

Land at Long Lane, Newbury

Preliminary
Landscape and
Visual Baseline
Appraisal

Prepared by:

The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd

On behalf of: **Donnington New Homes**

February 2021 Report Reference edp6880_r001c



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(edp6880_d008a 29 January 2021 AH/TR)

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This version is intended for electronic viewing only

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Section 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) has been commissioned by Donnington New Homes to undertake a preliminary Landscape and Visual Baseline Appraisal (LVBA) of Land at Long Lane, Newbury (the site). The site is being promoted by Donnington for residential uses.
- 1.2 EDP is an independent environmental planning consultancy with offices in Cirencester, Cardiff and Cheltenham. The practice provides advice to private and public sector clients throughout the UK in the fields of landscape, ecology, archaeology, cultural heritage, arboriculture, rights of way and masterplanning. Details of the practice can be obtained at our website (www.edp-uk.co.uk). EDP is a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute(¹) specialising in the assessment of the effects of proposed development on the landscape.
- 1.3 **Plan EDP 1** illustrates the location of the site and its boundaries. The site is located on the northern edge of Newbury, either side of the B4009 Long Lane, and is within the West Berkshire Council Local Planning Authority (LPA) area. The site comprises three large, broadly triangular agricultural fields dissected by the B4009, abutting Newbury along the southern boundary. The two parcels within the western area are divided by the access track to Highwood Farm.

Purpose

- 1.4 This preliminary LVBA has been undertaken to inform the consideration of the site for residential development and to support its promotion through the Local Plan process.
- 1.5 To date, the purpose of EDP's work has been to gain an early understanding of the landscape and visual issues likely to affect the 'in principle' suitability and potential capacity of the site for development.
- 1.6 This baseline report identifies the existing conditions of the site and its surrounding area, to inform the design layout and appearance of emerging proposals. This work identifies any mitigation measures which should be incorporated into the scheme to ensure its potential negative landscape and visual effects are minimised, and opportunities for enhancement are taken. The Concept Masterplan incorporating these proposals is included at **Appendix EDP 1**.

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¹ LI Practice Number 1010

Methodology Adopted for the Assessment

- 1.7 Landscape and visual assessment comprises a study of two separate but interlinked issues:
 - Landscape character is the physical make up and condition of the landscape itself, and arises from a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of physical and social elements, aesthetic factors and perceptual aspects; and
 - Visual amenity is the way in which the site is seen; views to and from the site, their direction and character.
- **Section 3** addresses baseline landscape character issues, whilst visual amenity issues are addressed in **Section 4**.
- 1.9 Recommendations to inform any future design process, based on the findings of **Sections 3** and **4**, are considered in **Section 5**.
- 1.10 The LVBA has been undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition* (LI/IEMA, 2013) (GLVIA3), insofar as it is relevant to this stage in the process, and as considered proportional to the potential development being considered. The criteria referred to, but not defined within the guidelines, have been defined by EDP as set out in the methodology at **Appendix EDP 2**.

Study Area

- 1.11 Due to the containment offered by the surrounding topography and woodland cover, a broad study area of up to 2km from the site was adopted as the initial search area, as shown on **Plan EDP 1**, This enabled the geographical scope of the assessment to be defined and provided the wider geographical context of the study. Within this area, the search focused on: identifying the local planning policy context; identifying national and local landscape designations and other relevant designations, for example Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG); and providing a general geographical understanding of the site and its broader context, for example, in relation to landform, transport routes and the distribution and nature of settlement.
- 1.12 Following this initial analysis and subsequent field work, and having an appreciation of the development proposed, the study area was refined to focus on those areas and features that are assessed as likely to be affected by the proposals. The extent of this study area is approximately 1km from the site boundary, as shown on Plan EDP 4, although occasional reference may be made to features beyond this area where appropriate.

Section 2 Findings of EDP Data Trawl

Information Sources

Desk Study

2.1 EDP's baseline landscape and visual appraisal has included preliminary reviews of aerial photographs, web searches, West Berkshire Council (WBC) publications and landscape character assessments. EDP has also obtained, where possible, information about relevant landscape and other designations such as AONBs, Conservation Areas, and Registered Parks and Gardens.

Field Assessment

2.2 Preliminary field assessment of local site circumstances was undertaken in order to corroborate the findings of the desk study with the current condition of the site. A field assessment was undertaken by a qualified landscape architect on 11 January 2021, from publicly accessible locations only.

Landscape-related Designations, Policy and Considerations

Landscape Designations and Considerations

- 2.3 The environmental planning context of the site is illustrated on **Plan EDP 1**. The site does not contain or fall within any designated landscape and there are no such landscapes near the site; however, the North Wessex Downs AONB falls approximately 1.8km to the northeast.
- 2.4 The settlement of Newbury itself contains a number of heritage features that lie within the sites 1km study boundary, most notably approximately 400m south-west of the site where the Shaw House Conservation Area and Shaw House RPG lie, as illustrated on **Plan EDP 1**. This area also contains a number of Listed Buildings which continue south along the B4009 (Shaw Road) within a second Conservation Area; Shaw Road and Crescent. The field assessment found there to be no intervisibility between the site and the existing heritage features.

Local Policy

2.5 The current adopted Development Plan for West Berkshire is made up of a number of documents, the following are considered relevant to this appraisal:

- West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 (WBDLP) 2006 (Saved Policies 2007); and
- Core Strategy Development Plan (CSDP) Document (2006 2026).
- 2.6 Policies contained in the Development Plan, of relevance to landscape and visual matters of the site, are listed below.
- 2.7 **WBDLP Policy ENV.1: The Wider Countryside** states, of relevance to landscape matters, that:

"Proposals for development will seek to conserve and enhance the special features and diversity of the different 'landscape character areas' found within West Berkshire."

2.8 **WBDLP Policy ENV.8: Active Nature Conservation Measures** states that:

"The Council will encourage and support the management of land and water areas for nature conservation purposes and the creation of nature reserves in connection with new development and land uses. In seeking such provision the Council will have regard to:

- (a) the existing nature conservation value of the site and its present condition; and
- (b) whether the site (or any part thereof) has a specific nature conservation designation;
- (c) the opportunity and potential to manage the site following development or other land use changes in ways which protect and enhance the habitat and wildlife value of the area in a sustainable manner; and
- (d) expert nature conservation advice from English Nature or other specialist sources."

2.9 **CSDP Policy CS 14: Design Principles** states that:

"New development must demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area, and makes a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire."

- 2.10 It notes that in order to achieve this, development will be expected to:
 - "Make efficient use of land whilst respecting the density, character, landscape and biodiversity of the surrounding area;
 - Consider opportunities for a mix of uses, buildings and landscaping.
 - Provide, conserve and enhance biodiversity and create linkages between green spaces and wildlife corridors."
- 2.11 **CSDP Policy CS 18: Green Infrastructure** details that the District's existing Green Infrastructure will be protected and enhanced:

"New developments will make provision for high quality and multifunctional open spaces of an appropriate size and will also provide links to the existing green infrastructure network. Specific standards for provision within new developments will be identified in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD and through the masterplanning for strategic sites.

Developments resulting in the loss of green infrastructure or harm to its use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted. Where exceptionally it is agreed that an area of green infrastructure can be lost a new one of equal or greater size and standard will be required to be provided in an accessible location close by."

- 2.12 **CSDP Policy CS 19: Historic Environment and Landscape Character** aims to conserve and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District. Particular regard should be given to:
 - "a) The sensitivity of the area to change.
 - b) Ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.

