

**THE GREAT DURNFORD ESTATE**

**LAND AT VINEYS FARM, AMESBURY**

**LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL**

**ISSUE: Thursday, 21 October 2021**



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**CLIENT**                    The Great Durnford Estate

**PROJECT**                    Land an Vineys Farm, Amesbury

**REPORT TITLE**            Landscape Appraisal

**DJA Reference:**            2988-4-4-4-LV-0001-S5-P1-Land at Vineys Farm, Amesbury 211021

**Report Number:**        LV 0001

**Revision:**                P1

**Issue Date:**            Thursday, 21 October 2021

#### REPORT REVISIONS

Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Approved
P1	21/10/2021	Issue	PG	PG

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### General

- 1.1 This landscape appraisal report has been prepared by David Jarvis Associates (DJA) Limited on behalf of The Great Durnford Estate. DJA is a planning and design consultancy, established in 1982, with extensive experience in the planning, assessment, design and implementation of residential proposals. The firm is a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute.
- 1.2 This report is provided in support of an objection in respect of development proposed at Vineys Farm, Amesbury as part of the Examination for the Wiltshire Local Plan.

### Site Description

- 1.3 The site occupies 73.7ha and is located on a ridge of rolling agricultural land to the east of the Avon Valley, south of Amesbury. The A345 lies along the eastern boundary with the King's Gate housing development currently under construction to the east, see Figure **LV-0001**.
- 1.4 An area of woodland lies on the northern edge of the site within the Avon Valley. There are bands of woodland plantation within the site, planted within the last 15-20 years. Hedgerows are present on the boundaries and within the site.
- 1.5 The site lies on a rolling ridge rising to about 105m AD at its highest point adjacent to the A345. The land falls steeply northwards toward the Avon Valley, and more gently to the west and south to approximately 75m AOD in the south west corner around Amesbury Down. It rises to approximately 92m AOD at Stock Bottom in the south east corner of the site.
- 1.6 There are a number of public rights of way around the edges of the site. These are mostly bridleways with short sections of footpath on the northern edges within the Avon Valley. There is no public access within the central part of the site, see Figure **LV-0004**.
- 1.7 The site falls within a Special Landscape Area and adjacent to the River Avon SSSI/SAC. The World Heritage Site associated with Stonehenge lies to the west, see Figure **LV-0003**.
- 1.8 The site lies close to Ordnance Survey grid reference 415300, 140200.

## 2. LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY

2.1 The site falls within the remit of Wiltshire Council planning policy. The Local Plan is under review as part of this Examination.

### Wiltshire Council Core Strategy 2015

2.2 Figure 5.1 of the Core Strategy identifies those area proposed for growth. The site in question is to the west of the King’s Gate strategic allocation.

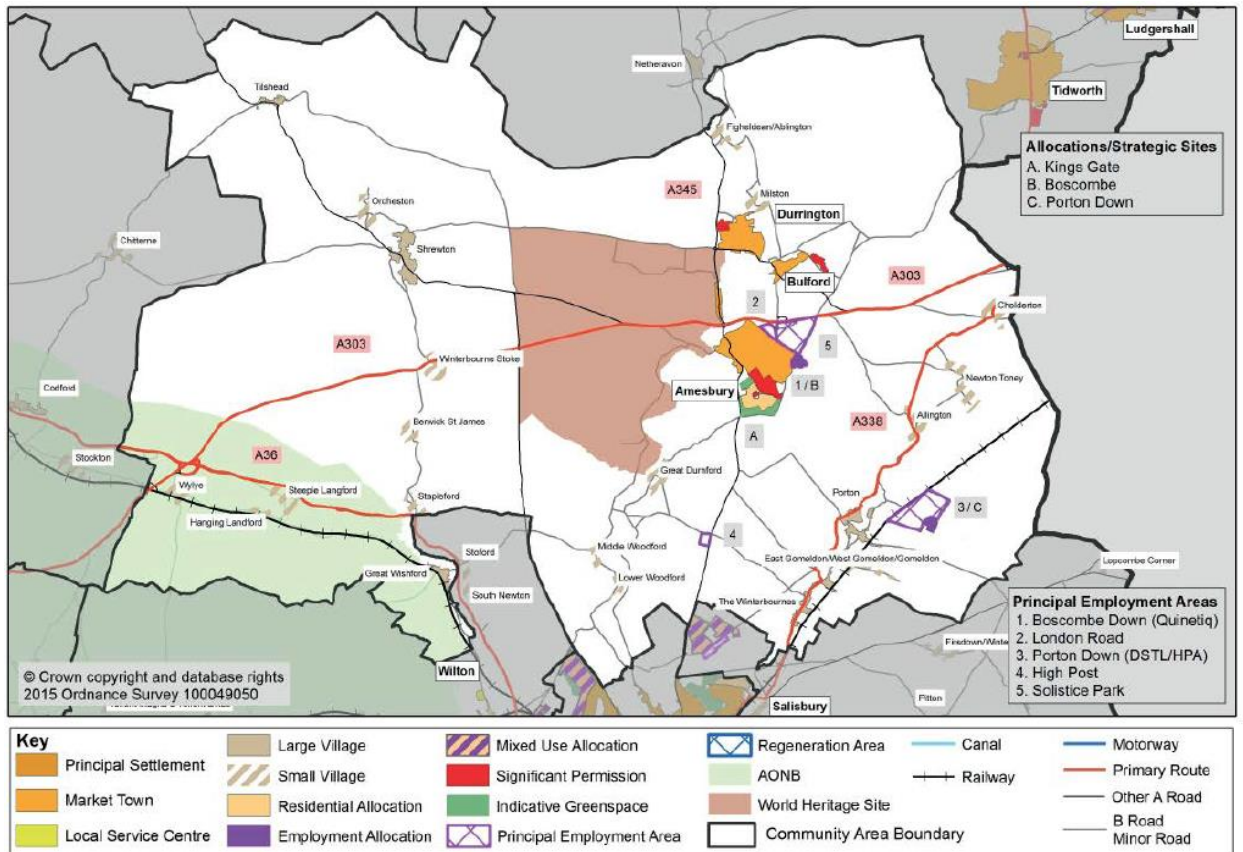


Figure 5.1 Amesbury Community Area

2.3 The site lies within a Special Landscape Area (SLA). Paragraph 6.86 of the Core Strategy states:

*“The emerging Wiltshire Landscape Strategy will review the need for Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) in Wiltshire and, if necessary, also clarify their special characteristics and boundaries. In the interim they will continue to be protected under relevant saved local plan policies, and if evidence demonstrates the need for SLAs these policies will be superseded by a Wiltshire-wide policy.”*

2.4 To date the Wiltshire Landscape Strategy has yet to be published. The SLA designation remains in place, as per saved Policy C6 of the Salisbury Local Plan 2011. Policy C6 states:

*“Within the Special Landscape Area, proposals for development in the countryside will be considered having particular regard to the high quality of the landscape. Where proposals which would not have an adverse effect on the quality on the landscape are acceptable, they will be subject to the following criteria;*

- (i) the siting and scale of development to be sympathetic with the landscape; and
- (ii) high standards of landscaping and design, using materials which are appropriate to the locality and reflect the character of the area.”

2.5 Core Policy 51 requires that:

*“Proposals for development within or affecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), New Forest National Park (NFNP) or Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) shall demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas. Proposals for development outside of an AONB that is sufficiently prominent (in terms of its siting or scale) to have an impact on the area’s special qualities (as set out in the relevant management plan), must also demonstrate that it would not adversely affect its setting.”*

2.6 Core Policy 59 The Stonehenge, Avebury and associated sites World Heritage Site requires that:

*“The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site will be sustained by:*

*i. giving precedence to the protection of the World Heritage Site and its setting*

*ii. development not adversely affecting the World Heritage Site and its attributes of OUV. This includes the physical fabric, character, appearance, setting or views into or out of the World Heritage Site*

*iv. requiring developments to demonstrate that full account has been taken of their impact upon the World Heritage Site and its setting. Proposals will need to demonstrate that the development will have no individual, cumulative or consequential adverse effect upon the site and its OUV.”*

**Wiltshire Council Landscape Character Assessment 2005;**

2.7 The majority of the site falls within Wiltshire Council Landscape Character Assessment LCA 3B Salisbury Plain East, see **LV-0002**.

*“Salisbury Plain East is an area of High Chalk Plain rising up from the river valleys to the east and west. As with other areas within the High Chalk Plain Landscape Type, a vast proportion of the area is MOD land and has not been cultivated for many years, allowing for large scale calcareous grassland recolonisation of high ecological value. Juniper scrub is frequent throughout the area, as are clumps of trees and some more extensive areas of woodland, such as Everleigh Ashes. In recent years however, there has been some extensive tree clearance particularly in connection with the Life project to restore and manage the calcareous grassland. Settlement is more apparent in this area than the other areas of the High Chalk Plain Landscape Type. Two large military camps at Bulford and Tidworth extend up out of the Nine Mile and Bourne Valleys. There is also a group of settlements to the east of the area including Ludgershall and Tidworth. Other military sites include rifle ranges and Boscombe Down Airfield which occupies a large area of flat ground to the south of the area. Sites of historic and archaeological interest are frequent throughout the area, including the Iron Age fort on Sidbury Hill. **Despite the settlement and areas of woodland which create some more intimate areas, Salisbury Plain East retains its vast scale and sense of isolation and exposure.”***

2.8 The condition of the landscape is assessed as good, and the sense of character is strong.

2.9 The inherent landscape sensitivities are assessed as:

- *The open, exposed and isolated nature of the plain.*
- *Internationally important ecological resources in the vast areas of uninterrupted chalk grassland.*
- *Ecologically significant areas of arable biodiversity, Juniper scrub and ancient woodland*
- *Numerous sites of archaeological interest.*
- *The long views and openness of the level plateau have a high visual sensitivity to change.*
- *Skylines and tops of the scarp slopes are also particularly visually sensitive.*

- 2.10 The northern edge of the site lies within the Avon Valley and is within LCA 5D Upper Avon Chalk River Valley.

*“The Upper Avon Chalk River Valley runs southwards between two High Chalk Plain areas and is a narrow strongly contained valley particularly to the north and south. The middle section is wider and more level and contains the settlements of Durrington and Amesbury. The sheltered and enclosed valley with its intricate pattern of small pastoral fields, woodlands and scattered villages contrasts strongly with the open, simple landscape of the downs. The area has a rich ecology with the River Avon (SAC), wet woodlands, commercial poplar plantations, hanging valley side woodlands linked by full hedgerows and hedgerow trees, plus meadows including outstanding example of actively managed water meadow system at Lower Woodford Water Meadows SSSI. There is a long history of settlement in the Upper Avon Chalk River Valley from the Long Barrow at Bulford, tumuli elsewhere, the Fort and Abbey at Amesbury, and Manor houses at Great Durnford and Little Durnford. The A345 trunk road runs along to northern section of the area and it is crossed at Amesbury by the A303, while minor roads follow valley sides to south. **Despite the busy roads and settlement the Upper Avon Chalk River Valley remains predominantly a highly rural landscape.**”*

- 2.11 The condition of the landscape is assessed as good, and the sense of character is strong.

- 2.12 The inherent landscape sensitivities are assessed as:

- *Small scale enclosed landscape.*
- *High water quality and outstanding ecological richness of the chalk rivers.*
- *Remnants of water meadows including a few in active management plus other historic floodplain feature such as mills and leats and watercress beds.*
- *Rich floodplain landscape of small scale grazed pastures, riparian vegetation and damp woodlands.*
- *Small distinctive villages and manors built of rich variety of local materials.*
- *Peaceful rural landscape away from the major roadways.*
- *Valley crests are visually sensitive.*

### **Stonehenge and Avebury WHS Management Plan 2015**

- 2.13 Paragraph 7.5.12 of the WHS Management Plan states:

*“The Guidance (NPPF) underlines that the setting requires protection and that it is essential that the Local Plan sets out how this will take place. The Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 59 states that this will be done by undertaking a Setting Study for the whole WHS.”*

- 2.14 Map 11 on page 306 shows those areas that are visually sensitive in consideration of the major monuments within the WHS. The site is partly defined as an area of visual sensitivity. The note requires that *“a full analysis of visual impacts should be prepared for any significant development proposal within the WHS or its setting as part of a Heritage Impact Assessment.”*

### 3. SHAFTESBURY INTERNATIONAL SERVICES (SIS) DOCUMENTS

#### SIS Consultation Response to Wiltshire Local Plan

- 3.1 The document that forms the consultation response summarises the perceived suitability of the site for development at 4.12 on page 16. Roman numeral vii) states:

*“Although the western part of the site does not adjoin the boundary of the Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS), land within the ownership of SIS – which is not proposed for allocation – does adjoin the River Avon on the opposite bank to the WHS. Taking this into consideration, a **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken on behalf of SIS which concludes that there are no direct views of the proposed development from Stonehenge.** SIS also note that existing shelterbelts within the site, together with additional land within SIS’s ownership which can be dedicated to additional planting, between it and the WHS, can and would provide further screening of the proposed development from views from the west. In addition, the distribution of the proposed built development within the site will respect Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS. In particular, it is proposed that a riverside park and strategic woodland planting will be provided in those parts of the site which are nearest to the WHS boundary.”*

- 3.2 This paragraph is misleading. The landscape report that forms part of the representation is not an LVIA, but a Summary Landscape and Visual Context Review, and as noted at 1.2 of the SLVCR *“it does not constitute an impact appraisal or assessment”*. Whilst there are no direct views of the proposed development from Stonehenge itself, the site is currently visible from elsewhere within the WHS. This is in opposition to the need to respect the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS. This position may be further eroded by the Setting Study for the whole WHS to be produced by Wiltshire Council, see 2.13 above.
- 3.3 At Roman numeral ix) the presence of the site within the SLA is discussed. The supposedly logical nature of the extension to the village through the development of the site does nothing to address the fact that the site currently lies within the SLA. The site is viewed largely in isolation from the Kings Gate development, with little or no interaction. The change to the local landscape brought about by the development of the Kings Gate is not in question but the effect of that development on the South West Amesbury site is limited. No specific evidence is presented to support the removal of the site from the SLA.

#### Summary Landscape and Visual Context Review (SLVCR)

- 3.4 The SLVCR has been produced by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute and Urban Design Group Recognised Practitioner and does not constitute an impact appraisal or assessment.
- 3.5 The SLA is discussed at 2.2. It is correct that the policy does not preclude development, but it must be appropriate to the locality. Policy C6 requires that *“development in the countryside will be considered having particular regard for the high quality of the landscape”*. It has not been demonstrated that the *“siting and scale of development to be sympathetic with the landscape”*.
- 3.6 The justification for development appears to be a belief that the SLA review will remove the site from within the designation, or remove the designation entirely, in due course.
- 3.7 At 2.6 it is asserted that *“the presence of the existing and proposed woodland buffer strips along the western boundary of the site are **likely** [my emphasis] to mitigate likely impacts”*. Again, this is not proven.



- 3.8 The visibility of the site has been tested against a bare earth model, using only five test points. This is not particularly robust and gives a misleading indication of the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) of the proposed development.
- 3.9 Whilst the test points are not theoretically visible from Stonehenge it is clear from Figure 6 of the SLVCR that the proposed development would be visible from within the WHS.
- 3.10 As a result of the limited number of test points and the position of them within the site the ZTV incorrectly concludes that the proposed development would not be visible from the Avon Valley, see Section 4 below.

