



[www.landuse.co.uk](http://www.landuse.co.uk)

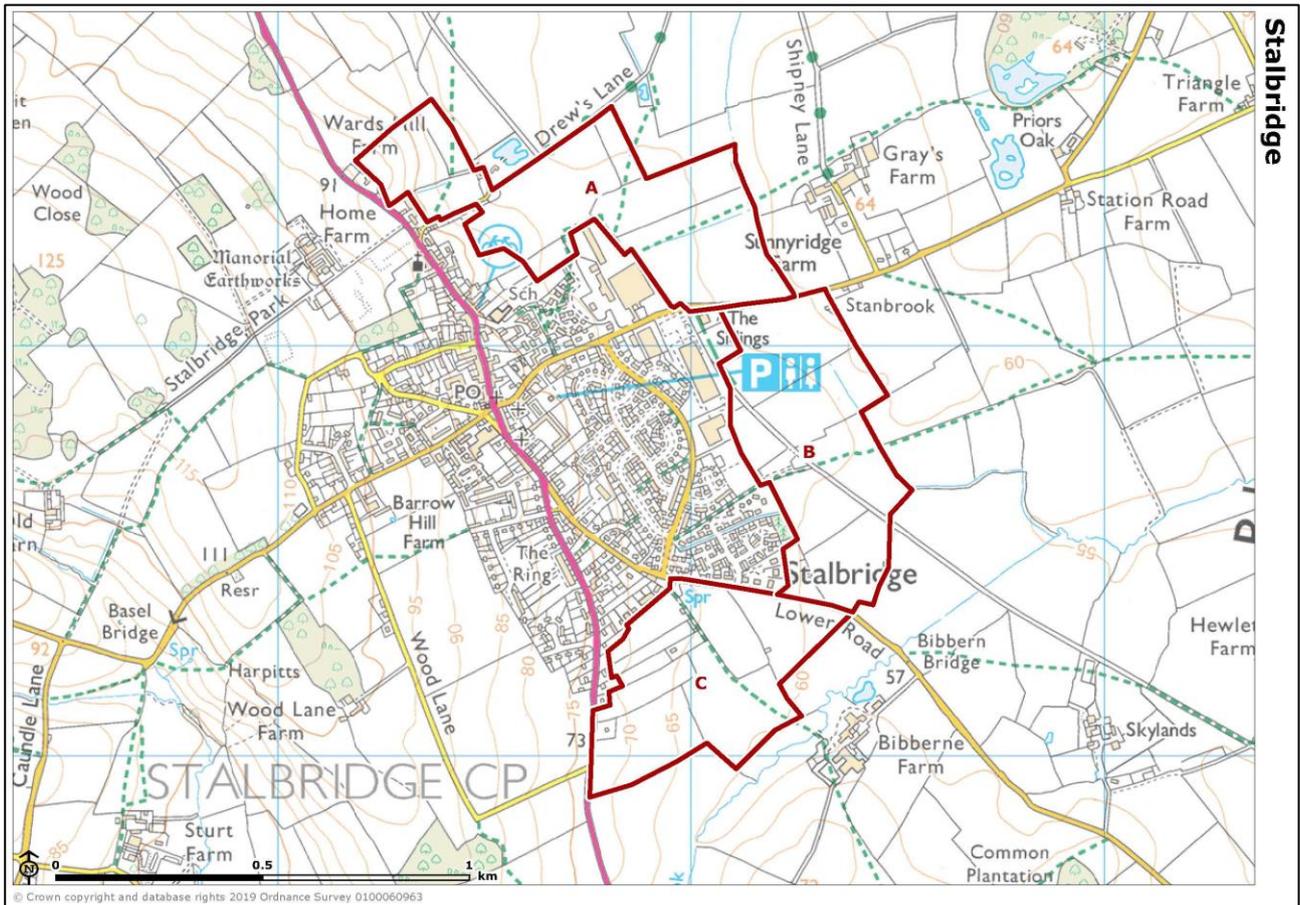
# North Dorset Strategic Landscape and Heritage Study

## Stage 2 Assessment: Stalbridge

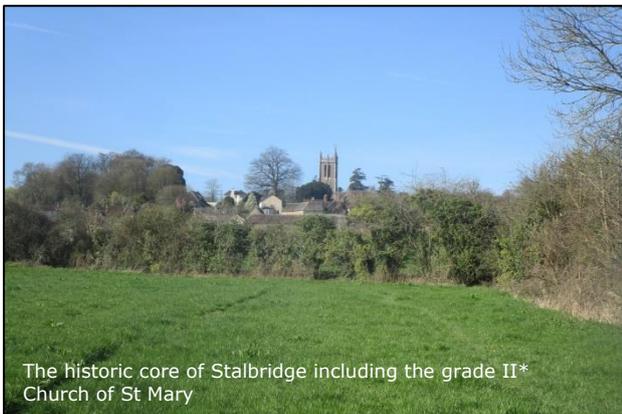
Final Report  
Prepared by LUC for Dorset Council  
October 2019



