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SONNING COMMON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group (NPWG) acting under auspices of the Parish Council is working together with the community to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 1.2 The NPWG is preparing an evidence base for policies and site allocations within this Plan.
- 1.3 Charles Potterton of Potterton Associates has been appointed by the Parish Council to carry out this outline landscape and visual study to provide comparative landscape and visual impact comment on sites identified for potential future housing development.
- 1.4 Potterton Associates Ltd was founded in 1992 and trades as a Limited Company, Charles Potterton is a qualified landscape architect (BA, Dip LA) and Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CLMI) Potterton Associates has carried out a significant number of visual impact assessments and character appraisals on a wide variety of sites primarily in Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.
- 1.5 Potterton Associates are supported in the assessment work by Katie Lea of Place Studio, a Landscape Architect and a Licentiate member of the Landscape Institute.
- 1.6 The main purpose of this assessment is to provide comparative comment on sites identified for potential future development of around 140 houses together with employment and recreation buildings and space on the edge of Sonning Common.
- 1.7 This assessment considers how potential proposed development on the shortlisted sites (development has been assumed to be primarily residential and predominately two storeys in height) may have an effect on Landscape Character and effects on views and visual amenity. It also outlines some mitigation measures to help reduce or avoid effects on character and views. We have not carried out an extensive study as one would do with a stand-alone Landscape and



Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) therefore this study is presented as a Landscape Assessment or outline LVIA.

- 1.8 This assessment is looking at a series of different possible sites in order to assess the comparative likely impacts and will be informed by LVIA guidance.
- 1.9 It will contribute to the emerging evidence base for a Neighbourhood Development Plan, specifically to the evidence which will underpin sites allocations, helping to inform deliberations for preferred options for housing.
- 1.10 It considers potential development on the site shortlisted and known as SONS 1, 2, 3, 6 (part), 7, 8, 9, 11 (part). Also considered in this assessment are Sons 5 and 15A, 15B (Son 5 and 15B are recommended for exclusion at this stage).
- 1.11 The shortlisted sites were selected on the basis of community survey work and consultation together with information from the existing evidence base. This work has been led by a specific Sites Task Group with input from members of the community.
- 1.12 This assessment seeks to recognise site constraints and to identify the sites with the least overall adverse environmental effect on existing landscape character and visual amenity. It aims to identify any opportunities where development can make a positive contribution to the visual character of a settlement, such as improving the appearance of the settlement edge.
- 1.13 Should sites be considered for other forms of development that generate alternative heights and massing, bespoke analysis should be undertaken.
- 1.14 We do not think it is wise to set these sites in order of preference as there are many other constraints and opportunities to consider.
- 1.15 The following tables are set out to enable the key aspects of Landscape & Visual Impact to be looked at over the three key stages i.e. existing, proposed and longer term. We have focused our attention



on identifying the constraints and opportunities each of the sites and their surroundings present.

- 1.16 The comments made in these tables are, as noted above, based on the general methodology employed when carrying out a full Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment but are, for this type of study reduced in scope to enable a broader assessment of the issues pertaining to a range of different sites. We have used our experience to focus on where we see the primary issues / impacts.
- 1.17 It is not intended to be a site selection tool in its own right and is intended as an important part of a wider evidence source to inform the next stages of site allocation. The aim is to compare and contrast the issues and opportunities associated with development from a landscape perspective.

2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 This report has been prepared in line with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) 2013 Landscape Institute.
- 2.2 We summarise the impacts on Physical, Visual and Character and we include a discussion on existing designations and look at how these may or may not be affected by any development.
- 2.3 The fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value. This is particularly so in areas of the UK, mainly in England, where relevant national planning policy and advice has actively discouraged local designations. The European Landscape Convention promotes the need to take account of all landscapes.
- 2.4 Similarly, it is probable that not every 'site' will exhibit all or possibly even any of the characteristics that are set out in wider ranging character assessments. It is therefore a matter of professional judgment to assess which are the relevant characteristics that are present and to understand how, if at all, they may be affected by a possible development.



- 2.5 The community, led by the NPWG have also undertaken character assessment (in draft format at December 2012) of the settlement and the immediate landscape context. This provides an insight into locally valued features and aspects of the landscape setting to the built environment.

3 PLANNING CONTEXT

- 3.1 Sonning Common is surrounded by the national designation of Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), mainly to the east, north and west.

- 3.2 In the section on “Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment” the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states the following about landscape issues in particular (abstracted):

- *Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (paragraph 115).*
- *Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*
 - *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
 - *the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
 - *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated (paragraph 116)."*

- 3.3 The Chilterns AONB Management Plan, in its section on development, sets several aims of which the following are most relevant:



- Ensure that the natural beauty, local distinctiveness and aesthetic qualities of the built environment of the Chilterns are conserved.
- Ensure that all new development contributes to the special qualities of the built environment of the Chilterns.
- Improve the built and natural environment of the Chilterns, particularly degraded landscapes, to enhance its distinctive character.

3.4 The Plan also highlights key issues, including:

- The Chilterns and surrounding areas are under considerable pressure to accommodate significant numbers of new houses.
- The retention of open space and the need to try and restrict the scale of new development are key to conserving the natural beauty of the AONB.
- New development of all types needs to respect vernacular architecture, settlement character and the local landscape. This will require developers to do more than try to use standard designs. The Board has published guidance on design and the use of building materials.

3.5 The key (relevant) policies are:

- D1. Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB, by reinforcing the local distinctiveness of the built environment.
- D6. Seek enhancement of the quality of the landscape of the AONB by the removal or mitigation of existing visually intrusive developments.
- D7. Pursue opportunities for landscape improvement and creation of green space (green infrastructure) when development is proposed in, or adjacent to, the boundaries of the AONB.



- D9. Encourage appropriate densities on new housing developments which reflect the local context, whilst having regard to the special qualities of the AONB

3.6 Local Policy. The adopted (December 2012) South Oxfordshire District Council Core Strategy addresses landscape issues in its "Environment" section that includes Policy CSEN1 which states that the district's distinct landscape character and key features will be protected from inappropriate development:

- "Where development is acceptable in principle, measures will be sought to integrate it into the landscape character of the area.
- high priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and planning decisions will have regard to their setting.
- Proposals which support the economies and social well being of the AONBs and their communities, including affordable housing schemes, will be encouraged provided they do not conflict with the aims of conservation and enhancement."

3.7 The South Oxfordshire District-wide Landscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG adopted July 2003) is part of the evidence that underpins the adopted Core Strategy.



4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.1 Landscape Character is a key consideration in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: the contribution of landscape character to sense of place and quality of life for all, and the way that change may affect individual components of the landscape. Landscape Character Assessments that cover the landscape around Sonning Common are:

- Natural England's National Character Areas
- South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (SPG)
- The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)
- Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Report
- Sonning Common Parish Council Draft Character Assessment and Design Statement

4.2 National Character Area. Sonning Common sits in NCA 110 Chilterns; an area of chalk hills and plateau with escarpments and dry valleys. Below the NCAs sit county and/or district-wide Landscape Character Assessments.

4.3 The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) was published in 2004 and defines regional landscape character areas across Oxfordshire. This study identifies a number of regional landscape character types. The landscape type which Sonning Common is identified to be part of is the 'Wooded Farmland'. Described as "distinctively ancient, rural character typified by a mosaic of woodland, enclosed pasture, arable fields as well as scattered farms and settlements".

