

Figure 2.2: 2008 Study South of Abingdon LCAs

2008 Study Abingdon LCA	2008 Study Landscape sensitivity	2008 Study Landscape capacity	2008 Study Landscape robustness	2013 Landscape capacity conclusions	Additional comments and reasons for any difference in judgement
1 Mill Road	Low	Low	Moderate	Medium	Agree with capacity assessment in 2008 Study for the western area. Potential to accommodate a sizeable area in the north part of the site
2 Clay Hill North Slope	Low	Low	Moderate		
3 Clay Hill Plateau	Low	Low	Moderate		
4 Clay Hill South Slope and Valley	Low	Low	Moderate		
5 Clay Hill East Slope	Low	Low	Moderate		
6 Macefield Crescent Open Space	Low	Low	Moderate	Excluded from Site 2	X
7 Stonehill House	High	Low	Low	Medium	Consider that the eastern area has a better capacity than indicated in the 2008 Study Potential to accommodate some development north of the bridleway subject to further assessment
8 Stonehill Farm	High	Low	Low		
9 Oday Hill	High	Low	Low		

### Site description:

Site 2 South Abingdon is a Greenfield site of 63.8ha to the south-west of the town. The Site is divided into two distinct areas: Landscape Area 2A Clay Hill west of the B4017; and Landscape Area 2B Stonehill Farm east of the B4017. The northern boundary of LA2A Clay Hill follows the line of the old disused Wilts and Berks Canal. The western boundary follows the A34 for a short stretch then swings eastwards to follow a southern boundary across the open fields to the B4107. The eastern boundary runs along the western edge of the houses and western and southern edge of Masefield Crescent Open Space to the B4017; runs around the edge of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (not visible on the ground) to rejoin the B4017 opposite Stonehill Farm. LA2B Stonehill Farm is a much smaller area bounded to the west by the B4017; to the south by a small stream south of Stonehill Farm which continues eastwards up to the floodplain of the stream running north-south east of Stonehill House. The eastern boundary runs northwards to meet the permitted housing site north of the house. The northern boundary then follows the southern boundary of this permitted housing site. The proposed new route of the Wilts and Berks Canal runs west to east close to the southern boundary of the site. These two areas have been assessed separately below.

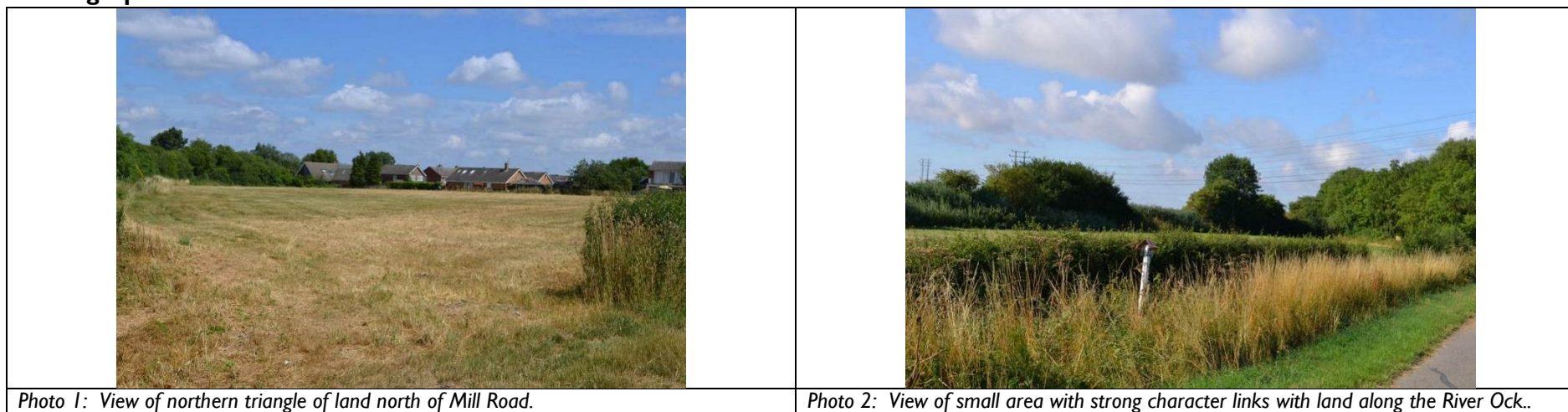
## I. LA2A Clay Hill

The area is predominantly arable on an open broad gently sloping raised landscape which affords panoramic views to the Chilterns to the east, North Wessex Downs to the south and the Corallian Ridge to the north.

