

# LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY & CAPACITY STUDY FOR LAND NORTH EAST OF THATCHAM

DAVID LOCK ASSOCIATES LTD.

NORTH EAST THATCHAM

WEST BERKSHIRE

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## 1. Executive summary:

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- 1.1 This report summarises a landscape sensitivity and capacity study undertaken on behalf of David Lock Associates, planning consultants appointed to West Berkshire Council, in relation to land located to the north east of Thatcham. The work was undertaken during the summer of 2021 by Lloyd Bore Ltd, a landscape practice registered with the Landscape Institute.
- 1.2 This site is referred to as THA20 in the West Berkshire Housing and Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), is a composite site, made up of previously-promoted sites THA6, THA8, THA10 and THA14. In this report THA20 is referred to as 'the study site.'
- 1.3 The methodology and assessment criteria used for this assessment are taken from the West Berkshire Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity template that has been used for assessing other sites within the Council's area.
- 1.4 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). The Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' provides further guidance on assessing value in connection with non-designated land, such as land north east of Thatcham.
- 1.5 Visual sensitivity has been assessed by walking the public footpaths, lanes and highways, within and outside the study site boundary, and by making judgements based on the criteria set out in the methodology. Private land was not accessed. Views shown in the site photographs are representative. They are not intended as a comprehensive photographic record.
- 1.6 The project brief required the sensitivity of the study site to be assessed as a single tract of landscape, and for the site not to be broken down into individual parcels of land for more detailed assessment. At this stage the site is being assessed as a whole, to see if it has capacity for development in landscape terms. It is acknowledged that the site is part of a south-facing, valley-side landscape, and therefore contains local variations in landscape and visual character. Further more detailed assessment will need to identify and consider more fine-grained judgements about the landscape's sensitivity and its capacity to accommodate development in different parts of the site.
- 1.7 Having followed the template methodology, and made judgements concerning landscape and visual sensitivity, wider landscape sensitivity and landscape value, this exercise has concluded that overall the study site THA20 has a **Medium Capacity**. This is defined in the methodology as follows: **'The landscape could 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.'**

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## 2. Introduction

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### Site context

- 2.1 This report summarises a landscape sensitivity and capacity study undertaken on behalf of David Lock Associates, planning consultants appointed to West Berkshire Council, in relation to land located to the north east of Thatcham. The work was undertaken during the summer of 2021 by Lloyd Bore Ltd, a landscape practice registered with the Landscape Institute.
- 2.2 Situated to the north-eastern side of Thatcham, the site is referred to as THA20 in the West Berkshire Housing and Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). This is a composite site, made up of previously-promoted sites THA6, THA8, THA10 and THA14. In this report THA20 is referred to as 'the study site.'
- 2.3 The western end of the study site is adjacent to the existing Thatcham settlement boundary along Floral Way and Bath Road (A4). The eastern end of the site is located north of Colthrop Industrial Estate, which extends east of Thatcham along the floor of the Kennet Valley.
- 2.4 The study site is approximately 1km from the town centre at its closest point, and 1km from Thatcham's railway station. It is approximately 3km long, varies in width between 500m and 950m, and extends to a total area of approximately 180ha. All of the study site is located north and east of Bath Road and Floral Way.
- 2.5 North of the site are the small rural settlements of Cold Ash and Upper Bucklebury. These are located on the wooded ridge that characterises the southern boundary of the North Wessex Downs AONB. The small village of Midgham with its dramatically located St Matthew's Church is located just beyond the site's eastern boundary.

### Basis of methodology

- 2.6 The methodology and assessment criteria used for this assessment are taken from the West Berkshire Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity template that has been used for assessing other sites within the Council's area. The full template is included in Appendix 1. 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). The Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' provides further guidance on assessing value in connection with non-designated land, such as land north east of Thatcham.
- 2.7 As in current best practice, sensitivity should be assessed against a specific kind of change. There are no detailed design proposals in place for this land. In this instance the assessor has been advised that as North East Thatcham is a strategic site, the West Berkshire Density Pattern Book (September 2019) is not a suitable vehicle against which sensitivity should be assessed. Instead the following assumptions are made:
  - Mixed use development, predominantly residential, with elements of commercial / employment, retail, community, recreation and education uses.
  - A range of building heights, but generally two and three storey plus roof, with occasional taller buildings and single storey buildings creating variety and accent.
  - Use of architectural forms and materials that would not be unexpected or visually assertive in the landscape
  - Integrated landscape and ecological design including trees, woodlands, hedgerows, green spaces and drainage features.
- 2.8 Best practice guidance 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 site has been assessed with the development assumptions above in mind. Recommendations and comments have been added where relevant relating to the appropriateness of development on particular parts of the site and to ensure raised awareness of potential unacceptable adverse effects on landscape character.

- 2.9 Visual sensitivity has been assessed by walking the public footpaths, lanes and highways, both within and outside the site, and by making judgements based on the criteria set out in the methodology. Private land was not accessed, and as a result there will be views that have not been assessed. It is not practical to identify and assess all possible views, and the views shown in the site photographs are representative rather than comprehensive.
- 2.10 The centre of the settlement of Thatcham itself is largely hidden in most views, being set down in the valley floor and screened by vegetation. This is the case for views in the vicinity of the study site, and for views gained northwards from the opposite side of the Kennet Valley. It should be noted that the visibility of a tract of landscape will change depending upon season, time of day and prevailing weather conditions.
- 2.11 The project brief requires the visual sensitivity of the study site to be considered as a single tract of landscape, and for the site not to be broken down into individual parcels of land. This is challenging, for whilst the site is clearly part of a south-facing, valley-side landscape, and might be described in that singular way, it contains local variations in visual character.
- 2.12 As a consequence, within the visual sensitivity attributes assigned to the overall site, there will inevitably be a range, and this study acknowledges that there will parts of the site with higher and lower sensitivity (and therefore lower and higher capacity) than the overall classification given, and it will be down to individual applicants to assess the visual sensitivity of specific parts of the site in relation to individual planning proposals, should the land be brought forward for development.
- 2.13 Proposals for any future development would need to include appropriate, detailed and specialist input into siting, layout, design (including massing and colour / selection of materials) and mitigation. For proposed developments that are screened as EIA development, with landscape and visual issues scoped in, a full landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) should accompany planning applications, assessing the significance of predicted impacts.
- 2.14 For non-EIA development proposals that nevertheless have the potential to generate landscape and visual impacts, a landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) will be necessary. This is based on a similar methodology to an LVIA but does not require the significance of predicted impacts to be assessed.
- 2.15 Assessment of potential visual impacts should be informed by the use of Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) of proposed development options, using methodologies set out in the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals.' Other studies including ecology, archaeology, heritage, arboriculture, highways, drainage and soils may also be required to accompany specific proposals.
- 2.16 Landscape sensitivity is also assessed as a singularity, by appraising the site's natural, cultural and perceptual attributes, as set out in the template. These too will vary across a large site such as this, and again it is acknowledged that there will parts of the site with higher and lower landscape sensitivity than the overall classification given. Individual applicants will need to assess the landscape sensitivity of specific parts of the site in relation to individual planning proposals, should the land be brought forward for development.

### Assessment process

- 2.17 The assessment methodology is a staged process, set out in full below. 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 entered into a matrix to identify the landscape character sensitivity (Stage 3) as set out under Matrix 3 below.
- 2.18 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 'wider sensitivity' as set out in Matrix 4 to identify the overall landscape sensitivity (Stage 5).
- 2.19 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 combined 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 process is tested against the five criteria for landscape capacity (Stage 7) based on professional judgement.

**Assessment abbreviations and colour code (from template):**

**L** - Low Capacity

**M/L** - Medium / Low Capacity

**M** - Medium Capacity

**M/H** - Medium / High Capacity

**H** - High Capacity

**Field data sheet**

<b>Site:</b>	North East Thatcham
<b>Date of site survey:</b>	Fieldwork survey 2 June 2021. Photographic survey 29 July 2021
<b>Surveyors:</b>	Julian Bore BA Hons MPhil CMLI.
<b>Photographer:</b>	Chris Beech BSc Hons
<b>Camera:</b>	Digital Nikon D7100 fitted with a fixed 35mm AF-S NIKKOR lens providing an equivalent 50mm focal length
<b>Weather/visibility:</b>	Fieldwork - humid with thundery showers. Photographic work - fine and clear
<b>LCA:</b>	WH4 LCA WH4: Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic
<b>Landscape Designations</b>	None

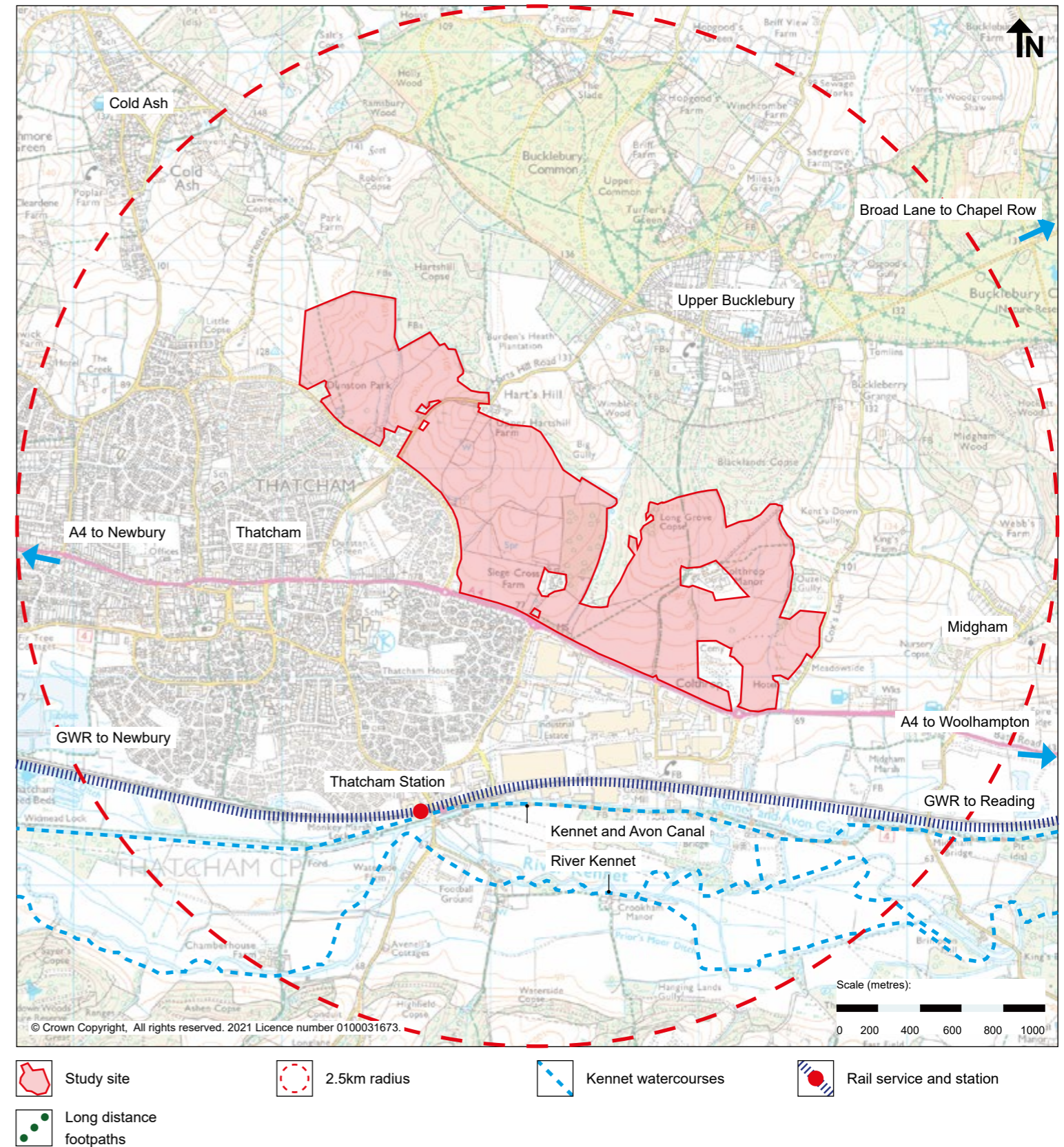
3. Baseline data

3.1 The following section brings together relevant landscape baseline data that is necessary to develop an understanding of the landscape character of the study site and its context. The material on the following pages is derived largely from desktop mapping.

Site Location.

- 3.2 The mapping opposite shows the location and extent of the study site. A 2km radius circle centred on the site (ref.453350,167720) is indicated. This is included to assist with scale and context and has no other relevance.
- 3.3 The study site is attenuated generally north west - south east, occupying land on the north side of the Kennet Valley and north/east of Bath Rd (A4) and Floral Way.
- 3.4 The north eastern boundary is generally bounded by woodland or field boundaries. The majority of the southern and south western boundary of the site is formed by Bath Road and Floral Way. Cox Lane abuts a short section of the site's eastern boundary.

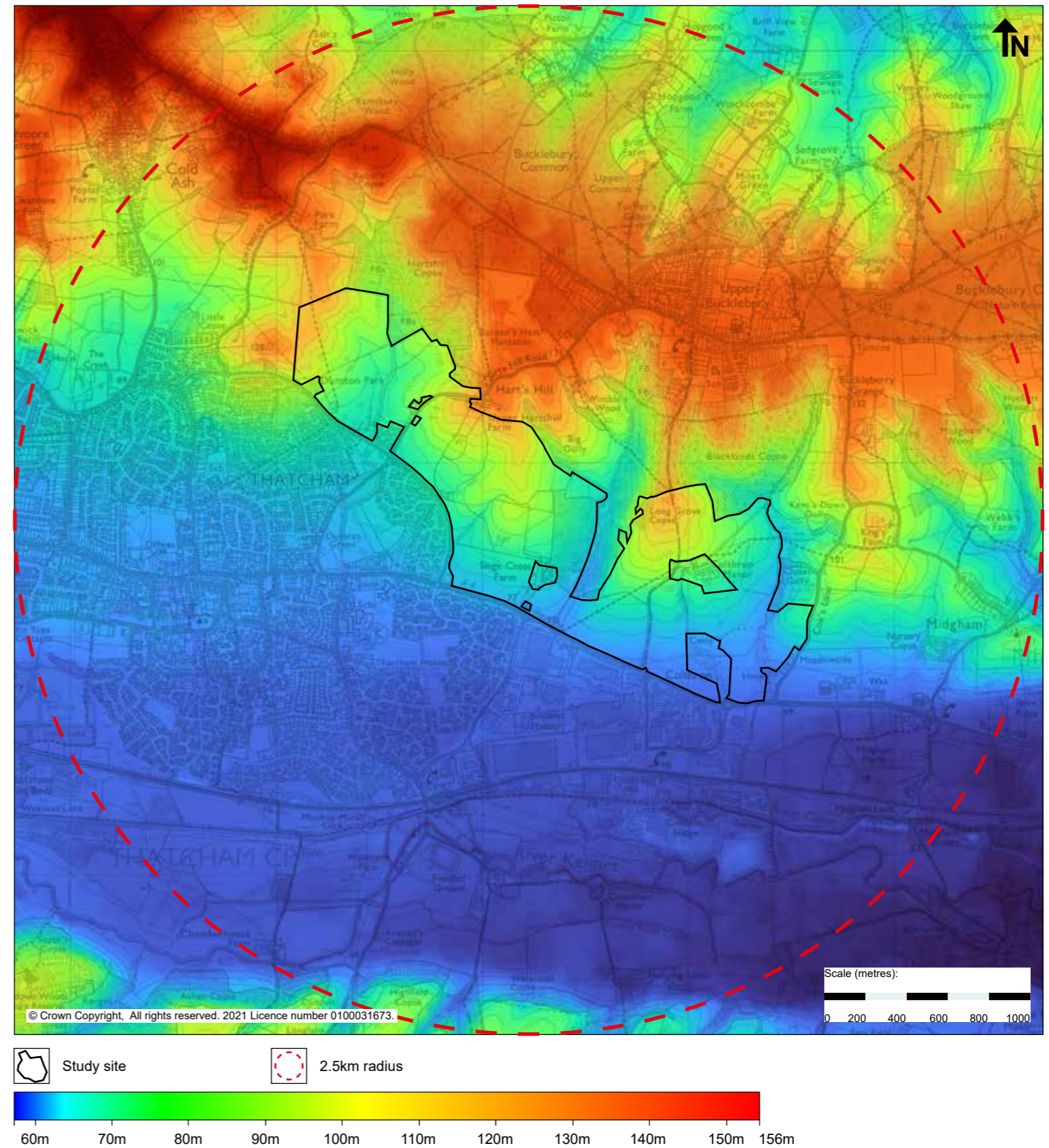
Fig. 1: Ordnance Survey map indicating site location and surrounding features.



**Topography**

- 3.5 The general topographical characteristics of the study site and wider landscape are indicated opposite.
- 3.6 The study site is within a tract of landscape that is aspected generally to the south west on the northern side of the Kennet Valley. The northern parts of the study site rise towards a ridge at Upper Bucklebury and Cold Ash (outside the study site boundary), whilst the south eastern parts of the side are closer to the river and canal, and generally lower and flatter in character.
- 3.7 The diagram shows that the valley side is not consistent in form, and is characterised by ridges and valley formations projecting from the higher land to the north, creating a strongly undulating topography.

**Fig. 2: Topography**





## National Landscape Character

3.8 At a national level the study site is located in Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) profile 129 'Thames Basin Heaths.'

3.9 Key characteristics of this NCA are identified as:

- Plateaux of Tertiary sands and gravels in the London Basin, with intervening river valleys floored by London Clay. In the far west, Chalk forms the Hampshire Downs escarpment and the river beds of the Kennet and Pang.
- High woodland cover. Conifers and plantations on former heathland are dominant features in the east. The west has scattered small, semi-natural woodlands.
- Acid soils mean that farming on the plateaux is limited to rough pasture, and alternative land uses (forestry, golf and equine) have emerged. Heather, gorse, oak and birch dominant. Arable land and improved pasture in the valleys, on alluvium.
- A patchwork of small to medium-sized fields with woods. The legacy of historic hunting forests includes veteran trees, ancient woods, ancient hedgerows and parklands. Fragments of historic meadows along watercourses.
- Prehistoric earthworks mark promontories on the plateaux. Archaeology well preserved on historic heathland.
- Mosaics of open heathland and grassland with scrub, secondary woodland and plantation. Valley bogs, ponds and streams enhance diversity. Large, continuous mosaics in the east.
- Historic commons offer tranquillity and unenclosed views, while other rights of access are enjoyed across farmland, canals and downland. MOD ownership restricts some access.
- The Thames Basin Heaths SPA protects internationally important populations of woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.
- Valley floors contain ditches, numerous watercourses, ponds, waterfilled gravel pits, reedbeds and carr. Historic features include mills, relict water meadow and canals.
- 20th-century conurbations, including Camberley, located in the Blackwater Valley, with associated roads (including the M3) dissecting heathland and woodland into blocks. Elsewhere, there are winding lanes and historic dispersed villages and farmsteads of traditional, locally-made brick and tile.



**The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019**

**3.10** The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019 supersedes both the Newbury District Landscape Assessment (1993) and Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2003) but continues to sit alongside the North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2002) which covers a broader area. The North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken in 2002.

**3.11** The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment places most of the study site within the WH4 LCA WH4: Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic LCA.

**3.12** The key characteristics of this character area are set out as follows:

- Geologically and topographically varied with steep and gentle undulating slopes rising to a central ridge
- Presence of surface water and small streams
- Complex pattern of land cover, dominated by woodland and with remnant heaths
- Varied field pattern with strong hedgerows
- Parklands a characteristic feature
- Relatively densely settled, particularly along the ridge, but with woodland containment
- A minor road network contained by the wooded landscape
- An accessible landscape
- Quiet, intimate and secluded character

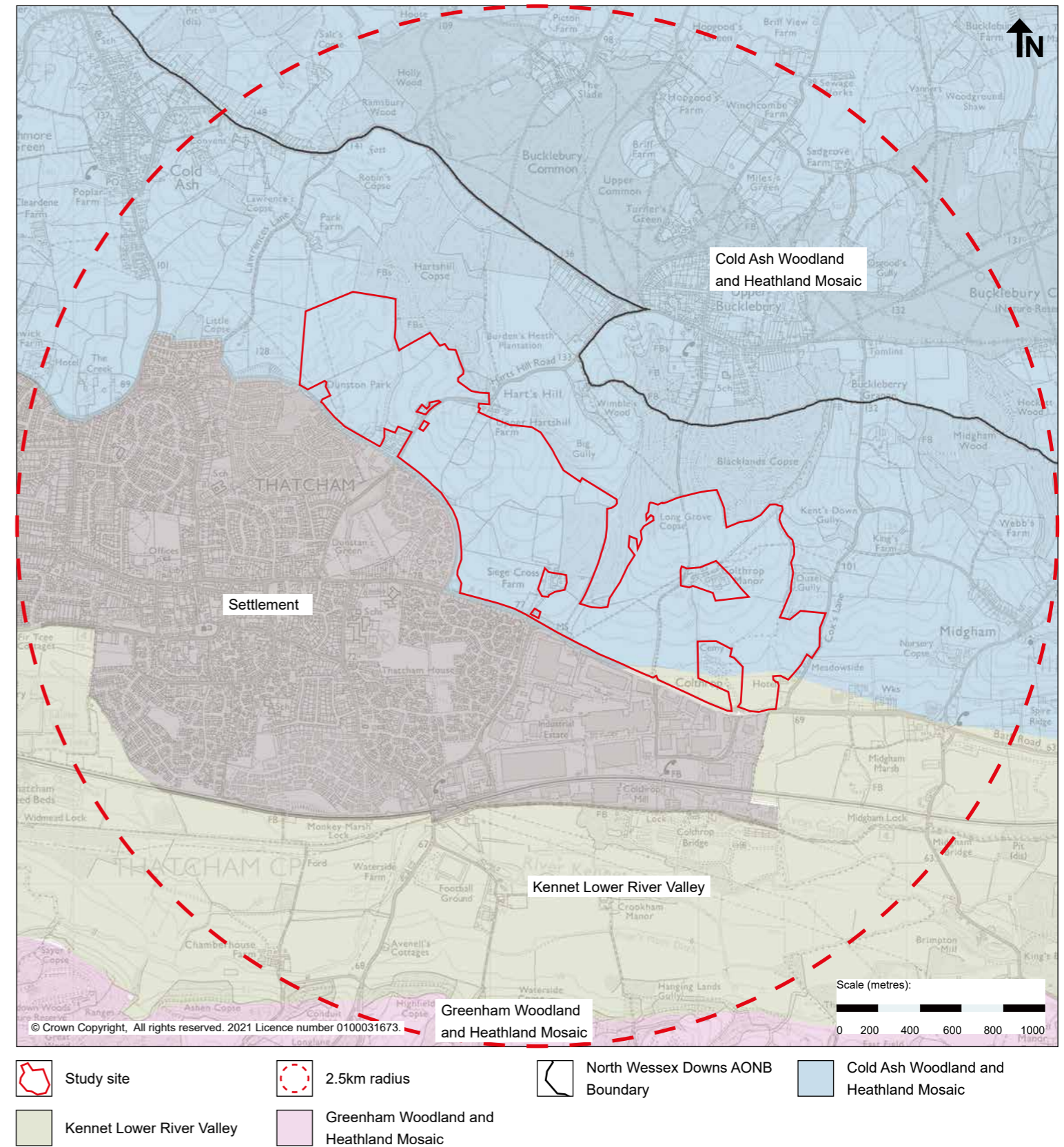
**Valued Features and Qualities:**

- Nationally valued landscape which forms part of the North Wessex Downs AONB
- The visual role of the wooded ridge crest and slopes
- The varied land cover mosaic and important habitats
- A very rural character away from major roads and urban edges
- Recreational value
- Historic landscape character

**Detractors:**

- Past hedgerow loss for arable farming
- Changing land use patterns resulting in gradual loss of landscape variation and biodiversity
- Increase in horse paddocks
- Impact of the M4 on character
- Decreasing separation/coalescence between settlements
- Increased suburbanisation
- Loss of gradation between settlement and countryside
- Increased traffic on the rural lane network

**Fig. 3: Ordnance Survey map indicating West Berkshire Landscape Character Areas**



## Landscape Strategy:

- *Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the nationally designated landscape of the North Wessex Downs AONB*
  - *Conserve and restore heathland characteristics*
  - *Promote appropriate woodland management*
  - *Conserve and strengthen existing boundary elements*
  - *Retain the distinction between and individual identity of settlements*
  - *Conserve elements that mark a transition between settlement and countryside*
  - *Conserve the existing character of rural lanes and public rights of way*
  - *Maintain open views from routeways*
- 3.13** The study site shares many of the key characteristics identified in the WH4 LCA WH4: Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic landscape character area, in particular the gentle undulating slopes rising to a central ridge, and the varied field pattern with strong hedgerows and woodland containment on the higher ground. In places the study site possesses a quiet, intimate and secluded rural character in areas away from major roads and urban edges.
- 3.14** In the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019, a small part of the south eastern section of the study site falls within the 'LV1: Kennet Lower River Valley' landscape character area.
- 3.15** The key characteristics of this character area are set out as follows:
- *Distinctive flat and open lowland landscape, created by the River Kennet and associated channels and drainage ditches*
  - *Principally pasture farmland used for cattle grazing, with some larger arable fields. Woodland occurs along the river corridor*
  - *Internationally and nationally important wetland habitats along the valley floor*
  - *Sense of time-depth with visible heritage features and historic settlements*
  - *Sparsely settled, although influenced by Newbury and Thatcham*
  - *Many public rights of way, particularly along the river*
  - *Transportation routes, often parallel to the river corridor*

## Valued Features and Qualities:

- *Forms part of the nationally valued North Wessex Downs AONB landscape*
- *Ecologically valuable habitats along the river corridor*
- *Numerous heritage assets and historic landscape features give the landscape a sense of time-depth*
- *Strong rural and sparsely settled character*
- *Valued destination for recreation*
- *Distinctive visual character*

## Detractors:

- *Impacts of improvements and intensification of the railway line*
- *Increasing development pressures*

- *Changes in farming practices including a reduction in the viability of livestock grazing*
- *Past and present impacts of industrial use*
- *Nutrient enrichment of the river from agricultural run-off and water vessels*
- *Increased risk of more frequent and severe flooding due to climate change*
- *Development of large infrastructure such as solar farms and waste management facilities*

Landscape Strategy:

- *Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the nationally designated AONB landscape*
- *Conserve and restore the traditional valley landscape*
- *Restore, extend and manage wetland habitats that occur along the floodplain*
- *Conserve the valley floor woodland*
- *Conserve and enhance heritage features in the landscape*
- *Manage recreational pressure*
- *Conserve the distinct identities of individual settlements*

**3.16** The study site shares some of the key characteristics identified in the LV1: Kennet Lower River Valley landscape character area, in particular the flatter landscape associated with the valley floor, large arable fields, the urban influence of Thatcham and the transportation routes running along the valley floor.