## 4. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ANALYSIS

- 4.1 The site and the ridge that it sits on is a transitional zone between the open downland of LCA 3B and the intimate wooded Avon River valley of LCA 5D. As a consequence, it displays a mix of both LCA in that there are areas of woodland, steep sided valleys and some more open rolling agricultural land.
- 4.2 The landscape setting of the site is rural, despite the effect of the A345. The site is separated from the A345 by a well-developed hedgerow that, as stated in the SLVCR, provides good screening. This has the effect of reinforcing the association of the site with the Avon Valley rather than the land to the east. The land to the west is largely undeveloped with views of the WHS from the higher parts of the site.
- 4.3 The proposed development would constitute a significant change to the local landscape. The King's Gate development would not play a significant role in views from the western slopes of the Avon Valley, so the proposed development would appear very much in isolation. The site has a very limited relationship with the centre of Amesbury, with invisibility limited to views filtered by intervening woodland or not visible.
- 4.4 Whilst the WHS would not be directly affected, the effect on the setting of the WHS and on the SLA would be adverse.
- 4.5 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) testing was performed to understand the overall visibility of the proposed development, see Appendices 3 and 4. Development blocks were tested at a range of heights. LiDAR DSM data was used in **Appendix 3** with existing development and woodland to simulate the screening effect of vegetation. For the wider area tests found at **Appendix 4** OS Terrain 5 was used with existing woodland and development added from OS VectorMap. In both cases the proposed development was tested at 9m high to reflect the testing in the SLVCR, and at 12m to test 3 storey development.
- 4.6 It is evident from **Appendix 3** that whilst the proposed development at both 9m and 12m high would not be visible from Stonehenge it would be theoretically visible from the WHS, the Avon Valley and Amesbury Park Registered Park and Garden.
- 4.7 **Appendix 4** demonstrates that in addition to the effects described above, the proposed development would be theoretically visible over a wide area, including further areas of the WHS to the west of Stonehenge and around Woodhenge to the north.
- 4.8 Further testing showed that if the proposed development was 13m in height and above some part of it would be visible from Stonehenge itself.
- 4.9 A site visit was made on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Photographs were taken from the seven viewpoints used in the SLVCR, with additional viewpoints where necessary.

### **Viewpoints 1 and 2 (No equivalent SLVCR Viewpoints) – Stonehenge**

- 4.10 The site itself is not visible from Stonehenge or the approach from the visitor centre to the west.

### **Viewpoint 3 (SLVCR Viewpoint 1) – Church Street near the River Avon**

- 4.11 The proposed development would be largely screened from view by the existing planting along the skyline with the exception of roofs of those dwellings on the higher ground.

### **Viewpoints 4 and 5 (SLVCR Viewpoint 7) – Stonehenge Road near West Amesbury Farm**

- 4.12 The proposed development would be visible on the skyline in the distance.

**Viewpoint 6 (SLVCR Viewpoint 6) – Footpath north of Wilsford Manor**

- 4.13 The site is not visible, hidden by the treeline along the north of the track.

**Viewpoint 7 (No equivalent SLVCR Viewpoint) – Field gate on lane west of A345**

- 4.14 View of the site, the proposed development would be clearly visible on the valley side and skyline beyond.

**Viewpoint 8 (SLVCR Viewpoint 5) – Field gate on lane west of A345**

- 4.15 View of the site, the proposed development would be clearly visible on the valley side and skyline beyond.

**Viewpoint 9 (No equivalent SLVCR Viewpoint) – Field gate west of A345**

- 4.16 View of the site, the proposed development would be clearly visible on the valley side and skyline beyond. The WHS is visible on the distant skyline.

**Viewpoint 10 (SLVCR Viewpoint 3) – A345**

- 4.17 The site is screened by the boundary hedge. The proposed development would be visible above the hedgeline.

**Viewpoint 11 (No equivalent SLVCR Viewpoint) – Bridleway near Southmill Hill Plantation**

- 4.18 This route forms part of the access into the proposed development. Development would be clearly visible on the rising ground to the left and ahead.

**Viewpoint 12 (No equivalent SLVCR Viewpoint) – Break in hedge on lane west of A345**

- 4.19 View of the site, the proposed development would be clearly visible on the valley side and skyline beyond.

**Viewpoint 13 (SLVCR Viewpoint 2) – Footpath near Ham Hatches and River Avon**

- 4.20 The proposed development would be visible above the hedgeline and plantation on the skyline. This demonstrates the limited screening effect that some of the recent areas of plantation would provide from certain viewpoints.

**Viewpoint 14 (No equivalent SLVCR Viewpoint) – Footpath south of Ham Hatches**

- 4.21 The proposed development would be visible above the hedgeline and plantation on the skyline. This demonstrates the limited screening effect that some of the recent areas of plantation would provide. Amesbury appears well separated from the viewpoint and site.

**Viewpoint 15 (No equivalent SLVCR Viewpoint) – Bridleway south of Ham Hatches**

- 4.22 Site not visible

**Viewpoint 16 (No equivalent SLVCR Viewpoint) – Bridleway south of Ham Hatches**

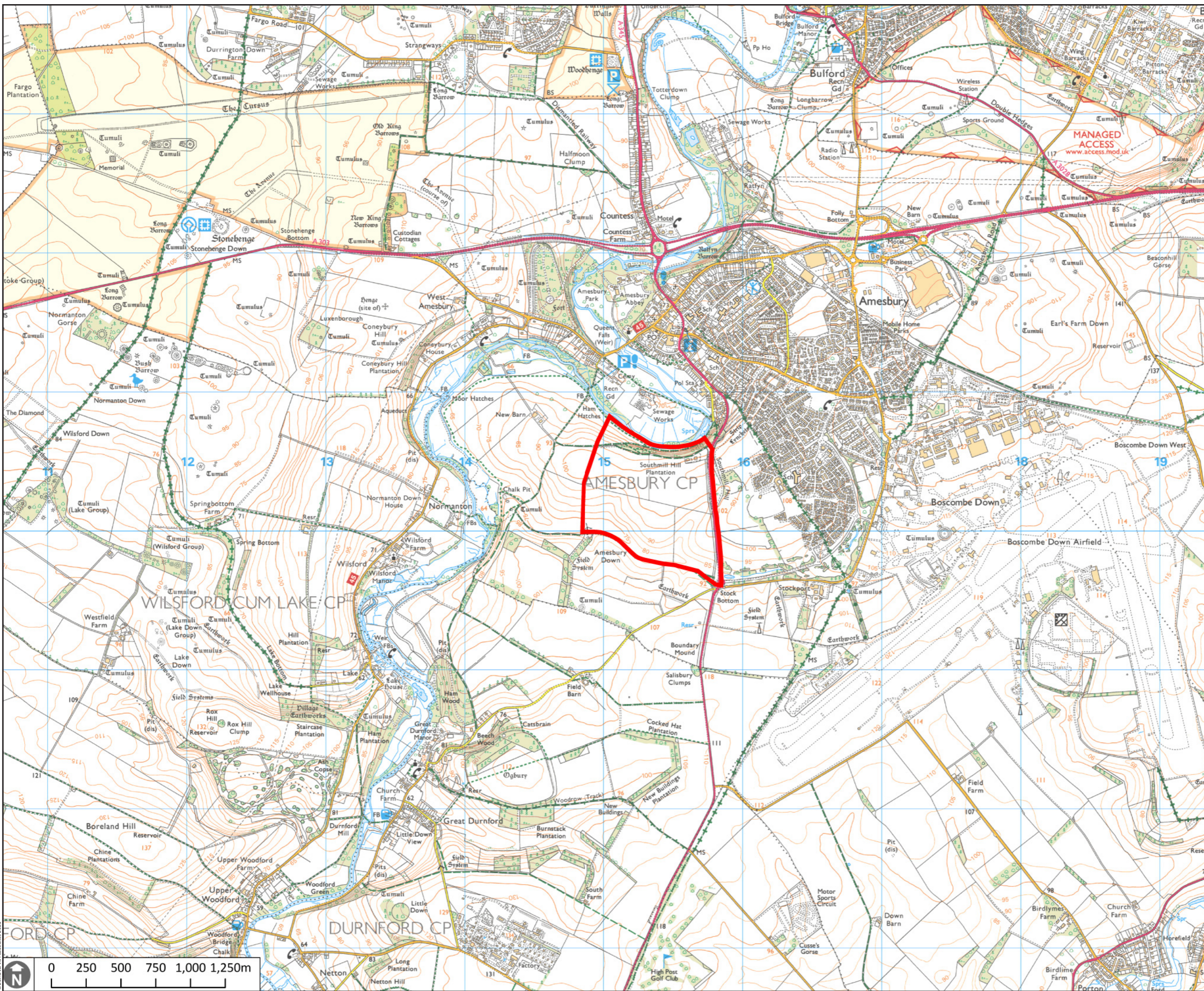
- 4.23 The proposed development would be visible above the hedgeline and plantation in the middle distance and on the skyline. This demonstrates the limited screening effect that some of the recent areas of plantation would provide from certain viewpoints.


**Viewpoint 18 (SLVCR Viewpoint 4) – Bridleway at Amesbury Down**

- 4.24 The proposed development would be visible in the foreground and above the hedgeline and plantation on the skyline. This demonstrates the limited screening effect that some of the recent areas of plantation would provide from certain viewpoints.
- 4.25 In summary it is evident that the proposed development would be clearly visible in a number of local views, with limited screening effect offered by the recently planted plantations in certain views.

## 5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This landscape appraisal report has been prepared by David Jarvis Associates (DJA) Limited on behalf of The Great Durnford Estate.
- 5.2 This report is provided in support of an objection in respect of development proposed at Vineys Farm, Amesbury as part of the Examination for the Wiltshire Local Plan.
- 5.3 The site occupies 73.7ha and is located on a ridge of rolling agricultural land to the east of the Avon Valley, south of Amesbury. The A345 lies along the eastern boundary with the King's Gate housing development currently under construction to the east.
- 5.4 The site lies within a Special Landscape Area (SLA) and with views of the Stonehenge and Avebury WHS. No specific evidence is presented to support the removal of the site from the SLA.
- 5.5 The majority of the site falls within Wiltshire Council Landscape Character Assessment LCA 3B Salisbury Plain East. The northern edge of the site lies within the Avon Valley and is within LCA 5D Upper Avon Chalk River Valley. The condition of the landscape in both LCA is assessed as good, and the sense of character is strong.
- 5.6 The WHS Management Plan identifies areas that are visually sensitive in consideration of the major monuments within the WHS. The site is partly defined as an area of visual sensitivity.
- 5.7 The ZTV in the SLVCR incorrectly concludes that the proposed development would not be visible from the Avon Valley.
- 5.8 The landscape setting of the site is rural, despite the effect of the A345. This has the effect of reinforcing the association of the site with the Avon Valley rather than the land to the east. The land to the west is largely undeveloped with views of the WHS from the higher parts of the site.
- 5.9 The proposed development would constitute a significant change to the local landscape. The site has a very limited relationship with the centre of Amesbury, with invisibility limited to views filtered by intervening woodland or not visible.
- 5.10 Whilst the WHS would not be directly affected, the effect on the setting of the WHS and on the SLA would be adverse.
- 5.11 Whilst the proposed development at both 9m and 12m high would not be visible from Stonehenge it would be theoretically visible from the WHS, the Avon Valley and Amesbury Park Registered Park and Garden, including further areas of the WHS to the west of Stonehenge and around Woodhenge to the north. This is in opposition to the need to respect the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS. This position may be further eroded by the Setting Study for the whole WHS to be produced by Wiltshire Council.
- 5.12 In summary it is evident that the proposed development would be clearly visible in a number of local views, with limited screening effect offered by the recently planted plantations in certain views.



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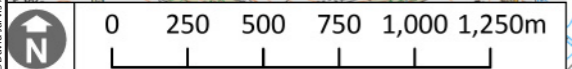
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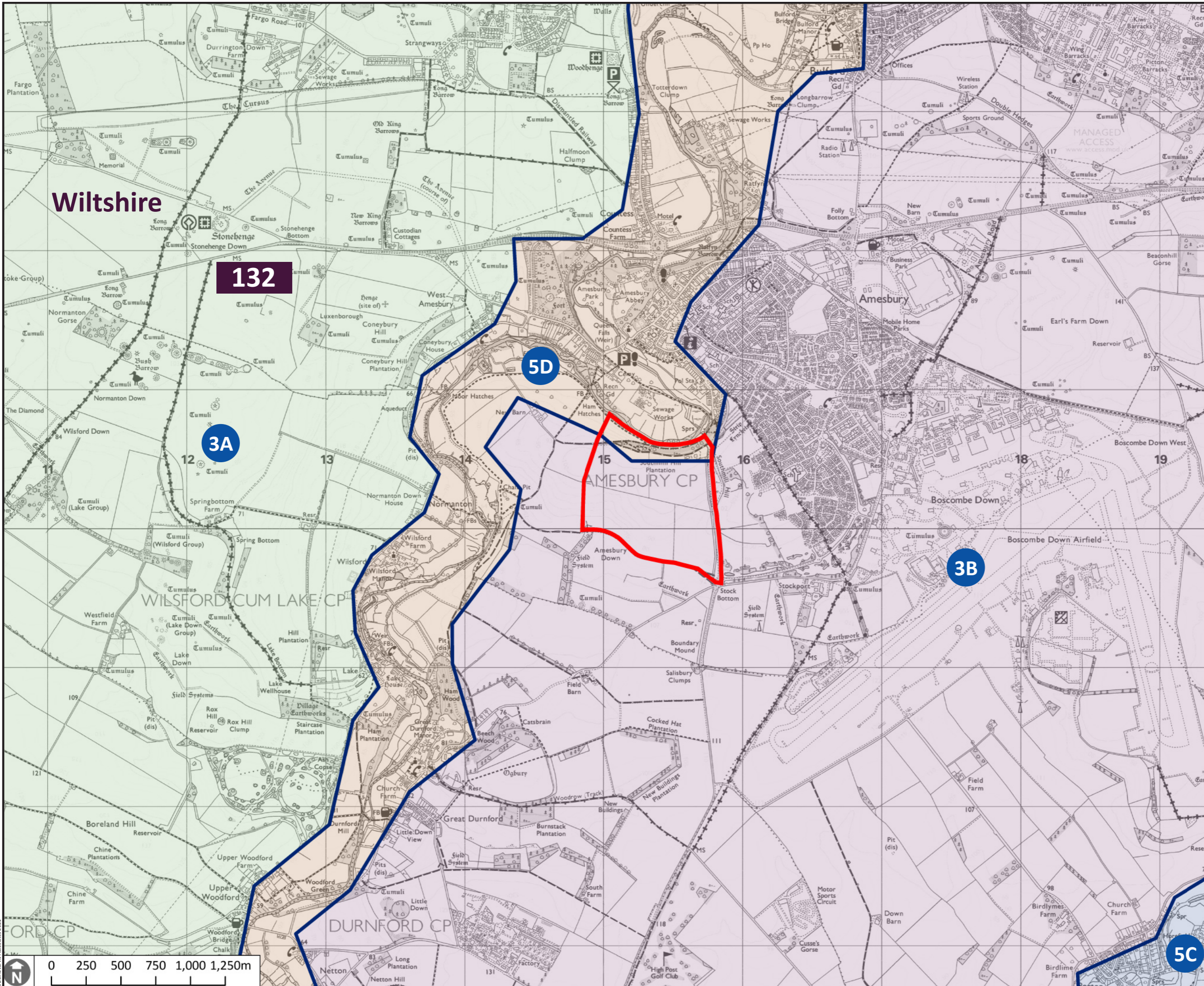
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Wiltshire

132

3A

5D

3B

5C

**KEY**

Boundary:  
Proposed Site

**National Landscape Character**  
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**National Character Area**  
132: Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs (NE479)

**Landscape Character Types**  
Source: Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment Dec 2005

Type 3: High Chalk Plain  
Type 5: Chalk River Valley

**Landscape Character Areas**  
Source: Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment Dec 2005

3A Salisbury Plain West  
3B Salisbury Plain East  
5C Bourne Chalk River Valley  
5D Upper Avon Chalk River Valley

