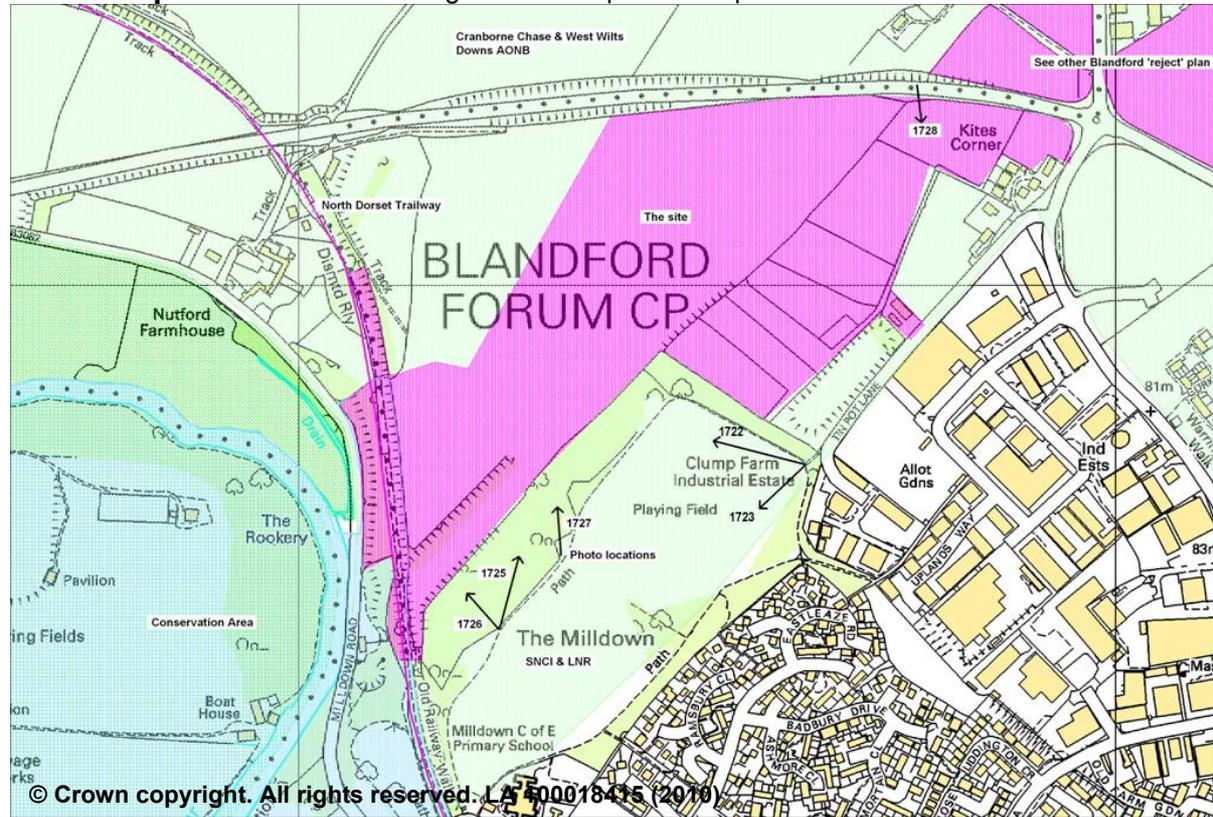


North Dorset District Council
Proposed Housing Sites
Landscape Impact Assessment: Assessment template

NB: See methodology notes attached

Site name: <i>Blandford; Site North of Milldown Local Nature Reserve</i> REJECTED SITE	NDDC Ref: 2/03/0526	Date: 14 July 2010
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Location plan: with relevant designations and photo viewpoints



Key Characteristics: These are the key positive features or qualities, which if lost or changed there would be a significant consequence for the current character of the landscape

- ◆ *The site sits on the edge of the Melbury/Blandford Chalk Escarpment, the Southern Downland Belt and the Mid Stour Valley Landscape Character Areas¹.*
- ◆ *The whole site lies within the boundary of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.*
- ◆ *It is primarily a downland landscape forming part of the wider rolling, wooded, chalk downland landscape type.*
- ◆ *It is formed of a number of sloping, small grazed paddocks and several large, open arable fields to the north.*
- ◆ *It sweeps and slopes down north towards the River Stour Valley and has some dense woodland edges especially along the north-east and north-western edges.*

¹ North Dorset District Council Landscape Character Assessment dated Nov 2007 and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment dated June 2003.

