

NORTH DORSET LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2026 PART 1

EXAMINATION

Inspector's requests and points arising during hearing sessions

Issues 9 Shaftesbury

**Note on landscape appraisal of land at Higher Blandford Road,
Shaftesbury.**

May 2015

This page is blank

Contents

1. Introduction4
2. Landscape impact assessment of land at Higher Blandford Road, Shaftesbury. ...4

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the Hearing, discussion included reference to land at Higher Blandford Road, Shaftesbury. The Inspector requested the Council to arrange for a landscape appraisal to be undertaken of this objection site.
- 1.2 This has been undertaken under the supervision of Tony Harris, Senior Landscape Officer with Dorset County Council, and is attached at Appendix A.

2. Landscape impact assessment of land at Higher Blandford Road, Shaftesbury.

- 2.1 The assessment of the land at Higher Blandford Road shows that the site, which is currently a medium to large open pasture field, has an open countryside perception. It is the first large open area of land reached when leaving Shaftesbury in a southerly direction and there are extensive views across and out of the site to the south, towards the Melbury Downs. Significant open views are available to the south towards the distinctive skylines of the Melbury Downs. There are some important trees to the north of the site, and strong characteristic hedgerows bounding the site to the south.
- 2.2 Summarising the assessment, it is noted that there are a number of sensitivities / vulnerabilities which include threats to key characteristics. If it is assumed that if no mitigation measures are put in place then:
 - development would impact negatively on the rural character of the site and surrounding landscape to the south;
 - development would breach the strong boundary formed by the A30 which separates the urban form of Shaftesbury from the open countryside beyond; and
 - development would interrupt open views south towards the AONB.
- 2.3 The assessment states that the site has a high value in terms of its contribution to the landscape setting of the town, forming a large and consistent component of the gently sloping Greensand terrace landscape. It also has a high value in the experience of (in particular, views towards) the Cranborne and West Wiltshire AONB.
- 2.4 The conclusion is that it is likely that the site is too sensitive from a landscape and visual perspective for mitigation to be effective. Residential development would need to be of such low density and small scale so as to retain the rural village character south of the A30. Even with this design mitigation in place, the open countryside character and open views towards the AONB would be damaged.

Appendix A:

Proposed Housing Site Landscape Impact Assessment

<p>Site name: <i>Shaftesbury: Land East of Higher Blandford Road</i></p>	<p>NDDC Ref:</p>	<p>Date: 31 March 2015</p>
<p>Location plan: with photo viewpoints (the AONB boundary lies just to the east of this plan)</p>		
<p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The site is a medium to large open pasture field which forms part of the wider Shaftesbury Greensand Ridges Landscape Character Area¹. ◆ The site is bound by low density residential development to the west which has a rural village character. To the north of the A30, a hard urban edge is created by the new residential scheme at The Maltings. ◆ The site has an open countryside perception, being the first large open area reached when leaving Shaftesbury and forming a large and consistent component of the Greensand Terrace landscape¹ to the south east of the town. 		

¹ North Dorset District Council Landscape Character Assessment, Addendum – July 2008.

- ◆ There are extensive views across and out of the site to the south towards the Melbury Downs.
- ◆ The site is slightly elevated above higher Blandford Road, particularly at the southern end. This effect is exaggerated by the lower elevation of existing dwellings to the west of the road.

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

A long, wedge shaped pasture field, internally divided by an indistinct fence line. The predominant perception is one of an open, rural, agricultural landscape which provides an attractive countryside edge to the town. The site is bound by post and wire fencing to the north and west, resulting in a very open outlook across the site to the fine landscape beyond. To the north lies new residential development, with a hard urban edge. To the north east, the agricultural character is maintained by existing commercial uses in converted agricultural buildings. It is noted that the land to the east of the site is allocated for commercial / industrial uses. To the west, existing residential development is low density, set back and down from the road resulting in a discrete rural village character, which prevails immediately south of the A30.

Significant open views are available to the south towards the distinctive skylines of the Melbury Downs. There are some important trees to the north of the site, and strong characteristic hedgerows bounding the site to the south.

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

- ◆ Development would impact negatively on the rural character of the site and surrounding landscape to the south.
- ◆ Development would breach a strong boundary formed by the A30 which distinguishes the urban form of Shaftesbury from the open countryside beyond.
- ◆ Development would interrupt fine open views south towards the AONB.

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 has a high value in terms of its contribution to the landscape setting of the town, forming a large and consistent component of the gently sloping Greensand terrace landscape. It also has a high value in the experience of (in particular views towards) the AONB.

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.

It is likely that the site is too sensitive from a landscape and visual perspective for mitigation to be effective. Residential development would need to be of such low density and small scale so as to retain the rural village character south of the A30. Even with this design mitigation in place, the open countryside character and open views towards the AONB would be damaged.

Photographs



Viewpoint 1



Viewpoint 2



Viewpoint 3



Viewpoint 4



Viewpoint 5



Viewpoint 6