Status **PLANNING**

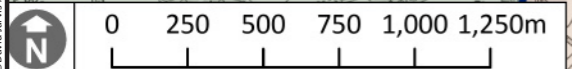
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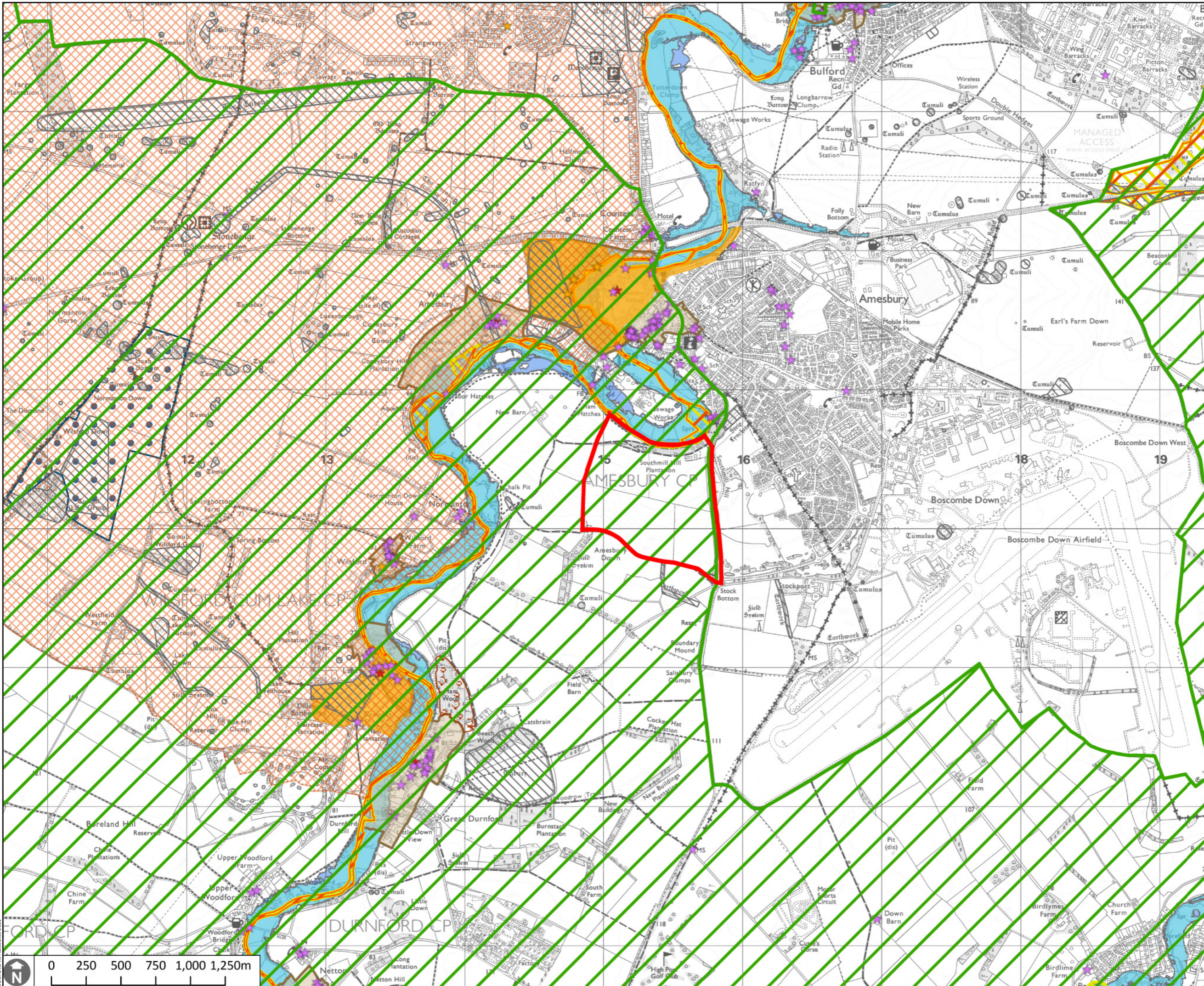
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- KEY**
- Boundary: Proposed Site
  - Landscape Designations**  
© Historic England 2021
  - Listed Buildings**
    - Grade I
    - Grade II\*
    - Grade II
    - Scheduled Monument
    - World Heritage Sites
    - Registered Parks and Gardens  - Landscape Designations**  
© Natural England 2021
    - Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
    - Sites of Special Scientific Interest
    - Special Areas of Conservation
    - Special Landscape Area  - Local Authority Designations**
    - Conservation Areas
    - RSPB Public Reserves  - Flood Zones**  
Environment Agency 2016
    - Flood Zone 2
    - Flood Zone 3

Status

**PLANNING**

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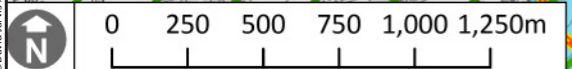
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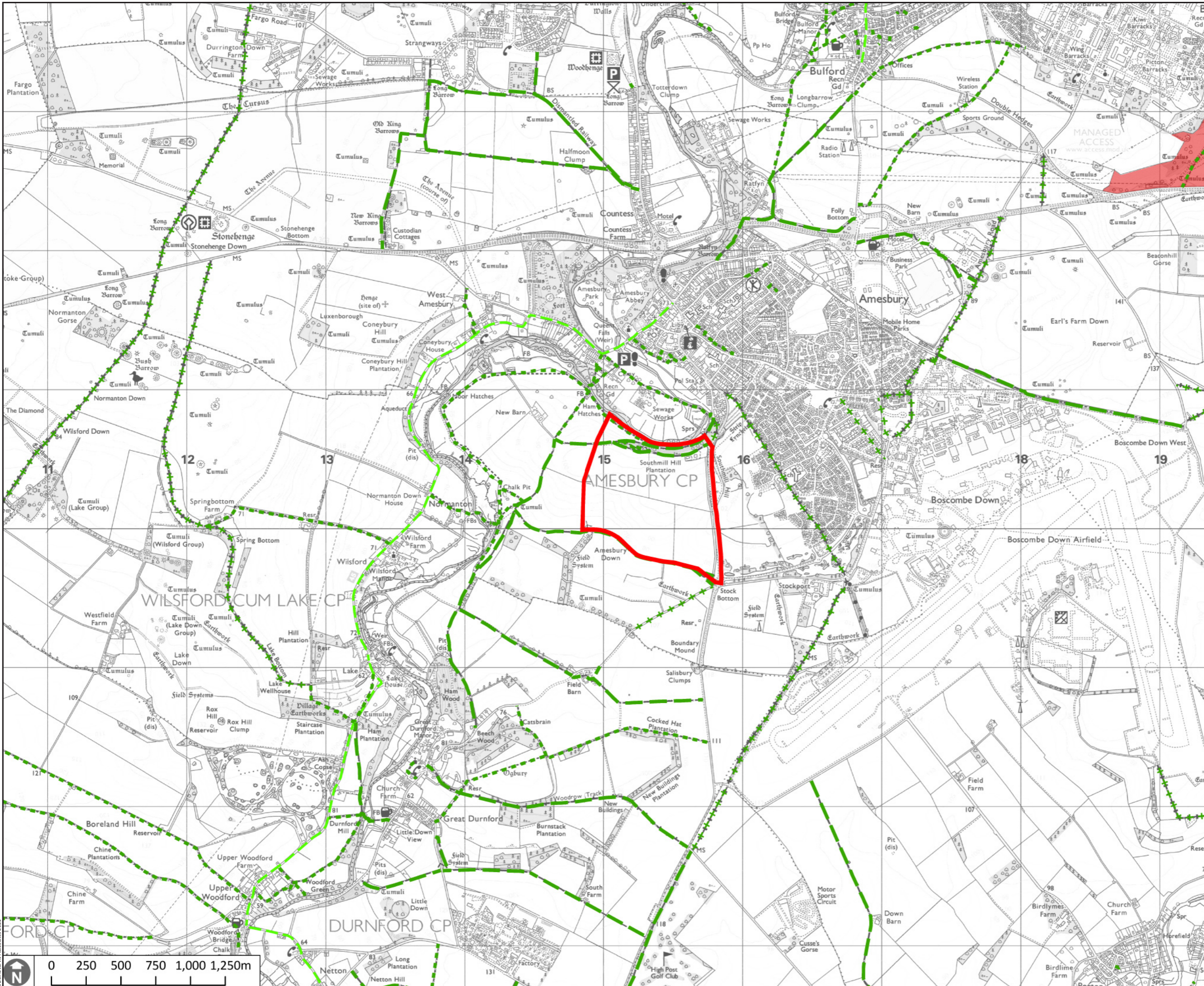
**LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS**

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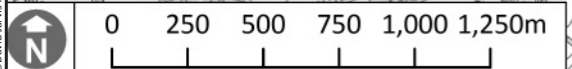
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**KEY**

- Boundary: Proposed Site
- Public Rights of Way
  - Public Bridleway
  - Public Footpath
  - BOAT
- Countryside and Rights of Way
  - Open Access Mapping Areas (CROW Act 2000)
  - Section 4 - Conclusive Open Country (CROW Act 2000)
- National Cycle Network © Sustrans
  - National Cycle Route



Status **PLANNING**

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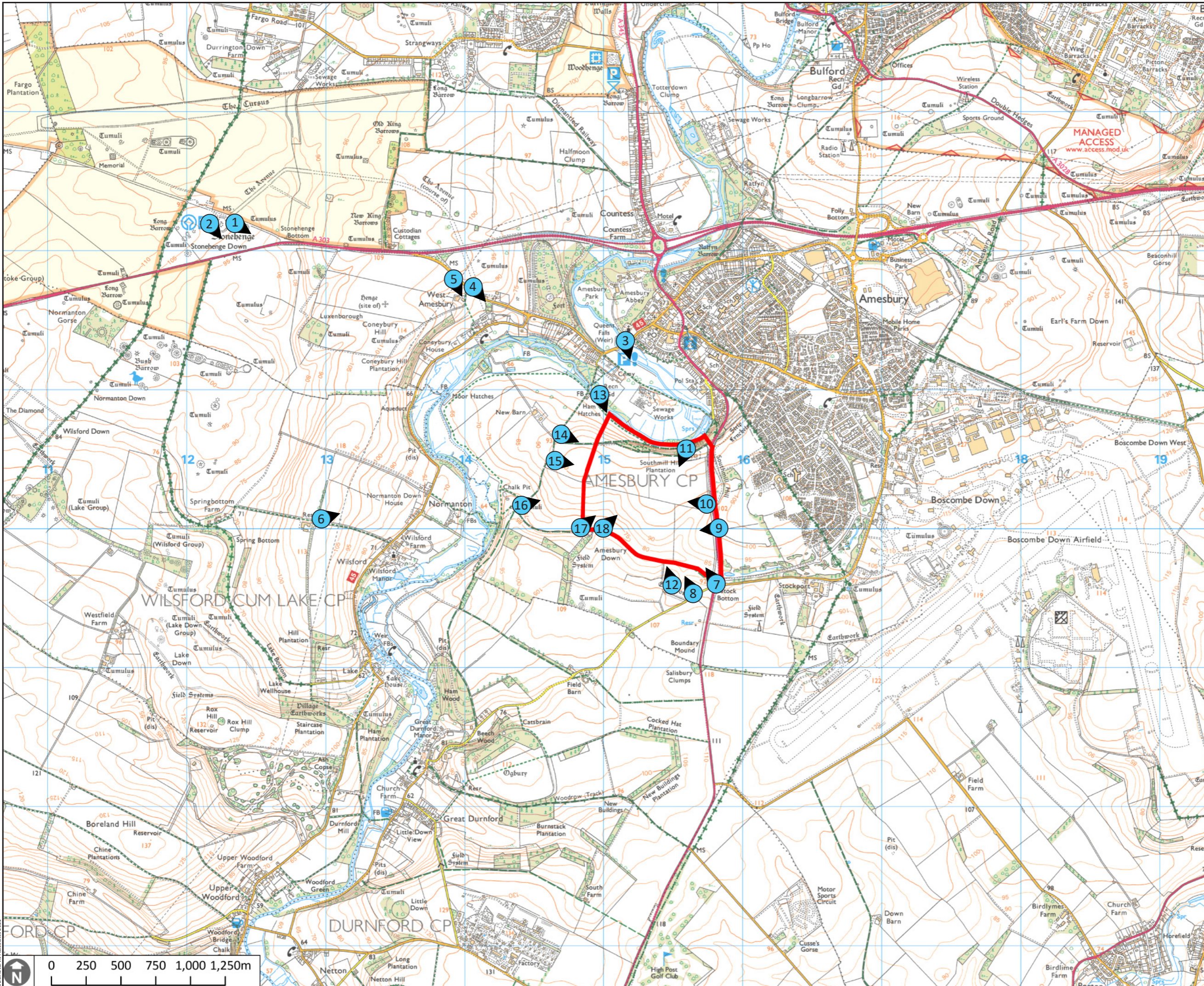
Client  
**GREAT DURNFORD ESTATE**

Project  
**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Drawing Title  
**PROW**

Scale	Sheet Size	Date	
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Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.	Status
-	2988-4-4-4	LV-0004	S4-P1

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**KEY**

Boundary:  
Proposed Site

**Viewpoint Locations**

1  
Representative Viewpoint  
Location

Status **PLANNING**

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Project  
**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Drawing Title  
**REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT  
LOCATION PLAN**

Scale <b>1:25,000</b>	Sheet Size <b>A3</b>	Date <b>AUG 2021</b>
Client Ref. <b>-</b>	Drawing Ref. <b>2988-4-4-4</b>	Drawing No. <b>LV-0005</b>
		Status <b>S4-P1</b>

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## **Appendix 1**

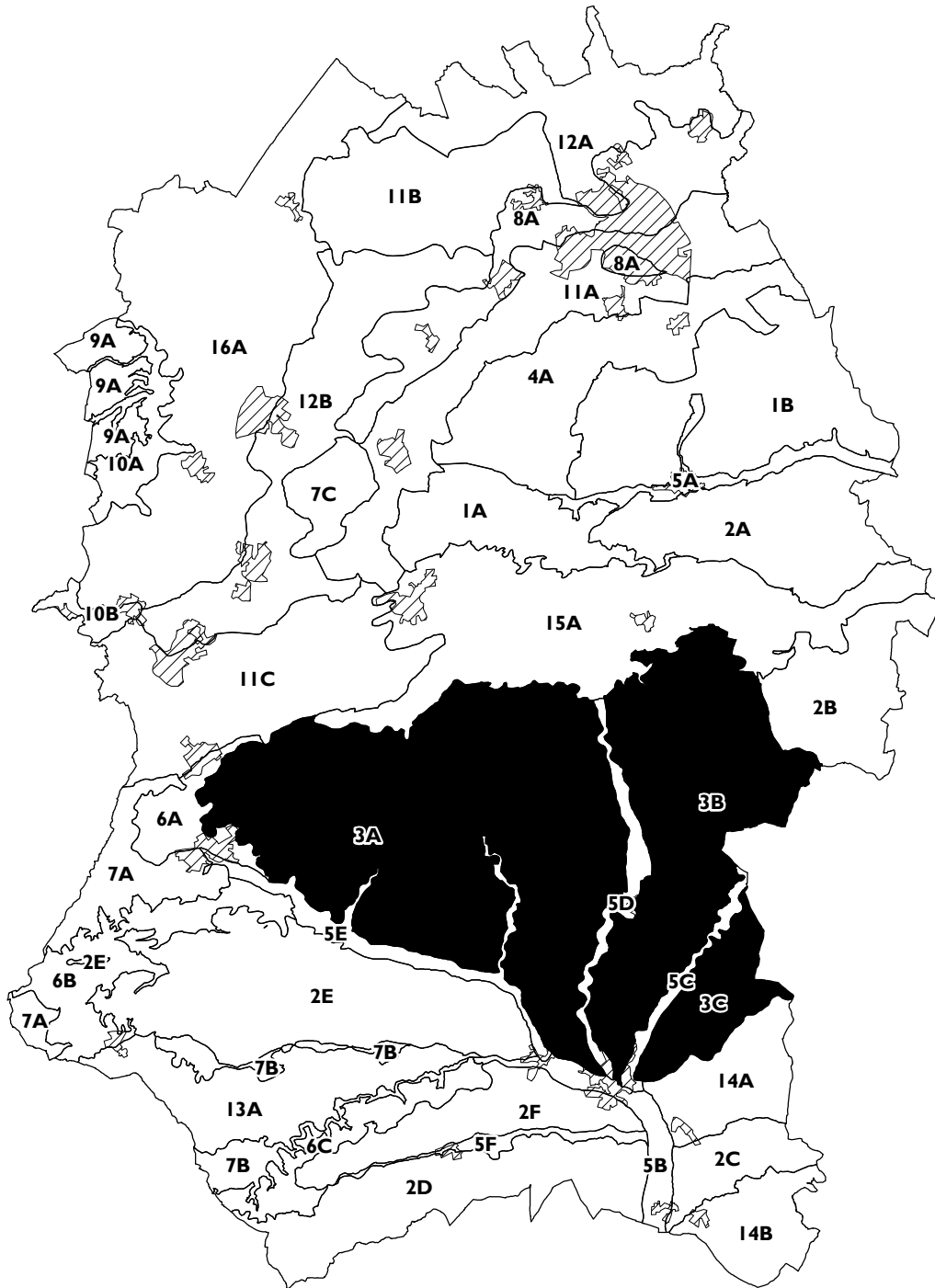
**Extracts from the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005)**

# LANDSCAPE TYPE 3: HIGH CHALK PLAIN

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# 3: HIGH CHALK PLAIN



## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- 3A** Salisbury Plain West
- 3B** Salisbury Plain East
- 3C** Porton Down
-  Urban Area

# TYPE 3: HIGH CHALK PLAIN

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## DESCRIPTION

### Location and Boundaries

The *High Chalk Plain* Landscape Type forms a large area of central Wiltshire, over a wide band of Upper Chalk Formation. The boundaries are defined by changes in topography to the north, west and south where water courses have created valleys, and a change in land cover to the east where woodland is more prevalent. The county boundary constrains the area of study to the east.

