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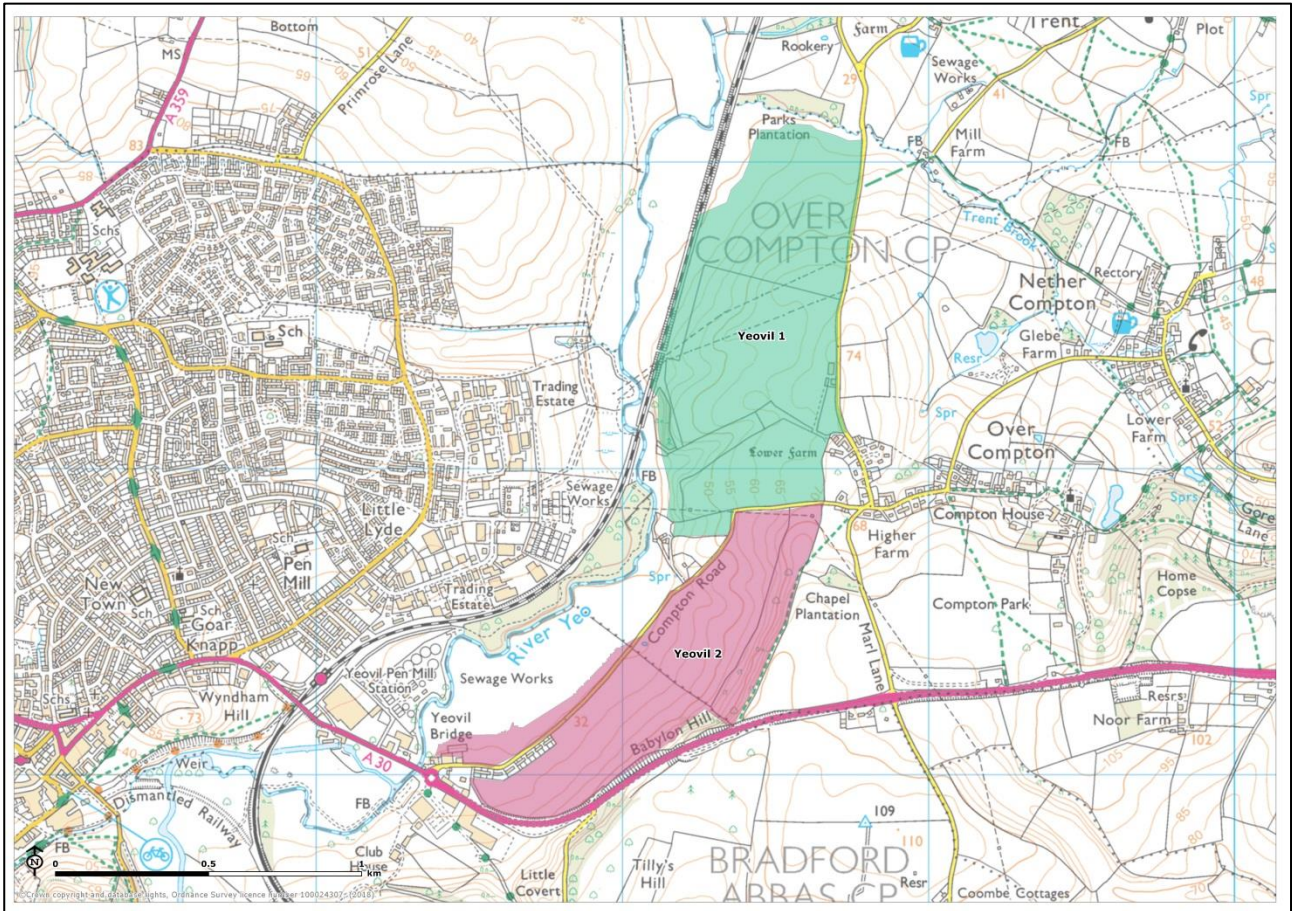
West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Strategic Landscape and Heritage Study

Stage 2 Assessment: Yeovil

Prepared by LUC
July 2018



Yeovil



Representative photographs of the settlement



New housing development on the north-eastern fringes of Yeovil



The eastern fringes of Yeovil, including industrial estates fringing the Yeo

Location and description

Yeovil is located within the district of South Somerset, close to the boundary between South Somerset and West Dorset. The town is located adjacent to the River Yeo, which forms part of the county boundary between Somerset and Dorset. It has Saxon origins, and was a prosperous market town in medieval times. Yeovil has expanded significantly in the 20th century with extensive residential development to the north of the historic core of the settlement. The town is framed by a number of hills and ridges, including the wooded slopes of Constitution Hill to the south and Babylon Hill (within West Dorset) to the south-east.

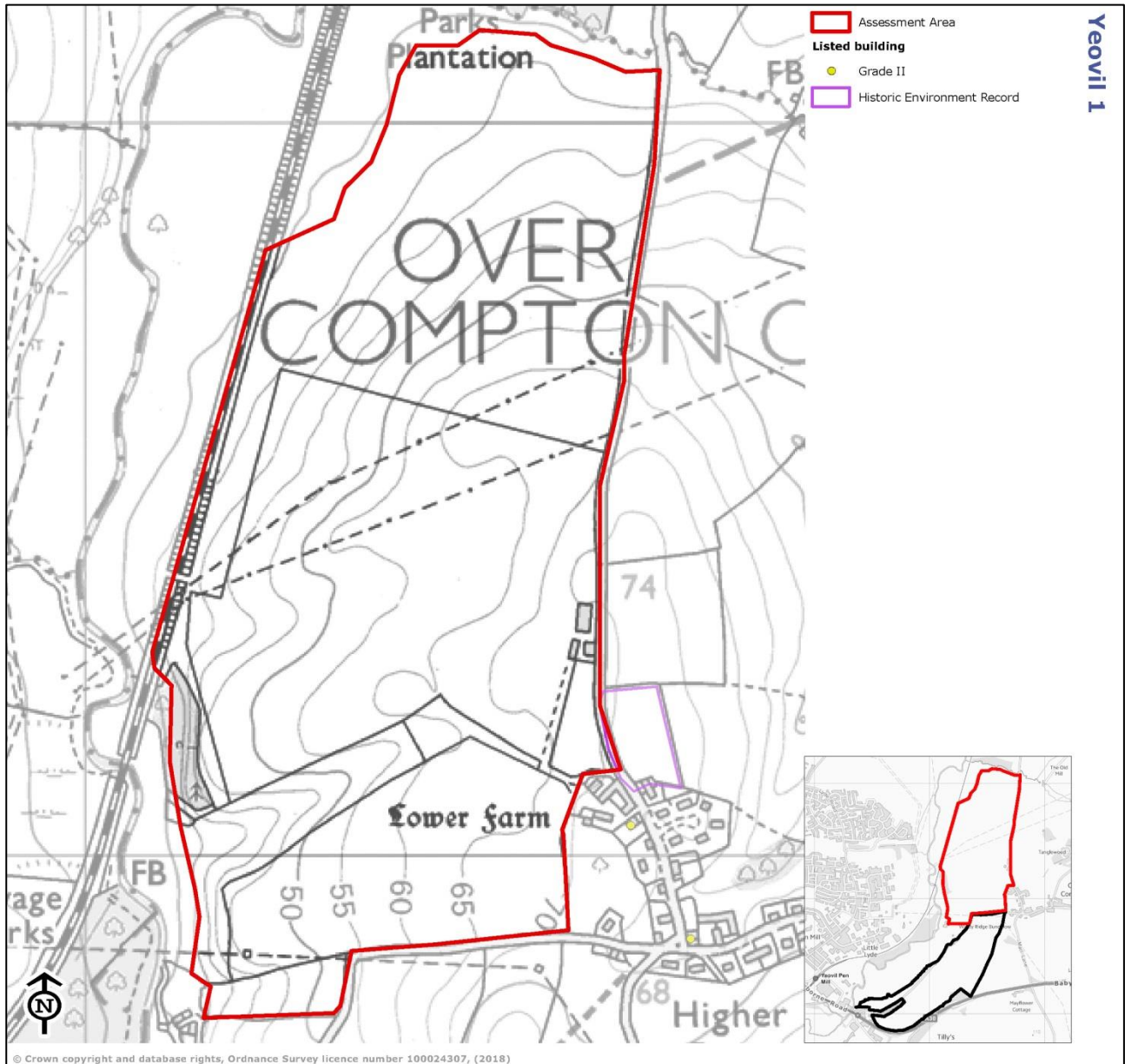
Aerial extent

YEOVIL



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Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Assessment area: Yeovil 1



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landscape character context				
This assessment area falls within the Trent Hills and Yeo Valley Pasture Landscape Character Areas. It comprises a number of large agricultural fields sloping up to the east of the River Yeo.				
Assessment criterion	Description			Sensitivity score
Physical character (including topography and scale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land sloping up from the River Yeo in an easterly direction, reaching a maximum of 74 metres. It slopes down in the north to Trent Brook, a tributary of the Yeo. A medium-large scale landscape, due to large field sizes and low-cut hedgerows creating a sense of exposure. 			M
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large-scale, modern fields which are mostly under intensive arable use and divided by closely cut hedgerows. Occasional mature in-field trees contribute to the natural character of the landscape and an estate feel on the edge of Trent village. A small block of mixed woodland is located adjacent to the river. 			L-M
Historic landscape character (<i>please see separate heritage assessment for asset-based information</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HLC indicates that the enclosures within this area are of medieval and modern, post-war origin. The adjacent village of Over Compton contains a number of Listed Buildings. This area also forms part of the wider landscape setting to Trent Conservation Area (located 350 metres to the north east), including its landmark Grade I Listed church. 			M
Form, density and setting of existing development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area is sparsely settled, with development limited to a small cluster of farm buildings along Western Street. This area is adjacent to and forms a setting to the village of Over Compton, in addition to forming part of the wider rural backdrop to the eastern areas of Yeovil and the village of Trent. 			M-H
Views and visual character including skylines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three overhead cable lines cross east-west through the landscape. Skylines are otherwise open and are locally prominent from the east of Yeovil. From higher ground, there are views over the river to the existing residential and industrial developments, including new housing. Long views north-west from the northern part of the landscape extend towards the Mendip Hills AONB and Glastonbury Tor. The spire of the Grade I St Andrew's church peeps above the trees in views of Trent village. 			M-H
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The landscape generally has strong rural qualities, although noise from the railway can intermittently detract from tranquillity. From higher ground, the area has a sense of openness. 			M
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
The landscape's open aspect affording expansive views (including to the Mendip Hills AONB), largely undeveloped, elevated skylines, rural setting the landscape provides to Yeovil and the historic vernacular villages of Over Compton and Trent (with its Conservation Area and Listed Buildings including Grade I landmark church) result in overall moderate-high landscape sensitivity. Sensitivity is reduced by the dominance of intensive farming with limited natural features, lack of historic field patterns and the visibility of urban and industrial development forming Yeovil's eastern fringe.				

Heritage sensitivity assessment

Dorset Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) context

The assessment area is composed principally of modern fields, displaying a total reorganisation of the historic field pattern. The southern quarter of the area comprises post-medieval piecemeal enclosures, although here some amalgamation of fields has also occurred.

Description and significance of heritage assets present

A definitive list of assets within each study area is provided at Appendix 1 in the Stage 2 methodology report. Only assets judged to be of a level of significance likely to influence the planning process are discussed below.

Designated assets within the assessment area:

- None

Non-designated assets within the assessment area:

- None

Likely susceptibility to physical change as a result of development

None.

Likely susceptibility to setting change as a result of development

Designated assets with the potential to experience setting change:

- Lower Farm farmhouse and attached garden wall, Grade II Listed Building
High importance
- Trent Conservation Area
High importance
- Parish Church of St. Andrew, Trent, Grade I Listed Building
High importance

Non-designated assets with the potential to experience setting change:

- Lower Farm steadings
Low importance

Overall assessment of sensitivity of heritage assets to change within the area

L

L-M

M

M-H

H

Development within the assessment area could result in setting change to Lower Farm farmhouse. The asset's setting has already been significantly eroded by the insertion of modern development in close proximity, removing its relationship to functionally, historically and visually connected land to the east (i.e. through the creation of 'Compton Acres'). New additions as part of the conversion of its steadings have also somewhat changed its immediate setting through the insertion of clearly domestic buildings within an area that would have been the working portion of the farmstead.

The exclusion of the small field abutting the property boundary is valuable in providing a link to its rural context, but setting change could still occur by way of divorcing the asset from remaining open agricultural context.

Trent Conservation Area, and particularly the landmark Grade I-Listed Parish Church of St. Andrew, are susceptible to setting change. Whilst the assessment area lies to the west of the road, and development would be unlikely to intrude on characteristic views to the church spire travelling north between Over Compton and Trent. However, development on the crest of the hill and steeply-sloping northern portion of the assessment area would likely be prominent in glimpsed views from the Conservation Area.

Summary of key sensitivities and guidance for sustainable development

Summary of key sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape and heritage sensitivities within the assessment area:

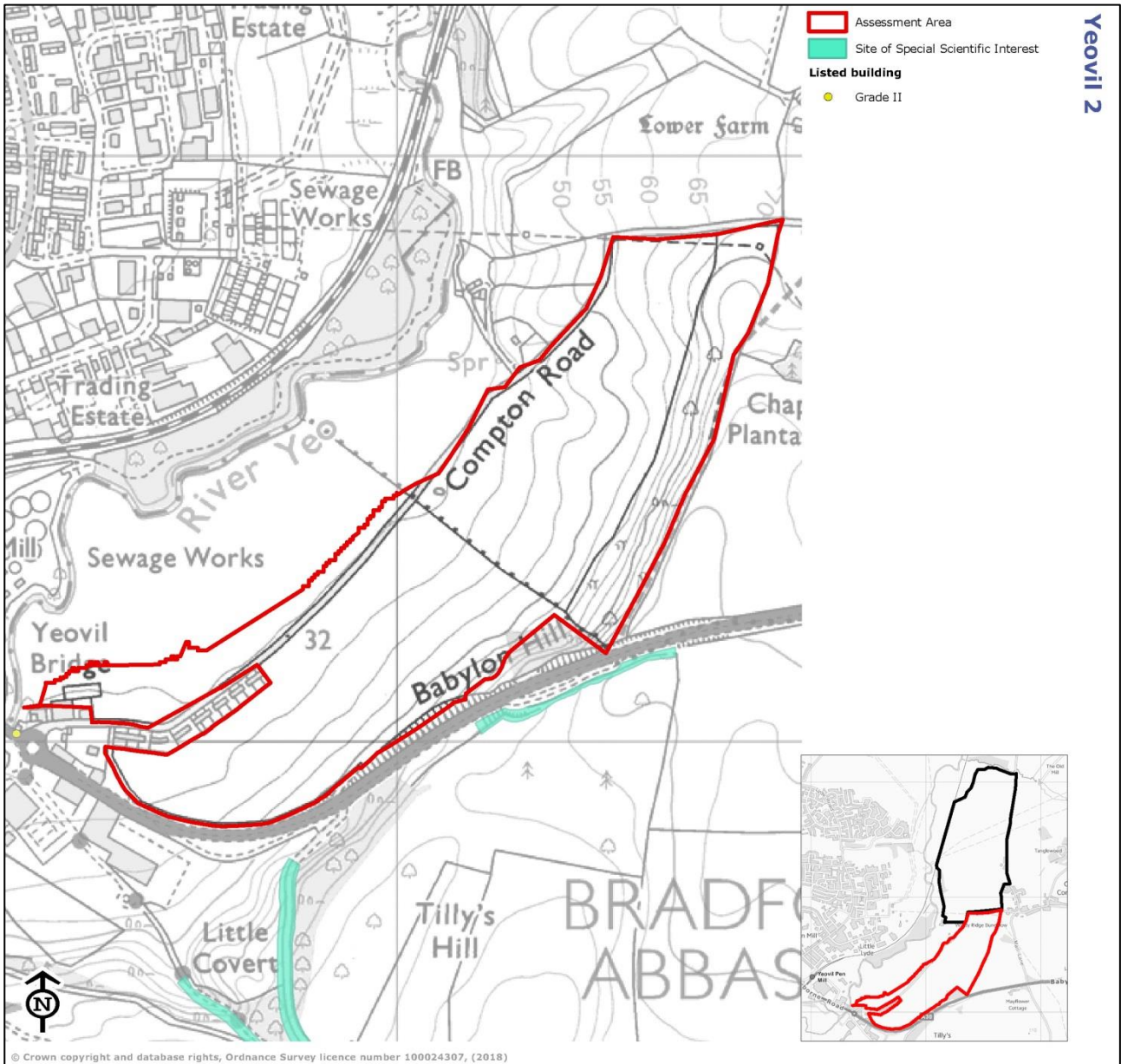
- Prominent slopes with undeveloped, open skylines that are highly visible from the eastern edges of Yeovil and the villages of Over Compton and Trent.
- The setting the landscape provides to the historic villages of Trent and Over Compton, the former being a Conservation Area. Both villages contain clusters of Listed Buildings and a distinctive local stone vernacular architecture.
- The setting provided to the Grade II listed Lower Farm farmhouse and related farm steadings.
- The sparsely settled and strongly agricultural character of the landscape, with existing development limited to farm buildings.
- Long views from higher ground including towards Glastonbury Tor and the Mendip Hills AONB, accompanied by a sense of openness and exposure.
- The function of the landscape as an eastern rural edge to Yeovil and natural containment to the town, rising up from the Yeo floodplain which marks the settlement's eastern extent.

Guidance for sustainable development

Any new development should:

- Be limited in scale and extent, given the assessment area's high visual prominence and both physical and visual separation from the settlement limits of Yeovil (beyond and above the Yeo floodplain).
- Conserve the setting the landscape provides to the historic villages of Trent (Conservation Area) and Over Compton, with clusters of Listed Buildings.
- Conserve the setting of the Grade II Lower Farm farmhouse and related farm steadings.
- Ensure any limited new development utilises consistent building styles/materials to the locality, particularly the use of local stone.
- Conserve views to the landmark Grade I Listed St Andrew's church in Trent, as well as longer, open views north-west towards Glastonbury Tor and the Mendip Hills AONB.
- Protect the landscape's function as a rural edge and containment (owing to its topography) to Yeovil.
- Utilise the screening effects of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows – seeking to enhance habitat coverage and linkages in association with any new development (tree/hedgerow planting should utilise locally prevalent species).
- Protect the tranquil and strongly agricultural qualities of the landscape.

Assessment area: Yeovil 2



Representative photographs



Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landscape character context				
This assessment area falls within the Trent Hills and Yeo Valley Pasture Landscape Character Areas. It comprises sloping agricultural land to the east of the River Yeo floodplain.				
Assessment criterion	Description			Sensitivity score
Physical character (including topography and scale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land steeply sloping up from the River Yeo towards Babylon Hill, reaching a maximum of 100 metres AOD. The field pattern is large-scale and regular in shape and appears intensively farmed. 			M
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mature broadleaved woodland, scrub and distinctive stands of Scots Pine on the slopes of Babylon Hill. Thick hedgerows and tall hedgebanks along Compton Road contribute to the wider habitat network. 			L-M
Historic landscape character (<i>please see separate heritage assessment for asset-based information</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HLC indicates that enclosures in this area comprise post-medieval piecemeal enclosures. A toll-house on the County boundary is adjacent to this area and is a Grade II Listed Building. 			L-M
Form, density and setting of existing development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This area is unsettled, although linear modern housing has encroached slightly along Compton Road. The landscape forms part of the setting to eastern Yeovil and the historic village of Over Compton, as well as providing separation between the two settlements. 			M-H
Views and visual character including skylines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This west of this area is not overly prominent. The steep slopes in the east of the area are more visible, particularly from the west. From higher ground (and where woodland allows), there are long views over the Yeo floodplain and Yeovil. Woodland on the A30 (Babylon Hill) along the edge of this area creates wooded skylines. A pylon line crossing the north of the area is a prominent feature. 			M
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The landscape retains a strong rural quality particularly in its northern half, being more influenced by nearby development including the sewage works and large-scale retail buildings in the south. Noise from the nearby railway line and A30 dual carriageway can detract from tranquillity. 			M
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
The prominent steeply sloping landform, broadleaved woodland, setting and sense of separation provided to existing settlement (Yeovil and the historic village of Over Compton), rural qualities and long views out from higher ground result in overall moderate-high landscape sensitivity. Sensitivity is reduced (particularly in the southern half) by the influence of the A30 and modern development including large-scale industrial buildings.				

Heritage sensitivity assessment

Dorset Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) context

The assessment area is composed mainly of post-medieval piecemeal enclosures, with a single surviving enclosed strip field and a small linear settlement of post-war housing.

Description and significance of heritage assets present

A definitive list of assets within each study area is provided at Appendix 1 in the Stage 2 methodology report. Only assets judged to be of a level of significance likely to influence the planning process are discussed below.

Designated assets within the assessment area:

- None

Non-designated assets within the assessment area:

- Site of the Battle of Babylon Hill

Likely susceptibility to physical change as a result of development

Babylon hill was reportedly the site of an English Civil War skirmish in 1642, in which a force of Parliamentarian Roundheads under the control of the Earl of Bedford defeated the Royalist Cavaliers under Sir Ralph Hopton. Archaeological remains, primarily in the form of lead shot and other artefacts lost during the battle, may therefore be present within the site. These will be highly susceptible to physical change and a phased programme of works comprising a desk-based assessment and field evaluation to inform the design process and an appropriate mitigation strategy will likely be required.

Likely susceptibility to setting change as a result of development

Designated assets with the potential to experience setting change:

- Toll-house on the county boundary with Somerset, Grade II Listed Building
High importance

Non-designated assets with the potential to experience setting change:

- Old Pen Mill (in South Somerset District) [HER ref: 54756]
Low importance

Overall assessment of sensitivity of heritage assets to change within the area

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
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Setting of the toll-house is already significantly changed by proximity of industrial estate and roundabout; the key element of its setting is the relationship with the road itself and this would be unlikely to change as a consequence of development.

Old Pen Mill does not have significant intervisibility with the assessment area as the asset is set well down in the landscape to the south of Sherborne Road; meaningful setting change is therefore unlikely as the asset's key functional and visual relationships are with the River Yeo.

If the battle site location is correct, physical change would occur to a non-designated asset.

Summary of key sensitivities and guidance for sustainable development

Summary of key sensitivities

The following provides a summary of the key landscape and heritage sensitivities within the assessment area:

- The locally prominent slopes of Babylon Hill in the east of the area.
- Semi-natural habitats providing texture in the landscape, including broadleaved woodland, scrub and distinctive stands of Scots Pine.
- Long views afforded from higher ground, particularly focused in a westerly direction across the Yeo floodplain towards Yeovil.
- The unsettled, rural character of the landscape which provides part of the setting to Yeovil and Over Compton, as well as maintaining a sense of separation between the two settlements.
- Strong rural character despite the close proximity of existing urban development and the A30.

Guidance for sustainable development

Any new development should:

- Be limited to the southern part of the assessment area – where low-lying, flatter land is already influenced by adjacent 20th century development (including the small row of 20th century housing, nearby A30, sewage works and large-scale industrial development).
- Avoid the prominent land sloping up to Babylon Hill, which is also characterised by locally important scrub and woodland habitats.
- Seek to understand in detail the location and extent of the Babylon Hill battlefield, ensuring that proposals conserve and enhance the character and significance of the asset.
- Maintain the undeveloped, rural character of the northern half of the assessment area which forms part of the transition into open countryside.
- Utilise the screening effects of existing hedgerows – seeking to enhance habitat coverage and linkages in association with any new development (tree/hedgerow planting should utilise locally prevalent species).
- Respect the historic line of Sherborne Road, conserving and – where possible – enhancing the relationships between the Listed toll-house and the road corridor.

Potential in-combination effects on heritage assets

The principal concern with regard to in-combination effects relates to changes in the character and appearance of the wider setting of Yeovil, as development of both Yeovil 1 and 2 would occupy a substantial area of the scarp on the opposite side of the River Yeo. This would reduce the legibility of the characteristic landform.