

# LAND TO REAR OF THE HOLLIES, READING ROAD, BURGHFIELD COMMON

Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment

JSL4137  
Land to Rear of The  
Hollies, Burghfield  
Common  
Final\_2  
13 January 2022

## REPORT

### Document status

Version	Purpose of document	Authored by	Reviewed by	Approved by	Review date
V1	Client review	JB	PE		03.12.2021
V2	Comment	JB	JB		07.12.2021
Final	Submission	JB	JB		14.12.2021
Final_2	With amended LS	JB	JB		13.01.2022

### Approval for issue

[Name]

[Signature]

[Date]

The report has been prepared for the exclusive use and benefit of our client and solely for the purpose for which it is provided. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by RPS Group Plc, any of its subsidiaries, or a related entity (collectively 'RPS') no part of this report should be reproduced, distributed or communicated to any third party. RPS does not accept any liability if this report is used for an alternative purpose from which it is intended, nor to any third party in respect of this report. The report does not account for any changes relating to the subject matter of the report, or any legislative or regulatory changes that have occurred since the report was produced and that may affect the report.

The report has been prepared using the information provided to RPS by its client, or others on behalf of its client. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RPS shall not be liable for any loss or damage suffered by the client arising from fraud, misrepresentation, withholding of information material relevant to the report or required by RPS, or other default relating to such information, whether on the client's part or that of the other information sources, unless such fraud, misrepresentation, withholding or such other default is evident to RPS without further enquiry. It is expressly stated that no independent verification of any documents or information supplied by the client or others on behalf of the client has been made. The report shall be used for general information only.

#### Prepared by:

**RPS**

Jane Betts  
Principal Landscape Architect

20 Western Avenue  
Milton Park  
Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4SH

T +44 1235 821 888  
E bettsj@rpsgroup.com

#### Prepared for:

**T A Fisher & Sons Ltd**

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
	General .....	1
	Baseline Methodology .....	1
	Assessment Methodology .....	1
	Study Area .....	2
<b>2</b>	<b>PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
	Introduction .....	3
	Planning Policy Context .....	3
	Summary of Planning Policy .....	8
<b>3</b>	<b>EXISTING CONDITIONS</b> .....	<b>9</b>
	Landscape and Townscape Baseline.....	9
	Visual Baseline .....	15
<b>4</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>20</b>
	Relevant Guidance .....	20
	Landscape Assessment Methodology.....	20
	Visual Assessment Methodology .....	21
<b>5</b>	<b>PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	<b>23</b>
	Scheme Description .....	23
<b>6</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE, TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS</b> .....	<b>25</b>
	Assessment of Operational Effects .....	25
	Assessment of Construction Effects.....	29
<b>7</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>31</b>
	Summary of Landscape Effects .....	31
	Summary of Visual Effects .....	31
<b>8</b>	<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>33</b>

## Figures

- Figure 1: Site Location and Context
- Figure 2: Landscape Planning Designations
- Figure 3: National Character Areas
- Figure 4: Landscape Character Areas, West Berkshire
- Figure 5: Topography
- Figure 6: Zone of Theoretical Visibility with Viewpoint Locations
- Figure 7: Viewpoints 1 and 2
- Figure 8: Viewpoint 1
- Figure 9: Viewpoint 2
- Figure 10: Viewpoints 3 and 4
- Figure 11: Viewpoint 3
- Figure 12: Viewpoint 4

## REPORT

---

Figure 13: Viewpoints 5 and 6

Figure 14: Viewpoint 5

Figure 15: Viewpoint 6

Figure 16: Viewpoint 7

Figure 17: Viewpoint 7

Figure 100D: Illustrative Landscape Strategy

Figure 550A: Plant Schedule

## Appendices

Appendix A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

Appendix B Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic Landscape Character Area.

Appendix C Application Site Character Photographs

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## General

- 1.1 RPS has been commissioned by T A Fisher & Son Ltd to prepare a Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LTVIA) to accompany a planning application for a proposed residential development (the Proposed Development) on land to the rear of The Hollies, Reading Road, Burghfield Common referred to in this report as the Application Site.
- 1.2 The Application Site is an area of 1.84 ha. It includes four distinct parcels of land separated by tree belts. The Application Site is bounded by woodland to the north-west and gardens of residential properties along Reading Road to the south-east. The Application site would be accessed from Regis Manor Road. (See Figure 1).
- 1.3 The objective of the LTVIA is to identify the likelihood of the Proposed Development giving rise to significant landscape, townscape and/or visual effects, and to propose effective and appropriate measures to mitigate such effects. These mitigation measures are presented as the Landscape Strategy.

## Baseline Methodology

- 1.4 For this LTVIA, a desktop review of published information, including landscape character assessments, OS data, online mapping data, aerial photography and local and national planning documents was undertaken. To further inform the LTVIA, representative views looking towards the Application Site were selected.
- 1.5 This report provides consideration of the Application Site within the context of the surrounding rural landscape and townscape of the village of Burghfield Common. It outlines the existing baseline conditions in terms of:
- Topography;
  - Vegetation cover and land uses;
  - Published landscape character studies;
  - Landscape and other relevant designations; and
  - The current visibility of the site.
- 1.6 The likely landscape, townscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development are assessed against the existing baseline scenario.
- 1.7 Planning policy of relevance to the Application Site insofar as it relates to landscape, townscape and visual amenity matters is also considered in this report.
- 1.8 A site visit was carried out on 10 November 2021 to record views from publicly accessible locations, as well as to gain an understanding of the local landscape/townscape character. Fieldwork assisted in the assessment of the potential effects on the landscape character of the Application Site and surrounding landscape/townscape, as well as on visual receptors.

## Assessment Methodology

- 1.9 The method used to undertake this LTVIA is detailed in Appendix A of this Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology, as summarised in Section 4 below of this report. It is based on the following documents:

- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition* (May 2013).
- Landscape Institute *Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations* (May 2021).
- Landscape Institute *Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals* (September 2019).

1.10 The LTVIA provides an overview of the existing baseline conditions, and then assesses the potential significant effects of the Proposed Development upon baseline conditions during its construction and operational phases. This is undertaken through consideration of the sensitivity of the resources/receptors to the proposed impact of the residential development.

1.11 The introduction of built form to a site without a significant number of buildings would result in landscape and/or visual change. This report identifies whether these changes are significant or not in terms of the physical landscape/townscape and its character, and when viewed by visual receptors (people) from the surrounding area. As the Application Site is allocated for development in the adopted West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) it is acknowledged that some landscape and visual impact due to residential development of the Application Site and the principle of development in this location is accepted.

## Study Area

1.12 For the purpose of the LTVIA the Study Area extends to a 2 km radius from the outer edges of the Application Site. While it would be theoretically possible to see the Proposed Development outside the Study Area, given the site location and nature of development, there is no scope for significant effects to arise beyond this distance. Sensitive landscape and visual receptors within the Study Area as defined by the extent of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) have been included for assessment in the LTVIA.

## 2 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

### Introduction

2.1 This report identifies the national and local policies of relevance to landscape and visual matters, which have informed the baseline assessment and subsequent landscape, townscape and visual assessment for the Proposed Development. The aims of the various policies at national, county and local level are outlined.

### Planning Policy Context

2.2 As part of establishing the existing baseline environment, this assessment has reviewed and considered relevant planning policies within the currently adopted Local Development Plan for West Berkshire Council (Table 2.1 and 2.2). Other documents of material consideration are reviewed in paragraphs 2.10 to 2.22.

### The Development Plan

2.3 For the purposes of West Berkshire, the Development Plan relevant to this application is considered to consists of the following:

- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2006 – 2026,) adopted July 2012
- Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document, adopted May 2017
- West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 – 2006 (Saved Policies 2007), as amended in July 2012 and May 2017

2.4 These documents have been reviewed and planning policies, relevant to landscape and visual matters and to the Proposed Development are summarised in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below.

### West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan, 2012

2.5 The core strategy sets out the vision for West Berkshire to 2026. West Berkshire have developed a strategy that responds to aspirations and how these will be delivered to guide and manage development working in partnership with everyone with a stake in the future of the district.

**Table 2.1: Relevant Landscape Planning Policies from the Bracknell Forest Core Strategy (2008)**

Plan Policy	Details
<b>Policy CS4: Housing Type and Mix</b>	<p><i>“Residential development will be expected to contribute to the delivery of an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the community, including those with specialist requirements. The mix on an individual site should have regard to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The character of the surrounding area.</i></li> <li>• <i>The accessibility of the location and availability of existing and proposed local services, facilities and infrastructure.</i></li> <li>• <i>The evidence of housing need and demand from Housing Market Assessments and other relevant evidence sources.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how these matters have been addressed within the proposed dwelling mix.</i></p> <p><i>Developments will make efficient use of land with greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Higher densities above 50 dwellings per hectare may be achievable in town centres, particularly in parts of Newbury</i></li> </ul>

Plan Policy	Details
	<p>town centre, and along main transport routes and close to transport nodes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the areas outside town centres, new residential development will predominantly consist of family sized housing which should achieve densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare, and should enhance the distinctive suburban character and identity of the area.</li> <li>• Lower density developments below 30 dwellings per hectare will be appropriate in certain areas of the District. Some parts of the urban areas and some villages are particularly sensitive to the impact of intensification and redevelopment because of the prevailing character of the area, the sensitive nature of the surrounding countryside or built form, and/or the relative remoteness from public transport.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy CS14: Design Principles</b></p>	<p>“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. Good design relates not only to the appearance of a development, but the way in which it functions. Considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, having regard not just to the immediate area, but to the wider locality. Development shall contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.</p> <p>Development proposals will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safe environments, addressing crime prevention and community safety.</li> <li>• Make good provision for access by all transport modes.</li> <li>• Ensure environments are accessible to all and give priority to pedestrian and cycle access providing linkages and integration with surrounding uses and open spaces.</li> <li>• Make efficient use of and whilst respecting the density, character, landscape and biodiversity of the surrounding area.</li> <li>• Consider opportunities for a mix of uses, buildings and landscaping.</li> <li>• Consider opportunities for public art.</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the historic and cultural assets of West Berkshire.</li> <li>• Provide, conserve and enhance biodiversity and create linkages between green spaces and wildlife corridors.</li> <li>• Make a clear distinction between public and private spaces and enhance the public realm.</li> <li>• Consider opportunities for including Home Zones <sup>(17)</sup> where practicable.</li> </ul> <p>All development proposals will be expected to seek to minimise carbon dioxide emissions through sustainable design and construction, energy efficiency, and the incorporation of renewable energy technology as appropriate and in accordance with Policy CS15: Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency.”</p>
<p><b>Policy CS18: Green Infrastructure</b></p>	<p>“The District’s green infrastructure will be protected and enhanced. The Council will work with partners, including Parish Councils and the community to address the District’s green infrastructure needs and deficiencies as set out in the forthcoming Green Infrastructure SPD.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Developments resulting in the loss of green infrastructure or harm to</p>



Plan Policy	Details
	<i>its use or enjoyment by the public will not be permitted. Where exceptionally its 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.”</i>
<b>Policy CS19: Historic Environment and Landscape Character</b>	<p><i>“In order to ensure that the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District is conserved and enhanced, the natural, cultural, and functional components of its character will be considered as a whole. In adopting this holistic approach, particular regard will be given to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) The sensitivity of the area to change.</i></li> <li><i>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...</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Proposals for development should be informed by and respond to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) The distinctive character areas and key characteristics identified in relevant character assessments including Historic Landscape Characterisation for West Berkshire and Historic Environment Character Zoning for West Berkshire...</i></li> </ul>

## Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document, 2017

- 2.6 The Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) has been prepared following adoption of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2012). The role of the Housing Site Allocations DPD is to implement the framework set by the Core Strategy by allocating non-strategic housing sites across the District.
- 2.7 The land, subject to this assessment, to the rear of The Hollies Nursing Home, Reading Road, Burghfield Common is an allocated site within the Housing Site Allocations DPD. Part of this allocation (28 dwellings) has been built out and forms the new development of Regis Manor Road. The remaining part of the allocation (32 dwellings) is covered by the full planning application that is LTVIA supports.

**Table 2.2: Relevant Policies from the Housing Site Allocations DPD (2017)**

Plan Policy	Details
<b>Policy HSA16: Land to the rear of The Hollies Nursing Home, Reading Road and Land opposite 44 Lamden Way, Burghfield Common</b>	<p><i>“These sites are being considered together as one site and have a developable area of approximately 2.7 hectares. The sites should be masterplanned comprehensively in accordance with the following parameters:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• The provision of approximately 60 dwellings with a mix of dwelling types and sizes.</i></li> <li><i>• The site will be accessed from Reading Road, with a potential secondary access from Stable Cottage...</i></li> <li><i>• The scheme will comprise a development design and layout that will:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Limit the developable area to the west of the site to exclude the areas of existing woodland.</i></li> <li><i>• Be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which with include measures to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Reflect the semi-rural edge of Burghfield Common through appropriate landscaping.</i></li> <li><i>• Provide a buffer of 15 metres to the areas of ancient woodland to the west of the site and provide appropriate buffers to the rest of the TPO woodland.</i></li> <li><i>• Provide an appropriate landscape buffer on the part of the site that is adjacent to The Hollies to minimise any impact on residents.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Plan Policy	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore options to provide footpath and cycle links to existing and proposed residential development to increase permeability to other parts of Burghfield Common.</li> </ul>

### Saved Policies of the West Berkshire Local Plan, 2007

2.8 Planning Policies within WBLP 2007 were partially replaced by the Core Strategy (2012). A number of policies, which have not been replaced and are therefore saved and considered relevant to this assessment.

**Table 2.3: Relevant Landscape Planning Policies from Saved Polices of the West Berkshire District Local Plan (2007)**

Plan Policy	Details
<b>Policy ENV1: The Wider Countryside</b>	<i>“The Council in considering proposals for development will seek to conserve and enhance the special features and diversity of the different ‘landscape character areas’ found within West Berkshire.”</i>

### Burghfield Neighbourhood Plan

2.9 A Neighbourhood Area for Burghfield was designated in March 2017. This is the first formal stage in preparing a neighbourhood plan, and the designation allows Burghfield Parish Council to commence work on a neighbourhood plan. The Application Site is within the designated neighbourhood area boundary. The Neighbourhood Plan is therefore at a very early stage such that it is not currently a material consideration for decision makers to review as part of this application.

### West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037 (LPR)

2.10 The current local plan for West Berkshire sets out planning policies up to 2026. The Local Plan is under review (LPR) with an emerging West Berks Local Plan to cover the period up to 2037. Although it has not yet been adopted, and thus is not yet a material consideration, it would identify development that is required to meet local needs and a strategy for distribution of development within the district whilst setting out policies seeking to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment in order to achieve sustainable development. Once adopted the following policies are envisaged to be relevant during the lifetime of the application.

- Policy SP7: Design Principles
- Policy SP8: Landscape Character
- Policy SP10: Green Infrastructure
- Policy RSA19: Land to the rear of The Hollies Nursing Home, Reading Road and Land opposite 44 Lamden Way, Burghfield Common (Site Ref HAS 16).
- Policy DC11: Registered Parks and Gardens
- Policy DC14: Trees, woodland and hedgerows

## Other Material Considerations

### National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2.11 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2021 by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and replaced the earlier 2019 version which had replaced the original 2018 NPPF.
- 2.12 The NPPF emphasises the importance of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 states: “*The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.*” This includes an environmental role, to protect and enhance our natural environment.
- 2.13 Strategic policies regarding Plan-making at Section 3 include, at paragraph 20, the sufficient provision for “*conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment including landscapes and green infrastructure*”.
- 2.14 Non-strategic policies should set out more detailed policies for specific areas, including the allocation of sites, establishing design principles, as well as conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraph 28).
- 2.15 Section 11 supports an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes whilst safeguarding and improving the environment. Paragraph 120 promotes decisions that take opportunities to achieve net environmental gains such as developments that enable new habitat creation or the improvement of public access to the countryside. Paragraph 124 recognises that decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land taking account of the “*desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting...or promoting regeneration and change’ and ‘the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places*”.
- 2.16 Section 12 is concerned with well-designed places. Paragraph 130 b) explains that developments should be “*visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping*”. Paragraph 130 c) requires that developments “*are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. While not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)*”. This is to ensure that developments will function and add to the overall quality of the area, establish a strong sense of place and create an attractive and comfortable place to live, work and visit.
- 2.17 Paragraph 131 deals with the important contribution trees make to the character and quality of urban environments, can help adapt to climate change and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.
- 2.18 Section 15 deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment, is of relevance to this assessment. Paragraph 174 states that “*planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*” and by “*recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*” including the benefits of trees and woodland.
- 2.19 Paragraph 176 states that “*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues*”. The Application Site is not located in either of the statutorily designated areas.

### National Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.20 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (DCLG. 2014) is a web-based guidance resource that was introduced in 2014 in order to bring together existing planning practice guidance for England in an accessible and useable way. The NPPG was last updated by MHCLG in June 2021.

- 2.21 The NPPG sets out details in relation to protected landscapes and the need for local planning authorities to undertake landscape character assessments.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

- 2.22 There are a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which accompany and support the West Berkshire Council's Development Plan Documents. That which are relevant to this assessment include Quality Design – West Berkshire SPD (2006)

### **Quality Design – West Berkshire SPD**

- 2.23 The Quality Design SPD forms part of West Berkshire's policy context and will be a material consideration in determining planning applications submitted to West Berkshire Council (WBC). The Quality Design SPD set out general advice on design principles that apply to all forms of development although it is predominantly aimed at residential development. The SPD focuses on how development proposals respond to their surroundings and sets out principles relating to understanding a site and the context including responding positively to the existing local character.

