

## LAMBOURN

<b>Settlement</b>	Lambourn
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas:</b>	LCA 1B: Lambourn Downs; LCA 7B: Lambourn Valley
<b>Date of site survey</b>	7 May 2015
<b>Surveyor</b>	AG

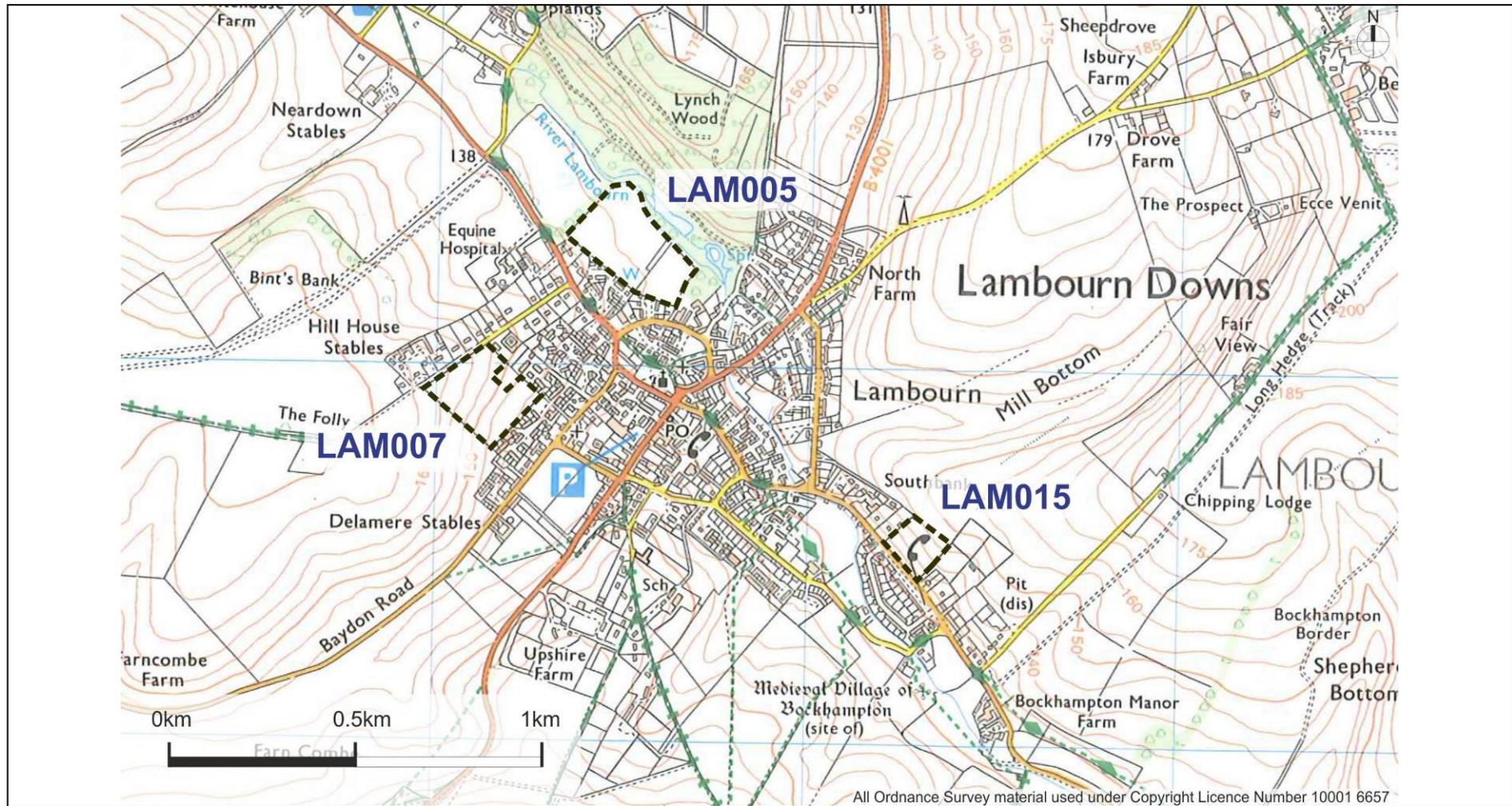


Figure LAM.1: Lambourn potential housing sites

### Key landscape characteristics

#### **AONB LCA** (unless source noted otherwise)

#### **IB Lambourn Downs** (LAM007 and LAM015)

- A strong, structural landform with a series of flat topped or gently rounded hills and ridgelines forming successive horizons, intersected by wide, dry valleys
- Large scale arable fields dominate with tiny fragments of surviving unimproved pasture on steep slopes
- Hedgerows tend to be gappy and poorly maintained with occasional mature hedgerow trees
- Thin linear skyline shelterbelts, hill top beech clumps and small, isolated mixed woodland blocks, are a distinctive feature of the area;
- Limited road access with minor tracks connecting farms. By contrast there is an extensive network of public rights of way (PROWs), gallops and rides.
- Historic features include prominent hilltop barrows, prehistoric field systems, trackways and settlements
- Remote and open with sparse population outside the larger valley settlement of Lambourn
- Around Lambourn itself, large areas of former fields and downs are now covered by land-uses related to race horse breeding and training (HECA: Lambourn Valley)
- Sinuous grain due to the convergence of several valleys at Upper Lambourn and the existence of numerous routes radiating out to surrounding watersheds (HECZ: Lambourn Valley and Downs – Racing – LAM005 northwest section, 007)
- Hedgerows require replanting to ensure continuity of character (NDLCA)
- Dramatic, rolling landform (BLCA)

#### **7B Lambourn Valley** (LAM005)

- The river flows through a narrow corridor
- Varied field pattern including small fields with sinuous boundaries that may date to the Saxon period plus informal and later formal enclosures
- Large manor houses and manor farms with ornamental parkland are a feature
