



# Land Adjacent to The Bull Tavern Sturminster Newton

## Landscape and Visual Appraisal

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Author:	Name: D Price	DP
	Role: Director	
Checked for issue:	Name: I Newton	IN
	Role: Director	



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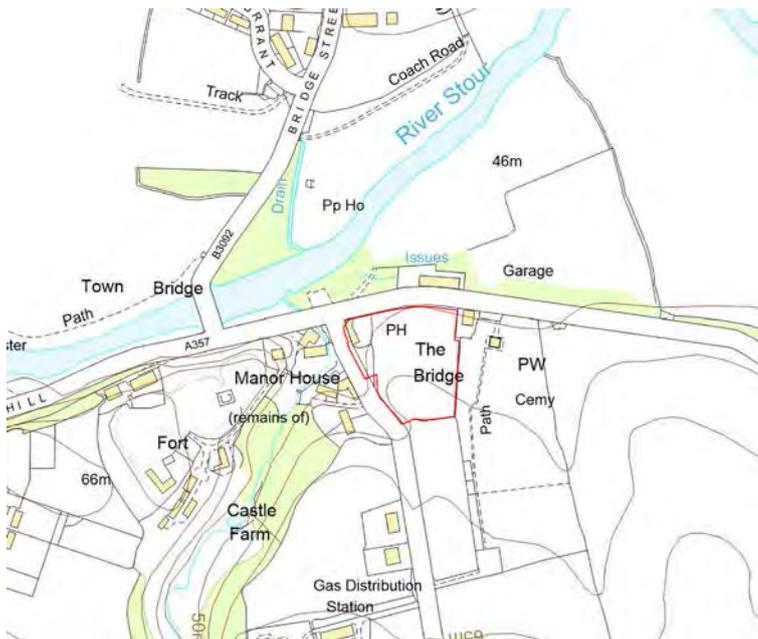
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## **NOTES ON THIS VERSION**

*This report has been restructured and updated in response to the NDDC pre-app consultation document PRE/2016/0292/PREAPP dated September 12<sup>th</sup> 2016.*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by Hyland Edgar Driver Ltd on behalf of Hall and Woodhouse Ltd.
- 1.2 The report has been prepared as a supporting statement on landscape and visual matters in consideration of the proposed housing development at land adjacent to The Bull Tavern, Sturminster Newton. The report is a qualitative assessment of the key visual and landscape issues affecting the site and their bearing upon the development proposals.
- 1.3 The location of the site is shown on Figure 1 below;



**Figure 1 Site location**

- 1.4 The purpose of this report is as follows:
- To undertake an initial landscape and visual appraisal of the site and its surroundings and to assess the visibility of the site and its relationship with adjacent areas;
  - To advise on the landscape and visual constraints that would influence the scale and layout of the development. These constraints may include features such as existing trees and the visibility of the site from adjacent roads, public rights of way and properties; and
  - To advise on a landscape design strategy.
- 1.5 The appraisal was carried out during April to June 2016 through a process of desktop analysis and fieldwork survey.

### The proposed development

- 1.6 The development site is grassland located south of the A357 at Newton Hill, to the West of The Bull Tavern.
- 1.7 The development proposals are for the expansion of the public house associated with an outline planning application for a good quality residential development of up to 15 no. dwellings, with a provision for public open space. The detailed design of the development is to be considered at a later date.

## 2.0 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

2.1 This section describes the landscape related planning legislation and policy that applies to the development site and context, and to the proposed land use. The extents and locations of the various planning policy designations discussed below are shown on Figure 2.

### National legislation

#### Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

2.2 This Act enables local authorities to designate areas for their special architectural and historic interest. Such areas identify higher quality townscapes, and the site is in the Newton Village and The Bridge Conservation Area and physically connects the main settlement of the village with the cemetery. It also provides the setting, in part, to the cemetery.

2.3 There are a number of Listed Buildings within the study area including the Bull Tavern public house within the application site. Outside of the study area lies the Manor House Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). More information is provided in the Historic Environmental Assessment<sup>1</sup>.

### National Planning Policy

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>2</sup>

##### *Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes*

2.4 Section 6 of the policy framework outlines the means by which Local Planning Authorities should significantly boost the supply of new homes.

##### *Requiring good design*

2.5 Section 7 looks at the design of new developments, including housing schemes, and states that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people'.

2.6 The principles of good design in new developments are outlined as:

- High functionality that adds to the overall quality of the area for the lifetime of a development;
- The establishment of a strong sense of place and local distinctiveness, using streetscapes and buildings to create visually attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- site optimisation to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including green and other public space) and the support of local facilities and transport networks;
- responding to local character and history to reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, but allowing for appropriate innovation; and
- the creation of safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.

##### *Promoting healthy communities*

2.7 Section 8 of the framework expands on these themes of good design to promote interaction between people in new communities through the use of active street frontages, clear and legible pedestrian routes and high quality public spaces.

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<sup>1</sup> Land Adjacent to The Bull Sturminster Newton, Historic Environmental Assessment, AC Archaeology, 2017

<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government, London; 2012

*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*

- 2.8 Section 11 covers the protection of the wider landscape stating that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils.
- 2.9 Paragraph 113 states that 'local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting ... landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites'.

## **Local Planning Policy**

### **North Dorset District Council Local Plan**

- 2.10 The North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan Part 1 (LP1) was adopted on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016. This document sets out the strategic planning policies for the district and lists a number of saved policies from the former 2003 Local Plan.
- 2.11 Part one of the local plan is subdivided into chapters including 'Environment & Climate Change', 'Meeting Housing Needs' and 'Market Towns and the Countryside'.
- 2.12 Chapter 4 covers environmental policy on Landscape Character, describing the landscape character of the district and its importance in helping provide sense of place and local distinctiveness. Paragraph 4.56 states that it is '*important that all development is designed to fit with this landscape character*'. Paragraph 4.57 continues this theme to state that development proposals should be accompanied by a landscape and visual assessment to '*demonstrate how important landscape features will be integrated into the development proposals and how the visual impact of a development has been mitigated*'.
- 2.13 Chapter 5 covers the planned level of housing growth for Sturminster Newton, as an expanding service centre in the north-west of the district, whilst chapter 8 - Market Towns and Countryside outlines the strategic policy specific to the town.
- 2.14 The most relevant saved policy (from the 2003 plan) is 1.9 'Important Open or Wooded Areas (IOWA)'. These are public or private sites within settlements that have been selected for the overall contribution that they provide in visual or amenity terms to public areas within the town or village. An IOWA designation covers the site and the adjacent cemetery, undesignated Countryside to the south.
- 2.15 Appendix A of the 2015 plan states that '*IOWA were designated to protect the amenity and character of settlements from the pressure of infill development. They will continue to be saved until they are reviewed either through the Local Plan Part 2 or a Neighbourhood Plan*'.
- 2.16 It should be noted that no quantitative, or qualitative, landscape analysis for this IOWA designation has been provided as part of the Local Plan evidence base, however the Preapp consultation document<sup>3</sup> implies the following reasons for the designation:  
  
*'I can see value in the openness that the site contributes to the setting of the Cemetery, chapel, Inn as well as the approach to the town. The land is not seen in isolation and forms an important open area which demarcates the different land uses (residential and cemetery) and defines the limited extent of the towns development on this side of the river, ending where the few historic cottages and the inn'.*
- ### **Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031**
- 2.17 The Draft Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of pertinent policies including 'Design and character of buildings and their settings' (Policy 8), 'Important local buildings' (P.10) 'Important Open Spaces and Local Green Spaces (P.11); but it is the site specific Policy 41 'Land adjoining the Bull Tavern' and the landscape focused Policy 9 'Important views

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<sup>3</sup> NDDC pre-app consultation document PRE/2016/0292/PREAPP; September 12th 2016

and landscape sensitivity' and 12 'Trees in the landscape' that are most important for this study.

2.18 Policy 41 states that development of land adjoining the Bull Tavern will be supported provided there is a suitable access and layout that includes for the A357 frontage and the eastern boundary facing the Cemetery. These important masterplan elements are to consist of planting, to retain the semi-rural character of this section of the A357 road, and to provide a soft transition along the eastern boundary that respects the setting and amenity value of the cemetery and Listed Buildings. Both landscape elements are also to provide biodiversity benefits.

2.19 Policy 9 states '*where potential development on a site is likely to be clearly visible and prominent in views from well-used routes or important open spaces in the town or its surrounding landscape, the following (landscape) principles should be applied:*

- *retain views of key landmarks;*
- *reduce landscape impact by careful siting and orientation, and by making the most of the existing landform; and*
- *use existing tree cover, hedgerows and/or new landscaping that will be maintained to minimise the impact or reduce any remaining adverse impacts to an acceptable level.*

*Development should not be allowed if it would, either alone or cumulatively, lead to substantial harm to an important view or the local landscape character'.*

*Policy 12 states 'Trees that contribute to the character of the area or its key views, or provide a critical role screening otherwise intrusive developments, should be protected. Landmark trees, due to their prominence in the street scene or their historic / cultural associations, should also be retained*

*Opportunities for tree planting should be taken to reinforce local character where this is a notable feature of the character area, or where the character of the area would be improved by more tree planting. Areas where trees are noted to make a significant positive difference are listed in Table 16' (which include the proposed development site).*

## **Other Guidance**

### Urban design guidance

2.20 North Dorset District Council has prepared a guidance note to help developers when preparing design proposals for planning submissions. The guidance give an indication of the design data required to help inform the NDDC during its decision making process.

### Buildings of Local Importance

2.21 In addition to the listed buildings on Common Lane, Acre Lodge and the Chapel building, to the east of the site, are designated Buildings of Local Importance. It should be noted that the immediate setting of Acre Lodge is somewhat compromised by the A357 road.

## **Policy and guidance a summary of its relevance to the LVA**

2.22 The legislative and policy background provides the setting against which this LVA is undertaken, and provides an indication of the important characteristics of the landscape of the study area. It also highlights various and balancing interests on the site and its surroundings and how these might relate to any potential future development. In this instance the proposed development site lies within the settlement boundary but is identified as an Important Open or Wooded Area (IOWA).

### 3.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY

3.1 This LVA has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines set out in The Landscape Institute 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition 2013<sup>4</sup>,<sup>5</sup>.

3.2 LVA is a common preliminary or outline assessment methodology for proposed development sites and uses a combination of objective and subjective judgements structured in a way that is consistent with the reasonable and proportionate assessment approach recommended by GLVIA3. This assessment has followed three main stages:

- stage 1 - establishment of the study area;
- stage 2 - description of the landscape and visual baseline conditions; and
- stage 3 - assessment of the potentially significant landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.

Stage 3 has also been used to develop a potential landscape led site 'development brief'.

#### Study Area

3.3 A study area of 1km radius centred on the site was selected as the initial extent of the study area. This was sufficient to include those receptors most likely to experience significant change from the proposed development. This judgement was made following fieldwork which considered the visually enclosed nature of the site and small scale of the proposed development.

3.4 The study area has not been agreed with North Dorset District Council (NDDC) but is considered robust for ongoing negotiations.

#### Description of the landscape and visual baseline conditions

3.5 This records and analyses the existing landscape features and visual characteristics and identifies their value or importance. This collects the 'baseline' against which any potential changes from proposed development can be identified, and any potential landscape and visual effects can be assessed.

3.6 The landscape in the study area has been described using a combination of desk-based study and site survey. This has examined physical landscape elements such as vegetation and topography in addition to landscape character, sensitivity, value and quality.

3.7 Baseline visual receptors have been identified using a combination of desk-based study and site survey. This has identified the following types of community, residential, employment and transport based receptor locations:

- public places e.g. playing fields, cricket club, church, school, Common Land;
- Public Rights of Way e.g. footpaths, byways and bridleways;
- residential e.g. detached, semi-detached, bungalow, terrace, apartment;
- workplaces e.g. business or commercial property; and
- transport routes e.g. classified and unclassified roads (country lanes), cycle routes.

#### Landscape and visual assessment of the likely significant effects of the proposed facilities

3.8 The final stage in the assessment methodology has followed the standard GLVIA approach of assessing changes in the development case against the baseline condition.

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<sup>4</sup> The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and Landscape Institute (3rd Edition 2013); Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Routledge; Oxford

<sup>5</sup> The Landscape Institute (2011); Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment; Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11.

Predicted effects have been identified for receptors and the magnitude of the identified landscape and visual changes evaluated by professional judgement. The significance of these effects has been determined by the inter-relationship of magnitude of effect and receptor sensitivity; a standard and accepted principle.

## 4.0 BASELINE

### Summary of the landscape and visual baseline

- 4.1 This section describes and records the proposed development site, in its context, as of April 2016. Further detail can be found in Appendix 1: The Baseline.
- 4.2 The site is grassland within the settlement boundary of Newton village on the southern edge of Sturminster Newton. Set on rising ground above the Upper Stour river valley, the site is bounded by the A357 to the north, and connects with the rolling farmland of the South Blackmoor Vale to the south
- 4.3 The site is locally valued and of Good Landscape Quality. Mature woody vegetation is limited to the field boundaries of the north and west boundaries. Offsite significant woody vegetation includes the layers of deciduous trees and shrubs on the Stour River floodplain and the ornamental planting of the cemetery. The later includes the landmark Wellingtonia trees that are visible for long distances and prominent from the A357 when approaching the site.
- 4.4 The vegetation and site aspect limit views into the site, with those from the A357, to the north, and the cemetery, to the east, being most open. Otherwise the Zone of Visibility for the site is relatively confined.
- 4.5 As a rural study area visual receptors would include (farm)workers, motorists on the main road and, on the quieter Common Lane, recreational pedestrians, cyclists and potentially equestrians. Visitors to the cemetery would be the most sensitive visual receptors along with the limited number of residents.

### Analysis of the IOWA designation

- 4.6 The IOWA designation protects sites against development, to preserve the overall contribution that they provide in visual or amenity terms to public areas (within a town or village). More specifically, the pre-app consultation has suggested that the open character of this site helps to:
- form the setting for the cemetery, chapel, inn and the approach to the town;
  - demarcates the different residential and cemetery landuses; and
  - defines the limit of the towns development on this side of the river.

Although the second and third points are not related to public or visual amenity, they do recognise the differences in landscape character/landuse in the study area. In regard to the third point it is the cemetery element of the IOWA that defines the limit of town development.

- 4.7 In the stricter definition of the IOWA designation this privately owned site provides no physical amenity value, and the Zone of Visibility analysis has shown that the public areas, from which the site affords visual amenity, are limited to the footpaths and carriageway of the busy main road, and the cemetery. Furthermore it should be noted that views from the A357 and its footpaths are compromised by the road itself and, in terms of an (eastern) approach to the town, the site is passed before it is really appreciated (the cemetery screens the site and the 80m long frontage is passed in 6 seconds at 30mph).



**Plate 1 The A357 approach from the east with Acre Lodge in the foreground**

- 4.8 The site does, however, form part of the attractive wider green setting to the cemetery. The northern part of the cemetery, away from the A357, enjoys a tranquil rural aspect with views over the rolling countryside to the east and north. At the less tranquil southern end of the cemetery, views, whilst more contained by the mature vegetation and buildings, are enjoyed over the proposed development site from a section of the footpath between the chapel and the car park.

## **5.0 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS RESULTING FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE**

### **Landscape Effects**

- 5.1 Development would bring about unavoidable change in the landscape character of the site; from grassland to residential landuse. However as the site is reasonably visually contained, indirect landscape character effects on adjacent areas to the north, south and west would be small scale. Impacts on the relatively tranquil nature of the cemetery would be more noticeable, particularly adjacent to the shared boundary. Potential impacts would be noticeable on a relatively sensitive receptor (landscape character) to realise locally significant effects
- 5.2 Potential direct landscape impacts on woody vegetation would be minimal provided that all of the important vegetation along the site boundaries was retained by the development.
- 5.3 Potential direct impacts on landform would be required in the cut for the carpark, roads and house platforms. These have the potential to be locally significant but with a balanced cut and fill, and careful site design, adverse impacts would again be minimised.

### **Visual Effects**

- 5.4 Landscape and visual effects are generally linked, and the most significant visual effects would potentially occur for people along the eastern edge of the cemetery immediately next to the site, and the residents of Acre Lodge. Currently this boundary is open and

any visual changes, resulting from development, would be noticeable and perceived as an adverse locally significant visual effect.

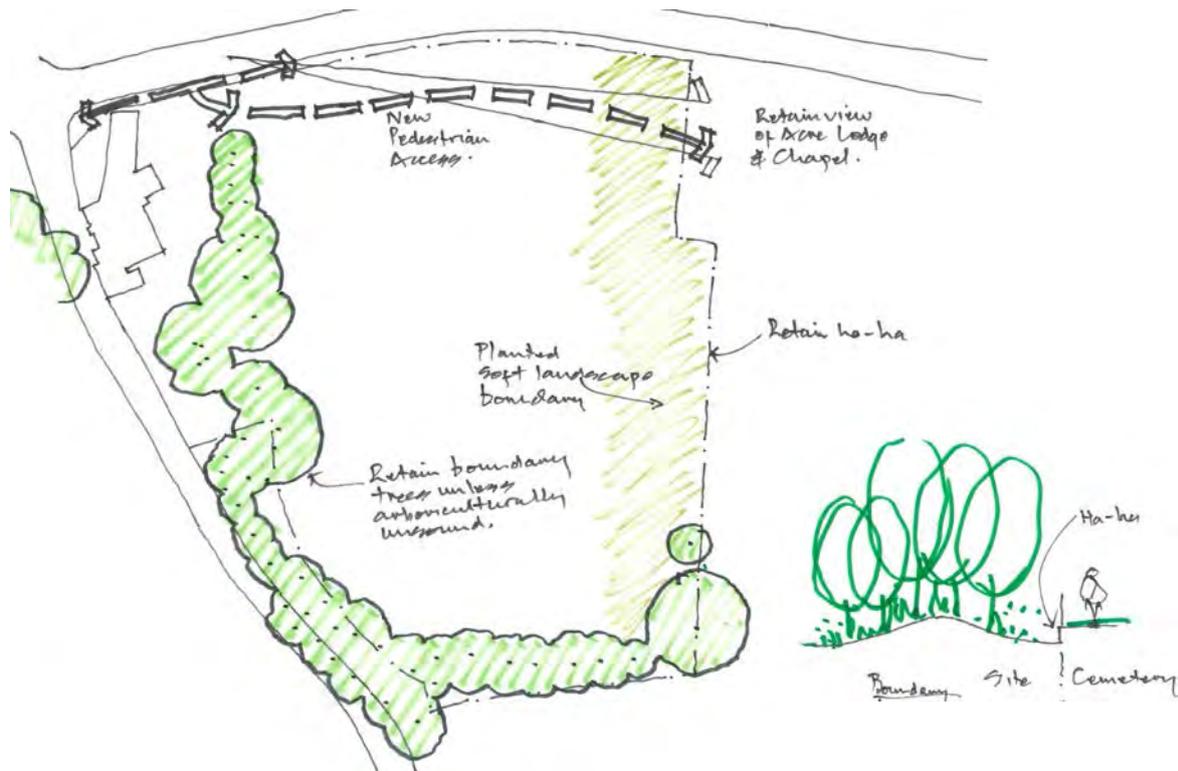
- 5.5 Receptors along the A357 corridor already have compromised views and the significance of any changes to these views, resulting from development, would be reduced by the lower sensitivity of the motorists and pedestrians using this road corridor.
- 5.6 The other potentially important group of visual receptors would be the residents along Common Lane. Although these properties are set down, relative to the site, some new properties are likely to be seen through the boundary hedgerow above the lane. Here potential visual effects would be greatly reduced by the retention of the woody boundary vegetation.

### **Landscape Policy**

- 5.7 Whilst the Conservation Area and IOWA designations address a range of considerations, in this instance the key issues result from the requirement to maintain visual amenity and a quality open, or wooded, setting to adjacent heritage assets and public areas.
- 5.8 As the A357 already compromises the quality of views, and visual amenity, from the road and footpaths, it is the view from the cemetery, to the east, and the associated effects on public amenity that are more important.
- 5.9 Any development of the site resulting in locally significant adverse visual impacts would have an associated impact on the visual amenity for parts of the cemetery closest to the site. The resultant potential effects on the function and purposes of the IOWA designation would be locally significant, and the need for mitigation is referenced clearly in Policy 41 of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

## **6.0 POTENTIAL MITIGATION AND A DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

- 6.1 As highlighted, locally significant landscape and visual effects would potentially result from impacts along the eastern boundary shared with the cemetery. Elsewhere the site is relatively well enclosed by its northern aspect and mature boundary vegetation on, and off, site.
- 6.2 The incorporation of a planted landscape buffer along the eastern site boundary would not be inconsistent with the character of the area, and would visually enclose this side of the site. This would mitigate amenity effects on the cemetery and on the views of people within it, along with any potentially significant setting effects on the Listed Buildings.
- 6.3 A357 pedestrian access to the cemetery is currently along narrow and, at times, uncomfortable footpath; the alternative route travelling up Common Lane and through the cemetery carpark. The site development therefore has the potential to incorporate an off road footpath with increased public amenity.
- 6.4 The various items are encapsulated in the sketch landscape design strategy overleaf. In policy terms this would be consistent with the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.



**Sketch 1 Landscape Design Strategy**

## **7.0 L&V ASSESSMENT OF THE ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN**

- 7.1 The development proposal is work in progress, but in order to examine the potential landscape and visual effects the Preliminary Technical Layout has been used as the 'development case'.
- 7.2 The Sketch Plan site layout is attached as Appendix 2. In terms of the LVA the important features of this layout are:
- Site access from the A357 at the point of the existing field access;
  - A new pub carpark of 14 spaces adjacent to the site access;
  - Sloped site access to five small blocks of residential properties;
  - A public green adjacent to Acre Lodge and planted boundary to the cemetery; and
  - Retention of all significant woody vegetation along the site boundaries.

### **The potential effects of the Proposed Development**

- 7.3 At a macroscale the development of this site would fit well with the landscape settlement patterning identified within the NDDC Landscape Character Assessment. At a local scale some adverse landscape and visual effects would be realised by the development of this site.
- 7.4 Although open space is being proposed in the developing site layout, a loss of green open land is inevitable. This would bring about adverse direct landscape effects but also have an impact on the function and purposes of the part of the IOWA local landscape designation covering the developed site area. This adverse direct impact would be locally significant. Figure 2 (overleaf) illustrates the change in area of this part of the IOWA (dark green) with the landscaped eastern site boundary shown in a lighter green.



**Figure 2 Newton Village IOWA (above) and as impacted by the development proposals (below).** NOTE: The Draft Neighbourhood Plan has proposed a Local Open Space designation for the cemetery site.

- 7.5 The site enclosed on most sides with only a limited number of sensitive residential receptors overlooking it. The illustrative layout retains the mature woodland vegetation along the south and west sides to screen views and limit associated amenity impacts on the public (and on the IOWA designation of the adjacent cemetery site).
- 7.6 The A357 road and the eastern boundary to the site has provision for green open space. The cemetery boundary ha-ha feature would be retained and substantial new tree and shrub planting introduced. This design would create native-mix planting belt, with biodiversity benefits, that would, in time, screen views of the site from the adjacent parts of the cemetery and help retain its green tranquil feel.
- 7.7 Development of the site would lead to a more 'designed' approach to the town. This should be seen as a positive change. Currently the A357 approach from the east is a semi-rural mix of designed and open sites that are quite difficult to make sense of. A well designed, good quality semi-rural open frontage to the proposed development site would tie everything together and help the motorist make sense of the approaching residential centre and bridge crossing. Such a frontage would maintain views of the chapel from the west and allow for a pedestrian access, away from the main road, through to the cemetery.
- 7.8 In summary, the site offers a good opportunity for development as it would fit well into the macroscale landscape pattern documented in the NDDC LCA. The site is well contained with relatively few sensitive visual receptors overlooking it and, with careful design, adverse effects on amenity could be minimised and balancing amenity benefits could be created. The potential adverse effects are local in scale and would be balanced by the positive socio-economic arguments of the new housing and public house redevelopment.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: The Baseline

#### Introduction

- I. This section describes and records the proposed development site, in its context, as of April 2016.
- II. The development site is a plot of open grassland, within the settlement boundary of Newton village, which physically connects the main settlement of Newton village with the cemetery to the west. It is bounded by the A357 road to the north and the unclassified Common Lane to the west. To the south the site landscape extends into the rolling clay/greensand farmland.
- III. Along Common Lane is a small cluster of residential properties and the pub. These buildings form an attractive grouping of properties distinct from the main settlement of Newton. Visually connected with these buildings is the less attractive garage development on the northern side of the A357. There is one further residential property, Acre Lodge, in the immediate vicinity of the site on the edge of the cemetery. Together this area is known as The Bridge.

#### Landscape baseline

- IV. The landscape baseline is comprised of the landscape character and its aesthetic characteristics and physical landscape elements, such as topography and vegetation.

#### Landscape Character

- V. Landscape character has been studied extensively within the initial study area. At a national level the character area profile is Blackmoor Vale and The Vale of Wardour Character Areas.
- VI. At a county level the landscape character has been defined by the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment (2000), and at a district level in the North Dorset District Council Landscape Character Assessment (2008). In these studies the site lies in the South Blackmoor Rolling Vales LCA and abuts the Upper Stour Valley LCA on the north side of the A357, with the North Dorset Limestone Ridge LCA beyond the river valley to the north.
- VII. The site is visually separated from the Upper Stour Valley LCA by woody vegetation.
- VIII. The key characteristics of the South Blackmoor Rolling Vales LCA are:
  - Undulating and rolling farmland hills forming a transition zone between the Blackmore Vale and the chalk escarpment.
  - A more folded landscape at the foot of the escarpment.
  - Irregular shaped fields bounded by thick hedgerows.
  - Mature hedgerows are important features (nearer the Blackmore Vale).
  - Twisting hedge lined lanes with narrow verges.
  - Small bridged stream crossings are key features often with low parapets.
  - Settlements are often situated at the foot of the escarpment or on elevated slopes overlooking the Vale
  - Frequent use of locally distinctive building materials, mainly stone and brick, adds to character.
  - A tranquil and unified landscape.
- IX. The site itself is reasonably typical of the LCA being a small pasture bounded by mature hedgerows on two sides, forming part of a settlement at the foot of the slope of rolling farmland.
- X. To the north of the site lies the Upper Stour river valley with a small area designated as a local nature reserve. Within the reserve is a footpath with limited views of the site. A second footpath on the northern side of the Stour floodplain follows a similar route.
- XI. The cemetery landuse is classified as 'urban' and forms the eastern extent of the Newton Village settlement boundary. It has a distinct 'townscape' character with its open green aspect but planned layout of statuary, buildings, boundary walls and a walled ha-ha, and

the ornamental planting with specimen's trees. The character of the cemetery is, at times, influenced by the presence of the A357 but away from the road, and higher up the slope, it becomes a more peaceful place. This includes the area of current interment and also contains the cemetery carpark and access.

#### **Landscape Quality and Value**

- XII. Much of Dorset's landscape is attractive and designated, often AONB. Although this site lies outside of either of Dorset's AONB's, the site has a recognisable landscape structure and the characteristic patterns and combinations of landform and land cover (of the grassland) are still evident. There is some scope to improve management of the site and boundary hedgerow land cover. The landscape is locally valued as grassland and a visual resource.
- XIII. The adjacent cemetery with its distinct townscape character, also has a recognisable green and open townscape structure with historical and cultural associations.
- XIV. This study has found that the landscape of site and adjacent cemetery is locally valued and of Good landscape quality.

#### **Landscape Sensitivity**

- XV. Landscape sensitivity is influenced by a combination of existing land use and the pattern and scale of the landscape, and from:
- visual sensitivity (resulting from visual enclosure/openness of views and the distribution of visual receptors);
  - the value placed on the landscape/townscape; and
  - the scope for mitigation (which would be in character with the existing landscape/townscape).
- XVI. The site is a landscape of some intrinsic quality, is reasonably well enclosed by the surrounding landform and vegetation but enjoys more open views to the A357 and cemetery. As the site is designated at a local level, this study has found the site to be at the upper end of Medium Landscape Sensitivity.

#### **Historic and Cultural**

- XVII. The historic dimension of the landscape is subject of a separate discipline; Historic Landscape Character Assessment, however in terms of the existing landscape and this study is most obviously expressed in the landscape pattern of the roads and lanes, the town cemetery and the pattern of settlement that demonstrates a long continuous landuse that has resulted in a characterful multi-layered landscape. Further information is provided in the Historic Environment Assessment<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Movement and Access**

- XVIII. The site is bounded by the A357 road to the north. The A357 offers pedestrian and vehicular access to the site along its northern boundary. The A357 footway is the most direct pedestrian access to the cemetery from Sturminster Newton. It should be noted that these paths are narrow and often feel unwelcoming and potentially hazardous when the A357 is busy.
- XIX. Common Lane provides vehicular access and a limited section of footpath on western site boundary.

#### **Topography**

- XX. Topography is important in itself, as a natural feature to be appreciated and preserved, and is important for its indirect influences on views and on how the land is used.
- XXI. The site lies on a north facing, approximately 1:10, slope running from a low point of 49.5m AOD to a high of 57m AOD. The topography limits views of the site to the south.
- XXII. The site overlays clay geology and in terms of agricultural land quality in the study area is grade 3, good to moderate.

### **Vegetation**

- XXIII. The site is sloping grassland. Permanent woody vegetation is limited to the hedgerows bounding the site. The most significant of these run along the west and north boundaries and include some good quality mature specimens of ash, sycamore and beech along with mature hedgerow plants of hawthorn and hazel.
- XXIV. Off-site there are visually dense belts of vegetation lining the Stour floodplain, to the immediate north of the site, and some magnificent Wellingtonia specimens can be found in the cemetery to the east of the site.
- XXV. As the site lies in a conservation area the woody vegetation within it is effectively protected as if it were under a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- XXVI. Vegetation limits views of the site to the south, north and west and filters views to east. The significant vegetation in and around the site is mapped on Figure 3.

### **Visual baseline**

- XXVII. A preliminary Zone of Visibility (ZV) for the existing site has been estimated on site by an experienced Landscape Architect. This is presented in Figure 4. The ZV is limited in extent due to a combination of the northern aspect of the site and the surrounding vegetation.
- XXVIII. Within the initial study area a record of the views from certain locations has been taken. Whilst these locations have not been agreed with NDDC, the locations provide a comprehensive record of the important views into the site.
- XXIX. The following paragraphs describe these viewpoints highlighting the attributes that are of most relevance to the study. The baseline photographs of the views are provided in the Figures 5-8.

### **Views from Upper Stour floodplain**

- XXX. Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3 from footpaths along the northern edge of the Stour River floodplain.
- XXXI. These are seasonal densely filtered views of site, fully screened in summer by the layers of mature woody vegetation that line the River Stour floodplain. The site is barely visible during the winter months, although lights from the roads, residential properties and pub would be visible at night.
- XXXII. Visual receptors in this location would be motorists, workers and pedestrians. The motorists and workers would be less sensitive to potential visual changes compared to pedestrians (some of which would be enjoying recreational walks).

### **Views from the footpaths in the A357 road corridor**

- XXXIII. Viewpoints 4, 5 and 6 from the west, 9 from the north and 12 from the east.
- XXXIV. These are views generally dominated by the A357. From the east and west main road approaches to the site only the front lower portion of the site is visible. The landmark Wellingtonia trees in the cemetery are important in the views from west, whilst the cemetery planting and buildings close-off much of the potential site view when approaching from the east.
- XXXV. Viewpoint 9 from the A357 footway shows the existing field access and the open aspect along the main road frontage. The view from the garage would be similar to this.
- XXXVI. Visual receptors in these locations would be motorists, workers and pedestrians/cyclists. Generally their sensitivity to visual changes would be relatively low either to their activity or due the proximity to the A357 road.

### **Views from the west and north-west of the site (Common Lane)**

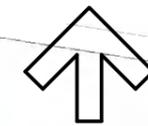
- XXXVII. Viewpoints 7 and 8.
- XXXVIII. Common Lane is a sunken lane and views from the (approximately 5no.) residential properties and the pub are largely contained by the high banks lining it. Above the banks the site can be glimpsed through the mature woody vegetation of the hedgerow.
- XXXIX. From the north, as the viewer approaches the site from Broad Oak and across the more open land next to the cemetery, the northern hedgerow of the site screens views and

combines with the other vegetation of the sunken lane to create the well vegetated character to the view interrupted by occasional residential properties.

- XL. Receptors in these locations would be motorists, pedestrians/cyclists, potentially equestrians and residents. This is a quiet rural lane, and sensitivity to visual change, whilst lower for the motorists, would generally be moderately high for residents and walkers etc. enjoying the countryside.

**Views from the east and north of the site (Cemetery)**

- XLI. Viewpoints 10 and 11
- XLII. The boundary to west of the site is visually permeable with open views between the site and the cemetery along most of this site edge. Viewpoint 10 is similar to the view that would be available from Acre Lodge (in a westerly direction).
- XLIII. The view from the northern part of the cemetery (the area in more active use) is filtered by the mature hedgerow on the sites northern boundary.
- XLIV. Receptors in these locations would be visitors to the cemetery and residents, both of which would be sensitive to visual changes.



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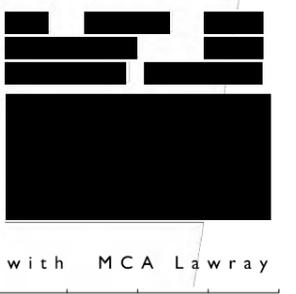


Sketch Plan

Hall & Woodhouse Ltd

# Land adjacent to The Bull Tavern, Sturminster Newton

Rev	Date	Amendment



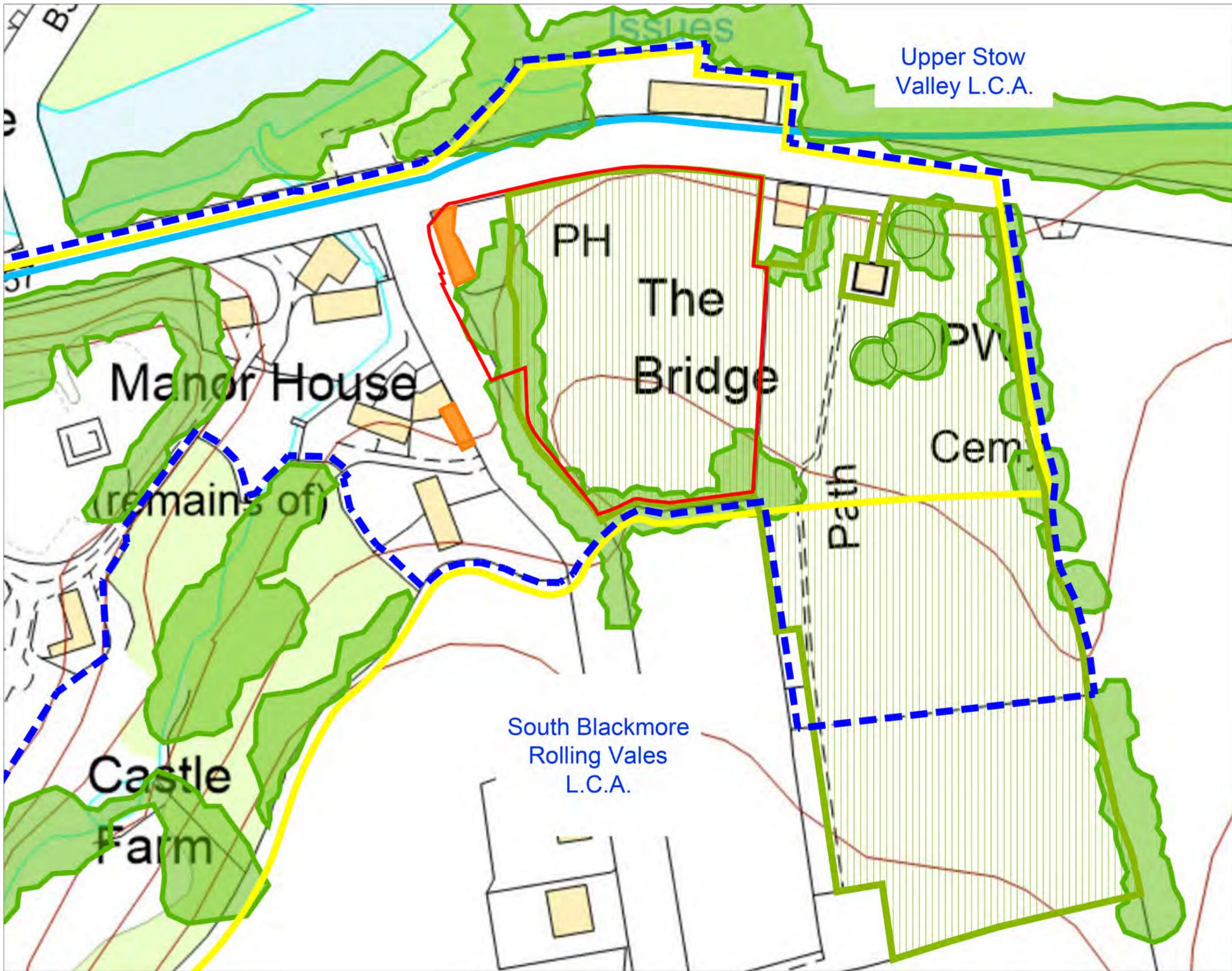
Date Mar 16  
 Scale @A3 1:500  
 Drawing File: 13154-A.dwg

13154.sk04

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KEY

-  Site Boundary
-  Landscape Character Designation Boundary
-  Extent of Settlement Boundary
-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Building
-  Important Open or Wooded Area (I.O.W.A.) Boundary
-  Important Vegetation
-  Landmark Tree



Project Name  
Sturminster Newton

Title  
Landscape Designations and Character Areas  
Figure 3

Scale 1 : 500 @ A1  
Scale 1 : 1000 @ A3

Document Number  
-

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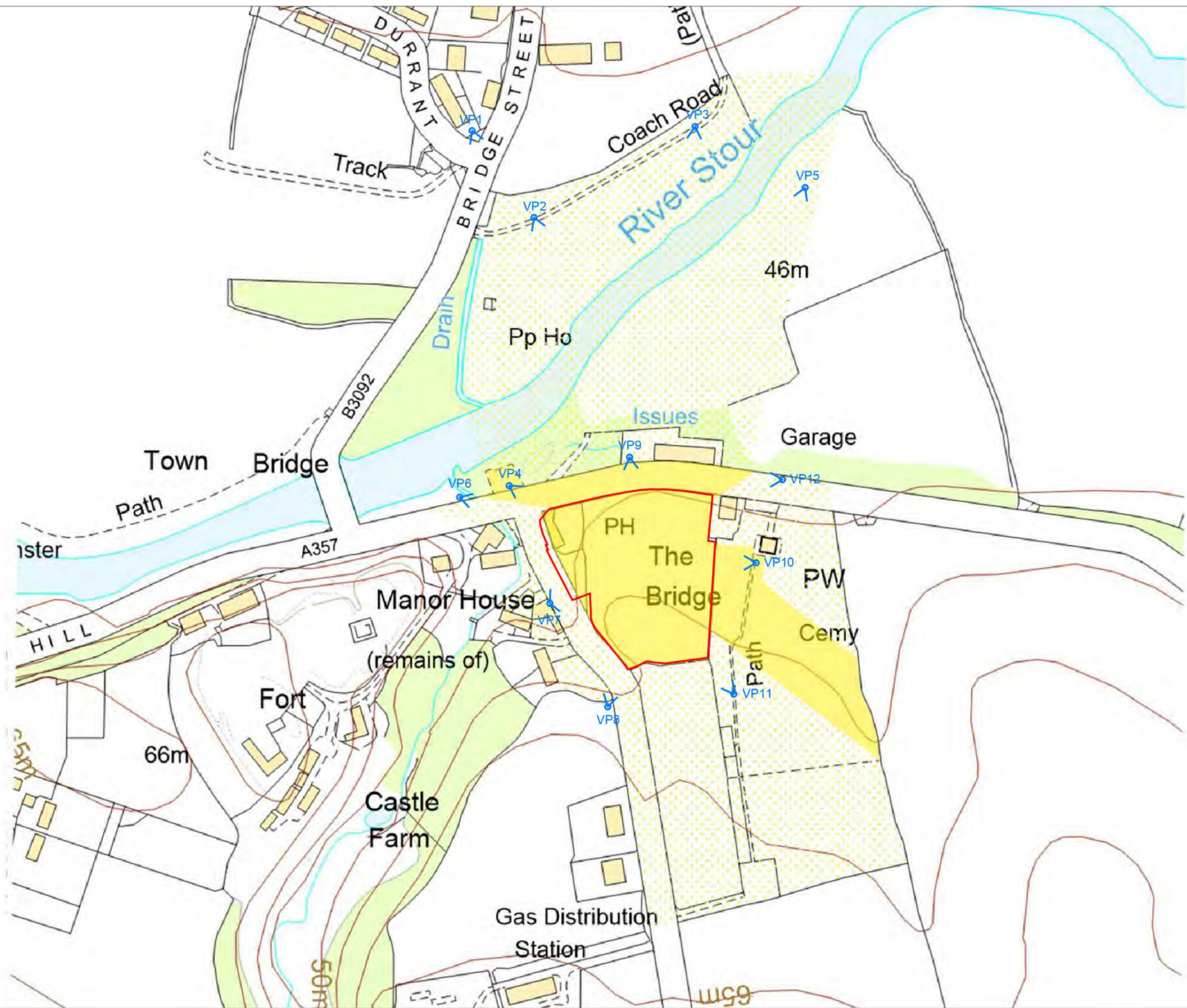
KEY

VP1 Viewpoint Location

Estimated Zone of Visibility

Open Views

Filtered Winter Views



Project Name  
Sturminster Newton

Title  
Viewpoint Locations  
Figure 4

Scale 1 : 1000 @ A1  
Scale 1 : 2000 @ A3



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Viewpoint 1  
Footpath on Damant



Viewpoint 2  
Stour Valley Footpath - North Side



Viewpoint 3  
Stour Valley Footpath - North Side



Viewpoint 5  
Stour River Valley Internal Footpath - South Side

Project Name  
**Sturminster Newton**

Title  
**Viewpoints  
Views From Upper Stour Floodplain**

Figure 5  
Scale: nts @ A1



Document Number  
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Viewpoint 6  
A357 Footpath Looking East



Viewpoint 4  
Roadside Meadows LNR Car Park



Viewpoint 9  
A357 Footpath Adjacent to Site Entrance



Viewpoint 12  
A357 Footpath Looking West

Project Name  
Sturminster Newton

Title  
Viewpoints  
A357 Road Corridor

Figure 6  
Scale: nts @ A1



North

Document Number  
-

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Viewpoint 10

Chapel of Rest Looking West



Viewpoint 11

Cemetery Footpath Looking South

Project Name  
**Sturminster Newton**

Title  
**Viewpoints  
West and North-West of the Site**

Figure 7  
Scale: nts @ A1



Document Number  
-

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Viewpoint 7  
Common Lane Adjacent to Stour View



Viewpoint 8  
Common Lane

Project Name  
Sturminster Newton

Title  
Viewpoints  
East and North of Site

Figure 8  
Scale: nts @ A1



North

Document Number  
-

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