

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment for: GRE3 land south of Newbury Racecourse

Methodology

Basis of methodology

- 1.1 The methodology and assessment criteria used for this assessment are detailed below. The key texts on which methodology is based are the Scottish Natural Heritage and Natural England's *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (2017) 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).
- 1.2 As in current best practice, sensitivity should be assessed against a specific change, and for this study, a development scenario based on densities set out in the West Berkshire Density Pattern Book (September 2019) has been assumed for each site as a guide against which sensitivity has been assessed.
- 1.3 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 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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

Assessment process

- 1.6 The assessment methodology is a staged process. Landscape attributes (Table 3), and visual attributes (Table 4), 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 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. Then the landscape and visual sensitivity of the site, or its sub-area, are merged to identify the **landscape character sensitivity** (Stage 3) as set out under Matrix 3 below.
- 1.7 The Study goes on to classify the **sensitivity of the site in its wider context** (Stage 4) into five categories. Then 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).
- 1.8 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 5 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 sites.

Assessment abbreviations and colour code:



– Low Capacity



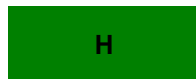
– Medium / Low Capacity



– Medium Capacity



– Medium / High Capacity



– High Capacity

Stage 1: Determination of Visual Sensitivity

- 1.9 This assessment is set out in the Record Sheets and Reports for each site, or sub-division.
- 1.10 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 the sites were reviewed 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 site, or sub areas, are grouped as shown.

Matrix 1: 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 3: 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

- 1.11 This assessment is set out in the Record Sheets and Reports for each site or sub-division.
- 1.12 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 the sites were reviewed 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 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 4: 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	
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

1.13 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 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 Site to the Wider Landscape and Settlement Edge Pattern

1.14 Stages 1 to 3 have led to a comprehensive assessment of the intrinsic landscape sensitivity of the individual 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 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 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.

1.15 The results of the assessment are set out in the reports for each site or sub-division.

Stage 5: Determination of Overall Landscape Sensitivity

1.16 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 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

1.17 The model for this work follows GLVIA 2013.

Table 5 - 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. Chiltern Way
Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional	Setting of AONB / National Park Regional Park (i.e. Colne Valley) 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. South Bucks 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

1.18 Landscape capacity is the ability, or otherwise, of the 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 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					

1.19 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 could not accommodate areas of new development without a significant and adverse impact on the landscape character and visual amenity. 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 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 and visual 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

- 1.20 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 site and the recommended location.
- 1.21 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 site, subject to the provision of Green Infrastructure. However, in many cases we recommend a 'reduced area' which identifies a part of the site that could be considered further as a potential site subject to the provision of Green Infrastructure. The 'reduced 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 have also been taken into account.
- 1.22 The capacity of each site is based on densities set out in the West Berkshire Density Pattern Book (September 2019) for the site or reduced area.
- 1.23 Study Constraints
 - The sites have largely been assessed from publicly accessible viewpoints including the local road network, public rights of way, public open space and other publicly owned land.
 - Site photographs included in this study are representative of key views of the site.
 - 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.

- The majority of study fieldwork was undertaken in October 2020 with summer vegetation.
- The West Berkshire Density Pattern Book (September 2019) has been used to guide capacity. Time limitations have meant that no public consultation has taken place during the Study.

WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL CAPACITY STUDY 2020 RECORD SHEET

Site:	Land south of Newbury Racecourse
Date of site survey:	14/10/2020
Surveyors:	LA
Weather/visibility:	Clear and dry
LCA:	West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019 <i>WH2: Greenham Woodland and Heathland Mosaic</i>
<p>Key Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gently undulating slopes leading to flat-topped ridge at Greenham and Crookham Common • Presence of surface water and small streams running parallel to ridges • Large open expanse of heathland, surrounded by woodland. Surrounding the plateau are areas more typical of this landscape type, consisting of large, predominantly deciduous woodlands which form a regular pattern of linear ghyll woodlands in undulating wet gullies leading down to the Kennet and Enborne Valleys. Between these woods there is a mosaic of arable and pastoral land use • Legacy of the military airbase on Greenham and Crookham Common • Scattered dispersed settlements, separated by expanses of woodland and heathland in the west. Greenham lies very close to the edge of Newbury in the west, creating a more suburban character. Settlement at Bury's Bank and scattered farms are separated by expanses of woodland, farmland and common land • An accessible landscape of open access land and rights of way • Open views from the plateau to the north and south <p>Valued Features and Qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive heathland, acid grassland and woodland • Scenic and open views from the plateau • Tapestry of agricultural land <p>Landscape strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote appropriate woodland management • Balance recreational pressures • Ensure integration of new development into the landscape • Conserve the strong time-depth experienced in the landscape 	
Landscape designations:	None