There are three Character Areas within this landscape type, divided by river valleys. 3A: *Salisbury Plain West* is the largest and most westerly area, 3B: *Salisbury Plain East* is the central area and 3C: *Porton Down* is to the east.

A large proportion of the *High Chalk Plain* Landscape Type is Ministry of Defence (MOD) land, with restricted public access.

### Key Characteristics

- Very large scale and open, exposed landscape.
- Rolling plateau land form with panoramic views over the surrounding lowlands creating a sense of elevation.
- Large regular arable fields are bounded mainly by ditches or fences with occasional hedgerows.
- Steep and incised slopes down to the surrounding river valleys.
- Extensive areas of chalk grassland and scrub occur on the northern and central parts of the area under military ownership with arable farmland around the periphery.
- Copses and woodland belts, at various stages of growth occur throughout the area with sinuous older plantations contrasting with more recent tree planting in geometrical blocks.
- Proliferation of military signage and posts along the numerous tracks that cross the area.
- Rich ecology particularly the numerous extensive and intact areas of chalk grassland.
- Archaeological remains and sites of historic importance, particularly the Neolithic monuments of Stonehenge and Old Sarum.
- Settlement limited to a scattering of small villages and military installations including camps and abandoned or specially constructed villages used by the army for training operations.

## Physical Influences

The *High Chalk Plain* Landscape Type sits on a belt of chalk from the Upper Cretaceous period that runs east to west across the county. The majority of the area comprises of Upper Chalk with Middle Chalk and Lower Chalk occurring on the steep slopes and at the base of slopes respectively. Steep scarp slopes rise to form an upstanding plateau, with wide flat areas incised by a complex network of dry valleys forming an expansive rolling landscape. Small isolated areas of Clay with Flint and Sandstone also occur. The underlying chalk geology has led to the predominance of free draining calcareous soils, and a lack of surface water. The landform undulates between 100m and 230m AOD.

## Biodiversity

The *High Chalk Plains* Landscape Type is rich in areas of high ecological value and offers a range of habitats including extensive areas nationally rare chalk grassland, a habitat that has seen an 80% decline over the last 50 years. The long established military land use has contributed to these ecologically important areas. Within the Type there are 13 SSSI. Three of these areas are of European significance, with additional SAC designations. Two of these, Salisbury Plain and Porton Down, are also SPAs; while the other site, Parsonage Down is also a NNR. There are also several County Wildlife Sites around the periphery of the military area and a number beech and ancient woodland remnants throughout.

Salisbury plain, designated as a SSSI, SAC and SPA, covers approximately 12933ha in three areas spread over the northern part of the *High Chalk Plain* Landscape Type. The purchase of land for military use at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has protected the area from intensive farming methods, allowing over 100 years of chalk grassland re-colonisation. Today the diverse range of calcareous soil types support a wide range of grassland communities including 13 species of nationally rare plants. The Plain is an important habitat for invertebrates, with 67 rare and scarce species recorded. It is also an internationally important site for birds, offering important breeding and wintering grounds for a number of species, including six listed in the Red Data Book.

Porton Down, designated as a SSSI, SAC and SPA, is located to the east of the Type and extends beyond the county border. Porton Down is also a significant tract of ungrazed and uninterrupted calcareous grassland and includes nationally rare colonies and species. The Down also has several broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantations and around 20% of the southern English population of Juniper scrub. The range of habitats supports a diverse range of species, some internationally important, including lichens, fungus, flies, snails, beetles, butterflies, deer and birds.

Parsonage Down SSSI, SAC and NNR is again an area of botanically rich chalk grassland, situated to the west of Shrewton and outside of the MOD controlled land.

The more isolated areas of species rich calcareous grassland and Juniper scrub designated as SSSI, include; Yarnbury Castle SSSI, Steeple Langford Down SSSI, Starveall and Stoney Down SSSI, Scratchbury and Cotley Hill SSSI, Upton Cow Down SSSI, Bratton Down SSSI, Great Cheveral Hill, Figsbury Ring SSSI, Bracknell Croft SSSI and Cockey Down SSSI.

County Wildlife Sites include: The Warren, mixed plantation woodland on steep valley sides with open fen and a watercourse at the valley bottom and white helleborine, broad-leaved helleborine, ploughman's-spikenard, adders tongue and water crowfoot present; White Hill,

three enclosures with a complex system of terraces and access track-ways crossing them - the slopes are unimproved chalk grassland; and Codford Down, a large area of chalk downland with visible signs of old field systems with species present including black medick, burnet saxifrage and glaucous sedge, and brown hare.

### **Historic environment**

The *High Chalk Plain* Landscape Type has many sites of historic and archaeological importance. The military use has contributed to preserving a number of archaeological sites from the Prehistoric and Roman periods that would have otherwise been lost through ploughing. Whole archaeological landscapes survive in this landscape type largely undisturbed by any activity following the Roman period. The military training area east of the River Avon has the biggest concentration of Bronze Age burial mounds in Europe. This prehistoric landscape exhibits signs of consensus relating to its use. Large areas are devoted to agriculture and others on which agriculture was clearly excluded are dedicated to burial practices.

The most significant concentration of sites is Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS), recognised for its heritage of international value by UNESCO in 1986. Although the famous stone circle is the most recognisable feature, the WHS covers an area of around 2600ha, protecting the site and setting of a number of Neolithic monuments including; Woodhenge, another henge monument; the Cursus, consisting of two straight banks and ditches 90-130 metres apart running 2.8 kilometres and several barrows. Barrows dating from Neolithic and early Bronze Age periods are a frequent occurrence across this landscape with over 700 on the protected MOD land alone.

To the south of the type, close to Salisbury is the site of the Neolithic settlement of Old Sarum. Established during the Iron Age around 500bc the site was occupied successively by the Romans and Saxons, although the most important developments occurred during Norman occupation. A castle, palace and cathedral were built inside a network of earthwork but the settlement started to fade with the establishment of New Sarum, the latter day Salisbury in 1226.

The area was extensively settled throughout the Iron Age and Roman periods. Significant sites include the Iron Age forts of Yarnbury Castle, Sidbury Hill, Figsbury Ring and Scratchbury Hillfort and earthworks associated with a Roman settlement on Charlton Down. There are some six Roman villages surviving intact on Salisbury Plain including street and house platforms surviving as clear earthworks.

In 1897 the first land was purchased for military training purposes and by 1902 the majority of the 17,400ha that is now the MOD controlled Army Training Estate – Salisbury Plain was under military ownership. The protection offered by the military zoning has had a profound affect on the modern landscape. Outside the MOD land large arable fields indicative of recent enclosure are dominant.

### **Settlement and built character**

Settlement within the *High Chalk Plain* Landscape Type is sparse, limited to nucleated villages, military camps and isolated farmsteads. The highest concentration of development is to the east of the area with a cluster of villages around the settlements of Tidworth and Ludgershall in the Bourne valley. Other settlement is widely dispersed, such as the isolated village of



Tilshead and the parkland estate of Everleigh. Scattered throughout, but usually to the periphery of the MOD land are isolated brick farmsteads occupied by the tenant farmers tending to cattle that are allowed to graze in specified areas of the military zone. Most settlement within the locality is, however, confined to the river valleys (Landscape Type 5: Chalk River Valleys) that divide the *High Chalk Plain*, occasionally spilling out on to the plain as at Amesbury.

'Attached' to and dwarfing some of the villages are the military camps of Tidworth, Bulford and Netheravon. There are also several freestanding camps such as Larkhill and New Zealand Camp. The camps, surrounded by wire fences, are often constructed of modern brick, weatherboard and corrugated iron. Although the camps are highly visible in some areas of the landscape their large scale, muted colours and utilitarian construction are in keeping with a landscape that has been so heavily influenced by its military land use. There are also several other military developments including the large Boscombe Down airfield, several artillery ranges and a replica German village. The military presence is also evident in the numerous signs and white topped posts clustered around track junctions and areas with restricted access such as the firing ranges or the historic sites.

As the majority of the area is controlled by the MOD, transport routes are limited and generally pass through the area to connect the settlements in the river valleys. The busy A303 also passes through the area east/west. Within the MOD land there is a sparse network of rough tracks that are inaccessible to the public.

## **CHARACTER AREAS**

### **3A: Salisbury Plain West**

*Salisbury Plain West* is by far the largest of the character areas of the *High Chalk Plain* Landscape Type. The vast High Chalk plateau rises with steep scarp slopes from the river valleys that define its southern and eastern edges and the greensand to the north. Although it is incised by numerous dry valleys, the rolling, expansive and exposed landscape retains its continuity. Although the majority of the area is controlled by the MOD there is restricted public access. The boundary between the military land and the farmland is distinct. The MOD land, a wide band to the north of the area, is almost exclusively calcareous grass land with the different grass communities arising from local conditions giving subtle variations throughout. Woodland clumps, some ancient, and small plantations at various stages of growth are also scattered across the downs, apart from the north east of the area which is used as an impact area for weapons and is exclusively grassland. The areas outside MOD control are predominantly intensively farmed and arable. The large fields and lack of hedgerow retains the openness of the area but the landscape has a more 'manicured' feel. The lack of settlement, limited to the small village of Tilshead and a couple of military camps, accentuates the feeling of remoteness and isolation. Views within the area can be distant, looking across vast areas of grassland and views from the periphery of the area are often panoramic, overlooking the surrounding lowlands. Military installations, signage and posts occur throughout the area. An abundance of historic sites from the Neolithic period is also a characteristic of this area, including the World Heritage Site Stonehenge and several hundred barrows.

### **3B: Salisbury Plain East**

*Salisbury Plain East* is an area of High Chalk Plain rising up from the river valleys to the east and west. As with other areas within the *High Chalk Plain Landscape Type*, a vast proportion of the area is MOD land and has not been cultivated for many years, allowing for large scale calcareous grassland recolonisation of high ecological value. Juniper scrub is frequent throughout the area, as are clumps of trees and some more extensive areas of woodland, such as Everleigh Ashes. In recent years however, there has been some extensive tree clearance particularly in connection with the Life project to restore and manage the calcareous grassland. Settlement is more apparent in this area than the other areas of the *High Chalk Plain Landscape Type*. Two large military camps at Bulford and Tidworth extend up out of the Nine Mile and Bourne Valleys. There is also a group of settlements to the east of the area including Ludgershall and Tidworth. Other military sites include rifle ranges and Boscombe Down Airfield which occupies a large area of flat ground to the south of the area. Sites of historic and archaeological interest are frequent throughout the area, including the Iron Age fort on Sidbury Hill. Despite the settlement and areas of woodland which create some more intimate areas, *Salisbury Plain East* retains its vast scale and sense of isolation and exposure.

### **3C: Porton Down**

The smallest area within the *High Chalk Plain Landscape Type*, *Porton Down* is an area of High Chalk that straddles the Wiltshire border to the west of the county. The area is effectively divided into two by the A30. North of the A30 the MOD land is predominantly calcareous grassland with some scattered clumps of trees and is relatively inaccessible. South of the A30 the land is generally in private ownership and is arable with a more formal network of hedgerows and trees creating a more intimate and less exposed landscape.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Positive landscape features of significance**

- Large scale open and exposed landscape.
- Strong sense of remoteness and isolation accentuated by absence of settlement.
- Wide views across the plain and out over the surrounding lowlands.
- Extensive areas of uninterrupted calcareous grassland with juniper scrub and of high ecological value.
- Scattered woodlands and plantations.
- Outstanding sites of archaeological interest; numerous sites, many of international importance including Stonehenge (WHS).
- Twentieth century military history evident in features such as the “German” village, disused tanks, distinctive signage, posts and gates on the rough tracks and roads.

## Forces for change

- Changes in military activity potentially leading to alterations to the management of the calcareous grassland, Juniper scrub and the woodland blocks.
- In the past intensive arable agriculture has resulted in loss of biodiversity (chalk grassland) and ploughing up of important historic monuments.
- Further amalgamation and enlargement of fields and the breakdown of traditional field boundaries associated with intensive farming practices.
- LIFE project impacts (aims to restore and management of the calcareous grassland).
- Management of military plantations.
- Managing high visitor numbers to key archaeological sites – potential effects on the historic landscape and need for supporting infrastructure.
- Potential impact of tall structures - communications masts and transmitters plus future renewable energy developments (wind turbines) that will be particularly intrusive on the skylines and could have a major impact on the sense of remoteness.

## Condition

The MOD controlled areas within the Type are subject to military activity but this land use has also maintained large areas of the *Chalk High Plain* Landscape Type in good condition. The chalk grassland is maintained through rotational grazing by tenant farmers, there is active clearance of invasive scrub and the sites of archaeological interest are protected. The non-MOD areas have seen a loss of biodiversity through the intensification of arable farming methods for instance the removal of hedgerows, however the overall condition of the *Chalk High Plain* Landscape Type is **good**.

## Strength of character

This is a landscape of **strong** character. A sense of the vast scale and openness of this landscape is present throughout both the MOD controlled and farmed areas. The lack of settlement accentuates the feeling of isolation and remoteness and numerous and widespread sites of historic and ecological interest enrich that character of the landscape.

## Inherent landscape sensitivities

- The open, exposed and isolated nature of the plain.
- Internationally important ecological resources in the vast areas of uninterrupted chalk grassland.
- Ecologically significant areas of arable biodiversity, Juniper scrub and ancient woodland
- Numerous sites of archaeological interest.
- The long views and openness of the level plateau have a high visual sensitivity to change.

- Skylines and tops of the scarp slopes are also particularly visually sensitive.

### **Strategy**

The management strategy for the *High Chalk Plain* Landscape Type is to **conserve** the open and isolated character of the plain along with the vast areas of calcareous grass land and sites of historic interest.

### **Broad Management Objectives**

- Conserve the sense of remoteness and isolation, with sparse settlement and road network and limited visible development.
- Conserve the areas of chalk grassland, arable biodiversity, Juniper scrub and ancient woodland of high ecological value.
- Explore opportunities to reinstate buffer areas of chalk grassland around the arable fields but ensuring retention of arable interest.
- Protect the sites of historic interest and archaeological features. Consider opportunities for extending areas of pasture around archaeological monuments in the arable areas.

## **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT**

The character of the Wiltshire landscape has already been investigated in a number of studies as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2.