### Key landscape planning factors:

LA2A is not included in the AONB or Green Belt nor is it included in any local designations. It lies within the Lowland Vale and is subject to Local Plan 2011 policy NE9. It is also within the Local plan 2011 Area for Landscape Enhancement policy NE11. The area wraps around a large Scheduled Ancient Monument with a small but locally prominent copse at its centre. A small section of the urban edge of Abingdon is visible in the north-east and traffic on the A34 affects the western part of the area. The A34 effectively cuts the area off from the wider landscape to the west.

### Photographs:





*Photo 3: View to the trees around Macefield Crescent Open Space.*





*Photo 4: View of woodland at the centre of the area designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.*



*Photo 5: View south down gently slopes towards the north edge of the village of Drayton.*



*Photo 6: View towards the site showing hedgeline at change of orientation in the site.*

	
<p><i>Photo 7: View of open landscape typical of the northern part of the site.</i></p>	<p><i>Photo 8: View of church spire nestling in the landscape. Abingdon town largely hidden from view</i></p>

**Please refer to section 3 methodology of the assessment process**

**1. Medium / High Visual Sensitivity:**

- Extensive panoramic long distance views
- Site is crossed by key view to landmark church spire at St Helen's, West St. Helens Street, Abingdon
- Open exposed site.

**2. Medium / Low Landscape Sensitivity:**

- Predominantly arable land;
- Generally lack of landscape features except copse within SAM;
- No cultural significance
- Good access but several visual detractors
- The southern part beyond the change in site orientation along hedgerow marked on Figure 2.1 forms part of the wider rural landscape.

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

4. **Medium / High Wider Landscape Sensitivity:**
  - Strong physical and visual links with the landscape to the south around Drayton;
  - Urban influence localised.
5. Overall Landscape Sensitivity: Medium / High (combines 3 and 4)
6. **Medium/Low Landscape Value**
  - No written evidence of landscape value;
  - Landscape setting of SAM;
  - Proximity to River Ock landscape.
7. Landscape Capacity: Medium (combines 5 and 6)

#### **Relationship of site to Abingdon**

- Development on north part of the site would link to existing housing
- Development on northern part would not extend built form south of SAM woodland which forms a gateway feature on the boundary of the town

#### **Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The southern part has very good landscape links with the landscape to the south

#### **Potential impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Need to protect the landscape setting to the SAM
- Loss of openness
- Medium sized development area would reflect landscape pattern

#### **Potential impact on key visual characteristics**

- Development of the southern part beyond the change in site orientation along hedgerow marked on Figure 2.3 would significantly erode the visual separation of Abingdon and Drayton to the detriment of the distinctive character of the village
- Loss of view to church spire
- Loss of panoramic views and perception of the wider rural landscape in the southern part of the site

**Potential impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development would be a strong contrast in an undeveloped open area
- Development of whole site would significantly reduce the open countryside separation between Abingdon and Drayton

**Landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure**

- Contain housing within ‘reduced area’ as shown in Figure 2.3
- Build new landscape structure to meet OWLS landscape strategy and link into existing extant landscape features
- Enhance landscape buffer to the A34
- Create new open space links into existing Green Infrastructure at Macefield Crescent Open Space
- Enhance River Ock / old canal landscape corridor

**Conclusion and recommendations**

- Contain housing within ‘reduced area’ as shown in Figure 2.3
- Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the settlements by maintaining open landscape south of the hedgerow shown on Figure 2.3
- Protect SAM and its woodland through creation of landscape buffer as shown in Figure 2.3
- Maintain rural setting of SAM woodland on the approach to Abingdon as a gateway feature
- Include Green Infrastructure as shown in Figure 2.3
- Maintain open pasture character and riverside planting north of the site along the river Ock
- Assess the significance of the setting to the SAM to determine the extent of and form of the development
- The preferred access to Site 2A avoids damage to the river Ock landscape corridor and is opposite existing development on the B4017
- Access to site should take account of existing Stewardship Scheme on this land which currently provides for public access