Proposals for development should be informed by and respond to:

a) The distinctive character areas and key characteristics identified in relevant landscape character assessments including Historic Landscape Characterisation for West Berkshire and Historic Environment Character Zoning for West Berkshire."

North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019–2024

2.13 The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019–2024 lists the Special Qualities of the AONB, none of which are considered relevant to this report. Chapter 2 relates specifically to landscape and, although not referred to within the special qualities, the management plan identifies the following key issue of relevance to this report: "The potential for development beyond the AONB boundary to visually damage or undermine the scale and critical qualities of landscape character areas." The Management Plan states that these key issues have potential to have significant influence on the AONB's Landscape Special Qualities.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Cycle Routes

2.14 Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3 runs along the entirety of the western site boundary outside of the site, providing a connection between Newbury, to the south, and to the AONB approximately 1.8km to the north. Cold Ash footpath 13 runs along the southern edge of the eastern parcel from the B4009, before crossing the disused railway and heading northeast up the valley side towards Stone Copse (Cold Ash Footpath 14). It also connects to Newbury Footpath 20, which connects into the settlement. These routes, along with further PRoWs in the area are shown on **Plans EDP 1** and **2**.

- 2.15 Sustrans National Cycle Route 4 runs east to west through the centre of Newbury along the River Kennet, however this has no physical or visual relationship with the site, as shown on **Plan EDP 1**.
- 2.16 There are no areas of Open Access Land within or adjacent to the site.

Tree Preservation Orders

2.17 No Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) trees were identified within or adjacent to the site from the WBC on-line mapping service².

 $^{^2\} https://gis2.westberks.gov.uk/webapps/OnlineMap/?vln=TREE%20PRESERVATION%200RDERS - accessed 13.01.21$

Section 3 Landscape Character Considerations

3.1 This section provides a consideration of the 'baseline' (existing) conditions in respect of the character of the site and its landscape context, which are relevant to the integration of potential residential development of the site into its context at this northern edge of Newbury. It summarises relevant published landscape assessments that contribute to a better understanding of the landscape context. Such assessments provide a helpful understanding of the landscape context, but rarely deliver sufficiently site-specific or up-to-date information to draw robust conclusions about the significance of any change proposed by the development. Accordingly, EDP has undertaken its own assessment of the site itself, which is also included in this section.

Review of the Published Landscape Character Assessments

- 3.2 The landscape character assessment resource for West Berkshire comprises the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (August 2019) which forms part of the Local Plan Review Evidence, Information and Monitoring. This replaces the Newbury District Landscape Assessment (1993) and the Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2003).
- 3.3 The assessment breaks the area down into 10 different Landscape Character Types (LCT) and 26 Landscape Character Areas (LCA), based on baseline data and a combination of physical attributes such as geology, topography, agricultural land and tranquillity. The B4009 running through the centre of the site forms the boundary to two LCA (**Figure EDP 3.1**). To the west lies FC4 (Framed Chalk Mosaic): Winterbourne Farmed Chalk Mosaic and to the east lies WH4 (Woodland and Heathland Mosaic): Cold Ash Woodland and Heathland Mosaic.

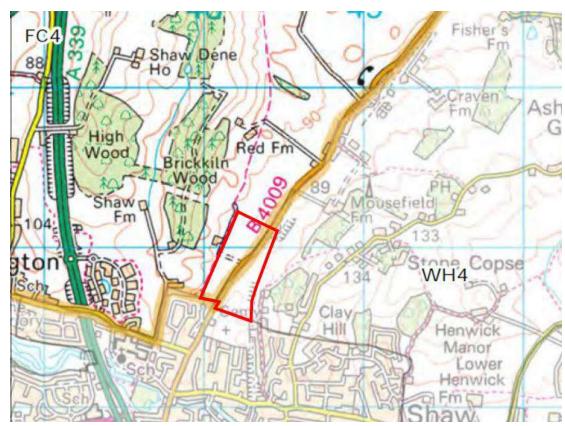


Figure EDP 3.1: LCA FC4 and WH4 across centre of site, edged in red

3.4 In relation to FC4, the following extracts are considered relevant to this study. Underlining has been added to emphasise descriptions of most relevance to the site and context:

"Summary

A generally large open and gently rolling landscape, rising from the Lambourn Valley. The area has more surface water and streams than is typical in Farmed Chalk Mosaic areas. There are extensive areas of interconnected woodland, particularly on the higher ground, and heathland is present at Snelsmore Common. An accessible landscape, with many public rights of way, it is relatively sparsely settled with the exception of Donnington in the south of the area. The area is predominately rural and tranquil, although the A34, A339 and M4 introduce noise and movement.

This large area is bisected by the River Lambourn valley (LCA UV2) in the west. It is bounded by the M4 to the north, while the southern extent is determined by the settlement edge of Newbury. The eastern and western edges are transitional zones based on geology into the Woodland Heathland Mosaic type. The majority of the area forms part of the North Wessex Downs AONB, the exceptions being the slopes around Newbury.

Key Characteristics

- 1. Open and gently rolling landform, rising from the Lambourn Valley;
- 2. Presence of surface water and small streams;

- 3. Diverse land use of <u>large rolling arable farmland</u> and <u>extensive woodland</u>, plus areas of heathland and parkland;
- 4. Generally sparse and dispersed settlement pattern in the wider rural area;
- 5. Busy major roads contrast with rural road network;
- 6. Historic and archaeological landscape relating to strategic position at intersection of east west and north south routes;
- 7. An accessible landscape; and
- 8. <u>Low wooded horizons</u> contrast with open rural landscape.

Landscape Strategy

- 1. <u>Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the nationally designated landscape of the North Wessex Downs AONB;</u>
- 2. Conserve and restore heathland characteristics;
- 3. Conserve and extend existing mixed woodland;
- 4. Conserve and strengthen existing boundary elements;
- 5. Opportunities for restoration of completed extraction sites;
- 6. Mitigate the adverse influences of the major roads and maintain character of rural lanes;
- 7. Maintain the rural settlement character;
- 8. Seek to promote enhanced management of horse paddocks, and particularly boundary associated elements; and
- 9. Actively manage and conserve features of historic significance."
- 3.5 In relation to WH4, the following extracts are considered relevant to this study. Underlining has been added to emphasise descriptions of most relevance to the site and context:

"Summary

An area dominated by an east-west orientated, heathland ridge and characterised by varied topography, from flat plateau areas to steeply undulating slopes. Woodland is a key component in the varied and attractive land cover mosaic, giving it a distinctive role in providing a rural setting to the adjacent towns of Thatcham and Newbury and also in containing settlement within the area and contributing to the rural character.

The northern and southern extents of the character area are clearly defined by the valleys of the River Pang and River Kennet respectively, to the north of the urban edges of Thatcham, Newbury and Theale. To the east a narrow but prominent band of elevated, wooded chalk slopes separates the character area from Reading, and to the west the B4009 marks a transition to a belt of open, arable, farmland on the chalk. The eastern half of the character area, and land to the north of the ridge between Cold Ash and Woolhampton, forms part of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

Key Characteristics

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

Landscape Strategy

- 1. <u>Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the nationally designated landscape of</u> the North Wessex Downs AONB;
- 2. Conserve and restore heathland characteristics;
- 3. Promote appropriate woodland management;
- 4. Conserve and strengthen existing boundary elements;
- 5. Retain the distinction between and individual identity of settlements;
- Conserve elements that mark a transition between settlement and countryside;
- 7. Conserve the existing character of rural lanes and public rights of way; and
- 8. Maintain open views from routeways."

