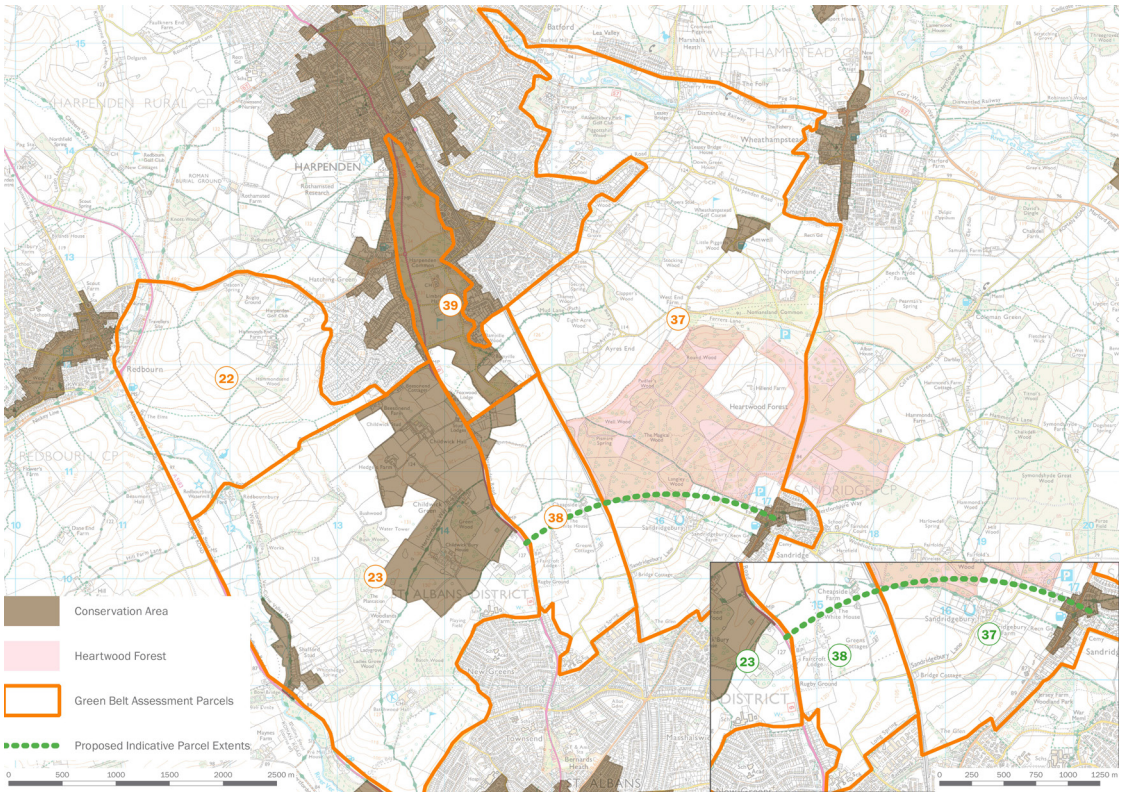

Image EDP 6.2: Illustrating the proposed sub-parcel extents to the north of St Albans

6.9 Whilst this document is not seeking to 'score' how the site performs in terms of the five purposes of the Green Belt (as stated in paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework June 2019 (NPPF)). The following summarises, from a landscape perspective, the site's role:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas:

    - The SKM methodology reserved the application of this purpose to Luton and Dunstable, Stevenage and London

2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another:

    - Fundamentally, the removal of the majority or all of the site from the Green Belt would not result in the merging of St Albans with Harpenden. The North St Albans proposed Green Belt boundary changes were found by SKM not to significantly compromise the space between St Albans and Harpenden;

    - EDP finds that as the site represents a fraction of the overall Green Belt extent and is visually well contained it will become more so as the woodland planting at Heartwood continues to mature. There would be no notable reduction in the physical or perceived gap between any towns as a result of its development. The site is, therefore, considered to make a limited contribution to this purpose; abutting settlement boundaries and having permanent and defensible boundaries;

- Maintaining the settlement pattern of the relationship of towns to villages is a local consideration and not one of the five national Green Belt purposes; and

- The master planning of a strategic area removed from the Green Belt will involve the consideration of the disposition of land uses, including open space typologies.

3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment:

   - At present the site is subject to a semi-urbanised character, due to typical settlement edge land uses and the influence of roads and railway. The site offers the potential to form a logical extension to the urban edge. As mentioned above, the site is in part representative of the host landscape character type (as is SA-S4), however, the correlating features worth retention, can be incorporated into the Green Infrastructure proposals going forward. Development within the site would assimilate well and be perceived as a logical constituent of the settlement.

4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns:

   - St Albans is an historic town albeit not one of the six historic towns to which purpose 4 has especial importance (Bath, Cambridge, Chester, Durham, Oxford York);

   - The Green Belt to the north of St Albans does not contribute to Purpose 4, but other Green Belt land (e.g. to the west and south-west of the town may do so); and

   - It is not a national purpose of the Green Belt to perform any other heritage setting role.

5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land:

   - Given the site's green-field nature, EDP considers that all Green Belt land (including SA-S4) is considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose.

