape context can only accommodate some small change/ more change without detriment to character.</p> <p>VISUAL IMPACT: Landscape has high aesthetic value at a local, regional or national scale.</p> <p>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY: Public location or community of private views where the accepted activity is recreational and enjoyment of the view.</p>	High	<p>LANDSCAPE: Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape</p> <p>VISUAL: The introduction of prominent elements of a scale, form and colour distinct from the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Change affects a large proportion of the view at the distance studied and/ or will be medium -long lasting (10-14 years +)</p>
<p>LANDSCAPE VALUE: Element has some cultural or ecological value at a local, regional or national scale.</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Replaceability): Element can be replaced in the medium timescale (7-14 years).</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Significance): Element is not yet scarce, it is an accepted part of landscape character and further small losses will cause only small loss of character.</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Vulnerability): Landscape context can accommodate some small change/ more change without detriment to character.</p> <p>VISUAL IMPACT: Landscape has good aesthetic value at a local, regional or national scale.</p> <p>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY: Public location where the accepted activity is recreational, but the view is secondary (e.g. sports fields) or small number of private views are affected.</p>	Medium	<p>LANDSCAPE: Partial loss or alteration to one key element, feature or characteristic of the landscape.</p> <p>VISUAL: Introduction of prominent elements that are not wholly uncharacteristic of the existing landscape.</p> <p>Change affects a medium proportion of the view at the distance studied and/ or will be medium lasting (7-14 years)</p>
<p>LANDSCAPE VALUE: Element has small cultural or ecological value at a local, regional or national scale.</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Replaceability): Element can be replaced in the short-medium timescale (5-7 years).</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Significance): Element is not scarce, it is not a wholly accepted part of landscape character and further small losses will cause only a small loss of character.</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Vulnerability): Landscape context can accommodate a small amount of change/ more change without detriment to character.</p> <p>VISUAL IMPACT: Landscape has low aesthetic value at a local, regional or national scale.</p> <p>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY: Public location/single private views where the accepted activity is recreational but not enjoyment of the view. Views from most transport corridors and businesses.</p>	Low	<p>LANDSCAPE: Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape.</p> <p>VISUAL: Introduction of minor features not uncharacteristic of the existing landscape</p> <p>Change affects a small proportion of the view at the distance studied and/ or will be short lasting (5-7 years)</p>
<p>LANDSCAPE VALUE: Element has little cultural or ecological value at a local, regional or national scale..</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Replaceability): Element can be replaced in a very short timescale (1-3 years).</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Significance): Element is not scarce, it is not a key part of landscape character and further small losses will not cause any loss of character.</p> <p>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY (Vulnerability): Landscape context can accommodate quite large change/ more change without detriment to character.</p> <p>VISUAL IMPACT: Landscape has little or no aesthetic value at a local, regional or national scale.</p> <p>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY: No recreational activities takes place, little significance for private views.</p>	Very Low	<p>LANDSCAPE: Very minor loss or alteration of one or two key elements, features or characteristics of the landscape.</p> <p>VISUAL: Introduction of elements of a form, scale and colour not uncharacteristic of the existing landscape.</p> <p>Change affects a very small proportion of the view at the distance studied and/ or will be very short lasting (1-3 years)</p>

APPENDIX B: Example definitions for the condition of existing landscape elements

CONDITION	DESCRIPTIVE EXAMPLES
Excellent	The feature is an excellent example of its type and close to the ideal for the habitat type or landscape character of the area.
Good	The feature has lacked some appropriate maintenance and character or ecological health has suffered somewhat, but is easily recovered in the short term. <3 years.
Average	The feature has undergone damage or lack of maintenance that requires some investment to remedy, although the element should recover completely in the medium term (3-7 years).
Poor/Damaged	The feature has been damaged and some parts may not be recoverable. Other elements could recover only in the long term. (7+ years.) The feature is simply a poor example, having never been designed or maintained appropriately.
Degraded	The feature is so damaged and degraded that recovery may not be possible or economic. Creation of new character or elements may be necessary.

APPENDIX C: Significance matrix for impact scoring

		MAGNITUDE				
		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
SENSITIVITY	Very High	Major	Very Severe	Severe	Substantial	Moderate
	High	Very Severe	Severe	Substantial	Moderate	Slight
	Medium	Severe	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
	Low	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Insignificant
	Very Low	Moderate	Slight	Negligible	Insignificant	Insignificant

APPENDIX D: Landscape Character

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS - 2004)

In the OWLS, the study area includes two landscape types, Rolling Village Pasture and Wooded Pasture, Valleys and Slopes. The key landscape characteristics of Rolling Village Pastures are described as:

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

The key landscape characteristics of Wooded Pasture, Valleys and Slopes are described as:

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

The Cherwell District Landscape Assessment (1996) locates the study area lies within the Ironstone Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area which it describes as being distinguished by:

- It's rolling landscape and remote and isolated unspoilt ironstone villages
- Much of the rolling hills landscape is in arable cultivation. Some medium/large arable fields are still surrounded by hedges. However, much of the higher land and gentler slopes now have a fairly open landscape, with fields sometimes lacking even fences
- Frequent steep-sided valleys and narrow valley floors, smaller fields, mixed farming, predominantly permanent pasture
- Many hedgerows unmanaged and growing out. Many hedges contain mature hedgerow trees. Hedges mostly dense well-grown barriers. Areas of arable more closely trimmed
- Narrow stands of trees along road verges gives impression of being well-treed, the area lacks larger woodlands. Streams in valley bottoms are locally marked with old willows

At a more local level, the Assessment uses landuse and vegetation character to sort the landscape into types: the landscape type for the study area is identified as R4a Small-scale Enclosed Farmland - described as 'a strong undulating complex of farmed hills and valleys' and 'a pastoral scene of small grazing fields divided by mature, dense hedgerows'.

The study area shares characteristics of an adjacent small enclosed farmland type R4b: 'Where landform opens out, small fields are ploughed so that the resulting landscape is an intricate blend of mixed farming, with small variations in scale and local land use being closely related to topography, a tightly knit small scale rolling farmland with strong field pattern.

The study area extends across the Oxfordshire border west into Warwickshire into the Cotswolds AONB landscape type Ironstone Hills and Valleys, character area 6A Whichford Hills and Valleys. These are fragments of the broader area that extends eastwards and is described above. Key characteristics are described as follows:

- Complex topography of steeply sided convoluted valleys and rolling rounded ridgelines and hills;
- Intermittent isolated round hills
- Distinctive local vernacular with buildings constructed in Hornton Stone
- Settlement pattern of intermittent nucleated hamlets, isolated farmsteads, and individual buildings
- Area principally under arable cultivation, together with some improved and permanent pasture, mainly on valley slopes and bottoms
- Medium to large scale rectilinear fields, mainly enclosed with hedgerows, with frequent hedgerow trees
- Limited woodland cover

1. INTRODUCTION

IRONSTONE DOWNS

The character area covers the entire northern half of the district to the west of the Cherwell Valley. It also forms part of a larger region, which is fairly homogenous in terms of its geology and architecture, covering parts of Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and West Oxfordshire. The Ironstone Downs consist of marlstone rock beds overlying middle and lower lias clays, except where outcrops of white limestone and Northampton sands have been exposed by uplift. The southern half of this area is divided into steeply sided, convoluted valleys with narrow valley floors and rolling, rounded hill lines. The marlstone is less faulted in the northern half, producing an upland plateau-like landscape incised by very steep and often narrow valleys. The majority of this character area drains into the River Cherwell, except for a small area around the Sibfords, which drains west into the River Stour.

2. LANDSCAPE

2.1 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

- (i) The Ironstone Downs is a strongly undulating landscape, which rises to the west forming an upland ridge on the western boundary of the district, over 200m in altitude in part. In places, such as Oatley Hill at 239m, this ridge provides extensive views over much of the western part of this character area.
- (ii) Steeply sided, narrow valleys containing small brooks dissect the area, being more defined in the north where they cut through a gently rolling plateau. To the south, however, rounded hills often extend straight from the valley sides. Quarrying has had a considerable impact on the landscape with some reclaimed fields several metres below the natural level of the land.
- (iii) Mixed farmland is characteristic of this area. Where the land is gently sloping, large-scale intensive arable farmland predominates. Elsewhere on steeper slopes, small scale grazing land exists with strong patterns of mixed thorn hedgerows containing hedgerow trees such as Oak, Ash, Sycamore and occasional Beech. Remnant heath vegetation also exists on some of the higher ground.
- (iv) There are very few extensive areas of woodland. Those that exist are either associated with historic parkland located in the east of the area, or with poor quality soils, especially in association with watercourses and the brow of hills.
- (v) This area contains both exposed large-scale arable landscapes and intimate small-scale valleys under pasture. Views from upland locations often encompass both types.
- (vi) Roads generally cross the higher ground and traverse valleys, but rarely follow them. Occasionally the roads are raised above the level of the landscape where extensive quarrying has taken place in adjacent fields. Roads are sunken where they cross steep valley slopes.

2.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

- (i) New roads or access ways should cause minimal disturbance to valley floors, e.g., by careful alignment, the formation of cuttings, planting of hedgerows and other treatment sympathetic to the landscape.

- (ii) Trees and hedges should be retained to conserve the small-scale character of much of the landscape. Where new planting is required to help integrate new development into the landscape, this should reflect local landscape structure and character.
- (iii) All forms of development need to be sited with care in order to avoid locations where development would be either, prominent, visually intrusive, out of character or would harm a feature or site, which is important to the character of the area.

