

# **RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND CAPACITY STUDY**

### **FINAL REPORT**

**By**

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This study relates to specified areas of land in Rutland around Oakham and Uppingham and on the edge of Stamford which are being evaluated by Rutland County Council (RCC) as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy. The Council has commissioned the study in order to help determine the most appropriate directions for future development in Rutland.
- 1.2 The study follows best practice methodology for judging landscape sensitivity and capacity in accordance with the techniques and criteria described in The Countryside Agency's and Scottish Natural Heritage's joint *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*, 2002, Topic Paper 6.
- 1.3 Detailed fieldwork on the edges of Oakham, Uppingham and Stamford has been undertaken in order to provide a finer grain of assessment than the county wide landscape character assessment undertaken by David Tyldesley & Associates in 2003. This was required in order to provide a greater level of understanding of the landscape and settlement character sensitivity of each of the specified sites.
- 1.4 Land on the edge of Oakham has been sub-divided into four landscape character types, referred to in this report as 'North West Oakham Vale', 'North East Oakham Vale', 'Eggleton Plain' and 'High Rutland Fringe'.
- 1.5 Land on the edge of Uppingham has been sub-divided into two landscape character types, referred to in this report as 'Uppingham Ridges and Valleys' and 'Uppingham Plateau'.
- 1.6 Land within Rutland on the edge of Stamford has not been further sub-divided into smaller landscape character types. The eastern half of the site, referred to as Site B, lies within the 'Clay Woodlands' landscape character area as defined in the 2003 county wide landscape character assessment. The western half of the site, referred to as Site A, has an indistinctive urban edge character.
- 1.7 Consultation was undertaken on a draft report (Issue 1, 21 April 2010) in April 2010. Consultees asked to comment were:
- CPRE, Rutland Branch  
English Heritage (EH)  
Leicestershire County Council, Historic & Natural Environment (LCC)  
Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust (L&RWT)  
Natural England (NE)  
South Kesteven District Council (SKDC)
- Few comments were received, which were generally minor in nature. In EHs opinion the study provides a useful evidence base for the LDF but will need supporting by additional assessments on historic landscape character (LCC suggested that this could be a separate research project) and biodiversity. EH also commented that RCC will need to understand impacts on heritage assets and other potential impacts of growth due to road improvements, increased demand for services and retail development, and increased traffic congestion. These issues are beyond the scope of the brief for this study.
- 1.8 The following table summarises the assessment and analysis of specified sites in Oakham:

**Table 1: Summary of Specified Sites in Oakham**

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
2A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
2B	High	High	High	High	Low
2C	Moderate to High	High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium
2D	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate	Medium
3A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
3B	Low to Moderate	High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium
4A	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate to High	Low
4B	High	High	High	High	Low
5A	High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate to High	Low
5B	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
6A	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low	Moderate	Medium to High
6C	Low to moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
7A	High	Moderate to High	High	Low to Moderate	Low to Medium
7B	Moderate	Moderate to High	High	Low to Moderate	Low to medium
8	Moderate to High	High	High	Moderate to High	Low
9A North	Moderate to High	Low to Moderate	High	Low	Medium
9A South	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low	Medium to High
9B	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

*Note: sensitivity and capacity of Site 6B is not presented because the site is essentially developed*

1.8 The following table summarises the assessment and analysis of specified sites in Uppingham:

**Table 2: Summary of Specified Sites in Uppingham**

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
2A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
2B	Moderate to High	Moderate	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium
3	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	Medium
4	High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium
5A North	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium
5A South	High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium
5B	High	Moderate to High	High	High	Low
6A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium
6B	Low to Moderate	Low	Low	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
7A	High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium
7B	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

1.9 The following table summarises the assessment and analysis of specified sites in Stamford:

**Table 3: Summary of Specified Site in Stamford**

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
B	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium

1.10 Recommendations are given in section 7 of the report to prioritise sites and to help guide the direction of the future growth of Oakham and Uppingham. Where sites have been assessed as having the same overall capacity to accommodate development, a judgement is made on the order that these sites could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms. Sites considered as being highly sensitive and with low or low to medium capacity are not prioritised for development.

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## 2. Background, Outline of the Brief and Format of the Report

### Background to Landscape Character Assessment in Rutland

- 2.1 In 2003 Rutland County Council commissioned and adopted a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the whole of its administrative area. It was prepared in the context of the 1995 strategic study '*Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy*' (published 2001) undertaken by Leicestershire County Council. In parallel with the LCA a Countryside Design Guide (CDG) was prepared with the intent of later adoption by the council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Both pieces of work were carried out by David Tyldesley and Associates - Planning and Environmental Consultants who have also prepared this landscape sensitivity and capacity study.
- 2.2 The LCA was prepared to assist the council and all other stakeholders involved in development and land management across the county to take decisions which have landscape implications, to provide an understanding of the context and likely consequences of such decisions. It recognised that the environmental quality of the county, and particularly of the landscape, is often very high and that it makes a substantial contribution to the quality of life in Rutland. Landscape is not only about the blend of 'natural' environmental features, it is about how people have interacted with the land and importantly, how they perceive the landscape and their own place within it.
- 2.3 The LCA divided the county into a number of 'Landscape Character Types' (LCTs), each of which display distinctive blends of topography, geology, soils, drainage, land cover, land use, enclosure, exposure, and many other elements to create identifiable 'landscape'. Some of these LCTs were further divided into more discrete 'Landscape Character Sub-Areas' to provide a more detailed assessment of their character to help inform the guidance.
- 2.4 In accordance with the methodology used in this landscape sensitivity and capacity study, as described in section 3, detailed fieldwork on the edges of Oakham, Uppingham and Stamford has been undertaken in order to provide a further refinement of the LCTs at an even finer grain of assessment than the 2003 county wide landscape character assessment. This was required in order to provide a greater level of understanding of the landscape and settlement character sensitivity of each of the specified sites.

### Background to and Outline of the Brief

- 2.5 Rutland County Council (RCC) has commissioned the study in order to help determine the most appropriate directions for future development in Rutland as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy. The study relates to specified areas of land around Oakham and Uppingham and on the edge of Stamford which are being evaluated by the Council in the Core Strategy as potential directions for future growth.
- 2.6 RCC is in the process of determining the most appropriate areas for development of approximately 1,900 new homes and other development in the period to 2026 in order to meet the requirements of the East Midlands Regional Plan. The study will form part of the evidence base to inform the next stages of the Core Strategy and future development plan documents, and to support RCCs position at a future Public Examination, if necessary.
- 2.7 The study will help RCC evaluate the suitability of specified areas around Oakham and Uppingham that have been identified by the Council following consultation on the Core

Strategy Issues and Options document (August 2008), and in the Preferred Options consultation document (May 2009), and allow comparison between them on an objective basis. The Council's preferred approach as set out in the Preferred Options document is for a sustainable urban extension of approximately 1,000 new homes to the north west of Oakham and a site of approximately 250 new homes to the north west of Uppingham.

- 2.8 The Council's preferred approach is based on a Directions of Growth Appraisal carried out by council officers between December 2008 and April 2009 which examined all the land around Oakham and Uppingham in terms of a range of environmental, social and economic factors. The appraisal assessed the visibility of the land around the two towns and this was one of the key factors determining the preferred areas for development. However responses to the preferred options consultation suggested a more detailed and refined assessment of landscape issues is required.
- 2.9 Land in Rutland on the edge of Stamford was not identified by RCC as a preferred option as it relates to the future of Stamford, which lies within another local authority's boundary. This assessment will help RCC and South Kesteven District Council to jointly consider the suitability of a developer proposal for land on the edge of Stamford.
- 2.10 As required by the brief, the study provides a sound, robust, detailed independent appraisal of the landscape sensitivity of the sites and their landscape capacity to accommodate development, based on recognised methodologies which have been adapted to suit local circumstances. It should be noted that this study assesses landscape and visual considerations only. A range of other environmental considerations may need to be taken into account, such as ecology and nature conservation, heritage and archaeology, water quality and flooding potential, etc. by others to determine the potential wider environmental and cumulative impacts of development on a particular site. Other site considerations, including access and drainage issues for example, will also need to be considered by decision makers but which do not form part of this assessment.

#### Format of the Report

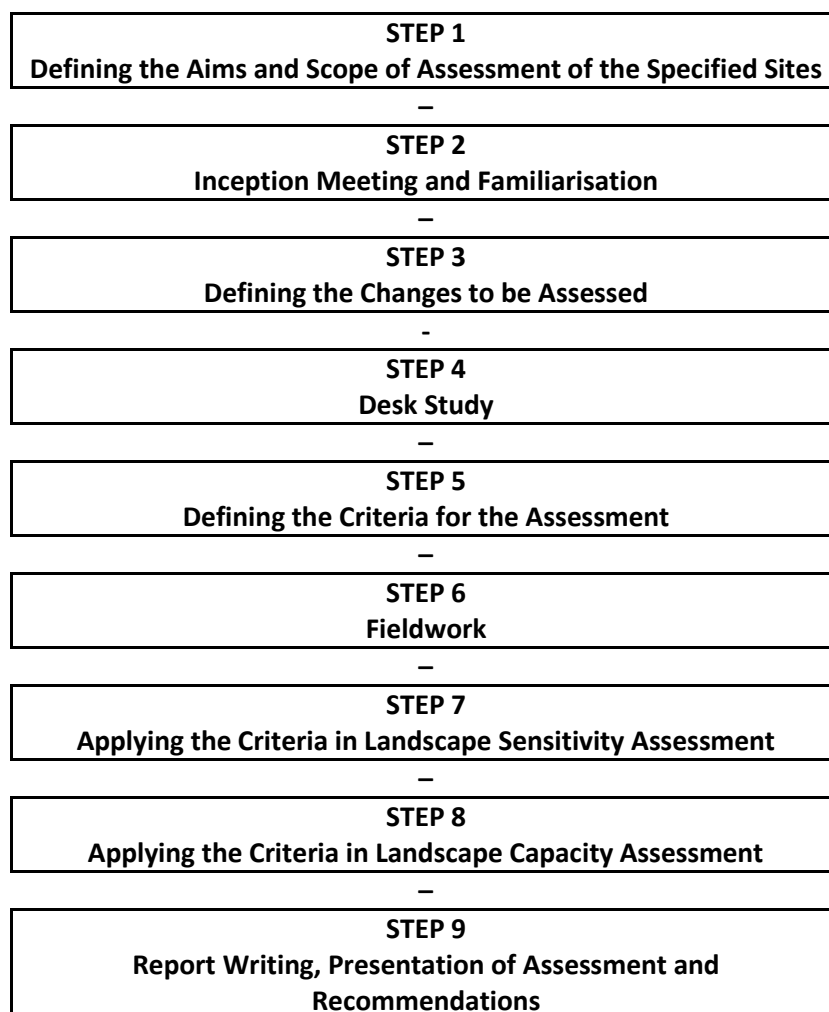
- 2.11 The next section, section 3 describes the methodology used in the study. Criteria for assessing landscape sensitivity and capacity are described and clearly set out in a number of tables included within section 3. The assessment is then reported for each site in turn, beginning with the specified sites in Oakham in section 4, specified sites in Uppingham in section 5 and finally land in Rutland on the edge of Stamford in section 6.
- 2.12 For each town, the relevant section begins by describing the local landscape character around each site, highlighting any differences from the County-wide landscape character assessment undertaken in 2003. Drawings are included to illustrate the local landscape character setting of each town within the vicinity of the sites being assessed. Within the local landscape context, each site is described in terms of its location, landscape character and setting of the town, settlement form and pattern, visual considerations, and scope for mitigation. These terms are described in more detail and explained in section 3. For each site an assessment is then made of its landscape sensitivity, using the criteria described in section 3 to assess firstly landscape character sensitivity, and secondly visual sensitivity. Drawings and photographs are included to illustrate the landscape and visual context of each town within the vicinity of the sites being assessed.

- 2.13 Criteria described in section 3 to assess landscape value are then applied to each site, and conclusions made on the overall landscape capacity of each site to accommodate development. A summary table is included at the end of the assessment of each site, and drawings provided to illustrate separately landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity of each site. At the end of each section overall summary tables are given to compare the assessment of all sites for each town.
- 2.14 In section 7 recommendations are given to prioritise sites and to guide the direction of the future growth of Oakham and Uppingham. Where sites have been assessed as having the same overall capacity to accommodate development, a judgement is made and recommendations given on the order that these site could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms.

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### 3. Methodology

- 3.1 The study follows best practice methodology for judging landscape sensitivity and capacity in accordance with the techniques and criteria described in The Countryside Agency's and Scottish Natural Heritage's joint *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*, 2002, Topic Paper 6. The study is also consistent with the impact assessment methodology advocated by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in their "*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*", 2002.
- 3.2 This body of good practice guidance has been extended to include methods developed generally for capacity assessments and specifically for built development and settlement expansion, drawing on our experience gained in other landscape capacity projects in England and Scotland, as described below.
- 3.3 Essentially capacity evaluation is a systematic and chronological process through the steps shown below. However, it is also an iterative process and some steps were repeated in a cycle part way through the method to refined and apply the criteria:



#### Step 1: Defining the Aims and Scope of the Assessment of the Specified Sites

- 3.4 The aims and scope of the assessment are clearly set out in the project brief as described in section 2 above. Only those sites as specified by the Council in the brief have been assessed i.e. sites specified on the edge of Oakham and on the edge of Uppingham, and land specified in Rutland on the edge of Stamford. As the study progressed, however, and as agreed in the inception meeting (see below), some of the specified sites were split and separate assessments undertaken of the different parts of a site where appropriate in terms of landscape character, landscape and / or visual sensitivity and landscape capacity. For example, Uppingham Site No. 2 as specified in the brief was split into two sites, Site 2A and Site 2B for the purposes of this assessment.

#### Step 2: Inception Meeting and Familiarisation

- 3.5 An inception meeting was held on 17 December 2009 at RCCs offices in Oakham, attended by David Troy, RCC Planning Policy Manager; Peter Beever, RCC Senior Planning Officer; and Anthony Brown, DTA Associate. Various documents were passed to DTA (see below). An Inception Report outlining the changes to be assessed (see below), draft methodology, study outputs and timetable and clarifying various other aspects of the brief as agreed at the meeting was submitted to RCC, in accordance with the project brief, on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010.
- 3.6 Familiarisation of the specified sites and general landscape setting of Oakham, Uppingham and the northern edge of Stamford was undertaken prior to the inception meeting. This enabled focussed discussion at the meeting.

#### Step 3: Defining the Changes to be Assessed

- 3.7 The project brief states that the Council is seeking a study that assesses the sensitivity and capacity of the landscape to accommodate future development, particularly residential and employment. As described above, the study is to help the Council in determining the most appropriate areas for development of approximately 1,900 new homes and other development in the period to 2026 in order to meet the requirements of the East Midlands Regional Plan.
- 3.8 Discussion was held in the inception meeting about the most appropriate form of development envisaged within the specified sites. It was agreed that built development assumed for the purposes of this study is conventional, domestic-scale residential, community and business development together with conventional larger scale buildings associated with employment uses but excluding unusually high structures, or wide-span buildings, specialist buildings or uses requiring extensive areas for outside storage. It is assumed that the buildings would be well designed and would use traditional or other appropriate building techniques and materials. It is also assumed that the development would include a strong framework of structural landscaping including ground modelling, where appropriate, and tree planting of appropriate scale, area, design and species composition to ensure that the development achieves a good fit in the landscape.

#### Step 4: Desk Study

- 3.9 Prior to the inception meeting a list of background information and other documents required to carry out the study was forwarded to the Council, and these were provided at the inception meeting or shortly afterwards. This enabled a desk study of published and

unpublished material to begin over the Christmas period. The main documents consulted were:

- Core Strategy Issues and Options Document, August 2008
- Preferred Options Consultation Document, May 2009
- Directions of Growth Appraisal, May 2009
- Rutland Landscape Character Assessment, May 2003
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey, July 2009 (of land on the edge of Oakham and on the edge of Uppingham, and land in Rutland on the edge of Stamford)

3.10 Various other data was provided by the Council to inform the study. This included information held on the Council's GIS system, such as OS base tiles, to enable study mapping to be provided in compatible electronic format (MapInfo Version 8.5), as required by the brief. Other information was obtained from the Council's website, including the Rutland Local Plan. We also used aerial photographs from Google (including Street View) to gain an initial appreciation of landscape and settlement character prior to the fieldwork.

#### Step 5: Defining the Criteria for the Assessment

3.11 The most important stage in the study is defining appropriate criteria for relevant assessment so that these may be applied in a systematic, impartial and transparent judgement and the conclusions of the assessment summarised into meaningful recommendations. The technique adopted follows the methodology in Topic Paper 6 (see paragraph 3.1 above) for assessing the overall sensitivity of the landscape to a particular type of change or development, defined in terms of the interactions between the landscape itself, the way it is viewed and the particular nature of the type of change or development in question, summarised as follows:

*Overall Landscape Sensitivity = Landscape Character Sensitivity + Visual Sensitivity*

3.12 For judging the ability or capacity of the landscape to accommodate change or development, the technique adopted follows the methodology in Topic Paper 6 for judging the overall landscape sensitivity, as above, and the value attached to the landscape or to specific elements in it, summarised as follows:

*Landscape Capacity (to accommodate specific type of change) = Overall Landscape Sensitivity + Landscape Value*

3.13 As part of the iterative process, criteria were defined and refined over a number of weeks as the study progressed, based around four key aspects:

- (i) Landscape and settlement character sensitivity
- (ii) Settlement form and pattern
- (iii) Visual considerations
- (iv) Landscape value

#### Landscape and settlement character sensitivity

3.14 This considers impacts upon particular aspects of landscape character including landform, land cover, land use, scale, pattern, enclosure, quality and condition. A detailed assessment of the character of the landscape of each site was undertaken and has been divided into

smaller units where localised landscape character shows some variation from the generic description of the wider character area as defined in the 2003 Landscape Character Assessment. The local landscape sub-areas are only examined in the context of the development sites and their immediate context in relation to the edges of Oakham, Uppingham and Stamford, thus outer boundaries are not precisely defined.

- 3.15 An assessment is made on the presence or absence of distinctive landscape elements or features, whether they could be readily replaced and whether they make a positive contribution to character and sense of place. Conclusions are made on whether development would overall have a negative effect, neutral or positive effect on landscape character.
- 3.16 Criteria have been developed to assess the function of each site in the wider setting of each settlement. It is considered that the most important considerations in this respect are the function of the site as actual or perceived intervening land between settlements; and as an important break between town and countryside.
- 3.17 Where the character of a site is defined by surrounding built development rather than the setting of the site on the edge of the town and countryside, its function as open space affecting the setting, appearance, form and / or character of the built environment is made.

#### Settlement form and pattern

- 3.18 It is recognised that all three towns have distinctive historical cores. Of particular importance in relation to the assessment of built development is the historic settlement pattern and the extent to which this has been sustained or modified. Growth has occurred which has obviously altered settlement shape and to varying extent the pattern of each town, i.e. the direction of growth which often reflects natural influences or other considerations. In some areas there is a good landscape fit where the built up area on the edge of town relates well to its landscape setting, for example a strong linear form or other shape related to topography or hydrology or historical land use or patterns of buildings or activities. In other areas the fit is not so good resulting in a harsh edge to the town which does not blend so well into the landscape.
- 3.19 Compatibility of changes to the overall shape of each town and their fit in the wider settlement pattern of the landscape is essential if new development is to sustain the appreciation of distinctive settlement patterns and characteristics. Thus the study considers settlement pattern, settlement morphology and the design, external finish and landscape fit of buildings. An assessment is made of whether development within a site would represent an appropriate extension to the town, or where there may be some association with settlement form and pattern but where this is less clear, or where development would be isolated from the town. Conclusions are made on whether development would overall have a negative effect, neutral or positive effect on settlement form and pattern.

#### Visual considerations

- 3.20 The assessment considers the visual effects of development, such as the obstruction of views (for example by new buildings) or intrusion into views; how conspicuous the development may be or whether it would affect important skylines or views, for example those seen from dwellings, roads, paths and viewpoints, and to what extent this might affect the setting of the town. Some visual effects may be reduced by mitigation measures;



however these may themselves have adverse effects on the landscape or may obstruct important views in the attempt to prevent views of the new development.

3.21 The elements considered to be important in the assessment of visual considerations are:

- Views in to the site and approaches; the impact on views of and approaches to the settlements from the approach roads, public rights of way and other viewpoints
- Outward views; the impact of development on views out of the settlement where these are strategically significant and distinctive and an important aspect of settlement character
- Ridges and other areas of high ground; the potential effect on distinctive ridges and other areas of high ground or where the settlement avoids such elevated positions
- Conspicuity; whether development would be located in a visually conspicuous location, such as open, flat ground or on open, high or rising ground, where this is not already a key positive landscape characteristic

3.22 Visibility of development is not necessarily an adverse effect, even where it would be conspicuous. Thus the assessment considers whether development is likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view, or where development would enhance views or existing visual amenity.

#### Landscape value

3.23 The first three key aspects considered above, namely landscape character and setting of the town; settlement form and pattern; and visual considerations, were assessed to reach conclusions on the overall landscape sensitivity of each site. This process inevitably involved both objective assessment, such as the presence or absence of landscape features, and relative and comparative judgements, such as changes to patterns, diversity and openness.

3.24 Turning the sensitivity study into an assessment of capacity to accommodate a particular type of change requires consideration of more subjective, experiential or perceptual aspects of the landscape and of the value attached to it. Certain landscapes are valued by society for a variety of reasons and this needs to be reflected in judgements made about capacity to accept change. Thus the capacity assessment considers the interaction between the sensitivity of the landscape, the type and amount of change, and the way that the landscape is valued.

3.25 Criteria have been adopted which consider landscape designations and other aspects of value, such as scenic value / interest, and public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity (general wildlife) interest and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (tranquillity).

3.26 With regard to designated landscapes, there are no national designations such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within Rutland. The Rutland Local Plan does, however, include a policy for the protection of Countryside of Special Landscape Value (Policy EN28) referring to the designation of an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside (APAC) within the county. Policies in the local plan were automatically saved for a 3 year period to September 2007 under the provisions of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Several policies were extended beyond that date by a Direction issued by the Secretary of State, to remain in force until replaced by new policies through the LDF process. Included in the list of extended policies is EN28, despite the Government's approach in Planning Policy Statement (PPS)7 to Sustainable Development in Rural Areas that local landscape designations should only be

maintained where it can clearly be shown that criteria-based planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection.

- 3.27 For this reason in assessing landscape value we have included consideration of whether a site lies within or adjacent to a designated landscape or not. All of the Uppingham sites lie wholly within the APAC which increases their landscape value. Several of the specified sites on the edge of Oakham lie within the APAC but some do not. The western half of the site in Rutland on the edge of Stamford lies outside the APAC but the eastern half lies adjacent to it.

Step 6: Fieldwork

- 3.28 Initial field survey was undertaken in December 2009 to consider initial criteria for each specified site. Criteria were then refined and further detailed fieldwork undertaken between January and March 2010 by two consultants with extensive experience in landscape assessment, with at least one being a qualified Landscape Architect.
- 3.29 Detailed fieldwork enabled the definition of local landscape character sub-areas, as a finer grain of assessment than the 2003 county wide landscape character assessment. This was then fed into the assessment of landscape character sensitivity.

Step 7: Applying the Criteria in Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 3.30 As described in Step 5 appropriate criteria were defined and then applied in a systematic and impartial judgement of the sensitivity and capacity of each specified site. Criteria for all the four key aspects explained in Step 5 were devised as being most appropriate to the consideration of built development on the edges of Oakham, Uppingham and Stamford. To assess landscape character sensitivity the following criteria in Table 4 were used:

**Table 4: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity**

	<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>
<b>HIGH SENSITIVITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.</li> <li>• Important intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.</li> <li>• Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.</li> <li>• Open space important to the appearance, form and character of the built environment.</li> <li>• Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.</li> <li>• Site may be adjacent to built limits but lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.</li> </ul>
<b>MODERATE SENSITIVITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.</li> <li>• Part of a larger area of intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.</li> <li>• Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.</li> <li>• Open space of some importance to the setting, appearance, form and</li> </ul>

	<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>
	character of the built environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.</li> </ul>
<b>LOW SENSITIVITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some elements / features are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place. Few, if any, features / elements that could not be replaced.</li> <li>• Is not important intervening open land between settlements.</li> <li>• Of little or no importance to the setting of the town as there is little or no distinctive break between town and countryside.</li> <li>• Open space of little or no importance to the appearance, form and character of the built environment.</li> <li>• Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.</li> </ul>

3.31 To assess visual sensitivity the following criteria in Table 5 were used:

**Table 5: Visual Sensitivity**

	<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>
<b>HIGH SENSITIVITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated.</li> <li>• Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated.</li> <li>• Site is very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important.</li> <li>• Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.</li> </ul>
<b>MODERATE SENSITIVITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.</li> <li>• Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that visual intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable.</li> <li>• Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.</li> <li>• Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.</li> </ul>
<b>LOW SENSITIVITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of little or no importance to the setting of the town such that development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation.</li> <li>• Site is well screened from public or private views.</li> <li>• Development would not be discernible or would enhance views or existing visual amenity.</li> </ul>

3.32 To make a judgement on overall landscape sensitivity by considering the interactions between landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity, the following categories given in the matrix in Table 6 were used:

**Table 6: Overall Landscape Sensitivity Categories**

<b>Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity</b>	High	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
	Moderate	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
	Low	<b>LOW</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
		Low	Moderate	High
		<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>		

Step 8: Applying the Criteria in Landscape Capacity Assessment

3.33 As described in paragraph 3.24 above, turning the sensitivity study into an assessment of capacity to accommodate a particular type of change requires consideration of the way that the landscape is valued. To do this the following criteria in Table 7 were used:

**Table 7: Landscape Value**

	<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>
<b>HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.</li> <li>• Presents locally important landscape characteristics or scenic value; or</li> <li>• Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).</li> </ul>
<b>MODERATE LANDSCAPE VALUE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lies wholly or partially within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded.</li> <li>• Lies adjacent to a designated landscape.</li> <li>• Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest; or</li> <li>• Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).</li> </ul>
<b>LOW LANDSCAPE VALUE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.</li> <li>• Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest; or</li> <li>• Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).</li> </ul>

3.34 To make judgements on overall landscape capacity by considering the interactions between overall landscape sensitivity and landscape value, the following categories given in the matrix in Table 8 were used:

**Table 8: Overall Landscape Capacity Categories**

<b>Overall Landscape Sensitivity</b>	High	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b>	<b>LOW</b>
	Moderate	<b>MEDIUM TO HIGH</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b>
	Low	<b>HIGH</b>	<b>MEDIUM TO HIGH</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>
		Low	Moderate	High
		<b>Landscape Value</b>		

Step 9: Report Writing, Presentation of Assessment and Recommendations

3.35 This report presents the findings of the landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment. For each settlement the relevant section begins by describing the local landscape character around each site, highlighting any differences from the County-wide landscape character assessment undertaken in 2003. Each site is described in terms of its location, landscape character and setting of the town, settlement form and pattern, visual considerations, and scope for mitigation, as defined above. The criteria are applied to each site in order to arrive at categories of sensitivity and capacity, and the results presented in tabular format, colour coded for ease of reading and to enable easy comparison between sites.

3.36 The different aspects of landscape character sensitivity, visual sensitivity, and landscape value are assessed to three categories; low, medium and high. However, in some cases the assessment does not fall squarely in to one of these categories and a split assessment, such as moderate to high landscape character sensitivity has been given. Overall landscape sensitivity using the matrix in Table 6 is also assessed to these three categories and colour coded as shown in the table. Again, for some sites decisions have been made about how the individual assessments are combined where split assessments have led to more than one possible category. For example, a site with a moderate to high landscape character sensitivity and moderate visual sensitivity could have an overall landscape sensitivity of either moderate or high using the matrix in Table 3. Thus a judgement has been made, by comparing the assessment of other sites, to arrive at the most appropriate category.

3.37 To arrive at overall landscape capacity, a five point scale has been used as shown in the matrix in Table 8; low, low to medium, medium, medium to high and high. A five point scale allows greater differentiation between sites and is particularly helpful where individual sites have been split into two or more areas of different sensitivity and / or capacity. These five categories are also colour coded as shown in the table and illustrated via GIS mapping.

- 3.38 When assessing overall landscape capacity, again for some sites decisions have been made about how the individual assessments are combined where split assessments have led to more than one possible category.
- 3.39 Colour coded summary tables are presented at the end of each site assessment. For each settlement the summary tables for each site have then been combined into overall settlement summary tables to allow easy comparison between sites and for cross-reference to the coloured maps.
- 3.40 Recommendations are given in section 7 to prioritise sites and to guide the direction of the future growth of Oakham and Uppingham. Where sites have been assessed as having the same overall capacity to accommodate development, a judgement is made and recommendations given on the order that these site could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms.

## **4. Site Assessment & Analysis – Oakham**

### **4.1 Local Landscape Character Context**

- 4.1.1 Oakham falls entirely within the southern part of the 'Vale of Catmose' Landscape Character Type (LCT) as defined in the 2003 Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (see section 2 above). The following extracts from the LCA sets out an assessment of the area :

'The Vale of Catmose lies mainly within the County of Rutland, with a small part of its northern area extending into Leicestershire where it abuts the Leicestershire Wolds and Wreake Valley landscape character areas. The Vale stretches down from the north-west boundary of the county to the western shores of Rutland Water, south of Oakham. It comprises a broad, generally flat-bottomed valley basin surrounded by the higher land of High Rutland (to the west), the Wolds (to the north) and the Rutland Plateau (to the east). This contrast is at its most dramatic where Burley House overlooks the Vale and Rutland Water Basin from its commanding position on the edge of the Cottesmore Plateau. The Vale of Catmose lies in the Countryside Agency's "Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds" regional character area and English Nature's "Trent Valley and Rises" Natural Area. Its geology is principally ironstone and limestone overlain in part by glacial tills'.