#### **North Wessex Downs AONB landscape character**

**3.17** The study site is outside the AONB boundary. The closest part of the AONB designation is to the north of the study site. The landscape character of this part of the AONB is classified in the North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment Technical Report March 2002 (LUC) as 8A 'Hermitage Wooded Commons', part of the Lowland Mosaic landscape type. Key characteristics of the Hermitage Wooded Commons are identified as:

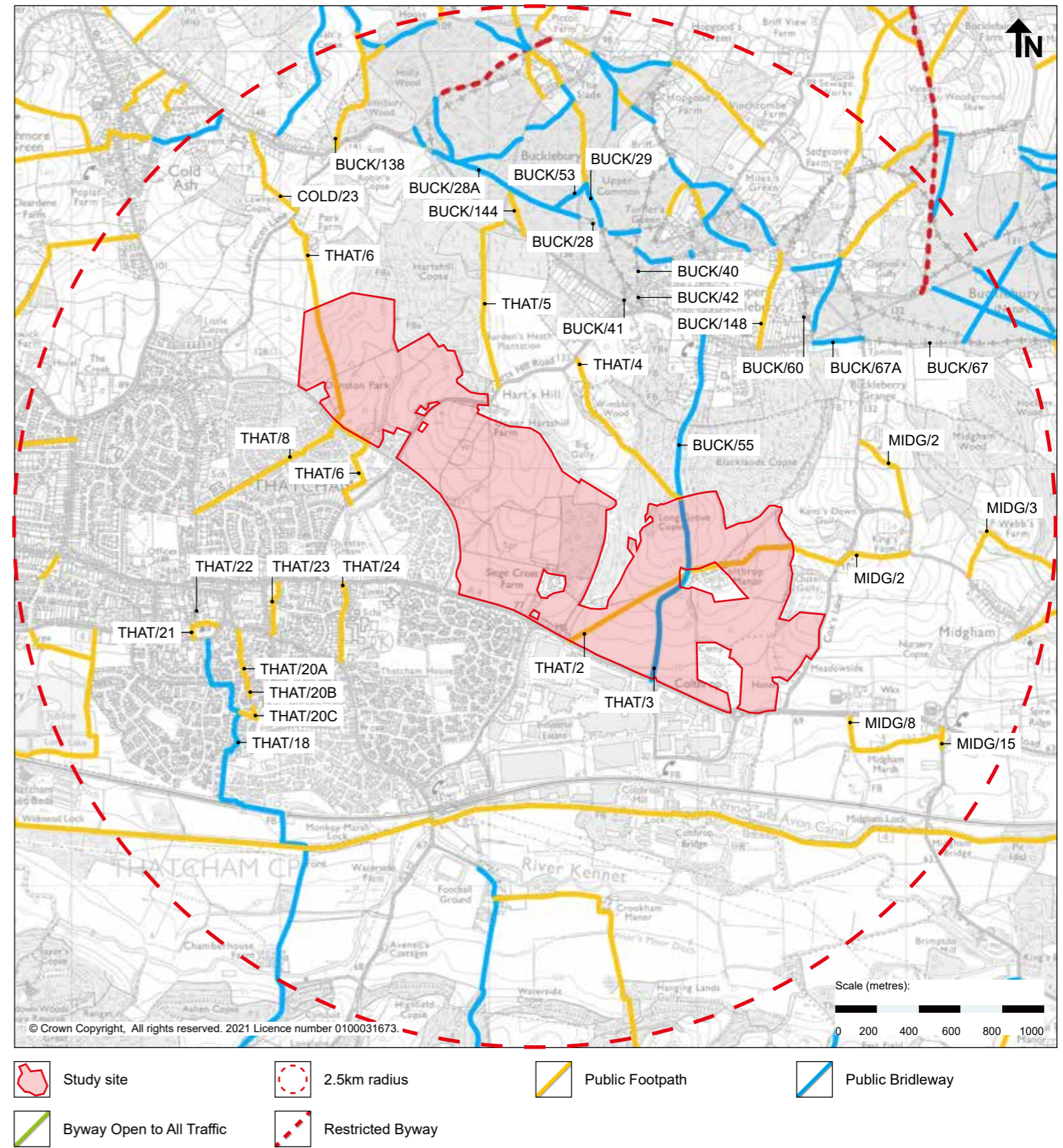
- *lowland area at the base of the chalk dip slope, underlain by clays, silts, sands and gravels of the Reading and Bagshot Beds and London Clay, giving rise to nutrient poor, often acidic, soils;*
- *a broad undulating plateau falling towards the Kennet Valley to the south east and dissected by the River Pang;*
- *variable land cover forming an intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and remnant heathland. Some more open areas of arable land can be found on the slopes that drop to the Pang Valley and to the south east near Beenham;*
- *large, interconnected woodland blocks and strong hedgerow pattern with mature trees restrict views and create an enclosed and intimate character. Low wooded horizons are a feature;*
- *numerous semi-natural woodlands of ancient origin, with some large commercial plantations. Wooded commons and small areas of remnant heath are a distinctive element;*
- *many features of biodiversity interest including heathland, dry and wet woodland, bog and areas of wet meadow;*
- *dominated by small irregular fields of informal and piecemeal enclosures, medieval and post-medieval, with some larger, more regular and straight edged, formal Parliamentary enclosure on flatter terrain in the south-east and west;*
- *dispersed pattern of settlement characteristic of encroachment into areas of common and woodland. Includes large nucleated villages, lines of estate cottages, loose roadside settlements as well as many dispersed farmsteads and residential country houses;*
- *intricate network of rural lanes, many sunken and overhung by woodland plus more intrusive road infrastructure;*
- *historic parkland based on medieval deer parks and manor houses with associated*
- *ornamental parklands with gardens, rides and plantings are a particular feature.*

**Public Rights of Way**

3.18 The diagram opposite indicates a dense network of PRow north of the study site, especially to the north and east of Upper Bucklebury. In contrast the PRow network crossing the study site is relatively sparse, restricted to THAT/6 crossing the extreme western part of the site and THAT/2 linking with THAT/3 in the centre east.

3.19 Where PRow do cross the study site they offer high degrees of amenity in terms of views (especially to the south), and recreational opportunity, linking to the wider PRow network, including the AONB to the north.

**Fig. 4: Ordnance Survey map indicating Public Rights of Way network**

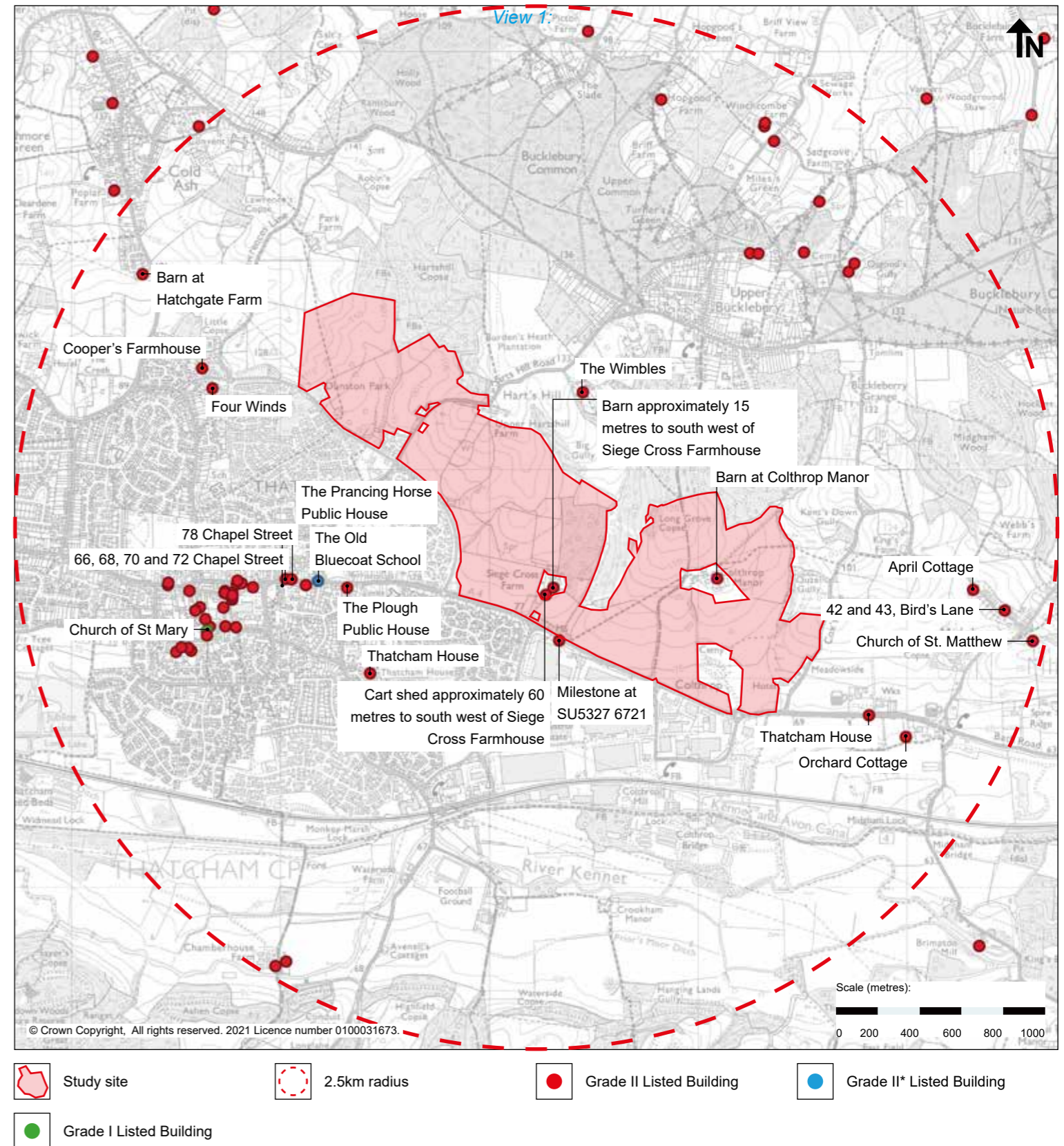


**Listed Buildings**

3.20 Listed buildings in the vicinity of the study site are shown opposite.

3.21 A small number of Grade II Listed Buildings are located in close proximity to the site, identified as: Barn at Colthrop Manor; Barn at Siege Cross Farm and Cartshed at Siege Cross Farm. These are all excluded from the study side boundary, contained in enclaves within the overall study site boundary. There is also a Grade II listed milestone on the A4 Bath Road, and further to the north is The Wimbles, a Grade II listed house.

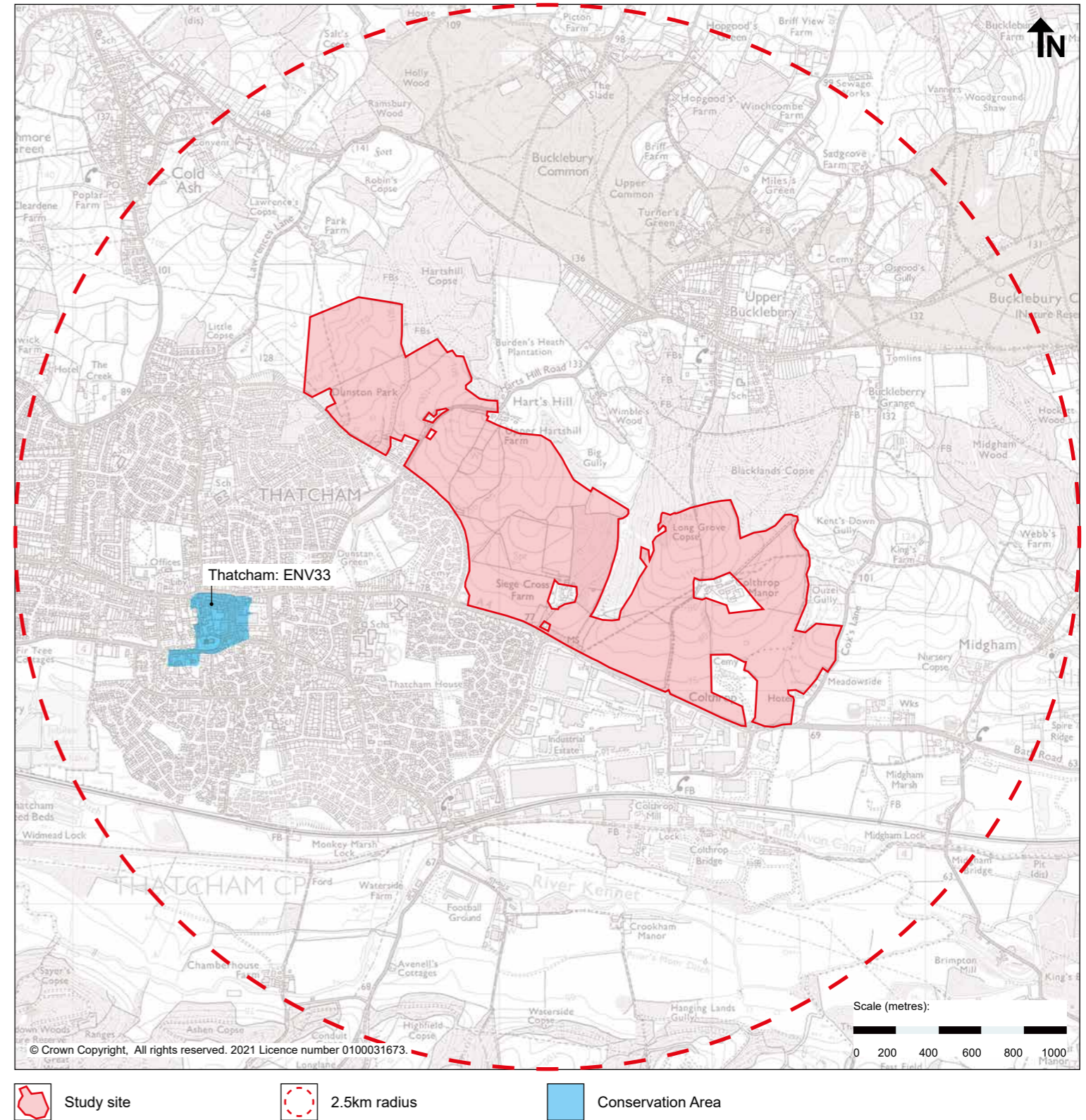
**Fig. 5: Ordnance Survey map indicating locations of Listed Buildings**



**Conservation Areas**

- 3.22 Thatcham Conservation Area was designated 1980 and is centred on The Broadway and High Street south of Bath Road.
- 3.23 Policy ENV33 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (September 2007) states that the Council will not permit development which would harm or prejudice the special character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
- 3.24 Policy CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy states that *'In order to ensure that the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District is conserved and enhanced, the natural, cultural, and functional components of its character will be considered as a whole. In adopting this holistic approach, particular regard will be given to:.....the conservation and, where appropriate, enhancement of heritage assets and their settings. Proposals for development should be informed by and respond to: ... b) Features identified in various settlement character studies including Conservation Area Appraisals. c) The nature of and the potential for heritage assets identified through the Historic Environment Record for West Berkshire and the extent of their significance.'*
- 3.25 There is currently no Conservation Area Appraisal for Thatcham.

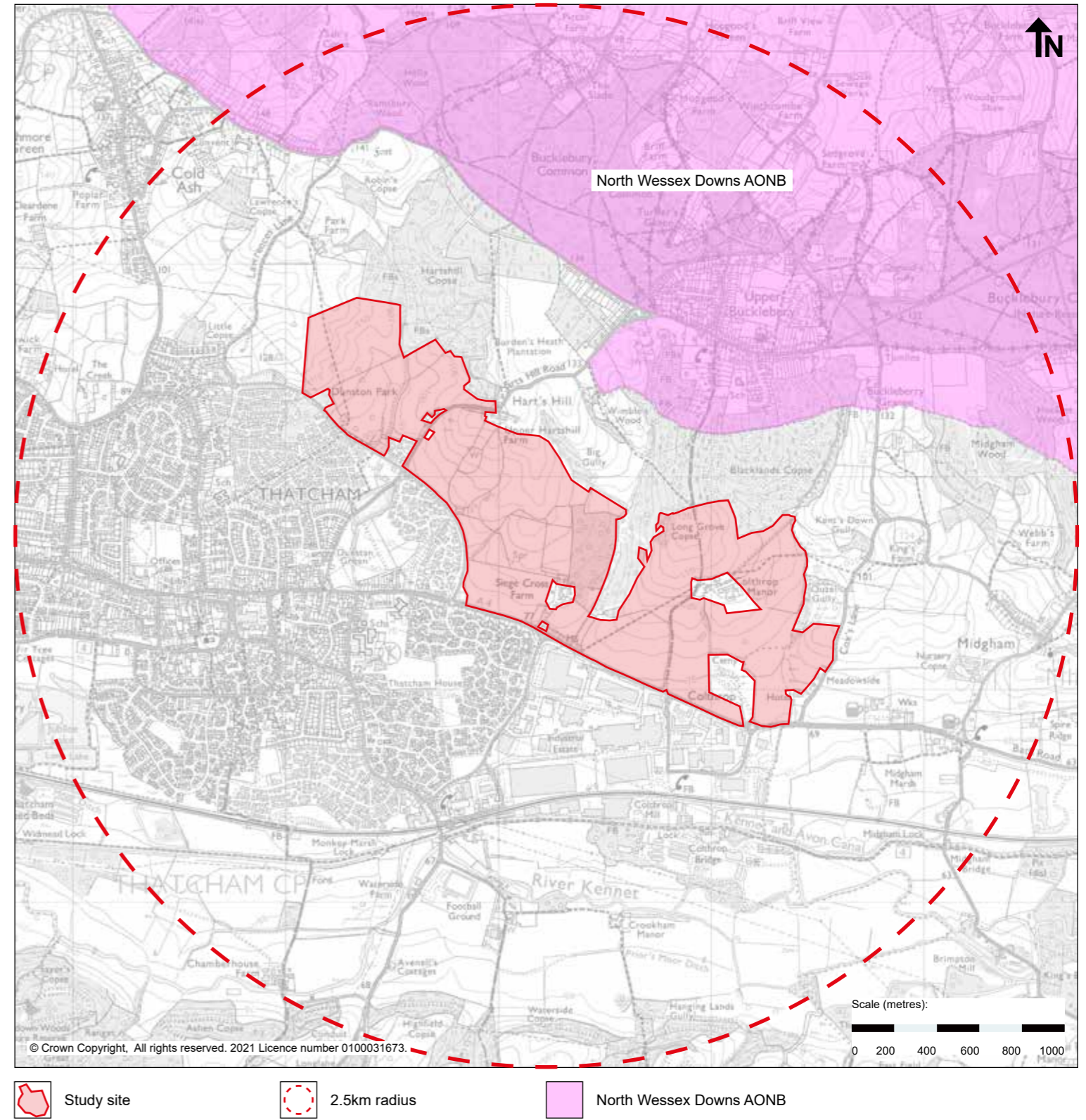
**Fig. 6: Ordnance Survey map indicating locations of Conservation Areas**



**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

3.26 AONBs are nationally protected landscapes which are designated to ensure that the special qualities of our finest landscapes are conserved and enhanced. S.82 of The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 confirms that the primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. S.85 of the CROW Act places a statutory duty on all relevant authorities requiring them to have regard to the purpose of AONBs when coming to decisions or carrying out their activities relating to, or affecting land within these areas. This is known as the 'duty of regard'.

**Fig. 7: Ordnance Survey map indicating boundary of North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**





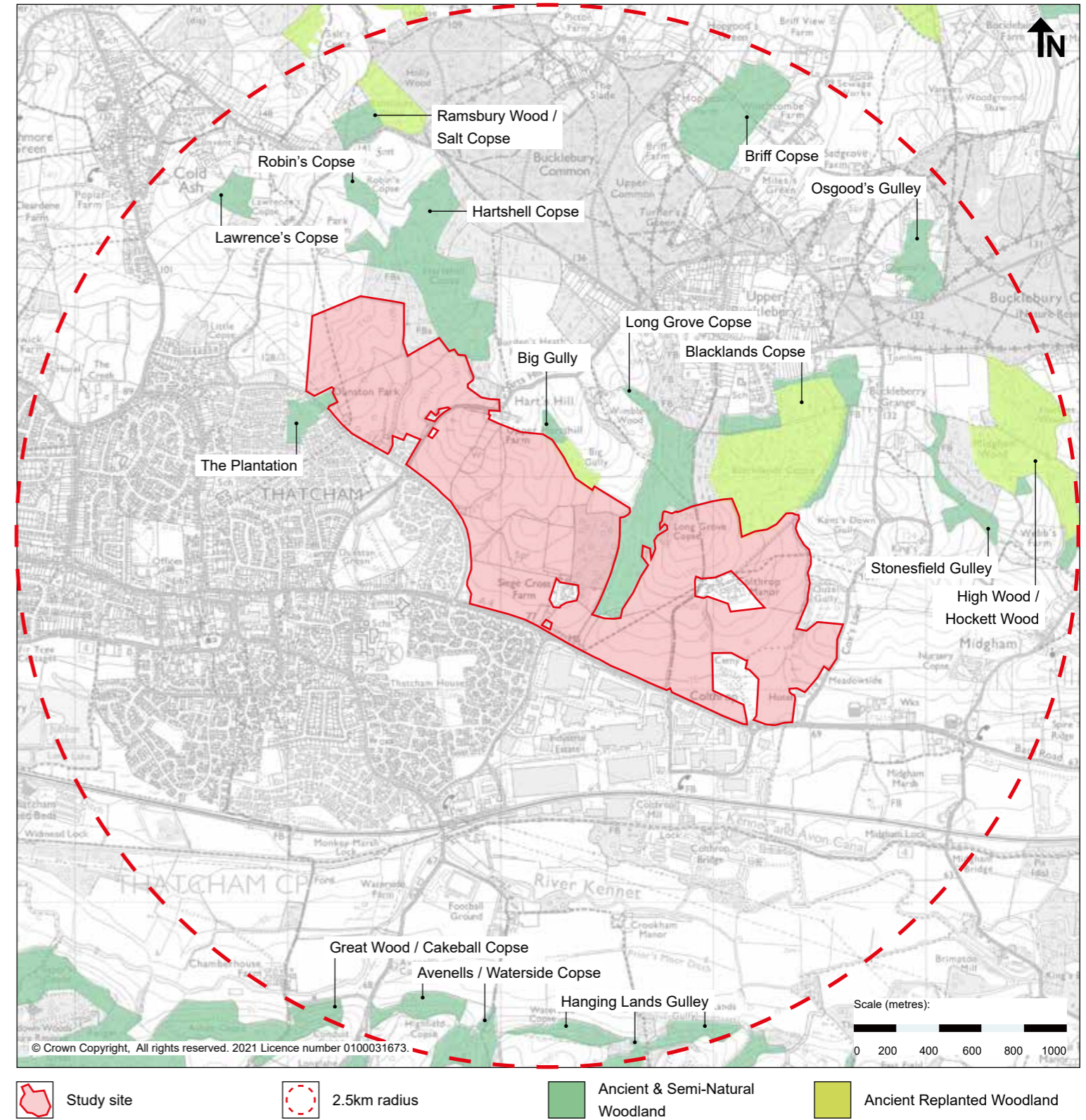
**Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - NPPF July 2021**

- 3.27** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. As far as protected landscapes are concerned, para 176 states that *'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.... and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas.....The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited.....'*
- 3.28** Para 177 goes on to state *'When considering applications for development within ...Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*
- a. the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
  - b. the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
  - c. any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.'*
- 3.29** The North Wessex Downs AONB covers 74% of West Berkshire. The boundary of the AONB in relation to the study site is indicated above. The site is not within the national designation, and does not share a boundary with it, but its proximity to it means its presence must be considered.
- 3.30** Para 176 of the NPPF states that development within the setting of AONBs *'should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.'*
- 3.31** Neither the NPPF nor the planning practice guidance (NPPG) the government publishes to support the NPPF provide a definition of 'setting' in the context of AONBs. The NPPG notes: *"Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account"* (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 'Natural Environment) Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-042-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019).
- 3.32** The NPPG confirms that the Duty of Regard is "particularly important to the delivery of the statutory purposes of protected areas. It applies to all local planning authorities, not just National Park authorities, and is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries, but which might have an impact on their setting or protection.' Para: 039 Reference ID: 8-039-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019.