## Stalbridge



### Representative photographs of the settlement



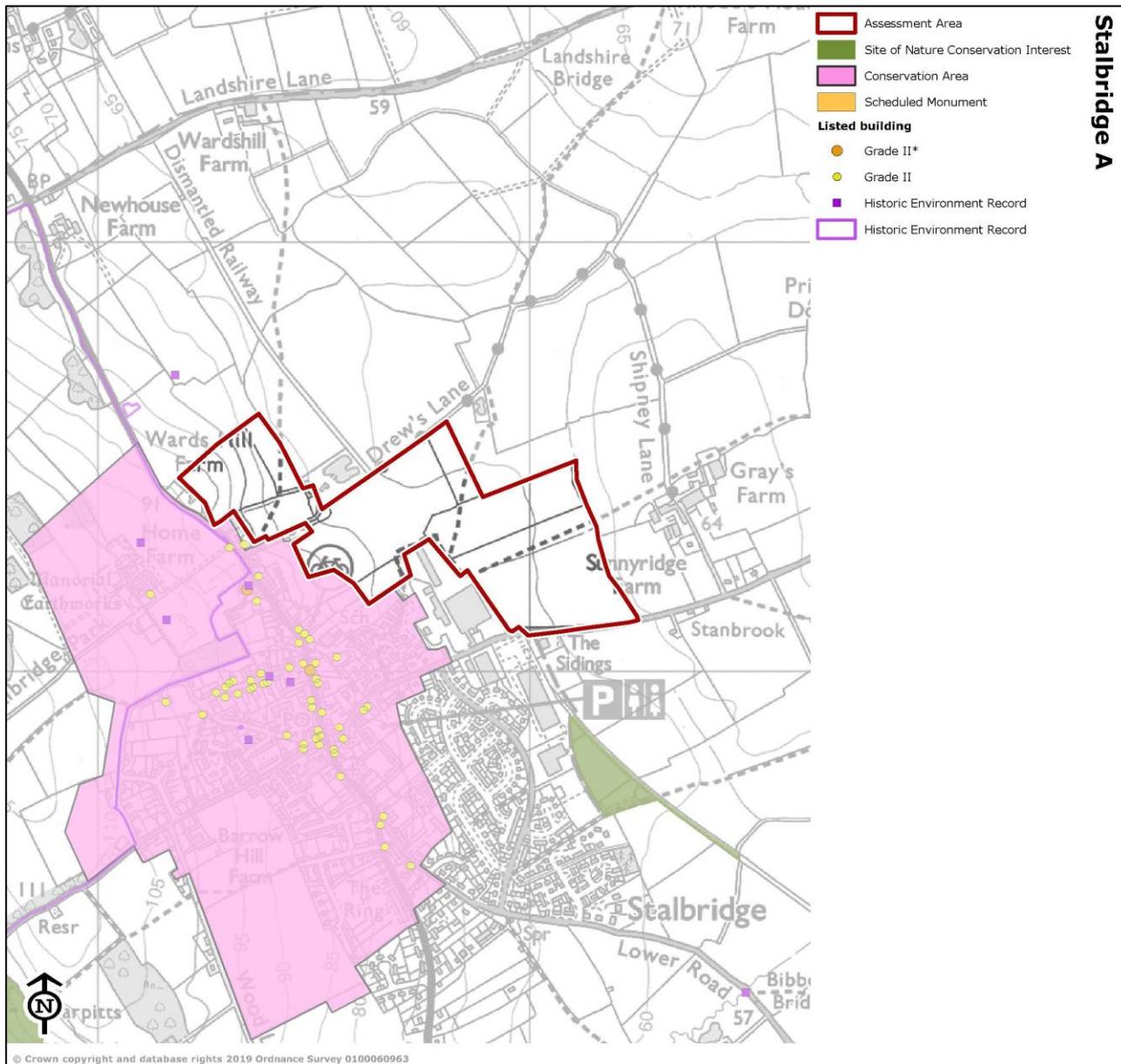
### Location and description

Stalbridge is a small town located in the north-west of the former North Dorset District (close to the Somerset border) on an east-facing slope. The town is thought to have originated from a late Saxon manor, with an economy built on crafts in the medieval period, cattle in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and a sawmill in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Expansion of this settlement was most significant in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century with the addition of suburban housing estates, particularly in the south-east of the town.

