

Landscape character area	OWLS (landscape character types)	Contingency site options	Key characteristics / guidance
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open views with filtered views through tree lined streams • Abingdon is sited on the junction of the Rivers Thames and Ock • Small and large nucleated villages outside of Abingdon • Strengthen the field pattern by planting up new and gappy hedges, particularly along roadsides, using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as crack willow, oak and ash. • Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting willows and ash and, where appropriate, pollarding willows. • Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as crack willow, oak and ash. • Safeguard, maintain and enhance and the characteristic landscape features of existing parklands including mature trees, avenues of trees, lakes, woods and walls. • Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns and villages 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.
	LCT19 Wooded Estatelands	1B: North Abingdon 3: South-West Botley 25: South Kennington 28: North-West Radley (small area in NE corner) 29: North Radley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly undulating rolling topography with localised steep slopes • Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable size • Large parklands and mansion houses with estate character • Regularly shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields • Medium to large fields • Thorn and elm hedges • Views to area from the Vale • Views through tree cover and framed by woodland • Abingdon is sited on the junction of the Rivers Thames and Ock • Settlement pattern of nucleated villages on the hill tops and along the springline with low density of dispersed settlement • Small villages of strong vernacular character • Conserve and maintain semi-natural and ancient semi-natural woodland. Promote the establishment and management of medium to large-scale deciduous and mixed plantations in areas where the landscape structure is particularly weak. • Strengthen the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species. • Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type. • Conserve and sympathetically maintain species-rich hedgerows and, where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle. • Conserve parklands and their associated landscape features such as stone walls, lakes, mature trees and woods. • Conserve the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland, particularly within parklands. • Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting. • Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses such as quarries, landfill sites, airfields and large-scale development, such as new barns and industrial units, with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. • Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements.
VWH Lowland Vale	LCT1 Alluvial Lowlands	2A: South Abingdon Clay Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive alluvial flats and gravel terraces • Flat open landscape • Low hills formed from Kimmeridge Clays protruding through alluvial flats and gravel terraces

Landscape character area	OWLS (landscape character types)	Contingency site options	Key characteristics / guidance
		16: North-West Grove 20: North-West Drayton 41:Steventon Storage Facility 45:Land east of East Hanney 47:Land west of Steventon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arable farming on large regular fields • Chequer board agricultural landscape • Sparsely wooded and few hedgerows • Small tree clumps, particularly around villages, farmhouses and in some fields • Pattern of hedged fields is a distinctive feature, although it is not always obvious where it is flat • Many internal field hedges south of Abingdon are fragmented and gappy, particularly where they enclose arable land • In need of landscape enhancement (tree and hedgerow planting, small woodlands and tree belts) • Detracting elements (eg Didcot Power Station, A34) • Long views over open landscape (including to Didcot power station and associated power lines) • Long views to the Chilterns and Berkshire Downs • Views to the Corallian ridge • Abingdon is sited on the junction of the Rivers Thames and Ock • Small to medium-sized rural villages and dispersed farms • Largely located on raised gravel patches, numerous nucleated village settlements are often found centred around village greens with churches as focal points • Urban activity at Abingdon • Impact of new roads and road improvements ● Strengthen the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as willow 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, such as industrial estates, gravel pits, landfill sites, airfields and the fringes of towns and villages 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.
	LCT3 Clay Vale	23: East Challow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flat, low-lying landform • Mixed land uses, dominated by pastureland, with small to medium-sized hedged fields • Many mature oak, ash and willow hedgerow trees • Dense, tree-lined streams and ditches dominated by pollarded willows and poplars • Small to medium-sized nucleated villages • dominated by improved and semi-improved grassland which is often located around settlements and adjacent to small streams and watercourses • well-defined network of intact hedges

Landscape character area	OWLS (landscape character types)	Contingency site options	Key characteristics / guidance
	LCT4 Estate Farmlands	23: East Challow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium to large, regularly-shaped hedged fields. • Small, geometric plantations and belts of trees. • Large country houses set in ornamental parklands • Small estate villages and dispersed farmsteads • a rolling landscape to the north of The Wessex Downs • Semi-improved and improved grassland is largely associated with parkland, with the more undulating parts of the landscape and smaller fields around villages • At the foot of the North Wessex Downs, the rolling landform is dissected by small, narrow valleys and springlines, which are often dominated by woodland and scrub • a few species-rich hedges with shrubs such as spindle, field maple, hazel, wild privet and dogwood. They border old tracks
	LCT8 Lowland Village Farmlands	2B: South Abingdon Stonehill Farm 10: South Valley Park 11; North-West Valley Park 12: Valley Park 13A: Didcot A 13B: North Didcot 21: South Drayton 33: East Sutton Courtney 39: Rowstock 40: Milton Heights – east of Milton Hill Road 44: Land west of Harwell Village 46: Appleford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variable, often large-scale farmed landscape closely associated with village settlements. • A varied gently rolling and almost flat topography. • Medium to large-sized arable and hedged fields. • Thinly scattered hedgerow trees, which are mostly ash. • Ash, willow and poplars fringing ditches and streams. • Prominent village settlements scattered throughout the area. • Strengthen the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as willow 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, such as industrial estates, gravel pits, landfill sites, airfields and the fringes of towns and villages with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside. • Maintain the vernacular character of settlements and promote the use of local building materials and a scale of development and that is appropriate to this landscape type.
	LCT10 River Meadows	2: South Abingdon (2A Clay Hill very small area) 27: South Marcham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a linear riverine landscape with a flat, well-defined alluvial floodplain. It has pastoral character with meadows, wet and semi-improved pasture. Flat, low-lying topography with seasonally flooded alluvial floodplains. • Meandering river channels. • Grazing meadows and small fields of permanent pasture. • Riparian character with a strong pattern of riverside willows and tree-lined ditches.

