

## COMPTON

<b>Settlement</b>	Compton
<b>North Wessex Downs AONB Character areas:</b>	LCA ID Blewbury Downs open downland
<b>Date of site survey</b>	7 May 2015
<b>Surveyor</b>	AG

PLAN OF SETTLEMENT AND SITES COM 009/010/011 AND COM 012

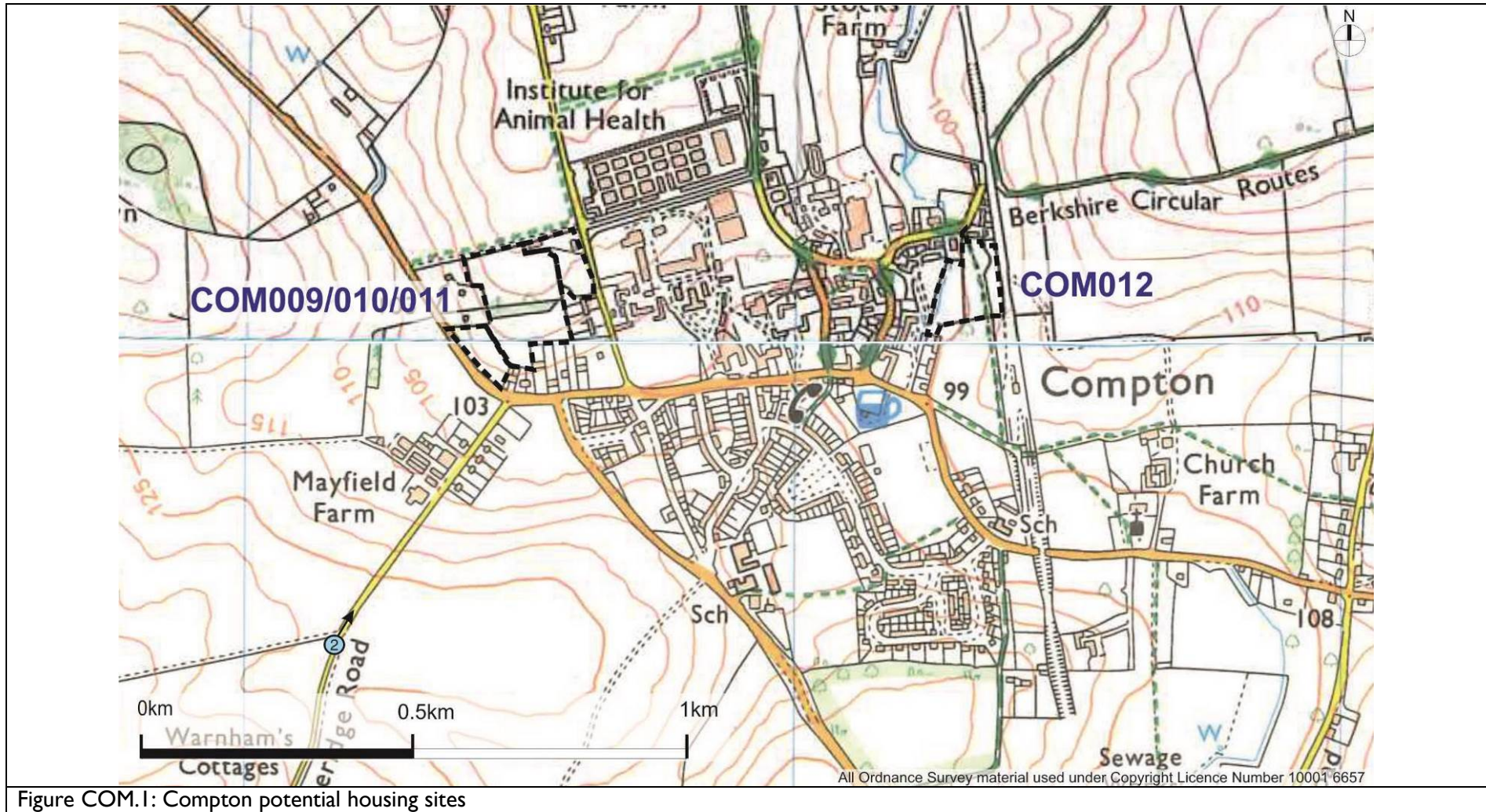


Figure COM.1: Compton potential housing sites

### Key landscape characteristics

#### AONB LCA ID Blewbury Downs (unless source noted otherwise)

- Strong structural landform of elevated downland with round or flat topped hills
- Intersecting dry valleys
- Large open landscape of rectilinear fields with little subdivision
- Dominated by arable farmland with sparse woodland on the tops
- Little enclosure
- Racehorse gallops and equestrian centres
- Numerous rights of way including the Ridgeway
- Sense of remoteness
- Some skyline tree belts and sparse hedgerow trees (NDLCA LCT1)
- Southern boundary of the village is marked by the extensive tree belts and woodlands (NDLCA LCT1)
- Upper winterborne section of the river Pang on the eastern boundary of the village and where appropriate new development should have due regard for any rise in the water table. (VDS)
- Important area of meadow at Stocks Farm west of the railway line (VDS)
- Historically most land to the north of the Pang was downland grazing, with open fields to the south (HECZ Upper Pang Valley)

### Key visual characteristics

#### AONB LCA ID Blewbury Downs (unless source noted otherwise)

- Long views
- Valleys often concealed from view by the landform (NDLCA LCT1)
- Area is noted visually for its broad sweeping lines and the vastness of the wide horizons
- Views out from the village to the Downs (VDS)

### Key settlement characteristics

#### AONB LCA ID Blewbury Downs (unless source noted otherwise)

- More settled than other areas of open downland
- Villages nestle at the heads of dry valleys
- The more major roads and lanes tend to follow the valley bottoms (NDLCA LCT1)
- Nucleated settlement (BLCA E4 Farnborough open downlands)
- Compton has a more modern character with 'business park' like buildings (BLCA E4 Farnborough open downlands)
- East Compton is a cluster of sporadic residential dwellings, originally clustered around the church. This area is visually and physically distanced from the remainder of the village by the railway line (VDS)
- Older housing in small groups lies north of the High Street, much of which is in the Conservation Area (VDS)
- South of High Street the estates are larger post war and modern but do not form a solid mass (VDS)