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

<i>General visibility</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Mitigation potential</i>
<p>Views into the site from: Audrey's Meadow Saint Mary's Church Public Right of Way on western edge Greyberry Copse Road Pigeons Farm Road Rosyth Gardens – at end of road House and gardens of properties on Young Crescent Newbury Racecourse Fetlock Drive and Home Straight</p>	<p>Types of viewers: Church Yard visitors/users Users of Audrey's Meadow Walkers, travellers in cars</p>	<p>Opportunities for mitigation and landscape compatibility of mitigation: Extending woodland planting, but would need to be deciduous in character, therefore will still permit filtered views of development during winter months. If it had a more evergreen/non-native composition would detract from rural character of area</p>
<p>Views out of the site to: Woodland belt (Lodge Covert) to the south of the site Young Copse to the west Saint Mary's Church Northern valley side of the Kennet Valley and edge of AONB Newbury Racecourse and adjacent new housing development</p>	<p>Magnitude of viewers (level of use and popularity): Visitors to Audrey's Meadow (high) Public Right of Way (high) North side of Newbury Racecourse, residents on Fetlock Drive and Home Straight and users of POS (high) Very small number of dwellings to the south Filtered views from road to south, more open within the winter months Graveyard/church users</p>	<p>Impacts of mitigation: Loss of views across the Kennet Valley to the north and the northern Kennet Valley side/AONB Loss of open field setting of Young Copse as viewed from Audrey's Meadow Loss of semi-open rural setting of Church, with views to wider rural landscape</p>
<p>Does the site form part of a skyline? No</p>	<p>Visual perceptions (activity and expectations of local visual receptors): Rural setting of Greenham and separate identity from Newbury. Countryside experience, with small fields, woodland as part of setting for Audrey's Meadow</p>	
<p>Panoramic views: Yes, elevated views across the site from southern boundary to northern side of Kennet Valley Part of the wooded panoramic view from north of the Racecourse</p>		
<p>Landmark features: Young Copse – Ancient Woodland</p>		
<p>Sensitivity score: Medium/High</p>	<p>Sensitivity score: Medium/High</p>	<p>Sensitivity score: Medium</p>
<p>Visual sensitivity score: Medium/High</p>		

<i>General visibility</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Mitigation potential</i>
<p>Additional comments: Due to the location of the site on a valley side, this permits views from the south down across the site, which then further extends and links with the adjacent facing northern Kennet Valley side. The site as a series of small fields provides a setting for Audrey's Meadow, setting for Saint Mary's Church and visual separation of Greenham from Newbury</p>		

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

<i>Natural factors</i>	<i>Cultural factors</i>	<i>Perceptual features</i>
<p>Topography and landform: Part of the lower southern side of the River Kennet valley. Sloping down from the south at around 110m AOD down to northern edge at around 80-85m AOD</p>	<p>Boundary features other than vegetation: Garden boundary of property at Young Crescent Cemetery fence</p>	<p>Tranquillity – Noise levels: Bird sounds/rustling leaves, with faint background urban noise</p>
<p>Geological features: None</p>	<p>Historic landscapes: Young Copse – Ancient Woodland</p>	<p>Tranquillity – Visual intrusion / detractors: Good with no visual detractors. The maintenance shed complex for Newbury Racecourse has a rural agricultural character</p>
<p>Soil quality: Natural England: <i>Other land primarily in non-agricultural use</i></p>	<p>Parkland features: None</p>	<p>Tranquillity – Light pollution/dark skies: The adjacent mature woodlands reduce light pollution from neighbouring residential areas of Newbury and Greenham to the site</p>
<p>Water features: Pond shown on OS map south of Young Copse at western end Two field ditches flow/align NS down the valley side within wide hedgerows</p>		
<p>Landcover and land use: Grassland and grazing Maintenance complex for Newbury Racecourse including two sheds and open yard, access from the north</p>	<p>Conservation Area: None</p>	
<p>Tree belts, individual trees and riverside trees: Eastern area of the site contains mature trees within hedgerows and individual trees within the southern area of the site Western area of the site contains groups of trees and part of the adjacent area of woodland</p>	<p>Landscape features of CA: Part of the gently undulating slope leading up to Greenham Common Young Copse and other unnamed woodlands, hedgerows with mature trees, small pasture fields Elevated views from the south (outside site) across to the north</p>	
<p>Hedgerows and hedgerow trees: A matrix of hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees across the site linking Young Copse with areas of</p>	<p>Built form: None</p>	<p>Accessibility by public footpath: None</p>