4.4 The key characteristics of the landscape type include:

- Large blocks of ancient woodland and a large number of plantations.
- A varied field pattern of arable land and pasture enclosed by woodland and hedges.
- Species-rich hedgerows with many hedgerow trees.



- Dispersed settlement pattern with settlements and scattered farms.
- 4.5 The Chilterns Historic Landscape Characterisation Report demonstrates how historic environment contributes to special character of the Chilterns AONB. The land around Sonning Common is characterised as, Zone 3: Oxfordshire Farmsteads "This is a zone encompasses a band isolated farmsteads in the Oxfordshire Chilterns. The area includes other settlement types notably Sonning Common and Kidmore End this is typified by the dispersed settlements of Mapledurham, Harpsden, Crowsley."
- 4.6 The heritage significance of the landscape around the village itself varies from low to high in the south west.
- 4.7 South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (SPG) places Sonning Common within "Character Area 10: Chiltern Plateau with Valleys". The Chiltern landscape around Sonning Common specifically falls mostly under the description of the sub-type, "Semi-Enclosed Dipslope". Key characteristics listed by the district assessment of the sub-type are:
- "typically level or more gently sloping ground;
 - comparatively open fields contained within a strong structure of woods, hedgerows or trees to form a loose mosaic;
 - dominance of arable cultivation;
 - strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low intervisibility;
 - distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';
 - generally rural and unspoilt character but with some 'suburbanising' influences within rural settlements and along main roads (eg. A4074, A4130), and localized intrusion of built development and power lines (eg. Around Sonning Common and Caversham)."
- 4.8 The SPG outlines a management approach to development, "large scale development of any kind will be inappropriate within open



countryside areas but particularly within the AONB. The ability of the landscape to accommodate smaller scale development will depend upon:

- The potential impacts on distinctive landscape and settlement character;
- The potential impacts on intrinsic landscape quality and valued features and the overall sensitivity of the landscape to change
- The visual sensitivity of the receiving landscape"

The management strategy for the landscape around Sonning Common is to 'conserve'.

- 4.9 The SPG highlights that whilst this landscape type is less visually sensitive, much of the landscape is 'high quality' and that most forms of new development "will have an adverse impact on the AONB". The assessment advises that attention should be paid to "special attention should be paid to creating strong landscape 'edges' to settlements to reduce the urbanising influences of development on adjacent countryside". This is especially applicable to Sonning Common.
- 4.10 In most cases, landscapes of higher quality are more sensitive to change than those of lower quality, but this depends on the nature of the change. The landscape assessment process looks at a number of criteria to determine the '**quality**' of the area.
- 4.11 '**Landscape sensitivity**' is a general indication of the extent to which a landscape can accommodate change without unacceptable detrimental effects on its character and this can include existing land use, pattern and scale, scope for mitigation and the general quality of the landscape.
- 4.12 The table below is taken from the SPD and indicates the overall quality and sensitivity at a district level, of the Landscape Character Area that Sonning primarily sits within (highlighted in blue).



TABLE 1 – District LCA Quality and Sensitivity

Table 10.2: Chilterns plateau with valleys - Landscape quality and sensitivity							
Key							
● Typical characteristic							
◆ Occasional characteristic							
		Open dipslope	Semi-enclosed dipslope	Wooded dipslope	Commons and heaths	Parkland and estate farmland	Amenity landscape
LANDSCAPE QUALITY AND SENSITIVITY							
Scenic quality	high		●	●	●	●	
	medium	●					●
	low						
Sense of place	strong		●	●	●	●	
	medium	●					●
	weak						
Intrusive influences	uncommon		●	●	●	●	
	occasional	●					●
	frequent						
Other heritage values (eg. Historic Park or Garden, SSSI, Conservation Area etc.)	uncommon	●					
	occasional		●		●		●
	frequent			●		●	
Visual sensitivity	high	●					
	medium		●				●
	low			●	●	●	
Sensitivity to change	high				●	●	
	moderate	●	●	●			●
	low						
Management strategy	conserve		●	●	●	●	
	repair	●					
	restore						●
	reconstruct						

- 4.13 District level character assessment forms a basis for the site specific assessment of effects. However, the level of detail for the District assessment does not extend to local level variations in character.
- 4.14 Sonning Common Parish Council Character Assessment and Design Statement (Draft December 2012) undertook local level assessment of the landscape setting, together with built environment as part of the community's work in preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The document outlines the aim 'that the document which was produced with a high level of community input, will be used by developers, applicants, the local authorities and the community, ideally to work together to ensure that any future developments are in



the right place and designed in the right way to respond to and enhance the village's valued local character'.

- 4.15 'The distinctive character of the Parish is recorded in the document, one that is important historically and one that the residents value and wish to see understood and enhanced as any future development takes place'.
- 4.16 The assessment objective was to add a further layer of detail to the Character Assessments undertaken at National and district level.
- 4.17 The document also highlights the distinctive landscape setting that needs to be respected in the future, especially given that some likely development sites are on the edge of the village. It concludes with guidelines that are deliberately general and not meant to determine specific design solutions or to discourage contemporary design. Within the document locally valued landscape landmarks and features are identified and relate to broad design guidelines in relation to development:
- Sensitive boundary treatment to any development on the settlement edge should demonstrate either the conservation or, if appropriate, the repair of the landscape 'edges' around Sonning Common.
 - In line with national policy guidance, the protection of the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB setting to the village should inform any design proposals.
 - Suburbanising influences such as powerlines, lighting and signage should be sensitively integrated and avoided in new developments.
 - Key distant and short views to and from the village and its landscape setting should inform design approaches, and design proposals should demonstrate how a project would sit within in the landscape.
 - In particular new development should have regard to views from existing rights of way and the maintenance of those routes.
 - Ridgeline development is inappropriate.
 - Links to existing habitats and the creation of new ones should be considered in order to safeguard and enhance local wildlife.
- 4.18 The assessment considers the built environment of the village commenting that "unlike very many of the villages in South Oxfordshire, Sonning Common is a product of the 19th and 20th centuries. As a



result, it may not exhibit many of the characteristics of a 'typical' Chilterns village but that does not mean that it lacks a distinctive character".

4.19 There are two main types of development in different parts of Sonning Common. The two main types of area are quite interspersed across the village so there are some sub areas for each type, each with its slightly different character. The two main types of area are:

- Plotland - Areas developed at different time but essentially as a series of plots with houses along relatively straight roads.
- Estate - Areas developed as small or large estates of houses, sometimes as very small backland development, arranged along mostly winding roads and cul-de-sac.

4.20 South Oxfordshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) examines the setting of a development in section 2.4. One of the stated Design Principles relevant to this report is the need "identify opportunities for new development to make a positive contribution to the visual character of a settlement, such as improving the appearance of the settlement edge".

4.21 The edge of Sonning Common is where the majority of potential sites under consideration are located, the sensitivity of these (in both landscape and settlement form terms) and local value placed upon these are all important considerations in the overall approach to sites selection in the Parish.