- ◆ *It links visually into the well used Milldown Local Nature Reserve and SNCI and provides an important, open, undeveloped backdrop to this key recreational area.*
- ◆ *Part of the western side of the site forms The North Dorset Trailway; an important route which is within the Blandford Conservation Area.*
- ◆ *The northern edge abuts the A350 Blandford bypass as it goes into cutting and there are some important, maturing plantations along this edge.*
- ◆ *It is open to exposed views especially to the north-west towards Hod and Hambledon Hills.*

Summary of overall character: based on scale, landform, pattern/complexity, settlement & human influences, skyline, visual relationships & views, intervisibility, perceptual/aesthetic criteria.

The site forms part of the downland landscape associated with the Melbury/Blandford Chalk Escarpment Character Area and the Southern Downland Belt Landscape Character Area with its western edge linked to the character and setting of the Mid-Stour Valley Landscape Character Area. It is primarily a downland landscape with wide open views to the north-west especially, as well south-west over the well used and popular Milldown Local Nature Reserve/SNCI. These views would be more open in the winter months. It is formed of a number of smaller paddocks along the edge with properties along Tin Pot Lane and larger arable fields along its more exposed north-western sides. There are dense wooded edges along the boundary with Milldown Local Nature Reserve and along the north, north-west boundaries associated with the North Dorset Trailway which lies within the northern edge of the Blandford Conservation Area. The northern edge abuts the A350 Blandford bypass as it goes into cutting and there are some important and maturing tree hedgerows/trees along this edge. There are glimpses into the north-east of this site from the A350.

Sensitivities/vulnerabilities: to include threats to key characteristics. Assumes no mitigation measures; which are outlined below.

- ◆ *Development would create a significant adverse impact on the rural setting and landscape character of the AONB and would be very dominate in open views, especially from the north-west.*
- ◆ *This would create an unacceptable negative impact on the setting and context of this rural edge of the town.*
- ◆ *It would also impact negatively on the context setting and integrity of the Trailway, the Milldown Local Nature Reserve and the Blandford conservation area.*
- ◆ *Development would create an incongruous and large urban extension out into open downland countryside. It would not link in with any other built form and therefore be at odds with the current settlement pattern.*
- ◆ *Development would impact directly and indirectly on the important dense and mature wooded areas around and within the site.*

Value: based on AONB status (including setting of AONB), wildlife, public 'good' (access/enjoyment & amenity value), setting for the wider settlement, historic value (see EH Conservation Principles)

The site lies within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and it is continuous with the chalk escarpment/downland landscape out to the A350. This designation gives it a high sensitivity rating. The site has a vital role in providing an open, green, undeveloped area of countryside helping to create a 'soft' edge to this part of the settlement and forming a key backdrop to the Milldown Local Nature Reserve, the North

Dorset Trailway and the Blandford Conservation Area. The trees, woodland and hedges around and within the site have a key wildlife value and the Milldown Local Nature Reserve/SNCI adjacent to this site has an important wildlife value.

Sensitivity Analysis: this takes the form of a 'guidance statement' informed by scale, landform, pattern/complexity, settlement & human influences, skyline, visual relationships & views, intervisibility, perceptual/aesthetic criteria which will outline opportunities for mitigation/enhancement.

Due to the openness of the site to views from the AONB and Milldown LNR there is little mitigation possible which could minimise the identified negative impacts on the landscape and townscape character. In the winter months potentially more open views would be possible into the site; for example from Milldown LNR and along the A350 Blandford Bypass.

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