Landscape character area	OWLS (landscape character types)	Contingency site options	Key characteristics / guidance
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sparsely settled with a few roads. • Conserve the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland particularly on land adjacent to rivers and other watercourses. • 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 rivers and other watercourses by planting willows and alders and, where appropriate, pollarding willows. • Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as willows and alders. • Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns with the judicious planting of appropriate tree and shrub species characteristic of the landscape type. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside. • Maintain high standards of restoration at gravel pits to accommodate a range of after-uses that integrate successfully with the character of the surrounding landscape.
	LCT12 Rolling Farmland	6: South Farringdon 9: South Wantage 30: South Shrivenham 31: North Shrivenham 36: South Wootton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent rolling landscape • Large geometric arable fields enclosed by weak hedgerows • Thinly distributed hedgerow trees • Locally prominent blocks of ancient woodland • Localised small streams providing some variation to the open intensively managed landscape • Open distant views are common • More filtered views where fields are better enclosed • Abingdon is sited on the junction of the Rivers Thames and Ock • Small to medium sized nucleated villages now expanding into linear settlements outside Abingdon • 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. • Promote the sustainable management of existing ancient semi-natural woodland to safeguard its long-term survival. • Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as oak and ash.
	LCT19 Wooded Estatelands	5: South-West Farringdon 32: North Stanford – in - the – Vale 37: North Wootton 38: West Stanford – in - the - Vale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly undulating rolling topography with localised steep slopes • Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantations of variable size • Large parklands and mansion houses with estate character • Regularly shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields • Medium to large fields • Thorn and elm hedges • Views to area from the Vale • Views through tree cover and framed by woodland • Abingdon is sited on the junction of the Rivers Thames and Ock

Landscape character area	OWLS (landscape character types)	Contingency site options	Key characteristics / guidance
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement pattern of nucleated villages on the hill tops and along the springline with low density of dispersed settlement • Small villages of strong vernacular character • Conserve and maintain semi-natural and ancient semi-natural woodland. Promote the establishment and management of medium to large-scale deciduous and mixed plantations in areas where the landscape structure is particularly weak. • Strengthen the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally characteristic species. • Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type. • Conserve and sympathetically maintain species-rich hedgerows and, where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle. • Conserve parklands and their associated landscape features such as stone walls, lakes, mature trees and woods. • Conserve the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland, particularly within parklands. • Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting. • Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses such as quarries, landfill sites, airfields and large-scale development, such as new barns and industrial units, with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. • Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Reporting units

- 3.1.1 The OWLS 2004 identified local landscape types within the Vale of White Horse. In the first instance the field surveys confirmed that the 2004 local landscape character types generally reflected physical and visual changes of character within the landscape. As a result these local landscape character types have been incorporated into the LCSCS.
- 3.1.2 Many of the site options lie wholly within one local landscape character type and in these cases one Report has been produced for the whole of the site. However, elsewhere the site option is subdivided into the one or more local landscape areas in which case the site area has been divided up into sub-areas (for example Site 1 North Abingdon is subdivided into 3 sub areas).

3.2 Basis of methodology

- 3.2.1 The methodology and assessment criteria used for this assessment are detailed in section 3.3. Sources of data are identified in Appendix B of this Report. The key texts on which methodology is based are the Scottish Natural Heritage and The Countryside Agency's *Landscape Character Assessment* (2002) and subsequent *Topic Paper 6 Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (2006) as well as the Landscape Institute / IEMA *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (2013) (GLVIA).
- 3.2.2 As in current best practice, sensitivity should be assessed against a specific change, and for this study, a development scenario based on a density of 25 residential dwellings per hectare including the provision of open space serving the development, with dwellings of two or three storeys, has been assumed for each site as a guide against which sensitivity has been assessed.
- 3.2.3 Best practice guidance also recognises that a landscape with a high sensitivity does not automatically mean that landscape has a low capacity for change, but that 'capacity is all a question of the interaction between the sensitivity of the landscape, the type and amount of change and the way that the landscape is valued' (*Topic Paper 6, 2006, p12*). The contingency sites have been assessed with the development scenario above in mind. Recommendations and comments have been added regarding the appropriate development of particular sites and to ensure raised awareness of potential unacceptable adverse effects on landscape character.
- 3.2.4 Proposals for any development would need to include appropriate, detailed and specialist input into siting, layout and design, and a full landscape and visual impact assessment should accompany a specific planning application relating to any site. Other studies including ecology, archaeology, arboriculture, traffic, soils may also be required to accompany specific proposals.

- 3.2.5 Details of the landscape and visual attributes for each site and an assessment of landscape and visual sensitivity (based on desk top studies and field surveys) are to be found on the Record Sheets in Appendix A. A summary of the landscape sensitivity, value and capacity for each site, or sub-areas of each site, follows in individual Reports.

3.3 Assessment process

- 3.3.1 The assessment methodology is a staged process. Landscape attributes, and visual attributes, are considered separately in accordance with the guidance in GLVIA. These attributes are used to identify the **intrinsic landscape and visual sensitivity** (Stages 1 and 2) of the contingency site, or its sub-areas, on a scale of 5 levels from low to high as set out under the Matrix 1 and 2 below. The landscape and visual sensitivity of the contingency site, or its sub-area, are then merged to identify the **landscape character sensitivity** (Stage 3) as set out under Matrix 3 below. The LCSCS then goes on to classify the **sensitivity of the site in its wider context** (Stage 4) into five categories. In Stage 5 the landscape character sensitivity is combined with the wider sensitivity as set out in Matrix 4 to identify the **overall landscape sensitivity** (Stage 5). The **landscape value** (Stage 6) of each site, or sub-area, is assessed separately on a scale of 5 levels as set out under Table 1 below. Finally the overall landscape character sensitivity is merged with the landscape value on a scale of 5 levels to give an assessment of **landscape capacity** (Stage 7) on a scale of 5 levels as set out under Matrix 5 below. This ‘bottom up’ process is tested against the five criteria for landscape capacity (Stage 7) based on professional judgement and an overall full understanding of the contingency sites.

Assessment abbreviations and colour code:

L	– Low Capacity	M/L	– Medium / Low Capacity	M	– Medium Capacity
M/H	– Medium / High Capacity	H	– High Capacity		

STAGE I: DETERMINATION OF VISUAL SENSITIVITY

3.3.2 This assessment is set out in the Record Sheets and Reports for each contingency site, or sub-division.

3.3.3 The assessment considers the types of **views**, the nature of the **viewers** and the **potential to mitigate** visual impact on the identified viewpoints. The more viewpoints, the more exposed the site, the greater the sensitivity of the viewers (based on GLVIA) and the greater difficulties in screen planting to mitigate the impact without harm to the landscape and visual attributes of the site, the higher the sensitivity. As a final test all 38 sites were revisited to assess the relative visual sensitivity of the sites and ensure that professional judgements have been consistent along the way. At this stage each level has been given a score from low = 1 to high = 5 and the scores are added up. Total scores for the contingency site, or sub areas, are grouped as shown.

