

Please refer to section 3 methodology of the assessment process

1. **Low Visual Sensitivity:**
 - Site is enclosed on 3 sides, open to the south only
 - Views of North Wessex Downs AONB (in winter)
 - Good opportunities for mitigation, with existing tree belts and hedgerows

2. **Medium Landscape Sensitivity:**
 - Tree belts internally and to eastern, northern and western boundaries
 - Areas of orchard in southern parts of site – not included as a BAP site
 - General lack of internal hedgerows
 - No cultural significance
 - Site feels isolated/rural despite some influence of employment centre
 - Some visual intrusion from glasshouses to south and activity of business centre
 - Flatter, higher ground in the west part of site, rolling down to east / north-east

3. Landscape Character Sensitivity: Medium / Low (combines 1 and 2)

4. **Medium / High Wider Landscape Sensitivity:**
 - South part of site influenced by Core Business Centre
 - Feels separate from the Milton Heights housing development
 - Isolated from wider countryside except immediately to the south

5. Overall Landscape Sensitivity: Medium (combines 3 and 4)

6. **Low Landscape Value**
 - No written evidence of landscape value.

7. Landscape Capacity: High (combines 5 and 6)

Relationship of site to Milton Heights

- Disconnected from Milton Heights but would be connected if site 40B were connected

Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- Southern part of site is connected to the countryside to the immediate south but disconnected from the wider landscape

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics

- Potential loss of orchard – though not included in BAP records
- Potential to build on existing landscape framework

Potential impact on key visual characteristics

- Possible loss of longer views to NWD AONB
- Site visually well contained
- Possible loss of semi-rural character of Milton Hill Road

Potential impact on key settlement characteristics

- Development could link well with development of site 40B and hence with the small village of Milton Heights
- Loss of rural setting of Tollgate and Core Business Park

Landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure

- Retain and enhance existing boundary vegetation, tree belts, orchards
- Plant new woodland edge to southern boundary to create a strong countryside edge and link with existing and new green infrastructure
- Create new landscape structure using existing or former field boundaries, tree belts and woodland to sub-divide site and to meet OWLS landscape strategy
- Create landscape setting for Tollgate

Conclusion and recommendations

- The whole of this site can be further considered for development as shown in Figure 40.2 – subject to assessment of extent and value of orchards
- Create links with site 40B
- Create a strong edge and screen to the development area, linking with existing and new green infrastructure
- Plant new woodland edge to southern boundary to create a strong countryside edge
- Preferred access would be via the existing gaps in vegetation on Milton Hill Road and via the access to the Core Business Centre

LA40B East of Milton Hill Road**Photographs:**

Photo 4: View east across site with distant views of the Chilterns



Photo 5: View south across site towards North Wessex Downs from higher ground



Photo 6: View north towards site from Grove Road looking across a shallow valley with Stert Plantation to the right



Photo 7: View north-west towards site looking across shallow valley. Milton Heights visible on high ground in distance

Please refer to section 3 methodology of the assessment process

1. Medium Visual Sensitivity:

- Site forms skyline from lower ground in east of site
- Long views to the east (towards The Chilterns)
- Views of North Wessex Downs AONB (in winter)
- Milton Hill has semi-rural character
- Site feels isolated/rural despite some influence of A34/Didcot/ football ground
- Good opportunities for mitigation, with existing (or remnant) field divisions, tree belts, plantations and some hedgerows

2. Medium / Low Landscape Sensitivity:

- Frequent belts of poplar and alder
- Some orchard and conifer plantations
- General lack of hedgerows
- Site envelops football ground
- No cultural significance
- Influence of noise/visual intrusion from football pitch/A34/Didcot
- Flatter, higher ground in the west part of site, rolling into a valley in east part of site.

3. Landscape Character Sensitivity: Medium / Low (combines 1 and 2)

4. Medium Wider Landscape Sensitivity:

- North part of site adjacent to existing development of Milton Heights
- South-east part of site connects to wider landscape of valleys
- Existing development of Milton Heights on higher, flatter ground comprises 20th century housing and a school, not a village.