**Ancient Woodland**

- 3.33 Areas of Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland in the vicinity of the study site are shown opposite.
- 3.34 There is no Ancient Woodland within the study area boundary, but there are areas of Ancient Woodland that abut the boundary of the study site. Long Grove Copse is a substantial area of ancient woodland adjacent to the site's northern boundary.
- 3.35 Current standing advice from Natural England and the Forestry Commission is that for Ancient Woodlands a buffer zone of at least 15 metres should be provided between the Ancient Woodland boundary and any development works to avoid root damage. The size and type of buffer zone should vary depending on the scale, type and impact of the development. Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance a larger buffer zone may be required. ('Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: protecting them from development' - Forestry Commission and Natural England Guidance last updated 5 Nov 2018).

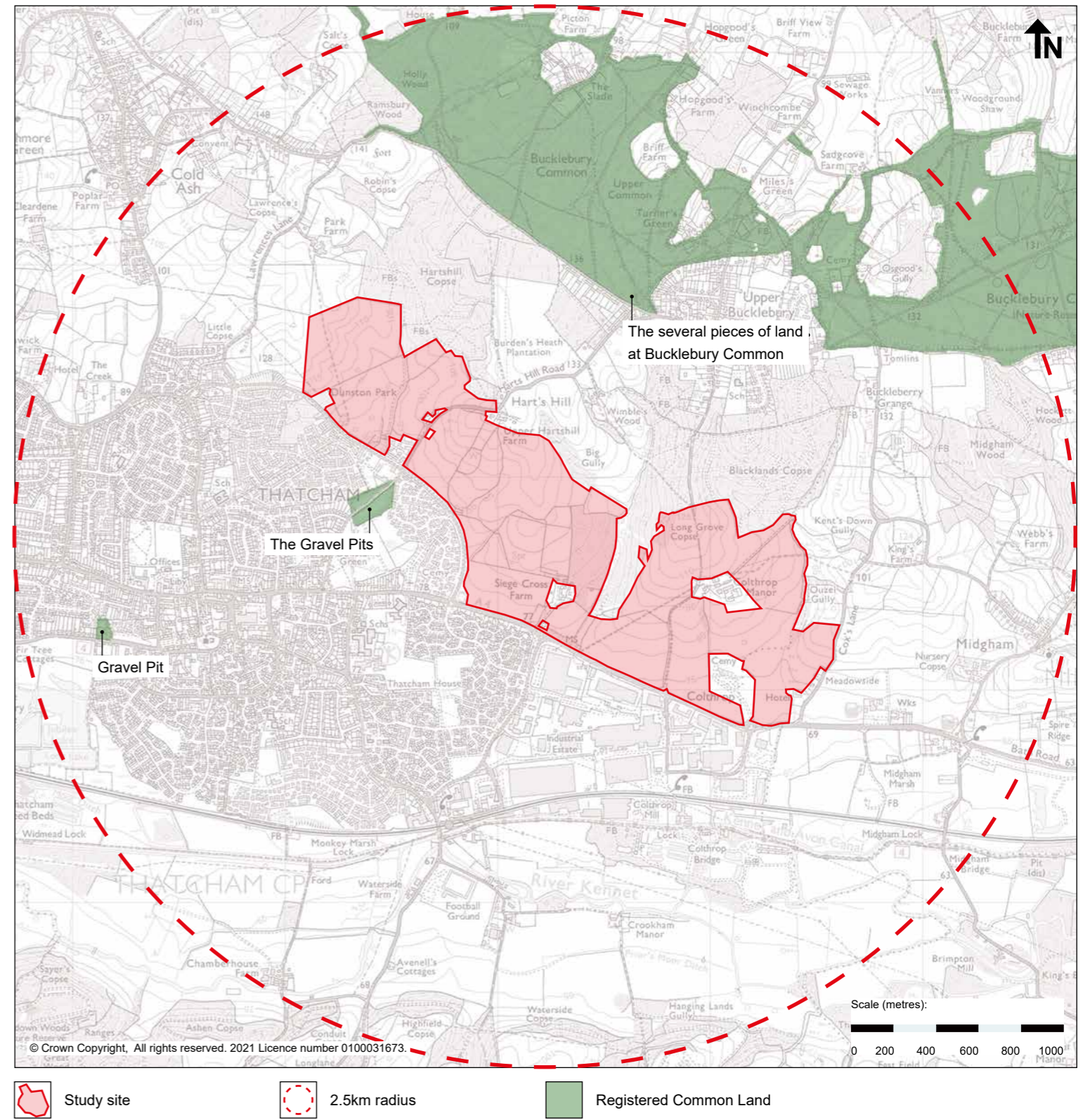
**Fig. 8: Ordnance Survey map indicating Ancient Woodland**



**Registered Common Land**

- 3.36 The location of Registered Common Land in relation to the study site is indicated opposite.
- 3.37 The nearest Registered Common Land (The Gravel Pits) is located approximately 80m from the site's southern boundary. More substantial areas of common land are located to the north of the study site, at Bucklebury Common.

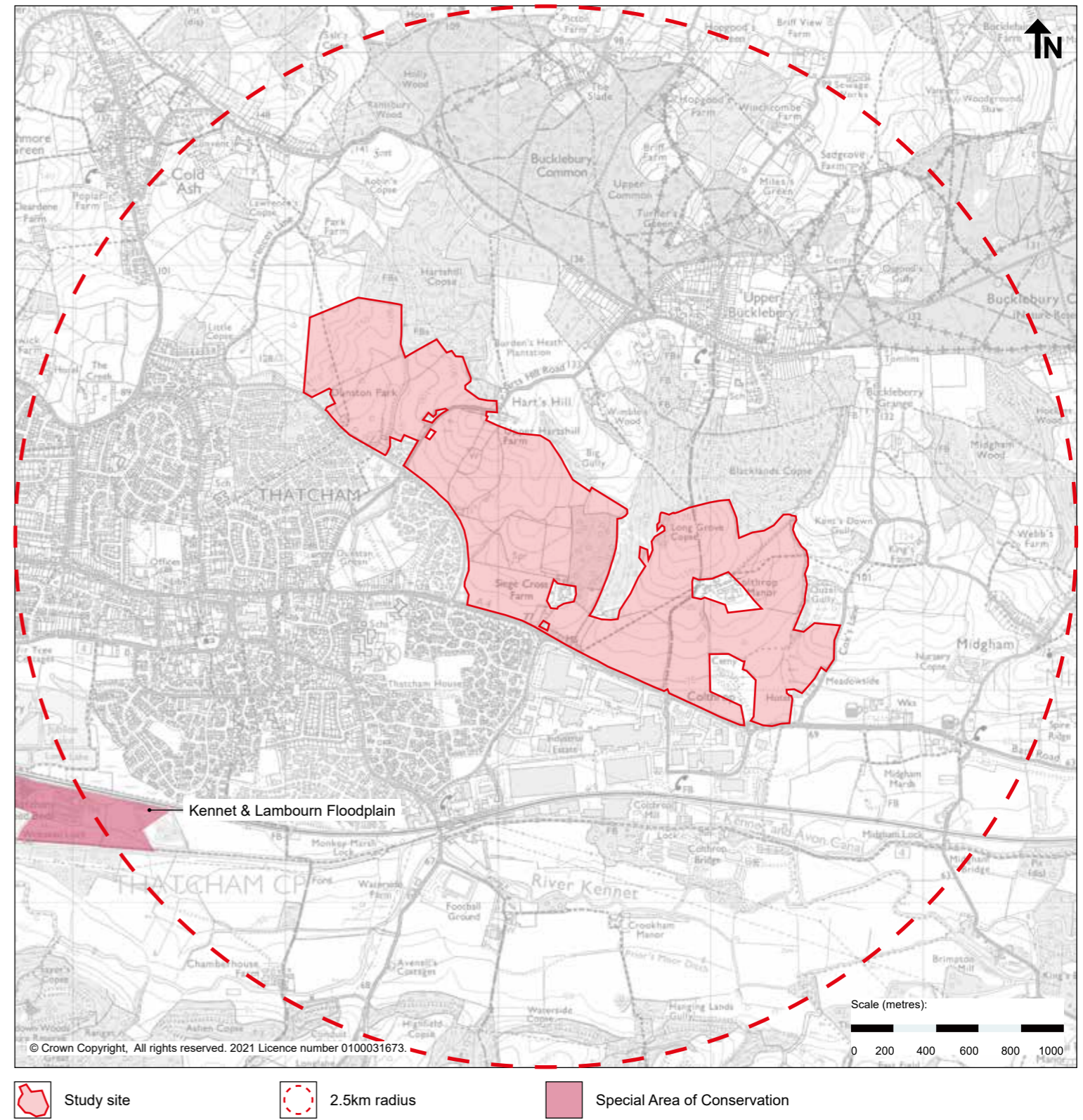
**Fig. 9: Ordnance Survey map indicating Registered Common Land**



**Special Areas of Conservation**

- 3.38 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in relation to the study site are indicated opposite.
- 3.39 The Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC is located approximately 1.6km from the study site boundary.

**Fig. 10: Ordnance Survey map indicating Special Areas of Conservation**

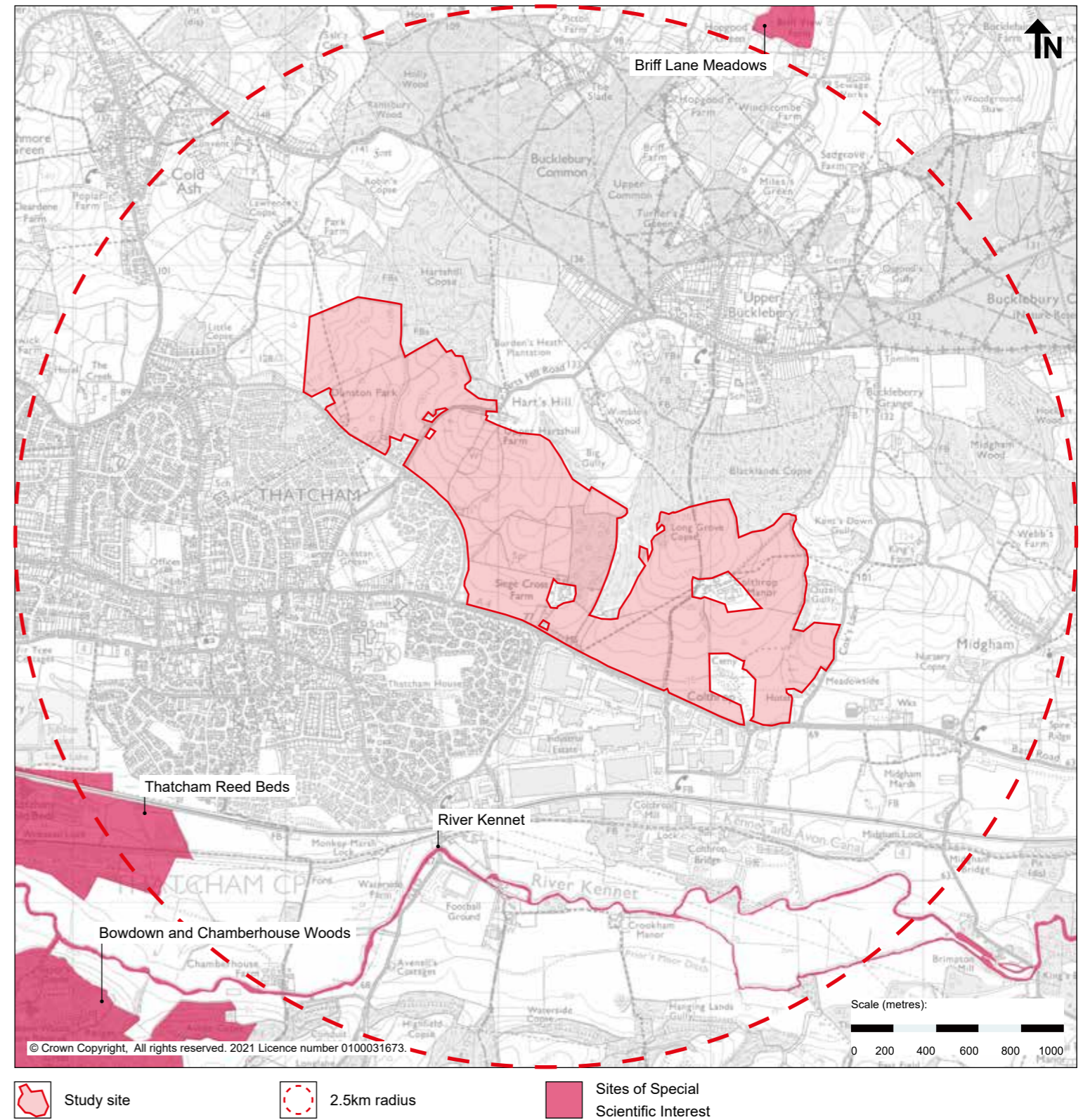


**Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

3.40 SSSI in relation to the study site are indicated opposite.

3.41 The Thatcham Reed Beds and River Kennet SSSIs are the closest such designations to the study site boundary, both to the south. The nearest SSSI to the study site boundary is the River Kennet, approximately 750m from the southern boundary of the study site.

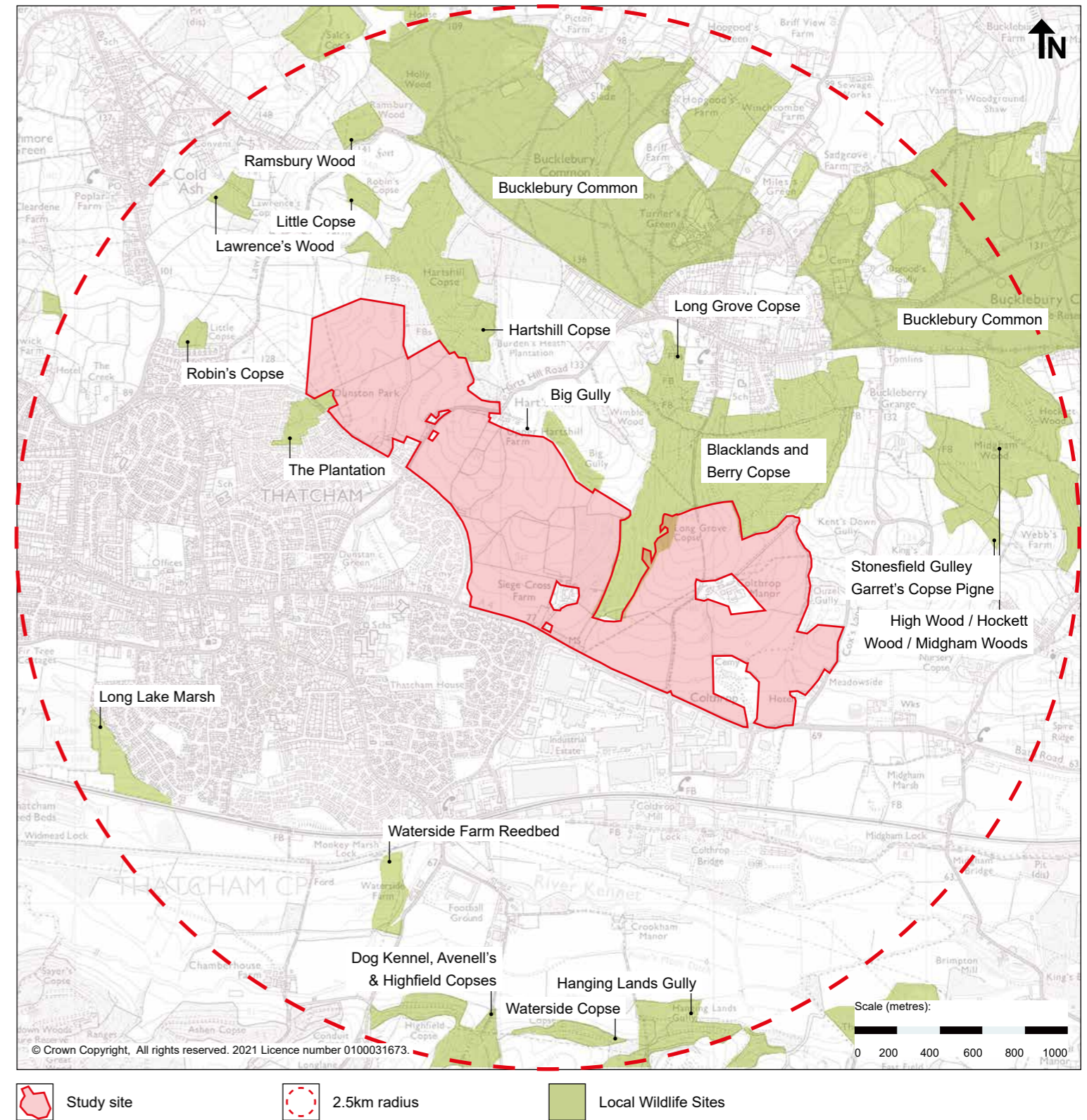
**Fig. 11: Ordnance Survey map indicating Sites of Special Scientific Interest**



**Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)**

- 3.42 LWS in relation to the study site are indicated opposite.
- 3.43 There is a fairly dense distribution of LWS to the north of the study site, mostly associated with the woodlands, copses and commons. Some areas of LWS about the study site boundary and a small part of Blacklands and Berry Copse LWS designation extends into the study site itself. The Long Grove Copse LWS (also Ancient Woodland) is outside the study site boundary, but projects from the north almost dividing the site into two parts.
- 3.44 There are fewer LWS to the south, principally due to the urban area, but some associated with the Kennet and others with woodland on the southern side of the valley.

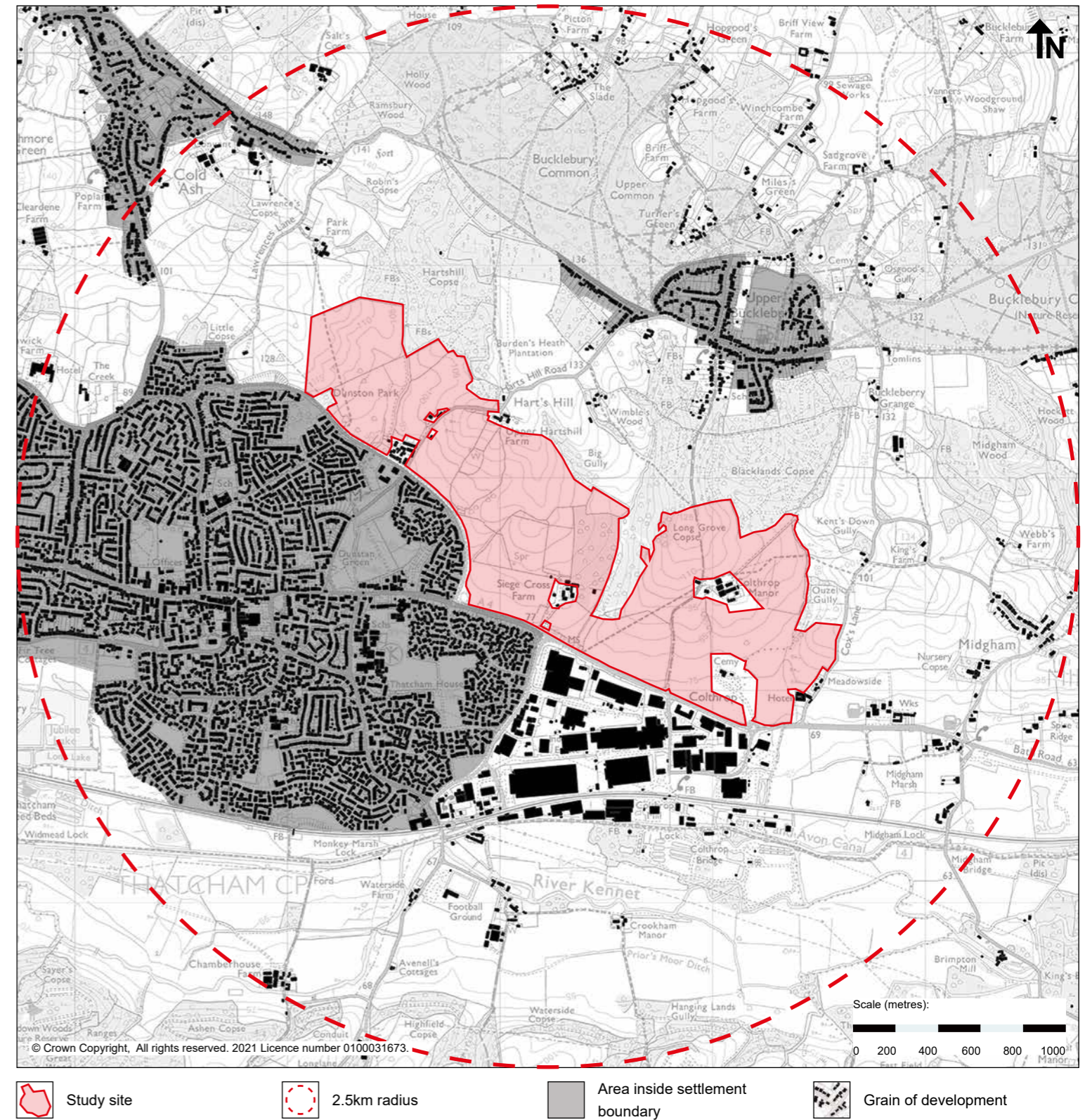
**Fig. 12: Ordnance Survey map indicating Local Wildlife Sites**



**Settlement pattern and grain of development**

- 3.45 The pattern of existing settlement and grain of development in relation to the study site is indicated opposite. Existing settlement boundaries, which identify the main built up area of a settlement and which are identified in the West Berkshire Local Plan, are also highlighted.
- 3.46 The three principal settlements of Thatcham, Cold Ash and Upper Bucklebury are clearly evident, with Thatcham dominant. Here the urban area's north eastern boundary is clearly defined by Bath Rd and Floral Way.
- 3.47 The grain of development indicates elements of linear residential form along the lanes leading to / from Cold Ash and Upper Bucklebury, with some infill behind, contrasting with a denser, more nucleated form of development in Thatcham.
- 3.48 Locally distinctive grain is evident in the pattern of historic farmsteads and former farmsteads - Hartshill Farm (now subject to conversions and surrounded by modern residential development), Siege Cross Farm and Colthrop Farm. This contrasts with the grain of the large format employment units to the east of Thatcham.