5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 There is a lot of information to address for each site. We have set out our findings in the form of a table to enable each heading to be reviewed under the three main headings of existing, proposed and long-term.
- 5.2 Our assessment is based on the site layouts as issued by the Parish Council. Whilst it may be that more recent iterations of these plans may show slightly differing boundaries, the main thrust of our comments would remain valid.
- 5.3 The following tables are set out to enable the key aspects of Landscape & Visual Impact to be looked at over the three key stages i.e. existing, proposed and longer term. We have focused our attention on identifying the constraints and opportunities each of the sites and their surroundings present.
- 5.4 The comments made in these tables are based on the general methodology employed when carrying out a full Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment but are, for this type of study reduced in scope to enable a broader assessment of the issues pertaining to a range of different sites. We have used our experience to focus on where we see the primary issues / impacts.
- 5.5 It is not intended to be a site selection tool in its own right and is intended as an important part of a wider evidence source to inform the next stages of site allocation.
- 5.6 Our comments are also made on the assumption that wider matters of planning policy can be overcome and that matters such as ownership, archaeology, ecology, highway engineering can or have already been resolved.
- 5.7 The following tables explain some of the descriptions and criteria we use later in the site specific tables.
- 5.8 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY is a general indication of the extent to which a landscape can accommodate change without unacceptable detrimental effects on its character and this can include existing land



use, pattern and scale, scope for mitigation and the general quality of the landscape. The degree of sensitivity can be defined as follows:

Sensitivity	Landscape
High	An area possessing a particularly distinctive sense of place, in good condition, or highly valued for its scenic quality and/or landscape character, a landscape with low tolerance to change of the type identified, for example National Parks, AONBs, Heritage Coasts, setting of Listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments.
Medium	An area with a clearly defined sense of place and/or character in moderate condition; an area valued at a local or regional level, a landscape which is partially tolerant of change of the type identified.
Low	An area with a weak sense of place, and/or landscape character in poor condition, often not valued for its scenic quality, an area that is tolerant of substantial change of the type identified.

5.9 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPACT - The significance of the impacts is defined as follows:

Landscape impact significance criteria	
Impact	Criteria
Major adverse	The proposals would be at considerable variance with the local landscape. They would degrade, diminish or destroy a highly valued landscape or its characteristics, features or elements.
Moderate adverse	The proposals would noticeably conflict and be at odds with the local landscape. They would leave an adverse impact on a landscape of recognised quality or on vulnerable and important characteristics, features or elements.
Minor adverse	The proposals would not quite fit into the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape. They would affect an area or elements of character of recognised quality and importance.
Neutral	The proposals would more or less fit in with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, maintaining the character of the



	existing character and quality.
Minor beneficial	The proposal would slightly enhance the existing quality and character, being in scale with the landscape and strengthening existing patterns.
Moderate beneficial	The proposals would enhance the existing landscape character, improving the quality of the landscape through the removal of damage caused by existing detractors or by adding new element sensitive to the prevailing landscape pattern.

5.10 VISUAL SENSITIVITY - The sensitivity of the receptor is defined as follows:

Factor	Description
High sensitivity – Observers whose attention or interest may be focussed on the landscape and recognised views in particular	Recognised / Important Viewpoints, including those identified within and protected by policy. These viewpoints may be tourist destinations and marked on maps. Designed views, including from within historic landscapes. Residential Properties -views from rooms occupied during daylight / waking hours (predominantly ground floor rooms). Users of Rights of Way and Recreational Trails. Users of land with public access (i.e. Open Access Land and National Trust properties)
Medium sensitivity Views of the landscape are part of, but not the sole purpose of the receptors	Residential Properties - views from rooms unoccupied during daylight / waking hours (1st floor rooms). Those playing or spectating at outdoor sports or undertaking formal outdoor recreation. Users of local roads where there are clear / open views across the landscape and low levels of traffic.
Low sensitivity - Attention is focussed upon the activity of the receptor and not upon the wider views	Users of main roads travelling at speed, or local roads where the focus is upon the road ahead owing to traffic conditions and the context / composition of views. People at their place of work.



5.11 VISUAL SIGNIFICANCE - The significance of visual impact is defined as follows:

Impact	Criteria
Major adverse	The proposals would cause total permanent loss or major alteration to key elements and features of the landscape, to include the introduction of elements totally uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape. The proposals would be visually intrusive and would disrupt fine and valued views both into and across the area.
Moderate adverse	The proposals would cause substantial permanent loss or alteration to one or more key elements of the landscape, to include the introduction of elements that are prominent but may not be substantially uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape. The Development would be visually intrusive and would adversely effect upon the landscape.
Minor adverse	The proposals would cause minor permanent and/or temporary loss or alteration to one or more key elements or features of the landscape, to include the introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape. The proposals would cause limited visual intrusion.
Neutral	The proposals would more or less fit in with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, maintaining the balance in the existing view
Minor beneficial	The proposals would slightly enhance the existing view, being in scale with the landscape and strengthening existing patterns
Moderate beneficial	The proposals would enhance the existing view, improving the quality of the landscape through the removal of damage caused by existing detractors.



- 5.12 There follows a detailed description of each site and the likely landscape and visual impacts we foresee.
- 5.13 A photosheet with a number of key views and viewpoints that illustrates some of the points raised in the descriptions below is included in the appendices. Photographs were taken in good weather conditions with a Canon EOS 50D.

SON 1	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings	Large open site – 7.8ha - generally featureless. Track to the north is most valuable feature.	No large earthworks required	No significant elements envisaged.
Vegetation – perimeter and freestanding / internal	No internal vegetation. Perimeter hedges to be retained and protected during construction.	None.	Can add significant amounts of planting
Sensitivity of the site	Medium sensitivity but has already been compromised by the adjacent housing.		Retention of perimeter features with sufficient space for wide buffer / transition zones is key.
Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	This is a relatively featureless, effectively flat, open field. Boundary vegetation, Old Copse Ancient Woodland is the primary feature	Perimeter vegetation must be retained and protected – visually and physically. Impact would be Minor adverse .	Good design can ensure a good transition to open countryside. May improve relationship with countryside. Appropriate buffer zones required to west side especially.



Visual – likely receptors, sensitivity & significance	Adjacent residents (medium), large numbers of users of PROW (High sensitivity). Views generally limited to field boundaries.	Moderate adverse. Good design (layout) can include larger areas of open space to soften edges and PROW re-routed accordingly.	Good design will minimize impacts.
The AONB & its relationship to the site	This site is in the AONB but does not exhibit any of its primary characteristics.	Loss of agricultural land / change in use is inevitable with all the sites.	Not possible to mitigate but this loss would not adversely affect the AONB.
Vehicle access (current & proposed)	Existing access for agricultural vehicles from farm only. Narrow track to north valuable character asset and not suitable.	SON 1 needs to be accessed (probably) via SON 2 to avoid destroying northern gravel track / access.	
PROW's – designated & permissive	PROW crosses the middle of the site and is locally valued.	Path may (probably) need to be re-routed.	Must retain same end and start points. Some disturbance to users but not significant in length (285m).
CONCLUSIONS – main points to consider within the decision making process	The northern track / PROW access is most important feature. This generally dictates that it needs to be developed with SON 2. Relationship with Old Copse important and must be recognised in a sensitive design. Paddocks to southern boundary must be retained as they provide setting for Bishopswood Farm (& House).	Can deliver substantial number of dwellings but sufficient open space needs to be retained to allow for buffer zones to east and western boundaries. Development of this site is entirely logical and would not affect the wider character of the area.	Visual impact is limited and a good scheme can bring forward other longer term benefits.