- The village benefits from private and public open green spaces within the village boundary (VDS)
- Industrial buildings on the eastern boundary are visible on the skyline (VDS)
- Economically diverse village with good community facilities reflected in its buildings and built form (CPP)

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

The whole of Compton and its hinterland lie within the AONB landscape character area LCA ID Blewbury Downs. It is recommended that an overriding objective should be that the village remain small and contained within its dry valley setting and ensure that the wider landscape retains its visual qualities and sense of relative remoteness. The northern side of Compton is noted for its openness and it is very important that no development should be visually intrusive. The existing Pirbright Institute site currently detracts from the character of the village (except where it abuts the High Street) and the special qualities of the AONB, and opportunities should be sought to remedy this. Compton also lies on the transition of open downs to the more wooded hillsides to the south, whereby the existing tree cover in the south of the village is of particular value. Most of the settlement lies on lower flat ground at 100 – 115m AOD, either side of the main route through the village, and west of the River Pang, whose winterbourne upper section passes along the eastern side of the village. Any proposed development which would result in the loss of woodland cover, would extend up onto higher ground, or would lead to the loss of views into the open countryside is likely to have a detrimental effect on the special qualities of the AONB and the settlement of Compton.

The village is also noted for its pattern of generous open spaces within the settlement, many of which are linked visually or physically and lead the eye into the surrounding countryside. The village also has a distinctive settlement pattern. The two settlements of Compton and East Compton have distinct characters which should be maintained. The strong rural character of East Compton is a special feature of this area and a valuable contrast to the more modern and economically vibrant main village. The historic core and the pattern of small development plots in Compton require that the scale of any development is important. East Compton would not be able to accommodate any housing in even small estates without significant harm to the AONB. Any proposed development needs to respect these characteristics.