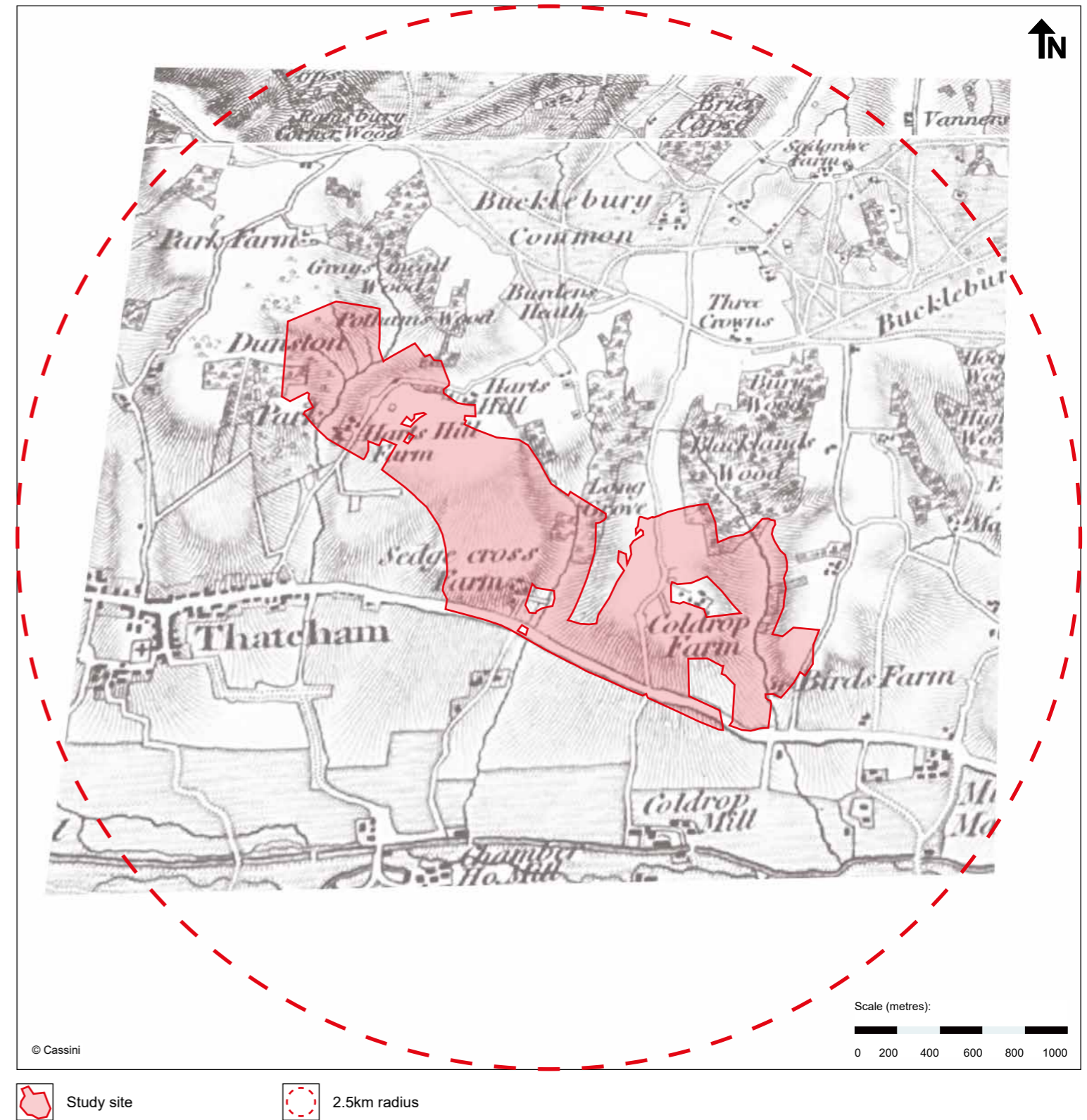
**Fig. 13: Ordnance Survey map indicating settlement pattern and grain of development**



**Historic landscape**

- 3.49 The mapping progression shows gradual change in landscape patterns to the north, and the start of change brought about by the railway line and industry, including paper mills to the south.
- 3.50 On the early (1805-1874) map opposite the superimposed study site is approximate only. Dunstan Park can be seen in the west of the earlier mapping. Harts Hill Road, Cox's Lane and the route of THAT/3 to Coldrop (Colthrop) Farm and northwards to Bucklebury are also clearly evident.
- 3.51 The dense network of tracks and paths across the common land and heaths at Bucklebury Common is evident in the early mapping.

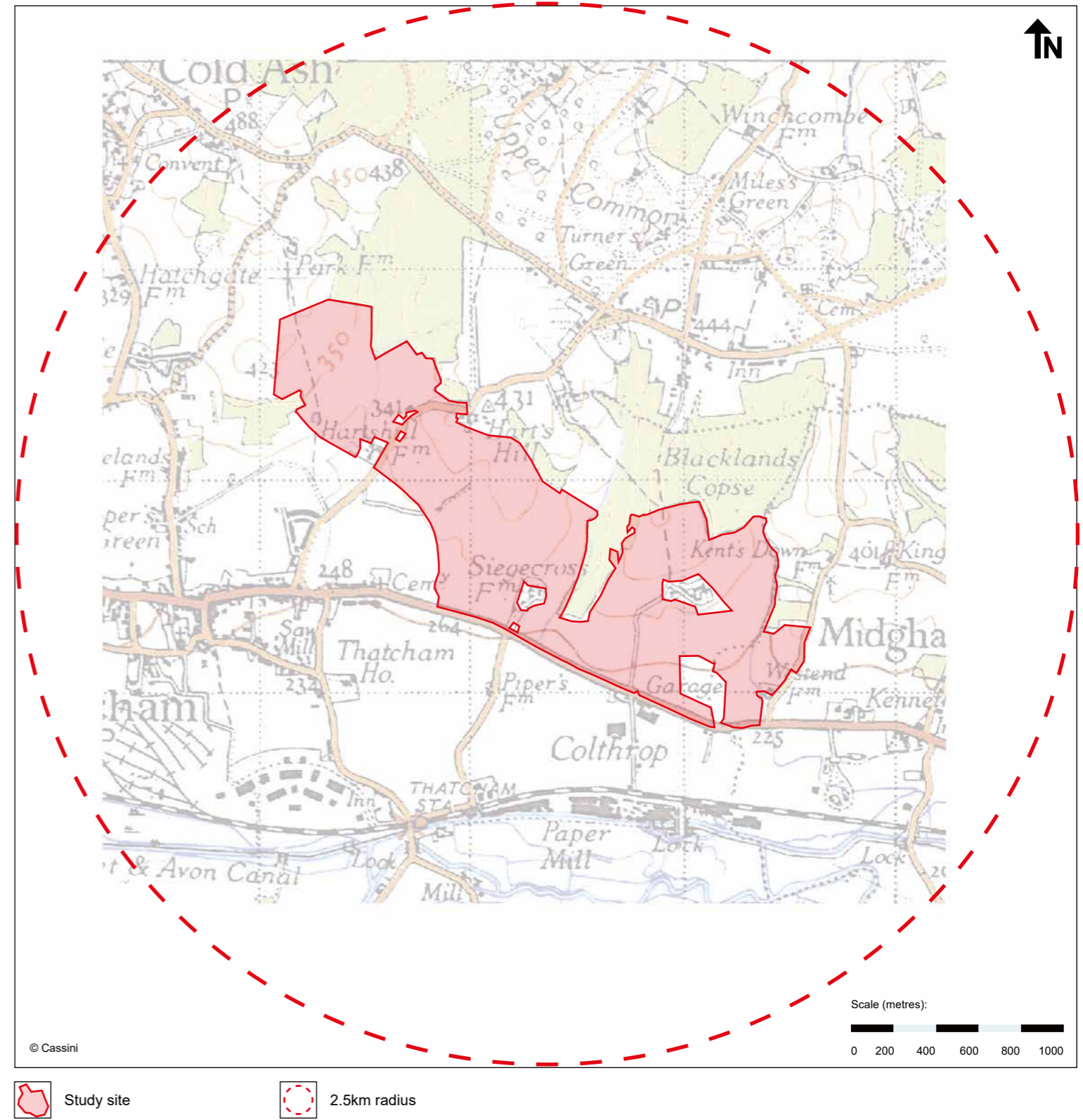
**Fig. 14: Cassini historic map, circa 1805-1874.**





- 3.52 In the Cassini 1945-48 series a small triangle of residential development constructed between Harts Hill Rd and Dunstan Rd, signals the beginning of the rapid expansion of Thatcham in the latter part of the 20th century.
- 3.53 In this mapping the development of large footprint employment units east of Piper's Lane has not yet commenced, although the canal and rail corridor has undergone substantial change with new industry, including the paper mill.

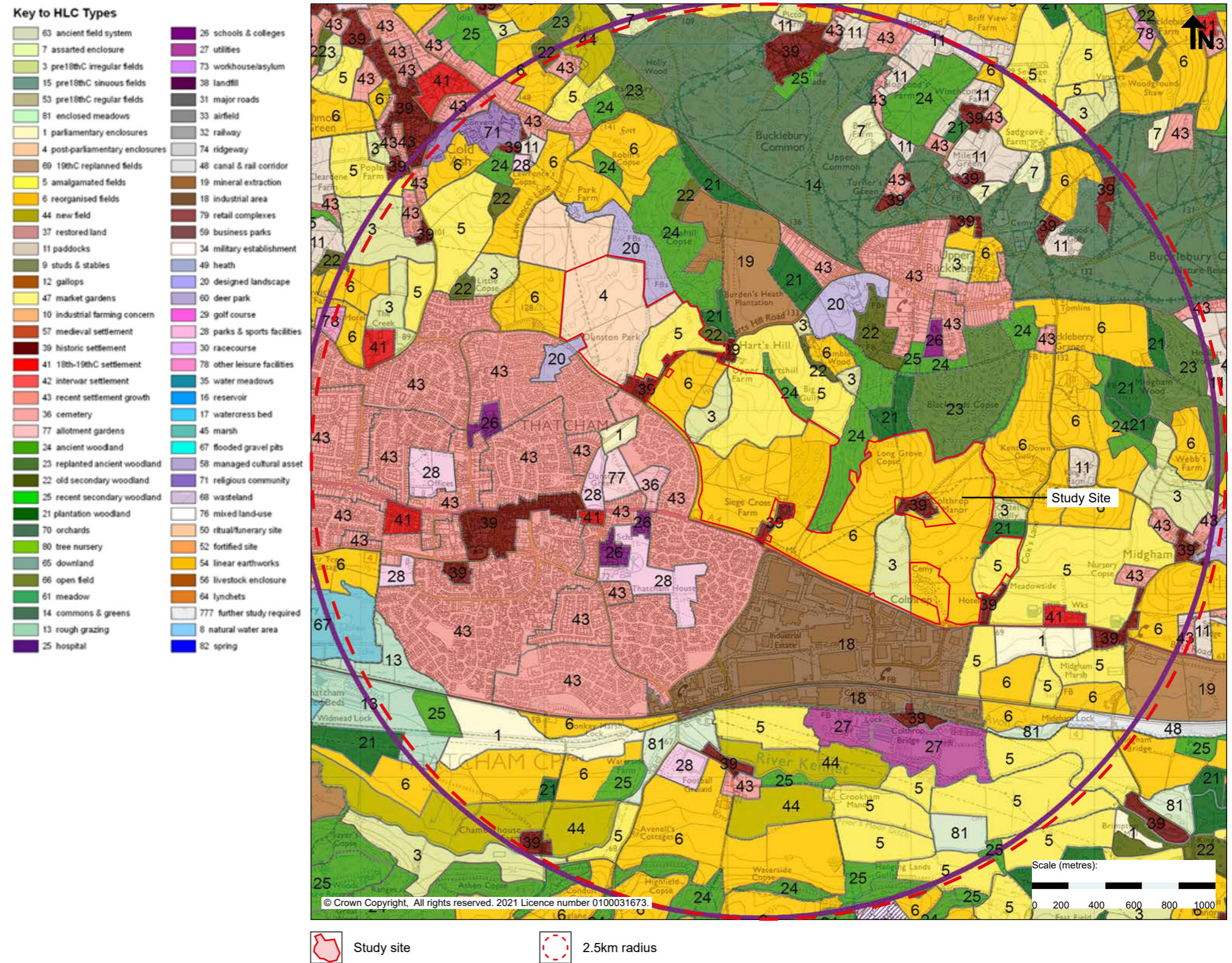
Fig. 15: Cassini historic map, circa 1945-1948.



**Historic Landscape Characterisation**

3.54 A Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) exercise was carried out between 2004 and 2007 by West Berkshire's Archaeology Service in partnership with English Heritage, the North Wessex Downs AONB Office, Hampshire County Council, Wiltshire County Council, Swindon Borough Council and Oxfordshire County Council. It involved mapping current and past land use across West Berkshire, as well as the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

**Fig. 16: Ordnance Survey Map indicating Historic Landscape Use Character**



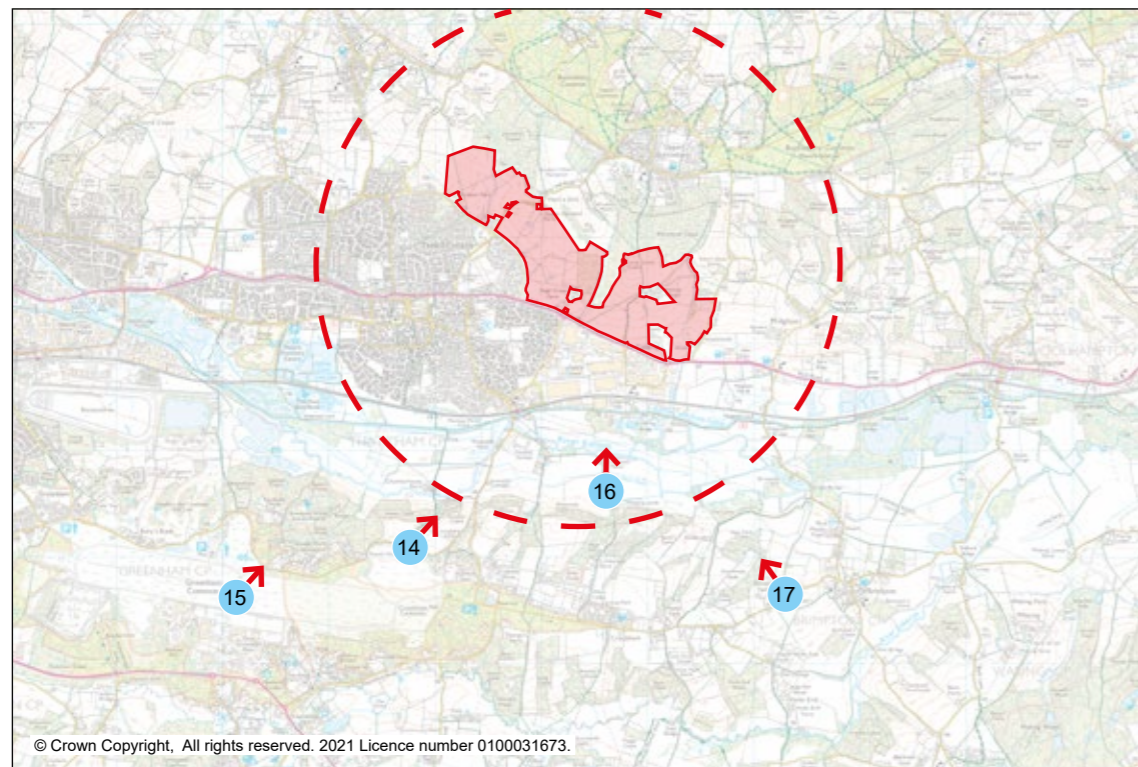
- 3.55 West Berkshire's Historic Landscape Characterisation Sensitivity Map categorises sensitivity value into 5 categories from low to high, plus a further 'undetermined' category).
- 3.56 The majority of the land within the study site is classified as 'low, low-medium and medium' sensitivity value, but there are some areas of 'medium-high and high' sensitivity value, where more historic land-use types survive.
- 3.57 These include a large sweep of commons and ancient woodland to the north, small pockets of early enclosure and Parliamentary enclosure, and in the south by the Kennet some meadows.
- 3.58 As well as the historic settlement cores within Thatcham, there are several hamlets and farm clusters, and Bucklebury Common has common-edge settlement around it. Remnants exist of the 18th century Dunston Park though its house was lost by 1798, and there is a small early 20th century designed landscape in Upper Bucklebury.

**Fig. 17: Ordnance Survey Map indicating HLC Landscape Sensitivity Value**

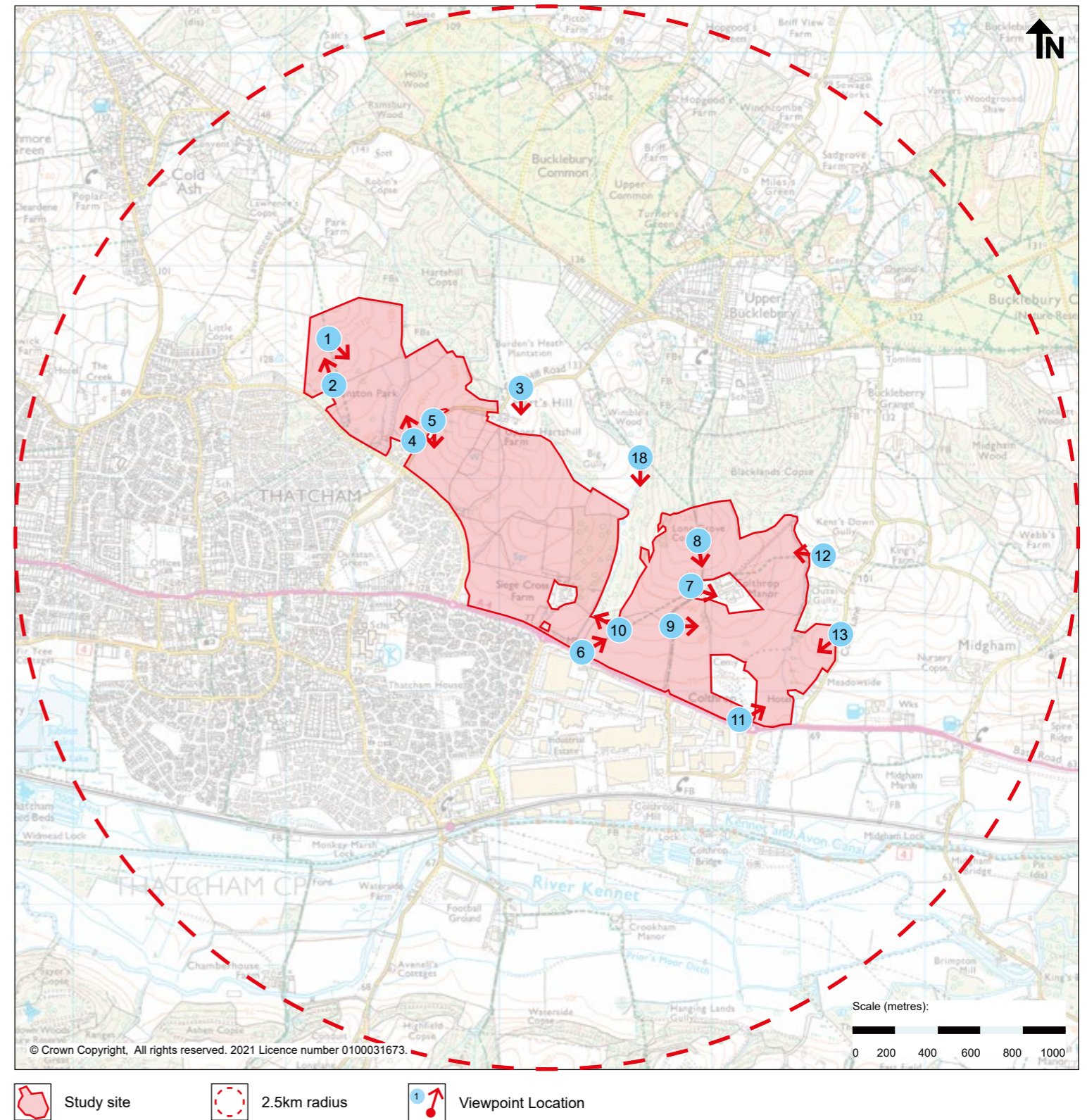


**Visual baseline**

- 3.59 To inform judgements about the visual accessibility, character and sensitivity of the study site and its surroundings, a number of viewpoints were selected. The viewpoints are considered to be representative of views generally in the vicinity of the study site, and do not represent all views that can be gained to and from it.
- 3.60 All viewpoints were gained from publicly accessible land. There are other views of the study site that can be gained from private land that are not included in the visual sensitivity assessment section of this study.
- 3.61 The views are set out in the following pages. For all views an indicative site centre is shown on the location plan, to provide a common reference point. For each view a single frame photograph has been taken, together with a panorama to show context.



**Fig. 18: Ordnance Survey Map indication location of viewpoints.**

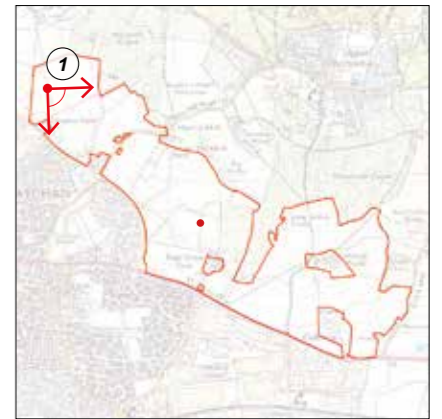


**VIEW 1: SOUTH EAST FROM PROW THAT/6**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

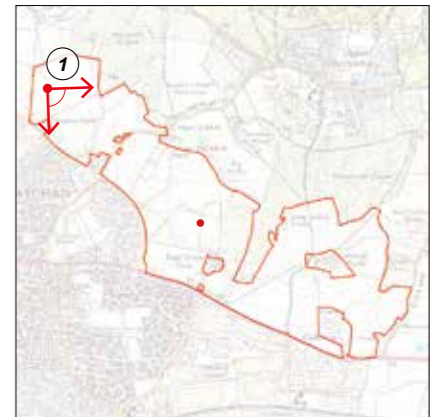


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 452200.78, 168646.3  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 12.56pm  
Elevation: 170  
Viewing Direction: 133°  
Dist. to centre of site: 1.38km

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:

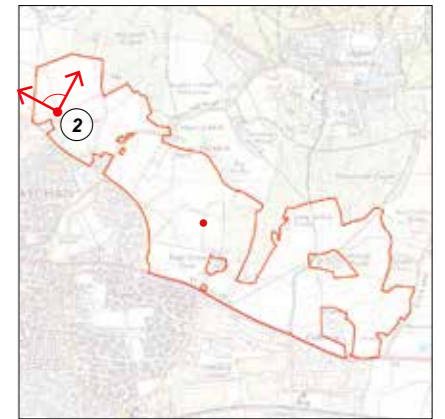


**VIEW 2: NORTH WEST FROM PROW THAT/6**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

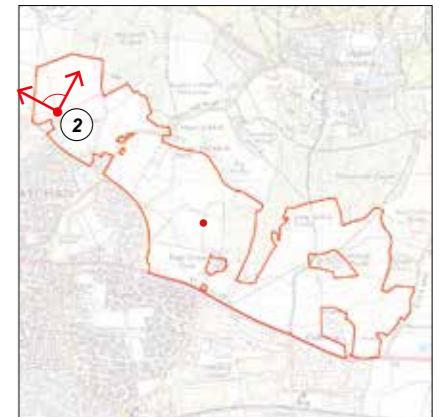


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 452262.98, 168441.09  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 13.05pm  
Elevation: 150  
Viewing Direction: 348°  
Dist. to centre of site: 1.2km.