### **Burghfield Parish Design Statement**

- 2.24 The Burghfield Parish Design Statement, August 2011 was prepared by Burghfield Parish Council to define what makes Burghfield special and to guide change that respects the character of the village. The statement sets out guidance at a local level but compliments and supports the district level Quality Design – West Berkshire SPD (2006).

### **Summary of Planning Policy**

- 2.25 The NPPF (2021) sets out overarching aims to ensure development is appropriately located, well designed and sustainable. In summary, the policies set out to improve the overall quality of an area, establishing a strong sense of place and create an attractive and comfortable location, responding to local character. National policies seek to conserve, protect and enhance valued landscapes and provide protection to scenic areas within nationally designated areas such as National Parks and AONBs.
- 2.26 The West Berkshire Core Strategy, Housing Site Allocations DPD and West Berkshire District Local Plan collectively incorporate strategies to conserve and enhance (where possible) the important features, elements and characteristics of the landscape and townscape by avoiding visually intrusive development and promote good quality design which incorporates appropriate green infrastructure and respects local character.
- 2.27 In accordance with national policy the local development framework is based on the principles of sustainable development whilst promoting good design. New development would be encouraged to maintain and enhance the character of the local landscape/townscape where possible.

## 3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Landscape and Townscape Baseline

- 3.1 This section sets out the context of the Application Site within the surrounding area, with reference to published landscape character assessments and, where relevant, landscape designations at national and local levels. It describes the location, topography and drainage, land use, vegetation cover, existing rights of way and existing landscape character. The location of the Application Site, and relevant landscape planning context, are shown at Figures 1 and 2 and in the photographs at Figures 7 to 17.

#### Landscape Character

- 3.2 Landscape character types and landscape character areas can be defined at a variety of scales and a substantial amount of published information is available for national to local landscape character. The principal published information comprises Natural England's national landscape characterisation of England (Natural England, 2015) and characterisations undertaken at the district level are contained within the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (LUC, August 2019). No Neighbourhood Plan landscape character assessments have been prepared relevant to the study area. Relevant published landscape character assessments are reviewed with a site-specific assessment at paragraphs 3.15 to 3.28 (Application Site Description).
- 3.3 This section should be read in conjunction with Figure 3 National Character Areas, Figure 4 Landscape Character Areas, and Figure 5 Topography.

#### National Landscape Character

- 3.4 Natural England divides England into 159 distinct natural areas of National Character Areas (NCAs). Each NCA is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, cultural and economic activity. Their boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment. At a national level, the Application Site is located within National Character Area 129: Thames Basin Heaths. NCA 115: Thames Valley lies to the north of the Application Site at the northern edge of the study area.

#### Thames Basin Heaths NCA 129

- 3.5 The key characteristics of NCA 129: Thames Basin Heaths relevant to the Application Site and study area include:
- *“Plateaux of Tertiary sands and gravels in the London Basin, with intervening river valleys flooded London Clay...*
  - *High woodland cover, offering an array of colour in the autumn...*
  - *Acid, leached soils mean that farming on the plateaux is limited to rough pasture, and that alternative land uses (such as forestry, golf courses and horse paddocks) have emerged. Heather, gorse, oak and birch all thrive here....*
  - *Beyond the large areas of heathland and woodland, there is a patchwork of small to medium-sized fields with woods. The legacy of historic hunting forests includes veteran trees, ancient woods, ancient hedgerows and parklands. Historic meadows remain as fragments along watercourses.*
  - *Historic commons offer tranquillity and unenclosed views, while other rights of access are enjoyed across farmland....*

- ....there are winding lanes and historic dispersed villages and farmsteads of traditional, locally made brick and tile.

3.6 The Application Site occupies a small part of the extensive NCA. The relatively small amount of rough pasture and trees affected would be seeded and replanted with individual trees and scrub as part of the proposed residential development.

### **West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment**

3.7 The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (WB LCA) was prepared by LUC for West Berkshire Council and published in August 2019. The Application Site falls within the remit of the WB LCA. The assessment of landscape effects uses the current district level landscape characterisation study as its baseline.

3.8 The WB LCA is for land outside defined settlements and identified ten Landscape Character Types (LCTs), which are broad tracts of landscape with similar characteristics. These LCTs are subdivided into 26 Landscape Character Areas within the WB LCA which are single unique geographical areas with a recognisable pattern of landscape characteristics that combine to create a distinct sense of place.

### **LCA WH5: Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic**

3.9 The Application Site is located within the WH5: Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic Landscape Character Area (LCA). Refer to Figure 4. The LCA is summarised in the WB LCA as: *“A well-wooded plateau visually dominates this area, which extends from Brimpton Common in the west to Burghfield and Mortimer in the east, but sizeable areas of built development, including extensive MoD property at Aldermaston operated by AWE, have a significant localised impact on landscape character. A more traditional rural character predominates on the slopes that form the northern part of the character area, to which historic houses and parklands make a significant contribution”*.

3.10 The key characteristics features relevant to the Application Site and the surrounding area are summarised as:

- Geologically and topographically varied landscape with a flat plateau and undulating margins.
- Presence of surface water and small streams.
- Complex pattern of land use, dominated by woodland.
- Large areas of Ministry of Defence owned land.
- Development influences the character of the plateau.
- Historic, rural character on northern slopes.

3.11 Further detail relating to characteristics of Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic are set out in Appendix B.

### **Townscape Character**

3.12 There is limited analysis of the developed area of Burghfield Common within the West Berkshire documents therefore a separate analysis of the townscape character has been undertaken to establish a comprehensive baseline situation at a local level that is appropriate to the scale of the study area for the Proposed Development. The village of Burghfield Common is without an historic core. The settlement area is generally defined by three through routes namely Reading Road to the south and Clayhill Road to the north which are linked by Hollybush Lane to the west. There are a few distinctive buildings along Reading Road namely Essex Farm Cottage and The Hollies which are infilled by various modern housing types. Between the defining road system, the area is

surrounded by extensive twentieth century, mainly residential developments along cul-de-sacs and link roads that includes a mix of terrace and semi-detached houses, bungalows or detached properties. The townscape of Burghfield Common is generally homogenous and the modern housing estate character type extends over the majority of the settlement and is typical and common place.

- 3.13 A characteristic of the townscape is the role of woodland often separating development and defining the edge of the settlement whilst providing contrast to the built form. Building materials include predominantly buff or red brick or painted render with white painted timber boarding and windows. Roof materials include predominantly red tile and slate.
- 3.14 The townscape character of Burghfield Common is identified as Modern Residential Townscape Character Area (TCA) and is of ordinary condition.

## **Application Site Description**

### **Location, Land Cover and Land Use**

- 3.15 The Application Site is located adjacent to the northern residential edge of Burghfield Common. It is comprised of land to the rear of The Hollies Care Home which is accessed off Reading Road. The northern boundary of the Application Site abuts the recent residential development on Regis Manor Road and the eastern boundary is adjacent to infill development at The Oaks (private road). The wider residential development of Burghfield Common extends south-west of the Application Site as far as Hollybush Lane. The western boundary of the Application Site is defined by an area of ancient woodland within the valley floor.
- 3.16 The Application Site is currently overgrown grassland set within a series of four small fields (refer to Figure 2 and Appendix C) delineated and separated by mature tree lines which are intermixed with scrub. The mature tree lines include a mix of oak, ash, yew, holly and hawthorn. Due to the maturity of the trees and density of the scrub these provide substantial boundaries across the site. The western boundary of the Application Site is defined by ancient woodland up to 22 m high that includes oak, sweet chestnut, field maple and coppiced hazel. Rear gardens of adjacent properties are generally defined by timber post and rail fence or post and wire which maintains an open aspect in places where dense hedgerow vegetation does not occur.
- 3.17 With respect to Field 1 – this is a narrow field immediately north-west of Stable Cottage and contained by development on three boundaries. The field is overgrown grassland with areas of bramble particularly encroaching the site from the adjacent boundaries. Individual trees on the boundaries include Leyland and Lawson Cypress, beech, and with fruit trees and silver birch within the field.
- 3.18 Field 2 – is a small rectangular field north-east of the new development of The Oaks. A significant tree belt of mature oaks, up to 18 m high, defines the south-east boundary and separates the field from the adjacent houses. The linear group of mature oaks returns to the north-west to define a southern boundary that also includes goat willow and ash and provides separation between Field 2 and Field 3. The field is overgrown grassland with encroaching bramble thicket and the north-western half of Field 2 extends to oak woodland and scrub encroaching grassland.
- 3.19 Field 3 – is the largest and most open of the group of four fields. The south-east boundary abuts the gardens of properties on Reading Road that includes Leyland Cypress, crack willow and remnant hawthorn hedge. The south-west boundary that separates Field 3 from Field 4 is predominantly mixed hedgerow with some ash. Groups of oak, willow and silver birch are along the north-west boundary and adjoin an area of ancient woodland. The field is overgrown, rough grassland.
- 3.20 Field 4 – the grassland of the smaller southern field is maintained to a short sward. A mature and dense group of oak and mixed broadleaf species separate the field from gardens of properties at

Paddocks End and Lamden Way. A group of aspen saplings and ash trees adjoin the western boundary of ancient woodland.

- 3.21 A more detailed description of vegetation and habitats in relation to the Application Site is provided in the Ecological Assessment, November 2021, and within the submitted Tree Survey, October 2021.
- 3.22 A timber building is located at the at the west boundary of Field 1. There are no other above ground structures on the Application Site.

### Topography and Drainage

- 3.23 The topography of the Application Site is generally sloping from east to west, with large changes in gradient at certain points. Refer to Figure 5. Field 1 is level at approximately 90 m AOD from Stable Cottage to the timber building. Field 2 falls from east to west at 89 m AOD to 72 m AOD, Field 3 falls from 87 m AOD to 73 m AOD and Field 4 falls from the southern corner at 86 m AOD to 73 m AOD at the west boundary. Ditches along the field boundaries drain to a stream that follows a course north-east within the ancient woodland belt at the valley floor.
- 3.24 The Application Site lies on the west facing slope of a ridge of higher land that is one of a series of ridge and valley landform that extend north east from the Burghfield plateau. The valleys contain streams that include Burghfield Brook to the south-east and Clayhill Brook to the to the north west. These streams drain to the River Kennet that is to the north of the study area.

### Access and Infrastructure

- 3.25 The Application Site is adjacent to the existing settlement area of Burghfield Common within countryside south-west of Reading. The study area settlement pattern comprises scattered farmsteads and farm buildings, dispersed hamlets including Sulhamstead Abbots and Goddard's Green. Part of the AWE Burghfield site occupy the north-east of the study area.
- 3.26 The M4 major transport corridor is north of the Application Site and separates Reading from Burghfield Common. South of Reading and the M4 a network of minor roads link villages and settlements within the study area.
- 3.27 The proposed development would be accessed as a continuation of Regis Manor Road which connects to Reading Road at the north-east edge of Burghfield Common.
- 3.28 No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross the Application Site. There is roadside pavement along Reading Road and along Regis Manor Road. North-east of the Application Site, a bridleway (BURG/9/1) takes a route west from Reading Road, passes through Pondhouse Farm, and connects to Clayhill Road. Several other PRoW connect settlements within the wider study area.

### Landscape Value

- 3.29 As part of the baseline description of the study area the value of the landscape that would be affected by the proposed development has been established. The NPPF at paragraph 174 states that *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by; protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.*
- 3.30 GLVIA3 defines value as *"the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons...A review of existing landscape designations is usually the starting point to understanding landscape value, but the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be carefully considered and individual elements of the landscape-such as trees, buildings or hedgerows may also have value."*



- 3.31 GLVIA3 includes a list of factors within Box 5.1 that identifies a range of factors to consider when establishing value together with the complimentary Landscape Institute, *Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations*. These factors are useful in identifying the particular qualities present with the Application Site.

### **Designated Landscapes**

- 3.32 The Application Site does not lie within a nationally designated landscape.

### **Historic Parks and Gardens**

- 3.33 No Registered Historic Parks and Gardens are located within the Study Area.

### **Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas**

- 3.34 Cultural heritage assets such as listed buildings and conservation areas are considered in the LVIA insofar as they contribute to local landscape character and visual amenity. Locations of listed building are shown on Figure 2.

### **Ancient Woodland and Ecological Designations**

- 3.35 The Application Site borders an area of ancient woodland to the north west and is adjacent to Pond House Copse which is a proposed Local Wildlife Site. For more detail refer to the Ecology Report, November 2021. Locations of Ancient Woodland are shown on Figure 2.

### **Non-designated Landscapes**

- 3.36 The Application Site does not lie within a nationally or locally designated landscape. This does not mean that the Application Site has no value. The range of factors set out in GLVIA Box 5.1 and TGN 02/21 are considered to help in the identification of valued landscapes and are discussed below and used in this assessment to establish value.

### **Landscape Quality**

- 3.37 Landscape quality, or condition, measures the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
- 3.38 The mature tree belts and native hedgerow around the land parcels of the Application Site are typical features of the Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic LCA which is often retained within the settlement context of Burghfield Common Modern Residential Townscape Character Area and have medium to high value. The quality of the trees is assessed in more detail in the Tree Survey Report. The grassland fields are overgrown and form a remnant of the previous agricultural use and now form part of the settlement edge and have medium to low value. These features combine to form a transition from the 20<sup>th</sup> century residential fringe to farmland beyond the woodland belts. They form a small part of a series of spaces and land uses within the wider rural landscape of the Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic LCA that have similar values.

### **Scenic Quality**

- 3.39 This measures the degree to which the landscape appeals primarily to the visual senses. The visual baseline is analysed in more detail below.
- 3.40 Field 1 has low scenic quality due to the close association with the development of the settlement edge along three of its four boundaries. Fields 2, 3 and 4 are associated with the settlement edge along their south-east boundaries and have a low to medium scenic quality due to the high quality

of the woodland belt to the west and the tree lines along the settlement edge. The area of grassland fields is overgrown and has retained few naturalistic qualities although connects physically and visually to the adjacent ancient woodland which is of high scenic quality. Limited close views of the Application Site are available, and parts of the adjacent residential edge are lower scenic quality.

### **Rarity and Representativeness**

- 3.41 Rarity is concerned with the presence of rare features and elements in the landscape or the presence of a rare character type or elements within the site and its surroundings which are considered particularly important examples, which are worthy of retention.
- 3.42 The grassland, trees, woodland and hedgerows of the Application Site and surrounding rural landscape are typical features associated with the Burghfield Woodlands and Heathland Mosaic LCA and fringes of the Burghfield Common Modern Residential TCA and cannot be defined as rare locally. The field boundary vegetation within the Application Site includes good examples of mature trees and tree belts which are more important. The settlement edge, lines of trees and woodland create good enclosure, which is representative of the village fringes within this wider landscape. The hedgerows and trees of the Application Site are typical examples of this landscape that would be retained, where possible, and enhanced within the Proposed Development.

### **Conservation Interests**

- 3.43 This considers the presence of features of wildlife, earth science, historical and cultural interest that can add value to a landscape.
- 3.44 There are no ecological or heritage designations on the Application Site to increase its value, and therefore has no more than low value. Designated ancient woodland is adjacent to the Application Site that is high value and the fields exhibit some ancient woodland indicator species. The ancient woodland requires a 15 m protection buffer along its boundary with the potential for ecological enhancements. There are no listed buildings within or adjacent to the Application Site to increase its value.

### **Recreational Value**

- 3.45 This considers any evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- 3.46 There is no public access to the Application Site therefore, it has no direct recreational value. The closest PRoW is bridleway BURG/9/1 located approximately 150 m north of the Application Site and takes a route through Pond House Copse. The village and wider farmland of the study area contains further public rights of way linking to surrounding settlements and farms. Overall, the landscape of the Application Site has low recreational value whilst the wider landscape of the study area has medium recreational value.

### **Perceptual Aspects**

- 3.47 A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
- 3.48 The landscape and townscape of the Application Site and surrounding settlement and farmland is rural but, is not wild. The overgrown grassland, trees and hedgerows have some wild qualities. The woodland, trees and hedgerows provide visual containment although the adjacent residential developments limit the sense of tranquillity to low value.

## Associations

- 3.49 This considers any evidence of artistic endeavours and historic events that contribute to the perceptions of the natural beauty of an area.
- 3.50 The Application Site and its surroundings do not have any special cultural, literary or artistic associations.

## Functional

- 3.51 This considers elements that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape or a strong physical or functional link with an adjacent designated landscape or its appreciation.
- 3.52 The Application Site is largely comprised of overgrown grassland contained by tree belts, hedgerows and woodland and no longer serves any agricultural needs. The Application Site does not form part of a published Green Infrastructure Network however the woodland adjacent to the site is considered to contribute to the network of multi-functional green space within the local area which has a higher value and creates a sense of place.

## Summary of Landscape Value

- 3.53 The value of the landscape of the Application Site and its surroundings is considered to range from low to high. The elements of rough grassland, hedgerows and trees which comprise the site are not rare within the context of the wider Burghfield Woodlands and Heathland LCA or the Burghfield Modern Residential TCA, however some trees and woodland along the site boundary are important examples. The Application site has limited scenic quality due to the close association with the development of the settlement edge and lack significant ground flora but does include some woodland indicator species with potential to increase ecological importance. The Application Site and immediate surroundings are not part of a wild landscape due to the developed edge and farmed landscape. There is no recreation opportunity of the Application Site to elevate the value and visual amenity is limited due to the contained nature of the Application Site. Whilst the Application Site has some positive landscape elements and wildlife interest, these are not considered sufficient to elevate the area of land to one that is highly valued in accordance with paragraph 174 of the NPPF.