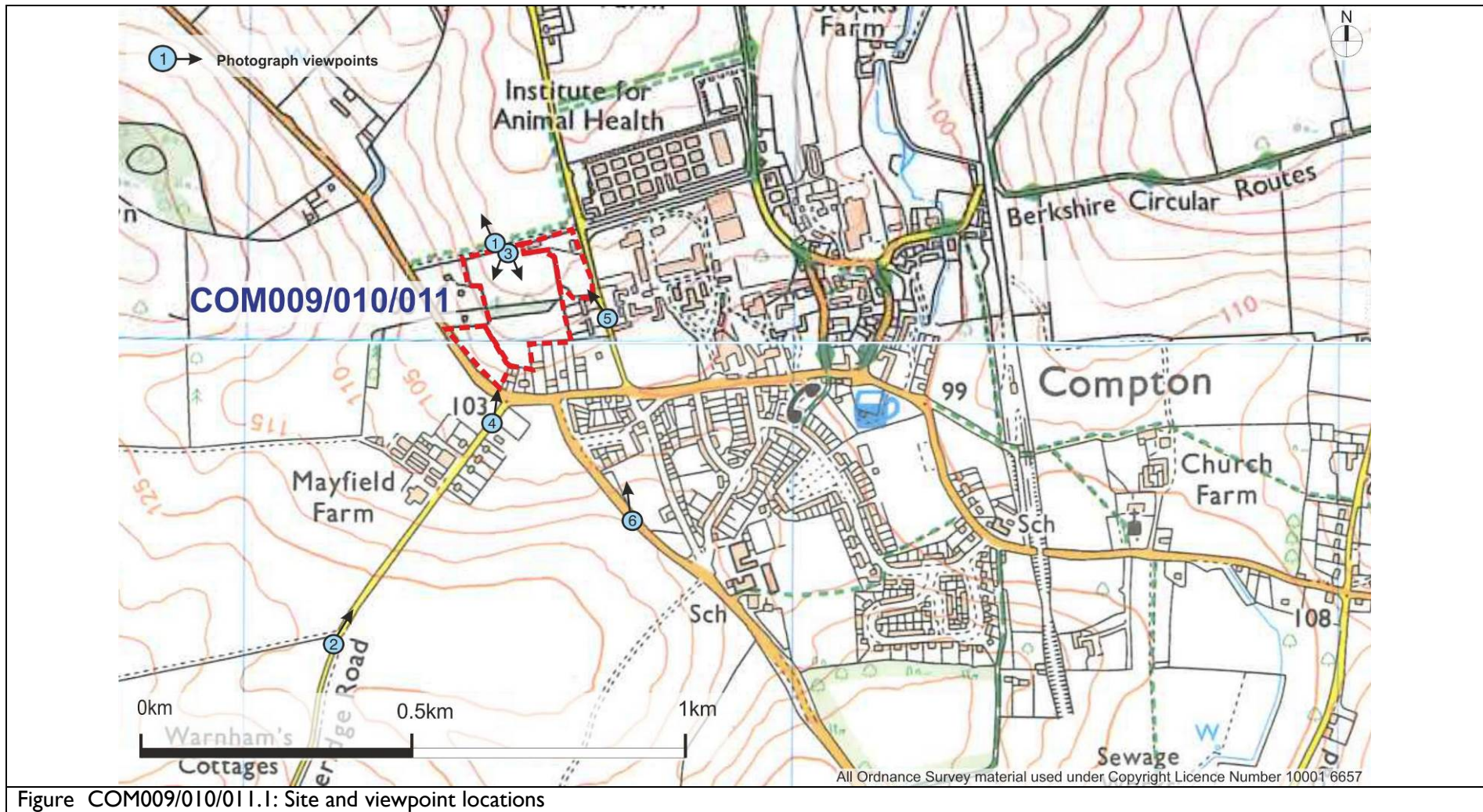
Although Compton has a large site on the edge of the settlement which has long been under some form of development, the development of large and homogeneous estates would detract from the special qualities of this area. Great care will also be needed to minimise the impact on the landscape character of the surrounding AONB, through limitations on the scale of development and generous provision of linked open space, and to mitigate the existing harm to the AONB landscape from intrusive built form as at the Pirbright Institute site and the industrial buildings.