## Aerial context



## Assessment area: Stalbridge A



## Representative photographs



## Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landscape character context				
<p>The assessment area falls within the Blackmore Vale Landscape Character Area, with a small part to the east within the North Dorset Limestone Ridges Landscape Character Area. The area is situated to the north-east of Stalbridge, including the land between the A357 and Station Road.</p>				
Assessment criterion	Description	Sensitivity score		
Physical character (including topography and scale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sloping topography ranging from 90m AOD in the north-west to 60m AOD in the east. The landform is steepest in the west of the assessment area. The land slopes downhill away from the existing settlement.</li> <li>Fields are medium-scale and regular. The scale of the assessment area varies from medium-scale in the north, becoming larger close to the industrial area where fields are generally more expansive.</li> </ul>	<b>M</b>		
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fields are used for a mixture of arable and pastoral farming.</li> <li>Field boundaries are mostly defined by hedgerows, often containing many mature trees. Some have been replaced by wooden post and rail fencing. There are also several ditches.</li> <li>There is a small area of traditional orchard BAP priority habitat along Drew's Lane.</li> </ul>	<b>L-M</b>		
Historic landscape character ( <i>please see separate heritage assessment for asset-based information</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The south-western corner of the assessment area shares its boundary with Stalbridge Conservation Area and provides a rural setting to the historic part of Stalbridge.</li> <li>The area also provides a rural and undeveloped setting for multiple grade II listed buildings and the grade II* listed Church of St Mary (close to the western boundary of the assessment areas).</li> <li>The HLC identifies the field patterns to be of medieval origin including planned enclosure, enclosed paddocks and closes.</li> </ul>	<b>M-H</b>		
Form, density and setting of existing development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The assessment area is primarily unsettled, although it abuts the historic western and northern settlement edge of Stalbridge and provides a rural setting to the settlement.</li> <li>The eastern part of the assessment area is isolated from residential parts of Stalbridge by large commercial buildings.</li> <li>Existing settlement is low lying and low density. The church is the most visually prominent structure in the village.</li> </ul>	<b>M-H</b>		
Views and visual character including skylines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are views extending over the area from the more elevated land in the west. Most of these views are from within the conservation area. Skylines are undeveloped.</li> <li>The grade II* listed church tower forms a landmark skyline feature.</li> <li>The sloping landform in the west is visually prominent on a local scale. The large industrial buildings are prominent in local views.</li> </ul>	<b>M-H</b>		
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area has a rural character, which feels removed from the adjacent settlement, despite its proximity. It is characterised by narrow rural lanes and views of trees and hedgerows with the sound of birdsong.</li> <li>Close to the industrial area the noise of machinery can detract from the rural qualities.</li> </ul>	<b>M</b>		
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity				
<b>L</b>	<b>L-M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M-H</b>	<b>H</b>
<p>The landscape sensitivity of this area is increased by its proximity to Stalbridge Conservation Area, the rural setting provided to Stalbridge, strong rural character and long views from higher ground. Overall, the assessment area has <b>moderate-high</b> landscape sensitivity. Noise and visual intrusion from the adjacent industrial area slightly reduce landscape sensitivity.</p>				

## Heritage sensitivity assessment

### Dorset Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) context

The HLC indicates an agricultural landscape comprised of medieval<sup>1</sup> and post-medieval<sup>2</sup> field enclosures. These have time-depth and are likely to feature hedgerows that qualify as historically important under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations. If present, such hedgerows are usually regarded as heritage assets of low value and would be susceptible to physical change.<sup>3</sup> The historic landscape, in particular the medieval fields that directly adjoin the historic medieval core of Stalbridge Conservation Area, have some further value as they contribute to the significance of heritage assets in the vicinity.

### 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.*

There are no designated assets in the assessment area.

Non-designated assets within the assessment area:

- Site of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway [historic maps]  
**Low importance**
- Historic footpaths [historic maps]  
**Low importance**

### Likely susceptibility to physical change as a result of development

Historic maps show that the route of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway, which was built in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and dismantled in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, passed through the assessment area. So too, do a number of historic footpaths that remain extant. In the event of development, the footpaths and any remains relating to the railway would be highly susceptible to physical change.

The dearth of recorded archaeological evidence is indicative of an absence of archaeological investigations more than an absence of archaeology. In the wider area, a Roman burial is suggestive of earlier Roman settlement and the town is known to have developed from a Saxon manor,<sup>4</sup> with evidence being found for an early medieval church. A tributary of the River Cale lies along the eastern edge of the assessment area and highlights a potential for geoarchaeology and paleoenvironmental remains typically associated with alluvial deposits. Other than the railway and an orchard just south of Drew's Lane, the lack of post-medieval and modern development means that any hitherto unknown archaeological remains would be likely to survive well. In the event of development, any remains present would be highly susceptible to damage or total loss.

### Likely susceptibility to setting change as a result of development

Designated assets with the potential to experience setting change:

- Stalbridge Conservation Area  
**High importance**

The special historic and architectural interest of Stalbridge – a medieval market town – derives from the near-complete survival of historic town plan and the large quantity of its historic buildings.<sup>5</sup> The historic buildings are typified by their modest scale, use of local stone and survival of historic fabric. The assessment area lies to the east of Church Hill, one of the key historic thoroughfares lined by historic buildings with very little modern infill. Several grade II Listed Buildings lie along the eastern edge of this route including: the Old School building [1108608], The School House [1324851], The Cottage Farmhouse [1108609], The Old Red Lion [1324852], and Andrew Brothers and 31 High Street [1153027]. The fieldscapes within the assessment area have a historical and functional relationship with the core of the settlement which they were created to

<sup>1</sup> AD 1066-1499.

<sup>2</sup> AD 1500-1799.

<sup>3</sup> In order to remove such a hedgerow an owner must serve notice on the local planning authority who then decides if it is 'important' and if so it is whether it should be retained.

<sup>4</sup> DCC, NDC and EH. 2011. Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Stalbridge Historic Urban Characterisation, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Mostly from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, although there are also some 15<sup>th</sup> century structures (e.g. the grade II\* listed Church, the grade II\* listed and scheduled market cross and two domestic buildings).

support. This relationship can be appreciated from Church Hill where the fields may be glimpsed between the building frontages and along Drew's Lane, which is one of the only approaches that allows an appreciation of the historic core – particularly the grade II\* Church of St Mary - in its rural context. Of the listed buildings within the conservation area only four would likely be susceptible to meaningful setting change as a result of development within assessment area A; these are discussed in turn below.