- The Lambourn is a clear, fast flowing lowland chalk river with valuable wetland habitats including flood pastures and water meadows
- Medieval mills and weirs survive along the river e.g. at Weston. Remnant floated meadows are also a feature
- Regular spacing of attractive linear settlements along the valley with detached houses
- Almost all of Lambourn parish was enclosed into fields through Act of Parliament in the early 19th century, however the wider field pattern includes sinuous boundaries from 17th and 18th century informal enclosure (HECA: Lambourn Valley)
- Historically, the landscape was very sparsely wooded, with nucleated settlements of medieval or earlier origin regularly spaced along the valley floor. Valley sides were open fields with riverside meadows used for common grazing (HECA: Lambourn Valley)
- Long narrow zone along valley floor, with areas outside settlements largely consisting of water meadows until early 20th century, now arable or pasture (HECZ: Lambourn Valley Floor – LAM003)
- Southern side of valley historically covered with open fields with areas of downland (HECZ: Lambourn Valley – Scattered archaeological records – LAM004)
- River Lambourn, unusually, dries up in winter and flows again in the spring (VDS)
- Paddock fencing should be replaced with new hedgerows; replant to improved existing gappy hedgerows (NDLCA)

**Key visual characteristics**

**1B Lambourn Downs** (LAM007, 015)

- Mainly open with strong horizons formed by ridgelines
- Scale and structure of the landscape is emphasised by a lack of strong field boundaries
- Exposed, bleak character created by uniform arable cover and lack of trees
- Large areas almost totally unwooded – the open aspect of the Historic Zone is important (HECZ: Lambourn Valley and Downs – Racing – LAM005 northwest section, 007)
- Limit visual influence of horse gallops and stable developments on the landscape, by selective siting (not screening with exotic conifers) (NDLCA)
- Open remote character west of Lambourn, with numerous bridleways, extensive panoramic views (BLCA)
- Open, undeveloped and highly visible skylines (BLCA)