Newbury Landscape Sensitivity Study (2009)

3.6 As part of the Local Development Framework, West Berkshire Council commissioned a landscape sensitivity study for the main towns of the district, which included Newbury. This was carried out to inform the most appropriate options for the direction of sustainable growth across the district. The report breaks the area down into Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCA) with the site forming the southern edge of LLCA11B: Mousefield Wooded Lowland.

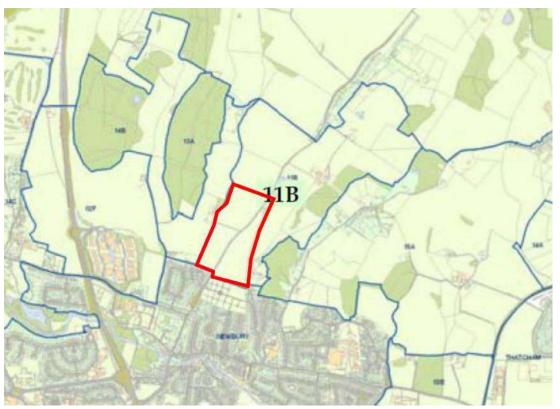


Figure EDP 3.2: LLCA11B with site indicated in red

- 3.7 The key elements of landscape sensitivity identified within the report are as follows, with those relevant to the site underlined:
 - "Generally open with little sense of seclusion, but <u>enclosed by woodland</u> mostly outside the LLCA to the west (LLCA13A and 14B) and east (LLCA15A);
 - Grade 2 agricultural land to west of Hermitage Road (Long Lane);
 - Block of woodland on higher ground in east, former railway line route defined by trees, otherwise few trees and medium scale often fenced fields; and
 - <u>Little built form</u> apart from scattered farmsteads, large farm buildings high in landscape at Mousefield Farm are visually dominant within area."

3.8 The study gives the area an overall medium to low sensitivity, attributed to low levels of tranquillity, little historic interest and visually intrusive built form on Hermitage Road.

On-site Character Assessment

- 3.9 The site comprises three broadly triangular arable fields, dissected by the B4009 as shown in **Plan EDP 2**. These fields are bounded as follows:
 - The hedge and tree lined route of the bridleway and the well treed mature grounds of Highwood Farm combine to form the western boundary, with the south-eastern slopes of the wooded Dolman's Row rising beyond the site further west;
 - A 1.2m high post and wire fence along the northern boundary, with occasional scrub planting with agricultural land across the rising valley beyond;
 - The well vegetated dismantled railway corridor along the entirety of the eastern boundary;
 - The northern edge of the built up area of Newbury to the south which appears to have edged further north throughout the 20th century, including properties along Highwood Close and Shaw Cemetery; and
 - The B4009 runs centrally through the site which is bound on both sides by mature hedgerow at approximately 2-3m in height, with the western site area divided by the access track to Highwood Farm.
- 3.10 The site is located within a localised valley, with the eastern and western boundaries rising towards separate ridges, and the route of B4009 broadly following the valley floor. The valley's upper slopes are marked by extensive woodland, creating a sense of enclosure and restricting opportunities for visual connection to the wider landscape east and west. This is consistent with the key characteristics described in LCT FH4 and WH4.
- 3.11 The site is separated from the northern edge of Newbury by hedgerow, which to the west forms the rear garden boundary of properties along Highwood Close. This boundary marks an abrupt end to the existing settlement edge which has edged north across the 20th century and does little to reflect the character of the historic settlement core. To the east, the boundary is lined with a number of large trees forming the northern edge of Shaw Cemetery. A 2m high security fence also marks the cemetery boundary on this edge.
- 3.12 The B4009 (Long Lane) is bound on both sides by mature hedgerow approximately 2-3m in height, with two large trees located along its southern edge.
- 3.13 The two field parcels to the west of the B4009 are separated by the access track to Highwood Farm, which contains a scrubby line of vegetation along its southern edge. A line of overhead telegraph cables run north from the southern field connecting to Highwood Farm, this, combined with the noise and movement created by traffic running along the

B4009 on the valley floor and visual connection with the settlement edge, introduces urbanising influences across the site and detract from the integrity of the landscape character of the site to some degree.

3.14 The LCA descriptions and landscape strategies make reference to the management, retention, enhancement and restoration of hedgerows and woodland blocks. The presence and promotion of woodland, in particular, is useful in a development situation as it means that, should screening be required, the introduction of woodland for this purpose would not, if carefully implemented, appear out of place.

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Section 4 Visual Amenity Considerations

- 4.1 Visual amenity (as opposed to 'visual character' described in the previous section) is not about the visual appearance of the site, but has to do with the number, distribution and character of views towards, from or within the site. An analysis of visual amenity allows conclusions to be reached about who may experience visual change, from where and to what degree those views will be affected by the proposed development.
- 4.2 This section identifies the extent of visibility towards the site and the type, and distribution of, visual receptors that may be able to obtain views to the site. It also provides a consideration of those existing 'baseline' conditions that are relevant to the integration of potential residential development of the site into its context on the northern edge of Newbury.

The Process

4.3 An analysis of existing views and the 'receptors' likely to experience visual change is conducted in three steps described in turn below.

Step One: Defining Zones of Theoretical and Primary Visibility

- 4.4 The starting point for an assessment of visual amenity was a computer-generated ZTV, which is not included in this report. The ZTV is derived using digital landform height data only and therefore it does not account for the screening effects of intervening buildings, structures or vegetation, but it does give a prediction of the areas that, theoretically, may be able to experience visual change; it thus provides the basis for more detailed field assessment.
- 4.5 The resulting ZTV was then tested, by walking and driving (as appropriate) local roads, rights of way and other publicly accessible viewpoints, to identify the main visual receptors predicted to have actual visibility to the site. It was found that actual visibility to the site is less extensive than predicted by the ZTV. This is due to the screening effect of adjacent topography, woodland and settlement as set out in more detail below, this is shown on **Plan EDP 4** as the Zone of Primary Visibility (ZPV).

Step Two: Defining Receptor Groups

- 4.6 Publicly accessible locations from which it was identified that there are likely to be views towards the site are shown on **Plan EDP 4** and include:
 - The PRoW that traverses the landscape immediately west of the site and provides access between Newbury and the AONB to the north (**Photoviewpoints EDP 1 3**);

- Vehicular users of the B4009 as it heads north out of Newbury and a short extent of footway running alongside within the built form (**Photoviewpoint EDP 10**);
- Users of Shaw Cemetery abutting the site's southern boundary (Photoviewpoint EDP 8); and
- The PRoW that heads east from the B4009 along the site's southern boundary (Photoviewpoints EDP 7 and 9) which rises in elevation as it continues north-east towards the hamlet of Stone Copse (Photoviewpoints EDP 5 and 6).

Step Three: Defining Representative Viewpoints

4.7 The on-site assessment was also useful in identifying key receptors and representative viewpoints, or photoviewpoints (PVP), that might have views towards the site. The PVPs are listed in the **Table EDP 4.1**, their locations shown on **Plan EDP 4**, and a photographic record is included at **Photoviewpoints EDP 1** to **10**.