6.10 Overall, it is considered that development of the site would have little effect on the visual openness of the Green Belt at this northern extent of St Albans. The site is small in scale in comparison to the wider area of agricultural land extending to the north of St Albans, beyond the arc of Heartwood Forest. There would be a barely perceptible difference in the gap between settlement edges should the site be developed in the manner outlined in **Section 7**. In landscape and visual terms, the site is considered suitable for removal from Green Belt land, without resulting in any material adverse effects on overall Green Belt function as identified within the NPPF. With consideration of the above, and the preceding objective landscape assessment, it is clear that further consideration of Green

Belt matters is required at a district level. In doing so, further refinement of assessment parcels to the north of St Albans is required as illustrated in **Image EDP 6.2**.

Section 7
Conclusions and Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Development Proposals

7.1 The potential development of the site for residential development should consider the landscape and visual sensitivities identified within this report and seek to mitigate potential effects insofar as is possible, so as to reduce these to an acceptable level and integrate the site into its context at the northern edge of St Albans.

7.2 Any proposals for development of this site should include visual screening and separation from the north-eastern portions of the site. It is likely that this could be achieved, with time, by retaining and reinforcing existing planting, where present, and establishing a new, substantial, woodland belt, as illustrated on **Plan EDP 9.** This planting belt would need to be a minimum of 15m wide with buildings offset from it by a sufficient distance to allow for tree fall without risk. The northern site boundary forms the most elevated section of the site, so introducing planting in this location will help mitigate any visual effects on users of the PRoW to the immediate north (on the fringes of the Heartwood Forest), users of the Promoted Route of the Hertfordshire Way and heritage assets at Sandridgebury Farm and the historic core of Sandridge itself. Nonetheless, such screening would take some years to mature to the point that it would form an effective screen. Further testing would be needed to inform design proposals going forward, to ensure that any screening is appropriate and effective.

7.3 It should be noted that parts of the site sit within a valley where the valley sides are well wooded and form a characteristic feature of this landscape. The proposed mitigation is not only likely to be effective, but appropriate in this landscape context and would not be an incongruous or inappropriate new landscape component.

7.4 Other landscape and visual considerations for development of the site would include:

- Protection and enhancement of the existing site boundary hedgerows and protection of vegetation beyond the site boundaries, notably the woodland along the northern boundary;

- Retention and enhancement of existing hedgerow planting along field boundaries to help biodiversity and help filter views from surrounding PRoW network;

- Across much of the site there is an absence of PRoW, new east to west connections should be created within green corridors and with sensitive adjacent development linking to a Green Infrastructure network and asserts within and beyond the site (Heartwood Forest and Jersey Wood);

- Consideration of views from the elevated PRoW to the east of the site, in Jersey Wood and Woodcock Hill as it descends the landscape into Sandridge. Additional,

considered woodland and hedgerow planting within the proposed Green Infrastructure will help assimilate the proposed built form into the landscape;

- Setting development back a minimum of 15m from the north-western site boundary will ensure built form does not create a prominent feature in available views from the west of the site; and

- Consideration of the visual amenity of adjacent properties within Sandridge and along the St Albans Road.

Overall Preliminary Conclusions in Respect of Landscape and Visual Amenity

7.5 The site is not located within and does not contain a designated landscape.

7.6 In terms of Green Belt matters, further, finer grain analysis is required of land to the north of St Albans. The inclusion of the site within parcel 37 without further sub-division does not demonstrate sufficient regard for the sites landscape and spatial characteristics.

7.7 Perhaps of the main consideration is the potential for the eastern and northern edges of any development of the site to be prominent in views from the wider landscape and the relationship with the settlement edge and heritage assets at Sandridge. At present, receptors here have some perception of the northern edge of St Albans, with ribbon development along the St Albans Road effectively coalescing the settlements and, so reducing their sensitivity to development to some degree, but minimization of further potential effects would be beneficial. As such, in designing the scheme, consideration should be given to a development buffer along the north-eastern boundary, to ensure development does not rise too far up against the existing settlement setting and also minimizing its visibility in views from the east and north.

7.8 On this basis, and if the recommendations set out above can be integrated into the scheme, it should be possible to develop a scheme which provides new housing and other facilities while respecting the sensitivity of the site and thereby minimising adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Any future planning application for the site should be informed by this baseline report and proposals should be assessed against it in the form of a full Landscape and Visual Assessment.

Appendix EDP 1
Methodology: Tables Defining the Thresholds and Definitions of Terminology used in this Appraisal

A1.1 Landscape and Visual Assessments are separate, though linked procedures. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape fabric, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the perception of the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

Table EDP A1.1: Defining the Sensitivity of the Landscape Baseline

EDP assessment terminology and definitions	
Landscape Baseline - Overall Sensitivity	
Very High	***Value***: Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Strong/distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.
High	***Value***: Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Many distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.
Medium	***Value***: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Some distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.
Low	***Value***: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Few distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.
Very Low	***Value***: Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors.
	Susceptibility: Absence of distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change.