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo



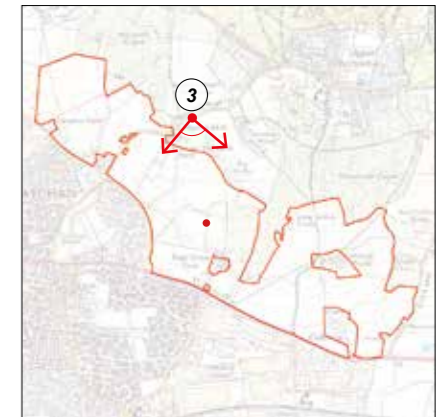


**VIEW 3: SOUTH FROM HARTS HILL ROAD**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

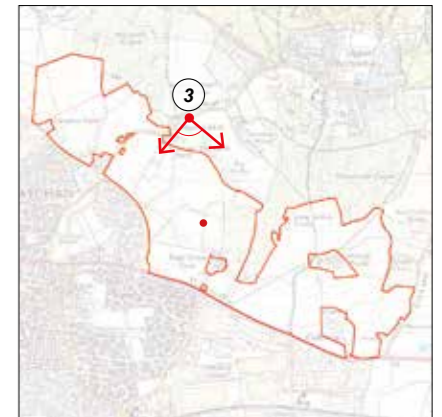


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 453153.28, 168414.57  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 12.19pm  
Elevation: 180  
Viewing Direction: 175°  
Dist. to centre of site: 698m

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo



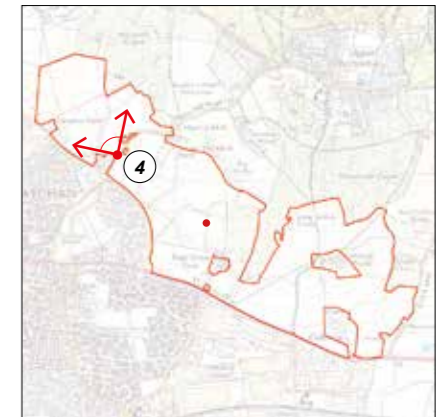
Colthrop Business Park

**VIEW 4: NORTH WEST FROM HARTS HILL ROAD**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

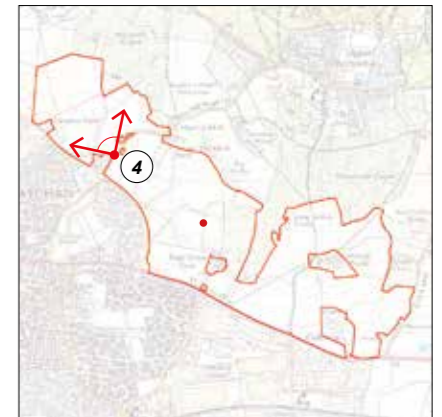


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 452623.33, 168174.8  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 12.28pm  
Elevation: 143  
Viewing Direction: 327°  
Dist. to centre of site: 755m

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo

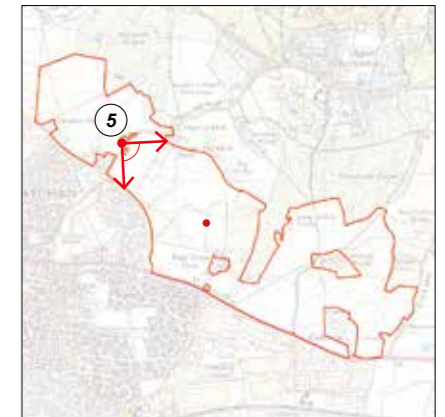


**VIEW 5: SOUTH FROM HARTS HILL ROAD**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

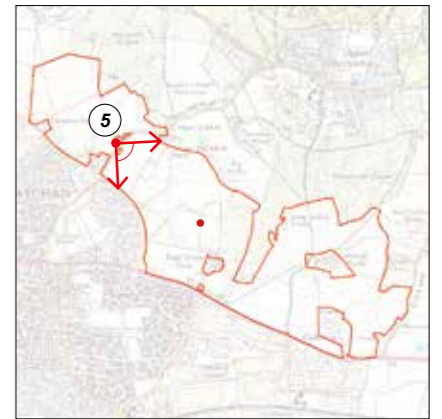


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 452660.59, 168225.63  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 12.32pm  
Elevation: 155  
Viewing Direction: 132°  
Dist. to centre of site: 758m

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo

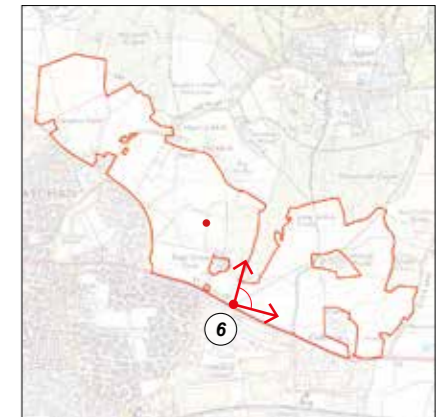


**VIEW 6: NORTH EAST FROM PROW THAT/2**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

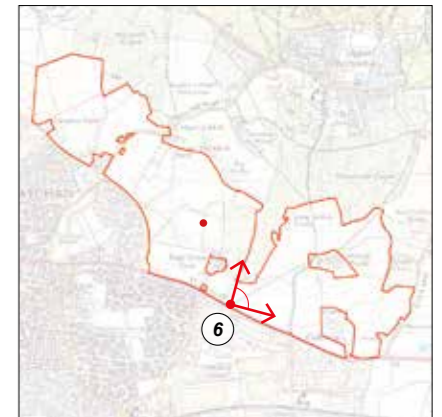


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 453386.48, 167178.34  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 11.38am  
Elevation: 123  
Viewing Direction: 60°  
Dist. to centre of site: 566m

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo



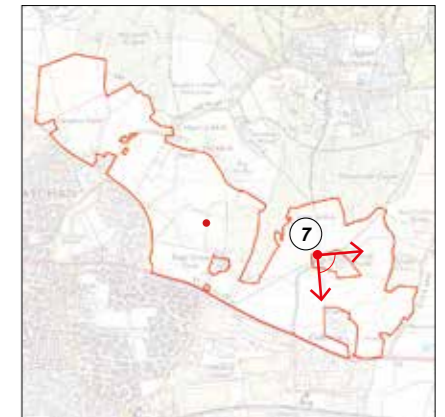


**VIEW 7: EAST FROM FROM PROW THAT/2 (JUNCTION WITH THAT/3)**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

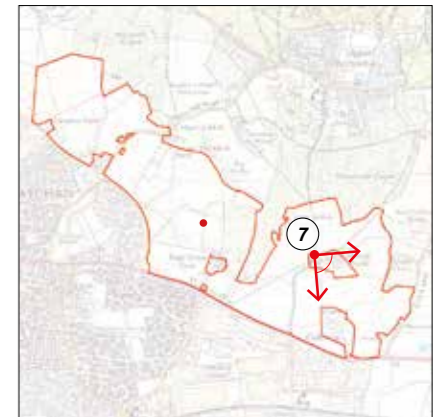


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 453956.47, 167499.55  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 11.22am  
Elevation: 149  
Viewing Direction: 130°  
Dist. to centre of site: 764m

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo



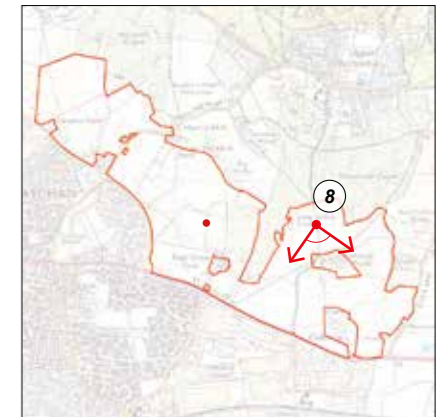
Colthrop Manor

**VIEW 8: SOUTH FROM PROW THAT/3**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

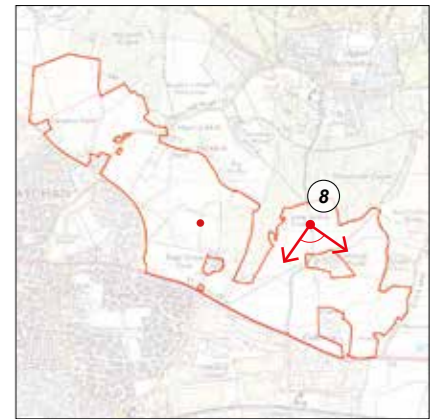


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 453945.74, 167675.85  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 11.14am  
Elevation: 163  
Viewing Direction: 170°  
Dist. to centre of site: 722m

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo



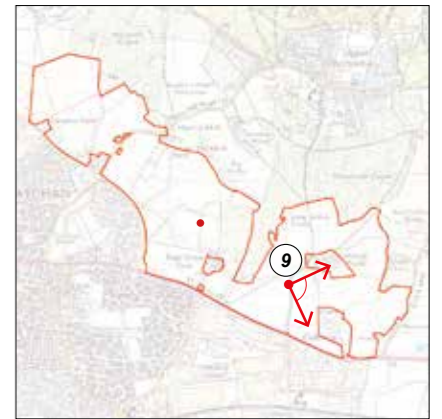
Colthrop Business Park

**VIEW 9: EAST FROM PROW THAT/3/1 (PRIVATE ROAD)**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

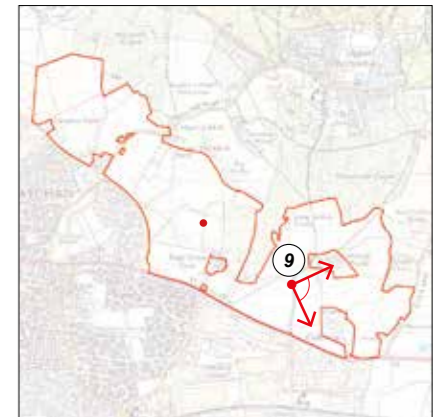


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 453805.92, 167308.97  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 11.05am  
Elevation: 140  
Viewing Direction: 110°  
Dist. to centre of site: 712m

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo



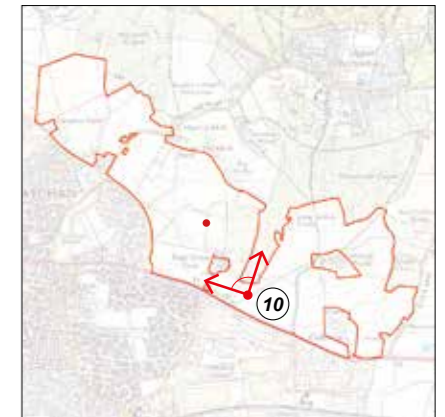
PROW THAT/3/1 (Private Road)

**VIEW 10: NORTH WEST FROM PROW THAT/2**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

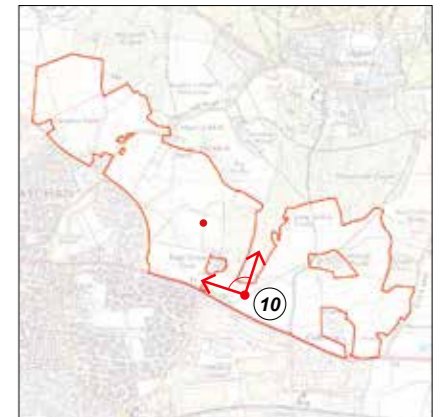


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 630206.434, 158532.842  
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Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 13.39pm  
Elevation: 17.735  
Viewing Direction: 65°  
Dist. to centre of site: 571m

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



PROW THAT/2

Location of single frame photo



Siege Cross Farm

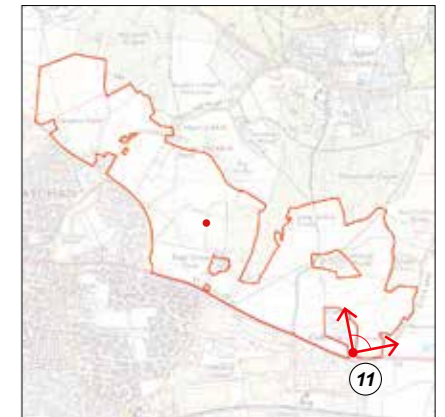


**VIEW 11: NORTH EAST FROM THE ENTRANCE TO WEST BERKSHIRE CREMATORIAM**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

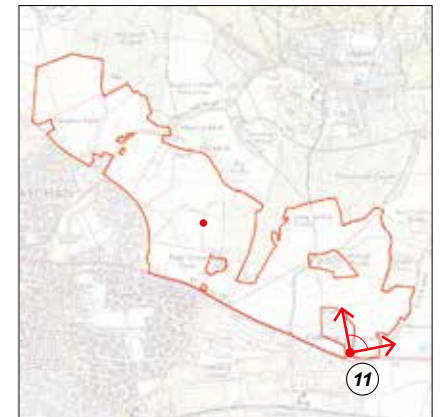


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 454188.83, 166852.11  
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Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 10.48am  
Elevation: 117  
Viewing Direction: 34°  
Dist. to centre of site: 1.3km

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo



Entrance to West Berkshire Crematorium

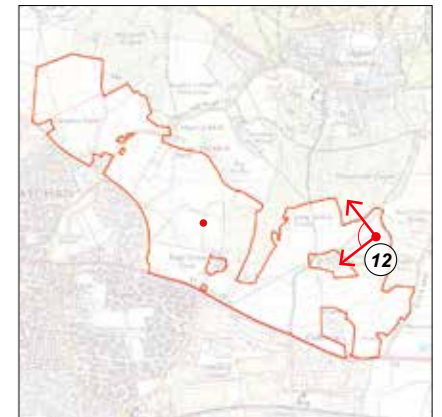


**VIEW 12: WEST FROM PROW THAT/2 NEAR COX'S LANE**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

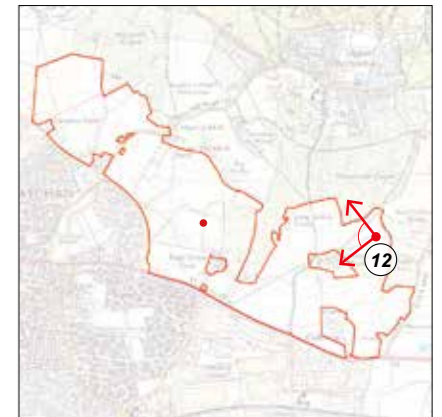


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 454616.05, 167567.68  
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Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 9.52am  
Elevation: 149  
Viewing Direction: 277°  
Dist. to centre of site: 1.4km

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo

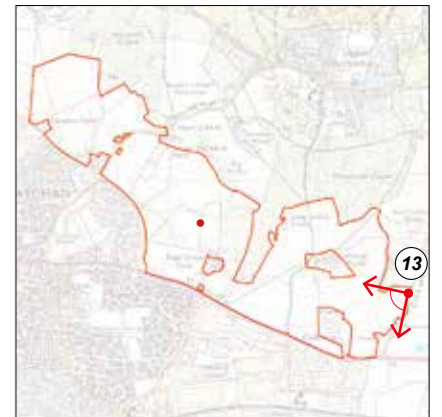


**VIEW 13: SOUTH WEST FROM COX'S LANE**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

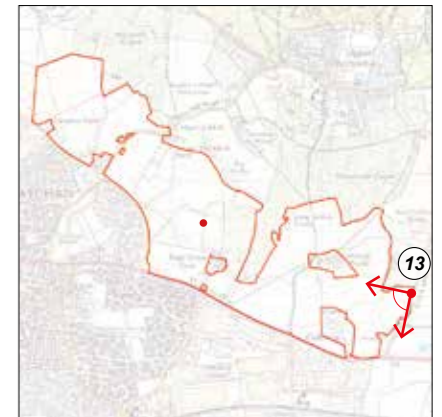


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 454607.5, 167266.59  
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Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 10.00am  
Elevation: 146  
Viewing Direction: 237°  
Dist. to centre of site: 1.45km

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo

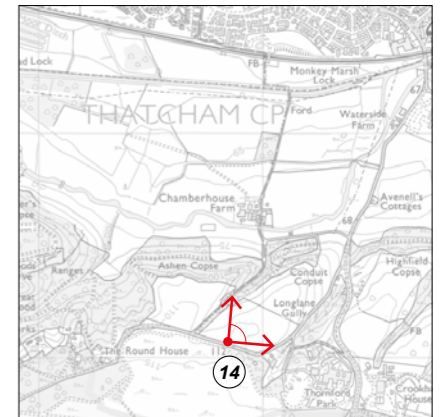


**VIEW 14: NORTH EAST FROM LAY-BY ON BURY'S BANK ROAD ADJACENT GREENHAM COMMON**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

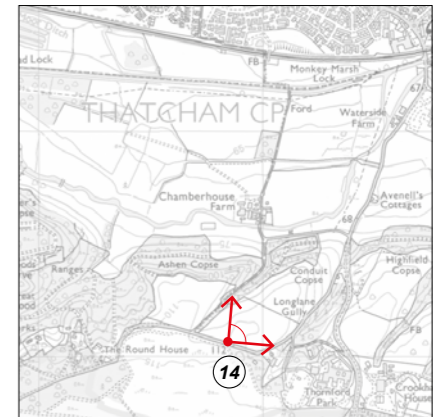


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 451799.9, 165063.95.95  
 Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
 Date: 30.07.2021  
 Time: 14.18pm  
 Elevation: 166  
 Direction to site: 29°  
 Viewing Direction: 65°  
 Dist. to centre of site: 3.02km

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo



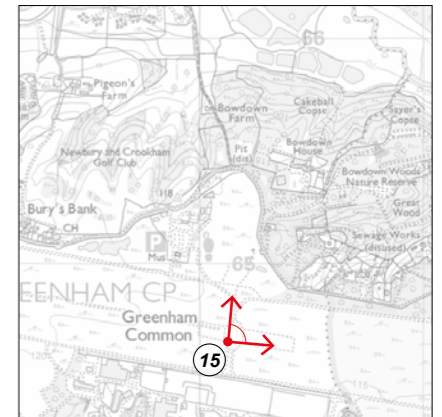


**VIEW 15: NORTH EAST FROM FORMER RAF GREENHAM COMMON RUNWAY**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

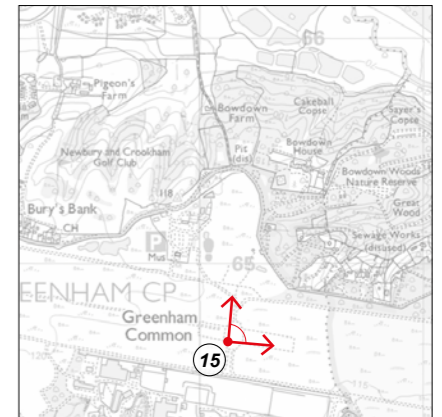


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 450132.75, 164622.59  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 14.37pm  
Elevation: 165  
Viewing Direction: 46°  
Dist. to centre of site: 4.38km

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo

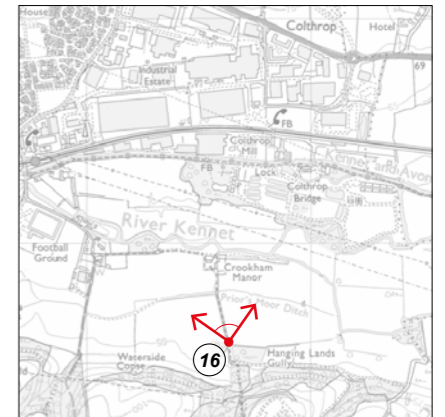


**VIEW 16: NORTH FROM PROW THAT/26/2**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

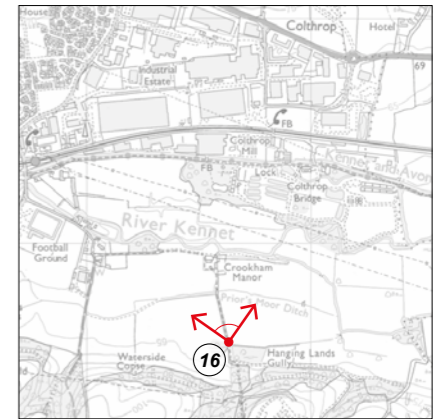


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 453633.54, 165553.7  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 14.00pm  
Elevation: 115  
Viewing Direction: 350°  
Dist. to centre of site: 2.21km

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo

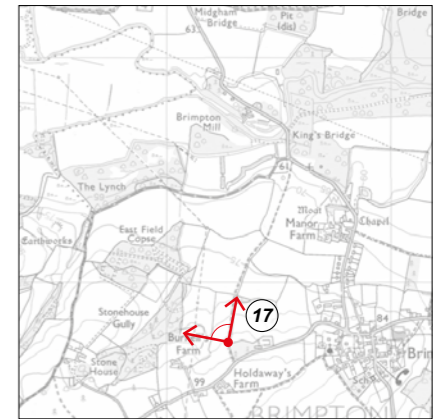


**VIEW 17: NORTH WEST FROM PROW BRIM/2/1**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

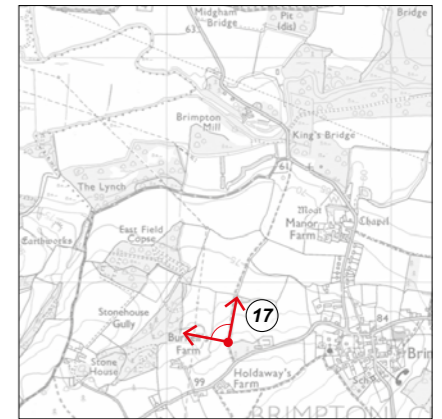


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 455277.07, 164731.88  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 13.37m  
Elevation: 144  
Viewing Direction: 326°  
Dist. to centre of site: 3.63km

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo



Colthrop Manor

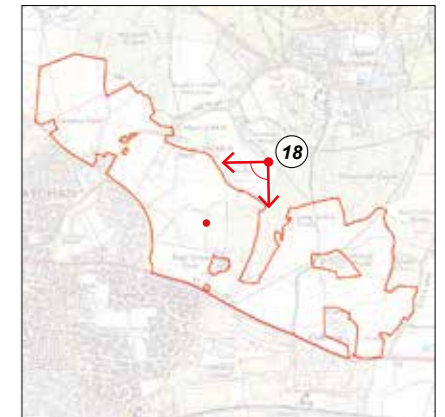
Mecure Newbury

**VIEW 18: SOUTH FROM PROW THAT/4/1**

Existing Single Frame View.



Location Plan:

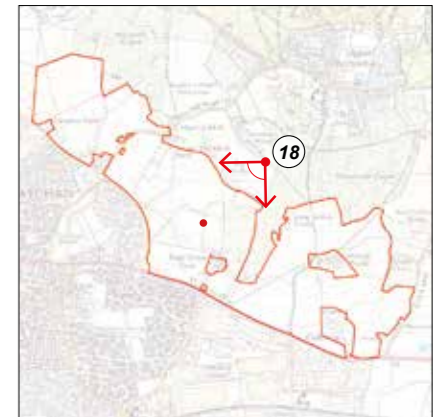


**PHOTO DATA:**

Location: 453615.27, 168133.04  
Indicative Site Centre: 453225.85, 167721  
Date: 30.07.2021  
Time: 12.05pm  
Elevation: 150  
Viewing Direction: 224°  
Dist. to centre of site: 567m

**IMAGE DATA:** Viewing Distance: 400mm Production size: Standard A3 Landscape Horizontal Field of View: 39.6°

Location Plan:



Location of single frame photo





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#### 4. **Visual sensitivity**

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- 4.1 The following section provides an assessment of visual sensitivity based on judgements on the 'General visibility', Population' and 'Mitigation' criteria set out in the template methodology.
- 4.2 The sections of text in black are the criteria set out in the template, including typical indicators for Higher and Lower Sensitivity. The sections in red are site notes for each individual view, responding to the indicator text where relevant.
- 4.3 The ratings for each view under these criteria are set out in the table at the top of each sheet in red, and summarised to provide an overall visual sensitivity for each view.

**Record Sheets - Visual Sensitivity**



View 1 south east from PROW THAT/6/1	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	4
• Population	4
• Mitigation	4
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>12 - MEDIUM / HIGH</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; <b>11-13 = Med/high</b> ; 14-15 = High)	<b>12</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Long and exposed viewing sequence along PROW	Fleeting and limited views	Views occasionally restricted by field boundaries
	Most of site area visible	Most of site west of Hart's Hill Rd visible, with some of the land beyond rising to the east.	Little of site area visible	None of the eastern part of the site is visible
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	Site is visible in local views but not necessarily a key focus	Site is an incidental part of wider views	Site is glimpsed through field gates and gaps in hedgerows from local highways, and these views are incidental
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks	Hedgerows, trees, patchwork of fields and small scale settlement contribute to visual character but do not constitute key landmarks or major focal points in themselves.	No landmarks present	
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	Broad panorama. Distant wooded horizon visible to the south	Unimportant or no vistas	
	Prominent skyline	Falling topography means no part of the site in this view forms the skyline. New development in this view could impact on skyline depending on its proximity to the viewpoint. This tract of landscape is sensitive as it contributes to valley-side visual character at the edge of the AONB.	Not part of skyline	

Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors	PROW does not appear to be heavily used. Assumed mainly for recreational purposes / dog-walking	Lack of sensitive receptors	
	Large number of people see site	The PROW appears to be relatively lightly used.	Few can see site	It is assumed that the number of people who experience this view is moderate to low, and is likely to be experienced by the same cohort of people, mostly local.
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	For those using the PROW this is a notable panoramic view. Views from local small-scale settlements will be sensitive.	Views of site are unimportant	This view is not unimportant
	Site is part of valued view	For those using the PROW this is likely to be a view of value	Site does not form a part of a valued view	
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	Town centre not visible in this long-distance view but roofs of employment units can be glimpsed below distant horizon	Not part of setting of settlement view	Site is prominent in views from local small scale settlement but not from the town centre. Views towards town centre from this location are obstructed by trees (right of view).

Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	Development located close to AONB boundary on upper valley slopes would be difficult to mitigate	Mitigation possible	Wide-scale structural planting could provide some mitigation, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Extensive mitigation works in the foreground would change the character of views and could obstruct views towards the distant horizon	Would not obscure key views	
	Mitigation would damage local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes, and could obstruct views towards the distant horizon	Mitigation would not harm local character	There may be an opportunity to frame views and screen less attractive elements



View 2 north west from PROW THAT/6/1	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	3
• Population	3
• Mitigation	3
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>9 - MEDIUM</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; <b>8-10 = Med</b> ; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>9</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Long and exposed viewing sequence along PROW on rising land	Fleeting and limited views	Views occasionally restricted by field boundaries
	Most of site area visible	Part of site west of Hart's Hill Rd visible. View is looking towards rising land outside site boundary	Little of site area visible	None of the eastern part of the site is visible
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	Site is visible in local views but not necessarily a key focus.	Site is an incidental part of wider views	Site is glimpsed through field gates and gaps in hedgerows from local highways, and these views are incidental
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks	Hedgerows, trees, patchwork of fields and small scale settlement contribute to visual character but do not constitute key landmarks or major focal points in themselves. Telecoms tower SE of Cold Ash is a focal point in some views.	No landmarks present	
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area		Unimportant or no vistas	Not a panoramic view; horizon is relatively close
	Prominent skyline	Rising topography to a wooded / arable horizon. New development in this view could interrupt the skyline. This tract of landscape is sensitive as it contributes to valley-side visual character at the edge of the AONB.	Not part of skyline	Skyline is outside site boundary.

Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors		Lack of sensitive receptors	Sensitive receptors restricted to users of PROW, which does not appear to be heavily used. Assumed mainly for recreational purposes / dog-walking
	Large number of people see site	The PROW appears to be relatively lightly used.	Few can see site	It is assumed that the number of people who experience this view is moderate to low, and is likely to be experienced by the same cohort of people, mostly local.
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	For those using the PROW this is a notable view. Views from local small-scale settlements will be sensitive.	Views of site are unimportant	This view is not unimportant
	Site is part of valued view	For those using the PROW this is likely to be a view of value	Site does not form a part of a valued view	
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	There is no view across / out of the town. These upper valley slopes have the potential to be viewed from locations to the south.	Not part of setting of settlement view	

Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	Development located close to AONB boundary on upper valley slopes would be difficult to mitigate	Mitigation possible	Wide-scale structural planting could provide some mitigation, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Extensive mitigation works would change the character of views and could obstruct views towards the nearby horizon	Would not obscure key views	
	Mitigation would damage local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes, and could obstruct views towards the distant horizon	Mitigation would not harm local character	There may be an opportunity to frame views and screen less attractive elements



View 3 south from Harts Hill Rd	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	3
• Population	2
• Mitigation	2
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>7 - MEDIUM / LOW</b> (3-4 = low; <b>5-7 = Med/low</b> ; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>7</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site		Fleeting and limited views	View through gap in roadside hedgerow
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	A small part of the site south of Upper Hartshill Farm is visible in the middle distance. No other parts of the site are visible.
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	Site is visible in local views but not necessarily a key focus.	Site is an incidental part of wider views	Site is glimpsed through field gates and gaps in hedgerows from local highways, and these views are incidental
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	The eye is drawn to the distant horizon and to the light coloured roofs of the industrial units, but these do not constitute key landmarks
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area		Unimportant or no vistas	Not an important vista due to lack of accessibility
	Prominent skyline	This tract of landscape is sensitive as it contributes to valley-side visual character at the edge of the AONB, although this view not readily accessible.	Not part of skyline	Site does not form skyline
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors		Lack of sensitive receptors	Few pedestrians on this section of highway due to traffic and absence of footway
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	Harts Hill Rd generally sunk below surrounding landscape and lined by hedgerows, restricting views
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Occupants of vehicles are not sensitive receptors	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view		Site does not form a part of a valued view	This is more of an incidental view than valued
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	There is no view across / out of the town. The upper valley slopes have the potential to be viewed from locations to the south.	Not part of setting of settlement view	Settlement of Thatcham not visible.
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	Development located close to AONB boundary on upper valley slopes would be difficult to mitigate	Mitigation possible	Wide-scale structural planting could provide some mitigation, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views		Would not obscure key views	Mitigation could obstruct views of the horizon but this is not a key view
	Mitigation would damage local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes, and could in the long term obstruct views towards the distant horizon	Mitigation would not harm local character	There may be an opportunity to frame views and screen less attractive elements



View 4 north west from Harts Hill Rd	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	3
• Population	2
• Mitigation	2
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>7 - MEDIUM / LOW</b> (3-4 = low; <b>5-7 = Med/low</b> ; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>7</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site		Fleeting and limited views	View through gated gap in roadside hedgerow
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	Part of the north western section of the site, north of Harts Hill Rd, is visible.
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	Site is visible in local views but not necessarily a key focus	Site is an incidental part of wider views	Site is glimpsed through field gates and gaps in hedgerows from local highways, and these views are incidental
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	The eye is drawn to the wooded horizon and to the communications mast but these do not constitute key landmarks. Reservoir is not visible
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	Not an important vista	Unimportant or no vistas	
	Prominent skyline	Skyline characterised by trees, woodland and mast is relatively close to viewpoint. View is towards AONB boundary.	Not part of skyline	Development on the site would have the potential to interrupt the skyline

Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors	Fairly busy lane but most receptors are vehicle occupants and therefore low sensitivity	Lack of sensitive receptors	Few pedestrians on this section of highway due to traffic and absence of footway
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	Harts Hill Rd generally sunk below surrounding landscape and lined by hedgerows, restricting views to a few locations such as this. Views generally more open along the southern stretches of the road closer to junction with Floral Way
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Occupants of vehicles are not sensitive receptors	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view		Site does not form a part of a valued view	This is more of an incidental view than valued
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	There is no view across / out of the town. The flatter, lower valley slopes are generally screened to view by from the south by vegetation either side of Floral Way. The more distant upper slopes have the potential to be evident in views from the opposite (south) side of the Kennet Valley	Not part of setting of settlement view	Settlement of Thatcham not visible.

Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	Development located close to AONB boundary on upper valley slopes would be difficult to mitigate. More feasible on lower slopes.	Mitigation possible	Wide-scale structural planting could provide some mitigation, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Mitigation works could change the character of views or interrupt them	Would not obscure key views	
	Mitigation would damage local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes, and could in the long term obstruct views towards the distant horizon	Mitigation would not harm local character	There may be an opportunity to frame views and screen less attractive elements



View 5 south from Harts Hill Rd	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	2
• Population	2
• Mitigation	2
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: 6 - <b>MEDIUM / LOW</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = <b>Med/low</b> ; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>6</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site		Fleeting and limited views	Limited view from single track road accessing a small group of properties.
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	Part of the central section of the site is visible
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	Site is visible in local views but not necessarily a key focus	Site is an incidental part of wider views	Site is glimpsed over hedgerows and through gates from local highways, and these views are incidental
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	No landmarks present
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area		Unimportant or no vistas	No vista of importance
	Prominent skyline		Not part of skyline	Tree planting along Floral Way obstructs views of distant skyline
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors		Lack of sensitive receptors	Few pedestrians and few properties accessed by this track
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	Harts Hill Rd generally sunk below surrounding landscape and lined by hedgerows. This is a local, slightly elevated view over the hedgerow, but not a view gained by large numbers of people
	Key view from a sensitive receptor		Views of site are unimportant	Not a key view
	Site is part of valued view		Site does not form a part of a valued view	This is more of an incidental view than valued
	Site in key views to/across/out of town		Not part of setting of settlement view	Settlement of Thatcham not visible. There is no view across / out of the town. The flatter, lower valley slopes are generally screened to view by from the south by vegetation either side of Floral Way.
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible		Mitigation possible	Wide-scale structural planting could assist in mitigating development, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Mitigation works could change the character of views or interrupt them	Would not obscure key views	This not a key view
	Mitigation would damage local character		Mitigation would not harm local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes, although structure has been degraded already by more recent construction of highway and reservoir. There may be an opportunity to screen less attractive elements



View 6 north east from PROW THAT/2/1	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	3
• Population	3
• Mitigation	3
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>9 - MEDIUM</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; <b>8-10 = Med</b> ; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>9</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Sequenced and exposed views towards higher land	Fleeting and limited views	
	Most of site area visible	Part of the eastern section of the site is visible	Little of site area visible	
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	The flatter, lower valley slopes are generally screened to view by from the south by vegetation either side of Floral Way. The more distant upper slopes have the potential to be evident in views from the opposite (south) side of the Kennet Valley	Site is an incidental part of wider views	
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	No landmarks present
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area		Unimportant or no vistas	Rising land and relatively close horizon prevent vistas / panoramas in or out
	Prominent skyline	The skyline is quite distinctive in this view. The more elevated section of this tract of landscape is sensitive as it contributes to valley-side visual character at the edge of the AONB.	Not part of skyline	
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors		Lack of sensitive receptors	Sensitive receptors restricted to users of PROW
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	Definition of track is well-established indicating regular use, but likely by relatively small numbers of people
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Users of PROW are sensitive receptors, although this is not a key view	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view	The PROW crosses part of the site. The site is part of a valued view sequence for users	Site does not form a part of a valued view	
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	The upper south-facing slopes of the Kennet valley in the vicinity of this viewpoint have the potential to be seen in views from the opposite side of the valley	Not part of setting of settlement view	
	Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	The upper part of the site is elevated and exposed. Development located close to AONB boundary on upper valley slopes would be difficult to mitigate. More feasible on lower slopes.	Mitigation possible
Mitigation would interrupt key views		Mitigation works could change the character of views or interrupt them, including views towards the horizon	Would not obscure key views	Views of the horizon could be obscured by mitigation.
Mitigation would damage local character		Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes	Mitigation would not harm local character	



View 7 east from PROW THAT/3/5	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	3
• Population	3
• Mitigation	2
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>8 - MEDIUM</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; <b>8-10 = Med</b> ; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>8</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Part of a sequence of contrasting views from the PROW.	Fleeting and limited views	Relatively limited and enclosed view
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	Colthrop Manor is excluded from the study site boundary as an enclave. Little of the site is visible in this view
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	The collection of buildings features in some views from the east.	Site is an incidental part of wider views	This collection of buildings is fairly well hidden in the landscape, especially in views from the west. It does not form a key focus viewed from these directions and neither does the surrounding site
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	The collection of buildings at Colthrop forms a local landmark but are not prominent
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area		Unimportant or no vistas	No clear vistas. Some glimpsed views of distant horizon
	Prominent skyline		Not part of skyline	The skyline is not a prominent feature in this view
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors		Lack of sensitive receptors	Receptors restricted to users of PROW
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	This view is gained at a junction of PROW. Definition of paths is well-established indicating regular use, but likely by relatively small numbers of people
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Users of PROW are sensitive receptors, although this is not a key view	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view	The PROW crosses part of the site in the vicinity of this view. The site is part of a valued view sequence for users	Site does not form a part of a valued view	Little of the site is visible.
	Site in key views to/across/out of town		Not part of setting of settlement view	The settlement of Thatcham is not visible in this view
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	Sensitivity of heritage assets would require careful mitigation.	Mitigation possible	Although Colthrop Manor is excluded from the study site boundary as an enclave, The Barn is Grade II Listed and its setting would need to be taken into consideration in designing mitigation. The use of buffer zones and wide-scale structural planting could assist in mitigating development, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views		Would not obscure key views	In this instance there are no key views that would be likely obstructed by mitigation
	Mitigation would damage local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes. Mitigation could harm the isolated characteristic of the farmstead	Mitigation would not harm local character	





View 8 south from PROW THAT/3/5	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	<b>4</b>
• Population	<b>3</b>
• Mitigation	<b>4</b>
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>11 - MEDIUM / HIGH</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; <b>11-13 = Med/high</b> ; 14-15 = High)	<b>11</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Views of parts of the site are sequenced and exposed in places	Fleeting and limited views	
	Most of site area visible	Much of the eastern section of the site is visible. Colthrop Manor in the centre of the view is excluded from the Approximate Appraisal Site Boundary as an enclave	Little of site area visible	
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	The site forms the foreground and middle distance of the view	Site is an incidental part of wider views	This collection of buildings at Colthrop is set down into the landscape of the valley side, and does not form a key focus in views from this direction
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks	Church spire at Midgham just visible above the trees to the east (extreme left) but not prominent. Industrial units are prominent but not key landmarks	No landmarks present	The collection of buildings at Colthrop forms a local landmark when travelling south along the PROW, but it is not prominent
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	Panorama out of the site towards the north facing slopes of the Kennet valley	Unimportant or no vistas	
	Prominent skyline	This tract of landscape is sensitive as it contributes to valley-side visual character at the edge of the AONB.	Not part of skyline	In this view the eye is drawn to the distant skyline / horizon but the site does not form part of it
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors		Lack of sensitive receptors	Receptors restricted to users of PROW
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	Definition of paths is well-established indicating regular use, but likely by relatively small numbers of people
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Users of PROW are sensitive receptors	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view	The PROW crosses part of the site. The site is part of a valued view for its users	Site does not form a part of a valued view	
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	The upper south-facing slopes of the Kennet valley in the vicinity of this viewpoint have the potential to be seen in views from the opposite side of the valley	Not part of setting of settlement view	The settlement of Thatcham is not visible in this view
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	This upper part of the site is elevated and exposed. Development located close to AONB boundary on upper valley slopes would be difficult to mitigate.	Mitigation possible	Wide-scale structural planting could provide some mitigation, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Mitigation could interrupt views of the horizon	Would not obscure key views	In this instance there are no key views that would be likely obstructed by mitigation
	Mitigation would damage local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes. Mitigation could harm the isolated characteristic of the farmstead	Mitigation would not harm local character	



View 9 east from PROW THAT/3/1	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	3
• Population	3
• Mitigation	3
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>9 - MEDIUM</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; <b>8-10 = Med</b> ; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>9</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Views of the site are sequenced and exposed in places	Fleeting and limited views	
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	Part of the eastern section of the site is visible.
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	The site forms the foreground and middle distance of the view	Site is an incidental part of wider views	
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	Industrial units are prominent but not key landmarks
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	Views out of the site towards the north facing slopes of the Kennet valley	Unimportant or no vistas	Employment units detract from view
	Prominent skyline		Not part of skyline	In this view the eye is drawn to the distant skyline / horizon but the site does not form part of it
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors		Lack of sensitive receptors	Receptors restricted to users of PROW / access track
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	This view of site likely to be experienced by relatively small numbers of people
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Users of PROW are sensitive receptors, although this is not considered a key view	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view	The PROW crosses part of the site. The site is part of a valued view for its users	Site does not form a part of a valued view	
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	The upper south-facing slopes of the Kennet valley in the vicinity of this viewpoint have the potential to be seen in views from the opposite side of the valley	Not part of setting of settlement view	The site and the existing employment units are visible in the same view
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible		Mitigation possible	The lower part of the site is more amenable to mitigation. The use of buffer zones and wide-scale structural planting could assist in mitigating development, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Mitigation could interrupt views of the horizon	Would not obscure key views	In this instance there are no key views that would be likely obstructed by mitigation
	Mitigation would damage local character		Mitigation would not harm local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes, although this has been degraded to an extent by development and the crematorium.



View 10 north west from PROW THAT/2/1	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	<b>3</b>
• Population	<b>3</b>
• Mitigation	<b>3</b>
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>9 - MEDIUM</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; <b>8-10 = Med</b> ; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>9</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Views of the site are sequenced and exposed	Fleeting and limited views	View of farm buildings is fleeting and limited
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	Part of the central / eastern section of the site is visible
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	The site forms the foreground and middle distance of the view	Site is an incidental part of wider views	
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	Seige Cross Farm buildings appear in gap between trees, but do not form a key landmark
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area		Unimportant or no vistas	There are fewer opportunities to view out of the site to the south at lower elevations along the PROW
	Prominent skyline		Not part of skyline	In this view the eye is drawn to the farm building just on the skyline. The site is set below the skyline.
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors		Lack of sensitive receptors	Receptors restricted to users of PROW
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	This view of site likely to be experienced by relatively small numbers of people
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Users of PROW are sensitive receptors, although this is not considered a key view	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view	The PROW crosses part of the site. The site is part of a valued view for its users	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	The upper south-facing slopes of the Kennet valley above this viewpoint have the potential to be seen in views from the opposite side of the valley. This viewpoint, however, is located on lower land close to Bath Rd which is screened from these views by intervening vegetation and development.
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible		Mitigation possible	The lower part of the site is more amenable to mitigation. The use of buffer zones and wide-scale structural planting could assist in mitigating development, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Mitigation could interrupt views of the horizon and obstruct views of the farm buildings	Would not obscure key views	In this instance there are no key views that would be likely obstructed by mitigation
	Mitigation would damage local character		Mitigation would not harm local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes, although this has been degraded to an extent by development



View 11 north east from Bath Rd (Crematorium entrance)	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	2
• Population	3
• Mitigation	3
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>8 - MEDIUM</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; <b>8-10 = Med</b> ; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>8</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site		Fleeting and limited views	Limited view towards site (crematorium site excluded from site boundary)
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	Part of the south eastern section of the site is visible
	Site is a key focus in available wider views		Site is an incidental part of wider views	Site is an incidental part of wider views
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	No key landmarks although crematorium landscape is distinctive
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area		Unimportant or no vistas	No vistas or panoramas, although visual approach to cemetery is highly controlled
	Prominent skyline		Not part of skyline	The lower, flatter parts of the site are further from the AONB boundary and less likely to impinge on sensitive skylines

Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors	Visitors to the crematorium would be assessed as sensitive receptors	Lack of sensitive receptors	Generally occupants of vehicles passing the crematorium entrance at Bath Rd / Gables Way roundabout, would not be considered sensitive receptors.
	Large number of people see site	Potentially large numbers seeing the site passing along the highway or visitors to the crematorium	Few can see site	
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Views of the site contribute to visual setting of crematorium entrance	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view	View from / of crematorium may be valued, but this is privately owned land	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	The site does not form part of the setting of the settlement in this view.

Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	The crematorium is a sensitive receptor requiring very specific kinds of mitigation	Mitigation possible	The lower part of the site closer to Bath Road is more amenable to mitigation. The use of buffer zones and wide-scale structural planting could assist in mitigating development, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Mitigation could interrupt the glimpsed view of the horizon	Would not obscure key views	In this instance there are no key views that would be likely obstructed by mitigation
	Mitigation would damage local character		Mitigation would not harm local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes, although this has been degraded to an extent by development and highways infrastructure



View 12 west from PROW THAT/2	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	4
• Population	4
• Mitigation	4
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: 12- <b>MEDIUM / HIGH</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; <b>11-13 = Med/high</b> ; 14-15 = High)	<b>12</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Sequenced view towards site and Colthrop Manor	Fleeting and limited views	Views of site and farm buildings disappear further west at lower elevations
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	Part of the eastern section of the site is visible
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	The eye is drawn to the farm buildings and the site forms the visual context to these	Site is an incidental part of wider views	
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks	The farm buildings form a local landmark (although excluded from the site)	No landmarks present	
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	This is a locally important vista from the PROW	Unimportant or no vistas	
	Prominent skyline	The combination of trees and farmstead buildings are quite noticeable on the skyline. This tract of landscape is sensitive as it contributes to valley-side visual character at the edge of the AONB.	Not part of skyline	
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors	Users of PROW are sensitive receptors	Lack of sensitive receptors	Receptors restricted to users of PROW, so a small range of sensitive receptors
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	Definition of paths is well-established indicating regular use, but likely by relatively small numbers of people
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	The PROW continues west to cross part of the site. The site is part of a valued view for its users.	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view	The site is part of a valued view for PROW users.	Site does not form a part of a valued view	
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	This view does not include views of the town, but the upper south-facing slopes of the Kennet valley in the vicinity of this viewpoint have the potential to be seen in views from the opposite side of the valley	Not part of setting of settlement view	The site does not form part of the setting of the settlement in this view.
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	This upper part of the site is elevated and exposed. Development located close to AONB boundary on upper valley slopes would be difficult to mitigate.	Mitigation possible	Wide-scale structural planting could provide some mitigation, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Mitigation could interrupt the view of the farm buildings and wider landscape	Would not obscure key views	
	Mitigation would damage local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes. Mitigation could harm the setting of the farmstead	Mitigation would not harm local character	



View 13 south-west from Cox Lane	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	<b>4</b>
• Population	<b>4</b>
• Mitigation	<b>4</b>
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>12- MEDIUM / HIGH</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; <b>11-13 = Med/high</b> ; 14-15 = High)	<b>12</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Sequenced and exposed view across site to distant horizon	Fleeting and limited views	
	Most of site area visible	Large part of the eastern section of the site is visible	Little of site area visible	
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	Site occupies a large part of foreground, middle distance and distance and features in many wider views.	Site is an incidental part of wider views	
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	The eye is drawn to the strong, light coloured horizontal forms of the employment units, below the wooded horizon, but no prominent landmarks present
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	This is a locally important panorama from the PROW / public highway	Unimportant or no vistas	
	Prominent skyline	This tract of landscape is sensitive as it contributes to valley-side visual character at the edge of the AONB.	Not part of skyline	The wooded horizon is distinctive although the site does not form part of it.
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors	Users of PROW and accessible country lanes are sensitive receptors. Occupants of vehicles are less sensitive	Lack of sensitive receptors	Receptors restricted to users of PROW and single track highway, so a relatively small range of sensitive receptors
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	Likely that this view is experienced by relatively small numbers of people
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	The PROW continues west to cross part of the site. This is considered a key view for a sensitive receptor	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view	The site is part of a valued view for PROW users.	Site does not form a part of a valued view	
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	This view does not include views of the town centre, but does include the employment units. The upper south-facing slopes of the Kennet valley in the vicinity of this viewpoint have the potential to be seen in views from the opposite side of the valley	Not part of setting of settlement view	The site does not form part of the setting of the settlement in this view.
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	This upper part of the site is elevated and exposed. Development located close to AONB boundary on upper valley slopes would be difficult to mitigate.	Mitigation possible	Wide-scale structural planting could provide some mitigation, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views	Mitigation could interrupt views of the distant horizon and the wider landscape	Would not obscure key views	
	Mitigation would damage local character	Extensive structural planting works could change historic structure of the landscape, such as field patterns and woodland shapes. Mitigation could harm the setting of the farmstead	Mitigation would not harm local character	Mitigation could be used to screen views of the employment units.



View 14 north east from Burys Bank Rd	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	<b>1</b>
• Population	<b>3</b>
• Mitigation	<b>3</b>
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>7- MEDIUM / LOW</b> (3-4 = low; <b>5-7 = Med/low</b> ; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>7</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site		Fleeting and limited views	Limited, distant view between / above intervening vegetation.
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	Very little of the site is visible. A small part of a field within the site, north of Colthrop Manor, can be glimpsed between the middle distance trees centre left of view. The field further to the right, below the four conifers on the horizon, is outside the site, south of Birds Lane, Midgham. Midgham Church spire visible centre right.
	Site is a key focus in available wider views		Site is an incidental part of wider views	Site does not feature in many wider views
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	No landmarks present
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	Views north towards the south facing sides of the Kennet Valley are important. Site does not feature prominently in this view	Unimportant or no vistas	No important vistas or panoramas
	Prominent skyline	This distant tract of landscape is sensitive as it contributes to valley-side visual character at the edge of the AONB.	Not part of skyline	Upper Kennet valley side and skyline can be seen in some publicly accessible locations viewing north from the Greenham Common / Bury's Bank / Crookham Common area, generally glimpsed between or over foreground woodland. In these the skyline is not prominent and the site does not form part of the skyline. Some private viewpoints may have more open and direct views towards the site.

Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors	There is no footway along the road, so views are restricted to occupants of vehicles (not sensitive) and users of nearby footpaths on Greenham Common (sensitive)	Lack of sensitive receptors	
	Large number of people see site	A fleeting view gained obliquely from within moving vehicles. Likely that this view is experienced by a moderate number of vehicle occupants, but briefly. Cyclists and users of the nearby paths to the south will experience the view at a more leisurely pace	Few can see site	
	Key view from a sensitive receptor		Views of site are unimportant	Site makes little contribution to this view
	Site is part of valued view	Site is undesignated, and contributes little to the view, but views more generally from Greenham Common footpaths are valued. The view is gained towards the AONB which is a valued landscape.	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	Town is hidden within the valley

Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	Small parts of the site on the upper valley slopes are visible, although distant. Development located close to the AONB boundary on upper valley slopes would be difficult to mitigate.	Mitigation possible	Wide-scale structural planting could provide some mitigation, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views		Would not obscure key views	Mitigation could cause minor changes in the appearance of the distant landscape but would not interrupt key views
	Mitigation would damage local character		Mitigation would not harm local character	Mitigation would not harm local character



View 15 north east from RAF Greenham Common	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	N/A
• Population	N/A
• Mitigation	N/A
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: N/A (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	N/A

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





View 16 north from PROW THAT/26/2	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	<b>1</b>
• Population	<b>1</b>
• Mitigation	<b>1</b>
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>3 - LOW (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)</b>	<b>3</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes	
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site		Fleeting and limited views	Glimpsed view in the direction of the site from PROW	
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	none of the site visible in summer. Small sections may become revealed after leaf fall.	
	Site is a key focus in available wider views		Site is an incidental part of wider views	Site makes little contribution to the view	
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	No landmarks present	
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	Attractive view across valley floor with glimpses of northern valley sides		Unimportant or no vistas	Not an important vista
	Prominent skyline		Not part of skyline	Site does not contribute to skyline. Skyline not prominent	
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors		Lack of sensitive receptors	Sensitive receptors restricted to PROW users.	
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	PROW route fairly well defined suggesting regular use by a small number of users, but site is not visible from this location	
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	PROW users are sensitive receptors, although this is not a key view	Views of site are unimportant	Site makes little or no contribution to the view	
	Site is part of valued view	This is part of a sequence of views for PROW users and therefore valued	Site does not form a part of a valued view	Site makes little or no contribution to the view	
	Site in key views to/across/out of town		Not part of setting of settlement view	Settlement not evident in this view	
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible		Mitigation possible	Little or none of the site visible - N/A	
	Mitigation would interrupt key views		Would not obscure key views	Little or none of the site visible - N/A	
	Mitigation would damage local character		Mitigation would not harm local character	Little or none of the site visible - N/A	



View 17 north west from BRIM/2/1 nr Crookham Common Rd	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	3
• Population	3
• Mitigation	3
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: <b>9 - MEDIUM</b> (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; <b>8-10 = Med</b> ; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	<b>9</b>

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
General Visibility	Sequenced and exposed views toward site	Limited, distant view above intervening vegetation from PROW location, gained at walking speed	Fleeting and limited views	
	Most of site area visible		Little of site area visible	A small part of the eastern section of the site can be seen in this view, with Colthrop Manor just visible, together with the fields above and below it. The field to the east of Cox's Lane, north of the Mercure Hotel, is also visible, together with land to the east of Cox's Lane, which is outside the site boundary. The western part of the site is hidden
	Site is a key focus in available wider views	The opposite side of the Kennet Valley is a focal point on the horizon in this view	Site is an incidental part of wider views	
	Site includes prominent and key landmarks		No landmarks present	No key landmarks present. Transmission pylons detract from the quality of views.
	Important vistas or panoramas in/out of area	Characteristic panorama towards upper northern valley slopes	Unimportant or no vistas	No key vistas or panoramas
	Prominent skyline	The distant tract of landscape is sensitive as it contributes to valley-side visual character at the edge of the AONB.	Not part of skyline	Upper Kennet valley side and skyline can be seen in some publicly accessible locations viewing north from the Crookham Common Road area, generally glimpsed between or over foreground woodland. In these views the site is set below the skyline.
Population	Large extent or range of key sensitive receptors	This view is restricted to PROW users, but a similar glimpsed view can be gained from the nearby road. There is no footway along the road, so the view from the road is restricted largely to occupants of vehicles (not sensitive) and cyclists (more sensitive).	Lack of sensitive receptors	Sensitive receptors restricted to PROW users.
	Large number of people see site		Few can see site	Not a heavily used PROW. Adjacent Crookham Common Rd is busier but views fleeting and peripheral.
	Key view from a sensitive receptor	Users of PROW are sensitive receptors	Views of site are unimportant	
	Site is part of valued view	The site is undesignated land but is gained towards the AONB which is a valued landscape. The distant woodland on the horizon is on the edge of the AONB. The site contributes to the setting of the AONB.	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	Town is hidden within the valley
Mitigation	Mitigation not very feasible	Small parts of the site on the upper valley slopes are visible, although distant. Development located close to the AONB boundary on upper valley slopes would be difficult to mitigate.	Mitigation possible	Wide-scale structural planting could provide some mitigation, building on existing elements in the landscape (woodlands, copses, hedgerows)
	Mitigation would interrupt key views		Would not obscure key views	Mitigation could cause minor changes in the appearance of the distant landscape but would not interrupt key views
	Mitigation would damage local character		Mitigation would not harm local character	Mitigation would not harm local character



View 18 south from PROW THAT/4	
Matrix 1: Visual sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	<b>RATING</b>
• General visibility	N/A
• Population	N/A
• Mitigation	N/A
• OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY: N/A (3-4 = low; 5-7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	N/A

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

## 5. Visual Sensitivity - Discussion

- 5.1 Views and visual sensitivity has been assessed by walking the public footpaths, lanes and highways, both within and outside the site, and by making judgements based on the criteria set out in the methodology. Private land was not accessed, and therefore views from private land have not been assessed. It is not practical to identify and assess all possible views, and the views shown in the site photographs are representative rather than comprehensive.
- 5.2 The project brief requires the sensitivity of the site to be assessed as a single tract of landscape. Whilst the site is clearly part of a south-facing, valley-side landscape, and might be described in that singular way, it does contain local visual variations. For example, the upper valley sides provide some long ranging panoramic views, especially to the south, whilst views from the lower slopes are more contained. The upper slopes also have more potential to be seen from positions on the southern side of the Kennet Valley. Views from the lower slopes in the southern part of the site, and across the part of the study site south of Bath Rd, are also more likely to be influenced by urban elements, such as highways and lighting. In contrast, the roofs of the large format, light-coloured employment units to the east of the town are more visible from the higher elevations of the upper valley sides, than from the lower land closer to Bath Rd and Floral Way. In parts of the site there are also special visual sensitivities such as the settings of listed buildings, views to and from the crematorium, or views gained close to the sensitive AONB boundary.
- 5.3 The centre of the settlement of Thatcham itself is largely hidden in these views, being set down in the valley floor and screened by vegetation. This is the case for views in the vicinity of the study site, and for views gained northwards from the opposite side of the valley.
- 5.4 The above is borne out in the visual sensitivity ratings for the representative views, which shows 15 of the 18 views falling within the Medium-high sensitivity to Medium-low sensitivity range, summarised as follows:
- Medium-high: 4 no. (Views 1, 8, 12 and 13)
  - Medium: 7 no. (Views 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 17).
  - Medium-low: 4 no.(Views 3, 4, 5 and 14)
  - Low: 1 no. (View 16)
  - N/A: 2 no. (Views 15 and 18).
- 5.5 The visual character of a tract of landscape will change, depending on season, time of day and prevailing weather conditions. The views rated as Medium-high tended to be those gained from or across the upper valley slopes. The lower rated views tended to be those gained from the lower slopes. The views assessed from the south of the Kennet Valley viewing northwards tended to be of lower sensitivity, partly due to the effect of distance and partly due to the presence of woodlands, hedgerows and tree belts on the upper valley sides, which tends to limit distant views northwards towards the study site. Views north from the valley floor are generally obstructed by tree belts and woodland.
- 5.6 Although private land was not accessed to view the study site, it is clear from fieldwork undertaken that there are some existing settlements and individual houses close to the study site boundary where private amenity, including private visual amenity, will be a consideration in making judgements about design proposals, but these are relatively few in number.
- 5.7 **In summary, the visual sensitivity of the site as a whole is assessed as Medium. As discussed above, within that category there is a range of sensitivity from Medium-high to Low. This acknowledges that there are parts of the site with higher and lower visual sensitivity. Should the site be brought forward for development it will therefore be down to individual applicants to build upon this study and assess the visual sensitivity of specific parts of the site in more detail in relation to individual planning proposals.**

## 6. Landscape Sensitivity

### Landscape Sensitivity - Natural Factors

6.1 The following section assesses landscape sensitivity on the basis of three elements set out in the methodology; namely 'Natural Factors', 'Cultural factors' and 'Perceptual Features'. Suggested evidence for 'higher sensitivity' and 'lower sensitivity' (black text) is derived from the methodology. Site notes which assist in arriving at a landscape sensitivity judgement are in red text.

Matrix 2: Landscape sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	RATING
<b>Natural factors</b>	<b>4</b>
Cultural factors	-
Perceptual features	-

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
Natural factors	Native woodland	There is native woodland, including ancient woodland outside the study site boundary and generally to the north east of the site and on the upper valley sides and plateau that contributes to the wider landscape setting.	Plantation	There are no significant areas of native woodland within the study site. There are no significant areas of plantation within the study site. There are some areas of plantation within the woodland blocks outside the site boundary and generally to the north east of the site that contribute to its landscape setting.
	Significant tree/groups	See above. The most significant tree groups are located outside the site boundary. The extensive woodland located north of the study area is significant in that it reinforces the valley side character and contributes a sense of enclosure and containment to the landscape. The planted belt along Floral Way defines the edge of settlement of north eastern Thatcham.	Insignificant/young trees	Trees within the site are generally arranged in linear fashion on field boundaries and within hedgerows. There are a few individual mature trees located within fields in the western part of the study site.
	Strong hedgerow structure with hedgerow trees	There is a strong and distinctive hedgerow structure, with hedgerow trees, including some mature, possibly veteran oaks. This structure creates a compartmentalised landscape despite some evidence of erosion / degradation in some places.	Weak structure and no trees	
	Species rich grassland		Arable field	Predominantly intensive arable fields with some grazing.
	Significant water feature(s)	Some streams and ditches drain south, notably within the various gullies that traverse the landscape (Big Gully, Little Gully, Ouzel Gully). The water features in themselves are not particularly significant, but they relate to the strongly undulating landform. There are also some small ponds, springs and wells, and an ornamental pond within the Grange (Mercure) hotel grounds on Cox's Lane.  The flood alleviation reservoir between Floral Way and Harts Hill Road is a substantial man-made feature in the landscape (approx 220m x 150m dimensions), although this is not permanent water.	No water feature(s)	There are no large areas of open water.
	Varied landform and distinctive features of the area	The undulating valley-side landform is varied and contributes to a distinctive topography.	Uniform landform and lack of topographical features	The parcel of land south of Bath Rd and north of the railway line (eastern extremity of study site) is more uniform and lacks topographical features (other than its flatness).
	Pronounced geology		Lack of geological features	Geological features are not prominent in the landscape.

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
	Soils significantly contribute to landscape features	Soils are classified as 'Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils' for the majority of the site north of Bath Rd, and 'Loamy and clayey floodplain soils with naturally high groundwater' for the southern section of the parcel of land south of Bath Rd (data from NSRI/Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute website).  These soils contribute to a predominantly arable landscape.	Soils are not an important feature	
	Complex and vulnerable landcover		Simple robust landcover	The landcover is simple and robust.
	Presence of other significant vegetation cover		Absence of other significant vegetation	There is little other significant vegetation present. Some distinctive designed landscape and planting associated with the crematorium and the hotel to the south east (outside the study boundary).
	Presence of valued wildlife habitats	Local wildlife sites abut western Approximate Appraisal Site Boundary at Thatcham Woodland Plantation and Fishponds (Piggy Woods, Floral Way), at Dunston Wood to the north west, at Big Gully to the centre / north, and at Long Grove Copse.	Absence of valued wildlife habitats	
	Significant wetland habitats and meadows		Poor water-logged areas	No poor waterlogged areas. No significant wetland habitats and meadows.
	Presence of common land		No common land	No common land.
	Presence of good heathland		Lost heathland	No lost heathland.

**Landscape Sensitivity - Cultural Factors**

Matrix 2: Landscape sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	RATING
Natural factors	-
<b>Cultural factors</b>	<b>3</b>
Perceptual features	-

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
Cultural factors	Distinctive good quality boundary features	Many parts of the study site exhibit a strong and distinctive hedgerow structure, with hedgerow trees, including mature, possibly veteran oaks. This structure creates a compartmentalised landscape despite some evidence of erosion / degradation in some places.	Generic or poor boundary features	The construction of Floral Way has created an artificial but strong new boundary in the landscape.
	Evidence of surviving part of an historic landscape	Western part of study site may contain parts of the former parkland of Dunstan House, built by General Waring who planted the park with trees arranged according to troop positions in the battles in which he had fought. The house was sold in 1798 and demolished soon after. There were two main entrances to the park, one from the south-west, starting from the road to Cold Ash; the other from the south-east, at a point along the Reading Road. Both led up to the house towards a large circular drive in front. Much of former parkland is now built over.	No evidence	There are no Registered Parks and Gardens in the vicinity of the study site.
	Complex historic landscape pattern with good time depth	Well established field pattern with mature hedgerows and oak trees indicates good time depth in the landscape.	Simple modern landscape	
	Evidence of historic park	Historic references to Dunstan House and Park, now mostly developed to housing.	No evidence	
	Important to setting or in a Conservation Area		No relationship	Thattham Conservation Area designated 1980 centred on The Broadway and High Street south of Bath Rd. The study site has no physical or visual relationship with the Conservation Area.
	Includes a Scheduled Monument or Important to setting		No relationship	No Scheduled Monuments. Study site not important to settings of Ancient Monuments.
	Locally distinctive built form and pattern	Locally distinctive built form evident in the pattern of historic farmsteads and former farmsteads - Hartshill Farm (now subject to conversions and surrounded by modern residential development), Siegecross Farm, Colthrop Farm. Distinctive built form and character of nearby villages (see below).	Generic built form	Modern residential development in NE Thattham is generic in character (Simmons Field, Broadmead End, Trefoil Drove, Cowslip Crescent).
	Important to setting of a Listed Building	A small number of Grade II Listed Buildings are located in close proximity to the site: Barn at Colthrop Manor; Barn at Siege Cross Farm; Cartshed at Siege Cross Farm. The site is important to the settings of these buildings. There is also a Grade II listed milestone on the A4 Bath Road, and further to the north is The Wimbles, a Grade II listed house.	No relationship	
	Distinctive strong settlement pattern	Some sporadic farmsteads but no distinctive / strong settlement pattern.	Generic or eroded pattern	Generic suburban residential settlement pattern in north east Thattham.
	Locally significant private gardens		Poorly maintained gardens erode the character	No locally significant private gardens. No evidence of poorly maintained gardens.
	Evidence of visible social cultural associations		Lack of social cultural associations	No strong visible evidence of social cultural associations

### Village Character

This sheet provides examples of built form in neighbouring villages outside the study site, and is included for context only.

A: Cold Ash Hill - south east from Strouds Meadow

- Brick elevations and brick curtilage walling
- Slate roofs and concrete roof tiles
- Brick chimneys
- Brick gables
- Metal railings
- Modern weatherboarding
- Mock timbers with render
- Tarmac highway and footway with street lighting
- Climbing plants and hedged garden
- Village shop, post office and car parking
- Distant views to the south east

B: Cold Ash Hill - north east from Strouds Meadow

- Brick elevations and cream render
- Tiled roofs
- Distinctive array of brick chimneys
- Brick gables
- Traditional fenestration
- Tarmac highway and footway with street lighting
- Ornamental planting and hardscape
- Levels rising to the north reflected in the architecture

C: Upper Bucklebury - north east from Broad Lane

- White and green painted elevations
- Traditional tile-hanging
- Tiled roofs
- White picket fencing
- Tarmac highway and footway with cobble edge detail
- Hedgerow, garden planting and pollarded trees
- Modern half-hip roofscape
- Pub signage
- Elevations and cream render
- Tiled roofs
- Distinctive array of brick chimneys
- Brick gables
- Traditional fenestration
- Tarmac highway and footway with street lighting
- Ornamental planting and hardscape
- Levels rising to the north reflected in the architecture

D: St Matthew's Church, School Hill, Midgham

- Mid 19th century flint and stone tower and stone spire. Tiled roof
- Prominent site with traditional churchyard, mature trees and hedgerows

A: Cold Ash Hill south east from Strouds Meadow



B: Cold Ash Hill north east from Strouds Meadow



C: Upper Bucklebury north east from Broad Lane



D: St Matthew's Church, Midgham





**Landscape Sensitivity - Perceptual Features**

Matrix 2: Landscape sensitivity: LOW (1); LOW / MEDIUM (2); MEDIUM (3); MEDIUM / HIGH (4); HIGH (5)	RATING
Natural factors	-
Cultural factors	-
<b>Perceptual features</b>	<b>3</b>
OVERALL LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY RATING: <b>10 MEDIUM</b> - (3-4 = low; 5- 7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High)	

Factor	Higher sensitivity	Notes	Lower sensitivity	Notes
Perceptual features	Quiet area	Upper valley slopes are quiet	Noisy area	Areas near Floral Way / Bath Road are impacted by traffic noise. Harts Hill Rd also carries traffic which can be noisy due to incline.
	Absence of intrusive elements		Intrusive elements present	Departures from predominant pattern of arable field, hedgerow boundary and woodland are intrusive to varying degrees, such as the flood attenuation reservoir, pumping station, quarry and to an extent the crematorium. Floral Way cuts across the landscape grain and field pattern. Employment units to the south east are intrusive in some views.
	Dark skies		High levels of light pollution	Site was not visited at night. It is probable that high levels of light pollution are generated from the employment area to the south east (Enterprise Way, Aylesford Way) where there is streetlighting, floodlighting of service yards, and reflective building surfaces. Also streetlighting along Bath Rd and Floral Way.
	Open exposed landscape	Degree of exposure depends on location and altitude. Upper valley slopes are perceived as more open due to long views, despite physical compartmentalisation by hedgerows and trees.	Enclosed visually contained landscape	Flatter parts of the site to the south are perceived as more contained as there are fewer long views.
	Unified landscape with strong landscape pattern	Strong landscape pattern of arable fields, hedgerows and woodlands, generally intact but fragmented in places, especially to the south, by Floral Way and the reservoir.	Fragmented/'bitty' or featureless landscape	Partially fragmented in places but generally intact and not featureless.
	Well used area or appreciated by the public	Some well-trodden PROW and narrow lanes indicate regular use by the public.	Inaccessible by public	Large areas in private ownership and not physically accessible, although most of the site is visually accessible from public vantagepoints.
	Important rights of way	Some PROW present	None present	
	Well used and valued open air recreational facilities		None present	None present
	Open access land		None present	None present.

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## 7. Landscape Sensitivity - Discussion

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- 7.1 Landscape sensitivity has been assessed through desktop research and by walking the public footpaths, lanes and highways, both within and outside the site, and by making judgements based on the criteria set out in the methodology. Private land was not accessed.
- 7.2 The project brief requires the landscape sensitivity of the site to be assessed as a single tract of landscape. Whilst the site is clearly part of a south-facing, valley-side landscape, and might be described in that singular way, it does contain local variations in landscape character. For example, the open agricultural landscape character of some of the upper valley slopes is in contrast with the more enclosed and intimate wooded valley landscapes, and with the more urban landscape character associated with the settlement edge. There is a notable topographic contrast between the sloping valley sides and the flatter valley floor.
- 7.3 In terms of overall ratings for the study site as a whole:
- Natural factors were rated as **Medium/High (4)**
  - Cultural factors were rated as **Medium (3)**
  - Perceptual factors were rated as **Medium (3)**
- 7.4 These combined yield a rating of 10, placing the site as a whole within the **MEDIUM** landscape sensitivity category: (3-4 = low; 5- 7 = Med/low; **8-10 = Med**; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High).
- 7.5 **In summary, the landscape sensitivity of the site as a whole is assessed as Medium. The study acknowledges, however, that there are parts of the site with higher and lower landscape sensitivity, and so should the site be brought forward for development, it will therefore be down to individual applicants to build upon this study and assess the sensitivity of specific parts of the site in more detail in relation to individual planning proposals.**

**Stage 3: Determination of Landscape Character Sensitivity**

7.6 The landscape sensitivity and visual sensitivity are combined, as shown in Matrix 3, to yield landscape character sensitivity.

7.7 The Visual Sensitivity of the site is assessed as **MEDIUM**, and the Landscape Sensitivity is assessed as **MEDIUM**, producing a Landscape Character Sensitivity of **MEDIUM**.

**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
	<b>Medium</b>	M/L	M/L	<b>M</b>	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	<b>Medium</b>	Med/High	High	
<b>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY</b>						

## Stage 4: Determination of Wider Sensitivity

### The Contribution of the Site to the Wider Landscape and Settlement Edge Pattern

- 7.8 Stages 1 to 3 have led to an assessment of the intrinsic landscape sensitivity of the study site. The assessment methodology states that the sensitivity of a 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 the site is assessed using judgements based on the following criteria taken from the methodology template, with a commentary in red:
- 7.9 **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
- 7.10 **COMMENTARY:** Existing built form in north east Thatcham is physically separated from the site by Bath Road and Floral Way, which are built forms in themselves. Hedgerows and woodland planted along these corridors contribute a degree of physical and visual separation between the site and the urban settlement boundary. The site is partially, but not heavily influenced by the built form of the adjacent residential settlement. The large employment units in eastern Thatcham exert an urban visual influence in many views, including elevated views.
- 7.11 **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
- 7.12 **COMMENTARY:** There are land uses present north and east of the Bath Road / Floral Way corridor that may be described as urban fringe, but the site is not heavily influenced by them. These are summarised as:
- Bath Road and Floral Way and their streetlighting, noise and emissions are urban influences, but these influences diminish with distance. The highways design and the 'shape' of the settlement pattern in north east Thatcham are strongly related.
  - Man-made flood attenuation reservoir
  - Mercure Hotel
  - Crematorium.
- 7.13 **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
- 7.14 **COMMENTARY:** From many parts of the site, viewing to the south and east the light-coloured roofs of the units on the industrial land to the east of the town are visible. The southern parts of the site are influenced by Bath Road and Floral Way which define the developed edge of the town, generating traffic noise, emissions and movement. There is streetlighting along the road, together with a footway and cycleway, which contribute urban characteristics. Either side of the road there has been extensive planting, linking with larger areas of trees, which mitigates the visual impact of the road and traffic, and reinforces the edge of settlement characteristic.
- 7.15 These highways have the effect of defining and containing the north eastern extent of the urban area, but some uses have spilled over into the landscape to the north, such as the Mercure Hotel on Cox's Lane and the nearby crematorium, as well as the flood alleviation reservoir. The Spinney is a mixed use development comprising new build around a conversion, bringing some urban characteristics including streetlighting north of Floral Way. Further to the west, between Cold Ash Hill and Lawrences Lane, which is outside the study site boundary there is a more substantial area of residential development dating from early / mid 20th century to more recent construction (Acorn Drive).

- 7.16** Moving north and east from Floral Way and Bath Road the study site contributes an increasingly rural character to the landscape, with arable fields contained by hedgerows on rising land. The landscape is not highly accessible. There are a few narrow lanes, Lawrence Lane is single track with a few passing places, and Cox's Lane is similar. Harts Hill Road is far busier and carries quarry traffic, but there are no footways and the pedestrian experience is unpleasant. Harts Hill Rd is generally sunk down into the landscape, with roadside hedgerows, so views from it are restricted. Cox's Lane is more open providing longer views to the south and west. The PROW network is sparse in places, notably in the area between Harts Hill Road, Floral Way and Siege Cross Farm. Floral Way and Bath Road restrict connectivity between the site and land to the south and west. The landscape to the north is typically contained by a wooded horizon.
- 7.17** The landscape here contributes an important function in separating northern Thatcham from small village settlements at Cold Ash and Upper Bucklebury. There is little intervisibility between these settlements, but the southern edge of Cold Ash is only about 300m from the northern edge of development on the northern edge of Thatcham on Cold Ash Hill. There is greater separation between Thatcham and Upper Bucklebury, at just over 1km. Thatcham is at a relatively low elevation within the Kennet Valley, with the villages at much higher elevations. This vertical differential contributes to their separation.
- 7.18** In views from within the urban area and from the southern side of the valley, the lower valley slopes within the study site are generally not visible due to the presence of intervening development and vegetation. From the arc of landscape that describes the north-facing valley side and the plateau area behind it (Brimpton, Crookham Common, Greenham Common), the upper parts of the study site, close to the AONB boundary, appear in some views and these tracts of landscape contribute to the valley landscape context and the setting of the AONB. This is generally the exception rather than the rule, as many views north from these locations are obstructed by woodland occupying the north-facing valley sides. Where the opposite side of the valley is visible, Thatcham town centre is generally well-hidden in the valley, with the undeveloped slopes rising behind.
- 7.19** **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
- 7.20** **COMMENTARY:** There is no strong intervisibility between the site and the AONB to the north, but there are strong visual links between parts of the site and the landscape to the south of the Kennet Valley. The undulating valley-side landscape of the site is a characteristic it shares with the wider landscape. The impacts generated by adjacent urban settlement are not dominant, but they are not minor. The visual influence of the employment units east of Thatcham becomes more apparent at higher elevations with more of the light-coloured roofs visible.
- 7.21** **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.
- 7.22** **COMMENTARY:** The site is not included within the AONB designation and there are no strong visual links to it. The degree of the settlement's impact upon the site depends on location. The lower valley slopes close to the existing settlement and the Bath Road / Floral Way corridor are more impacted than the upper valley sides.
- 7.23** **SUMMARY - WIDER SENSITIVITY**
- 7.24** In making judgements based on the above, it is concluded that the classification that best fits the criteria set out in the methodology for 'Stage 4: Determination of Wider Sensitivity – The Contribution of the Site to the Wider Landscape and Settlement Edge Pattern' is: **'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.'