## Visual Baseline

- 3.54 A visual assessment has been undertaken to verify the desk study findings and confirm the extent of visual influence of the proposed development. A site visit was made on 10 November 2021 during mild, overcast weather.
- 3.55 Principal viewpoints, sensitive visual receptors and the approximate visibility of land within the Application Site have been recorded from representative publicly accessible viewpoints. Photographs have been taken using a digital camera from the representative viewpoints as a record of the view and have been taken with a fixed 50 mm lens on a 35 mm digital camera in landscape format at eye level, approximately 1.6 m above ground level. No access to private properties was obtained, and where impact to residential and other private views is noted, this has necessarily been estimated by using the nearest possible publicly accessible location.

## Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 3.56 Areas from which views of any part of the proposed development would theoretically be possible were determined by generating a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). The ZTV does not indicate how much of the proposed development would be visible. Figure 6 shows both a 'bare earth' (landform only) ZTV (shown blue on Figure 6) and a ZTV that takes account of the screening effect

of major woodland blocks (at 12 m high) and buildings (at 9 m high) (shown orange on Figure 6). Whilst the orange ZTV is a more accurate representation of what might be seen, it does not take account of smaller blocks of woodland or hedgerows and associated / incidental tree cover, which add to the amount of screening provided by vegetation.

- 3.57 Representative viewpoints, located within the ZTV and likely to experience visual change, were identified through desk study and fieldwork, and their sensitivity established in accordance with best practice guidance.
- 3.58 The extent of the ZTV (and study area for the visual assessment) is limited to a 2 km buffer from the boundary of the Application Site and indicates that potential views of the Proposed Development would be experienced from a relatively contained area to the west and east with limited views available from the urban edge of Burghfield Common.

## Visual Receptor Groups

### Residential Properties (Private Views)

- 3.59 In the planning system no individual has the right to a view. The Landscape Institute has provided guidance on residential visual amenity in Landscape Institute *Technical Guidance Note 2/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment*. Inspector Kingaby, (Burnthouse Farm Wind Farm, APP/D0515/A/10/2123739) noted that *“There needs to be a degree of harm over and above identified substantial effect to take a case into the category of refusal in the public interest. Changing the outlook from a property is not sufficient”* (Inspector’s Report, paragraph 120) (also at paragraph A1.7, LI TGN 2/19).
- 3.60 The residential areas of Burghfield Common are generally well screened by vegetation or built form from views towards the Application Site. The main locations where there could be potential visual impacts on residential properties, previously considered during the housing allocation process, at the edge of the settlement comprise:
- Regis Manor Road and The Hollies;
  - Reading Road, The Oaks and Paddocks End;
  - Properties at Lamden Way.
- 3.61 Site survey observations have indicated that residential properties are located along the eastern boundary of the Application Site. Two storey properties located on Regis Manor Road have side elevations with Field 1 and do not face the Application Site. Oblique views from ground floor windows would be limited by boundary vegetation. Views into the site from first floor windows would be available from the Hollies care home although filtered by vegetation.
- 3.62 Four detached two storey properties at The Oaks have rear elevations which face the Application Site. Timber post and rail fences define rear garden boundaries of these properties. Views of the Application Site from ground floor rooms and gardens are of trees and vegetation along the boundary and within the site. Filtered views would be available through tree canopy in winter from upper storey would be possible in winter.
- 3.63 Two detached two storey properties located at Paddocks End have rear elevations that face the western part of the Application Site. A garden building and post and wire fencing define the boundary of these properties. Views of the Application Site from ground floor rooms and rear gardens are limited by trees and vegetation along the boundary. Glimpses of the Application Site would be possible particularly in winter. This would be similar for some properties on Reading Road.
- 3.64 Two detached two storey properties located at the eastern end of Lamden Way are set within gardens separated from the Application Site by the road and a small paddock. Occupiers of these properties would gain glimpse views of the Application Site between vegetation or filtered in winter.

- 3.65 Where residential views might be gained from properties these have been considered in combination with local and publicly accessible views.

### Public Rights of Way

- 3.66 Reference to the Ordnance Survey map and web based definitive interactive map for West Berkshire has informed the extent and status of the PRow network in the immediate vicinity of the Application Site. Open views of the site are generally restricted and are not achievable from public assessable locations due to vegetation cover or intervening buildings. However, partial views of the Application Site can be gained from the receptor at Bridleway (BURG/9/1).

### Commercial Property

- 3.67 Farms / agri-businesses are located in the vicinity of the Application Site including Poundhouse Farm and Green Farm. People at their places of work are considered to have a low sensitivity to the proposed development because the focus of attention is on their work not on the surroundings.
- 3.68 People involved in agricultural working or associated industry at various farms are likely to experience limited views of the proposed residential development. Given their low sensitivity they are not likely to experience significant change. Consequently, this receptor group is not taken forward for detailed impact assessment.

### Surrounding Roads Network

- 3.69 There are some very fleeting dynamic views of the Application Site from nearby local roads within the ZTV. These include:
- Reading Road;
  - Clayhill Road; and
  - Regis Manor Road, from which access to the Application Site is made.
- 3.70 Because attention tends to be focused on the road or within the vehicle itself, people travelling in vehicles through this landscape are considered to have low sensitivity to the proposed development. Cyclists have a slightly raised sensitivity to the proposals, namely medium. However, due to the amount of intervening vegetation locally or built form, there is little potential for any of these receptors to experience significant visual effects and, have therefore not been taken forward for detailed assessment.

### Consultation

- 3.71 Following production of the ZTV, site verification and professional judgement a selection of representative viewpoints have been made to support the assessment. The candidate viewpoints were submitted to West Berkshire Council for comment on 11 November 2021. No direct response to the viewpoint selection has been made to-date however, if the council wish to review the selected viewpoints during the planning process this could be dealt with at a later date. A total of seven viewpoint locations are presented as part of this assessment

### Representative Viewpoints

- 3.72 The visual assessment has primarily been based on an assessment of seven representative viewpoints described in Table 3.1. In addition, ZTV information supplemented by site visits has been used to identify and consider the main visual receptors within the vicinity of the Application Site.

**Table 3.1: Description of Views from Representative Viewpoints**

Viewpoint and Location	Distance from Site	Receptor and Sensitivity	Description
1. Regis Manor Road	39 m	Residents - High Pedestrians / cyclists - Medium Vehicle travellers Low	Close view looking south-west from pavement near number 15 Regis Manor Road. The view is along the road corridor to the tree and shrub boundary with of the Application Site. Views of the ground level of the Application Site are screened or filtered by boundary vegetation. The boundary is defined by sections of close boarded fencing and post and wire fencing. Glimpse and heavily filtered views of parts of the roof and first floor windows of properties at The Oaks are available. Mature oak trees adjacent to the Application Site are prominent features of the view. The residential properties, out buildings and lighting columns are features of the view. The character of the view is modern suburban residential with associated landscape treatment.
2. Bridleway BURG/9/1	149 m	Walkers - High	Close view looking south-west from PRow at Burghfield. The view is heavily filtered through boundary vegetation of adjacent residential development. Intervening vegetation prevents views of the ground level of the Application Site. Views of the Application Site are heavily filtered or screened by intervening vegetation and built form. The tops of oak trees adjacent to the site boundary are perceptible through a filigree of intervening vegetation. Glimpse views are obtained of the surface of Regis Manor Road, security fencing and other infrastructure.
3. Bridleway BURG/9/1	350 m	Walkers - High	Close view looking south from PRow at Clayhill Road, Burghfield Common. The view is across a farm access track with grass verge, over hedgerow with mature trees to a block of mature woodland. Poles and powerlines are features across the view that link to buildings at Pondhouse farm. There is no intervisibility with the Application Site due to the significant intervening vegetation.
4. Clayhill Road	310 m	Pedestrians / cyclists – Medium Vehicle travellers - Low	Close view looking south-east from pavement on Clayhill Road. The view is across the road to the hedgerow boundary. A glimpse view is obtained through a gated gap in the roadside hedgerow, across a pasture field to a block of woodland. A small part of the gable end of the Hollies and the roof of another property located on Reading Road are visible features within the tree line. The significant row of mature oak

Viewpoint and Location	Distance from Site	Receptor and Sensitivity	Description
			trees along the east boundary of the Application Site are a noticeable feature of the ridgeline. The ground level of the Application site is screened by intervening vegetation. Poles and powerlines are features in the view.
5. Lamden Way	100 m	Residents – High Pedestrians / cyclists – Medium Vehicle travellers - Low	Close view looking north-east from pavement near number 34 Lamden Way. The view is channelled along the road corridor to residential properties. Glimpse views of part of the roof of houses located at The Oaks are visible. In summer views to the Application Site are screened and would be heavily filtered in winter by intervening vegetation or screened by intervening built form. The character of the view is modern residential with houses interspersed by mature trees and other vegetation.
6. Reading Road	106 m	Residents – High Pedestrians / cyclists – Medium Vehicle travellers - Low	Close view looking north-west from Reading Road. The view is across the road through a gap between roadside properties. Part of the mature tree boundary of the Application Site is visible in the gap. The ground surface of the Application Site is not visible being screened by intervening built form and boundary treatments.
7. Folly Lane	1.40 km	Cyclists – Medium Vehicle travellers - Low	A middle distant view looking south-east. The view is through a gap in the roadside hedgerow offering a glimpse towards the Application Site. The view is over pasture grassland to the woodland block that forms a strong horizon. Poles and powerlines are visible features against the sky. There is no intervisibility with the Application Site due to the significant intervening vegetation.

Table Note

## 4 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

### Relevant Guidance

- 4.1 The methodologies tailored for the assessment of this development are based on *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition (GLVIA3)* and are presented in detail at Appendix A and summarised below. GLVIA3 set out broad guidelines rather than detailed prescriptive methodologies. The level of landscape and visual effects are assessed through consideration of the sensitivity or susceptibility of the receptor and the magnitude of change. The significance of effect table (Appendix A, Table 4) outlines the broad approach adopted to assess the level of effect which is considered together with professional judgement.
- 4.2 This assessment focuses on the operational phase of the Proposed Development, taking account of the description of the development set out below in Section 5 and is supported by an overview of the construction effects. An assumption has been made that the assessment is undertaken on the basis of full completion of the Proposed Development.
- 4.3 Landscape and visual studies provide an analysis of the physical and perceptual attributes of an area. The assessment of landscape issues relates to the potential effect of development on the landscape resource, which encompasses landscape character, quality and distinctive features, including topography, drainage, vegetation and built features, whereas the study of visual constraints is concerned with the potential effect on views and visual amenity.
- 4.4 The analysis of visual constraints includes the identification of important views towards the Application Site, which are generally from a range of visual receptors, both public (highways and public rights of way) and private (residential properties and places of employment). Visual receptors are at varying sensitivity to change, with views from the ground floor of private residences generally accepted as being more sensitive to change than those from highways or places of work where attention is focused elsewhere. Public rights of way through rural areas with attractive landscapes, which are used for recreational purpose, are also usually accepted as being of a high sensitivity to change.

### Landscape Assessment Methodology

- 4.5 The landscape assessment combines the results of both objective and subjective appraisal of the landscape. The assessment consisted of three stages including desk study, a field survey and an analysis of the likely effects resulting from the Development Proposals in the light of these studies.

#### Desk Study

- 4.6 The desk study involved examining the 1:25,000 scale Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs to establish the general context of the study area. This was followed by an analysis of relevant documentation (reports, development plans, assessments, government guidance etc.) to clarify the landscape planning context.

#### Fieldwork

- 4.7 Fieldwork involved a visual survey of the Application Site and its surroundings to assess its character and identify key landscape elements and visual receptors.



## Analysis

- 4.8 Based on the findings of the desk study and field survey, distinctive elements in the landscape, the pattern of their arrangement and dominant features were identified and the existing character and quality of the affected landscape is described.
- 4.9 An assessment was then made of the degree of change to various landscape components or elements and the overall landscape character that would result from the proposed development and the nature of any potential effects was assessed.
- 4.10 Effects on the landscape can be defined as the relationship between the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of any change which the proposals would create. Effects may be adverse, beneficial or neutral in nature. The landscape effects of the proposed development are discussed in Section 6 below.
- 4.11 Additional mitigation measures in the form of planting have been recommended to offset or reduce landscape effects. The effects on landscape character were assessed as the Proposed Development was completed at year 1. Ten years after completion of the development when the existing and retained strategic planting has matured the residual effects are expected to reduce and further integrate the scheme with the local area.

## Visual Assessment Methodology

- 4.12 An assessment has been undertaken to determine the degree of visual effect of the Proposed Development upon receptors (people) in the surrounding area.
- 4.13 A computer generated ZTV has been prepared for the Proposed Development to show the theoretical extent of the surrounding area from which views to it at eye level (assumed to be 1.6 m above ground level), may be possible taking account of screening landform, significant woodland blocks and buildings, within the study area. The screening effect of other features such as tree belts, hedgerows and individual trees were not taken account. The ZTV is shown on Figure 6.
- 4.14 A 2 km buffer from the site boundary has been selected for the extent of the study area used in this assessment. The extent of the study area is based upon our previous experience with similar scale developments in rural areas in that the limit to any significant landscape and visual effects would be within 2 km of the Application Site. The ZTV confirms this extent is sufficient for this assessment.
- 4.15 Visual receptors are people and include the public or community at large, residents and visitors to the area. Viewpoints looking towards the proposed development have been selected to represent these visual receptors. These include views from the public highway and the public right of way network at different distances and directions to the Application Site. The representative viewpoints have been used to assess the potential visual effects of the Proposed Development and are described in Section 3 above.

## Fieldwork

- 4.16 The provisional identification of viewpoints was refined by subsequent fieldwork, at which stage visual receptors identified from the desk study that might experience an effect were confirmed or ruled out. These included locations from highways and public rights of way. Existing views from a representative number of these locations were recorded photographically. Refer to Figure 6 for viewpoint locations.
- 4.17 Baseline photographs were taken at eye level from the representative viewpoints, using a digital SLR camera with fixed focal lens equivalent to a 50 mm focal length lens in 35 mm film format. These photographs are reproduced in the assessment and a description of the views has been included in Table 3.1 above. Refer to Figures 7 to 17.

## Analysis

- 4.18 The existing views were then compared with those that would result if the scheme were to be constructed. The comparative changes in the views have been assessed for winter for the first year following completion of the development. Changes in views are recorded as adverse, beneficial or neutral effects, representing the effects in visual amenity terms. The effects are set out in Section 6 below.

## Limitations of the Landscape and Visual Assessments

- 4.19 The visual assessment has been based on analysis of OS mapping of the Application Site and surrounding area and on field surveys of views towards the Application Site from publicly accessible locations in the surrounding landscape / townscape. Although every effort has been made to include viewpoints in sensitive locations and locations from which the development would be most visible, not all public viewpoints from which the development would be seen have necessarily been included in the assessment. Where impacts to residential and other private views (e.g. commercial occupiers) are noted these have necessarily been estimated.
- 4.20 The visual assessment and associated field work were carried out during autumn 2021 when deciduous vegetation remained with some leaf and thus providing some screening effect and therefore not presenting the worst-case scenario. Judgements have necessarily been made regarding the winter situation when vegetation is without leaf providing the least screening effect.

## 5 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### Scheme Description

- 5.1 The Proposed Development comprises a residential scheme of 32 dwellings to be located on an allocated housing site on the northern edge of Burghfield Common, and on land that is adjacent to an existing housing development. An indicative Landscape Strategy and Plant Schedule illustrates the scheme on Figures 100D and 550A.
- 5.2 The proposed site layout plan has been developed to provide appropriate landscape elements in keeping with the settlement edge location and neighbouring rural landscape which minimises any adverse effects on landscape and townscape character and the visual amenity of the local community. The new houses would be detached and semi-detached, be either two storeys high or split level. The Application Site is located adjacent to the properties on Regis Manor Road and to the rear of properties on The Oaks, The Paddocks, Lamden Way and Reading Road. The majority of the new built form would be located mainly on the southern part of the Application Site. An attenuation pond would be provided at the lower level of Field 2 and be surrounded by an area of amenity open space with biodiversity enhancements. A 15 m offset buffer from the site boundary (and ancient woodland) would be retained free from built development and would retain vegetation on the western fringes of the site and significant trees.
- 5.3 The access road would enter the Application Site from Regis Manor Road where a post and rail fence is the current boundary. The proposed public open space would incorporate an attenuation pond, include native tree and shrub planting and meadow grassland. This area would become an attractive and diverse addition to the green infrastructure network within the village. The mature tree belts, intermittent hedgerows and woodland along the western boundary of the Application Site would be retained to provide attractive green infrastructure and setting for the new development. These existing and proposed features would combine to provide a comprehensive landscape framework for development and reinforce the character of the Burghfield Modern Residential townscape character area and its interface with the Burghfield Woodland and Heaths landscape character area of the surrounding woodland and farmland.
- 5.4 The landscape design focuses on reflecting the existing pattern of the settlement and field system whilst minimising effects on the townscape of Burghfield common and the local landscape. The proposals include the following features:
- Tree, shrub and hedgerow planting and grass seeding to enhance the site, provide integration with the landscape and compliment the adjacent residential developments and rural landscape.
  - Retention of hedgerows and trees within the Application Site and along the western edge to retain the character of the urban edge, the pattern and grain of the townscape and screen views.
  - Predominantly native planting to supplement existing vegetation within public access areas to provide a scheme of landscape and ecological value including the creation of an attenuation pond and introduction of marginal planting.
  - An ecologically diverse collection of habitats incorporating trees, scrub, meadow grassland and ponds within the western part of the Application Site to form an important ecological resource and public open space.
  - Mature hedgerows and trees would be managed to retain their important characteristics, to ensure they contribute to the quality of the proposed development, the character of the urban edge and the valuable screening function they provide.
  - Buildings would reflect traditional styles, materials, colours and textures.