 Table EDP 4.1:
 Summary of Representative Photoviewpoints

PVP No.	PVP Name/Location	Grid Reference	Distance and Direction of View to Site	Reason(s) for Selection of PVP/Receptors
1	Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3 immediately south-west of site	447973, 168695	5m; north-east	Users of PRoW, Residents
2	Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3 in site's northern corner	448207, 169230	5m; south	Users of PRoW
3	Elevated view south from Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3	448292, 169570	380m; south	Users of PRoW
4	Elevated view south from Chieveley Byway 33 within AONB	449404, 170760	1.9km; south- west	Users of PRoW
5	Elevated view south-west from Cold Ash Footpath 14 adjacent to Stone Copse	448791, 168983	440m; south- west	Users of PRoW
6	Elevated view south-west from Cold Ash Footpath 14	448567, 168892	200m; south- west	Users of PRoW
7	View from Cold Ash Footpath 13 across eastern parcel	448219, 168560	5m; north	Users of PRoW
8	View north from main access track within Shaw Cemetery	448114, 168515	80m; north	Users of Cemetery
9	View as Cold Ash Footpath 13 enters eastern parcel from Long Lane	448069, 168617	5m; north-east	Users of PRoW

PVP No.	PVP Name/Location	Grid Reference	Distance and Direction of View to Site	Reason(s) for Selection of PVP/Receptors
10	View north from pedestrian	448053,	40m; north	Road users (vehicular
	footway on Long Lane	168602		and pedestrian),
				Residents

Visibility to the Site

- 4.8 The site is visually enclosed by the vegetation along the site boundaries and the valley sides to the east and west are well wooded on the upper slopes and ridgetops.
- 4.9 The topography gently rises north of the site before plateauing as it reaches the North Wessex Downs AONB, approximately 1.8km away. The rising topography at, and in the vicinity of, Angel's Hill, between the site and the AONB, ensures there is no intervisibility between the two (**Photoviewpoint EDP 4**).
- 4.10 The B4009 traverses the landscape north of the site and is generally well enclosed by mature hedgerows on either side. Road users heading south towards Newbury are afforded occasional glimpses towards the site through gaps in vegetation, however, given the elevated topography when compared to the site and northern edge of Newbury, the town's built form provides the backdrop in any available views.
- 4.11 To the east, the dismantled railway runs along the entirety of the site's boundary and provides a mature vegetated belt, helping to screen potential views from the southern extent of Cold Ash Footpath 14 as it runs parallel to the southern extent of this boundary (as illustrated at **Image EDP 1**).



Image EDP 1: Vegetation along dismantled railway immediately east of site.

4.12 Cold Ash Footpath 14 continues in a north-easterly direction rising steeply in elevation as it heads towards the hamlet of Stone Copse. The lower slopes are afforded filtered views

into the site through intervening vegetation (**Photoviewpoint EDP 6**), where the built form of the northern edge of Newbury can be seen in the middle distance, and the white elevation of Highwood Farm forms a prominent feature in the winter view. This location on the valley side offers 180° panoramic views from Newbury to the south towards the fringes of the AONB to the north.

- 4.13 Towards the upper slopes, views from Cold Ash Footpath 14 become further filtered by the surrounding wooded context (**Photoviewpoint EDP 5**). The surrounding vegetation helps to channel views along the route of the footpath, which limits potential views into the site to its southern edge, either side of the B4009. Due to the elevated nature of the receptor, the site is seen against the northern edge of Newbury with rooftops forming a common feature in the overall experience. Heavily filtered seasonal views are possible from this location towards the site's western boundary, with the white elevation of Highwood Farm identifiable through the existing woodland. Views towards the site from further east are screened by intervening vegetation and topography.
- 4.14 Cold Ash Footpath 13 runs along the southern boundary of the eastern land parcel within a narrow channel between the edge of Shaw Cemetery and an unkempt post and wire fence (Image EDP 2). Views are generally open in nature given the lack of boundary planting, however due to this section of the southern boundary forming the lowest part of the site, experiences are generally limited to the site's eastern parcel, which is further enclosed by the vegetation along the B4009 and the dismantled railway (Photoviewpoints EDP 7 and 9). The footpath terminates as it meets the B4009 where pedestrians can join the footway along the road.



Image EDP 2: Cold Ash Footpath 13 running within narrow channel along southern boundary.

4.15 Shaw Cemetery lies immediately south of the site, which is afforded glimpsed views through boundary vegetation and fencing, again limited to the eastern parcel of the site due to topography and vegetation (**Photoviewpoint EDP 8**). The northern boundary of the cemetery contains a number of mature trees that form a prominent feature in the surrounding context (**Image EDP 3**). The cemetery also contains a number of trees along the access road and dotted throughout the area, which helps to further filter views towards the southern extent.



Image EDP 3: Line of mature trees marking the northern edge of Shaw Cemetery.

- 4.16 Further south, properties along the northern edge of Cromwell Road are afforded heavily filtered views towards the eastern parcel, restricted by the vegetation within and along the cemetery boundary.
- 4.17 Users of the B4009 heading north out of Newbury are afforded glimpsed transient views into the site both east and west, however this is heavily restricted by the mature hedgerow running along both sides of the road. Pedestrians accessing Cold Ash Footpath 13 from the town are afforded a glimpsed view towards the eastern parcel, however the footway terminates approximately 80m south of the boundary limiting any potential for further views (**Photoviewpoint EDP 10**). Views further south along the road are screened by intervening vegetation and development.
- 4.18 A small number of properties along Highworth Close are afforded open views into the site from rear gardens and upper storeys as they back on to the site. The boundary between the two comprises a hedgerow with occasional tree planting, however opportunities for additional views along this road are screened by development.
- 4.19 To the west, Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3 runs along the entirety of the site's western boundary, providing access between Newbury to the south and the wider landscape to the north, including the North Wessex Downs AONB. The southern section of the bridleway sits within a well vegetated corridor (Image EDP 4), affording only occasional glimpsed views through gaps in vegetation (Photoviewpoint EDP 1). As the bridleway continues north, it opens out as it meets the access track to Highwood Farm, affording open views across all three parcels of land from the site's northern tip (Photoviewpoint EDP 2). The elevation of this location allows views to traffic movement along the B4009, visible above the hedgerow, and the built form of Newbury, apparent through the large trees on the northern boundary of Shaw Cemetery.



Image EDP 4: Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3 within enclosed corridor along site's western boundary.

- 4.20 Further north along the Bridleway, the topography rises in elevation which allows open views towards the site (**Photoviewpoint EDP 3**). However, the elevated topography also affords the receptor a 180° panorama across the valley, including built form along the B4009 and the northern edge of Newbury.
- 4.21 Further west, views towards the are screened by intervening vegetation and topography.

Interim Summary of Visual Amenity

- 4.22 Overall, the site is visually well contained by vegetation along the site boundaries and the wooded valley sides to the east and west. Key findings of the visual analysis are as follows:
 - There is no intervisibility between the site and the North Wessex Downs AONB, approximately 1.8km to the north, due to intervening topography;
 - The site is generally well screened from users of the B4009 on the northern approaches
 to Newbury, with occasional glimpses afforded both east and west through gaps in the
 hedgerow which runs along both sides of the road;
 - The heavily vegetated dismantled railway along the eastern boundary screens any
 potential close views from Cold Ash Footpath 14, to the south, while open and filtered
 views are afforded from this route as it rises in elevation towards Stone Copse to the
 north-east. Where there are views to the site it is generally seen within the context of
 the built form at Newbury immediately to the south;
 - To the south, users of Cold Ash Footpath 13 are afforded open views into the site's eastern parcel, with views towards the west heavily filtered by vegetation along the B4009. Users of Shaw Cemetery and Cromwell Road further south will have filtered views through intervening vegetation; and

• Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3 runs along the outside of the entirety of the western boundary. Views from this route towards the site range from occasional glimpses, from its southern extent, to open views across further to the north. Elevated panoramic views further north along the route are available, where the site is seen along the valley floor adjacent to movement along the B4009 and the built form of Newbury in the background. This page has been left blank intentionally

