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**BRADFIELD SOUTHEND**

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Bradfield Southend</b>
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas:</b>	
LCA 8A Hermitage Wooded Commons	
<b>Date of site survey</b>	7 May 2015
<b>Surveyor</b>	AG

### **Key landscape characteristics of LCA8A**

- Broad undulating plateau
- Intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and small areas of remnant heathland
- Large interconnected woodland blocks (along river Bourne)
- Strong hedgerow pattern with mature trees
- Enclosed and intimate character
- Small irregular fields of informal and piecemeal enclosures
- Intricate network of rural lanes, many sunken and overhung with woodland
- Ancient and semi-natural woodland
- Reorganised fields and paddocks, formerly pre 18th C irregular fields (HLC)
- Blurring of the urban/rural boundary as result of introduction of paddocks (HECZ)
- Network of lanes with old hedgebanks (NDLCA LCT15)
- Linear woodland (NDLCA LCT15)

### **Key visual characteristics of LCA8A**

- Low wooded horizons

### **Key settlement characteristics of LCA8A**

- Dispersed settlement pattern characteristic of encroachment into woodland and commons
- Linear roadside settlements as at Southend
- Development has extended beyond the settlement boundary
- Original centred on two drove roads
- Mix of farmhouses and poly-focal hamlets with several nuclei clustered around road junctions at Southend (HECZ)
- Housing developments from the 1960s concentrated around the historic settlements of South End, typified by small housing estates and developments constructed around the historic nuclei. Development at South End has shifted the settlement's focus to the south-west and away from the historic core (HECZ)
- Ridgetop roads and settlements (NDLCA LCT15)
- Insensitive modern infill development (NDLCA LCT15)

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

The whole of Bradfield Southend and its hinterland lies within the AONB landscape character area LCA 8A Hermitage Wooded Commons. The village extends along a low ridge at 95 to 100m AOD above the river Bourne valley to the south and the river Pang valley to the north. A minor stream in a shallow valley defines the northern edge of the village. The settlement is largely linear in character, as the historic nucleated hamlets have been linked through more modern housing along Cock Lane and South End Road, although these are linked by development along Heath Road. The settlement edge is fragmented but much more clearly defined at the west end of the village on Cock Lane and at the top of Aldmoor Lane. The village has few open views; with framed views into adjacent fields. The Bourne valley to the south is a local feature and the local tree and hedgerow cover helps to contain the village.

The village still maintains its ridgetop character and largely retains a linear pattern. The impact of modern infill development is partly mitigated by the lack of large or medium sized estates and the open space between Cock Lane and South End Road. The village would benefit from a greater sense of containment and clearer definition to the main approaches into the village. This is already in evidence at Cock Lane and further development beyond the existing boundary here should be resisted. The character of Aldmoor Lane should be conserved and development should not extend down the ridgeline slopes. Minor extensions at each end of South End Road might be achieved without harm to the AONB provided that an opportunity was sought to enhance the settlement edge and the village did not expand beyond any well-defined landscape features.

#### **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)

**A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: BRS006: Land at Ash Grove**



Figure BRS006.1: Site and viewpoint locations



**PHOTOGRAPHS**



Viewpoint 1: View south west from Mariners Lane. Site is screened by the tree belt on the eastern boundary of the site.



Viewpoint 2: View west from a field gate along South End Road. Site is screened by the tree belt (seen beyond the open field) which is on the eastern boundary of the site.



Viewpoint 3: View north east from footpath alongside Bradfield Primary School. The site is largely screened by foreground vegetation and buildings.

## Site description

Site BRS006 is located on the northern side of Bradfield Southend, entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB. The site's southern boundary is adjacent to the school field of Bradfield Primary School and a small, recent housing estate, all accessed off Cock Lane. Otherwise the site's western, northern, and eastern boundaries are adjacent to the surrounding countryside. The eastern boundary is formed by a tree belt, with a wooded stream corridor forming the western boundary and with a hedge along the northern boundary. The site is flat to undulating, dropping to the stream on the western edge. From aerial photograph the field appears to be used as pasture. The site is very difficult to view from publicly accessible viewpoints and has very little intervisibility with the village, except with the school and houses immediately adjacent to the site.

### Relationship with adjacent settlement

- The site is adjacent to loose built form on its southern boundary, but extends beyond the current settlement edge
- The site is at the edge of the plateau on which the village sits
- There is very little intervisibility with the wider village
- Urban edge largely well vegetated, but partially open along the southern boundary
- Settlement between Heath Road and South End Road has been infilled with small scale developments increasing the width of the built form but generally retaining the linearity, particularly along Cock Lane between the school and South End Road
- The western edge of the settlement either side of Cock Lane is clearly defined by the stream corridor

### Relationship with adjacent wider countryside

- Strong relationship with the wider AONB and typical of the LCA
- Part of the intricate mosaic of woodland, pasture and larger arable fields
- Strong pattern of hedgerows and woodland
- Largely enclosed landscape
- Part of the tranquil landscape north of Bradfield Southend
- No public rights of way across the site or links to the wider countryside

**Impact on key landscape characteristics**

- Potential loss of significant tree belts
- Loss of matrix of woodland and pasture which has links with the wider landscape
- Loss of visual and aural tranquillity

**Impact on key visual characteristics**

- The site is well screened from within Bradfield Southend and the wider countryside

**Impact on key settlement characteristics**

- Development of the whole site would result in substantial 'backland' extension to the existing development north of Cock Lane and erosion of the linear pattern of much of the village
- Limited visual and physical connections with the existing built form

**Summary of compliance with NPPF**

Development on the whole of this site would result in harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB. However, the south eastern part of the site, adjacent to the settlement edge could be developed without harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.

