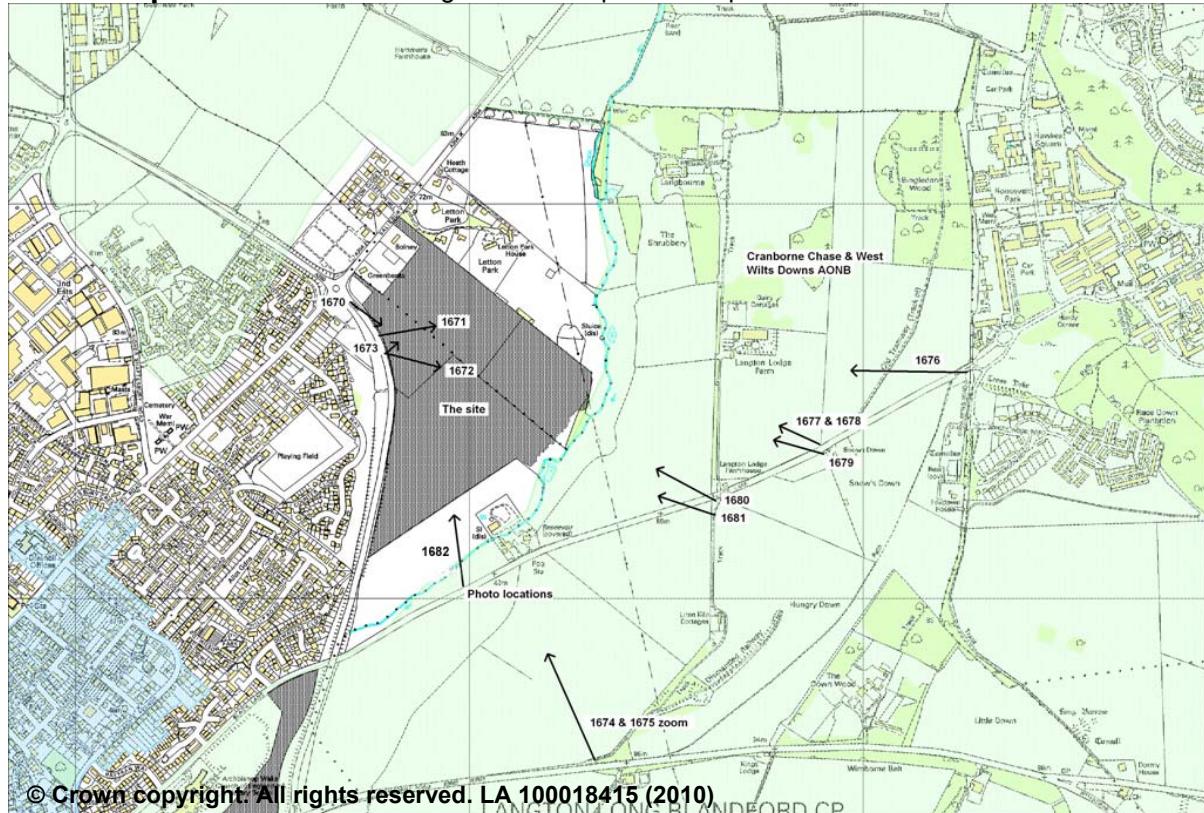


North Dorset District Council
Proposed Housing Sites
Landscape Impact Assessment: Assessment template

NB: See methodology notes attached

Site name: <i>Blandford; Land to the North-East of Blandford (Salisbury Road)</i> Proposed housing nos: 800	NDDC Ref: 2/03/0511	Date: 13 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

- ◆ *Forms part of the rolling Southern Downland Belt Landscape Character Area¹, which is a chalk valley and downland landscape type².*
- ◆ *Forms a key component to the setting of Blandford when viewed from the southeast and east.*
- ◆ *Open expansive and undeveloped landscape with wide open views to the east, south and south-east across downland.*
- ◆ *Is a series of three medium to large scale south-east sloping arable fields.*
- ◆ *Mainly narrow very straight hedgerows as field boundaries with groups of important mature trees in places.*
- ◆ *Bounded by narrow tree belt along the A350 Blandford Bypass to the west.*
- ◆ *Part of the late 18th century planned enclosure landscape.*

¹ Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment June 2003.