'A key characteristic of much of the Vale is that of an open valley basin created by the edges, shoulders, ridges and slopes of the surrounding hills and plateaux, the skylines of which are frequently wooded. The Vale is typically distinguished by its lower lying land, absence of the dramatic series of ridges and dips of High Rutland and the characteristic enclosure of a vale contrasting sharply with the more exposed plateau to the east. The classic 'vale' landscape of meadows and fields gently rises in altitude towards the north from the outskirts of Oakham. In its northern extremity, the distinction in relief and character between the Vale and the Cottesmore Plateau is more subtle. Land within the Vale typically ranges from about 80m AOD in the lower areas to about 120m AOD on the tops of the rolling hills'.

'The Vale comprises a mix of arable land, which is located mainly on the slopes, and pasture, which is located mainly on the valley bottom. The Vale contributes significantly to the pastoral landscapes of west Rutland. There is relatively little tree cover and fields are generally quite regular in shape and relatively larger in size than in the High Rutland hills. Fields are bounded by low-cut, often gappy, hawthorn hedges with occasional ash trees forming noticeable features where they have survived in the open, arable fields'.

'Throughout the Vale there is evidence of field boundary loss, particularly where arable farming is prevalent. Elsewhere, hedgerow maintenance has declined or has been limited to cutting by mechanical flails, so hedgerows have become generally very low and gappy, often supplemented with post and rail fencing. The hedgerow trees are, in places, less frequent or over-mature. These characteristics are particularly noticeable along the Oakham Road, just north of the town and around Ashwell where there is also evidence of non-agricultural use of the land for horse grazing and stabling. However, this is not a uniform characteristic as there are pockets of land in the northern extremities of the Vale, where there is evidence of a better maintained agricultural landscape with more substantial, stock-proof hedges, although even here field sizes are still relatively large, showing some evidence of intensification of agriculture over recent decades.'

‘There are a number of linear features in the Vale including the disused Oakham - Melton Mowbray canal, the Leicester - Melton - Oakham railway line and the A606 Melton - Oakham Road. The Vale also contains a number of electricity transmission lines. The canal retains water in places and, along with its riparian vegetation, is a locally significant feature in both landscape and ecological terms. The railway line also has some ecologically interesting, linear features within its shallow cuttings and along its low embankments which appear to have been relatively unaffected by the intensive arable farming alongside. The railway, in places, foreshortens or restricts views across the Vale and locally creates a more enclosed landscape where it intersects with field boundaries. The road and railway introduce some noise and movement into an otherwise quiet, calm, rural landscape; but it is the jet aeroplanes flying overhead from RAF Cottesmore that are more disturbing to the character of the Vale’.

‘The low-lying, flat or gently undulating land form of the Vale means that views across it are limited and settlements are not generally visually prominent from within the Vale, although they can be from the surrounding higher land. Roads across the Vale tend to be straight and narrow.’

‘Other elements of landscape character include a series of small streams running generally west-east across the Vale and a significant network of small field ponds, particularly around Langham, although neither are visually pronounced. The Vale is crossed by a series of minor roads, tracks and other rights-of-way radiating from most of the villages and there is a sporadic distribution of fox coverts and farmsteads outside the villages’.

4.1.2 The LCA goes on to present landscape objectives for the Vale of Catmose as:

**Recommended Landscape Objectives for the Vale of Catmose**

To conserve, enhance and, where necessary, restore the generally quiet, calm, rural, pastoral or mixed-agricultural vale character, with its compact stone and tile villages, regular field pattern across a broad, generally flat-bottomed valley basin surrounded by higher land and wooded skylines. To increase woodland cover throughout the Vale especially with small - medium sized, linear woodlands and belts of native broadleaved species which would strengthen the form and line of the landscape and link existing woodlands and other semi-natural habitats. To safeguard the landscape setting of Oakham.

Sub-Division of the Vale of Catmose LCT.

4.1.3 All of the potential development sites for Oakham assessed by this study fall within the ‘Vale of Catmose’ LCT. The boundaries of the Vale of Catmose were established within the 1995 Landscape and Woodland Strategy. 2003 LCA did not further sub-divide the LCT as was the case with the other 1995 LCTs, as it was seen to present a largely coherent and consistent character at the strategic level.

4.1.4 However, the LCT description does not afford sufficient grain of detail at the site-specific level which is more appropriate to this study. Therefore, in line with the proposed project method, it is necessary to sub-divide the LCT into smaller units where localised landscape character shows some variation from the generic description of the wider LCT. The four sub-units set out below and shown in Figure 2 are only examined in the context of the development sites and their immediate context in relation to Oakham itself. ‘Outer boundaries’ are not therefore defined.



#### *North-West Oakham Vale*

- 4.1.5 This sub-area fringes Oakham's north-west quarter, extending from the LCT boundary with High Rutland in the west, extending eastwards to the north of Barleythorpe and the by-pass, as far as the roundabout junction with 'Land's End Way'. From there it is bounded to the east by a north-south linear tree belt. The area presents some of the more undiluted 'vale' landscape character found in the immediate vicinity of Oakham. It is an area of generally flat, slightly undulating pastoral land with slightly smaller field sizes than elsewhere around the town. Its predominant use is rough grazing, enclosed by mostly well maintained hedges which are punctuated with field-side trees, mostly of Ash. Views across the area are mostly foreshortened by hedges and trees because of the general absence of variation in relief. Fox coverts and tree belts also contribute to the character and sense of enclosure of the sub-area, particularly to its northern parts where these combine to bring forward the visual envelope. Some of the pasture land still displays historic ridge and furrow character.
- 4.1.6 The area's character is significantly affected by the presence of the by-pass which acts as a visual, physical and perceptual barrier between the town and its vale setting towards the north. The highway's cuttings and verges have been subject to extensive planting, although this remains immature. Road and vehicle noise is a frequent intrusion. The construction of the new road has partially annexed a parcel of land bounded by 'Main Road' and the by-pass north of the Barleythorpe Stud complex which appeared to be partially under development of new housing at the time of this study. The remaining area south of the by-pass is subject to proposals for significant mixed use housing and employment proposals, marketed as the Hawksmead Park sustainable urban extension. Consequently, the agricultural management of the area appears to have been abandoned and new access roads laid down within an area previously characterised by small fields and dense hedgerows. The proposals for Hawksmead Park include the loss to development of the existing showground and sports fields which are to be relocated to the area north of the by-pass.
- 4.1.7 The North-West Oakham Vale extends into the urban area of Oakham in the vicinity of the Showground. However, in this area the transition between open countryside and built area is fragmented and, at the time of study, seldom abrupt. More recent employment development off Land's End Way has diminished this gradual transition. The small hamlet of Barleythorpe to the immediate north-west of Oakham stands separate from the main town, but its separation is diluted by the 'man-made' character of the showground, highway infrastructure, development around Barleythorpe Stud and the construction of the new college.

#### *North-East Oakham Vale*

- 4.1.8 This sub-area is found north of the by-pass from the tree belt dividing the area from the 'North-West Oakham Vale', extending in an arc eastwards and southwards as far as the Stamford Road. Within this broad sweep north and east of Oakham, the Vale of Catmose landscape character is affected by a general intensification in agriculture land use as arable farming becomes predominant and occasional encroachment of development and non-agricultural uses beyond the confines of the by-pass is visible.
- 4.1.9 Along the northern edges of the town, beyond the confines of the by-pass the landscape becomes slightly less intimate, with field size increasing and hedgerow extent and condition becoming diluted. This change is emphasised from the elevated vistas available from the road's bridge over the railway. The embankment and elevation also presents an increase in

the degree of separation between the town and this section of the sub-area, despite modern industrial scale employment buildings being prominent from the inner edge of the by-pass. Tree and shrub cover is still present but mainly associated with the linear features of the railway line and the disused and fragmented canal, as well as the small scale woodland cover around Springfield Stables. Apart from the significant elevated views from the by-pass and middle-distance vistas from the Burley area, views over this area of open landscape are generally limited, often as a consequence of thick roadside hedges.

- 4.1.10 Further east, between the Ashwell Road and Burley Road the Vale landscape beyond the by-pass is characterised by a mix of intensive arable land use – mostly of cereal production and occasional pasture, with sporadic modern development such as the superstore on Burley Road, large veterinary practice on Ashwell Road and playing fields and pitches. Field size remains generally large and tree cover more limited in the vicinity of the town which in this area extends up to the by-pass as recent housing development. Elevation increases very gradually away from the town across the slope towards Burley, although views into it are mostly foreshortened by hedgerows. This area's contrast with the built extent of Oakham is therefore slightly more diluted than the west of the sub-area. However thick hedges and landscaping associated with the by-pass does, and will increasingly present a green buffer between the town, the by-pass and open countryside beyond.
- 4.1.11 Between Burley Road and Stamford Road the Vale of Catmose occupies a narrower strip between the town and the foot of the 'Cottesmore Plateau' Landscape Character Type. The LCT extends only a short distance beyond the by-pass up to the 'Dog Kennel Spinney', a locally significant belt of trees tracing the minor stream flowing north to south towards the north east edge of Rutland Water.
- 4.1.12 The northern half of the section is characterised by a single large field given over to cereal production, backed by the wooded stream, whilst the southern half appears to be out of intensive agricultural as rough pasture and scrub around Dog Kennel Cottage, an isolated dwelling and outbuildings lying close to the wooded stream. The southernmost section of the sub-area is occupied by the significant utility infrastructure of the water treatment works and electricity sub-station which abut the Stamford Road. Apart from the electricity pylon located within the works, a belt of established and some more recent tree and vegetation screening serve to reduce the visual impact of these installations.

#### *Egleton Plain*

- 4.1.13 Located in the area south-east and south of Oakham between the Stamford Road and the inner reaches of Brooke Lane, the 'Egleton Plain' is characterised by a very gently dipping, almost flat, relief which falls away to the western shores of Rutland Water and the small village of Egleton. It is almost entirely given over to intensive arable farmland, primarily for cereal production. Field size is mostly large, separated by low, sometimes gappy hedges, with occasional hedgerow trees. Beyond the mature and significant tree cover of the southern edge of Oakham, particularly around Oakham/Catmose Park, other permanent vegetation cover is minimal with the exception of small pockets of trees on the edge of Egleton and along parts of the railway line.
- 4.1.14 The area is dissected by the important transport infrastructure: the southern section of the Oakham by-pass; the Uppingham Road which provides a principal route into the town; and the railway. The Uppingham Road occupies a very slightly elevated linear approach to Oakham which affords middle distance vistas across the sub-area and some longer views

across Rutland Water to the east, although these are not particularly significant because of the low differential in elevation. Views to the wooded edge of Egleton, and particularly its church steeple are however important from the southern fringe of Oakham. Conversely the by-pass is partly sunken in comparison to its immediate setting, and enclosed by as yet immature structural planting within its cuttings, particularly towards its northern parts on the approach to the Stamford Road. Beyond their immediate environs the most intrusive element of the transport infrastructure is vehicle and train movement across it rather than the structures themselves.

4.1.15 Utility infrastructure is prominent across parts of the Egleton Plain. High and medium voltage electricity transmission lines, pylons and poles are particularly prominent and interrupt the views towards Rutland Water. Their impact is exacerbated by the 'big sky' landscape characteristic of the western edge of Rutland Water.

4.1.16 This area has a clear sub-area character, although the intrinsic value of the Plain is perhaps limited. It does however present a distinctive context for the south of Oakham and defines the space between it and Rutland Water. That setting is however not one which has historical significance because of the 'modern' heritage of the reservoir.

#### *High Rutland Fringe*

4.1.17 The 1995 LCA identifies the Vale of Catmose as extending in a narrow strip between the western edge of Oakham and the raised relief of the High Rutland. From the western built limits of Oakham a series of rounded ridges and valleys flank the town, running generally in a west-east direction. Relief increases markedly over a short distance in a series of rolling slopes from around 115m on the Egleton Plain to a ridge height of up to 160m within the High Rutland 'Ridges and Valleys' LCT. The lower slopes fall within the Vale of Catmose. This study recognises that the Vale of Catmose on the western Oakham fringe displays characteristics which vary somewhat from the typical wider vale's landscape and is consequently defined as the 'High Rutland Fringe' sub-area.

4.1.18 The sub-area lies between the Brooke Road in the south, extending northwards immediately west of the rather abrupt built edge of Oakham (primarily late 20<sup>th</sup> Century housing estates), as far as the Manor Lane and Barleythorpe. It is further dissected by the Braunston and Cold Overton Roads which radiate westwards from Oakham, rising noticeably as they do so. These roads all afford some significant vistas over the town and its rural hinterland, most notably from Brooke Road where vistas over the Egleton Plain and the more distant Rutland Water and Burley Plateau.

4.1.19 The LCT comprises mainly of rough grazing pasture divided into relatively large fields with occasional parcels of arable land use on the better soils and less sloping sites of the valley floor south of the Cold Overton Road. Historic field patterns have been diluted with the remaining boundaries consisting of hawthorn and blackthorn hedges, sometimes thick and overgrown, but at other times are in poor condition. There are extensive historic ridge and furrow remains visible across much of the sub-area, particularly prominent between Brooke Road and Braunston Road, and again north-east of Cold Overton Road as the slope falls towards Barleythorpe. Former land use as a rifle range north of Brooke Road may partially explain the retention of the historic land form.

4.1.20 Unlike most other areas of Oakham, there are views and glimpses of the rising land from within the western parts of the town. Views back over the town from within the LCT are

important and extensive, although these are generally limited to points along the highways as there is a general lack of Public Rights of Way across the area.

- 4.1.21 There are limited but important mixed broad-leaved parcels of tree cover within the LCT. A line of trees and shrubs are found along the small watercourse which runs in the valley south of Cold Overton Lane, and again with a similar character along the stream south of Barleythorpe in the northern segment of the LCT. Elsewhere there are occasional free standing mature trees within the pastures which belie the line of former field boundaries rather than any considered parkland design. Small pockets of semi-mature and more recently established broad-leaved woodland and scrub punctuate the landscape, including land managed by the Woodland Trust on the middle slopes south of Braunston Road. These are likely to have increasingly important landscape and biodiversity value in the future.
- 4.1.22 Like the Eggleton Plain, high voltage cables and pylons also affect the landscape within the High Rutland Fringe. On occasion these run immediately adjacent to the Trent Road housing estate. However, these are often seen against a backdrop of the upper slopes of LCT, or conversely, viewed from above when looking across the town, although these do skyline as they rise and cross Cold Overton Road.
- 4.1.23 The sub-area is primarily characterised and differentiated from its neighbouring LCTs by its pastoral, less intensive land use and contrasting, sometimes steeply rising relief. This contrast to other Vale sub-areas are further emphasised by the harsh boundaries of the western estates of Oakham.

## **4.2 Assessment & Analysis of Specified Sites in Oakham**

- 4.2.1 The following sheets record the assessment and analysis of specified sites in Oakham. The sites are numbered as follows:  
Sites 2A, 2B, 2C & 2D;  
Sites 3A & 3B;  
Sites 4A & 4B;  
Sites 5A & 5B;  
Site 6;  
Site 7;  
Site 8;  
Sites 9A & 9B.
- 4.2.2 The site numbering is in accordance with the sites specified in the invitation to tender document, hence there is no Site 1. Site 6 has been further sub-divided into three discrete units for ease of description and assessment; Site 7 has been divided into Site 7A and Site 7B; and Site 9A has been divided into Site 9A North and Site 9A South.

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## **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 2A**

**Site Name: South of Stamford Road**



*View A from the bypass looking north-west.*

### **Site Location**

Small site located south of Stamford Road between the existing developed boundary of Oakham and the bypass. Land to the west consists of large detached properties within well treed gardens within Catmose Park Conservation Area. The site on the opposite side of Stamford Road is recent housing development which extends the built limit of Oakham to approximately half way along Site 2As northern boundary.

### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 2 & 3A)**

Essentially a small field given over to arable production. Slightly dipping away from Stamford Road across the northern half but then the slope steepens significantly to the south-east corner to the well-wooded watercourse which defines its southern boundary. This woodland ribbon screens the site significantly from approaches along the by-pass from the south. Open boundaries exist to the north and eastern edges with some extensive but as yet immature landscaping along the verges of the bypass. Low density housing in well treed plots is visible through the western boundary which also constitutes the Conservation Area boundary and presents a softer green fringe to the town's built limits south of Stamford Road. Stamford Road is an important gateway route into the town. Longer vistas to the east and north-east are relatively extensive towards Burley and Rutland Water.

The northern edge of the site occupies a low ridge between the two shallow valleys. It is therefore slightly raised from approaches from the north and south, including along the by-pass as it meets the roundabout with Burley Road.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The site relates well to the built form and extent of Oakham. Low density built development is visible through the well vegetated western fringe to the site. Recent development north of Stamford Road extends the current eastern limits of the town to about half way along Site 2As northern boundary. Development of the site to around this point would therefore be logical. The southern boundary of trees following the stream line presents a clear limit to the 'rear' of the site, whereas the bypass presents a natural limit to eastern direction.

The site compares favourably in terms of settlement pattern compared to most others subject to this study.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3A)

Development of the site for housing would present a relatively high degree of public visibility, but within the context of existing townscape features. Boundaries to the south and west are well established and would limit views of any development from those directions. Visibility would be high however from approaches from the east and along Stamford Road where existing hedgerows are low and would present ineffective visual mitigation. Extensive landscaping to the bypass will present further screening or softening of impacts from the east and south east in the long term.

Wider visual impact would be limited, and in the context of neighbouring development and complementary settlement form, would not be particularly harmful in the wider context.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Scope for mitigation is limited to further supplementary planting along the bypass boundary, and within any undeveloped elements of the site to its eastern boundary. Existing mitigation is established along the southern and western fringes. Along Stamford Road structural planting should be limited to occasional roadside trees as this will be an important built frontage on a main approach to the town. Further screening would be inappropriate. Delivery of high quality built design will be the most important element in mitigating the impact of developing the site.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Common place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

**Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

### **Landscape Value**

**Low to Moderate** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### **Conclusions on Landscape Capacity**

Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity with Low to Moderate Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium to High Capacity for Site 2A** to accommodate the proposed development in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 5 (see Figure 5). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly

higher capacity has been allocated because development of the site would be viewed in the context of the town, although within an important entry point to Oakham. It is also adjacent to a Conservation Area, and this should emphasise the need for high quality design to be delivered, rather than be a significant barrier to development.

The site is well related to the existing edge of Oakham, is modest in its scale and benefits from a degree of natural framing from its backdrop of woodland. Further screening benefits will accrue in the medium and long term from the landscaping associated with the bypass' construction.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
2A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High

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### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 2B**

**Site Name: Land east of Uppingham Road adjacent to Catmose Park**



*View B from Public Footpath entry near Uppingham Road*



*View C from Public Footpath looking south-east*

#### **Site Location**

Lying within the Egleton Plain LCT between the southern wooded limits to Oakham, the east side of Uppingham Road and north of the open arable field of site 2C. A rectilinear site crossed by one of only a limited number of footpaths which radiate out from Oakham into its rural hinterland.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 2 & 3A)

The site is an untypical blend of intensive arable agricultural land use with scattered stands of unenclosed mature broadleaved trees, possibly from a remnant parkland associated with Catmose House. It is generally level with some fall to its north-east corner as it bounds with the shallow valley which also partially defines the limits to sites 2C and 2A. Across its southern boundary it is enclosed by a mature hedge with hedgerow trees (contiguous with 2C), which then returns to the north where its condition deteriorates, often becoming gappy. Its northern boundary is defined by the important wooded edge of Oakham, although this boundary is complicated by linkages between the woodland and the stands of trees within the site. Its boundary with Uppingham Road is partially screened through tree cover and occasional development.

The combination of arable land use with parkland characteristics affords a somewhat unusual site profile which is not typical of the Egleton Plain but which is clearly a component part of the wider setting.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The site is physically adjacent to the exiting limits of Oakham where development is of a very low density, but is otherwise very poorly related to it in any visual sense. The heavily wooded southern fringe to the town affords a very strong sense of screening to Oakham when approached along Uppingham Road or the bypass. Development of the site would introduce a built element to the south of Oakham which does not exist at present, whilst also likely to be at a higher density which would contrast significantly to the screened development within Catmose Park Conservation Area.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3A)

The site would be prominent from both Uppingham Road and the bypass on approaches from the south. This impact would be partially ameliorated by existing hedgerows and the trees within the site, but would nevertheless be visually prominent against the wooded backdrop. Views from the east on the bypass as it nears the site may be partially reduced as the road surface drops below the surrounding ground level.

A well used footpath, part of the Hereward Way, crosses the site. If this would be retained the development of the site would be highly conspicuous from what is a well used and unenclosed recreational resource.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Should the site be selected for development, mitigation should include extensive woodland planting to the southern boundary to help reduce visual impact and to complement the existing screened character of the town's southern approaches. Such measures are however only likely to be effective in the long term. The existing stands of mature trees within the site should be retained and protected from harm by adjacent development. This would help break the roofscape and profile of any development.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements / features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.
- Open space important to the setting, appearance, form and character of the built environment.

Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Site is very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important.
- Provides important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated.

**Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

### Landscape Value

**High Landscape Value** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value give **Low Capacity for Site 2B** to accommodate the proposed development.

The site is particularly sensitive to development primarily because of the role its woodland features play in providing a fully screened approach to Oakham from the south. The 'green' southern edge to Oakham is an important landscape and townscape characteristic, and development in front of the woodland would completely alter that distinctive feature. It is also important in respect to public access as the 'Rutland Round' path crosses it.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
2B	High	High	High	High	Low

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### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 2C**

**Site Name: Land between Burley Park Way and Catmose Park**



*View D looking east from Uppingham Road*



*View E of Site 2C from its south-east corner off Burley Park Way*

#### **Site Location**

The outermost arable field between Oakham's south-easterly built limits and Burley Park Way. The site extends in an arc from the southern boundary with Site 2A, enclosed by the by-pass around to its boundary with Uppingham Road. Its northern boundary follows the outer hedge boundary of the Catmose Park area of the Conservation Area and Site 2 B, before returning northwards to the southern edge of Site 2A.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 2 & 3A)**

Primarily a large level arable field, low lying with very marginal change of relief within the site boundaries. The site itself is of little intrinsic landscape value, lying within the Egleton Plain LCT and is typical of its distinguishing characteristics of wide open, low lying arable land with big skies and low hedge boundaries. Views across it towards Rutland Water, and the screening effect of its northern boundaries do however provide landscape value in respect to the setting of Oakham.

The wooded fringe to Oakham along 2C's north east edge is a particularly important landscape component. It continues across the northern edge of Site 2B but is clearly visible from 2C and presents its perceptual limits, if not its actual extent. These serve to screen the southern boundary of the built extent of the town, and whilst not a solid block of mature trees, combine to give the appearance and screening effect of denser woodland.

#### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The site lies in relatively close proximity to the town and within the line of the bypass, but visually is detached from Oakham as a consequence of the wooded backdrop to the town's southern edge. Retention of this wooded backdrop and the low development capacity of Site 2B would result in the

development of 2C being detached from the built extent of Oakham, and hence significantly diluting historic settlement form. Uppingham Road is an important historic route into the town where the treescape shields the prominence of the town until the traveller is almost within it. Development of the site would completely the character of the approach into the town.

#### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3A)

Wide open vistas into and across the field are available all along its Uppingham Road boundary where the highway level is slightly elevated from field height and the boundary hedge is low. Views continue over the site towards the Burley Plateau, Rutland Water and Egleton. Whilst the landscape character in this direction is unremarkable, its openness and glimpses of the reservoir are locally significant. The northern edge is defined by a thick, high mature hedgerow with occasional hedgerow trees.

The site does occupy a space which separates Egleton from Oakham and where the wooded edge does not permit clear views from each settlement to the other.

Views into the site from Burley Park Way are open from its southern most limits, but then lessen as the road sinks into cuttings along its eastern edge. Immature landscaping and hedge planting will eventually increase this screening effect. Views into the site from its north-eastern edge are only possible from the top of the road cutting. However, such vantages are of some importance from the public footpath, part of the 'Rutland Round' which crosses the bypass at the centre point of the site's outer edge. From northern approaches along the bypass the site is generally screened from within the cutting, and from the junction with Stamford Road, by the woodland ribbon which separates it from Site 2A.

#### **Scope for Mitigation**

Extensive tree planting along site boundaries would be required to reduce visual prominence of development across the site, but this would be unlikely to be effective for many years and may also be inconsistent with existing landscape character. Development of two storeys or more would remain visually prominent across the site in the long term. Existing but immature planting associated with the bypass will help define and screen the eastern fringes to the site but will be ineffective in the short to medium term. If the site is to be considered for development, delivery of high design standards should be secured to offset prominence, particularly of development fronting the roadside.

#### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.
- Part of a larger area of intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.
- Common place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.

Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Provides important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated.
- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated.
- Site is very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous.

Overall **High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

### Landscape Value

**Moderate** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly or partially within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value give **Low to Medium Capacity for Site 2C** to accommodate the proposed development (see Figure 5).

Consistent with the assessment of Site 2B, the capacity of this large site is reduced by its location between the town and its wooded southern boundary which is an important natural feature of Oakham. Site 2B is identified by this study as having low capacity for development and development of this site would then be further removed from the town as a consequence. In addition the site would be highly prominent lying on open land on the Egleton Plain, between the bypass and Uppingham Road which could not be reasonably mitigated because of its degree of exposure. The Rutland Round crosses the site which is an important recreational path, the value and character of which would be severely diminished by the development.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
2C	Moderate to High	High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium

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### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 2D**

**Site Name: Land to the west of Uppingham Road adjacent to Catmose Park**



*View F from Uppingham Road looking north-west.*

#### **Site Location**

Lying within the Egleton Plain LCT between the southern limits to Oakham, the west side of Uppingham Road and the railway line which demarcates the whole of its western boundary.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 2 & 3A)

The site is typical of the Egleton Plain, characterised by low lying land, primarily under cereal production. It specifically consists of 4 fields, the southern-most two constituting a significant majority of the overall area. Two smaller meadows retained as rough grazing, occupy the northern section on the southern limits of Oakham. Low hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees define all internal breaks in the site.

The site is crossed by local electricity supply poles and wires, but is otherwise free from any significant built development or structures. The northern fringe of the site retains a more intimate character than the large open expanses of the two main fields, but these are generally viewed across the hedges towards the trees of the northern boundary rather than into the meadows themselves. Some limited ridge and furrow appears to have survived in the northern meadow where intensive arable farming has been avoided. The northern 'buffer' between the open spaces of the site and the southern fringe of Oakham is an important landscape function in respect to key approaches to the town along the Uppingham Road. Hedgerow trees within the site supplement this screening function from slightly longer views.

#### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The northern parts of the site are in close proximity to allotments, late 20<sup>th</sup> Century housing and tennis and bowls clubs of southern Oakham, but a relatively well treed and slightly disjointed boundary line means most of the town's built extent is screened from the site. This serves to separate the site from the physical limits of the town in a similar but slightly less pronounced way than across sites 2B and 2C. As the site extends southwards to the west of Uppingham Road its relationship with the town's form is weakened. Development of the site in total would present a

pronounced 'finger' extending to the south-east along Uppingham Road where any relationship to the historic town would be limited.

#### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3A)

The site is clearly visible from along most of its boundary along Uppingham Road as a consequence of the road being slightly elevated from the general ground level, the lack of relief within it, and the low hedge height along the Uppingham Road. Elsewhere a well treed northern boundary with Oakham and the allotment gardens provides a more substantial but broken green buffer between the town and the site, although this screening is not as significant as that on the northern edge of Site 2B. The western edge is defined by the railway with patches of scrub vegetation and occasional trees and consequently presents a definitive boundary to the site, although its screening effect from more elevated sites to the west is minimal where the site could be seen as a major extension to the town. The short southern boundary is demarcated by a low hedgerow behind which a small patch of scrub and a small pocket of trees help define the limits to the site. A slight rise in ground level beyond this boundary further emphasises a perceptual break.

#### **Scope for Mitigation**

Views into the site would be conspicuous from most of Uppingham Road, and equally so from passengers travelling along the railway. The prominence of development could be ameliorated to some degree by boundary planting, but this would only be effective in the medium to long term. Retention of hedgerow trees across northern parts of the site could help some screening and also afford internal value and landscape benefit. Development of the northern parts of the site would be less conspicuous and better related to urban form than the southern, more open areas, but nevertheless would be prominent when approaching along the Uppingham Road.

#### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Common place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Open space of some importance to the setting, appearance, form and character of the built environment.
- Site may be adjacent to built limits but lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.

Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated.

**Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4). A judgement has been made to allocate moderate rather than high overall landscape sensitivity, on balance. Site 2D is considered to be less sensitive than Site 2C which is assessed as having an overall high landscape sensitivity.

### Landscape Value

**Moderate** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly or partially within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded.
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity with Moderate Landscape Value give **Medium Capacity for Site 2D** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5).

The site's capacity for development is restricted by its location to the outside of the soft green boundary which characterises the southern edge of Oakham. Whilst not as pronounced as to the east of Uppingham Road, it remains a characteristic townscape and landscape feature, which would be harmed by development beyond it. However development of its northern sections may be able to be more effectively mitigated through structural planting than its southern half. The elongated site profile also suggests that development to its south would significantly affect settlement form. Visual prominence of the southern reaches of the site is also a limiting factor.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
2D	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

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## Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham

**Site Number: 3A**

**Site Name: Land between Brooke Road and the Railway (Inner Site)**



*Panoramic View G over Sites 3A and 3B from elevated land on Brooke Road*

### Site Location.

Lying to the immediate south of Oakham between the railway and the lower extent of Brooke Road.

### Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 2 & 3A)

The site is enclosed by Brooke Road to the west and the railway in the east which diverge from its upper 'point' to present a roughly triangular parcel of land. Its southern boundary is defined by low hedges in very poor condition with large arable fields beyond (Site 3B). It lies within the Egleton Plain LCT and is typical of the wider sub-area.