**7B Lambourn Valley** (LAM005)

- The valley sides form a close horizon, a contained visual setting and a strong sense of enclosure
- The valley itself forms a small scale landscape of great interest, intimacy and detail compared to surrounding downs
- Preserve views to open, undeveloped valley sides and crests; preserve distinct character of settlements and their clear relationship to the surrounding landscape (BLCA)
- Lambourn has a particularly rural and remote character (BLCA)

### **Key settlement characteristics**

#### **1B Lambourn Downs (LAM007, 015)**

- Late 19th and late 20th century settlement growth is modest and limited to infill or growth around existing settlements (HECA: Lambourn Valley)
- Late 20th century development over Parliamentary fields, which were formerly open fields, downland and meadow. 1960s development on the east side of the village consisting of small estates, parks and schools. Development from 1980s onwards largely on the west side of the village and consisting of a mix of large detached houses and dense groups of small houses (HECZ: Lambourn – Recent Settlement – LAM005 south east section, 009)
- The distinctive oval pattern of Saxon settlements still dictates the street pattern of Lambourn, the circuit being formed by Market Place, Oxford Street, The Broadway, Big Lane and Parsonage Lane, with the church on the southern edge. (VDS)
- Redevelopment of the small number of 'Brownfield' sites in the village centre is a threat to the character of the settlement (HECZ: Lambourn – Historic Core)
- New development proposals that are insensitive or uncharacteristic, e.g. tennis courts, conifer plantations, cut and fill, or amalgamation of settlements to form a continuous ribbon, should be prevented (NDLCA)
- The continued expansion of large settlements including Lansdown and linear expansion infill to join smaller settlements (e.g. Chieveley – Downend to Beadon) should be avoided to prevent loss of character and local identity (NDLCA)
- Limited infill within defined settlement boundaries would be preferable (NDLCA)
- Large scale developments in this open farming landscape would be visually intrusive (NDLCA)
- Lambourn has a historic core with more modern peripheral development (BLCA)
- Further development or intensification of existing settlements would need to maintain the feeling of remoteness (BLCA)

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- New development proposals that are insensitive or uncharacteristic, e.g. tennis courts, conifer plantations, cut and fill, or amalgamation of settlements to form a continuous ribbon, should be prevented (NDLCA)
- New development should be severely restricted to conserve character of existing settlements - large-scale developments are not appropriate in this narrow river valley (NDLCA)
- Prevent amalgamation of settlements to form continuous ribbon along valley bottom (NDLCA)
- Lambourn noted for its nucleated form around the church and market cross (BLCA)

### **Summary of the key characteristics of the settlement and landscape constraints on the extent and location of development**

The village of Lambourn is centred on the convergence of several valleys, chiefly the valley of the River Lambourn and extending up a dry valley to the north east. The settlement is contained within two AONB landscape character areas: LCA 1B Lambourn Downs and 7B Lambourn Valley. Development occurs both in the valley floor and on the valley sides, mostly below the 150m AOD contour, but in some areas, notably on the western side of the village, up to the 170m contour. Development at the higher elevations tends to be made up of low density, detached properties with associated land often related to horse training. The result of the settlement extending up the slopes is that many views from within the settlement contain houses rather than clear, open countryside.

The valley landscape is noted for its small scale landscape mosaic, contrasting with the more exposed, large scale and open character of the surrounding Downland landscape. The enclosed valley landscape offers opportunities for locating new development whilst still retaining the visual enclosure. However, great care will also be needed to minimise the impact on the landscape character of the surrounding AONB, through limitations on development and generous provision of Green Infrastructure, to ensure that new buildings are appropriately integrated into the landscape. It is recommended that development within the valley floor and on open bluffs is avoided and that the settlement pattern is maintained along the direction of the valley and main road and that nucleated compactness of the village is maintained through small estates.