Matrix I: Visual sensitivity

General visibility	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Population	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Mitigation	L (1)	M/L (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY	3-4 = low; 5- 7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High				

Table 1: Notes on Visual Sensitivity Assessment

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Lower sensitivity
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Fleeting and limited views
	Most of site area visible	Little of site area visible
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	Site is an incidental part of wider views
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks	No landmarks present
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	Unimportant or no vistas
	Prominent skyline	Not part of skyline
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors	Lack of sensitive receptors
	Large number of people see site	Few can see site
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Views of site are unimportant
	Site is part of valued view	Site does not form a part of a valued view
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	Not part of setting of settlement view
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	Mitigation possible
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Would not obscure key views
	Mitigation would damage local character	Mitigation would not harm local character

STAGE 2: DETERMINATION OF LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

3.3.4 This assessment is set out in the Record Sheets and Reports for each contingency site or sub-division.

3.3.5 The assessment considers the **natural** physical factors which make up the landscape character of the site, the **cultural** and built form aspects and the **perceptual** features. The greater the incidence of landscape interest and diversity, historically important features and cultural associations, and the greater the levels of access and perceptions of tranquillity and strong landscape pattern, the greater the sensitivity. As a final test all 38 sites were revisited to assess the relative landscape sensitivity of the sites and ensure that professional judgements have been consistent along the way. At this stage each level has been given a score from low = 1 to high = 5 and the scores are added up. Total scores for the contingency site, or sub areas, are grouped as shown.

Matrix 2: Landscape sensitivity

Natural factors	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Cultural factors	L (1)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
Perceptual features	L (1)	M/L (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
OVERALL LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY	3-4 = low; 5- 7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High				

Table 2: Notes on Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Lower sensitivity
Natural	Native woodland	Plantation
	Significant tree/groups	Insignificant/young trees
	Strong hedgerow structure with hedgerow trees	Weak structure and no trees
	Species rich grassland	Arable field
	Significant water feature(s)	No water feature(s)
	Varied landform and distinctive feature of the area	Uniform landform and lack of topographical features
	Pronounced Geology	Lack of geological features
	Soils significantly contribute to landscape features	Soils are not an important feature
	Complex and vulnerable landcover	Simple robust landcover
	Presence of other significant vegetation cover	Absence of other significant vegetation
	Presence of valued wildlife habitats	Absence of valued wildlife habitats
	Significant wetland habitats and meadows	Poor water logged areas
	Presence of common land	No common land
Presence of good heathland	Lost heathland	
Cultural	Distinctive good quality boundary features	Generic or poor boundary features
	Evidence of surviving part of an historic landscape	No evidence
	Complex historic landscape pattern with good time depth	Simple modern landscape
	Evidence of historic park	No evidence
	Important to setting or in a Conservation Area	No relationship
	Includes a Scheduled Ancient Monument or Important to setting	No relationship
	Locally distinctive built form and pattern	Generic built form
	Important to setting of a Listed building	No relationship
	Distinctive strong settlement pattern	Generic or eroded pattern
	Locally significant private gardens	Poorly maintained gardens erode the character
Evidence of visible social cultural associations	Lack of social cultural associations	

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Lower sensitivity
Perceptual	Quiet area	Noisy area
	Absence of intrusive elements	Intrusive elements present
	Dark skies	High levels of light pollution
	Open exposed landscape	Enclosed visually contained landscape
	Unified landscape with strong landscape pattern	Fragmented/'bitty' or featureless landscape
	Well used area or appreciated by the public	Inaccessible by public
	Important rights of way	None present
	Well used and valued open air recreational facilities	None present
	Open access land	None present

STAGE 3: DETERMINATION OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SENSITIVITY

3.3.6 The landscape sensitivity and visual sensitivity are combined, as shown in Matrix 3, to give the **landscape character sensitivity**. The results of the assessment are set out in the Reports for each contingency site or sub-division.

Matrix 3: Landscape character sensitivity

VISUAL SENSITIVITY	High	M	M/H	M/H	H	H
	Med/High	M/L	M	M/H	M/H	H
	Medium	M/L	M/L	M	M/H	M/H
	Med/Low	L	M/L	M/L	M	M/H
	Low	L	L	M/L	M/L	M
		Low	Med/Low	Medium	Med/High	High
LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY						

STAGE 4: DETERMINATION OF WIDER SENSITIVITY – THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STRATEGIC SITE TO THE WIDER LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT EDGE PATTERN

3.3.7 Stages 1 to 3 have led to a comprehensive assessment of the intrinsic landscape sensitivity of the individual contingency sites. However the sensitivity of each site to development is also affected by its importance, and contribution, to the adjacent wider rural landscape and the influence of, and pattern of uses within, the settlement edge. The relative wider sensitivity of each contingency site is assessed as follows:

Low wider sensitivity – The site is heavily influenced by the built form of the adjacent urban settlement and not an important part of the adjacent wider landscape

Medium/Low wider sensitivity – The site is heavily influenced by urban fringe uses and has views of the some parts of the adjacent urban settlement but shares some of the characteristics of the adjacent wider landscape

Medium wider sensitivity – The site is partly influenced by urban fringe uses but shares many of the characteristics of the wider landscape, with good physical and visual links to the wider landscape

Medium/High wider sensitivity – The site has strong physical and visual links to the wider landscape and these outweigh any minor impacts from the adjacent urban settlement

High wider sensitivity – The site is an important part of the wider landscape with which it has strong visual and landscape links. The nearby settlement has little impact on the site.

3.3.8 The results of the assessment are set out in the Reports for each contingency site or sub-division.

STAGE 5: DETERMINATION OF OVERALL LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

3.3.9 The **overall landscape sensitivity** is determined by combining the landscape character sensitivity with the wider sensitivity as shown in Matrix 4. The results of the assessment are set out in the Report Sheets for each contingency site or sub-division.

Matrix 4: Overall landscape sensitivity

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SENSITIVITY	High	H	H	M/H	M/H	M
	Med/High	H	M/H	M/H	M	M/L
	Medium	M/H	M/H	M	M/L	M/L
	Med/Low	M/H	M	M	M/L	M/L
	Low	M	M	M/L	M/L	L
		High	Med/High	Medium	Med/Low	Low
		WIDER SENSITIVITY				

STAGE 6: DETERMINATION OF LANDSCAPE VALUE

3.3.10 The model for this work follows GLVIA 2013.

Table 1 - LANDSCAPE VALUE CRITERIA

Value	Typical criteria	Typical scale	Typical examples
High	Very High importance (or quality) and rarity. No or limited potential for substitution	International	World Heritage Site SAC
Medium/high	High importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	National	National Park/ AONB SSSI EH Register of Parks and Gardens Grade I and II* listed buildings and their settings National recreational route or area e.g. Thames Path/Open Access
Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional	Setting of AONB / National Park Local landscape designation Landscape value identified in the Local Plan SINC/Conservation Areas and their setting Grade II listed buildings and their setting Local Wildlife sites Regional recreational route/area e.g. Oxford Greenbelt Way
Medium/low	Local importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Local	Undesignated but value expressed through publications such as Village Design Statements Local buildings of historic interest and their settings Local recreational facilities of landscape value
Low	Low importance (or quality) or rarity		Area of little value and identified for improvement

Designations: The location of the site within a designated area, or the presence of a designated area within the site, is an important measure of the value society gives to the landscape of the site. These include landscape, historic and ecological designations and recreational routes at a national/international level, regional or district level, or at the local level.