The site consists solely of a single large field given over to arable crop production. It is very gently undulating but with little internal change of relief. Limited bushes and occasional trees along the northern boundaries with housing on the east of Brooke Lane and along the northern parts of the railway line present some marginal landscape interest and help to present a visual buffering between the town and its rural context, but this is not significant.

The site has very limited intrinsic landscape value despite lying within the Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside local landscape designation. A distinctive feature of the site is its openness and unbroken views across it towards sites 2C and 2D beyond the railway and then on towards Rutland Water. This openness is particularly significant when viewed from further up Brooke Road. In part the site provides an open break between the town and the rising ground to the south-west.

### Settlement Form and Pattern

The site's western edge abuts the eastern side of Brooke Road. This is a mostly undeveloped boundary but a continuous line of housing tightly abuts the western side of the road and hence there is a clear relationship with the town at this point. The compact form of the site, arching around to the railway line suggests that development, whilst conspicuous, would relate relatively well to this more recent area of Oakham's built extent.

### Visual Considerations (see Figure 3A)

Open views across the site are clearly visible from along the lower reaches of Brooke Road and then again from the important elevated views from Brooke Road to the south-west. Those elevated views are however seen with Oakham as a clear and immediate backdrop in an area of the town of

unremarkable townscape character or visually significant buildings or landmarks. Moreover the site is viewed as the inner parcel of a much larger open area of relatively degraded landscape character with similar mix of features as the site around Oakham's southern fringe.

Views across the site from Brooke Road properties (which in turn are highly prominent from within the site) will be individually highly valued, and development would destroy those outlooks because of the level relief of the site.

Views from the east are well screened by the presence of the railway line, slightly embanked with some occasional scrub vegetation increasing its boundary function and visual screening effect.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Roadside and rail-side planting and hedgerow strengthening along Brooke Road would help soften the impact of development across the site, but screening would be impossible from elevated views to the south. Structural planting across the exposed southern arc of the site would present a long term softening effect and landscape enhancement function.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Some elements / features are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place. Few, if any, features / elements that could not be replaced.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.

**Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

### **Landscape Value**

**Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly or partially within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### **Conclusions on Landscape Capacity**

Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium to High Capacity for Site 3A** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated. The site presents quite low levels of landscape character

importance because of inherent character and poor condition of its features. It is well related to development on lower Brooke Road although development would seriously impact upon private views from some properties. It relates relatively well to settlement form and would enjoy some framing effects from the road, railway and some existing vegetation. Visual prominence from elevated points to the south-west would be seen against the backdrop of the town. Strengthening of boundary features and structural planting could significantly help with integration into its landscape setting.

#### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
3A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High

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### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 3B**

**Site Name: Land between Brooke Road and the Railway (Outer Site)**



*View H from south west of 3B*



*Panoramic View G over Sites 3A and 3B from elevated land on Brooke Road*

#### **Site Location.**

Lying to the south of Oakham between the railway and the lower extent of Brooke Road ‘wrapping’ around the southern edge of Site 3A.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 2 & 3A)

The site is enclosed by Brooke Road to the west and the railway in the east and comprises of a series of 4 fields which serve to create an outer ring south of 3A. It lies within the Egleton Plain LCT and is typical of the wider sub-area. Its western boundary extends along Brooke Road as far south as the existing housing which lies only to the west of the road, and extends eastwards to the railway where it extends as far southwards as Site 2D.

The four constituent fields are large, open and generally level, all under arable/cereal crop. They are poorly sub-divided by low and often gappy hedgerows with minimal hedgerow tree cover, which consequently presents a very consistent character over the separate parcels within the site (which can also be extended to site 3A which cannot be separated from site 3B in landscape terms).

The site has very limited intrinsic landscape value. It is however a component part of the wider Egleton Plain LCT and relatively typical in that respect. A distinctive feature of the site is its

openness and unbroken views across it towards sites 2C and 2D beyond the railway and then on towards Rutland Water. This openness is particularly significant when viewed from further up Brooke Road. In part the site provides a stark contrast and open break between the town which has an abrupt boundary along Brooke Road and the rising ground to the south-west.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The site's western edge abuts the eastern side of Brooke Road which is a completely undeveloped boundary. A continuous line of housing tightly abuts the western side of the road terminating in a primary school at the southern limit of development, and hence there is a clear relationship with the town along the lower lane. The open form and poor enclosure features of the site as it arcs around to the railway line means that development within it would be conspicuous. Development would however link directly to this more recent area of Oakham's built extent, but in doing so extend it considerably into very open landscape.

The settlement form of Oakham, which is generally nuclear, would be reflected by the proposals, but it is the extent of the extension which would be most significant.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3A)

The site is highly conspicuous from all along Brooke Road, including from important elevated vistas from its upper reaches within the adjacent High Rutland LCT.

Like Site 3A, those elevated views are however seen with Oakham as a partial backdrop, albeit separated by Site 3A, in an area of the town with unremarkable townscape character and no visually significant buildings or landmarks. However, unlike Site 3A the site is viewed as an extensive expanse of open land reaching away from the town into the Egleton Plain, a much larger open area of relatively degraded landscape character with similar mix of features as the site around Oakham's southern fringe.

Views across the site from Brooke Road properties (which in turn are highly prominent from within the site itself) will be individually highly valued, and development would destroy those outlooks because of the level relief of the site.

Views from the east are well screened by the presence of the railway line, slightly embanked with some occasional scrub vegetation increasing its boundary function and visual screening effect.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Roadside and rail-side planting and hedgerow strengthening along Brooke Road would help soften the impact of development across the site, but screening would be impossible from elevated views to the south. Structural planting across the exposed southern edge of the site would present a long-term softening effect and landscape enhancement function.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Some elements / features are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place. Few, if any, features / elements that could not be replaced.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.
- Provides important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated.
- Site is very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important.

**Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

### Landscape Value

**Moderate** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly or partially within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value give **Low to Medium capacity for Site 3B** to accommodate the proposed development in accordance with the matrix in Table 8.

This site presents very similar, relatively low landscape character considerations as Site 3A. However its scale, degree of separation from the town and visual prominence suggests that its development would have considerably greater impacts upon landscape character, settlement form and visual amenity. The site would be particularly prominent from important elevated views from Brooke Road which would emphasise its significance in relation to scale and settlement form.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
3B	Low to Moderate	High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium

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### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 4A**

**Site Name: Land between Braunston Road and Cold Overton Road**



*View K from Cold Overton Road looking south*



*View L from Braunston Road looking north*

#### **Site Location**

Lying on the western edge of Oakham between Braunston Road and Cold Overton Road.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 2 & 3A)

The site lies within the High Rutland Fringe LCT. Consisting of two large pastoral fields, the site occupies rising ground which reaches west from the abrupt western fringe of Oakham, where it consists of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing estate reached via Glebe Way. The site rises in an undulating fashion from both its southern and eastern fringes, and is bisected by a shallow, well treed valley with stream running generally west to east through its centre. At its northern boundary along the ridgeline on Cold Overton Road it reaches a height of just over 150m, and occasional vistas through the hedgerow boundary from the lane to the south are consequently extensive.

The site is characterised by its distinct rising relief and low intensity pastoral use, particularly within the northern field where the change in gradient and elevation is most prominent. The northern field's steeper sided pasture appears not to have been improved, with a rough grazing use evident. The southern field, consisting of a low dome profile between Braunston Road and the stream appears to have lost field boundaries in the past as a small number of free standing mature trees belie the position of former hedgerows. Consequently when viewed from the southern boundary, the site could be argued to display parkland characteristics, albeit artificial ones. Ridge and furrow is

present but less obvious across the site than elsewhere across the western fringe sites.

The site has considerable intrinsic landscape interest, which can be seen to be both emphasised and diminished as a result of its immediate relationship with the western edge of Oakham.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The site wraps around the western fringes of the town to a relatively uniform depth. Should the site be developed it would have a limited impact upon overall settlement form apart from its outward extension. However the change in elevation, with development rising above the general level character of the town would introduce a relatively alien component to the townscape (although this is observable around Cold Overton Road - Site 4A and Site 5A).

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3A)

Development of the site would be prominent in the landscape from lower stretches of Braunston Road along its southern boundary, and from elevated but intermittent views from Cold Overton Road. The northern section of the site in particular could also be seen rising above the two storey development from within the housing estate on Oakham's western edge itself.

Views into the site from the south are open and extensive from Braunston Road where it can be seen to sweep down to meet the edge of the town. All properties backing onto the site from the Glebe Way estate enjoy extensive private views across it which if developed, would be seriously diminished if not totally removed.

The rising relief of the ground may mean the upper reaches of the site, if developed, could be visible from further vantage points within the town and from open land to its south, east and north. However, these are likely to be distant and of limited significance.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Appropriate mitigation for the site would be limited to further boundary woodland planting and hedgerow strengthening and management. Consideration could be given to the benefits of development across only the inner half of the site so as to minimise impacts of development on higher reaches which would be conspicuous and inconsistent with settlement character. In addition, the highest reaches of the site on the slopes rising to meet Cold Overton Road to its northern edge should be maintained free of development to reduce conspicuous development. A 'green corridor' either side of the small stream which dissects the site which maintains its distinctive vegetated ribbon should also be retained.

Design and materials of development would be of high importance given the characteristics and location of the site.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements / features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated.

**Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

#### Landscape Value

**Moderate to High Landscape Value** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.
- Presents locally important landscape characteristics or scenic value.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

#### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Low capacity for Site 4A** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5). A low to medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated because the site presents an important landscape setting to west Oakham, emphasised by its rolling and rising relief. The existing interface between the town and the site is stark, but this is insufficient justification for an extension of that development on landscape grounds. The prominence of development from public vantage points would be high. Development across higher land to the west of Oakham would introduce an uncharacteristic element to settlement form.

#### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
4A	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate to High	Low

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### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 4B**

**Site Name: Land between Brooke Road and Braunston Road**



*Panoramic View I over southern section of Site 4B from Brooke Road*



*View J of southern area of Site 4B*

#### **Site Location**

Land stretching in a band around the south-west fringe of Oakham between Brooke Road in the south and Braunston Road to its northern extent.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 2 & 3A)

The site lies within the High Rutland Fringe LCT. The site's definitive characteristic is its change in relief and profile compared to the level, low lying character of the Egleton Plain which bounds the site to the south, and the whole of Oakham itself. The site occupies the lower slopes of the rise towards the High Rutland LCT to the west and south. Whilst only reaching 140m at its highest point, it displays a distinctive gain in altitude from its fringe with the Trent Road housing estate to its east which lies at around 115m. Slope profile is very slightly concave but often undulating and uneven.

The site consists of a series of small and medium sized fields given over to rough grazing, with occasional small pockets of scrub. The internal delineation between the component fields has been eroded in some places through loss of hedgerows and replacement with post-and-wire fencing. The external boundaries of the site are defined by hedgerows in generally good condition.

The site's eastern boundary is harshly defined by the outer edge of the large mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing development around Trent Road, softened to only slightly by a low hedgerow and occasional trees. The 'outer', elevated boundary to the west is defined by hedgerow. The south-

west edge of the site abuts an area of new community woodland, a locally popular undertaking implemented by the Woodland Trust. There are likely to be considerable medium and long term landscape, biodiversity and community benefits accruing from the project.

Ridge and furrow earthworks are extensive and clearly visible across much of the site. High voltage power lines and support pylons are prominent alien features, particularly within the northern reaches of the site.

The rough grazing and pastoral character of the site, the ridge and furrow features and its change in relief from the predominant low lying landform around Oakham affords it with some significant intrinsic landscape value. The transition from urban to rural landscape is abrupt, but an absence of urban fringe uses or piecemeal development means the landscape immediately abuts the town.



### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The site wraps around the south-west fringes of the town to a relatively uniform depth. Should the site be developed it would have a limited impact upon overall settlement form apart from its outward extension. However the change in elevation, with development rising above the general level character of the town would introduce a relatively alien component to the townscape (although this is observable around Cold Overton Road - Site 4A and Site 5A).

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3A)

Views across and into the site are possible from public vantage points, although horizons are sometimes closer than elsewhere around Oakham as land continues to rise to a ridge at about 160m. Significant Public access is possible to the site as a consequence of its management and woodland creation by the Woodland Trust. Extensive views into the site are therefore possible, especially from higher ground on Brooke Road and from the access to the site's north-east corner on Braunston Road. Elsewhere on Braunston Road views into the site are effectively screened by the large mature hedgerow along and beyond its northern boundary, or by existing housing development.

The site (as opposed to the general raised ground which rises westwards from the site) is only prominent from a few points because of the enclosing effect of high ground to its west, which itself is consequently of greater landscape importance. Those vistas are however locally significant.

The site is highly visible from the properties on the outer edge of Oakham adjacent to the site where private views are enjoyed over the pastoral outlook. Development of the site would be highly damaging to those interests.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Appropriate mitigation for the site would be limited to further boundary woodland planting and hedgerow strengthening and management. Consideration could be given to the benefits of development across only the inner half of the site so as to minimise impacts of development on higher reaches which would be conspicuous and inconsistent with settlement character. Design and

materials of development would be of high importance given the characteristics and location of the site.

### Sensitivity to Development

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Site may be adjacent to built limits but lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.

Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Provides important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated.
- Site is very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous.

**Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

### Landscape Value

**High** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.
- Presents locally important landscape characteristics or scenic value.
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value give **Low Capacity for Site 4B** to accommodate the proposed development.

The site is important in respect to its pastoral landscape character, distinctive rising relief which frames the existing extent of Oakham, and for its public access and biodiversity value. Management of the site by the Woodland Trust suggests it may not come forward for development. Development across higher land to the west of Oakham would introduce an uncharacteristic element to settlement form.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
4B	High	High	High	High	Low

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## Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham

**Site Number: 5A**

**Site Name: Land between Cold Overton Road and Barleythorpe**



*View M of Site 5A (beyond middle distance hedge) from Manor Lane, west of Barleythorpe*

### Site Location

The site runs in a roughly south-west to north-east orientation from the ridge of Cold Overton Road to the southern fringe of Barleythorpe and Main Road, Oakham.

### Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 2 & 3B)

The site lies across a small number of meadows which separate the north-west edge of Oakham and the small hamlet of Barleythorpe, a settlement built around the imposing Barleythorpe Hall. It transects the LCTs of High Rutland Fringe and North-West Oakham Vale. Land use is predominantly pastoral with generally intact field pattern to its northern, lower component parts with good condition hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees. Ridge and furrow is found across most of its southern, elevated parts. High voltage transmission lines and pylons cross the site and are conspicuous features.

The site form is complex, following disjointed field boundaries with little clear relationship with either settlement. It has a significant boundary with Main Road which is the principle route north from Oakham town centre but it is not contiguous with the town's built extent along the road. A short boundary also exists with the ridge of Cold Overton Road at its southern extreme, but views from that elevated point are foreshortened by the ridgeline immediately north of the road. A small length of its southern edge abuts the Redland Road and Hilltop Drive 20<sup>th</sup> Century housing developments north of Cold Overton Road, and a small section along its northern edge abuts the loosely defined settlement limit with Barleythorpe. Elsewhere the site's limits are bounded by other fields and the playing fields of Oakham College. Consequently vistas into the site are sometimes difficult to achieve.

The southern limits to the site are elevated as it reaches Cold Overton Road. Its southern-most field rises quite steeply to an elevation of around 155m, whilst its lower parts only reach around 120m.

### Settlement Form and Pattern

In general the site is poorly related to established settlement form and extent of Oakham, and constitutes an important gap in the already weakened distinction between Oakham and the smaller settlement of Barleythorpe. The distinction between Oakham and Barleythorpe is already diluted along Main Road, north of Oakham, and this site constitutes the remaining open space between the two. Major re-development of the college grounds to the 'inner' boundary of the site will eventually further weaken that separation.

Another important implication of development of the site is its elevated prominence to the south. Some uncharacteristic development along Cold Overton Road has already served to diminish the generally low-lying settlement form of Oakham, which would be further eroded by development of this site's upper reaches.

#### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3B)

Due to its elevation, the southern section of the site is particularly prominent in the landscape, particularly when viewed from Manor Lane to the north, which is also the route of the 'Rutland Round' linked footpath. This vista is however relatively distant, and frequently limited by the roadside hedge.

Conversely the lower lying parts of the site, constituting the majority of it, are less prominent in the landscape, with views being generally well screened by intervening hedges and hedgerow trees from the north, and a general separation from it and public access points. To the east and south built development, particularly the redeveloped college site, serves to obscure the northern and eastern reaches. Nevertheless, the site's lower elements retain an intimate pastoral character which is important to the immediate setting and perception of the town's context which development of two storeys or more seriously disrupt.

#### **Scope for Mitigation**

Mitigation to the lower reaches of the site through additional planting could be relatively effective in combination with existing hedge and tree cover outside its boundaries. Development of its upper reaches could not be effectively screened from view and its impact in the landscape would remain significant. Mitigation of its effect would be limited to restricting development to the lower elements only.

#### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Important intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.
- Site may be adjacent to built limits but lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.

Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Important to the setting of the town by providing important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.

**Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

#### **Landscape Value**

**Moderate to High** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Low Capacity for Site 5A** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5). A low to medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated because the site presents a combination of strong landscape character and high visual prominence across its upper elements. Its lower reaches are however less prominent but present an important landscape and townscape function in maintaining a perceptual gap between Oakham and Barleythorpe. Development on the upper site towards Cold Overton Road would be difficult to mitigate effectively and would consolidate uncharacteristic development along and north of Cold Overton Road which is historically alien to Oakham's townscape.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
5A	High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate to High	Low

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## **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 5B**

**Site Name: Land South and West of Main Road**



*View N from Main Road*

### **Site Location**

Prominent open site immediately to the south and west of Main Road, north-west of the centre of Oakham.

### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 2 & 3B)

The site is a discrete, level and open area of improved grassland, bounded on most sides by existing development, including the significant new development at Rutland College along its northern edge. Main Road defines most of its eastern extent and Rutland Care Village sheltered housing to its west. A primary school bounds its southern fringe.

Its character is that of a playing field, and is identified as such on ordnance survey sheets although there is no evidence of such formal uses, and public access appears to be restricted despite its accessibility and relative lack of enclosure. Mature broadleaved trees partially fringe the site, adding significant townscape value. A relatively new development of flats with a distinctive front elevation is prominent on the eastern side of Main Road, (the College Close development) and whilst not actually abutting the site presents an important perceptual element of the site's limits. The site is a prominent open area within Oakham, rather than on its fringe, which has no discernable relationship with the wider landscape context of the town.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

Development would constitute a significant loss of open space which to all intents and purposes is within the perceptual built-up limits to the town, a factor which will be exacerbated as the college re-development to its north-west is completed. Whilst the site is of limited intrinsic value, its boundary trees and open views between them do enhance the immediate environs. Development on it would however reinforce the relatively compact nuclear settlement form of Oakham and serve to safeguard its wider landscape setting through reducing the pressure to develop greenfield sites on its periphery. The wider implications of the retention or loss of this space to development may therefore be delicately balanced.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3B)

The site is widely visible to public vantage points because of its level character and public access to most of its unenclosed boundary. It is particularly prominent when travelling along Main Road. Visibility within the wider landscape is severely limited because of its enclosure by existing and

future development as well as by mature trees dotted around several parts of its boundary.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Development of the site would result in the loss of an otherwise unremarkable but prominent open space within the town. Mitigation of the loss would be difficult to achieve if the full site were developed. Efforts to mitigate impact upon townscape would be dependent on retention of the trees around its boundary and delivery of high quality design and use of appropriate materials. Development fronting Main Road - an important entry to the town, should be of particularly high design quality. Retention of an undeveloped green parcel along some or all of the Main Road frontage could serve to retain a sense of openness and reinforce a 'village green' character which the site currently portrays.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Open space of some importance to the setting, appearance, form and character of the built environment.
- Common place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.
- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
- Of little or no importance to the setting of the town such that development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation.

**Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** on balance, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4). A judgement has been made to allocate moderate rather than low overall landscape sensitivity, on balance.

### **Landscape Value**

**Low to Moderate** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.

### **Conclusions on Landscape Capacity**

Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium to High Capacity for Site 5B** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated. The site is a significant open space within the perceived urban area of Oakham. Its intrinsic landscape value is not significant, but its influence on settlement form

is of note. With open views over the site but limited public access its overall importance is not high.

The open element it affords could be retained through a sensitive design solution which incorporates a 'village green' feature, along with its mature boundary trees.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
5B	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High

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### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 6**

**Site Name: Showground and Hawksmead Park**



*View O of Site 6 south – Showground*



*View P of Site 6 central, Barelythorpe Stud / Hawksmead Park*



*View Q of Site 6 north east towards bypass junction with Land's End Road*

#### **Site Location**

Fragmented 'green wedge' of agricultural and mixed amenity land lying between the bypass and north-west fringe of Oakham.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 2 & 3B)

A large site within the North-West Oakham Vale LCT, comprising of a number of different land uses and now partially developed across its central section.

The site has been examined in three parts at the time of this study:

#### **Site 6A:**

The southern section is dominated by the Oakham Showground, which for most of the year is given over to extensive sports pitches and playing fields with associated changing rooms, club houses and floodlighting within the site. Two separate meadows, formerly horse paddocks occupy the northern third of the site. The Showground site is level, given over to mown grass surfaces and mostly bounded by thick hedges along its western boundary to Main Road, across its northern edge and

again along Land's End Road to the eastern edge. A number of hedgerow trees are found around the site contributing to a sense of enclosure and screening from some areas. Conversely the showground gates from Main Road present a wide vista over the playing fields and are themselves a locally important element of Oakham's townscape and cultural heritage. The site in part helps the separation between Oakham and Barleythorpe.

**Site 6B:**

A narrow central section of Site 6 extends across its slightly narrower part between existing modern employment development off Land's End Road and the Main Road. This area is the former location of the Barleythorpe Stud and has been subject to recent conversions and new build housing and office space development over the paddocks and stable yards, partially pre-empting the findings of this study. Existing tree belts and mature hedgerows help diminish the prominence of the new buildings in the wider landscape.

Landscape capacity analysis is not presented for this site given its semi-developed nature. To avoid confusion with site assessment, Site 6B is not shown in the figures.

**Site 6C:**

A northern section extends from the former stud site to the inner edge of the bypass and between Land's End Road and Main Road. The area displays strong remnant characteristics of a degraded vale landscape which would have been typical of the North-West Oakham Vale LCT. It is divided into several small fields, is generally level with dense hedgerow boundaries, some with strong belts of trees within them. Planning proposals as yet undetermined for strategic mixed use development under the Hawksmead Park scheme have resulted in an apparent abandonment of active agricultural practice across the area, with new service roads punctuating the dense field network and protective embankments constructed to restrict vehicular access into those spaces. Meadows are beginning to show signs of scrub encroachment.

**Settlement Form and Pattern**

The site in its wider context constitutes a large green wedge extending towards the town centre from the open countryside of the North West Oakham Vale LCT. Its central area (6B) abuts the small hamlet of Barleythorpe which mostly lies west of Main Road. The showground area (6A) within the southern part of the site, faces open countryside to the west around the college, Barleythorpe to its north-west corner, new development within the stud site to its north and large modern business units to the east along Land's End Road. Hence, the southern section of the site relates best to Oakham's urban areas – now further enclosed by the stud development area, but would nevertheless begin to diminish the extensive open spaces of the 'wedge' east of Main Road which is presently distinctive in Oakham's settlement form.

Development of 6C would constitute a significant expansion of the town to its north-west (currently defined by the Barleythorpe Stud developments) but would remain enclosed by the bypass which now presents a physical and perceptual boundary to the town in this area. Main Road to the east would likewise present legible delineation of the western limits to new development across Site 6. However, development of the whole site would have little direct impact upon the town's historic core, although the showground may be considered to be culturally important. Its development would serve to diminish the distinction and break between Oakham and Barleythorpe, a situation further eroded by the large scale redevelopment taking place at Rutland College to the immediate south of Site 6.

**Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3B)

Site 6A: Despite its openness the southern part of the site cannot be readily looked across because

of the level relief and boundary hedge cover, apart from at the Showground gates and other access points into it. Development across the site of more than single storey would however be visible from along most of Main Road and in glimpses from Land's End Road.

Site 6C: The north- eastern elements of the site would be visible from eastern approaches along the bypass close to the junction with Land's End Road, but relatively screened from western approaches as a consequence of embankments either side of the new road. In time, the heavily landscaped verges will mature and further screen the site from the bypass. Views from the northern parts of Land's End Road are relatively open, but in places foreshortened by internal embankments and hedgerows.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Screening of the wider site is well established around most of its boundary as a consequence of hedgerows, trees and existing development, particularly along its eastern and central areas. Supplementary tree planting of indigenous species around parts of the boundary would serve to provide long term mitigation of visual impact on the immediate visual envelope. The site is self contained within two coherent spatial units, within which landscape character would be significantly eroded, but wider visual impact limited. More detailed visual envelope study of development proposals would dictate precise extent and positioning of supplementary planting.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

*Site 6A:* Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Part of a larger area of intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.
- Some elements / features are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place.
- Few, if any, features / elements that could not be replaced.
- Open space of little or no importance to the setting, appearance, form and character of the built environment.

*Site 6A:* Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.
- Of little or no importance to the setting of the town such that development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation.

**Site 6A: Overall Low Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4). A judgement has been made to allocate low rather than moderate overall landscape sensitivity, on balance.

*Site 6C:* Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Common place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Some elements / features are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place. Few, if any, features / elements that could not be replaced.
- Part of a larger area of intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.

- Of little or no importance to the setting of the town as there is little or no distinctive break between town and countryside.

*Site 6C:* Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.
- Of little or no importance to the setting of the town such that development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.

**Site 6C: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4). A judgement has been made to allocate moderate rather than low overall landscape sensitivity, on balance.

### Landscape Value

**Site 6A: Moderate** Landscape Value In accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
- Lies adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.

**Site 6C: Low to Moderate** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

*Site 6A:* Overall Low Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value and gives an overall **Medium to High capacity for Site 6A** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5).

The site has limited importance in terms of its landscape character contribution to the setting of Oakham, is well related to the town, and around much of its boundary is relatively well screened. It is however of significant amenity and cultural importance to the town, particularly in respect to its showground functions. Such uses can however be relocated with relatively limited landscape impact in other locations close to the town. Nevertheless, the development of the site may be unpopular for reasons relating to its public amenity.

Development of the site would be of limited consequence to Oakham's landscape settling but would further erode the distinction between it and Barleythorpe. This distinction may already be considered as limited however. Mitigation of this effect may be secured through enhanced structural planting to the site's eastern boundary, but such measures would be likely to take several years to reach significant levels of effectiveness.

*Site 6C:* Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium to High capacity for Site 6C** to



accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a marginally higher capacity has been allocated. Despite the wider site's proximity to the established built-up limits to Oakham, it has a relatively low prominence in the wider landscape and does not present important landscape context to the town itself. However the site does contribute to maintaining the gap between Oakham and Barleythorpe, (although this distinction has already been eroded by the development across the Barleythorpe Stud site in the central section of Site 6), and it would reduce the wider landscape value of the established tree belts internal to the site. The minimal relief across the site means that double storey development would only be visible at its boundaries where screening can be focused and most effective. The site's former rich 'vale' characteristics of small fields with hedges and tree belts have until recently been important in the setting of the town, but have been eroded since the abandonment of farming across the site and the introduction of advanced service infrastructure. Whether by chance or by design, the new bypass does afford a logical outer limit to the built extent of Oakham at this point.

Mitigation of the visual impact of the site's development through enhanced structural planting, and the retention of an open development buffer along the eastern side of Main Road would help reduce its wider impact and maintain a perceptual buffer between it and Barleythorpe. Extensive landscaping along the bypass corridor will further enhance long term screening. The strengthening of tree belts and high hedges in the vicinity of the site would be broadly consistent with the landscape context of the site.

This assessment does not address the landscape impacts of re-positioned showground and sports field facilities elsewhere around Oakham.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
6A	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low	Moderate	Medium to High
6C	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High

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## Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham

**Site Number: 7**

**Site Name: Land North of the Bypass between Oakham Road and the Railway**



*View R looking north-west from Burley Park Way (bypass)*



*View S of the eastern end of Site 7 below the bypass embankment*

### Site Location.

A large site which straddles the boundary between the North-West and North East Oakham Vale LCTs, extending northwards from the outer side of the bypass between Oakham Road in the west and the railway line at its eastern edge. The site extends northwards in varying depths towards (but never reaching) Burley Road and Langham to the north.

### Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 2 & 3B)

A large irregular wedge-shaped site comprising of pastoral and arable farmland. The site's southern boundary is defined along its total length by the bypass which is generally below the site level to the west, but gradually rises eastwards until it gains height significantly as it rises over the railway line and affords views to the north-west over the site (and towards Site 8). Its western boundary 'point' is short, running only a few metres north from the roundabout linking Main Road, the bypass and Oakham Road. Its eastern boundary runs northwards from the railway as it passes under the bypass. The northern boundary is a stepped diagonal line running generally north-east from the western most point of the site following field boundaries. The village of Langham lies to the north-west of the site but does not abut it. The central part of the northern boundary is backed by a network of tree belts and tall hedges associated with the 'Hubbard's Lodge' farm complex where a distinctly tighter network of small fields and tree belts is found.

In terms of landscape character, there is a notable difference between areas which lay either side of the central shelterbelt. For these reasons the capacity analysis for the site is split between Site 7A (west) and Site 7B (east).

Relief across the whole site falls slightly, sloping gently from its slightly higher points in the west towards the railway line, but its topography is generally of an area of low lying flat land, especially in the east. Its character is strongly agricultural with mixed sized fields, hedged boundaries and a notable but immature shelterbelt of trees running north-south through the central section. The site overall experiences a dilution of its 'vale' characteristics as it extends from west to east.