- 5.5 Detailed landscape proposals and final species mixes would need to be agreed in consultation with West Berkshire Council and is envisaged to be secured by suitable planning condition.

## 6 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE, TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

### Assessment of Operational Effects

#### Landscape Effects

- 6.1 This section describes the effects of the operational phase of the Proposed Development based on the landscape strategy shown on Figure 100D. The proposed use of native trees and shrubs would help provide a link with the existing perimeter and internal woodland areas and hedgerows to maintain a buffer between adjacent land uses and would screen the lower levels of buildings within views from adjacent areas. External spaces within the Application Site would be of good quality landscape design in terms of types of native and ornamental planting, meadow grassland, ornamental species around the attenuation pond and the use of hard materials. The likely landscape effects that would result as a consequence of the proposed development are summarised below.

#### National Character Areas

- 6.2 Direct effects on national landscape character relate to Thames Basin Heaths character area. The proposed residential development at the edge of the developed area of Burghfield Common would extend the level of residential development at the edge of a developed area of ordinary condition. Areas of rough grassland and four mature hedgerow trees that are characteristic features of Thames Basin Heaths would be lost and changed to roads and houses set within a landscape including retained boundary and internal tree belts. As a proportion of the overall national character area the change in landscape character of the Application Site would be relatively small. The low sensitivity and small magnitude of change to the national character area would result in a **Negligible** adverse effect where the proposed changes would reflect the existing character of the wider character area. This is not significant.

#### West Berkshire Character Areas

- 6.3 At a district scale the published landscape character assessment for West Berkshire define the area in which the Application Site is located as Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic LCA. This character area covers the whole of the study area and it is recognised that development influences the character of the area. The Application Site is located on a sloped grassland margin of the complex pattern of land use that is dominated by woodland. Development of part of a series of four small rough grassland fields and introduction of an attenuation pond as a residential scheme with amenity open space on the edge of a village within the landscape character area, would change the character of a small piece of urban fringe land, as a proportion of the extensive character area.
- 6.4 The Application Site is sloping and has hedgerows and mature tree belts on some of the eastern and internal field boundaries with an area of ancient woodland along the west boundary, minimising the potential to impact on the adjoining landscape to the north-west. There would be change in land use of the Application Site however, the established pattern and grain of the land at the interface with the townscape and landscape would be retained.
- 6.5 Sections of new hedgerows, scrub and trees would be planted and improvements to existing boundaries made around the Application Site to provide a screen for the new houses. These would add a positive element of character to the landscape and integrate the development. Generally, the land within the Application Site is not readily intervisible with the adjoining

landscape or settlement limiting the potential for people to perceive the full extent and scale of the residential development.

- 6.6 The proposed residential development west of Reading Road would not result in significant harm to the value of the landscape of the Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic as there would be limited loss of important landscape features, elements and characteristics. There would be some influence over the adjacent farmland of the LCA, although no intervisibility with other settlements. The residential scheme would introduce further development of the same character and scale on the residential edge of Burghfield Common within a context of woodland.
- 6.7 The small-scale of the scheme, within a landscape structure provided by hedgerows, hedgerow trees, tree belts and woodland, supplemented by new hedgerow, scrub and tree planting, and an introduced and planted pond, would limit the effects on a relatively small part of the wider Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic of medium sensitivity to the proposed change resulting in **Minor** adverse effect which is not significant.

### Site and Immediate Surrounds

- 6.8 Due to the development of a new small-scale housing scheme on an urban edge landscape and the change in character of the Application Site from grassland to residential and open space with water infrastructure would be medium magnitude on the character of the Application Site of medium sensitivity. The direct effect on the site area would be **Moderate** adverse, which would not be significant.
- 6.9 The proposed scheme would form a minor extension of part of the northern edge of Burghfield Common. This would form a relatively low-key addition in the context of the urban land uses. The similarity in the scale, mass and nature of development of the new scheme and the existing residential developments and the minimal disruption of the pattern and grain of the village would minimise any adverse influence over existing townscape character or the urban edge in a rural context. Development at any location on the existing edge of settlement is likely to result in the loss of open land and result in localised adverse effects on the character of the landscape/townscape interface. Inclusion of open space with water infrastructure as part of the scheme offer improved levels of ecological diversity and would provide enhancement to the townscape character and benefits to the local community.
- 6.10 The land within the Application Site currently contains no lighting however, the adjacent residential developments within Burghfield Common include lighting columns and lighting within properties which exert some influence over the site area at night. Development of the site would introduce very limited new street lighting and light sources within houses resulting in a **Negligible** adverse effect at night, which is not significant.

### Visual Effects

- 6.11 Visual impacts would result from change to the appearance of the Application Site in its landscape and townscape context, resulting from the Proposed Development. A ZTV was generated, using the height of buildings (9 m) to establish the extent to which the Proposed Development would theoretically be possible. Refer to Figure 6.

### Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 6.12 Due to the general nature, extent and small scale of the Proposed Development, combined with the presence of extensive mature boundary vegetation and vegetation within the neighbouring area of Burghfield Common townscape, there would be limited change in the extent of the ZTV for the proposed scheme within the rural landscape and urban fringe, when compared to the visibility of the existing site. There would be no perceptible visibility of the scheme from the landscape west

and north of the of the settlement and very limited perception of the development from within the village. All visual impacts are direct.

### Visual Receptors

- 6.13 Visual receptors at locations which are not represented by one of the seven individual representative public viewpoint locations are described below.

### Views from Residential Properties

- 6.14 Occupiers of the four detached two storey properties located adjacent to the east of the Application Site (The Oaks), would gain near views of the proposed development. The new houses would be visible beyond post and rail garden fences and filtered through existing mature trees along the site boundary from ground floor rooms and rear gardens. The existing view would be replaced by road, housing and reinforced boundary vegetation. The architecture and layout of the development would be appropriate in design and character within this location. The new development would be at a lower level but form a prominent element in some views. Views of the new houses from the upper floor windows would be filtered by the canopy of existing mature trees. There would be a change in view from the main living spaces and gardens of these properties. There is a change in view and these particular properties would experience more change than other residential properties. However, given the type of development (residential) the properties would not experience more than substantial effect to a private view which is not a planning matter, as explained in paragraph 3.59 above.
- 6.15 Occupiers of some two storey properties on Reading Road located adjacent to the Application Site would gain near views of the proposed development. There would be a change in view from these properties but it is considered to be of less effect than views from other adjacent houses.
- 6.16 At night light sources within houses would be visible in the foreground with some lighting columns, against a dark treed landscape presenting a slight change.

### Representative Viewpoints

- 6.17 An assessment of the likely effect on views gained from groups of different receptors the seven representative viewpoint locations are described below. These viewpoints are all at publicly accessible locations where the scheme would potentially be visible, and there locations illustrated on Figure 6. The representative viewpoint photography is at Figures 7 to 17.

### Viewpoint 1: Regis Manor Road

- 6.18 Representative viewpoint 1 (Figures 7 and 8) lies approximately 39 m north-east of the Application Site. This near channelled view looking south-west from the residential development at Regis Manor Road. The Application Site access would form an extension of the existing Regis Manor Road and require the removal of the existing post and rail boundary fence. Some boundary vegetation would be lost and be likely to include one Lawson cypress on the boundary and a silver birch within the Application Site to accommodate the road and pavement. The access road would curve to the right to accommodate parking spaces that service the proposed apartment building to the east, similar to the Regis Manor Road development. The proposed apartment building would be partly visible filtered through existing trees in the foreground, to the left of the view. The new development would form a visual intensification of the existing residential area of Burghfield Common. The houses and road would be visible in the view, however would be appropriate in terms of the character of the townscape. Occupiers of gardens and ground floor rooms are receptors of high sensitivity. Pedestrians on the pavement are medium sensitivity. The magnitude of change in view would be small leading to **Moderate** adverse effect during the day for people in

houses and **Minor** adverse effect for pedestrians, which is not significant. Occupiers of vehicles are low sensitivity and would gain a similar view. The level of effect would be **Negligible** adverse.

6.19 By Year 10, along the road and around the parking bays would be established. Whilst the scheme would appear softened the level of effect would remain the same.

6.20 At night views of new street lights and lights within houses within a currently lit space of the foreground and distant properties would result in **Negligible** adverse level of effect for people in properties, pedestrians or occupiers of vehicles.

#### **Viewpoint 2: Bridleway BURG/9/1**

6.21 Representative viewpoint 2 (Figures 7 and 9) lies approximately 149 m north-east of the Application Site. This heavily filtered view through boundary vegetation looking south-west from the bridleway. Following development and extension of Regis Manor Road into the Application Site the loss of one Lawson cypress would be discernible. There would be no view of new houses within the Application Site from this location due to screening provided by intervening residential development. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity and would experience a negligible magnitude of change. The level of effect in the daytime would initially be **Negligible** adverse, which is not significant. By Year 10 any planting within the site and adjacent recent planting would reinforce the existing distant vegetation cover and further integrate development at the edge of Burghfield Common. The level of effect would remain **Negligible** adverse.

6.22 At night views of new street lights and lights within houses within a currently lit foreground space would result in **Negligible** adverse level of effect for people using the bridleway during hours of darkness.

#### **Viewpoint 3: Bridleway BURG/9/1**

6.23 Representative viewpoint 3 (Figures 10 and 11) lies approximately 350 m north of the Application Site. This heavily screened view of intervening hedgerow and woodland would prevent views of the proposed development. From this viewpoint it would not be possible to distinguish the residential development in summer or winter due to the screening provided by the intervening vegetation and the context and character of the view would remain. There would be no change to the existing view for walkers of high sensitivity using the bridleway. The long-term effect on this view would be **No change** at year 1 and year 10.

#### **Viewpoint 4: Clayhill Road**

6.24 Representative viewpoint 4 (Figures 10 and 12) lies approximately 310 m north-west of the Application Site. This glimpse view through a gap in the roadside hedgerow provides a window of visibility to the Application Site. Views would be gained over pasture farmland to the tops of houses set within in woodland. Only the roofs of houses would be visible as the view benefits from significant screening provided by the intervening woodland. Additional housing in this context would be appropriate and in character with the view that includes rooftops of existing houses on Reading Road. Walkers on the pavement are receptors of medium sensitivity and people in vehicles low sensitivity and would experience a small magnitude of change leading to **Minor** adverse effects for pedestrians and **Negligible** adverse effects in for vehicles users in day time, which is not significant. Due to the significant retained woodland the level of impact would remain small at year 10 and the level of effect would remain **Minor to Negligible** adverse.

6.25 At night-time the light sources within new houses would be more visible than the existing lit settlement edge with possible point light sources visible. The level of effects on pedestrians and people in vehicles would be **Negligible** adverse.



### Viewpoint 5: Lamden Way

- 6.26 Representative viewpoint 5 (Figures 13 and 14) lies approximately 100 m south of the Application Site. Residents of houses, pedestrians and people in vehicles using Lamden Way would experience very little change in view and the composition and character of the view would be substantially unaltered. The view is channelled along Lamden Way, looking north from residential development and is over foreground hedges and garden vegetation. Existing mature trees are prominent and would screen the proposed development in summer. In winter when deciduous vegetation is without leaf heavily filtered views of additional roof tops would be possible. Residents of houses are receptors of high sensitivity and would experience a negligible magnitude of change, resulting in **Negligible** adverse effect during the day in winter and summer. Pedestrians at this location are medium sensitivity and people in cars low sensitivity who would also experience **Negligible** adverse effect during the day.
- 6.27 At night-time light sources within new houses would be barely perceptible even in winter but seen in context of the existing lit environment and would result in **Negligible** adverse effect for residents, pedestrians or vehicle travellers.

### Viewpoint 6: Reading Road

- 6.28 Representative viewpoint 6 (Figures 13 and 15) lies 106 m east of the Application Site. This near roadside view is through a gap between two storey detached houses on Reading Road. There would be no views into the development, although the tops of houses may be visible as a glimpse between built form and vegetation or heavily filtered by the canopy of the intervening mature trees. The proposed development would be at slightly lower level than the existing houses. Change to the view would be barely distinguishable and the context and character of the view would remain substantially unaltered. Residents of houses would be high sensitivity and could experience medium change in view from upper storey windows leading to **Moderate** adverse effects depending on the extent of intervening garden vegetation. For pedestrians and vehicles travellers using Reading Road, of medium and low sensitivity respectively would experience a negligible magnitude of change leading to **Negligible** adverse effects during the day in summer and winter.
- 6.29 At night-time light sources within new houses would be very limited with only views to roofs generally available. The magnitude of change would be negligible at night-time within this lit environment resulting in **Negligible** adverse effects for pedestrians and vehicle travellers, which is not significant.

### Viewpoint 7: Folly Lane

- 6.30 Representative viewpoint 7 (Figures 16 and 17) lies 1.4 km north-west of the Application Site. This open view obtained from a gateway gap in roadside hedgerow is over pasture field to significant woodland. The woodland would prevent views of the proposed development. From this viewpoint it would not be possible to distinguish the residential development in summer or winter due to the screening effect of the woodland and the context and character of the view would remain. There would be no change to the existing view for vehicles travellers of low sensitivity using the road. The long term-effect on this view would be **no change** at year 1 and year 10.

## Assessment of Construction Effects

- 6.31 Construction activities associated with the proposed residential development would include the following;
- Erection of protective fencing for hedgerows and trees to be retained;
  - Removal of four significant trees and scrub vegetation;

- Stripping and stockpiling of soil materials;
- Construction of houses;
- Construction of roads, footpaths and fences;
- Site offices and car park; and
- Implementation of soft landscape proposals.

### Landscape and Townscape Effects

- 6.32 The construction site and activities for this small-scale residential development would result in localised direct effects on the fabric of the Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic landscape character area. The activities within the settlement edge landscape and townscape would temporarily form a discordant addition to a small part of the rural character area, although the scale of the activities would not be completely uncharacteristic of built development within Burghfield Common. The removal of four mature trees and scrub vegetation to accommodate development would result in temporary activities being visible in the neighbouring landscape and townscape context. However, the urban form of the village, the existing green infrastructure and vegetation around field boundaries would provide a well contained location and relationship with the settlement. The levels of effect previously defined for the operational stage of the development would be the same for the construction phase. Whilst the nature of the construction site and activities is more discordant in the landscape/townscape than the completed scheme, this would be balanced by the short-term nature of effects.

### Visual Effects

- 6.33 Occupiers of properties at The Oaks which are immediately adjacent to the Application Site would temporarily gain views of construction site activities or obstructed views due to hoardings as discordant additions to the rural urban fringe view, leading to significant effects in the short term.
- 6.34 There would be no significant effects on visual receptors in any locations within the surrounding study area including walkers using public rights of way which are located near to the Application Site or occupiers of residential properties. The levels of effect previously defined for the operational stage of the development would be the same for the construction phase.

## 7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed residential scheme that is proposed for the Application Site in Burghfield Common would comprise 32 properties, located within a parcel of land which is allocated for residential development in the site Allocations DPD, and currently comprises rough grassland, hedgerow and tree belts on the northern residential edge of settlement. New houses would be positioned behind existing properties on Regis Manor Road, Reading Road and Lamden Way and include an area of open space around an attenuation pond. The majority of existing hedgerow and mature trees around the site perimeter would be retained and supplemented by new planting to provide a comprehensive landscape framework for development and to reinforce the character of the townscape. There is currently no public access to the Application Site. The new properties would extend residential development at the edge of the village.

### Summary of Landscape Effects

- 7.2 It is considered that permanent changes that would occur in the Burghfield Woodland and Heathland landscape character area as a result of the proposed residential development would be accommodated within the character area which has capacity to absorb the scale of this residential development. The parcel of land, which would be developed for housing, has a typical character and exhibits few special qualities of its own, resulting in a landscape of no more than local value within the context of the adjacent settlement. The ordinary condition of the existing landscape at the Application Site provides the opportunity of introducing new housing without significant effects. The proposed development with an appropriate site layout and landscape strategy, would seek to ensure that the site would function well and add to the overall character and quality of the area with **Moderate** to **Negligible** adverse effects on landscape character.
- 7.3 During the temporary construction phase the magnitude of impact on landscape character would be similar to the completed development but some activities would be more discordant including the movement of construction vehicles.
- 7.4 At night-time the effect of site lighting and within houses on the surrounding area is **Negligible** adverse.
- 7.5 The landscape mitigation and enhancement proposals have been included as an integral part of the scheme. The landscape strategy includes retention of existing tree belts, native tree and shrub planting, individual trees, scrub, wildflower and amenity grassland. As the landscape proposals mature, they would become an important aspect of the development, capable of softening and enhancing the quality of the townscape.
- 7.6 Overall, the quality and character of the landscape and townscape would be maintained in the long term.

### Summary of Visual Effects

- 7.7 The ZTV for the proposed development is localised and well defined by surrounding vegetation to the north and built development of Burghfield Common to the east, south and west. The assessment concludes that the greatest change in views would be experienced by private views of neighbouring residents in properties at The Oaks. Due to the close proximity of viewing locations and the prominence of new houses there would inevitably be a change in the character and composition of these views. Views from other adjacent residential properties would experience a less effect. Visual effects at other viewpoints at the edge of Burghfield Common and local rural landscape would not be significant and would range from **Moderate** to **Negligible** adverse, depending on the presence of residential development within the village and hedgerows and trees within the adjoining landscape, within the intervening view.