3. SETTLEMENTS

3.1 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

- (i) A large number of closely spaced settlements of an agricultural origin have developed as a result of the soil fertility and water supply. The majority of villages are small in scale, with the exception of Adderbury, Bloxham, Bodicote, Deddington and Hook Norton, all of which act as local service centres and are located in the southern half of this area. Villages are positioned in valley locations, either on the valley sides, e.g. South Newington, at the head of a valley, e.g. Wroxton; or near the top of the valley on the brow of the hill, eg. Hempton.
- (ii) Villages are generally only prominent where the valleys are open and wide, e.g. the Barfords in the Swere valley. Elsewhere village location and topography means that many villages are not visible over long distances. Churches located near the highest point of the village provide a landmark in the wider countryside.
- (iii) Villages have developed as distinct nucleated features in the landscape, with little development other than farms in the wider countryside. Over time, development has produced a variety of village forms depending on the location of villages in relation to roads. Where only one road exists the villages are generally linear in form, e.g. Tadmarton, however as many of the villages are located at the junction of roads, compact forms have developed over time, e.g. Balscote. The layouts of roads sometimes enclose areas of undeveloped land, which contributes to the character of the village, e.g. Wigginton. At the head of the valleys, the topography actually limits development and therefore helps to shape the form of the village, e.g. Hornton.
- (iv) Despite a lack of woodland in the wider landscape, trees and hedgerows are often important features in street scenes and in views of villages in their landscape setting.
- (v) Village character varies both within a settlement and from village to village. Terraced properties and high ironstone walls set close to narrow lanes create a sense of enclosure, e.g. parts of Bloxham, whilst small informal verges and small greens create space, e.g. Shenington.

3.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

- (i) New development should respect the existing setting of each particular village. Landscape constraints are very important in this part of Cherwell District and most proposals, which would have a prominent visual impact on the wider countryside, will not be acceptable.

- (ii) The scale, location and layout of new development should carefully relate to the historic form of each particular village.
- (iii) Open space, which forms an important part of the character of the village, should remain undeveloped.
- (iv) The creation of new public space, which is an integral part of new development, can help maintain the rural character of the villages.

4. BUILDINGS

4.1 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

- (i) There is a strong consistency in the vernacular architecture of this area. Two storey terraced and detached houses built of ironstone is characteristic. Although the ironstone walling shows considerable variation in character, the most frequently used is small roughly squared rubble laid in courses of unequal depth. Duns Tew is the exception, where limestone predominates. Early 19th century brick buildings are largely found in villages close to Banbury, although other villages on railway lines, such as Hook Norton, were influenced by the introduction of new materials. 20th century development displays a large variety of materials.
- (ii) The traditional roofing material of the area is thatch and stone slate. A large number of roofs have subsequently been replaced with plain dark grey slates, tiles and Welsh slate. Red clay or concrete tiles have been used in some modern developments. Roof pitches are generally steep with brick stacks on the ridge line.
- (iii) Window types in ironstone cottages are a mix of stone mullioned, timber casement and timber sash, with horizontal alignment being the traditional pattern.
- (iv) The majority of domestic buildings face the streets with the occasional house positioned at right angles to the road. Houses are either located adjacent to the streets, often with no pavement, or set back a few metres, sometimes enclosed by low ironstone walls. High ironstone walls often enclose large important buildings and open space. This relationship forms well defined streets.
- (v) Farmsteads and farm buildings are dispersed throughout the Ironstone Downs, some close to roads, many at the end of access tracks, away from the main through routes. As a result, these farms either appear set into the hillside or are concealed out of sight.

4.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

- (i) Ironstone is the only appropriate building material for domestic properties in many village locations. The appropriateness of other materials will need to be carefully considered and

will depend on the exact location of the proposal. Limestone will be acceptable in Duns Tew.

- (ii) The dominant roof type should be slates and plain tiles of subdued colours appropriate to their locality and thatch. Profiled or interlocking tiles will not normally be acceptable. Roofs should be steeply pitched and chimneys positioned on the ridge line.
- (iii) Domestic building form and design should be simple, without elaborate use of porches or dormers. The proportions of openings are important in maintaining this simple form. Timber casement or sash windows should normally be used.
- (iv) The mix of terraced and detached houses should reflect the existing character of individual villages. Houses should face streets. Large front gardens will not normally be appropriate. Ironstone walls should be used for enclosure where they will be visible from the public domain.
- (v) New farm buildings should reflect the rural and agricultural nature of the area in terms of scale and design. They should be sited with great care to avoid prominent or sensitive locations and be accompanied by new planting to integrate them as quickly as possible into their setting.

CHECK-LIST

Now check your proposal against the series of questions listed below:

- Is your proposal in accordance with adopted local plan policies?
- Does your proposal complement the landscape character of the surrounding area?
- Will it retain existing features, within and along the boundaries of the site?
- Will it respect the setting of existing buildings and features when viewed from distance?
- Is your proposal integrated into its landscape setting?
- Are there less prominent or exposed sites available in the locality?
- Will your proposal retain the existing relationship between the village and its landscape location?
- Will it maintain and enhance the historic form of the village?
- Does it respect the existing street character of that part of the village?
- Does your proposal retain existing trees and hedgerows and provide extra planting if necessary for screening or visual amenity?
- Is the setting of important spaces or gaps in the village enhanced by your proposal?
- Does your proposal use appropriate materials for the locality?
- Will it respect the traditional form, scale and proportions used in buildings of the area?
- Are the means of enclosure appropriate to its village location?
- Do the buildings produce an appropriate street frontage for the particular village?

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