5. Overall Landscape Sensitivity: Medium (combines 3 and 4)

6. Low Landscape Value

- No written evidence of landscape value.

7. Landscape Capacity: High (combines 5 and 6)

Relationship of site to Milton Heights

- The northern part of the site connects strongly with Milton Heights

Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- South-east part of site is connected to the countryside to the south and east as it rolls down into a valley towards Harwell village

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics

- Some loss of openness
- Potential to build on existing landscape framework

Potential impact on key visual characteristics

- Loss of rural setting of Milton Heights
- Loss of semi-rural character of Milton Hill Road

Potential impact on key settlement characteristics

- Development on the northern part of site would link strongly with existing residential development of Milton Heights
- No physical or visual link with sites 11, 12 and 13 east of A34

Landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure

- Retain and enhance existing boundary vegetation, tree belts, orchards
- Plant new woodland edge to southern boundary to create a strong countryside edge and link with existing and new green infrastructure
- Create new landscape structure using existing or former field boundaries, tree belts and woodland to sub-divide site and to meet OWLS landscape strategy

Conclusion and recommendations

- The whole of this site can be further considered for development as shown in Figure 40.2
- Link development with existing housing and create links with site 40A
- Create a strong edge and screen to the development area, linking with existing and new green infrastructure
- Plant new woodland edge to southern boundary to create a strong countryside edge towards valley bottom
- Preferred access would be via the football ground access and / or via Milton Heights

Potential capacity of the site

It is recommended that both sites are considered further as contingency sites, with the inclusion of Green Infrastructure to create a strong edge to the settlement, as shown on Figure 40.2. Preferred access would utilise existing access roads or existing gaps in boundary vegetation. The density of the area is recommended to be a maximum of 25 per ha. A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment and assessment of the orchards in site 40A will be required to inform the final capacity of the site. Using a nominal density of 25dph, some 1780 dwellings might be accommodated on Site 40.