- 7.8 Mitigation measures would be incorporated into the scheme to provide new hedgerow, scrub and tree boundaries and features which would in time reinforce the vegetation network and field pattern on the edge of the agricultural landscape, reducing effects by year 10 to a level that is not significant in the long term. The tree and scrub planting, pond creation and improved wildflower grassland within the area of open space would also enhance the biodiversity of the site.
- 7.9 Overall, the proposed scheme would not result in significant harm to visual amenity within the study area.

## 8 REFERENCES

- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition (GLVIA3)*, 2013
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals*, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19, 2019
- Residential Visual Amenity Assessment*, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/19, 2019
- Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations*, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21, 2021
- Natural England, National Character Area (NCA) Profiles, 129 Thames Basin Heaths, 2014  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4685559624630272>
- Department for Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, 2021
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), 2014
- The West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment*, LUC for West Berkshire Council, 2019
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2006 – 2026,) adopted July 2012
- Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document, adopted May 2017
- West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 – 2006 (Saved Policies 2007), as amended in July 2012 and May 2017



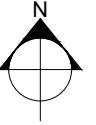
**FIGURES**





© 2021 RPS Group

**Notes**

1. This drawing has been prepared in accordance with the scope of RPS's appointment with its client and is subject to the terms and conditions of that appointment. RPS accepts no liability for any use of this document other than by its client and only for the purposes for which it was prepared and provided.
2. If received electronically it is the recipient's responsibility to print to correct scale. Only written dimensions should be used.
3. Where applicable Ordnance Survey (c) Crown Copyright 2021  
All rights reserved. Licence number 0100031673



**Legend**

-  Study Area (2km Radius)
-  Application Site Boundary

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date



Lakesbury House, Hittingbury Road, Chandlers Ford,  
Hampshire SO53 5SS  
T: 02380 810 440 E: rpsso@rpsgroup.com

Client **T A Fisher & Sons Ltd**

Project **Land to Rear of The Hollies  
Burghfield Common**

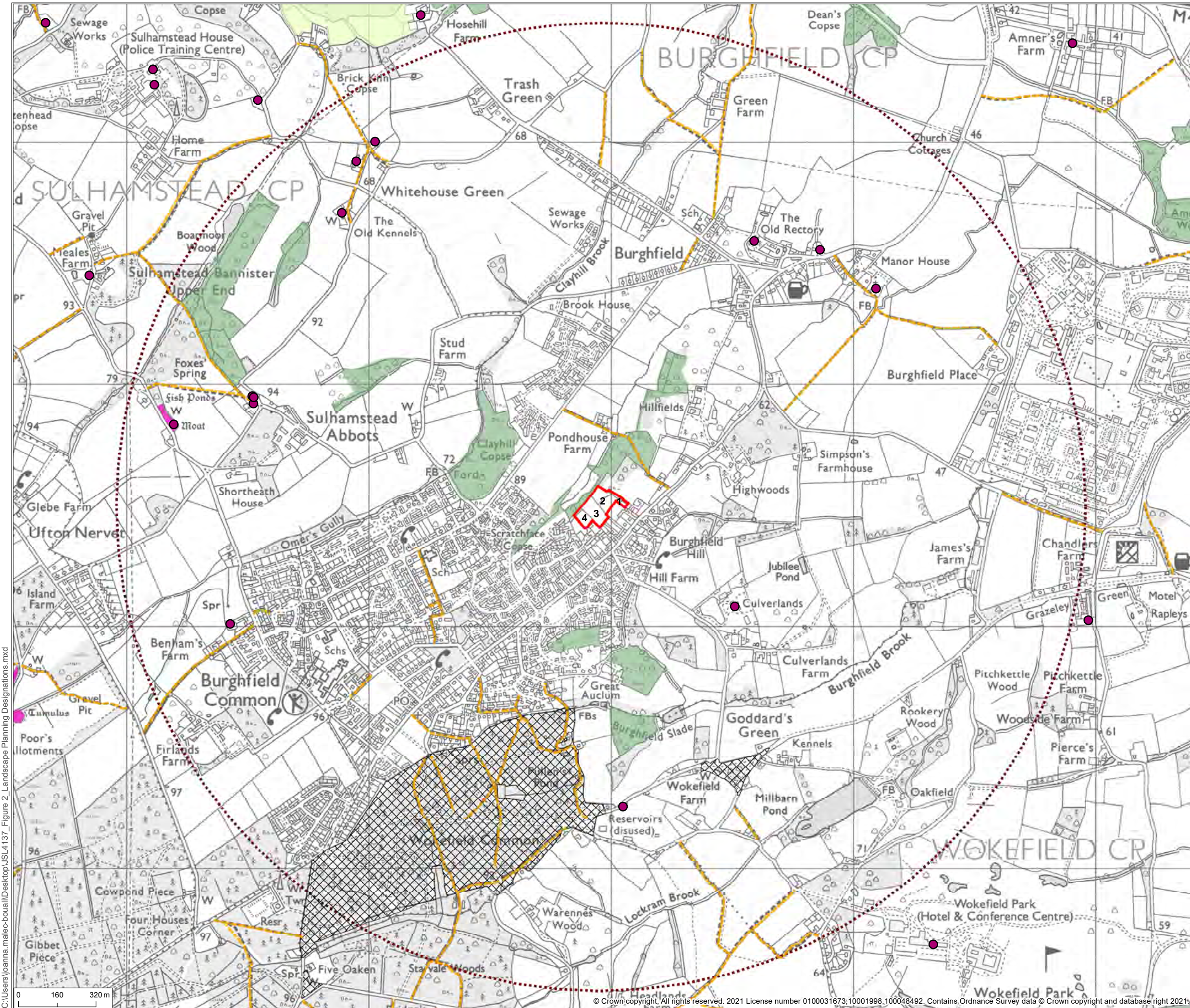
Title **Site Location and Context**

Status **Final**      Drawn By **DA**      PM/Checked by **JB**

Job Ref **JSL4137**      Scale @ A3 **1:15,000**      Date Created **Nov 21**

Figure Number **1**      Rev **-**

[rpsgroup.com](http://rpsgroup.com)



© 2021 RPS Group  
 Notes  
 1. This drawing has been prepared in accordance with the scope of RPS's appointment with its client and is subject to the terms and conditions of that appointment. RPS accepts no liability for any use of this document other than by its client and only for the purposes for which it was prepared and provided.  
 2. If received electronically it is the recipient's responsibility to print to correct scale. Only written dimensions should be used.

**Legend**

- Study Area (2km Radius)
- Application Site Boundary
- Ancient Woodland
- Local Nature Reserves (England)  
Hosehill Lake
- Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000  
Access Land
- Scheduled Monuments
- Public Rights of Way
- Listed Building
- 1 - 4 Field Number

Note:  
 Terrain 5 data has been used for generating the ground model.

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date



Lakesbury House, Hiltbury Road, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire SO53 5SS  
 T: 02380 810 440 E: rpsso@rpsgroup.com

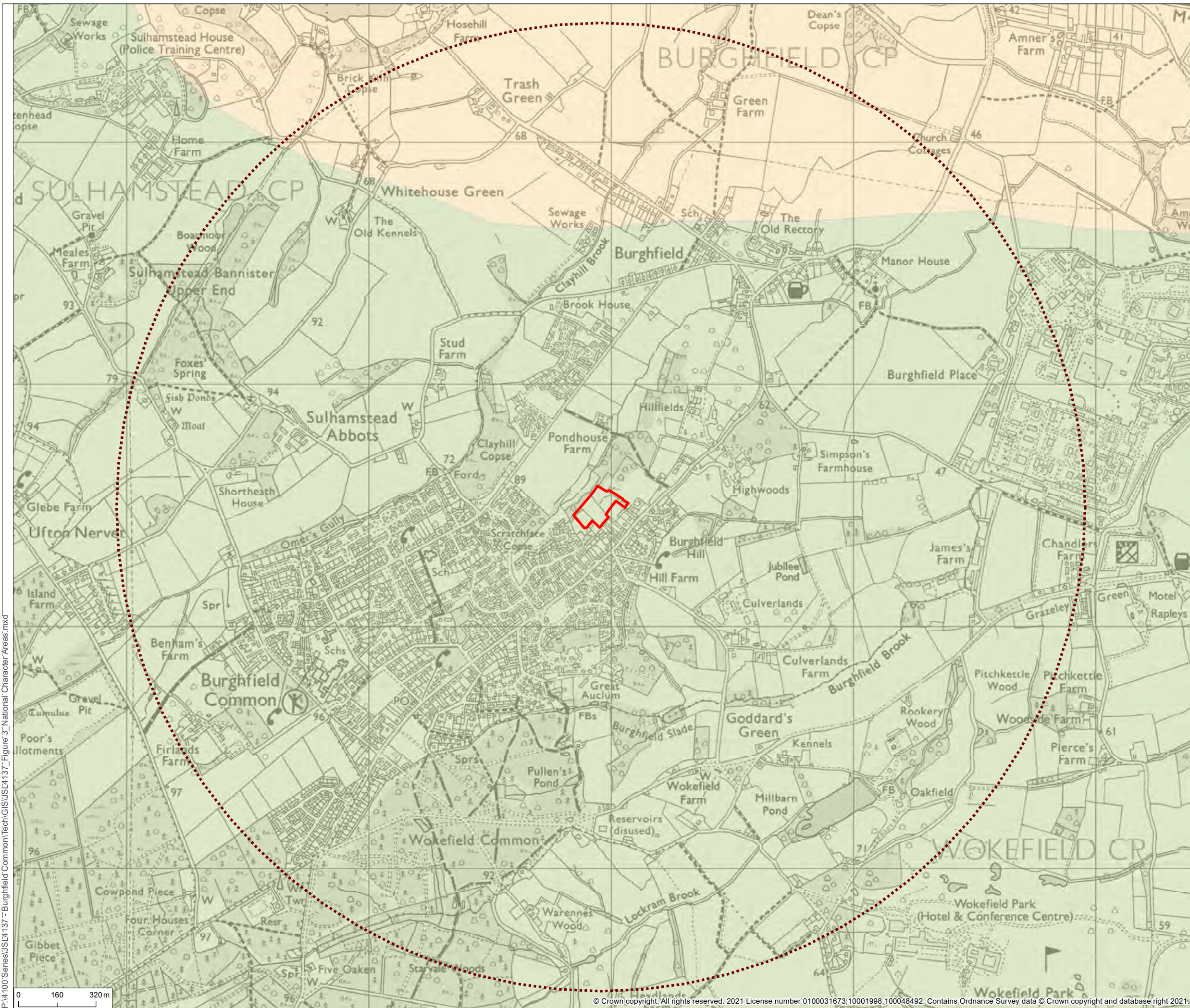
Client **T A Fisher & Sons Ltd**  
 Project **Land to Rear of The Hollies  
 Burghfield Common**  
 Title **Landscape Planning Designations**

Status **Final** Drawn By **DA** PM/Checked By **JB**  
 Project Number **JSL4137** Scale @ A3 **1:15,000** Date Created **DEC 2021**  
 Figure Number **2** Rev **-**

[rpsgroup.com](http://rpsgroup.com)

C:\Users\joanna.malec-bouall\Desktop\JSL4137\_Figure 2\_Landscape Planning Designations.mxd





© 2021 RPS Group  
 Notes  
 1. This drawing has been prepared in accordance with the scope of RPS's appointment with its client and is subject to the terms and conditions of that appointment. RPS accepts no liability for any use of this document other than by its client and only for the purposes for which it was prepared and provided.  
 2. If received electronically it is the recipient's responsibility to print to correct scale. Only written dimensions should be used.

**Legend**

- Study Area (2km Radius)
- Application Site Boundary

**National Character Areas**

- Thames Basin Heaths
- Thames Valley



Note:  
 Terrain 5 data has been used for generating the ground model.

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date



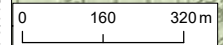
Lakesbury House, Hillingbury Road, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire SO53 5SS  
 T:02380 810 440 E: rpsso@rpsgroup.com

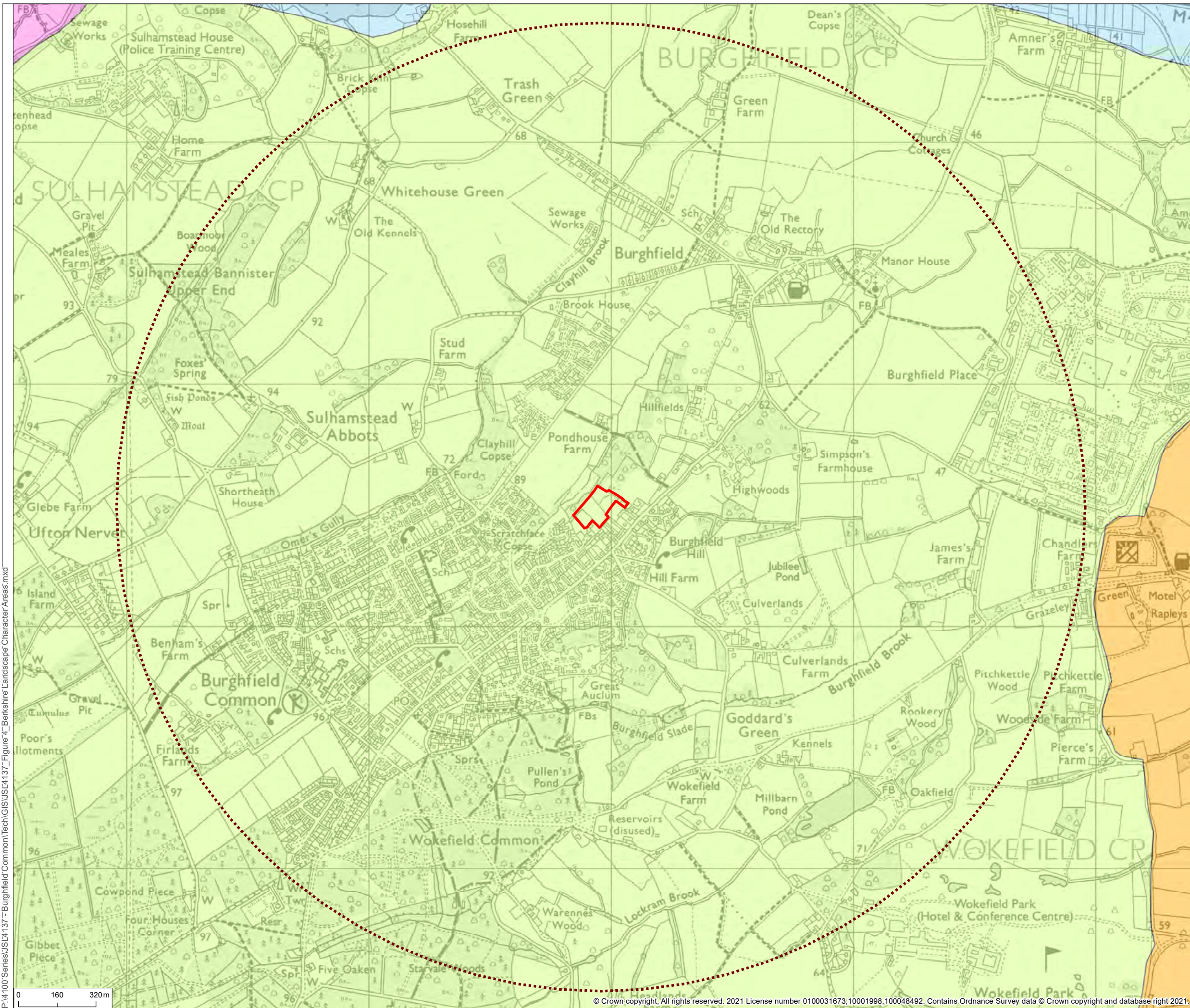
Client **T A Fisher & Sons Ltd**  
 Project **Land to Rear of The Hollies  
 Burghfield Common**  
 Title **National Character Areas**

Status **Final** Drawn By **DA** PM/Checked By **JB**  
 Project Number **JSL4137** Scale @ A3 **1:15,000** Date Created **DEC 2021**  
 Figure Number **3** Rev **-**

[rpsgroup.com](http://rpsgroup.com)

P:\100 Series\JSL4137 - Burghfield Common\Tech\GIS\JSL4137\_Figure 3 'National Character Areas.mxd





© 2021 RPS Group  
 Notes  
 1. This drawing has been prepared in accordance with the scope of RPS's appointment with its client and is subject to the terms and conditions of that appointment. RPS accepts no liability for any use of this document other than by its client and only for the purposes for which it was prepared and provided.  
 2. If received electronically it is the recipient's responsibility to print to correct scale. Only written dimensions should be used.

**Legend**

- Study Area (2km Radius)
- Application Site Boundary

**Landscape Character Areas - West Berkshire**

- B - Lower River Floodplain
- C - Lower River with Open Water
- H - Woodland and Heathland Mosaic
- L - Open Clay Lowlands



Note:  
 Terrain 5 data has been used for generating the ground model.