The western area, Site 7A, lies within the narrowing element of its wedge shape, and is characterised by relatively small pastoral fields with thick low hedges and occasional mature hedgerow trees and visible ridge and furrow earthworks. Its pastoral character remains strong. This area is slightly elevated from the bypass level, and is partially screened from within its shallow cutting.

This pastoral quality is diluted towards the east within Site 7B, where field size increases notably, hedge condition deteriorates, hedgerow trees are less frequent, ridge and furrow disappears and slight undulation in relief is replaced by very level ground. Pastoral land use is replaced by arable cropping. This dilution in character is emphasised by the more expansive vistas made possible by the elevated height of the bypass over the railway.

Vantage points or public views into or across both sites are otherwise quite restricted without footpaths through it or a walkway on the northern side of the bypass. Burley Road to the north is separated from the sites by fields beyond their northern edge. Low relief, hedgerows and trees combine across its northern and western boundaries to restrict views into the site.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The whole site is poorly related to the existing built extent of Oakham. The bypass presents a clear physical and perceptual northern boundary to the town at this point, made more distinct by the almost complete absence of any built development within or adjacent to it. Existing industrial development to the south of the bypass is prominent to the south east section of the site, but this itself is an incongruous element of townscape and further separates the site from the historic core and other residential parts of Oakham. Its eastern boundary along the railway line would, if fully developed present a particularly rectilinear and 'hard' edge to the site, incongruous with the wider form of Oakham.

This incongruous relationship with Oakham would be exacerbated if Site 6 is not developed beforehand. Notwithstanding this, the site is no more prominent from distant elevated areas such as Burley than many other peripheral areas of the town.

Development of the site would represent a significant expansion of the built extent of Oakham into undeveloped countryside with little or no relation to its historic form or evolution.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3B)

The most significant visual impact from development of the site would be from traffic crossing the railway bridge along the bypass. From this point, travelling east or west extensive views are possible which would overlook most of Site 7B, although Site 7A would be less prominent despite this being slightly of higher relief. From the bridge and its embankments, vistas overlooking a mainly residential expansion of the town would be considerable, with 'roofscape' being an important component of the outlook. Views from further to the east would however be considerably constrained by the screening effect of the railway and its vegetated embankment. Views from the north would be negligible as a consequence of distance from Burley Road and the intervening hedges and trees. The boundary of Site 7A with Oakham Road is particularly short and generally benefits from existing hedgerow and tree cover. Consequently overall visual impact from the site would be considerable but almost entirely from the southern boundary.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Given that the prominence of the site is from a partially elevated section of the bypass, mitigation of visual impact would be difficult in the most affected areas. Extensive planting along the bypass embankment and cuttings remains immature but will provide some long-term screening effect,

although this is not possible from the bridge itself and would be unlikely to mitigate fully visual impact. On-site structural planting to the western limits of the bypass and south of the Burley Road could increase the effectiveness of visual amelioration, but would also serve to further emphasise the disjointed relationship of the site with Oakham's built form. Development of Site 7B should avoid a rigid alignment with the eastern boundary along the railway line which would be a seriously incongruous feature in the countryside unless the adjoining site (Site 8) east of the railway were developed in parallel to avoid this effect.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

*Site 7A:* Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Important intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.
- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

*Site 7A:* Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.
- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

**Site 7A: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

*Site 7B:* Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate** because it shows characteristics from the high, moderate and low categories as shown in Table 4:

- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.
- Some elements / features are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place. Few, if any, features / elements that could not be replaced.
- Site may be adjacent to built limits but lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.

*Site 7B:* Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

**Site 7B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4). Although the site could fall within either the Moderate or the High categories, a judgement has been made to allocate the site, on balance, into the High category because its overall landscape sensitivity is considered to be the same as Site 7A.

### Landscape Value

*Site 7A: Low to Moderate* Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

*Site 7B: Low to Moderate* Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

*Site 7A:* Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Low to Medium Capacity for Site 7A** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated as a consequence of it falling outside the important perceptual limits to Oakham created by its bypass. The site also retains significant landscape character integrity. Development across the site would result in irreversible loss of such character which mitigation works would be unlikely to reverse. The prominence of the site is less significant than Site 7B, but its relationship with the town's current built extent is more disjointed.

*Site 7B:* Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value. As with Site 7A, a judgement has been made to allocate the category **Low to Medium Capacity for Site 7B** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5). As with Site 7A, a medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated as a consequence of it falling outside the important perceptual limits to Oakham created by its bypass. The site's landscape character integrity is less than for Site 7A, but whilst of lower landscape merit it is more conspicuous from the rising bypass as it crosses the rail line. Elevated views would be significant if the site were developed, emphasising the outlying nature of the site in relation to the town's current extent.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
7A	High	Moderate to High	High	Low to Moderate	Low to Medium
7B	Moderate	Moderate to High	High	Low to Moderate	Low to Medium

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Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study

### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 8**

**Site Name: Land North of the bypass between the Railway and Ashwell Road**



*View T of south-west section from bypass showing the wooded line of the disused Oakham Canal*



*View U of north-east section towards Springfield House and Ashwell Road from the public entry to the site from Oakham Canal towpath*

#### **Site Location**

A site within the North-East Oakham Vale LCT, extending northwards from the outer side of the bypass between the railway in the west and Ashwell Road at its eastern edge. The site extends northwards towards (but never reaching) Burley Road to the north.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character** (see Figures 2 & 3B)

An irregular shaped site which gently dips from north to south, comprising primarily of four arable fields bounded by hedgerows and interspersed by significant tree cover along the south-eastern section boundary which separates the site from the bypass. A significant mature tree and shrub belt dissects the southern half of the site in a north-south direction, defining the line of the now abandoned Oakham Canal, which is excluded from the site itself and consequently affords a relatively complex site boundary line. The belt extends across the northern half of the site as a very thick hedgerow and shrub line but generally without mature trees. The canal line is an important feature both in the landscape, and as a historic and cultural asset. Development which would closely abut its line would be likely to detract from its wider significance.

The site's southern boundary is defined along its south-western edge length by the raised bypass. Its western boundary is defined by the slightly raised railway with significant track-side scrub vegetation. Its eastern boundary runs northwards along Ashwell Road from north of Springfield House. The northern boundary is a simple, slightly curved hedgerow running east-west between the railway and Ashwell Road, its eastern half containing several mature hedgerow trees. A well treed section of the canal which still contains water extends northwards from the centre point of the northern boundary, from which a public footpath extends south westwards over the northern part of the site before tracing the edge of the railway towards the bypass.

Relief across the site falls very slightly, sloping downwards from its slightly higher points in the north towards the bypass, an aspect most obvious from along Ashwell Road. However its southern and western topography is generally of low lying flat land. Its character is strongly agricultural and reflects the characteristics of the North-East Oakham Vale LCT. The south eastern section skirts around the site of Springfield House, a large farmhouse and range of traditional buildings in a courtyard configuration.

Vantage points or public views into or across the site are significant from the raised bypass as it crosses the railway, and again from the public footpath which crosses the site, one of few radiating into the countryside from Oakham. This footpath links to the towpath of the disused Oakham Canal at the site's northern edge, a popular route and important component of local landscape character. Burley Road to the north is separated from the site by fields beyond the site's extent. Low relief, hedgerows and trees combine across its northern and western boundaries to restrict views into the site.

#### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The site is not well related to the existing built extent of Oakham. The bypass presents a clear physical and perceptual northern boundary to the town at this point, although modern housing development abuts the bypass in this area. Existing industrial development to the south of the bypass is prominent to the south-west section of the site, including some distinctive former canal wharf warehouses. Its western boundary along the railway line would, if fully developed present a particularly rectilinear and 'hard' edge to the site, as would it along Ashwell Road, incongruous with the wider form of Oakham. The separation of the south-eastern section of the site from the bypass and Oakham by the well treed Springfield House site further emphasises the disjointed relationship with Oakham in settlement form terms. Notwithstanding this, the site is generally screened by its central tree belt from distant elevated areas such as Burley.

Development of the site would represent a significant expansion of the built extent of Oakham into undeveloped countryside with little or no relation to its historic form or evolution.

#### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3B)

The most significant visual impact from development of the site would be from traffic crossing the railway bridge along the bypass. From this point, travelling east or west extensive views are possible which would overlook significant areas of Site 8, although the north-east area would be less prominent despite this being slightly of higher relief. From the bridge and its embankments vistas overlooking a mainly residential expansion of the town would be considerable, with 'roofscape' being an important component of the outlook. Views from further to the east would however be considerably constrained by the screening effect of the Springfield House site and its wooded environs. Wider views from the north would be negligible as a consequence of distance from Burley Road and the intervening hedges and trees. Views into the site from Ashwell Road are well screened from close range by particularly a thick and high hedgerow with very few openings.



The footpath across the site which links with the historically important canal towpath, one of relatively few radiating out of Oakham would, if retained, present direct views across and within the site. The visual intrusion of development would be also be likely to be experienced along the southern sections of the remaining towpath.

Consequently overall visual impact from the site would be considerable but almost entirely from the south-western boundary and from the internal footpath.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Given that the prominence of the site is from a partially elevated section of the bypass, mitigation of visual impact would be difficult in the most affected areas. Extensive planting along the bypass embankment and cuttings remains immature but will provide some long-term screening effect, although this is not possible from the bridge itself and would be unlikely to mitigate fully visual impact of development. On-site structural planting to the western limits of the bypass boundary could increase the effectiveness of visual amelioration, but would also serve to further emphasise the disjointed relationship of the site with Oakham's built form. Any development of the site should avoid a rigid alignment with the western boundary along the railway line which could present a seriously incongruous feature in the countryside unless the adjoining site (Site 7) west of the railway were developed in parallel to avoid this effect.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Part of a larger area of intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.
- Site may be adjacent to built limits but lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.
- Common place elements / features some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.

Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Provides important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated.
- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous.

**Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

### **Landscape Value**

**Moderate to High** Landscape Value because Site 8 shows the following criteria from the High and Low categories in Table 7:

- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
- Presents locally important landscape characteristics and scenic value.
- Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Low Capacity for Site 8** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5). A low to medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated to reflect the value of the landscape which it is recorded in a lower category than is considered appropriate because the site does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.

The site presents a mixture of landscape characteristics, with its main areas of relatively limited interest, but boundary features being significant in the landscape. Its development would be highly conspicuous from the elevated sections of the bypass, impacts which could not be reasonably mitigated. The constraining influence of the site's boundary features could result in particularly 'boxed in' character of development, particularly evident along the rail line and former canal remnants. The site has inherent public value as a consequence of the footpath crossing the site with important links to the canal at its northern edge. Its influence across and around the site is also important for biodiversity. As per the other sites outside the bypass, its development would have significant implications for settlement form and urbanisation of the rural setting of the town.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
8	Moderate to High	High	High	Moderate to High	Low

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### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 9A (North and South)**

**Site Name: Land North of the bypass between Ashwell Road and Burley Road**



*View V of Site 9A (North) from inside its western boundary*

#### **Site Location.**

Located within the North-East Oakham Vale LCT, extending northwards from the bypass west of the Burley Road junction, wrapping around - but omitting, the site of the superstore, and then extending in an east-west strip towards Ashwell Road.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 2 & 3B)

An irregular shaped site which occupies generally level ground, essentially comprising of a single large arable field with distinct southern and northern sections. For the purposes of this study the site's sensitivity and capacity analysis is therefore split into Site 9A North and Site 9A South.

It is bounded by thick hedgerows and interspersed by significant hedgerow trees, particularly along its northern boundary. The irregular shape of the site is influenced by the presence of the supermarket which lies on its north-western flank, around which the site 'wraps'. The central section of the site is a narrow strip linking the southern and northern parts, constrained in its width by sports fields and its significant associated clubhouse/changing facilities.

The site's southern-most boundary is defined by a short length of the bypass which has relatively well established shrub and tree screening, and its eastern side by the Burley Road, along which an established hedgerow is thick and without significant break, affording strong screening even in winter months. The central-eastern boundary around the supermarket and garage is defined by security fencing with well established hedging which includes a significant number of hedgerow trees. Screening along the boundary with the sports field reflects that around the supermarket, although the trees are largely absent. The western boundary runs to the rear of the large veterinary centre on Ashwell Road. The northern boundary is defined by a high, mature hedgerow with significant hedgerow tree elements which trace the line of a minor stream.

Change in relief across the site is negligible. Its character is strongly agricultural despite its convoluted shape, and reflects well the characteristics of the North-East Oakham Vale LCT. Its component features are however unremarkable within the wider landscape context.

#### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The whole site is generally poorly related to the existing built extent of Oakham. The bypass presents a clear physical and perceptual north-eastern boundary to the town at this point, although modern housing development abuts the road in this area. The site is however partly positioned between the significant 'outlying' developments of the supermarket and the veterinary centre, both of which are substantive modern buildings lying outside the existing built limits to Oakham. The sports pavilion and pitches which lie between part of the site and the town are also elements which

introduce an urban character to the vicinity. Nevertheless, the development of the site would extend the town into generally undeveloped countryside beyond the bypass.

Any urban extension would be made more incongruous because of the irregular shape of the site. Its 'inner' element, Site 9A South, is more closely related to the town by way of its proximity. However, Site 9A North is considerably more remote from the town. Development within the northern site would result in an outlying and convoluted site form as a consequence of its relationship with surrounding land uses.

Notwithstanding this, both sites are generally screened by boundary hedges with relatively few views into it, even from close range, but development of the sites would represent a significant expansion of the built extent of Oakham into countryside with little or no relation to its historic form or evolution. The presence of the supermarket on Burley Road and the large veterinary centre on Ashwell Road, combined with other 'urbanising' features such as pavements and street lighting do however serve to reduce the urban character of the site's setting.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3B)

Vantage points or public views into or across the sites are generally limited by its mostly well established boundary hedges and trees. Langham Lane to the north is separated from the sites by several fields beyond the site's extent. Low differences in relief, hedgerows and trees combine across its northern boundary to restrict views into the sites. Land does rise markedly to the north-east towards Burley and the Cottesmore Plateau LCT, and views across the sites are possible from elevated locations, but these are seen very much in the wider context of Oakham and its patchwork of hedged fields and the site is not prominent in those wider vistas.

The visual impact of development across the sites would often be limited because of the degree of screening the site enjoys. However two or more storey development close to 9A (South) boundaries would tend to rise above the mainly hedged boundaries and visibility consequently increased. Views into the sites from higher reaches of Ashwell Road and Burley Road and from around the bypass are mostly well screened from close range by particularly thick and high hedgerows and/or bypass landscaping with very few openings. Vistas into the sites are possible from openings around the veterinary centre, but these are relatively limited. The level topography of the sites would generally restrict views to only the peripheral elements of any development to come forward.

Consequently overall visual impact from both of the site may be less significant than their respective proximity to the town, scale and form might suggest.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

On-site structural planting to all the boundaries would help reduce the prominence of peripheral elements of the development. Its inner areas would be screened by outer buildings as a consequence of the low differences in relief.

Whilst such measures could increase the effectiveness of visual amelioration, they may also serve to further emphasise the disjointed relationship of the site with Oakham's built form.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

*Site 9A North*: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

- Common place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.

*Site 9A North:* Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.
- Site is well screened from public or private views.

**Site 9A North: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4). Although the site could fall within either the Moderate or the High categories of overall landscape sensitivity, a judgement has been made to allocate the site, on balance, into the High category because of its isolation from the town.

*Site 9A South:* Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Site may be adjacent to built limits but lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.
- Common place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.

*Site 9A South:* Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.
- Site is well screened from public or private views.

**Site 9A South: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

### **Landscape Value**

*Site 9A North:* **Low** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria:

- Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

*Site 9A South:* **Low** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria:

- Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

*Site 9A North:* Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Low Landscape Value give an overall **Medium Capacity for Site 9A North** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5). Site 9A North's capacity lessens from the more southern Site 9A South as a consequence of its form and separation from the town. It is particularly poorly related to Oakham's built extent and its settlement form, whilst landscape character is slightly more sensitive within its northern limits. Mitigation of visual impacts would have little bearing on such impacts.

*Site 9A South:* Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low Landscape Value give an overall **Medium to High Capacity for Site 9A South** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 5). The site's position between established urban areas and outlying elements of the town afford it a relatively positive ability to accommodate development. In combination with low relief changes and generally well established boundary screening, this perhaps presents the best site for expansion of the town of those sites outside the bypass boundary.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
<b>9A North</b>	Moderate to High	Low to Moderate	High	Low	Medium
<b>9A South</b>	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low	Medium to High

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### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Oakham**

**Site Number: 9B**

**Site Name: Land East of the bypass between Burley Road and Dog Kennel Cottage**



*View W looking north from the bypass verge*



*View X looking south from the bypass verge*

#### **Site Location.**

A site within the North-East Oakham Vale LCT, it extends eastwards from the bypass between the Burley Road junction to the north and Dog Kennel Cottage on its southern boundary. The site extends eastwards to the wooded line of Dog Kennel Spinney.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 2 & 3B)**

An irregular shaped site which occupies slightly undulating ground to the immediate east of Oakham's current built limits, essentially comprising a single large arable field with uncultivated margins and a wooded backdrop. To its western edge it is defined by the outer limits of the bypass verge with its post and rail fencing and immature landscaping. Its northern edge along Burley Road is defined by a thick mature hedge without hedgerow trees. Its southern boundary is defined by the access track to the isolated Dog Kennel Cottage. The irregular shape of the site is partially influenced by the staggered line of Dog Kennel Spinney which traces the line of a minor stream flowing south towards Rutland Water as a slightly fragmented belt of mature deciduous trees.

The site slopes gently downwards from west to east with a slight dip towards the central section. Its character is generally of intensive arable agricultural land use, although its southern elements are retained as rough grazing and scrub which offers a slightly more natural landscape element. Otherwise, it generally reflects well the characteristics of the North-East Oakham Vale LCT. Its component features are mostly unremarkable within the wider landscape context.

Vantage points or public views into or across the site are generally limited to views from the bypass and directly from housing to the west of the bypass which are at a slightly higher elevation to the road. Approaches along the bypass from both north and south allow for views into the site facilitated by relatively open post and rail fencing 'front' boundary but these are generally limited to close distance. Views from Burley Road are limited by the hedgerow but vistas from the Public Right of Way along the access to Dog Kennel Cottage are more accessible, if intermittent because of scrub vegetation.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

Although directly opposite extensive recent housing development, the site is not well related to the existing built extent or form of Oakham. The bypass presents a clear physical and perceptual eastern boundary to the town at this point. The site is however perceptually enclosed by the woodland fringe to its eastern edge or 'rear', and as it tapers towards the south does not relate as clearly to wider expanses of the vale as other sites which lie outside the bypass boundary. Extension of the built extent of Oakham into the site would therefore be self limiting in respect to its extent, and 'framed' by existing boundaries which could be further strengthened. Nevertheless, its development would mark a significant extension to Oakham which would detract from its generally nuclear form.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 3B)

The visual impact of the site would be considerable from the bypass, but such views would generally be seen with the backdrop of Dog Kennel Spinney. From Burley Road the site is well screened but two or more storey development close to the site's boundaries would tend to rise above the hedged boundary and visibility consequently increased. Views into the site from higher reaches of Burley Road would be mostly well screened by the spinney. Vistas towards the site from the bypass would however be limited to development fronting that boundary because of general fall of the site eastwards towards the spinney.

Public access exists along the short southern boundary of the site along the 'Hereward Way' long distance path.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

On-site structural planting to the northern Burley Road boundary, and to its frontage to the bypass could help reduce the prominence of peripheral elements of the development. Its inner areas would be screened by outer areas as a consequence of the low differences in relief. Views from the Hereward Way may be significant or reduced, depending on whether the semi-natural scrub vegetation towards the southern fringe is retained or developed. Retention of a well wooded element in this area would reduce the impact from both the footpath and from the bypass on northern approaches.

Whilst such measures could increase the effectiveness of visual amelioration, they may also serve to further emphasise the disjointed relationship of the site with Oakham's existing built form. The open frontage of the site, if not provided with further landscaping to supplement that associated with the bypass, should be the focus for particularly high quality design of development to reflect its prominence.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity is on balance **Moderate** because it shows characteristics from the high, moderate and low categories as shown in Table 4:

- Site adjacent to built limits but lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.



- Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Common place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.

Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important.

**Site 9B: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 4).

#### Landscape Value

Site 9B: **Moderate** Landscape Value on balance in accordance with the following criteria in table 7:

- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
- Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.

#### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value give an overall **Medium Capacity for Site 9B** to accommodate the proposed development.

The site occupies an area outside the boundary function presented by Burley Park Way (bypass) and as such presents significant implications for settlement character and form. However, Burley Road which bounds the site to the north has some semi-urbanised character through street lighting and footpath leading to the supermarket, hence eroding any pure rural character in the vicinity. Development of the site would therefore be set within such context.

Landscape character itself is unremarkable and the site benefits from a degree of 'framing' and limitation by the wooded feature of Dog Kennel Spinney to its eastern edge. Despite open views into the western boundary, the overall visual sensitivity of the site is ameliorated by generally well screened vistas from the north and south. This impact could be further reduced by structural planting being provided along Burley Road.

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
9B	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

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## 5. Site Assessment & Analysis – Uppingham

### 5.1 Local Landscape Character Context

- 5.1.1 Uppingham lies within the 'High Rutland' LCT. The LCA further sub divided High Rutland into four landscape character sub-areas. Uppingham falls entirely within the southern part of the 'Ridges and Valleys' sub-area. The 'Eyebrook Valley' sub-area lies immediately to the west of Uppingham. The following extracts from the LCA sets out an assessment of the 'High Rutland' LCT:

'High Rutland forms part of the watershed between the Soar - Trent - Humber and the Welland catchments. It is dissected by radiating rivers and streams which have formed steep sided valleys separated by ridges. This gives the whole area the distinctive steeply rolling landform familiar to travellers who are either continually ascending and descending the steep slopes or travelling along the ridges enjoying panoramic views across the surrounding countryside'.

'The highest parts of the landscape character type in Rutland reach over 190 metres AOD. Much of High Rutland is deeply rural and locally feels relatively remote. A distinctive feature is the network of narrow gated roads connecting isolated hamlets and farms. The only major roads within the area are the A47 running east to west and the A6003 running north to south, neither of which is seriously visually intrusive in the landscape but they do create a busier, noisier ambience in the main road corridors'.

'Land use is a mixture of arable on the flatter and more gently sloping ridge areas and grassland mainly on the steeper slopes and in the valley bottoms. Ridge and furrow is fairly well distributed throughout the area and reflects the intensity of arable cultivation here in the early Middle Ages. Field ponds are also characteristic. The field pattern is mainly one of regularly shaped fields bounded by thorn hedges with mainly ash, and in a few places oak, as hedgerow trees. These enclosure hedges contrast with the older mixed species hedges that form the more sinuous parish boundaries'.

'Throughout the area, but especially in Leighfield Forest, some hedgerows are substantial and many still perform an important function in this pastoral landscape, providing containment, shelter and shade for stock. Whilst a number of hedges have been neglected, relatively few have been removed and there is evidence of the increasing practice of traditional hedgerow management by laying, protection of hedgerow trees and fencing of new field and hedgerow trees to protect them from grazing animals. A number of hedgerow trees are over-mature, including some left isolated in the fields when associated hedgerows were removed, these need careful maintenance and surgery to extend their lives and replacement to ensure continuity of hedgerow tree cover. Some ponds are being cleaned, restored and nurtured demonstrating that all these important contributions to landscape character can still be practicable today'.

'Whilst horse-keeping helps to maintain the pastoral character, a number of the fields are over-grazed. The use of inappropriate fencing and the accumulation of stables, barns and other, usually temporary and unsightly, buildings, vehicles, lighting and clutter detracts from the generally unspoilt rural character and is particularly intrusive in views of, to and from the villages'.

‘Woodland is a significant feature throughout the area reflecting the old Leighfield Forest. The woodlands tend to be broadleaved, mainly ash and oak, but there are also mixed conifer and broadleaved plantations associated with 19th century sporting estates and a number of mature poplar plantations. In general the woodlands tend to be even aged. Parkland is an important component of the landscape in some parts. Other concentrations of sites of ecological value are provided by small streams, ponds, disused railway lines and Eyebrook Reservoir’.

‘Whilst the Leighfield Forest and Chater Valley sub-areas have remained pastoral and well wooded, elsewhere there has been extensive conversion or reversion to arable with attendant loss of pasture, woodland, field boundaries, hedgerow trees and small pockets of semi-natural vegetation. However, in parts new woodland planting is quite extensive; the Woodland Trust has new plantations between Oakham and Braunston-in-Rutland. Some parkland landscapes are in good condition, others urgently need restoration and reinstatement of good management practice’.

5.1.2 The following extracts from the LCA sets out a more local assessment of the ‘Ridges and Valleys’ landscape character sub-area:

‘This extensive part of west, south and central Rutland has typical generic landscape elements, features and characteristics of High Rutland but differs from Leighfield Forest by lacking the sense of rural isolation and having a much more open, regular, geometric field pattern (exacerbated by some boundary removal) with fewer, low-cut or gappy hedges, fewer hedgerow trees and less enclosure. The ridges and valleys are evident but not as pronounced as to the west. There are fewer woodlands and those that occur tend to be enclosure or post-enclosure, straight-edged plantations. In parts there are a number of small plantations and some of the valley streams have linear strips of woodland or narrow, linear wetland habitats’.

‘Mixed or arable farming prevails with a variety of crops and intensively managed, improved grasslands grazed by cattle and sheep. There are more farm steadings in the countryside and more and larger farm buildings’.

‘Although the sub-area does exhibit a number of historic features, with ridge and furrow and old lanes linking medieval villages still characteristic, this part of High Rutland has a less obvious feeling of antiquity and continuity. It is busier and noisier with the main roads passing through it, settlements are more frequent and larger (including Uppingham) and settlement pattern much denser, especially between North and South Luffenham and Uppingham. Roads, railways and disused railways form important linear features sometimes seeming to run against the grain of the ridges and valleys which run generally east – west’.

5.1.3 The LCA goes on to recommend landscape objectives for High Rutland – Ridges and Valleys as:

**Recommended Landscape Objectives High Rutland - Ridges and Valleys**

To sustain and restore the rural, mixed-agricultural, busy, colourful, diverse landscape with regular patterns, straight lines, frequent movement, many large and small historic, stone-built conservation villages that fit well with the landform, to protect the landscape setting and conserve and enhance the edges of villages, to increase the woodland cover and other semi-natural habitats whilst protecting historic features and panoramic views from the ridges.

Further Sub-division of 'High Rutland – Ridges and Valleys' within the Local Context of Uppingham.

- 5.1.4 All of the potential development sites for Uppingham assessed by this study fall within the 'High Rutland' LCT. The boundaries of High Rutland were established within the 1995 Landscape and Woodland Strategy, although the area was referred to as High Leicestershire within that document. The 2003 LCA used the term High Rutland as it was considered more appropriate for an assessment of Rutland. As described above, the 2003 assessment further sub-divided the LCT into four landscape character sub-areas, of which Uppingham falls entirely within the southern part of the 'Ridges and Valleys' sub-area.
- 5.1.5 Despite this sub-division, a finer grain of detail at the site-specific level is necessary for this study. Therefore, in line with the proposed project method, the Ridges and Valleys sub-area has been further divided into smaller units where localised landscape character shows some variation from the generic description of the wider sub-area. The sub-units set out below and shown in Figure 6 are only examined in the context of the development sites and their immediate context in relation to Uppingham itself. 'Outer boundaries' are not precisely defined.

#### *Uppingham Ridges and Valleys*

- 5.1.6 The countryside fringing Uppingham to the north, east and south exhibits strong characteristics typical of the 'High Rutland – Ridges and Valleys' landscape sub-area as described in the LCA. A series of streams flow west to east with pronounced steep sided valleys, and broad ridges in-between. The town has developed on relatively flat high ground between two valleys and has expanded primarily northwards, and south-eastwards, where the valley is much shallower. The steepness of the valleys to the east and south of the town has limited expansion in these directions.
- 5.1.7 Agricultural land use is typically arable on the flatter, higher ridges with improved / semi-improved grassland for rough pasture grazing on the steeper valley sides. Rectilinear arable fields are larger than the grasslands, an indication of where field boundaries have been removed. Hedges are predominantly well maintained hawthorn with occasional hedgerow trees, creating an open, exposed character with a distinctive west to east alignment following the predominant pattern of the landscape. A number of isolated farms lie close to the built up edges of the town, located on the higher broad ridges.
- 5.1.8 On the sloping valley sides the smaller grassland fields provide a more regular, geometric field pattern. Here there is much more of a sense of enclosure, due to the topography and the prevalence of taller hedges with trees, areas of scrub and small copses, especially those which follow the more sinuous course of a stream. In some areas individual mature trees mark the line of former hedges, and ridge and furrow remains in several places.
- 5.1.9 From the upper valley sides and the broad ridges, views are often extensive across the steeply rolling countryside of 'High Rutland'. By way of contrast views from the numerous minor roads which continually ascend and descend the ridges and valleys rapidly alternate from panoramic to foreshortened views.

### *Uppingham Plateau*

- 5.1.10 To the west of Uppingham is an elevated, comparatively level expanse of land; a tableland plateau gently rising from around 150m in the east to around 163m further west. It lies between the steeply rolling ridges and valleys of 'High Rutland' to the north and east, including Uppingham itself, and the steeply falling valley sides within the watershed of the Eyebrook Valley landscape sub-area to the south and west.
- 5.1.11 Land use is almost entirely pasture, comprising improved or semi-improved grassland for sheep grazing, although there are small arable fields abutting the western edge of the town. There is a regular, geometric, rectilinear field pattern, with closely trimmed hawthorn hedges and more abundant hedgerow trees than to the east. Many trees are becoming over mature, many with extensive ivy and large dead boughs. Dry stone walls provide field boundaries alongside the winding Stockerstone Road, and there are patches of remaining ridge and furrow.
- 5.1.12 Despite being elevated, the plateau is well contained by topography, vegetation and the built up edge of Uppingham, limiting views both out of and in to the plateau.
- 5.1.13 A key characteristic is the lack of streams across the area. There are small ditches within the hedgerow bottoms but these are not obvious features within the landscape. There is a series of wells and springs on the edge of the plateau, which are also inconspicuous.
- 5.1.14 A section of the Rutland Round long distance footpath cuts across the middle of the plateau and along Leicester Road.