SON 1



-  Site boundary
-  Public right of way



SON 2	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings	Medium sized open site 3.3 ha – generally featureless.	No large earthworks required	No significant elements envisaged.
Vegetation – perimeter and freestanding / internal	No internal vegetation. Perimeter hedges are good and provide effective screening – must be retained and protected during construction.	None.	Can add significant amounts of planting.
Sensitivity of the site	Medium sensitivity but has already been compromised by the adjacent housing.		Retention of perimeter features with sufficient space for wide buffer / transition zones is key.
Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	This is a relatively featureless open field. Boundary vegetation is the primary feature.	Perimeter vegetation must be retained and protected – visually and physically. Impact would be Minor adverse	Good design can ensure a good transition to open countryside. May improve relationship with countryside.
Visual – likely receptors, sensitivity & significance	Adjacent residents (Medium sensitivity), views limited to field boundaries.	Moderate adverse. Good design (layout) can include larger areas of open space to soften edges.	Good design will allow impacts to be minimised.
The AONB & its relationship to the site	This site is in the AONB but does not exhibit any of its primary characteristics.	Loss of agricultural land / change in use is inevitable with all the sites.	Not possible to mitigate but this loss would not adversely affect the wider AONB.



Vehicle access (current & proposed)	Existing access for agricultural vehicles from farm only. Access from Lambourne Rd / Russet Close difficult so would probably need to be accessed from Reades Lane.	Can also provide access to SON 1.	Need to be aware of over-loading traffic flow via Lambourne Road. This is a Highways issue but suggests that SON 3 provides the key to locking SON 1, 2 and 3 together.
PROW's – designated & permissive	No PROW's on or near the site	Opportunities exist to create pedestrian routes / links into adjoining areas.	n/a
CONCLUSIONS – main points to consider within the decision making process	This site is the key to unlock SON 1. Paddocks to western boundary must be retained as they are as they provide setting for Bishopswood Farm (& House).	Development of this site is entirely logical and would not affect the wider character of the area or the AONB	Visual impact is limited and a good scheme can bring forward other longer term benefits.

SON 2



 Site boundary

 Public right of way



SON 3	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings	Medium sized open site – 5.3 ha – triangular shaped site with gently undulating topography – no internal features.	No large earthworks required	No significant elements envisaged.
Vegetation – perimeter and freestanding / internal	No internal vegetation. Perimeter hedges and trees are very important and add to AONB. To be retained and protected during construction.	None.	Can add significant amounts of planting
Sensitivity of the site	Medium sensitivity but has already been compromised by the adjacent housing – Farm Close was built in the corner of this field, but screening vegetation establishing well.	Change would be minor adverse assuming good design and appropriate landscape led scheme developed.	Retention of perimeter features with sufficient space for wide buffer / transition zones is key.
Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	Topography is gently undulating and may offer the key to a good layout.	Perimeter vegetation (specifically to Reades Lane) must be retained and protected – visually and physically. Minor adverse.	Proximity to and setting of Bishopswood Farm is a concern and the western boundary needs very careful design consideration.



Visual – likely receptors, sensitivity & significance	Adjacent residents off Farm Close (medium), views limited to field boundaries. Generally well hidden from Memorial Hall & Reades Lane, but some glimpsed views underlines importance of this vegetation. Medium sensitivity.	Moderate adverse. Good design (layout) must protect western boundary to Bishopswood Farm and southern boundary to Reades Lane.	Include larger areas of open space to soften edges.
The AONB & its relationship to the site	This site is in the AONB but does not exhibit any of its primary characteristics.	Loss of agricultural land / change in use is inevitable with all the sites.	Not possible to mitigate but this loss would not adversely affect the AONB.
Vehicle access (current & proposed)	Existing access for agricultural vehicles from farm only. Possible access from Reades Lane	Loss of vegetation for visibility splays is a concern. Possible entry point in very SE corner to reduce impacts.	Hedges to Reades Lane would have to be enhanced to provide longer term dense screen.
PROW's – designated & permissive	No PROW on or near the site	Opportunities exist to create pedestrian routes / links i.e. across to the school	This can be seen as a valuable addition to the local infrastructure / green network.
CONCLUSIONS – main points to consider within the decision making process	This is the most sensitive of the three linked sites (SON 1, 2 & 3) as it fronts Reades Lane and Bishopswood House. Perimeter vegetation to Reades Lane especially important to AONB character.	Development of this site is logical and would not affect the wider character of the area or the AONB, generally because of depth of perimeter hedging. Careful design can allow development to sit back from both frontages and help retain transition from urban to rural.	Loss of vegetation on Reades Lane for visibility may be an issue but good replanting can limit longer term damage. Links to school would be useful for other residential areas to the north-east.



SON 3





SON 5	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings (* see note below)	<p>Small rectangular site that sits behind roadside / wayside dwellings – 2.0 ha – flat. Post & wire fencing in the main but includes 'additional' site at east end. Small stable in poor condition. Pylon / overhead wires cross the site. Loss of property to create access is discussed below. Inclusion of the garden behind No 54 appears totally illogical and would require the removal of protected and important trees. Adjacent chalk-pit & possible tunnels need to be researched and dealt with accordingly.</p>	<p>No earthworks required. Overhead cables are limiting factor and have easements. Stables are of no inherent value. Assess implications of Chalk pit / tunnels.</p> <p><i>Damage to the land behind No 54 would be significant and this part of the site should be excluded.</i></p>	<p>There would be no physical damage caused through development of the majority of the site.</p>
Vegetation – perimeter and freestanding / internal	<p>Limited self sown internal vegetation of no real value. Very significant hedge to the western boundary must be protected and retained as high natural feature i.e. not trimmed. Valuable Pine trees in rear garden of No 54. Protect and retain as key features.</p>	<p>Limited loss of vegetation due to creation of new access. Design would have to retain western hedge in public ownership i.e. not within gardens to help protect its integrity.</p>	<p>Relatively narrow site that leaves limited room for large areas of new vegetation. Scope for smaller number of bigger specimens as focal points / screening features.</p>



Sensitivity of the site	This is a well contained site and is of medium sensitivity – primarily because it abuts the AONB. The adjacent field (was SON 4) is very sensitive.	Development would cause minor adverse impacts. Whilst there may be views into the site from the west, that view already includes houses and other buildings. This would not be a wholly new impact, but an extension of an existing one. The AONB boundary already includes buildings in other areas.	Any development would have to be kept lower than the perimeter vegetation and stay well away from perimeter vegetation to the west. Low density scheme would allow for well designed area of POS / buffer to the western hedge.
Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	The site is not 'rare' or valuable nor does it include any key characteristics of the AONB. It has become dominated and sub-urbanised by removal of garden hedges, its unkempt appearance and pony grazing.	Loss of lower quality paddock is not a primary concern. Moderate adverse but only on small part of the AONB	Sensitive design can address key issues. Impact on character of the actual site would be minor adverse .
Visual – likely receptors sensitivity & significance	Views are generally limited to the site itself and upper parts of the adjacent field. There are glimpsed mid-range views from adjacent PROW that cuts through the AONB field. The vegetation along the boundary of this site and AONB is variable but mature and viewed from the PROW layers with the green of the	Adjacent properties that have removed their boundaries will experience major adverse impact . Others have significant amounts of vegetation in their gardens but will still have moderate adverse impact . Users of PROW in adjacent field will have glimpsed views (dependant on height / density	No longer term issues foreseen as the site is generally well contained, though screening vegetation needs to be consolidated. Roofs already exist in this view.