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date



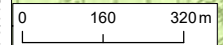
Lakesbury House, Hiltlingbury Road, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire SO53 5SS  
 T:02380 810 440 E: rpsso@rpsgroup.com

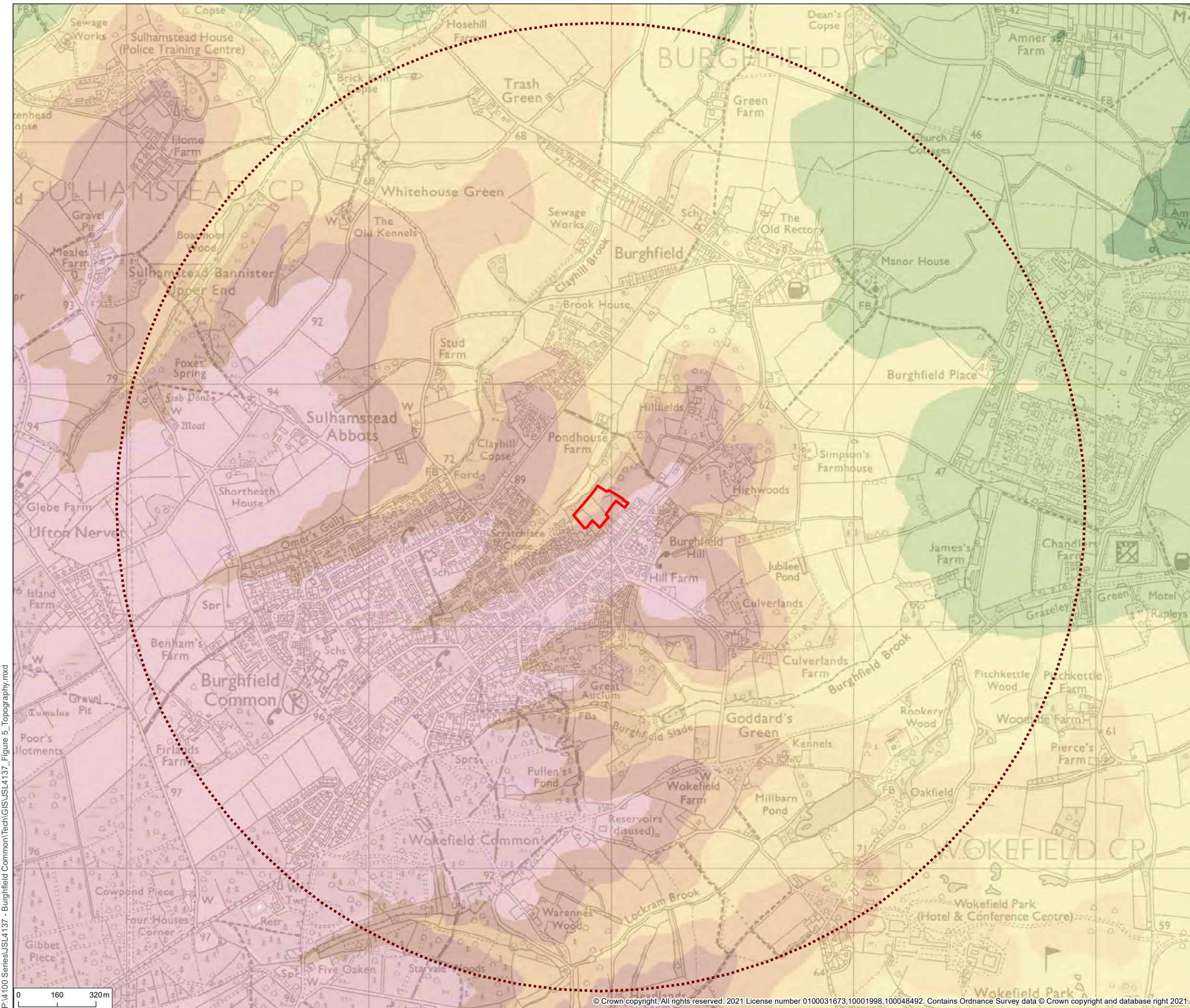
Client **T A Fisher & Sons Ltd**  
 Project **Land to Rear of The Hollies  
 Burghfield Common**  
 Title **Landscape Character Areas  
 West Berkshire**

Status **Final** Drawn By **DA** PM/Checked By **JB**  
 Project Number **JSL4137** Scale @ A3 **1:15,000** Date Created **DEC 2021**  
 Figure Number **4** Rev **-**

[rpsgroup.com](http://rpsgroup.com)

P:\100 Series\JSL4137 - Burghfield Common\Tech\GIS\JSL4137\_Figure 4 - Berkshire Landscape Character Areas.mxd





© 2021 RPS Group  
 Notes  
 1. This drawing has been prepared in accordance with the scope of RPS's appointment with its client and is subject to the terms and conditions of that appointment. RPS accepts no liability for any use of this document other than by its client and only for the purposes for which it was prepared and provided.  
 2. If received electronically it is the recipient's responsibility to print to correct scale. Only written dimensions should be used.

**Legend**

- Study Area (2km Radius)
- Application Site Boundary

**Topography**

- 30 to 40m
- 40 to 50m
- 50 to 60m
- 60 to 70m
- 70 to 80m
- 80 to 90m
- 90 to 100m
- 100 to 110m



Note:  
 Terrain 5 data has been used for generating the ground model.

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date



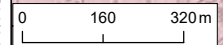
Lakesbury House, Hiltbury Road, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire SO53 5SS  
 T:02380 810 440 E: rpsso@rpsgroup.com

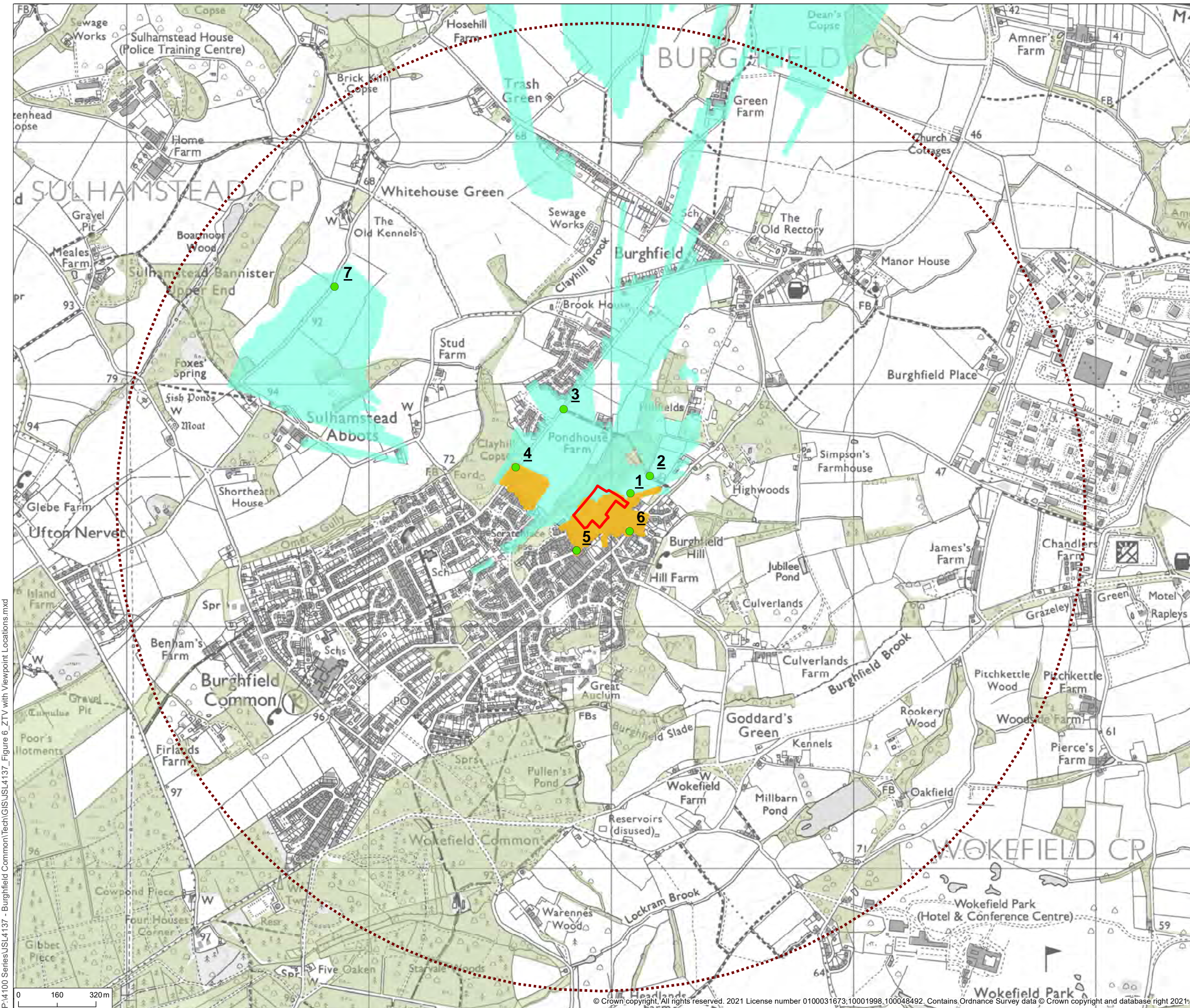
Client **T A Fisher & Sons Ltd**  
 Project **Land to Rear of The Hollies  
 Burghfield Common**  
 Title **Topography**

Status **Final** Drawn By **DA** PM/Checked By **JB**  
 Project Number **JSL4137** Scale @ A3 **1:15,000** Date Created **DEC 2021**  
 Figure Number **5** Rev **-**

[rpsgroup.com](http://rpsgroup.com)

P:\1100 Series\JSL4137 - Burghfield Common\Tech\GIS\JSL4137\_Figure 5\_Topography.mxd





© 2021 RPS Group  
 Notes  
 1. This drawing has been prepared in accordance with the scope of RPS's appointment with its client and is subject to the terms and conditions of that appointment. RPS accepts no liability for any use of this document other than by its client and only for the purposes for which it was prepared and provided.  
 2. If received electronically it is the recipient's responsibility to print to correct scale. Only written dimensions should be used.

- Legend**
- Study Area (2km Radius)
  - Application Site Boundary
  - ZTV (Theoretical extent of surrounding landscape from where the proposed development may be visible)
  - ZTV Bare Earth (without woodland barriers)
  - Buildings
  - Woodland
  - Viewpoints



Note:  
 Terrain 5 data has been used for generating the ground model.

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date



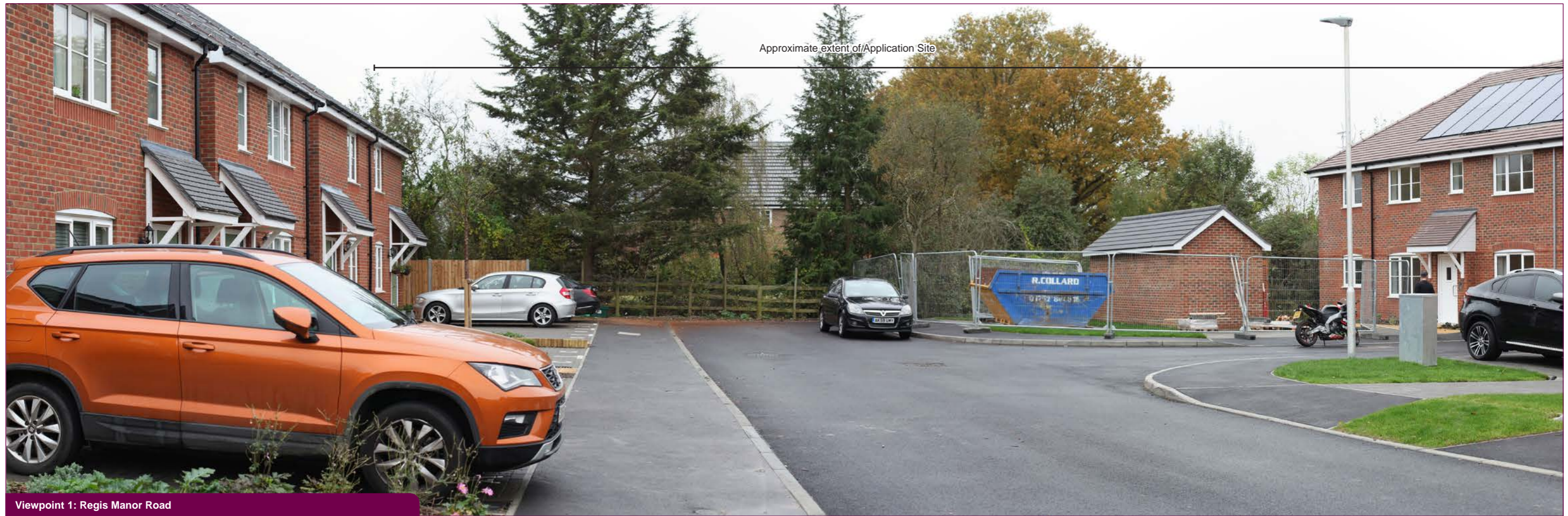
Lakesbury House, Hiltbury Road, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire SO53 5SS  
 T:02380 810 440 E: rpsso@rpsgroup.com

Client **T A Fisher & Sons Ltd**  
 Project **Land to the Rear of The Hollies  
 Burghfield Common**  
 Title **Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)  
 with Viewpoint Locations**

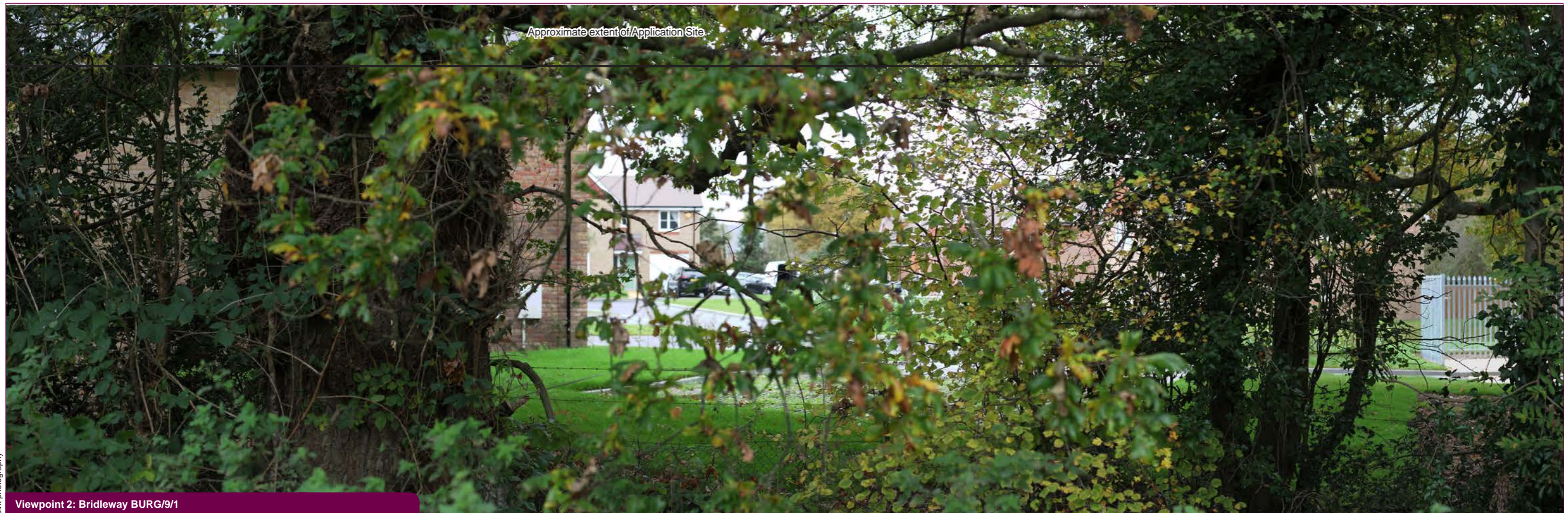
Status **Final** Drawn By **DA** PM/Checked By **JB**  
 Project Number **JSL4137** Scale @ A3 **1:15,000** Date Created **DEC 2021**  
 Figure Number **6** Rev **-**

[rpsgroup.com](http://rpsgroup.com)

P:\1100 Series\JSL4137 - Burghfield Common\Tech\GIS\JSL4137\_Figure 6\_ZTV with Viewpoint Locations.mxd



Viewpoint 1: Regis Manor Road



Viewpoint 2: Bridleway BURG/9/1

JSL4137 Viewpoint photography



Viewpoint 1: Regis Manor Road

	Land to Rear of The Hollies, Burghfield Common JSL4137	Date of photograph: 11.11.2021	Horizontal field of view: To be viewed at comfortable arms length	Figure: 8
--	---	--------------------------------	--	-----------