<i>Natural factors</i>	<i>Cultural factors</i>	<i>Perceptual features</i>
woodland (Lodge Covert) to the south		
<p>Woodland and copses: The western boundary of the main part of the site, is formed by a wide belt of woodland/ trees, this also connects to Young Copse The middle hedgerow widens towards the southern boundary of the site becoming a small woodland copse at the junction with the woodland (Lodge Covert) along the southern boundary The western area of the site to the east contains a number of small woodland copses and to the west, part of the woodland along Newbury's Settlement Boundary which also links to Young Copse</p>	<p>Setting of listed buildings: Saint Mary's Church - Grade II * Listed</p>	<p>Open access areas: None on site, adjacent Audrey's Meadow has access with permissive paths and has been adopted as a Public Open Space</p>
<p>Wetland and meadow: Fields have a grassland meadow character</p>	<p>Scheduled Ancient Monuments: None</p>	<p>Recreational areas: None on site, adjacent Audrey's Meadow and adjacent woodland areas which are informally used for recreation with permissive footpaths shown</p>
<p>Common land: None</p>	<p>Settlement pattern: Outside Settlement Boundary of Newbury. Proposed point of access is shown to the west off Rosyth Gardens which then extends across Audrey's Meadow into the site. Very short section of site boundary aligns adjacent to the Settlement Boundary. The site forms part of an area of open land in-between Greenham and Newbury</p>	
<p>Heathland: None</p>	<p>Contribution of private gardens to landscape character: N/A</p>	<p>Aesthetic sensitivity - Elements of openness/enclosure: Semi-open landscape contrasting with the wooded landscape to the south</p>

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment for sites within West Berkshire

Other significant vegetation cover: The site area is grassland	Cultural associations: None known	Aesthetic sensitivity – landscape pattern: Intact pattern of small fields, hedgerows linking to areas of woodland
BAP/Phase 1 records: The surrounding woodland is Priority Habitat Inventory Deciduous woodland	Features of cultural importance: None known	
Presence of SSSI/SINC/local wildlife designation/Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland: Adjacent Young Copse – Ancient Woodland adjacent Audrey’s Meadow		
Sensitivity score: Medium/High	Sensitivity score: Medium/High	Sensitivity score: Medium/High
Landscape sensitivity score: Medium/High		
Additional comments: Well intact area of small fields, hedgerows, semi-enclosed by woodland including Young Copse an Ancient Woodland and Lodge Covert		

Relationship with the wider landscape/townscape

Adjacent settlement:

Located between the two settlements of Newbury and Greenham, although will be linked by road to Newbury, but the site will be separate from Newbury by Audrey's Meadow which contains two woodlands and a central meadow area. Physically closer to Greenham. Development of the site will diminish separate identity of both settlements

Character of the urban edge:

Greenham: Well vegetated woodland, originally outer woodland of the extensive grounds of Greenham Lodge, now with a very low density of short two storey terraces within a woodland setting

Newbury: Beyond Audrey's Meadow to the west, settlement edge abuts a mature woodland, which screens this settlement edge from the site. No intervisibility

Presence in a floodplain:

No

Relationship with adjacent wider countryside:

Continues with open countryside to the east, leading across open farmland to the River Kennet

Continues with open countryside to the west, across Audrey's Meadow, across the PRoW/New Road into a further area of grassland and West Wood, another Ancient Woodland

Character of adjacent village(s):