#### **Sources:**

North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment 2002

Additional information from:

- Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 2003 (BLCA)
- Newbury District Landscape Character Assessment 1993 (NDLCA)
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)
- Historic Environment Character Zoning (HECZ)
- Historic Environment Character Area Report (HECA)
- Lambourn Parish Plan (VDS)

**A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: LAM015: Land at Newbury Road, Lambourn**

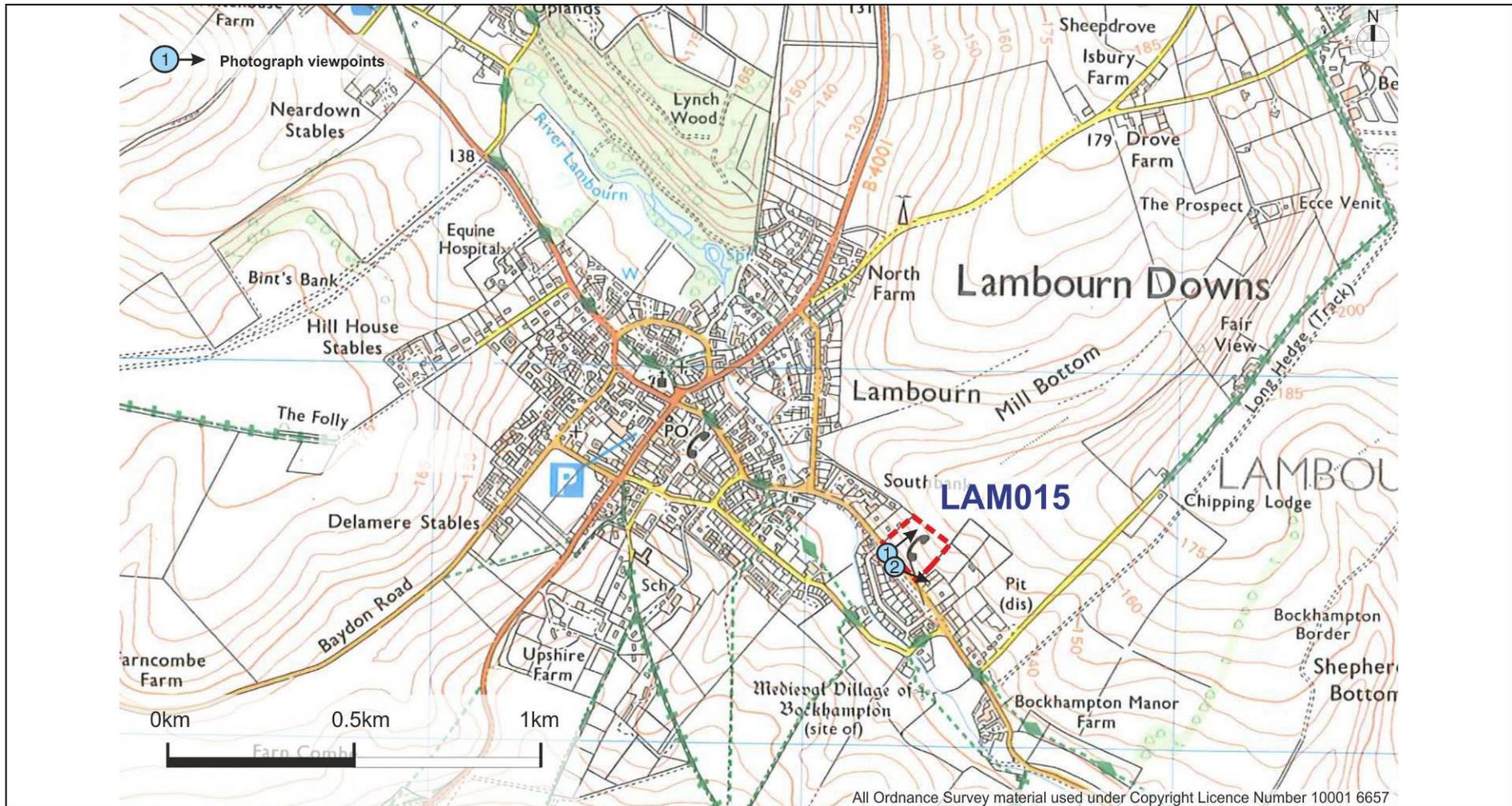


Figure LAM015.1: Site and viewpoint locations

**PHOTOGRAPHS**



Viewpoint 1: View north east from Newbury Road.



