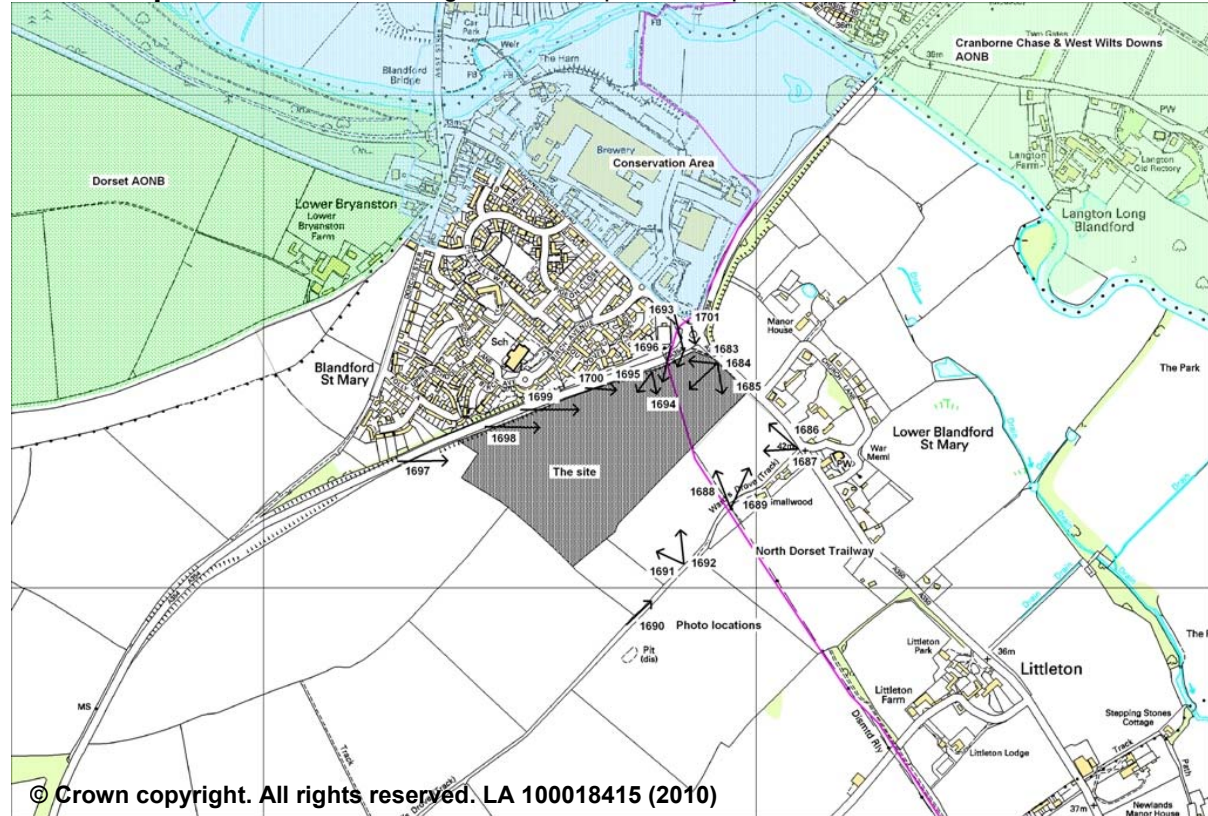


North Dorset District Council
Proposed Housing Sites
Landscape Impact Assessment: Assessment template

NB: See methodology notes attached

Site name: <i>Blandford; Junction of A354 and A350</i>	NDDC Ref: 2/03/0460	Date: 14 July 2010
Proposed housing nos: 360		

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 forms the northern edges of the South Blandford Downs Landscape Character Area¹ which is part of the open chalk downland landscape type².*
- ◆ *The site is formed of one large, rectangular, sloping, arable field which contributes to the distinctive unified field pattern in the area.*
- ◆ *It forms part of the rural setting of the settlement edge when viewed from the south.*
- ◆ *It is bounded by straight hedgerows and the A354 Blandford bypass to the north.*
- ◆ *It is open, undeveloped countryside abutting the southern limits of the settlement edge.*
- ◆ *There are open views into the site from Wards Drove, a public right of way, to the south-east of the site.*
- ◆ *The elevated south-western end of the site is open to views from the town and from*

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

² Dorset County Council Landscape Character Assessment Nov 2009

the downland to the north-east of Blandford.

- ◆ *Some important hedgerows and hedgerow trees around the site.*
- ◆ *A key feature near the centre of the site is the mature, freestanding, broad-leaved copse.*

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 South Blandford Downs Landscape Character Area which is, in turn, part of the undulating, rolling, open, chalk upland landscape which extends south of Blandford. The site is one large, rectangular, arable field bounded by straight hedgerows typical of the late 18th Century enclosure.

The site slopes north-east towards the A350 and the more elevated south-western end of the site is exposed to views to the north and north-east across the towns and to the downs beyond Blandford. The A354 Blandford bypass forms the northern edge and is bounded by maturing shelter belts. The site is open, undeveloped countryside outside of the southern limits of the settlement edge and therefore forms part of the rural setting and context of the town particularly when viewed from the south-east. There are open views out across this site and towards open countryside from the busy roundabout at the junction of A354 and A350 on the edge of the town. There are open views into the site from Wards Drove, a public right of way to the south-east of the site which links onto North Dorset Trailway. There are some important mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees around the site and a mature parkland style freestanding copse in the centre of the site which provides a key feature within it.

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

- ◆ *Development would impact negatively on the role the site plays in forming part of the rural countryside setting of the town and would extend the urban edge beyond the existing logical edge created by the A354 bypass. In this way development would impact negatively on the open, undeveloped character of the South Blandford Downs landscape character area and on the amenity of users of Wards Drove. This impact would be greater in the winter months when vegetation is not in leaf.*
- ◆ *Development would also impact negatively on the trees/copses and hedgerows directly or indirectly; for example, via damage in the root zone.*
- ◆ *Development would break up the unity of the field pattern in this part of the downland landscape.*
- ◆ *Development would impact on the open views and context this site provides when viewed from the busy A354/A350 roundabout.*

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 relatively high amenity value for users, in particular from Wards Drove and has a high value in terms of its contribution to the rural setting of the town in its surrounding downland character. It has some historic value³ as part of the enclosed field pattern and the hedgerows/trees have some wildlife value. The site lies outside both the Dorset and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB.

³ As defined by English Heritage in their 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' dated April 2008 and as defined in every day assumed use of this term.

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 felt that due to the sensitivities and vulnerabilities outlined above that any form of mitigation would be limited in reducing these identified impacts. The only form of mitigation which may be considered is limiting development to a small area in the lower slopes of this site in the far north-east corner as this would have some benefits in ensuring development is not seen on the skyline. This would reduce some of the negative impacts on landscape character but would also create a new hard urban edge outside the context of the existing settlement pattern and break-up the existing field pattern. Development here would also be viewed directly from Wards Drove and impact on the amenity of users and impact negatively on the setting of the town when viewed from this location.

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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