**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)
- Compton Parish Plan (CPP)
- Compton Village Design Statement (VDS)

**A. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: COM009/010/011: Land between Ilsley Road and Churn Road, Compton**



**PHOTOGRAPHS**



Viewpoint 1: Long views north from PRoW along northern boundary. Built form on higher ground in northern part of site would be widely visible from the AONB



Viewpoint 2: View from Cheseridge Road on high ground to south west. Parts of site would be visible in winter amongst trees between white shed roofs and silo



Viewpoint 3: The northern part of site visually prominent in views from the PRoW along northern boundary



Viewpoint 4: The southern part of site (COM011 and part of COM009) is visually prominent and forms a wooded skyline in views from the valley to the south (from Ilsley Road)





Viewpoint 5: View of COM010 from Churn Road – forms skyline from down the hill.



Viewpoint 6: View north from Newbury Road. Higher parts of COM009 and COM010 are visible.

### Site description

Site COM009/010/011 is located on the western edge of Compton on the north side of the main road passing through the village, on land rising northwards between 100m AOD and 120m AOD. The site, which is entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB, comprises one field to the north west which is separated by an area of tree / scrub woodland from the southern part of site which extends to meet Ilsley Road. In the north east there is a small field on rising ground, with Churn Road forming the eastern boundary and houses to the south. The northern fields are on the brow of the hillside which rolls over to the north where the land continues to rise to the Compton Downs. Both fields are used as pasture. The northern boundary has a public right of way just beyond the boundary. Long views northwards are possible from the PRoW and the higher ground within the site in the north west. The southern part of the site is contained by the settlement to the south east, with large gardens containing mature trees to the west.

<p><b>Relationship with adjacent settlement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site lies on western edge of Compton</li> <li>• The northern edge of site extends beyond the 115m contour below which much of the settlement lies</li> <li>• South and south east boundaries are adjacent to settlement</li> <li>• Some intervisibility with parts of the village</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relationship with adjacent wider countryside</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lies on the lower to middle slopes leading up to Compton Downs, but beyond the highest elevation of much of the settlement (115m AOD)</li> <li>• North western part of the site links with the open landscape to the north and forms a transition with the smaller scale landscape in the valley, to which the southern part of the site contributes</li> <li>• The site forms part of the open space of the village which has physical and visual links with the surrounding countryside</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impact on key landscape characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on tree groups / scrub woodland at the interface between the open upper slopes and the more enclosed valley landscape</li> <li>• Impact on character of PRoW adjacent to northern boundary</li> <li>• Topography would require major modification to enable housing development</li> <li>• Loss of visual and aural tranquillity</li> <li>• Loss of locally uncommon pasture</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impact on key visual characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on views from PRoW adjacent to northern boundary</li> <li>• Visual impact on the wider countryside to the north and south within the AONB, including a number of PRoWs and roads</li> <li>• Loss of views out to surrounding countryside from the village edge</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impact on key settlement characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion beyond upper limits of Compton above 115m AOD</li> <li>• Loss of distinctive views to the countryside from the village</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary of compliance with NPPF</b></p> <p>Much of the site is not suitable for development and would result in significant harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>Much of the site is not suitable for development and is constrained by potential visual and landscape harm to the AONB and the settlement pattern. Only part of the relatively enclosed small field in the north east would be suitable for development as shown in figure COM009/010/011.2 and subject to the following requirements to conserve and enhance the AONB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development should be in the form of a continuation of the linear cottages to the south.</li> <li>• Development should be kept off of the higher ground to the north and north west.</li> <li>• A new hedgerow with hedgerow trees should be planted to the western edge, linking two areas of woodland / scrub.</li> </ul>