## **5.2 Site Assessment & Analysis of Specified Sites in Uppingham**

- 5.2.1 The following sheets record the assessment and analysis of specified sites in Uppingham. The sites are numbered as follows:  
Sites 2;  
Sites 3;  
Sites 4;  
Sites 5A & 5B;  
Site 6;  
Site 7.
- 5.2.2 The site numbering is in accordance with the sites specified in the invitation to tender document, hence there is no Site 1. A number of sites have been further sub-divided into smaller units for ease of description and assessment. Thus Site 2 has been divided into Site 2A and Site 2B; Site 5A has been divided into Site 5A North and Site 5A South; Site 6 has been divided into Site 6A and Site 6B; and similarly Site 7 has been divided into Site 7A and Site 7B.

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## Site Assessment and Analysis - Uppingham

**Site Number: 2**

**Site Name: Northeast Uppingham between the A47 and Glaston Road**

### Site Location

Site No.2 lies adjacent to the eastern edge of Uppingham, between the A47 and Glaston Road. Recent housing development abuts the site to the west, with older dwellings along the south-western edge. Open arable fields lie to the north and east, where Launde Farm is located on a ridge of high ground between 130m – 135m. To the south-east of the site Glaston Road dips into a steep valley which continues through the southern half of the site. Gas Works House, a number of small light industrial units and a telephone mast lie in the valley abutting the site at its south-eastern corner.

### Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 6 & 7)

For the purposes of this assessment the site has been split into two; Site 2A in the northern half, with Site 2B in the southern half.

#### Site 2A:



*View A from the end of The Beeches*

Part of a broad ridge of gently sloping, open arable farmland, lying at approximately 135m where it abuts the housing development to the west. A field of semi-improved grassland falls to 130m in the extreme north-eastern corner alongside the A47. An electricity sub-station is located in the extreme north-western corner. There are trimmed or gappy hedges along the site boundary, with few hedgerow trees.

Modern housing development on high ground to the west and the nearby A47 affect the typical quiet rural character of the ridge and valley landscape. Overall landscape elements / features are few and common place, creating a generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.

#### Site 2B:

A distinctive steeply sloping valley comprising semi-improved grassland falling from approximately 130m along its northern edge with Site 2A and around 135m where its southern edge abuts Glaston Road, down to approximately 115m at the valley bottom where a stream flows from west to east through the site. An area of marsh surrounds the stream. Sheep graze the steep grassland which is divided into four regular geometric fields with gappy, scrubby hedges and trees in-between and along the northern boundary, resulting in a relatively well enclosed, small scale, self contained site.

An exception is at the extreme southern corner which is elevated and relatively flat and exposed, with extensive views to the north and east. A public footpath crosses this exposed field and continues northwards down and up the valley sides towards Launde Farm and beyond.



*View B from the public footpath off Glaston Road*

A phone mast in the valley abutting the south-eastern corner is a modern intrusion affecting the otherwise natural, undeveloped, distinctive steep sided valley character.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

*Site 2A:* Recent housing development has occurred on the north-eastern side of Uppingham, including Hazel Close off The Beeches immediately to the west of Site 2A. The end of The Beeches stops at the site boundary where there is a field gate which would provide suitable access into the site.

Development of Site 2A would be a further extension of the town to the east in keeping with the form and pattern of growth of the town. There would be no impact on important aspects of historic settlement form or pattern. The northern field alongside the A47 is currently somewhat isolated but would be better associated with the town once employment allocation to the west is realised. The A47 is considered an appropriate boundary to development.

*Site 2B:* There is housing immediately to the west and southwest. Development would continue the eastern expansion of the town with no impact on important aspects of historic settlement form or pattern. However, any development up to Glaston Road would close the sensitive, steeply sided gap between the town and Gas Works House and a number of small light industrial units to the east, closing an open, natural corridor considered important for strategic green infrastructure networks connecting town and country.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 7)

*Site 2A:* Due to its relatively exposed position, views into and out of the site are of some importance, but the wider topography, hedgerows and buildings at Launde Farm limit views. Despite being close to the A47, views from the road are limited until close to the site, where recent housing development on higher land immediately to the west somewhat overshadows the site and gives it an urban edge, unremarkable character but with some sense of place. Similar views are available from a public footpath close to Launde Farm. There are views from the road across the open fields to a church spire within the town.

*Site 2B:* Essentially an enclosed valley with limited visibility and limited views into and out of the site. Topography and surrounding vegetation limit views until close to the site. There are no views from the A47 despite it being relatively close across open fields. Views into and out of the town are of some importance especially in the south-western corner which is higher, flatter and more exposed, with extensive views to the east. Development here would be conspicuous.



A public footpath continues from beyond Launde Farm across the stream through the site and into the town.

### Scope for Mitigation

*Site 2A:* The eastern site boundary could be strengthened with wider hedgerow and tree planting, in keeping with the well treed character of High Rutland. This would reduce potential visual impact.

*Site 2B:* Mitigation is inappropriate and could not replace distinctive elements / features which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.

### Sensitivity to Development

*Site 2A:* Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Common place elements and combination of features which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town to the east with no impact on important aspects of settlement form or pattern.

*Site 2A:* Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside are important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

**Site 2A: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8).

*Site 2B:* Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity is on balance **Moderate to High** because it shows characteristics from the high, moderate and low categories as shown in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

*Site 2B:* Visual Sensitivity is on balance **Moderate** because it shows characteristics from the high, moderate and low categories as shown in Table 5:

- Of little or no importance to the setting to the setting of the town such that development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation.
- Development in the south-western corner would be conspicuous.
- Site is partially open to public and private views where views of the countryside are important.

**Site 2B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8). Although the site could fall within either the Moderate or the High categories of overall landscape sensitivity, a judgement has been made to allocate the site, on balance, into the High category because of its distinctive landscape character and importance to the setting of the town.

### Landscape Value

Site 2A: **Moderate to Low** Landscape Value because the site exhibits the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Site 2B: **Moderate to High** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.
- Presents locally important landscape characteristics and scenic value;
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

*Site 2A:* Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to Low Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium to High Capacity for Site 2A** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect the relatively low landscape value which may be overvalued in the scoring due to its location within a locally designated landscape.

The northern half of Site 2A is considered more sensitive as development would be somewhat isolated until employment allocation on land to the west is realised. The A47 is considered an appropriate boundary to development eventually, but it would be appropriate to develop the southern half of the site first, as an extension to the recent housing development to the west. Thus the northern half of Site 2A is considered to have a Medium landscape capacity.

Mitigation in the form of hedgerow planting to widen the existing hedges and hedgerow tree planting along the eastern site boundary is considered appropriate to help assimilate any development into the landscape. Planting should be of native species appropriate to the 'Ridges and Valleys' landscape character sub-area.

*Site 2B:* Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Low to Medium Capacity for Site 2B** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9). A low capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect its relatively well enclosed nature (except for the south-western corner).

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
2A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Medium to High
2B	Moderate to High	Moderate	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium

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### **Site Assessment and Analysis - Uppingham**

**Site Number: 3**

**Site Name: East Uppingham between Glaston Road and Seaton Road**



*Panoramic View C off Seaton Road*

#### **Site Location**

Site No. 3 is located on the eastern side of where Glaston Road joins Seaton Road, on the eastern edge of Uppingham. Thus its northern boundary is Glaston Road and its southern and western sides are bounded by Seaton Road. To the east is a track that leads to Boundary Farm adjacent to the eastern site boundary. The south-eastern half of Site No. 3 is a housing development site under construction (see view D below), thus the Site No. 3 under consideration in this assessment is only the north-eastern half of a previously larger site.



*View D from Seaton Road showing houses on the eastern end of the site*

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figure 6)**

Site No. 3 is an area of amenity playing fields belonging to Uppingham School. A cream painted, thatch roofed pavilion building stands in the extreme north-western corner at the junction of Glaston Road and Seaton Road. It has a clock face and seating on its eastern side, which overlooks a cricket square in the centre of the site and there are other playing pitches marked out at its southern end. It has a parkland character, with closely mown grass and mature trees including horse chestnut and lime around its boundary. The south-eastern corner with the new housing development is particularly well treed.

It is relatively flat, lying on high ground at around 135m+. It occupies the highest part of a ridge running east-west, with adjacent land falling steeply to two valleys to the north and south. Its character is of an open amenity space on the edge of the town rather than exhibiting any distinctive landscape elements / features characteristic of the 'High Rutland - Ridges and Valleys' landscape sub-area. The site is popular with local dog walkers.

Despite being in an elevated position, it is a well contained, enclosed site due to the mature trees and hedges along its boundaries and the new houses being constructed to the south-east. An exception to this is where a public footpath cuts across the site from Seaton Road and through a gap between Boundary Farm and the new housing. From this gap there are extensive views out towards Bisbrooke and beyond.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The distinctive ridge and valley topography on the eastern side of Uppingham has until recently prevented the town expanding in this direction. Glaston Road and Seaton Road have defined the limits to built development until the construction of the housing development site on the northern side of Seaton Road, within the south-eastern half of the original Site No. 3. This development lies on a valley side sloping down from around 133m at the site boundary to 105m. The new development does not affect the character of the site – indeed it could be argued that it reinforces its amenity value as an important open space between built developments.

The Uppingham Conservation Area lies close to the western edge of the site, in the south-western quadrant of the crossroads where Glaston Road joins Seaton Road.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 7)

Site No. 3 is a well contained, enclosed site. The ridge and valley topography culminating in the ridge of high ground at Boundary Farm screens views into the site from the north. The farm is a distinctive feature within the landscape. From the east and south the farm, new housing development and surrounding vegetation are obvious features which screen views of the site from these directions.

The views out from the site to the east through the gap between Boundary Farm and the new housing development site are extensive and valued by users of the public footpath through the site and dog walkers around the site perimeter.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

Assuming the mature boundary vegetation would remain, no further planting in mitigation to reduce adverse impacts of developing the site would be necessary.

However, development of the site would mean the loss of the Uppingham School playing fields. In mitigation, therefore, a new site would need to be found for replacement playing fields.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements and combinations of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Open space of some importance to the setting, appearance, form and character of the built environment.

- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance to its setting.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

**Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8). Although the site could fall within either the Moderate or the High categories of overall landscape sensitivity, a judgement has been made to allocate the site, on balance, into the Moderate category because of its relatively well enclosed nature.

### **Landscape Value**

**Moderate to High** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest;
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### **Conclusions on Landscape Capacity**

Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium Capacity for Site 3** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9). A low to medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated because the housing development under construction on the south-eastern half of the site has reduced the sensitivity of the remaining open space on the site, and increased its overall capacity to accommodate further residential development. Without this housing, which will extend the built up area beyond the current eastern limit, development on the remaining open space would be more isolated from the town and would detract from the form and pattern of settlement. Without the adjacent housing, development of the site would overall have had a negative effect on settlement form and pattern, whereas it is now considered to have a neutral effect.

Without the adjacent housing, overall landscape sensitivity would have been high (rather than moderate) and overall landscape capacity would have been low to medium (rather than medium).

The impact of any new development on the open space would be reduced by retaining the important boundary vegetation, in particular the mature trees. There would be an extensive root protection area around their trunks which should be protected from development, and which would reduce the area available for construction between the trees. High quality, low density housing retaining a high proportion of open space is likely to be more appropriate.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
3	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	Medium



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## Site Assessment and Analysis - Uppingham

**Site Number: 4**

**Site Name: Southeast Uppingham between Seaton Road and A6003 London Road**

### Site Location

A relatively large site lying between built development south of Seaton Road and east of the A6003 London Road. A trading estate, factory buildings and residential properties abut the site to the north. A cemetery, a small copse and several large detached properties in extensive, mature, well vegetated grounds, including Redgate, Brooklands and Hilltop House, are located adjacent to the western site boundary. There is also a stable building within a gated, fenced off grass field adjacent to the western boundary.

Uppingham Community College including playing fields is located on a ridge of high ground to the south of the site. There is also a disused quarry, now over grown with scrub and trees.

Grassland lies to the east with Valley Farm alongside a dismantled railway line.

### Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 6 & 7)

Arable farmland is found on the higher, flatter ridge running west – east through the centre of the site approximately (see view E below). There is a high point of around 140m+ along the western site boundary. From here the site falls steeply down the valley sides to streams to the north, east and south, before steeply rising further south up to another high point of around 140m towards the Uppingham Community College playing fields at the south-western corner of the site.



*View E showing ridge of flat arable land with extensive views out to the east*

The valley sides to the south comprise fields of rough improved or semi-improved grassland, with clumps of scrub divided by overgrown but gappy hedges and trees, along field boundaries running up and down the valley sides predominantly in a north – south direction. Wet tussock grassland lines the valley floor alongside a stream, and a public footpath descends and ascends the valley slopes before passing through the small copse to the west of the site and continuing northwards alongside the arable field and down the valley side into the town centre. This is an intimate, small scale, well vegetated, enclosed, regular landscape where distinctive elements and features make a positive contribution to character and sense of place (see view F below).



*View F showing the valley to the south looking northwards up to the ridge of high ground*

The valley side in the north of the site, also improved or semi-improved grassland, falls more gradually than that to the south. It is more open with fewer hedges and trees, and occasional scattered broadleaf trees. The most prominent vegetation lines the valley sides both at the bottom alongside the factory units and at the top alongside the northern edge of the arable field. This area also has a distinctive character and sense of place (see view G below).



*View G from the ridge of high ground looking northwards towards the town*

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The well vegetated valleys and steeply sloping valley sides cutting through the site to the north and south have prevented expansion of the town in a southwards direction, towards the site. Low density development to the west of the site alongside London Road is for the most part on higher, flatter ground with open garden areas and the cemetery on more sloping ground.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 7)

Views out from the valleys through the site are foreshortened by topography and vegetation, and are limited to views from the public footpath as it ascends and descends the valleys through the site in a north-south direction. In contrast there are panoramic views from the higher, flatter ridge of arable land in the centre of the site, across the rolling High Rutland countryside to the east, and northwards across the town where historic buildings including church spires are attractive features within the Uppingham Conservation Area. There are also panoramic views from the edge of the College playing fields to the open countryside to the east and south.

Views in to the site are also limited by topography and vegetation. The site is screened in views from Seaton Road by the ridge of high ground, where mature trees on the ridge, and ridge and furrow on the valley side, are distinctive features in the landscape. This ridge and north-facing valley are important, open features linking town with countryside in views from within the town, for example along Station Road.

In distant views from the Lyddington to Bisbrooke road south of the site, the town is seen occupying high ground beyond the wooded valley on the southern site boundary. The ridge of high ground within the centre of the site is visible as an open area surrounded by built development.

### Scope for Mitigation

Distinctive landscape elements / features could not be replaced and thus mitigation is considered inappropriate on this site.

### Sensitivity to Development

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Development on the higher ground would be conspicuous.
- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance to its setting.
- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside are important.

**Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8).

### Landscape Value

**Moderate to High** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Low to Medium Capacity for Site 2B** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9). A low capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated because of the relatively well enclosed nature of the majority of the site.

The steep sided valleys would be difficult to develop, and are considered important corridors for strategic green infrastructure networks connecting town and country. Development within Site 4 would lead to the loss of distinctive landscape elements and features that could not be replaced by mitigation.

In topographical terms the flatter ridge running west-east through the centre of the site would be more easily developed, however development here would be conspicuous and would be isolated from the town thus detracting from settlement form and pattern.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
4	High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium

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## **Site Assessment and Analysis - Uppingham**

**Site Number: 5A**

**Site Name: Southwest Uppingham between Gipsy Hollow Lane and Stockerston Road**

### **Site Location**

The site is located between the single lane track known as Gipsy Hollow Lane (which becomes Newtown Road further north) to the east and Stockerston Road to the west. Stockerston Crescent, a modern housing development abuts the site to the north, with a farm adjacent to the extreme north-eastern corner of the site.

### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 6 & 7)

The site forms a transition between two local landscape character areas, and exhibits characteristics of both. The eastern half of the site is generally relatively flat at between 155m – 158m, but falls gradually to a stream which is steeply banked where it surfaces towards the centre of the site from a spring or well, and flows slowly eastwards in an open channel through Site 5B. It falls to below 150m at its lowest point alongside Gipsy Hollow Lane where its banks are much less steep. This half of the site is improved grassland grazed by sheep. It exhibits similar characteristics to the ridge and valley landscape to the east, although the topography is less pronounced (see view H below).



*View H looking across the site from Gipsy Hollow Lane*

The western half of the site is in arable use and is flat at around 158m. It is more characteristic of the plateau landscape to the west, with closely trimmed hawthorn hedges and more abundant hedgerow trees than to the east (see view I below). There are small ditches within the hedgerow bottoms but these are not obvious features within the landscape.

The site is of some importance to the setting of the town, but the adjoining modern housing development within Stockerston Crescent is of standard layout and design, being red brick, concrete tiled with white barge boards and dormer windows, and no distinctive local characteristics. This forms an unfortunate, insensitive edge to the town when approaching from the west on Stockerston Road or on the Rutland Round long distance footpath.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The town has expanded on the flatter ground to the west, along Stockerston Road immediately north of the site. Modern Crescents and Close's have been built, namely Stockerston Crescent, Newtown Crescent and Chestnut Close. Bayley Close lies on the northern side of Stockerston Road, which is the main route out of the town to the west.

Further expansion of the town westwards along Stockerston Road, and southwards along Newton Road / Gipsy Hollow Lane would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern. It would be on relatively high ground, as is the existing housing to the north, but would represent an extension into the High Rutland countryside beyond the current southern and western limits to development.



*View 1 looking across the site from Stockerston Road towards Stockerston Crescent*

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 7)

Views into the site are limited by topography and distance. From the east, views from London Road are also limited by intervening farm buildings and tall vegetation. There are some views into the site off Gipsy Hollow Lane (which is a single track lane and infrequently used) and the footpath passing through Site 5B, where the houses are seen on high ground with no backdrop.

Views into the site when approaching from the west along Stockerston Road are limited by the sinuous nature of the road, the intact roadside hedgerows and tall hedgerow trees. Thus the site is only visible from the road at its south-western corner, where the modern houses are seen on high ground across the arable field in the western half of the site. As Stockerston Road dips and bends on its approach into the town, the height of the arable field above the road varies such that at its northern end the roadside hedge is on a significant bank.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

The key characteristics of the landscape around Site 5A are the intact, low hedges with scattered and regular hedgerow trees. Woodlands are infrequent thus any dense woodland planting would be inappropriate. There would be scope for new hedgerow planting with trees, however, in particular along the boundary between Site 5A North and Site 5A South.

Given the flat topography any ground raising to screen development, for example screen mounds, would be inappropriate and would themselves create adverse visual impact.

### **Sensitivity to Development** (see Figure 8)

For the purpose of this assessment the site has been divided in two, north and south.

*Site 5A North:* Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Common place elements and combination of features which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

*Site 5A North:* Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that visual intrusion into the countryside is acceptable.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

*Site 5A North:* **Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8).

*Site 5A South:* Landscape Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would be isolated from the town and would overall have a negative effect on settlement form and pattern.

*Site 5A South:* Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

*Site 5A South:* **Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8).

### **Landscape Value**

*Site 5A North:* **Moderate to Low** Landscape Value because the site exhibits the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

*Site 5A South:* **Moderate to High** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.

- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, biodiversity interest and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

*Site 5A North:* Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to Low Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium Capacity for Site 5A North** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9). A medium to high capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated to reflect the generally moderate landscape and settlement character, visual sensitivity and value of the site.

Development within Site 5A North would continue recent expansion of the town to the south and west, with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern. Assuming hedgerow boundaries and trees remain, development would overall have a neutral effect on landscape character. New hedgerow planting with trees along the boundary between Site 5A North and South would mean development could be mitigated so that intrusion into the countryside is acceptable.

*Site 5A South:* Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Low to Medium Capacity for Site 5A South** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9). A low capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated as an appropriate comparison with adjacent sites.

Pressure for development within Site 5A South is likely to increase if Site 5A North was developed because it would be less isolated from the town and would be a continuation of the southern expansion of the town. However it would start to encroach in to the more sensitive ridge and valley landscape which should be avoided.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
<b>5A North</b>	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Medium
<b>5A South</b>	High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium



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## **Site Assessment and Analysis - Uppingham**

**Site Number: 5B**

**Site Name: South Uppingham between A6003 London Road and Gipsy Hollow Lane**

### **Site Location**

The site is located between the A6003 London Road to the east and a single lane track known as Gipsy Hollow Lane to the west. Rectory Farm and Uppingham School playing fields lie to the north, with open grassland to the south.

### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 6 & 7)

The site comprises a shallow valley of semi-improved grassland sloping down to a stream running in a west-east direction along or close to the northern boundary. The fields are grazed by sheep, and fall from 155m in the south-western corner and around 150m in the north-western corner, down to below 135m in the valley bottom in the north-eastern corner.

A number of gappy hedges with scattered broadleaved trees follow the west-east pattern of the landscape and divide the site up into several regularly sized, rectangular fields. Hedgerows along the western, eastern and southern boundaries are taller, broader, more intact and well maintained.



*Panoramic view J northwards across the site towards the town*

In parts the stream has cut into and eroded the grassland, creating a deep gully with steep banks. Marshland with rushes appears close to the stream in places, with willow and scattered scrub in others. There is standing water in several locations and ridge and furrow still remains in other areas, with damper grassland in the furrows.

Rectory Farm, with its array of outbuildings of varying shapes, sizes and materials, and accumulation of stored materials and equipment, provides a rural setting close to the edge of town. It's somewhat unkempt appearance contrasts with that of the manicured school playing fields to the north.

The site provides a natural setting to the town to the south, which has a strong enclosed character due to the mature vegetation including tall evergreen coniferous trees on the town's southern boundary, north of the playing fields.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

The well vegetated valley and steeply sloping valley sides on the town's southern boundary, north of the playing fields, has prevented expansion of the town in a southwards direction. The site is isolated from the town, with the flatter school playing fields, with its white painted rugby posts, football and hockey goal posts, and flood lit sports pitches, providing a transition between the town and the countryside setting of the site.

### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 7)

The site is very well screened in views from the north. There are some glimpses through vegetation from the rear of properties on Newtown Crescent off Gypsy Hollow Lane. Elsewhere dense vegetation along the southern boundary to the town provides a successful screen.

Topography and vegetation limit views in to the site from other directions also. There are views from some properties along London Road and from the road itself through roadside vegetation, but only when close to the site. This includes important views northwards across the site and playing fields towards Uppingham School, seen amongst dense vegetation.

A public footpath from Gypsy Hollow Lane crosses the site and playing fields and continues into the town. This gives the clearest views of the site and the setting of the town. There are panoramic views out to the east and south from the footpath as it emerges from the south-western corner of the site on the Gypsy Hollow Lane.

### **Scope for Mitigation**

The distinctive valley landscape and associated elements / features could not be replaced. If the site was to be developed, the southern boundary could be strengthened with further tree planting. However this could block sensitive views across the site towards the town.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements and combinations of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Provides important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated.
- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside are important.

**Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8).

### **Landscape Value**

**High** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.
- Presents locally important landscape characteristics and scenic value.
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### **Conclusions on Landscape Capacity**

Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value gives an overall **Low Capacity for Site 5B** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9).

Development within Site 5B would lead to the loss of distinctive landscape elements and features that could not be replaced by mitigation. Development would be conspicuous by completely altering the setting of the town from the south, in particular in important views on the approach into the town along London Road, and would be isolated from the town thus detracting from settlement form and pattern.

Development of Site 5B is likely to put increased pressure for development on the playing fields to the north.

#### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
5B	High	Moderate to High	High	High	Low

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## **Site Assessment and Analysis - Uppingham**

**Site Number: 6**

**Site Name: Uppingham West between Stockerston Road and Leicester Road**

### **Site Location**

The site is located on the western side of Uppingham, between Stockerston Road and Leicester Road. Housing within Bayley Close and school playing fields lie adjacent to the site to the east. At the time of survey there were major construction works occurring within the playing fields to the east.

### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figures 6 & 7)

For the purposes of this assessment the site has been split into two; Site 6A in the southern half, with Site 6B in the northern half.

*Site 6A:*



*View K from Stockerston Road across Site 6A*

The site lies on the plateau of flat, high ground, at around 155m, to the west of the town. The southern half of the site comprises improved grassland and at the time of survey was grazed by sheep. A dense well managed hedge with tall scattered broadleaved trees divides the southern half of the site in two. There are intact hedges of varying height with scattered trees along the eastern boundary with the houses and playing fields. Characteristic features of the plateau landscape include dry ditches which line the hedge bottoms, ponds in some field corners, remnant ridge and furrow and dry stone walls alongside Stockerston Road. Gappy hedges run along the western boundary which is thus relatively open to the plateau landscape beyond.

As with Site 5A, Site 6A is of some importance to the setting of the town but the adjoining modern housing development within Bayley Close is of standard layout and design, being red brick, concrete tiled with white barge boards and no distinctive local characteristics. This forms a somewhat insensitive edge to the town when approaching from the west on Stockerston Road or on the Rutland Round long distance footpath, although vegetation in the gardens and along the boundary of the site helps to soften the built edge.

*Site 6B:*



*View L from Leicester Road of the western end of Site 6B*



*View M from Leicester Road of the eastern end of Site 6B, with the construction site in the background*

The northern half of the site comprises an extensive area of unmanaged semi-improved grassland, probably an abandoned pasture field. Scattered scrub of willow, hawthorn and bramble grows throughout this half of the site, together with other woodland sapling species such as ash and goat willow as a result of natural succession. A small copse of woodland lies in the south-western corner, and a line of young ash and hawthorn is present along the north-western field boundary.

A field of cattle-grazed semi-improved grassland lies in the eastern corner of the Site 6B, where there is also some evidence of remnant ridge and furrow. A tall unmanaged hedgerow with mature scattered broadleaved trees borders the site along its western boundary.

Leicester Road is an uncharacteristically wide, long straight road, in stark contrast to the more typically narrow, winding roads found elsewhere around the town. It has a wide verge, footpath and street lighting on one side, and other urban features including road signage and kerbed accesses. Avenues of mature trees and housing on both sides of the road further strengthen the urban character of Leicester Road, of which *Site 6B* is a part.

### Settlement Form and Pattern

The town has expanded on the flatter ground to the west along Stockerston Road, including Bayley Close immediately east of *Site 6A*. A bungalow is located in the extreme south-eastern corner opposite the access to Stockerston Crescent.

Ribbon development of seven detached properties lies on the northern side of Leicester Road opposite *Site 6B*. Further to the west on the northern side of Leicester Road, beyond the site, is a housing development at Westlands, including properties on Shepherds Way, which is isolated from the town by intervening arable fields.

Further expansion of the town westwards along Stockerston Road and Leicester Road would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern. It would be on relatively high ground but around the same height as development at Westlands. Development of *Site 6A* would represent an extension into the High Rutland countryside beyond the current western limits to development along Stockerston Road. Development of *Site 6B* would also extend the town westwards into countryside but within an area where urban character is more dominant than rural character.

### Visual Considerations (see Figure 7)

Views into the site are limited by topography and built form, being confined essentially to views from Stockerston Road and Leicester Road in the west. There are also views from the Rutland Round long distance footpath as walkers travel eastwards into the town from the west.

Views into the site when approaching from the west along Stockerston Road are limited by the sinuous nature of the road, the intact roadside hedgerows and tall hedgerow trees. Thus the site is only visible from the road at its southern corner, where the modern houses are seen on high ground across *Site 6A*.

Dense vegetation including tall scrub and trees along the northern and western boundaries of *Site 6B* screen most views into the site.

### Scope for Mitigation

The key characteristics of the landscape to the west of *Site 6A* and *Site 6B* are the intact, low hedges with scattered and regular hedgerow trees. Woodlands are infrequent thus any dense woodland planting would be inappropriate. There would be scope for new hedgerow planting with trees, however, to reinforce existing gappy hedges.

### Sensitivity to Development (see Figure 8)

*Site 6A*: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Common place elements and combinations of features which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

*Site 6A*: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance to its setting but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.

- Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that visual intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

*Site 6A: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity* in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8).

*Site 6B: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity Moderate to Low* in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Some elements / features are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place. Few, if any, features / elements that could not be replaced.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Of little or no importance to the setting of the town as there is little or no distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

*Site 6B: Visual Sensitivity Low* in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Of little or no importance to the setting of the town such that development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation.
- Site is well screened from public or private views.
- Development would not be discernible or would enhance views or existing visual amenity.

*Site 6B: Overall Low Landscape Sensitivity* in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8). Although the site could fall within either the Moderate or the Low categories of overall landscape sensitivity, a judgement has been made to allocate the site, on balance, into the Low category to reflect its predominantly low landscape and settlement character and low visual sensitivity.

### **Landscape Value**

*Site 6A: Moderate Landscape Value* on balance because the site exhibits the following criteria from the high and low categories in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive;
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest;
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

*Site 6B: Moderate to Low Landscape Value* because the site exhibits the following criteria from the high and low categories in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive and has become degraded;
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest;
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).



### Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

*Site 6A:* Overall Low to Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium Capacity for Site 6A** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9). A medium to high capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated because development within Site 6A would continue recent expansion of the town to the south and west, with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern. Assuming hedgerow boundaries and trees remain, development would overall have a neutral effect on landscape character. New hedgerow planting with trees along the western boundary would mean development could be mitigated so that intrusion into the countryside is acceptable.

*Site 6B:* Overall Low Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to Low Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium to High Capacity for Site 6B** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9). A high capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated because although it is considered that development within *Site 6B* would continue ribbon development along Leicester Road, which is essentially urban in character, there would be some effect on settlement form and character because of the open playing fields to the east. However, the traditional rural character of the site has broken down and, assuming boundary vegetation would remain, development could have a positive effect on landscape character. It is understood that part of Site 6B was allocated for sport and recreation use in the Rutland Local Plan.