- The Church of St Mary – grade II\* listed building [1108611]

**High importance**

The heritage significance of this medieval parish church is derived primarily from a combination of its aesthetic, historical illustrative and associative, and communal value. In terms of setting the church has an important relationship with its surrounding cemetery and the historic core of the settlement, which was home to its parishioners. It also has historical relationships with other extant medieval features in the area, most notably the site of the extant street layout, the manor to the west, and the market cross to the south-east. Topographically the church is sited on high ground to the north of the settlement, enabling views of it above the town. The legibility of the asset as a rural parish church could be diminished by development of the assessment area and the loss of its rural setting.

- Stalbridge Park Farmhouse– grade II listed building [1153266]

**High importance**

The 18<sup>th</sup> century Home Farm lies to the west of the assessment area within Stalbridge Park. It includes stonework from the former Stalbridge Manor House, destroyed in 1822. The heritage significance of Home Farm derives primarily from its aesthetic and historic illustrative value. The farmhouse has a historical and functional relationship with its historic outbuildings, the surrounding agricultural landscape and Stalbridge Park, which may be considered a non-designated asset in its own right as it remains extant, albeit in modified form. Development of the assessment area is unlikely to affect any of the key setting components that contribute to the heritage significance of Home Farm. However, the legibility of the non-designated parkland may be reduced by the introduction of built development along its boundary.

- Gate and Gatepiers to Stalbridge Park – grade II listed building [1108610]

**High importance**

The heritage significance of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gate and 17<sup>th</sup> century gatepiers to Stalbridge Park is derived primarily from their aesthetic and historic illustrative/associative value. The gate and gatepiers have an important historical/functional relationship with the extant dry stone wall that surrounds Stalbridge Park [MDO39188] and the other extant elements within the park. Development of the assessment area could affect their legibility as the entrance to a country park.

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

- Stalbridge Manor landscape park [MDO39188]

**Medium importance**

- Stalbridge medieval manorial site [MDO4742]

**Medium importance**

- Stalbridge deer park [MDO4751]

**Medium importance**

This group, of potentially regional importance and high evidential value, provide evidence of the evolution of Stalbridge Park from a medieval manor and deer park etc. (with wider agricultural setting of relict medieval open fields) to gentrified 18/19th century parkland. The assessment area contributes to the legibility of these assets, providing historic landscape context that would be lost in the event of development.

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

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
---	-----	---	-----	---

The heritage sensitivity of this assessment area is **high**, primarily due to the potential for effects to the conservation area and designated and non-designated heritage assets within it. There is the potential for physical change to known archaeological assets of low value,<sup>6</sup> as well as to low value heritage assets, such as historic hedgerows.

<sup>6</sup> As, always, there is the risk of unknown archaeological remains which, depending on their significance, could result in a higher level of harm than that predicted.

# Summary of key sensitivities and guidelines for sustainable development

## Summary of key sensitivities

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

- Sloping landform in the west which is visually prominent in the local landscape.
- The elevated location of Stalbridge Conservation Area (in the west) and several listed buildings which overlook the assessment area.
- Ecological habitats including BAP priority habitat traditional orchards and well-established hedgerows with mature trees.
- Undeveloped and long-reaching views.
- Strong rural character despite the proximity to existing development, including an industrial park.
- Sense of time-depth that contributes to the heritage significance of the conservation area and designated assets within.
- Potential for historically important hedgerows that would be susceptible to physical change/total loss.
- Risk of harm to known archaeological assets of low value and potential for hitherto unknown archaeological remains that would be similarly susceptible.
- Risk of harm to the character and special interest of Stalbridge Conservation Area as a result of the loss of rural setting affecting its legibility.
- Risk of harm to designated and non-designated assets within the conservation area as a result of the loss of setting affecting their legibility.