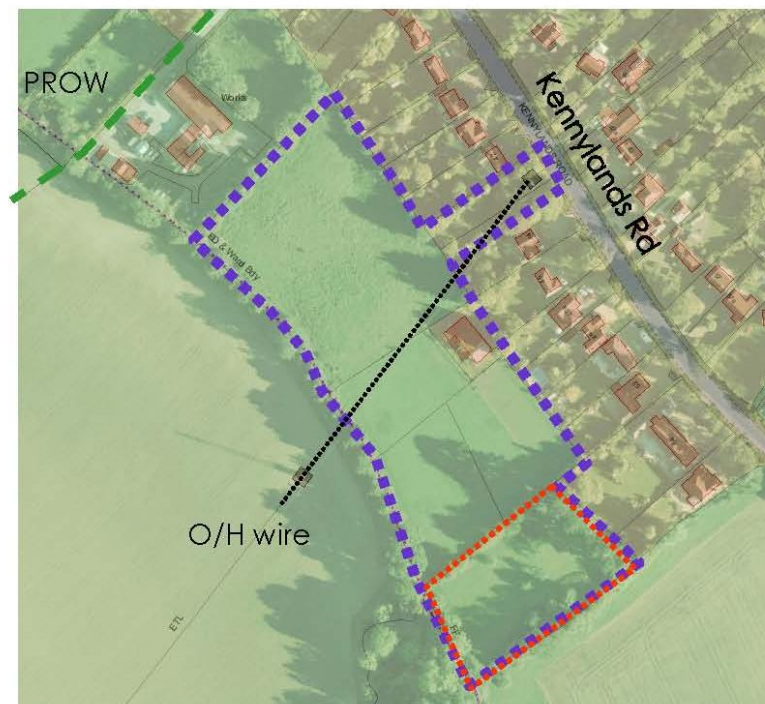


	paddock and residential garden vegetation. In the colder months the deciduous trees and shrubs will provide less screening. Scheme would have to be developed through carefully considered height analysis and strategy. High – Medium sensitivity	strategy chosen) and due to variable quality and condition of the boundary vegetation currently these will be more significant than current uses .	
The AONB & its relationship to the site	This site abuts a sensitive site within the AONB. The site itself does not include any key characteristics of AONB but is an important part of its setting.	AONB already has significant areas of housing abutting its boundary.	We do not think that the development would adversely affect the AONB, however sensitive design & mitigation will be vital.
Vehicle access (current & proposed)	Existing narrow track between 44-46 Kennylands Road. Proposed access via widened pylon / overhead wire line corridor. Would have to comply with highway regulations.	Apart from the loss of the property itself, there will be a loss of vegetation. A high quality scheme using large tree stock would be required.	Traffic matters dealt with by Highways, but low density scheme should not provide highway issues.
PROW's – designated & permissive	No PROW's on the site. Well used PROW crosses field behind. Well used path running along the rear of the western boundary.	Must exclude all possibility of informal access to the western side and PROW beyond.	No direct links to existing PROWS - this would need to be maintained.
CONCLUSIONS – main points to consider within the decision making process	This site is sensitive and has been subject to significant scrutiny in the past. Should it be decided that development was appropriate, then a well designed	The western boundary is very important and must be retained and allowed to continue growing. This would have to be a low density and 1.5-2.0 storey	Design of the layout to allow long term protection and management of west boundary is critically important. This will provide a narrow but



	<p>and sensitive low density and low height scheme would not have a high impact on the adjacent AONB. It is accepted that it would have a negative impact on those adjacent properties that current have a view into the site, but this should not preclude the site being considered further. The land to the rear of No 54 does not appear to be logical and should not be included. See red line on diagram.</p>	<p>maximum height to stay hidden behind western boundary. Well designed scheme of planting to the eastern boundary would be required.</p>	<p>effective buffer.</p>
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SON 5



-  Site boundary
-  Public right of way



SON 6	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings	This site is part of an open field so has not 'back' to it. Medium quality land. No buildings or other apparent features. The site is 1.6 ha.	Would not cause any physical damage per se (but see note on vegetation below)	A well designed scheme of planting and fencing could add a strong rear boundary.
Vegetation – perimeter and freestanding / internal	No internal vegetation but extremely important roadside boundary / frontage vegetation. Rudgings Plantation and Bur Wood form a further visual boundary to the rear of the field.	Continuing similar style as remainder of Kennylands Rd would decimate this vegetation. Preferable to have single point of access from main road.	Depends on style of development. Strongly advise against ribbon development.
Sensitivity of the site	The site itself is not specifically valuable, but it its role as context for and protection of the AONB that gives it importance. As the site has no back, it is high sensitivity as the remainder of the field abuts the AONB.	This would have a high adverse impact if road frontage vegetation was compromised. Current site boundary is logical as it extends current development style, but does not allow for anything other than a continuation of the same style of development.	A well designed scheme of planting and fencing could reduce some impacts to the rear, but it is not possible to mitigate the likely damage to the road frontage.



Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	Frontage vegetation is the key characteristic of this part of Sonning Common and is read in conjunction with the woodland at Son 7. This is very important to the area and must be protected.	Any development on this site must take account of and retain the roadside vegetation. We question whether such a narrow site can be developed in a more traditional manner. A further key consideration is planting to the rear to establish clear strong edge to settlement form. This would take a number of year to establish. Major / Moderate adverse	With removal of vegetation, the major adverse impact to character of this stretch of road cannot be fully mitigated.
Visual – likely receptors sensitivity & significance	The site is clearly visible along Kennylands Rd. Generally views restricted to the natural boundaries of the field with some longer distance views to the SE. Users of the PROW will have clear views of the site. These are high sensitivity . Adjacent properties will experience lower impact and road users get glimpsed views.	Users of the PROW will experience major / moderate adverse impact . From the road, the retention of the vegetation is key and if can be achieved users will experience a minor adverse impact .	Level of visual impact would be acceptable if roadside vegetation were to be retained and enhanced.
The AONB & its relationship to the site	AONB abuts the rear of the field behind i.e. to the east side of Rudgings Plantation / Burr Wood.	A well designed scheme, including planting and fencing to the rear could restrict impacts to the AONB.	



Vehicle access (current & proposed)	Current agricultural access via other fields. There is an existing access off Kennylands Rd but this needs improvement.	Would depend on the style of development.	See other comments.
PROW's – designated & permissive	There is a PROW crossing the field to the rear. This would not be physically affected.	Not physically possible to link to the PROW network except along Kennylands Rd.	
CONCLUSIONS – main points to consider within the decision making process	There is a plan based logic to continuing development along Kennylands Rd and 'joining up' the two existing lines of houses. This should not be a preferred site in our view.	However the vegetation on both sides of the road is now a very important part of the landscape character that they must be retained. Development is then constrained and now probably not acceptable on SON 6.	Longer term impacts on the AONB and pressure to develop further into the remaining field would be difficult to mitigate.