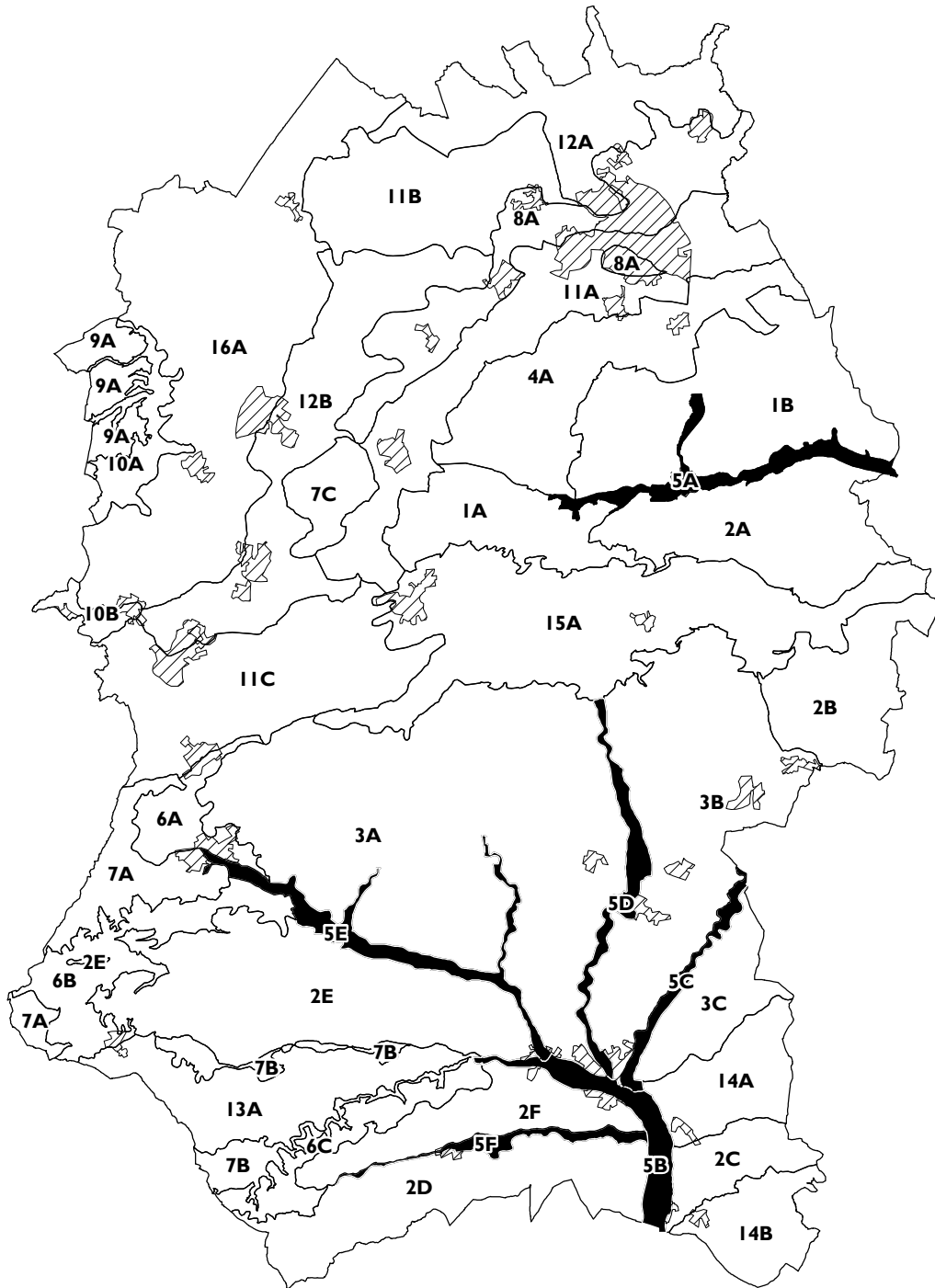
The *High Chalk Plain* Landscape Type has, in part, been covered by the Army Training Estates – Salisbury Plain Landscape Character Assessment.

# LANDSCAPE TYPE 5: CHALK RIVER VALLEY

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# 5: CHALK RIVER VALLEY



## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- 5A** Kennet Chalk River Valley
- 5B** Lower Avon Chalk River Valley
- 5C** Bourne Chalk River Valley
- 5D** Upper Avon Chalk River Valley
- 5E** Wylde Chalk River Valley
- 5F** Ebbles Chalk River Valley

 **Urban Area**

# TYPE 5: CHALK RIVER VALLEYS

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## DESCRIPTION

### Location and boundaries

The *Chalk River Valleys* Landscape Type encompasses the narrow river valleys cutting through the Chalk uplands of the county. Area 5A: *Kennet Chalk River Valley* cuts across the mass of chalk downs to the north east of Wiltshire, while area 5B: *Lower Avon Chalk River Valley* is located to the south centring on Salisbury and areas 5C: *Bourne Chalk River Valley*, 5D: *Upper Avon Chalk River Valley* and 5E: *Wylde Chalk River Valley* radiate out over Salisbury Plain.

Boundaries are based on topography with the valleys defined as the floodplain and immediate valley sides. The boundaries usually follow a physical feature, often a road that runs along the first contour above winter flooding level.

Area 5A lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB and areas 5E and 5F are largely within the Cranborne Chase AONB.

### Key characteristics

- Strongly enclosed valleys with an intimate scale contrasting with the surrounding open upland landscape.
- Level, often narrow valley floors with relatively steep sides.
- Pastoral land use along the valley floor with small scale fields contrasts with arable farmland on the valley sides with medium to large geometric fields.
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees add to the lush and enclosed feel of the valleys.
- Riparian woodlands, lines of poplar along ditches and willow pollards.
- Diverse mosaic of land cover and habitats includes meadows, fen and wet woodland on valley floor.
- Clear fast flowing chalk rivers and streams a key habitat.
- Valleys contain a concentration of settlement in contrast to the adjacent unsettled downs.
- Many long established villages, sited along the spring line and built of a rich variety of vernacular materials.
- Isolated Neolithic long barrow burial monuments, Bronze Age round barrows and water meadow channels on the valley floor contribute to the visible archaeology.
- Valley used as transport corridors with major roads and railway lines along valley sides.
- Rural landscape sometimes interrupted by the large volume of traffic.

## Physical influences

The rivers are all cut into the solid geology generally of the Upper Chalk at an elevation varying from 40m to 100m AOD. The Chalk has been overlain by Alluvium immediately along the river courses and River Terrace Deposits at the valley sides. The latter have created brown calcareous loamy/clayey soils which are well drained and suited to arable farming while the Alluvium has formed ground water gleys which are susceptible to water logging and riverine flooding and so used for pasture.

## Biodiversity

The spring fed streams and rivers, which incise the chalk upland are rich in plant and animal communities, deriving, in part, from the high-quality of the base-rich water which is naturally clear and fast flowing. The rivers irrigate the valley floodplains to create a rich mosaic of associated wetland habitats including water meadows, damp pasture, wet woodland and fens. The high ecological importance of the *Chalk River Valley* Landscape Type is reflected in the number of SSSI within the Type. Notable amongst these are Lower Woodford Water Meadows SSSI and Britford Water Meadows SSSI which are the last two actively managed water meadows in Wiltshire and retain the grassland communities typical of this type of management. Land formerly managed as water meadows and retaining significant ecological value include Chilton Foliat Water Meadows SSSI and East Harnham Water Meadows SSSI.

Substantial proportions of the River Kennet, River Avon System and River Till SSSIs lie within the type and the international significance of the River Avon and River Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain are indicated by their designation as SACs. The River Avon has over 180 species of aquatic plant recorded plus one of the most diverse fish faunas in Britain and part of its upper reaches is also a County Wildlife Site.

Other County Wildlife Sites include Chilton Foliat Wet Meadows, former water meadows alongside the River Kennet, west of the SSSI of the same name. The site consists of wet neutral meadows, ditches and streams with fen vegetation and plant species including early and March orchids and marsh valerian. It is important for breeding waders such as woodcock, and for Cetti's warbler, grasshopper warblers and for nightingales. Another water meadow County Wildlife Site is Winterbourne Earls Meadow, large disused water meadows dominated by tall herbs, but with a species-rich flora and historical records of native crayfish.

Also Langford Lakes, former gravel pits with breeding waterfowl including gadwall and great crested grebe, visiting bittern and osprey and also otters and water voles.

## Historic environment

River valleys have long been a focus for occupation, partly because of the range of resources they supply (for example, fish, fowl, rich alluvial deposits, and characteristic fast-flowing clear streams) and this is reflected in the range of archaeological sites and artefacts from the prehistoric period onwards.

Historically, settlement was concentrated in the river valleys, close to the water supply is, as reflected in the numerous manors and villages, many of which are recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086. There are many well-preserved deserted or shrunken Medieval villages along these river valleys often surviving as complex earthworks adjacent to the



current settlements. Water meadows of 17<sup>th</sup> century origin are often a strong feature of the flood plains, particularly in the Avon south of Salisbury.

The structure of the land also defines communication patterns. The river valleys form important routes, particularly those of the Rivers Kennet, Wylde and Avon.

### **Settlement and built character**

The river valleys contain a concentration of settlement, following a very distinctive pattern. Both nucleated and linear villages occur at regular intervals along the valley sides, at a height just above the winter flood level. The settlements include tiny hamlets clustered around a church, many small villages, a few small towns such as Marlborough and Amesbury and the major settlements of Warminster and Salisbury.

The latter has a major influence on the type as, apart from the Kennet, all the *Chalk River Valleys* converge at Salisbury. Views of the cathedral are characteristic of area 5B: *Lower Avon Chalk River Valley* in particular.

Building materials show a rich vernacular tradition with frequent red brick, sometimes combined in intricate chequerboard patterns with flint, chalk, render plus timber frame and weatherboard and thatch or clay tile roofs.

## **CHARACTER AREAS**

### **5A: Kennet Chalk River Valley**

The *Kennet Valley Chalk River Valley* has relatively steep sides and a narrow valley floor, providing a strong sense of enclosure. Alluvium and gravel deposits line the valley floor which is dominated by pasture while the valley sides are generally under arable cultivation. The valley has a varied and attractive landscape with tracts of lush floodplain pasture, marsh and reedbeds, lines of willow pollards and poplars plus hedgerows enclosing the fields and stands of regenerating alder, birch and oak along the river banks. It is well wooded, with sinuous belts of woodland lining the valley sides and some larger broadleaved woodland blocks on the valley floor particularly in the east. Further diversity is provided by the historic parklands, which include Ramsbury Manor and Chilton Foliat. The River Kennet is an important chalk river habitat and designated as a SSSI. The rich biodiversity of the floodplain is reflected in its status (with the floodplain of the River Lambourn) as an SAC. Providing a main east-west communications corridor, the route of the A4 road follows the valley west of Marlborough. Elsewhere minor roads follow the lower valley sides. Settlements, from manor houses and hamlets to the market town of Marlborough include those of Saxon and Medieval origins. Building materials generally reflect the local geology, with brick/flint and clay tile dominating east of Marlborough, and sarsen stone and brick dominating to the west. Mills and churches are distinctive built features within the valley. In the upper reaches of the river, archaeological monuments associated with Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS), including The Sanctuary stone circle, are a prominent feature.

### **5B: Lower Avon Chalk River Valley**

The *Lower Avon Chalk River Valley* is wider than the others in the type, containing the confluence of the Rivers Wylde, Nadder, Bourne and Ebbel with the Avon. To the south of Salisbury the valley contains a complex system of channels and water meadows largely

inaccessible and highly rural and tranquil in feel despite the closeness of Salisbury. Views of the cathedral spire are striking in this rural context and have long been appreciated by artists as in Constable's famous painting of *Salisbury Cathedral from the River*. The area is pastoral with small fields with lush hedges, mature hedgerow trees as well riparian vegetation such as willow and alder. Water meadows were typical of the area and East Harnham Pastures SSSI is one of these areas which, despite no longer being in active management as a water meadow, has retained its herb rich grassland. Settlement is in the form of a few villages and farmsteads plus historic houses and parklands such as Longford Castle and Park, and Wilton House. The river winds through Salisbury skirting the historic core of the city as well as more suburban areas on the south banks. More rural village buildings are of red brick combined with flint, and with red tiled roofs or thatch. Major trunk roads follow the sides of the *Lower Avon Chalk River Valley* but despite their noise and movement this character area retains substantial areas of rural and remote pastoral landscape.

### **5C: Bourne Chalk River Valley**

The *Bourne Chalk River Valley* runs southwards from Cholderton to Salisbury where the Bourne joins the Avon. It divides two *High Chalk Plain* areas and especially to the north, has shallower sides and is less enclosed than the other *Chalk River Valleys*. The river corridor is characterised by lines of willows and the presence of water meadows, for instance at Porton Meadows SSSI. The shallow valley sides to the north of the area support arable and are less distinct from the surrounding chalk upland. The area is settled to the south in particular with Porton and the Winterbournes tending to merge along the roadways. To the south the presence of the northern fringes of Salisbury is felt in settlement on either side of the valley which has a more suburban style.

### **5D: Upper Avon Chalk River Valley**

The *Upper Avon Chalk River Valley* runs southwards between two *High Chalk Plain* areas and is a narrow strongly contained valley particularly to the north and south. The middle section is wider and more level and contains the settlements of Durrington and Amesbury. The sheltered and enclosed valley with its intricate pattern of small pastoral fields, woodlands and scattered villages contrasts strongly with the open, simple landscape of the downs. The area has a rich ecology with the River Avon (SAC), wet woodlands, commercial poplar plantations, hanging valley side woodlands linked by full hedgerows and hedgerow trees, plus meadows including outstanding example of actively managed water meadow system at Lower Woodford Water Meadows SSSI. There is a long history of settlement in the *Upper Avon Chalk River Valley* from the Long Barrow at Bulford, tumuli elsewhere, the Fort and Abbey at Amesbury, and Manor houses at Great Durnford and Little Durnford. The A345 trunk road runs along to northern section of the area and it is crossed at Amesbury by the A303, while minor roads follow valley sides to south. Despite the busy roads and settlement the *Upper Avon Chalk River Valley* remains predominantly a highly rural landscape.

### **5E: Wylde Chalk River Valley**

The *Wylde Chalk River Valley* runs eastwards from Warminster to Wilton and is a deep valley enclosed by steep chalk slopes. The valley floor is a rural landscape where sheep and cattle graze the floodplain within small irregular fields bound by intermittent hedgerows, while the lower valley sides support the cultivation of arable crops or improved pasture in larger more geometric fields. Tree cover includes small beech plantations and lines of willows and

poplars which follow field boundaries together with the past and present courses of the Wylde and its tributaries. The valley provides a corridor for movement with the Salisbury-Warminster railway line and A36 trunk road running along the gravel terraces either side of the floodplain. The A303 trunk road also crosses the valley on a viaduct. Attractive linear or nucleated villages are scattered along these east-west routes, their chequerboard buildings of stone and knapped flint a distinctive feature. The long history of human occupation of the valley is made evident by the survival of Neolithic long barrows on the valley floor, as well as a number of Bronze Age round barrows, the Norman motte and bailey earthworks at Sherrington and the pattern of medieval settlements along the valley, largely surviving today. Post-medieval agricultural improvements included the creation of water meadows, the channels of which are still visible components of the valley landscape, and watercress beds. Despite the relatively large-scale landform of the valley, this is an intimate landscape with a semi-enclosed character. Although characterised by busy transport corridors, both along and across the valley, the floodplain retains a peaceful quality.