Development within *Site 6B* may put increased pressure for development on the adjoining playing fields to the east. However, with surrounding development on all sides this area would become an important open space and thus development should be resisted.

### Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
6A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium
6B	Moderate to Low	Low	Low	Moderate to Low	Medium to High

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## Site Assessment and Analysis - Uppingham

**Site Number: 7**

**Site Name: Northwest Uppingham between Leicester Road and the A47**

### Site Location

The site is located on the north-western edge of Uppingham, between Leicester Road and the A47 which bypasses the town to the north. Recent housing development lies adjacent to the site to the south and east, with a short section of the A6003 abutting the north-eastern corner. Allotment gardens, a pond amongst scrubland and gardens within detached properties on Leicester Road lie adjacent to the south-eastern corner. Shepherds Way within the housing development at Westlands lies adjacent to the south-western corner.

### Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 6 & 7)

Site 7 is a large site of varying landscape character. The majority of the site lies within the ridges and valleys landscape character area. Fields in predominantly arable production fall from between 150m – 155m at Leicester Road at first gently but then more steeply towards the roundabout junction of the A47 and A6003, to approximately 130m. A belt of semi-natural broadleaf woodland lies in a natural shallow valley at the trough of adjacent arable fields, on the banks of a minor stream that flows eastwards towards the roundabout and beyond. Wet grassland lines the stream side.



*View N from the north towards the northern edge of Uppingham, showing the ridge and valley landscape within Site 7*

Sheep and cattle-grazed semi-improved grassland falls gradually through the centre of the site from south to north, bounded by low managed species-rich hedges with trees. Dry ditches follow the hedge bottoms, and frequent scattered broadleaf trees are located towards the centre of the site.



*View O of the flatter grassland through the centre of the site, towards houses on the northern edge of the town*

The southern and western half of the site, alongside Leicester Road, is relatively flat and is more characteristic of the plateau landscape to the west. This southern area is divided up into a number of rectangular arable fields by several intact, managed hedgerows of varying height with semi-mature and mature hedgerow trees. A small triangular field in the extreme southern corner of the site is used as a pony / goat paddock.



*View P into the site off Leicester Road showing the plateau landscape*

Leicester Road is an uncharacteristically wide, long straight road, in stark contrast to the more typically narrow, winding roads found elsewhere around the town. It has a wide verge, footpath and street lighting on one side, and other urban features including road signage and kerbed accesses. Avenues of mature trees and housing on both sides of the road further strengthen the urban character of Leicester Road, of which the southern section of *Site 7* is a part.



*View Q of Leicester Road and the small triangular paddock within Site 7*

The site is of importance to the setting of the town because of its location adjacent to housing on high ground on the northern edge of Uppingham which is overlooked by the A47.

### **Settlement Form and Pattern**

Further expansion of the town westwards along Leicester Road would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern. Ribbon development of seven detached properties lies on the northern side of

Leicester Road opposite Site 6B. Further to the west on the northern side of Leicester Road, beyond the site, is a housing development at Westlands, including properties on Shepherds Way, which is isolated from the town by intervening arable fields. Development of the southern section of *Site 7* would continue ribbon development along Leicester Road which is essentially urban in character. It would complement the adjacent Site 6B on the south side of Leicester Road which is also assessed as having the capacity to accommodate housing development. Although it would close the gap between the town and Westlands, this break between built development is not considered important to the setting, appearance, form or character of the town.

Recent employment development has extended the town right up to the A47 / A6003 roundabout on the eastern side of the A6003, and it can be argued therefore that the A47 adjacent to the site provides a defensible boundary to development. Further extension of the town northwards would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern but would encroach into the more sensitive ridge and valley landscape. Houses and bungalows on Firs Avenue occupy higher ground than the site which falls southwards. It is noted that there is suitable access into the site to the north and west between the houses.



*View R across arable fields towards properties on high ground on Firs Avenue*

#### **Visual Considerations** (see Figure 7)

Views into the site from Leicester Road are limited by built form and vegetation, in particular the roadside hedge and trees, and those dividing the arable fields within the site. These filter views across the site towards the houses on the western edge of the town.

Views into the site from the north, east and west, in particular from the A47, are much more open, where the site is seen in the foreground falling down to the A47, with houses on Firs Avenue on the high ground beyond. There are extensive views out in the opposite direction from the edge of the housing, across the northern half of the site and beyond.

A public footpath passes through the centre of the site from Ayston in the north to Leicester Road in the south, alongside the semi-improved grassland fields.

#### **Scope for Mitigation**

Assuming most of the roadside boundary vegetation along Leicester Road would remain, mitigation planting in association with the southern half of the site is not considered necessary.

With regard to any development on the northern half of the site, given the topography of the site mitigation planting is not considered appropriate as it would be ineffective in providing a screen.

**Sensitivity to Development** (see Figure 8)

For the purpose of this assessment the site has been divided in two, *Site 7A* to the north and *Site 7B* to the south.

*Site 7A*: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

*Site 7A*: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Provides important views into and out of the town which could not be mitigated.
- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated.
- Site is very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

*Site 7A*: **Overall High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8).

*Site 7B*: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Common place elements and combinations of features some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements;
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive;
- Open space of little or no importance to the setting, appearance, form and character of the built environment;
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

*Site 7B*: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance to its setting;
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

*Site 7B*: **Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 8).

## Landscape Value

*Site 7A: Moderate to High* Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access and biodiversity interest.

*Site 7B: Moderate* Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive.
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest;
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access and biodiversity interest.

## Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

*Site 7A:* Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Low to Medium Capacity for Site 7A** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9). A low capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated because although development would intrude into the countryside and would overall have a negative effect on landscape character and settlement form and pattern, the barrier effect of the A47 somewhat reduces this intrusion and thus in time expansion of the town up to the trunk road may be more preferable than development on other sensitive areas elsewhere around the town. If this were to occur, the well wooded valley should remain as an area of important open space between development within *Site 7A* and *Site 7B*.

*Site 7B:* Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value gives an overall **Medium Capacity for Site 7B** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 9).

Development within Site 7B would continue recent expansion of the town to the north and west, with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern. It would continue development along Leicester Road which is essentially urban in character, linking the town to the Westlands area to the west. The small triangular field used as a pony / goat paddock could possibly remain undeveloped as an important open space and strategic green infrastructure link, as a continuation of the open natural corridor to the east.

The northern boundary to development should avoid the more sensitive well wooded valley landscape within Site 7A.

## Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
7A	High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium
7B	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

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## 6. Site Assessment & Analysis – Stamford

### 6.1 Local Landscape Character Context

6.1.1 Land in Rutland on the northern edge of Stamford lies within the 'Rutland Plateau' LCT. The LCA further sub-divided the Rutland Plateau into four landscape character sub-areas. Land in Rutland on the northern edge of Stamford falls within the southern part of the 'Clay Woodlands' sub-area. The following extracts from the LCA sets out an assessment of the 'Rutland Plateau' LCT:

'The Rutland Plateau is the area of generally higher land which occupies the north east part of the County, extending from the Welland Valley in the south, and abutting the High Rutland, Rutland Water Basin and Vale of Catmose landscapes to the west. The plateau extends into Lincolnshire and Leicestershire at the northern County boundary. The Plateau dips gently from its highest point (149m AOD) on the ridge above and to the east of the Vale of Catmose, eastward to the lower lying areas around the villages of Ryhall and Essendine, close to the Lincolnshire border, where spot heights close to Ryhall are only 17m AOD'.

'Whilst the higher parts are generally characteristic of a relatively high, open plateau, the area is cut by significant river valleys, notably those of the River Gwash and the North Brook, above Empingham. The heavier clay soils overlying the limestone in the north-east have led to the retention of large woodlands. The Gwash Valley separates the higher land above Ketton from the main Rutland Plateau to its north. These differences form the basis of the four sub-areas of the plateau'.

'The plateau includes "The Kesteven Uplands" and part of the "Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds" regional landscape character types in the Countryside Agency's Map of England; and the western part of the "Leicestershire and Rutland Limestone" Natural Area of English Nature. The geology is predominantly Jurassic Limestone with parts overlain by a drift of glacial till and clays. The limestone has been worked for many years as a building stone, in cement manufacture and for general limestone uses. Consequently, several parts have been disturbed by old workings and are in differing stages of restoration eg east of Exton and Greetham villages'.

'The limestone geology strongly influences the landscape character, through its distinctive landforms (the plateau, scarp and dip slopes, shallow but quite narrow and steep-sided stream valleys), characteristic building materials, typical limestone ecology of semi-natural, species-rich calcareous grasslands and verges and the frequent occurrence of limestone dust on fields, verges and roads'.

'The plateau landscape is dissected north to south-east by the A1 trunk road, which through Rutland follows the line of the original Roman 'Ermine Street'. This intrusion on the character of the area varies in significance and intensity along the road, with some localities markedly affected by the road infrastructure itself and the noise and movement of traffic'.

'Whilst there are significant variations in the local character of the plateau landscape character type, it is generally distinguishable by its predominantly arable farming land use. Within the broad, geometric network of large, regular fields, enclosed by thorn hedges, is a well-treed and wooded landscape, interspersed with pasture, particularly close to the

plateau settlements and within the river valleys of the Gwash and North Brook. The tree cover frequently restricts and encloses vistas out from, and into, the plateau’.

‘Over many parts of the Rutland Plateau the intensification of arable farming has led to the loss or decline of drystone walls and hedgerows emphasising the open, windswept, exposed nature of the elevated plateau. Similarly, the loss of landscape features and the generally level or slightly rolling or dipping landform has resulted in a number of farmsteads becoming more exposed and prominent within the arable landscape, often appearing to be 'perched' on the landscape rather than integrated with it’.

6.1.2 The following extracts from the LCA sets out a more local assessment of the ‘Clay Woodlands’ landscape character sub-area:

‘The Clay Woodlands is an extensive area of gently undulating, predominantly arable countryside in the County east of the North Brook. The key characteristics of this landscape sub-area are the medium to large scale mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodlands within large farming estates such as Holywell, Clipsham, Empingham and Tickencote. These woodlands, predominantly ash and sycamore with oak and blackthorn, are conspicuous features in most views within or into this area. Close to, they enclose views whilst providing an extensive backdrop in most distant views across well maintained farmland’.

‘Woodlands are less extensive around the Gwash Valley, where trees are in small copses and where close trimmed hedges alongside large arable fields give a more open feeling to the landscape. This is particularly so in the extreme eastern corner of the County, between Ryhall and Essendine, where the railway line and its tall gantries, high voltage power cables and pylons, and modern housing are intrusive’.

‘The central area of the clay woodlands is a transitional area between the settled estate woodlands to the north and west, and the more open, modern unsettled claylands to the east and south’.

‘Remnant dry stone walls made of local limestone are characteristic features in some parts of the clay woodlands, probably originating from one of the many small quarries around Clipsham’.

6.1.3 The LCA goes on to recommend landscape objectives for ‘Rutland Plateau – Clay Woodlands’ as:

**Recommended Landscape Objectives Rutland Plateau - Clay Woodlands:**

To conserve and enhance the large-scale, gently undulating, agricultural landscapes with substantial woodlands and avenues, to enhance the sustainable management of existing woodlands and to create new woodlands in the less wooded parts around the Gwash Valley, especially where they would create skyline features. To improve the edges of the settlements and integrate large structures and modern buildings into the landscape where necessary. To protect historic features such as earthworks and restore characteristic drystone walls.

### Site-specific Assessment of Land in Rutland on the Northern Edge of Stamford

- 6.1.4 In line with the proposed project method, a more finely grained assessment of the potential development site on land in Rutland on the northern edge of Stamford has been undertaken, to ascertain whether localised landscape character shows any variation from the generic description of the wider sub-area. The local landscape character setting of land in Rutland on the edge of Stamford is shown in Figure 10.
- 6.1.5 The site is located adjacent to the northern built-up edge of Stamford, immediately north of the Old Great North Road and west of Little Casterton Road. It comprises relatively flat agricultural land, lying at between 55m-60m in the north and east, gently rising southwards to approximately 67m-68m along the southern boundary with the Old Great North Road and the western site boundary. The southern half of the eastern area of the site comprises former brick workings from the Williamson Cliff Brick Works, now demolished.
- 6.1.6 The development of Stamford has taken place to the north and west of the historic core of the town, mainly due to the River Welland restricting growth southwards. The old town of Stamford, including the numerous distinctive 18th and 19th century buildings, many of which are listed as of architectural and historic interest, and its intricate street pattern with narrow lanes and often steep gradients, lies immediately to the north of the River Welland on land rising from around 24m AOD where the A16(T) bridges over the river, to approximately 45m AOD at the northern limit of the Conservation Area.
- 6.1.7 Just as the valley of the River Welland has largely restricted growth of the town southwards, so too the River Gwash valley and now dismantled railway have prevented development further eastwards. To the west development has occurred along the arterial roads radiating out from the town centre towards the A1(T), including Tinwell Road, Empingham Road and the Old Great North Road. Housing development has occurred between Empingham Road and the Old Great North Road, on land rising to 70m AOD, either side of Arran Road which links the two and joins the Old Great North Road at the western-most limit of the development site. More recent housing has been built further west between the Old Great North Road and the A1(T), on land falling westwards from 70m to 60m AOD (housing estate including Primrose Way and cul-de-sacs off it).
- 6.1.8 The northern-most development of Stamford has occurred with housing on the eastern side of Little Casterton Road, on land between 60m and 64m AOD. Open fields between the houses and the Rutland / South Kesteven boundary were locally designated within the South Kesteven Local Plan as a Prominent Area for Special Protection and an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) (as an extension of the AGLV designated in the Lincolnshire Structure Plan associated with the rolling limestone uplands between Grantham, Stamford and Bourne). Further north the open fields fall more steeply to the north and east towards the River Gwash at approximately 25m.
- 6.1.9 The former brick works on land immediately south of the development site is now a housing development site in construction, known as Welland Park (including Mason Drive and Banks Crescent). This will extend right up to the county/district boundary. Housing is also being constructed on other land north of Belvoir Close, within Casterton Heights, which will take development across the boundary into Rutland on land between 60m and 66m AOD.
- 6.1.10 Thus housing abuts the site to the east and south. To the west a BP petrol filling station and car sales site lie on a localised ridge at around 67m. Open arable fields fall westwards

relatively steeply towards Toll Bar and Great Casterton within the River Gwash valley, lying at around 40m.

- 6.1.11 The western half of the development site is bounded to the north by Quarry Farm Wood, at between 65m-72m AOD. The wood is important in landscape and visual terms in defining the character of the site and its landscape setting. Land to the south of the woodland, within the development site, lies immediately adjacent to the Old Great North Road and the built up area of Stamford. It is well enclosed and visually self-contained by surrounding built development to the south, east and west, and by the woodland and other mature vegetation to the north and east. Other than the Quarry Farm Wood itself, there are no distinctive landscape elements / features typical of the Clay Woodlands, resulting in an indistinct character which is derived predominantly from its urban-edge location. A mobile phone mast is a distinctive feature in the gap between Quarry Farm Wood and other dense vegetation to the southeast.
- 6.1.12 By way of contrast, land to the north and east of the Quarry Farm Wood is more exposed and falls much more steeply than that to the south of the woodland, generally towards the River Gwash, to between 35m and 40m AOD beyond the road running from Toll Bar to Little Casterton to the north-west, and to between 25m and 30m AOD beyond Little Casterton Road and Ryhall Road to the east. This area, comprising regularly shaped, medium sized arable fields with well maintained hedgerow boundaries, is open and undulating, undeveloped and unspoilt. Distinctive typical elements / features of the Clay Woodlands are present, which make a positive contribution to the character of the landscape and sense of place. The river valley between Great Casterton, Toll Bar and Ryhall was locally designated as an Area of Local Landscape Value (ALLV) in the Rutland Local Plan.
- 6.1.13 The area of most recent clay workings lies adjacent to the woodland. Although there are extensive undulating and well-wooded areas further north, with often wide panoramic views from high ground over villages, hamlets and small farmsteads, the topography and woodlands limit the extent of views to relatively narrow sections of the landscape. Quarry Farm Wood, being relatively large and on high ground, is a dominant landscape feature in most views from surrounding areas, including public footpaths, minor roads and the A1(T). Much of the land which falls northwards from the woodland towards Great Casterton, Little Casterton and Little Casterton Road is screened from long distance views, but is clearly visible from close too, and is an important element of the overall character of the area and of the setting of the northern extent of Stamford.

## **6.2 Site Assessment & Analysis of Specified Site in Stamford**

- 6.2.1 The following sheet records the assessment and analysis of the one specified site in Stamford. The site has been divided into two, Site A and Site B, for ease of description and assessment.

Rutland County Council  
Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study

## **Site Assessment and Analysis - Stamford**

### **Site Number: A & B**

### **Site Name: Land in Rutland on the edge of Stamford**

#### **Site Location**

The site is located adjacent to the north-western built-up edge of Stamford, immediately north of the Old Great North Road and west of Little Casterton Road. Along the western site boundary is a BP filling station, car sales area and former caravan / camping site with an open field beyond falling to Toll Bar, Great Casterton and the River Gwash.

#### **Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity** (see Figure 10)

The site comprises relatively flat agricultural land, lying at between 55m-60m in the north and east, gently rising southwards to approximately 67m-68m along the southern boundary with the Old Great North Road and the western site boundary. Quarry Farm Wood lies immediately to the north of the western half of the site. The area immediately south of the eastern area of the site is being developed for housing as part of the Welland Park development (including Mason Drive and Banks Crescent), formerly the Williamson Cliff Brick Works.

For the purposes of this assessment the site has been split into two; Site A is the western half and Site B the eastern half.

#### *Site A*



View A from the western site boundary

Site A has an indistinctive urban edge character, derived more from its setting on the built up edge of Stamford than by its location on the edge of the 'Rutland Plateau – Clay Woodlands' landscape character sub-area. There are a number of key features which combine to provide this local peri-urban characterisation: adjacent housing on high ground, including that being constructed within the Casterton Heights development off Belvoir Close to the east; the old Great North Road immediately to the south, including street lighting, footway, large direction signs and 40mph speed limit; and the BP filling station, car sales area and former caravan / camping site immediately to the west.

The site is relatively well enclosed and self contained due to the screening effect of surrounding vegetation. Quarry Farm Wood immediately to the north largely screens the site from the countryside beyond. The wood is important in landscape and visual terms in defining the character

of the site and its landscape setting. A dense copse forms a natural barrier between Site A and Site B to the east. Another dense copse lies between the site and Belvoir Close. A dense tall hedge lies alongside the site and the Old Great North Road, mirroring the belt of tall vegetation which screens much of the housing within the estate to the south of the road. Finally a line of tall trees including conifers, poplar, alder and birch lie on a ridge of high ground along the western site boundary between the site and a former caravan / camping site.

Other than the Quarry Farm Wood itself, there are no distinctive landscape elements / features typical of the Clay Woodlands, resulting in an indistinct character which is derived predominantly from its urban-edge location.

The site is privately owned but there is permissive access which allows people to walk around its perimeter. This extends through to the adjoining Site B to Little Casterton Road to the east, and is particularly popular with local dog walkers.

### *Site B*



View B from Little Casterton Road

Site B is immediately adjacent to the Welland Park housing development under construction on higher ground to the south. Its northern boundary is open, whilst a tall hedge runs alongside its eastern boundary with Little Casterton Road, and a dense copse forms a natural barrier between the site and Site A to the west.

The site includes features such as tracks and spoil heaps which are remnants from its previous land use as part of the brick works. It has an unsettled character due to its location on the edge of the built up area and close to on-going construction. For example, there is evidence of fly tipping close to Little Casterton Road. A phone mast is located just beyond the site close to Quarry Farm Wood and provides a man-made feature on the edge of the undulating countryside.

The character of Site B is generally unremarkable, being derived more from its setting on the built up edge of Stamford than by its location on the edge of the 'Rutland Plateau – Clay Woodlands' landscape character sub-area. Being more open to the north than Site A, it does exhibit some sense of place although its relatively flat topography contrasts with the more undulating countryside which falls steeply to the River Gwash valley to the north and east. This area, comprising regularly shaped, medium sized arable fields with well maintained hedgerow boundaries, is open and undulating, undeveloped and unspoilt. Distinctive typical elements / features of the Clay Woodlands are present, which make a positive contribution to the character of the landscape. By way of contrast *Site B* forms a much more indistinct break between town and country.

### Settlement Form and Pattern

The development of Stamford has taken place to the north and west of the historic core of the town, and this is continuing with the housing developments under construction adjacent to *Site A* and *Site B*. Development of these sites would be a continuation of this pattern although development along the northern boundary would be an extension beyond the current limit to development within South Kesteven.

Surrounding development is modern but does not detract from important aspects of the historic settlement form and pattern.

### Visual Considerations (see Figure 11)

Views from the A1:

Views from the A1 are distant, with Quarry Farm Wood and new housing between the Old Great North Road and the A1 being the most obvious features. The new housing is stark and both breaks the skyline and extends down the west-facing slope, with no apparent screening. Built development appears to continue unbroken alongside the B1081 Old Great North Road from Great Casterton, through Toll Bar and up to the petrol filling station on the ridge of high ground in front of land at Quarry Farm. The open space between Great Casterton and Toll Bar is barely visible from the A1 as it is low lying and is screened by surrounding development.

Views from Toll Bar and the Toll Bar to Little Casterton road:

Views from properties in Toll Bar are limited to views from the first floor windows of 3 or 4 houses and from a length of approximately 500 metres along the road, looking up to *Site A*. Quarry Farm Wood is the most obvious feature, on high ground, with sloping arable fields falling to the north and west. Close to the woodland, trees and hedges along the ridge of high ground along the western site boundary break the skyline in some views whilst in others the roof lines of houses on high ground to the south of the Old Great North Road are visible above it. The gap between Quarry Farm Wood and tall poplar trees along the western site boundary is identified as the most open area of land within the site, and thus can be considered as more sensitive to development. The rest of *Site A* is less sensitive due to the housing on the edge of Stamford beyond and the buildings and vegetation in front. Furthermore, despite this housing giving the appearance that it is located within the site, the open fields between it and Toll Bar are important in visually separating the two settlements.

Development within *Site B* is likely to be screened by Quarry Farm Wood and other mature vegetation in views from properties on the eastern edge of Toll Bar. From further beyond the Toll Bar to Little Casterton road there may be some views of development within *Site B* to the east of Quarry Farm Wood from some locations along the road where the undulating topography allows. Where there are views, development would be seen against a backdrop of existing houses at a distance of approximately 1.2km. However it is likely that the ridge of high ground to the north of Quarry Farm Wood would screen probably all but the highest roof lines.

Views from Ryhall Road:

Between half a dozen and a dozen properties in Great Casterton have views across open fields and up to the development site, mostly from first floor windows. The most open views are from Ryhall Road opposite the Community College. Views are similar to those described from the Toll Bar to Little Casterton Road above, but are at a greater distance of over 1km (*Site A*) and almost 2km (*Site B*). Here the open fields can be clearly seen to separate firstly Great Casterton and Toll Bar, and secondly Toll Bar and houses on the edge of Stamford. Development of land on *Site A*, even if

noticeable, would not compromise the separate identities of Stamford, Toll Bar and Great Casterton. It is the open fields on falling ground in front of (to the north-west of) the proposed development site that are important in separating built development. The fields in the foreground, between Great Casterton and Toll Bar, are those previously designated as ALLV in the Rutland Local Plan, and both these fields and those between Toll Bar and Quarry Farm exhibit similar characteristics to those landscapes further north, east and west previously designated as AGLV by South Kesteven District Council.

Development within *Site B* is likely to be screened by Quarry Farm Wood and other mature vegetation in views from properties on the eastern edge of Great Casterton. From further beyond Ryhall Road there may be some views of development within *Site B* to the east of Quarry Farm Wood from some locations along the road where the undulating topography allows. Where there are views, development would be seen against a backdrop of existing houses at a distance of approximately 2km. However it is likely that the ridge of high ground to the north of Quarry Farm Wood would screen probably all but the highest roof lines.

Views from Little Casterton Road:

Little Casterton Road is a relatively narrow, winding road with predominantly well maintained hedgerows on both sides, limiting views from the road. Where there are glimpses beyond the hedgerows towards the edge of Stamford, housing can be clearly seen on high ground to the south of the Old Great North Road through a narrow gap between Quarry Farm Wood and the mature copse separating *Site A & B*. Development within *Site A* would only be visible through this narrow gap, including views from Northfields Farm.

Development of *Site B* would be more prominent, although it would be seen from the road and Northfields Farm against a backdrop of housing on higher ground, including new houses under construction on the former brick works.

Views from the Old Great North Road adjacent to the site:

A solid hedgerow along the boundary of the site and the Old Great North Road screens most views from travellers using the road and from pedestrians walking alongside it. Views are more open across the site from the gateway opposite Arran Road. Mature vegetation on the embankment also screens most direct views from houses on the south side of the Old Great North Road, which are predominantly aligned in an east-west direction and thus not directly over the site.

The most direct and closest views are from three houses on Arran Road close to the junction with the Old Great North Road. The main road and side roads are relatively busy and are currently lit. Development of *Site A* would be noticeable in views from some properties on the south side of the Old Great North Road and by the travelling public using the road and adjacent footpath, but would be appropriate on what is essentially an enclosed, well contained urban edge site. It is considered that development of *Site A* would not lead to unacceptable intrusion into the countryside. Quarry Farm Wood would prevent any further urban sprawl into the countryside further north.

Development of *Site B* would be largely screened from the Old Great North Road by existing housing, housing under construction, and mature vegetation between *Site A & B*.

#### **Scope for Mitigation** (see Figure 13)

The gap between Quarry Farm Wood and the petrol filling station / car sales site would need to be handled sensitively, but a well designed development, sensitive to the location, could provide an



attractive entrance to Stamford from the west. This could be achieved by incorporating a sensitively designed landscape scheme alongside the ridge line.

Development could be set back off the Old Great North Road into *Site A*, leaving space for a belt of planting / mounding along the road side to mirror that on the south side of the road. This would help reduce the impact of any new development and retain the well vegetated character along this section of the road, as a transition between the town and countryside to the west.

Views into *Site B* from the north are limited, and no mitigation planting along the northern boundary is considered necessary other than hedgerow planting in keeping with the character of the landscape. This would mirror the built up edge within South Kesteven district to the east of Little Casterton Road, which is relatively exposed.

### **Sensitivity to Development**

*Site A*: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Common place elements and combinations of features which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Part of a larger area of intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.
- Open space of little or no importance to the setting, appearance, form and character of the built environment.
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

*Site A*: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance to its setting but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that visual intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

**Site A: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 12).

*Site B*: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4:

- Common place elements and combination of features which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Part of a larger area of intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

*Site B:* Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance to its setting but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that visual intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable.
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

*Site B:* **Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 (see Figure 12).

### **Landscape Value**

*Site A:* **Low to Moderate** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

*Site B:* **Low to Moderate** Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7:

- Lies adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

### **Conclusions on Landscape Capacity**

*Site A:* Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium to High Capacity for Site A** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 13). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect the well enclosed nature and indistinct urban edge character of the site, and in comparison with Site B (see below).

Residential development or retail such as an edge of town superstore or similar are considered appropriate on Site A. Development should be set back into the site avoiding the more sensitive western ridge, where mitigation planting would be appropriate. A dense belt of planting along the frontage with the Old Great North Road would mirror that on the south side of the road and provide a transition between town and country as well as a softened approach into Stamford from the west.

*Site B:* Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value, the same as Site A. However, a judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium Capacity for Site B** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 (see Figure 13). A medium to high capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated in comparison with Site A which is considered to have a greater capacity to accommodate development. This also reflects the slightly higher landscape and settlement character sensitivity of Site B compared with Site A.

Modern housing development is considered appropriate within Site B, which would be in keeping with existing and future housing under construction on higher ground immediately to the east and south. No specific mitigation is considered necessary other than hedgerow planting on the northern

site boundary in keeping with the character of the landscape.

**Summary Table**

<b>Site No.</b>	<b>Landscape &amp; Settlement Character Sensitivity</b>	<b>Visual Sensitivity</b>	<b>Overall Landscape Sensitivity</b>	<b>Landscape Value</b>	<b>Overall Landscape Capacity</b>
<b>A</b>	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
<b>B</b>	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium

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## 7 Recommendations for Priority Sites

- 7.1 In accordance with the project brief, recommendations are given in the tables below to prioritise sites and to help guide the direction of the future growth of Oakham and Uppingham. Where sites have been assessed as having the same overall capacity to accommodate development, a judgement is made on the order that these sites could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms.
- 7.2 The key factors from the assessment influencing the recommended order of priority of site development are summarised after the tables. It is stressed that prioritisation is not an exact science and there may be little to choose between some sites in terms of landscape sensitivity and capacity.
- 7.3 Sites marked in the tables with X are considered to be highly sensitive with low or low to medium capacity to accommodate development. They are not prioritised for development therefore.
- 7.4 It is stressed that a range of other environmental considerations will need to be taken into account, such as ecology and nature conservation, heritage and archaeology, water quality and flooding potential, etc. by others to determine the potential wider environmental and cumulative impacts of development on a particular site. Other site considerations, including access and drainage issues for example, will also need to be considered by decision makers but which do not form part of this assessment.

### Priority Sites in Oakham

**Table 9: Priority of Specified Sites in Oakham**

Priority	Site No.	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Capacity
1=	6A	Low	Medium to High
1=	5B	Moderate	Medium to High
2	6C	Moderate	Medium to High
3=	2A	Moderate	Medium to High
3=	3A	Moderate	Medium to High
4	9A South	Moderate	Medium to High
5=	2D	Moderate	Medium
5=	9B	Moderate	Medium
6	9A North	High	Medium
X	2B	High	Low
X	2C	High	Low to Medium
X	3B	High	Low to Medium
X	4A	High	Low
X	4B	High	Low
X	5A	High	Low
X	7A	High	Low to Medium
X	7B	High	Low to Medium
X	8	High	Low

7.5 The key factors influencing the priority of sites in Oakham are as follows:

Site 6A

- Expansion north-westwards along Main Road would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern, well associated with the town;
- Amenity open space dominated by the Showground with surrounding built development of indistinct, largely urban character;
- Few, if any, landscape features / elements that could not be replaced;
- Relatively well screened. Development would not be visually intrusive;
- Scope for appropriate mitigation planting.