Table EDP A1.2: Defining the Sensitivity of the Visual Baseline

Visual Baseline - Overall Sensitivity	
Very High	***Value/Susceptibility***: View is designed/has intentional association with surroundings; recorded in published material; from a publicly accessible heritage asset/designated/promoted viewpoint; nationally/internationally designated right of way; protected/recognised in planning policy designation.
	Examples: May include views from residential properties; National Trails; promoted holiday road routes; designated countryside/landscape features with public access; visitors to heritage assets of national importance; Open Access Land.
High	***Value/Susceptibility***: View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of scenic value or destination/summit views; inferred that it may have value for local residents; locally promoted route or PRoW.
	Examples: May include from recreational locations where there is some appreciation of the visual context/landscape e.g. golf, fishing; themed rights of way with a local association; National Trust land; panoramic viewpoints marked on OS maps; road routes promoted in tourist guides and/or for their scenic value.
Medium	***Value/Susceptibility***: View is not widely promoted or recorded in published sources; may be typical of those experienced by an identified receptor; minor road routes through rural/scenic areas.
	Examples: May include people engaged in outdoor sport not especially influenced by an appreciation of the wider landscape e.g. pitch sports; views from minor road routes passing through rural or scenic areas.
Low	***Value/Susceptibility***: View of clearly lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.
	Examples: May include major road routes; rail routes; receptor is at a place of work but visual surroundings have limited relevance.
Very Low	***Value/Susceptibility***: View may be affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.
	Examples: May include people at their place of work, indoor recreational or leisure facilities or other locations where views of the wider landscape have little of no importance.

Magnitude of Change

A1.2 The magnitude of any landscape or visual change is determined through a range of considerations particular to each receptor. The three attributes considered in defining the magnitude are:

- Scale of change;
- Geographical extent; and
- Duration and reversibility/proportion.

A1.3 **Table EDP A1.3** provides an indication of the criteria by which the geographical extent of the area will be affected within this assessment.

Table EDP A1.3: Geographical Extent Criteria

Landscape Receptors	Visual Receptor Criteria
Large scale effects influencing several landscape types or character areas	Direct views at close range with changes over a wide horizontal and vertical extent.
Effects at the scale of the landscape type or character areas within which the proposal lies	Direct or oblique views at close range with changes over a notable horizontal and/or vertical extent
Effects within the immediate landscape setting of the site	Direct or oblique views at medium range with a moderate horizontal and/or vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects at the site level (within the development site itself)	Oblique views at medium or long range with a small horizontal/vertical extent of the view affected.
Effects only experienced on parts of the site at a very localised level	Long range views with a negligible part of the view affected.

A1.4 The third, and final, factor, in determining the predicted magnitude of change is duration and reversibility. Duration and reversibility are separate but linked considerations. Duration is judged according to the defined terms set out below, whereas reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation. The categories used in this assessment are set out in **Table EDP A1.4**.

Table EDP A1.4: Factors Influencing Judgements on Magnitude of Change

Duration	Reversibility
Long Term (20+ years)	Permanent with unlikely restoration to original state e.g. major road corridor, power station, urban extension, hydrocarbons
Medium to long term (10 to 20 years)	Permanent with possible conversion to original state e.g. agricultural buildings, retail units;
Medium term (5 to 10 years)	Partially reversible to a different state e.g. mineral workings;
Short term (1 – 5 years)	Reversible after decommissioning to a similar original state e.g. renewable energy development;
Temporary (less than 12 months)	Quickly reversible e.g. temporary structures.

Table EDP A1.5: Defining the Magnitude of Change to the Landscape and Visual Baseline

Magnitude of Change	
(Considers Scale of Proposal/Geographical Extent/Duration and Reversibility/Proportion)	
Very High	***Landscape***: Total loss/major alteration to key receptors/characteristics of the baseline; addition of elements that strongly conflict or integrate with the baseline.
	Visual: Substantial change to the baseline, forming a new, defining focus and having a defining influence on the view.
High	***Landscape:*** Notable loss/alteration/addition to one or more key receptors/-characteristics of the baseline; or addition of prominent conflicting elements.
	Visual: Additions are clearly noticeable and part of the view would be fundamentally altered.

Magnitude of Change	
Medium	***Landscape:*** Partial loss/alteration to one or more key receptors/characteristics; addition of elements that are evident but do not necessarily conflict with the key characteristics of the existing landscape.
	Visual: The proposed development will form a new and recognisable element within the view which is likely to be recognised by the receptor.
Low	***Landscape:*** Minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape receptors/-characteristics; additional elements may not be uncharacteristic within existing landscape.
	Visual: Proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.
Very Low	***Landscape:*** Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.
	Visual: Proposed development will form a barely noticeable component of the view, and the view whilst slightly altered would be similar to the baseline.
Imperceptible	In some circumstances, changes at representative viewpoints or receptors will be lower than 'Very Low' and changes will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to negligible effects.