² Dorset County Council Landscape Character Assessment Nov 2009

- ◆ *Important mature parkland and tree belts along the northern edge associated with Letton Park.*
- ◆ *Open views into the site from Wimborne Road (B3082) and Black Lane up to Blandford Camp.*
- ◆ *No access to or across the site with no public rights of way.*
- ◆ *The far south-east boundary forms an ancient parish boundary between Langton Long, Blandford and Pimperne/Blandford Forum.*
- ◆ *In the internal south-east and north-west hedgerow also forms an ancient parish boundary between Blandford Forum and Pimperne.*

Historic Landscape Character³:

The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) for the AONB which extends just beyond the boundary indicates that the three fields to the east of the bypass comprise the southern most fields in a group of regular planned enclosures with ruler straight internal and external boundaries. These fields date to before 1800 as they are present as enclosed land on the 1820s OS surveyors map and were created as later 18th century parliamentary enclosure. These fields were enclosed from open downland previously formed open grazing on the edge of Blandford Forum. These fields have undergone important boundary modifications since the 1880s with the addition of the upper northeast southwest internal boundary and the loss of a southeast northwest boundary along the line of the parish boundary between Pimperne and Shaftesbury. This type of field is common in the AONB landscape as a whole and seems to be part of a larger system of enclosure much of which has already been subsumed by the modern settlement development to the south radiating out from the historic core of Blandford Forum.

The western boundaries of these fields have already been removed by the Blandford bypass. The northern boundary kinks around 20th century settlement and abuts the A354 in two locations. This road marks the route of a historic turnpike. Boundary features relating to this history route way may survive, such as milestones, as well as historic trees marking the line of the route and well formed boundary banks. The north-eastern boundary follows the edge of Letton Park, Letton House was built in 1855 and this boundary may be associated with features associated with the landscaping of the small parkland created here. The top part of the south eastern boundary of the site follows the irregular sinuous ancient parish boundary between Langton Long Blandford and Pimperne/Blandford Forum. This boundary is likely to be of considerable antiquity, and may be associated with large trees including coppices, and well formed banks. Similarly the surviving internal ruler straight southeast – northwest boundary runs along the ancient parish boundary between Blandford Forum and Pimperne and may also be associated with historic boundary features.

³ Provided by Emma Rouse HEAP Project Officer Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB

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 Southern Downland Belt Landscape Character Area which undulates towards Blandford creating the elevated aspect along this side of the settlement. The site is just outside the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB boundary but it does impact on the setting of this designation. It is formed of a series of three medium to large sized arable fields which slope south-east towards the small stream in the adjacent valley bottom. The A354 Blandford Bypass forms the distinctive western edge to the site which comprises a narrow maturing tree belt. The internal field boundaries are straight and weak in places but have important groups of mature trees in certain locations. These hedgerows form part of the late 18th century planned enclosure of former open downland and include two important ancient parish boundaries. There is a group of important mature trees along the northern edge of the site associated with park and setting of Letton Park; these tree groups are covered by Tree Preservation Orders. There are wide open views into and from the site out across the downland landscape to the east, south-east and south. There are no public rights of way crossing sites but there are views from the north-eastern end of the public right of way which links the Wimborne Road to Black Lane to the south of the site.

Sensitivities/vulnerabilities: to include threats to key characteristics. Assumes no mitigation measures.

- ◆ *Development would impact negatively on the open undeveloped rolling rural character of this site, impacting on its role in providing a green setting for this edge of Blandford.*
- ◆ *Development in this way would also impact negatively on the existing character and visual amenity of this part of the AONB. The fact that the site slopes south towards the AONB increases the impact of any built development on the site.*
- ◆ *The current A354 Blandford Bypass forms an obvious and distinctive edge to this settlement when viewed from the open countryside and any further development would break this important physical and visual function, creating a negative cumulative impact.*
- ◆ *Development would also impact negatively on the integrity of the internal hedgerow boundaries of which two are important historical parish boundaries.*
- ◆ *The potential negative impact on hedgerows and trees around and adjacent to the site is also a key sensitivity.*
- ◆ *The setting and context of Letton Park would also be impacted on in a negative way.*

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 is outside the AONB but does impact on the setting of this designation therefore elevating its sensitivity to high; particularly as it is open to views from key view points within the AONB. It has a high visual amenity status in its role as providing a green undeveloped setting and context for this edge of the settlement. The adjacent and internal hedgerow trees and copse have a high wildlife value⁴.

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 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 along the A354 Blandford Bypass.

⁴ As defined by English Heritage in their 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' dated April 2008.

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