Section 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Development Proposals

- 5.1 The potential development of the site for residential development should consider the landscape and visual sensitivities identified within this report, and seek to mitigate potential effects insofar as is possible, so as to reduce these to an acceptable level and integrate the site into its context at the northern edge of Newbury.
- 5.2 With this in mind, any proposals for development of this site should include visual screening along its northern boundary. It is likely that this could be achieved, with time, by retaining and reinforcing existing planting, where present, and establishing a new, substantial, woodland belt, as illustrated on the Concept Masterplan at **Appendix EDP 1.** This planting belt would need to be a minimum of 15m wide with buildings offset from it by a sufficient distance to allow for tree fall without risk. The northern site boundary forms the most elevated section of the site, so introducing planting in this location will help mitigate any visual effects on users of Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3 further north. Nonetheless, such screening would take some years to mature to the point that it would form an effective screen, as illustrated on the Concept Masterplan at **Appendix EDP 1**. Further testing would be needed to inform design proposals going forward, to ensure that any screening is appropriate and effective.
- 5.3 It should be noted that the site sits within a valley where the valley sides are well wooded and form a characteristic feature of this landscape. The proposed mitigation is not only likely to be effective, but appropriate in this landscape context and would not be an incongruous or inappropriate new landscape component.
- 5.4 Other landscape and visual considerations for development of the site would include:
 - Protection and enhancement of the existing site boundary hedgerows and protection
 of vegetation beyond the site boundaries, notably the woodland along the western
 boundary and the dismantled railway to the east;
 - Retention and enhancement of existing hedgerow planting along field boundaries to help biodiversity and help filter views from surrounding PRoW network;
 - Incorporate the PRoW running along the outside of the southern boundary into a substantial green corridor and with sensitive adjacent development and linking to a Green Infrastructure network across the site;
 - Consideration of views from the elevated PRoW to the east of the site as it descends
 the landscape adjacent to Stone Copse. Additional woodland and hedgerow planting
 within the proposed Green Infrastructure will help assimilate the proposed built form
 into the landscape. Setting development back a minimum of 15m from the western

site boundary will ensure built form does not create a prominent feature in available views from the most elevated edges of the site;

- Incorporating green fingers that run up the western slopes of the site connecting to the vegetation along the western boundary will be key in breaking up the built form to ensure it is not seen as a single block from elevated receptors to the east; and
- Consideration of the visual amenity of adjacent properties at Highwood Farm and along the south-western site boundary.

Overall Preliminary Conclusions in Respect of Landscape and Visual Amenity

- 5.5 The site is not located within and does not contain a designated landscape; the North Wessex Downs AONB falls approximately 1.8km to the north. There is no intervisibility between the site and the AONB and it is considered that there will be no effects on its setting due to the distance and topography.
- 5.6 Perhaps of the main consideration is the potential for the western and northern edges of any development of the site to be prominent in views from the wider landscape to the north and east. At present, receptors here have some perception of the northern edge of Newbury and the B4009, so reducing their sensitivity to development to some degree, but minimisation of further potential effects would be beneficial. As such, in designing the scheme, consideration should be given to a development buffer along the western boundary, to ensure development does not rise too far up the valley side and so minimise its visibility in views from the east, as well as a significant tree belt along the northern boundary to limit views into the site.
- 5.7 On this basis, and if the recommendations set out above can be integrated into the scheme, as illustrated by the Concept Masterplan, it should be possible to develop a scheme which provides new housing and other facilities while respecting the sensitivity of the site and thereby minimising adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Any future planning application for the site should be informed by this baseline report and proposals should be assessed against it in the form of a full Landscape and Visual Assessment.

Appendix EDP 1 Concept Masterplan

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Land at Long Lane, Newbury

drawing title
Concept Masterplan

Appendix EDP 2

Methodology: Tables Defining the Thresholds and Definitions of Terminology used in this Appraisal

A2.1 Landscape and Visual assessments are separate, though linked, procedures. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape fabric, which may give rise to changes in its character, and how this is experienced. Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the perception of the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

Table EDP A2.1: Defining the sensitivity of the landscape baseline

EDP Assess	sment Terminology and Definitions		
Landscape	Baseline - Overall Sensitivity		
Very High	Value: Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors.		
	Susceptibility: Strong/distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.		
High	Value : Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.		
	Susceptibility: Many distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.		
Medium	Value: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.		
	Susceptibility: Some distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.		
Low	Value: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.		
	Susceptibility : Few distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.		
Very Low	Value: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.		
	Susceptibility : Absence of distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change.		

Table EDP A2.2: Defining the sensitivity of the visual baseline

Visual Base	eline - Overall Sensitivity
Very High	Value/Susceptibility : View is: designed/has intentional association with surroundings; recorded in published material; from a publicly accessible heritage asset/designated/promoted viewpoint; nationally/internationally designated right of way; protected/recognised in planning policy designation.
	Examples : May include views from residential properties; National Trails; promoted holiday road routes; designated countryside/landscape features with public access; visitors to heritage assets of national importance; Open Access Land.
High	Value/Susceptibility: View of clear value but may not be formally recognised, e.g. framed view of scenic value or destination/summit views; inferred that it may have value for local residents; locally promoted route or PRoW.
	Examples: May include from recreational locations where there is some appreciation of the visual context/landscape e.g. golf, fishing; themed rights of way with a local association; National Trust land; panoramic viewpoints marked on OS maps; road routes promoted in tourist guides and/or for their scenic value.
Medium	Value/Susceptibility: View is not widely promoted or recorded in published sources; may be typical of those experienced by an identified receptor; minor road routes through rural/scenic areas.
	Examples : May include people engaged in outdoor sport not especially influenced by an appreciation of the wider landscape e.g. pitch sports; views from minor road routes passing through rural or scenic areas.
Low	Value/Susceptibility: View of clearly lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.
	Examples : May include major road routes; rail routes; receptor is at a place of work but visual surroundings have limited relevance.
Very Low	Value/Susceptibility: View may be affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.
	Examples : May include people at their place of work, indoor recreational or leisure facilities or other locations where views of the wider landscape have little or no importance.

Magnitude of Change

- A2.2 The magnitude of any landscape or visual change is determined through a range of considerations particular to each receptor. The three attributes considered in defining the magnitude are:
 - Scale of change;
 - Geographical extent; and
 - Duration and reversibility/proportion.
- A2.3 **Table EDP A2.3** below provides an indication of the criteria by which the geographical extent of the area will be affected within this assessment.

Table EDP A2.3: Geographical Extent Criteria

Landscape Receptors	Visual Receptor Criteria
Large-scale effects influencing several landscape types or character areas	Direct views at close range with changes over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.
Effects at the scale of the landscape type or character areas within which the proposal lies	Direct or oblique views at close range with changes over a notable horizontal and/or vertical extent.
Effects within the immediate landscape setting of the site	Direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects at the site level (within the development site itself)	Oblique views at medium or long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects only experienced on parts of the site at a very localised level	Long range views with a negligible part of the view affected.

A2.4 The third, and final, factor, in determining the predicted magnitude of change is duration and reversibility. Duration and reversibility are separate but linked considerations. Duration is judged according to the defined terms set out below, whereas reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation. The categories used in this assessment are set out in **Tables EDP A2.4** and **A2.5**.