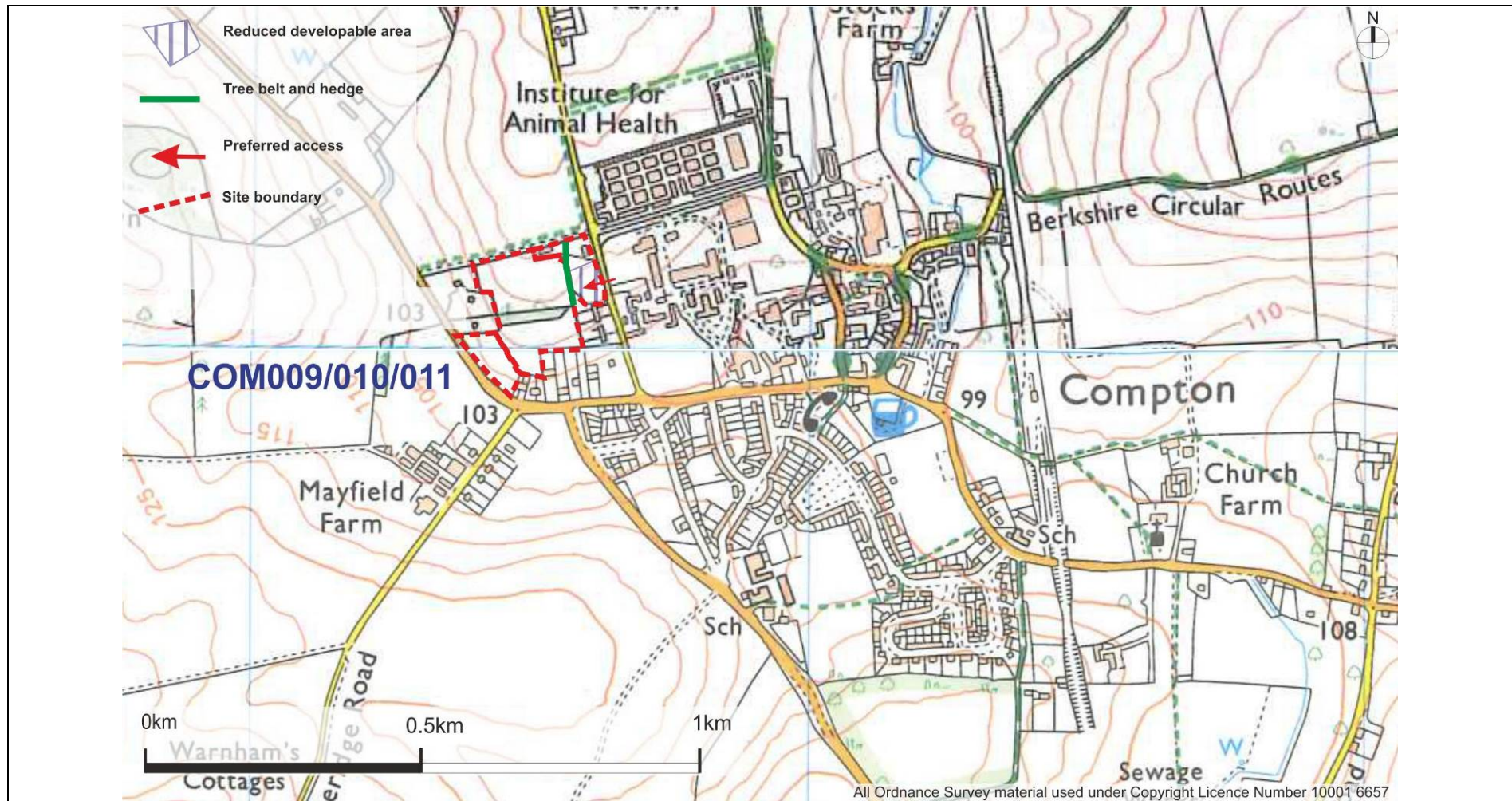