Site 5B

- Development along Main Road would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern, well associated with the town as essentially infill development;
- Open space with surrounding built development with generally unremarkable urban character;
- Development would be visually perceptible but would not cause significant visual impact;
- Scope for appropriate mitigation planting;
- Any new development should be sensitively designed, possibly within a 'village green' setting and retention of mature boundary trees.

Site 6C

- Expansion north-westwards would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern – it would be a continuation of built development from the Barleythorpe Stud development up to the bypass which presents a physical and perceptual boundary to the town;
- Lies within the North West Oakham Vale LCT but where landscape features and elements are degraded, uncharacteristic and not typical or distinctive, due largely to the Hawksmead Park proposals;
- Development would be visually perceptible but would not cause significant visual impact;
- Scope for appropriate mitigation planting to enhance existing vegetation including landscaping along the bypass corridor.

Site 2A

- Expansion eastwards along Stamford Road would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern, well associated with the town;
- Adjoins existing built development to the north and west, and the bypass to the east which presents a physical and perceptual boundary to the town;
- Well screened from Catmose Park Conservation Area;
- High quality residential development in the western half of the site would be appropriate, up to existing eastern limits defined by recent development north of Stamford Road, thus retaining some open space up to the bypass.

Site 3A

- Extension south-westwards along Brooke Road would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern, adjoining recent built development to the west and thus well associated with the town;
- The railway presents a physical boundary to development to the east;
- Despite lying within the APAC the site has unremarkable landscape character with few, if any, landscape features / elements that could not be replaced;

- Views into and out of the site are of some importance but mitigation planting would help integrate the site into its landscape setting within the Eggleton Plain LCT.

#### Site 9A South

- Despite lying north of the bypass which generally presents a physical and perceptual boundary to the town, other significant built development beyond the bypass introduce an urban character to the vicinity with which further development would have some association;
- Well screened. Development would be visually perceptible but would not cause significant visual impact;
- Landscape features and elements are common place creating generally unremarkable landscape character;
- Low landscape value.

#### Site 2D

- Some extension southwards along Uppingham Road, in the northern half of the site, would be relatively well associated with the town despite lying beyond existing southern limits defined by built development and mature vegetation;
- The railway presents a physical boundary to development to the west;
- Lies within the APAC but the site has typical, unremarkable landscape character with few, if any, landscape features / elements that could not be replaced;
- Views into and out of the site are of some importance but structural mitigation planting separating the northern and southern halves of the site would help integrate the northern half into its landscape setting on the southern approach to the town.

#### Site 9B

- Generally well screened to the north and east where Dog Kennel Spinney forms a natural boundary;
- Lies beyond the bypass which presents a physical and perceptual boundary to the town, but mitigation would reduce intrusion in to the countryside;
- Burley Road to the north is semi-urban in character.

#### Site 9A North

- Despite lying north of the bypass which generally presents a physical and perceptual boundary to the town, other significant built development beyond the bypass introduce an urban character to the vicinity with which further development would have some association, albeit more isolated than Site 9A South;
- Well screened. Development would be visually perceptible but would not cause significant visual impact;
- Landscape features and elements are common place creating generally unremarkable landscape character;
- Low landscape value.

### Priority Sites in Uppingham

**Table 10: Priority of Specified Sites in Uppingham**

Priority	Site No.	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Capacity
1=	6B	Low	Medium to High
1=	2A	Moderate	Medium to High
2	7B	Moderate	Medium
3=	5A North	Moderate	Medium
3=	6A	Moderate	Medium
4	3	Moderate	Medium
X	2B	High	Low to Medium
X	4	High	Low to Medium
X	5A South	High	Low to Medium
X	7A	High	Low to Medium
X	5B	High	Low

7.6 The key factors influencing the priority of sites in Uppingham are as follows:

#### Site 6B

- Expansion westwards along Leicester Road, where character is predominantly urban, would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern;
- Of little importance to setting of the town;
- Avoids the more sensitive Uppingham Ridges and Valleys LCT;
- An abandoned area of largely unmanaged scrub with indistinct landscape character where development could have a positive effect;
- Well screened thus low visual sensitivity;
- Scope for appropriate mitigation planting.

#### Site 2A

- Expansion north-eastwards adjacent to recent housing development at The Beeches would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern, well associated with the town;
- Lies within the Uppingham Ridges and Valleys LCT but where landscape features and elements are uncharacteristic and not typical or distinctive;
- Views of some importance but scope for mitigating potential visual impacts;
- Southern half of site adjacent to The Beeches should be developed first. Development of the northern half of the site would be more in keeping with settlement form and pattern if the employment allocation on land to the west, south of A47, is developed before it.

#### Site 7B

- Expansion westwards along Leicester Road, where character is predominantly urban, would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern, well associated with the town;
- Lies partially within the Uppingham Plateau and Uppingham Ridges and Valleys LCTs but is more characteristic of the former than the latter, with unremarkable landscape character;
- Residential development on Firs Avenue is on high ground. Further development northwards would be lower and although visually perceptible would not create



significant visual impact;

- Small triangular paddock off Leicester Road could remain undeveloped as open space and strategic green infrastructure link.

#### Site 5A North

- Expansion westwards along Stockerston Road and southwards along Newton Road adjacent to Stockerston Crescent would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern, well associated with the town;
- Somewhat insensitive modern housing design within Stockerston Crescent could be improved by more sensitive development on Site 5A North;
- Lies partially within the Uppingham Plateau and Uppingham Ridges and Valleys LCTs but is more characteristic of the former than the latter, with unremarkable landscape character;
- Generally moderate rather than low landscape and settlement character, visual sensitivity and landscape value give a slightly lower capacity for development than the other sites given greater priority;
- Scope for appropriate mitigation planting.

#### Site 6A

- Expansion westwards along Stockerston Road adjacent to Bayley Close would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern, well associated with the town;
- Somewhat insensitive modern housing design within Bayley Close could be improved by more sensitive development on Site 6A;
- Avoids the more sensitive Uppingham Ridges and Valleys LCT;
- Of higher landscape value than Site 5A North but lower landscape value than Site 3;
- Scope for appropriate mitigation planting.

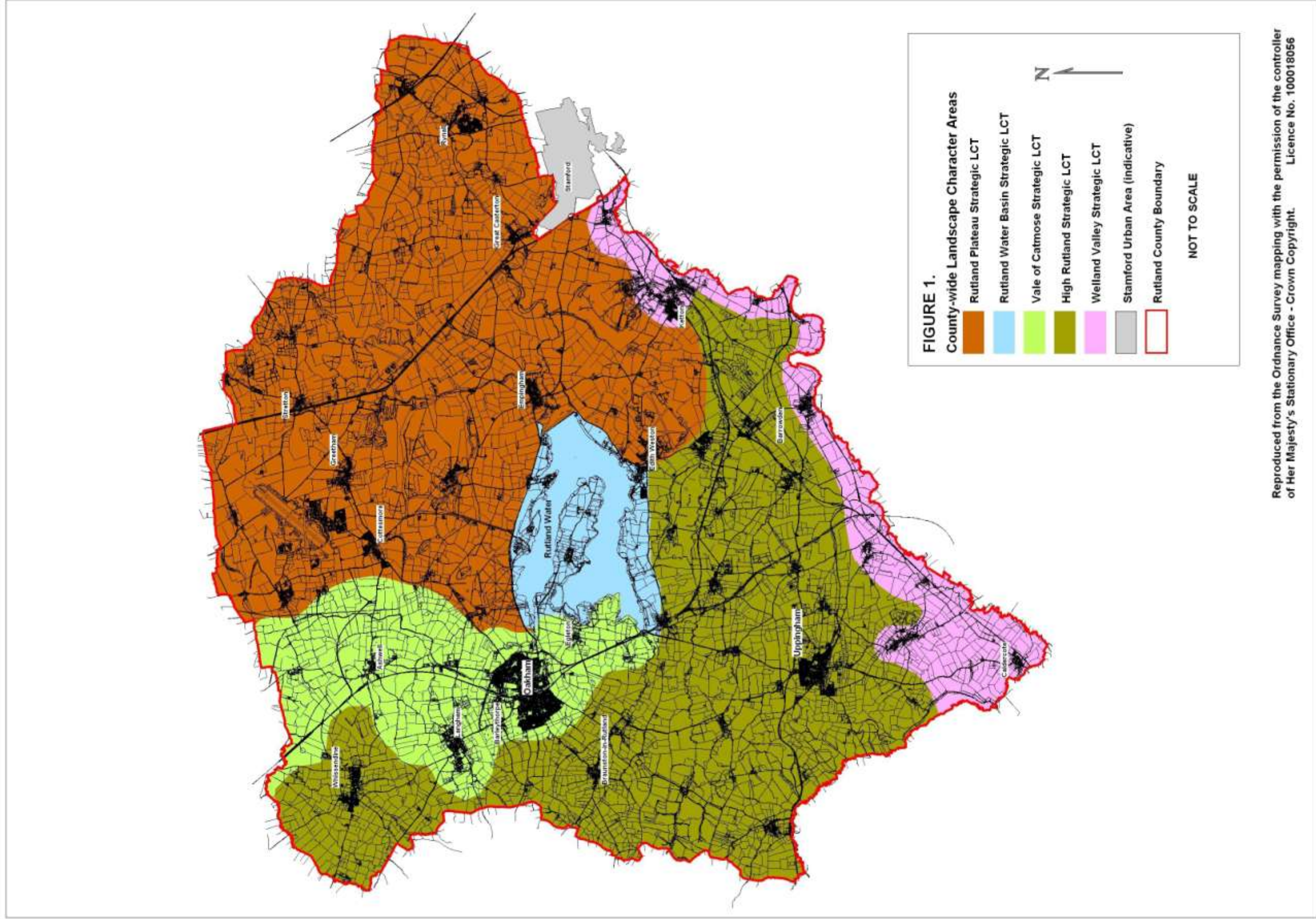
#### Site 3

- Well enclosed, visually screened site which reduces overall landscape sensitivity to Moderate from otherwise High;
- Adjacent residential development under construction on the south-eastern part of the site has reduced sensitivity and increased overall capacity to accommodate further residential development as an extension to settlement form and pattern eastwards along Seaton Road;
- Distinctive characteristic open space providing playing fields for Uppingham School which are likely to need replacing elsewhere if site is developed. Features such as the thatch-roofed cricket pavilion would be difficult to replace;
- High quality, low density housing retaining high proportion of open space and retention of mature trees would be appropriate.

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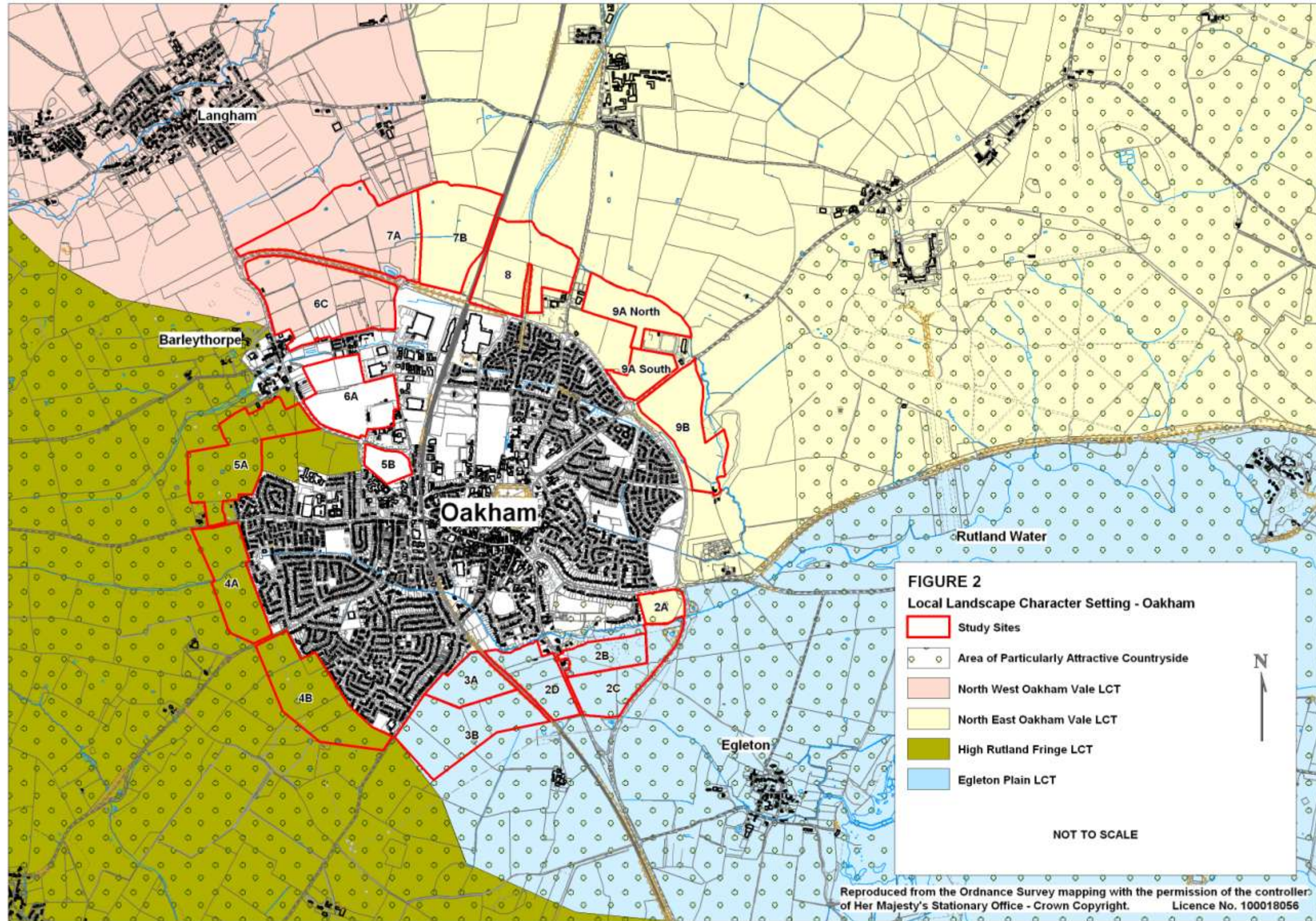
## FIGURES

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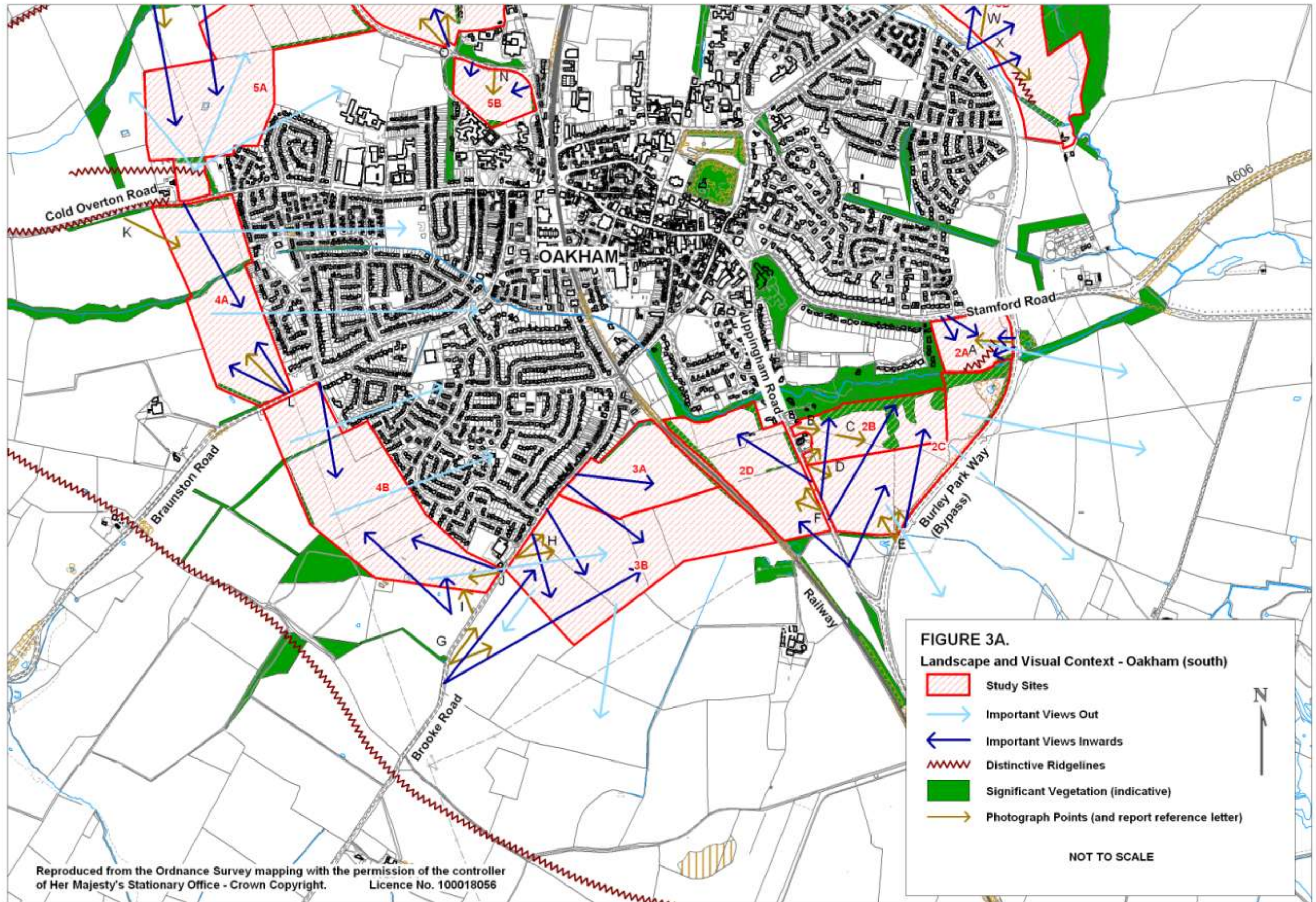
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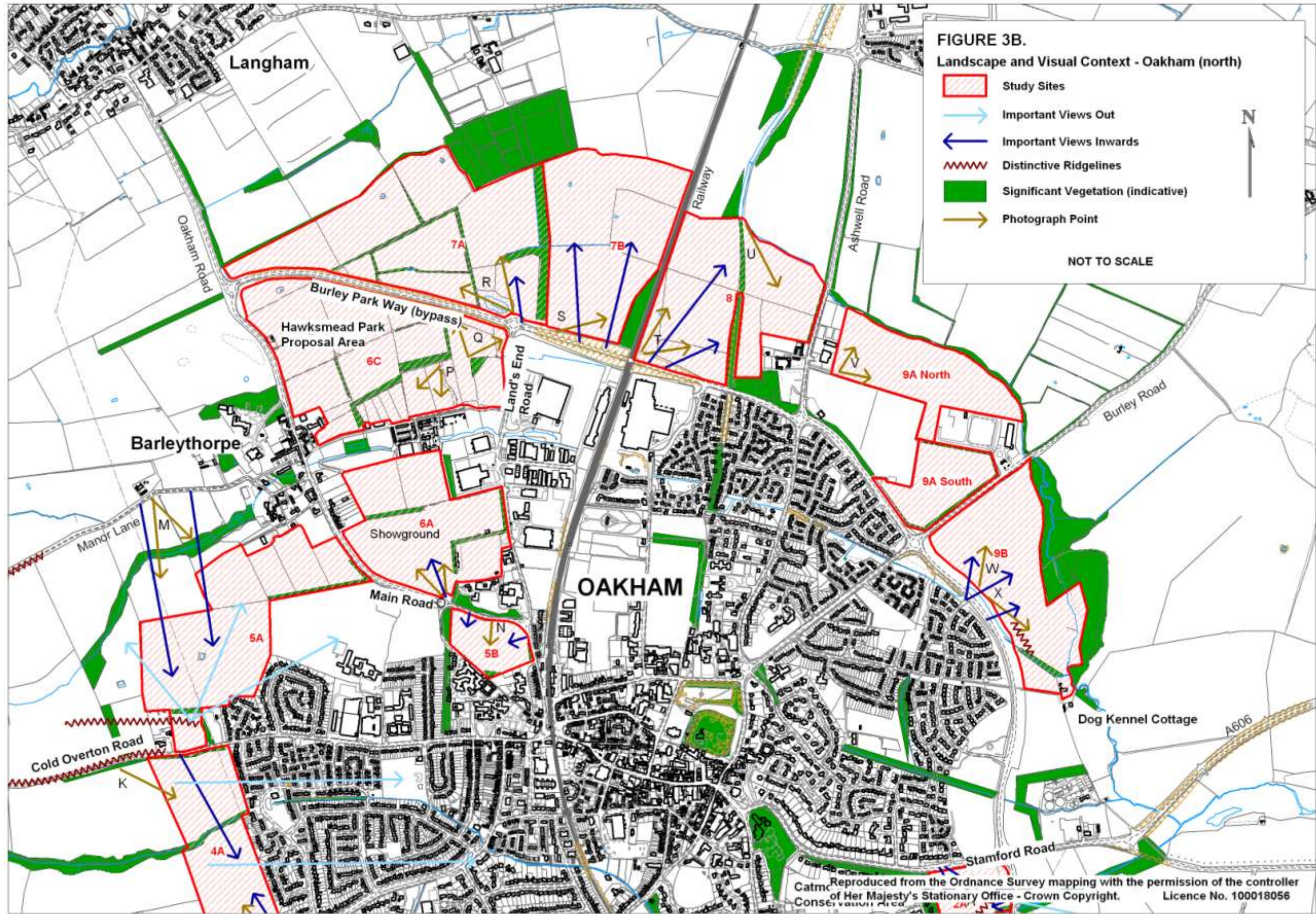


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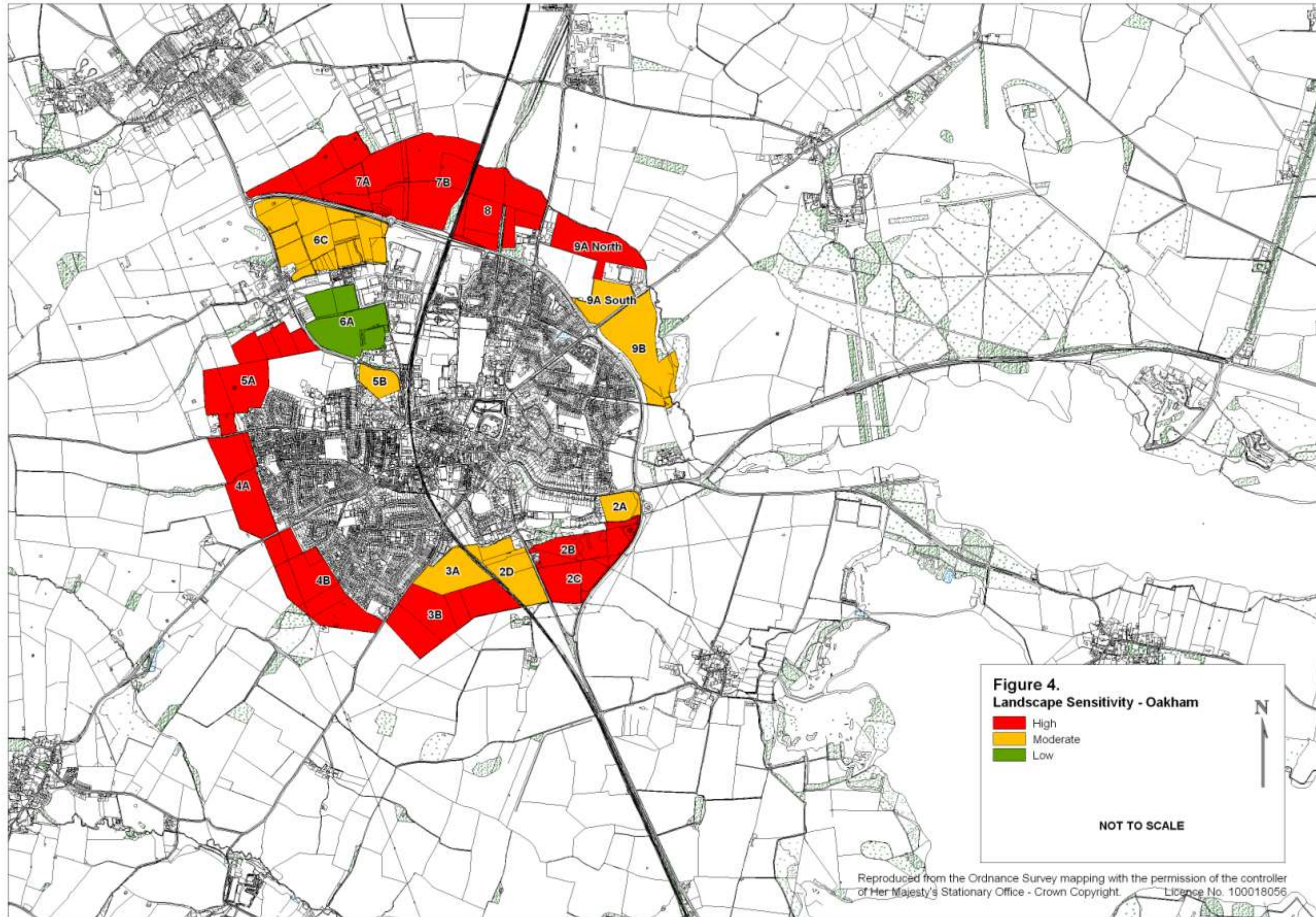




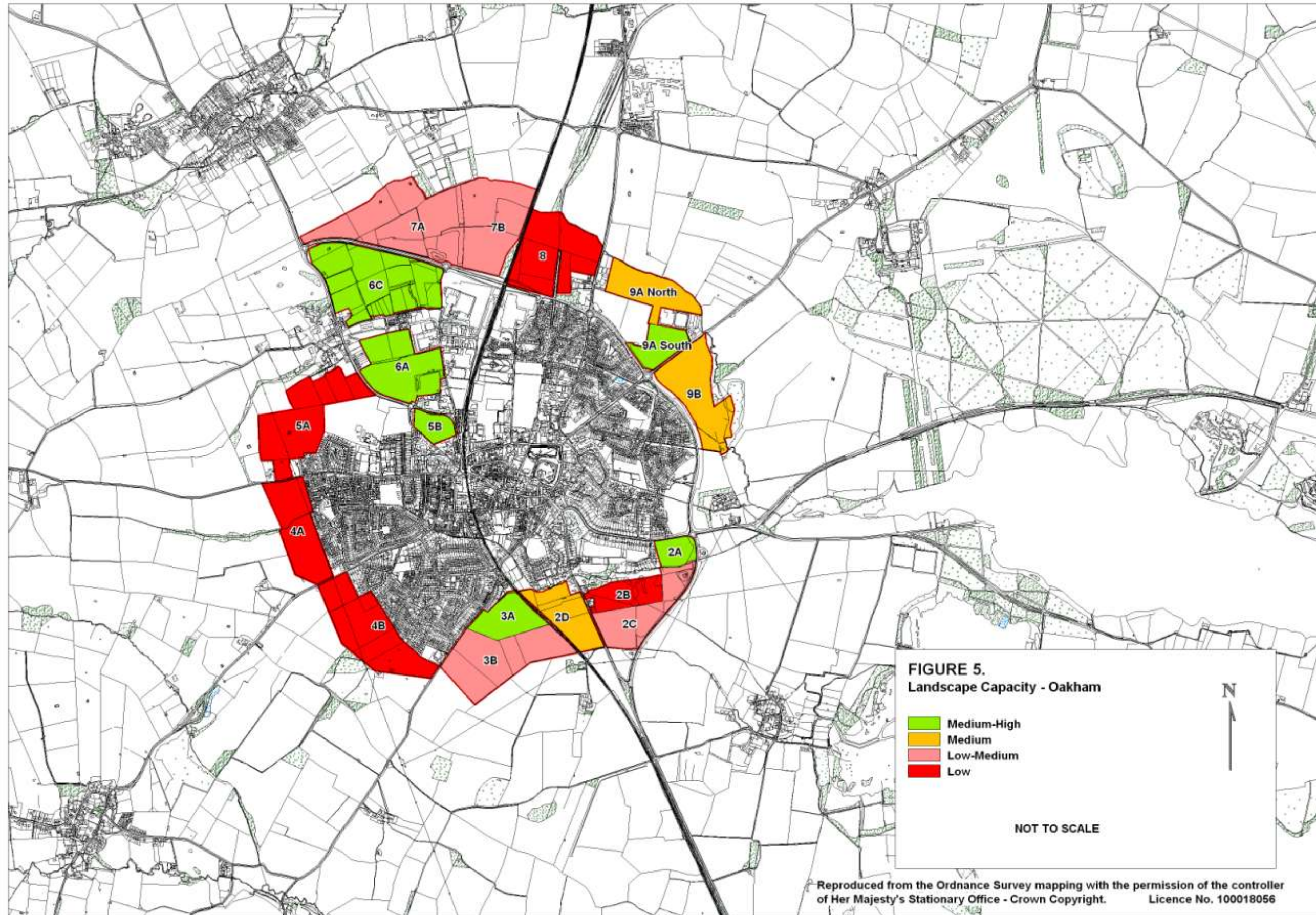
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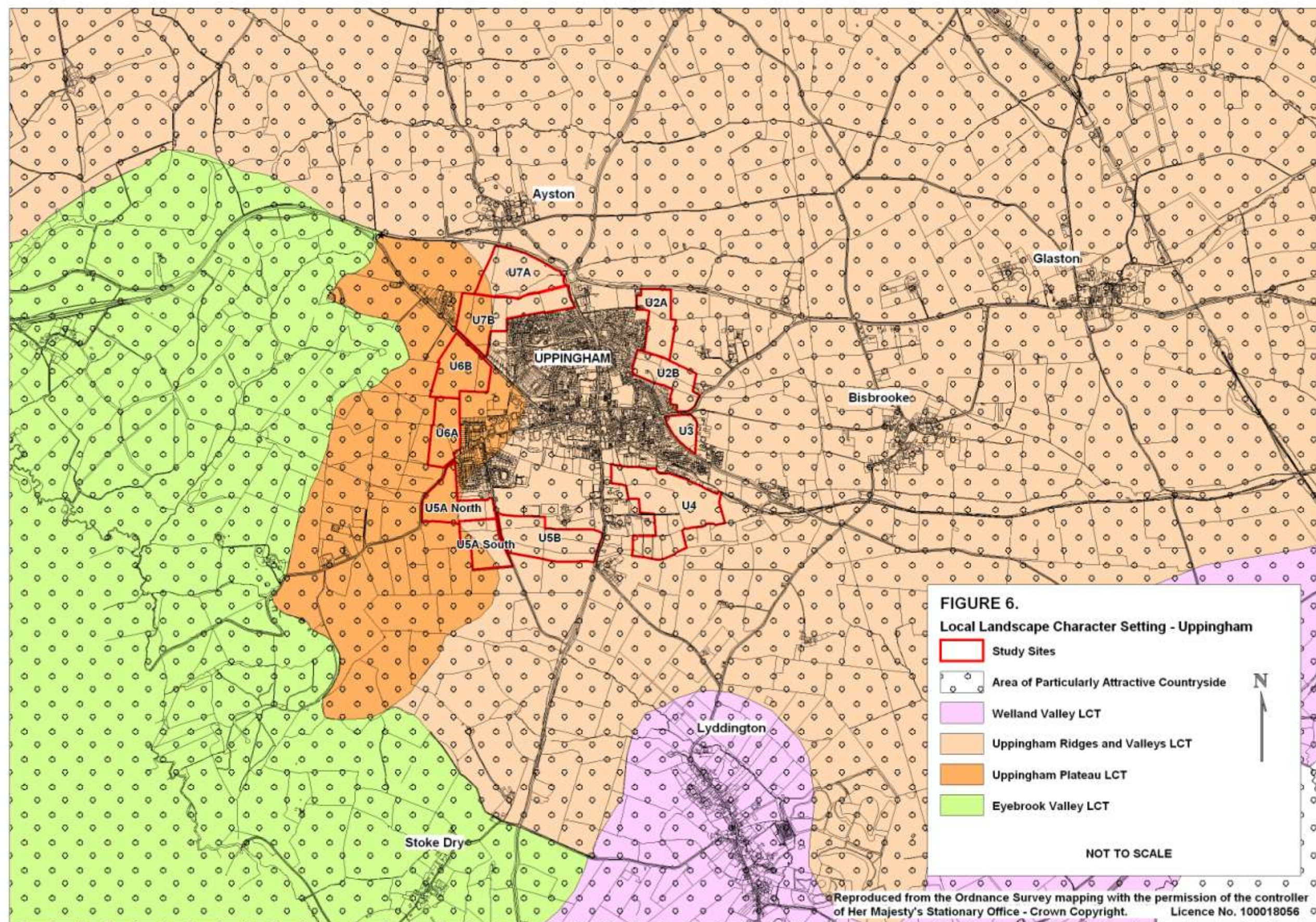