SON 6



-  Site boundary
-  Public right of way

SON 7	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings	This is the (house and) grounds of Hagpits House. It includes drive, tennis court and outbuildings. The site is 1.9ha in total.	We understand that any scheme would probably result in the demolition of the house and therefore its grounds would be very much under threat.	It is not possible to mitigate for a loss of this type or magnitude
Vegetation – perimeter and	The grounds contain a	There is a line of trees (Ash, Larch &	There is scope for replanting but this



freestanding / internal	substantial number of trees. Whilst not necessarily of individual value, have great collective worth. Retention of vegetation and a buffer along Kennylands Rd is as important for this site as it is for SON 6. Hagpits Wood is also extremely important (visual & ecologically) and must be retained and protected.	Sycamore) to the Eastern site boundary (with SON9) that are decrepit and could be removed. The retention of the house and some of its grounds would allow for more effective protection and management of the woods.	needs to be done as a part of a sensitive overall design.
Sensitivity of the site	The house and grounds, whilst isolated, are medium sensitivity .	The impact of development on the whole of the site would be major adverse if demolition and grounds clearance was required.	The development should be restricted to only parts of the site to allow for the preservation of the house and its immediate setting.
Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	The grounds (and the house) are important character assets to the wider area and need to be retained. Especially in a situation where there are other opportunities available, then we do not think the whole site is appropriate.	Development on the whole site would cause major adverse impact . Development of part of the site, and possible allied to SON 9, would be more acceptable.	Loss of the house and grounds could not be mitigated and would be unacceptable. A well designed scheme on part of the site could work and would be acceptable.
Visual – likely receptors sensitivity & significance	The house and grounds are well screened from most views. There are views to the east through SON 9 to the AONB. Depending on the retention of the existing	If the line of trees to the eastern boundary were removed then it would open the site to more views from the east but in context of the development of SON9, then we do	Retention of western side vegetation (and house / grounds) will remove most visual impacts.



	vegetation, then visual impact would not be a primary issue. If large amounts of vegetation were to be removed, then visual impact would increase proportionately. Low sensitivity	not see this as an issue.	
The AONB & its relationship to the site	The site is not in the AONB.	Development of this site, in part, would not impact on the AONB.	
Vehicle access (current & proposed)	Current access is discrete and off Kennylands Road.	Proposed access would logically follow the existing, but as we are recommending only part of the site is included, then it would have to be accessed via SON 9 or through the back of SON 8.	
PROW's – designated & permissive	There are no PROW's on or near the site.	The scheme would not affect any PROW's.	The scheme would not affect any PROW's.
CONCLUSIONS – main points to consider within the decision making process	In our opinion the house and its immediate setting is wholly inappropriate for residential development.	It may be possible to jettison the paddock to the east side and, with removal of the line of poor trees, add it to SON 9. Should SON 9 not come forward, then the partial (i.e. effectively any) development on SON 7 would not be acceptable.	A reduced but well designed scheme could sit comfortably here and with appropriate planting and POS provision could create a more manageable and acceptable development.



SON 7



-  Site boundary
-  Public right of way

SON 8	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings	This is a relatively small site, 0.81ha, and is a narrow 'backland' site that effectively divides in two - the grounds of the housing at Essex Way and The	The reality is that the retention of The Dorian Centre (plus car parking etc) would make it extremely difficult to develop this site fully. It would be possible to create	There are a number of options on this relatively small site. The principle of development would not be an issue, but a sensitive design



	Dorian Centre (Thames Valley Gymnastics Club) with its associated car parking, mounding and the access road. There is further housing adjacent to the east at Birdwood Court.	a small and discrete scheme to the north of the site and retain the Dorian Centre. Partial-development would need to be compatible with the existing adjacent dwellings.	that retains the existing vegetation is required. Adjacent Millennium Green important locally and needs to be considered.
Vegetation – perimeter and freestanding / internal	There is a good group of trees to the north of the building. There is a good hedge to the north (boundary with SON 9 – TPO protection) and to the east. The southern hedge is poor.	We would recommend that this group of trees be retained in any scheme to become a central established feature, or an edge buffer zone.	Retention and protection of existing vegetation will provide valuable screening and should work well.
Sensitivity of the site	The site is low sensitivity and can accommodate change readily.	Depending on which option (discussed above) is chosen then the impacts would be neutral .	
Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	The various parts of the site appear as being 'leftover' from adjoining development. It is not sensitive or valuable in that respect.	There would be no impact on immediate or wider character. Neutral .	There could be a beneficial impact in the longer term.
Visual – likely receptors sensitivity & significance	There will be some impact to the immediate properties on Essex Way but this will be limited. Views are contained and would be generally limited to the site itself and to the adjacent Millennium Field. Low sensitivity .	A sensitive scheme will be able to reduce impacts to a small number of receptors. Neutral impact .	No longer term adverse impacts.
The AONB & its	This site is 'land-	n/a	n/a



relationship to the site	locked' and would not have any impact on the AONB.		
Vehicle access (current & proposed)	From Peppard Rd via Birdwood Court.	Would probably follow the existing.	Need to include pedestrian links.
PROW's – designated & permissive	None on or near the site.	n/a	n/a
CONCLUSIONS – main points to consider within the decision making process	Development of this site appears entirely logical and extent depends on the viability of The Dorian Centre and its possible re-location elsewhere.	Scheme layout needs to retain internal block of vegetation and respect adjacent properties.	No overall impacts. Any scheme must be sensitive towards Millennium Green.

SON 8



-  Site boundary
-  Public right of way



SON 9	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings	This site is 3.2ha and is an open paddock, subdivided with post & rail. There are no buildings on the site. It slopes downhill from the southern boundary with SON 7 to Peppard Rd.	Fencing will be removed but has no value.	
Vegetation – perimeter and freestanding / internal	There is no internal vegetation, but there is perimeter vegetation to all sides. The hedge to Peppard Rd is good and provides valuable 'in leaf' screening.	Removal of trees to west boundary (with SON 7) is recommended. Other boundaries must be retained and protected.	Retained vegetation to be protected during construction and upgraded within the scheme.
Sensitivity of the site	This site is effectively a buffer between development at Birdwood Court and Westleigh Drive. The Herb Garden & Maze provide an intermediate step. The site is of medium sensitivity .	Any scheme needs to be appropriate and respect and respond to its immediate neighbours. We suggest the front wall of The Herb Garden becomes the new building line to the east side. As discussed with SON 7 we suggest the vegetation to the west is removed and the two sites amalgamated. We think this will reduce the impact to minor adverse .	



Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	The site has few features itself but has a value as a buffer precisely because it is undeveloped.	Sensitive design and boundary treatment (i.e. allowing space for transition / buffer zones) must be incorporated. Building design must also respect existing properties and choice of materials and detailing is very important on this site. Response to Hagpit House would be an interesting reference point. Minor adverse.	No longer term or wider character issues.
Visual – likely receptors sensitivity & significance	Limited number of receptors as site is well contained. People using The Herb Garden or The Maze would be most affected. Medium sensitivity , but a small group. As the site slopes, there are increasing views from higher parts of the site. Consider in design stage.	Retention of vegetation in scheme design is the key to reducing visual impact moderate adverse if vegetation on perimeter is retained and enhanced. Development needs to stay behind line suggested by Herb Garden	No longer term visual impacts envisaged. A good planting scheme would be required for any development to protect views to / from the AONB.
The AONB & its relationship to the site	The site faces directly onto the AONB – the field opposite is distinctive and sensitive. Local AONB topography is important.	Development needs to sit back in the paddock to respect the line suggested by The Herb Garden.	