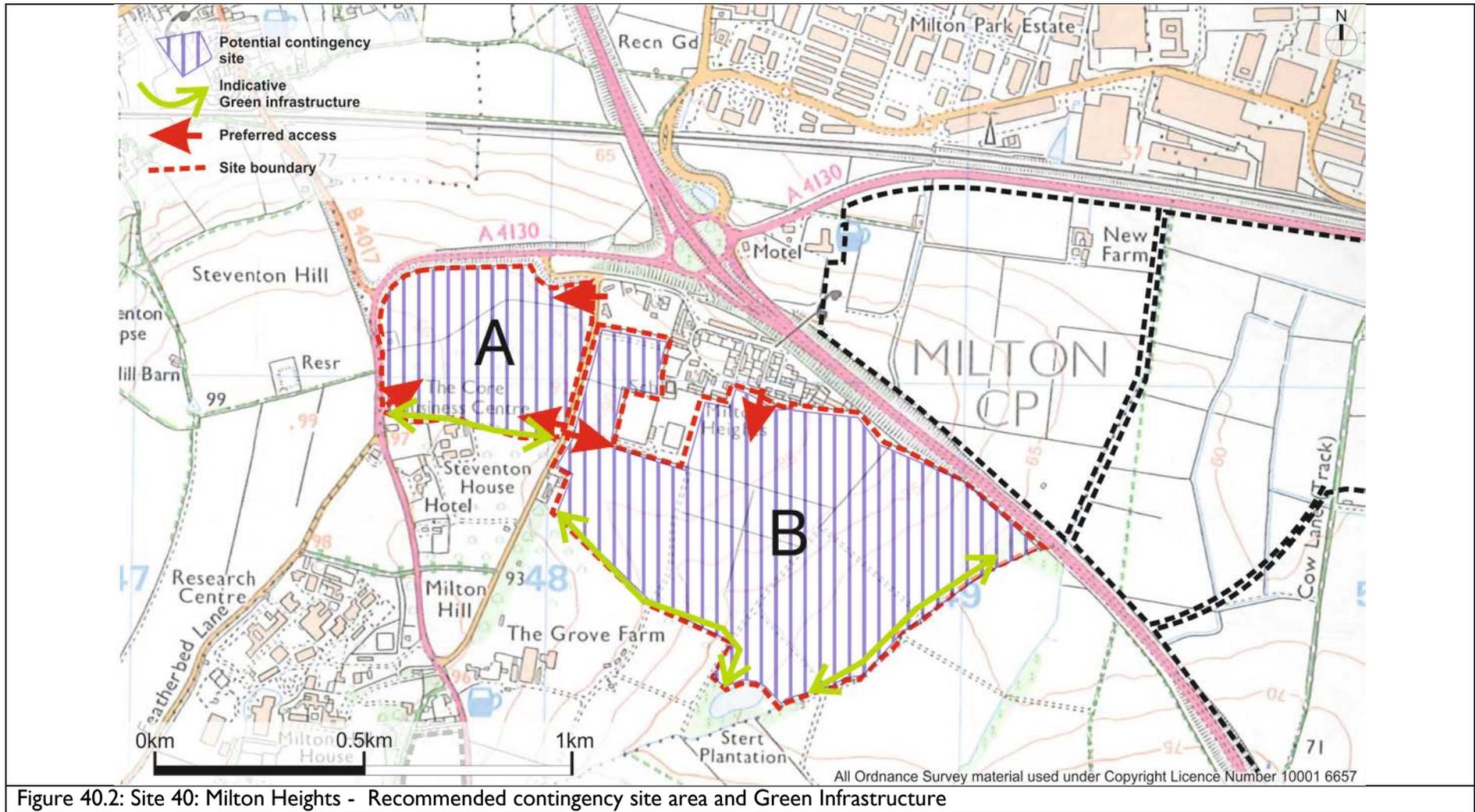


Figure 40.2: Site 40: Milton Heights - Recommended contingency site area and Green Infrastructure

Site 41: Steventon Storage Facility

Site map:

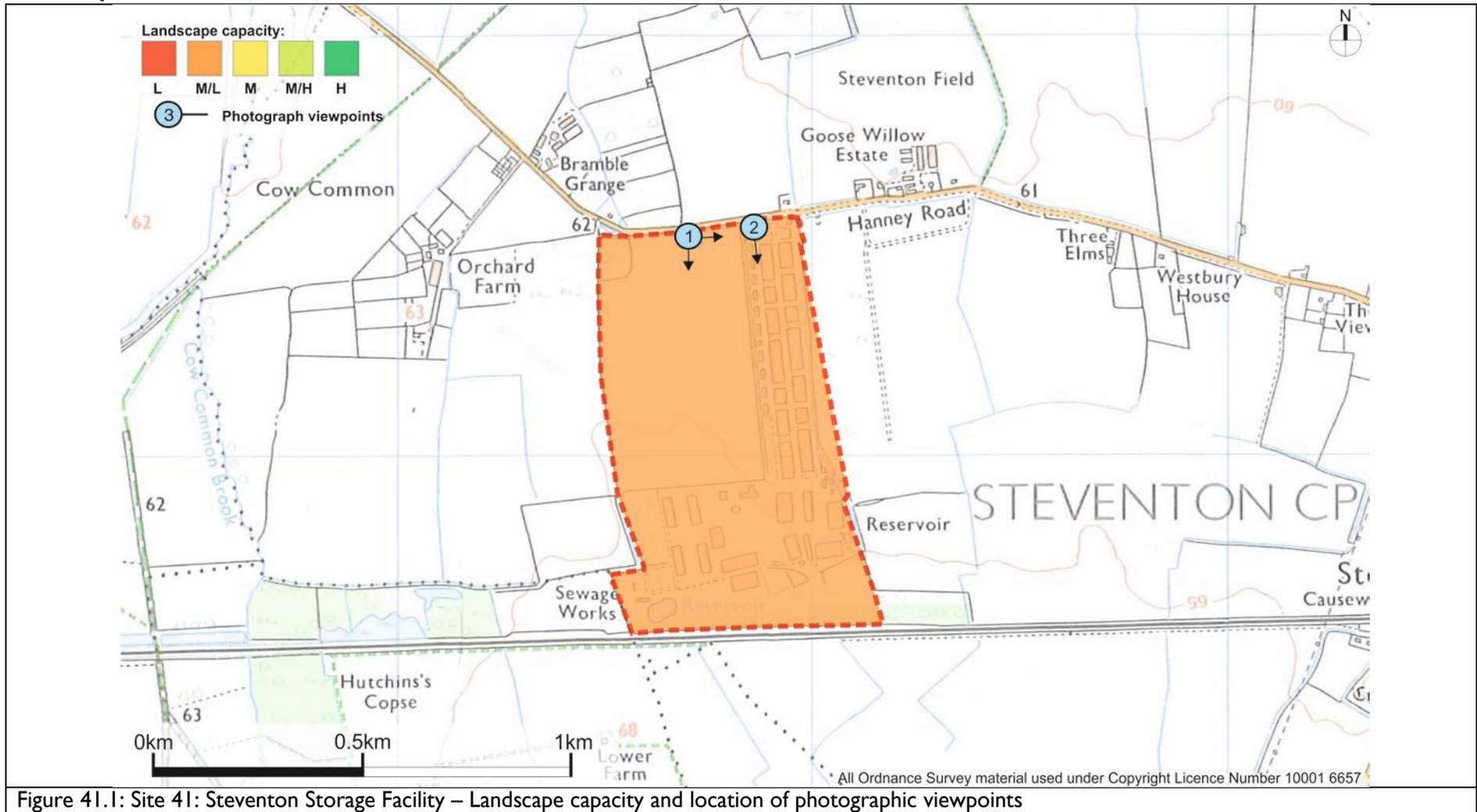


Figure 41.1: Site 41: Steventon Storage Facility – Landscape capacity and location of photographic viewpoints

Site 41 Steventon Storage Facility

The site lies in the **OWLS LCTI Alluvial Lowlands**. The key landscape, visual and settlement characteristics are set out in the Record Sheet for Site 41.

OWLS Landscape Strategy

Maintain the tranquil nature of the landscape and promote the restoration and enhancement of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree-lined watercourses.

Guidelines

- Strengthen the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as oak and ash.
- Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type.
- Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting willows and ash and, where appropriate, pollarding willows.
- Conserve the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland, particularly on land adjacent to watercourses.
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns, villages and farms with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.
- Promote the use of building materials and a scale of development and that is appropriate to this landscape type. These range from red brick and clay tiles in the Vale of White Horse to limestone and stone tiles in the Upper Thames valley.
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses such as gravel extraction with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic to the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.

Site description:

Site 41 is 50.5 ha part greenfield/part brownfield site situated to the west of Steventon. The site comprises a single character area and is bordered to the north by Hanney Road and to the south by the London-Swindon railway line. The western boundary follows a field boundary and wraps around the Storage Facility boundary, following the course of a drain. The eastern boundary appears not to strictly follow the field boundary and passes between the storage facility and a covered off-site reservoir. Approximately 60% of the site area is currently occupied by a fenced compound housing warehouses and storage buildings with the rest being put to arable.

Key landscape planning factors:

Site 41 is not within the Green Belt or the AONB but is within the Lowland Vale area identified in Local Plan policy NE9. This policy protects the Vale which is valued for its contribution to distant views from the higher ground to the north (Corallian Ridge) and the North Wessex Downs to the south. The site is the subject of policy E15 which states that proposals for new buildings, any increase in floorspace or changes of use to the current storage facility would not be permitted. The council will seek the complete cessation of business uses and clearance and restoration of the site.

Photographs: