

vegetation, which means that the assets are visually and spatially divorced from the site. The lack of a physical or visual relationship between the assets and this part of the site from which, historically, the owners drew an income means that although they have a shared history it is not one that is appreciable from the existence of the site alone.

6.228 The part of the site that could have some intervisibility with the house and grounds (to the south), were it not for the tree cover, does not have any known relationship with the estate.

Sensitivity and potential harm

6.229 The risk of harm to Wolfeton House and its associated listed buildings is **none**. The indicative masterplan indicates that the land historically associated with the assets lies within Open Space South, although part of it is to be developed as the Link Road. The Link Road would be routed approximately 790m east of the grade I House and would involve the development of a former small strip of Wolfeton House's landholding within the Dorchester water meadows. Due to the intervening topography and vegetation, there would be no intervisibility between Wolfeton Estate and the Link Road; it is also unlikely that any associated noise and light could be experienced given the distance between the two. Any development further east within the site (e.g. Housing West) would also not be experienced from or on conjunction with the house or estate due to the distance between them and the intervening topography and vegetation.

Level of effect

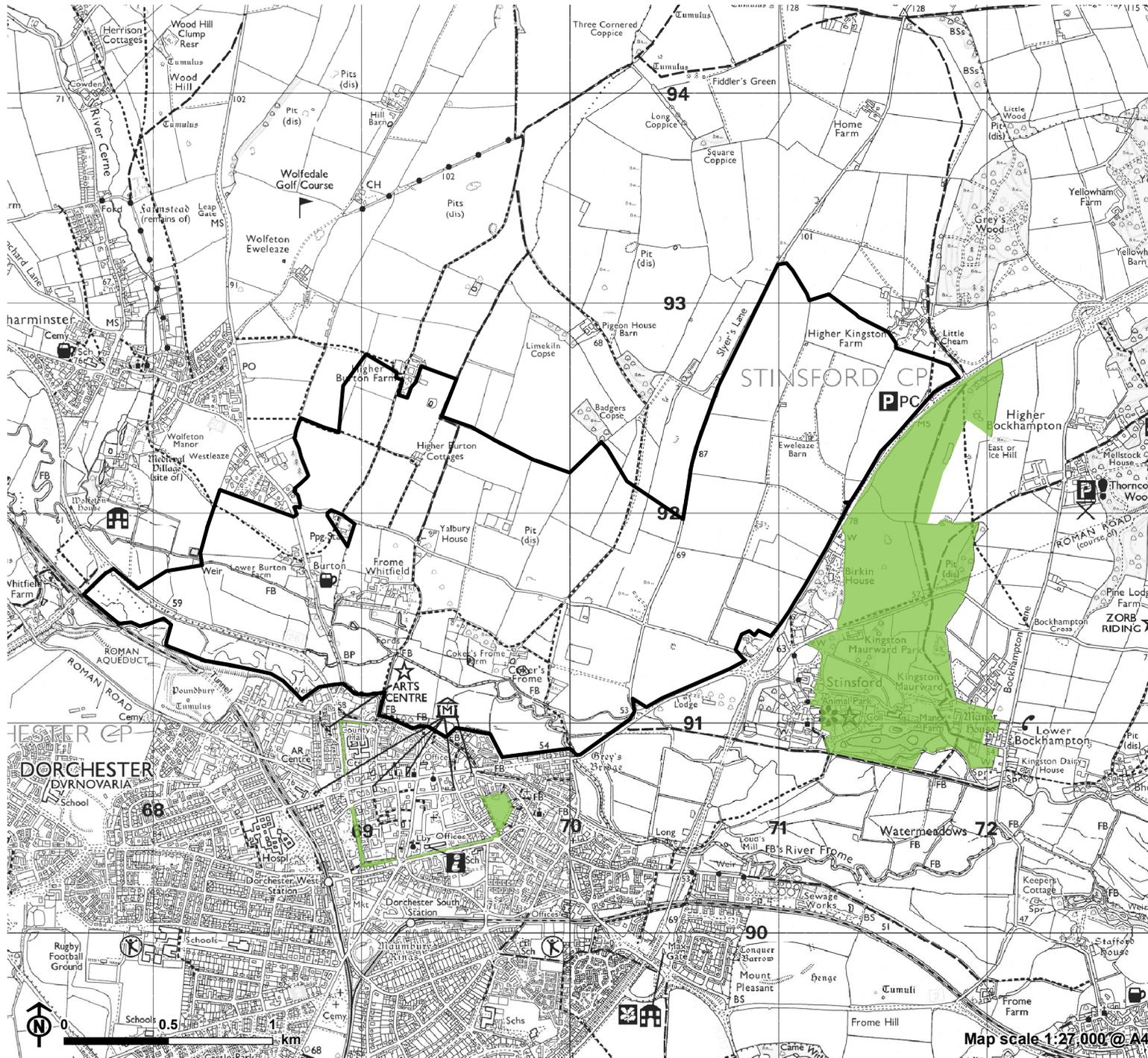
6.230 Taking into account the significance of this asset (high) and the risk of harm to their significance (none), the overall level of effect of the indicative masterplan proposals on the historic environment is judged to be **none**.

Registered parks and gardens

6.231 The location of the registered parks and gardens potentially sensitive to setting change as a result of the development of the site is shown on Figure 6.39 (below).



Figure 6.39: Registered parks and gardens potentially sensitive to setting change



- Site boundary
- Registered Parks and Gardens

Kingston Maurward [NHLE ref: 1000719]

Summary

Significance of asset	Contribution of the site to significance	Risk of harm to asset	Level of effect
High	Low	Low	Low-medium
Grade II* RPG	The site forms a marginally important part of the setting of the asset and this contribution to heritage significance may be affected by the development of the site.	The significance of the heritage asset may be harmed but that harm would be minor.	Asset is of high significance and the magnitude of change is likely to be of such a minor scale that the significance of the asset will only be marginally affected.

Description

6.232 Kingston Maurward is a grade II* RPG situated c.2.5km east-northeast of Dorchester. The 96ha park is bound to the west by the village of Stinsford and the grounds of Birkin House, to the north by the A35, to the east by agricultural land and the hamlet of Bockhampton, and to the south by water meadows along the Frome Valley. The southern half of the park (up to Stinsford Hill) forms part of Stinsford Conservation Area and includes eight listed buildings; a scheduled monument (a Roman road) lies in the northern half.

6.233 A manor has been present at Kingston Maurward from the 14th century, and today a 16th century mansion (now grade I listed) remains extant [NHLE ref: 1119861] in the southeast corner of the park. Constructed by the nobleman Christopher Grey c.1590, the house comprises two ashlar storeys with an attic, and slate roofs with parapets and coped gables. The original E-shaped range was extended in the early 17th century with a projecting wing to the east. The gardens associated with this house are situated to the west and south of the building and are enclosed to the south by rubble-stone walls. A terrace retained by ashlar walls and approached by a flight of stone steps (listed grade II; NHLE ref: 1154768) extends below the west facade of the house. There are further walled garden enclosures to the east of the house.

6.234 In the 18th century, George Pitt had a new mansion [NHLE ref: 1154732] built on a ridge of high ground 300m west of the 16th century manor. The architect of this three-storey brick house (now faced in stone and grade I listed) is uncertain. Two architects – Thomas Archer and John James

of Greenwich – have been suggested, although it is the latter that is most likely.

6.235 The construction of the new mansion meant that the earlier house lost its walled gardens, as they were converted to kitchen gardens for the new house. Fourteen years after completion in 1720, an extensive park and pleasure ground were laid out around the new mansion with the advice of William Pitt, Lord Chatham. The formal gardens are situated to the west of the mansion, while informal pleasure grounds extend to the south-east and south, where the ground drops steeply towards a large ornamental lake. These gardens include several grade II listed structures, including several flights of stairs [NHLE ref: 1154758, 1154758 and 1119860], and various balustrades and stone piers [NHLE ref: 1154755] featuring vase finials and a walled garden [NHLE ref: 1323653].

6.236 In the 18th century King George III was entertained at the house and apparently, at his suggestion, the house was cased in Portland stone. In the mid-19th century, the estate passed from the Pitt family to Francis Martin MP, whose wife educated Thomas Hardy as a boy; the house later served as a model for Knapwater House in Hardy's novel *Desperate Remedies* (1891).

6.237 Martin only held the estate for seven years, selling it on to James Fellows in 1853. In 1906 it was sold on again; this time to Major Kenneth Balfour who in turn parted with it in 1914, when it was purchased by Cecil Hanbury. Following World War I, Hanbury proceeded to set out a series of formal gardens west of the manor. During the 1920s several leading politicians and Thomas Hardy were entertained at the house by the Hanbury's.

6.238 During World War II the house and grounds were requisitioned by the military and it was an important base for D-day preparations. Then, in 1947, the estate was sold to Dorset County Council for use as a farm institute. The Institute undertook an extensive programme of repairs and consolidation, restoring the gardens and pleasure grounds. However, the repurposing has also had a negative impact on view lines and the appreciation of designed landscape, leading to the RPG's inclusion on the Heritage at Risk register.

6.239 The park extends to the north of the 18th century mansion and, today, is in mixed agricultural use with areas of arable cultivation to the north of a minor road (Hollow Hill) that crosses the site from east to west c.500m north of the house. A narrow belt of mixed plantation extends eastwards into the park from the principal entrance on Hollow Hill, screening the road from the house as it drops into the valley. Further areas of plantation to the east, north-east, and north-west frame the northern vista.

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6.240 Much of the parkland lies within a north-south dry valley, and this topography naturally limits views in and out of the parkland. However, there are some southerly views from the high ground within the parkland across the valley of the River Frome towards plantations associated with Came House c.1.75km south-south-west. To the north there are also views beyond the park towards Grey's Wood, which lies north of the development site and was once part of the estate's landholding. The house is also visible in the far distance in views from Waterston Ridge beyond Grey's Wood; this gives a pleasing perspective from which Kingston Maurward House can be seen and read as a high-status house in a rural setting, although the designed landscape that surrounds it is not legible in these long-distance views.

6.241 The development site lies directly to the north of the northern half of the RPG, on the opposite side of the A35, which forms a clear boundary to the park. Despite the proximity, there is extremely limited intervisibility between the asset and the site. It may be possible to see the very eastern edge of the site from the footpath that extends from the old manor house towards Hollow Hill (following the line of the RPG's eastern boundary), but intervening vegetation and changes in topography make these limited.

Figure 6.40: Kingston Maurward House



The view from Hollow Hill looking south towards the 18th century house.

Figure 6.41: View NNE from Kingston Maurward RPG



View from the public footpath that runs along the eastern boundary of the RPG. In the middle distance behind the pump house is Hollow Hill and beyond that the fields that make up the northern extent of the RPG. The site is beyond the clump of trees and planting in the far distance middle-left of the photograph.

Figure 6.42: View north towards the site from within Kingston Maurward RPG



This is the view from the field furthest north within the RPG. In the very far distance just right of centre are the tops of the trees of Grey's Wood; the line of trees in front of them (at the far end of the field) are those that line the A35. The site is beyond them to the left of Grey's Wood.

Figure 6.43: View towards Kingston Maurward from Waterston Ridge



Kingston Maurward House is visible from this point, but because of the topography its lower floors and the landscape within which it stands are not visible. The trees to the left handside are those of Grey's Wood, next to them are the farm building of Higher Kingston CA, and the bright green field between the farm and the house is part of the site. The indicative masterplan suggests that this will remain green open space.

Significance

6.242 The significance of Kingston Maurward RPG is **high**. It is derived from a combination of its artistic interest as a designed landscape, with added value as a result of its group value with the listed buildings and historical landscape features within it. The asset also has historical interest due to its association with several notable figures, including Thomas Hardy, and its role as a base for preparations for D-day. There is also likely to be some communal value for people who have worked and studied at the college.

6.243 In terms of setting, the RPG has important historical and functional relationships with the listed buildings and other historical structures and features within it. In many cases these features have either deliberate or fortuitous visual, spatial and contextual relationships that contribute greatly to its aesthetic values and are important to understanding the function and history of the park as a high-status country estate. The estate's wider rural setting has a minor contribution to make in this regard as it helps us understand the history of the estate; this connection is principally contextual, however, as the topography and insular character of the RPG limit views to/from the parkland that would help illustrate and reinforce this relationship.

Contribution of the site to significance

6.244 The contribution the site makes to the significance of the asset is **low**. The asset has no historical connection with the site, and the topography of the area and the extent of tree

cover throughout, especially along its boundary with the A35 and the site, means there is extremely limited – if any – intervisibility; if there is, this would be from the northern portion of the RPG when tree cover thins.

6.245 Although the site does not directly contribute to the significance of the RPG, its undeveloped character does ensure that there are no visual distractions above the treeline of the boundary from the northern fields of the parkland; as such, the site in its current form indirectly influences our experience of the asset by allowing a better appreciation of its historical and aesthetic significance.

6.246 Likewise, the site's benign character allows appreciation of the estate in its wider, rural setting in views back towards the asset from Waterston Ridge (although this is predominantly related to appreciation of the house rather than the parkland).

Sensitivity and potential harm

6.247 The sensitivity of the asset to the development of the site is **low**. The indicative masterplan for the site indicates that the part of the site immediately adjacent to the A35 and Kingston Maurward RPG is to be kept predominantly as Open Space North and so views towards this area will not change; similarly, views towards Grey's Wood from within the RPG and from Waterston Ridge back towards the house will be unaffected.

6.248 A small section of housing east will sit opposite the RPG boundary just north of Birkin House, fronted by an area of strategic landscaping. From here, the proposed boundary of housing extends backwards away from the A35 and RPG boundary but further north towards Higher Kingston CA. The strategic landscaping would not harm the significance of the RPG as it will just strengthen existing boundary cover. It should also, in theory, screen the housing from views within the RPG; however, as the layout, and scale etc. of the housing is not yet known, there is potential for it to be visible above the line of the trees, which may visually distract and detract from our experience of the RPG.

Level of effect

6.249 The development of the site would result in a low level of harm to an asset of high significance. Therefore, the overall level of effect of the indicative masterplan proposals on the historic environment is **low-medium**.

Options for sustainable development

6.250 In this instance, harm to the heritage asset could be completely avoided by ensuring that any development on the site is not visible above the tree-line of the boundary of the RPG/A35. To that end, it is recommended that any

applications for development of this part of the site include verified views from within the RPG towards the site and towards the asset from Waterston Ridge to demonstrate that the development will not visually intrude on the asset.

Town Walks [NHLE ref: 1001594]

Summary

Significance of asset	Contribution of the site to significance	Risk of harm to asset	Level of effect
High	None	None	None
Grade II RPG	The site does not contribute to the heritage significance of the asset and so the asset is not sensitive to development of the site	The significance of the heritage asset will not be harmed.	The development of the site does not interact with the asset or its significance.

Description

6.251 Dorchester Town Walks are a group of six early-18th century tree-lined promenades laid out on the course of the Roman town walls (which are also scheduled NHLE ref: 1002449). The walks included in the register entry are North Walk, Colliton Walk, West Walks, Bowling Alley Walk, South Walks, Gallows Hill, and Salisbury Walk, together with the adjacent Salisbury Field, a park from c.1900.

6.252 For centuries the town walls marked the extent of Dorchester to the west, south and east, and development was principally contained within them; this can be seen on the 1771 map of the town (commissioned by the mayor and aldermen of the Corporation) as can clearly the avenues of trees that lined the promenades of the walks.⁸⁶ As such, when the promenades were established in the 18th century, there were probably views out towards the countryside to the north west and south.

6.253 Today, the town has extended considerably beyond the walls and so your experience of the walks is as part of the historic core of Dorchester (rather than demarcating its extent), as soft, green landscaping features within an urban setting. Views to or from the site and walks are highly constrained by the built development that surrounds the assets and there are, at least now, only two areas that the site

can be experienced from – and in both cases the visibility is low and long-range.

6.254 The first of these is Salisbury Field. This park is located on a north-south slope and part of the site is visible from the higher southern part of the site, behind the historic and modern development that lines the southern boundary of the park. The second area is along Colliton Walk, which runs north-south by The Grove. The site may be seen when looking north along the main road, but the raised elevation of the walk and tree-cover along it mean that the site cannot be experienced in summertime, until the very end of the walk as it turns east on to North Walk. There may be some greater visibility in wintertime given that the trees are broadleaved.

Figure 6.44: View north towards the site along Colliton Walk



Figure 6.45: View north across Salisbury Park towards the site



Significance

6.255 This asset has a **high** significance derived primarily from its artistic and historical illustrative value as a good survival of 18th century ornamental/pleasure walks that demonstrate how social practices – in this case 'promenading' – have shaped our townscapes. Promenades are perhaps

⁸⁶ <http://www.opcdorset.org/fordingtondorset/Files2/MapDorchester1771.html> [accessed 19th October 2020]

more commonly associated with seaside resorts and the emergence of the mass tourism industry in the 19th century, as well as public parks and cemeteries, but it is a landscape type that was well established by the end of the 18th century. Whilst many were paid entry only (either on entry or through subscription), others – such as Dorchester, Shrewsbury, Bath, Liverpool, York – were technically publicly accessible, although social convention meant they were generally the preserve of the middle and upper classes. They often, as at Dorchester, incorporated features of antiquity as the study of such monuments was increasingly popular and were designed for people to see – and be seen in – the latest fashions. The creation of the Town Walks at Dorchester funded by the alderman and mayor shows just how prosperous the town was at the time and how well its merchant and professional classes were doing for themselves, and would have made Dorchester the height of fashion at the time.

6.256 The example here at Dorchester also has associational and cultural value as they are mentioned in Thomas Hardy's novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886).

Contribution of the site to significance

6.257 The contribution of the site to the significance of The Walks is **none**. There is no apparent functional or designed relationship with the site and very limited visibility, with glimpsed views of the site possible from the asset but none the other way. These views are incidental to our experience and understanding of the asset and have been greatly curtailed by the expansion of the town, so that if there were once any designed views – or even further reaching serendipitous views – these are now lost to later changes. At most, where glimpsed, the site may be said to provide some wider historical landscape context.

Sensitivity and potential harm

6.258 The risk of harm to the significance of The Walks is none because there is no relationship between the site and The Walks. Parts of the site may potentially be visible above the roofline of properties along Salisbury Field, but the introduction of built development in the distance behind existing development would not affect the significance or experience of the asset. The area of site potentially visible from along Colliton Walk would be Open Space South, meaning that there would be no change to this view.

Level of harm

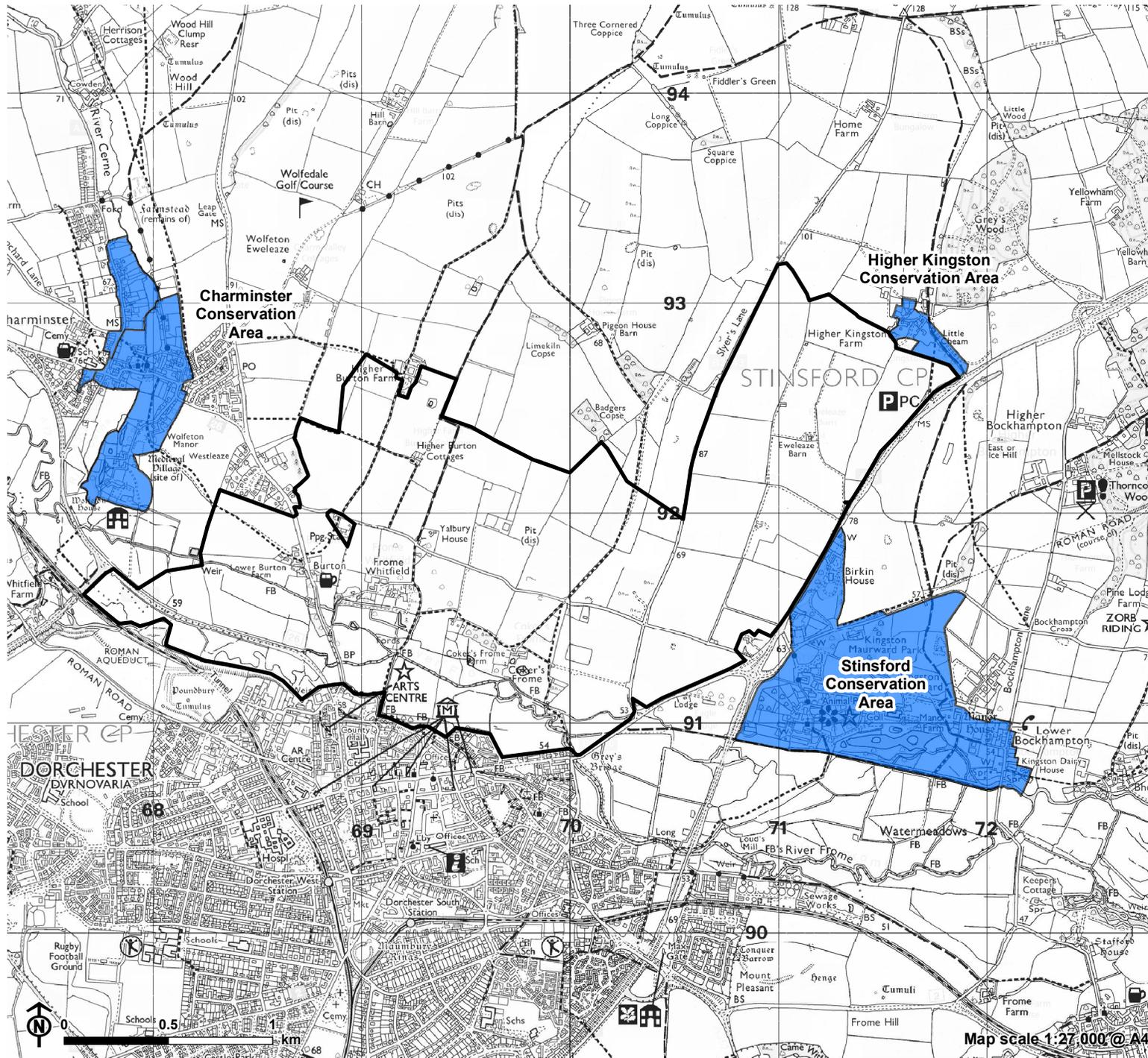
6.259 Taking into account the significance of this asset (high) and the risk of harm to their significance (none), the overall level of effect of the indicative masterplan proposals on the historic environment is judged to be none.

Conservation Areas

6.260 The locations of the conservation areas potentially sensitive to setting change are shown on Figure 6.46 (below).



Figure 6.46: Designated assets potentially sensitive to setting change
Registered Parks and Gardens



- Site boundary
- Conservation Area

Charminster Conservation Area

Summary

Significance of asset	Contribution of the site to significance	Risk of harm to asset	Level of effect
Medium	Low	None	None
Conservation area of regional significance	The site forms a marginally important part of the heritage significance of the asset and this contribution to heritage significance may be affected by the development of the site.	The significance of the heritage asset will not be harmed.	The development of the site does not interact with the asset or its significance.

Description

6.261 Charminster Conservation Area was designated in 1973 and amended in February 1990. It is located at the confluence of the Rivers Cerne and Frome approximately 1.5km north-northwest of Dorchester. It comprises the historic core of Charminster, a linear settlement in the Cerne valley, and the Wolfeton Estate, a separate settlement located to the south of it.

6.262 The village of Charminster is of medieval origin and developed at a crossing point (near the Parish Church) of the River Cerne. Much of the original nucleated plan of the village is intact and many of its historical public and private buildings survive – including the Church, Vicarage, former Mill, Hall and one of the major gentry houses – displaying a variety of architectural styles. This part of the conservation area is domestic in scale, organic in layout and due to the topography of the valley, self-contained and inward looking, with no visibility of the site (as indicated by the ZTV).

6.263 The Wolfeton Estate comprises several listed buildings including a wing of an Elizabethan manor with attached gatehouse (grade I), a Riding House (grade II*), stable block (grade II) and two gate piers with flanking walls (both grade II), as well as the site of a deserted medieval settlement. The gardens and approaches to the estate also remain, although the wider landscape setting - beyond the conservation area

boundary - has partly been reorganised by modern interventions; the significance of the listed buildings has been assessed in more detail above, and more information on them and the history of the estate can be found there. It is this part of the conservation area that is more sensitive as, although there is no intervisibility between the site and listed buildings themselves, part of the site used to be part of the Wolfeton estate, and the character of this area is more open with a much more immediate relationship with its rural environs.

6.264 In total, the conservation area includes 21 listed buildings and around 20 important local buildings of character and group value. In addition to the historic core of the village and Wolfeton Estate, the conservation area also takes in parts of the village's surrounding landscape which are functionally related to the settlement, including the river and mill channels, some water meadows, several large gardens and areas of amenity green space.⁸⁷

6.265 Beyond the conservation area there is considerable modern housing development to the west and east of Charminster, as well as modern infill along the A352, which runs along the western side of the Cerne valley and the conservation area. Otherwise, the setting of the conservation area is undeveloped agricultural land comprising post-medieval and modern enclosures (the latter running along the east of the conservation area). Amidst this, the former water meadows remain legible to the southwest and north of the conservation area.

Significance

6.266 The special interest of any conservation area lies principally in its historical and architectural interest, as the history and evolution of the area is documented in the spaces and buildings contained within it; the arrangement, appearance and relationship between these elements tells the unique story of an area and shapes the character and sense of place as we experience them today. Charminster Conservation Area is an attractive example of a rural Dorset village of regional interest and, thus, **medium** significance, with its interest deriving from the well-preserved historical layout of the village, its spatial relationship with the remnant Wolfeton Estate, and the number and variety of historical buildings within it. The gardens at Wolfeton House and the village's contextual relationship with its wider landscape setting are also important to the conservation area's character and appearance.

⁸⁷ West Dorset District Council. 2007. *Cerne Abbas, Charminster, Sydling St Nicholas and Godmanstone Conservation Area Appraisal*. Available online at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/>

constraints/conservation-areas/west-dorset/pdfs/cerne-abbas-charminster-sydling-st-nicholas-and-godmanstone-conservation-area-appraisal.pdf

Contribution of the site to significance

6.267 The site makes a **low** contribution to the significance of the asset. There are some small areas of the site that are historically related to the Wolfeton Estate, but there is very limited intervisibility with them and so the contribution they make to the character and appearance of the area is negligible.

6.268 What the site does do is provide part of an important spatial and visual separation between the historic settlements of Charminster and Dorchester. This reinforces the boundary of the settlements by ensuring there is a transition from urban to rural and back again, which helps maintain their individual character and allows better appreciation and understanding of them as separate entities. This is appreciable in views southeast towards Dorchester and vice versa from Dorchester towards Charminster Conservation Area.

Sensitivity and potential harm

6.269 The risk of potential harm to Charminster Conservation Area from the indicative masterplan proposals is **none**. The site extends up to 292m east and 302m south of Charminster Conservation Area and the area of the site closest to Charminster Conservation Area is Open Space South. This area also extends up to and includes part of Dorchester Conservation Area, meaning that Charminster Conservation Area will continue to maintain its distinct and separate historical character.

Level of harm

6.270 Taking into account the significance of this asset (medium) and the risk of harm to their significance (none), the overall level of effect of the indicative masterplan proposals on the historic environment is judged to be none.

Options for sustainable development

6.271 Any alterations to the indicative masterplan should seek to retain the open space between Charminster, the small group of buildings around Lower Burton Farm and Dorchester and conserve their legibility as separate historical settlements.

Higher Kingston Conservation Area (including the grade II listed Kingston House NHLE no. 132622)

Summary

Significance of asset	Contribution of the site to significance	Risk of harm to asset	Level of effect
Medium	Low	None	None
Conservation area of regional significance	The site forms a marginally important part of the heritage significance of the asset and this contribution to heritage significance may be affected by the development of the site.	The significance of the heritage asset will not be harmed.	The development of the site does not interact with the asset or its significance.

Description

6.272 Higher Kingston Conservation Area was designated in February 1990. It is located at the northern end of Kingston Maurward RPG, on the opposite side of the A35, and the site extends up to and abuts its southern boundary. The conservation area covers the extent of a post-medieval farmstead at Higher Kingston and includes one grade II listed building, the 18th century Kingston House [NHLE no. 1323622] (which has been assessed separately above), although some of the other buildings in the conservation area may be curtilage listed.

6.273 The farmhouse is a relatively plain 2-storey building with an 19th century extension to the rear and left. It stands at the northern end of the conservation area, roughly 100m to the north of the site boundary,⁸⁸ and faces southeast, towards the A35. It is surrounded by gardens, with those to the front terraced and reached via a short flight of steps. A driveway leads up to the front of the house, from the A35, and down the eastern side to a courtyard complex of outbuildings, which appear to be of historical character. Behind these are a series of tenement cottages, which correspond to buildings shown on the early OS maps. There are also some larger modern agricultural buildings beyond these.

⁸⁸ Note that the identification triangle on the NHLE shows the house slightly further northwest of where it actually is.

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6.274 In terms of setting, the farm complex is surrounded by agricultural land, with Grey's Wood to the northeast. Although located relatively high up the northern side of the Frome River Valley, Higher Kingston Farm – and conservation area – stand within a dry valley that extends around the west of Grey's Wood, down through Kingston Maurward RPG to the River Frome. Consequently, the landform within the conservation area rises relatively quickly to the south-west of the farmhouse, interrupting almost all intervisibility with the site bar the very southern boundary of the conservation area, which currently extends to include the brow of the hill.

Figure 6.47: View of Higher Kingston CA from the north



Grey's Wood is to the left with the collection of Higher Kingston CA buildings adjacent to it in the centre. The site is the green field directly behind the farm buildings in the distance.

Figure 6.48: Views within Higher Kingston CA



Workers' cottages and agricultural buildings to the north of the main farmhouse.



The approach to the CA from the A35. The site starts at the brow of the hill.

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Significance

6.275 The character and appearance of this conservation area is derived primarily from the architectural value of Kingston Farmhouse and its associated historical buildings, and their historical illustrative value as a well-preserved example of local vernacular architecture during the agricultural revolution and period of high farming (1750 – 1880). It also has picturesque aesthetic character due to its positioning within a secluded and well-treed dip in the landscape, which provides a sense of seclusion despite the proximity of the A35.

Contribution of the site to significance

6.276 The contribution the site makes to the significance of the asset is **low**. The asset does not appear to have a historical associative or functional relationship with the land contained within the site; however, there is some limited intervisibility, with the site forming a small part of the backdrop to the asset in long distance views from the north. The site's rural character and the lack of any other development ensures there are no visual distractions and so it contributes to the asset's aesthetic qualities.

Sensitivity and potential harm

6.277 The sensitivity of the asset to the development of the site is **none**. It is indicated on the masterplan that the part of the site that contributes to the asset's significance is to remain as open green space and so the contribution it makes to the asset's aesthetic value will not change.

Level of effect

6.278 The development of the site would result in no harm to an asset of medium significance. Therefore, the overall level of effect on the historic environment is **none**.

Stinsford Conservation Area

Summary

Significance of asset	Contribution of the site to significance	Risk of harm to asset	Level of effect
High	Low	Low	Low - medium
Conservation area of national significance	The site forms a marginally important part of the heritage significance of the asset and this contribution to heritage significance	The significance of the heritage asset may be harmed but that harm would be minor.	The development of the site does not interact with the asset or its significance.

Significance of asset	Contribution of the site to significance	Risk of harm to asset	Level of effect
	may be affected by the development of the site.		

Description

6.279 Stinsford and Lower Bockhampton are two small settlements situated two kilometres east of Dorchester, on the shallow north slope of the Frome valley. They are separated from Dorchester by the River Frome water meadows and in turn lie 1km apart, being separated by the Kingston Maurward estate (now a grade II * Registered Park and Garden and part of Kingston Maurward College). Designated in 1990, Stinsford Conservation Area covers both the settlements at Stinsford and Locker Bockhampton, as well as the southern half of Kingston Maurward estate. In total it contains 31 listed buildings, including three grade I assets of exceptional interest and 18 locally listed buildings.

6.280 The settlement of Stinsford is of medieval origin and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The oldest extant building is the parish church of St Michael (now grade I listed), the earliest parts of which are of 13th century date. The church is referred to in the works of Thomas Hardy and is the burial place of his heart and several of his family members, as well as another Poet Laureate, Cecil Day-Lewis. Several of the monuments in the church graveyard are listed. The church also has important associations with the Kingston Maurward Estate and the grade II listed Stinsford House, a 17th century country house that has recently been converted into multiple residences.

6.281 Other key listed buildings in Stinsford include the grade II listed Stinsford Farmhouse and Stinsford Cottages, which were presumably historically and functionally related to Stinsford House, and Birkin House, a 19th century country house that is now grade II listed (see separate assessment above for further details on this individual asset). Birkin House and grounds lie to the north of the former Stinsford estate; both are bound to the west by the A35 – with the site on the opposite side - and to the east by Kingston Maurward RPG.

6.282 A manor had been present at Kingston Maurward from the 14th century, and today two mansions – one 16th century and the other 18th century (both grade I listed) – survive along with gardens and 96 ha of parkland. Other listed structures in this section of the conservation area are mainly related to features within the gardens surrounding the houses, although the design and sightlines between them have been affected by the estate's repurposing as an agricultural college and the addition of modern buildings.

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6.283 In contrast to the other parts of the conservation area, Lower Bockhampton appears to be a relatively modern hamlet that grew up along Bockhampton Lane, by the south-eastern entrance to Kingston Maurward. However, it is possible that it existed earlier as an adjunct to the Elizabethan Old Manor.⁸⁹ This part of the conservation area includes several grade II listed cottages, the oldest being of late 18th century date.

6.284 The conservation area is essentially characterised by two large country estates, a smaller Victorian country house, and a rural hamlet of compact linear form at Lower Bockhampton. As country estates/ villas are generally designed to provide a private rural retreat, much of the conservation area is undeveloped, insular and self-contained. The undulating topography of the conservation area reinforces this character by limiting views in and out of it, especially the dry valleys running through Kingston Maurward RPG and along Bockhampton Lane. The parkland character of much of the conservation area also means that there is extensive vegetation that limits views in and out, and frames views within. Screening along the A35 also means that views west towards the site are very limited. However, there are

occasions where the agricultural land within the site can be seen in the backdrop to views, for example, when looking west from the northern end of Church Lane.

6.285 In terms of setting, the conservation area is surrounded by agricultural land, some of which was functionally related to Stinsford Farm and Kingston Maurward estate. However, as stated above the ability to appreciate this visually is generally limited within the conservation area. Instead, the conservation area is best understood in its rural setting in longer-ranging views outside of the conservation area from the north and south.

6.286 This experience is particularly powerful on the approach to the area across the water meadows from Dorchester. The tower of the Church of St Michael can be glimpsed from certain points within the meadows, indicating the presence of the settlement, but the verdant character of the area makes it clear this is a small, rural settlement in contrast to that just left at Dorchester. It also makes for picturesque views towards the area which, despite the sound of the A35 in the background, contribute greatly to the aesthetic value of the area as well as helping us understand its place within the wider landscape.

Figure 6.49: Parkland character of the Stinsford CA



A view of Kingston Maurward House and the topography of the area around the estate, which is set within a dry valley.



View across parkland towards the western boundary of the CA.

⁸⁹ WDDC. ND. Puddletown, Stinsford & Lower Bockhampton & Tolpuddle Conservation Area Appraisal, pp. 24

Chapter 6

Assessment of designated heritage assets with the potential to experience setting change

Land North of Dorchester

January 2021

Figure 6.50: View from Stinsford Water Meadows



A break in the trees reveals the tower of the Church of St Michael in an otherwise green and open setting to the south of the CA.

Figure 6.51: View of the site from Church Lane, Stinsford



Figure 6.52: The buildings around St Michael's Church



Views within this part of the conservation area are contained by topography, buildings and trees, creating an intimate, secluded and insular character.

Significance

6.287 The significance of the conservation area is **high**. The special architectural and historical interest of the Stinsford and Lower Bockhampton Conservation Area derives from its:

- High architectural and historical illustrative interest resulting from the number and range of listed and unlisted buildings and the RPG;
- High artistic value as a result of the designed landscapes/gardens, as well as more fortuitous rural and picturesque charm;
- Historical association with Thomas Hardy, and other historical figures, particularly at Stinsford Church.

6.288 The conservation area's open rural setting contributes to its significance by aiding in understanding the history and development of Stinsford Farm and the country estates.

However, it only does this to a limited extent as much of its historically and functionally related land lies to the west of the A35, a busy road that has created a physical and visual barrier between this land and the conservation area. The land to the south and north of the conservation area makes more of a contribution because it remains visually connected to the conservation area, with part of it forming the northern extent of Kingston Maurward RPG. The southern area around the water meadows is also important because this area helps separate Dorchester and Stinsford, maintaining their legibility as distinct historical settlements.

Contribution of the site to significance

6.289 The site makes a **low** contribution to the significance of Stinsford Conservation Area. This is because it includes land to the west of Stinsford Conservation Area, much of which is comprised of agricultural land that was historically and functionally associated to Stinsford Farm and so provides a contextual setting. However, the ability to appreciate this on the ground is limited due to topography, intervening vegetation and the A35. More critical is the contribution that land within the site - specifically that along the B3150 and A35 - makes to helping to maintain the separation between Dorchester and Stinsford and sustaining their distinct identities.

Sensitivity and potential harm

6.290 The risk of harm to the site is **low**. The site almost abuts the western boundary of Stinsford Conservation Area, extending along the A35 by Birkin House and then along Stinsford Hill, approximately 125m to the west of Stinsford. According to the indicative masterplan the closest areas of the site include Open Space South and Housing East, in which an employment area is proposed adjacent to the A35, opposite Birkin House and the Stinsford Conservation Area. The Link Road is also due to connect to the A35, opposite the northern end of the conservation area.

6.291 The area designated as Open Space South would help preserve the separation between Dorchester and Stinsford. However, development in Housing East would introduce built development into the rural setting of the conservation area, directly opposite Birkin House and a short distance west of Stinsford. This change would likely be experienced via glimpsed views from within the conservation area and potentially in views from outside the conservation area where the development may be viewed in combination with the conservation area. These views are extremely limited, however, and on the whole will not affect the character and appearance of the conservation area apart from along its western boundary and the A35.

Level of effect

6.292 Taking into account the significance of this asset (high) and the risk of harm to their significance (low), the overall level of effect of the indicative masterplan proposals on the historic environment is judged to be **low-medium**.

Options for sustainable development

6.293 To completely avoid harm the boundary of Housing East and the employment area would need to be pulled back from the edge of the conservation area. Options for minimising harm are limited but could include consideration of alternative sites for the employment area or height restrictions to ensure that development does not become visible above the treeline of the western boundary. Screening could potentially be considered, but this would only hide the visual effect of the development in certain views, and the introduction of screening could have its own effect on those view that would need to be considered. As such, it is recommended that any applications for development of this part of the site include verified views from within and toward the conservation area to demonstrate that the development will not visually intrude on it.