Predicted Effects

A1.5 In order to consider the likely level of any effect, the sensitivity of each receptor is combined with the predicted magnitude of change to determine the level of effect, with reference also made to the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the effect within the assessment. Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the level of effect can be derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix in **Table A1.6.**

Table EDP A1.6: Determining the Predicted Levels of Effects to the Landscape and Visual Baseline

Overall Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude of Change				
	Very High	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Very Low**
Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-Minor
High	Major	Major/-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-Minor	Minor
Medium	Major/-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-Minor	Minor	Minor/-Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Minor/-Negligible	Negligible
Very Low	Moderate/-Minor	Minor	Minor/-Negligible	Negligible	Negligible/-None

Table EDP A1.7: Definition of Effects

Definition of Effects	
Substantial	Effects that are in complete variance to the baseline landscape resource or visual amenity.
Major or Major/Moderate	Effects that result in noticeable alterations to much (*Major effect*) or some (*Moderate/Major effect*) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Moderate	Effects that result in noticeable alterations to a few of the key characteristics of the baseline landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Minor or Minor/Negligible	Effects that result in slight alterations to some (*Minor effect*) or a few (*Minor/Negligible*) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
Negligible or Negligible/None	Effects that result in barely perceptible alterations to a few (*Negligible effect*) or some (*Negligible/None effect*) of the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.
None	No detectable alteration to the key characteristics of the landscape resource or aspects of visual amenity.

A1.6 Effects can be adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral. The landscape effects will be considered against the landscape baseline, which includes published landscape strategies or policies if they exist. Changes involving the addition of large-scale man-made objects are typically considered to be adverse, unless otherwise stated, as they are not usually actively promoted as part of published landscape strategies.

A1.7 Visual effects are more subjective as peoples' perception of development varies through the spectrum of negative, neutral and positive attitudes. In the assessment of visual effects the assessor will exercise objective professional judgement in assessing the level of effects and, unless otherwise stated, will assume that all effects are adverse, thus representing the worst-case scenario. Effects can be moderated by maturation of landscape strategies.

A1.8 The timescale of each effect is also important and effects are generally assessed at time stamps in the whole development life cycle: temporary (at a mid-point in construction), short-term (completion at year 1), medium-term (typically 15 years), medium- to long-term (15+ years). In some cases, the operational phase of a scheme could be considered 'temporary'.

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Appendix EDP 2
Photoviewpoints
(edp6902_d009a 08 March 2021 JTF/WG)

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Photoviewpoint EDP 1: View from terminus of Footpath 035 within Sandridge Conservation Area adjacent to the Church of St Leonard

To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

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Registered office: 01285 740427
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Grid Coordinates:	**517092, 210556**	Horizontal Field of View:	**39.6°**	Direction of View:	**290°**	date	**08 MARCH 2021**
Date and Time:	**09/02/2021 @ 11:07**	Height of Camera:	**1.6m**	Distance:	**63m**	drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
Projection:	**Planar**	Make, Model, Sensor:	**Canon 5D MK2, FFS**	aOD:	**83m**	drawn by	**JTF**
Visualisation Type:	**1**	Enlargement Factor:	**100% @ A3**	Focal Length:	**50mm**	checked	**WG**
						QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 1**

Photoviewpoint EDP 2: View from Footpath 032 to the North of Sandridge

To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

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Grid Coordinates:	**517196, 210963**	Horizontal Field of View:	**39.6°**	Direction of View:	**210°**	date	**08 MARCH 2021**
Date and Time:	**09/02/2021 @ 11:16**	Height of Camera:	**1.6m**	Distance:	**100m**	drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
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Visualisation Type:	**1**	Enlargement Factor:	**100% @ A3**	Focal Length:	**50mm**	checked	**WG**
						QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 2**

Photoviewpoint EDP 3: View from high point within Heartwood Forest

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Grid Coordinates:	**516468, 211208**	Horizontal Field of View:	**90°**	Direction of View:	**210°**
Date and Time:	**09/02/2021@ 11:37**	Height of Camera:	**1.6m**	Distance:	**350m**
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date	**08 MARCH 2021**
drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
drawn by	**JTF**
checked	**WG**
QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 3**

Photoviewpoint EDP 4: View from Bridleway 009 at the junction of the Heartwood Forest and Railway

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Grid Coordinates:	**515475, 210734**	Horizontal Field of View:	**90°**	Direction of View:	**130°**
Date and Time:	**09/02/2021 @ 12:22**	Height of Camera:	**1.6m**	Distance:	**0m**
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date	**08 MARCH 2021**
drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
drawn by	**JTF**
checked	**WG**
QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 4**

Photoviewpoint EDP 5: View from Bridleway 009 to the west of the railway line

To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

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Grid Coordinates:	**515402, 210738**	Horizontal Field of View:	**39.6°**	Direction of View:	**110°**	date	**08 MARCH 2021**
Date and Time:	**09/02/2021 @ 12:23**	Height of Camera:	**1.6m**	Distance:	**70m**	drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
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Visualisation Type:	**1**	Enlargement Factor:	**100% @ A3**	Focal Length:	**50mm**	checked	**WG**
						QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 5**

Photoviewpoint EDP 6: View from Footpath 096 at Long Spring to the immediate north of the Settlement edge of St Albans