Table EDP A2.4: Factors influencing judgements on magnitude of change

Duration	Reversibility
Long Term (20+ years)	Permanent with unlikely restoration to original state e.g. major road corridor, power station, urban extension, hydrocarbons.
Medium to long term (10 to 20 years)	Permanent with possible conversion to original state e.g. agricultural buildings, retail units.
Medium term (5 to 10 years)	Partially reversible to a different state e.g. mineral workings.
Short term (1 – 5 years)	Reversible after decommissioning to a similar original state e.g. renewable energy development.
Temporary (less than 12 months)	Quickly reversible e.g. temporary structures.

Table EDP A2.5: Defining the magnitude of change to the landscape and visual baseline

Magnitude of Change			
(Considers So	(Considers Scale of Proposal/Geographical Extent/Duration and Reversibility/Proportion)		
Very High	Landscape : Total loss/major alteration to key receptors/characteristics of the baseline; addition of elements that strongly conflict or integrate with the baseline.		
	Visual : Substantial change to the baseline, forming a new, defining focus and having a defining influence on the view.		

Magnitude of C	hange
High	Landscape: Notable loss/alteration/addition to one or more key receptors/-characteristics of the baseline; or addition of prominent conflicting elements. Visual: Additions are clearly noticeable and part of the view would be fundamentally altered.
Medium	Landscape: Partial loss/alteration to one or more key receptors/characteristics; addition of elements that are evident but do not necessarily conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape. Visual: The proposed development will form a new and recognisable element within the view which is likely to be recognised by the receptor.
Landscape: Minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape recept characteristics; additional elements may not be uncharacteristic within existing landscape. Visual: Proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.	
Very Low	Landscape: Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape. Visual: Proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view, whilst slightly altered, would be similar to the baseline.
Imperceptible	In some circumstances, changes at representative viewpoints or receptors will be lower than 'Very Low' and changes will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to negligible effects.

Predicted Effects

A2.5 In order to consider the likely level of any effect, the sensitivity of each receptor is combined with the predicted magnitude of change to determine the level of effect, with reference also made to the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the effect within the assessment. Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the level of effect can be derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix in **Table EDP A2.6.**

Table EDP A2.6: Determining the predicted levels of effects to the landscape and visual baseline

Overall Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude of Change				
Overall Selisitivity	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/- Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/- Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible
Very Low	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/- Negligible	Negligible	Negligible/ None

Table EDP A2.7: Definition of effects

Definition of Effects	
Substantial	Effects that are in complete variance to the baseline landscape resource or visual amenity.
Major or Major/Moderate	Effects that result in noticeable alterations to much (<i>Major effect</i>) or some (<i>Moderate/Major effect</i>) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Moderate	Effects that result in noticeable alterations to a few of the key characteristics of the baseline landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Minor or Minor/Negligible	Effects that result in slight alterations to some (<i>Minor effect</i>) or a few (<i>Minor/Negligible</i>) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Negligible or Negligible/None	Effects that result in barely perceptible alterations to a few (Negligible effect) or some (Negligible/None effect) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
None	No detectable alteration to the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.

- A2.6 Effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. The landscape effects will be considered against the landscape baseline, which includes published landscape strategies or policies if they exist. Changes involving the addition of large-scale man-made objects are typically considered to be adverse, unless otherwise stated, as they are not usually actively promoted as part of published landscape strategies.
- A2.7 Visual effects are more subjective as people's perception of development varies through the spectrum of negative, neutral and positive attitudes. In the assessment of visual effects, the assessor will exercise objective professional judgement in assessing the level of effects and, unless otherwise stated, will assume that all effects are adverse, thus representing the worst-case scenario. Effects can be moderated by maturation of landscape strategies.
- A2.8 The timescale of each effect is also important, and effects are generally assessed at time stamps in the whole development life cycle: temporary (at a mid-point in construction), short-term (completion at year 1), medium-term (typically 15 years), medium- to long-term (15+ years). In some cases, the operational phase of a scheme could be considered 'temporary'.

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Plans

Plan EDP 1 Site Location and Environmental Planning Context

(edp6880_d008a 29 January 2021 AH/TR)

Plan EDP 2 Site Character and Local Context

(edp6880_d010a 29 January 2021 AH/TR)

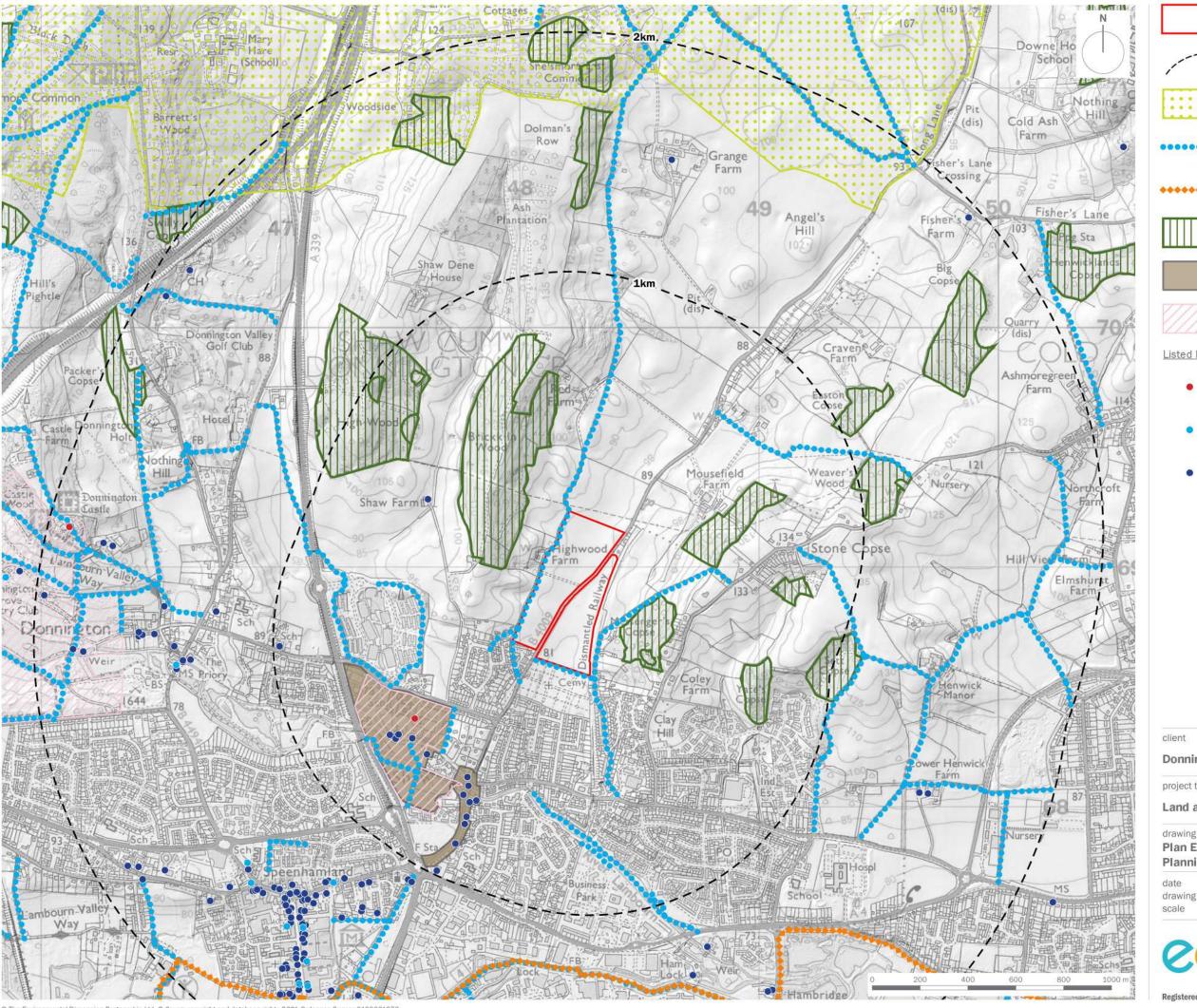
Plan EDP 3 Topography

(edp6880_d009a 29 January 2021 AH/TR)