Vehicle access (current & proposed)	There is no access off Peppard Rd and agricultural access appears to be via The Herb Garden.	Access may be possible off SON 8 or a new combined access via The Herb Garden. As there are wide verges along Peppard Rd, it may be possible to create new access with minimal loss of vegetation.	
PROW's – designated and permissive	There are no PROW's on or near the site.	n/a	n/a
CONCLUSIONS – main points to consider within the decision making process	As discussed with SON 7 we suggest the vegetation to the west is removed and the two (reduced) sites are amalgamated.	The reduced sites can show a sensitivity to the AONB and use the remaining space to the front (east) as an informal meadow or POS.	Sloping site and implications for location of replacement planting to be considered at design stage.

SON 9





SON 11	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings	This site is 0.68ha. This includes part of what appears to be former grounds of Reddish Manor. We have not been able to access this land, but it appears to contain significant perimeter vegetation. There are no apparent internal features within the remainder 'farmland' element of the site.		
Vegetation – perimeter and freestanding / internal	There is a good hedge to the west side of the site – boundary with Peppard Rd. There is a line of tall Poplar trees on the north side and some well established vegetation to the SW side / boundary with Reddish Manor	Given the nature of the road, it would only be possible to access this site from Blackmore Lane. As such it is probable that no vegetation would have to be removed. However, the Poplars are now dangerous and should be removed.	Poplars can be replaced with more appropriate native trees.
Sensitivity of the site	High sensitivity as it sits at the open end of a field which is a very important part of the AONB and displays some key characteristics.	The development of this site would be major adverse as it would introduce a new discordant element on this side of the road. This is a wholly new impact and not just an increase or extension of an existing one. It	This impact cannot be mitigated.



		would also impact on the setting of Reddish Manor.	
Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	The site is gently undulating and is part of a bigger field that displays many of the overarching characteristics of the AONB. High sensitivity.	The development would also have an impact on the setting of the adjacent Manor (not listed, but a locally important building). Major adverse.	Impact on the character of the AONB would not be improved by new boundary planting.
Visual – likely receptors & sensitivity	Site obviously visible from Blackmore Lane and the wider AONB. Perimeter hedge hides some views from Peppard Rd. The properties on the north side of Blackmore Lane have direct views down the valley into the site / AONB.	There are a limited number of receptors but the impact on these would be classified as Major adverse.	
The AONB & its relationship to the site	This is in the AONB and is an important part of it. Development on this site does appear to be unbalanced in that it will cause significant impact but as it is relatively small, provide only modest numbers.	Retention of boundary vegetation is important. New planting to SE boundary possible.	Key impacts on the AONB would outweigh the benefits.
Vehicle access (current & proposed)	Off Blackmore Lane.	Off Blackmore Lane.	
PROW's – designated and permissive	None on the site. There is a PROW on the opposite side of Peppard Rd, but not physically affected.	n/a	
CONCLUSIONS – main points to	This is a very sensitive and important corner	We do not think this site should be included due to its	It may be possible to add a small number of



consider within the decision making process	site. It marks the start of open countryside on this side of the road.	impact on the AONB.	dwelling discretely within the wooded area that was historically the grounds of Reddish manor, but we do not think the current site boundary is acceptable.
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SON 11





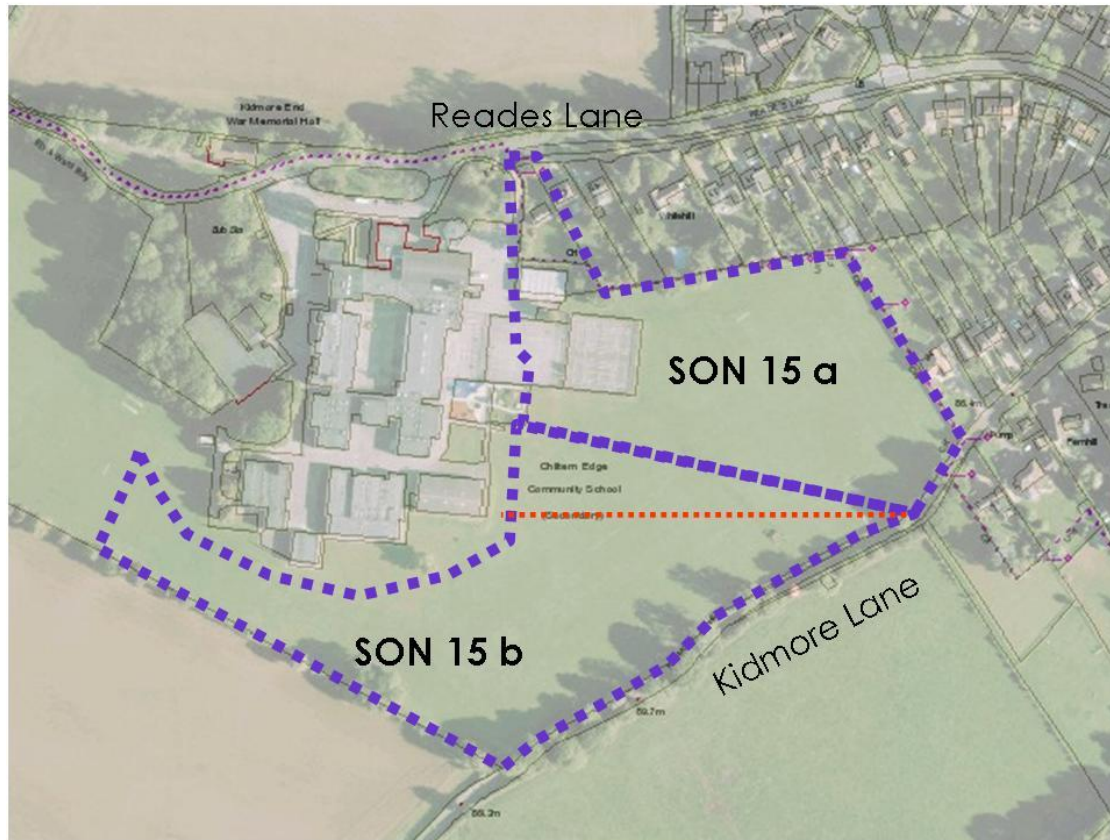
SON 15a	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings	1.8ha (approx). This is part of the grounds of Chiltern Edge Community (Secondary) School. There are not internal features on the actual site.	Some demolition may be required to construct the access via the Caretakers house & day nursery. No other works are envisaged.	
Vegetation – perimeter and freestanding / internal	No internal vegetation. There are some good and valuable trees to the perimeter and especially within the gardens around the proposed access.	It is not apparent which may need to be felled to allow access. All measures should be taken to retain these.	Replacements are possible and could be part of a well designed scheme.
Sensitivity of the site	We consider this to be a site with medium sensitivity as it is relatively well contained and sits in the context of the school and its other detracting elements such as tennis courts etc.	The scheme would have a limited impact, but there are very few receptors. A sensitive scheme needs to properly consider the relationship / boundary treatment with the school.	It would not be out of keeping with its adjacent land uses. A well designed scheme that allows an appropriate buffer / transition zone would work well.
Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	This site has few features and is bland and utilitarian. Tennis courts and fencing dominate.	Perimeter vegetation to the west is important and needs to be addressed. A good scheme could be seen as effectively neutral in impact.	A good scheme can bring more interest and improvements.