**Potential capacity of site 2A**

It is recommended that only part of this site is considered further as a contingency site on landscape and visual grounds. The capacity of the site is partly determined by the need to retain the distinctive and separate characters of Abingdon and Drayton and a substantial area of open countryside between these two settlements. Abingdon is a principal town with large estates in its southern sector with development largely on the north facing slopes. Drayton retains its village character, despite the proximity of Abingdon, separated by the domed landscape at Clay Hill. The land west of the ‘reduced area’ slopes down westwards towards Drayton and is divorced from Abingdon. Existing hedgelines provide a clear break and line of containment. The preferred access to Site 2A avoids damage to the river Ock landscape corridor and is opposite existing development on the B4017. The capacity of the reduced area will be determined by the factors listed in the above recommendations including the contribution made by the site to the significance of the landscape setting to the SAM; a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment including a visual impact of development on the skyline and key views; whilst respecting the distinctive character of Drayton and its rural setting. The density of this reduced area is recommended to be a maximum of 25 dwellings per ha. A full

detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site. On this basis some 325 dwellings might be accommodated on site 2A.

## 2. LA2B Stonehill Farm

The area is under pasture or within private gardens. It has a semi-enclosed feel but has good landscape and visual links with the wider landscape to the south.

### Key landscape planning factors:

LA2B is not included in the AONB or Green Belt nor is it included in any local designations. It lies within the Lowland Vale and is subject to Local Plan 2011 policy NE9 which is set out for convenience in part 2 of this Report. It is also within the Local Plan 2011 Area for Landscape Enhancement policy NE11. The area forms a part of the open countryside between Abingdon and Drayton. The urban influence from Abingdon is low.

### Photographs:



*Photo 8: View of small area of pasture. Permitted housing site visible beyond through gap in the northern boundary vegetation*



*Photo 9: View of the area south of Stonehill House and its listed barns, looking towards the minor stream on the eastern boundary.*



*Photo 10: View of Stonehill Farmhouse and its rural setting.*



*Photo 11: View of open pasture and streamside tree line south of Stonehill Farm with views through to the landscape beyond.*



*Photo 12: View of dense tree buffer along southern edge of the site east of the track/bridleway.*

Please refer to section 3 methodology of the assessment process

1. **Medium /Low Visual Sensitivity:**
  - Semi-enclosed;
  - Inter-visibility with open landscape to the south;
  - Limited receptors
  - Good opportunities for mitigation.
2. **Medium / High Landscape Sensitivity:**
  - Small scale and complex landscape pattern;
  - Tree belts a key feature
  - Setting of listed buildings;
  - Little evidence of cultural associations
  - Close proximity to urban activity.
3. Landscape Character Sensitivity: Medium (combines 1 and 2)
4. **Wider Landscape Sensitivity: Medium**
  - Northern part is more affected by future development and has less in common with the landscape south of the site;
  - Southern part has strong links with the wider landscape.
5. Overall Landscape Sensitivity: Medium (combines 3 and 4)
6. **Medium Landscape Value**
  - Potential setting of listed buildings;
  - No written evidence of value;
7. Landscape Capacity: Medium (combines 5 and 6)

**Relationship of site to Abingdon**

- Development on north part of the site would link to permitted housing site
- Development on northern part would not extend built form south of SAM woodland which forms a gateway feature on the boundary of the town

**Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- The southern part has good landscape links with the landscape to the south

**Potential impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Some loss of locally rare pasture
- Tree lines and water features could be integrated into the development
- Small scale development would reflect the landscape pattern

**Potential impact on key visual characteristics**

- Development of the southern part would erode the visual separation of Abingdon and Drayton to the detriment of the distinctive character of the village

**Potential impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development would subsume the Stonehill cluster into the urban edge of Abingdon

**Landscape mitigation and contribution to Green Infrastructure**

- Contain housing within 'reduced area' as shown in Figure 2.3
- Maintain landscape pattern and rural character to southern edge of the site
- Retain tree belts and riverside trees

**Conclusion and recommendations**

- Contain housing within 'reduced area' as shown in Figure 2.3.
- Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the settlements by avoiding development in the open landscape south of the track/bridleway and by retaining the landscape pattern and tree cover north and east of this track
- Retain tree cover
- Retain open setting to Stonehill Farm area south of the track
- Assess the significance of the setting to the listed buildings to determine the extent of and character of the development in order to avoid harm to the landscape setting
- The preferred access to Site 2B is split into two to give access to two small areas either side of Stonehill house. Access from the recently approved development to the north of Site 2B should also be considered.