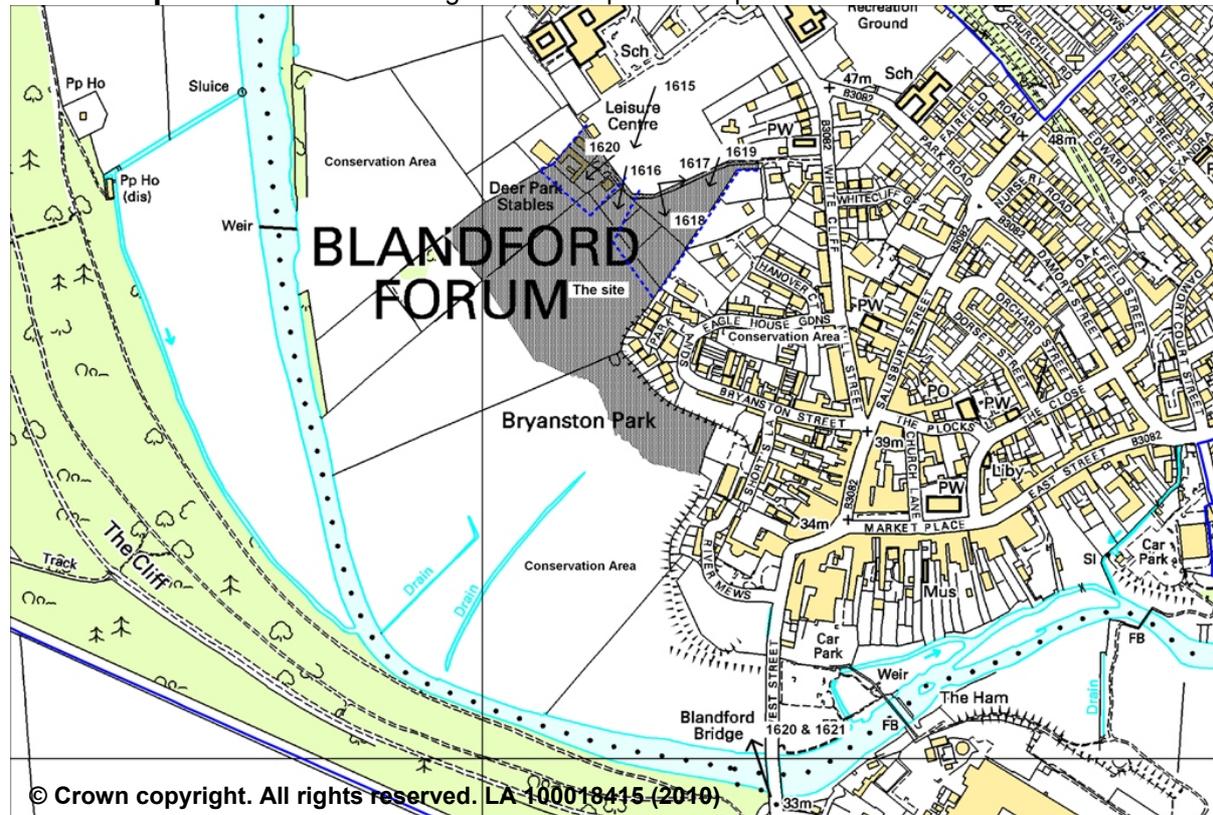


North Dorset District Council
Proposed Housing Sites
Landscape Impact Assessment: Assessment template

NB: See methodology notes attached

Site name: <i>Blandford; West Blandford (Deer Park)</i>	NDDC Ref: 2/45/0397	Date: 8 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

- ◆ *Part of the Mid Stour Valley Landscape Character Area¹ adjoining the River Stour flood plain.*
- ◆ *A series of small scale, flat paddocks used mainly for pony grazing.*
- ◆ *A pastoral, parkland landscape.*
- ◆ *Forms part of the green undeveloped edge to the west part of the town.*
- ◆ *Contributes to setting of the Blandford Conservation Area and to the town's setting in the Stour Valley.*
- ◆ *Some important groups and individual mature trees which contribute to its parkland character.*
- ◆ *Open and attractive views across the site to the flood plain meadows and to The Cliff beyond.*

¹ North Dorset District Council Landscape Character Assessment dated November 2007.

- ◆ *The site becomes more 'urban fringe' in character along its northern edge.*

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 wider Mid Stour Valley Landscape Character Area and a key component of the unified River Stour flood plain meadows which characterise this part of the settlement edge and valley floor. It is formed of a series of small scale, flat pony paddocks that gently slope towards the river and has stabling in the north-western part of the site. It has a pastoral, parkland landscape perception and forms part of the green undeveloped edge to the western part of the town contributing to the setting of the town in its valley context. In this way it is a key component of the setting of the Dorset AONB and the Blandford Conservation Area. There are several important individual, mature, parkland trees and one significant cluster or copse of trees near the centre of the site. There are open pleasing views across the site from the leisure centre to the flood plain meadows and to The Cliff beyond. The Cliff is a distinctive 'Site of Nature Conservation Interest' landscape on the steeply sloping, wooded terrace abutting the western edge of the River Stour. The site does have a more urban fringe feel along its northern edge with the grounds of the leisure centre.

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

- ◆ *Development would impact negatively on the open, undeveloped flood plain parkland character of the site and therefore impact on its function in contributing to the setting of the town, Conservation Area and the setting of the Dorset AONB.*
- ◆ *Development would impact negatively on the important mature parkland trees in the site and potentially 'block off' open views out across to the flood plain meadows to the backdrop of the cliff beyond.*
- ◆ *Development would impact on the historic urban edge of the town, particularly around the southern edge of the site.*
- ◆ *Development would impact on the setting of the leisure centre grounds which currently enjoy open aspects and vistas out across the flood plain.*

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)

- ◆ *High value due to its Conservation Area designation and therefore has high value in its contribution to the historic context and setting of the town.*
- ◆ *High value due to its position within the setting of the Dorset AONB, the boundary of which lies along the eastern edge of the River Stour.*
- ◆ *Some amenity value as open, undeveloped countryside when seen from the leisure centre and for users of the stables/pony paddock.*

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.

If development was limited to the more 'urban fringe' northern part of the site and the paddocks with the closest association with the flood plain landscape were left undeveloped, this would limit the identified impacts on character and important site features. The areas considered potentially as more suitable to development are those to the urban edge side of the dotted blue line on the plan above. By maintaining a green, open 'wedge' through any

development would also help mitigate the impact on views, break-up the development and link physically and visually the existing flood plain meadows and the undeveloped grounds of the leisure centre.

The use of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) and other sustainable construction techniques should be explored for this site.

The development of the strategic Landscape Masterplan for the site is essential and should be developed 'up front' prior to any future planning application based on the Poole, Dorset and Bournemouth Landscape and Development checklist dated Feb 2008.

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