### **5F: Ebble Chalk River Valley**

The *Ebble Chalk River Valley* encompasses the narrow floodplain and lower valley sides of the River Ebble as it flows eastwards to join the River Avon near Nunton. The shallow slopes along much of the Ebble valley mean that there is a predominance of arable agriculture, comprising large fields on the lower valley sides and this has diluted the visual distinction between the previously pastoral character of the floodplain and the arable downland valley sides. The valley supports a range of associated riverine habitats and is of significant ecological interest. This includes small areas of rough pasture that are now largely limited to small grazing pockets. Field boundaries are varied – comprising post and wire fencing in places, native hedgerows and a scattering of hedgerow trees. Small woodland belts and scattered trees are a feature of the valley bottom, for example the willows and poplars that line the narrow floodplain and are conspicuous along the course of the river. Settlement within the Ebble River Valley predominantly comprises linear villages and hamlets such as Combe Bissett, Stratford Tony and Bishopstone which occur regularly along the course of the river. Brick and flint are common building materials within the settlements whilst thatch and slate are characteristic roofing materials. New development is occurring within the villages and settlement edges are often defined by concrete roadside kerbs – changing the rural character. As well as this chain of small medieval settlements along the river, historic components of the landscape are water meadows and cress beds.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Positive landscape features of significance**

- Intimate, small scale rural landscape.
- Chalk rivers and streams with their characteristically clear, fast-flowing waters.
- Seasonal flood meadows, grazed pastures, marsh and damp woodlands of high ecological value.

- Distinctive features relating to past management of the flood plain such as water meadows, watercress beds and remnants of mill systems including leats and pools.
- Distinctive pattern of settlement of small villages of rich and varied vernacular materials.

### **Forces for change**

- Nutrient pollution from riverside arable land plus road and urban run off affecting the high water quality of the streams and rivers.
- Intensification in farming leading to drainage and improvement of permanent pasture and water meadows on the floodplain and loss of riparian vegetation.
- Potential changes in farming practices - including loss of livestock with some remaining valley pastures and meadows no longer being grazed with consequential scrub encroachment.
- Wet woodland is now mostly restricted to a narrow line of willow and alder along the immediate river banks.
- The presence of major transport corridors particularly the trunk roads has brought pressures for development and associated amenity planting and signage.
- Modern residential developments in more open locations, some close to the floodplain, have weakened the pattern of tight knit villages in the past.
- Changes in agriculture leading to lack of maintenance of traditional valley features including watercress beds and historic features - water meadow systems, mills and leats.
- Loss of hedgerows boundaries and particularly mature hedgerow trees, plus poor management of remaining hedgerows.
- Increased traffic on the road network, plus improvements to the lanes including kerbing, widening, signing and new river crossings which, in places create a more 'urban' character.
- Development pressures, particularly for new housing which will affect the character of the existing small settlements - villages may appear to coalesce along the valley side roads.
- Development pressure may also affect the rivers through increased extraction causing lower flows.
- Increasing road use which will further diminish the rural tranquillity of the valley landscape.

### **Condition**

The overall condition of the *Chalk River Valley* Landscape Type is **good** with its chalk rivers of high water quality and rich biodiversity, its largely intact hedgerow network, riparian woodland and compact well kept villages. However there are some elements of declining condition: some hedgerows in poor condition and the loss of traditional land management

methods such as water meadows has led to decline in ecological value of the wet grasslands.

### **Strength of character**

The *Chalk River Valley* Landscape Type has a **strong** character with its generally narrow, steep sided landform, small scale rural settled and tranquil landscape of pastoral fields bounded by hedgerows, villages built of local vernacular materials and in traditional patterns and outstanding ecological interest in its water courses and meadows. The visual and historic relationship between the river valleys and the city of Salisbury further enriches the Type. Detracting from the rural, peaceful small scale landscape are the busy trunk roads and some suburban edges of larger settlements.

### **Inherent landscape sensitivities**

- Small scale enclosed landscape.
- High water quality and outstanding ecological richness of the chalk rivers.
- Remnants of water meadows including a few in active management plus other historic floodplain feature such as mills and leats and watercress beds.
- Rich floodplain landscape of small scale grazed pastures, riparian vegetation and damp woodlands.
- Small distinctive villages and manors built of rich variety of local materials.
- Peaceful rural landscape away from the major roadways.
- Valley crests are visually sensitive.

## **STRATEGY**

The strategy for the *Chalk River Valley* Landscape Type is to **conserve** the tranquil, intimate and rural character of the landscape. This will include maintenance of key features including permanent pasture, wet grassland and riparian woodlands and historic features associated with the mills and water meadows, historic parklands and vernacular villages. There are opportunities for restoration of waterside pastures, replanting and management of hedgerows and limited native tree planting/regeneration.

### **Broad management objectives**

- Consider opportunities for re-planting hedgerows and hedgerow trees where these have been lost. In particular, the comparatively dense structure of willows, poplars and other moisture loving trees should be retained along field boundaries and the course of the river.
- Identify, conserve and restore remnant water meadow systems that are an important historic landscape feature - and consider opportunities for reinstatement of traditional management techniques.

- Identify, conserve and consider opportunities for reconnecting and recreating wetland habitats such as wet woodland, fen, marsh and swamp.
- Resist excessive signage associated with new development along the trunk roads and maintain a sense of landscape scale when planning new road junctions - junctions that are too large will disrupt visual unity along the valleys.
- Monitor road engineering to safeguard the rural character of the lanes.
- Conserve the pattern of tight knit villages, maintaining the physical and visual gap between them.
- Consider developing guidance for built development to ensure both future construction and changes to existing buildings are designed to integrate with the existing character and structure of settlements.

## THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

The character of the Wiltshire landscape has already been investigated in a number of studies as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2.

The *Chalk River Valley* Landscape Type is covered in the landscape character assessments for Kennet District, the North Wessex Downs AONB and Cranborne Chase AONB.

*Area 5A: Kennet Chalk River Valley* is covered in the Kennet District and North Wessex Downs AONB assessments as the Kennet Valley character area. Boundaries vary from these assessments in that the valley of the River Og is included as far north at Ogbourne St George in this county assessment to ensure consistency in boundary treatment through the county.

*Area 5B: Lower Avon Chalk River Valley* and *5C: Bourne Chalk River Valley* are not included in an existing assessment.

Parts of *areas 5D: Upper Avon Chalk River Valley* are covered in the Salisbury Plain Training Area Landscape Character Assessment under the River Valley Farmlands and Enclosed Downlands landscape types and a number of character areas.

*Areas 5F: Ebble Chalk River Valley* and *5E: Wylde Chalk River Valley* are covered in the Cranborne Chase Landscape Character Assessment under the Chalk River Valley landscape type and Ebble Chalk River Valley and Wylde Chalk River Valley character areas. The boundaries of the valleys in the Cranborne Chase assessment take in the valley sides up to the skyline however in this county assessment the boundaries of all the valleys in this type encompass just the valley floor and the immediate valley sides hence varying from the Cranborne Chase boundaries. This is consistent for all the Chalk Valleys.

**Appendix 2**

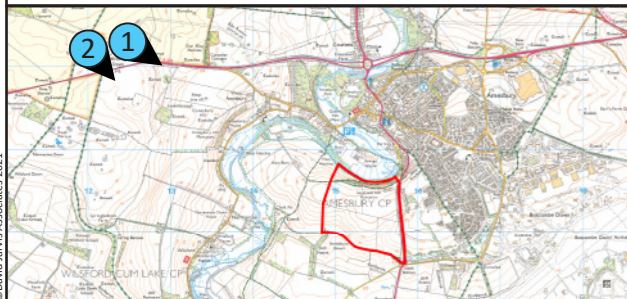
**Photographic Field Survey Record DJA August 2021**



**Viewpoint 1**



**Viewpoint 2**



**Viewpoint 1**

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 Distance to Site: 3032m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 09:23

**Viewpoint 2**

Grid Reference: E: 412201, N: 142179  
 Altitude AOD: 103.52m  
 Distance to Site: 3148m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 09:26

Project

**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Client

**GREAT DURNFORD ESTATE**

Drawing Ref & Title

**2988-4-4-4-AP-0001-S5-P1**

**PHOTOGRAPHIC FIELD SURVEY RECORD**

**APPENDIX 2 - SHEET 1 OF 14**

Date

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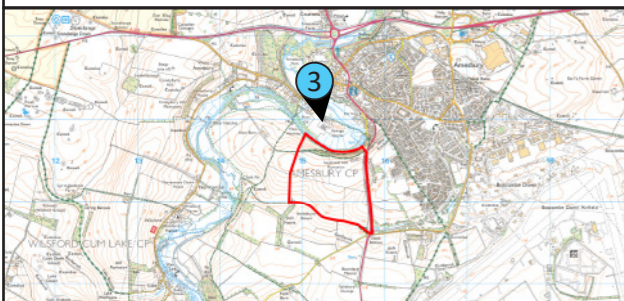




**Viewpoint 3**



**Viewpoint 3 - Continued**



**Viewpoint 3**

Grid Reference: E: 415136, N: 141322  
 Altitude AOD: 61.21m  
 Distance to Site: 505m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 10:29

Project

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Client

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Drawing Ref & Title

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**APPENDIX 2 - SHEET 2 OF 14**

Date

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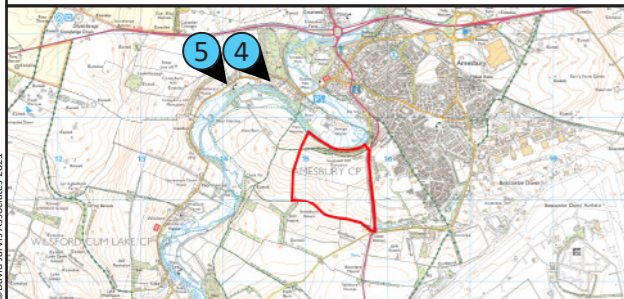
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**Viewpoint 4**



**Viewpoint 5**



**Viewpoint 4**

Grid Reference: E: 414034, N: 141715  
 Altitude AOD: 78.78m  
 Distance to Site: 1346m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 10:35

**Viewpoint 5**

Grid Reference: E: 414007, N: 141727  
 Altitude AOD: 82.66m  
 Distance to Site: 1374m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 10:44

Project

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Client

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**APPENDIX 2 - SHEET 3 OF 14**

Date

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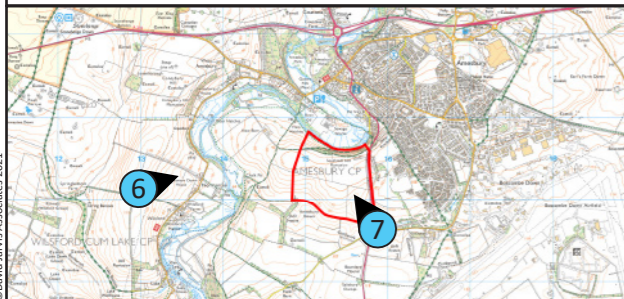
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**Viewpoint 6**



**Viewpoint 7**



**Viewpoint 6**

Grid Reference: E: 412944, N: 140044  
 Altitude AOD: 112.21m  
 Distance to Site: 1901m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 11:07

**Viewpoint 7**

Grid Reference: E: 415778, N: 139578  
 Altitude AOD: 92.18m  
 Distance to Site: 45m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 11:34

Project

**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Client

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Drawing Ref & Title

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**APPENDIX 2 - SHEET 4 OF 14**

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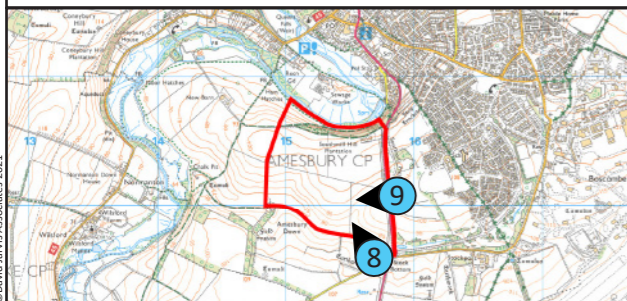
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**Viewpoint 8**



**Viewpoint 9**



**Viewpoint 8**

Grid Reference: E: 415642, N: 139511  
 Altitude AOD: 98.66m  
 Distance to Site: 181m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 11:35

**Viewpoint 9**

Grid Reference: E: 415794, N: 140011  
 Altitude AOD: 99.39m  
 Distance to Site: 0m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 11:43

Project

**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Client

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**APPENDIX 2 - SHEET 5 OF 14**

Date

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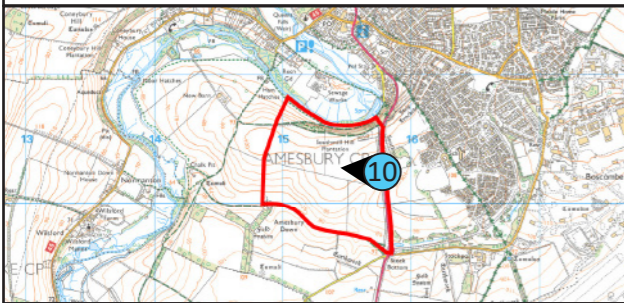
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**Viewpoint 10**



**Viewpoint 10 - Continued**



**Viewpoint 10**

Grid Reference: E: 415789, N: 140147  
 Altitude AOD: 100.53m  
 Distance to Site: 0m  
 Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 11:45

Project  
 Client  
 Drawing Ref & Title  
 Date

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**APPENDIX 2 - SHEET 6 OF 14**  
**OCT 2021**

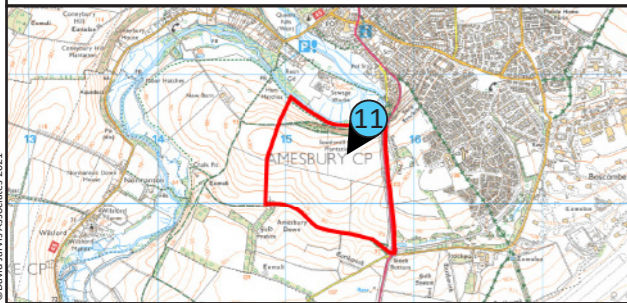
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**Viewpoint 11**



**Viewpoint 11 - Continued**



**Viewpoint 11**

Grid Reference: E: 415553, N: 140545  
 Altitude AOD: 88.32m  
 Distance to Site: 0m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 12:52

Project: **LAND AT VINEYS FARM**  
 Client: **GREAT DURNFORD ESTATE**  
 Drawing Ref & Title: **2988-4-4-4-AP-0001-S5-P1**  
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**APPENDIX 2 - SHEET 7 OF 14**  
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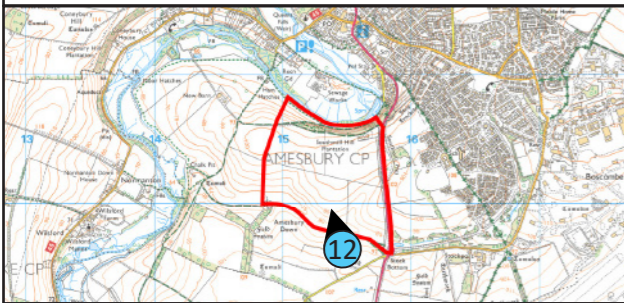
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**Viewpoint 12**



**Viewpoint 12 - Continued**



**Viewpoint 12**

Grid Reference: E: 415632, N: 139523  
 Altitude AOD: 99.49m  
 Distance to Site: 178m  
 Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 13:01

Project  
 Client  
 Drawing Ref & Title  
 Date

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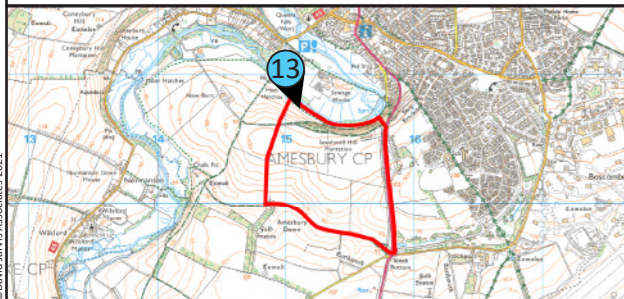
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**Viewpoint 13**



**Viewpoint 13 - Continued**



**Viewpoint 13**

Grid Reference: E: 414924, N: 70.4998  
 Altitude AOD: 70m  
 Distance to Site: 164m

Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 15:38

Project

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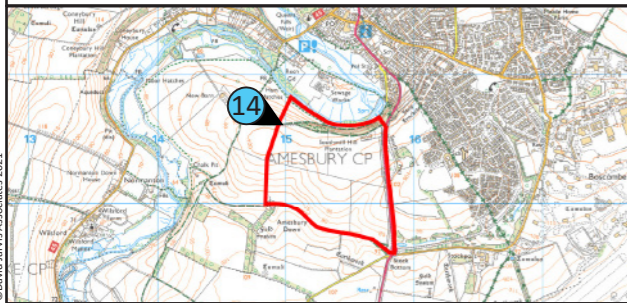




**Viewpoint 14**



**Viewpoint 14 - Continued**



**Viewpoint 14**

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 Distance to Site: 294m  
 Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 15:46

Project  
 Client  
 Drawing Ref & Title  
 Date

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**APPENDIX 2 - SHEET 10 OF 14**  
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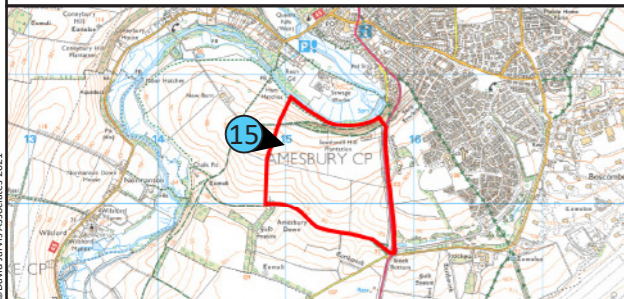
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**Viewpoint 15**



**Viewpoint 15 - Continued**



**Viewpoint 15**

Grid Reference: E: 414598, N: 140497  
 Altitude AOD: 93.78m  
 Distance to Site: 292m  
 Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 15:50

Project

**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Client

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Date

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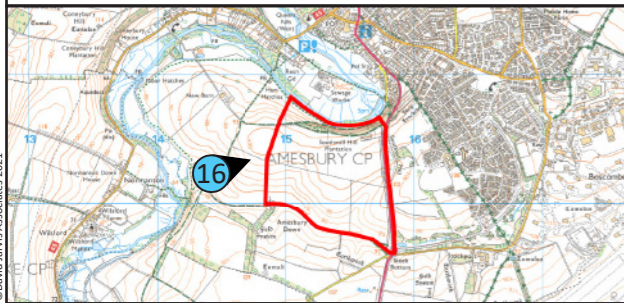
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**Viewpoint 16**



**Viewpoint 16 - Continued**



**Viewpoint 16**

Grid Reference: E: 414359, N: 140139  
 Altitude AOD: 79.85m  
 Distance to Site: 490m  
 Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 15:57

Project

**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Client

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Date

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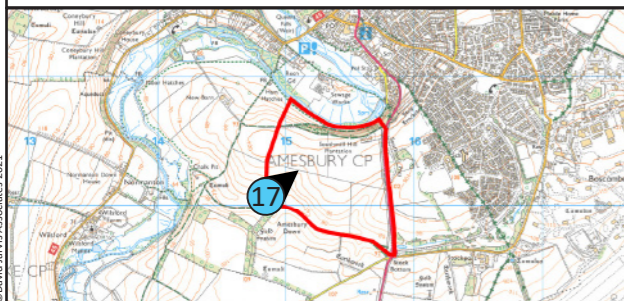
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**Viewpoint 17**



**Viewpoint 17 - Continued**



**Viewpoint 17**

Grid Reference: E: 414792, N: 139978  
 Altitude AOD: 79.89m  
 Distance to Site: 54m  
 Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 16:03

Project

**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Client

**GREAT DURNFORD ESTATE**

Drawing Ref & Title

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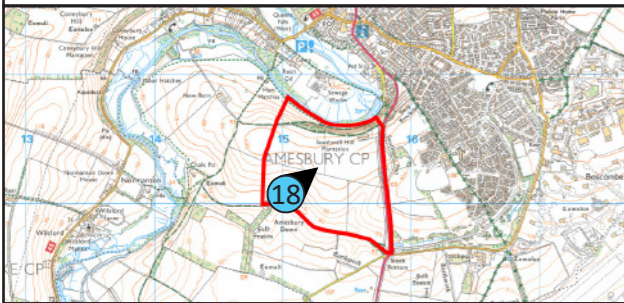
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**Viewpoint 18**



**Viewpoint 18 - Continued**



**Viewpoint 18**

Grid Reference: E: 414954, N: 139980  
 Altitude AOD: 81.50m  
 Distance to Site: 14m  
 Date: 20/08/2021  
 Time: 16:06

Project

**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Client

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**PHOTOGRAPHIC FIELD SURVEY RECORD**

**APPENDIX 2 - SHEET 14 OF 14**

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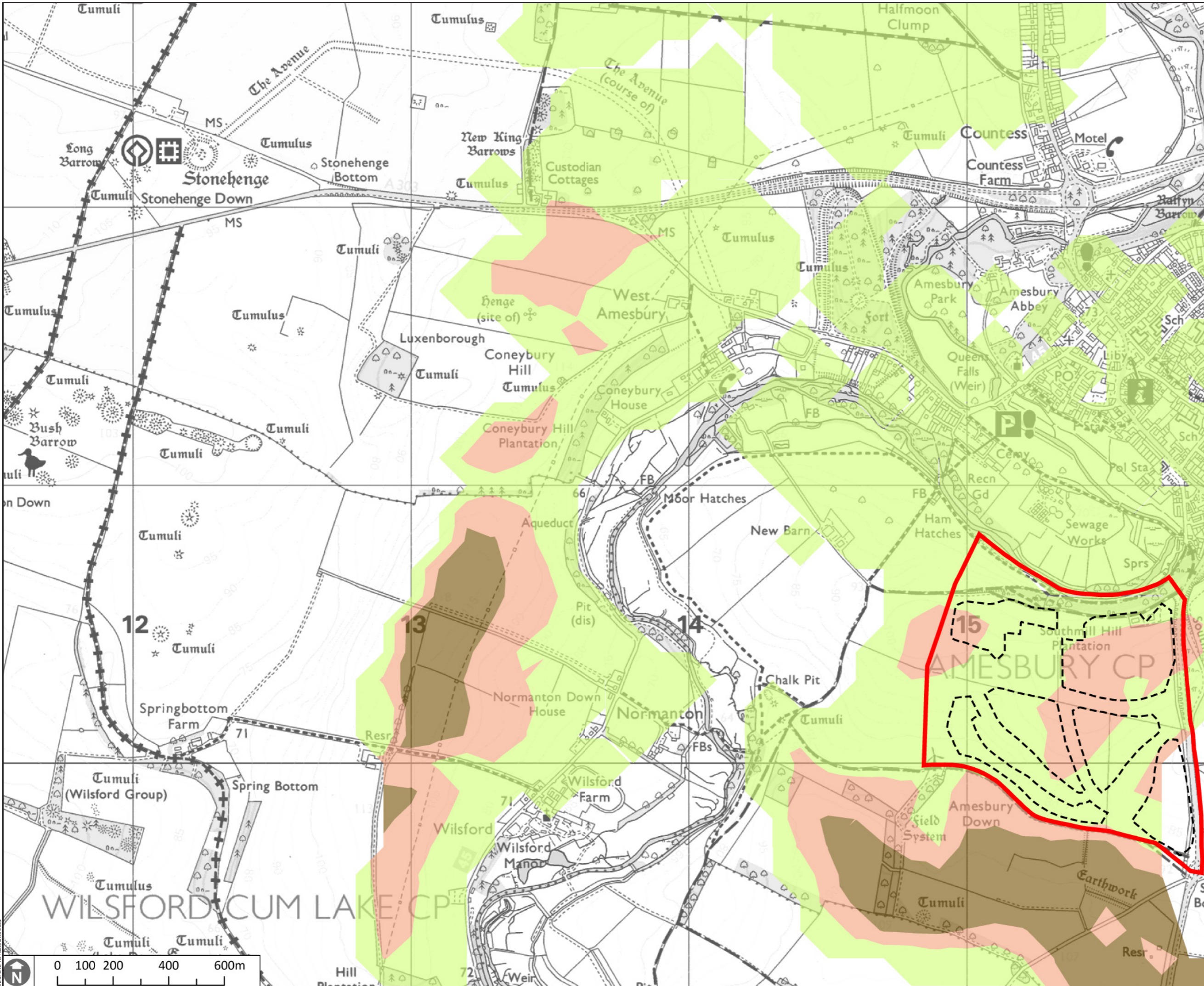
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## **Appendix 3**

### **ZTV testing – LiDAR DSM**

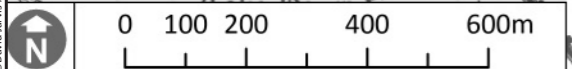


- KEY**
- Boundary: Proposed Site
  - ZTV Test Area (Indicative Proposed Development)

- Level of Visibility**
- No Visibility
  - Low Visibility (up to 33%)
  - Moderate Visibility (34 to 66%)
  - High Visibility (more than 66%)

The zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV) are shown for the proposed test. The model takes account of landform only - no account is taken of existing vegetation or other built development and in reality, these would provide a considerable degree of screening. The Zone of Visual Significance is defined during field survey and takes into account those aspects missing from the ZTV and will therefore be considerably reduced from the ZTV.

The ZTV is therefore considered to represent 'worst than worst case' scenario.



Status **DRAFT**

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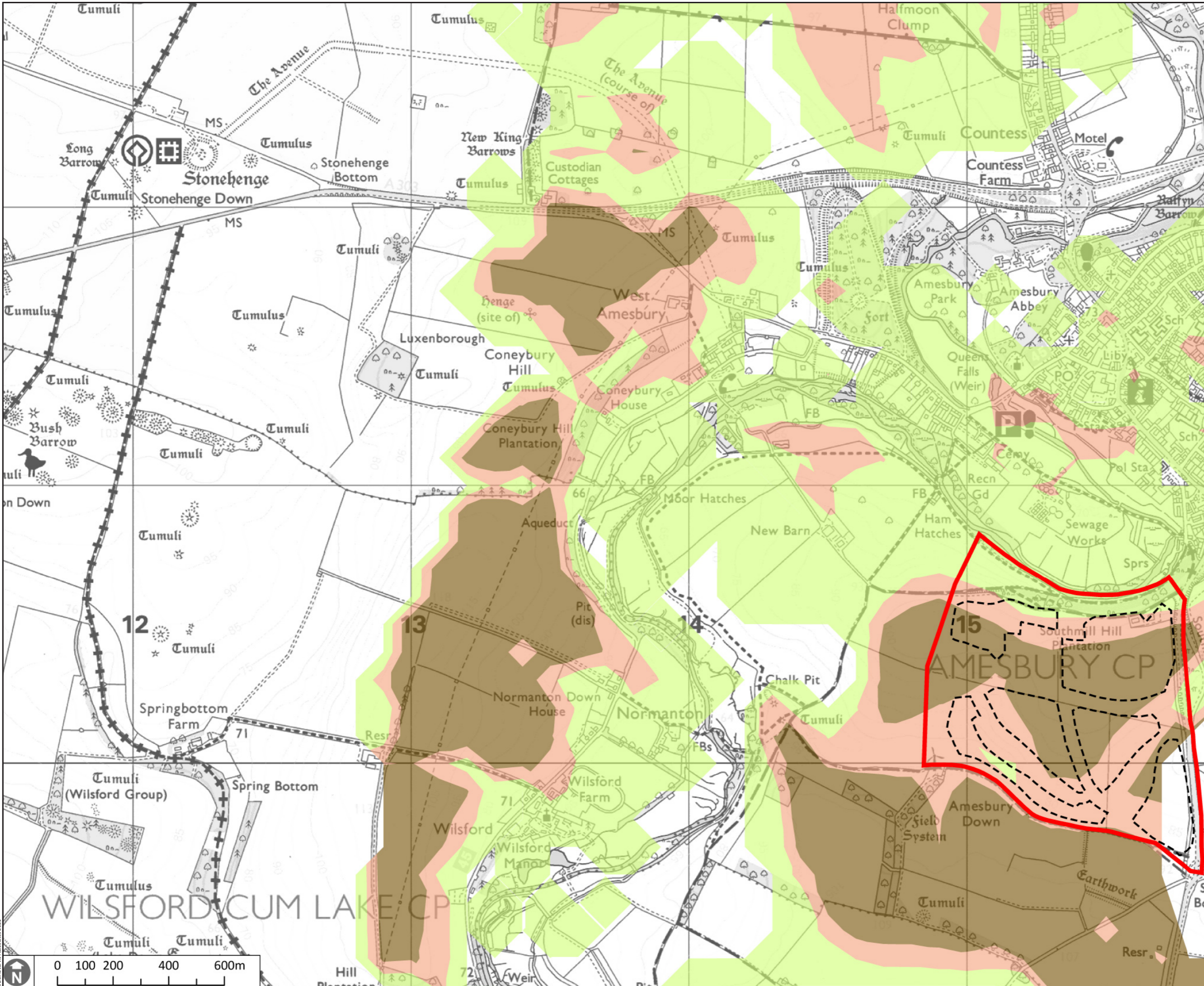
Client  
**GREAT DURNFORD ESTATE**

Project  
**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Drawing Title  
**ZTV EXISTING CONDITIONS (LIDAR DSM) - SHEET 1 OF 3**

Scale	Sheet Size	Date	
<b>1:12,500</b>	<b>A3</b>	<b>Aug 2021</b>	
Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.	Status
-	<b>2988-4-4-4</b>	<b>AP-0001</b>	<b>S4-P1</b>

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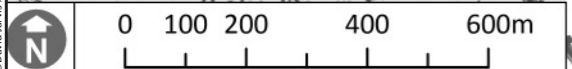


- KEY**
- Boundary: Proposed Site
  - ZTV Test Area (Indicative Proposed Development)

- Level of Visibility**
- No Visibility
  - Low Visibility (up to 33%)
  - Moderate Visibility (34 to 66%)
  - High Visibility (more than 66%)

The zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV) are shown for the proposed test. The model takes account of landform only - no account is taken of existing vegetation or other built development and in reality, these would provide a considerable degree of screening. The Zone of Visual Significance is defined during field survey and takes into account those aspects missing from the ZTV and will therefore be considerably reduced from the ZTV.

The ZTV is therefore considered to represent 'worst than worst case' scenario.