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Grid Coordinates:	**515639, 209644**	Horizontal Field of View:	**90°**	Direction of View:	**40°**
Date and Time:	**09/02/2021@ 12:45**	Height of Camera:	**1.6m**	Distance:	**200m**
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date	**08 MARCH 2021**
drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
drawn by	**JTF**
checked	**WG**
QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 6**

Photoviewpoint EDP 7: View from Footpath 096 at Long Spring at the Junction with Valley Road

To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

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Grid Coordinates:	**515382, 209394**	Horizontal Field of View:	**39.6°**	Direction of View:	**40°**	date	**08 MARCH 2021**
Date and Time:	**09/02/2021 @ 12:51**	Height of Camera:	**1.6m**	Distance:	**765m**	drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
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Visualisation Type:	**1**	Enlargement Factor:	**100% @ A3**	Focal Length:	**50mm**	checked	**WG**
						QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 7**

Photoviewpoint EDP 8: View from Sandridge Recreational Ground, Footpath 011 (Hertfordshire Way Promoted Route)

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Grid Coordinates:	**516857, 210421**	Horizontal Field of View:	**90°**	Direction of View:	**270°**
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Visualisation Type:	**1**	Enlargement Factor:	**96% @ A1 width**	Focal Length:	**50mm**

date	**08 MARCH 2021**
drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
drawn by	**JTF**
checked	**WG**
QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 8**

Photoviewpoint EDP 9: View from Footpath 027 within Jersey Farm Woodland Park

To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

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Grid Coordinates:	**517301, 210475**	Horizontal Field of View:	**39.6°**	Direction of View:	**270°**	date	**08 MARCH 2021**
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Visualisation Type:	**1**	Enlargement Factor:	**100% @ A3**	Focal Length:	**50mm**	checked	**WG**
						QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 9**

Photoviewpoint EDP 10: View from Bridleway 053 at the interface of Jersey Farm Woodland Park and the existing settlement along St Albans Road

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Grid Coordinates:	**516808, 209710**	Horizontal Field of View:	**90°**	Direction of View:	**300°**
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date	**08 MARCH 2021**
drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
drawn by	**JTF**
checked	**WG**
QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 10**

Photoviewpoint EDP 11: View from Footpath 022 adjacent to St Leonards Playground

To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

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Grid Coordinates:	**516908, 210102**	Horizontal Field of View:	**39.6°**	Direction of View:	**300°**	date	**08 MARCH 2021**
Date and Time:	**09/02/2021 @ 14:28**	Height of Camera:	**1.6m**	Distance:	**185m**	drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
Projection:	**Planar**	Make, Model, Sensor:	**Canon 5D MK2, FFS**	aOD:	**94m**	drawn by	**JTF**
Visualisation Type:	**1**	Enlargement Factor:	**100% @ A3**	Focal Length:	**50mm**	checked	**WG**
						QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 11**

Photoviewpoint EDP 12: View from Footpath 031 to the west of the wireless station at Woodcock Hill

To be viewed at comfortable arm's length

the environmental dimension partnership

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Grid Coordinates:	**518126, 210301**	Horizontal Field of View:	**39.6°**	Direction of View:	**260°**	date	**08 MARCH 2021**
Date and Time:	**09/02/2021 @ 15:07**	Height of Camera:	**1.6m**	Distance:	**1km**	drawing number	**edp6902_d009a**
Projection:	**Planar**	Make, Model, Sensor:	**Canon 5D MK2, FFS**	aOD:	**110m**	drawn by	**JTF**
Visualisation Type:	**1**	Enlargement Factor:	**100% @ A3**	Focal Length:	**50mm**	checked	**WG**
						QA	**RB**

client	**Lightwood Strategic**
project title	**Land at Sandridgebury Lane, St Albans**
drawing title	**Photoviewpoint EDP 12**

Appendix EDP 3
Extract from Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2005

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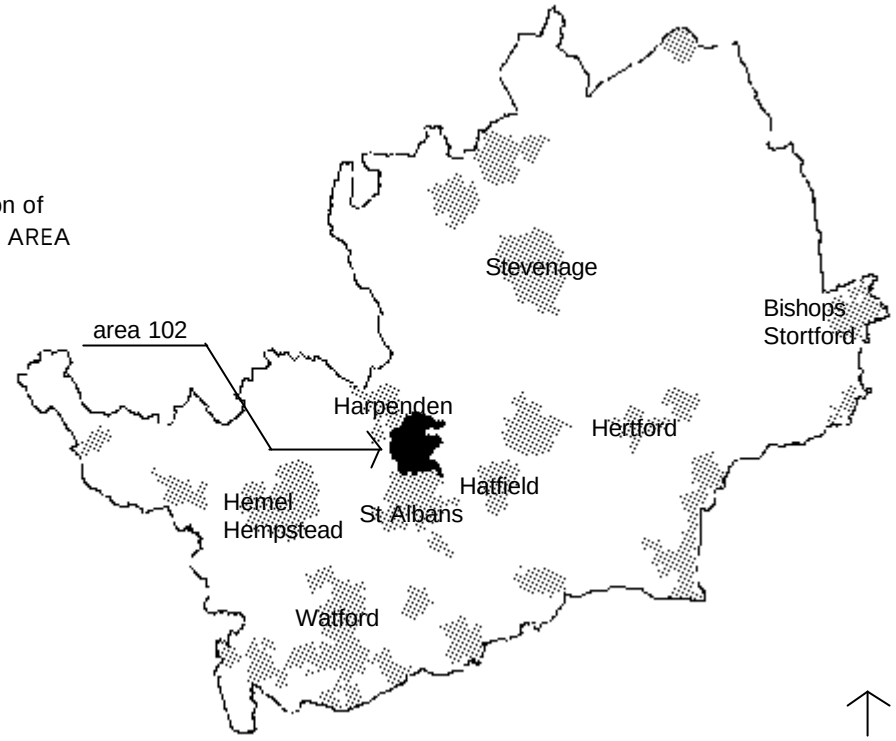
County Map showing location of LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