Visual – likely receptors & sensitivity	Limited to the adjacent properties off Kidmore Lane and Reades Lane. Gently sloping site does suggest better to include housing to the rear of the site and retain boundary buffer.	Minor adverse impact. Scheme needs to provide good fields of vision and buffer zones.	No long term issues identified.
The AONB & its relationship to the site	The site abuts the AONB but its current use(s) and surrounding developments mean the site has no characteristics of the AONB. Kidmore Lane provides a good defendable boundary.	The development would not have an impact upon it.	No long term issues identified. A good scheme will include a good buffer / transition.
Vehicle access (current & proposed)	No current access except via school.	Off Reades Lane via Caretakers property.	
PROW's – designated and permissive	There are no PROW's on the site or affected by the development.		
CONCLUSIONS – main points to consider within the decision making process	There is significant development potential on this site and it may release important funds for the school – thereby bringing important community benefits.	The development of this site would not have an impact on the AONB. It would not have a significant visual impact or impact on character. The development needs to create well defined and appropriate boundary treatment / transition zones to the school and the AONB to the south.	No longer term issued identified. Should consider extending 15a into part of 15b and create a smaller but more appropriately shaped <u>single</u> site.



SON 15 a & b



-  Site boundary
-  Public right of way



SON 15b	Key existing features	Likely development impacts & their significance	Mitigation measures & likelihood of success
Physical – walls, gates, fences and buildings	2.1 ha (approx). This is part of the grounds of Chiltern Edge Community (Secondary) School. There are not internal features on the actual site.	This site can only be accessed as part of or via 15a. This is a key weakness.	
Vegetation – perimeter and freestanding / internal	No internal vegetation. The southern boundary is very important and must be retained.	Significant boundary with Kidmore Lane and field to SE boundary. Both are very important and must be retained / protected.	Ongoing management important.
Sensitivity of the site	This is more sensitive than 15a because of its long boundary with Kidmore Lane and closer proximity to the AONB. High sensitivity	The scheme would have a limited wider impact, but there are very few receptors. The narrowness of the SE section of the site means it is not appropriate for development if a buffer zone is required.	Development on part of this site could work and would cause little damage to the character of the AONB. A sensitive scheme is required with significant buffer zone.
Landscape Character – elements that are important and may be affected	This site is read closely with the adjacent AONB and forms a key corner to the school.	Perimeter vegetation is important and needs to be retained. Current buildings sit back from AONB and this feature needs to be retained. Moderate adverse	Significant part of this site is not appropriate due to impact on wider character.
Visual – likely receptors & sensitivity	If developed (in part) with 15a then limited receptors only.	Limited impact. Scheme needs to provide good field of vision and buffer zones i.e. sit back from boundary.	No long term issues identified.



The AONB & its relationship to the site	The site abuts the AONB but its current use(s) and surrounding developments mean the site has no characteristics of the AONB	The site has a topographical relationship with the AONB, as it gently dips at the eastern corner.	No long term issues identified. A good scheme will include a good buffer / transition.
Vehicle access (current & proposed)	No current access except via school.	Could only be accessed via SON15a.	
PROW's – designated and permissive	There are no PROW's on the site or affected by the development.		
CONCLUSIONS – main points to consider within the decision making process	This part of the site could not be developed in isolation. It must be developed as part of SON15a or not at all. The extensive southern boundary to Kidmore Lane and the wrapping around the school are significant negative elements and the boundary would need to be revised to extend 15a to the south in a line parallel with the main buildings. This will retain a good buffer to the AONB.	The development needs to create well defined and appropriate boundary treatment / transition zones to the school and the AONB to the south. Suggest part development only, with 15a	



6 SUMMARY

- 6.1 We have looked at each of the sites and their surroundings. We have identified certain key constraints and opportunities for each and have prepared a summary table showing these conclusions.
- 6.2 It is important to remember that this study is looking at a range of possible development sites – i.e. there is a choice. It is not a case of defending the need to develop any one site over another and we have specifically not placed the sites in any order other than numerical.
- 6.3 We conclude, in respect of each of the sites, as follows -
- 6.4 SON 1 - A large site that can be developed with no impact on the AONB. Existing northern access must be retained. Sensitive scheme with wide green buffer to housing and AONB. Need to consider relationship with Old Copse and other facilities to the west. PROW is a key consideration but could be amended if required.
- 6.5 SON 2 – As with SON1, there is no apparent reason why not to develop the site. Must retain buffer to Bishopswood Farm. Access is the key and is probable that it could be developed in conjunction with SON 1 and SON3.
- 6.6 SON 3 – Need to retain buffer to Reades Lane and Bishopswood Farm, otherwise a logical choice with good access option off Reades Lane. It is our conclusion that SON's 1, 2 and 3 are logically tied together and the solutions are better considered as part of a wider masterplan approach. Access from Reades Lane via SON 3 would be the logical solution but an exemplar design and mitigation package would be required.
- 6.7 SON 5 – Backland infill that may be possible but only with very carefully considered height strategy and low density. The site is a fringe one and in its current form serves as a buffer to the AONB and the residential edge. Impact on the setting of the adjacent AONB, and especially users of PROW is a key consideration. The nature of the urban form in



this part of the village should also factor in decisions. Development would probably result in limited numbers and therefore reduced viability. Strongly opposed to development in the rear of east side property.

- 6.8 SON 6 – There is some logic in continuing the settlement form along Kennylands Road but the semi rural character of the road could be damaged. Retention of road frontage vegetation is critical. Consider layout set back from the road and include significant planting to rear boundary of appropriate width and species for local habitat. The creation of a defensible edge that is separate from private residential properties will be key to limiting the 'suburbanisation' of the fringes.
- 6.9 SON 7 – There are a number of important local assets on the site which is tied to valuable woodland. We suggest that any development proposal should consider retention of the house and its grounds (as its setting). Could release the paddock and link to SON9. We have had to assume that any issues over ownership can be resolved. This should not be a preferred site in our view.
- 6.10 SON 8 – An awkward small site that is entirely logical to develop in two blocks or 1 (if sports use needs to be retained due to covenant).
- 6.11 SON 9 – Sensitive to east side boundary with AONB – suggest step back from road and link to SON7 to restrict overall size of adjacent developments. Sloping ground affects visibility and needs to be considered in overall layout.
- 6.12 SON 11 – Recommend that this site is not appropriate due to impact on AONB and setting of adjacent manor. Part of the site may be able to accommodate some development but we do not think the benefit outweighs the impact.
- 6.13 SON 15a – This is a logical use of 'spare' school grounds. Funds can be invested in betterment of the school and therefore wider community benefit. Sensitive design needs to consider buffer zone with school and AONB. Any development needs to sit back from Kidmore Lane / AONB boundary.



- 6.14 SON15b – It would obviously not be possible to develop this site on its own and its proximity to the AONB and topographical relationship to it makes it much more sensitive. We do not think it can be developed in its current shape and suggest a reduction in the size of 15a to simply, in effect, extend 15a. We do not think it is appropriate to create such a long boundary of housing along the Kidmore Lane / AONB frontage and therefore suggest that 15b should be reduced in size i.e. not wrap around the front of the school. See red dotted line on diagram.
- 6.15 Having considered and identified constraints and opportunities for each site, the next step is to take the considerations and comments in this report together with other elements of the evidence base to consider a comprehensive approach to development in the Parish over the proposed plan period.