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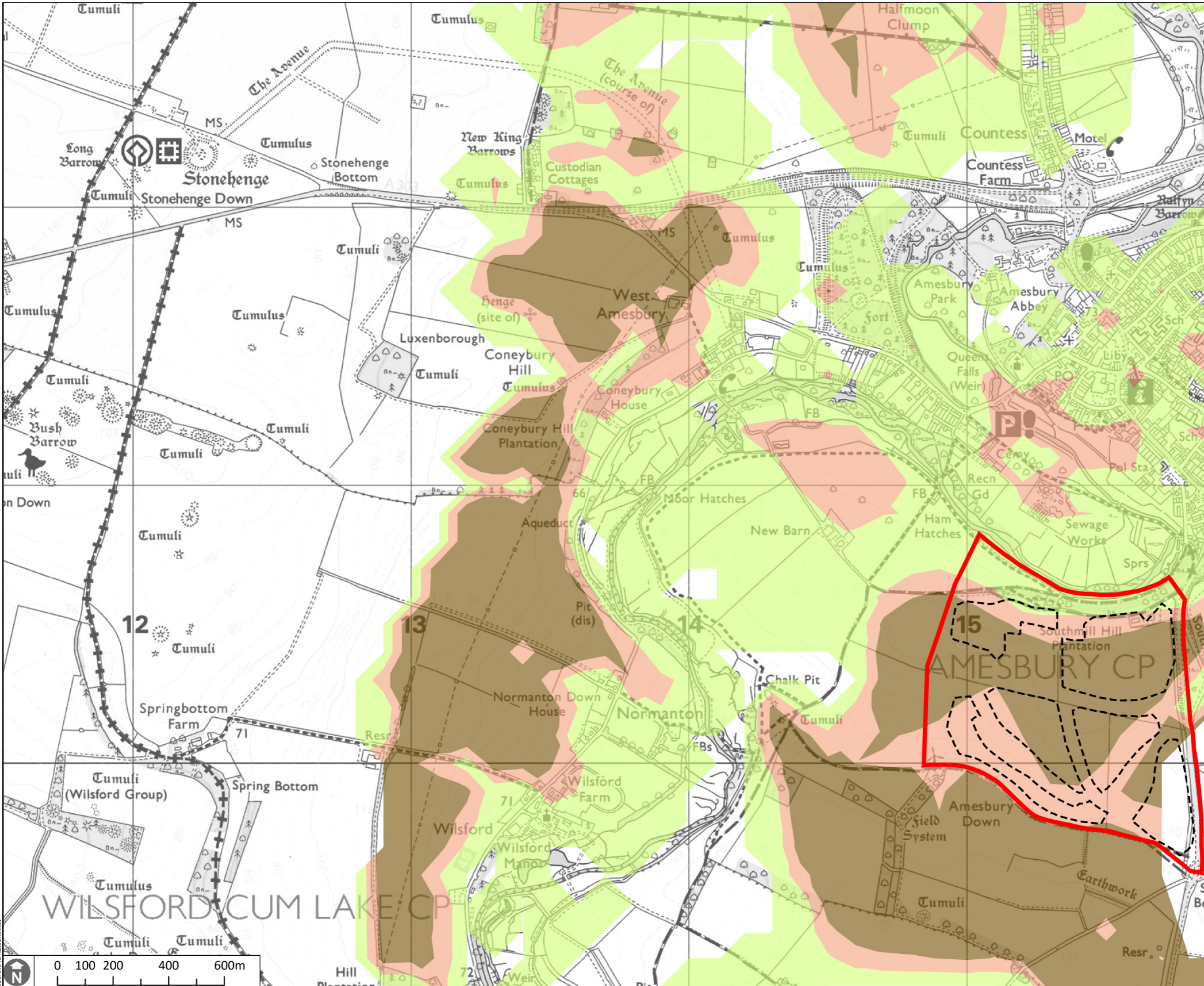
Client  
**GREAT DURNFORD ESTATE**

Project  
**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Drawing Title  
**ZTV 9.0M HIGH DEVELOPMENT (LIDAR DSM) - SHEET 2 OF 3**

Scale	Sheet Size	Date	
<b>1:12,500</b>	<b>A3</b>	<b>Aug 2021</b>	
Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.	Status
-	<b>2988-4-4-4</b>	<b>AP-0001</b>	<b>S4-P1</b>



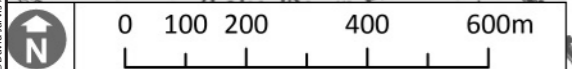


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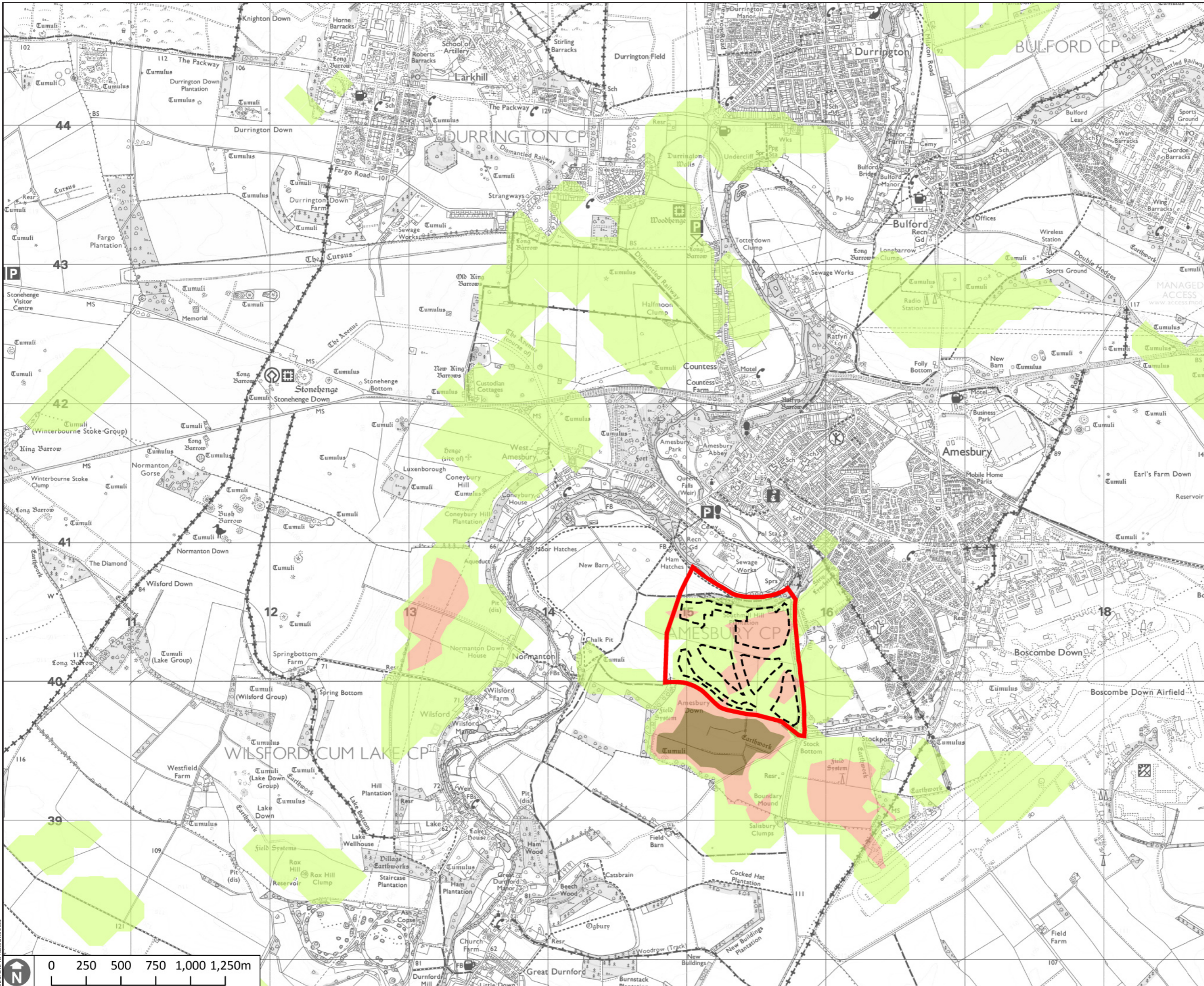
Drawing Title  
**ZTV 12.0M HIGH DEVELOPMENT (LIDAR DSM) - SHEET 3 OF 3**

Scale	Sheet Size	Date	
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Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.	Status
-	<b>2988-4-4-4</b>	<b>AP-0001</b>	<b>S4-P1</b>

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## **Appendix 4**

### **ZTV testing – OS Terrain 5**



**KEY**

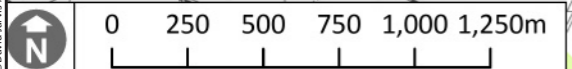
- Boundary: Proposed Site
- ZTV Test Area (Indicative Proposed Development)

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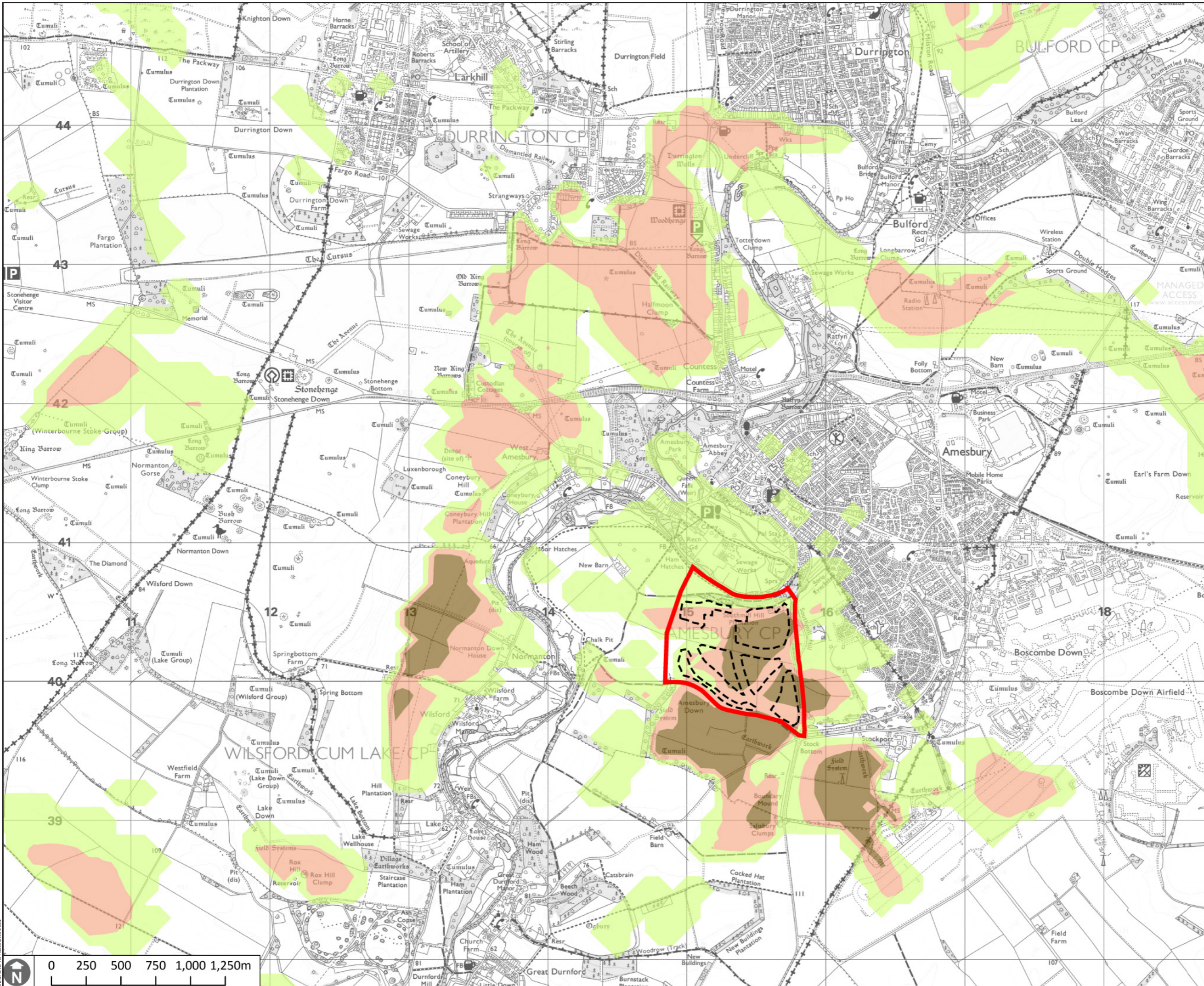
Client  
**GREAT DURNFORD ESTATE**

Project  
**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Drawing Title  
**ZTV EXISTING CONDITIONS  
 (OS TERRAIN 5) - SHEET 1 OF 3**

Scale <b>1:25,000</b>	Sheet Size <b>A3</b>	Date <b>Aug 2021</b>
Client Ref. <b>-</b>	Drawing Ref. <b>2988-4-4-4</b>	Drawing No. <b>AP-0002</b>
		Status <b>S4-P1</b>

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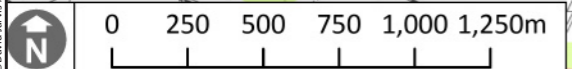


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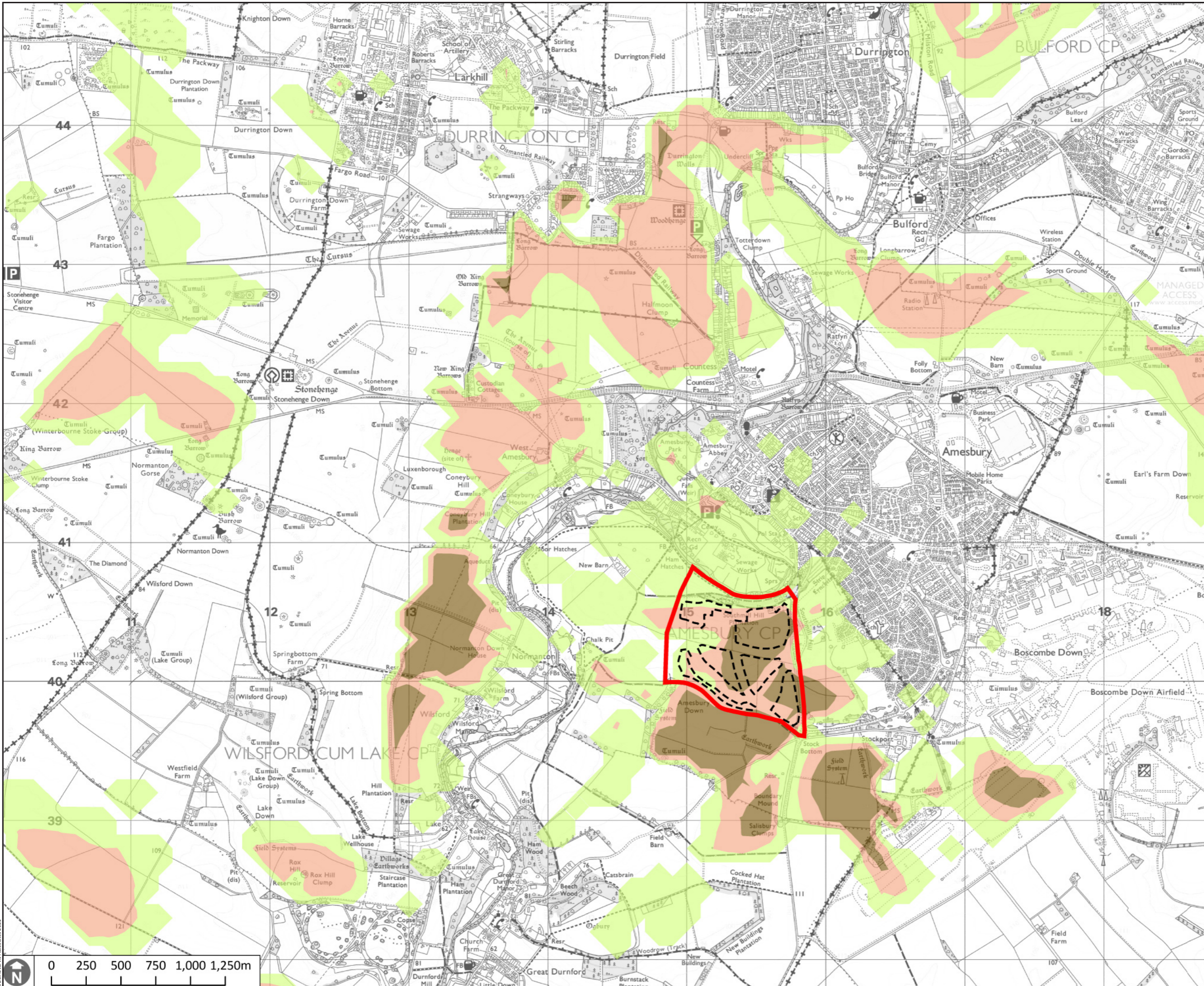
Client  
**GREAT DURNFORD ESTATE**

Project  
**LAND AT VINEYS FARM**

Drawing Title  
**STZ 9.0M HIGH DEVELOPMENT (OS TERRAIN 5) - SHEET 2 OF 3**

Scale <b>1:25,000</b>	Sheet Size <b>A3</b>	Date <b>Aug 2021</b>
Client Ref. <b>-</b>	Drawing Ref. <b>2988-4-4-4</b>	Drawing No. <b>AP-0002</b>
		Status <b>S4-P1</b>

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**KEY**

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Drawing Title  
**ZTV 12.0M HIGH DEVELOPMENT (OS TERRAIN 5) - SHEET 3 OF 3**

Scale	Sheet Size	Date	
<b>1:25,000</b>	<b>A3</b>	<b>Aug 2021</b>	
Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.	Status
-	<b>2988-4-4-4</b>	<b>AP-0002</b>	<b>S4-P1</b>