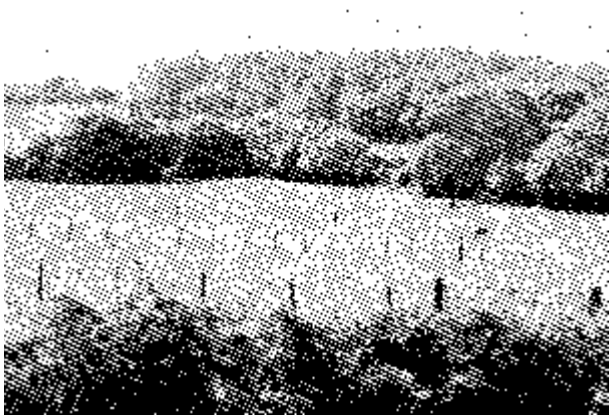


LOCATION

This area is bounded by the A1081 to the west, Harpenden and Wheathampstead to the north and Sandridge and St. Albans to the east and south. The area is split into two unequal parts by the linear settlement of Sandridge along the B651.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

A network of dry interconnecting valleys with a sense of rural seclusion despite the close proximity of settlements on the higher ground to the rear of the smaller plateau areas on the fringes of this area. The visual containment is aided by the prominent small and medium sized woods located on the upper reaches of the valley sides. Narrow lanes and equestrian activities create a relatively relaxed feel. The plateau areas are more open, with large arable fields and intermittent clipped hedgerows. On the fringes of the adjacent urban settlements there is a greater emphasis on recreational activities, including playing fields, equestrian activity, golf and community woodland.



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- open dry valleys overlooked by smaller areas of plateau on the fringes
- quiet area with few visual detractors except the A1081 and mainline railway to the west
- small woods on the upper slopes emphasize the valleys
- area served by narrow, winding roads lined by dense mixed hedgerows
- mixed arable, pasture and recreational land uses
- number of equestrian establishments associated with small country houses, including The Grove and Sandridgebury
- locally prominent built edges to adjacent settlements
- isolated properties or small clusters of dwellings, generally with strong vernacular architecture

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- new playing fields for St Albans School and Old Albanians at Cheapside Farm off A1081
- Ayres End Green
- St Pancras- Sheffield mainline railway and gantries
- new golf course at Long Acre Farm
- Jersey Farm woodland park, St Albans
- St. Leonards Church, Sandridge, with flint and shingle tower
- enclosed high sided hedgerow north of Sandridge on B651

Paddocks off Pipers Lane
(J.Billingsley)

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. The chalk bedrock geology is overlaid by clay-with-flints on the higher/plateau areas and by undifferentiated chalky drift on the slopes. The valleys contain sand and gravels while on the plateau area the acidic clay loams are stagnogleyic paleo-argillic brown earths with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging with some well drained clayey soils over chalk, variably flinty (Batcombe association). In the valley bottoms and lower slopes between Harpenden and St Albans there are typical argillic brown earths, well drained fine silty soils, locally very flinty, some shallow over flint gravel (Charity 2 association). These dry valleys also contain river terrace gravels and areas of sandy soils between St. Albans and Nomansland Common. (See also Area 103).

Topography. This markedly undulating landscape of plateau areas and dry valleys separates St. Albans and Harpenden. A small section in the south is cut off from the rest of the area by Sandridge, which is on a subtle ridge. Slopes are slightly steeper in the northern half of the area, where the landscape is more rolling. In comparison the southern half comprises a plateau area with a south-east facing slope.

Degree of slope. To the north the slopes average 1 in 32 while from the central plateau to the south east they are typically 1 in 20.

Altitude range. 85m in the south east; 125m in the plateau areas of the north, north west and centre.

Hydrology. Standing water is rare in this area of high ground and dry valleys. Local wood names suggest springs, wells or wet areas, e.g. Long Spring, Pismire Spring, Pudler's Wood and Secret Spring. There is a pond at Cheapside Farm, a well at Green Cottages and a pond and wet drain near the playground at Jersey Farm. Nearby House Lane is susceptible to flooding north of the roundabout, as is the B651 north of Sandridge.