Viewpoint 2: Bridleway BURG/9/1



Land to Rear of The Hollies, Burghfield Common  
JSL4137

Date of photograph: 11.11.2021

Horizontal field of view:  
To be viewed at comfortable arms length



JSL4137 Viewpoint photography





Viewpoint 3: Bridleway BURG/9/1

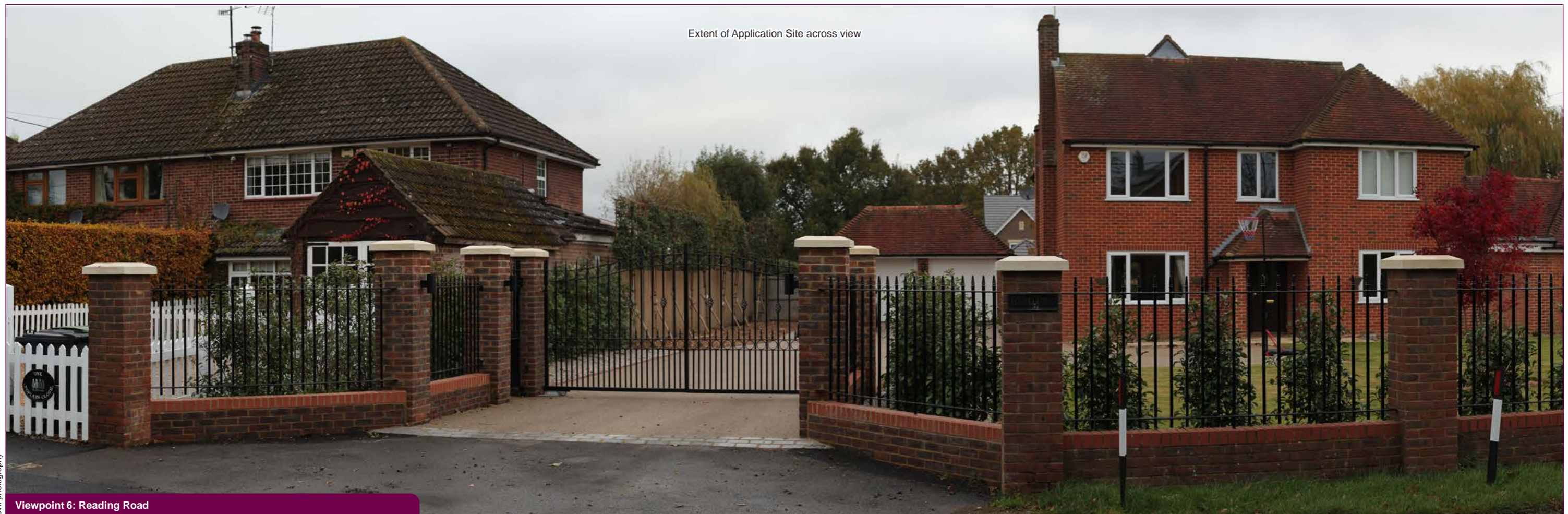


Viewpoint 4: Clayhill Road

	Land to Rear of The Hollies, Burghfield Common JSL4137	Date of photograph: 11.11.2021	Horizontal field of view: To be viewed at comfortable arms length	Figure: 12
--	---	--------------------------------	--	------------



Viewpoint 5: Lamden Way



Viewpoint 6: Reading Road

JSL4137 Viewpoint photography



Viewpoint 5: Lamden Way



Viewpoint 6: Reading Road



Viewpoint 7: Folly Lane

JSL4137 Viewpoint photography



Land to Rear of The Hollies, Burghfield Common  
JSL4137

Date of photograph: 11.11.2021  
Lens type: 50mm

Annotated Photograph Field of view  
Viewpoint 70 degree

Figure: 16



Viewpoint 7: Folly Lane

	Land to Rear of The Hollies, Burghfield Common JSL4137	Date of photograph: 11.11.2021	Horizontal field of view: To be viewed at comfortable arms length	Figure: 17
--	---	--------------------------------	--	------------



© 2021 RPS Group  
**Notes**  
 1. This drawing has been prepared in accordance with the scope of RPS's appointment with its client and is subject to the terms and conditions of that appointment. RPS accepts no liability for any use of this document other than by its client and only for the purposes for which it was prepared and provided.  
 2. If received electronically it is the recipient's responsibility to print to correct scale. Only written dimensions should be used.  
 3. Where applicable Ordnance Survey (c) Crown Copyright 2021. All rights reserved. Licence number 0100031673

**KEY**  
**SOFT LANDSCAPE**

**Existing elements**

- TREES To be retained and protected
- TREES To be removed

**Proposed elements**

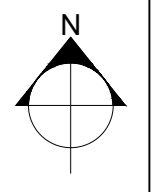
- FEATURE TREE
- STREET/ PARK TREE
- MULTI-STEMMED TREE
- ORNAMENTAL AMENITY SHRUB PLANTING
- NATIVE SHRUB MIX & NATIVE BUFFER INFILL MIX INTO EXISTING VEGETATION
- ORNAMENTAL HEDGE
- NATIVE SPECIES HEDGE
- MOWN AMENITY GRASS
- PRIVATE LAWN
- REAR GARDEN AREAS
- GENERAL MEADOW AREA
- MEADOW GRASS MIXTURE FOR WET SOILS
- GRAVEL MULCH
- CLIMBING SHRUB
- SPECIMEN SHRUB In shrub border

**HARD LANDSCAPE**

- ROAD SURFACING - Tarmac
- PRIVATE DRIVEWAY Concrete block surfacing, 'Natural'
- FOOTPATH SURFACING Tarmac
- FOOTPATH Bark mulch
- PEDESTRIAN PAVING Concrete slab paving, 'Bluff'

**STREET FURNITURE**

- TIMBER SEAT



D	Minor amendments	JMB	JB	12.01.22
C	Updated to new layout	JMB	JB	12.01.22
B	Updated as per client comment	JRL	JB	10.12.21
A	Updated to new layout	JMB	JB	14.12.21
Rev	Description	By	CB	Date

**rps** MAKING COMPLEX EASY

Lakesbury House, Hillingbury Road, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire SO53 5SS  
 T: 02380 810 440 E: rpsso@rpsgroup.com

Client **T A Fisher & Sons Ltd**

Project **Land to Rear of The Hollies  
 Burghfield Common**

Title **Landscape Strategy**

Status **Final** Drawn By **DA/JMB** PM/Checked by **JB**

Job Ref **JSL4137** Scale @ **A2** Date Created **Dec 2021**  
 1:500

RPS Drawing / Figure Number **100** Rev **D**

[rpsgroup.com](http://rpsgroup.com)





## Typical Tree and Shrub Palette

Client: T A Fisher & Sons Ltd

Status: For Planning

Project: Land to Rear of The Hollies, Burghfield Common

Date: Dec 2021

Dwg Ref: JSL4137\_100

Revision: A

Doc Ref: JSL4137\_550

Botanical name	Common name	Girth / size	Stock	Density / %
<b>A. Trees</b>				
<b>i. Extra Heavy Standard - Street / Park Tree</b>				
Acr cm	Acer campestre	Field maple	16-18cm	C / SR / RB
Be pnd	Betula pendula	Silver birch	16-18cm	C / SR / RB
Be ut	Betula utilis jacquemontii	West Himalayan birch	16-18cm	C / SR / RB
Crpns bt	Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam	16-18cm	C / SR / RB
Mls ts	Malus tschonskii	Pillar Apple	16-18cm	C / SR / RB
Prns av	Prunus avium	Wild Cherry	16-18cm	C / SR / RB
Prns sb A	Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis'	Winter Flowering Cherry	16-18cm	C / SR / RB
Pyr cl C	Pyrus calleryana "Chanticleer"	Pear	16-18cm	C / SR / RB
Srbs ar L	Sorbus aria 'Lutescens'	Whitebeam	16-18cm	C / SR / RB
Qr ro	Quercus robur	Oak	16-18cm	C / SR / RB
<b>ii. Multi-stemmed trees</b>				
Be ut	Betula utilis jacquemontii	West Himalayan birch	2.0-2.5m	C
<b>B. Hedge planting</b>				
<b>i. Clipped 'estate' hedge</b>				
Escl AB	Escallonia 'Apple Blossom'		60-80cm	B
Lgs ov	Ligustrum ovalifolium	Common Privet	5L	C
<i>Hedgerows planted at 3.00m, in single row.</i>				
<b>C. Structure planting</b>				
<b>i. Native shrub mix &amp; Native buffer infill mix into existing vegetation</b>				
Crtg mn	Corylus avellana	Common Hazel	60-80cm	B
Crns sn	Cornus sanguinea		60-80cm	B
Crlys av	Crataegus monogyna	Common Hawthorn	60-80cm	B
Il aq	Ilex aquifolium	Common Holly	60-80cm	B
Prns sp	Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	60-80cm	B
Rs cn	Rosa canina	Dog Rose	60-80cm	B
<i>Shrub mix planted at 1.0m/cs, in single species groups of 3, 5 and 7</i>				
<b>100%</b>				
<b>D. Ornamental amenity shrub planting</b>				
<b>i. Shrub and herbaceous areas</b>				
Brgn cr	Bergenia cordifolia		3L	C
Cean trR	Ceanothus thyrsiflorus 'Ripens'		3L	C
Chsy tr	Choisya ternata		3L	C
Elgn x eb	Elaeagnus x ebbingeii		3L	C
Escl	Escallonia 'Apple Blossom'		3L	C
Eny fr EG	Euonymus fortunei 'Emerald Gaiety'		3L	C
Grn JB	Geranium 'Johnson's Blue'		3L	C
Hb MB	Hebe 'Midsummer Beauty'		3L	C
Hb rk	Hebe rakaiensis		3L	C
Lvn an H	Lavandula angustifolia 'Hidcote'		3L	C
Lnc nt M	Lonicera nitida 'Maigreen'		3L	C
Osmnt dl	Osmanthus delavayi		3L	C
Prsc affn	Persicaria affinis 'Darjeeling Red'		3L	C
Ptt tn TT	Pittosporum tenuifolium 'Tom Thumb'		2L	C
Ptnt fr RR	Potentilla fruticosa 'Katherine Dykes'		3L	C
Prnus lauro OL	Prunus laurocerasus 'Otto Luyken'		3L	C
Pyr OC	Pyracantha 'Orange Charmer'		3L	C
Pyr c RC	Pyracantha 'Red Cushion'		3L	C
Vb dv	Viburnum davidii		3L	C
<b>ii. Specimen shrubs</b>				
Hydrn qu	Hydrangea quercifolia		5L	C
Phrm tn P	Phormium tenax 'Purpureum'		10L	C
Vb tn EP	Viburnum tinus 'Eve Price'		10L	C
<b>iii. Climbing shrubs</b>				
Hdr cl DV	Hedera colchica 'Dentata Variegata'		3L	C
Hydrn an	Hydrangea anomala petiolaris		3L	C
Prth hn	Parthenocissus henryana		3L	C
<b>E. Grass and Meadow areas</b>				
<b>i. Amenity Grass Mix</b>				
	Geminal A18 mix (or similar and approved)		S	35g/m2
<b>ii. Turf areas</b>				
	Medallion' turf by Rolawn (or similar and approved)			
<b>iii. Wildflower Grassland Mix</b>				
	EM2 Standard General Purpose Meadow Mixture (Emorsgate or similar)		S	4g/m2
<b>iv. Flood Meadow Mix</b>				
	EG8 Meadow mixture for wetlands (Emorsgate or similar)		S	5g/m2

Notes: Species listed above are subject to commercial availability / viability

Any alterations to species, stock sizes or planting densities shall only be with prior consent of the CA / LA

Stock Abbreviations:

C = Container grown

SR = Spring ringed

B = Bagged

RB = Root balled



**APPENDICES**

## Landscape, Townscape & Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

### 1. Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

#### Assessment Methodology

1.1 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment considers the potential effects of the development upon:

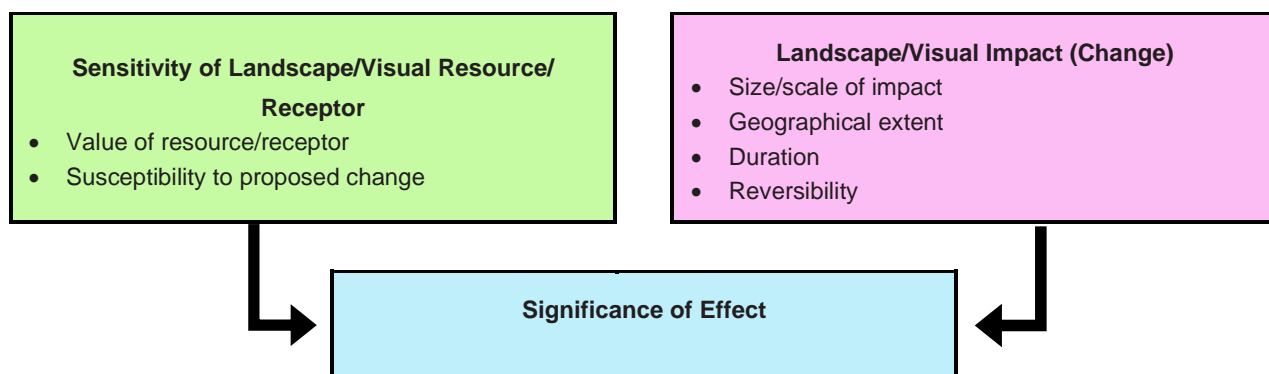
- Landscape character in general;
- Individual elements and features in the landscape;
- Visual resources in general; and
- Visual amenity of individuals who view the proposed development.

#### *Distinction between landscape and visual effects*

1.2 As set out in the ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition’, 2013 (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment) (GLVIA3) landscape and visual effects have been assessed separately, although the procedure for assessing each of these is closely linked. A clear distinction has been drawn between landscape and visual effects as described below:

- Landscape effects relate to the effects of the project on the physical and other characteristics of the landscape and its resulting character and quality.
- Visual effects relate to the effects on views experienced by visual receptors (e.g. residents, footpath users, tourists etc.) and on the visual amenity experienced by those people.

1.3 The likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development are assessed by considering the change that would result from it against the landscape resource or visual receptor as outlined in the diagram below.



1.4 These factors are determined by a combination of quantitative (objective) and qualitative (subjective) assessment using professional judgement. Magnitude of change (impact) and resource and receptor

sensitivity is described in the paragraphs below. Landscape and Visual effects can be beneficial (positive) or neutral as well as adverse (negative).

### **Assessment criteria and significance of effects**

- 1.5 The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate the magnitude of change (impact) to landscape and visual resources and receptors to enable the likely key effects of the project to be identified.
- 1.6 Published guidance states that the level of effects is ascertained by professional judgement based on consideration of the sensitivity of the baseline landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of change as a result of the project.

#### *Sensitivity of landscape receptors*

- 1.7 The sensitivity of a landscape receptor is a combination of *“judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape”* (GLVIA3, para 5.39). For the purpose of this assessment, susceptibility and value of landscape receptors are defined as follows:

- Landscape susceptibility: *“the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies”* (GLVIA3, para 5.40).
- Value of the landscape receptor: *“The value of the Landscape Character Types or Areas that may be affected, based on review of designations at both national and local levels, and, where there are no designations, judgements based on criteria that can be used to establish landscape value; and, the value of individual contributors to landscape character, especially the key characteristics, which may include individual elements of the landscape, particularly landscape features, notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities, and combinations of these contributors”* (GLVIA3, para 5.44).

#### *Sensitivity of visual receptors*

- 1.8 Visual receptors are always people. The sensitivity of each visual receptor (the particular person or group of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint) *“should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change and in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views”* (GLVIA, para 6.31). For the purpose of this assessment, susceptibility and value of visual receptors are defined as follows:

- Visual susceptibility: *“The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of: The occupation or activity of people experiencing views at the particular locations; and, the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations”* (GLVIA3, para 6.32).
- Value of views: Judgements made about the value of views should take account of: *“recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations; and, indicators of value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their*

*enjoyment (such as parking places, sign boards or interpretive material) and references to them in literature or art...” (GLVIA3, para 6.37).*

1.9 Sensitivity is not readily graded in bands and GLVIA3 notes, with regards to visual sensitivity, that the division of who may or may not be sensitive to a particular change “is not black and white and in reality, there will be a gradation in susceptibility to change” (GLVIA3, para 6.35). In order to provide both consistency and transparency to the assessment process, however, Table 2 defines the criteria which have guided the judgement as to the intrinsic susceptibility and value of the resource/receptor and subsequent sensitivity to the proposed development.

**Table 2: Sensitivity of receptor**

	Landscape resource/receptor	Visual receptor
Low	Landscape value is low, with no designations; landscape is in a poor condition and a degraded character with the presence of detractors; and the landscape has the capacity to potentially accommodate significant change.	May include people at their place of work, or engaged in outdoor activities, whose attention may be focussed on their work or activity and who may therefore be less sensitive to visual change. Occupiers of vehicles whose attention is not focused on landscape.
Medium	Landscape value is recognised or designated locally; the landscape is relatively intact, with a distinctive character and few detractors; and is reasonably tolerant of change.	Viewers’ attention may be focused on landscape; such as users of secondary footpaths, pedestrians on rural lanes, and people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation (e.g. horse riders using gallops) are moderately sensitive to visual change.
High	Landscape value recognised by existing or proposed national designation. The qualities for which the landscape is valued are in a good condition, with a clearly apparent distinctive character and absence of detractors. This distinctive character is susceptible to relatively small changes.	Observers on the public rights of way network in the countryside are more sensitive to visual change. Viewers’ attention very likely to be focused on landscape.  e.g. residents experiencing views from dwellings; users of strategic recreational footpaths and cycle ways; people experiencing views from important landscape features of physical, cultural or historic interest, beauty spots and picnic areas.

*Magnitude of impact on landscape resources / receptors*

1.10 The magnitude of impact or change affecting landscape receptors depends on the size or scale, geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. These factors are described below:

- Size or scale: “The extent of the existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape...; the degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones... ; and, “whether the effect [impact] changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character” (GLVIA3, para 5.49).
- Geographical extent: Distinct from scale or size, this factor considers the geographical area over which the landscape impacts will be felt, it might, for example, be a moderate loss of

landscape receptors or character over a large area, or a large loss of receptors or character over a very localised area. At para 5.50 GLVIA3 notes that “*in general effects [impacts] may have an influence at the following scales, although this will vary according to the nature of the project and not all may be relevant on every occasion:*”

- at the **site** level within the development site itself; at the level of the **immediate setting** of the site;
- at the scale of the **landscape type or character area** within which the proposal lies;
- and, on a **larger scale**, influencing several landscape types or character areas.”