Viewpoint 2: View south east from Newbury Road.

## Site description

Site LAM015 is located on the south eastern edge of Lambourn, entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB and on rising ground on the north eastern slope of the River Lambourn valley. Newbury Road forms the south western boundary which is partly hedged and has a number of semi-mature trees. The small, 1960s estate of Woodbury is on the opposite side of Newbury Road. The site forms a gap in the loosely developed settlement on the north east side of Newbury Road, with detached houses in large gardens each side of the site. The north eastern boundary is formed by a gappy hedge with a farm track beyond with larger, exposed fields leading up to Lambourn Downs beyond that. The field is used as pasture and is not publicly accessible. The tranquillity of the site is affected by the road and the settlement edge.

### Relationship with adjacent settlement

- The site is part of the loose built form along the north east side of Newbury Road which extends to the south east of the village, beyond the main settlement envelope
- The site is below the 150m contour where much of the village sits
- There is some intervisibility with the south eastern part of the village
- Urban edge is well vegetated to the south east and otherwise partially open

### Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- Linked with the wider AONB and somewhat typical of the LCA, though smaller in scale and less exposed
- Part of the valley side landscape which reaches into the settlement
- No public rights of way across the site or links to the wider countryside

<p><b>Impact on key landscape characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impact on characteristic valley side topography</li><li>• Loss of visual and aural tranquillity</li></ul>
<p><b>Impact on key visual characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The site is likely to be visible from the wider AONB across the valley to the south, but set within other built form</li><li>• The site is visible from the road and the visual connection with the countryside as seen across the site from the road would be lost, though the rest of the settlement has generally good intervisibility with the surrounding countryside</li></ul>
<p><b>Impact on key settlement characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of the whole site would result in 'backland' extension to the existing loose and linear built form on the north east side of Newbury Road</li><li>• Intense development of the site would mirror the 1960s Woodbury estate on the south western side of Newbury Road</li><li>• Development would be contained below the 150m AOD contour</li></ul>
<p><b>Summary of compliance with NPPF</b></p> <p>Development on the north eastern part of the site would result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>The south western part of the site adjacent to the road, as shown in Figure LAM15.2 could be developed subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development being contained on the lower ground;</li><li>• Access being possible from Newbury Road.</li><li>• Development should take the form of a continuation of the linear built form on the north east side of Newbury Road but not the widening of the linearity.</li><li>• The retention of open space on the higher ground and the provision of a hedge with hedgerow trees to contain the housing on the north eastern edge, continuing along the south eastern edge to link with garden planting.</li><li>• A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site.</li></ul>