Land cover and land use. The primary land use is arable cropping. However there is also a good proportion of equestrian pasture, including sites at Sandridgebury and Pipers Lane. Around the perimeter of the area and adjacent to the settlements of Harpenden and St. Albans there is a range of leisure-related land uses, including extensive new playing fields for the St Albans School and Old Albanians on the A1081, the pay and play golf course at Long Acre Farm and the Jersey Farm Woodland Park north of St. Albans. There is a small orchard at Cheapside Farm

Vegetation and wildlife. The area contains a number of small to medium sized discrete woods, some of which are ancient, e.g. Thames Wood, Langley Wood, Pudler's Wood, Clappers Wood and Eight Acre Wood. The main species mix is oak/hornbeam with variable amounts of elm. There are also a number of later plantations, e.g. Pismire Spring, where species include cherry, ash and larch. The main hedgerow species are hawthorn/blackthorn and elm with smaller amounts of hazel, holly and field maple. Hedgerow trees are mainly oak, holly and ash. Sunken lanes and tall overgrown hedges are common on the steeper slopes, e.g. Pipers Lane. Mud Lane is a notable green lane with interesting ground flora including bluebell. On the arable plateau areas the hedges are tightly clipped and the landscape more open, however there has been tree planting around Cheapside Farm. Remnant natural grasslands e.g. Ayres End Meadows are dominated by Creeping Soft Grass, Bents and Red Fescue. Locally important rare species include Creeping Formentii (*Potentilla angelica*) at Ayre's End and the Natterer's Bat.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

On the east of the area a finger of sandy soils from the north-eastern outskirts of St Albans, through Sandridge to Nomansland Common, led to early exploitation. Remains of burial mounds dating to the 2nd millennium BC lie west of Sandridge. On the southern edge of the area, adjacent to f St. Albans, is a short length of the Beech Bottom dyke whcih dates from the early 1st century AD. It has been suggested that the pronounced hedgebank on the west side of the B 651 between Sandridge and Wheathampstead, which marks the line of the medieval parish boundary, also marks a prehistoric boundary between Beech Bottom Dyke and the Devils Dyke in Wheathampstead. The most notable historic feature of the landscape, first mentioned in the late Saxon period, is a long, curving boundary, marked by fields and tracks, from the western end of Nomansland Common to northwest of Cheapside farm. There is a manorial site within Thames Wood.

Field pattern. Field patterns derive mainly from the pre 18th-century irregular enclosure. There was some later parliamentary enclosure, but the significant impact has been the creation of large prairie fields in the later part of the 20th century, particularly to the south of the area. To the north of Nomansland are a few former unenclosed common arable fields. Field sizes are medium to the north while to the south west and south east they are larger and more regular in shape. Locally there are some reasonably intact portions of hedgerow networks, e.g. at Cross Farm immediately south of Harpenden. Smaller paddocks have been created by sub-dividing larger fields with temporary fencing to serve local equestrian activity, e.g. along Pipers Lane and Sandridgebury.

Transport pattern. Narrow winding lanes with narrow verges are typical and where they rise up the steeper slopes to the plateau there are some pronounced sunken lanes. The exceptions to this pattern are the busy A1081 to the west of the area and the B651which runs between St. Albans and Wheathampstead. The London to Sheffield main line railway is mainly in cutting as it crosses from north to south.

Settlements and built form.

There is a dispersed settlement pattern with small hamlets e.g. Amwell and Ayres End , isolated farms and occasional white rendered cottages. Traditional building materials such as clay tile and brick are prevalent. Cross Farm, originally a Saxon hall, has a 17th-century gable brick front . An impressive range of brick, weatherboard and clay tile barns can be seen from Cross Lane. The parish church of St. Leonard is a distinctive feature in the landscape with its flint tower and chamfered shingle spire.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The area is generally both visually contained and coherent. Despite the close proximity of a number of towns the distant and enclosing views are largely formed and framed by vegetation or landform. This a peaceful area with few detractors, particularly in the central core. The harmonious blend of dwellings using traditional materials adds to the appeal of the area. The central ridge between Cheapside Farm and Hillend Farm is more exposed. The most significant noise source is from the main line railway.

Rarity and distinctiveness. The landscape type is frequent within the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

Locally there are some relatively raw built edges to the open countryside , e.g. along Cross Lane , Harpenden, to the southern boundary of Wheathampstead and from parts of Sandridge. However, the wider countryside is protectd from the full impact of the more extensive residential areas, which are either set back from the ridgelines or screened by belts of trees, which in some cases include a relatively high proportion of conifers, e.g. north of Amwell. While the new playing fields on the A1081 represent a substantial development in the open countryside, the planting proposals include a number of copses, small woods and new hedges which respect the local pattern and native species mixes. Recreational land uses on the edge of St. Albans, e.g. Jersey Farm Woodland Park, include significant areas of new woodland. Within the equestrian areas the use of temporary fencing is discordant with the traditional pattern of hedgerows. The overhead gantries, associated earthworks and structures along the main line railway are only locally intrusive features, as much of the route is in cutting.

ACCESSIBILITY

Total length of Public Rights of Way - 16,094m
Total length of Other Public Access - n/a
Total length of Designated Cycle Routes - 5,184m
Total length of all public access - 21,278
Area of LCA in square metres - 11,125,144
Length to area ratio - 1:523

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This area is widely regarded for its distinctive landscapes, particularly as a setting to Nomansland Common (and some would not see such a marked boundary between the two character areas), but also for locations in the north and west of the area. The impact of more recent changes in and around the area, however, has the occasional critic: "Sandridge- Subtopian clutter in a village that has ribboned out to join St. Albans….Opposite the church, Pound Farm, mellow and ivy-smothered, is guarded by four grotesquely truncated oaks" R. M. Healey in "Hertfordshire, A Shell Guide" Faber & Faber 1982.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

Greenbelt
Landscape Conservation Area (north of Cheapside Farm and Hillend Farm)
Amwell Conservation Area
Childwickbury Conservation area (north-west corner)
Sandridge Conservation Area

CONDITION

Land cover change:	**localized**
Age structure of tree cover:	**mixed**
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	**fragmented**
Management of semi-natural habitat:	**not obvious**
Survival of cultural pattern:	**declining**
Impact of built development:	**low**
Impact of land-use change:	**moderate**

ROBUSTNESS

Impact of landform:	**prominent**
Impact of land cover:	**apparent**
Impact of historic pattern:	**interrupted**
Visibility from outside:	**locally visible**
Sense of enclosure:	**contained**
Visual unity:	**coherent**
Distinctiveness/rarity:	**frequent**

CONDITION	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	**Improve and conserve**	Conserve and restore
POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character

ROBUSTNESS

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE: IMPROVE AND CONSERVE

- promote the appropriate management of coppice woodland in order to re-establish a rich ground flora and the distinction between different management systems, such as high forest, coppice and coppice-with-standards
- utilize ancient hedge, field and woodland boundaries to establish the most appropriate location for wood restoration and expansion and creating eco-corridors. Build on the pattern of woodland on the upper slopes of the valley sides
- use indigenous species and native stock of local provenance wherever possible
- promote hedgerow restoration and creation throughout the area , particularly in the south , to provide visual and ecological links between existing and proposed woodland areas. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries where possible
- promote both the creation of new ponds and the retention/enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- improve public access arrangements including the scope for circular walks from adjacent settlements and access to woodlands
- provide new uncropped or grass field margins to link areas of wildlife importance and/or existing and proposed rights of way
- promote the retention and restoration of existing orchards and the creation of new orchards
- encourage the reuse of existing agricultural buildings for equestrian activity and introduce native planting schemes to integrate them into the landscape
- promote the use of traditional field enclosure where land is converted to equestrian pasture. Introduce new copses within areas of pasture e.g. Sandridgebury and Pipers Lane
- conserve unimproved and semi-improved grassland, e.g. at Ayres End,, wherever possible, avoiding agricultural improvements, so as to maintain their nature conservation value
- avoid over-grazing and heavy public pressure on areas of semi-improved grassland
- ensure that ancient lanes and their associated hedgerows are retained, protected, enhanced and integrated into any new development with due regard to their historic, ecological and landscape value
- ensure that the surroundings of converted and new buildings are designed and maintained to be in keeping with their agricultural surroundings. 'Garden' details are to be screened from view where possible and native species used for hedging and tree planting on the perimeter
- within golf courses a high proportion of the total area shall be dedicated to and maintained as wildlife habitat, building upon established areas of wildlife interest already present. Landscape management plans to be an integral part of the planning consent and maintenance
- new buildings and structures to be in keeping with the local vernacular and remaining historic character of the site .
- ensure all existing and proposed recreational land uses include appropriate measures to manage and enhance the existing landscape setting and historical and ecological value. Developments on the urban edge to be integrated by the use of native woodland, copses and hedgerows.
- promote planting schemes that will reduce the impact of existing urban development on the landscape of adjacent areas
- promote planting to screen the impact of the mainline railway and A1081
- maintain and develop the traditional pattern of roadside verges as a local feature and a wildlife resource Where development is likely to affect verges and damage is unavoidable, development should include details of protection of the remaining verge and replacement of its nature conservation value within the proposed scheme. This is particularly important where verges include hedgebanks, sunken lanes, ditches and hedges.

- Ayres End
(E. Anderson)

Plans

Plan EDP 1	Site Location and Boundaries (edp6902_d004b 08 March 2021 GY/OW)
Plan EDP 2	Geology Map (edp6902_d011a 08 March 2021 WG/RB)
Plan EDP 3	Soil Map (edp6902_d010a 08 March 2021 WG/RB)
Plan EDP 4	Topography Plan (edp6902_d012a 08 March 2021 WG/RB)
Plan EDP 5	Published Landscape Character Assessment (edp6902_d013a 08 March 2021 WG/RB)
Plan EDP 6	Site Character and Local Context (edp6902_d005b 08 March 2021 GY/OW)
Plan EDP 7	Environmental Planning Context (edp6902_d006b 08 March 2021 GY/OW)
Plan EDP 8	Findings of EDP's Visual Appraisal (edp6902_d007b 08 March 2021 GY/OW)
Plan EDP 9	Landscape Constraints and Opportunities (edp6902_d008b 08 March 2021 GY/OW)

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