**Recommendations**

Part of this site may be suitable for further consideration as a housing site as shown in figure BRS006.2 subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB and to generally retain the linear settlement pattern of the village:

- Development is contained in the south eastern part of the site adjacent to the settlement edge
- The retention of existing trees
- The provision of a tree belt to contain the housing on the northern edge, continuing along the northern edge of the school grounds and linking the tree belt on the eastern edge with the wooded stream corridor on the western boundary.
- The preferred access from Cock Lane, subject to an assessment of the impact on existing trees.
- A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site.



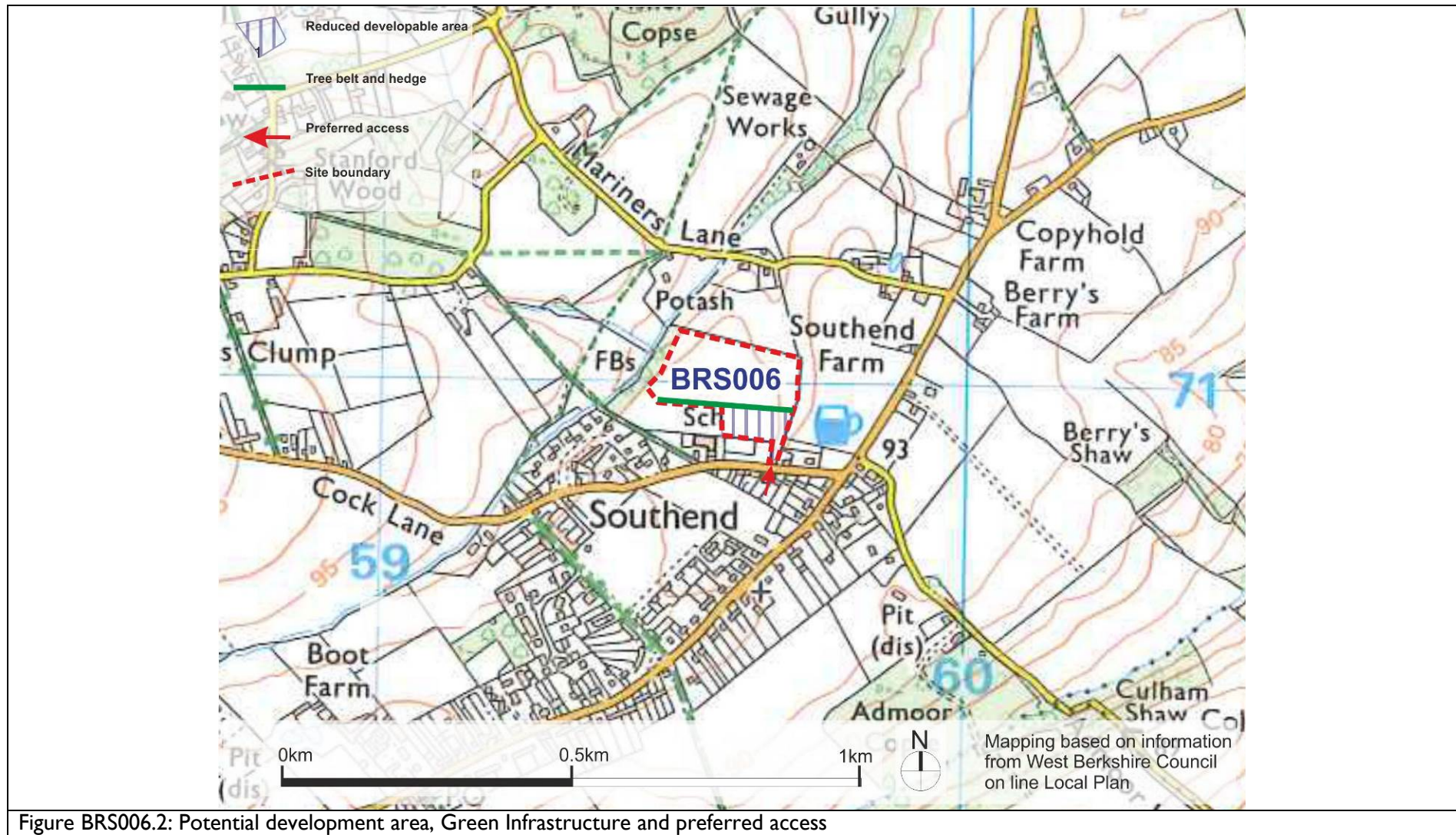


Figure BRS006.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access