Local Associations: These are included as far as possible using available data. In addition to the more formal designations above, sites may sometimes have special scenic value, associations or meanings to the local community and therefore make a contribution to the value of the local landscape. This has been assessed through a review of readily available evidence of community value. Further research may be required as part of any detailed landscape and visual impact assessment.

STAGE 7: DETERMINATION OF LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

3.3.11 Landscape capacity is the ability, or otherwise, of the contingency sites to accommodate a certain amount of development. The landscape capacity is determined by combining the overall landscape sensitivity with the landscape value as shown in Matrix 5. The results of the assessment are set out in the Report Sheets for each contingency site or sub-division.

Matrix 5 LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

OVERALL LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY	High	M	M/L	L	L	L
	Med/High	M/H	M	M/L	L	L
	Medium	H	M/H	M	M/L	L
	Med/Low	H	H	M/H	M	M/L
	Low	H	H	H	M/H	M
		Low	Med/Low	Medium	Med/High	High
		LANDSCAPE VALUE				

3.3.12 The results from the matrix are subsequently tested against the following classifications for each level of landscape capacity, building on classifications used by the authors of this Report for other capacity studies.

Low capacity – The landscape character area could not accommodate areas of new development without a significant and adverse impact on the landscape character. Occasional, very small scale development may be possible, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

Medium / Low capacity – A low amount of development can be accommodated only in limited situations, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

Medium capacity - The landscape character area could be able to accommodate areas of new development in some parts, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. There are landscape constraints and therefore the key landscape and visual characteristics must be retained and enhanced.

Medium/ High capacity – The area is able to accommodate larger amounts of development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas. Certain landscape and visual features in the area may require protection.

High capacity – Much of the area is able to accommodate significant areas of development, providing it has regard to the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and the sensitivity of adjacent landscape character areas.

STAGE 8: DETERMINATION OF LANDSCAPE CAPACITY WITHIN THE SITE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- 3.3.13 Each site is examined in detail to determine the potential area for development in the light of the landscape capacity and landscape and visual constraints on the site. In some cases the whole site will be ruled out for development. In others the whole site will be included as a potential contingency site, subject to the provision of Green Infrastructure. However in many cases we recommend a ‘reduced development area’ which identifies a part of the site that could be considered further a potential contingency site subject to the provision of Green Infrastructure. The ‘reduced development area’ is that part of the site that could be developed whilst conserving (and potentially in some cases indirectly enhancing) the key landscape and visual characteristics of the site and its landscape setting; and whilst conserving and reinforcing the influence of the underlying landscape on the settlement pattern of the adjacent town or village. The policy constraints affecting sites within the AONB and the Green Belt have also been taken into account. Where the whole or a part of the site is recommended for further consideration, we have indicated a preferred access point to the site in order to minimise the landscape and visual impact.
- 3.3.14 For each site that we have recommended should go forward for further consideration, we have indicated the approximate location and extent of strategic site Green Infrastructure. This is designed to retain and enhance key landscape features and link open space into the adjoining Green Infrastructure provision. It should be regarded as additional to the provision of open space to serve the needs of the development and future residential amenity. However it should also be integral to the landscape masterplan for these sites and the delivery of Green Infrastructure to serve the existing and future community.
- 3.3.15 Each site report contains an overall plan showing the landscape capacity classification of the site at the beginning of the site report; and an overall plan showing the extent of the site recommended for further consideration as a contingency site, the recommended location and extent of Green Infrastructure and the preferred access point at the end of the site report.

2 STUDY CONSTRAINTS

1. The sites have been assessed from publicly accessible viewpoints including the local road network, public rights of way, public open space and other publicly owned land. Views from private houses and from private land are noted where obvious, but were not visited. This has not resulted in any significant constraint on the assessment.
2. The one exception is Site 13A Didcot A where access could not be arranged. The Study therefore relied on aerial photographs and a site visit to the perimeter of the site.
3. Site photographs included in this study are representative of key views of the site.
4. Views from the surrounding countryside or urban areas have been assessed by noting intervisibility from within or adjacent to the site, but the Study does not include an assessment of the potential zone of visual influence of any development on each site.
5. The majority of study fieldwork was undertaken in July and August 2013, with summer vegetation in full leaf. Additional visits were undertaken in November / December and January 2013/14.
6. For all sites, a nominal density of 25 dph has been applied.
7. Time limitations have meant that no public consultation has taken place during the Study.
8. The Study examines the relative capacity of greenfield sites in the study area, with the exception of two brownfield sites at Site 13A: Didcot A and Site 41: Steventon Storage Facility.
9. Due to lack of detail on the GIS OS base map, this study reproduces the site boundaries using 1:25,000 OS maps as bases for increased clarity for presentation purposes only. Site boundaries have been redrawn over the 1:25,000 OS maps using GIS information provided by VVH as a guide but for absolute accuracy reference should be made to original GIS data.

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Site I: North Abingdon

Site map:

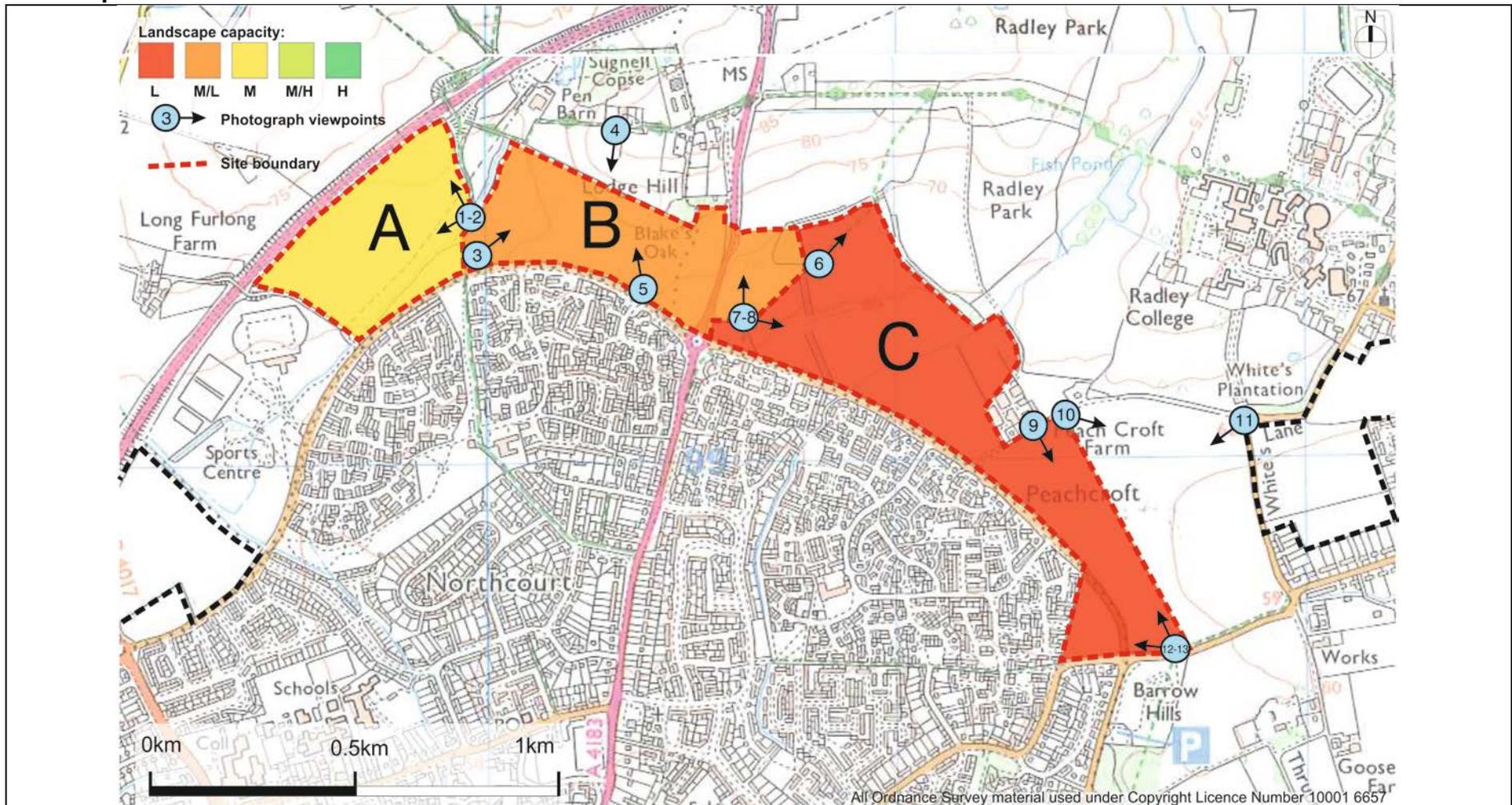


Figure I.1: Site I: North Abingdon – Landscape capacity and location of photographic viewpoints

The site lies in the **North Vale Corallian Ridge**. OWLS divide the site into three landscape character types IA: Rolling Farmland; IB: Wooded Estates; IC Terrace Farmlands. The boundaries on the Study site plans are slight modifications of the OWLS boundaries in order to follow visible boundaries on the ground as far as possible.

OWLS Landscape Strategy: IA: Rolling Farmland

Conserve and enhance the surviving pattern of woodlands, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree-lined watercourses. Minimise the impact of built development through appropriate location, choice of building materials, and the use of locally characteristic tree and shrub species.

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.
- Promote the sustainable management of existing ancient semi-natural woodland to safeguard its long-term survival.
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as oak and ash.
- 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 with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.
- Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development that is appropriate to this landscape type. This includes limestone or limestone and bricks and clay roof tiles in the Midvale Ridge, and red bricks and clay tiles in the Vale of White Horse and North Wessex Downs.

OWLS Landscape Strategy: IB: Wooded Estates

Safeguard and enhance the characteristic landscape of parklands, estates, woodlands, hedgerows and unspoilt villages.

Guidelines

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

OWLS Landscape Strategy: IC: Terrace Farmlands

Strengthen and enhance the pattern of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree-lined watercourses.

Guidelines

- Strengthen the field pattern by planting up new and gappy hedges, particularly along roadsides, using locally characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as crack willow, 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.
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as crack willow, oak and ash.

- Safeguard, maintain and enhance and the characteristic landscape features of existing parklands including mature trees, avenues of trees, lakes, woods and walls.
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns and villages 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.
- Local building materials should be used, including brick and clay tiles in the Vale of White Horse, flintstone and brick or red and blue brick and clay tiles in the Chilterns, and stone with clay tiles in the Upper Thames area.

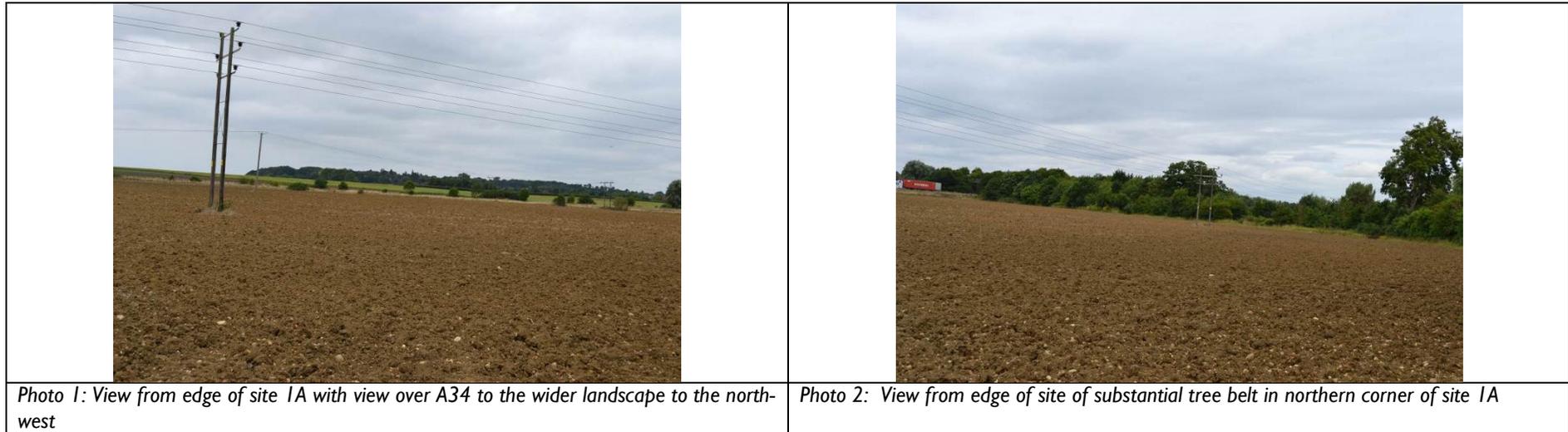
Site description:

Site I North Abingdon is a Greenfield site of 69.4ha. It follows a broad arc north of Dunmore Road and Twelve Acre Drive from the Sports Centre in the west to Radley Road in the east. The southern boundary is mainly formed by a dense belt of trees and shrubs along the road edge. The site abuts the A34 in the west and follows strong tree lines along the mid slopes of Lodge Hill and Radley Park eastwards as far as just north of Peachcroft Farm. The site has been sub-divided into three landscape areas IA: North-east of Sports Centre; IB: Lodge Hill; and IC: Peachcroft. The farm buildings at Peachcroft Farm are excluded from the site but the horticultural fields and poultry paddocks are included. The northern boundary north and east of Peachcroft Farm is poorly defined. The eastern boundary is marked by a line of trees. The site is divided by the A4183 with dense vegetation on each side of the road. A small triangular piece of the site lies south of Twelve Acre Drive.