Plan EDP 4 Findings of EDP's Visual Appraisal

(edp6880_d012a 29 January 2021 AH/TR)

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Site Boundary

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ Public Rights of Way



Reference Points

- 1. Eastern Slopes of Dolman's Row
- 2. Wooded Valley Sides
- 3. Highwood Farm
- 4. Access Track to Highwood Farm
- 5. Northern Boundary Comprising 1.2m High Post and Wire Fencing and Occasional Scrub
- 6. Dismantled Railway Wooded Corridor
- 7. Shaw Cemetery
- 8. Properties at Cromwell Road
- 9. Properties along Highwood Close

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drawing title

Plan EDP 2: Site Character and Local Context

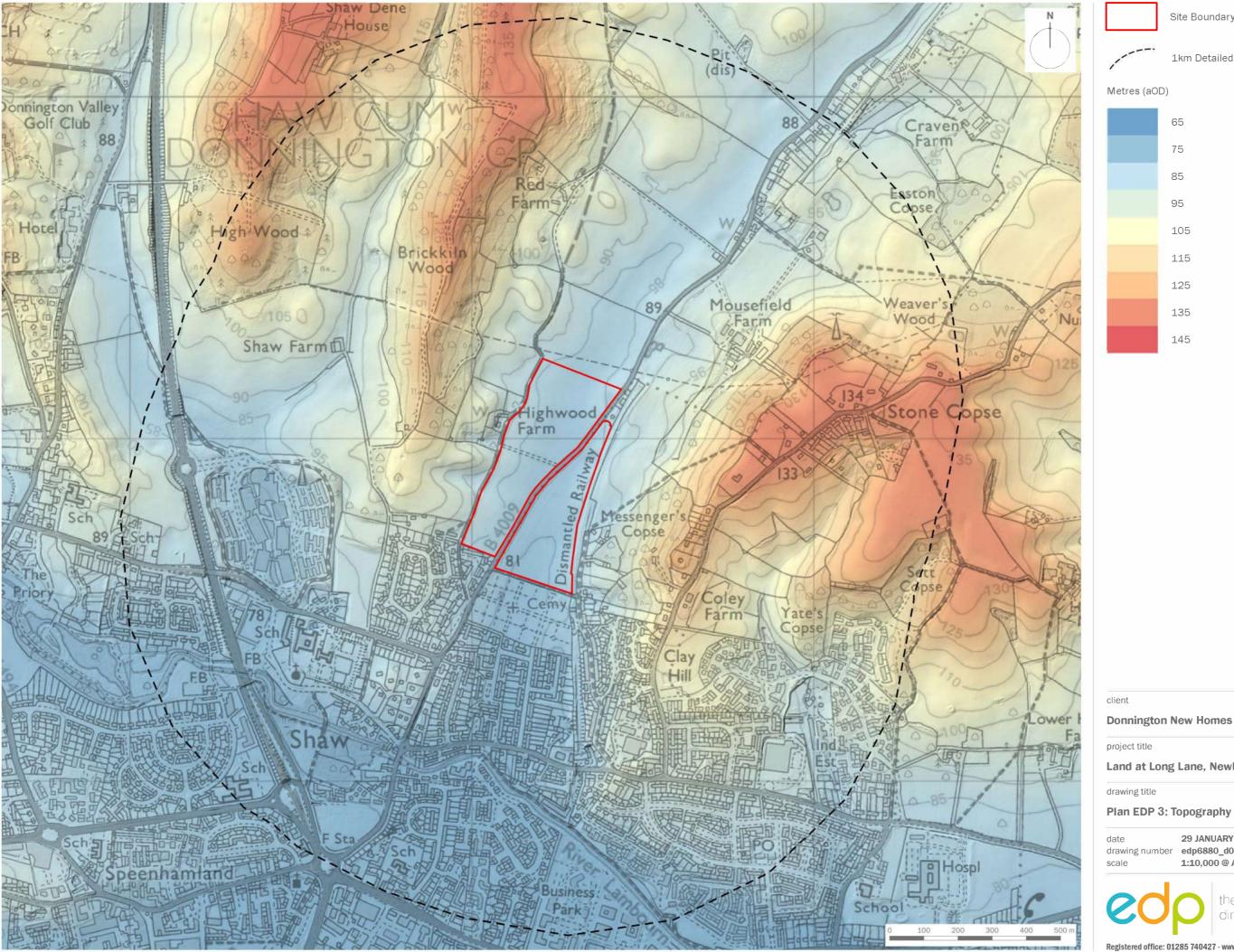
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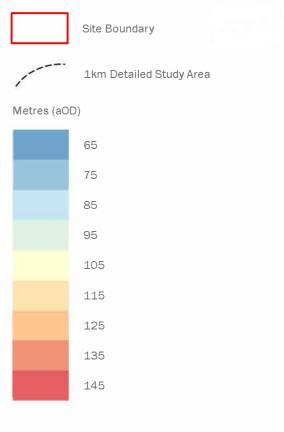
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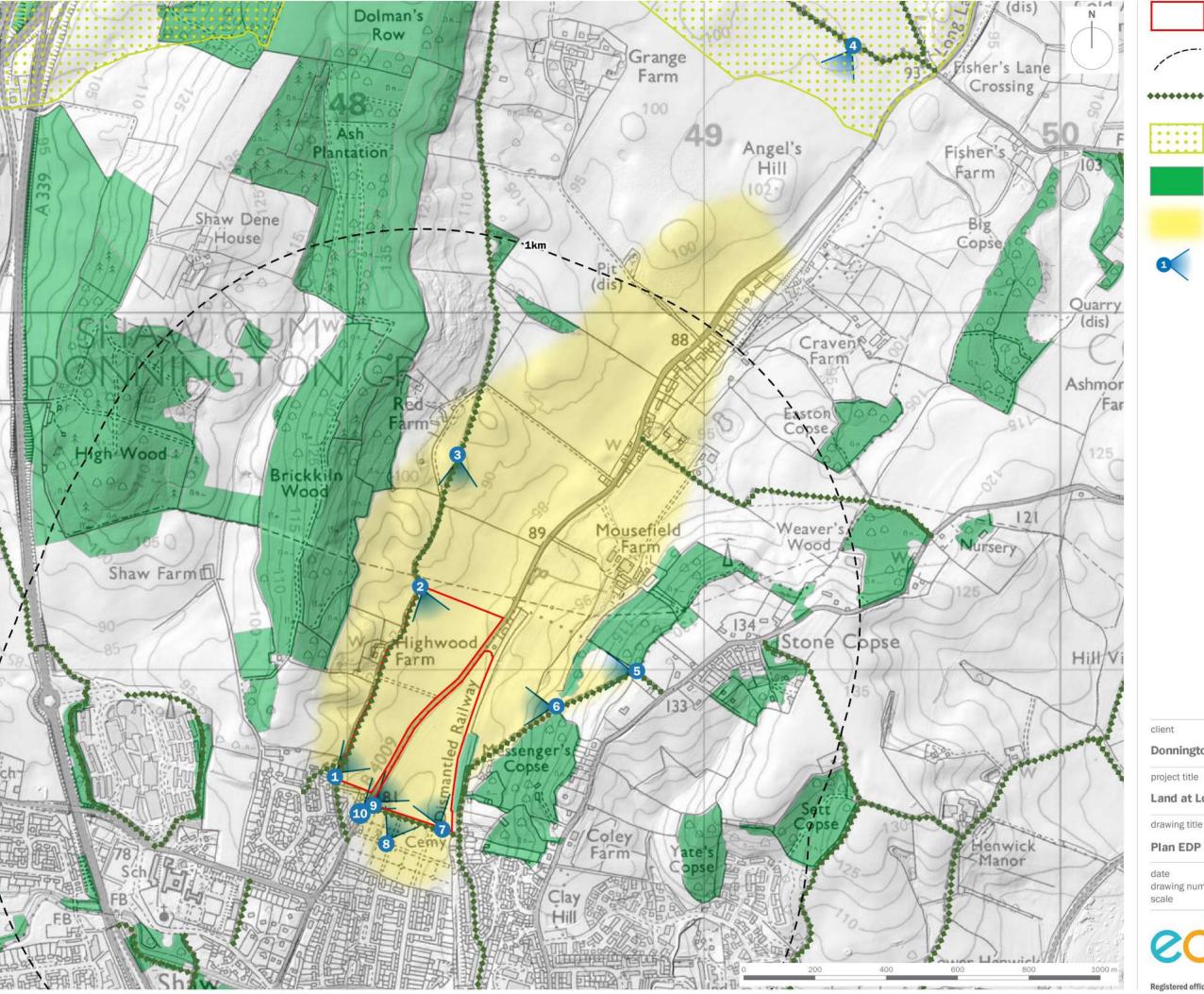
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Plan EDP 4: Findings of EDP's Visual Appraisal