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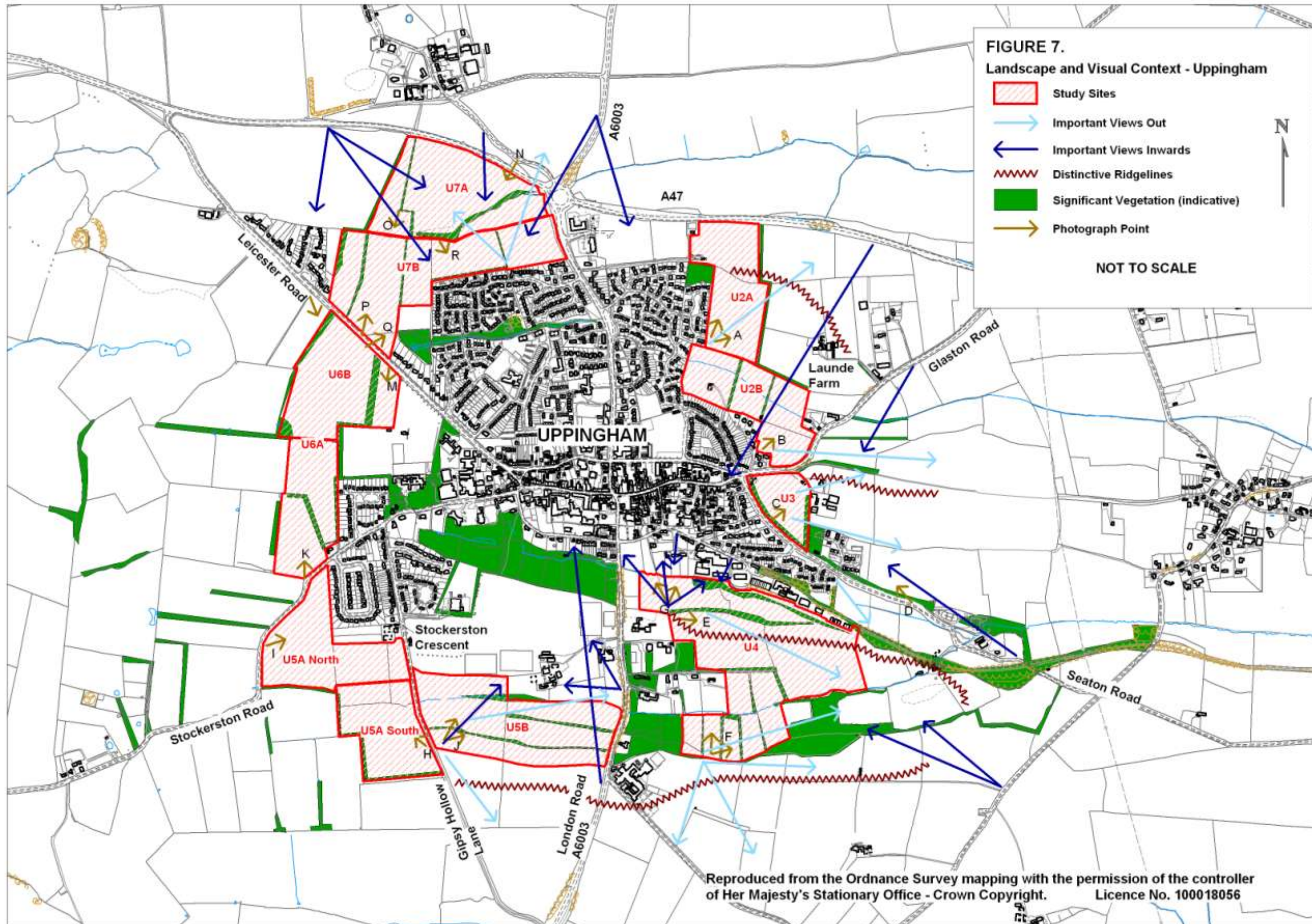


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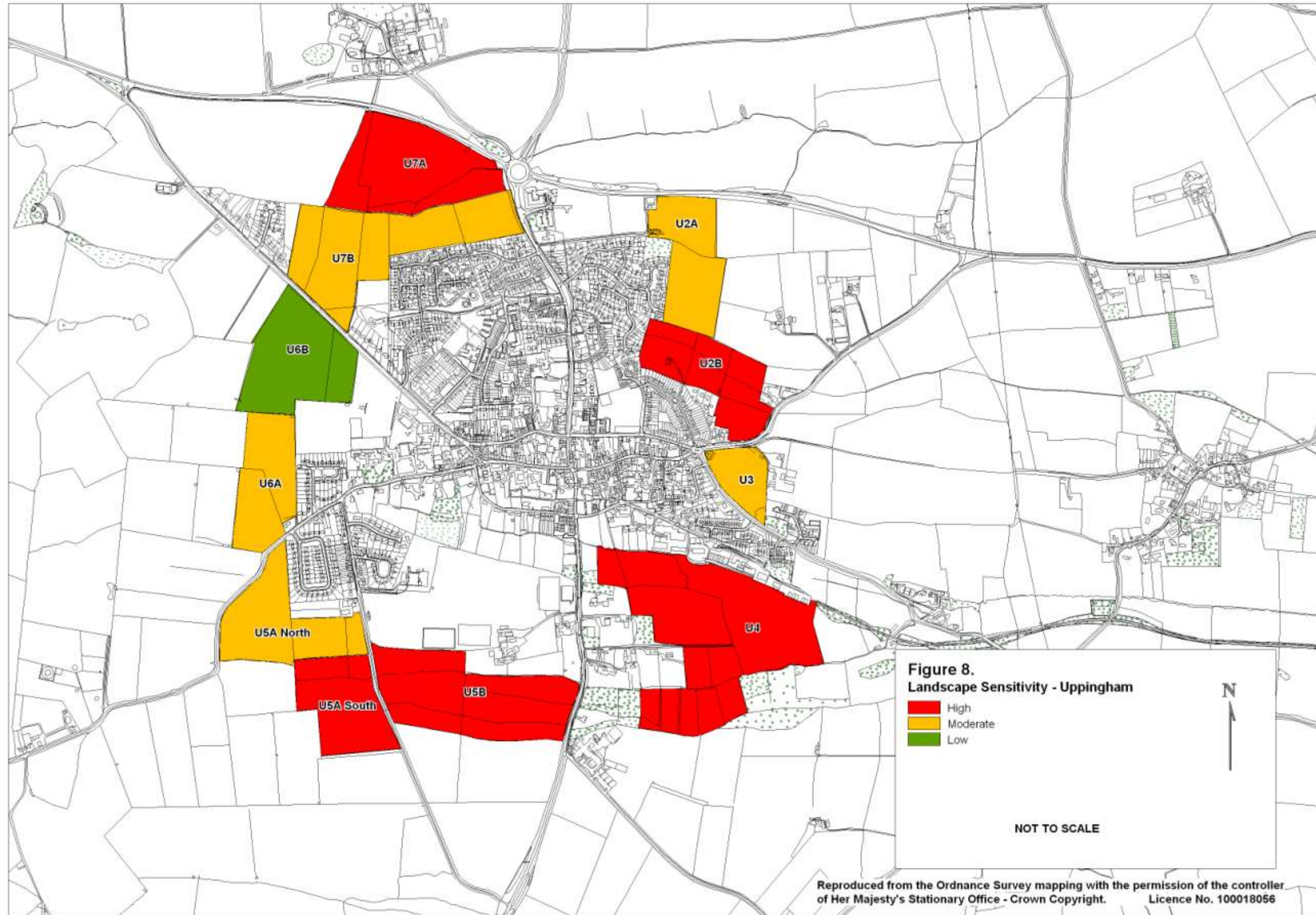




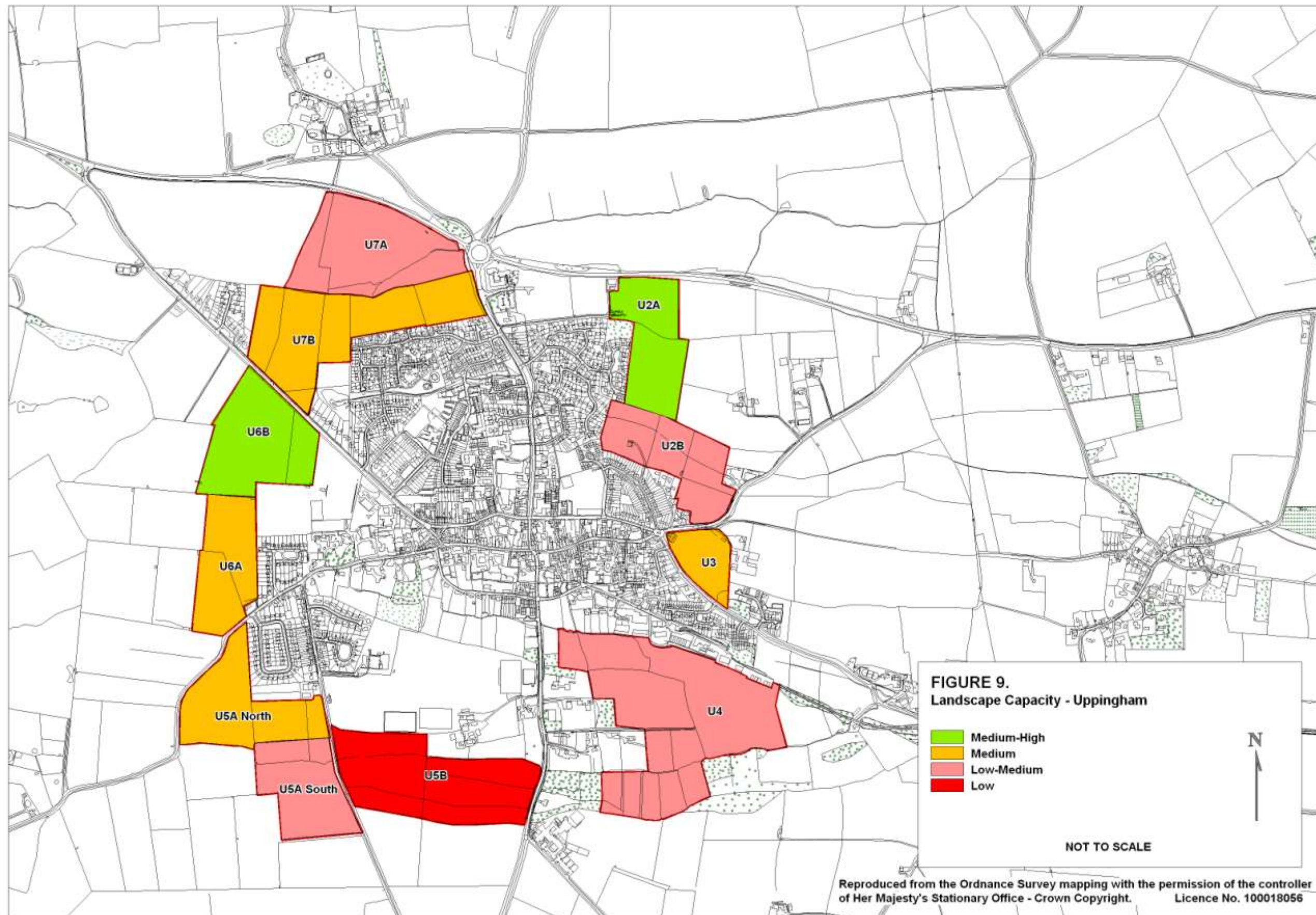
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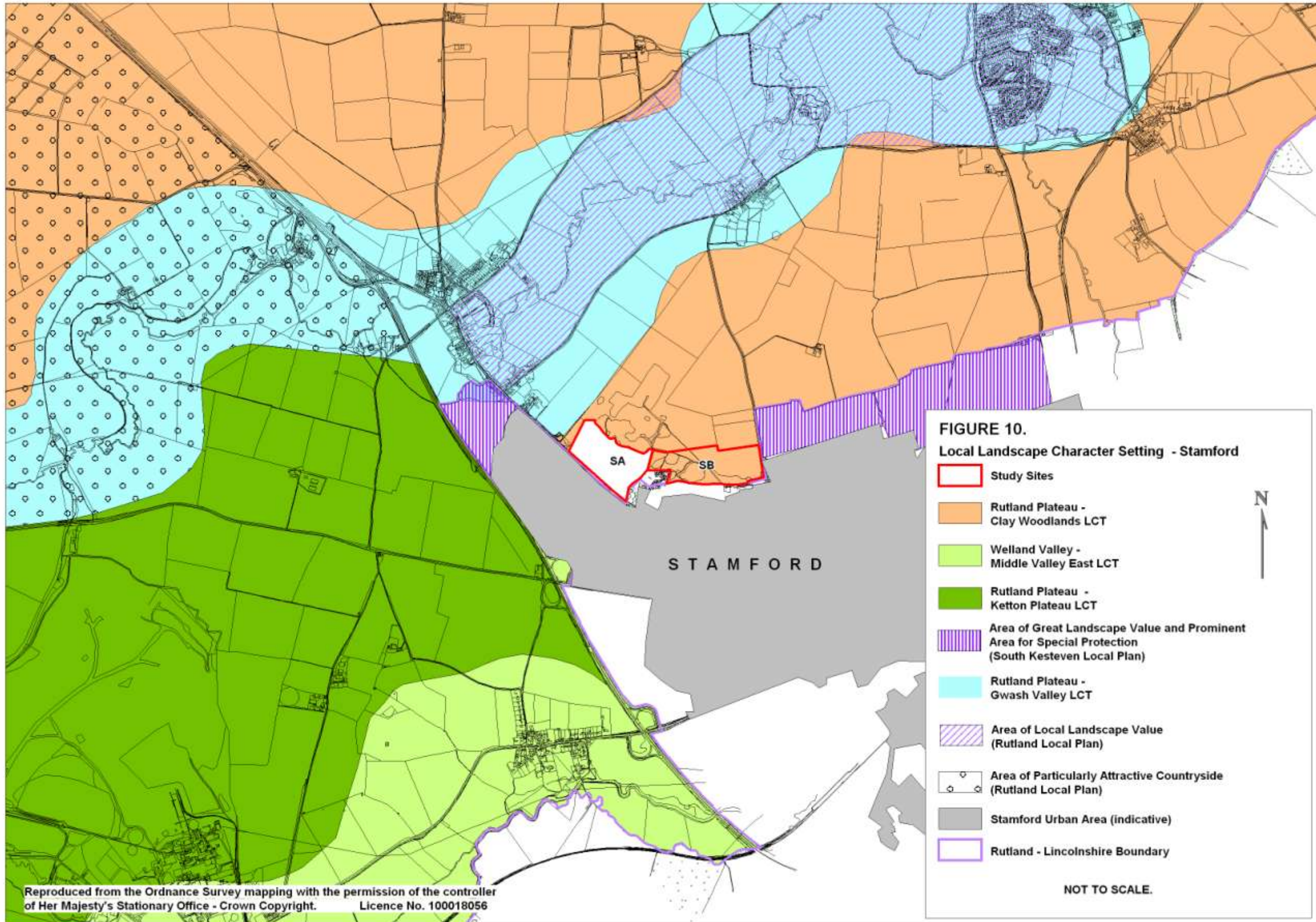


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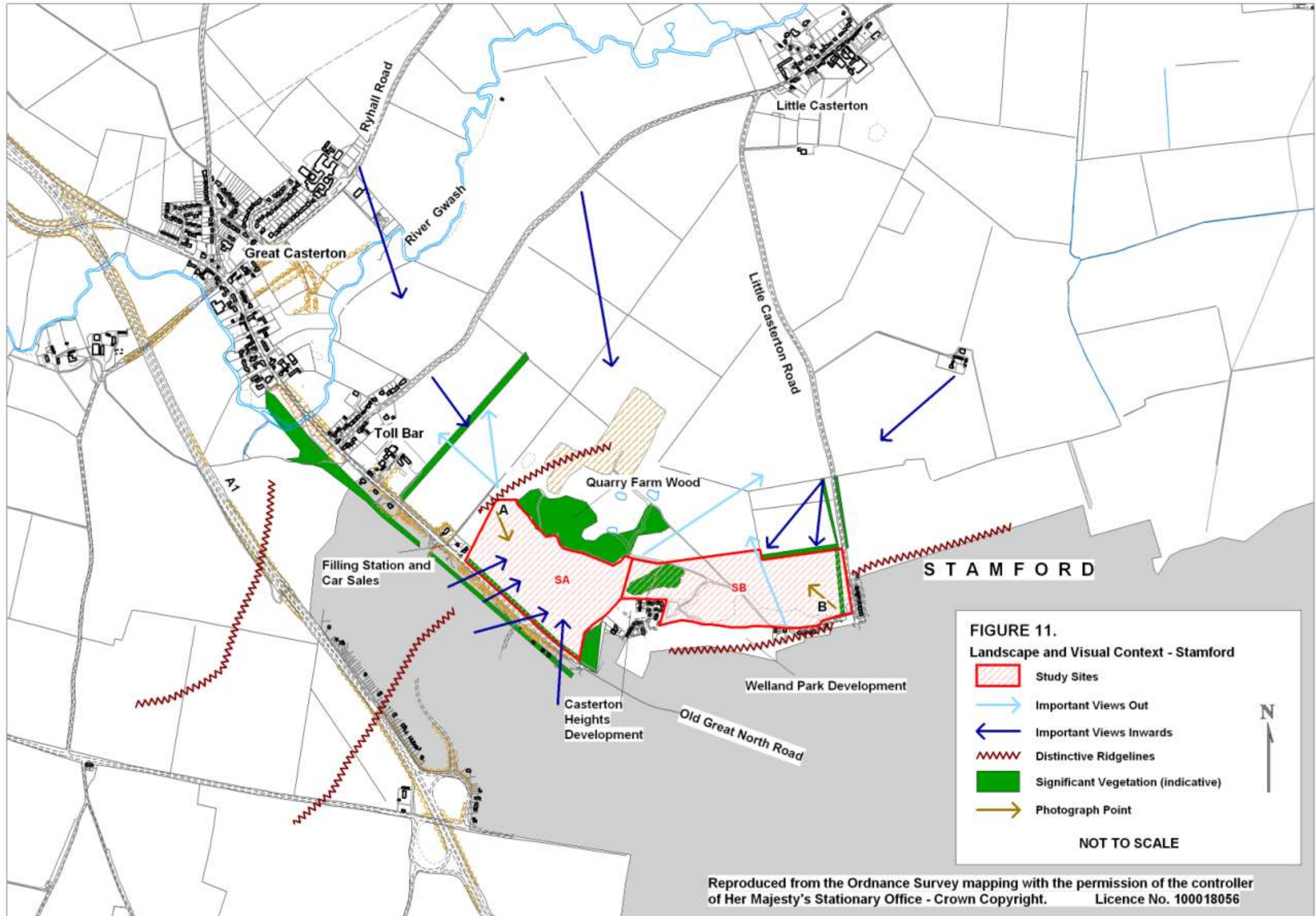


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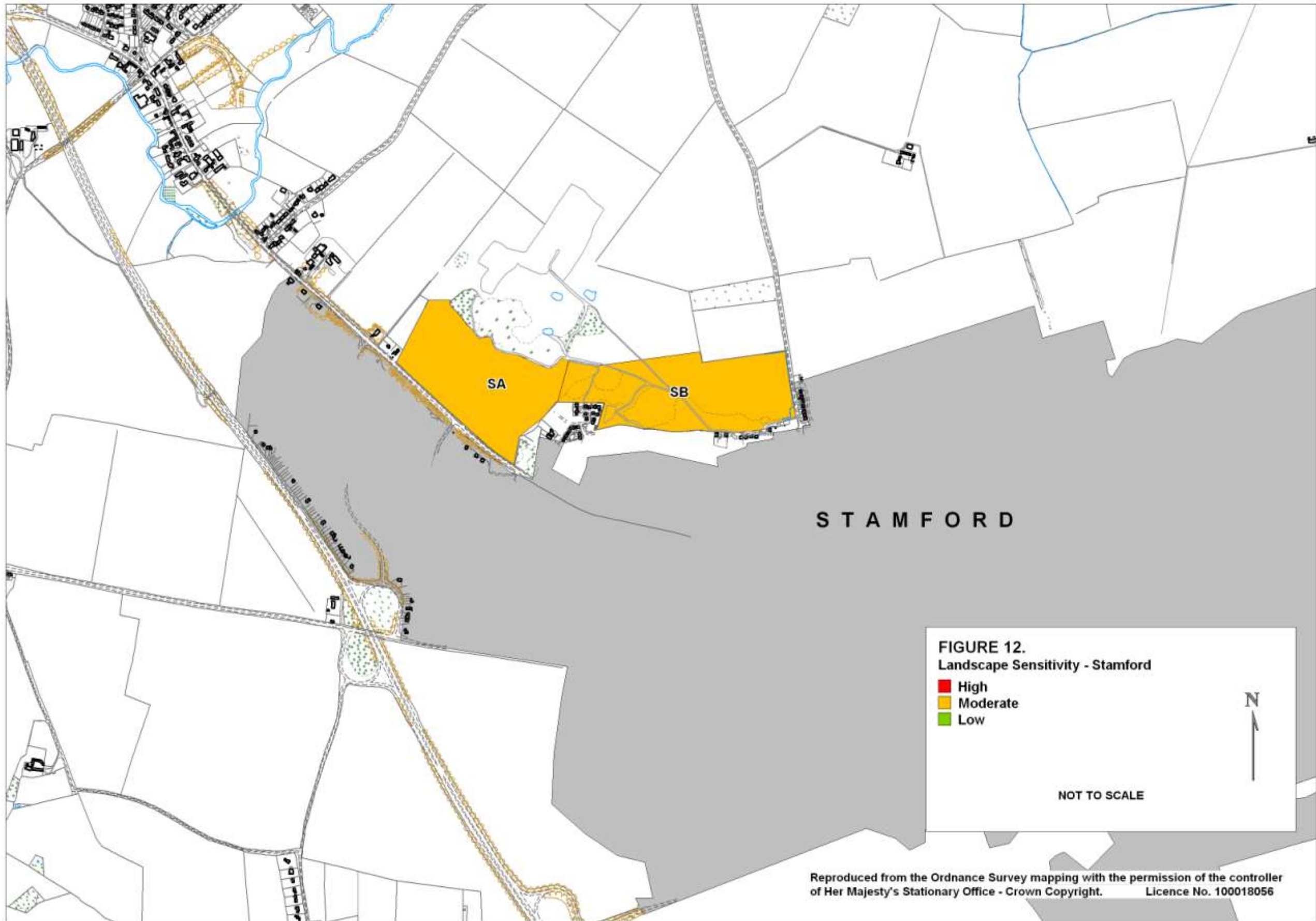




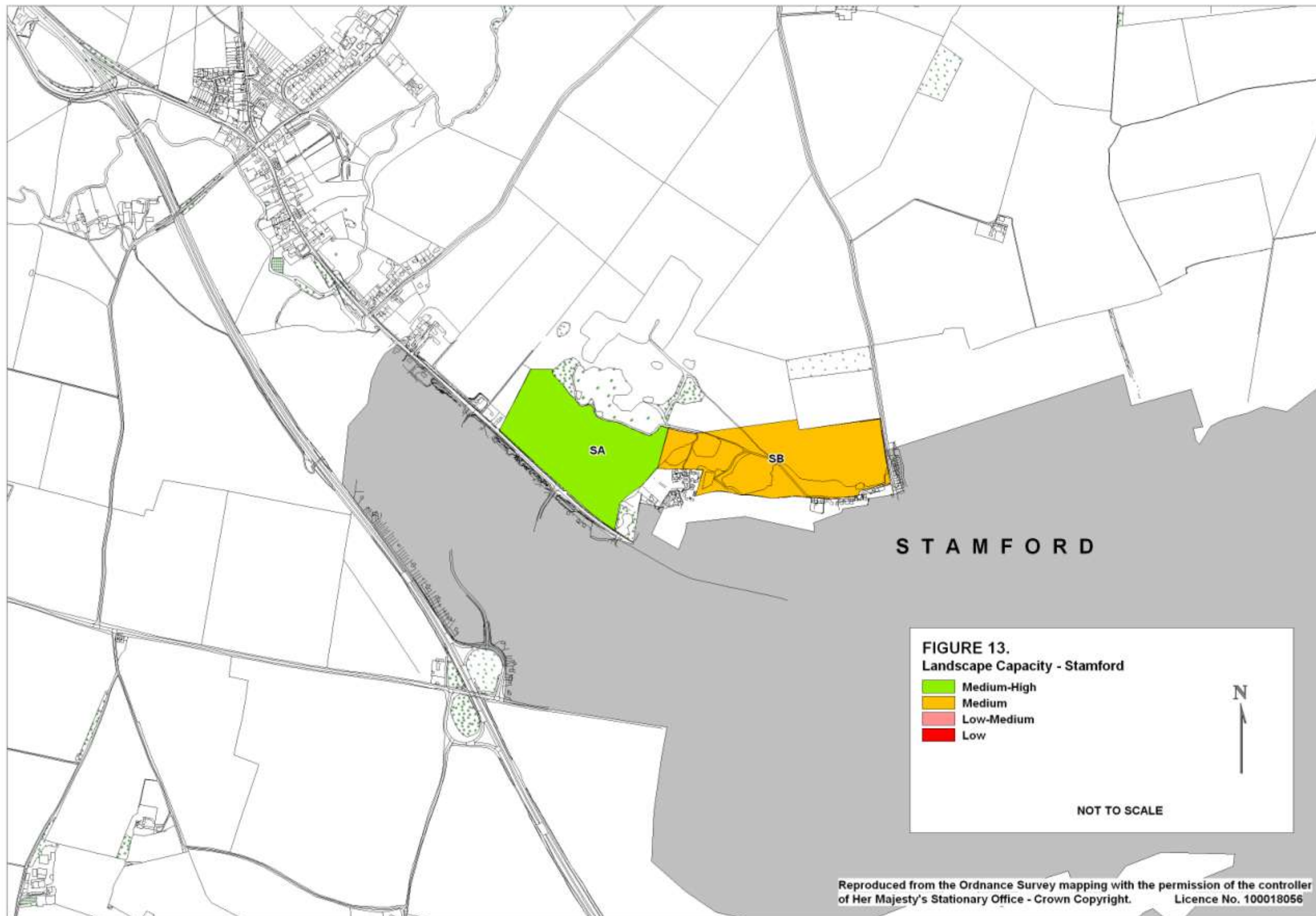
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