**Stage 5: Determination of Overall Landscape Sensitivity**

7.25 The overall landscape sensitivity is determined by combining the landscape character sensitivity (MEDIUM) with the wider sensitivity (MEDIUM) as shown in Matrix 4. This yields an overall landscape sensitivity of **MEDIUM**.

**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/H	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**

7.26 The model for this work follows GLVIA 2013 methodology. Further commentary relating to determination of landscape value is provided below.

**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
Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional	Setting of AONB / National Park Regional 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
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

7.27 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.

7.28 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 which may not be immediately apparent from fieldwork alone. Further research will be required as part of any detailed landscape and visual impact assessment.

**Commentary - Determination of Landscape Value**

7.29 The site is not covered by international or national landscape protection designations, so in accordance with the template it would not be included in ‘High’ or ‘Medium/High’ value classifications. The study site is close to the North Wessex Downs AONB but is not within it. Whilst there is no strong intervisibility between the study site and the AONB, from some distant locations to the south of the Kennet Valley, parts of the study site and some of the woodlands fringing the southern boundary of the AONB are visible in the same view. The definition of the setting of AONB does not necessarily rely on visual criteria alone. It is therefore assessed that the study site does form part of the setting of the AONB, and so guided by the landscape value criteria set out in the methodology, the study site is placed in the Medium category.

- 7.30** There is no definition of a valued landscape in the NPPF, but para 174 states that: ‘Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
  - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;.....’
- 7.31** The Landscape Institute has recently (February 2021) issued Technical Guidance Note 02/21 ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations.’ This states that the GLVIA3 recognises that landscape value is not always signified by designation: ‘the fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value’ (paragraph 5.26). GLVIA3 recommends that when undertaking a LVIA/LVA in an undesignated area, landscape value should be determined through a review of existing assessments, policies, strategies and guidelines and, where appropriate, by new survey and analysis (paragraphs 5.27 and 5.28). It is recommended that the process for identifying landscape value outside nationally designated areas is based upon a structured and transparent assessment process including community-based evidence where practical to do so.
- 7.32** The list of factors set out in Box 5.1 of GLVIA3 is described as an example of ‘the range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes’. It should be noted that they are not comprehensive nor intended to be prescriptive. Nevertheless, ‘Box 5.1’ has been widely used to inform judgements about landscape value as part of LVIA/LVA in the planning process. This list of factors is:
- Landscape quality (condition): a measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual area, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements
  - Scenic quality: the term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses)
  - Rarity: the presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.
  - Representativeness: whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples
  - Conservation interests: the presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right
  - Recreation value: evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important
  - Perceptual aspects: a landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity
  - Associations: some landscapes are associated with particular people such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area
- 7.33** Since GLVIA3 was published in 2013, appeal decisions, high court judgements and practitioners’ experience have provided further information about the factors which can be considered in assessing landscape value outside nationally designated landscapes. These have been incorporated into Table 1 of the Landscape Institute’s Technical Guidance Note 02/21 which sets out a range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value in any of the contexts described above. This is summarised below:
- Natural heritage: Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape
  - Cultural heritage: Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape
  - Landscape condition: Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure
  - Associations: Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts
  - Distinctiveness: Landscape that has a strong sense of identity
  - Recreational: Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important



- Perceptual (Scenic): Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense
- Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity): Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies
- Functional: Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape

**7.34** Whilst the site is not covered by any landscape protection designation, and does not comply with any of the criteria for High, or Medium High landscape value in the methodology template, the lack of designation does not mean it cannot be a valued landscape.

**7.35** Taking each of the above criteria in relation to the study site:

- Natural heritage: the valley side landscape is of topographic interest and contributes to the character of the wider area.
- Cultural heritage: some nearby listing buildings and farmsteads of interest; historic landscape patterns / structure evident in parts of the site.
- Landscape condition: Landscape structure intact and strong in parts of the site; elsewhere it has been eroded.
- Associations: Historic and landscape association with General Waring and the former parkland of Dunstan Park.
- Distinctiveness: The valley-side and valley-floor landscape is distinctive.
- Recreational: Only a few PRow cross the site providing some recreation opportunities and links to the nearby AONB landscape.
- Perceptual (Scenic): Attractive views from the upper slopes towards the opposite side of the valley. Some reciprocal views towards the upper valley slopes. Detracting elements in places, especially modern employment units.
- Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity): Perception of tranquillity tends to increase away from roads and towards the rural landscape in the north of the study site. The surrounding woodlands (outside the site boundary) contribute a sense of 'wildness.'
- Functional: The wider landscape clearly performs a predominantly agricultural function, but also supports a range of other functions, including flood attenuation reservoir, crematorium, extraction industry, hotel, employment uses.

**7.36** For the above reasons the study site has been placed in the **MEDIUM** landscape value category.

**Stage 7: Determination of Landscape Capacity**

7.37 Landscape capacity is the ability, or otherwise, of the site to accommodate a certain amount of development. The landscape capacity is determined by combining the overall landscape sensitivity (MEDIUM) with the landscape value (MEDIUM) as shown in Matrix 5, which yields a landscape capacity of MEDIUM, with capacity definitions from the template set out below.

**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	<b>M</b>	M/L	L
	Med/Low	H	H	M/H	M	M/L
	Low	H	H	H	M/H	M
	Low	Med/Low	<b>Medium</b>	Med/High	High	
	LANDSCAPE VALUE					

- 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**

7.38 The assessment of the site’s landscape capacity (MEDIUM) relates to the entire site. It is clear from undertaking the assessment process that there is variability in the landscape and visual characteristics within the site, which will have an impact on local landscape capacity. This means that some parts of the site would have a greater capacity to accommodate areas of new development than others. The landscape sensitivity and capacity study has revealed that some tracts of land within the southern part of the study site, closer to Bath Road and Floral Way, are less sensitive to development than some areas occupying the upper valley slopes, which are closer to the AONB boundary, more rural in character and more likely to be visible in distant views from the southern site of the Kennet Valley.

**7.39** In this exercise the study site has not been broken down into sub-compartments for more detailed assessment. Should development proposals be brought forward it is recommended that detailed landscape and visual impact exercises be undertaken to test landscape capacity in more detail, for the nature of development proposed. Visual impact exercises should be informed by verified AVRs (Accurate Visual Representations) produced in accordance with the current Landscape Institute guidance (TGN 06/19 - 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals'), so that impacts on views can be objectively assessed.

**7.40** Study Constraints

- The site has been assessed from publicly accessible viewpoints including the local road network, common land, public rights of way, public open space and other publicly owned land.
- Site photographs included in this study are representative and are not intended as a comprehensive photographic record.
- Views from surrounding 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 (ZVI) of any proposed development scenario.

## 8. Summary & Conclusion

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### 1. Visual Sensitivity:

#### Medium

- Higher visual sensitivity associated with upper slopes, with some fine panoramic views, especially to the south.
- Roofscape of large format employment units east of Thatcham detract from some of these elevated views.
- Parts of the site's upper slopes are visible in distant views from the southern side of the Kennet Valley, featuring in the same views as woodland on the ridgeline on the boundary of the AONB.
- Lower sensitivity associated with lower slopes. Views are more contained and these parts of the study site are less visible from distant vantagepoints to the south.
- Existing vegetation on the boundary with Bath Rd and Floral Way visually contains the northward extent of existing developed land.
- Users of Public Rights of Way crossing the site represent sensitive visual receptors.
- Few issues in relation to potential impacts on private residential amenity.

### 2. Landscape Sensitivity:

#### Medium

- Largely intact rural landscape of a patchwork of fields, robust hedgerows, mature trees and wooded declivities, which contribute to the character of the River Kennet valley side. Some local degradation / erosion of landscape structure.
- The study site performs an important function in separating the urban area of Thatcham from smaller rural settlements to the north.
- The study site is not within AONB and there is little visual intervisibility between them. Nevertheless, the setting of the AONB does not rely exclusively on visual criteria and this is a sensitivity to be addressed should the land be brought forward for development.
- The study site is not part of a locally designated landscape, although there are no locally designated landscapes in West Berkshire.
- Some public rights of way cross the study site, but large tracts of the site are not publicly accessible.
- Some historic / cultural interest in the west of the study site represented by the former Dunstan House and parkland.
- Some Grade II listed buildings / structures - Barn at Colthrop Manor; Barn at Siege Cross Farm; Cartshed at Siege Cross Farm; Grade II listed milestone on the A4 Bath Road. The site is important to the settings of these buildings.
- Perception of the presence of the urban edge much greater in the southern part of the study site, with noise and movement on Bath Road / Floral Way, streetlighting and developed land.
- Some 'spill-over' north of Bath Rd / Floral Way, with rural character eroded by construction of the crematorium, the reservoir and associated infrastructure, and the hotel.
- Predominantly arable land use unlikely to support rich diversity (to be confirmed by survey), but strong hedgerow structure in places, mature trees and adjacent areas of ancient woodland likely to be of biodiversity importance.
- No ancient woodland within the site but present close to site boundaries, requiring buffer zones to development.

### 3. Landscape Character Sensitivity:

**Medium (combines 1 and 2)**

### 4. Wider Landscape Sensitivity:

**Medium**

- Little visual relationship with AONB to the north, but forms part of the setting of the AONB.
- The study site forms part of the undeveloped valley side of the Kennet River Valley, and shares characteristics of the wider landscape.
- Some intervisibility between upper parts of the study site and distant locations on the southern side of the Kennet Valley.
- Strong links with surrounding woodland network including ancient woodland.
- No intervisibility between the study site and the centre of Thatcham.
- From many parts of the site, viewing to the south and east the light-coloured roofs of the units on the industrial land to the east of the town are visible, heightening the perception of nearby urban influences.
- The southern parts of the site are influenced by Bath Road and Floral Way which define the developed edge of the town, generating traffic noise, emissions and movement. There is streetlighting along the road, together with a footway and cycleway, which contribute urban characteristics.
- Extensive planting along these highways mitigates the impact of the road and traffic, and reinforces the edge of settlement. The highways define and contain the north eastern extent of the urban area, but some uses have spilled over into the landscape to the north, such as the Mercure Hotel on Cox's Lane and the crematorium, as well as the flood alleviation reservoir.
- Mixed use development at The Spinney brings some urban characteristics including streetlighting north of Floral Way. Further to the west, between Cold Ash Hill and Lawrences Lane, outside the study site there is a more substantial area of residential development dating from early / mid 20th century to more recent construction (Acorn Drive).
- North and east from Floral Way and Bath Road the site contributes an increasingly rural character to the landscape, with arable fields contained by hedgerows occupying rising land.
- The landscape is moderately accessible. There are a few narrow lanes. Harts Hill Road is the busiest of these and carries quarry traffic, but there are no footways and the pedestrian experience is unpleasant. The road is sunk down into the landscape below roadside hedgerows, so views from it are restricted. Cox's Lane is more open providing longer views to the south and west. The PROW network is sparse in places. Floral Way and Bath Rd restrict connectivity between the site and land to the south and west. The landscape to the north is typically contained by woodland.
- The landscape separates northern Thatcham from small village settlements at Cold Ash and Upper Bucklebury. Thatcham is at a relatively low elevation within the Kennet valley, with the villages at higher elevations. This vertical differential contributes to their separation.
- In views from within the urban area and from the southern side of the valley, the lower valley slopes within the study site are generally not visible due to intervening development and vegetation. From the arc of landscape that describes the north-facing valley side and the plateau area behind it (Brimpton, Crookham Common, Greenham Common), the upper parts of the study site appear in some views and in these contribute to the valley landscape context and the setting of the AONB. Generally, however, views north from these locations are obstructed by woodland occupying the north-facing valley sides. Where the opposite side of the valley is visible, Thatcham town centre is hidden in the valley, with the undeveloped slopes rising behind.

- 8.1 This study concludes that the classification that best fits the criteria set out in the methodology for 'Stage 4: Determination of Wider Sensitivity – The Contribution of the Site to the Wider Landscape and Settlement Edge Pattern' is: **'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.'**

## 5. Overall Landscape Sensitivity:

**Medium (combines 3 and 4)**

## 6. Landscape Value:

**Medium**

- Natural heritage: the valley side landscape is of topographic interest and contributes to the character of the wider area.
- Cultural heritage: some nearby listing buildings and farmsteads of interest; historic landscape patterns / structure evident in parts of the site.
- Landscape condition: Landscape structure intact and strong in parts of the site; elsewhere it has been eroded.
- Associations: Historic and landscape association with General Waring and the former parkland of Dunstan Park.
- Distinctiveness: The valley-side and valley-floor landscape is distinctive.
- Recreational: Only a few PRow cross the site providing some recreation opportunities.
- Perceptual (Scenic): Attractive views from the upper slopes towards the opposite side of the valley. Some reciprocal views towards the upper valley slopes. Detracting elements in places, especially modern employment units.
- Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity): Perception of tranquillity tends to increase away from roads and towards the rural landscape in the north of the study site. The surrounding woodlands (outside the site boundary) contribute a sense of 'wildness.'
- Functional: The wider landscape clearly performs a predominantly agricultural function, but also supports a range of other functions, including flood attenuation reservoir, crematorium, extraction industry, hotel, employment uses.
- The site is not covered by international or national landscape protection designations, so would not be expected to be included in 'High' or 'Medium/High' value classifications.
- The study site is close to an AONB designation but not within it. Whilst there is no strong intervisibility between the study site and the AONB, from some distant locations to the south of the Kennet Valley, parts of the study site and some of the woodlands fringing the southern boundary of the AONB are visible in the same view. The setting of AONB does not rely on visual criteria alone. Parts of the study site contribute to the setting of the AONB. According to the landscape value criteria set out in the methodology, the study site is placed in the Medium category.

## 7. Landscape Capacity:

**Medium (combines 5 and 6)**

- 8.2 **Medium capacity - The landscape could 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.**

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## 9. Potential Impacts on Key Landscape Characteristics:

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### Key landscape characteristics identified in the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2019 for the Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic LCA are:

- Geologically and topographically varied with steep and gentle undulating slopes rising to a central ridge
  - potential for topographical variation (and its perception) to be adversely impacted by development
  - opportunity for landform to inform design
- Presence of surface water and small streams
  - potential for natural drainage patterns to be adversely impacted through development
  - opportunity for natural drainage patterns to inform design
- Complex pattern of land cover, dominated by woodland and with remnant heaths
  - potential for ancient woodland to be impacted - requirement for buffer zones and tree Root Protection Areas (RPAs) to be designed into proposals
  - no remnant heaths within study site
- Varied field pattern with strong hedgerows
  - potential for field patterns and hedgerows to be adversely impacted by development, with attendant risks to biodiversity
  - opportunity for field patterns and hedgerows to inform design
- Parklands a characteristic feature
  - potential for remnant parkland in the western part of the study site to be adversely impacted by development
  - opportunity for remnant parkland to be retained within design
- Relatively densely settled, particularly along the ridge, but with woodland containment
  - potential for new development to reduce separation between Thatcham and Cold Ash / Upper Bucklebury.
  - woodland containment unlikely to be adversely impacted provided buffer zones and tree RPAs are protected
- A minor road network contained by the wooded landscape
  - potential for impacts on minor road network resulting from development
  - woodland containment unlikely to be adversely impacted provided buffer zones and tree RPAs are protected
- An accessible landscape
  - study site only moderately accessible at present
  - opportunity for improved and inclusive public accessibility through design
- Quiet, intimate and secluded character
  - potential for impacts on parts of the study site that are quiet, intimate and secluded, especially in the northern parts of the study site
  - opportunity for these key characteristics to be protected and reinforced through design

**Potential Impact on Site Specific Landscape Characteristics:**

- Potential loss of historic patterns of fields, hedgerows and drainage features which are characteristic of the undeveloped Kennet Valley side.
- Potential impacts on the settings of listed buildings.
- Potential impacts upon mature trees, hedgerows and off-site ancient woodland, and their attendant ecology.
- Potential increase in human activity / recreation impacts on ancient woodland by bringing edge of settlement closer.
- Potential impacts on public rights of way, including their route and character.
- Potential for new development to impact on separation between Thatcham and Cold Ash / Upper Bucklebury.

**Potential Impact on Key Visual Characteristics:**

- Potential for fundamental change in visual character of the study site and wider landscape as a result of development.
- Potential impacts on views from public rights of way.
- Potential for development to be visible from distant locations on the southern side of the Kennet Valley, impacting on the visual character of the valley.
- Potential for new development to be visible above the horizon in key views.

**Potential Impact on Key Settlement Characteristics:**

- Extension of the urban area of Thatcham to the north and east
- Reduction in physical separation between Thatcham and Cold Ash / Upper Bucklebury.
- Changed (likely increased) connectivity between urban area and land to the north, including connectivity to AONB.
- Potential for impacts resulting from the lack of a 'hard' northern boundary once land is developed north of Bath Rd / Floral Way.

**Landscape Mitigation and Contribution to Green Infrastructure:**

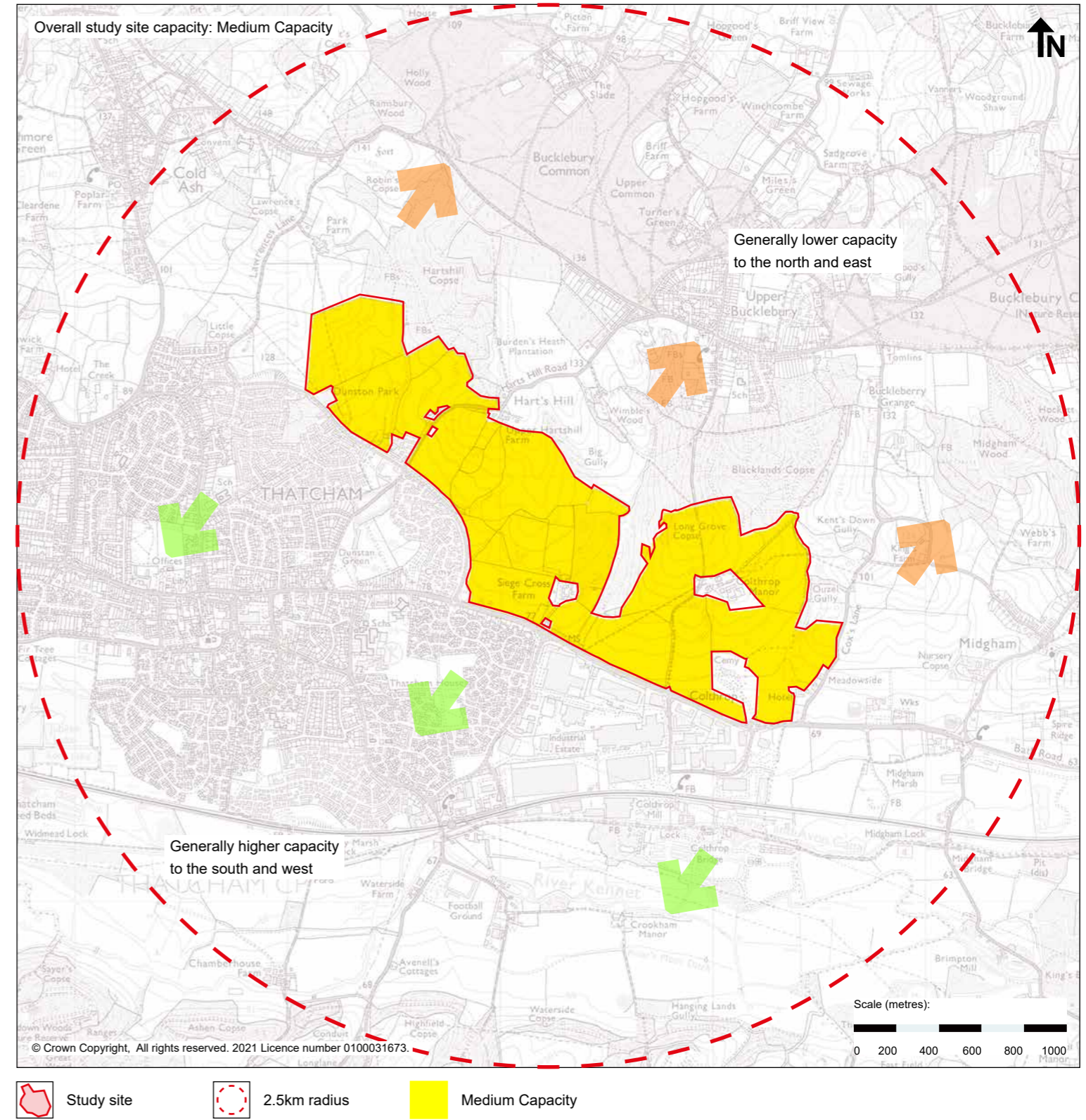
- 9.1 Landscape mitigation should be informed by rigorous landscape and visual assessment work to test potential impacts of alternative development options on key landscape and visual sensitivities. This should be based on current methodology for landscape and visual assessment work as set out in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' 3rd edition 2013 (Landscape Institute / IEMA). This will include assessing potential impacts upon sensitive receptors such as listed buildings and users of public rights of way, as well as impacts upon the wooded ridgeline close to the AONB boundary, which forms the horizon in many views. Potential impacts upon distant viewpoints from the southern side of the Kennet Valley should also be tested.
- 9.2 Mitigation should be embedded in the design process and predicated on protecting and reinforcing key landscape and visual characteristics. This should take the form of:
- Sensitive upper valley slopes to remain undeveloped.
  - Protecting the settings of listed buildings.
  - Retaining and protecting the separation/identity of settlements.
  - Structural planting of woodlands using native species of local provenance.
  - Protecting and reinforcing hedgerows, reinstating historic field boundaries.
  - Improving ecological connectivity across the site, including connectivity to habitats within the AONB and the wider landscape.
  - Designing to protect ancient woodland from development and from damaging forms of access.
  - Designing to respond to the topography of the valley-side location, such as the slopes, folds and drainage patterns in the landscape, introducing variety and interest.
  - Improving public accessibility to the countryside and AONB, together with improved legibility, inclusion and interpretation.



Fig. 19: Ordnance Survey map indicating landscape capacity.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:**

**9.3 Medium capacity** - The landscape could 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.



10. Appendix 1: Methodology

**Stage 1: Determination of Visual Sensitivity**

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

10.2 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)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
<b>OVERALL VISUAL SENSITIVITY</b>	<b>3-4 = low; 5- 7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High</b>				

**Table 3: Notes on Visual Sensitivity Assessment**

Factor	Higher Sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity
<b>General Visibility</b>	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
<b>Population</b>	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 o a valued view
	Site in key views to/across/out of town	Not part of setting of settlement view
<b>Mitigation</b>	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**

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

**10.4** 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)	L/M (2)	M (3)	M/H (4)	H (5)
<b>OVERALL LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY</b>	<b>3-4 = low; 5- 7 = Med/low; 8-10 = Med; 11-13 = Med/high; 14-15 = High</b>				

**Table 4: Notes on Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**

Factor	Higher Sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity	
<b>Natural</b>	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	
<b>Cultural</b>	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	
	<b>Perceptual</b>	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**

10.5 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**

<b>VISUAL SENSITIVITY</b>	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	
<b>LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY</b>						

**Stage 4: Determination Of Wider Sensitivity**

**The Contribution of the Site to the Wider Landscape and Settlement Edge Pattern**

10.6 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.

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

**Stage 5: Determination of Overall Landscape Sensitivity**

10.8 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	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**

10.9 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
Medium	Medium importance (or quality) and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	Regional	Setting of AONB / National Park Regional 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
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**

**10.10** 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						

**10.11** 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 template 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**

**10.12** Because the project brief requires the sensitivity of the study site to be assessed as a single tract of landscape, rather than broken down into sub-components, no attempt has been made to plot variability of landscape capacity within the study site boundary, although it is clear that variability is present and is a constraint that should inform design. It will be down to individual applicants to assess the capacity of individual components of the site in relation to individual planning proposals, should the land be brought forward for development.

**10.13 Study Constraints**

- The site has 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. This does not represent a comprehensive record of all views that can be gained.
- 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 the site.
- Study fieldwork was undertaken in late Spring / Summer, with deciduous vegetation in full leaf.
- Assumptions have been made in relation to land use type, building height and form, to advise this sensitivity study. No public consultation has taken place in preparing the Study.