Key landscape planning factors:

The site is on the southern edge of the Oxford Green Belt. Dunmore Road and Twelve Acre Drive at present form a clearly defined edge to urban Abingdon with only the sports centre and Peachcroft Farm in the adjacent open countryside. Radley Park to the north is a local landmark but, although it has connections with Capability Brown and is clearly a designed landscape, it is not on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. However many elements of the parkland are still in evidence and the site forms the open rural setting to the Park. The A34 affects the western end of the site but this part of the site has good landscape and visual links with the land to the west.

The three landscape areas have been assessed separately below.

IA: North-east of Sports Centre**Photographs:****Please refer to section 3 methodology of the assessment process**

1. **Medium / Low Visual Sensitivity:**
 - Visual links with the wider landscape
 - Visually enclosed otherwise
 - Good potential to mitigate the impact of new built form.
2. **Medium / Low Landscape Sensitivity:**
 - Good landscape structure
 - Little cultural value
 - Lower level of tranquillity.
3. Landscape Character Sensitivity Medium / Low (combines 1 and 2)

4. **Medium / Low Wider Landscape Sensitivity:**
 - Some landscape and visual links with landscape to the west
5. Overall Landscape Sensitivity: Medium / Low (combines 3 and 4)
6. **Medium / High Landscape Value**
 - Within North Vale Corallian Ridge
7. Landscape Capacity: Medium (combines 5 and 6)

Relationship of site to Abingdon

- Beyond well-defined northern edge and separated by belt of trees
- Within 70m AOD contour

Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- Close links with the wider landscape

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics

- Need to retain existing tree belts and stream lines

Potential impact on key visual characteristics

- Little impact

Potential impact on key settlement characteristics

- Site development would project the settlement beyond existing clearly defined line although existing defined edge does not follow the grain of the landscape
- Abingdon already has large estates extending north from the town core
- Contains development below the 70m AOD contour at present
- Extends urban influence up to lodge Hill

Landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure

- Tree planting to A34
- Contribute to GI provision around northern edge of Abingdon linking to Radley Park and Sports Centre

Conclusion and recommendations

- Part of site IA could be considered further as a contingency site subject to the following:
- It is recommended that the access into Site IA should be from Site IB, taking advantage of a gap in the vegetation between the two areas.
- Creation of substantive GI linking the Sports Centre Grounds with Lodge Hill along the line of the stream
- Substantive tree belt along A34
- Development on lower slopes

Potential capacity of site IA

It is recommended that only part of this site is considered further as a contingency site on landscape and visual grounds to order to retain views and landscape links between the eastern boundary and the wider landscape to the west. The site is related well to the Sports Centre, contained by the A34 and lies on the lower slopes of Lodge Hill. The capacity of site IA is partly determined by the need to retain and create substantive Green Infrastructure leading out from Abingdon along the line of the stream and incorporating tree cover between IA and IB; and to link into the northern line of hills at Lodge Hill and Radley Park. This area could be developed in conjunction with Site IB as shown in the Figure 1.2. Preferred access should be from site IB, taking advantage of a gap in the vegetation between the two areas. The capacity of the reduced area will be determined by the factors listed in the above recommendations including a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment; whilst respecting the distinctive character Lodge Hill. The density of this reduced area is recommended to be a maximum of 25 per ha. On this basis some 215 dwellings might be accommodated on site IA (410 dwellings in combination with site IB).

IB: Lodge Hill

Photographs:



Photo 3: View from footpath along western edge of site IB north-east to Lodge Hill.



Photo 4: View from footpath south of Lodge Hill over the site to Abingdon in the south.



Photo 5: View over site from edge of Abingdon.



Photo 6: View north-east from footpath east of A4183 north to planting along northern boundary which historically formed part of Radley Park.



Photo 7: View north from footpath east of A4183 .

Please refer to section 3 methodology of the assessment process

- 1. Medium / Low Visual Sensitivity:**
 - Visually enclosed area
 - Views to Abingdon from upper slopes
 - Good potential to mitigate the impact of new built form.

- 2. Medium Landscape Sensitivity:**
 - Good landscape structure
 - Surviving elements from Radley Park
 - Lower level of tranquillity.

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

- 4. Medium / High Wider Landscape Sensitivity:**
 - Enclosed and distinct from the wider landscape
 - Site contributes to the setting of Radley Park

5. Overall Landscape Sensitivity: Medium (combines 3 and 4)
6. **Medium / High Landscape Value**
- Within North Vale Corallian Ridge
7. Landscape Capacity: Medium / Low (combines 5 and 6)

<p>Relationship of site to Abingdon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beyond well-defined northern edge and separated by belt of trees
<p>Relationship with adjacent wider countryside</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enclosed and distinct from the wider landscape
<p>Potential impact on key landscape characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential adverse impact on surviving historic landscape features (small wood, park boundary vegetation) • Need to retain existing tree belts and stream lines • Would extend development up to 75m AOD contour
<p>Potential impact on key visual characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of open views
<p>Potential impact on key settlement characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site development would project the settlement beyond existing clearly defined line although existing defined edge does not follow the grain of the landscape • Abingdon already has large estates extending north from the town core • Only a small encroachment up the hillside over the 70m AOD contour at present

Landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure

- Retain existing tree belts and small copses
- Avoid land above 75m AOD
- Build on landscape structure south of Lodge Hill through woodland planting
- Reinstate parkland boundary east of A4183
- Contribute to GI provision around northern edge of Abingdon linking to Radley Park and Sports Centre

Conclusion and recommendations

- Part of site IB is recommended for further consideration as a contingency site despite the above analysis suggesting considerable constraints on the site. The following should be taken into account:
- Detailed assessment of the impact of any development on the North Vale Corallian Ridge
- Creation of substantive GI linking the green way through to Northcourt to Lodge Hill along the line of the stream
- Development on lower slopes well below 75m AOD
- Enhancement of the GI between the site and Lodge Hill
- Protection of surviving historic landscape elements
- The preferred points of access are off the perimeter road to the south and these should be located to minimise the loss of any vegetation along the southern boundary.