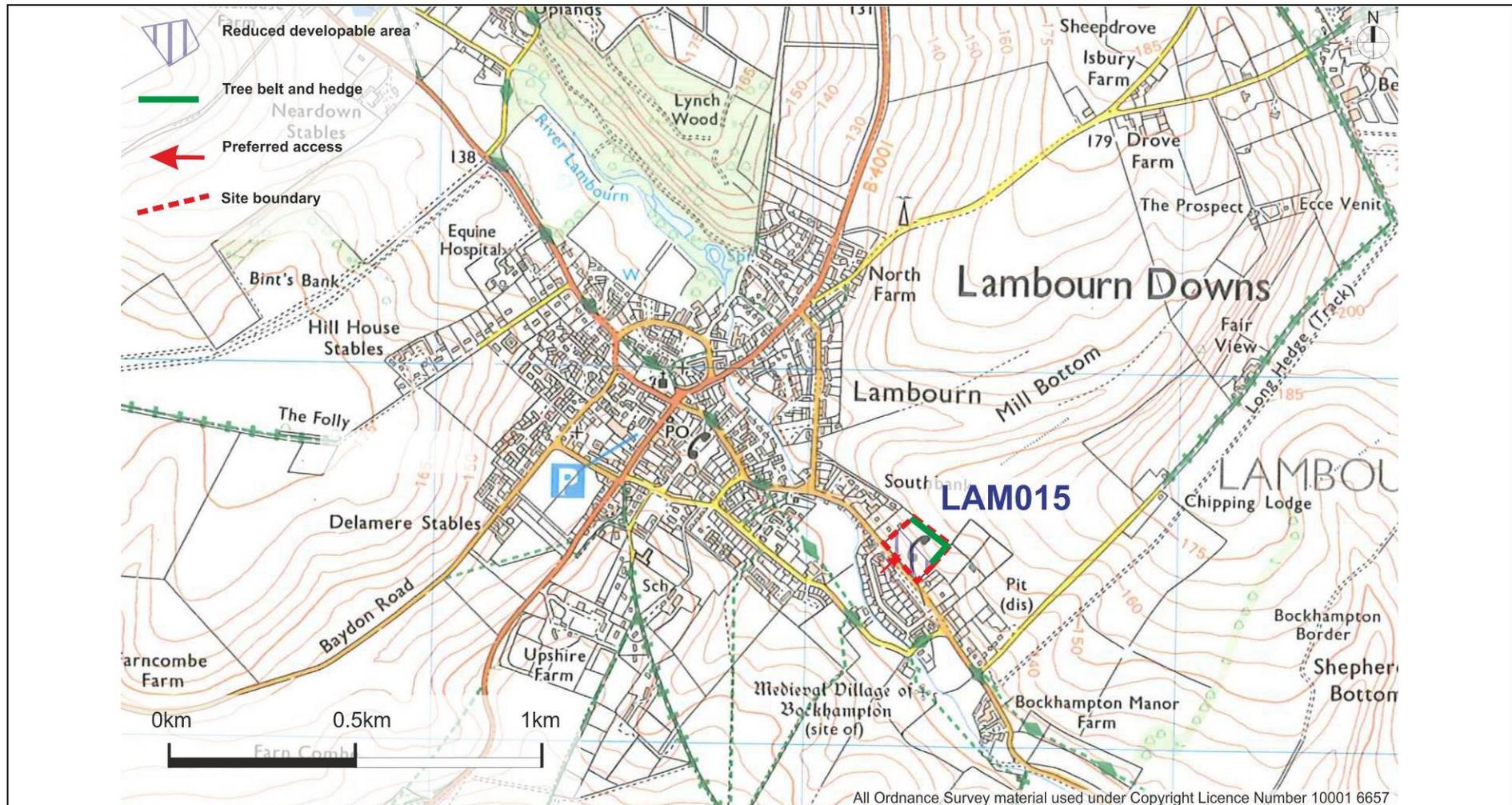


Figure LAM015.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

### **Conclusion**

The above analysis recommends one potential area for housing on landscape and visual grounds. The site is heavily constrained by the following:

- The need to retain local landscape features,
- The need to avoid land that lies above or below the local settlement pattern in terms of the topographical spread
- The need to avoid any landscape intrusion on or into the wider landscape
- The need to avoid the creation of an exposed urban edge
- The need to conserve and enhance landscape links and patterns that are characteristic of the AONB
- The need to take advantage of enclosed and screened sites that relate well to the modern built form
- The need to seek the opportunity to mitigate existing visual intrusion from the settlement where this is not in conflict with the above.

The recommended site is a reduced part of LAM015. The area considered suitable for development has been reduced from the greater site area to avoid impacts on the settlement pattern. The linear settlement pattern will be continued but would be totally lost if the whole of the site were to be developed. The cumulative impact of the development of this area combined with the potential development of LAM005 and LAM007 as identified in the 2011 Landscape Sensitivity Study would be very limited due to the lack of intervisibility between the sites and the small scale of the proposed area on LAM015.