## Guidelines

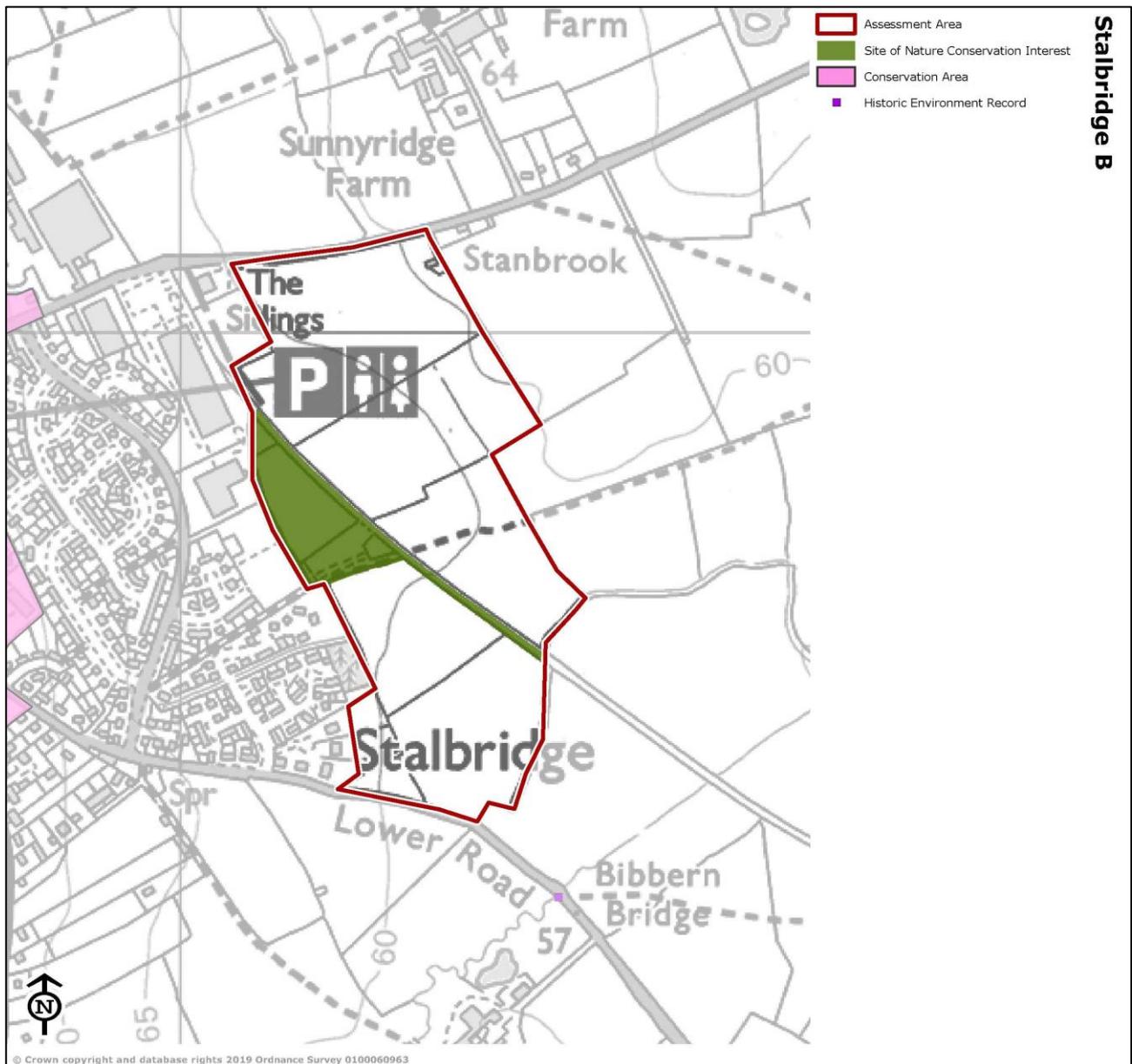
**Any new development should:**

- Avoid the steeply sloping ground in the west of the area, where it would be visually prominent.
- Retain semi-natural features including trees and hedgerows and areas of BAP priority habitat. New linkages between areas of semi-natural habitats should be created.
- Seek to avoid impacts on the more sensitive heritage features e.g. the medieval strip fields and edges of the conservation area.
- In the event of development any hedgerows identified as historically important, as well as historic pathways, should ideally be retained to aid in the creation of a sense of place.
- Undertake detailed archaeological and heritage assessments as required by the NPPF.
- Accord with the necessary design guidance. Ensure that any new development is in keeping with the existing form, density and vernacular styles of the adjacent settlement.
- Retain any historically important hedgerows to create a sense of place.
- Further investigate and characterise the archaeological potential of the assessment area via desk-based research and, if necessary field evaluation, to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy.<sup>7</sup>
- Avoid and minimise harm to Stalbridge Conservation Area and the designated and non-designated heritage assets within it by ensuring development is limited to the south of the existing commercial development on Station Road and does not occur along the rear of the existing buildings along Church Hill. A conservation area appraisal or management plan should be prepared to inform any planning proposals and decisions.

---

<sup>7</sup> Typically, mitigation would involve either targeted excavation or an archaeological watching brief, but for high value remains (even those not designated) preservation in-situ would be required. All investigation should be informed and approved by the local authority's archaeological advisor.

## Assessment area: Stalbridge B



## Representative photographs



## Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landscape character context				
This assessment area falls within the Blackmore Vale Landscape Character Area. The area is located on the eastern outskirts of Stalbridge, containing the area between Station Road and Lower Road.				
Assessment criterion	Description			Sensitivity score
Physical character (including topography and scale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A generally flat area of land at an elevation of approximately 60m AOD.</li> <li>Fields are medium to large in scale and regular in shape.</li> </ul>			L-M
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land is used for a mixture of arable and pastoral agriculture.</li> <li>Stalbridge Site of Nature Conservation Interest (Local Nature Reserve) is located in the west of the assessment area, including the route of the dismantled railway line.</li> <li>Fields are enclosed by well-established hedgerows with frequent mature trees. Some have been replaced by post and wire fencing.</li> </ul>			M
Historic landscape character ( <i>please see separate heritage assessment for asset-based information</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The HLC identifies most fields in this area as being of probable post-medieval origin, with those in the north following a planned enclosure pattern.</li> </ul>			L-M
Form, density and setting of existing development <sup>8</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area is rural and unsettled. The dismantled railway line (part of North Dorset Trailway) is marked by mature trees.</li> <li>The assessment area is adjacent to the settlement edge of Stalbridge including some large commercial buildings and residential housing estates. It provides part of the wider rural setting to Stalbridge.</li> <li>Residential development adjacent to the south is well integrated into the landscape by hedgerows and woodland.</li> </ul>			M
Views and visual character including skylines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relatively flat topography and the frequent mature hedgerow trees create a sense of visual enclosure. However, there are some long views to the east from the larger, more open fields.</li> <li>The area is not visually prominent in the wider landscape.</li> <li>Skylines are undeveloped and marked by mature trees. Rooftops of existing settlement are sometimes visible.</li> </ul>			M
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area has strong undeveloped rural character which feels removed from the adjacent settlement. There is occasional noise from the adjacent industrial buildings.</li> <li>Some areas have a sense of enclosure due to the presence of thick hedgerows with many mature trees. These contrast with more open areas (typically in the east of the area) which have an expansive character due to low fences and hedges.</li> </ul>			M
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity				
L	L-M	M	M-H	H
Features which increase landscape sensitivity include the Stalbridge Site of Nature Conservation Interest, the strong undeveloped rural character, the setting the landscape provides to existing development and long views east. Landscape sensitivity is reduced by the limited heritage features, flat landform and lack of visual prominence. Overall, the landscape sensitivity of the assessment area is <b>moderate</b> .				