Potential capacity of site IB

It is recommended that only part of this site is considered further as a contingency site on landscape and visual grounds in order to avoid the visual intrusion of development on higher ground and encroachment on the landscape setting of Lodge Hill by containing the development on the lower slopes of Lodge Hill. The capacity of site IB is partly determined by the need to retain and create substantive Green Infrastructure leading out from Abingdon and linking into the northern line of hills at Lodge Hill and Radley Park and to protect the surviving historic landscape features connected to Radley Park. This area could be developed in conjunction with Site IA as shown in the Figure 1.2. The preferred points of access are off the perimeter road to the south and these should be located to minimise the loss of any vegetation along the southern boundary. The capacity of the reduced area will be determined by the factors listed in the above recommendations including a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment; whilst respecting the distinctive character of Lodge Hill and the landscape setting to Radley Park. The density of this reduced area is recommended to be a maximum of 25 per ha. On this basis some 195 dwellings might be accommodated on site IB (410 dwellings in combination with site IA).

IC: Peachcroft

Photographs:



Photo 8: View east from footpath along the boundary with site IB to Peachcroft Farm.



Photo 9: View of shelter belts and horticultural area at site IC.



Photo 10: View from the edge of site IC north of Peachcroft Farm to Radley.



Photo 11: View over site IC to the south-west from the track on White's Lane Radley to the north-east of Peachcroft Farm.



Photo 12: View from Radley Road to the Triangle of land south of Twelve Acre Drive and housing in Abingdon.



Photo 13: View from Radley Road to site 1C north of Twelve Acre Drive.

Please refer to section 3 methodology of the assessment process

1. Medium / High Visual Sensitivity:

- Very good visual links with the wider landscape
- Important as a visual gap between Abingdon and Radley
- Limited potential to mitigate the impact of new built form without harm to the local landscape character
- Triangle less sensitive.

2. Medium Landscape Sensitivity:

- Poor landscape structure in the east
- Part of the landscape setting to Radley Park
- Adjacent to surviving historic parkland features
- Lower level of tranquillity
- Triangle less sensitive

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

4. **Medium / High Wider Landscape Sensitivity:**
 - Good landscape and visual links with landscape to the west and north-east
 - Contributes to the open countryside between Abingdon and Radley
 - Area contributes to the setting of Radley Park
 - Triangle of land to south severed by road;
5. Overall Landscape Sensitivity: Medium / High (combines 3 and 4)
6. **Medium / High Landscape Value**
 - Within North Vale Corallian Ridge
 - Low for Triangle
7. Landscape Capacity: Low (combines 5 and 6) (except Triangle)

Relationship of site to Abingdon

- Small triangle in east follows townscape pattern south of Twelve Acre Drive
- Majority of site beyond well-defined northern edge and largely separated by belt of trees

Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- Close links with the wider landscape
- Important wider landscape setting to Radley and Radley Park
- Small triangle is separated from open countryside by Twelve Acre Drive

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics

- Potential adverse impact on surviving historic landscape features (small wood, stream flowing from fish ponds, park boundary vegetation)
- Need to retain existing tree belts and stream lines

Potential impact on key visual characteristics

- Visual intrusion on Radley
- Loss of open views

Potential impact on key settlement characteristics

- Site development would project the settlement beyond existing clearly defined line although existing defined edge does not follow the grain of the landscape
- Abingdon already has large estates extending north from the town core
- Would result in loss of physical and visual separation between Abingdon and Radley
- Triangle complements settlement pattern

Landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure

- Additional tree planting along Twelve Acre Drive

Conclusion and recommendations

- Development on any part of IC north of Twelve Acre Drive is not recommended
- A reduced area at the Triangle south of Twelve Acre Drive could be developed for housing subject to tree planting along the northern boundary
- The preferred access is located to enable tree planting along the northern boundary in order to contain and screen the site from the Green Belt to the north.

Potential capacity of site IC

It is recommended that only the southern triangle south of Twelve Acre Drive in landscape area IC is considered further as a contingency site on landscape and visual grounds. The capacity of Site IC is determined by the need: (1) to retain the distinctive and separate townscape characters of Abingdon and Radley and their landscape settings; (2) to retain a substantive area of open countryside as separation between these two settlements; (3) to protect the landscape setting and surviving landscape features to Radley Park; and (4) to retain the landscape and visual continuity of the countryside east of the A4183. The preferred access to the triangle is located on the southern boundary to enable tree planting along the northern boundary in order to contain and screen the site from the Green Belt to the north. The capacity of the reduced area will finally be determined by the factors listed in the above recommendations in a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment. On this basis of the nominal density of 25dph, some 50 dwellings might be accommodated on area IC.

Total capacity of Site I: North Abingdon: A total of 460 dwellings are recommended at a nominal density of 25dph for this contingency site.