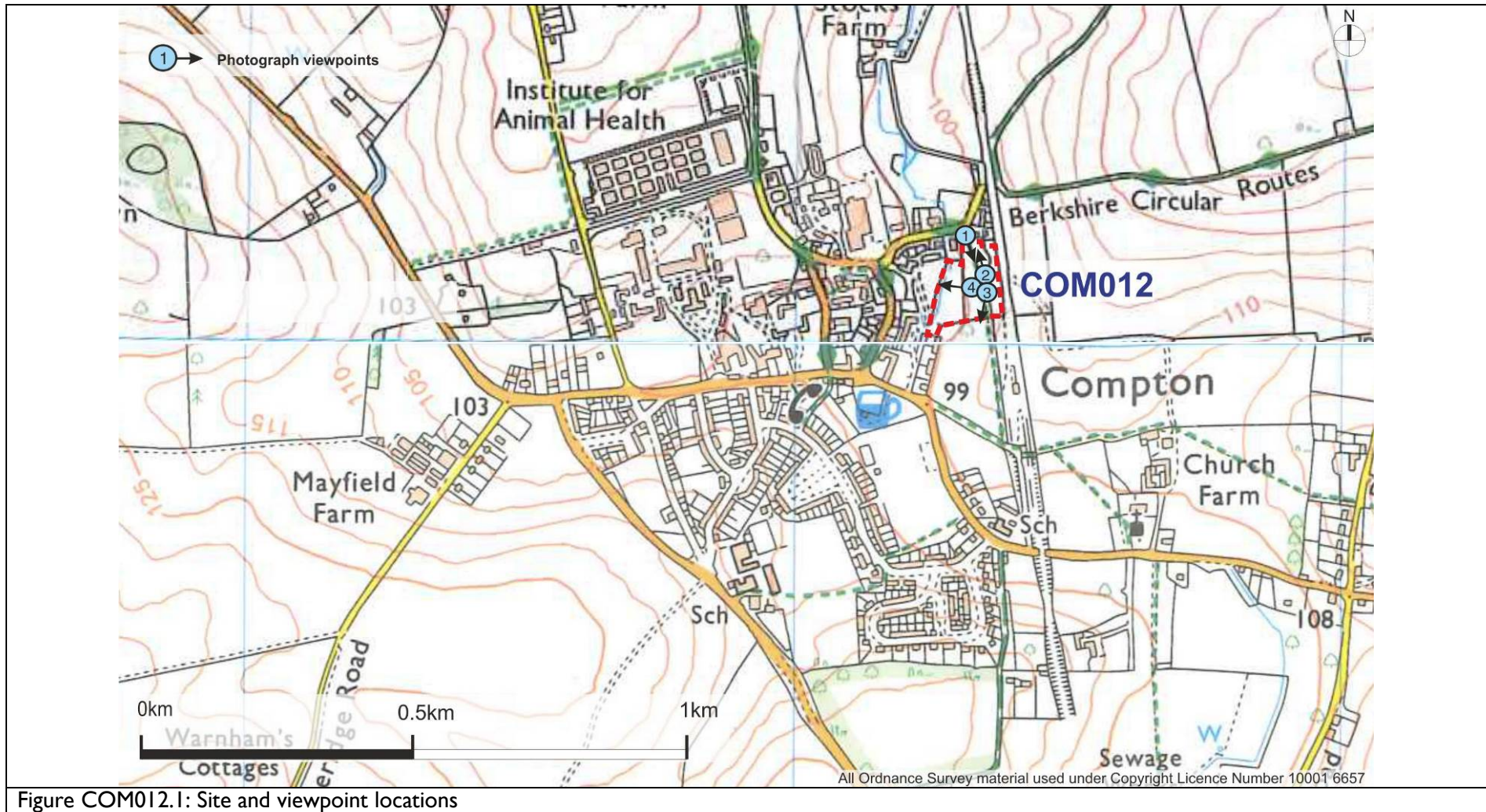