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Photoviewpoints

(edp6880_d011a 29 January 2021 GY/AH)

Photoviewpoint EDP 1	Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3 immediately south-west of site
Photoviewpoint EDP 2	Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3 in site's northern corner
Photoviewpoint EDP 3	Elevated view south form Shaw-Cum-Donnington Bridleway 3
Photoviewpoint EDP 4	Elevated view south from Chieveley Byway 33 within AONB
Photoviewpoint EDP 5	Elevated view south-west from Cold Ash Footpath 14 adjacent to Stone Copse
Photoviewpoint EDP 6	Elevated view south-west from Cold Ash Footpath 14
Photoviewpoint EDP 7	View from Cold Ash Footpath 13 across eastern parcel
Photoviewpoint EDP 8	View north from main access track within Shaw Cemetery
Photoviewpoint EDP 9	View as Cold Ash Footpath 13 enters eastern parcel from Long Lane
Photoviewpoint EDP 10	View north from pedestrian footway on Long Lane

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date 29 JANUARY 2021
drawing number edp6880_d011a
drawn by GY
checked AH
QA JTF

drawing title Photoviewpoint EDP 1

client **Donnington New Homes** project title Land at Long Lane, Newbury



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Enlargement Factor: 96% @ A1 width Focal Length: 50mm

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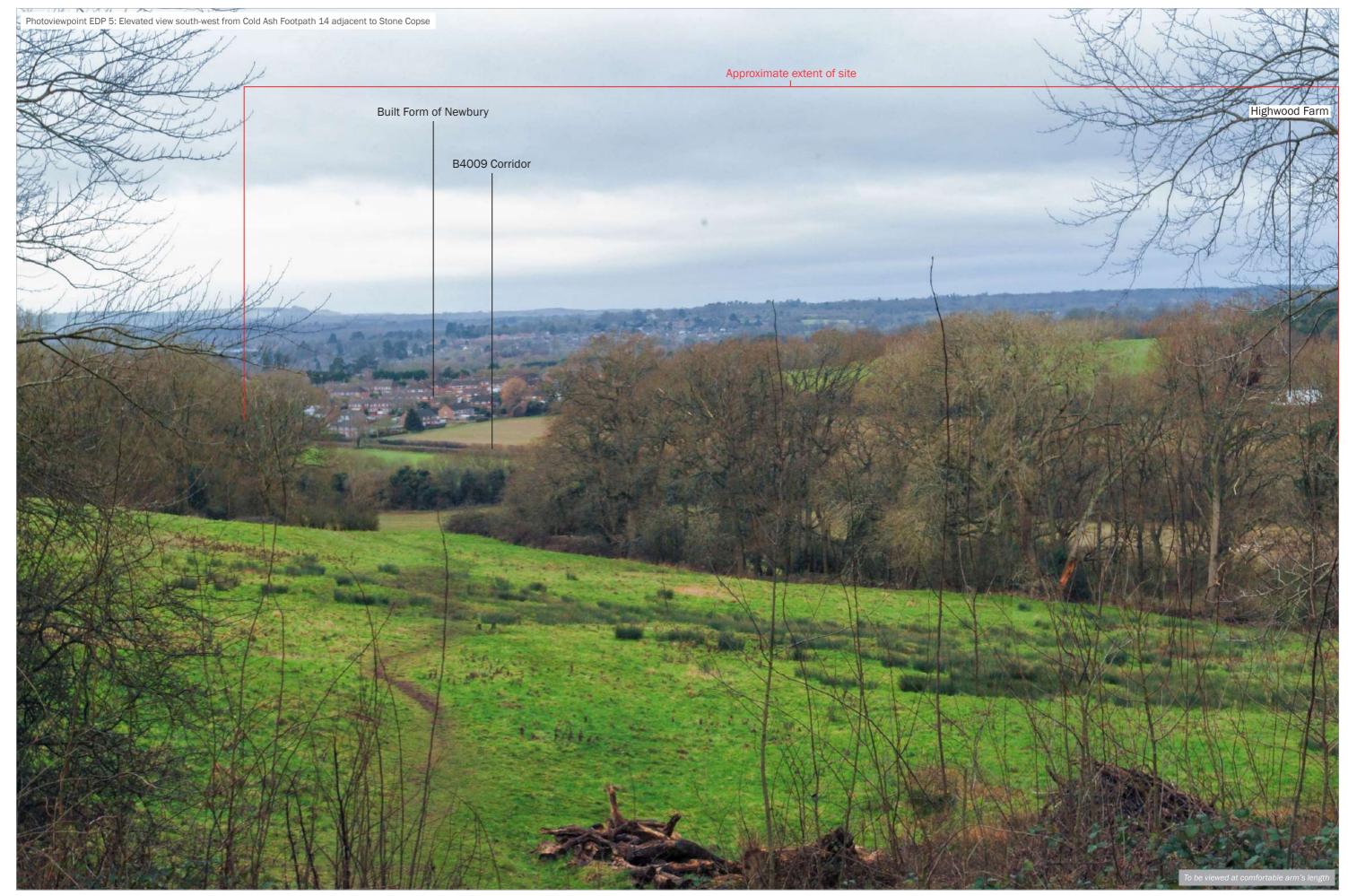
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drawing number drawn by GY
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QA JTF







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drawing number edp6880_d011a
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Enlargement Factor: 96% @ A1 width Focal Length: 50mm

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Make, Model, Sensor: Nikon D3000, FFS aOD: 85m
Enlargement Factor: 96% @ A1 width Focal Length: 50mm

Distance: 5m

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drawing title Photoviewpoint EDP 7

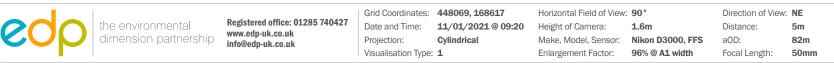
client **Donnington New Homes** project title Land at Long Lane, Newbury



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drawing number drawn by GY
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