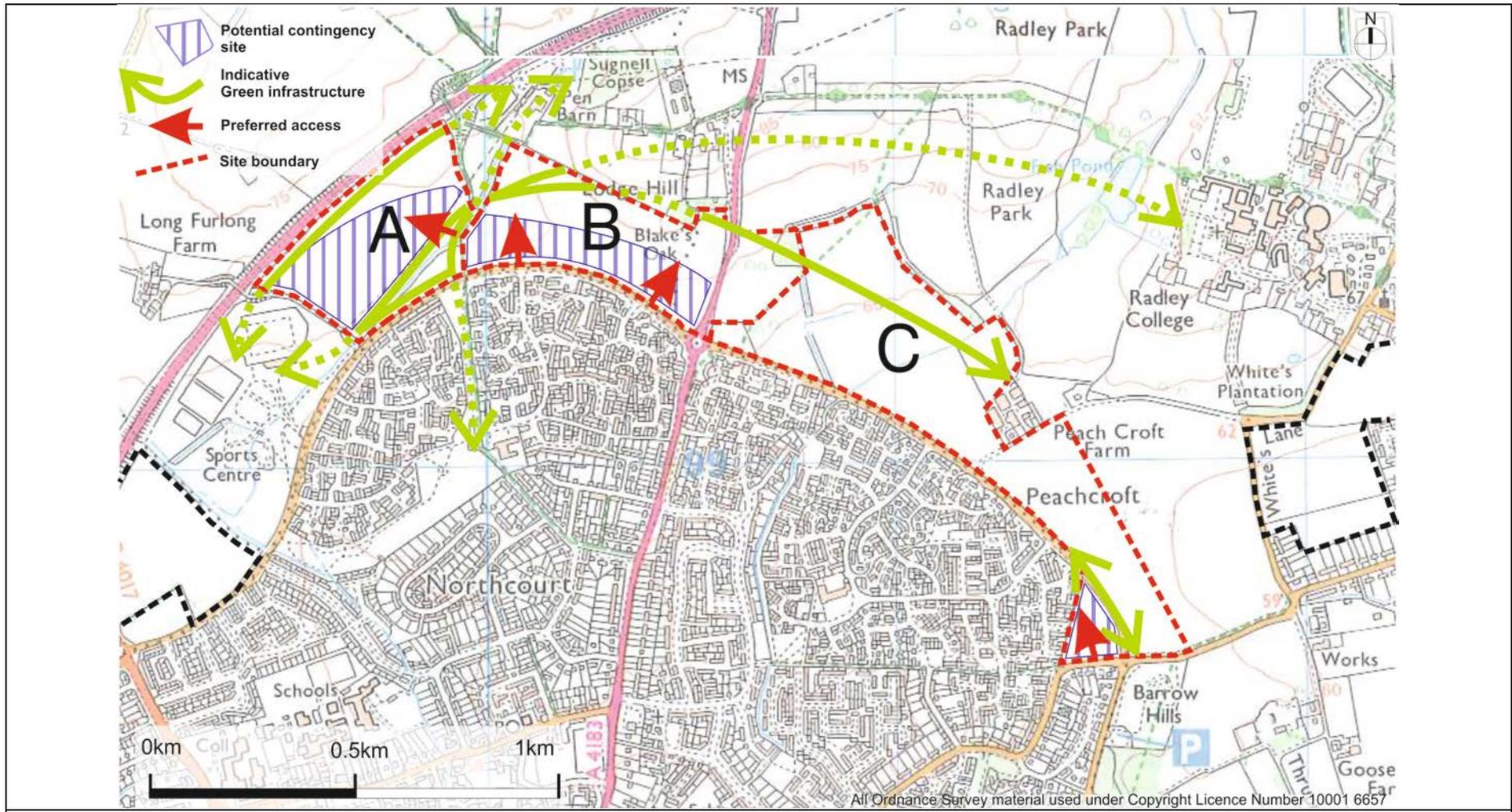


Figure I.2: Site I: North Abingdon - Recommended contingency site area and Green Infrastructure

Site 2: South Abingdon

Site map:

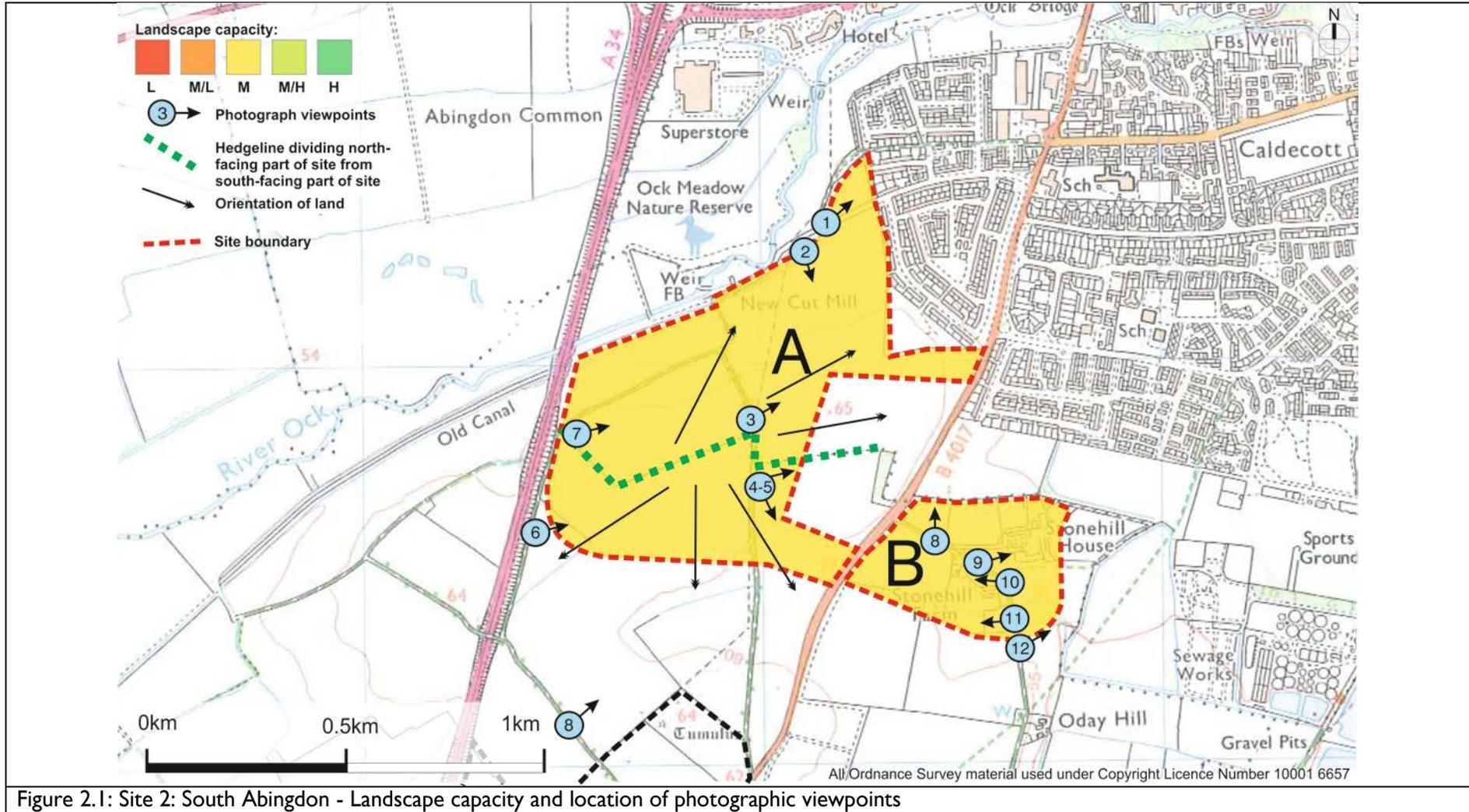


Figure 2.1: Site 2: South Abingdon - Landscape capacity and location of photographic viewpoints

Site 2 South Abingdon

The site lies in the **Lowland Vale 2C / OWLS LCT8 Lowland Village Farmlands**. The key landscape, visual and settlement characteristics for this area are set out in the Record Sheets for Site 2. The following guidance is given in OWLS.

OWLS Landscape Strategy

Conserve and enhance the vernacular character of the villages and strengthen the existing pattern 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 willow 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, such as industrial estates, gravel pits, landfill sites, airfields and the fringes of towns and villages with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside.
- Maintain the vernacular character of settlements and promote the use of local building materials and a scale of development and that is appropriate to this landscape type. This ranges from limestone and stone tiles at Garsington and Merton through to the red bricks and tiles associated with the clay vales.

Advice on the Landscape Impact of Further Development South of Abingdon December 2008 (2008 Study)

The Study included Site 2 South Abingdon in its assessment. The site was assessed and divided up into nine small character areas; six west of the B4017 at Clay Hill and three to the east around Stonehill Farm. The summary of this assessment is set out in figure 2.2 below. This assessment has been reviewed in the light of our current work and our conclusions included in the Table below.