<sup>8</sup> There is an existing planning application in the south of the assessment area 2/2017/0741/OUT, consisting of a development of up to 120 dwellings; this has been approved. Development may alter the character of this area and may subsequently impact on the sensitivity to residential development.

## Heritage sensitivity assessment

### Dorset Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) context

The HLC data indicates that the assessment area comprises medieval enclosure to the south and post-medieval enclosure to the north. These have some time-depth and may feature hedgerows that qualify as historically important under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997). If present, such hedgerows are usually regarded as heritage assets of low value and would be susceptible to physical change.<sup>9</sup>

### 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.*

There are no designated assets in the assessment area.

Non-designated assets within the assessment area:

- Site of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway [historic mapping]  
**Low importance**
- Historic footpaths [historic mapping]  
**Low importance**

### Likely susceptibility to physical change as a result of development

Historic maps show that the route of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway, which was built in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and dismantled in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, passed through the assessment area. So too, do a number of historic footpaths that remain extant. In the event of development, the footpaths and any remains relating to the railway would be highly susceptible to physical change.

The dearth of recorded archaeological evidence is indicative of an absence of archaeological investigations more than an absence of archaeology. In the wider area, a Roman burial is suggestive of earlier Roman settlement and the town is known to have developed from a Saxon manor,<sup>10</sup> with evidence being found for an early medieval church. A tributary of the River Cale passes through the search area and highlights a potential for alluvial deposits and typically associated geoarchaeology/paleoenvironmental remains. Any archaeological remains would be highly susceptible to physical change as a result of development.

### Likely susceptibility to setting change as a result of development

Designated assets with the potential to experience setting change:

- Stalbridge Conservation Area  
**High importance**

Stalbridge Conservation Area lies to the west of the assessment area. It is physically and, for the most part, visually separated by modern suburban development and an industrial estate on the site of the former railway station. As such, although the assessment area has some time-depth and a historical and functional relationship with the historic core of the settlement, the contribution that it makes to understanding Stalbridge's special historic interest is very limited. Where visible any development would be viewed in the distance and separate to the conservation area or in addition to existing modern development on approach or when leaving the conservation area to the east. In either case, it should not fundamentally affect the ability to appreciate the character and special interest of the conservation area.

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

L	L-M	M	M-H	H
The sensitivity of this assessment area is <b>low</b> as it has a very limited relationship with any heritage assets. Stalbridge Conservation Area is nearby, but is unlikely to be meaningfully affected. As such the main sensitivity relates to the potential for physical harm to low value heritage assets, although hitherto unknown remains, if present, could be of higher value and sensitivity.				

<sup>9</sup> In order to remove such a hedgerow an owner must serve notice on the local planning authority who then decides if it is 'important' and if so it is whether it should be retained.

<sup>10</sup> DCC, NDC and EH. 2011. Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Stalbridge Historic Urban Characterisation, p. 46.

# Summary of key sensitivities and guidelines for sustainable development

## Summary of key sensitivities

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

- Habitats of ecological importance including the locally designated Stalbridge Site of Nature Conservation Interest (which includes the North Dorset Trailway).
- Strong rural character, which forms part of the wider rural setting to the village.
- Long views across the countryside to the east of the assessment area.
- Undeveloped wooded skylines.
- Sense of time-depth and the potential for historically important hedgerows that would be susceptible to physical change/total loss.
- Risk of harm to known archaeological assets of low value and potential for hitherto unknown archaeological remains that would be similarly susceptible.