The settlement of Greenham originated from a scattering of large properties and designed grounds (Greenham Lodge) with a mix of smaller dwellings located around the northern periphery of Greenham Common. Saint Mary's Church located towards the western edge of the parkland of Greenham Lodge marked the outer edge of this dispersed settlement form. By the 1960's a more concentrated village had developed around the junction of Greenham Road and Burys Bank Road and to the west of the gatehouse lodge to Greenham Lodge; this included a low density of dwellings with large gardens. By the 1990's low density housing had extended out into the woodlands to the north east of Greenham Lodge. The settlement of Greenham village today is shown as a NE-SW linear form on the northern edge of Greenham Common separated from Newbury by two Ancient Woodlands (West Wood and Young Copse) and a series of connecting grass fields including Audrey's Meadow which also act as a buffer and visual screen to the urban edge of Newbury.

The adopted housing sites (HSA4) located to the west of the site, which includes four housing areas to the north and south of a proposed open space/biodiversity corridor, maintain the separate settlements forms of Greenham and Newbury

Newbury: The adjacent settlement edge of Newbury is located beyond Audrey's Meadow and a woodland, where from the main part of the site there is no intervisibility. The settlement at this location is a mix of high density detached and semi-detached two storey dwellings

Historic links with the wider area if known:

South western part of site where two mature trees are evident, this area is the remains of the designed parkland of Greenham Lodge (ref OS map 1880-1881 Scale 1:2,500). This area on the Historic Landscape Characterisation is also designated *designed landscape*

Ecological links with the wider area if known:

Young Copse (adjacent the site) – Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland
West Wood (connected by open land across to the west 75m from site) – Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland
Greenham Common SSSI to the south

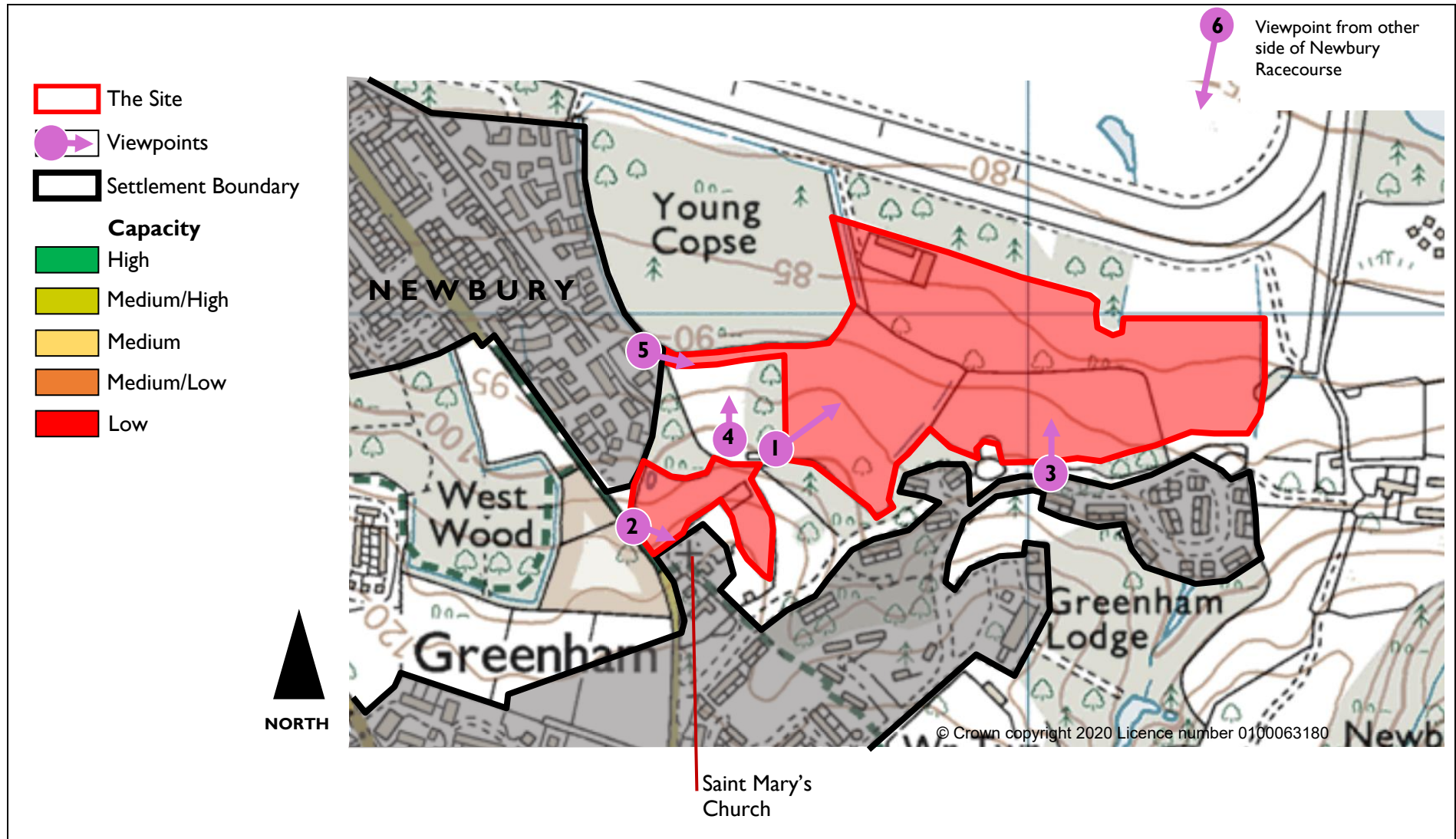
Recreational links with the wider area:

Part of the Greenham and Crookham Commons Act 2002
Audrey's Meadow contains a number of permissive footpaths, which then align along the southern edge within Lodge Covert.

VDS/Parish Plan – relevant extracts:

None

Site: Land South of Newbury Racecourse



West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019

The site lies within *LCA WH2: Greenham Woodland and Heathland Mosaic* for which the key requirements of the Landscape Strategy is set out below:

- Promote appropriate woodland management
- Balance recreational pressures
- Ensure integration of new development into the landscape
- Conserve the strong time-depth experienced in the landscape

Site description:

The site is located on the lower slopes of the Kennet Valley and includes separate two areas, as follows:

- The larger area contains three small fields and part of another field of grassland; these fields are partly separated from each other by robust wide hedgerows containing mature trees. The most eastern field also contains isolated mature field trees and a pond. There is evidence of ditches/steams within one hedgerow boundary between the most eastern field and the central field and along the eastern site boundary. The site is enclosed along its southern boundary by a mature woodland belt, which continues to the west and along the western edge of the site linking to Young Copse an Ancient Woodland. Beyond the western wooded site boundary is Audrey's Meadow a Local Wildlife Site and Public Open Space
- The second area is smaller and is located to the north of Saint Mary's Church. This area is also a field but is characterised by un-managed grassland and groups of trees. Its southern boundary aligns the cemetery boundary of the church and the PRow to the west which links Greenham with Newbury. A small section of the northern boundary lies adjacent the settlement boundary of Newbury, with the rest aligning through a woodland and along the southern edge of Audrey's Meadow. The eastern boundary aligns the field boundary, with woodland beyond

Key landscape planning factors:

The site is located as follows:

- outside the settlement boundary of Newbury and Greenham, although the site boundary abuts a small part of the settlement boundary
- within the area of Greenham and Crookham Commons: Act 2002
- within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area
- adjacent an Ancient Woodland - Young Copse

Viewpoints:



Photo 1: A view from the edge of the woodland to the east (part of Audrey's Meadow) across the site with the maintenance sheds visible to the left, enclosed by the wooded horizon located within the AONB



Photo 2: View across western part of site to the Grade II* Saint Mary's Church located on higher ground within an open setting



Photo 3: A view through the southern woodland belt (Lodge Covert) into the site, within the winter months due to the deciduous composition, these views will be a lot more open down across the site



Photo 4: A view across Audrey's Meadow to Young Copse, an Ancient Woodland



Photo 5: View at location of vehicle access point into site, presently also pedestrian access into Audrey's Meadow



Photo 6: View from Public Open Space (north of Racecourse) across to the eastern end of the site

Please refer to section 3 methodology of the assessment process

1. Visual Sensitivity: Medium/High

- From Audrey's Meadow open views of proposed access road within setting of Young Copse/Ancient Woodland
- Views into site from Audrey's Meadow
- Elevated filtered views from southern boundary through woodland belt (Lodge Covert) down across site, which then further extends across to the northern Kennet Valley side and the AONB
- Filtered views through woodland belt into the main site from the Grade II* Listed Saint Mary's Church graveyard
- Direct views from the cemetery into the western part of the site
- Long views from northern side of Newbury Racecourse across to eastern part of the site
- Views into the western area of the site from adjacent Public Right of Way