Figure COM009/010/011.2: Potential development area, Green Infrastructure and preferred access

**B. Assessment of Potential Housing Site: COM012: Land off Wallingford Road, Compton**



**PHOTOGRAPHS**



Viewpoint 1: View south from Wallingford Road



Viewpoint 2: View north from public footpath in centre of site



Viewpoint 3: View south west from public footpath in centre of site. Edge of village is well screened by mature trees.



Viewpoint 4: View west from public footpath in centre of site. Edge of village is largely well screened by mature trees. Rodden House and its garden is visible through trees.

### Site description

Site COM012 is located on the north eastern edge of Compton, entirely within the North Wessex Downs AONB and on ground gently rising to the downs to the east of Compton. The site is set back from Wallingford Road, behind houses and accessed from the road in the north western corner of the site between two houses. The eastern boundary is formed by a hedgerow on the line of a dismantled railway and the western boundary by the winterbourne section of the River Pang, with mature trees along much of the boundary, and the large garden of Roden House beyond, which is within the Compton Conservation Area. Rear gardens form the northern and north western edges and the southern boundary is formed by a fence with mature trees, through which there are glimpses of the village across an open field. The small, early 2000s housing estate of Yew Tree Stables is adjacent to the south western corner of the site, with houses set each side of the Pang. The site is used for horse grazing and is subdivided by post and wire fencing. There are a number of mature horse chestnut trees in the site, giving a parkland character.

#### **Relationship with adjacent settlement**

- The site extends beyond the tight historic core of the village and forms one of the typical generous open spaces of the village
- The site extends east of the Pang (most of the village is on the western side of the Pang)
- The site is below the 100m contour where much of the village sits
- There is some intervisibility with the village, including the Conservation Area
- The urban edge is well vegetated to the west and otherwise partially open to the north

#### **Relationship with adjacent wider countryside**

- Not typical of the LCA, being small in scale and enclosed and related to the valley bottom which reaches into the settlement
- A public right of way crosses the site linking to the Berkshire Circular route to the north and local links to East Compton



<p><b>Impact on key landscape characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impact on characteristic valley bottom and side topography</li><li>• Loss of visual and aural tranquillity</li><li>• Loss of specimen trees and parkland character</li><li>• Impact on setting of the River Pang</li><li>• Impact on the setting of the public right of way</li><li>• Development on the western part of site would be within the flood zone of the Pang</li></ul>
<p><b>Impact on key visual characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The site is not visible from the wider AONB</li><li>• The site is visible from the Conservation Area, forming a characteristic open space within the settlement with views out to the wider landscape</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 linear built form along Wallingford Road</li><li>• Development of the whole site would introduce uncharacteristic estate development on the eastern side of the Pang</li><li>• Development of the western section would continue the built form of Yew Tree Stables (to the south west) along the Pang</li><li>• Development of the site would impact on the setting of the Conservation Area</li><li>• Development would be contained below the 100m AOD contour</li></ul>
<p><b>Summary of compliance with NPPF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development on this site would cause harm to the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB by eroding the distinctive settlement pattern of Compton which forms an integral part of local character and distinctiveness and adds to the diversity of the AONB landscape as a whole.</li></ul>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>The site should not be pursued further as a potential housing site.</p>

## Conclusion

The above analysis recommends only one small potential area for housing on landscape and visual grounds. Other areas are 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 area considered suitable for development is the north eastern part of COM009/010/011 and this would result in a minor extension to the linear settlement pattern. Development would be locally visible but seen within the context of and well related to the settlement. The cumulative impact of the development of this area combined with the potential development of COM004 as identified in the 2011 Landscape Sensitivity Study could, depending on access to COM004, result in a change to the character of the rural lane. It would be important to retain the mature vegetation on the western boundary of COM004 to limit intervisibility between the two sites and from the lane.