## Guidelines

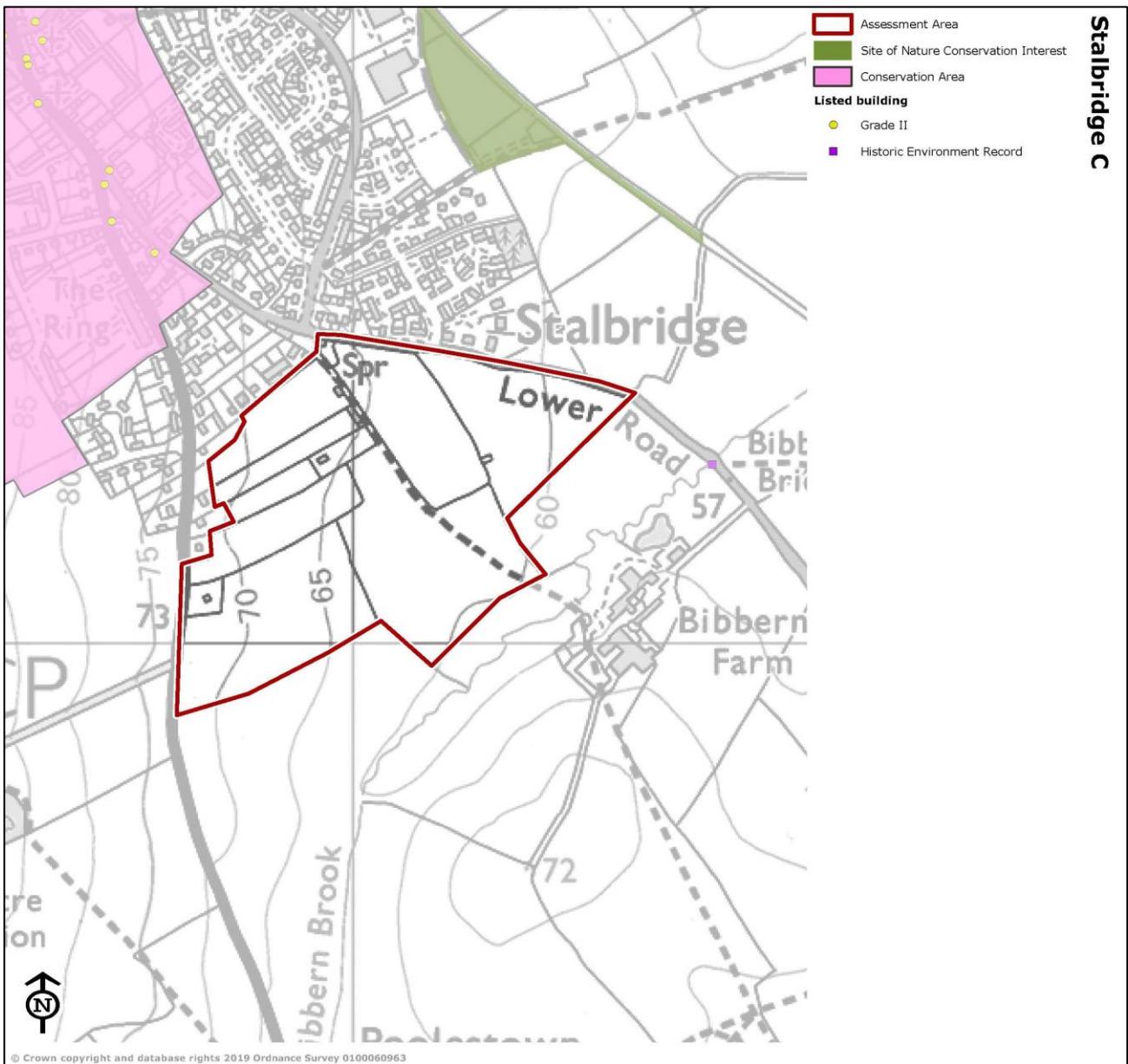
**Any new development should:**

- Retain valued ecological features such as trees and hedgerows and seek to provide linkages between habitats.
- Avoid development which will intrude on the undeveloped skylines with occasional mature trees.
- Preserve the wider rural setting to the village.
- Ensure that any hedgerows identified as historically important should ideally be retained to aid in the creation of a sense of place and time-depth.
- Further investigate and characterise the archaeological/geoarchaeological potential of the assessment area via desk-based research and, if necessary field evaluation, to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Typically, mitigation would involve either targeted excavation or an archaeological watching brief, but for high value remains (even those not designated) preservation in-situ would be required. All investigation should be informed and approved by the local authority's archaeological advisor.

## Assessment area: Stalbridge C



## Representative photographs



## Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landscape character context				
<p>This assessment area falls within the North Dorset Limestone Ridges (east) and Blackmore Vale (west) Landscape Character Areas. The assessment area is located to the south-east of Stalbridge, including the land between Lower Road and Thornhill Road.</p>				
Assessment criterion	Description			Sensitivity score
Physical character (including topography and scale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently sloping topography which falls towards Bibbern Brook to the south-east. Elevation ranges between 55m and 73m AOD.</li> <li>Medium-scale fields are mostly used for pasture, with some smaller fields used as horse paddocks.</li> </ul>			<b>M</b>
Natural character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fields are used for a mixture of pastoral and arable farming. There are some small strip fields used for horse paddocks adjacent to the settlement.</li> <li>Fields are enclosed by hedgerows with occasional mature trees. Some field boundaries have been replaced by fencing.</li> </ul>			<b>L-M</b>
Historic landscape character ( <i>please see separate heritage assessment for asset-based information</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no identified historic landscape features in the assessment area.</li> <li>The Dorset HLC indicates that fields within this assessment area are reorganised medieval enclosure.</li> </ul>			<b>L-M</b>
Form, density and setting of existing development <sup>12</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A primarily unsettled landscape although the assessment area is associated with the edge of Stalbridge to the north. Low density modern development is adjacent to the north of the assessment area.</li> <li>The landscape contributes to the rural setting of the village. It does not make a strong contribution to the setting of the historic core of the village.</li> </ul>			<b>M</b>
Views and visual character including skylines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area has an open character and views are far-reaching to the south, including the undulating landform of Blackmore Vale. The area is not visually prominent in the wider landscape.</li> <li>Skylines in views to the south are undeveloped and marked by trees and woodland. To the north, the rooftops of existing housing in Stalbridge are visible. The village of Marnhull is also visible in the distance to the north-east.</li> </ul>			<b>M</b>
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area has a rural character with an open and exposed feel due to its low hedgerows and slightly sloping landform.</li> <li>Noise and movement from the adjacent A357 can detract from rural qualities.</li> </ul>			<b>M</b>
Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity				
<b>L</b>	<b>L-M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M-H</b>	<b>H</b>
<p>The sensitivity of the assessment area is increased by the open rural character, undeveloped skylines and relatively far-reaching views, setting provided to existing settlement and sloping topography. The sensitivity of this area is reduced by the lack of designated historic and designated natural heritage features and modern influences including traffic noise from nearby roads. Overall, the assessment area has <b>moderate</b> landscape sensitivity.</p>				