2. Landscape Sensitivity: Medium/High

- Intact rural landscape of a patchwork of small fields, robust hedgerows, mature trees and ditches/watercourse, which forms part of the valley side of the River Kennet
- Adjacent Young Copse and part of the open setting of this Ancient Woodland
- Access road crosses Audrey's Meadow a Public Open Space
- Part of open rural setting of the Grade II* Listed Saint Mary's Church
- Separate from Newbury and Greenham, with little or no intervisibility of settlement edge

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

4. Wider Landscape Sensitivity: High

- Part of the undeveloped valley side of the Kennet River Valley
- Strong links with surrounding woodland network including Young Copse – Ancient Woodland
- Site is part of the open landscape setting between the two settlements of Newbury and Greenham
- Contrasts with the settlement of Newbury, with very little inter-visibility with the built settlement edge due to intervening woodlands
- Contrasts with the settlement of Greenham, except for one gable end, the settlement edge is not visible
- Part of the area of open land which separates Greenham from Newbury which then further continues to the east and west

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

6. Landscape Value: Medium

- Part of the undeveloped rural setting of the Grade II listed Saint Marys Church
- An Intact rural agricultural landscape with small hedged fields, mature trees, water courses

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

Relationship with adjacent settlement

The site forms an open wedge of land between Newbury and Greenham, as follows:

Relationship of site to Newbury

- The site is separate from Newbury by Audrey's Meadow which includes two woodlands and meadow area and Young Copse – Ancient Woodland
- There is very little intervisibility between the site and Newbury

Relationship of site to Greenham

- The site is separate from Greenham by a woodland belt which links back to Young Copse – Ancient Woodland
- Open landscape on north eastern side of Greenham creates rural edge to village and separate settlement character from Newbury
- The adjacent part of Greenham contains a very low density of development within a strong woodland setting

Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- The site forms an important part of open countryside between Newbury and Greenham, as follows:
 - The site continues as open countryside to the east further along the Kennet Valley side and out to further open countryside
 - Open countryside continues to the south west across Audrey's Meadow, along the northern edge of the grounds of Saint Mary's Church across a Public Right of Way to the open fields and Woods Copse another Ancient Woodland on the southern edge of Newbury

Potential impact on key landscape characteristics

- Loss of small fields of pasture, hedgerows which forms a tapestry of agricultural land characteristic of the un-developed Kennet Valley side
- Loss of open rural setting to Greenham
- Degradation of the open rural setting of Young Copse – Ancient Woodland
- Loss of the open rural setting of Saint Mary's Church – Grade II* Listed
- Loss of open setting to field trees, ditches/watercourses and robust hedgerows with mature trees

Potential impact on key visual characteristics

- Loss of open views from southern edge across the lower Kennet Valley side across to the northern Kennet Valley side
- Visual impact on users of Audrey's Meadow
- Visual impact on users of adjacent PRow
- Loss of open rural setting of Saint Mary's Church, with also filtered views across intervening woodland to main part of the site

Potential impact on key settlement characteristics

- Amalgamation of Newbury with Greenham with further loss of their individual identity further to the west, by blocking the continuation of open land out to the east
- Introducing high density development in proximity to Greenham with a low-density rural settlement character, where woodland is the overarching landscape feature

Landscape mitigation and contribution to green infrastructure

- N/A

Conclusion and recommendations

The site has a Low capacity for development due to the site being constrained in a number of ways where any development would affect views and characteristics which would cause harm to the landscape. Therefore, the site is not recommended for development for housing due to the need to protect:

- Audrey's Meadow, an area for public access and quiet recreation
- An area containing an intact rural landscape of small grassed fields, robust hedgerows, mature trees and waterbodies as part of a wider tapestry of an agricultural landscape
- The open setting of Young Copse, an Ancient Woodland
- An area with defining characteristics of the Kennet Valley side
- An area which contributes to the separate identities of Newbury from Greenham
- The well-defined and established settlements edges of Newbury and Greenham
- Long views from the valley side to the north and the North Wessex Downs AONB
- The open rural setting of the Grade II* Listed Saint Mary's Church