This assessment considers the impact of the proposed development on the published landscape character areas and units, both at local and national level, i.e. the third and fourth landscape scales.

- Duration and reversibility: Duration is categorised as short, medium or long-term. GLVIA3 explains that as there are no standard lengths of time within these categories, the assessment must state what these are and why these have been chosen (GLVIA3, para 5.51). Reversibility is described as “*a judgement about the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation*” (GLVIA3, para 5.52). Projects can be considered to be permanent (irreversible), partially reversible or fully reversible. For the purposes of this assessment the proposed development is considered to be permanent.

#### *Magnitude of impact on visual receptors*

1.11 As with the magnitude of landscape impacts, the magnitude of impact or change affecting visual receptors depends on the size or scale, geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. These factors are described below:

- Size or scale: Judgements need to take account of: “*the scale of the change [impact] in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development; the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture; and, the nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses*” (GLVIA3, para 6.39).
- Geographical extent: This will vary from viewpoint to viewpoint, and will reflect: “*the angle [orientation] of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor; the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development; and, the extent of the area over which the changes [impact] would be visible*” (GLVIA3, para 6.40).
- Duration and reversibility of visual effects: As with landscape impacts, duration should be categorised as short, medium or long-term and projects considered to be permanent (irreversible), partially reversible or fully reversible (GLVIA3, para 6.41). For the purposes of this assessment the impacts on views of the proposed development are considered to be permanent.

**Table 3: Magnitude of Impact**

	Landscape impacts	Visual impacts
Negligible	Very minor loss or addition of or alternation to one or more key elements/features/patterns of the baseline i.e., pre-development landscape and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape approximating to a 'no-change' situation.	Very slight change in baseline, i.e., pre-development view, - change barely distinguishable from the surroundings. Composition and character of view substantially unaltered.
Small	Minor loss or addition of or alteration to one or more key elements/features/patterns of the baseline i.e., pre-development landscape and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape.	Minor change in baseline, i.e., pre-development view, - change would be distinguishable from the surroundings whilst composition and character would be similar to the pre-change circumstances.
Medium	Partial loss or addition of or moderate alternation to one or more key elements/features/patterns of the baseline i.e., pre-development landscape and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be substantially uncharacteristic with the attributes of the receiving landscape.	Moderate change in view: which may involve partial obstruction of existing view or partial change in character and composition of baseline, i.e., predevelopment view, through the introduction of new elements or removal of existing elements. Change may be prominent but would not substantially alter scale and character of the surroundings and the wider setting. Composition of the views would alter. View character may be partially changed through the introduction of features which, though uncharacteristic, may not necessarily be visually discordant.
Large	Total loss or addition or/very substantial loss or addition of key elements/features/patterns of the baseline i.e., pre-development landscape and/or introduction of dominant, uncharacteristic elements with the attributes of the receiving landscape.	Complete or very substantial change in view, dominant involving complete or very substantial obstruction of existing view or complete change in character and composition of baseline, e.g., through removal of key elements.

*Significance of effect*

- 1.12 It is recognised that new development will lead to some landscape and visual effects. However, it should be stressed that not all landscape and visual effects will be significant.
- 1.13 GLVIA3 explains, at paragraph 5.55 that a staged approach can be taken to assess landscape significance; *“susceptibility to change and value can be combined into an appraisal of sensitivity for each receptor, and size/scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility can be combined into an appraisal of magnitude for each effect. Magnitude and sensitivity can then be combined to assess overall significance”*.

- 1.14 Significance varies depending on the receptor’s sensitivity and the magnitude of impact of the project. The distance to the development can be a major factor in determining the magnitude of impact. Those resources or receptors closer to the project are likely to experience a greater significance of effect than those further away.
- 1.15 The following Table 4 outlines the broad approach adopted to assess the level of effect, together with professional judgement in determining which of the levels is more appropriate.

**Table 4: Significance of effect**

Landscape and visual sensitivity	Magnitude of change			
	Large	Medium	Small	Negligible
High	Major	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Minor or Negligible
Medium	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Minor or Negligible	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor or Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

- 1.16 The significance effect of relevant aspects of the project on the landscape has been described and evaluated against the following criteria, as set out in Table 5 below:

**Table 5: Significance of landscape effects**

Significance of effect	Definition (landscape resource/receptor)
Major adverse	Where the proposed changes would be uncharacteristic and/or would significantly alter a valued aspect of (or a high quality) landscape.
Moderate adverse	Where some elements of the proposed changes would be out of scale or at odds with the character of an area.
Minor adverse	Where the proposed changes would be at slight variance with the character of an area.
Negligible adverse	Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the landscape.
Neutral:	Where the proposals would be in keeping with the character of the area and/or would maintain the existing quality or where on balance the proposals would maintain quality and leave the character of an area effectively unaltered (e.g. where on balance the adverse effects of the proposals are off-set by beneficial effects).
Negligible beneficial	Where the proposed changes would not conflict with the existing character and would slightly improve the quality of the landscape.
Minor beneficial	Where the proposed changes would fit well, reflect and reinforce the existing character and would slightly improve the character and quality of the landscape.
Moderate beneficial	Where the proposed changes would not only fit in well with the existing character of the surrounding landscape but would improve and enhance the quality of the resource through the removal of detracting features.
Major beneficial	Where the proposed changes would significantly improve character and quality through the quality of design or removal of large-scale damage and dereliction and provision of far reaching enhancements.



1.17 The effect of relevant aspects of the project on views has been described and evaluated as set out in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Significance of visual effects**

Significance of effect	Definition (visual resource/receptors)
Major adverse	Where the proposed changes would form a major part of the view, or would be uncharacteristic, and/or would alter valued view or a view of high scenic quality.
Moderate adverse	Where the proposed changes to views would be out of scale or at odds with the existing view.
Minor adverse	Where the proposed changes to views, although discernible, would only be at slight variance with the existing view.
Negligible adverse	Where the proposed changes would have a barely noticeable effect on the existing view/visual amenity.
Neutral	Where the project would be imperceptible or would be in keeping with and would maintain the existing views or, where on balance, the proposals would maintain the quality of the views and leave the visual amenity of an area effectively unaltered (which may include adverse effects of the proposals which are offset by beneficial effects for the same receptor).
Negligible beneficial	Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within or not conflict with the existing view.
Minor beneficial	Where the proposed changes to the existing view would be in keeping with and would slightly improve the quality of the existing view.
Moderate beneficial	Where the proposed changes to the existing view would not only be in keeping with but would improve the quality of the scene through the removal of visually detracting features.
Major beneficial	Where the proposed changes to existing views would significantly improve the character and quality of the view due to quality of design or the removal of large-scale damage and dereliction and provision of far reaching enhancements.

1.18 The level of effects is described as major, moderate, minor, negligible. Where negligible adverse and beneficial effects occur within the same view or same landscape, the effect can be described as neutral on balance. The level of effects varies according to individual circumstances and the baseline situation, for example the presence of landscape designations and/or visual detractors.

1.19 In this assessment, those effects of Moderate and below are not considered to be significant. Those effects to be Major may be regarded as significant.

## Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic Landscape Character Area

### SUMMARY

A well-wooded plateau visually dominates this area, which extends from Brimpton Common in the west to Burghfield and Mortimer in the east, but sizeable areas of built development, including the extensive MoD property at Aldermaston operated by AWE, have a significant localised impact on landscape character. A more traditional rural character predominates on the slopes that form the northern part of the character area, to which historic houses and parklands make a significant contribution.

The area is defined to the south by the District border, where the adjacent landscape in Hampshire has similar characteristics, and to the north by a transition into the valley of the River Kennet. The narrower valley of the River Enborne marks the western edge and to the east there is a transition to open clay lowlands. Similar woodland and heathland mosaics occur to the north of the Kennet and west of the Enborne.

West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 184 August 2019

LCA WH5: Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

1) Geologically and topographically varied landscape with a flat plateau and undulating margins

A relatively flat, east-west oriented ridge top, formed from gravel drift deposits overlying clays, incised by numerous narrow valleys with undulating margins which drop into the broader Kennet Valley to the north, and its tributaries to the east.

2) Presence of surface water and small streams

Acidic sandy layers have resulted in the formation of podsol soils where drainage is impeded by a layer of hardpan, and the clay bedrock beneath has low permeability. These conditions have resulted in the presence of surface springs, ponds and numerous streams, including short watercourses draining northward into the River Kennet and a more complex network, including Burghfield Brook, Lockram Brook and West End Brook, flowing eastwards through clay lowlands before turning north to join the Kennet. Although frequent, watercourses typically are not visually prominent due to the extent of their containment by tree cover.

3) Complex pattern of land use, dominated by woodland

The mosaic of land cover includes arable fields, damp pasture, paddocks, woodland and small areas of remnant heathland. Woodland dominates the plateau area, notably the large coniferous plantations on former heathland to the west of Burghfield Common that extend southwards into Hampshire, but is frequent throughout the character area. There is a

significant proportion of ancient woodland, including wet woodland, mostly associated with the steeper valley sides such as Padworth Gully and Brent's Gully. Field boundaries are a variable mix of hedgerows and fences, with larger hedges often linking woodland blocks, and/or associated with watercourses, but weaker field boundaries in some arable areas. Larger fields are evident on the sloping fringes of the Character Area.

#### 4) Large areas of Ministry of Defence owned land

A significant element of this landscape is the large area of Ministry of Defence owned land at AWE Aldermaston, a security-fenced site covering over 270 hectares, much of which is occupied by industrial built development and hardstanding. There are also fenced MoD storage depots at Padworth, which have storage structures and earthworks but are more open in character.

#### 5) Development influences the character of the plateau

Although contained within the wider landscape by tree cover, built development and associated traffic has a significant influence. Mortimer, Burghfield Common and Tadley (the latter just across the border into Hampshire) are urban settlements that expanded significantly in the second half of the 20th century, in association with growth of the defence establishments at Aldermaston and just to the east of the character area at Burghfield. There has also been commercial development at several industrial estates adjacent to AWE Aldermaston, and the volume of traffic on the roads in this area reflects the proximity of employment centres and settlement.

#### 6) Historic, rural character on northern slopes

The village of Aldermaston, which straddles the northern edge of the character area, retains a historic character, with numerous listed buildings, despite the presence of the A340. Elsewhere settlement is limited to smaller villages and hamlets, where 20th century development has in some instances had an influence on historic character (e.g. Ufton Nervet and Sulhamstead) but which retain a rural setting and are linked by an indirect network of minor roads. The northern slopes of the area, with long views across the Kennet Valley, were historically a desirable location for the siting of large country houses, and a number of historic houses remain, notably at Wasing, which also has a sizeable parkland, Ufton Court, Aldermaston Court and Padworth House.

West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 185 August 2019

LCA WH5: Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic

Evidence of Past Use and Cultural Evolution

1) The area contains evidence for human activity since the later prehistory but the majority of this comes from buried archaeological remains. There are few traces which survive at a scale appreciable in the in the present landscape but notable exceptions are the Bronze Age barrow cemeteries at Brimpton Common and Holden's Firs and the linear earthwork, Grim's Bank,

thought to be of later prehistoric date. The route of the Roman road Ermin Way, linking Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) to Glevum (Gloucester), passes through the Character Area.

2) Many of the settlements including Burghfield, Padworth and Wasing are recorded in Domesday. Deer parks associated with great houses were established during this time. By the 18th century these had changed use, often becoming landscape parks ranging in size from the very large, such as at Wasing, to small formal parks around manor houses, as at Ufton Court. Most parks have in turn changed use or shrunk, with large areas of former grounds being turned over to agriculture, paddocks or commercial and institutional use. Wasing Park, Aldermaston Court and Folly Farm at Sulhamstead are all Registered Parks and Gardens, the latter designed by landscape architect Gertrude Jekyll.

3) Settlement was dominated by small villages and hamlets such as Ufton Nervet and Mortimer. Aldermaston was the only large nucleated village and is an exception to the overall pattern of settlement, created in the 17th century to resettle displaced villagers more the enlargement of Aldermaston Park. Farms were sparsely distributed across the western part of the area, becoming more common east of Aldermaston.

4) A historically well-wooded area, the majority of land was enclosed into irregular-shaped fields by the 18th century. Commons of varying sizes were found across the area with the largest examples situated adjacent to the Hampshire border. Almost all the common land was enclosed by the early 19th century, although small stubs of Padworth and Burghfield Commons remained open into the 20th century.

5) An immense amount of military development took place during the 20th century with the construction of the two Atomic Weapons Establishments at Aldermaston, a wartime airfield, and the former munitions factory at Burghfield (in LCA CL1). Both bases originated in the Second World War and largely erased earlier land-uses on their sites. AWE Aldermaston was constructed at Aldermaston Park and a few traces of the park's landscaping remain within the complex. A surprising survival within AWE Aldermaston is one of the best preserved stretches of Grim's Bank.

### Natural Landscape and Priority Habitats

1) The area has a variety of important wildlife habitats, including ancient woodland, heathland, meadows and pasture, open water and parkland. There are three nationally important SSSI sites at Wasing Wood Ponds, Decoy Pit, Pools and Wood, and West's Meadow. The two pond sites are both former gravel extractions, and have particularly important habitats for aquatic insects. Decoy Pit, Pools and Wood is especially important for its mosaic of habitats including woodland, heathland, grassland and small waterbodies. West's Meadow consists of two small fields of unimproved pasture, containing over 80 species of grassland plants.

2) There are also many areas of ancient woodland, the vast majority of which are designated as Local Wildlife Sites. The other Local Wildlife Sites in the area are designated for their

woodland habitats and ponds with wet woodland.

3) Padworth Common is designated as a Local Nature Reserve, containing heathland, woodland, ponds and alder-lined gullies. There are also small areas of remnant heathland within the woodland between Burghfield Common and Mortimer, and at Little Heath within the AWE Aldermaston site.

West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 186 August 2019

LCA WH5: Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic

### VALUED FEATURES AND QUALITIES

#### 1) The visual role of woodlands

The area's extensive woodlands play an important role locally, by containing urbanising influences and maintaining distinction between settlements, and at a wider scale by providing a southern backdrop to views from the North Wessex Downs AONB, the boundary of which follows the northern edge of the Kennet Valley.

#### 2) The varied land cover mosaic and important habitats

The variety of woodland forms, including valley and plateau woodlands, the presence of heathland, streams and ponds, and the varied field pattern, enhance landscape character. The ecological importance of heathland, ancient woodland and grassland habitats adds to landscape interest.

#### 3) Historic houses, parkland and agricultural estates enhance traditional, rural character

Away from the coniferous plantations, settlements and MoD owned establishments, the Wasing and Englefield estates account for much of the area's farmland. The historic houses and parkland associated with these well-maintained estates enhance the sense of time-depth.

#### 4) Open views across the Kennet Valley

The northern slopes provide long views across the Kennet Valley, which contribute to a sense of rural separation.

### DETRACTORS

#### 1) 20th century decline in heathland and native woodland habitats

Changing land use patterns, including conversion to forestry and lack of grazing, led to significant loss of heathlands and broadleaf woodland, but there has been some reversal of this in recent decades, in part due to the influence of Environmental Stewardship schemes.

#### 2) Impact of built development

The development of AWE Aldermaston and expansion of nearby settlements has had a detrimental impact on rural landscape character, through loss of existing landscape elements (including most of the former Aldermaston Park), the urbanising influence of new buildings and (at Aldermaston) security fencing, and the volume of traffic on local roads. Residential development since 2000 has been more limited, with woodland providing a significant

constraint to development, but small-scale growth nonetheless has an incremental impact.

### 3) Limited public access

In contrast to most other areas in the Woodland and Heathland Landscape Type, there is a fairly limited network of public rights of way.

## LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

### 1) Conserve and enhance heathland character

Take opportunities for restoration of habitats and reinstatement of features that have been lost, including management of areas of recently wooded common land to reintroduce a stronger heathland presence and link existing small, fragmented sites.

### 2) Promote appropriate woodland management

Conserve and restore deciduous woodland habitats, promoting appropriate woodland management including coppicing and pollarding, in particular for ancient and semi-natural woodland areas. Ensure that new woodland planting follows the existing pattern of wooded West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 187 August 2019

#### LCA WH5: Burghfield Woodland and Heathland Mosaic

ridges and interconnected valleys. The aim should be to create a more mixed woodland character in areas which have been converted to coniferous plantation and ensure that woodland boundaries are sensitive to landform.

### 3) Maintain the role of woodland in containing and separating development

Land of the fringes of settlements should be positively managed to avoid settlement coalescence and/or suburbanisation of the fringe.

### 4) Seek opportunities to enhance recreational access

An increase in provision of open access land, and off-road connectivity between existing rights of way, would be desirable e.g. in association with any new development or removal of commercial forestry plantations. On the existing road network, consider potential to designate Quiet Lanes, and measures to discourage the use of narrow lanes as 'rat runs' or by overly large vehicles e.g. adequate signage and lower speed limits.

### 5) Enhance boundaries of AWE Aldermaston

Any opportunities to enhance the boundaries of the military institution, in particular at the various access gates, to reduce the visual impact of the site, should be explored.

### 6) Positive restoration of gravel pits

Gravel extraction does not currently have a significant landscape impact in this area, with only one active site (off Raghill, to the west of Padworth Common), but potentially could due to the presence of sands and gravels. Where such works occur, opportunities should be taken for completed pits to be restored to enhance ecological value and integration into the landscape.

West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment 188 August 2019

## Appendix C

### Application Site Character Photographs



Field 1



Field 2



Field 2



Field 3



Field 3



Field 4