<sup>12</sup> There are existing planning applications within the north (2/2017/1095/OUT) and directly to the north-east (2/2017/0741/OUT) of the assessment area. 2/2017/1095/OUT is access for up to 60 dwellings, whilst 2/2017/0741/OUT is for up to 120 dwellings; both have been approved. Development may alter the character of this area and may subsequently impact on the sensitivity to residential development.

## Heritage sensitivity assessment

### Dorset Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) context

The HLC data indicates that the majority of the assessment area comprises enclosure of medieval<sup>13</sup> date, some of which have been reorganised. These have some time-depth and the potential to feature hedgerows that qualify as historically important as per the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations. Such hedgerows are typically considered to be heritage assets of low value that would be susceptible to physical change.<sup>14</sup>

### 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.*

There are no designated assets within the assessment area.

Non-designated assets within the assessment area:

- Historic footpath [historic mapping]

**Low importance**

### Likely susceptibility to physical change as a result of development

The footpath remains extant and would be susceptible to physical change. Given the undeveloped nature of the site there is the potential for hitherto unrecorded archaeology to survive well, most likely from the prehistoric and Roman periods as by the medieval period the assessment area is likely to have been in agricultural use. If any further archaeological remains are present they would be susceptible to physical change.

### Likely susceptibility to setting change as a result of development

Designated assets with the potential to experience setting change:

- Stalbridge Conservation Area

**High importance**

Stalbridge Conservation Area lies to the north-west of the assessment area. The area closest to it comprises the post-medieval expansion of Stalbridge, including the market site at The Ring, as well as a large area of agricultural land that is important to the setting of the town and the historic farmstead at Barrow Hill. The assessment area has some time-depth and, given its proximity to the core of the settlement, may have had a historical and functional relationship with it. However, the contribution that it makes to understanding Stalbridge's special historic interest is limited as it is for the most part physically and visually separated by the modern suburban development that extends to the south of The Ring. Its development would further urbanise the A357 and Lower Road approaches but would not fundamentally alter the character or legibility of the conservation area.

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

- Bibbern Farm

**Low importance**

This mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead derives its heritage significance from a combination of its aesthetic and historic illustrative value. Its agricultural hinterland has a historical and functional relationship with the asset, aiding its legibility. Development within the assessment area would reduce the assets agricultural setting but not to an extent that affected its legibility.

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

L	L-M	M	M-H	H

There is the potential for physical change to archaeology<sup>15</sup> and heritage assets of low value. The potential for setting change that would affect the heritage significance of nearby assets is also low, with the greatest potential relating to views from the conservation area. Consequently, the overall sensitivity of this assessment area is judged to be **low-moderate**.

<sup>13</sup> AD 1066 – 1499.

<sup>14</sup> In order to remove such a hedgerow an owner must serve notice on the local planning authority who then decides if it is 'important' and if so it is whether it should be retained.

<sup>15</sup> There is the risk of unknown archaeological remains which, depending on significance, could result in a higher level of harm predicted.

# Summary of key sensitivities and guidelines for sustainable development

## Summary of key sensitivities

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

- The sloping landform associated with the valley of Bibbern Brook.
- Strong rural character which provides part of the setting to the existing village.
- Long views to the undeveloped countryside to the south of the assessment area.
- Fields of medieval origin, which create time-depth and the potential for historically important hedgerows that would be susceptible to physical change.
- Risk of physical harm to known low value heritage asset and potential for hitherto unknown archaeology that would be similarly susceptible.
- Potential for low-level harm to Stalbridge Conservation Area as a result of loss of rural setting.

## Guidelines

**Any new development should:**

- Avoid development on slopes where it would be visually prominent.
- Preserve the wider rural setting to the village.
- Retain important ecological features including hedgerows with mature trees.
- Preserve the sense of time-depth experienced due to the medieval field patterns.
- Seek to retain historic pathways and any hedgerows that qualify as historically important, to help create a sense of place and deliver other public benefits e.g. accessibility.
- Further investigate and characterise the archaeological potential of the assessment area via desk-based research and, if necessary field evaluation, to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy.<sup>16</sup>
- Seek to avoid and minimise any harm to Stalbridge Conservation Area by sensitive design. A conservation area appraisal or management plan should be prepared to inform any planning proposals and decisions.

---

<sup>16</sup> Typically, mitigation would involve either targeted excavation or an archaeological watching brief, but for high value remains (even those not designated) preservation in-situ would be required. All investigation should be informed and approved by the local authority's archaeological advisor.

## Potential in-combination effects on heritage assets

No potential in-combination effects have been identified.

## Appendix 1: Historic environment assets within the assessment areas

Location*	Asset Type	List Entry	Name	Grade
Stalbridge A	Conservation Area	N/A	Stalbridge Conservation Area	N/A

\*No assets recorded by the NHLE or HER were identified within the Stalbridge A or C assessment areas.